

Department for Work and Pensions

Research Report No 566

Exploring a Distance Travelled approach to WORKSTEP development planning

Ann Purvis, James Lowrey and Rebecca Law

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Glossary

ALI (Adult Learning Inspectorate)

Was previously responsible for the inspection of education and training for adults and young people in England. In 2005, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) launched a consultation on plans to enlarge Ofsted to create a single inspectorate for children and learners, which would carry on the work of ALI.

BASE (British Association of Supported Employment)

Formed in 2006 from the merger of the National Association of Supported Employment and the Association for Supported Employment. BASE represents and supports agencies involved with supported employment provision in England and Wales.

Customer

The person on the WORKSTEP Programme receiving support from a provider organisation.

Employer

The organisation that employs the WORKSTEP customer.

Estyn (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales)

Responsible for the inspection of education and training in Wales.

Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

Brings together four formerly separate inspectorates, including ALI, to inspect education and training for learners of all ages.

Provider	An organisation funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide support to disabled people through the WORKSTEP Programme.
SEP (Supported Employment Programme)	Replaced the Sheltered Placement Programme (SPS) in 1994 amalgamating supported placements with supported workshops. The SEP was replaced in 2001 with the introduction of WORKSTEP.
Support worker	The person from the provider organisation who undertakes customer review meetings and provides support to the customer on the WORKSTEP Programme.
Supported business	A business established within the provider organisation to employ disabled people with at least 50 per cent of the employees assessed as eligible for entry to WORKSTEP.
Supported placement	Where the WORKSTEP customer is employed with a mainstream employer outside of the provider organisation.

Summary

Background to the WORKSTEP distance travelled project

WORKSTEP is part of a broad range of programmes and schemes funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which aim to help disabled people find and retain work. DWP commissioned the WORKSTEP distance travelled project in 2006, in response to recommendations made in the WORKSTEP Programme Evaluation¹ regarding the need to develop measures of Programme quality and 'in Programme' performance. In particular the evaluation proposed a need to develop an approach which could monitor the 'in work' progression of supported employees, i.e. distance travelled towards open employment.

The project aimed to help inform the policy development process in this area and the overall aims were to:

- raise awareness of the hard and soft outcomes associated with WORKSTEP, and the value of capturing all relevant Programme outcomes;
- offer potential improvements in Programme management information and the performance management of service delivery via the development of an approach to monitor 'in-programme' progression (distance travelled) for supported employees;
- develop recommendations to inform the process for the development of the 'distance travelled' within other DWP policies and programmes.

The project sought to develop an approach to monitoring distance travelled that would provide useful information and feedback to WORKSTEP, supported employees, provider staff and employers. Within this context the project aimed to develop information on individuals and also to enhance qualitative data on service provision which could feed into routine Jobcentre Plus monitoring and inspection processes. There are a number of difficulties associated with aggregating data on

¹ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

individual outcome measures to provide quantitative information on the relative performance of services², and it was not within the scope of this project to develop a system of this nature.

In order to achieve the project aims, work was carried out in two phases between 2006 and 2008. This involved initial research and the development of a distance travelled approach followed by a pilot of this approach with ten WORKSTEP providers who were selected to cover the range of WORKSTEP providers, both size and type of organisation and the differing models of service delivery (placements and supported businesses). The research team employed a range of methods, with data gathered from the following sources:

- background literature review and DWP/Jobcentre Plus documentation on distance travelled and development planning;
- analysis of projects that monitor distance travelled, in particular within employment and disability-related initiatives;
- ongoing review and input from an expert panel;
- qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders, carried out during the development and pilot review stages;
- four workshops with representatives from over 80 provider organisations' managers and support workers;
- structured monitoring and review during and after the pilot.

Findings from the pilot

The pilot process was extremely valuable and provided a significant amount of information on both the 'WORKSTEP distance travelled system', which was developed and piloted as part of the project, and more generally on the use of a distance travelled approach to development planning within WORKSTEP. Both of these areas also offer lessons which could be applied to the development of distance travelled within a range of other services.

Within the context of WORKSTEP, the pilot yielded significant evidence of the strengths of the distance travelled approach developed for use within the Programme, and the benefits of the approach when it is used appropriately. In particular the use of the approach contributes to the delivery of a high quality service, and providers involved in the pilot reported that the use of the approach offered:

- a significant improvement in the customer development planning process;
- a more professional approach to development planning and review meetings;
- an opportunity to standardise and develop provider staff working practices;

² *Good Practice in Work Preparation: Lessons from Research* (2002) DWP WAE Research Report No. 135.

- the facilitation of a greater degree of customer engagement with the Programme;
- an opportunity to motivate customers;
- an opportunity for customers to demonstrate their progress to employers;
- an opportunity for staff to refocus on the progression aims of the Programme;
- a method to clearly demonstrate when customers are ready to progress to open employment;
- a supportive process to facilitate customer progression.

The approach has also been commended in the the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection reports of two pilot providers who were inspected during the pilot:

- *'It has effectively focused staff on participants' barriers to employment and progression opportunities'.*
- *'Innovative practice' for 'measuring the progress achieved by participants'.*

Difficulties encountered during the pilot

Project resource constraints meant that it was not possible to directly involve customers in the process of system development and during the pilot phase customer and employer views were also sought indirectly, via provider support workers at WORKSTEP review meetings. It is acknowledged that this indirect method of gathering data has limitations as the process was mediated by the support worker and subject to their interpretations of customer and employer views.

Whilst the findings of the pilot are generally very positive, staff involved did raise a variety of concerns related to their experiences of piloting the distance travelled approach. The main concerns were reported in the following areas:

- difficulties in understanding key concepts and guidance, and linked to this:
 - difficulties explaining the approach to customers and employers;
- perceptions that the approach increased the time required for customer assessment and reviews, which was seen as particularly problematic where support workers had high caseloads and limited customer contact time;
- difficulties with the monitoring process, specifically:
 - the identification of what constituted evidence;
 - discomfort with the process of 'scoring' customer performance;
 - using the approach as a 'deficit model' and potentially undermining customer confidence;
- concerns about using the approach with customers who have fluctuating or deteriorating conditions.

Overall, many of these concerns appeared to diminish as staff became more familiar with the approach, or they were related to inadequate staff training and insufficient integration of the approach with existing development planning. There were also a range of difficulties associated with WORKSTEP Programme issues which were beyond the scope of areas that could be addressed by development planning.

The attitudes and experiences of customers and employers involved in the project tended to reflect the understanding and attitudes of the provider staff who worked with them. Where staff were able to present the approach in a clear and positive way, few concerns were reported by customers and employers engaged in the process. Where staff encountered difficulties with the approach these would be replicated in customer and employer experience.

Development of the approach

The process used to develop the WORKSTEP distance travelled system aimed to involve a wide range of stakeholders, and drew, in particular, on the experience of many staff from the wide range of WORKSTEP provider organisations. The system that was developed aimed to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment:

- Skills and attributes are identified via a framework of key behaviours and associated typical indicators.
- The monitoring of progress is based on recorded evidence which is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels.
- Use of this scoring system over time will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled'.

Whilst the monitoring of progress is often described as 'measuring' distance travelled, the term 'monitoring' was used within the project to emphasise that this is a process of reviewing skills and attributes over time rather than the determination and assignment of a specific numerical unit of measurement. The use of a numerical scale has also led some distance travelled models to describe progress in percentage terms when a customer moves from one level to another. The use of monitoring data to describe percentage improvements would only be valid if progress followed a linear and consistent scale that can be applied across all customers and key behaviours, which is not feasible. To reinforce this point, monitoring categories were changed to an alphabetical scale (A-E) towards the end of the pilot.

As noted above whilst a number of concerns were highlighted during the pilot, the majority of these were related to inadequate levels of staff training and support, insufficient integration of the approach with development planning or WORKSTEP Programme issues, rather than directly related to the approach developed. This

issue of training was addressed during the final stage of the pilot when a small working group reviewed the pilot launch materials as a basis for developing a new staff training package.

The main finding that emerged with regard to the development process was previously identified as a 'key success factor' within the Practical Guide³, i.e. the need to consult and involve staff who would be using the approach. In addition to initial consultation, the project sought to ensure ongoing staff involvement to capture their expertise in working with WORKSTEP customers.

Recommendations

Overall, the pilot offered significant evidence of the strengths of the distance travelled approach developed for use within WORKSTEP, and the benefits of the approach when used appropriately within the Programme.

Use of the approach within specialist disability provision

Given the demonstrable benefits identified during the pilot it is recommended that the review of specialist disability employment provision should give serious consideration to a requirement to incorporate the distance travelled approach, developed as part of this project, within customer development planning.

In addition to the benefits identified, the distance travelled approach could also support the modular approach proposed for a new specialist programme:

- Offering a standardised way to gather the evidence required to support decisions regarding any extension to the length of time a customer may spend on each module, or when customers move between modules.
- It can also clearly identify cases where existing Programme issues, such as payment of a subsidy, rather than the need for ongoing support or development, has led to customers remaining on the Programme.

The majority of the difficulties linked with the approach that were identified during the pilot appeared to be related to inadequate training for a number of staff involved and the limited integration of the approach with existing development planning. Therefore, it is also recommended that plans for any expansion in the use of a distance travelled approach should carefully consider:

- comprehensive staff training; and
- full integration of the approach with development plans.

³ *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document* (2003) DWP.

Use of the approach within other areas

The benefits identified as part of the WORKSTEP Project may also be equally applicable to a wide range of service provision. Indeed, a number of pilot providers reported that they have adopted the distance travelled approach within other programmes that they deliver therefore, it does appear feasible that the key elements of the WORKSTEP approach, i.e. a framework of key behaviours and an evidence-based approach to monitoring progress over time, via generic monitoring levels could be adapted for use with a range of other services.

An important factor for the successful adaptation of the WORKSTEP approach was also identified via the development process for this project, i.e. the importance of involving staff who would be using the approach. It is, therefore, recommended that to ensure the successful adaptation of the approach for use in other areas of service provision, appropriate staff are fully involved in the development process.

1 Background

1.1 The WORKSTEP Programme

WORKSTEP is part of a broad range of programmes and schemes funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which aims to help disabled people find and retain work. These programmes are managed by Jobcentre Plus, an executive agency of the DWP, and delivered by a range of organisations in the public, private and not-for-profit sector. The largest provider of WORKSTEP is Remploy Ltd, which operates as a company limited by guarantee and is a non-departmental government body.

WORKSTEP is a supported employment programme, aimed at disabled people facing the most significant or complex barriers to finding and keeping a job, who with the right support can work effectively. Supported employees on WORKSTEP work either in jobs in the open labour market, via supported placements, or within supported businesses, established to employ disabled people. WORKSTEP aims to help people progress to unsupported employment where this is the right option for them. Details on the eligibility criteria for the WORKSTEP Programme are given in Appendix L.

The WORKSTEP Programme replaced the Supported Employment Programme (SEP) in April 2001, and one of the changes introduced at that time was an emphasis on more individually tailored support for customers via individual development plans. Guidance to WORKSTEP providers states that development plans should include:

- on- and off-the-job learning and development goals, including basic skills learning and development where appropriate;
- specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) steps to achieve the learning and development goals.

Reviews of development plans are to be carried out on a regular basis, at least twice a year.

1.2 Background to the WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Project

The WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Studies⁴ described an overall lack of Programme management information and recommended the implementation of effective systems to capture, analyse and report Programme management information as a priority. It also highlighted the need to incorporate some further measures of Programme quality and 'in-Programme' performance. This included further development and testing of an approach to monitor the 'in-work' progression of supported employees, (distance travelled towards open employment).

'Currently WORKSTEP offers long-term support with no clear milestones between gaining supported employment and moving to unsupported open employment, a process which may take a number of years. Given this lack of structure it is important to incorporate some element of 'distance travelled' within the Programme. Ideally this would form part of the WORKSTEP development planning process.

In this context 'distance travelled' would offer all stakeholders a measure of the distance a supported employee has travelled towards open employment and clearly demonstrates their readiness to move from the Programme once targets are reached. For those supported employees who may never achieve open employment it also offers clear evidence of their progress and the positive impact of their involvement with the Programme.'

(WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Studies)

As part of the WORKSTEP evaluation a research instrument was developed and piloted which aimed to assess the feasibility of monitoring the progression a customer makes within supported employment. This instrument was based on the analysis of past research on disability and employment, including the Desirable Outcomes of WORKSTEP⁵. It focused upon the 'soft outcomes' associated with being in employment, in addition to work related issues.

There were a number of constraints within the research interview situation, such as researchers' limited knowledge of customers' individual abilities and circumstances, and insufficient time to develop a relationship with the customer. However, many of the issues reviewed with customers during this element of the study were found to be relevant. The research also highlighted a number of other issues which would assist in the future development of an approach appropriate for use with a diverse customer group such as those on the WORKSTEP Programme.

Other programmes which have attempted to monitor distance travelled have done

⁴ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

⁵ Meah, A. and Thornton, P. (2005) *Desirable outcomes of WORKSTEP: user and provider views*, DWP Research Report No. 279.

so through 'adviser-customer' interactions, with regular meetings taking place to establish the appropriate work, personal, and social outcomes for that person as reported in the Practical Guide⁶. The WORKSTEP provider support worker should, therefore, be ideally placed to identify appropriate hard and soft outcomes and incorporate distance travelled within existing WORKSTEP development plans and associated review meetings.

1.3 Definitions of soft outcomes and distance travelled

The Practical Guide also offers relevant definitions for soft outcomes and a basis for defining distance travelled within the context of an employment programme such as WORKSTEP.

'An outcome can be defined simply as an observable change in client behaviour brought about at least in part through their participation in an ESF project. "Outcomes" are sometimes confused with "outputs" but there is an important difference between them. An output is usually the tangible service that a project delivers, such as a training course in basic IT skills. An outcome, in contrast, is the wider behavioural change that results from the output, such as an ability to write a letter using a word processing package.

The simplest way of explaining what is meant by soft outcomes is to compare them to hard outcomes:

- *"Hard outcomes" are the clearly-definable and quantifiable results that show the progress a beneficiary has made towards achieving desirable outcomes by participating in a project. Typically they include obtaining a qualification, finding work, or securing a place on a course. Hard outcomes are usually straightforward both to identify and to measure.*
- *In contrast, "soft outcomes" refer to those outcomes that represent intermediary stages on the way to achieving a hard outcome. They could include for example, thinking skills such as improved problem-solving abilities, personal attributes such as improved self-confidence, or practical work-focused skills, such as a better appreciation of the importance of time keeping in the workplace. As such, it can be more difficult to define them clearly or to measure them – although they may represent the main outcomes achieved by the most disadvantaged ESF client groups.*
- *In this context, "distance travelled" refers to the progress beneficiaries make in terms of achieving soft outcomes that lead towards sustained employment or associated hard outcomes, as a result of participating in a project and against an initial baseline set on joining it. By definition, measuring distance travelled will require assessing clients on at least two separate occasions (and preferably more) to understand what has changed.'*

⁶ A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document (2003) DWP.

Within the context of the WORKSTEP Project, distance travelled was defined as *'progress supported employees make towards achieving outcomes that can lead to sustained open employment'*.

1.4 Project aims

DWP commissioned the WORKSTEP distance travelled project to help inform its policy development process in this area. The overall aims of the project were to:

- raise awareness of the hard and soft outcomes associated with WORKSTEP, and the value of capturing all relevant Programme outcomes;
- offer potential improvements in Programme management information and the performance management of service delivery via the development of an approach to monitor 'in-programme' progression (distance travelled) for supported employees;
- develop recommendations to inform the process for the development of the 'distance travelled' within other DWP policies and programmes.

The distance travelled project sought to develop an approach to monitoring distance travelled that would provide useful information and feedback to WORKSTEP, supported employees, provider staff and employers. Within this context, the project aimed to develop information on individuals and also to enhance qualitative data on service provision which could feed into routine Jobcentre Plus monitoring and inspection processes. There are a number of difficulties associated with aggregating data on individual outcome measures to provide quantitative information on the relative performance of services⁷, and it was not within the scope of this project to develop a system of this nature.

1.4.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the WORKSTEP distance travelled project were to:

- undertake a thorough review of distance travelled literature;
- explore views on the concept of distance travelled to assess how well it is embedded within the Programme;
- assess the effectiveness of current provider procedures for monitoring progression within the WORKSTEP Programme and highlight specific areas of good practice among WORKSTEP providers;
- facilitate work with Jobcentre Plus/DWP and WORKSTEP providers to develop guidelines and an approach to effectively monitor distance travelled within WORKSTEP.

⁷ *Good Practice in Work Preparation: Lessons from Research* (2002) DWP WAE Research Report No. 135.

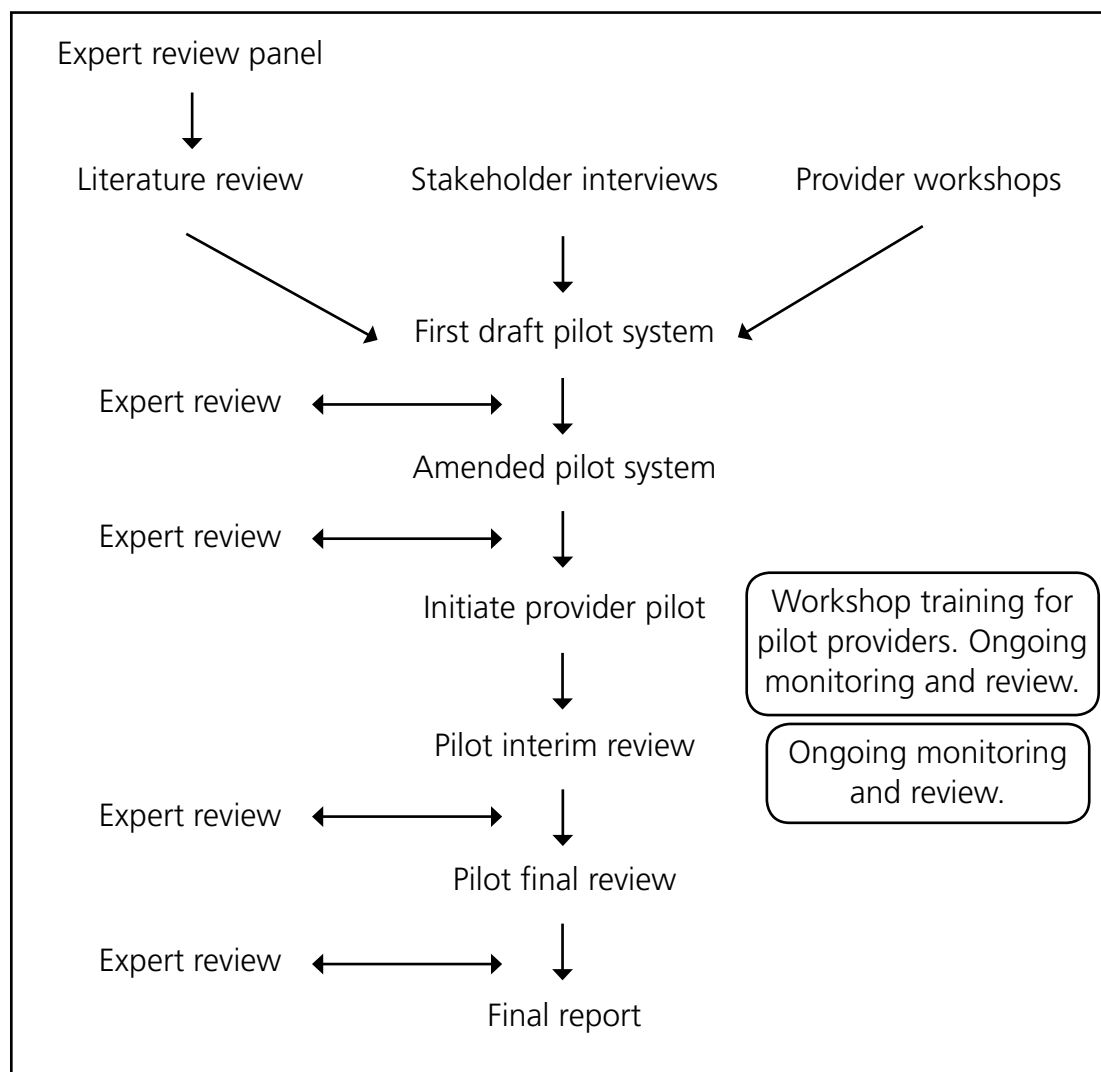
The project then piloted the developed distance travelled approach with selected providers of the WORKSTEP Programme. The research team facilitated and monitored the pilot with the selected providers to evaluate suitability and effectiveness. Finally, following the pilot, the team worked with a small number of the pilot providers and DWP to consider the findings and develop recommendations for any potential roll-out of a distance travelled component within all WORKSTEP supported employees' development plans.

1.5 Methodology

In order to address the aims and objectives of the project the research team used a range of methods, with data being gathered from the following sources:

- background literature review and DWP/Jobcentre Plus documentation on distance travelled and development planning;
- analysis of projects that monitor distance travelled, in particular within employment- and disability-related initiatives;
- feedback from an expert review panel;
- qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders including provider staff, Adult Learning Inspectorate, and Jobcentre Plus Contract Managers (carried out during the development and final review stages);
- workshops with provider organisation managers and support workers;
- ongoing structured evaluation of the pilot approach (to include review via expert panel).

Figure 1.1 highlights how the different elements of the research, development and pilot process worked together.

Figure 1.1 WORKSTEP distance travelled project

1.5.1 Expert review panel

An expert review panel was set up as part of the process to support the development of a distance travelled approach for WORKSTEP. The panel is made up of members of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC) which includes a disabled person and four academic specialists selected from the 'Expert Advice' in Disability, Health and Carers 'Lot' of the DWP Research Framework.

The purpose of the panel was to provide advice on each individual member's specialist area or experience. In particular to consider how the approach works with deaf or hearing impaired people (including people for whom British Sign Language is a preferred, or only, language) and people with a learning disability. The panel also consider general ethical and practical issues around developing this approach for use with the WORKSTEP customer group and one member of the panel is focused on the employer perspective. Figure 1.1 illustrates the points at which the panel were involved in the project.

1.5.2 Documentary analysis

A review of the literature and re-examination of existing data from the WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Study was carried out to identify evidence of existing development in this area, in particular related to:

- the measurement of hard and soft outcomes and distance travelled within employment- and disability-related initiatives;
- the identification and 'measurement' of key factors of employability;
- assessment processes and tools related to the above.

1.5.3 Initial semi-structured interviews

A series of semi-structured interviews were carried out to inform the development phase of the project. These were carried out with a range of stakeholders including:

- service providers;
- Jobcentre Plus staff;
- inspectorate staff (Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn));
- representatives from the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) and the DEAC.

More detail on these interviews is given in Section 2.2.

1.5.4 Provider workshops

A series of four provider workshops were held at locations across Britain during October and November 2006. These workshops were open to all WORKSTEP providers and promoted via the Jobcentre Plus WORKSTEP providers Extranet, and BASE e-bulletins. They aimed to gather views on distance travelled to facilitate the development of an approach for use within WORKSTEP. The workshops offered an overview of the rationale behind the project and aimed to explore distance travelled and review the general approach that was being used to develop the approach. In addition to this the workshops ran small group work sessions to identify key issues that are monitored when reviewing individual progress, the types of evidence that could be used to support monitoring and different methods for monitoring progress. Finally, the workshops were also used to ask providers for expressions of interest in the planned pilot. Details of the group work sessions can be found within Appendix B.

1.5.5 Development of a distance travelled approach for WORKSTEP

Based on the information collected through the WORKSTEP Evaluation case studies, the documentary analysis, initial semi-structured interviews and the

provider workshops, an initial WORKSTEP distance travelled system was developed. Following review by the expert panel and project steering group an amended version of the approach and guidance document was finalised for use in the first stage of the pilot.

1.5.6 Pilot of the WORKSTEP distance travelled system

Ten of the WORKSTEP providers who expressed an interest in the pilot were selected to be involved. The organisations were selected to cover the range of WORKSTEP providers, both size and type of organisation and the differing models of service delivery (placements and supported businesses). A launch event was held in March 2007 for representatives of the pilot sites, to introduce the WORKSTEP distance travelled system, provide training in its use, and present further details on the processes involved with the pilot.

During the course of the pilot regular monitoring activities were carried out with the pilot sites. Routine monitoring activities consisted of two elements: monthly email and telephone contact with the research team and anonymised monitoring forms which were completed by the support worker at every customer review meeting. The forms aimed to capture the views/comments of the support workers carrying out the review, the WORKSTEP customer and where relevant, the employer, in addition to some basic data on the customer.

Customer consent to participate in the project was also sought by the support worker, and an example of a pilot provider customer consent form is included in Appendix K.

In addition to this, at least one face-to-face monitoring visit was made to pilot sites during the course of the pilot, and an element of peer review was facilitated via a provider 'buddy' system, which paired pilot providers on a geographical basis.

An interim review meeting for representatives of all pilot sites was held in January 2008, and a further meeting to discuss issues related to staff training and supporting materials was held with four pilot sites and the DWP project manager in April 2008. Finally, at the end of the pilot period in August-September 2008, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with lead officers from nine of the ten of pilot sites to capture an overview of their experiences from the pilot process, along with any plans for future use of the approach.

1.6 Structure of the report

Chapter 2 of this report looks in more detail at the development of a distance travelled approach for WORKSTEP, from the initial development phase to the end of the pilot and Chapter 3 reviews the pilot process itself. More detailed analysis of pilot findings related to the use of a distance travelled approach within WORKSTEP is discussed in Chapter 4 with summary conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

2 Development of a distance travelled approach for WORKSTEP

This chapter offers an overview of the development process used for the WORKSTEP distance travelled system from the initial development phase through to the end of the pilot. It describes the initial activities that were undertaken, including a review of relevant literature and interviews with a range of stakeholders. Following on from this, a series of workshops were held for provider staff and the outputs from all of these activities were used to formulate an initial draft of the proposed WORKSTEP distance travelled system. This initial draft was considered by the project steering group and the expert review panel and, following amendment, subject to a further review prior to the pilot launch.

Whilst a wide variety of issues related to the use of the approach were highlighted during the pilot (discussed in more detail within the next chapter) it emerged that most of the difficulties identified during the pilot were related to the level of training and support available to staff or issues related to the WORKSTEP Programme, rather than the approach which had been developed. Thus, only two fairly minor amendments were put in place towards the end of the pilot, although additional work was undertaken to develop a more comprehensive staff training package.

2.1 Review of literature

A review of the literature and re-examination of existing data from the WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Study was carried out to identify evidence of existing development in this area, in particular relating to:

- the 'measurement' of hard and soft outcomes and distance travelled within employment- and disability-related initiatives;
- the identification and 'measurement' of key factors of employability;
- assessment processes and tools related to the above.

Details of the key sources used are given in the References, and numerous examples of methods for monitoring soft outcomes/distance travelled were identified, including resources developed and used within Jobcentre Plus such as the Customer Assessment Tool and the Personal Adviser Quality Assurance Framework. Despite the range of methods identified, two clear models for monitoring progress emerged from the review, i.e. those based on the opinions/perceptions of customers and those which are more strongly evidence-/judgement-based.

The review also identified a key resource for project methodology, *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled*⁸, and the project followed the general approach described within this guide for developing the WORKSTEP distance travelled system.

In addition to an outline process for the development of a system for monitoring distance travelled, the Practical Guide also identified three 'key success factors'. These can be summarised as a need to allocate dedicated resources, to consult with staff who would be using the approach and to subject any monitoring systems to ongoing review.

At an early stage of the project discussions were also held regarding the need to involve customers in the process of system development. Whilst this approach was advocated there was insufficient resource to facilitate direct customer involvement, and their views were derived from secondary sources, e.g. a DWP study on desirable outcomes of WORKSTEP⁹. During the pilot phase of the project customer views were sought via provider support workers and employer views were gathered in a similar way, via provider support workers at WORKSTEP review meetings. It is acknowledged that this indirect method of gathering data has limitations as the process is mediated by the support worker and subject to their interpretations of customer and employer views. There may also be constraints on the nature of the feedback offered in this situation, however, as with the development phase, the approach was determined by resource constraints.

Linked to the key success factors identified above, plans for the project did include a process for consultation with provider staff via individual interviews and a series of workshops, and the pilot phase of the project aimed to subject the use of the approach to an ongoing period of review.

The process for system development described within the Practical Guide can be broken down into three main activities.

⁸ *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document* (2003) DWP.

⁹ Meah, A. and Thornton, P. (2005) *Desirable outcomes of WORKSTEP: user and provider views*, DWP Research Report No. 279.

- 1 Identify the indicators that will be used to monitor progress.
- 2 Decide how monitoring will be carried out, i.e. an opinion- or evidence-based approach and the type of scale used.
- 3 Establish a baseline and review customer progress against this.

As noted in Section 1.2, the WORKSTEP provider support workers already carry out development planning and review activities with customers. They are, therefore, ideally placed to identify appropriate hard and soft outcomes and incorporate distance travelled within existing WORKSTEP development plans and associated review meetings.

Whilst the Practical Guide does not strongly advocate opinion-/perception-based approaches over those which are evidence-/judgement-based, it does offer an appraisal of the pros and cons of both approaches.

2.2 Stakeholder interviews

A series of 30 semi-structured interviews were carried out with a range of stakeholders including:

- service providers who currently monitor customer progress using soft outcomes and/or distance travelled, including:
 - 19 WORKSTEP provider staff, including managers and support workers;
 - three non-WORKSTEP service providers (one from a specialist (learning disability) supported employment provider and two from providers whose work was offered as examples within the Practical Guide¹⁰);
- three Jobcentre Plus WORKSTEP Contract Managers and a Jobcentre Plus Senior Psychologist;
- an Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) representative from the WORKSTEP improvement project;
- a representative from the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE);
- a representative from the Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC);
- one of the authors of the Practical Guide.

In addition to the initial interview with the ALI (later the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)) representative ongoing contact with them and a representative from Estyn (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) was maintained. This aimed to ensure that the organisations were informed about the work of the project and could advise on any relevant

¹⁰ *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document* (2003) DWP.

requirements of the provider inspection process. Informal discussions were also held at regular intervals with representatives of BASE, and the work of the project was formally presented at BASE annual conferences in 2007 and 2008, and the Scottish Union of Supported Employment conference in 2008. This facilitated feedback from a broad range of providers of supported employment and the work of the project generated a great deal of interest and support with these stakeholders.

The interviews examined the customers' general understanding of distance travelled, any experience they had of using a distance travelled approach, and any potential constraints or benefits to using such an approach. More details on the content of these discussions can be found in the topic guide (see Appendix A).

The stakeholder interviews identified significant enthusiasm for the project amongst WORKSTEP providers and Jobcentre Plus staff. There were, however, some concerns regarding potential constraints/practical difficulties of developing a distance travelled approach that would be appropriate for:

- the diversity of WORKSTEP customers and employment situations;
- working with customers with fluctuating or deteriorating conditions;
- working with customers who have transferred to WORKSTEP from the old Supported Employment Programme (SEP);
- customers who are WORKSTEP 'retention cases' (i.e. existing employees who have entered the Programme as a result of an impairment which means they require support outside a 'reasonable adjustment').

A number of staff also raised issues about the potential difficulties of 'scoring' customer development. Some support workers stated that they would feel uncomfortable using any form of monitoring score, and others suggested it may be problematic where the customer has reached a level that they are unlikely, or unable, to progress beyond, or where performance deteriorates, in particular for customers with degenerative or fluctuating conditions. There was a concern that in these situations any form of scoring could have a negative impact on customer confidence.

The interviews did identify some examples of WORKSTEP providers attempting to use a distance travelled approach, although these were generally at a fairly early stage of development. The interviews with non-WORKSTEP service providers offered an opportunity to examine the practical application of distance travelled systems in more detail and also highlighted a number of benefits that can be derived from using a distance travelled approach. These included:

- showing customers the progress they are making, thus boosting confidence and self-esteem;
- showing project staff the impact their service can make with customers, offering motivation for them at work;

- offering information to support the development of service providers by demonstrating the type of interventions that are most successful;
- demonstrating to employers the progress of their employees;
- demonstrating the value of projects to funders.

2.3 Provider Workshops

The events, which were held in four locations (Newcastle, Gloucester, Nottingham and Glasgow) during October and November 2006, were well attended with 122 participants representing 82 provider organisations. A small number of Jobcentre Plus WORKSTEP contract managers and members of the project steering group also attended.

2.3.1 Purpose of the workshops

The workshops aimed to offer WORKSTEP providers further information on the background to the distance travelled project, to explore 'distance travelled' within the context of the WORKSTEP Programme and to discuss plans for developing the work of the project.

In addition to these background issues the main focus of the events were group work sessions which examined areas that could be monitored when reviewing individual progress and the systems that could be used to record this type of information.

These group work sessions were designed to offer information which could feed into the first two stages of the process required to develop a distance travelled system, as described within the Practical Guide (see Section 2.1) i.e. to identify the indicators that will be used to monitor progress and to decide how monitoring will be carried out. The main issues raised in these sessions are described in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3. Discussions also covered WORKSTEP-specific issues which may have an impact on using a distance travelled approach and the potential benefits of using such an approach.

A final purpose of the workshops was to ask providers for expressions of interest to participate in the pilot of the WORKSTEP distance travelled system that was to be developed via the work of the project. Further details of the content of the workshops can be found in Appendix B.

2.3.2 Workshop outputs – indicators

As described in Section 2.3.1, the workshops aimed to identify the indicators that would be used to monitor progress and to decide how monitoring would be carried out. Collectively the workshops included 12 discussion groups which aimed to identify the skills and attributes that customers on the WORKSTEP Programme require to secure and sustain supported employment and move into unsupported employment. Groups were also asked to consider the key issues that

employers highlight as their requirements, as well as their own understanding of the softer skills that customers need. The outputs of these discussions are listed in Appendix C.

2.3.3 Workshop outputs – monitoring mechanisms

As noted in Section 2.1 a review of the literature identified two clear models for monitoring progress i.e. those based on the opinions/perceptions of customers and those which are more strongly evidence/judgement based.

The potential strengths and weaknesses of these two approaches were discussed during the workshops, and these discussions are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Opinion compared to evidence-based monitoring

Opinion-based	Evidence-based
Potential benefits	
Important to know how the customer feels they are developing	Provides a clear baseline to monitor change/improvement on a particular issue
Keeps the WORKSTEP customer central to the system	More objective – can show the ‘real’ progress that the customer is making rather than just an opinion
Feelings/attitudes of the individual are important to understand issues within the workplace	
Potential difficulties	
Subjectivity	Can be time consuming collecting a range of evidence
Customer difficulties in articulating developments	Difficult to collect evidence for the softer outcomes, e.g. increased confidence
Customers may over- or underestimate progress/development	
Response can depend on how the customer is feeling on that day	
Many ‘other’ factors can influence how a person is feeling	

Overall, there was a general consensus that any approach developed within WORKSTEP should be evidence-based, although the potential benefits of opinion-based systems highlighted in Table 2.1, would be incorporated, as individual customer views would form part of the evidence that would be considered.

As with the stakeholder interviews (see Section 2.2) a number of concerns were expressed about using some form of ‘score’ to monitor the progress that a customer makes. Whilst some providers were resistant to any form of scoring, there was recognition that some sort of scale would be needed to show the progress an individual is making. It was also suggested that wherever possible any scoring of development should involve the customer, provider and employer.

2.3.4 Workshop outputs – WORKSTEP issues

A number of issues were raised with regards to using a distance travelled approach within WORKSTEP, and these were broadly similar to issues identified during stakeholder interviews (see Section 2.2):

- Diverse customer group within a wide range of jobs

The approach needs to be as flexible as possible to accommodate both the wide range of impairments and abilities of customers on the WORKSTEP Programme and the hugely varied jobs that they are employed in.

- Fluctuating or deteriorating conditions

There were concerns expressed about monitoring distance travelled with those customers that have conditions which might fluctuate over time. It was suggested that the monitoring of 'negative' movement or regression, might have a detrimental effect on the customer, particularly for those with a mental health condition.

- Use with SEP/long-term customers

A significant number of WORKSTEP customers have been on the Programme for a number of years, and many transferred from the predecessor SEP. No baseline would be available for these customers, therefore, it would be difficult to show how far they have actually 'travelled'.

It was also noted that some customers may have been in the same job for a number of years, and may have reached their full potential. There was some debate on the relevance of a distance travelled approach for this group, although it was suggested that monitoring 'distance travelled' in this situation could ensure the customer maintains their level of performance and does not regress.

- Retention customers

These customers are existing employees who have entered the Programme as a result of an impairment which means they require support outside a 'reasonable adjustment'. Provider staff commented that the retention situation is about ensuring the person can remain in employment, and that a smooth relationship exists between employer and employee, rather than focusing on progressing and developing the customer. Therefore, suitability of distance travelled for this customer group was a concern.

WORKSTEP providers who attended the workshops also raised two general issues which they felt were important to ensure the success of the project:

- The skills of the support worker are crucial to ensure that the approach is used appropriately and successfully, and adequate training of provider staff will be essential.
- Any system should not make the development planning process any more time consuming, with paperwork kept to a minimum.

2.3.5 Workshop outputs – benefits of monitoring distance travelled

Despite a number of potential difficulties that workshop participants identified with regards to monitoring distance travelled within the WORKSTEP Programme, a number of benefits associated with monitoring in-programme developments were also highlighted. Again, these were broadly similar to issues identified during stakeholder interviews (see Section 2.2).

- The customer can see the progress they are making as a result of being on WORKSTEP which could improve personal motivation.
- Provider staff can see how much progress their customer is making.
- Information can be provided to support Programme development; it can help to identify whether the activities being undertaken are the right ones and where improvements might be made.
- Customers and their support workers can show potential employers the progress that has been made.
- A distance travelled system could show funders that the Programme is '*making a difference*', even if the sustained open employment is not reached.

2.4 Development of a draft system

As outlined in the project methodology (Section 1.5) the outputs from the literature review, stakeholder interviews and provider workshops were used to develop a first draft of a WORKSTEP pilot system. The way in which these outputs were utilised to develop this first draft is summarised below.

2.4.1 Stakeholder criteria for the approach

Both the individual interviews and provider workshops covered a range of topics and offered an opportunity to identify a variety of issues in relation to monitoring distance travelled for WORKSTEP customers. These included practical concerns and perceived constraints with regards to the operation of such a system within current WORKSTEP service delivery. The issues are summarised in Table 2.2, alongside the system features which would be required in order to address them.

Table 2.2 Summary requirements for WORKSTEP Distance Travelled System

Issues	Requirement
Minimise subjectivity	Evidence-based
Inclusion of customer views	Utilise findings of 'Desirable Outcomes' study Utilise customer perceptions of progress as part of routine monitoring Capture customer feedback on the process in pilot
Avoid duplication of systems (development planning and inspection)	Fit with existing WORKSTEP Development Planning Fit with inspection criteria – development supported by ALI Fit with RARPA requirements
Capacity of providers	Simple to administer Minimal additional 'paperwork'
Pre-work and in-work use	Flexibility of indicators/standards and monitoring mechanism
Diversity of providers	
Diversity of supported employees:	
• Individuals with fluctuating or deteriorating conditions.	
• Individuals who have transferred to WORKSTEP from SEP.	
• Retention cases.	
• Individual 'choice' re: ongoing development.	
Diversity of workplace/employer requirements	
Three-way scoring system (customer, employer and provider) – employer involvement not always possible	
Employer time constraints	Minimal additional time requirements

2.4.2 Identification of indicators

Collectively the provider workshops included 12 discussion groups which aimed to identify appropriate indicators. These indicators included the skills and attributes that individuals on the WORKSTEP Programme require to secure and sustain supported employment and move into unsupported employment. Groups were also asked to consider the key issues that employers highlight as their requirements, as well as their own understanding of the softer skills that customers need.

This initial list of indicators (Appendix C) was then further analysed and categorised into broader headings or 'key behaviours', which offer the main headings against which customer progress can be monitored.

These key behaviours were also compared with those compiled for a range of related distance travelled models identified by a review of the literature, including

examples of good practice from the Practical Guide. This offered an opportunity to identify any gaps within the ‘key behaviours’ and to develop descriptions of related ‘typical indicators’.

A total of 21 key behaviours, listed below, were identified:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Job seeking skills | 12. Communication skills |
| 2. Understand requirements of employment | 13. Appropriate behaviour |
| 3. Deliver requirements of employment | 14. Supervision |
| 4. Health and safety | 15. Team working |
| 5. Reliability | 16. Literacy and numeracy |
| 6. Equal opportunities | 17. Self-esteem/confidence |
| 7. Time management | 18. Personal presentation |
| 8. Adaptability | 19. Living skills |
| 9. Motivation | 20. Independent travel |
| 10. Concentration | 21. Health and well being |
| 11. Problem solving | |

These 21 behaviours were grouped under four broad headings 1-6 ‘Key skills for work’, 7-11 ‘Additional skills for work’, 12-15 ‘Behaviour and communication’ and 16-21 ‘Personal development’. The numbering/grouping of the key behaviours is presentational and does not suggest that any particular priority is attached to certain behaviours.

A number of the ‘typical indicators’ describing key behaviours were also identified. For example, the key behaviour ‘adaptability’ is further described by the following typical indicators:

- Demonstrates willingness to learn new tasks and skills as appropriate.
- Demonstrates an ability to transfer existing skills when undertaking new tasks.
- Demonstrates appropriate flexibility when moving between tasks.

The typical indicators do not aim to be totally comprehensive or exclusive, but aim to offer some reference points for evidence of progress related to that key behaviour. Thus not all typical indicators will be relevant and some that are not listed may be included if they are appropriate. This aims to offer the flexibility to use these indicators across a wide range of employment settings, with a diverse customer group.

The full details of the key behaviours and related typical indicators can be found within the WORKSTEP Pilot distance travelled system (Appendix G)

2.4.3 Development of the monitoring system

Analysis of existing models for distance travelled monitoring systems highlighted two distinct approaches: The first is based upon the individual customers’ perceptions of their abilities and progress, and the second based on judgements supported by a range of evidence. The overwhelming majority of stakeholders supported

the use of an evidence-based approach, although there were concerns expressed about the need to maintain a degree of flexibility and minimise 'paperwork'.

Two potential evidence-based models were considered. Both aimed to use evidence to monitor achievement and progress against the framework of key behaviours and typical indicators. However, one model used defined standards for each of the monitoring categories within key behaviours and the other offered more flexible, generic monitoring categories that may be used across the range of key behaviours.

The model based on defined standards for each monitoring category aimed to ensure a high degree of standardisation and to minimise subjectivity. A system adopting this approach lacked the flexibility that providers highlighted as an important requirement, as acceptable standards are frequently context specific. Given the number of key indicators that have been identified it would also have produced an approach that was rather unwieldy, again a feature that would not have been acceptable to providers.

A more streamlined approach was, therefore, chosen using the same set of key indicators and typical behaviours, which are monitored against more generic categories of progress rather than rigidly defined standards. It was expected that this would be more acceptable to providers in terms of the overall size and flexibility of the approach, whilst maintaining the rigour of an evidence-based approach.

In summary this approach monitors achievement and progress based on evidence from the customer, their WORKSTEP provider and others (e.g. employer, training provider). This evidence is used as the basis for scoring against the monitoring categories or levels described below. During the scoring process the support worker will exercise their judgement based on all of the evidence available. However, the process must involve joint discussions with the customer and where appropriate, the employer.

The first draft monitoring categories are described below and aimed to highlight clear and distinct levels that are mutually exclusive. Four categories were initially suggested to avoid offering a mid-point choice which may be used as a non-controversial or 'safe' option.

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work, although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates they are making progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

An example of the first draft monitoring framework, with examples of how it would be completed in a range of scenarios, with two of the key behaviours, is given in Appendix D.

2.5 An overview of the draft WORKSTEP Distance Travelled System

The draft system aimed to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment. These skills and attributes are identified via the system of key behaviours and associated typical indicators (see Section 2.4.2).

The monitoring of progress is based on recorded evidence which is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels (see Section 2.4.3). Use of this scoring system over time will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled'.

Whilst the monitoring of progress is often described as 'measuring' distance travelled, the term 'monitoring' was used to emphasise that this is a process of reviewing skills and attributes over time rather than the determination and assignment of a specific numerical unit of measurement. The monitoring levels simply offer a shorthand way of describing performance against particular key behaviours at that point in time, e.g. level 4 indicates that the customer is routinely demonstrating the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

It is not expected that every key behaviour would be appropriate for every customer and employment situation. As part of the WORKSTEP development planning process the support worker would, jointly with their customer and where appropriate with the employer, select the appropriate key behaviours. The selection of key behaviours would focus initially on the areas of development required to obtain and maintain supported employment. Any areas highlighted as key requirements by the employer should be addressed as a priority.

Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, the number that can be addressed at any one time needs to be realistic and achievable. Prioritisation of the selected key behaviours into those which require immediate attention, and those which may be worked on at a later date, is suggested.

The agreed actions which relate to these prioritised key behaviours will then form part of the customers' objectives/action plan within their WORKSTEP development plan. Progress in each key behaviour will be monitored using relevant evidence, with the scoring system used to assess where a person is at different points in time, rather than comparing the progress of different people.

2.5.1 System guidance

In addition to an overview and details of the main system components (the key behaviours framework and monitoring system) some general guidance on using a distance travelled approach was produced. This guidance document offered background to the project, an overview of the components and some direction as to how it should be used, which the initial research phase of the project had identified as important to ensure the approach is applied appropriately.

In summary guidance was offered on:

- introducing the approach to customers;
- selecting which key behaviours are appropriate to a customer's situation;
- carrying out baseline assessments and ongoing monitoring;
- the use and recording of evidence;
- system administration.

More details on all of these areas is found in the WORKSTEP Pilot distance travelled system (Appendix G).

2.5.2 Adopting a supportive approach

The draft guidance described how the concept of distance travelled should be introduced to customers as part of the WORKSTEP development planning process. Thus, the first step would normally involve an initial discussion to consider customers' goals, where development is required, and to jointly agree an action plan. The support worker was to use this opportunity to explain that distance travelled is one of the tools used to help the customer and the provider organisation work together, helping to monitor progress towards agreed objectives.

The guidance also indicated that the customer should, as far as possible, be jointly engaged in all of the processes associated with the distance travelled system. This includes the selecting and prioritising of key behaviours, evaluation of the evidence of progress and action planning. This is vital to ensure that the customer feels some degree of control, ownership and participation in the process.

Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, it should be made clear that no one is expected to work on all of these areas at any one time. The guidance suggested that it would be helpful to initially prioritise just two or three areas for action, so that the process feels manageable.

Guidance also highlighted that it is important for the customer to see the process as a positive one and discussions should identify their strengths in addition to areas for development. The system should not be used simply to identify areas of deficit, as this may undermine a customer's self-confidence. In the same way, situations where there is a regression in scores need to be handled sensitively.

Similarly, the guidance stated it is essential that customers do not see the process as threatening or competitive. The customer can be assured that the scoring of progress is never used to compare their progress with anyone else. The point of using distance travelled is not to achieve a particular score, but to understand what the score is describing with regard to customer progress or areas that require development. In this way it will help the customer and their support worker to identify the appropriate areas to work on.

As with all aspects of providers' contact with WORKSTEP customers, system users were reminded that the appropriate style, content and format for discussions and paperwork need to be considered, and should be appropriate to the communication needs of the customer. For example, the language used within the guidance may require adaptation depending on customer levels of literacy and comprehension. One of the indicators for the key behaviour 'Deliver requirements of employment', states 'routinely delivers work to required standard'. This may be more understandable if phrased as 'doing the work in the way we agreed when we talked with your supervisor'.

2.5.3 System administration

As described in Section 1.2, the provider support worker is ideally placed to identify appropriate indicators of progress and to incorporate the monitoring of distance travelled within the existing system of customer development plans and associated review meetings. The draft system was, therefore, designed to slot into existing development planning, offering a new approach to the process, rather than an additional system.

There are, however, wide variations in the development planning process and the content and format of individual development plans used by provider organisations. As such definitive instruction on the way in which the pilot system was to be integrated with existing development planning systems could not be offered.

Instead, general advice and suggestions on how the process should fit with existing development planning was offered within the guidance. Providers, therefore, need to review their current development planning processes and supporting paperwork to incorporate the pilot distance travelled system. Some basic template monitoring forms, which highlighted the information that must be recorded, were offered and these could be adapted to fit with providers' existing development plans.

2.5.4 Pre-pilot review and amendment of the draft system

At a number of stages plans on the proposed approach and drafts of the system were shared with the expert panel and steering group for review. Generally comments received on the draft were supportive of the planned approach, and also offered a number of suggestions to improve the style and content of the draft guidance, etc. The most significant change made at this stage of development was to add an additional level to the monitoring categories, which were increased from four

to five levels. The additional category was added to differentiate between where a customer demonstrates signs of 'initial progress', and when they demonstrate they are making 'sustained progress'. Thus, the monitoring categories in the version of the system used for the pilot launch were amended to:

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

The amended version of the system and supporting guidance, for use within the pilot phase of the project, is found within Appendix G.

2.5.5 Pilot stage amendment of the system

A wide variety of issues related to the use of the system were highlighted during the pilot, and these are discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4. However, in summary, what became clear over time was that the majority of the difficulties highlighted during the pilot were related to the level of training and support available to staff, or issues related to the WORKSTEP Programme, rather than directly related to the system which had been developed.

Towards the end of the pilot a more comprehensive training package was developed in response to the issue of staff training needs (see Section 3.7.1). This training was based on the pilot system with two amendments arising from feedback during the pilot. The first change was to amend categories used during the baseline assessment which involves selecting the key behaviours that the customer will be working on. The recording of this process is via a template in Appendix One of the WORKSTEP Pilot distance travelled system (contained in Appendix G of this report), and the selection categories are noted below:

Original selection categories

P	Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed immediately
D	Key behaviour is an area for development
N/A	Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer
N	No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Following feedback from pilot providers, an additional category of M for ‘met’ was added to offer the opportunity to make the initial assessment a more positive process, and X for not relevant, replacing N/A for ‘not applicable’.

Revised selection categories

- P Key behaviour is a priority area and must be addressed as soon as possible
- D Key behaviour is an area for development
- M Key behaviour is already fully met
- X Key behaviour is not relevant
- N No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

The second change was to the monitoring levels which were amended to levels A-E (from levels 1-5 given in Section 2.5.4). This change was purely presentational and made in response to concerns about staff and customer perceptions of ‘scoring’ progress, an issue which is discussed further below. The use of letters rather than a numerical scale also aimed to reinforce the principle that the approach seeks to monitor, rather than measure, progress (although the process is often described as ‘measuring’ distance travelled, see Section 2.5).

The use of a numerical scale has also led some distance travelled models to describe progress in percentage terms when a customer moves from one level to another. The use of monitoring data to describe percentage improvements would only be valid if progress follows a linear and consistent scale that can be applied across all customers and key behaviours, which is clearly not feasible.

Finally, the use of a numerical scale also increases the potential for a similarly flawed process of aggregating data to describe the progress of groups of customers, which again is an invalid use of the data.

Revised monitoring categories

- Level A** – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.
- Level B** – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.
- Level C** – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.
- Level D** – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.
- Level E** – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter offers an overview of the comprehensive process used to develop the WORKSTEP approach, which involved a range of stakeholders, and drew in particular on the experience of many staff from the wide range of WORKSTEP provider organisations. Whilst it should be acknowledged that the input of customers' and employers' views was limited (due to budgetary constraints), the ongoing input of provider staff throughout the pilot was invaluable.

As described within the next chapter, whilst a number of issues were highlighted during the pilot, the majority of these were linked to the level of training and support available to staff or WORKSTEP Programme issues, rather than directly related to the approach developed. As a result of this only two fairly minor amendments were put in place towards the end of the pilot, and efforts at this point were concentrated on the development of a more comprehensive staff training package.

The main finding that emerged with regards to the development process was previously identified as a 'key success factors' within the Practical Guide¹¹, i.e. the need to consult with staff who would be using the approach. In addition to initial consultation, the project sought to ensure ongoing staff involvement to capture their expertise in working with WORKSTEP customers. Harnessing this experience ensured that appropriate indicators (key behaviours and typical indicators) were developed at the earliest stage.

The second major issue was regarding the resource that the project had available for staff training, which was clearly inadequate for the successful introduction of a distance travelled approach to development planning. As described in Chapter 3, the pilot launch event was the only structured training offered, and it was then left to the pilot organisations to cascade this training to their staff. As a result of this many staff had very limited training and frequently struggled with some the concepts which underpinned the approach (as much of the feedback during the pilot phase demonstrated). The theme of staff training, and related recommendations, are returned to within the subsequent chapters of the report.

¹¹ *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document* (2003) DWP.

3 Pilot of the distance travelled system

The pilot of the WORKSTEP distance travelled approach aimed to involve ten pilot sites working with 500 WORKSTEP customers over a period of 18 months. It was envisaged that a pilot launch would take place in early 2007, with an interim review towards the end of that year, followed by final review interviews with each pilot site in the summer of 2008. This chapter offers an overview of the pilot activities, and comments on some of the key issues which had an impact on the work of the project. More detailed findings arising from the use of a distance travelled approach with WORKSTEP customers are discussed further in Chapter 4.

3.1 Selection of pilot sites

The pilot aimed to involve ten WORKSTEP providers with a sample covering:

- service delivery models (placements and supported businesses);
- geographical spread across Britain;
- WORKSTEP contract sizes;
- organisational type (i.e. not-for-profit, local authority and Remploy and private).

In order to assist with the selection of pilot sites, all of the providers who expressed an interest in the pilot at the distance travelled workshops in October and November 2006 were sent a letter asking them to complete a short questionnaire (see Appendix E). The data from this exercise was used to inform the selection process using the criteria above and a minimum contract size of 60 customers, to ensure that the pilot would involve at least 500 WORKSTEP customers.

The ten selected providers were informed early in 2007, although one of those initially selected (the private company) indicated shortly before the pilot launch that they were no longer in a position to participate. As they were the

only private sector provider who had volunteered to participate in the pilot no direct replacement could be included in the final sample. However, this type of organisation represents a very small proportion of total WORKSTEP provision so it was felt that this would not affect the outcomes of the pilot. Details of the final pilot providers are given in Table 3.1.

3.2 Pilot launch

The selected pilot organisations were informed in February 2007 (see Appendix F) and three representatives from each organisation were invited to a pilot launch event in March. The launch event aimed to introduce the pilot system and included a number of practical sessions to demonstrate both the principles and the application of a distance travelled approach to development planning. The event also outlined the monitoring processes for the pilot and more details of launch event activities are given in Appendix H.

During the launch event participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire to assess their understanding of the key messages about distance travelled and the pilot system, as well as a more general event evaluation sheet. Responses to both of these feedback mechanisms were very positive, and participants indicated that they found the event informative and generally demonstrated a good understanding of the main elements of the system and how it is used.

3.2.1 Initial pilot activities

Following the launch the first task for providers was to incorporate the distance travelled approach within their current development planning processes. Whilst the principal elements of the pilot system, such as the key behaviours and monitoring levels, were to remain fixed, the administration of the system was designed to offer a flexible approach that could be adapted to fit with existing development planning. Once this work was completed, and supporting documentation agreed with the research team, the aim was to commence the pilot as soon as possible, ideally no later than the end of April.

Providers were also asked to consider how they would pilot the approach across their organisation, for example how many support workers would be involved, and how many WORKSTEP customers. The research team requested that providers aim to involve a minimum of 60 customers representative of the broad spectrum of those they work with, i.e. customers across the range of age, employment status, length of time on the Programme and impairment. They were also asked to involve customers from both supported businesses and in placements with external employers. Selected customers were then to be offered information on the project and assurances on the anonymity of any information supplied prior to requesting their consent to participate.

Copies of the presentations and workshop materials used at the pilot launch were provided to pilot sites so that cascade training could be carried out with support workers who were to be involved with the work of the pilot, but who had not attended the launch event.

3.2.2 Pilot monitoring process

The ongoing monitoring process for the pilot was designed to consist of three elements: Firstly, monitoring involved direct contact with the research team, including regular updates via monthly e-mails and telephone calls with at least one face-to-face monitoring visit during the course of the pilot. Secondly, the use of monitoring forms, completed by the support worker at each customer review where the system is utilised. The forms were anonymised using a code allocated by the provider, and capture a range of data about the customer including:

- age;
- impairment;
- length of time on the Programme;
- employment status – pre-work, in-work (placement), in-work (supported business) and retention case.

The form also sought feedback on the distance travelled approach from customers, their employers (see Section 2.1) and support workers; and a copy is attached in Appendix I.

Finally, the pilot involved an element of peer review via a provider 'buddy' system, which paired pilot providers on a geographical basis. The precise form of this buddy support and monitoring was left to individual providers to agree with their partner, although it was suggested that this should, as a minimum, involve telephone contact to discuss the activities of the pilot. Providers were, however, encouraged to organise face-to-face meetings where possible, and to carry out observations of customer review meetings where the distance travelled approach was being used.

Each pilot organisation was asked to provide details for a nominated pilot 'lead officer' who would be responsible for leading the work of the pilot within their organisation, including responsibility for the monitoring process and maintaining links with the research team and buddy pilot site.

Table 3.1 Distance travelled pilot provider sites

Provider	Pilot region/ contract type	Type	Contract size	Provision	Pilot commenced
Azure	North East/ Regional	Not-for-profit	240	Mixed	April 2007
Brighton and Hove Council	South East/ Regional	Local authority	96	Mixed	April 2007
Capability Scotland	Scotland/ Regional	Not-for-profit	218	Mixed	May 2007
MTIB	Wales/ Regional	Not-for-profit	250	Mixed	April 2007
Newcastle City Council	North East/ Regional	Local authority	70	Mixed	April 2007
Nottinghamshire County Council	East Midlands/ Regional	Local authority	179	Mixed	April 2007
PLUSS	South West/ Regional	Not-for-profit	566	Mixed	May 2007
RBLI	SE/NE/SW Regional	Not-for-profit	1,000	Mixed	June 2007
Remploy	Scotland	Remploy	3,500+	Mixed	August 2007
Shaw Trust	North West/ National	Not-for-profit	2,500+	Mixed	September 2007

3.3 Pilot roll out and initial phase

Pilot start dates given in Table 3.1, illustrate that there were delays in starting the pilot with some providers, in particular the two national organisations. These delays and related communication difficulties led to initial concerns about their engagement with the pilot, however, following discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) project manager both organisations confirmed their commitment to full participation. It was also agreed at this time that Remploy would only pilot the approach with customers in supported placements.

The pilot monitoring and feedback mechanisms are outlined in Section 3.2.2, although to allow some time for providers to engage with the work of the pilot monitoring visits were kept to a minimum during the early stages of the project, through the summer of 2007. In addition to formal monitoring activities the DWP project manager and a steering group member visited three of the pilot organisations to maintain DWP links with the providers during this period.

3.4 Pilot participation

As noted above the pilot aimed to involve ten providers using the approach with a sample of their customers (a minimum of 500 in total) between April 2007 and July 2008. In practice a number of pilot sites commenced slightly later than this (see Table 3.1) and whilst the majority continued through to summer 2008 one left

the pilot at the end of February 2008, and a second had very limited engagement from the end of January that year. In both cases the departure of key staff from the pilot organisation led to their early disengagement from the pilot.

Table 3.2 offers information on the 529 customers who were involved in the pilot, taken from the 784 monitoring forms received. This demonstrates that the pilot did involve a wide range of customers and was broadly representative of those on the Programme.

Table 3.2 Details of customers involved in the pilot

	%
Impairment	
Condition restricting mobility	12
Visual impairment	3
Deaf/hearing impaired	3
Long-term medical condition	4
Learning disability	43
Mental health condition	10
Neurological condition	5
Other	3
Multiple impairments	17
Time on programme	
Up to 6 months	31
7-12 months	9
1-3 years	18
4-6 years	13
7-9 years	9
10 years +	20
Type of placement	
Pre-work	28
In-work placement	41
In-work supported business	23
In-work retention	8

3.5 Early feedback

A number of the issues raised by pilot sites during the earliest stages of the pilot were areas covered within the initial guidance document. Examples included the need for clarification of key behaviours and general administration of the process. Two providers highlighted that they were unable to identify any key behaviours that were appropriate for some of their customers, or noted that they were dealing with issues which were not covered within the framework of 21 key behaviours. These types of enquiries could generally be resolved on an individual basis, via

further discussions which referred back to the information offered within the initial guidance.

Overall the number of issues raised that were related to the key behaviours reduced significantly over time as staff became more familiar with the framework, as did the majority of 'process/administrative' concerns.

With the more complex or conceptual issues, in-depth feedback was collected so that this could be reviewed with all pilot providers as part of the planned interim review. This included the difficulties some support workers appeared to be having with concepts related to the use of evidence and the monitoring or 'scoring' process.

Alongside the difficulties being raised, a number of pilot sites also reported positive early feedback. Many pilot providers noted that the distance travelled approach facilitated the creation of a clear baseline for new referrals to the Programme, and focused work on the areas where support is required. They also suggested that the baseline assessment encouraged discussion of elements of the customer's professional and personal life which may have been missed by existing WORKSTEP development plans.

Some support workers also described distance travelled as offering a structured or 'measurable' process which allows providers and customers to 'see the story' or 'customer journey' of progress and development. They explained that this structured demonstration of progress could be used as a motivational tool with customers, and noted early indications that some employers and customers appeared more willing to explore progression. A small number of support workers also reported that the approach helped some customers become more responsible for their own development, as they can clearly see the agreed areas for improvement, targets that have been set, and they can also be involved in collecting evidence.

A number of pilot sites stated that the distance travelled approach led to more structured and 'professional' customer review meetings and one pilot provider was also very positive about the potential for a distance travelled approach to offer some standardisation to the work of the 'supported employment industry'.

All of the issues captured as part of the pilot monitoring system, including this early feedback, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, which looks at using a distance travelled approach within the WORKSTEP Programme.

3.5.1 Pilot 'buddy' system

In addition to discussions with the research team, providers were encouraged to discuss the pilot with their pilot buddy site. This buddy system, which aimed to encourage peer review, support and sharing of good practice generally worked well where the buddy relationship had been established, with providers clearly valuing the support and involvement of their peers. However, there were difficulties for some providers as early contact had not been established. Given the positive

feedback from sites where the buddy system was working well, providers who had not established contact with their buddy site during the initial phase of the pilot were encouraged to do so.

3.6 Pilot interim review

The delayed start to the pilot in some sites led to the deferral of the interim review event until January 2008. All sites were invited to send up to three representatives to this review meeting although, partly due to travelling difficulties associated with bad weather on the day, only 20 provider staff from nine of the ten pilot sites were able to attend.

The event aimed to facilitate more specific discussions on potential areas for improvement and a number of issues were reviewed with regard to the approach and pilot process. Further details on the activities of the interim review can be found in Appendix J.

An overview of issues and suggestions regarding areas for improvement raised on the day are summarised below, along with the initial response offered from the research team. As with early feedback noted in Section 3.5 these issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. However, what became clear during the review day was that a number of pilot provider staff still had a limited awareness of some of the basic concepts associated with using a distance travelled approach, such as using evidence to support the monitoring process. During this and subsequent discussions it was identified that a number of support workers had been offered limited training or support when the pilot was introduced, and many did not appear to have seen the full guidance document.

The use of cascade training for staff within pilot sites, as outlined in Section 3.2.1, was necessary due to the constraints of the project budget, however, this approach did rely on pilot providers allocating adequate internal resources to this process. This did not appear to have happened in some cases, and staff in these organisations struggled with both the theory and practical application of a distance travelled approach.

One of the pilot providers did identify, at a fairly early stage, that their initial introductory activities were insufficient for the needs of their staff, and they put in place additional support via a workshop focusing on the use of evidence and the monitoring process. This took place just before the interim review, in early January 2007, and they shared their experience through a presentation on the review day. From feedback following this session it was clear that a number of the staff involved in the pilot felt a need for improvements to training and guidance.

Where staff were offered adequate training and support they generally appeared to have encountered less difficulty using a distance travelled approach and were also more positive about the benefits. Thus, as already noted, one of the key lessons from the pilot is that in order to successfully roll out a distance travelled

approach and realise the potential benefits it can offer, appropriate training and support must be available to all staff.

3.6.1 Pilot 'buddy' system

The buddy sites that had initiated and maintained regular contact with their pilot partners remained very positive about the benefits of this system, and two of these sites gave a presentation of their experiences at the interim review event. They described the benefits of their meetings and peer observations of customer review meetings where distance travelled was used. In addition to this, some of the working relationships that developed between providers who had previously had little contact extended to cover other areas of work outside the pilot, and these have continued to be productive beyond the end of the project.

However, some sites at the review were still reporting limited contact with their designated buddy and they had not organised an opportunity to meet. As the majority of participants highlighted that one of the most important aspects of the day was an opportunity to meet with colleagues and share experiences, the potential benefits of contact with others involved in the pilot was clear. Contact details for all sites were, therefore, circulated with the suggestion that pilot providers make contact either with their designated buddy or any other organisation involved in the pilot to share and review their work on the pilot. Unfortunately there was little evidence that this follow up contact occurred, and given limitations to overall project resources the research team were unable to offer further facilitation for this process.

3.6.2 Key behaviours framework

Whilst the majority of feedback in this area was positive there were requests from some pilot providers to reduce the number of key behaviours from the current 21 by merging some of the existing areas. The research team had some concerns that whilst the current framework was extensive the areas covered were quite distinct. By merging behaviours there was a risk of broadening them to a point where it would become difficult to use the approach to facilitate the development of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) objectives for monitoring. However, pilot sites were asked to provide more specific details on those areas where they felt there was an overlap in key behaviours so that the research team could explore any amendments. Following the interim review no further comments were received, and as noted in Section 3.5 this type of feedback did reduce over time as staff became more familiar with the framework.

3.6.3 Evidence and monitoring

There were discussions about the difficulties of collecting and using evidence and as noted above, one of the pilot sites had already carried out additional training for their staff in this area. More information was requested from the pilot sites, in particular they were asked for examples of the types of evidence currently used, and for any specific areas of difficulty that needed to be addressed.

There were also a number of comments about the complexity of the wording of the current monitoring categories, the process of 'scoring' individuals and the need for simpler 'user friendly' materials was discussed more generally (see Section 3.6.5). In addition to this there was also some questioning of the need for any form of 'scoring' to monitor progress. As the requirement for some form of scoring is an essential element of any distance travelled approach providers were reminded about the rationale for distance travelled described in the relevant sections of current guidance.

In particular, pilot sites were directed to Section 2 of the guidance document which highlights the recommendation from the 'WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Studies'¹² regarding the development of a distance travelled approach for supported employees on the WORKSTEP Programme, and the benefits this could offer.

'Currently the only formal measure of supported employee progress is progression from the Programme to open employment. Given the long-term nature of support offered by WORKSTEP, many Contract Managers and providers felt that a mechanism for measuring progression within the Programme would also be valuable.'

This could capture many of the personal and social benefits that supported employees value, in addition to progress with regards to work related skills and experience.

In this context 'distance travelled' would offer all stakeholders a measure of the distance a supported employee has travelled towards open employment and clearly demonstrate their readiness to move from the Programme once targets are reached. For those supported employees who may never achieve open employment it also offers clear evidence of their development and the positive impact of the Programme.'

The research team also asked any of the pilot sites with specific concerns about the monitoring process to contact them, as this highlighted shortcomings in the training available to provider support workers with regard to the key concepts of the distance travelled approach. Although no further specific concerns were raised the issue of staff training remained a key area for development.

3.6.4 Administration of the system

A number of pilot sites commented on the need to amend supporting paperwork for the approach. As highlighted in Section 2.5.3 and the system guidance document (Appendix G), there are wide variations in the development planning process and the content and format of individual development plans used by provider organisations. Guidance on the way in which the distance travelled system is integrated with existing systems was, therefore, not prescriptive and the template

¹² Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

forms were offered as a starting point, which pilot providers were asked to adapt to fit with their own systems. Where pilot sites were able to fully incorporate the distance travelled elements within their own development planning systems, this worked well.

However, some pilot sites were not in a position to adapt existing systems which led to a degree of duplication within assessments and reviews, and also resulted in an unwieldy administrative process/paperwork. Another related issue raised by pilot provider staff was with regard to the customer case loads of individual support workers. Those from providers with high case loads have suggested that they did not have the time to use a distance travelled approach to development planning due to the large numbers of customers they deal with.

It was not possible to address such issues within the pilot, however, if a distance travelled approach is adopted in future there is a clear need to ensure that it is fully integrated within existing development planning. The issue regarding customer case loads would also require consideration.

3.6.5 Supporting materials for use with customers/employers

A number of comments were received about the complexity of the language used within the guidance document, and the need for simpler 'user friendly' materials. The guidance document was intended as a professional guide for provider staff, rather than something that would be directly quoted from, or given to customers or employers. This issue is noted in Section 2.5.2 and the system guidance document (Appendix G):

'As with all aspects of providers' contact with WORKSTEP customers the appropriate style, content and format for discussions and paperwork will need to be considered, and should be appropriate to the communication needs of the customer.'

For example, the language used in this guidance may require adaptation depending on levels of literacy and comprehension. One of the indicators for Key Behaviour 3, 'deliver requirements of employment', states 'routinely delivers work to required standard'. This may be more understandable if phrased as 'doing the work in the way we agreed when we talked with your supervisor'.'

However, this concern clearly required further consideration and the issue was tabled at a subsequent meeting, along with the issue of staff training (see Section 3.7.2).

3.6.6 Ensuring a positive approach

Some pilot sites suggested that whilst a distance travelled approach has the potential to be a motivational tool, as it can clearly demonstrate customers' progress, it also has the potential to undermine confidence when a number of areas for development are identified.

This issue is acknowledged in Section 2.5.2, although it was recognised that achieving the right balance is not always straightforward, and the approach relies on the skills of support workers. Providers were, therefore, asked to remind their staff about Section 4.1 of the guidance (Appendix G).

'Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, it should be made clear that no one is expected to work on all of these areas at any one time. It may be helpful to initially prioritise just two or three areas for action, so that the process feels manageable.'

It is also important for the customer to see the process as a positive one and discussions should identify their strengths in addition to areas for development. The system should not be used simply to identify areas of deficit, as this may undermine a customer's self-confidence. Similarly, situations where there is a regression in scores need to be handled sensitively.

It is essential that the process is not seen as threatening or competitive. The customer can be assured that the scoring of progress is never used to compare their progress with anyone else. The point of the process is not to achieve a particular score, but to understand what the score is describing with regards to customer progress or areas that require development. In this way it will help the customer and their support worker to identify the appropriate areas to work on.'

As with the issues related to monitoring which are highlighted above, the feedback in this area reinforced the need to consider the training available to provider support workers with regard to using a distance travelled approach.

3.7 Final stage pilot activities

Overall the pilot continued to progress well, with regular feedback and monitoring forms received from most sites, although one of the pilot sites did leave the pilot shortly after the interim review (February 2008) and there was limited engagement with a further site from around this point. In both cases this was linked to the departure of key staff from the pilot organisation (in one instance the lead officer and in the other both of the two support workers who were involved in the pilot).

In general, based on the monitoring and review activities of the pilot, the approach itself did not appear to require any radical change. There was good evidence of the benefits it offered in terms of the positive impact on the WORKSTEP development planning and review process. When used appropriately it appeared to offer a supportive process which may facilitate the progression of customers into open employment, as well as demonstrating the ongoing support requirements of customers where longer-term support is needed. It also clearly identified cases where there are Programme delivery issues which lead to customers remaining on WORKSTEP, such as a financial subsidy to employers, rather than there being a need for ongoing support or development. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

What was also clear was that the majority of providers required assistance with staff training in the use of the approach. There was no further feedback from pilot sites regarding the other issues raised and responded to at the interim review (Sections 3.6.2-3.6.6) so it was agreed with the project steering group that the two issues of staff training and development of supporting materials would be taken forward as the main activities for the final stage of the pilot (although this was beyond the initial remit of the project).

3.7.1 Development of staff training

A working group to consider staff training and the potential development of supporting materials met in April 2008. It involved staff from pilot sites who had expressed an interest, the DWP project manager and the research team.

The working group initially reviewed the pilot launch materials as a basis for developing a new staff training package. Whilst the questionnaire to assess participant understanding and the evaluation of the launch were positive the group agreed that more time needed to be spent working through practical examples or scenarios of using the approach. The group agreed that any future training should focus on the following areas:

- the concept and benefits of using a distance travelled approach;
- links with objective setting and action planning;
- gathering and recording evidence;
- the use of monitoring levels;
- ensuring a positive approach.

The representatives from the pilot organisations also agreed to share any existing training materials used to support the implementation of development planning process.

Using these materials, the outputs of the working group discussions and data gathered during the pilot, a new package was developed and shared with the group for comment. Following this a pilot session of the new training package was held in July, with staff from four of the pilot organisations in attendance. This included staff who had previously been involved in the pilot and some who were new to the distance travelled approach.

Feedback on this session was very positive and a number of attendees commented that they found the case study exercises particularly useful, and suggested that more time should be spent on this element of the course. The training package was subsequently developed further to take into account the feedback from this pilot session.

3.7.2 Supporting materials

The working group also discussed the issue of supporting materials, which could be potentially be used with customers and employers, to support understanding of a distance travelled approach. The consensus was that it was not appropriate to have separate materials on this issue and that any key messages should be integrated into existing leaflets that most organisations produce for employers and customers. There was a concern that if the organisation was using a distance travelled approach it should be a fully integrated part of their work and not presented as something separate to the Programme. The group also indicated that staff training should cover how staff introduce the approach to customers, and agreed that if this was covered appropriately then staff would be able to clearly explain the process to the people they work with.

It was, therefore, also agreed that future activity should concentrate on developing the staff training package, although as part of this work, supporting materials such as quick reference guides to the key behaviours framework and monitoring process were produced.

3.8 Pilot final review

The pilot officially came to an end in July 2008 and during August and September a final stage of semi-structured interviews was carried out with the majority of lead officers from the pilot organisations (there had been some staffing changes during the course of the pilot). Within the two pilot sites who left the pilot early, changes in staffing made it difficult to obtain a clear overview of the main issues related to the pilot, although individual feedback was available via monitoring forms, and this was incorporated into overall findings.

Overall, no new issues were identified as part of this final wave of interviews, and many pilot organisations had resolved some of their early difficulties with the approach.

The majority of pilot sites had by this stage incorporated some elements of the approach within their standard development planning systems for ongoing use beyond the pilot. Three had fully integrated the approach and all of these indicated that they would be continuing to use this as a standard part of their work with WORKSTEP customers. Some pilot providers also indicated that they have adopted a distance travelled approach on other programmes they run such as the Work Preparation Programme. One of the pilot providers who had not integrated the approach now indicated that, with hindsight, they felt this had been a mistake.

One of the main benefits that pilot providers associated with the use of distance travelled was a general improvement in, and standardisation of, their development planning process. They suggested that it offered a more structured and professional approach to their work with customers and supported the process of setting realistic objectives and action planning. Some also stated that it can help tackle

'staleness' with longer-term customers and facilitated discussions on some more sensitive issues.

A final area of benefit reported by pilot sites was that a distance travelled approach offers a structured process to review the 'customer journey' of progress and development. This could be used as a motivational tool with customers and in some cases this facilitated the exploration of progression with customers and employers. In addition to this it offered an opportunity to increase customer engagement and 'ownership' of their own development.

A number of concerns did remain for some, in particular where distance travelled wasn't fully integrated into development planning paperwork. In these cases it did appear to add time to the review process, which was a particular concern where customers were placed with external employers. Organisations with high support worker caseloads also expressed some difficulties due to pressures of time and relatively infrequent contact with customers.

For some support workers the issue of 'scoring' customer progress via the monitoring levels remained a part of the process that they were uncomfortable with, although many had come to accept this as a necessary part of the approach.

Finally, there were mixed views on some issues such as use of the approach in supported businesses, where some providers felt it had been extremely useful although one pilot site continued to find it problematic. Contradictory views were also expressed on using the approach with different customer groups, for example some pilot sites felt the approach **'very useful'** for customers with a learning disability, but others stated it was **'not suitable'** for this group.

Many pilot sites also identified that the difficulties they had experienced were linked to the availability of training, rather than the approach itself. Some stated that with hindsight they didn't ask enough questions at the launch, and that this initial session did not have enough of a practical focus. Some also identified that the 'wrong people' attended the launch, so that messages were not communicated clearly. Others highlighted the difficulties of cascade training within their own organisations, stating this had led to poor communications with the staff who were trying to use the approach.

3.9 Conclusions

The pilot process was extremely valuable and provided a significant amount of feedback both on the WORKSTEP distance travelled system which was developed as part of the project, and more generally on use of a distance travelled approach to development planning within WORKSTEP. Both of these areas also offer a number of lessons which could be applied to the development of distance travelled within a range of other services.

Within the context of the WORKSTEP pilot project there was significant evidence of the benefits associated with a distance travelled approach. In particular it demonstrated the potential for:

- significant improvements to the WORKSTEP development planning and review process;
- a supportive process which facilitates the discussion of customer progression into open employment, and may contribute to this process where appropriate;
- a means of demonstrating the ongoing support requirements where customers require longer-term support;
- opportunities to increase customer engagement and motivation.

It can also clearly identify cases where Programme issues, rather than a need for ongoing support or development, lead to customers remaining on WORKSTEP.

Overall many of the difficulties linked with the approach that were identified during the pilot appeared to be related to inadequate training for a number of staff involved and the limited integration of the approach with existing development planning.

The benefits identified as part of the WORKSTEP project may also be applicable to a wide range of service provision. Indeed a number of pilot providers identified that they have adopted the distance travelled approach within other programmes that they deliver. It does appear likely that the key elements of the WORKSTEP approach, i.e. a framework of key behaviours and an evidence-based approach to monitoring progress over time, could be adapted for use with a range of other services. An important factor for the successful adaptation of the WORKSTEP approach was also identified via the development process for this project, i.e. the importance of involving the staff who would be using the approach.

4 Using a distance travelled approach

Following the development phase of the WORKSTEP distance travelled project, the approach was piloted with ten WORKSTEP providers, selected to represent the range of delivery models and organisational sizes and types, between April 2007 and August 2008. During this period the approach was used to support development planning and review processes with 529 WORKSTEP customers. The views and experiences of pilot provider staff and the customers and employers they work with were captured via a number of monitoring processes, described within the previous chapter. Whilst Chapters 2 and 3 offer a chronological approach to reporting this feedback, linked to the various phases of development and piloting, this chapter presents an overview from the perspective of staff, customers and employers. It also aims to summarise feedback received on the key components of the approach, on use of the approach within WORKSTEP, and on its use with specific groups of customers.

4.1 Staff understanding and attitudes

As identified during the project development phase, whilst many staff were positive about the potential benefits of using a distance travelled approach there were certain areas where they anticipated difficulties. In practice much of the feedback from staff during the pilot reflected those early views about the approach (see Sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5). However, it was also clear that staff understanding of distance travelled varied significantly across the pilot providers and that staff were much more likely to report positive findings where they had a good understanding of the concepts and application of the approach. Where staff training and support was inadequate they tended to report their experiences in a more negative way and feedback from staff should, therefore, be viewed within this context.

Due to the constraints of the project budget, only one formal training session was offered at the pilot launch event, and pilot sites were given copies of presentation and workshop materials to cascade training to staff within their organisation. This

approach clearly had limited success, as it became clear during discussions at the pilot interim review that a number of staff were offered inadequate training or support and many did not appear to have seen the full guidance document. It appeared that in some cases support workers were simply handed the distance travelled documentation and very little training or discussion actually took place.

A review of the training offered at the launch event, carried out during the latter part of the pilot as part of work to develop staff training, also noted that there had been insufficient focus on the practicalities of using the approach. This may also have contributed to the limited success of cascade training, as staff who did not attend the launch event appeared to have taken a considerable amount of time to become comfortable and confident using a distance travelled approach and some did not reach this point.

One of the pilot providers that reported initial difficulties linked to limited staff understanding noted that it had taken over six months before staff were confident and positive towards distance travelled. During this time they regularly reviewed staff understanding and held workshops to ensure that any problems with the approach were addressed. Staff within this provider are now extremely positive towards the use of distance travelled and the approach has been rolled out across their organisation.

The key benefits that staff reported during the final pilot review are reported in Section 3.8. In particular many providers noted that the approach had facilitated significant improvements to development planning and customer review meetings and a small but significant number reported that the approach had improved staff understanding of action planning and objective setting. In particular, staff were now seen to be setting more precise objectives, with less ambiguity than was the case previously. It was reported that the use of distance travelled related to specific key behaviours had led staff to work in a much more focused way.

'It made...colleagues think more about what the actual issues were with the client and I think that's quite useful...I see too many comments or action plans that are based around something that is too high level...they are too broad statements...Colleagues think more about what a development actually is and what it could be.'

(Pilot provider)

This view is supported by findings from an Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection of one of the pilot sites, carried out during March 2008. The inspection report commented on the involvement of the provider in the project and reported that distance travelled *'has effectively focused staff on participants' barriers to employment and identifying progression opportunities'*.

Some providers also reported that they felt the use of a distance travelled approach offered an opportunity to increase customer engagement and motivation, and feedback from customers is reported in more detail in Section 4.2.

Alongside the benefits of the approach a number of difficulties were reported, in particular where distance travelled wasn't fully integrated into development planning paperwork. These issues are covered in more detail in the sections below, which review the key components of the approach, and its use in daily practice.

4.2 Customer experience

As reported in Section 2.1 the need to directly involve customers in the process of development and piloting a distance travelled approach was discussed at the earliest stage of the project. Whilst this approach was advocated, there were insufficient resources to facilitate direct customer involvement, so views were sought via support workers. It is acknowledged that this indirect method of gathering data has limitations as it may constrain the feedback that customers feel comfortable about offering. The mediation of the process by the support worker also subjected reporting to the influence of their attitudes towards the use of the approach and their interpretations of what the customer said.

As noted already, staff understanding of the approach and their attitudes towards distance travelled did vary significantly. Throughout the pilot where staff feedback was positive, their customers tended to report a positive experience of the pilot. Where staff were negative towards the approach it was rare for customers to offer positive feedback. Similarly, where there were limitations in staff understanding of the approach it was likely that these difficulties had an impact on customer understanding and experience.

4.2.1 Customer understanding

When introducing a distance travelled approach to customers provider staff were advised about the need to interpret the wording offered within the guidance document in an appropriate way, depending on the communication needs of the customer. It appeared that some provider staff found this quite difficult, and subsequently a number of their customers had a limited understanding of distance travelled.

'Too many of our clients really were struggling with the whole concept, they didn't understand the wording, they didn't understand on the whole to really participate in it enough.'

(Pilot provider)

Where staff had been offered more comprehensive training and support they were generally better able to explain the approach and their customers appeared to have a better understanding of distance travelled. As noted above where staff were negative about the approach, customer perceptions were generally negative and their understanding of distance travelled was limited.

There was some feedback from staff that no matter how often they tried to explain distance travelled to some of their customers they did not appear to understand. In some of these situations staff also reported that customers did not know they were on the WORKSTEP Programme and had little or no understanding of the development planning process.

A small number of provider staff also stated that some customers were very difficult to engage in the process. In the majority of these cases the customer had been on WORKSTEP or the Supported Employment Programme (SEP – the predecessor of WORKSTEP) for most or all of their working life. These customers did not see the need to engage with development planning or the distance travelled process.

'We have a residue of clients that just want to go through the motions every day and have no great desire to do anymore or be any better than they currently are, as there are in all walks of life not just on the WORKSTEP Programme.'

(Pilot provider)

4.2.2 Customer engagement

A number of providers reported that the distance travelled approach facilitated a greater degree of customer engagement than existing development planning processes. They felt that this was linked to the monitoring of customer progress and development via recorded evidence, and the fact that customers can be actively involved in the process of collecting evidence to demonstrate the progress they are making.

Some staff noted that not only does the approach allow customers to see the progress they are making but also how they can positively influence their own progress. This facility for a clear demonstration of development was viewed as beneficial in terms of customer motivation, as previously much of the progress made was not clearly demonstrated or recorded.

A number of customers also commented positively about the fact that they could now show their employer, or potential employers, the progress and development they had made over time.

4.2.3 Adopting a positive approach

One of the issues noted during the development stage of the project is the potential for a distance travelled approach to operate as a 'deficit' model, which concentrates only on areas for development. Although the guidance document highlighted the need to adopt a supportive and positive approach (see Section 2.5.2) there were some concerns during the pilot that staff only focused on the key behaviours where customers required development.

Some customers did report concerns about their weaknesses being highlighted as part of the distance travelled process and staff noted that this might have a negative impact on the customer's confidence and self-esteem.

During monitoring contacts and visits to providers the research team reiterated that the process must be a positive one for the customer, and highlighted the relevant sections within the guidance document. It was suggested that the review process should consider areas where the customer is performing well, alongside behaviours where development is required. Where this more balanced approach was adopted the process was generally viewed more positively. Although there were also a number of customers who viewed the identification of areas for development as a challenge and an opportunity to improve, this group did not appear to be overly concerned even when a number of key behaviours required work.

4.3 Employer understanding and attitudes

As with feedback from WORKSTEP customers, the views of employers were gathered via provider support workers at customer review meetings, and were subject to similar limitations. In addition to the monitoring forms completed by the support workers at the review meetings, pilot lead officers were also asked to give an overview of feedback from employers during end of pilot interviews. An overview of employer views and experiences is offered in the following sections.

4.3.1 Employer understanding

There appeared to be a significant split in the nature of employer engagement and feedback. It appeared that employers who clearly understood and engaged with a distance travelled approach, were already committed to staff development and had robust staff appraisal systems in place. These employers were also more likely to offer positive feedback and identify the benefits associated with the approach. However, some providers noted that a number of the employers they work with are not familiar with any form of staff appraisal and these employers generally failed to engage effectively in the pilot.

Where employers were familiar with appraisal systems, and continuous improvement processes, they appeared to find the distance travelled approach straightforward and easy to understand. A number of them found the structured framework of 21 key behaviours useful and some reported that this component of the approach allowed them to highlight and tackle issues with staff that they had previously felt uncomfortable addressing.

'Some employers absolutely loved it, particularly because it allowed them to really identify and address particular areas of weakness that were concerning them'.

(Pilot provider)

4.3.2 Time requirement

The employers who appeared more negative towards the process were generally concerned about two issues: Firstly, the length of time spent carrying out customer reviews and secondly, the potential for losing financial subsidy paid to them if a

WORKSTEP customer progressed into open employment. There was also a number of employers who were generally disinterested in the development of employees and regarded the process as just being 'more paperwork'.

A number of providers did report that employers who did not engage with the distance travelled pilot saw it as an extra burden to what they considered to be an already time consuming review process. Provider staff often stated that these employers were generally negative to the time that existing WORKSTEP development planning and review processes take, so adding in distance travelled or trying to explain this new element to the review meeting was not often successful.

One provider added that whilst some employers remained concerned about the time that it added to reviews, others eventually saw the benefits of adopting this approach to development planning.

'Others were really positive about it and realised how it helped improve their staff motivation and because we were doing it every five months instead of every six months...and they [supported employees] were really striving to increase their level.'

(Pilot provider)

The time taken when using a distance travelled approach in customer reviews is discussed further in Section 4.7.2.

4.3.3 Progression to open employment

One of the benefits of using a distance travelled approach identified by pilot providers was that it could facilitate discussions about customer progression to open employment. They noted that the approach could clearly demonstrate a customer's ability to maintain their employment with limited or no support, at which point they should be progressed from the WORKSTEP Programme. However, some employers were concerned that if the approach facilitated the identification of a WORKSTEP customer as ready to progress, then the financial support they receive from the provider would also come to an end. One provider noted that they still have 'a number of charities or organisations that rely heavily on funding [wage subsidy]'.

Another provider added:

'A couple of host employers haven't been keen for us to give them [supported employees] the level 5 ratings, they want the support to remain in place, that's where we have come across a bit of a stumbling block'.

(Pilot provider)

4.4 The approach – key behaviours framework

The distance travelled approach aimed to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported

employment. These skills and attributes are identified via a framework of key behaviours and associated typical indicators which provider staff review with their WORKSTEP customers. The key behaviours framework was compiled from information gathered at four provider workshops during the development stage of the project (see Section 2.4.2).

During the initial stages of the pilot there were suggestions that certain behaviours were missing from the framework. For example some support workers suggested that 'training' should be included. The term 'training' does not appear within the framework, as it was envisaged that the approach would focus upon the behaviours associated with training rather than the skills customers were actually acquiring. For example, when a customer undertakes training in the use of new machinery within a supported business, this may link with adaptability and/or confidence and self-esteem; a basic skills training course could be linked with customer motivation as well as literacy and numeracy. Rather than identifying training as a behaviour, the customer's engagement with a training course would be used as evidence of their development against the relevant behaviours during the monitoring process.

There were also suggestions that some behaviours were inappropriate for inclusion within the framework. In particular 'living skills' was deemed by some pilot providers to be a personal issue and outside of their WORKSTEP remit. Some also reported that customers did not wish to engage in discussions about their home life within the work environment. However, a significant number of WORKSTEP providers do engage with their customers in this way and offer support to develop living skills so it is important to capture this where appropriate.

Even where behaviours were viewed as not relevant for a particular customer (for example, literacy and numeracy where the customer is a highly qualified professional), support workers were encouraged to record this information. During a baseline assessment 'N/A' (not appropriate) would be recorded against the particular behaviour, along with the rationale to support this judgement.

The key behaviour framework was developed to offer a comprehensive base to support the mechanisms of the distance travelled approach within WORKSTEP. It was acknowledged prior to the commencement of the pilot that not all of the key behaviours would be applicable to all customers. However, given the diverse nature of the WORKSTEP customer group it was essential that the behaviours framework was comprehensive enough to capture all relevant areas of development.

To improve the clarity of the key behaviour framework it was divided into four main areas: Key Skills for Work, Additional Skills for Work, Behaviour and Communication and Personal Development. These groupings were purely presentational and were not meant to suggest that any particular priority was attached to certain behaviours. During the pilot two providers were keen to change these groupings and split behaviours into 'pre-work' and 'in-work'. The research team supported this change for use within these sites, but did highlight the importance of not

assuming that some behaviours grouped as 'pre-work' would not be carried into employment and similarly, some 'in-work' behaviours may need to be addressed during the pre-work stage of the programme.

Overall, the key behaviours were generally accepted as comprehensive and relevant, and suggestions for additions diminished over time, as providers became more familiar with the Framework. During the later stages of the pilot some providers suggested a reduction in the number of key behaviours by merging some of the existing areas. After further discussions it was agreed that whilst the current framework was extensive, the areas covered were quite distinct. By merging behaviours there was a risk of broadening them to a point where it would become difficult to use the approach to facilitate the development of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) objectives for monitoring.

A number of pilot providers continue to use all 21 behaviours as a basis for their development plans, as it ensures the coverage of all relevant issues in a systematic way. Although some support workers suggested that issues would have been addressed regardless of the use of the framework, most commented that the approach had enhanced the means by which issues were identified and recorded.

4.5 The approach – monitoring progress

A key component of any distance travelled methodology is a mechanism that can track the progress and development made by an individual over time. Within the WORKSTEP approach the monitoring of progress is based on recorded evidence which is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels (see Section 2.4.3). Use of this process over time monitors individual progress or distance travelled.

Although, generally, provider staff accepted that some sort of scale is necessary to monitor distance travelled, the area where they appeared to encounter the greatest difficulty was this need to evaluate customer performance. Some staff were generally very uncomfortable with any process that required them to quantify performance and for some this discomfort was compounded by the difficulties some experienced in understanding and using the monitoring categories.

4.5.1 'Scoring' performance and progress

A significant number of support workers reported that they initially felt very uncomfortable with the need to allocate any form of monitoring level, and for some this continued throughout the pilot. Those experiencing the greatest difficulties suggested that the scoring mechanism could '*build barriers between the adviser and the client*', and some reported that on a small number of occasions customers had become nervous and withdrawn during their review meetings when scoring was introduced. It was also noted that some support workers had witnessed disagreements between customers and employers over the scoring of

key behaviours, and one support worker commented that customers were anxious to regularly achieve level 5 in all key behaviours as they perceived that failing to do so meant they were *'failing in their jobs'*.

Staff also reported difficulties with allocating a monitoring level where customers had unrealistic perceptions of their own behaviours and personal achievements, although others felt the approach offered a supportive route to challenge these perceptions. One provider noted that whilst customers may initially state that they do not have any issues with particular key behaviours, when distance travelled was introduced the customer recognised the need to develop in that area.

'A lot of them [customers] have focused on confidence levels which you discuss and they say are fine but when you have gone into it in detail, actually admitted that maybe they could do with some help and a few of them have gone on confidence building courses as a result of this...one of them, she is due to progress this month actually.'

(Pilot provider)

In addition to this, some pilot organisations reported no difficulties with the scoring process, and this may reflect different organisational cultures and their focus with regard to the progression aim of the WORKSTEP Programme.

Customer feedback did vary and those who disliked the scoring system offered very little explanation as to why this was the case. Comments such as *'people are not numbers'* and *'I don't like to be scored'* were cited, implying that the negative attitudes harboured by some customers were the result of personal perceptions and opinions rather than process issues.

Despite some strong negative views towards scoring, a large proportion of customers perceived the process to be a positive attribute of the approach as it allowed them to locate and observe their current skills and abilities. The scoring system was also deemed beneficial as it permitted customers to identify areas for improvements and chart progress over a period of time. As one customer, suggested *'it's good to have input and see how we can change and develop'*.

As with findings reported above on staff understanding and attitudes to the approach overall, where staff feedback about scoring was positive, their customers tended to report a positive experience. For example, some staff communicated the 'scoring' of customer development in a positive manner, describing the monitoring levels as 'stages on a journey' rather than a numerical score of how well someone was performing. However, where staff were negative or uncomfortable about scoring, customers generally did not experience the process in a positive way.

In response to these negative perceptions of 'scoring' progress, when new training materials were developed during the latter stages of the pilot, the monitoring levels were presented as levels A-E rather than 1-5. The use of letters rather than a numerical scale also aimed to reinforce the principle that the approach seeks to monitor, rather than measure, progress.

4.5.2 Monitoring levels

To monitor distance travelled over time a 'scale' is required to track customer progress. The pilot approach utilised generic monitoring categories that could be used across the range of key behaviours with a numerical scale of 1-5. Each point on this scale corresponded to a monitoring statement which described levels of competence for that particular area.

When the approach was launched it was pointed out that the guidance document was intended as a professional guide for staff, rather than something that would be directly quoted from, or given to customers or employers. Despite this direction, feedback throughout the pilot reported that a small but significant number of support workers found it difficult to interpret the language into wording that was more appropriate to the needs of their particular customers.

In some cases staff did directly read out the formal monitoring definitions to their customers, even where it was clear that the language was unsuitable for the needs of the person involved. Where this happened it did appear to cause confusion and contributed to a lack of understanding about distance travelled and its purpose.

These staff viewed the wording of the monitoring levels as '*complicated*', '*wordy*' and '*unclear*', and some suggested that the statements were difficult to understand, which may explain why they had difficulty in rephrasing them. These difficulties often related back to how initial training on using the approach was delivered, and the support available within their organisation to address any difficulties they experienced.

Where there were good levels of understanding of the approach and purpose of the monitoring levels, staff appeared to have less difficulty in interpreting the information in a way that was appropriate to the needs of the customer. One provider explained that the work they carry out with their customers always requires a very flexible approach to communication about all aspects of employment, the WORKSTEP Programme and the support that the provider can offer. They felt it would not be possible to develop a standard approach to wording that would cover the needs of all WORKSTEP customers, and any developments of this nature would always rely on the skills of the providers staff to ensure customer understanding.

It was also beyond the scope and budget of the project to develop a range of materials for use with all of the customer groups on the Programme, so the pilot did rely on the provider organisations to interpret guidance appropriately. In many cases this was successfully achieved, for example, some staff devised pictorial illustrations to aid discussions with their customers. Examples of these illustrations included a traffic light system, and a 'foot steps' system to demonstrate distance travelled. In these situations customers appeared more positive towards distance travelled as they had a good understanding of the process and what they were aiming to achieve.

4.5.3 Monitoring in practice

Three other issues related to the practical application of the monitoring process were raised during the pilot. One was linked to customer progression to open employment, a second was linked to the monitoring customers with a fluctuating or deteriorating condition and a final issue which was related to monitoring progress within a supported business.

The issues related to supported businesses and fluctuating conditions are discussed in Sections 4.8 and 4.9.5. The issue related to progression was also noted in Sections 4.3.3, where some employers questioned whether customers who frequently scored level 5 across the key behaviours would continue to be eligible for WORKSTEP support. As discussed, some of these employers were concerned that if the monitoring process did indeed identify that customers were at a level where they were ready to progress, then the financial subsidy they receive from the provider would also come to an end.

The payment of subsidies to employers as a potential barrier to progression is an issue which was identified in the WORKSTEP Programme Evaluation¹³ and many providers have moved away from this system where possible. However, it is recognised that some longer-term customers may be at risk of losing their job if a subsidy is withdrawn and in these circumstances providers are reluctant to make this change. It should be noted that the use of a distance travelled approach is likely to draw attention to such cases, where a customer remains on the Programme because of a subsidy rather than an ongoing need for significant support or development.

4.6 The approach – using evidence

One of the key supporting features of the WORKSTEP approach to distance travelled is that the judgements about the monitoring levels used to track development are based on recorded evidence. The guidance document offered some supporting information as to the wide variety of evidence that could be used and how it could be obtained, but initial feedback during the pilot was that a number of staff were struggling to identify and use appropriate evidence.

One provider identified that collecting evidence was the biggest difficulty that their staff had identified and they organised an 'evidence and monitoring' workshop with all staff involved in the pilot. The provider found this to be extremely useful and during a subsequent pilot monitoring visit, the pilot staff reported they were comfortable with the collection of evidence, and generally confident in using the distance travelled approach.

¹³ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

In response to some enquiries about the use of evidence, providers were advised that in initial customer meetings evidence might be limited. The full baseline assessment could, therefore, be undertaken over a period of time, as and when evidence became available. Providers were also informed that they could use the evidence available in existing development plans and review documentation to inform their assessment of the key behaviours. Following this a number of providers did report that much of the evidence they had been struggling to identify could be found within existing customer records.

There was also some uncertainty as to what constituted evidence. Staff from one provider commented that they could not get written statements from employers at all of the review meetings and were, therefore, struggling to collect evidence. They were advised that evidence could take the form of verbal statements and discussions, and it was not necessary to have evidence in a written form to support their judgements. Providers were given the reassurance that the process of using evidence as the basis for their customer assessments was the same process that they had always used when carrying out action planning and reviews. All that was different about the approach was that they were being asked to record the basis for their judgements, i.e. the evidence, in a more systematic way.

4.7 The approach – process issues

4.7.1 Administration

As previously noted there are significant variations in WORKSTEP development planning process and the content and format of development planning and review documentation used by provider organisations. Guidance on the documentation required to support the distance travelled approach was, therefore, not prescriptive and template forms were offered as a starting point for providers to adjust and fit within their own systems.

When the pilot was launched providers were advised to review their own paperwork and consider how best to incorporate these templates within existing systems. Whilst a number of pilot organisations did attempt to fully incorporate the templates into development planning and review documentation, a number were reluctant to do so. This reluctance to make changes to existing systems reflected the fact that many providers had invested a considerable amount of time in developing what was in place. Some felt that it would be inappropriate to make any significant changes to systems that their staff were familiar with and that worked well, for a short-term pilot process. One pilot site reported that they had only recently made changes to their development planning documentation and they did not want to introduce another change so soon.

Where the approach was not incorporated into provider documentation, the template assessment and monitoring forms were simply appended to existing systems. In these cases a number of comments were received about the need to amend the format of the templates. There were also concerns about some

duplication of process when completing all of the review documentation (provider systems and distance travelled templates), leading to significant increases in the time taken to complete review meetings. However, where the distance travelled approach was fully incorporated into development planning and review systems the administration of the process was, after an initial phase of staff familiarisation, found to work well.

4.7.2 Time requirement

As noted previously, some pilot sites reported significant increases in the time taken to complete review meetings when using the distance travelled approach. In particular support workers viewed the baseline assessment of all 21 key behaviours as significantly time consuming, although some also commented that the approach was adding too much time to review meetings. One provider reported that the initial baseline assessment of the behaviours was adding an extra two to three hours to a meeting and in some cases they felt that this additional time requirement was causing difficulties with employers.

In response to these concerns providers were referred back to Section 7.2 of the guidance document (Appendix G) which notes:

'...it is also possible there will be insufficient time during the initial discussions to assess the customers' position using all 21 key behaviours. Where this is the case the selection record should be completed using N (no opportunity), and these behaviours should be revisited at a later monitoring meeting.'

Providers were advised that the baseline assessment could be completed across a number of review meetings and reminded of the option to use 'N' (no opportunity to assess this key behaviour) when they were unable to complete full baseline assessments. Support workers were also encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach when introducing distance travelled to existing customers. It was suggested that rather than duplicating previous work, staff should utilise past review paperwork as evidence when assessing key behaviours.

At subsequent review meetings, following the completion of the baseline assessment, the meeting length appeared to be less of an issue, as normally only the priority areas were discussed. The time taken for reviews also decreased as staff became more familiar with the approach. Where providers had fully incorporated distance travelled within their documentation, it was clear that reviews did not take longer than usual. One provider stated that the distance travelled approach actually decreased the duration of their review meetings because the structure of the approach enhanced the efficiency of the process and the consistency of their work.

4.7.3 Frequency of reviews and caseloads

One provider commented that carrying out customer reviews every six months (the contractual requirement for WORKSTEP) was not frequent enough to use distance travelled effectively. In particular, during the pilot, this meant that some of their customers only had two review meetings where the approach was used, which was insufficient to clearly demonstrate distance travelled.

This provider suggested that the approach would work best in the Work Preparation Programme, where providers had frequent and more intense contact with their customers. In fact, at the end of the pilot, a number of providers indicated that they had adopted a distance travelled approach on other programmes they run such as Work Preparation. However, an opposite view was offered by one pilot provider who suggested that the short-term nature of Work Preparation did not allow enough time to use the approach effectively.

Another issue which is linked to both time requirement and frequency of review meetings, was raised by some support workers in organisations with high customer caseloads. They felt that the large number of customers they were working with made it difficult to offer sufficient contact time to utilise a distance travelled approach. However, this issue is not just of concern in relation to the use of the approach, but also raises questions about the level of support more generally available to WORKSTEP customers in these circumstances.

4.8 Distance travelled within supported businesses

As with feedback on a number of issues within the pilot there was a mixed response to using the approach within supported businesses. Eight of the ten pilot providers had at least one supported business as well as placement provision and the following section focuses on the use of distance travelled within these supported businesses.

4.8.1 Culture change and promoting progression

For a number of the pilot providers with supported businesses, adopting the distance travelled approach was viewed as a '*fundamental change*' to the way in which they approached development planning. One provider described a '*culture change*' within their supported business and others referred to adopting a '*fresh*' approach. A number of staff commented that they had previously focused on job- or task-related objectives within their supported business customer development plans but with the introduction of distance travelled this focus has shifted to '*personal development*'.

One provider reported the significant benefits that they believed the new approach had brought to their supported business and described how adopting the approach had enabled them to refocus on the aims of their WORKSTEP Programme. They gave examples of long-term (SEP) customers requesting information on progression to employment outside of the supported business. The provider also noted that supervisory staff within the business were now focusing on skills and development rather than purely on work-related issues.

Where common areas of customer development were identified through the use of the approach they had responded by organising group training sessions. For example job seeking skills was seen as a key behaviour that needed to be developed and following training in this area all of the customers in the supported

business now had their own CV. Whilst the provider did acknowledge that the favourable terms and conditions of employment for customers within the supported business had always proved to be a barrier to progression, they also reported that discussions about progression were now taking place when this had not happened in the past.

This provider also found that the distance travelled approach had been very useful during an Ofsted inspection of their WORKSTEP provision. In particular the collection and recording of evidence was valuable, and the use of the key behaviour framework demonstrated that the literacy and numeracy needs of their customers were being addressed.

Another provider also highlighted how adopting the distance travelled approach meant their staff were no longer just focusing on 'factory [supported business] tasks'. The provider gave an example of a customer who had always stated that their confidence was not an issue. When this area was discussed within the context of distance travelled and evidence, the customer realised that their confidence was something that could be improved. As a result of this renewed and more in-depth focus on the key behaviour of confidence, the customer went on to attend a confidence building course, and following this had explored work opportunities outside the supported business. This customer had subsequently progressed from the WORKSTEP Programme into open employment.

A number of other providers also reported how the approach facilitated discussions related to progression, as customers and provider staff gathered evidence of development. Providers described how some customers came to realise that they had developed skills in a number of areas but had previously been unaware of this. By highlighting this progress, a small number of customers had started to consider opportunities outside the supported business environment.

'It gave [support worker] the chance to use a tool to look at things differently... they [supported employees] were always very much set in their ways, they just went in, did their job and went home. This now gives [support worker] a chance to see where people are within their own development...move on and out of the support factory...we have actually had one person already that has moved through that was on the pilot...it [distance travelled] let him see that his whole working life didn't have to be in this supported environment and that he actually had the skills and abilities to do something else. He's actually not even on the WORKSTEP programme at all now, he has moved on to other employment.'

(Pilot provider)

The approach was also seen as useful for challenging assumptions within supported businesses. For example, where customers believed that they were performing well, the collection of evidence may facilitate a realisation that further development could be made. However, one provider reported that customers could achieve level 5 in all behaviours within the working environment of their supported business, although they noted that this would not be the case with external employment. In

discussions about this issue it was noted that level 5 refers to performance where a person routinely demonstrates the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work. If support workers were unable to demonstrate that a customer could perform to this level outside a supported environment, it may not be appropriate to assess at level 5.

4.8.2 Suitability for use in supported businesses

Some providers reported that they considered a distance travelled approach was not suitable for some customers within their supported businesses. They gave examples where identifying areas for development had proved problematic, particularly in situations where customers had been within the same working environment for a number of years. There was also some concern that customers were being 'forced' to develop and progress within their work, even if they preferred not to. These concerns are not a result of any specific limitations with this approach to development planning. Instead, they relate more broadly to ongoing issues for some longer-term customers with the change of focus in supported employment when WORKSTEP was introduced in 2001. This is discussed more fully within the WORKSTEP Programme Evaluation.¹⁴

Finally a number of providers reported the distance travelled approach was easier to use within supported businesses, in particular they pointed to the fact that staff could spend longer with the customer, collecting evidence and exploring development areas, as many of the customers were 'on site'. Although one provider reported that they saw no difference between using the distance travelled approach in placement provision or in their supported businesses.

4.9 Use of with particular customer groups

The pilot of the distance travelled approach aimed to involve a minimum of 500 WORKSTEP customers to ensure that a wide range of customers were involved. Monitoring information from 529 customers was received and Table 3.2 offers further information on these individuals, demonstrating that the pilot did involve a wide range of customers, broadly representative of those on the Programme. Analysis of the data from monitoring forms, and other feedback from pilot provider staff raised a range of 'customer group' specific issues which are considered opposite.

4.9.1 New and existing customers

Provider staff reported differing views on the ease of introducing the distance travelled approach to new and existing customers. The majority of provider staff felt that introducing the approach to new customers was straightforward as customers viewed distance travelled as part of the standard development planning

¹⁴ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

process. Some difficulties were reported, as noted in Section 4.6, where support workers felt that the evidence required to carry out a full baseline assessment with a new customer was not immediately available. In these circumstances provider staff were advised that the assessment could be undertaken over a period of time, as and when evidence became available.

With existing customers some providers reported that it was more difficult to introduce the approach as it raised questions about the changes in the development planning, and in some cases led to criticisms about 'another' change in provider documentation. However, a small but significant number of provider staff highlighted that they found it easier to introduce the approach with existing WORKSTEP customers because of their prior knowledge of the customer, and the evidence from past reviews, that was available to support the assessment of key behaviours.

4.9.2 Long-term SEP customers

There are a significant number of customers that have been on the WORKSTEP Programme for an extended period of time and 20 per cent of the 529 customers involved in the pilot had been on the Programme (and its predecessor SEP) for over ten years.

Provider staff suggested that with some of these longer-term customers they were unable to identify any key behaviours that required development and the customers were quite happy working at their current level. A number of these customers had been in the same working environment most of their working lives, and some did not see themselves as being on a programme. It was often the case that these customers did not fully engage with development planning processes and, therefore, it was unlikely they would engage with distance travelled. There were also examples given of customers who were nearing retirement age and who were disinterested in developing and learning new skills. These issues were most commonly found within supported businesses and as noted in Section 4.8.2, they relate more broadly to the change of focus in supported employment when the WORKSTEP Programme was introduced.

In contrast some pilot providers did report that distance travelled offered a '*fresh approach*' to development planning with longer-term customers, and gave examples of customers exploring areas for development and progression when previously this had not been considered.

4.9.3 Learning disability

There were also contrasting views from provider staff about using the approach with customers who have a learning disability. Some staff found it particularly difficult to explain distance travelled to this customer group, and reported that customer understanding was limited.

Other provider staff suggested that the distance travelled approach worked best with this customer group as it allowed them to clearly see their development and

the progress they were making. Staff reported that the demonstrable development of 'softer outcomes' gave customers a real sense of achievement, which was particularly positive for this group as they were often unlikely to achieve the hard outcomes associated with the programme. Although one provider did note that they encountered some difficulties if customers did not see progress between the review meetings.

'Some customers with learning disabilities enjoyed the paperwork and they enjoyed discussing various skill levels, it was not so positive, however, when they did not see progress between the review meetings.'

(Pilot provider)

Such divergent views do tend to suggest that the success of the approach does rely upon the communication skills of the support worker and the way in which they engage with their customers.

4.9.4 Physical impairment

One of the pilot providers stated that the distance travelled approach was not relevant or useful for some of their customers who are disabled due to a physical impairment such as a condition restricting mobility. The provider referred to cases where customers did not have any areas for development and worked to an acceptable standard within the provider's supported business. Analysis of this situation suggested that it was, in fact, related to the issues discussed in Sections 4.8.2 and 4.9.2, where customers have been in the same working environment for a significant period of time, do not regard themselves as being on a programme and often do not fully engage with existing development planning processes.

4.9.5 Fluctuating/deteriorating conditions

As noted above in the discussion of 'scoring' of customer development (Section 4.5.3) a number of provider staff raised concerns about using the approach where customers have conditions that fluctuate or are likely to deteriorate over time. Some support workers perceived that distance travelled would be difficult to monitor and record as performance would fluctuate depending on the phase of the health condition. However, the principal concern was related to the potentially negative impact that using a distance travelled approach could have on customer confidence and self-esteem when, due to their health condition, performance was in fact 'regressing' or deteriorating rather than progressing.

A small number of provider support workers noted that when working with customers who have deteriorating conditions, they focus on maintaining current levels of work performance, rather than progress. This was also stated to be the case with many of the 'retention' customers on the WORKSTEP Programme.

'The customer's performance is greatly affected by how motivated he feels and this fluctuates and reduces as and when. The customer has quite complex needs and so the employer feels being able to maintain his current performance is the main issue.'

(Pilot provider)

For these customers, maintaining their current level of performance within a particular behaviour can be viewed as 'progress' for that individual. In these cases support workers were encouraged to discuss distance travelled in a positive and productive way with the customer.

There was a small number of concerns reported about adopting the distance travelled approach where customers have a mental health condition. In particular, where the customers' conditions fluctuated, staff felt uncomfortable about informing them that performance has declined and the monitoring level decreased.

'...customer with mental health issues that deteriorated found it particularly difficult to engage with distance travelled, as looking at her confidence levels and motivation was quite a negative experience.'

(Pilot provider)

As with other customers who have fluctuating conditions, there were concerns that the distance travelled scoring could have a negative effect on customers, and possibly add to their levels of anxiety. One provider made the decision not to 'score' customers in this situation to avoid having a negative impact upon customer self-esteem and confidence.

The successful application of a distance travelled approach is clearly reliant upon the skills and judgement of the support worker and their ability to work with customers in a positive and supportive way. The approach does not aim to replace their skills and experience, although it can offer a supportive process that may improve their ability to identify and focus on priority areas for customer development.

4.10 Conclusions

As with the previous chapters, the issues discussed here present significant evidence of the strengths of the distance travelled approach developed for use within WORKSTEP, and the benefits of the approach when it is used appropriately within the Programme.

Overall, many of the difficulties that were reported during the pilot appeared to diminish as staff became more familiar with the approach, or they were related to inadequate training for the staff involved and the limited integration of the approach with existing development planning.

In general, where employers had well developed staff appraisal systems in place they appeared to find the approach easier to understand and offered more positive feedback during the pilot, although this was not universal. Overall, the understanding, attitudes and experiences of customers and employers involved in the project were most clearly linked with the understanding and attitudes of the provider staff they worked with. Where the approach was presented in a clear and

positive way, far fewer concerns were reported by the customers and employers engaged in the process. This underlines the finding that the successful operation of the approach is dependent on the expertise of support workers and their capacity to engage and work with customers and employers in an appropriate and constructive way.

The approach did also identify some cases where Programme issues, such as the payment of a subsidy to employers or the reluctance of long-term customers to engage with progression, rather than a need for ongoing support or development, has led to customers remaining on WORKSTEP. Whilst the issue of subsidy to employers is beyond the scope of issues that can be addressed by the approach, there was evidence that distance travelled offered opportunities to adopt a fresh approach with longer-term customers and did facilitate the discussion of progression.

5 Summary conclusions and recommendations

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned the WORKSTEP distance travelled project in 2006, in response to recommendations made in the WORKSTEP Programme Evaluation¹⁵ regarding the need to develop measures of Programme quality and 'in programme' performance. In particular, the evaluation proposed a need to develop an approach which could monitor the 'in work' progression of supported employees, i.e. distance travelled towards open employment.

The project aimed to help inform the policy development process in this area and the overall aims were to:

- raise awareness of the hard and soft outcomes associated with WORKSTEP, and the value of capturing all relevant Programme outcomes;
- offer potential improvements in Programme management information and the performance management of service delivery via the development of an approach to monitor 'in-programme' progression (distance travelled) for supported employees;
- develop recommendations to inform the process for the development of the 'distance travelled' within other DWP policies and programmes.

The project sought to develop an approach to monitoring distance travelled that would provide useful information and feedback to WORKSTEP-supported employees, provider staff and employers. Within this context the project aimed to develop information on individuals and also to enhance qualitative data on service provision which could feed into routine Jobcentre Plus monitoring and inspection processes. There are a number of difficulties associated with aggregating data on individual outcome measures to provide quantitative information on the relative

¹⁵ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

performance of services¹⁶, and it was not within the scope of this project to develop a system of this nature.

In order to achieve the project aims, work was carried out in two phases between 2006 and 2008. This involved initial research and the development of a distance travelled approach followed by a pilot of this approach with ten WORKSTEP providers.

5.1 Findings from the pilot

The pilot process was extremely valuable and provided a significant amount of information on both the WORKSTEP distance travelled system, which was developed and piloted as part of the project, and more generally on the use of a distance travelled approach to development planning within WORKSTEP. Both of these areas also offer lessons which could be applied to the development of distance travelled within a range of other services.

Within the context of WORKSTEP the pilot yielded significant evidence of the strengths of the distance travelled approach developed for use within the Programme, and the benefits of the approach when it is used appropriately. In particular the use of the approach contributes to the delivery of a high quality service, and providers involved in the pilot reported that the use of the approach offered:

- a significant improvement in the customer development planning process;
- a more professional approach to development planning and review meetings;
- an opportunity to standardise and develop provider staff working practices;
- the facilitation of a greater degree of customer engagement with the Programme;
- an opportunity to motivate customers;
- an opportunity for customers to demonstrate their progress to employers;
- an opportunity for staff to refocus on the progression aims of the Programme;
- a method to clearly demonstrate when customers are ready to progress to open employment;
- a supportive process to facilitate progression.

The approach has also been commended in the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection reports of two pilot providers who were inspected during the pilot project:

¹⁶ *Good Practice in Work Preparation: Lessons from Research* (2002) DWP WAE Research Report No. 135.

- *'It has effectively focused staff on participants' barriers to employment and progression opportunities.'*
- *'Innovative practice' for 'measuring the progress achieved by participants'.*

5.1.1 Development planning

When the WORKSTEP Programme replaced the Supported Employment Programme (SEP) in April 2001, one of the changes introduced was an emphasis on more individually tailored support for customers via individual development plans. Guidance to WORKSTEP providers states that development plans should include:

- on- and off-the-job learning and development goals, including basic skills learning and development where appropriate;
- specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) steps to achieve the learning and development goals.

However, no other specific guidance on the content or format of development plans was offered and as a result of this, the scope and quality of WORKSTEP development planning is widely variable.

The majority of pilot providers noted that the use of the distance travelled approach facilitated significant improvements to development planning and customer review meetings stating these were now more *'structured'* and *'professional'*. A small, but significant, number of providers also reported that the approach had improved staff understanding of action planning and objective setting. In addition to this, one of the pilot providers was also very positive about the potential for a distance travelled approach to offer some standardisation to the work of the *'supported employment industry'*.

5.1.2 Customer engagement and motivation

A number of provider staff described the way in which they involved customers in the process of collecting evidence of progress and noted this offered customers an opportunity to take an active role in the monitoring process. Some staff noted that this form of involvement facilitated a greater degree of customer engagement in the work of the Programme than existing development planning processes.

Staff also reported that the approach allowed customers to clearly see the progress they have made, and the way in which they can positively influence their own progress. This facility for a clear illustration of development was viewed as beneficial in terms of customer motivation, as previously, much customer progress was not clearly demonstrated or recorded.

A number of customers also viewed the identification of areas for development as a challenge and an opportunity to improve, and a number made positive comments about the fact that they could now demonstrate their development to employers, or potential employers.

5.1.3 Customer support and progression to open employment

Another significant change introduced with WORKSTEP was an expectation that the new Programme would facilitate a higher rate of customer progression into open employment. Whilst the Programme has made some improvements to the very static situation that existed within SEP there is scope for improvements in this area, in particular with longer-term customers and those working within supported businesses.

One of the benefits of using a distance travelled approach identified by pilot providers was that it could facilitate discussions about customer progression to open employment, as customers and provider staff gathered and recorded evidence of development. They noted that the approach could clearly show when a customer was ready to maintain employment with limited or no support and is thus, in a position to progress from the Programme. Some staff also stated that the approach offered a means of demonstrating ongoing support requirements where customers require long-term support.

A number of the pilot providers with supported businesses described the distance travelled approach as a '*fundamental change*' to the way in which they approached development planning. One provider described a '*culture change*' within their supported business and others referred to adopting a '*fresh*' approach. Providers also described how use of the approach led some customers to realise that they had developed skills in a number of areas where they had previously been unaware of this. By highlighting progress, staff reported that a small number of customers within supported businesses were starting to consider opportunities outside this environment, and gave examples of customers who had actually made this move.

The approach did also identify cases where Programme issues, such as the payment of a subsidy to employers or the reluctance of long-term customers to engage with progression, rather than a need for ongoing support or development, has led to customers remaining on WORKSTEP. Whilst these issues are beyond the scope of areas that can be addressed by development planning, there was good evidence that distance travelled offered opportunities to adopt a new approach with longer-term customers, and a supportive process to facilitate the discussion of progression.

These findings are supported by the conclusions of an Ofsted inspection of one of the pilot sites, carried out during March 2008. The inspection report commented on the involvement of the provider in the project and reported that distance travelled '*has effectively focused staff on participants' barriers to employment and identifying progression opportunities*'. The approach was also described by Ofsted as '*innovative practice*' for '*measuring the progress achieved by participants*' in their inspection report for another pilot site in October 2008.

5.1.4 Difficulties encountered during the pilot

As noted in Section 2.1 project resource constraints meant that it was not possible to directly involve customers in the process of system development and during the pilot phase customer and employer views were also sought indirectly, via provider support workers at WORKSTEP review meetings. It is acknowledged that this indirect method of gathering data has limitations as the process was mediated by the support worker and subject to their interpretations of customer and employer views.

Whilst the findings of the pilot are generally very positive it is important to note that many of the staff involved did raise a variety of concerns related to their experiences of using the distance travelled approach. These are described in more detail in the preceding chapters, with the main concerns reported in the following areas:

- difficulties in understanding key concepts and guidance, and linked to this, difficulties explaining the approach to customers and employers;
- perceptions that the approach increased the time required for customer assessment and reviews, which was seen as particularly problematic where support workers had high caseloads and limited customer contact time;
- difficulties with the monitoring process, specifically:
 - the identification of what constituted evidence;
 - discomfort with the process of ‘scoring’ customer performance;
 - using the approach as a ‘deficit model’ and potentially undermining customer confidence;
- concerns about using the approach with customers who have fluctuating or deteriorating conditions.

Overall, many of these concerns appeared to diminish as staff became more familiar with the approach, or they were related to inadequate staff training and insufficient integration of the approach with existing development planning. There were also a range of difficulties associated with WORKSTEP Programme issues which were beyond the scope of areas that could be addressed by development planning. These issues include the payment of subsidies to employers, and the favourable terms and conditions offered within some supported businesses, which can act as a barrier to customers moving from this working environment.

The attitudes and experiences of customers and employers involved in the project tended to reflect the understanding and attitudes of the provider staff who worked with them. This may, to some extent, reflect the fact that customer and employer views were sought indirectly, via provider support workers at WORKSTEP review meetings.

In general, where employers had well developed staff appraisal systems in place, they appeared to find the approach easier to understand and offered more positive

feedback during the pilot. However, overall understanding, attitudes and experiences of customers and employers involved in the project were most clearly linked with the understanding and attitudes of the provider staff they worked with.

It appeared that where staff were able to present the approach in a clear and positive way, few concerns were reported by customers and employers engaged in the process. Where staff encountered difficulties with the approach these would be replicated in customer and employer experience. This does illustrate that the successful application of the approach is highly reliant upon the skills and experience of the support worker and their ability to engage and work with customers and employers in an appropriate and constructive way.

5.2 Development of the approach

Chapter 2 describes the process that the project used to develop the WORKSTEP distance travelled system. It aimed to involve a wide range of stakeholders, and drew, in particular, on the experience of many staff from the wide range of WORKSTEP provider organisations. Whilst it should be acknowledged that the input of customers and employer views was limited (due to budgetary constraints), the ongoing input of provider staff throughout the pilot proved to be invaluable.

The system that was developed aimed to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment. These skills and attributes are identified via the system of key behaviours and associated typical indicators (see Section 2.4.2).

The monitoring of progress is based on recorded evidence which is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels (see Section 2.4.3). Use of this scoring system over time will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled'.

Whilst the monitoring of progress is often described as 'measuring' distance travelled, the term 'monitoring' was used within the project to emphasise that this is a process of reviewing skills and attributes over time rather than the determination and assignment of a specific numerical unit of measurement. The monitoring levels simply offer a shorthand way of describing performance against particular key behaviours at that point in time. Towards the end of the pilot the monitoring levels were amended to levels A-E (from levels 1-5). This change was purely presentational and the use of letters rather than a numerical scale aimed to address staff and customer concerns about 'scoring' and to reinforce the principle that the approach seeks to monitor, rather than measure, progress.

The use of a numerical scale has also led some distance travelled models to describe progress in percentage terms when a customer moves from one level to another. The use of monitoring data to describe percentage improvements would only be valid if progress follows a linear and consistent scale that can be applied across all customers and key behaviours, which is clearly not feasible.

A numerical scale also increases the potential for the aggregation of data to describe the progress of groups of customers, which again is an invalid use of the data. As noted previously, there are a number of difficulties associated with aggregating data on individual outcome measures to provide quantitative information on the relative performance of services¹⁷, and it was not within the scope of this project to develop a system of this nature.

As noted previously, whilst a number of concerns were highlighted during the pilot, the majority of these were related to inadequate levels of staff training and support, insufficient integration of the approach with development planning or WORKSTEP Programme issues, rather than directly related to the approach developed. As a result of this only two fairly minor amendments to the approach were required towards the end of the pilot.

The main finding that emerged with regard to the development process was previously identified as a 'key success factor' within the *Practical Guide*¹⁸, i.e. the need to consult and involve staff who would be using the approach. In addition to initial consultation the project sought to ensure ongoing staff involvement to capture their expertise in working with WORKSTEP customers. Harnessing this experience ensured that appropriate indicators (the key behaviours framework) were developed at an early stage and emerging concerns could be identified and addressed. This need to consult and involve staff is also likely to be equally important if the WORKSTEP approach is to be successfully adapted for use in other areas of provision.

The secondary issue related to the development and piloting process was the resource that the project had available for staff training, which was clearly inadequate for the successful introduction of a distance travelled approach to development planning. As described in Chapter 3 the pilot launch event was the only structured training offered, and it was then left to the pilot organisations to cascade this to their staff. As a result of this many staff had very limited training and frequently struggled with some of the concepts which underpinned the approach, as much of the feedback during the pilot phase demonstrated.

This issue of training was addressed during the final stage of the pilot when a small working group reviewed the pilot launch materials as a basis for developing a new staff training package. The outputs of working group discussions and data gathered during the pilot were used to develop a new package which was then subject to a pilot and further development. This package offers a useful resource to support any future extension to the use of a distance travelled approach.

¹⁷ *Good Practice in Work Preparation: Lessons from Research* (2002) DWP WAE Research Report No. 135.

¹⁸ *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document* (2003) DWP.

5.3 Recommendations

Overall, the pilot offered significant evidence of the strengths of the distance travelled approach developed for use within WORKSTEP, and the benefits of the approach when used appropriately within the Programme.

5.3.1 Use of the approach within specialist disability provision

Given the demonstrable benefits identified during the pilot it is recommended that:

- The review of specialist disability employment provision should give serious consideration to a requirement to incorporate the distance travelled approach, developed as part of this project, within customer development planning.
- In addition to the benefits identified above the distance travelled approach could support the modular approach proposed for a new specialist programme:
 - offering a standardised way to gather the evidence required to support decisions regarding any extension to the length of time a customer may spend on each module, or when customers move between modules.
 - which can also clearly identify cases where existing Programme issues, such as payment of a subsidy, rather than the need for ongoing support or development has led to customers remaining on the Programme.

The majority of the difficulties linked with the approach that were identified during the pilot appeared to be related to inadequate training for a number of staff involved and the limited integration of the approach with existing development planning. Therefore, it is also recommended that plans for any expansion in the use of a distance travelled approach should carefully consider:

- comprehensive staff training; and
- full integration of the approach with development plans.

5.3.2 Use of the approach within other areas

The benefits identified as part of the WORKSTEP project may also be equally applicable to a wide range of service provision. Indeed, a number of pilot providers reported that they have adopted the distance travelled approach within other programmes that they deliver.

Therefore, it does appear feasible that the key elements of the WORKSTEP approach, i.e. a framework of key behaviours and an evidence-based approach to monitoring progress over time, via generic monitoring levels, could be adapted for use with a range of other services.

An important factor for the successful adaptation of the WORKSTEP approach was also identified via the development process for this project, i.e. the importance of involving staff who would be using the approach. It is, therefore, recommended that to ensure the successful adaptation of the approach for use in other areas of service provision, appropriate staff are fully involved in the development process.

Appendix A

Topic guides

Distance travelled initial interview schedule

Introduce self/CPP/overview of research (we have been asked to carry out a project to develop and pilot a tool for measuring distance travelled).

Purpose of the telephone call/interview:

- all information given is confidential (no particular reference will be made to individual people or organisations);
- no names will be used in any documents;
- they have the right to withdraw from the research at any point.

Inform them that they will have the opportunity to tell us anything else at the end – or to go back and revise what they have said.

Inform being tape recorded (if this is the case), as this is the best way of ensuring all information is collected accurately. Ask if any objections to this.

Question	Prompts	Notes
A. Background Information		
What organisation do you work for?	Where are you based?	
What is your role?	How long have you been involved in this type of work?	
What is your involvement in disability programmes?	WORKSTEP, NDDP, Research, Inspections, etc	
Do you have direct contact with WORKSTEP customers?	Other programme customers? When? Why? How often? Do you undertake review meetings/ development planning?	
B. Understanding of concept		
What is your general understanding of the term 'distance travelled'?	Measuring progression? In programme? Off programme? Hard outcomes, soft outcomes? Training, qualifications? Achieving goals?	

In terms of WORKSTEP, what would distance travelled be within the programme?	Improving soft skills? Social/communication skills? Open employment? Placements – Supported businesses? Any differences in distance travelled?	
What benefits are associated with being in work for WORKSTEP customers?	Confidence, independence, financial independence, socialising, improved health?	Desired outcomes research
What are your views on ‘measuring’ individuals’ development?	Soft skills? Subjectivity? Attribution issues? Difficulties in making comparisons? Levels of support?	
What are your views on giving individuals a score/grade for their actions/attitudes, etc?	Any difficulties in doing this?	
Are there any particular issues about scoring this client group?		
C. Experience of concept (Provider specific)		
Have you developed any type of tool for measuring distance travelled?	If yes – demonstrate, describe? How does it work? Does it improve development planning? Is it a paper based system? Any software used? What could be better? What difficulties do you come across? If no – why not? Difficulties? Time consuming? Lack of skills? Too much paperwork?	
When is the tool used?	Review meetings? How often? If no tool – if you had a tool, when do you think it would be used?	
How is the tool used by Support Workers?	Different approaches within organisation? How does this impact upon consistency of approach across the provider? Can you compare progress?	
Who is part of the process?	Provider staff? Customer? Employer?	
What do you focus upon within the tool?	Work skills? Personal and social skills? Levels of support? Employer needs?	
Is it used for all customers?	Is it more suitable for some than others? Pre-work? In-work? All programmes?	
Is the tool used for retention customers?	Long-term SEP customers? Or there any issues with this?	

How is the tool used for those customers that do not want to progress, undertake training, or develop new skills?	Can it be used? How do Support Workers deal with this type of customer?	e.g. those that have been in factory for 30+ years, are near retirement age, etc
How does the tool work for customers with deteriorating conditions?	What difficulties exist?	
What are the benefits of using a tool to measure distance travelled?	Continuous improvement? Prevents customers becoming static? Focuses Support Workers on developing individuals?	
What are the biggest challenges to overcome when using the tool?	How are these overcome?	
Do you receive feedback on the tool?	Customer views? Employers? What are their comments?	
What do you do with the information that is collected?	Use in development plans? Employer agreements? Management information? Use during ALL inspections?	
D. Taking distance travelled forward		
Would you like to see a standardised development plan?	With a distance travelled component? Any problems with this?	
If this (distance travelled component) was developed what sort of support do you think you would require?	Advice, guidance, training for staff?	
Do you think this would improve the service you offer to:	Customers? Employers?	
Would it help with ALL inspections?	Help with Jobcentre Plus contract management?	
<p>Give your contact details in case they would like to contact us in the future about the interview or to clarify any points that they have made.</p> <p>Thank them for their time and cooperation.</p> <p>Reiterate that they will not be named and all information given is confidential.</p>		

Distance travelled end of pilot interview schedule

Question	Prompts
A. Introduction	
When distance travelled was first introduced in March 2007 did you see this as a positive step?	In what ways did you see it as positive?
Do you think the system was launched appropriately?	Was there any information missing from the launch event which could have improved the introduction of the system?
	Was there anything that was particularly good?
How were your staff trained on the distance travelled approach?	Was this the most effective way? Why do you say this?
	Would you do anything differently if this approach was adopted?
How did staff initially react to the introduction of the system?	
Were they clear what monitoring distance travelled was aimed to achieve?	
Do you think they received enough information about distance travelled?	Did they understand the key concepts?
	Is there anything that was missing?
Is there anything that you would have liked from ourselves to support the introduction of the system?	More information?
	Clearer guidance?
	Further training/support?
B. Pilot feedback	
Staff:	
Overall how do staff feel towards using a distance travelled approach within WORKSTEP?	Has it been a positive experience?
	What has been the biggest difficulty? Probe: issues on time/forms/processes
	What have staff found most useful?
	Are staff able to effectively communicate
	Has it been a positive experience?
Customers:	
What sort of feedback have you had from customers about distance travelled? Positives/negatives?	
Employers:	
How have employers found the distance travelled pilot?	Positives/negatives?
	Highlights progression issues?
	Do they see it as being time consuming? (Check whether this is WS processes more generally).

C. Customer issues	
Does the length of time the customer has been on the programme effect how distance travelled works?	
Are there any examples of specific disability types where distance travelled works best?	Does not work well?
D. Scoring and monitoring levels	
How do staff feel about the scoring system which monitors distance travelled?	
How do customers react to the scoring?	
Do staff adopt particular techniques to deal with addressing the scoring issues? What are these techniques?	
Have staff highlighted any issues with the monitoring levels?	
E. Supported Business (where applicable)	
How has DT worked within your supported business?	
Are there any areas where it has worked well?	Not so well?
Are there any barriers that staff have had to overcome when adopting the approach working within the Supported Business?	Length of time on programme
	Age (some near retirement)
	Understanding
	Specific disability issues
	Length of time on programme
F. Taking DT forward	
Will your organisation continue to use the distance travelled system?	Within WORKSTEP?
	Is it used or will it be used in other Provider programmes?
Are there any elements that you will change, or would like to see changed?	
G. Overall	
Could you summarise you views on being involved in the pilot and adopting a distance travelled approach within WORKSTEP?	

Appendix B

Provider workshops

WORKSTEP distance travelled workshops – October/ November 2006

The distance travelled workshop aims to offer an opportunity to contribute to the development of a system to monitor the 'in-programme' progression, or distance travelled, by individuals supported through the WORKSTEP Programme.

Initial presentations will review the background to the distance travelled project, explore what we mean by 'distance travelled' within the context of the WORKSTEP Programme and discuss plans for developing the project work. The main focus of the day will be group work sessions to examine areas that can be monitored when reviewing individual progress, the types of evidence needed to support the monitoring of progress and systems to record this type of information.

Workshop Timetable

9.30 – 10.00	Coffee and registration
10.00 – 10.05	Welcome and overview of the day
10.05 – 11.00	Presentations: Background to the distance travelled project Development of a Distance Travelled Monitoring System
11.00 – 11.15	Tea/Coffee
11.15 – 12.15	Progress Indicators and Standards – Group Work Session 1
12.15 – 12.45	Feedback from Group Work Session 1
12.45 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 2.30	Systems for Monitoring Progress – Group Work Session 2
2.30 – 2.45	Tea/Coffee
2.45 – 3.15	Feedback from Group Work Session 2
3.15 – 3.30	Next steps
3.30	Close

WORKSTEP distance travelled workshops: group work

Discussion Group 1

Progress indicators and Standards

1. Within your group discuss the concept of distance travelled, and any benefits or drawbacks associated with monitoring in-programme developments.
2. One of the first steps to develop a Distance Travelled system is to decide upon the indicators that are relevant for WORKSTEP clients.

Based on your experience and knowledge of WORKSTEP clients draw up a list of the key skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and move into unsupported employment.

Discuss within your group the key issues that employers highlight as their requirements as well as your understanding of the softer skills that clients need.

Some examples of employer requirements may include an ability to be punctual, attend regularly and notify absence appropriately. Clients may need to develop confidence and self-esteem, or skills such as independent travel and form filling.

3. For three of the key skills and attributes you highlight define the desirable outcomes or standards.

For example if team working is difficult for a client, the standard might be to 'work co-operatively as part of a team'.

Describe the behaviour you would be looking for in someone who is working to this standard.

Use the flip chart to record your discussions and nominate a group member to feedback to the main group.

Discussion Group 2

Systems for Monitoring Progress

We have looked at a definition of distance travelled within WORKSTEP as, 'progress supported employees make towards achieving outcomes that can lead to sustained open employment.' In group discussions this morning we also discussed defining desirable outcomes or standards.

Systems which monitor distance travelled tend to use some form of scoring scale. These scales aim to assess the nature and extent of client needs in relation to desirable outcomes or standards, which are then reviewed over time, to give an indication of the distance travelled in developing relevant skills and attributes whilst on a programme.

Progress or distance travelled against standards can be measured in a number of ways. Some systems seek to record changes in clients' perceptions, others systems use judgements based on evidence of changes in behaviour or the development of skills.

Q.1. Using the scenario below assess or score the supported employee using the examples of monitoring systems given on the next page.

Time keeping standard – 'The individual is able to be punctual'

You are supporting a WORKSTEP employee who is based with an external employer. This employee is due to start work each day at nine am, but on three or four days each week they arrive for work after nine. If this happens they stay later to make up for any lost working time. The employer indicates to you that it is important for the employee to arrive at work on time. When you raise this issue with the employee, they do not see arriving late as a problem as they often work in excess of their contracted hours by staying later at work. Overall the employee appears very happy with their work situation.

Use the example systems to assess the current situation:

System A ____ **System B** ____ **System C** ____ **System D** ____

In your discussion with the employee you highlight the importance of arriving on time to start work at nine am and set an objective that they will arrive at work for nine each day. At your next visit the issue with regards to timekeeping appears to have improved, they are arriving on time most days and the employer is pleased with this progress. However the client indicates that getting to work for nine is sometimes a problem for them, and they are less happy with their work situation.

Use the example systems again to assess any change:

System A ____ **System B** ____ **System C** ____ **System D** ____

Examples of monitoring systems based on clients' perceptions:

System A: Uses a scale to capture clients' feelings with regards to particular issues and offers a ten point scale for their responses e.g.

'How happy are you with your timekeeping at work?'

The client selects a score on a scale between 0 (not at all happy) to 10 (very happy).

System B: This asks about the frequency that clients' experience a problem or need to seek assistance e.g.

'Do you have a problem with your timekeeping at work?'

Score 1(very often), 2(often), 3(sometimes), 4(seldom), 5(never).

Examples of a monitoring system using judgements based on evidence:

System C: Makes an assessment of client abilities against the standard 'the individual is able to be punctual' using a six point scale:

1 – Client has no recognition of a problem or severe lack of skill to deal with an issue

2 – Client has recognised and accepted the need to address an issue but has not developed the necessary skills to do so

3 – Client involved in drawing up action plan to address issue and beginning to work towards demonstrating skills

4 – Client fully involved in evidencing growing competence

5 – Client has demonstrated competence over a period of time

6 – Client is deemed fully competent

System D: Makes an assessment of the evidence of client abilities against the standard 'the individual is able to be punctual':

1 – Little/No evidence

2 – Some evidence

3 – Good evidence

Q.2. When considering the 'perception based' systems what factors may have an influence on the response the client gives you.

Q.3. When considering the 'judgement based' systems what types of evidence could be used to support the scoring process.

Q.4. Summarise the pros and cons of perceptions or evidence based systems for monitoring distance travelled.

The group has an hour to complete these tasks, recording your discussions of questions 2 – 4 on the flip chart. Nominate a group member to feedback to the main group.

Appendix C

Provider workshop outputs

Potential indicators for monitoring distance travelled

Collectively the workshops included 12 discussion groups which aimed to identify appropriate indicators. These are listed below and the score given to each indicator represents how many of the groups raised that particular issue.

For example, all 12 groups cited personal hygiene as being an important indicator.

12	Personal hygiene	2	Transferable skills	1	Working under pressure
10	Travelling independently	2	Stress/anxiety management	1	Work/life balance
10	Self-motivation	2	Stamina	1	Work ethic
9	Confidence	2	Seeking supervision if required	1	Vocational profiling
9	Communication skills	2	Personal development (general welfare and social interest)	1	Using a telephone
7	Team working	2	Quality of work	1	Predictable/reliable behaviour which is consistent
7	Good timekeeping	2	Work based skills	1	Understanding own strengths
7	Basic literacy/ numeracy	2	Multi-tasking	1	Controlling temper
6	Social skills/ interpersonal skills	2	Managing personal issues	1	Understanding equal opps/rights
6	Self-esteem	2	Knowing what you want to do	1	Social interaction
6	Money management	2	Job related skills	1	Sustain attention
6	Good timekeeping and attendance	2	Job adaptability	1	Understanding colleagues strengths/weaknesses

6	Appearance/dress	2	Informal rules of the workplace	1	Social inclusion
5	Using initiative	2	Good appearance	1	Sickness reporting
5	Understanding health and safety issues	2	Flexibility	1	Routine
5	Reliability	2	Decision making/ making individual choices without third party involvement	1	Retention cases re-skilling
5	Interview skills	2	CV/application Skills	1	Retaining Information
5	Behaviour	2	Broader employability skills	1	Relating to others
4	Understanding working environment	1	Understanding medical conditions	1	Raise concerns/anxieties
4	Understanding job role	1	Know your limits/ changes required	1	Prioritising work requirements
4	Interaction with colleagues	1	IT Skills	1	Understands rules
4	Form filling	1	Internal support mechanisms	1	Occupational awareness
4	Following policies and procedures	1	Individual is aware of their own capability	1	Obsession with the job – not working outside hours
4	Attitude	1	Independent living skills	1	Motorskills – dexterity
4	Attendance	1	Health and well being	1	Managing disability/pain management
3	Quality Awareness – delivering standards and understanding what is required	1	General living skills	1	Loyalty
3	Taking and understanding instructions	1	Food hygiene	1	Learning routines
3	Relationship skills	1	Daily living skills	1	Lack of knowledge
3	Realism/realistic expectations of career	1	Customer service	1	Family involvement
3	Working independently	1	Crisis management	1	Debt management
3	Punctuality	1	Coping skills	1	Dealing with interruptions
3	Problem solving	1	Being able to tell the time	1	Consistency
3	Job searching	1	Attitudes to Authority	1	Concentration
3	Honesty	1	Assertiveness	1	Benefit dependency
3	Corporate appearance	1	Appropriate Speech	1	Being adaptable to new tasks
3	Commitment/desire to work	1	Accepting Responsibility	1	Attitude of the individual

3	Ability to achieve qualifications	1	Ability to do the job	1	Ability to accept criticism
2	Organisational skills – time management	1	Knowledge of employment as oppose to training or placement		
2	Understanding employment	1	Fear/lack of trust		

Appendix D

First draft Distance Travelled Monitoring System

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.					
Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work.					

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates they are making progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.	√				Employer reports client behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) with colleagues. Customer complaints have also been received. Observation of client in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they have no awareness of the impact of their conduct.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.		√			Employer reports that client behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Observation of client in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they are aware of the impact of their behaviour and the need to improve. Agreed objectives/actions for development plan.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.			√		Employer reports that client occasionally behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Discussion with supervisor confirms some behavioural difficulties, although highlight client is working hard with support of workplace 'buddy' to improve behaviour and incidents are decreasing in frequency.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.				√	Client routinely demonstrates appropriate behaviour in all work situations.
Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work. Controls temper. Accepts responsibility.				√	Client routinely demonstrates appropriate behaviour in all work situations.
Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work	√				Client is wearing soiled clothing for review meeting at work, and employer reports this happens quite frequently. Although client has little direct contact with external customers they occasionally have to cover for colleagues who do, so poor personal presentation is not acceptable. Discussion with client highlights they have no appreciation of these issues.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work		√			Client is wearing soiled clothing for review meeting at work, and employer reports this happens quite frequently. Employer indicates that poor personal presentation at work is not acceptable. During review discussion client accepts that their standards of dress are not the same as other workers, and also recognises requirement to improve. Objectives/ actions for development plan agreed.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work			√		Client is required to wear uniform for work, and supervisor reports that occasionally this has not been worn or is incomplete. However, following discussions with supervisor this is now occurring much less frequently.

Key behaviours (e.g.)	Typical indicator (e.g.)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Evidence
Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work				√	Client routinely demonstrates appropriate dress in all work situations and employer is completely satisfied with the client's personal presentation.

Appendix E

Letter to prospective pilot sites

Disability Employment Programme Evaluation Team
Department for Work and Pensions
Level 2
Kings Court
80 Hanover Way
Sheffield
S3 7UF

To: WORKSTEP Providers who have expressed an interest in piloting the Distance Travelled Tool.

Dear Colleague,

WORKSTEP distance travelled project

Thank you for your contribution to the recent WORKSTEP provider workshops, and for your expression of interest to be involved in the next stage of the project, the pilot phase, which will be carried out with ten organisations.

We are aiming to involve a range of providers in the pilot, in order to ensure we have a representative sample covering the range of provider organisations (both size and type of organisation) and the differing models of service delivery (placements and supported businesses).

In order to support the sampling process which will select those who will be involved, and to help us understand a provider perspective on some of the practical issues regarding the pilot process, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached short questionnaire.

Please return the questionnaire to Rebecca Law at the Centre for Public Policy (r.law@northumbria.ac.uk) by Tuesday 2nd January.

We hope to confirm which providers will be involved in the pilot early in the new year, and aim to let everyone know the outcome of the sampling process as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tim Conway', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tim Conway

Senior Research Officer – Disability Employment Programme Evaluation Team



Distance Travelled Pilot Questionnaire

Please could you take the time to complete this short questionnaire, and where appropriate offer details with your response. This information will be used help us select the sample of pilot providers.

Background information	
Name of your organisation and contact details for distance travelled project.	
How many contracted places do you have in total (and split between supported business and placements if appropriate)?	
What are your current occupancy levels (overall and split between supported business and placement if appropriate)?	
How many Support Workers do you have?	
Do Support Workers specialise in working with clients at different stages of the Programme? E.g. do some work only in pre-employment stage?	
What is the usual caseload size for Support Workers?	
How often do you aim to review development plans?	
Do you specialise in working with a particular client group?	
Are there any client groups that you do not work with?	
The Pilot	
Do you think that it would be feasible to use the system with all of your Support Workers during the pilot?	

Do you think that it would be feasible to use the system with all clients? E.g. those in supported businesses, placement, pre-work, etc.	
Are there any other issues you would like to raise about the project pilot?	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return it to:

r.law@northumbria.ac.uk or post to:

Rebecca Law
Centre for Public Policy
Lipman Building
Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST

Or fax to: 0191 243 7434

If you have any queries about the pilot project please do not hesitate to contact us.

<p>James Lowrey Senior Research Assistant Centre for Public Policy Northumbria University Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST</p> <p>Email: James.Lowrey@northumbria.ac.uk Telephone: 0191 2437438</p>	<p>Ann Purvis Senior Research Consultant Centre for Public Policy Northumbria University Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST</p> <p>Email: Ann.Purvis@northumbria.ac.uk Telephone: 0191 2437440</p>
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Appendix F

Letter to successful pilot sites

Disability Employment Programme Evaluation Team
Department for Work and Pensions
Level 2
Kings Court
80 Hanover Way
Sheffield
S3 7UF

To: WORKSTEP Providers selected for the Distance Travelled Pilot.

12 February 2007

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your support of the WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Pilot Project.

Following on from the WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Provider Workshops, and initial system development, we have reached the stage of piloting the distance travelled monitoring system. A large number of providers expressed an interest in being involved with the pilot, and to try and achieve a representative sample a number of selection criteria were taken into consideration, e.g. size of contract, type of provision and organisation, regional or national contract, geographical spread etc.

We are pleased to confirm that your organisation has been selected as one of the pilot providers, and look forward to working with you over the coming months.

We are holding a launch event, for all ten providers participating in the pilot, at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne on Tuesday 13th March. At this event we will introduce the WORKSTEP distance travelled system, provide training in its use, and present further details on the processes involved with the pilot.

We can offer places for three representatives from each pilot site, and would ask that wherever possible this should include your nominated project lead and staff who will use the system directly with WORKSTEP clients. More details on the venue for the launch event, and a booking form are attached. We would be grateful if you could complete and return this to the Centre for Public Policy as soon as possible.

We have allocated funding for each pilot provider of £2,500 to cover travel and associated expenses throughout the course of the pilot, which is due to run until July 2008. Further details on this will be available on the 13th March, although if you have any questions about this please do not hesitate to contact Ann Purvis (ann.purvis@northumbria.ac.uk) or James Lowrey (james.lowrey@northumbria.ac.uk) at the Centre for Public Policy.

Meanwhile and we look forward to meeting you in Newcastle on 13th March.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tim Conway', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Conway
Senior Research Officer

Appendix G

Pilot distance travelled system



WORKSTEP PILOT DISTANCE TRAVELLED SYSTEM

Version 1.1 February 2007

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1 GLOSSARY

WORKSTEP is a supported employment programme, funded by DWP, which aims to assist disabled people facing the most significant or complex barriers to finding and retaining work. The Programme delivers WORKSTEP support to disabled people and their employers through around 190 different service provider organisations. Given the range of service providers a number of different terms are used to describe people who are supported by the Programme and elements of service delivery. For the purposes of this document some of these terms have been standardised and are defined below. Definitions of the elements of the WORKSTEP distance travelled system are also included.

Customer – The person on the WORKSTEP Programme receiving support from a provider organisation.

Development Planning – Process for providing individually tailored support for WORKSTEP customers. The Development Plan should reflect, “participants’ [customers] abilities, aspirations and job goals. All supported employees in WORKSTEP must have an agreed Development Plan that is regularly reviewed and revised.”¹⁹

Distance Travelled – ‘A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled’²⁰ defines distance travelled as the “progress beneficiaries make in terms of achieving soft outcomes that lead towards sustained employment or associated hard outcomes”. Based on this definition distance travelled within WORKSTEP can be defined as “the progress supported employees make towards achieving outcomes that can lead to sustained open employment”.

Employer – The organisation that employs the WORKSTEP customer.

Evidence – Information collected and recorded to support the monitoring of customer progress in areas identified by Key behaviours (see Section 4.3.1).

Key Behaviour – Key behaviours identify the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment (see Section 3.2).

Monitoring Categories – The system used for scoring the evidence of progress in areas identified by the key behaviours (see Section 3.3).

Provider – An organisation funded by DWP to provide support to disabled people through the WORKSTEP Programme.

¹⁹ WORKSTEP Handbook for Providers (2005) Jobcentre Plus.

²⁰ A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document (2003) DWP.

Support Worker – The person from the provider organisation who undertakes customer review meetings and provides support to the customer on the WORKSTEP Programme.

Supported Business – A business established within the provider organisation to employ disabled people.

Supported Placement – Where the WORKSTEP customer is employed with a mainstream employer outside of the provider organisation.

Typical Indicator – Examples of the conduct and activities which are used to describe each key behaviour (see Section 3.2).

2 BACKGROUND

The WORKSTEP distance travelled system has been developed as part of a DWP research project, following on from the findings contained in the 'WORKSTEP Evaluation Case Studies'²¹. One of the recommendations in the report is the development of a system to monitor distance travelled by supported employees on the WORKSTEP Programme.

'Currently the only formal measure of supported employee progress is progression from the Programme to open employment. Given the long-term nature of support offered by WORKSTEP, many Contract Managers and providers felt that a mechanism for measuring progression within the Programme would also be valuable.

This could capture many of the personal and social benefits that supported employees value, in addition to progress with regards to work related skills and experience.

In this context 'distance travelled' would offer all stakeholders a measure of the distance a supported employee has travelled towards open employment and clearly demonstrate their readiness to move from the Programme once targets are reached. For those supported employees who may never achieve open employment it also offers clear evidence of their development and the positive impact of the Programme.

A degree of standardisation within development planning, to incorporate a distance travelled component, could offer the opportunity to measure in programme development and progress towards open employment. It is therefore recommended that further development and piloting of a tool to measure distance travelled is considered.'

Many programmes and projects which monitor distance travelled do so via adviser-customer interactions, with regular meetings taking place to establish and monitor the appropriate work, personal, and social outcomes for the customer. 'A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled'²² offers a range of examples of this process.

The WORKSTEP provider support worker should, therefore, be ideally placed to identify appropriate indicators of progress and incorporate the monitoring of distance travelled within the existing system of customer development plans and associated review meetings.

²¹ Purvis, A., Lowrey, J. and Dobbs, L. (2006) *WORKSTEP evaluation case studies: Exploring the design, delivery and performance of the WORKSTEP Programme*, DWP Research Report No. 348.

²² A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Guidance Document (2003) DWP.

With this in mind the WORKSTEP distance travelled system has been designed to slot into existing development planning offering a new approach to the process rather than an additional system. There are wide variations in the development planning process and the content and format of individual development plans used by provider organisations. Guidance on the way in which this system is integrated with existing systems is, therefore, not prescriptive.

This guide aims to offer an overview of the main features of the distance travelled system with more detail on the practical operation of the model. General advice and suggestions on how the process should fit with existing development and action planning, and providers' internal quality assurance processes is also offered, along with some guidance on how the system is introduced to customers. Providers will, therefore, need to review their current development planning processes and supporting paperwork to incorporate the distance travelled model described below. The monitoring forms presented in the appendices are basic templates that highlight the information that must be recorded. These templates can be adapted to fit with providers' existing development plans.

3 THE WORKSTEP DISTANCE TRAVELLED SYSTEM

3.1 Overview of the System

The WORKSTEP distance travelled system aims to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment. These skills and attributes are identified via a system of key behaviours and associated typical indicators.

The monitoring of progress itself is based on recorded evidence from the customer, their WORKSTEP provider and others (e.g. employer, training provider). This evidence is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels. Use of this scoring system over time will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled'.

The system is, therefore, primarily designed to monitor individual progress, and it is not expected that people need to achieve the highest level within the monitoring system²³, against all key behaviours, before they may be ready to move into open employment.

3.2 Key Behaviours and Typical Indicators

The table below highlights the key behaviours which the system uses to monitor individual progress. The framework of key behaviours was developed from the outputs of a series of 'Distance Travelled' workshops for WORKSTEP providers, and covers a wide range of issues.

The key behaviours are numbered 1-21 and the table separates them into four broad areas:

- Key skills for work
- Additional skills for work
- Behaviour and communication
- Personal development

The numbering/grouping of the key behaviours is presentational and does not suggest that any particular priority is attached to certain behaviours.

²³ See Section 3.3 **Level 5** – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Key behaviours are described by 'typical indicators' that offer examples of associated conduct and activities. **The typical indicators highlighted below do not aim to be totally comprehensive or exclusive, but aim to offer some reference points for evidence of progress related to that key behaviour.** Thus not all typical indicators highlighted will be relevant and some that are not listed may be included if they are appropriate. This offers the flexibility to use the system across a wide range of employment settings, with a diverse customer group.

It is important to acknowledge the diversity of the WORKSTEP customer group when reviewing progress using any distance travelled model. It is not appropriate to highlight limited progress where this could be addressed by reasonable adjustments that any employer is expected to make for disabled employees, or the support that may be available via Access to Work. This should be taken into consideration when reviewing whether a person demonstrates an appropriate level of competence for unsupported work.

It is not expected that every key behaviour will be appropriate for every customer and employment situation. As part of the development planning process the support worker will, jointly with their customer and where appropriate with the employer, select the appropriate key behaviours. The selection of key behaviours will initially focus on the areas of development required to obtain and maintain supported employment. Any areas highlighted as key requirements by the employer should be addressed as a priority.

Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, the number that can be addressed at any one time needs to be realistic and achievable. Prioritisation of the selected key behaviours into those which require immediate attention, and those which may be worked on at a later date, may, therefore, be helpful.

The agreed actions which relate to these prioritised key behaviours will then form part of the customers' objectives/action plan within their WORKSTEP development plan. Progress in each key behaviour will be monitored using relevant evidence, with the scoring system used to assess where a person is at different points in time, rather than comparing the progress of different people.

3.2.1. Table of Key Behaviours and Typical Indicators

Key Behaviour	Typical Indicators
Key skills for work	
1. Job seeking skills	Collects appropriate and relevant information about available jobs. Identifies skills that are important for work and appropriate for particular jobs. Displays a realistic expectation of employment and can match own skills to appropriate jobs. Has completed CV/application forms to required standard. Demonstrates an understanding of the interview process. Demonstrates appropriate understanding of and skills required for interview process.
2. Understand requirements of employment	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the requirements of employment (as opposed to training/ short term placement). Routinely complies with workplace policies and procedures (e.g. sickness reporting). Prioritises work requirements as appropriate.
3. Deliver requirements of employment	Demonstrates a clear understanding of job role. Routinely delivers work to required standard. Deals appropriately with work pressures.
4. Health and safety	Consistently demonstrates an understanding of the importance of safe working practices, in accordance with health and safety policy. Routinely demonstrates safe and responsible workplace behaviour.
5. Reliability	Attendance is consistent and appropriate to employer requirements. Demonstrates honesty at work.
6. Equal opportunities	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of workplace rights and responsibilities. Demonstrates an awareness of appropriate sources of help and support regarding equal opportunities issues. Additional skills for work

7. Time management	<p>Routinely attends work punctually, starting/finishing at required time.</p> <p>Routinely takes allocated work breaks of appropriate duration, at agreed times.</p> <p>Constructively manages time at work to appropriate standard.</p> <p>Routinely arranges external appointments outside of work time.</p> <p>Maintains work appropriate 'work/life balance'.</p>
8. Adaptability	<p>Demonstrates willingness to learn new tasks and skills as appropriate.</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to transfer existing skills when undertaking new tasks.</p> <p>Demonstrates appropriate flexibility when moving between tasks.</p>
9. Motivation	<p>Demonstrates enthusiasm and a positive attitude to work and training opportunities.</p> <p>Perseveres when setbacks are encountered.</p> <p>Routinely sustains required levels of activity and standards of work.</p>
10. Concentration	<p>Routinely sustains attention to complete work tasks/ training activities to required standard.</p> <p>Works through minor distractions, dealing appropriately with interruptions and returning to tasks promptly.</p>
11. Problem solving	<p>Makes and carries out routine decisions required by the job.</p> <p>Shows initiative and handles non-routine decisions appropriately, seeking assistance if required.</p>
Behaviour and communication	
12. Communication skills	<p>Behaves politely and uses appropriate greetings and partings.</p> <p>Routinely uses appropriate and effective communication skills.</p>
13. Appropriate behaviour	<p>Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work.</p>

14. Supervision	Routinely acknowledges and carries out supervisor's instructions, seeking appropriate clarification if required. Seeks assistance from supervisor when appropriate. Once tasks are learnt works with minimal supervision, and carries on working without supervisor present. Accepts and acts on corrective supervision as required.
15. Team working	Works alongside others and co-operates to complete tasks where required. Works without unduly distracting others or being unduly distracted. Demonstrates an appreciation of colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. Assists others where necessary.
Personal development	
16. Literacy and numeracy	Reads/writes to functional level required. Understands and uses written materials as appropriate. Demonstrates use of numerical skills as appropriate.
17. Self esteem/ confidence	Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and a sense of self worth. Has a positive opinion of own actions and capacities. Demonstrates an appropriate level of confidence when dealing with new situations, or meeting new people.
18. Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work.
19. Living skills	Demonstrates independent living skills where appropriate. Demonstrates ability to effectively manage personal finances. Maintains accommodation to a safe and acceptable standard.
20. Independent travel	Travels to work and deals with any unforeseen transport problems if they occur. Identifies, plans and executes journeys using the most suitable/appropriate mode of transport.
21. Health and well being	Displays appropriate understanding and management of condition/pain to maintain health and well being where achievable. Demonstrates ability to recognise when there is a need for support and to access it appropriately.

3.3 Monitoring Categories

The system monitors achievement and progress based on evidence from the customer, their WORKSTEP provider and others (e.g. employer, training provider). This evidence is used as the basis for scoring against the monitoring categories or levels described below. During the scoring process the support worker will exercise their judgement based on all of the evidence available, however, the process must involve joint discussions with the customer and where appropriate the employer.

The monitoring categories described below aim to highlight clear and distinct levels that are mutually exclusive.

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Within the context of the distance travelled system 'unsupported work' refers to open employment, where an employee is no longer supported by the WORKSTEP Programme. It does not indicate that the employee would have no support available to carry out their job.

4 USING THE SYSTEM

4.1 **Introducing the distance travelled system to WORKSTEP customers**

The distance travelled system should be introduced to customers as part of the WORKSTEP development planning process.

The first step will normally involve an initial discussion to consider customers' goals, where development is required, and to jointly agree an action plan. The support worker will explain that the system is one of the tools used to help the customer and the provider organisation work together. The system will be used to help them monitor their progress towards agreed objectives.

The customer should, as far as possible, be jointly engaged in all of the processes associated with the distance travelled system. This includes the selecting and prioritising of key behaviours, evaluation of the evidence of progress and action planning. This is vital to ensure that the customer feels some degree of control, ownership and participation in the process.

Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, it should be made clear that no one is expected to work on all of these areas at any one time. It may be helpful to initially prioritise just two or three areas for action, so that the process feels manageable.

It is also important for the customer to see the process as a positive one and discussions should identify their strengths in addition to areas for development. The system should not be used simply to identify areas of deficit, as this may undermine a customer's self-confidence. Similarly, situations where there is a regression in scores need to be handled sensitively.

It is essential that the process is not seen as threatening or competitive. The customer can be assured that the scoring of progress is never used to compare their progress with anyone else. The point of the process is not to achieve a particular score, but to understand what the score is describing with regards to customer progress or areas that require development. In this way it will help the customer and their support worker to identify the appropriate areas to work on.

As with all aspects of providers' contact with WORKSTEP customers the appropriate style, content and format for discussions and paperwork will need to be considered, and should be appropriate to the communication needs of the customer.

For example the language used in this guidance may require adaptation depending on levels of literacy and comprehension. One of the indicators for Key Behaviour 3, 'deliver requirements of employment', states 'routinely delivers work to required standard'. This may be more understandable if phrased as 'doing the work in the way we agreed when we talked with your supervisor.'

4.2 Selection of Key Behaviours

The next step involves discussions where the support worker and customer consider the key behaviours within the distance travelled system and select those which are appropriate for the customers' situation.

Whilst initially a large number of key behaviours may be selected, the number that can be addressed at any one time needs to be realistic and achievable. Prioritisation of the selected key behaviours into those that require immediate attention, and those which may be worked on at a later date, may, therefore, be helpful. The Key Behaviour Selection Record (Appendix 1) should highlight the key behaviours selected as areas for development (D) and those which are priorities (P). It should also record the rationale for this selection.

The initial focus for the selection of key behaviours will usually be on the areas of development required to obtain and maintain supported employment. Any areas highlighted as key requirements by the employer should be addressed as a priority.

It is not expected that every key behaviour will be appropriate for every customer and employment situation, and where this is the case it should be noted on the Key Behaviour Selection Record as not appropriate (N/A). A rationale for this judgement should also be recorded.

It is also possible there will be insufficient time during the initial discussions to assess the customers' position using all 21 key behaviours. Where this is the case the selection record should be completed using N (no opportunity), and these behaviours should be revisited at a later monitoring meeting.

Summary of recording categories for initial key behaviour selection:

- P – Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed as soon as possible
- D – Key behaviour is an area for development
- N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate
- N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

4.3 Baseline Assessment and Monitoring Progress

Once the key behaviours have been selected and prioritised, those highlighted for action are transferred onto a Baseline and Monitoring Record (Appendix 2). Based on the available evidence a baseline score is recorded using the monitoring categories highlighted below:

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Appendix 4 offers an example of the recording of evidence and use of the monitoring categories to score this recorded evidence for a range of scenarios where a customer is being monitored on using one of the key behaviours.

Part of the discussion reviewing the evidence and assigning a score for each key behaviour should also focus on the actions required to facilitate progress in this area. These actions should also be recorded and where necessary transferred to the objectives or action planning section within the customers' development plan. The key behaviours and baseline assessment score are also recorded on the Progress Summary Record (Appendix 3).

This process is repeated during ongoing review meetings and, over time, use of the scoring system will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled' against selected key behaviours on the Progress Summary Record (Appendix 3).

WORKSTEP customer reviews take place at a minimum twice a year and the distance travelled system should be used at every review meeting. It is likely that providers will undertake reviews more frequently in the pre-work stage of the Programme, and in this situation the system will be used more regularly and should fit with normal development planning processes at this stage of the Programme.

As progress is achieved within the priority areas, then other key behaviours may be added to the baseline review and monitoring process. However, the overall number of key behaviours that can be worked on at any one time needs to remain realistic and achievable.

During the ongoing review of progress it is also important to bear in mind that the System is primarily designed to monitor individual progress, and it is not expected that people need to achieve level 5 against all key behaviours, before they may be ready to move into open employment.

4.3.1 Use of and Recording Evidence

The monitoring of progress or distance travelled is based on recorded evidence, which is used as the basis for scoring using the monitoring categories. Every score allocated against a particular key behaviour should be based on judgements which consider all of the available evidence. It is, therefore, *essential* to record all of the relevant evidence so that scoring is robust and open to scrutiny and verification.

Evidence needs to be sufficient to justify the scoring, although the collection of evidence is not an end in itself and the emphasis should be on the quality of evidence rather than the quantity. E.g. where witness statements are used they should be verified as appropriate.

As stated above it is important that the customer should, as far as possible, be jointly engaged in the process, including the collection and evaluation of evidence. However, the final judgement on the evidence and scoring lies with the support worker. The distance travelled system does not detract from or replace the skills and judgements of support workers. It aims to offer an approach that can improve their ability to identify and focus on priority areas for development, and may offer an opportunity to highlight the most effective ways of working with customers.

Evidence can be obtained in many ways including direct observation, discussions on the telephone, face to face discussions, witness statements (from employers, trainers, co-workers etc), the completion of paperwork (application forms etc), records of attendance, timekeeping and training.

It is helpful to seek evidence from a range of sources, for example directly from the customer, from employers, supervisors, trainers, etc. This will offer a range of perspectives and an opportunity to cross check evidence.

It is likely that supported placement employers will not usually be responsible for the systematic recording of evidence, and the evidence they supply will take the form of witness statements. However, there is no reason for the employer not to take a more proactive role in the collection and recording of evidence if they are willing to do so. Within a supported business it is probable that the employer would assume this more involved role.

4.4 System administration

The WORKSTEP distance travelled system has been designed to slot into existing development planning. As there are wide variations in the development planning process and the content and format of individual development plans used by provider organisations the format for monitoring templates (Appendices 1-3) is not prescriptive. However, the information recorded on the templates is essential for the operation of the system so that providers can either:

- review and adapt existing development planning paperwork to incorporate the Distance Travelled monitoring requirements; or
- adopt the monitoring templates offered in Appendices 1-3.

4.5 Summary of process

The key stages of the distance travelled monitoring process are highlighted below:

1. Introduce customer to the WORKSTEP distance travelled system.
2. Select and prioritise key behaviours – Key Behaviour Record (Appendix 1).
3. Baseline assessment of selected key behaviours – Baseline and Monitoring Record (Appendix 2).
4. Ongoing monitoring – Baseline and Monitoring Record, transfer details to Progress Summary Sheet (Appendix 2 and 3).
5. As progress is achieved within the priority areas other key behaviours can be added to the baseline assessment and monitoring process.

4.6 Quality Assurance

Existing provider organisation systems for the internal review and verification of development planning processes should be adapted to ensure that these incorporate the distance travelled element of the process. For example supervisory observation and feedback to support workers regarding their review meetings with customers, routine peer review and discussion of development plans etc.

Continuity of contact between customer and support worker will be important when utilising the distance travelled system. Where providers adopt the approach in which support workers specialise in working with customers at various stages of the Programme e.g. pre-work/in-work, any change of support worker should be accompanied by a thorough handover. This should ensure that full and precise details of the customers' situation are passed on to the new worker.

APPENDIX 1: WORKSTEP DISTANCE TRAVELLED KEY BEHAVIOUR SELECTION RECORD

Customer Name:		Support Worker:		Date:
Key Behaviour	Typical Indicators	Category	Evidence/Rationale	
Key skills for work				
1. Job seeking skills	Collects appropriate and relevant information about available jobs. Identifies skills that are important for work and appropriate for particular jobs. Displays a realistic expectation of employment and can match own skills to appropriate jobs. Has completed CV/application forms to required standard. Demonstrates an understanding of the interview process. Demonstrates appropriate understanding of and skills required for interview process.			
2. Understand requirements of employment	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the requirements of employment (as opposed to training/short term placement). Routinely complies with workplace policies and procedures (e.g. sickness reporting). Prioritises work requirements as appropriate.			
3. Deliver requirements of employment	Demonstrates a clear understanding of job role. Routinely delivers work to required standard. Deals appropriately with work pressures.			
4. Health and safety	Consistently demonstrates an understanding of the importance of safe working practices, in accordance with health and safety policy. Routinely demonstrates safe and responsible workplace behaviour.			
5. Reliability	Attendance is consistent and appropriate to employer requirements. Demonstrates honesty at work.			
6. Equal opportunities	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of workplace rights and responsibilities. Demonstrates an awareness of appropriate sources of help and support regarding equal opportunities issues.			

Selection categories

P – Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed immediately

D – Key behaviour is an area for development

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Additional skills for work		
7. Time management	Routinely attends work punctually, starting/finishing at required time. Routinely takes allocated work breaks of appropriate duration, at agreed times. Constructively manages time at work to appropriate standard. Routinely arranges external appointments outside of work time. Maintains work appropriate 'work/life balance'.	
8. Adaptability	Demonstrates willingness to learn new tasks and skills as appropriate. Demonstrates an ability to transfer existing skills when undertaking new tasks. Demonstrates appropriate flexibility when moving between tasks.	
9. Motivation	Demonstrates enthusiasm and a positive attitude to work and training opportunities. Perseveres when setbacks are encountered. Routinely sustains required levels of activity and standards of work.	
10. Concentration	Routinely sustains attention to complete work tasks/training activities to required standard. Works through minor distractions, dealing appropriately with interruptions and returning to tasks promptly.	
11. Problem solving	Makes and carries out routine decisions required by the job. Shows initiative and handles non-routine decisions appropriately, seeking assistance if required.	
Behaviour and communication		
12. Communication skills	Behaves politely and uses appropriate greetings and partings. Routinely uses appropriate and effective communication skills.	
13. Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work.	

Selection categories

P – Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed immediately

D – Key behaviour is an area for development

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

14. Supervision	Routinely acknowledges and carries out supervisor's instructions, seeking appropriate clarification if required. Seeks assistance from supervisor when appropriate. Once tasks are learnt works with minimal supervision, and carries on working without supervisor present. Accepts and acts on corrective supervision as required.		
15. Team working	Works alongside others and co-operates to complete tasks where required. Works without unduly distracting others or being unduly distracted. Demonstrates an appreciation of colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. Assists others where necessary.		
Personal Development			
16. Literacy and numeracy	Reads/writes to functional level required. Understands and uses written materials as appropriate. Demonstrates use of numerical skills as appropriate.		
17. Self esteem/confidence	Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and a sense of self worth. Has a positive opinion of own actions and capacities. Demonstrates an appropriate level of confidence when dealing with new situations, or meeting new people.		
18. Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work.		
19. Living skills	Demonstrates independent living skills where appropriate. Demonstrates ability to effectively manage personal finances. Maintains accommodation to a safe and acceptable standard.		

Selection categories

P – Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed immediately

D – Key behaviour is an area for development

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

20. Independent travel	Travels to work and deals with any unforeseen transport problems if they occur. Identifies, plans and executes journeys using the most suitable/ appropriate mode of transport.		
21. Health and well being	Displays appropriate understanding and management of condition/ pain to maintain health and well being where achievable. Demonstrates ability to recognise when there is a need for support and to access it appropriately.		

Selection categories

P – Key behaviour is a priority area, and must be addressed immediately

D – Key behaviour is an area for development

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

APPENDIX 2: WORKSTEP DISTANCE TRAVELLED BASELINE AND MONITORING RECORD

Customer Name:			Support Worker:		Date:
Key Behaviour	Level	Evidence	Action		
Behaviour					
Behaviour					
Behaviour					
Behaviour					
Behaviour					
Behaviour					

- Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this
- Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this
- Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
- Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
- Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

APPENDIX 3: WORKSTEP DISTANCE TRAVELLED PROGRESS SUMMARY RECORD

Customer Name:		Support Worker:									
	Baseline Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....	Review Date.....
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											
BEHAVIOUR											

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

APPENDIX 4: EXAMPLE OF SCORED EVIDENCE

The example below highlights the recording of evidence and use of the monitoring categories to score this recorded evidence for a range of scenarios, where a customer is being monitored on using the 'appropriate behaviour' Key Behaviour.

Key Behaviour	Level	Evidence
Appropriate Behaviour	1	Employer reports customer behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) with colleagues. Observation of customer in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they have no awareness of the impact of their conduct.
Appropriate Behaviour	2	Employer reports that customer behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Observation of customer in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they are aware of the impact of their behaviour and the need to improve.
Appropriate Behaviour	3	Employer reports that customer still behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Discussion with supervisor confirms some behavioural difficulties, although highlights that customer is working hard with support of workplace 'buddy' to improve behaviour and incidents are beginning to decrease in frequency. Customer finds support of 'buddy' helpful and feels they are making progress.
Appropriate Behaviour	4	Employer reports that customer occasionally behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Supervisor states customer has made good progress in this area and incidents are now quite infrequent. Customer feels they have made progress and they rarely argue with colleagues although they still seek occasional support from their workplace 'buddy'.
Appropriate Behaviour	5	Employer reports that customer routinely demonstrates appropriate behaviour in all work situations.

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Appendix H

Pilot launch event

WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Pilot Providers Workshop
Room 121, Lipman Building, Northumbria University
Newcastle 13th March 2007

Timetable

9.30 – 10.00	Coffee and registration
10.00 – 10.30	Introduction/DWP perspective
10.30 – 11.00	WORKSTEP distance travelled system
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee
11.15 – 12.15	Group work – Using the distance travelled approach
12.15 – 12.30	Feedback session
12.30 – 1.15	Lunch
1.15 – 2.00	Proposals for pilot process
2.00 – 3.00	Group Discussions/Action Planning – How will the Distance Travelled Approach work within our organisation?
3.00 – 3.30	Review of the day/next steps
3.30	Close

Workshop Preparation:

1. Read the document entitled 'WORKSTEP Pilot distance travelled system'.
2. As preparation for the group work 'Using the distance travelled approach', all provider staff should think of 3 customers that they have worked with. One from the pre-work stage of the programme, one from in-work (placement), and one from, where appropriate, in-work (supported business). This will ensure that we can work through using the distance travelled approach with relevant scenarios.

WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Pilot Providers Workshop

The distance travelled approach: Questionnaire

1. It is important that the customer is engaged with the processes associated with the distance travelled approach.

Agree/Disagree

2. When using the distance travelled approach you must monitor customer progress against all 21 Key Behaviours.

Agree/Disagree

3. The Typical Behaviours highlighted within the Key Behaviours Framework offer a comprehensive guide to the evidence of progress.

Agree/Disagree

4. When monitoring customer progress the selection of a monitoring level is based on the opinion of the support worker.

Agree/Disagree

5. When collecting evidence the emphasis should be on the quality rather than the quantity.

Agree/Disagree

6. It is important to document evidence which has been used to inform judgements about the monitoring of customer progress.

Agree/Disagree

7. When using the distance travelled approach within development planning it is important to concentrate solely on areas for improvement.

Agree/Disagree

Discussion Group 1

Using the distance travelled approach

This is a practical group work session which involves using the WORKSTEP Distance Travelled system to review and assess evidence based on your experience of WORKSTEP customers.

Working in small groups of three, each person should in turn describe the case of a WORKSTEP customer that they have worked with. The two other group members should use the four groups of Key Behaviours and Typical Indicators²⁴ to ask questions about the customer in order to collect and record relevant evidence.

Based on this evidence they should agree a monitoring level using the monitoring categories:

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Where a Key Behaviour is not appropriate for that customer indicate N/A on the monitoring form, or N if there was no evidence to assess this Key Behaviour.

Record both the level and evidence used when making your judgements on the Baseline and Monitoring record sheet. Remember you are aiming to objectively collect and assess evidence rather than record opinions.

Within this session work through as many of these groups of key behaviours as you are able to and aim to discuss cases from a range of WORKSTEP customers including those in the pre work phase, those who are in supported placements and those in supported businesses.

Following this session there will be an opportunity to feedback on your experience of collecting, recording and reviewing evidence to make judgements about the appropriate monitoring level. You may find it helpful to make a note of any questions or comments from this exercise to raise during this feedback session.

²⁴ Key skills for work, Additional skills for work, Behaviour and communication, Personal development.

Key skills for work		Category/ Level	Evidence/Rationale
1. Job seeking skills	Collects appropriate and relevant information about available jobs. Identifies skills that are important for work and appropriate for particular jobs. Displays a realistic expectation of employment and can match own skills to appropriate jobs. Has completed CV/application forms to required standard. Demonstrates an understanding of the interview process. Demonstrates appropriate understanding of and skills required for interview process.		
2. Understand requirements of employment	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the requirements of employment (as opposed to training/short term placement). Routinely complies with workplace policies and procedures (e.g. sickness reporting). Prioritises work requirements as appropriate.		
3. Deliver requirements of employment	Demonstrates a clear understanding of job role. Routinely delivers work to required standard. Deals appropriately with work pressures.		
4. Health and safety	Consistently demonstrates an understanding of the importance of safe working practices, in accordance with health and safety policy. Routinely demonstrates safe and responsible workplace behaviour.		
5. Reliability	Attendance is consistent and appropriate to employer requirements. Demonstrates honesty at work.		
6. Equal opportunities	Demonstrates an appropriate understanding of workplace rights and responsibilities. Demonstrates an awareness of appropriate sources of help and support regarding equal opportunities issues.		

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Additional skills for work		Category/ Level	Evidence/Rationale
7. Time management	Routinely attends work punctually, starting/finishing at required time. Routinely takes allocated work breaks of appropriate duration, at agreed times. Constructively manages time at work to appropriate standard. Routinely arranges external appointments outside of work time. Maintains work appropriate 'work/life balance'.		
8. Adaptability	Demonstrates willingness to learn new tasks and skills as appropriate. Demonstrates an ability to transfer existing skills when undertaking new tasks. Demonstrates appropriate flexibility when moving between tasks.		
9. Motivation	Demonstrates enthusiasm and a positive attitude to work and training opportunities. Perseveres when setbacks are encountered. Routinely sustains required levels of activity and standards of work.		
10. Concentration	Routinely sustains attention to complete work tasks/training activities to required standard. Works through minor distractions, dealing appropriately with interruptions and returning to tasks promptly.		
11. Problem solving	Makes and carries out routine decisions required by the job. Shows initiative and handles non-routine decisions appropriately, seeking assistance if required.		

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this
Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this
Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Behaviour and communication		Category/ Level	Evidence/Rationale
12. Communication skills	Behaves politely and uses appropriate greetings and partings. Routinely uses appropriate and effective communication skills.		
13. Appropriate behaviour	Consistent and predictable adult behaviour that is appropriate to work.		
14. Supervision	Routinely acknowledges and carries out supervisor's instructions, seeking appropriate clarification if required. Seeks assistance from supervisor when appropriate. Once tasks are learnt works with minimal supervision, and carries on working without supervisor present. Accepts and acts on corrective supervision as required.		
15. Team working	Works alongside others and co-operates to complete tasks where required. Works without unduly distracting others or being unduly distracted. Demonstrates an appreciation of colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. Assists others where necessary.		

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work

N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer

N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Personal Development		Category/ Level	Evidence/Rationale
16. Literacy and numeracy	Reads/writes to functional level required. Understands and uses written materials as appropriate. Demonstrates use of numerical skills as appropriate.		
17. Self esteem/ confidence	Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and a sense of self worth. Has a positive opinion of own actions and capacities. Demonstrates an appropriate level of confidence when dealing with new situations, or meeting new people.		
18. Personal presentation	Personal appearance/dress and levels of personal hygiene appropriate to work.		
19. Living skills	Demonstrates independent living skills where appropriate. Demonstrates ability to effectively manage personal finances. Maintains accommodation to a safe and acceptable standard.		
20. Independent travel	Travels to work and deals with any unforeseen transport problems if they occur. Identifies, plans and executes journeys using the most suitable/ appropriate mode of transport.		
21. Health and well being	Displays appropriate understanding and management of condition/ pain to maintain health and well being where achievable. Demonstrates ability to recognise when there is a need for support and to access it appropriately.		

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this
Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this
Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work
N/A – Key behaviour is not appropriate for the customer N – No opportunity to assess this key behaviour

Example of Scored Evidence

The example below highlights the recording of evidence and use of the monitoring categories to score this recorded evidence for a range of scenarios, where a client is being monitored on using the 'appropriate behaviour' key indicator.

Key Indicator	Level	Evidence
Appropriate Behaviour	1	Employer reports client behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) with colleagues. Customer complaints have also been received. Observation of client in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they have no awareness of the impact of their conduct.
Appropriate Behaviour	2	Employer reports that client behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Observation of client in workplace confirms behavioural difficulties, although review discussion highlights they are aware of the impact of their behaviour and the need to improve. Agreed objectives/actions for development plan.
Appropriate Behaviour	3	Employer reports that client still behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Discussion with supervisor confirms some behavioural difficulties, although highlights that client is working hard with support of workplace 'buddy' to improve behaviour and incidents are beginning to decrease in frequency. Client finds support of 'buddy' helpful and feels they are making progress.
Appropriate Behaviour	4	Employer reports that client occasionally behaves inappropriately (argues/temper tantrums) towards colleagues. Supervisor states client has made good progress in this area and incidents are now quite infrequent. Client feels they have made progress and they rarely argue with colleagues although they still seek occasional support from their workplace 'buddy'.
Appropriate Behaviour	5	Client routinely demonstrates appropriate behaviour in all work situations.

Discussion Group 2

Using the distance travelled approach in your Organisation

This session offers the opportunity for pilot providers to consider, with their colleagues, how the distance travelled system will operate within their organisation. Organisations are not expected to complete work on all of the tasks highlighted below, although you will be asked by one of the facilitators for some initial feedback towards the end of the session.

System Development

The distance travelled system has a number of key elements that need to be incorporated into existing development plans.

Task 1:

a) Consider how the distance travelled system will be incorporated within your existing development plans.

b) Consider how long it will take to revise your development plans for use in the pilot, and agree the date when CPP will receive copies.

Using the System

The aim of the project is to use the pilot system with 600 WORKSTEP customers; this is approximately 60 per provider organisation. Support workers rather than customers should be selected to pilot the system, and where providers have mixed provision they should consider how the system is going to be used within both their supported business and their placement provision.

Task 2:

Consider how the system will be used within your organisation, and how many support workers and customers will be involved in the pilot.

Monitoring and Reviews

Providers are requested to nominate a lead officer who will be the point of contact throughout the pilot. Regular monitoring will take place during the pilot and providers will also be paired with a 'buddy' organisation. The administration of these processes is the responsibility of the lead officer.

There are a number of different ways in which the 'buddy' process can operate; meetings to discuss the distance travelled system, review meeting observations, telephone discussions, and reviews of paperwork.

Task 3:

a) Agree who will be the lead officer for the pilot and consider the monitoring process and how monitoring feedback sheets will be completed and sent to CPP.

b) Consider the proposed 'buddy' system, and based on the options outlined in the presentation discuss the pros and cons of the different approaches. Agree how you would like this to operate with you buddy site.

Appendix I

Pilot monitoring form

Provider Name:			Support Worker:		
Customer Code:					
Age:	16-19		20-29		30-39
	40-49		50-59		60+
Employment Status:	Pre-work			In-work (placement)	
	In-work (supported business)			Retention	
Time on Programme:	Up to 6 months		7-12 months		1-3 years
	4-6 years		7-9 years		10 years +
Impairment:	Condition restricting mobility		Visual Impairment		Deaf/hard of hearing
	Speech Impairment		Long-term medical condition		Learning disability
	Mental health condition		Neurological condition		Other
Customer Feedback:					
Did the customer understand the distance travelled process?					
Did the customer understand the distance travelled system?					
Did the customer express any views on the system?					
Any other comments?					
Employer Feedback:					
Did the employer understand the distance travelled system?					
Did the employer express any views on the system?					
Any other comments?					
Support Worker Feedback:					
Is the structure of the system workable?					
Are there any issues with regards to key behaviours, indicators, and monitoring levels?					
Any other issues?					

Appendix J

Interim review

WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Pilot Review
Room 121 Lipman Building, Northumbria University
Tuesday 22nd January 2008

09.30 - 10.00	Coffee & Registration
10.00 – 10.30	Introductions, overview of the day and interim feedback from the Research team
10.30 – 11.00	Provider feedback – What has gone well and what lessons have been learned? Short presentations plus questions
11.00 – 12.00	Evidence Group Work Session
12.00 – 1.00	Lunch
1.00 – 2.00	Monitoring Progress Group Work Session
2.00 – 2.30	Provider feedback – What has gone well and what lessons have been learned? Short presentations plus questions
2.30 – 3.00	Plenary session – ‘What else should we build into lessons learned?’
3.00	Next steps/close

Workshop Preparation

The group work sessions will review what has worked well, what could be improved and what would be useful to add to the guidance. We are aiming to capture any specific recommendations for change you may have, along with examples from your experience of using the system that could be added to guidance document. It would be helpful if you could come prepared to discuss these issues and with any relevant examples you feel it would be useful to share. This could include copies of paperwork, examples of the types of evidence you find useful and strategies you adopt during monitoring meetings with WORKSTEP customers.

Workshop session 1 – What have we learned about using evidence?

Each group has 45 minutes to discuss what you have learned about gathering evidence:

- what has worked well?
- what could be improved?
- what would be useful to add to the current guidance? (copy below)

Please use the flip chart paper to capture any specific recommendations for change and examples from your experiences that could be added to the guidance document. Nominate someone from the group to give brief feedback to the main group.

Pilot system guidance section 4.3.1 on Use of and Recording Evidence

The monitoring of progress or distance travelled is based on recorded evidence, which is used as the basis for scoring using the monitoring categories. Every score allocated against a particular key behaviour should be based on judgements which consider all of the available evidence. It is, therefore, *essential* to record all of the relevant evidence so that scoring is robust and open to scrutiny and verification.

Evidence needs to be sufficient to justify the scoring, although the collection of evidence is not an end in itself and the emphasis should be on the quality of evidence rather than the quantity. E.g. where witness statements are used they should be verified as appropriate.

As stated above it is important that the customer should, as far as possible, be jointly engaged in the process, including the collection and evaluation of evidence. However, the final judgement on the evidence and scoring lies with the support worker. The distance travelled system does not detract from or replace the skills and judgements of support workers. It aims to offer an approach that can improve their ability to identify and focus on priority areas for development, and may offer an opportunity to highlight the most effective ways of working with customers.

Evidence can be obtained in many ways including direct observation, discussions on the telephone, face to face discussions, witness statements (from employers, trainers, co-workers etc), the completion of paperwork (application forms etc), records of attendance, timekeeping and training.

It is helpful to seek evidence from a range of sources, for example directly from the customer, from employers, supervisors, trainers etc. This will offer a range of perspectives and an opportunity to cross check evidence.

It is likely that supported placement employers will not usually be responsible for the systematic recording of evidence, and the evidence they supply will take the form of witness statements. However, there is no reason for the employer not to take a more proactive role in the collection and recording of evidence if they are willing to do so. Within a supported business it is probable that the employer would assume this more involved role.

Appendix 4 from system guidance, offering an example of the recording of evidence and use of the monitoring categories to score this recorded evidence for a range of scenarios where a customer is being monitored on using one of the key behaviours, is attached. (See Appendix H – Pilot Launch Event above).

Workshop Session 2 - What have we learned about monitoring progress?

Each group has 45 minutes to discuss what you have learned about monitoring progress:

- what has worked well?
- what could be improved?
- what would be useful to add to the current guidance? (copy below)

Please use the flip chart paper to capture any specific recommendations for change and examples from your experiences that could be added to the guidance document. Nominated someone from the group to give brief feedback to the main group.

Pilot system guidance sections 3.3 Monitoring Categories and 4.3 Monitoring Progress

The system monitors achievement and progress based on evidence from the customer, their WORKSTEP provider and others (e.g. employer, training provider). This evidence is used as the basis for scoring against the monitoring categories or levels described below. During the scoring process the support worker will exercise their judgement based on all of the evidence available, however, the process must involve joint discussions with the customer and where appropriate the employer.

The monitoring categories described below aim to highlight clear and distinct levels that are mutually exclusive.

Level 1 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work and has no recognition of this.

Level 2 – Individual lacks the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work although they recognise the need to address this.

Level 3 – Individual demonstrates signs of initial progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 4 – Individual demonstrates they are making sustained progress to develop the appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Level 5 – Individual routinely demonstrates appropriate level of competence required for unsupported work.

Within the context of the distance travelled system 'unsupported work' refers to open employment, where an employee is no longer supported by the WORKSTEP Programme. It does not indicate that the employee would have no support available to carry out their job.

Monitoring Progress

Once the key behaviours have been selected and prioritised, those highlighted for action are transferred onto a Baseline and Monitoring Record. Based on the available evidence a baseline score is recorded using the monitoring categories.

Part of the discussion reviewing the evidence and assigning a score for each key behaviour should also focus on the actions required to facilitate progress in this area. These actions should also be recorded and where necessary transferred to the objectives or action planning section within the customers' development plan. The key behaviours and baseline assessment score are also recorded on the Progress Summary Record.

This process is repeated during ongoing review meetings and, over time, use of the scoring system will monitor individual progress or 'distance travelled' against selected key behaviours on the Progress Summary Record.

WORKSTEP customer reviews take place at a minimum twice a year and the distance travelled system should be used at every review meeting. It is likely that providers will undertake reviews more frequently in the pre-work stage of the Programme, and in this situation the system will be used more regularly and should fit with normal development planning processes at this stage of the Programme.

As progress is achieved within the priority areas, then other key behaviours may be added to the baseline review and monitoring process. However, the overall number of key behaviours that can be worked on at any one time needs to remain realistic and achievable.

During the ongoing review of progress it is also important to bear in mind that the System is primarily designed to monitor individual progress, and it is not expected that people need to achieve level 5 against all key behaviours, before they may be ready to move into open employment.

Appendix 4 from system guidance, offering an example of the recording of evidence and use of the monitoring categories to score this recorded evidence for a range of scenarios where a customer is being monitored on using one of the key behaviours, is enclosed.

Appendix K

Provider customer consent form



Agreement to Participate in the WORKSTEP Distance Travelled Pilot

The WORKSTEP Distance Travelled pilot aims to monitor the progress of people on the WORKSTEP Programme in developing the skills and attributes required to secure and sustain supported employment and, where appropriate, move into unsupported employment.

The monitoring of progress itself is based on recorded evidence from the customer, their WORKSTEP provider and others (e.g. employer, training provider). This evidence is used as the basis for scoring against a series of monitoring categories or levels. Use of this scoring system over time will monitor individual progress or ‘distance travelled’.

By signing this agreement you are willing to participate in the pilot. All information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of the pilot and is subject to the Data Protection Act.

Client.....date.....

Host Employer.....date.....

MTIB..... date.....

Appendix L

WORKSTEP eligibility criteria

Taken from the DWP WORKSTEP Handbook for Providers (2008)

3.2 WORKSTEP eligibility & suitability defined

For a disabled person to be eligible for WORKSTEP there **must be evidence** that this is the most appropriate option for them at this time. Any candidate for WORKSTEP must be disabled, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This Act defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

The individual must be at least 16 years of age, to enter the WORKSTEP Programme and there is no upper age limit other than that which may be defined by the employer. However, they must abide by the employers existing policy on the age range of recruitment.

All eligible people must be disabled, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This Act defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

In addition, eligible people must also fall within one of the following groups of people who are:

- on Incapacity Benefit and/or NI credits only (including Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support); or
- on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and/or NI Credits only, for 6 months or more in a current or ‘linked’ jobseeking period (for more information on ‘Linked Jobseeking Periods’ see ***note** below); or
- on JSA and/or NI Credits only, for less than 6 months but have been in receipt of Incapacity Benefit immediately before claiming JSA; or

- a former supported employee who has progressed but needs to return to the programme within two years or has left for other reasons and returns within one year; or
- currently in work but at serious risk of losing their job as a result of disability, even after the employer has made all reasonable adjustments and considered other available support options; or
- a recent/prospective education leaver who does not fall within the groups above, but for whom there is clear evidence of a need for support in work.

(Typically the person will have stayed in education for an extended period and evidence to support their eligibility may be available from periods of work experience etc.)

***NOTE:**

Jobseeking Periods

When a customer makes a claim to JSA, the period of the effective claim is known as the Jobseeking Period (JSP).

A JSP is defined as any period of one or more days, known as effective days, when the customer satisfies or is treated as satisfying the entitlement conditions for JSA.

Linking Periods

Two or more Jobseeking Periods (JSP) can be treated as one JSP when they are separated by a period comprising of:

- any period of no more than 12 weeks;*
- two JSPs, which are treated as a single JSP;*
- a Linked Period;*
- any period of no more than 12 weeks falling between;*
- two linked periods; or*
- a JSP and a linked period;*
- a period in respect of a client who is on jury service only.*

Further information can be found in the JSA claims guide.

Suitability

Jobcentre Plus advisers [as well as those providers able to establish eligibility themselves] are required to ensure that WORKSTEP places are made available to those people who are both eligible and most in need of support of this kind (i.e. suitable).

Suitable candidates for WORKSTEP –

- experience complex work-related barriers arising primarily from disability; AND
- have barriers in work which cannot be overcome through workplace adjustments required under the Disability Discrimination Act and/or Access to Work support; AND
- need longer-term support in work as well as help with finding work.

In addition, recent/prospective education leavers will typically have stayed in education for an extended period, and evidence to support their eligibility may be available from periods of work experience etc.

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