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**New Deal and Minority Ethnic Young People:
Training, employment and integration?**

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**

**University of Warwick, Department of Sociology
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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Warwick. It is entirely my own work, except where other authors have been referred to and acknowledged in the text. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author, and in no way represent the views of the University of Warwick. It has not previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other University.

Dedication

For Trish, Patrick Jr. and Phoebe

and

In memory of my Mother

Abstract

New Deal for Young People was hailed as the Labour government's 'flagship' initiative when it was introduced nationally in April 1998. The programme promised to help young people who have been unemployed and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance to find work and improve their prospects of gaining and sustaining employment. It is especially pertinent to young people from minority ethnic groups who have been identified as having an increased tendency to be unemployed. However, the government's expressed intention to bring about parity of job outcomes for minority ethnic young people has not been matched with any real commitment, nor has it been matched at local level by the Employment Service as well as employers with changes required to improve institutional procedures and practices for the delivery of the programme.

This thesis presents the findings of research conducted in Southern Derbyshire. Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it examines the perspectives and experiences of young people from minority ethnic groups as they pass through the various stages of New Deal, including work-placements. It argues that young people from these groups have not benefited from the programme to the same extent as their White counterparts.

New Deal and Minority Ethnic Young People:

Training, employment and integration?

Preface

Background to the introduction of Labour's New Deal for Young People

One month after winning the 1997 general election, Britain's new Labour Prime Minister announced that the "greatest challenge" his government faced was "to refashion our institutions to bring the new workless class back into society and into useful work" (Blair, 1997: 4). The main objective of what he called the "Welfare to Work Government" is to "attack unemployment and break the spiral of escalating spending on social security" (Labour Party, 1997: 7). This is to be achieved by securing "high and stable levels of growth and employment" and by creating a modern welfare state that provides effective assistance to enable people to move from benefits into work (House of Commons, 1997, col 304; The Independent, 11 May 1997: 2).

Another aim of "Welfare to Work" as it was quickly christened, is to end the 'dependency' culture both by improving the employability of those out of work and by imposing an effective time limit on continuous benefit entitlement. According to Peck and Theodore (1999) 'passive' welfare regimes are accused of perpetuating poverty, eroding the work ethic and disrupting flexible work patterns, meanwhile, policy solutions are formulated in terms of 'active' benefit systems, labour-market inclusion and the extensive deployment of welfare-to-

work initiatives. At the heart of New Labour's welfare to work strategy is a dual offensive on jobs and welfare reform, framed not in terms of the old vocabulary of job creation, demand-side intervention and full employment, but instead in the new language of combating 'dependency', enforcing 'rights and responsibilities' and, above all, incentivising work (Ellwood, 1988; Murraray, 1990). The objective of New Labour's strategy, in the words of Frank Fields, then Minister of State for Social Security, is to remake the benefit system so it becomes a "life raft taking people back into work rather than...a sink into which they are dumped" (1995: 5)

There are those, including Deacon, 1997 and Walker, 1998, who argue that the tendencies of New Labour to talk about the welfare system as a problem to be fixed (rather than as a site of potential solutions), to exaggerate levels of expenditure growth and fraud and to construct the underlying policy problems as one of 'welfare dependency' (rather than unemployment or poverty per se) all clearly echo American thinking and American political strategies. So too does the focus on raising 'employability' in the context of a deregulated, 'flexible' labour market. It therefore may be more useful to think of the welfare-to-work project in terms of the 'American way' rather than the 'third way'. (Peck and Theodore, 1999).

As Tony Blair argued in his speech to the Party of European Socialists' Congress in June 1997:

We understand that economic stability is the prerequisite for radicalism in Social Policy rather than an alternative to it. We must be the party of fiscal and Economic prudence. Combined with it must be reform of the welfare state. The public simply won't pay more taxes and spend more to fund an unreconstructed welfare system ... We are spending. We are taxing. But we have more poverty and inequality ... Welfare has become passive; a way of leaving people doing nothing, rather than helping them become active (cited in Peck and Theodore, 1999: 486).

Echoing the Clinton administration's fateful pledge to 'end welfare as we know it', the Blair government has placed welfare reform at the heart of its political project, the £5 billion welfare to work programme representing by a considerable margin the new government's largest single public spending commitment. In his speech at the Aylesbury Estate, Southwark, 2 June 1997, Tony Blair stated, "the greatest challenge for any democratic government is to refashion our institutions to bring the new workless class back into society and into useful work, and to bring back the will to win" (ibid: 486).

The employability-based approach favoured by the Blair government locates the United Kingdom closer to the neo-liberal orthodoxy rather than to the would-be social-Keynesian alternatives. Indeed, while New Labour may have adopted the language of social inclusion, there remains considerable resistance in governmental circles to the suggestions that the economic, employability agenda should in any way be related in favour of more socially orientated or job creation-based measures (see Layard, 1998). To be sure, there are others, for

example, (Holtham et al, 1998; TUC, 1999) who continue to argue for a hybrid of these approaches, augmenting employability programmes like the New Deal with measures to stimulate job creation and training provision in the public, private and social economies. But according to Anne Gray (1998: 6), ‘New Labour has explicitly chosen the Tories ‘workfarist’ approach to labour market policy and to encourage adoption of its new labour discipline in other European Union States by pressing for a minimalist social chapter and promoting “New Deal” as a model policy’. Indeed, William Hague, the then Tory leader proposed replacing the New Deal programme with a project administered by the private sector called ‘Britain Works’. Under this, the Employment Service would be contracted out to private companies that would be paid a fee to place an unemployed person in a job and a success fee if the job lasts a given period. Under a ‘can work, must work’ guarantee, claimants would lose unemployment benefit entitlement if they refuse to work; this includes single parents with children of secondary school age. (Financial Times, 8 February, 2001). And as long as political and economic conditions remain generally favourable it would seem that the employability agenda enjoy a continued ascendancy (Peck and Theodore, 1999).

In this context, the old social policy concerns with the alleviation of poverty are giving way to a new regulatory imperative framed around the objective of active labour market inclusion. The new orthodoxy has it that outmoded systems of welfare, based on axioms of needs-based eligibility, social entitlement and labour market exclusion, should be replaced by work-orientated systems of regulation founded on a rather different set of principles for all but the most

‘unemployable’, selective entitlements, active programming and the maximisation of participation in wage labour (see Shragge, 1997; Peck, 2000).

Social Exclusion/Inclusion

Despite, or perhaps because of, the continuing debate on ‘equality’, New Labour prefers to use the terms of inclusion and exclusion (see Lister, 1998, 1999; Levitas, 1996, 1998; Stepney et al, 1999). According to Lister (1998: 215), it is possible to argue that ‘from equality to social inclusion’ effectively encapsulates an important paradigm shift in thinking about the welfare state.

There is no space here to engage in the debate which surrounds the concept of exclusion/inclusion, suffice to say that some writers, for example, Levitas (1999), have queried welfare to work’s basic premise that paid work represents the primary obligation for all those of working age, at the expense of unpaid forms of work in the home (primarily undertaken by women) and in the voluntary and community sectors. She questions the value of ‘integration’ or ‘inclusion’ into a profoundly unequal labour market. This reflects a narrow economic view of social inclusion which she has labelled as a ‘social integrationist discourse’ (SID), increasingly dominant in British policy thinking which is focused on achieving social cohesion through paid work. She contrasts it with an earlier critical and broader re-distributive, egalitarian discourse (RED), that embraces notions of citizenship and social rights, with a primary objective of social justice; MUD, which is a moralistic discourse that uses images of the underclass and the dependency culture and focuses on individual behaviour and values. In short, the

excluded lack money in RED, morals in MUD and paid work in SID (Levitas, 1999: 27).

According to Stepney et al (1999: 120), this means that all 'who can' should be given the opportunity to maximise their productive contribution to the formal economy. It follows that individuals are responsible for developing their full potential, defined in terms of productive rather than human potential, so that formal economic activity takes precedence over cultural, political, environmental, social or even nurturing activity (even child-care). As Lister (1999) points out, New Labour is concerned with the 'supply side' of employability rather than the 'demand side' of employment, which is rejected as 'old left' and not feasible in today's global economy (see Blair and Schroeder, 1999).

Lister (op cit.) reminds us that the New Labour project is to modernise the welfare state; to turn it into an 'active' welfare state that promotes personal responsibility and individual opportunity as opposed to what is characterised as a 'passive' welfare state that encourages dependency and lack of initiative. Blair has made clear that reform is not just about reining in expenditure, but about a fundamental change in the 'culture, attitude and practice of the welfare state' (op cit.: 224). He has also acknowledged that the responsibility to create 'one nation' a New Labour insignia for an inclusive society borrowed from the Tories, applies as much the top of society as at the bottom (op cit.: 224). However, others such as Hutton (1997a: 3), have warned that there is a danger of an imbalance in the allocation of responsibilities and rights such as to reinforce

rather than counteract existing inequalities. Thus, while we have a government committed to promoting *social inclusion*, it appears to have abandoned the goal of promoting greater *equality*. The question has to be asked whether, in the context of entrenched structural inequalities, genuine social inclusion, including the eradication of poverty, is possible without greater equality.

This research presents a critical review of New Labour's New Deal for Young People (NDYP) to examine its effectiveness in reducing unemployment among young people from minority ethnic groups. For, as will be apparent in Chapter 2, previous youth employment programmes have not met the needs of minority ethnic young people. Chapter 2 further demonstrates that the disproportionately high level of unemployment endured by minority ethnic groups is getting worse. Additionally, the importance of addressing this situation has been recognised by the present Labour government which has indicated that the reduction of unemployment among young people from minority ethnic groups is an important aspect of its strategy to tackle social exclusion. In this context, the New Deal initiative was perceived by the government as a vehicle which would improve the employment prospects of unemployed people from minority ethnic groups. Indeed, Richard Layer, one of the government's policy advisers, has identified long-term unemployment not only as threatening social cohesion, but also as having economic consequences. He demonstrated the underlying philosophy behind the New Deal programme:

The longer people are unemployed, the less attractive they become to employers. They become excluded from the world of work. So

employers can have jobs lying vacant and inflation can increase, while young people waste their lives doing nothing...If we can get the youngsters back into work it will enable us to have higher employment without rekindling inflation. We will have expanded the effective supply of labour, channelling into work people who would not previously have been given a chance by employers (Financial Times, 1998a).

The research therefore explores minority ethnic young people's perspectives and experiences of the New Deal programme, and assesses the extent to which the programme has improved their job readiness, employability and labour market position.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter looks at the employment position of minority ethnic communities. It critically assesses national policies devised to address youth employment and training, and considers whether these policies have resulted in the reduction of unemployment amongst minority ethnic young people.

Chapter 2 presents the methods and strategies adopted in carrying out the research, the main elements of which are qualitative and quantitative research with New Deal participants, qualitative and quantitative research with employers and qualitative research with New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs). The

chapter includes my own reflections on how I became involved in the New Deal programme, and comment on the ethical dilemmas I faced as a researcher.

The chapter also considers the ethical, political and methodological issues which surround social research. Specific issues associated with race or research in ethnic relations are equally examined.

Chapter 3 presents the findings of the quantitative survey of both young people and employers involved in the study. It analyses the questionnaire responses by New Deal participants and employers. It also presents an overview of Southern Derbyshire Unit of Delivery, including its structure and contracting arrangements with employers for delivering the New Deal programme.

Chapter 4 presents five case studies of young peoples' own accounts of their experience of the New Deal programme, their relationships with their NDPAs and whether or not the programme has had a positive impact on their job search skills, enhanced their employability and labour market position. It also explores young people's reflections and appraisal of the different stages of the programme and examines the factors affecting their choice of Option.

Similarly, Chapter 5 sets the role of NDPAs in context and argues that this role is one of the key elements in the delivery of the aims of NDYP programme. Three case studies of NDPAs are analysed in relation to factors that enable or constrain their ability to carry out their role effectively. Drawing on the findings of the case studies, a model for successful New Deal outcome is presented. It also

considers the extent to which the NDPA role enables or hinders job outcomes for New Deal participants.

Chapter 6 focuses on the central concerns of the study, namely: the implementation of New Deal by the Employment Service and the delivery of the programme by employers. It provides an overview of the reasons for employers involvement or non-involvement in the programme; their experience of the programme, including their attitude to young unemployed people and their recruitment procedures and practices.

Building on this, Chapter 7 presents the emerging themes and findings from the analysis of the empirical data presented in Chapters three, four and five. The use of both structured and unstructured techniques means that several different viewpoints, (for example, official, unofficial, institutional, group, individual) would be represented and the triangulation of methods and of data sources strengthen the validity and reliability of the study's findings (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Here, the aim is to provide an overview of the experiences of young people from minority ethnic groups on the New Deal programme by capturing the structural and institutional constraints experienced by this group of young people as they seek social integration through labour market participation.

The final Chapter draws together appraisals of the effectiveness of New Deal in relation to its impact on young people from minority ethnic groups. In particular, it considers the factors which have contributed to differential outcomes for this

group, and looks at priorities for, and alternative approaches to, the future development of the programme.

Appendixes provide examples of the fieldwork documents, as well as charts devised for analysing the transcripts of interviews.

Glossary of key terms

The focus of this study is to evaluate whether, and if so to what extent, NDYP has improved the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups. It is therefore important to clarify the key terms and concepts used in relation to (i) New Deal and (ii) minority ethnic groups in the labour market, especially since these terms are open to different interpretations.

‘Bonding social capital’ – links members of a given social group with each other.

‘Bridging social capital’ – consists of networks that link the members of a given social group with the wider society.

‘Direct discrimination’ – is defined in a Cabinet Office Report as a ‘situation in which one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin’ (2003: Annex 3).

‘Employment Service’ (ES) – (now Jobcentre Plus) is responsible for delivering NDYP, in association with employers, training providers and voluntary sector organisations. It was therefore appropriate to use the ES as a research site where there was an opportunity, not only to evaluate job outcomes for minority ethnic young people, but also to capture their views and experiences of the programme, as well as those of employers and NDPAs.

‘Ethnic penalty’ - refers to net differences in achievement. Some scholars use the term to emphasise the importance of discrimination in explaining persisting net differences in labour market achievement, and others to refer to ‘all the sources of disadvantage that might lead a minority ethnic group to fare less well in the labour market than do similarly qualified Whites’ (Heath and McMahon, 1997: 91).

‘Human capital’ – encompasses the sum of skills, knowledge, experience and educational qualifications that a person possesses.

‘Indirect discrimination’ – describes a situation where an apparently race neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a particular racial or ethnic origin at a disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

‘Institutional racism’ – is a form of indirect discrimination and was defined in the Macpherson Report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence as ‘the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin’.

‘Minority ethnic groups’ – is a term used to refer to people of South Asian, Chinese, Black African and Black Caribbean origin. However, the usefulness of the term is open to question, and often is of limited help in dealing with ethnic diversity. As the Cabinet Office Report (2003) points out, some minority ethnic

groups face greater labour market disadvantage than others. For example, it cites research evidence which suggests that the overall position of Indians is too far removed from that of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis to cover all three groups under the heading 'South Asian'.

'New Deal for Young People' (NDYP) – was introduced in 1998 by the government to help 18-24 year olds who are out of work for six months and claiming Jobseekers Allowance to find and sustain employment (NDYP is explained in detail in Chapter 2).

'NVQ Level 2' – refers to competence which involves the application of knowledge in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Some of these activities are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility or autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be a requirement. (Equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A - C).

'Race' - is a concept which is devoid of scientific legitimacy and is essentially a social construct (Miles, 1982, 1989, 1993). Alleged racial difference was used to make claims of European superiority and for some provided a direct justification for slavery and colonialism (Mason, 2000). This explains why in European academic writing it is often placed in inverted commas (ie, 'race'). This acknowledges the fact that the term is in common use, but draws attention to the fact that it does not represent anything real. Just because people commonly talk about different races does not mean they exist. The problem with reifying race

is that racial difference is inevitably constructed negatively. In a society that valued diversity, the presence of different national, religious, culture and minority ethnic groups would be welcomed. In contemporary Britain, such difference is too often seen as a problem (see Orton and Ratcliffe, 2003).

‘Social/Community cohesion’ – is described in a recent Home Office Report (2001) as ‘a shared sense of belonging based on common goals and core social values, respect for difference (ethnic, cultural and religious), and acceptance of the reciprocal rights and obligations of community members working together for the common good’.

Chapter 1: Minority ethnic groups: education, training and the labour market

1.0 Introduction

The educational and employment prospects for young people in the United Kingdom have changed radically over the past two decades or so. Historically, high levels of youth unemployment gave way in the late 1970s to concerns about the “demographic time bomb” and potential shortages in labour market supply for the future (Parsons, 1988; Roberts, 1995). These concerns evaporated somewhat in the early 1990s as rising youth unemployment once again became a significant problem in the UK.

Youth labour supply has also been influenced by the increasing propensity of young people to stay on in full-time education at the minimum school leaving age, and as Ball and Gordon (1996) have observed, it is now almost a “deviant” activity to be leaving full-time education at the age of 16. Thus, in some individual schools, it can be the case that virtually all year 11 students prolong their full-time studies (ibid: 14). The authors suggest that higher GCSE examination results seem to account for one half of the increased staying on rate. The remainder is accounted for by higher student and parental aspirations, the paucity of employment opportunities for 16 year olds, the withdrawal of benefit payments to school leavers and the attractiveness of the increasingly diverse offerings of education and training institutions.

More specifically, Drew et al (1997) suggest several explanations for the higher post-16 participation rates for minority ethnic groups. These include, first the possibility that minority ethnic groups are more committed to education; the second is that they see the securing of more qualifications as the best passport to successful labour market entry; and the third is that they perceive discrimination in the youth job market and take steps to avoid it as best they can by delaying entry as long as possible (see also Drew, 1995; Drew et al, 1992).

The world of work which now greets young people would have been unrecognisable some thirty years ago. Until the mid 1970s, the clear majority of young people could make what are regarded now as successful, secure and normal transitions to work, to social independence and economic security in adulthood – albeit ones structured by class and other structural inequalities (MacDonald, 1998). The economic crises of the 1970s and the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s generated wide scale industrial restructuring and mass unemployment which changed all this. In 1980, youth unemployment rose by more than it had in the previous two decades put together (Coles, 1988). The collapse of the youth labour market and the more general transformations which have affected British labour markets over the past two decades have left the economic position of young people severely weakened, particularly those already disadvantaged by ethnicity, class, qualification, locality and disability (Maguire and Maguire, 1997).

One of the most palpable consequences of the contracting and deregulated youth labour market has been the expansion of what Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 17)

describe as “an army of reluctant conscripts to post-compulsory education”. In the mid 1970s a third of 16 year olds stayed on at school; 20 years later, it was nearer 80 per cent. A range of vocational courses (BTEC, NVQ and GNVQ) have been introduced in schools and colleges of further education, but these “careers” for young people have also often remained precarious. About a third of those starting a full time post-16 course leave early or fail the relevant examination (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2000).

Those entering youth training fare little better. Despite government claims that Youth Training (YT) is designed to improve skills and subsequent employability, the schemes have been consistently critiqued by young people themselves as “slave labour”, with employers operating “try-out schemes” in which young people’s work performance is assessed and only the best are retrained (Coffield et al, 1986; Banks et al, 1992). YT has thus been received by young people with a combination of resistance, denial and ambivalence (Mizen, 1995: 197-202). The experience of training has also become fragmented and individualised, but remains stratified by class, gender and race (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 32). As will be discussed later in this chapter, the most disadvantaged and those from minority ethnic groups tend to be concentrated in schemes with low rates of subsequent employment. The promised new opportunities have failed to materialise, with the vast majority of schemes reinforcing and reproducing gender stereotypes in their provision of “suitable” work for young men and women (Griffin, 1985; Cockburn, 1987; Wallace, 1987).

The free market logic of deregulation has also not helped young people back into work, despite them being cheaper to employ. Demand in industrialised economies for skilled workers has meant that the young – especially those without qualifications – have been left behind. Using data from Department of Employment Labour Force Surveys, Brinkley (1997) suggests that in 1996 the unemployment rate for under-25's was 14.8 per cent, almost twice the national average. Unemployment has always hit the young hardest, particularly so for minority ethnic young people as will be demonstrated later in Section 2.1. But these estimates also miss a sizeable number of the population. Wilkinson's (1995) Sunderland-based study found that between 5 and 10 per cent of 16 and 17 year olds were neither in education or training nor in employment; nor did they have any access to income support. Officially they did not exist. This could amount to some 100,000 young people nationally who occupy what Williamson (1995) has called "status-zero".

It was in this context that in 1997 the New Labour government announced its Welfare-to-Work plans designed to take a quarter of a million under 25 year olds off the dole (see Section 1.6 below). The chapter begins with a consideration of the employment position of workers from minority ethnic groups, including the critical role of the education system and the Careers Service in the transition from school to work process. It will also evaluate critically the impact of previous state policies designed to address youth unemployment and whether or not these policies succeeded in improving the labour market position of minority ethnic young people. It will then describe the purpose of the government's New

Deal programme, its structure and asks whether New Deal can succeed where other youth training and employment schemes have failed.

1.1 Employment/Unemployment

Black¹ migrants to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s came to find work primarily in those sectors of the economy that were experiencing labour shortages. Workers from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan for example, were recruited for employment in foundries in the Midlands, textile mills in the North, transport industries in the major cities, and the Health Service. These workers experienced a high degree of exploitation, discrimination and marginalisation in their economic and social lives. Despite the need for their labour, their presence aroused widespread hostility at all levels, from trade union branch to government level. Employers only reluctantly recruited immigrants where there were no white workers to fill the jobs; white workers, through their unions, often made arrangements with employers about the sorts of work immigrants could have access to (Duffield, 1988). At this time the preference for white workers was perceived to be quite natural and legitimate – immigrant workers were seen as “an inferior but necessary labour supply” (Brown, 1992: 48).

Over time, these workers remained in a relatively restricted spectrum of occupational areas, over-represented in low paid and insecure jobs, working anti-social hours in unhealthy or dangerous environments (Lee and Wrench, 1980).

¹ The term ‘Black’ is used here to refer to people of African, Caribbean, Chinese and South Asian origin, and would be used interchangeably with the term ‘Black and Asian’, ‘Black and Minority Ethnic Groups’ or ‘Minority Ethnic Groups’.

Although by the 1970's African-Caribbean and Asian people worked in a broader range of occupations than before, these are still jobs that were "deemed fit" for minority ethnic workers rather than white workers (Brown, 1992: 52). In 1984, the Policy Studies Institute published a major survey on the state of minority ethnic groups in Britain covering housing, education and employment, showing that minority ethnic groups are still generally employed below their qualification and skill level, earn less than white workers in comparable job levels, and are still concentrated in the same industries as they were 25 years earlier (Brown, 1984). See also Cross et al (1990); Drew et al (1992).

Turning to unemployment, minority ethnic groups have a higher unemployment rate than that of the white population. Owen (1997), for example, has shown that the unemployment rates for men from minority ethnic groups were nearly twice as high as for white men; for women they were more than twice as high. According to Owen, there were marked differentials between groups: unemployment was lowest amongst White and Chinese men and women (11 per cent). The groups with the worst unemployment record were the Bangladeshis (31 per cent for men), black Africans (29 per cent) and Pakistanis (29 per cent). Amongst Bangladeshis, 71 per cent were either unemployed or in less skilled manual work, compared with the next worst, Black-Africans (51 per cent).

If we look at economic activity, a recent Cabinet Report (2003) indicates that Britain's minority ethnic population have consistently experienced unemployment rates twice those of White people. But within this overall picture, significant differences exist between minority ethnic groups. For example, there

are low rates of economic activity and employment among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, but high levels of economic activity and employment among Black Caribbeans (2003: 18).

The report also indicates that with the exception of Indian and Chinese adult men, very high rates of unemployment have persisted for minority groups over a long time and show no sign of improving. Placing the labour market position of minority ethnic groups in a historical context, the report points out that in 1992, the unemployment rate of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean men was 15-20 percentage points higher than those of their White counterparts. By 2000, though the scale of this disparity had decreased, a difference of approximately 10-15 percentage points remained. The report further points out that despite a sharp drop of unemployment levels for all groups during the 1990s, the overall employment position of minority ethnic groups at the end of the decade generally remains considerably worse than that of the White population. It also suggests that similar differentials exist for minority ethnic women (ibid: 19).

Particularly badly hit by unemployment are minority ethnic young people. A 1986 review of the statistical evidence reported:

While employment prospects are discouraging for all young people, the evidence shows that the black youth unemployment has reached astronomical proportions in some areas. The differential unemployment rates between blacks and whites are in fact generally greater for this age group than for any other. When account is taken of the fact that black

people are far more likely to go into further education than whites, we can see that young black people in the 1980's are facing a desperate situation (Newnham, 1986: 17 cited in Solomos and Back 1993).

That there are high rates of unemployment amongst minority ethnic young people is well documented. Drew et al (1997), for example, looking at the transition from education to work, has shown that in all minority ethnic groups, young people had a greater likelihood than whites of experiencing unemployment when they left school or further education.

Nearly two decades on, the situation is no better. For example, the unemployment rates for men from all ethnic groups were much higher among young people under the age of 25 than for older people. Statistics for this age group indicate that over 40 per cent of Bangladeshi men were unemployed in 2000-01. Young Black African men, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and those belonging to the Mixed group also had very high unemployment rates – though they ranged between 25 per cent and 31 per cent. The comparable unemployment rate for young White men was 12 per cent (ONS, 2002).

The picture for women was similar to that for men. Bangladeshi women had the highest unemployment rate at 24 per cent, six times greater than that of White women (4 per cent). Seven per cent of Indian women were unemployed. Further, women in all other ethnic groups had rates between 9 per cent and 16 per cent. Rates for young women under the age of 25 years were considerably higher than for older women and this was true for all ethnic groups (ibid).

Racial disadvantage, then, continues to be a fact of life for some, if not all, minority ethnic groups. Previous studies have demonstrated more specific examples of discrimination. Notably, controlled tests, whereby White and minority ethnic persons respond to advertised vacancies for which they are equally suitable, have been conducted since the 1960s and tend to reproduce the result that at least one third of private sector employers discriminated against Caribbean applicants, Asian applicants or both (Daniel 1968; Smith 1977; Brown and Gay 1985; Simpson and Stevenson 1994). Discrimination is found not just in face-to-face encounters, or in telephone calls, but also in tests using written applications where it seems from the applicant's name or biographical details that they are or are not white (see Esmail and Everington 1993).

Modood et al (1997) have also shown that the belief that some employers discriminate is held by 90 per cent of white people and three quarters of minority ethnic persons. They further found that one in five of the minority ethnic respondents said they had been refused a job on racial grounds, nearly half of whom had had this experience at least once in the previous five years. Indeed, it has been argued that the processes of racial discrimination in employment have become so routine and subtle as to be 'invisible' even to those engaged in discriminating practices (Wrench and Solomos, 1993: 159).

Furthermore, Heath and McMahon (1997) have drawn attention to the degree to which minority ethnic groups suffer an "ethnic penalty" in the labour market, as compared with native-born whites with similar educational qualifications. Heath and McMahon's analysis of the 1991 Census found that male migrants

with higher level qualifications in groups that appeared to be successful in the jobs market such as the Chinese, African Asians and Indians were significantly less likely to be employees in higher or intermediate non-manual work than either British born white people or Irish born migrants. While the African Asians, Indians and Chinese were more successful than the other groups of non-white men, nevertheless “their high qualifications effectively masked their difficulty in gaining access to the salariat” (Heath and McMahon 1995: 18). Migrant women from non-white groups were even more likely to pay an ethnic penalty, except for Caribbean women, who were more successful than Irish born women.

Heath and McMahon further found that, while there were differences between groups, there was a clear tendency for second generation non-white men and women to pay significant ethnic penalties in the competition for the better non-manual jobs. Moreover, the advantage that the first generation Caribbean women had is not repeated in the second generation, leading Heath and McMahon to suggest that the first generation pattern was owing to rather special recruitment efforts by the National Health Service to secure nurses from the Caribbean (Heath and McMahon 1995: 26). They conclude, therefore, that, for non-white groups, being born in this country is not associated with any improvement in competitive changes, for “the second generation experienced the same pattern and magnitude of ethnic penalties in the British labour market as the first generation did” (Heath and McMahon 1997: 29). Indeed, a Cabinet Office Report (2003: 25) suggests that there is no sign that matters have improved.

As Karn (1997) has observed, it would appear that the causes of the ethnic penalty in employment are likely to be quite complex, given the variation in the size of the penalty between minority ethnic groups. Nonetheless, Karn argues that the fact that there is a penalty for all minority ethnic groups strongly suggests an element of discrimination. Other studies have reached similar conclusions (see Mason, 2000, 2003; and also Cabinet Office Report, 2003)

Others, for example, Iganski and Payne (1996), suggest that racial differences in job outcomes may be due to an increase in the supply of the better non-manual jobs as much as to more “open”, “meritocratic” competition. They argue that in such a competitive environment even the “over-achieving” groups are being “under-rewarded” – that is to say, for the more competitive posts, minority ethnic individuals have to be not just as good, but better than their white competitors in order to get the job. Issues surrounding meritocratic appointments are discussed further in Chapter 6.

The next section considers briefly the impact of the education system on the position of minority ethnic young people.

1.2 Education

This section does not intend to consider in detail the impact of the education system on the position of minority ethnic young people. Rather, it will look at ‘human capital’ levels of young people from minority ethnic groups as these are one of the key determinants of labour market success. But before we do that, it is

worth noting that there is evidence of practices within schools which specifically disadvantage minority ethnic children. For example, admissions procedures of schools, colleges, universities and training schemes have been the subject of complaints about direct racial discrimination.

The CRE (1988a), for example, has found evidence of direct discrimination in admissions procedures for medical students, and entry to the Bar vocational course (CRE 1994:15). In addition, the CRE (1991a: 49) has also shown that colleges come under pressure from employers to discriminate in the allocation of placements and sponsorships. Exclusions from school has also been a source of concern. And according to the CRE (1985a), African-Caribbean pupils are four times more likely to be suspended than White pupils. A 1996 OFSTED report has again highlighted the problem.

Racial harassment and abuse in school have also been found to be widespread (Karn, 1997), affecting the attendance, performance and well-being of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The CRE's Racial harassment in schools and colleges 'Learning in Terror', concluded that:

The problem of racial harassment extends right through the educational system from nursery and infant schools to colleges and universities and affects pupils, students, parents and staff. Incidents of harassment do not occur in isolation: they spill over between the school, the street, the housing estate and the football terrace. Abuse, graffiti and violence as

both threat and actuality serve as a constant reminder of the intolerance in White society and the vulnerability of ethnic minority people.

The seriousness of the situation is not matched by a corresponding awareness and sense of urgency on the part of quite a number of Local Education Authorities where problems proliferate ... (CRE, 1988b: 16 cited in Karn, 1997: 271).

Turning to skills and education, the Cabinet Office Report (2003: 27) suggests that different minority ethnic groups have different levels of human capital derived from work experience. Looking at qualifications, the report notes that some groups, such as Indian and Chinese show high levels of literacy, education and skills, on average exceeding those of the White population. On the other hand, Bangladeshi, Black-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils achieve less highly than other pupils at most key stages at GCSE level. Despite this, the report further notes that whilst performance levels differ, the general trend in the proportion of young people from all minority ethnic groups gaining five or more GCSEs has been upwards (ibid: 27-28). Whilst the relationship between qualifications and labour market position is a complex one (Mason, 2000: 55), varying between minority groups and job type, the chapters which follow will argue that the general pattern shows minority ethnic groups fare worse (after controlling for qualifications) in both the likelihood of unemployment and job levels (see also Ratcliffe, 2004). As will be discussed later in Chapter 2, this probably accounts for the higher than average level of qualification possessed by young people from minority ethnic groups on the New Deal programme.

1.3 The Careers Service

Most young people will have at least one interview with a careers adviser during their school period, and many will have contact with the Careers Service after the age of 16 if they decide to enter work or training. The role of the Careers Service is therefore a crucial one, as it funnels young people into employment training and education. As mentioned above, the withdrawal of welfare benefits from most 16 and 17 year olds in 1988, and the introduction of a stricter benefit regime with the advent of the Jobseeker's Allowance has meant that the role of the Careers Service has become even more important particularly for unemployed young people as they seek information about work and/or training opportunities.

There is some evidence which suggests that minority ethnic young people are more likely to rely on the Careers Service than their White counterparts. Lee and Wrench (1983), for example, have found that large numbers of the firms they interviewed did not advertise their vacancies. Instead, they relied in significant part on the family members of existing employees for filling their vacant posts. The authors suggest that this recruitment practice is another factor which disadvantages minority ethnic job seekers in that it strengthens the importance of 'informal' channels of communications, such as 'word of mouth', which are inevitably more accessible to the White population. A study by the Haringey Employment Commission (1997) has again highlighted the problem.

As has been pointed out above, the Careers Service is but only one source of recruits amongst others such as informal networks and family contacts. However, their role is important as this Service has a 'gatekeeper' function with respect to referring young people to training schemes. However, it should be noted that the Careers Service has faced a number of criticisms. For example, Careers staff have been criticized for engaging in conventional negative stereotypes regarding the abilities and aspirations of minority young people (Sillitoe and Meltzer, 1985b); for exhibiting a lack of awareness and understanding of the realities of racial inequality and the processes of racial discrimination in the labour market (Eggleston et al, 1986); for being too ready to make generalized assumptions about the 'special needs' of minority young people (Fenton et al, 1984); for turning a 'blind eye' to employer racism (Brown, 1985); and for engaging in 'protective channelling' of minority ethnic young people away from employers and establishments where they are likely to experience discrimination (Cross et al, 1990). This 'anticipatory discrimination', according to Cross (1987), clearly limits the choices and options open to young people from minority ethnic groups.

The Connexions Service, which replaced the Careers Service in 2002, has also faced criticisms in relation to the careers advice it offers young people. For example, recent comments by David Yeandle, Deputy Director of Employment Policy, Engineering Employers Forum (EEF), on the careers information, advice and guidance that young people receive, whilst making no direct reference to young people from minority ethnic groups, is also instructive:

The government-funded Connexions Service – charged with focusing on careers advice for the disadvantaged and those in danger of dropping out of education and training – is not giving the majority effective guidance...On average each young person receives less than 20 minutes of careers advice a year. Given that Connexions advisers are spending the majority of their time on a very small proportion of students (academic achievers), this leaves almost nothing for the rest...Poor quality careers advice to young people is not just a disservice to the individuals themselves, but to companies and the overall economy (Personnel Today, 2004: 15, 20 April).

It is important to note that the ‘gatekeeper’ function of Careers Advisers in respect of referring young people to training is similar to that performed by New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs) in relation to referring young people to the type of Option deemed appropriate by the former to meet the needs of the latter. This issue is considered further in Chapters 2 and 3.

It is the previous government youth employment programme we turn our attention to next.

1.4 Youth Employment Programme

1.4.1 Background

State involvement in unemployment policy began in the early 1970s amid concerns about the ‘problem’ of youth unemployment. The Manpower Services

Commission (MSC) was set up in 1974 within the Department of Employment to foster training and employment services. The first large-scale programme was launched in 1975 as the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), designed to give unemployed young people the 'opportunity to learn about different kinds of jobs and give systematic and practical experience of a range of different trades' (MSC, 1977: 27). Youth unemployment at this time was defined by the MSC as a temporary one linked to demographic changes and short-term recession. Those who were unemployed were considered 'the disadvantaged' who lacked work experience and work discipline. The new programme was to constructively fill in the gap between school and work, improving young people's employability by providing them with the qualities sought by employers, cultivate good working habits, gain experience in work disciplines, and thereby improve their ability to compete more successfully in the labour market (Holland, 1977).

The Youth Opportunities Programme incorporated a variety of schemes, including those which provided a short introduction to work skills (Work Introduction Courses and Short Training Courses), schemes lasting six months which took place on an employer's premises or in a Training Workshop, and those which consisted of a project or Community Service. These separate schemes were designed to help young people with differing needs. The Work Introduction Courses and Training Workshop provision were specifically aimed at the less able and less motivated young people. Thus, there was an explicit recognition that some young people were more 'unemployable' than others.

1.4.2 Minority Ethnic Young People and the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP)

The notion that some young people were 'unemployable' had important implications for minority ethnic young people participating in the YOP schemes. As has been pointed out in the previous section, black and minority ethnic young people are disproportionately affected when unemployment rises. The effect was that minority ethnic school leavers were over represented on YOP (Cross et al, 1983). These authors also found not only were there differences between the proportions of minority ethnic young people and white school leavers participating in special programmes, but also in their representation on different types of schemes. Furthermore, the authors showed that minority ethnic trainees on YOP were proportionately more likely to have attended work preparation courses such as Short Training Courses or to be placed on Community Projects and in Training Workshops, than on Work Experience on Employers' Premises.

The over-representation of minority young people on these Work Preparation Schemes had further consequences. The Work Experience on Employers' Premises (WEEP) Schemes were the only ones to have a substantial element of work experience and as a result, provided employers with the opportunity to assess the suitability of their trainees for permanent employment. Bedeman and Coutenay's (1983) survey of YOP showed that on leaving the scheme, 36 per cent of former WEEP trainees had jobs, compared to 24 per cent of Training Workshops, 26 per cent on Community Projects and 10 per cent who had attended Short Training Courses (ibid; see also Cross et al, 1986). The fact that

minority ethnic trainees were over-represented on schemes with no work experience element and under-represented on WEEP appears to have entrenched their existing position of inequality in the labour market. Bedeman and Courtenay also showed that immediately on leaving YOP only 15 per cent of African-Caribbeans had jobs compared to 31 per cent of Whites. This disparity, according to the authors, could not be explained by the generally lower levels of qualifications held by African-Caribbean trainees, as the overall proportion in work was considerably below that for Whites with the same level of qualifications (ibid).

Implicit in the whole concept of the MSC's 'special programmes' is a 'deficit' model of young people, which places the responsibility for youth unemployment on the individual's lack of training, skills and effectiveness (Cross et al (1986). According to these authors, those kinds of 'pathological' explanations have been systematically applied to explain the disadvantaged position of minority ethnic young people (ibid). In other words, instead of acknowledging that the disadvantage suffered by minority ethnic people is essentially that of racial discrimination, there appears to be a tendency to blur racial characteristics with the disadvantage resulting from discrimination. This partly explains why this group of young people were more likely to be regarded as having 'special needs' and relegated to the 'secondary' sector of special programmes under YOP. This process was likely to have been reinforced by the generally perceived lower qualifications of African-Caribbean school leavers compared to their White counterparts, which can be traced back to racism and discrimination in the education system and low teacher expectations of African-Caribbean pupils,

leading to the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of lower performance and attainment of minority ethnic pupils at school (Eggleston et al, 1986; Solomos, 1986).

1.4.3 Youth Training Scheme (YTS)

As indicated above, the YOP was a scheme intended to develop individual skills and competencies. However, as Furlong (1993) points out, the scheme was widely regarded as providing little in the way of training while providing employers with a free source of labour. He argues that some employers used the scheme as a screening device for potential recruits, whilst others used trainees as a constant stream of free labour.

Partly as a result of these criticisms, the YTS was introduced in 1983 to replace YOP. This marked a new period of increasing government intervention in the labour market. The new scheme, planned to be a permanent feature of the transition from school to work process, according to Peck (1998), represented a shift away from the 'stop gap' image of YOP in favour of a long-term commitment to youth labour market regulation. It was intended to give 16 year-old school leavers (whether employed or unemployed), unemployed 17 year olds in their first post-school year, and some older trainees with special needs, a range of practical transferable skills to enable them to compete more effectively in the labour market.

YTS differed somewhat from YOP, in that all schemes had to include a work experience element, which appeared to redress some of the disadvantages during the period of YOP experienced by those young people relegated to 'special

needs' schemes with little or no job prospects. Thus, YTS appeared to offer unqualified young people a 'second chance', in that they could join YTS to compensate for their lack of basic education and skills they learnt would improve their life chances. However, it should be remembered that the scheme was delivered broadly, under one or a combination of two models: Mode A was work related, the majority of opportunities were employer-based and the employer took complete responsibility for the programme of its trainees; Mode B was largely provided through Community Projects and Training Workshops. The similarity between the two modes of YTS and the dual provision of YOP is apparent, indicating the continuity between, on one hand, the Work Experience on Employers' Premises Schemes and Mode A; and on the other, Community Projects and Training Workshops and Mode B.

Eventually YTS was extended to a two year scheme in 1986 'to provide a foundation of broad-based vocational education and training and planned work experience which gives all trainees the opportunity to obtain a vocational qualification related to competence in the workplace or to obtain a credit towards such qualification (MSC, 1985). Two categories of training places were available: basic and premium. The scheme thus exhibits a dualism in the form of a distinction between employer-based 'basic places' and workshop or college-based 'premium places', a distinction which bears an uncanny resemblance to the modes A and B places which were available on one-year YTS.

Premium places were provided for these young people who, either by virtue of their personal characteristics or by their place of residence, are at a disadvantage

in the labour market. In general, premium provision catered for those trainees who would otherwise have been unemployed, while basic provision catered for those who would otherwise have been in work. The MSC justified the dual provision as follows:

Premium places have been introduced to meet the particular training needs of disadvantaged and disabled young people and also to ensure provision in areas of high unemployment where employer-based places may not be available (MSC, 1986: 14) cited in Cross and Smith (1987).

Cross and Smith (1987) also point out that the practical implication of the above MSC statement is that where minority ethnic young people cannot be placed on employer-based schemes, they will be offered premium places, and argues that:

Premium places are now to be reserved for the 'disadvantaged' and concentrated in areas which will include all places of high minority ethnic concentration. We can expect higher, rather than lower, levels of unequal distribution on schemes under this new system, even though all places will be provided by Approved Training Organisations (ibid: 6).

No attempt is made here at comparing previous youth employment schemes with New Deal for Young People (NDYP). Suffice to note that although there is no apparent hierarchy of provision within the four main Options of NDYP (see Section 1.7.1 below), however, the Subsidised Employment Option of NDYP is similar to Mode 'A' or 'basic places' of YTS in at least two important respects.

First, it is an employer-based provision, and as will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, this is more popular with young people themselves as they are more likely to secure employment at the end of their placement. Second, Chapters 3 and 4 will also show that in common with Mode 'A' or 'basic places' of YTS, young people from minority ethnic groups on NDYP are less likely to be on the Subsidised Employment Option. Instead, they are more likely to be placed on either the Voluntary Sector Option or the Environmental Task Force Option – both of which do not offer job prospects at completion, as with Mode 'B' or 'premium places' of YTS.

Research has also shown that many employers, particularly large employers, have been reluctant to take on minority ethnic young people. For example, in 1990, less than 10 per cent of YTS trainees with employers were of minority ethnic background (Mizen, 1990; see also Gore, 1987; De Sousa, 1988). It would appear that the stated intentions of the MSC to promote equal opportunities and combat racial discrimination have not received the attention they deserve. Not only are employers free to continue using their 'normal recruitment methods and selection procedures' within the scheme (Income Data Services, 1983:1), they are given the 'bonus' of partial exemption from the race and sex anti-discrimination legislation (Finn, 1986).

Similar sentiments have been expressed by Cross and Smith who suggest that the recruitment to YTS run by industry mirrors recruitment practices for employment in general. They argue that despite the statutory obligations for equal opportunities in recruitment, there is almost no evidence that public or private

sector employers are less discriminatory than they were before the Race Relations Act was passed in 1976 (Cross and Smith, 1987). And as Chatrik has observed, the trainees who have been most disadvantaged in society have tended to receive the lowest quality training, and the training which is least likely to lead on to permanent jobs (Chatrik, 1997).

The issues relating to employers' recruitment procedures and practices discussed above are central to this study, and as will be discussed in Chapter 6, these recruitment procedures and practices still persist.

1.5 The Conservative Legacy

As mentioned above, New Labour has put welfare reform at the top of its political agenda and has introduced labour market programmes aimed at tackling long-term unemployment. This section provides a summary of the complex web of institutions, benefit regulations and programmes that the incoming New Labour government inherited after nearly 20 years of Conservative administration.

1.5.1 The training framework and unemployed minorities

As has been discussed above, training provision in Britain was predominantly centralised with the government playing a co-ordinating role through the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). However, after the Conservative election victory in 1987, there was a marked reduction in employment programme expenditure. With the demise of the MSC, control of training

programmes was handed to a national network of employer-led and controlled Training and Enterprise Councils' (TECs). Thus, there has been an overriding concern with a 'free-market' approach within which it is assumed that the self-interest of employers will encourage them to take training seriously (Webb, 1993). According to some observers, for example, Coffield, 1992; Crouch, 1992; Whiteside et al, 1992; Keep, 1994; Fletcher, 1995, this is in contrast to the state regulated models adopted in other European countries and has been identified as a major reason for the overall inefficiency and poor record of the British vocational training system.

A number of policy changes on vocational training resulted in a shift in the TECs' payment system from 'input' to 'output' based funding; the introduction of a greater number of performance measures; and the change in focus of successful training which was shifted to reflect job outcomes more than qualifications (Ogbonna, 1998: 169). The tightening of the financial regulations on training by the government has had a number of consequences for the parties involved. TECs have become more selective in the programme they fund and they have put more pressure on training providers as the contractual obligation imposed by the Department for Education and Employment is transferred to them (Ibid: 169; see also Chatrik, 1997).

This output related funding has consequences for all unemployed people eligible for training. However, as Chatrik (1997) notes, the impact is likely to be on young people who have additional training needs or on minority ethnic young people who already face discrimination in the labour market. Ogbonna (op. cit.)

expresses similar sentiments by pointing out that in view of the difficulties faced by young people from minority ethnic groups in the labour market, it is not surprising that a TEC or training organisation faced with the prospects of decline in profitability may choose not to recruit people from minority ethnic groups. Other research, for example, Boddy (1998), have come to the same conclusion:

The funding regime places pressure on Providers to recruit those who are likely to complete and to achieve positive outcomes, and also to do so without the need for above average resource inputs and support...The assumption is that these processes would be more likely to have an adverse impact on those from ethnic minorities (*sic*) due to Provider perceptions as to the likely successful outcomes and the resource implications (1995: 23).

By the mid 1990s government expenditure on training programmes for the long-term unemployed had fallen and expenditure on job creation measures was minimal. The focus of employment measures had noticeably shifted to those programmes delivered through the Employment Service (Finn, 1997). We consider the role of the Employment Service in the next section.

1.5.2 The role of Employment Service (ES)

The role and structure of the Employment Service changed dramatically during the 1980s. The Jobcentre network lost staff and functions. Its focus was increasingly shifted away from improving general labour market efficiency

towards maximising and monitoring the jobseeking behaviour of the unemployed (Finn and Taylor, 1990). By the end of the decade, the ES was enforcing new legislation, the Jobseekers Act, 1996, which had redefined the position of those without work. The adult unemployed were now required to demonstrate that they were actively seeking work, sanctions were increased and regulations greatly restricted the grounds on which jobs could be refused. The ES developed what became known as the “stricter benefit regime” and its provision shifted towards short courses focused on immediate job preparation and jobseeking underpinned, for the long-term unemployed, by compulsory attendance (ibid).

According to Robinson (1996), the stricter benefit regime may have had an impact in getting people to stop claiming benefit and, for some, accelerating the return to work. However, the author is sceptical about the value and duration of the outcomes generated, especially for mandatory programmes. Statistics released through Parliament, for example, continue to show that just over a quarter (27 per cent) of participants on Restart courses and less than a third (32 per cent) of those leaving Jobplan Workshops achieve a positive outcome, usually starting on another scheme. Only 4 per cent go directly into jobs (Unemployment Unit, 1997: 4).

In addition to its role in stimulating job search and applications the ES also became involved in promoting the take up of in-work benefits, especially Family Credit. The aim, according to Finn (1997), was to encourage the unemployed and other benefit recipients to enter employment by improving the difference

between individual benefit entitlement and the low wages available in entry-level jobs.

This was the context in which Britain's unemployed were redefined by the Jobseekers Act of 1996. Under the Act, unemployed individuals are classified as jobseekers who have to enter a formal Jobseeker's Agreement specifying the detailed steps they intend to take to look for work. Officials monitor these agreements, make job offers, and now also have a new discretionary power which enables them to issue a "Jobseeker's Direction" requiring an individual to look for jobs in a particular way, to take other steps to "improve their employability" or to participate in employment or training schemes. If the claimant fails to attend or behave in the required manner they can be subject to a 2 week benefit sanction, increasing to 4 weeks if they "re-offend" within a year (Employment Policy Institute, 1997: 12).

Although there has been an increased emphasis placed on jobsearch activities by ES staff during various review interviews, the reality is that a major part of these interviews is taken up with explaining the conditions for benefit receipt, including progress made by clients towards fulfilling the Jobseeker's Agreement. This compressed interview offers little opportunity for regular substantive jobsearch discussions to take place between the jobseeker and ES staff. Instead, ES staff are more concerned with checking on benefit eligibility rather than encouraging effective jobsearch (see Working Brief (2000: 14).

In April 2000 the government introduced revisions to Jobcentre processes for long term unemployed claimants of JSA aged 25 and above, who are not on any of the New Deals. The revised mandatory process involves a stronger emphasis on jobsearch at the Restart advisory interviews and the introduction of a six week period of 'intensive jobmatching' following the interview, involving weekly contact by telephone or attendance at a Jobcentre. A recent analysis of the effectiveness of the enhanced JSA commissioned by the government found that the jobmatching model is not addressing the significant barriers to employment faced by unemployed people. Rather, the process is thought to be inherently limited because the focus on jobsearch does not address the underlying problems around personal circumstances, skills and motivation. In addition, it points out that although there is an indication of some increase in jobsearch behaviour, the number of unemployed people 'signing off' and transferring to other benefits and unknown destinations appear to be larger than those moving into work. Overall, the analysis suggests a reduction in the JSA count for the target client group in the order of 1-2% (Department for Work and Pensions, 2002).

In 1993, the last Conservative government gave priority to improving jobsearch activity. However, it did begin to experiment with employment subsidies and work experience pilot schemes. The most notable of these pilots was Workstart which provided employment subsidies for those out of work for over two years. Two government-sponsored evaluations of the pilots confirmed that while Workstart subsidies could help some very long-term unemployed people, they were not a panacea for unemployment (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994; Institute for Employment Studies, 1994). These findings reinforced the Conservative

government's wider neo-liberal agenda and its scepticism about the value of a large-scale subsidy programme which they argued would "distort the process of wage determination, and impede the efficient operation of the labour market" (European Commission/House of Commons, 1996b: iii).

The last Conservative government also viewed job creation schemes negatively. It resisted the pressure to introduce "workfare," or compulsory work for the dole. They rejected any role for government as "employer of last resort" and argued that such programmes can, "by detaching unemployed people from the labour market, increase the problems created by long-term unemployment" (EC/HC, 1996b: iii).

To overcome this 'detachment', the government introduced new Project Work Pilot Schemes in 1996 by directly integrating compulsory work experience with the stricter benefit regime. The pilots were aimed at people aged between 18 and 50 who had been out of work for over two years. During the first 13 weeks participants were given intensive jobsearch assistance, followed by a mandatory period of up to 13 weeks work experience combined with continuing jobsearch activity.

According to Finn (1997) the pilot schemes were hailed by the government as a great success with, it was claimed, 20 per cent more long-term unemployed people leaving the register. In announcing an expansion of Project Work to cover some 28 areas, the government emphasised its deterrent role by stressing that the programme would also "make life more difficult for people who want to

cheat the taxpayer”. The Conservatives were pledging to introduce Project Work nationwide as their alternative to the New Deal being put forward by Labour in the run-up to the 1997 General Elections.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that, the new Labour government inherited, amongst other things, unpopular schemes, stricter, some would say, harsh benefit regulation, and an under-funded ES pre-occupied with benefit policing. It also inherited widespread scepticism amongst the unemployed on one hand, who see ‘schemes’ as something you are forced to go on with little prospect of a real job outcome, and on the other, employers, who see ‘schemes’ as something that only the most reluctant of the unemployed participate in. Before we consider New Deal in detail, it is necessary to provide a summary of the government’s policy approach to the programme.

1.6 New Labour’s policy approach to New Deal

It was mentioned earlier that New Labour’s election pledge was to reduce youth unemployment by 250,000 and tackle poverty through welfare to work programmes. New Labour also made it clear that it would not secure full employment through job creation or Keynesian demand management, and that poverty would not be addressed through taxation and redistribution. Instead, a mixture of welfare reform and training measures to enhance skills would, in the words of Gordon Brown in 1997, “create employment opportunity for all” (Guardian, 27 September, 1997).

Hence, New Labour had an immediate goal of reducing unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. At the same time, the New Deal initiative was presented as one of the key elements in a growing integration of policy for employment, education and training, and welfare reform of which the minimum wage (also an integral part), as laying down a basic 'floor' for low waged employment (see Fields,1998).

As Tonge, 1999 notes, New Labour placed the changes introduced by New Deal within a rights and responsibility theme. In return for the responsibility of searching for employment, the state would guarantee a set level of income, a specific level training, or assistance in job-searching (ibid: 219). And the rejection of Keynesian macro-economic employment strategies, the emphasis on training as a panacea for unemployment and the subsidy given to employers (reminiscent of Labour governments of the 1970s), according to Tonge, point to policies built firmly on the past,

Further, New Labour also builds on trends towards disciplinary or active welfare and reinforcement of work incentives initiated by the previous Conservative government, most notably restart interviews, project work pilot schemes and the 1996 Jobseeker's Allowance, which replaced National Insurance and imposed requirements on the long-term unemployed to demonstrate job-search as a condition for receiving benefit (see previous section).

Since the New Deal forms part of a broader project, which Tony Blair has called the 'Third Way', its relative success or failure will therefore be one significant

test of the viability of such a project. Broadly, this seeks to combine a neo-liberal approach to labour market flexibility with a more interventionist state which aims to enhance education and skills of the population, combined with radical welfare reform (see Powell, 2000).

1.7 What is New Deal for Young People (NDYP)?

New Deal for Young People is one element of the Government's wider Welfare to Work Strategy. It aims to help 18-24 year olds, who have been claiming unemployment benefit (Jobseekers Allowance – JSA) continuously for six months, to find work and to improve their prospects of remaining in full-time employment. Such claimants become eligible when they reach the six-month threshold. Participation is mandatory. Early entry to NDYP is possible and there are 11 groups who are entitled to enter NDYP before reaching the six-month point. Early entrants include people with disabilities, lone parents, ex-offenders, ex-members of the regular armed forces, people with literacy or numeracy problems and those meeting a range of other criteria.

NDYP was introduced in 12 Pathfinder areas from January 1998 as a pilot, and became a national programme in April 1998. The programme is intended to contribute to an increase in the sustainable level of employment and a reduction in the number of groups excluded from the labour market. The Employment Service has the lead responsibility for delivering NDYP working in partnership with others in the community. These partnerships bring together a range of organisations, including the Employment Service itself, Training and Enterprise

Councils (replaced in April 2001 by the Learning and Skills Councils), Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector Organisations and private companies. The delivery of NDYP through local Units of Delivery was designed to allow local knowledge of the labour market, unemployed clients and provision to inform New Deal delivery and ‘to ensure that programmes are sensitive to local circumstances and are tailored to meet local need (DfEE, 1997).

There are 144 Units of Delivery (UoD) across the country, each falling into one of four broad models of delivery. These delivery models are: Joint Venture Partnerships (JVP) in which a number of equal partners (including the local ES) contract with ES to deliver New Deal; Consortia in which ES contracts with individual partners; Private Sector delivery where ES Contracts with private sector organisations who lead delivery; and Independent Contracts where ES, in effect, is the lead contractor and sub-contracts individually with service providers (ES, 1998). The model adopted by Southern Derbyshire Unit of Delivery is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 New Deal Framework

There are three key stages to NDYP: The Gateway, Options and Follow-Through.

Gateway

Every young person who joins the New Deal first enters a Gateway process where their individual circumstances and needs are explored and assessed by their NDPA. In some cases the need for training will be apparent early on, and they will be able to move fairly quickly onto the education and training option. For others, the process of reaching a decision about the most suitable option for them will take more time. They may need expert help from for example, the Connexions Service or from other agencies and professionals. There may also be a need to draw in outside agencies to tackle underlying problems which are preventing their move into training or work.

For these people, the Gateway stage can last up to four months. During this period young people, who remain on JSA, develop plans jointly with their NDPAs to find a job, to enhance their employability or to prepare for the New Deal Options. It is central to the design of NDYP that clients receive support and advice from NDPAs that is tailored to the individuals' needs and circumstances. NDPAs provide structured support, advice and training with regard to job search, basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and personal problems that relate to employability (see also Chapter 5). Those not finding an unsubsidised job during the Gateway then move to the next stage of NDYP and one of the four Options.

The Options are:

- ***a job with an employer*** – under which employers receive £60 per week for up to six months towards employment costs. The employer is required to

offer approved, in work training for at least one day per week or equivalent off the job provision leading to a recognised qualification. There is £750 per head available for this training;

- ***work with the Voluntary Sector Organisation*** – offering experience of work with training for six months. A payment of £750 per head will be available for training. Voluntary organisations receive a fee for their placements, while trainees receive their previous entitlement to benefit, plus a grant of £400 (which is equivalent to £15 per week on top of their benefits);
- ***work with the Environment Task Force*** – offering up to six months work on tasks designed to improve the environment as well as the employability of trainees. The conditions and financial benefits are similar to that of the Voluntary Sector Option.
- ***full-time education and training*** – offering young people without basic educational qualifications, a course of training for up to 52 weeks, to achieve NVQ Level 2 or equivalent.

All those on Options continue to be subject to JSA rules, such as the obligation to actively seek work irrespective of the financial arrangements for the specific Option.

- ***Follow-Through*** - If a young person completes or leaves an Option and still has not obtained a job, they can reclaim JSA (if previously paid a wage) and

enter the Follow-Through period. During Follow-Through, they receive further intensive help with job search in order to find a job, re-enter an Option or even in some cases return to the Gateway.

Although there is no formal hierarchy in the allocation of these Options, it will be clear in Chapter 4 that the subsidised employment placement is by far the most preferred by New Deal participants, and for many, the main motivation for active participation in the programme. The Environmental Task Force Option is the least preferred.

The government has emphasised that there will 'be no fifth option of an inactive life on benefits' (Blair, 1997: 7). Young people refusing a New Deal Option without good cause will first have their whole benefits suspended for two weeks, followed by a four-week period if they refuse again after adjudication to take up an Option.

1.8 The promise of equality within New Deal

The promotion of equality of opportunity and its practice within New Deal was explicit in the design of the programme. The government's commitment to achieve equality of outcome for all young people was stated thus: 'The Government is committed to ensuring that New Deal actively promotes equality of opportunity and outcome for young people of all ethnic and racial groups' (Employment Service, 1998: 3). Indeed, the government has introduced 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy', accompanied by 'Ethnic Minority Toolkit'

which provides clear guidelines for the Employment Service, in a bid to ensure parity of outcomes for minority ethnic groups (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of the Strategy). For its part, the CRE (1997) also urged the government to ‘build in measures for reaching those who are most alienated, disaffected and disadvantaged into their strategy for creating training and employment opportunities’. As pointed out earlier, previous youth training programmes have been criticised as having little relevance for minority ethnic young people because of their minimal impact on unemployment levels (see Baqi, 1987; Cross and Smith, 1987; Cross et al, 1988; De Souza, 1987; Verma and Darby, 1987). In addition, the government’s own guidelines to guide against discrimination in the selection and recruitment process in schemes such as YOP and YTS, were found to be ineffective (ibid).

1.9 Overview

This chapter began with a discussion of the differential position of minority ethnic groups in the labour market. Drawing on research evidence and other reports, it pointed out that despite the introduction of legislation outlawing discrimination since the arrival of the initial migrants from the New Commonwealth, inequalities in employment have persisted. It argued that whilst there was evidence of divergence in the circumstances of some minority ethnic groups, and between men and women within those groups, the overall picture shows that the unemployment rate of minority groups is often at least twice the rate of White people and can sometimes be three times higher.

The evidence of the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups including the second generation indicated that these groups are faring no better. Despite evidence of high levels of literacy, education and skills among some minority groups, this has not reduced the risk of unemployment.

These discussions were linked to the wider issue of the role of the school system and the Careers Service in the transition from school to work. In the case of the latter, evidence suggests that some careers officers engage in stereotypes regarding the abilities and aspirations of young people from minority ethnic groups, while others failed to deal with employer racism.

Looking at the structure and delivery of previous government youth training and employment programmes, the indications are that they did not meet the needs of young people from minority ethnic groups.

The next chapter considers some of the political, ethical and moral difficulties associated with conducting social research, and in particular, that which addresses race and ethnicity issues. The research methods and strategies adopted in this study are also considered, including the method for analysing the research data.

Chapter 2: Ethical, methodological and political issues in social research

2.0 Introduction

This chapter considers the ethical, methodological and political issues associated with social research. These issues are often at the heart of questions about the method and the process involved in carrying out social research. There are, of course, additional complexities arising from research which may be defined as race relations research. In addition, the chapter argues, not necessarily for a shift in focus from the experiences of minority ethnic individuals or groups, but to go beyond these experiences (that is, what is happening), to examining the policies and practices that are located within institutions and the wider social policy goals and outcomes (that is, why and how it is happening).

The chapter begins with a summary of current studies conducted on the experiences of minority ethnic groups on New Deal, comment on the adequacy of these studies and formulate research questions for this study.

2.1 Key research questions

Evidence from current research indicates that outcomes for minority ethnic groups on NDYP are worse than their White counterparts. Specifically, they indicate that young people from minority groups are:

- more likely to spend longer at the Gateway stage during which the ES and their partners work with participants to improve their employability and find unsubsidised jobs before moving onto one of the four options;
- more likely to end up on Full-time Education and Training Option, even though they were more likely than their White counterparts to have a qualification when they entered New Deal; and to have qualifications at NVQ Level 2 or more;
- more likely to be on the Voluntary Sector Option;
- much less likely to be found on the Subsidised Employment Option; and
- more likely to have left New Deal completely without a positive outcome or to have come off the JSA register to unknown destination (DfEE, 1999; DWP, 2000; Moody, 2000; Owen et al, 2000).

Whilst these studies provide quantitative data indicating New Deal outcomes for minority ethnic groups at national level, less is known about how minority groups experience New Deal at local level, particularly in rural areas. Answers to the research questions noted above will supplement knowledge by shedding light both on the experiences of minority groups in rural locations, the behaviour of employers and the ways in which their recruitment practices relate to young and unemployed people, as well as the behaviour of NDPAs in the way they meet the needs and aspirations of young people on the programme. It further

provides the opportunity to examine whether, and if so to what extent, the government's 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' has delivered the supposed job outcomes for young people from all racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, the researcher's close involvement in the New Deal programme, as well as with ES managers and staff, will benefit the study by bringing an 'insider perspective' to it.

It should be pointed out that this is a small-scale research with a relatively small sample size. It is therefore not part of the research strategy to undertake a complex statistical analysis of the research data. Instead, it will examine in detail the experiences and perspectives of a modest sample of young people from minority groups in relation to employers, NDPAs, and the New Deal programme as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, the primary objective of New Deal is to improve the chances of unemployed young people to obtain employment, and when in employment, to sustain such employment. The role of the Employment Service (ES) is crucial, and particularly that of New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs), since the responsibility for getting young people 'job ready' via the Gateway process falls on NDPAs. How NDPAs discharge this responsibility raises a number of research questions. These include:

- What do NDPAs see as the main barriers facing minority ethnic young people in the labour market?

- What are NDPAs' understandings of job readiness?
- How do NDPAs decide which Option meets the needs and aspirations of individual young person?
- What are NDPAs' understandings of equality and diversity issues?
- How do NDPAs deal with discrimination if and when it occurs?

Employers also have a central role to play, not least, in facilitating the entry of young people into employment and improving the sustainability of such employment. This raises an important set of issues about how New Deal will bring about such a change in the recruitment of young people and the impact of the programme upon employers and their behaviour. This in turn raises questions about how employers responded to previous government training and employment programmes, and how they have recruited unemployed young people in the past. In order to provide answers to these issues, it is necessary to address a number of specific research questions. These include:

- What are employers' recruitment policy, procedures and practice?
- Do these recruitment policies and procedures affect minority young people gaining access to the labour market?

- What do employers' see as the main barriers affecting minorities in gaining access to the Employment Option?
- Will employers' participation in New Deal affect their recruitment behaviour?
- What are employers' understanding of job readiness?

In relation to New Deal participants from minority ethnic groups, the key issues centre on their experiences through out their New Deal career – from the Gateway stage through to the Option stage. Consequently, the key questions to be addressed include:

- What do participants see as the main barriers facing them in the labour market?
- What activities have participants undertaken and their relationship with their NDPAs at the Gateway stage and subsequently?
- What Options are participants on and why they chose that Option in preference to the other Options?
- What are participants' understandings of job readiness, and how has New Deal helped them?

The chapter continues with a brief account of my interest in the field of youth training and development, and outlines the circumstances leading up to the challenge to embarking on this research. It discusses the merits of conducting race relations research and in this context, argues that such work provides empirical evidence of differential access experienced by minority ethnic groups in the labour market as well as the causes of these differentials. It goes on to consider some of the issues around 'value-freedom' and 'value-neutrality' in the research process. Additionally, the concept of 'racial matching' as a model for social research is critically analysed. This provides the basis for an account of my experiences in the research process. It then presents the methods and strategies used to collect the research data, including an outline of the framework for analysing the data.

2.2 Taking a step backwards and moving forward

In December 1996, following the local government re-organisation, the Equal Opportunities and Race Relations (EORR) Department of a local government in the East Midlands which I joined at the beginning of 1987 and contributed to its development for over nine years, was disbanded. This new department, with its twenty-five employees and a Chief Officer, was created by the then leader of the Council in 1986, charged with the responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring equality policies, procedures and practices within the Council, together with promoting good race relations within the community. The work of the department was overseen by the Policy - Equal Opportunities and Race Relations Sub-Committee which was composed of the Chairs of all the

Committees of the Council. It was the only Committee of its kind within the Council which could boast of such membership, and of course, its influence was also unparalleled, as its decisions were fed directly into the main Council.

As head of the department's Community and Departmental Liaison Section, and a member of the Senior Management Team, I had direct and frequent access to Members as well as Chief Officers of all the departments within the Council. In addition, I have, on a number of occasions deputised in the absence of the Chief Officer.

The leader of the Council resigned in 1993 for personal reasons after eleven years in office. A discussion of the closure of the department started amongst senior Members immediately following the election of a new leader from amongst the ruling Labour group. Although equality work and its related activities were considered important under the new leader, it nonetheless received a low priority as compared to 'soft' issues such as the environment. Consequently, in 1996 following the local government reorganisation, the department was abolished. Most of the staff of the department transferred to a newly created unitary authority in the city of the county. If I had any ambitions of one-day becoming the department's future Chief Officer, this was extinguished. Instead, I was asked to join the Corporate Personnel Department (with its settled structure and culture) in April 1997, not as head of the Community and Departmental Liaison Section (because my post was also disestablished), but as Principal Personnel Officer.

If a career in personnel was far from my first choice, any disappointment has, to some extent, been compensated for in other ways. First, I no longer work in the 'gold-fish bowl' environment which existed in the EORR Department - where every aspect of our work, as well as the conduct and behaviour of senior managers - was scrutinised under the 'microscope' by the Conservative Group (but not exclusively by them) which perceived equality and diversity work as 'a waste of public money'. Second, I have been spared the Opposition Group's persistent call 'get rid of the department' which greeted every meeting of the Equal Opportunities and Race Relations Sub-Committee, and which was always rebuffed by the Labour Group. Ironically, the Opposition Group's wish to abolish the department was granted by the ruling Labour administration as equality and diversity issues became secondary to environmental issues. In essence, this also reflected the priorities of the 'new' rural council (after the local government reorganisation), with fewer minority ethnic population. Third, the days of long hours in the office, as well as attending evening meetings are very rare – I can now spend more time with my family.

My new role was more personnel oriented; and in July 1998, I was asked by the Deputy County Personnel Officer to develop the Council's Youth Employment Strategy. The Labour government's New Deal for Young People had just been introduced nation-wide, and the Youth Employment Strategy I developed included a framework for the Council's involvement in New Deal. This was adopted by the Council amidst a great deal of publicity.

After the launch of the strategy in September 1998, I thought that was the end of my involvement in New Deal - departments could get on with the implementation of the programme and call on me for advice as and when required. This was the established practice. However, at a subsequent meeting with a group of managers from the Employment Service, I was introduced by a senior manager present as the lead officer responsible for co-ordinating the Council's New Deal programme. My active involvement in New Deal thus began in earnest. I soon established a corporate Youth Employment Strategy Group comprised of senior departmental personnel officers to drive the programme forward. My involvement in New Deal grew, so was my interest, particularly in the social welfare elements of the programme which focused on issues around rights, responsibilities and social inclusion.

It was during this period that my interest to pursue a PhD course, which has remained dormant since the completion of my Masters degree at the University of Warwick about a decade ago due mainly to the pressure of work, was rekindled. The urge to pursue a PhD degree led me to contact the Director of the Centre for Research in Race and Ethnic Relations (CRER) at Warwick. Following this, a meeting was soon arranged at the Director's office at Warwick to discuss my research intentions. I was positively encouraged to prepare a research proposal to accompany an application for a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The application was sent at the end of July 1998. While I was waiting for a response from the ESRC, I decided on a back-up strategy should my application fail. I discussed my intentions with my head of department, including a request for a grant. I was assured that there was

money available in the department's training budget as my proposed course met the post entry training requirement and that I should submit a formal request for approval. A formal request was submitted during the second week in July 1998, in time for the next meeting of the relevant committee towards the end of the month. I was expected to have been informed immediately after the Committee meeting about the outcome of my request. However, during the second week after the Committee meeting, a chance reading of the minutes of the meeting indicated that my request had not been successful. At a subsequent meeting with my Chief Officer to find out why my request was rejected in spite of his initial reassurances, I was invited to submit another request at a later date – an invitation I totally refused.

My Chief Officer's decision not to support my PhD degree came as a surprise, not least, because my request fulfilled all the essential post entry training criteria necessary to secure a grant. A day release component of the request which would have enabled me to attend lectures was also refused. Nonetheless, I was determined to pursue the study with or without a grant. Plans to finance the course were almost complete, including the use of all my annual leave in order that I would be able to attend all the required lectures at the university. At this stage I had given up all hopes regarding the ESRC's grant application, and it was until the end of August 1998 when I received a letter confirming that my application for a grant has been successful. My registration at the University of Warwick was formalised, and a 'sentence of four to five years hard labour' started at the beginning of September that year.

2.3 Negotiating Access: the first steps

Two meetings were held with the Southern Derbyshire District New Deal Co-ordinator at the district office, each lasting for about one and a half hours. To some extent the success of the study depended on the co-operation of the Employment Service, not least because it is the body that has set up a database and also has direct access to employers, Advisers and of course young people on the programme. The first meeting was concerned with explaining the broad aims of the study, including brief details of the research strategy which involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, together with the potential respondents who would be involved in the study. I also discussed the kind of help I would require from the Employment Service, including access to their database on employers in the district, New Deal Personal Advisers and more importantly, young people participating in the New Deal programme.

My initial anxiety as to whether or not the Employment Service would be willing to provide the support I required appear to have been unnecessary. I was assured of their support, except that for data protection reasons, I would not be allowed direct access to their database. However it was suggested that this matter, together with details of both the employer and New Deal participant questionnaire, the covering letter and a schedule of interview questions would be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

The second meeting took place towards the end of October, 1999, and I was pleasantly surprised about the extent of the support the Employment Service

were willing to provide. They were to be associated with the research, and the covering letter could include a statement to that effect; they would also include a letter asking employers to encourage their New Deal employees to complete the questionnaire; and would be willing to distribute the questionnaires to both employers and New Deal participants. Furthermore, in relation to New Deal Personal Advisers, the District New Deal Co-ordinator would, at their subsequent Personal Advisers meeting, encourage them to take part during the qualitative stage of the study.

In relation to gaining access, Encel (1978), for example, notes that it is far more difficult to study powerful individuals and bureaucracies because people in power have more reason for obscuring the truth than others; and research may be anathema to some 'closed' groups (Lee, 1992). In addition, others may see research as a threat because of the repercussions it might have inside the research setting: it disrupts operational routines, there are fears of exploitation or it may result in damaging disclosures.

One way of countering these fears, according to Whyte (1955), is by acquiring an appropriate sponsor who acts as a "bridge" and "patron" with the group(s) to be researched. However, I would argue that the overt method used in gaining physical access to the Employment Service, together with the frankness and openness about the purpose of the research, including the timing – all contributed to the positive response by the Employment Service. And in relation to Whyte's appropriate "sponsor", I think I found one in the District New Deal Co-ordinator.

There were other factors which may have contributed to the apparent enthusiasm and willingness of the Employment Service to help and support the research. At the time of the study, the Employment Service were somewhat puzzled as to why, in spite of all the national, regional as well as local publicity given to the New Deal programme, there were relatively a few minority ethnic young people on the programme. The Employment Service were therefore keen to learn lessons which may arise from my research. On the face of it, this would appear to support the 'exchange theory' which assumes that the researcher has something to offer in exchange for the opportunity to undertake the research (see Hornsby-Smith, 2001). However, there were other factors which may have contributed directly to the Employment Services' willingness to help with the study. First, as mentioned earlier, I was responsible for developing my employer's framework for its involvement in the New Deal programme and overseeing its implementation – one of the first local Council in the area, and certainly, one of the few nationally, to become actively involved in the programme. The Employment Service therefore saw me as a New Deal champion, with a shared interest in the programme. Second, the District New Deal Co-ordinator, together with New Deal Managers and New Deal Personal Advisers, had attended one of the New Deal briefing meetings I organised for Employment Service staff at which I presented the business case as to the reasons why employers should consider signing up to participate in New Deal. This I think demonstrated not only my shared interest in New Deal with the Employment Service, but also my employer's determination to ensure the success of the programme. Third, the Employment Service were also aware that I was part of a small group of people invited by the Minister of Employment to

provide advice on what could be done to improve local authority participation in the programme. Fourth, I represent my employer on the North Derbyshire District New Deal Strategy Group - which develops policy and monitors outcomes, and the South Derbyshire District New Deal Employer Coalition - which provide labour market advice as well as support to the Employment Service.

The above, then has provided some explanation as to the reasons why the Employment Service were willing to assist my research. The second meeting with the District New Deal Co-ordinator, which took place two weeks later in mid-November 1999 was as successful as the first. At this meeting a draft employer questionnaire and that of New Deal participants were discussed; so too were the covering letter to accompany the questionnaires and a briefing paper that would be sent to New Deal Advisers explaining the aims of the study, including the areas to be covered during my interviews with them. The questionnaire and interview guides are discussed later.

2.4 Why more research on race and ethnicity?

Black and minority ethnic groups have long argued that there has been far too much research on their socio-economic condition over a number of decades but that much less has been done to improve their situation. This position is not without justification. In recent years, there have been, for example, four major Policy Studies Institute surveys into the social and economic position of black and minority groups in Britain. Second, results from the 1991 census, which was

the first to ask an ethnic origin question, has provided evidence of the secondary position occupied by black and minority ethnic groups in various spheres, including employment, education, housing etc. Third, there have been regular Labour Force Surveys, which provide detailed analysis of the economic activity and employment of black and minority ethnic groups. Fourth, there have been various studies conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE, 1985a; 1988; 1991a; 1994) in relation to the discrimination faced by black and minority ethnic groups in the professions, employment, housing, education, social services etc. Fifth, academic interest in the subject has meant that some universities have set up special centres of excellence to look into issues which affect the minority ethnic communities, and have published various papers on the subject. In addition, there have been public enquiries following major incidents, for example, the publication of the Scarman Report following the 1981 disorders, which dealt with various aspects of the disorders, including racial discrimination and under participation/achievement in education and employment; and finally, the publication of the McPherson Report in 1999 following the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, highlighting the need to tackle institutional racism.

In other words there is now, a plethora of evidence of the effects of racism, disadvantage and discrimination (see Daniel, 1968; Smith, 1977; Brown, 1984; Brown and Gay, 1985; Modood et al, 1997; CRE, 1994; Karn, et al, 1997). It is not surprising therefore that one of the main arguments against the production of more race relations research, particularly amongst black and minority ethnic activists is that, what is needed is action directed at eliminating racism and

discrimination (Solomos, 1989). This argument has a particular resonance when one considers the approaches of disciplines such as Social Anthropology and much of Sociology (for that matter) which concentrates its research activities mainly on the cultural aspects of specific minority groups as opposed to exploring the structural and institutional problems which give rise to racism and discrimination. That is to say, social scientific approaches, which effectively pathologise minority ethnic groups, and at the same time fail to incorporate structural arguments, may be accused of ethnocentrism (even racism) rooted in pathologised images of “ethnic minorities.” Indeed, it could be argued that historically, social anthropology has been what white people have done to black people in the name of social scientific research. Ratcliffe (1994: 12), for example, argues with reference to the treatment of Aboriginal people in early anthropological studies as treating them as though they were in the “zoo”. Whilst this may seem a crude oversimplification, it nonetheless represents the crux of the argument which appears to be that rather than challenging structures of inequality, research may merely reproduce or re-package them. In this view, research does nothing to redress historical imbalances in material well-being and distorts or conceals the everyday experiences of black and minority ethnic people.

Furthermore, a number of radical writers and activists have raised objections to the ways in which research has been conducted on black and minority ethnic communities (Bourne, 1980; Gilroy, 1980; Lawrence, 1981 and 1982; Potmar, 1981; Philips, 1983. Indeed, Lawrence (1982), links the popular images of black communities as suffering from communal helplessness and cultural handicap to

the tendency of researchers to become preoccupied by the apparent social relations within black communal lifestyles at the expense of detailed studies of the personal and institutional mechanisms through which racism operates. He argues that an emphasis on factors of this sort diverts attention from racism, and shifts the problems of race relations on to the black communities as individuals or as collectives. He cites as an example, the tendency to compare West Indian family structure negatively with the white 'norm'; the view of young Asians as 'caught between the two cultures'; a preoccupation with the supposed 'identity crisis' which afflicts second generation black youth; and the view of black ghetto life as pathogenic. According to Lawrence, this leads to marginalising the importance of racism in structuring the obstacles faced by black people in British society, leading to 'blaming the victim' types of ideological images. In addition, Lawrence argues that, the images presented of black communities tend to be ones which see them as passive, with little or no account taken of their capacities to respond positively and defensively to their historical experience of racism, either as individuals or collectively (Lawrence, 1982: 100-6 and 116).

A more detailed analysis of this debate, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, is required. However it is worth noting that the summary presented above has thrown up a range of issues. These include: first, that the question of why there is a need for more race relations research is far from being resolved. Second, that there are doubts over the usefulness or appropriateness of research on race as a means of improving the social and economic condition of black and minority ethnic groups. Third, that it could be taken as indicating a degree of mistrust

about the motives of predominantly white researchers doing research about race relations in Britain. This latter point is considered in Section 2.5 below.

Notwithstanding what has been said above, it should be pointed out that there are those, for example, Ratcliffe (2004), who believe that race and ethnicity are concepts which are of enormous sociological interest, not least because of their complexity. Ratcliffe also believes that many contemporary debates revolve around issues associated with race relations. And like the core concepts of class and gender, race and ethnicity have a contemporary salience as ‘meaningful’ social divisions (ibid: 3). Furthermore, others see race as the most significant, dangerous and unacceptable form of social division (Knowles, 1992), and that the only way to influence legislative and administrative branches of government is through the presentation of factual statistical information about discrimination in such areas as housing, employment, social services, etc (Solomos, 1989). This latter approach, according to Solomos, is particularly associated with the work of the Policy Studies Institute (and its predecessor, Political and Economic Planning), for example, (Daniel, 1968; Smith, 1977 and 1981; Brown, 1984; and Modood et al, 1997). Similar work has also been undertaken by Karn et al, (1997) and Berthoud (2002). Solomos points out that the end result of this approach may be said to be an emphasis on race research as either a neutral academic discipline or uncommitted policy research which aims to present policy-makers with facts on which they could base new policy initiatives. In a similar vein, a more recent Cabinet Office Report, ‘Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market’ (2003) draws together much of the available data on the subject

with an expectation that government action will increase the participation and achievement of minority ethnic groups in the labour market.

For my part, the essence of this study is to evaluate one of the government's strategies aimed at improving the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups. Labour market discrimination is therefore important to this study. This is because 'employment is perhaps the single most important measure of life-chances. It is at the centre of most discussions not just of racial equality but of social justice generally' (Modood et al, 1997: 5). Similarly, Mason (2000) also argues that paid work provides the economic resources which are often key to people's ability to control other aspects of their lives. Paid work is therefore of multiple importance, providing people with both income and prospects of broader social mobility (see also Orton and Ratcliffe, 2003).

In considering the debates surrounding race relations research, Solomos further points to the impossibility of isolating the conduct of research on racial issues from the wider social and political context within which it takes place. He identifies a number of factors which he considers are at the centre of this debate. These include: the focus of study in the field of race relations; the interrelationship between research and policy; who carries out and controls the research; and the impact of policy-oriented research on racial inequality. Until these issues become part of the research agenda of those undertaking research on race, he argues, it is unlikely that the suspicion of research and the questioning of its relevance to the struggle against racism will end. He argues therefore that it is up to researchers to be transparent in declaring their methods, values and

assumptions on which their work is based. Finally, he notes that some of the ethical and political problems involved in studying race which have persisted over the years may be resolved when critical research manages to shape policies and political strategies which undermine racist ideologies and practices (ibid).

Similarly, Ratcliffe (2001), has argued that sociological research on race should have at its core, the values of social emancipation. To this end he proposes a set of principles which he suggests should be adopted by those doing race research.

These include:

- A rejection of the view that race exist in any “real”, scientific sense;
- A rejection of cultural or ethnic essentialism;
- A commitment to research which empowers, or at least avoids the disempowering of minorities;
- A cautious approach to funders of research to ensure a commitment to redressing inequalities and a concomitant rejection of racism, prejudice and discriminatory processes. (This implies a need on the part of sociologists to assess the degree of political will on the part of funders to act on the research findings);
- A rejection of Eurocentric notions of culture and ethnicity, and the commitment to “equality of opportunity” in the research process itself – in

such matters as the recruitment of staff and the subsequent relations between members of the research team;

- In policy terms, an acceptance of the salience of “difference” (equivalent in “practical”, empirical terms to the rejection of essentialism). Thus ‘equality of opportunity’ is replaced by ethnicity - sensitive policy-making, with differential outcome assessments made prior to implementation (ibid: 6-7).

It is not the intention to discuss the relationship between values and social research at this point since this will be covered in Section 5 below. Here, it is sufficient to point out that Ratcliffe (ibid) acknowledges that the principles outlined above may portray the social researcher’s role as solely concerned with undertaking research to improve the well being of oppressed minorities. Rather, as Ratcliffe rightly points out, sociologists are not in a position to bring about meaningful change, particularly where there is no political will to act on research findings (2001: 7). He further points out that minorities are capable of changing things for themselves, and are also in the best position to make judgements as to the most appropriate course of action at a particular juncture in a particular social milieu.

2.5 The relationship between values and social research

Much has been written about the relationship between values and social research (see May, 1997; Gilbert, 2001; Ratcliffe, (2001). This section will therefore not review this literature, but assist in understanding this relationship in this area. It

will do so, first, by examining the main arguments which have been put forward by writers on the relationship between values and social research. The second part then considers the issues surrounding ethnic or racial matching and whether this method affects the outcome of social research projects.

One of the key debates in social research is the question as to whether there can be 'value-freedom' or 'value-neutrality' in the research process. In contributing to this debate, May notes: "For those who adhere to the idea of 'value neutrality' throughout the research process, there are insurmountable problems in mounting a defence for this position. Most scientists would not, if asked, attempt to maintain this in the face of overwhelming arguments to the contrary" (May 1997: 49). Despite this clear and unambiguous proposition, there are other sociologists who believe that social research can be 'objective'. One such proponent of objectivity in the research process is Weber (1949). He draws a distinction between what he sees as two problems in the conduct of social research: first, the problem-selection stage; and second, the fact-gathering stage. For Weber, the researcher would start a particular area of study and so make a value judgement; from this point, the researcher can be objective. Thus, Weber believes in the possibility of fact-gathering, while recognising the crucial role which values play in the research process (noting that objectivity is a value position).

A similar position is adopted by Pinker (1971), arguing that the first role of the researcher is to help the public distinguish between correct and incorrect knowledge, and in so doing 'inform or change public opinion, and to help create consciousness of problems where this consciousness is absent', (see also Nagel,

1961). Not surprisingly, critics of the ‘value-neutrality’ position argue that social research is not a neutral medium for gathering information on social realities (Gouldner, 1962). Similar sentiments are expressed by Ravn (1991) who argues that social research is:

An activity recognised by many as constructing them, and the researcher plays a major role in this. Thus enters the question of values in the research activities as well, and a fuller discussion of what is good – that is, what values should guide the researcher in her (*sic*) studies and interventions – is required (Ravn,1991: 112, cited in May 1997).

Thus, for Ravn, values enter all the different stages in the research process, and not only at the formulation stage as Weber and those who adhere to objectivity would have us believe. Moreover, the idea of objectivity as detachment is also criticised by other writers. Becker (1967), for example, argues that researchers should ask whose side they are on (in the research process) rather than attempting to separate themselves from those they are researching. Even then, white researchers can be treated with a great deal of suspicion from black subjects (Ratcliffe,1993: 116).

Others, for example, Ben Tovim et al (1986), from ‘action-research’ and ‘advocacy-research’ perspectives, reject the notion of value neutrality. These writers argue for a process of research which seeks to empower black, minority ethnic and other disadvantaged groups who are the subject of research. This means allowing such groups to influence the research questions, methodologies

and the interpretations of the findings. Researchers who adhere to this position, and for that matter, all committed researchers, want to maximise the political effectiveness of their research. To be sure, they also like their work to have practical results, to be useful in a good cause, and in this case, to be of real use in the fight against racism. However, these approaches have themselves been open to accusation of researcher bias, which it is argued can undermine the validity of research findings (Collins, 1980; Bradburn, 1983; Brannen, 1988). On the other hand, there are other writers who argue that in a race-centred society, the ethos guiding the research process from data collection through to the interpretation of those data, is rooted in Eurocentric hegemony (see Stanfield and Rutledge, 1993). Thus research projects which do not conform to the 'normal' process are seen as methodologically flawed.

In considering the values that inform the decisions of researchers in the course of their practice, feminists consider gender relations as consisting of cultural distinctions between 'masculinity' and 'femininity', with feminists claiming that the economic, political and social dominance of men means that it is the masculine value that dominates. To put it simply, these distinctions describe a series of hierarchical divisions whereby men dominate, exploit and oppress women within a patriarchal society (see Fitzpatrick, 2001, especially Chapter 7, for a discussion of the different feminist schools of thought). Feminists therefore argue that the values of male researchers affect all aspects of their research practice from design, through data collection to interpretation and application.

Consequently, writers who adhere to this feminist position perceive the research process to be a co-operative endeavour in which the researcher and participants share information and experiences. This method of social research is said to take account, not only of the feelings and experiences of the researcher and the researched, which are believed to be part of the research process (see Humm, 1995), but also allows the issues under discussion to be clarified, and thus provide a greater understanding of the social world (see Gelsthorpe, 1990; Acker et al, 1991). According to Acker et al, feminist methodology in the social research process thus becomes:

A dialogue between the researcher and the researched, an effort to explore and clarify the topic under discussion, to clarify and expand understanding; both are assumed to be individuals who reflect upon their experiences and who can communicate those reflections. This is inherent in the situation; neither the subjectivity of the researcher nor the subjectivity of the researched can be eliminated in the process (ibid: 140).

As hinted earlier, the feminist critique of value neutrality is ultimately a critique of the sexual division of labour that structures the relations between men and women across society. From this perspective, the place of commitment towards the improvement of women's position within society and the goals of a rational science, in some assumed detachment from the social world, are argued to be incompatible and impossible to sustain (Ramazanoglu, 1992). It can be argued, therefore, that, if research is conducted based on feminist methodology, with the sole purpose of overcoming women's oppression, then the only conclusion we

can draw is that values permeate all aspects of the research process from the design stage through to interpretation.

Clearly, the above discussion has demonstrated that Weber's value-neutrality position is incompatible with neither the feminist nor critical-research positions. Yet recent advocates of value-neutrality, notably Hammersley (1995), argue that research should not be political nor directly concerned with any other goal than the production of knowledge; and in so doing, he strongly defends the value-neutrality position. Consequently, he does not see it as the aim of research to raise consciousness, educate nor change the world.

2.6 Racial/ethnic matching: the salience of identity in the research process

One of the issues raised earlier in the debates about race relations research was whether it was appropriate for predominantly White researchers to engage in research about race relations.

This section therefore turns its attention to the debates surrounding the notion of racial or ethnic matching, and discusses it briefly, as to whether a social researcher's racial or ethnic background affects the research process in ways that can influence the outcome of the research. It also discusses its utility as a method for social research.

One of the central premises of the racial matching model is that researchers from minority ethnic groups have a particular worldview. It is presumed, for instance, that these researchers have better understanding of racial prejudice and discrimination, are less racist, and identify more closely with members of their presumed racial groups.

Specifically, the argument for racial matching is that, for example:

- (i) a black interviewer would be more likely to share the experience of racial prejudice and discrimination with a black informant who would, therefore, feel more comfortable discussing these issues than with a white researcher;
- (ii) black people's mistrust of white people in general would be extended to a white interviewer and inhibit effective communication;
- (iii) a white interviewer would be more likely to conduct an interview and interpret the data in a prejudicial manner (Rhodes 1994:550).

Wilson (1974), in discussing the same topic, notes that critics of cross-racial interviewing and fieldwork, mostly black scholars, argue that white researchers are basically incapable of grasping black realities, and that because of the very nature of their experiences, black and white researchers will approach the subject of race with very different foci of interest. The overall message, then, according to Zinn (1979), is that minority group scholars are the best qualified to conduct research in minority communities.

This notion of social research has been severely criticised on a number of grounds. First, the model assumes that a shared racial identity engenders rapport and promotes effective communication between researcher and subject. However, drawing from her research experiences while interviewing black foster care providers, Rhodes, a white researcher, identified a range of advantages to being a 'racial outsider'. She notes that her ethnicity was not always the handicap expected even when discussing such sensitive subject as racism. Many of her subjects were prepared to speak about their experiences and opinions and several confided that they would not have a similar discussion with another black person. She was treated to information which they would have assumed was the taken-for-granted knowledge of an insider. According to Rhodes, she adopted the equivalent of a pupil role with the informant a teacher, and people spoke to her as a representative of white people. In these encounters her subjects were speaking to her as a black person to a white person: the significance of skin colour became paramount, but as a stimulant rather than a block to communication (Rhodes, 1994).

Similarly, Wilson, a black sociologist, has also criticised the proponents of a 'black insider' perspective. He argues that there is no factual evidence to suggest that a researcher has to be black to adequately describe and explain the experiences of black people. He notes that although the contrary is sometimes assumed, the black experience is not uniform. He points to the fact that black people may have been victimised by racist behaviour at one time or another, nonetheless, the black experience may vary due to other factors such as social class, religion, age etc. In other words, some middle-class black researchers may

have experiences closer to that of middle-class white researchers than those of lower class black people (Wilson, 1974).

Another black researcher, Ann Phoenix, has also criticised the notion of 'colour' matching. She argues that although factors such as race and gender positions, and the power positions they entail, enter into the interview situation, they do not do so in any unitary or essential way. As a result, the impact of race and gender within a particular piece of research cannot be easily predicted as the complexities of this impact make it difficult to be clear whether the matching of interviewees with interviewers on particular characteristics will produce 'better' or 'richer' data than not matching. For this reason, Phoenix argues that it may even be better, methodologically, to use both black and white researchers: this way, different accounts about race are produced (Phoenix, 1994). In addition, Phoenix expresses doubt about the utility of the 'racial matching' model as to whether it will further the course of anti-racism. On the contrary, she points to the potential of the model contributing to the marginalisation of black scholars to studying only those of the same race (ibid). Indeed, Rhodes (1994), makes a similar point and argues that as a long term strategy for gaining access to the research establishment, 'racial matching' will be counterproductive as it risks promoting the very marginalisation and devaluation of black people and their concerns which it seeks to redress.

The above discussion has identified some of the major flaws in the 'racial matching' model as a method for social research. It has also highlighted the potential effects it may have on black scholars if it is pressed to its logical

conclusion. The remainder of this section will touch briefly on my own experiences in relation to how my role, not only as a black researcher, but also as a local government officer, with responsibility for co-ordinating my employer's New Deal programme, may have affected the research process.

As has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I am a local government officer responsible for implementing my employer's New Deal Programme. This has, of necessity, involved working closely with the Employment Service. There was therefore in existence a rapport, co-operation and a sense of working together to achieve the same ends between the Employment Service and myself. Mainly as a result of this, access, when it was requested, was more readily given than would otherwise have been the case.

In relation to interviews with young people on the New Deal programme, my relationship with them was a complex one largely because of the role they – the young people – have externally ascribed to me. I was perceived by the mainly White young people I interviewed, as having two sets of roles: an employer representative on one hand, and on the other, a policy officer who is developing a youth employment strategy for my employer. I was therefore thought of by these young people as one who has an interest in their issues and was concerned enough to listen to their plight. For most of them, the New Deal experience has been a negative one, particularly those who are on either the Voluntary Sector Option or the Environmental Task Force Option. Their concerns ranged from the 'lack of flexibility in the New Deal structure' (that is, not being allowed to move from one Option to the other), the 'quality of advice' from New Deal Advisers,

the 'quality of training' on their Option, 'employers negative perception of unemployed youth, which these young people believed was 'misplaced' and the 'real agenda' of the government which they perceived to be concerned only with 'reducing the unemployment figures'. Others, in particular, those on the Employer Option, have had positive experience of the programme (Chapter 5 presents details of interviews with young people). My racial identity in relation to the mainly White interviewees was less significant in this context.

My relationship with minority ethnic young people was qualitatively no different from that of the White interviewees. However, the two groups of interviewees perceived me differently. For example, the communication between the White interviewees and myself was a-bit formal and on the basis of my 'official position' – that is, a 'local government representative' and 'policy officer', with their criticisms centring around the 'New Deal structure', 'delivery of the programme', 'employers' attitudes towards young people' in general and the 'government's real agenda'. By contrast, the minority ethnic interviewees perceived me on the basis of my ethnicity, that is, black. Communication with this group of young people was less formal, more personal and in most cases specific. This then, was the context within which my interviews with minority ethnic young people were conducted. For example, they spoke about their concerns including, the 'quality of advice' they received from their Advisers, the Options they were 'assigned' to and the 'quality of tasks' they undertook on their placement. Those on the Employer Option, unlike their white counterparts, spoke of 'mundane tasks' and 'lack of responsibility' in their job roles, 'the level of training offered', 'negative perception of their abilities' by their established

colleagues, ‘racist name calling’ and how this affected their confidence. As to why these issues were not raised with their Advisers, the responses ranged from: ‘they would not understand our problems’ to ‘we don’t want to risk losing our placement’. Implicit in this discussion is that this group of young people showed empathy towards me, perceived me as having a common racial identity with them, and was therefore able to communicate more freely with me in a manner they could not with their White NDPAs.

It is important to note at this juncture that my interviews with New Deal participants, listening to their concerns, fears and aspirations, raises a dilemma. That is, as a local government officer, am I using my position to gather data for the sole purpose of my research? Would the findings of the research be used by relevant authorities to improve the conditions of the next generation of young people who participate in the programme? These issues are of major concern to this research and will be explored in subsequent chapters.

2.7 Methodology

The research method involved a number of different strands. (The reasons for adopting this research strategy are discussed in detail in Section 2.8 below). For the moment, it is worth noting that these different strands included the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from Employers, New Deal Participants and New Deal providers during the first two years of the operation of New Deal for Young People. Qualitative data were also collected from New Deal Personal

Advisers. The section which follows provides an outline of the fieldwork process.

2.7.1 Questionnaire

Both the employers and New Deal participants postal questionnaires were sent to potential respondents in January 2000 with the help of the Southern Derbyshire Employment Service. An introductory letter on the University of Warwick headed-paper, (to give the work a corporate identity and to signify respectability) accompanied each questionnaire, outlining the purpose of the study. The letter also mentioned that the study was sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and that it also had the support of the Southern Derbyshire Employment Service (see Appendix A). In addition, a supporting letter from the Southern Derbyshire Employment Service asking employers and New Deal suppliers for their co-operation in the study, was also included. 31 January 2000 was the target date for receipt of the questionnaires. In the event this date was extended by two month to the end of March 2000.

2.7.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Fifty-nine New Deal participants questionnaires and 104 employer questionnaires were received by the end of March 2000. Quantitative analysis of questionnaires was carried out between March and June 2000. The questionnaire data were converted into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) format.

One of the key elements of this analysis was to identify respondents, both New Deal participants and employers, who have indicated a willingness to be interviewed during the qualitative phase of the research.

2.7.3 Interviews

Respondents willing to participate in the qualitative study were contacted by telephone to arrange interview dates. Letters confirming the appointments were then sent between May and June 2000.

2.7.4 New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs)

Introductory letters were sent in June 2000 to all the eighteen NDPAs in the Southern Derbyshire Employment Service District, together with a supporting letter from the District New Deal Co-ordinator encouraging them to participate in the qualitative study. The letters gave details of the purpose of the study, including the duration of the interview and the general areas to be covered (see Appendix A3). Six out of the fifteen positive responses received from NDPAs were selected for the qualitative study. Of these, three were selected for the case studies. Geographical location was the main criterion used to select NDPAs to determine whether there were variations in the survey of NDPAs practices, expectations and outcomes of the programme across the different locations within the district, including the take-up of New Deal by participants (see Section 3.4.13).

2.8 Research Strategy

In general, the research strategy adopted was to achieve a triangulation method by drawing on different sources of data and to enable the examination of the different experiences and perspectives of New Deal participants in Southern Derbyshire. The strategy also allowed a comparison of the common themes which emerged from the data either within one group of respondents or across all the groups to be made. For example, Chapter 5 will show that NDPAs have differing views as to the aims and purpose of New Deal. This means that there are Advisers who perceive the programme as providing education and training to equip young people with the skill for the future. Others see the programme as moving young people from the dole into employment. Consequently, Advisers from the former school of thought would try to ‘steer’ their clients towards the Full-time Education and Training Option, whilst those of the latter were more inclined to ‘steer’ young people on to those Options which will provide them with employment. More specifically, the strategy comprised of the following:

2.8.1 Information Gathering

This involved background statistical information from Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), research reports commissioned by DfEE, DWP and ES, analysis of central government policy documents, and media coverage of NDYP. This provided an insight into the process by which the New Deal initiative was formulated, rationalised and implemented by the government.

2.8.2 Questionnaire

A total of 160 postal questionnaires were sent to 18-24 year old New Deal participants in Southern Derbyshire in January 2000. These included young people on the Employer Option, Full-time Education and Training Option, Voluntary Sector Option and Environmental Task Force Option. Fifty-nine questionnaires were returned. This equates to an overall response rate of 38.8 per cent. The questionnaire was designed to obtain biographical data, including respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, disability, qualifications, employment history, type of work and/or nature of training provided and whether respondents will take part in a follow up interview. (A copy of New Deal Participant Questionnaire can be found in Appendix A1).

Given that New Deal is essentially about helping young people to find and retain jobs, employers' reaction to the programme was clearly an important factor which would determine the programme's success. Employers have a crucial role to play both in relation to providing unsubsidised employment opportunities for young people and in their willingness to provide subsidised employment and training as part of New Deal Options. Two hundred and forty questionnaires were sent to local employers who have signed up to New Deal in Southern Derbyshire. This group of employers included those who have recruited young people under the programme, those who registered an interest in the programme but were yet to take on New Deal candidates; and those who have signed up but do not wish to recruit New Deal candidates. The Employer Questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix A2, was designed to evaluate employers' views and

experiences of the programme and of New Deal recruits. This included the distinction between questions about the establishment and New Deal status and the use of Standard and Occupational Classification (SOC) to characterise the employment profile of the establishment. A total of one hundred and four questionnaires were returned. This equates to an overall response rate of 43.3 per cent.

2.8.3 Nature of non-response

Over half the total number of the employer questionnaires (121) was not returned and could therefore not be accounted for. However, a total of 15 uncompleted questionnaires were returned. Of these uncompleted questionnaires, 7 were marked, 'undelivered, please return to sender'; 5 were from small businesses that had the following statement written across the envelop, 'do not wish to take part'; the remaining 3 bore the following remarks: 'why don't you find something better to do'. Clearly, the latter comments suggest that some employers did not wish to take part in the survey. On the other hand, it was not clear whether the non-response by some employers was due to their negative experience of previous government programmes, or whether other firms had moved out of the area and relocated elsewhere, or whether others have ceased trading altogether. It is also instructive to note that the Employment Service were in the process of updating their database at the time of the survey.

2.8.4 Questionnaire Development and Piloting

As mentioned earlier, two sets of questionnaires were devised: one to collect data from young people taking part in the New Deal programme, the other, from employers who have either taken on New Deal candidates, those who have registered an interest in the programme but have not yet employed a New Deal candidate, or those who, although registered with the Employment Service, have no intention of recruiting New Deal candidates.

The New Deal participant questionnaire, together with the introduction letter, was piloted in September 1999 in an attempt to ensure that the introduction letter would help secure the co-operation of potential participants (see Newell, 1997). It was also to find out whether the questions and the order in which they appeared, was appropriate; and whether the instructions and guidelines were clear. In addition, it was also intended to ensure that the line of questioning was appropriate, and that the document was understandable and user friendly.

In order to achieve a broader representation across the New Deal Options, seven young people were contacted by phone at the respective place of work to ask for their involvement in the pilot study. Two of the participants were on the Voluntary Section Option, with the remaining three drawn from the Full-time Education and Training Option, the Employer Option and the Environmental Task Force Option respectively.

The pilot exercise yielded some useful comments and suggestions each of which was considered carefully, and where necessary, revisions were made to the question accordingly. One notable example was the inclusion of filter questions to provide clear directions to participants who were on the Full-time Education and Training Option to skip employment related questions which were relevant to participants on either the Employer, Voluntary or Environmental Task Force Options.

A similar pilot exercise was conducted in relation to the employer questionnaire involving three employers from the private, public and the voluntary sector respectively. Again, the relevant suggestions were taken on board. Detailed analysis of both questionnaires is presented in Chapter 3.

2.8.5 In depth interviews and group discussions

The research method also involved a combination of in-depth interviews and group discussions. Letters of invitation explaining the purpose of the research were sent to all potential participants allowing those who did not wish to take part in the interviews the opportunity to withdraw. As pointed out earlier, Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the characteristics of participants in terms of age, gender, ethnic background and the Options they were on.

The in-depth interviews were used as the principal tool for data collection. This enabled me to fully explore each individual history, not only detailing the experiences of, and views about, New Deal for Young People, but also providing

rich contextual information relating to personal circumstances, educational and employment histories. Twenty-two young people took part in the study: fifteen individual interviews and one discussion group comprising four White male, two Caribbean male and one South Asian male (see Chapter 4).

An attempt was made to set up a mixed gender discussion group but this proved difficult largely because of the geographical location of participants.

Group discussions provided a forum for ongoing participants within two of the four options both to exchange views about the value of the New Deal programme and to share their experiences of its delivery. The group discussions also provided an environment where young people could debate potential changes to the programme and identify key strengths and weaknesses in its current form. The discussion group was composed of participants from the Employer, Voluntary Sector and the Environmental Task Force Options. The use of discussion groups also allowed the study to include the views of a relatively larger number of young people than would have been possible using individual in-depth interviews alone.

In relation to interviews with employers, care was equally taken to ensure that views representing the different sectors in the economy, industry as well as size, were captured. This was important because as Chapter 6 will demonstrate, employers' attitudes to, for example, 'employer subsidy', 'employability', the New Deal 'system' or recruitment methods, vary considerably depending on the sector, industry and size.

2.9 Sample design and selection

2.9.1 New Deal participant sample

The sample for the qualitative study was purposively selected to ensure full coverage of the various groups of young people taking part in New Deal. This made it possible to identify and to explain variations in views and experiences on New Deal. The sample was selected to ensure that all the key constituencies of young people participating in New Deal were included. In addition, the sample design ensured that the full range of possible activities at all the key Option stage of the programme was covered.

Similarly, minority ethnic young people were selected purposively as they were under represented on the Employer Option of the programme in particular, and New Deal programmes in general. It was therefore decided to interview all those who expressed a wish to participate in the study. In addition,, since most of the minority ethnic young people at the time of the study were on the Voluntary Option, the interviews were arranged with the help of a local Voluntary Sector Agency.

The remainder of the sample was selected on the basis of a range of factors which include:

2.9.2 *Current Status*

The sample needed to reflect the views of young people who had left the programme as well as those of ongoing New Deal participants. It was decided that the individual interviews would include a small proportion of participants who had left New Deal either to go into employment or for some other reason. Such input was necessary to obtain a stage-by-stage account of their experiences throughout their New Deal career.

The final composition of the Options sample included twenty-two ongoing participants and four who were leavers from New Deal. Of those who had left the programme three white male had completed their Option and were in full-time employment, the other a Pakistani female had completed six months on the programme, and was at the follow-through stage.

2.9.3 *Gender*

The intention was to divide the sample equally between men and women both in interviews and at group discussions in order to monitor any gender differences in experience and outcome. In the event, the distribution relating to individual interviews was achieved, whilst that of the group discussions was not attained due largely to the distance in travelling to interview venues.

2.9.4 Age

Participants were also selected on the basis of age since there could potentially be significant variations in the length of unemployment and stage of job readiness between people aged 18 and 24. The distribution of the sample was approximately equal across each of the age bands covered: 18-19, 20-21 and 22-24.

2.9.5 Ethnicity

It was important to ascertain whether the ethnic origin of participants affected their experience of New Deal. A total of 14 participants from Caribbean and South Asian groups and 8 from the White group took part in the research (see Chapter 4).

2.9.6 Employer sample

Fifteen out of the 20 employers who indicated on the employer questionnaire a willingness to take part during the qualitative phase of the study were purposively selected. This was to ensure that a balanced cross-section of employers was represented. Factors which could potentially influence employers' perspectives and experiences of New Deal were also taken into account. These included:

- geography (i.e., urban, rural, mixed areas);

- sector of the employer (i.e., public, private or voluntary sector);
- size of employer (i.e., number of employees);
- New Deal status (that is, committed to participation, considering participation and unlikely or unwilling to participate)

Characteristics of employers taking part in the study in relation to sector, size and type of activity are examined in Chapter 6.

2.10 Conduct of the interviews and group discussions

The interviews and group discussions for this study took place between September 2000 and April 2001, and were exploratory and interactive. Topic Guides were used to provide a framework of issues to be explored in each case. The guides were adapted from previous studies, in particular the 1992 survey of Employers Recruitment Processes (Hales and Collins, 1999) and the report commissioned by the Employment Service to evaluate employers' views on New Deal for Young People (Snape, 1998). The other report, also commissioned by the Employment Service, on New Deal for Young People: The National Options (Woodfield, et al, 2000), was also an important source of questions. Copies of the Interview Topic Guides are provided in Appendix B. These guides identified the key areas to be covered.

All interviews and discussions were tape recorded with the prior permission of respondents allowing for verbatim transcription. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to each participant, both on an individual basis and in relation to

organisations. The interviews took place at individual participants' workplaces or place of training. Group discussions were held in a local function room.

Individual interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour. Group discussions lasted between one to one and half-hours.

2.11 Analysis

The tape recordings were transcribed verbatim and the transcriptions were subsequently analysed using a framework method. 'Framework' is a method designed to analyse outputs from qualitative research (see Spencer et al 2003). Essentially, it is used for a variety of qualitative evaluations including policy review and development, practice evaluation and appraisals, as well as evaluations of particular interventions such as schemes and programmes.

In this context, the framework method will be used to:

- Identify any problems in the way New Deal is working for individuals: and evaluate the impact of the programme on individual participant's job readiness and employment outcomes;
- provide an understanding of the role of New Deal Personal Advisers including their practices in placing young people on the different Options of New Deal;

- evaluate employers' experiences of New Deal, their recruitment policies, procedures and practices, and the training and support they provide for their New Deal recruits.

Identifying a thematic framework

The transcripts of interviews with New Deal participants, employers and New Deal Personal Advisers will be analysed to identify the key issues, experiences and themes that emerge from the data. Following this a framework of key issues is then devised. A series of thematic charts, with headings, will then be devised, each relating to a different thematic issue. The headings reflect the aims of the research, and introduced into the interviews via the topic guides.

Themes

Having applied the thematic framework to individual transcripts, data from each respondent will be summarised and entered under each key topic. The views and experiences of all participants will be explored within a common analytical framework, compare and contrast respondents accounts, search for patterns and associations and seek for explanations for these within the data.

In relation to New Deal participants, the key topic areas will be structured around the following issues:

- Personal details, education and qualifications attained;

- Jobsearch and employment activity before joining New Deal;
- Reflections on Gateway activities, entry onto New Deal and interviews with New Deal Personal Advisers;
- Moving onto Option, choice of Option and experiences on Option;
- Evaluation and impact of New Deal; and improvements for the future.

The full range of charts devised for analysing the transcripts of interviews conducted with New Deal participants are presented in Appendix C1).

Separate thematic charts will also be devised for employers and New Deal Personal Advisers, with key issues and themes recorded in the same order as above. The topic areas covered by the employers' charts will include the following issues:

- Understanding of New Deal and the process for recruiting candidates;
- Recruitment policy, methods and procedures, and whether New Deal has influenced these;
- Reflections on job readiness, employer subsidy and training grant;

- Experience of New Deal participants and New Deal Personal Advisers.

Details of charts devised for analysing the transcript of interviews with employers are presented as Appendix C2.

Similarly, the issues which will inform the key topic areas of the New Deal Personal Advisers' thematic charts (see Appendix C3) will include the following:

- Understanding of New Deal and Adviser's role;
- Understanding of the Gateway process, New Deal Options, job readiness and the local labour market;
- Views on employment (short-term) versus training and development (long-term);
- Understanding of diversity issues and experience of dealing with discrimination.

2.12 Overview

This chapter has considered the key political, ethical and moral questions associated with social research and the particular importance for addressing those in the context of race relations research. I argued that studies on the experiences of minority ethnic groups (see Chapter 4) should look beyond these experiences

to focusing on the policies and practices that are located within institutions (see Chapters 5 and 6) and the wider social policy goals and outcomes (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The question as to why there is a need for more race relations research was considered. Doubts were raised over the usefulness of race relations research as a means of improving the social and economic condition of minority ethnic groups. At the same time, the importance of research on discrimination in the labour market was emphasised. It was argued that to a large extent employment determines people's life-chances as paid work provides the income and prospects of social advancement. The chapter also considered one of the key debates in social research as to whether there can be 'value-neutrality' in the research process. It was argued that the 'value- neutrality' position would be difficult to defend particularly if a piece of research is seeking to emancipate, empower or address issues of disadvantage or discrimination suffered by oppressed or minority groups. A closely related issue was also considered, ie. whether a researcher's ethnic or racial origin can influence the research process. This was also discussed in the light of my own experiences as a black researcher. The chapter concluded by setting out the strategies used in carrying out the research including the methods for analysing the data.

The next chapter presents the analysis of the quantitative data.

Chapter 3: Differential outcomes for minority ethnic young people: A quantitative analysis

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter considered the ethical, methodological and political issues associated with social research including the methods and strategies used in conducting the research. This Chapter presents the findings of the quantitative survey of young people on New Deal as well as employers participating in the programme. The qualitative aspects of the research with young people, employers and New Deal Advisers are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively. The Chapter begins with an overview of Southern Derbyshire Unit of Delivery (UoD), including its structure and contracting arrangements for delivering the New Deal programme. This is followed by an examination of the immediate destination of all entrants in the survey after the New Deal Gateway in Southern Derbyshire from January 1998 to June 2000. It then presents the quantitative analysis of the research in relation to the questionnaire responses received from New Deal participants during the same period, and comments on their experiences of the programme. It also looks at the characteristics of employers involved in the programme, and examines the extent of their involvement in relation to the number of young people they have recruited to subsidised jobs.

The focus of this research is primarily on the contrast between White young people and minority ethnic participants because the figures for minority ethnic

groups entering subsidised employment were very low; therefore analysis between minority ethnic groups was not possible. However, it is important to note that minority ethnic groups are not homogeneous in their experience of New Deal. As has been pointed out by Moody (2000), there is a variation between for example, Black groups, Indians and Pakistanis as well as between Whites and minority ethnic groups generally. Moody further suggests that even within the same ethnic group, there are important differences in levels of participation due to factors such as gender.

However, due to lack of take up of New Deal by young people from Black and minority ethnic groups in the research site, the data achieved could not capture the variation between for example, Black Caribbean, Indians and Pakistanis

3.1 Location of the research: rationale for the choice of Southern Derbyshire

Southern Derbyshire Employment Service District was chosen as a research site for a number of reasons. First, the district was one of the 12 Pathfinder areas selected by the government to pilot New Deal for 18-24 year olds in January 1998. Structures for delivering the programme were therefore well developed and firmly in place; statistical information relating to New Deal entry and option placements were also available, including information about the nature of the local labour market. Second, it covers the main urban areas of South Derbyshire, most of which are within the city of Derby and the Erewash valley. Consequently, a large proportion of the minority ethnic communities in the

county (9.7%) live in these areas, with 1.9% scattered across the rural and semi-rural areas in the south, north and the western areas of the county. It therefore provided the opportunity to examine whether there were variations in the survey of young people, in the take-up, and experience, of New Deal across the different locations within the district. Third, there is a gap in the national picture in relation to how, and under what circumstances, young people from minority ethnic groups experience New Deal. For example, official evaluation reports and monitoring statistics have focused much more on national level quantitative estimates about New Deal outcomes (eg, DfEE, 1999; Moody; 2000; Owen et al, 2000: and DWP, 2000). Further, there have also been a number of qualitative research studies examining the experiences of young people from minority ethnic groups on New Deal, and such studies have focused on these groups in inner-city locations (eg, Fieldhouse et al, 2001). The purpose of this study is, therefore, to supplement this knowledge with the experiences of minority groups in rural locations, the behaviour of employers and the ways in which their recruitment practices relate to young and unemployed people, as well as the behaviour of NDPAs in the way they meet the needs and aspirations of young people on New Deal. Another key feature of this study is the examination of how far the government's 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' has delivered the supposed job outcomes for all ethnic groups.

3.1.1 Southern Derbyshire Unit of Delivery (UoD)

New Deal in Southern Derbyshire is the responsibility of a Joint Venture Partnership (JVP). There are six partners involved: Southern Derbyshire

Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise (SDCCTE), Derby Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS), Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Careers Service and the Employment Service. The JVP is supported by a strategic group, whose membership includes representatives of the JVP partner organisations with additional members drawn from the wider community. These include representatives from local partnerships, organisations for minority ethnic groups, Trade Unions and employers.

3.1.2 Contracting Model and Delivery Arrangements

The Strategic Group agreed upon a Joint Venture Partnership (JVP) as the mode of New Deal delivery in South Derbyshire². There are three levels in the partnership structure: the Strategy Group, the Joint Venture (JVP) Management Group and the Options Groups:

- The planning and overall responsibility for the New Deal lies with the Strategic Group which has appointed a management group to deal with the actual delivery and monitoring of the New Deal programme in the district. The JVP Management Group (which is also the Joint Venture) is made up of operational managers from the Employment Service, Derby CVS, the Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise, Derby Careers Service, Derby City and Derbyshire County Councils. It is responsible for the operational delivery of New Deal in South Derbyshire in terms of setting

² Following the re-organisation of the Employment Service and Benefit Agency, Derbyshire Jobcentre Plus has been responsible for delivering New Deal throughout Derbyshire since April 2002.

up and overseeing the delivery structure, including operational responsibility over contracting, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, networking and financial issues.

- According to the existing contract, although each of the members is individually responsible for delivering different aspects of the New Deal, they are all responsible for the ‘whole’ delivery of the programme, i.e. the members are not there to represent their respective organisations and interests but rather to fulfil the roles that have been allocated to them. This means that if one of the partners runs into trouble or drops out for any reason, the rest will cover for them.
- There are also the Options Groups which are responsible to the management group for ensuring, among other things, the accurate identification of clients needs on an ongoing basis; the identification of gaps and/or quality in existing provision and submission of relevant recommendations; and the effective communication with and involvement of all key partners, potential partners and advisory groups. Lead organisations responsible for each group (and reporting directly to the management group) are shown below:

Option

Lead Organisations

Environmental Task Force

Derbyshire County Council; Derby
CVS

Voluntary Sector	Derby City Council; Derby CVS
Full-time Education and Training	South Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise; Derbyshire County Council; Derby City Council
Employment	Employment Service; South Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise; Derbyshire Careers Service
Gateway	Employment Service; South Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise; Derbyshire Careers Service

For contracting purposes within each option area, one of the lead organisations has been appointed by the management group to be the named contract holder for that option. These contract holders are responsible for sub-contracting provision in each option and the day-to-day management of any contracts entered as part of this action. The contracts are allocated as follows:

The Employment Service, in addition to managing the Gateway process during which their clients' career aspirations and learning needs are identified, is

responsible for managing the Employment Option of New Deal. Here, employers have a direct agreement with the Employment Service. Employers who are unable to carry out the programme of at least twenty-six days of training leading to the required qualifications can arrange for it to be run by a training provider. At the time of the research, the Employment Service's records indicated that there were forty employers involved in the Employment Option, offering twenty-one different types of jobs under New Deal.

The main contract for the Full-time Education and Training Option is held by Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise (SDCCTE) and managed under the JVP. This Option is primarily for those clients without a qualification at NVQ level 2 or its equivalent.

Derbyshire County Council holds the main contract for the Environmental Task Force Option and subcontracts to two providers.

The Derby Council for Voluntary Service contracts with two other organisations for the Voluntary Sector Option. It also acts as a provider itself. Derby Council for Voluntary Service then subcontracts to one organisation for the east of the area and to another for the south and west. These organisations, in turn, have contracts with a variety of work-placement providers, who either offer the training themselves or subcontract it to other training providers.

3.1.3 Equal Opportunities

Southern Derbyshire Joint Venture Partnership has an equal opportunities policy statement. The policy statement is contained in the Unit of Delivery plan for Southern Derbyshire. It was prepared in consultation with all the partnership members and various community groups, to ensure that it represents the inner city as well as the rural areas of Southern Derbyshire. As mentioned above, the partnership includes representation from Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise, Derby Council for Voluntary Service, Derby Careers Service and the Employment Service. The plan and the New Deal Option tendering documentation make specific reference to the requirements for all employers and other Option providers to uphold and promote equal opportunities. However, as will be seen later in Chapters 3 and 6, only a small proportion of employers in the survey indicated that they had developed equality policies.

3.1.4 Local Labour Market

The Southern Derbyshire Unit of Delivery (UoD) covers the main industrial areas of Southern Derbyshire, most of which are within the city of Derby and the Erewash valley. The economic profile of Southern Derbyshire is not a homogeneous one, with the south, north and western areas less urbanised and relying heavily on rural industries and small to medium size employers that cover a wide range of occupational areas.

The main sectors of industry in the area include: manufacturing industry (engineering, textiles and furniture) which, despite significant job losses in the sector during the 1990s, still provides employment for around a quarter of the workers in the area (Derbyshire in Figures, 2001: 18). Conversely, jobs in the service industries (retail and wholesale distribution, catering, transport, storage and communication, banking, insurance, education, health, local government and personal services) have increased substantially since 1991 and account for two-thirds of people employed in the area (ibid: 18). In addition, the proportion of people employed in other sectors include: agriculture and forestry (1.1 per cent); energy and water supply (1.0 per cent); construction (6.3 per cent (ibid: 18).

3.1.5 Characteristics of the Client Group

According to a study carried out by the Employment Service between mid-August and mid September 1997 the profile of the client group is as follows: 75 per cent hold no NVQs; 9 per cent hold level 1; 26 per cent hold no qualifications at all; 35 per cent hold no GCSEs; 47 per cent hold less than three GCSEs. At the other end of the scale, 16 per cent are qualified to NVQ at level 2 or above (equivalent to 5 GCSEs; 33 per cent hold more than five GCSEs; and 18 per cent have degree level qualifications. According to the Employment Service, the relative high proportion of unemployed graduates (or youngsters educated to that level) was highlighted at a number of interviews and has led in some cases to the readjustment of employers' perceptions of the client group.

In terms of special needs, the Employment Service survey identified the following: 9 per cent of the potential client group claim to have a health problem or disability that could affect their ability to work; 7 per cent are unable to read instructions, add figures or use new technology; 1 per cent have a lack of spoken English; 14 per cent lack work experience; and, as already mentioned, 26 per cent have no qualifications.

With regard to the ethnic profile of the client group, the Employment Service database does not hold current detailed information. However, the 2001 Census data relating to Southern Derbyshire shows that most of the minority ethnic population in the area live in the City of Derby and make up 9.7 per cent of the city's population, with the largest communities being Indian, Pakistani and African-Caribbean. Unemployment from within these groups was significantly higher by percentage per capita population (37 per cent Pakistani, 18.5 per cent African-Caribbean, 15 per cent Indian). The unemployment rate of 37 per cent for the Pakistani community was four times higher than the rate for the White population. Similarly, unemployment rates for the African-Caribbean and Indian communities were also significantly higher than for the White population. (Derbyshire County Council, 2003)

3.2 NDYP: the National Picture

This section presents a summary of the total number of young people represented at the different stages of the programme at the end of June 2003.

Statistical data published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at the end of June 2003 showed that nearly 91,400 were on NDYP of which 57,100 (63 per cent) were on Gateway, 21,300 (23 per cent) were on Options, and the remaining 13,000 (14 per cent) were on Follow-Through.

Of the 21,300 who were on an Option, 45 per cent were in Full-time Education and Training, 12 per cent were on the Employment Option, 23 per cent on the Voluntary Sector Option and 19 per cent on the Environmental Task Force Option. The remainder, 13,200 (15 per cent) were on the Follow-Through phase of the programme.

The DWP data also showed differential patterns of participation in New Deal. These showed that people from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be on Gateway, 65 per cent compared to 61 per cent Whites. Only 7 per cent of minority ethnic groups were on the Employment Option compared to 16 per cent of Whites, and 63 per cent minority ethnic groups on Full-time Education and Training Option compared to 36 per cent of Whites.

Within the minority ethnic groups, Indians were more likely to be on Gateway (69 per cent) and Black Africans were the least likely to be on the Employment Option. Bangladeshis were most likely to be on the Voluntary Sector Option (DWP, 2003).

It is important to note that the proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups reflects the relatively high levels of unemployment amongst this section

of the population. For example, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for Spring 1998-2000 shows that unemployment amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups aged 16-24 was 30 per cent compared to 12 per cent for Whites (see Twomey, 2001).

Other research has also shown that there are differential patterns of participation on New Deal (Boddy, 1998; Bryson et al, 2000; Bonjour, et al, 2001). Other monitoring data published by the government in monthly statistical releases also show that young people from minority ethnic groups are less likely to find subsidised employment and more likely to be on the Full-time Education and Training Option. They are also likely to leave to unknown destinations (Moody, 2000; O'Donnell, 2001). In terms of experiences of New Deal, national surveys have found that minority ethnic groups did not find NDYP as useful as their White counterparts (Bryson et al, op. cit.; Moody, op. cit.; DWP, 2000).

3.3 Passage through New Deal: the local context

The data presented in this section have been drawn from the New Deal database managed by the Southern Derbyshire Joint Venture Team at the Employment Service. This is a detailed source of information which tracks individual participants from entry through the New Deal process.

3.3.1 Gateway

New Deal started in Southern Derbyshire in January 1998. Table 3.1 shows that between January 1998 and June 2000, 3,305 young people had entered the Gateway stage of the programme. Within the minority ethnic groups, South Asians were the largest (8 per cent), representing almost twice the size of the Black group (4 per cent), with a small proportion (0.3 per cent) from the Chinese group. The table also shows that in aggregate, the proportion of minority ethnic groups on Gateway was around 14 per cent compared to the White group of 83 per cent.

Table 3.1 *Participants on NDYP by ethnic group, Southern Derbyshire, January 1998 – June 2000*

New Deal participants

Ethnic origin	Number	%
White	2747	83.10
Black	149	4.50
South Asian	287	8.70
Chinese	10	0.30
Prefer not to say	112	3.40
Total	3305	100.00

Source: Southern Derbyshire Joint Venture Partnership Database

3.3.2 Options

Table 3.2 below shows that of the 3254 young people who were on an Option in Southern Derbyshire at the end of June 2000, 41 per cent were on the Subsidised Employment Option, 20 per cent on the FTET Option, 17 per cent on the Voluntary Sector Option and a further 20 per cent were on the ETF Option. The

table also shows that minority ethnic groups are under-represented on the Subsidised Employment Option. The Chinese group, for example, are represented only on the FTET (3 people) and the Voluntary Sector Options (6 people). Whilst Black and South Asian groups are fairly evenly spread across all the Options, only 9 per cent of the former group and 16 percent of the latter group are represented on the Subsidised Employment Option. In aggregate, they represent around half of the White group who make up 46 per cent on the Subsidised Employment Option.

In contrast, a slightly higher proportion of the Black group (33 per cent) and the South Asian (31 per cent), were represented on FTET Option compared to only 18 per cent of the White group. These figures mirror the national picture of the proportion of young people participating in the programme at different stages of the programme (see Section 3.2; also see DWP, 2000; Moody, 2000).

The table also shows other significant variations which indicate that minority ethnic young people are over-represented on those Options with no prospect of job outcome. For example, there were 31 per cent of the Black group and 27 per cent of the South Asian group on the Voluntary Sector Option compared with only 15 per cent of the White group. Similarly, about a quarter of the Black group (25 per cent), and a similar proportion of the South Asian group were on the ETF Option compared with only 19 per cent of the White group.

Table 3.2 *Participants on NDYP at the Option stage, Southern Derbyshire, January 1998 – June 2000*

On a New Deal Option

Options	White		Black		South Asian		Chinese		Prefer not to say		Total on Gateway	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Subsidised Employment	1284	46.42	18	17.64	54	18.94	0	0.0	16	17.39	1372	42.16
Full-time Education & Training	520	18.8	34	33.3	89	31.22	3	33.3	26	28.26	672	20.6
Voluntary Sector	433	15.7	28	27.45	74	26.0	6	66.6	19	20.65	560	17.20
Environmental Task Force	529	19.1	22	21.56	68	23.8	0	0.0	31	33.7	650	20.0
Total	2766	85.0	102	3.13	285	8.75	9	0.3	92	2.8	3254	100.0

Source: Southern Derbyshire Joint Venture Partnership Database

3.4 Analysis of Respondents' Questionnaire Data

This section examines the characteristics of young people in the survey. These include their personal characteristics such as age, gender and ethnic origin; their work histories before entering New Deal, and barriers to employment they faced.

3.4.1 New Deal Participants

As noted in Chapter 2, a total of 59 young people took part in the quantitative phase of the research. Table 3.3 below shows the detailed ethnic breakdown of respondents at the end of June 2000. The White group was by far the largest with 45 young people, with the Black and South Asian groups evenly represented with 7 young people respectively.

Table 3.3 *Number of 18-24 New Deal respondents by ethnic group, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Respondents on New Deal

Ethnic origin	Number
White	45
Black	7
South Asian	7
Total	59

Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data

3.4.2 Age Distribution and work experience

This section looks at the age distribution and the length of time respondents have been in employment prior to entering New Deal.

Table 3.4 below describes the age distribution and work experience of respondents on New Deal. Around one-fifth (12) of young people in the survey were aged 18-19, and the remaining four-fifths (47 people) were aged 20-24. The table also shows a considerable variety of prior work experience across young people recruited to the programme. The majority of respondents (35 people) had some form of work experience, although all the 18 year olds have had no previous experience of work. This indicates, perhaps, that for this latter group of young people, their subsidised work placement was their first paid job. Of those who have had previous work experience, the 22-24 year old group, have had up to two years experience of work, whilst the 19-21 year old group, have had only up to one year of such experience.

Table 3.4 *New Deal Respondents and work experience by age, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Age distribution and work experience

	No of respondents	Less than 6 months	6 months - 1 year	1 - 2 yrs	Never
18 yrs old	5	-	-	-	5
19 yrs old	7	1	2	-	4
20 yrs old	7	3	1	-	3
21 yrs old	11	4	3	-	4
22 yrs old	8	5	1	1	1
23 yrs old	8	3	1	1	3
24 yrs old	13	5	2	2	4
Total	59	21	10	4	24

Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire

3.4.3 Gender balance

Table 3.5 below describes the proportion of respondents by gender. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the intention is to evaluate any differences in experience and outcome. As expected, the table shows that over two-thirds (41) were male compared with 18 female. This is consistent with the finding of a national survey which reported that the proportion of males on NDYP and its Subsidised Employment Option was 73 per cent (see DWP 2003). Similarly, the gender balance for respondents from minority ethnic groups in the survey (9 male and 5 female) conforms to the national pattern of predominance of males on the programme. Although the sample figures are relatively small, nonetheless they show that the overall gender balance of New Deal recruits may be a reflection of the different employment opportunities for males and females in each of the Employment Service District, rather than a reflection of male youth unemployment which is usually thought to be higher than that of female.

Table 3.5 *Respondents on New Deal by gender, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Proportion of respondents by gender

Ethnic origin	No of respondents	Male	Female
White	45	32	13
Black	7	5	2
South Asian	7	4	3
Total	59	41	18

Source: *New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data*

3.4.4 *Type of Option Entered by Respondents*

Table 3.6 below shows the Option entered by respondents from New Deal Gateway at the end of June 2000 in Southern Derbyshire. Of the 59 respondents on Options, 5 people were on subsidised employment, just under half (27 people) were on Full-time Education and Training Option, under a third (20 people) were on the Voluntary Sector Option and 7 were on the Environmental Task Force Option.

Table 3.6 *Type of Option entered by respondents from New Deal Gateway by ethnic group, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Type of Option entered

	No of Respondents	Subsidised Employment Option	Full-time Education & Training Option	Voluntary Sector Option	Environmental Task Force Option
White	45	4	25	12	4
Black	7	-	1	3	3
South Asian	7	1	1	5	-
Total	59	5	27	20	7

Source: *New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data*

The above table also shows the variations in experiences by ethnic group. For example, the number of White respondents on the Subsidised Employment Option was 4 compared to only 1 person from the minority ethnic group. More individuals from minority ethnic groups than the White group were on the Voluntary Sector Option, as well as the Environmental Task Force Option.

Other variations in experience by ethnic group as shown in Table 3.6 include:

- Those from the Black group were not represented on the Subsidised Employment Option. By contrast, one individual from the South Asian group, entered this Option on leaving the Gateway stage.
- Of the minority ethnic groups on Options, the majority of respondents from both Black and South Asian groups were represented on either the Voluntary Sector Option or the Environmental Task Force Option.
- In aggregate, only 3.4 per cent of those from minority ethnic groups entered the Full-time Education and Training Option compared to 42.4 per cent of the White group. This finding is in sharp contrast to the result of a national survey of New Deal for Young People (Owen, 2000) which showed that overall, more minority ethnic young people take up the Full-time Education and Training Option (22 per cent) than the White group (19 per cent): see also Moody (2000).

Respondents' existing level of qualification on entry to New Deal is discussed in detail in Section 3.4.6 below.

3.4.5 Preferred Option

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the Option they have currently entered was their preferred option. Table 3.7 shows that a large proportion, 40 people (around 68 per cent) were happy with the Option they had entered compared to 19 people (32 per cent) who were not happy. Of those who indicated that they were not happy with their Option, by far the largest proportion, 12 people (63 per cent) were from minority ethnic groups compared to 7 people (36 per cent) for the White group. Within the minority ethnic groups, the Black group was equally likely to be dissatisfied with their Option as the South Asian group.

Table 3.7 Respondents Preferred Option, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000

Was this your preferred Option?

	No of Respondents	Yes	No
White	45	38	7
Black	7	1	6
South Asian	7	1	6
Total	59	40	19

Source: *New Deal Respondents Questionnaire Data*

3.4.6 Level of Qualification

The Full-time Education and Training Option is primarily aimed at participants without NVQ Level 2 or equivalent. It was not surprising that only 2 out of the 14 respondents of minority ethnic participants entered this Option (see below).

The low take-up of the Full-time Education and Training Option amongst minority ethnic respondents, which is in sharp contrast to the national trend, is described in Table 3.8 below. As the table shows, over half the respondents from the minority ethnic groups have NVQ Level 2 or over, and that they were less likely to have no qualifications. In contrast, the majority of the White group either had no qualifications or their qualifications were below NVQ Level 2, with only about a quarter who had NVQ Level 2. This finding supports earlier research which suggests that minority ethnic groups have a greater propensity to participate in learning activities and are more likely to stay in full-time education after compulsory school leaving age than their White counterparts (MIACE, 1993): (see also Moody,2000; DWP, 2000).

Table 3.8 *Respondents existing level of qualification on entry to NDYP, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Level of Qualification

Ethnic origin	No of Respondents	None	Below NVQ Level 2	NVQ Level 2 or above	'A'Level or above
White	45	13	20	11	1
Black	7			4	3
South Asian	7		2	4	
Total	59	13	22	19	5

Source: *New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data*

3.4.7 Job Readiness

One of the key aims of New Deal is to equip young people with the skills they require to obtain and sustain employment. It was therefore important to ask respondents to indicate whether their participation in the programme has improved their job readiness. The results are summarised in Table 3.9 below.

As the table shows, over half the number of respondents (38 people) indicated that New Deal has improved their job readiness compared to only 9 people who indicated the contrary. Of the group which indicated that they were job ready, 29 were White compared to 5 Black and 4 from the South Asian group. All the respondents were near the end of their placements, and it was therefore surprising that nearly one-third of them (12 people) were not sure whether or not they were 'job ready'.

In interpreting these figures, it should be borne in mind that a slightly higher proportion of respondents in the survey (34 people) have had some form of previous experience of work prior to entering New Deal (see Section 3.4.2). The extent to which respondents were job ready may not have been due to New Deal, but rather as a result of their prior work experience. The other point which is also worth noting is that employers, particularly those who have had negative experiences of New Deal, have pointed to 'lack of job readiness' among New Deal recruits as the key factor for withdrawing from the programme. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Table 3.9 *Job readiness and respondents on NDYP, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Assessment of Job readiness

Ethnic origin	No of respondents	Job ready	Not Job ready	Don't know
White	45	29	6	10
Black	7	5	2	-
South Asian	7	4	1	2
Total	59	38	9	12

Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data.

3.4.8 Training

Equipping young people with the necessary vocational skills up to NVQ Level 2 under New Deal is one of the major elements of the programme. This is to be achieved either via the Full-time Education and Training Option route or the other work placement Options. Respondents were therefore asked to assess the extent to which they have benefited from this aspect of the programme. As Table 3.10 below shows, of those who did not find the training element of the programme useful, over half were from minority ethnic groups (10 people) compared to 9 Whites. This is less surprising, particularly since evidence from this study has shown that young people from minority ethnic groups had NVQ Level 2 or above on entering New Deal (see Section 3.4.6 above). As will be shown in Chapter 4, some young people from minority ethnic groups found the NVQ Level 2 to be below the level of qualifications they already possess. Also see Chapter 6 for further discussion of the inflexibility of the training requirement as a source of contention amongst employers.

Table 3.10 *Assessment of training element of NDYP, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Training element of NDYP

Ethnic origin	Useful	Not useful	Total
White	36	9	45
Black	2	5	7
South Asian	2	5	7
Total	40	19	59

Source: *New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data*

3.4.9 *Job prospects*

Respondents were nearing the end of their placement and have had a number of attempts at applying for jobs but have been unsuccessful. Their responses as to whether the programme has improved their chances of obtaining a job after their placement is set out in Table 3.11 below. Whilst a higher proportion of the White group (29) indicated that the programme has improved their job prospects, this compares with only 2 people from the minority ethnic groups. Of those who indicated that the programme had not improved their chances of gaining employment, more than half (11), were from minority ethnic groups compared to 6 from the White group. This finding may be a reflection of not only the differential experiences of New Deal by the White and minority ethnic groups (also see Chapter 4), but also by employer discrimination which has been identified by minority ethnic young people in this study as a key barrier to their chances of accessing employment (see Chapter 7).

Table 3.11 *Assessment of impact of NDYP on job prospects, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Has NDYP improved your job prospects?

Ethnic origin	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
White	29	6	10	45
Black	1	5	1	7
South Asian	1	4	2	7
Total	31	15	13	59

Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data

3.4.10 *Assessing whether young people will promote New Deal*

Attracting young people on to the programme depends, in part, on how it is promoted by those who have taken part in it. It was therefore considered relevant to ask respondents whether they would promote the programme by encouraging their friends and colleagues to take part in it. Not surprisingly, those who have had positive experiences and outcomes of the programme, together with those who consider themselves to have benefited from it, were more likely to promote it. This is reflected in the data in Table 3.12 which shows that in aggregate, over two thirds (9) young people from minority ethnic groups, compared to under a quarter of the White group (9), would not promote the programme. Clearly, this has implication for the future development of the programme as well as the government's agenda for the economic and social integrating of young people from minority ethnic groups into British society.

Table 3.12 *Will you recommend NDYP to other young people? Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Will you recommend New Deal to others?

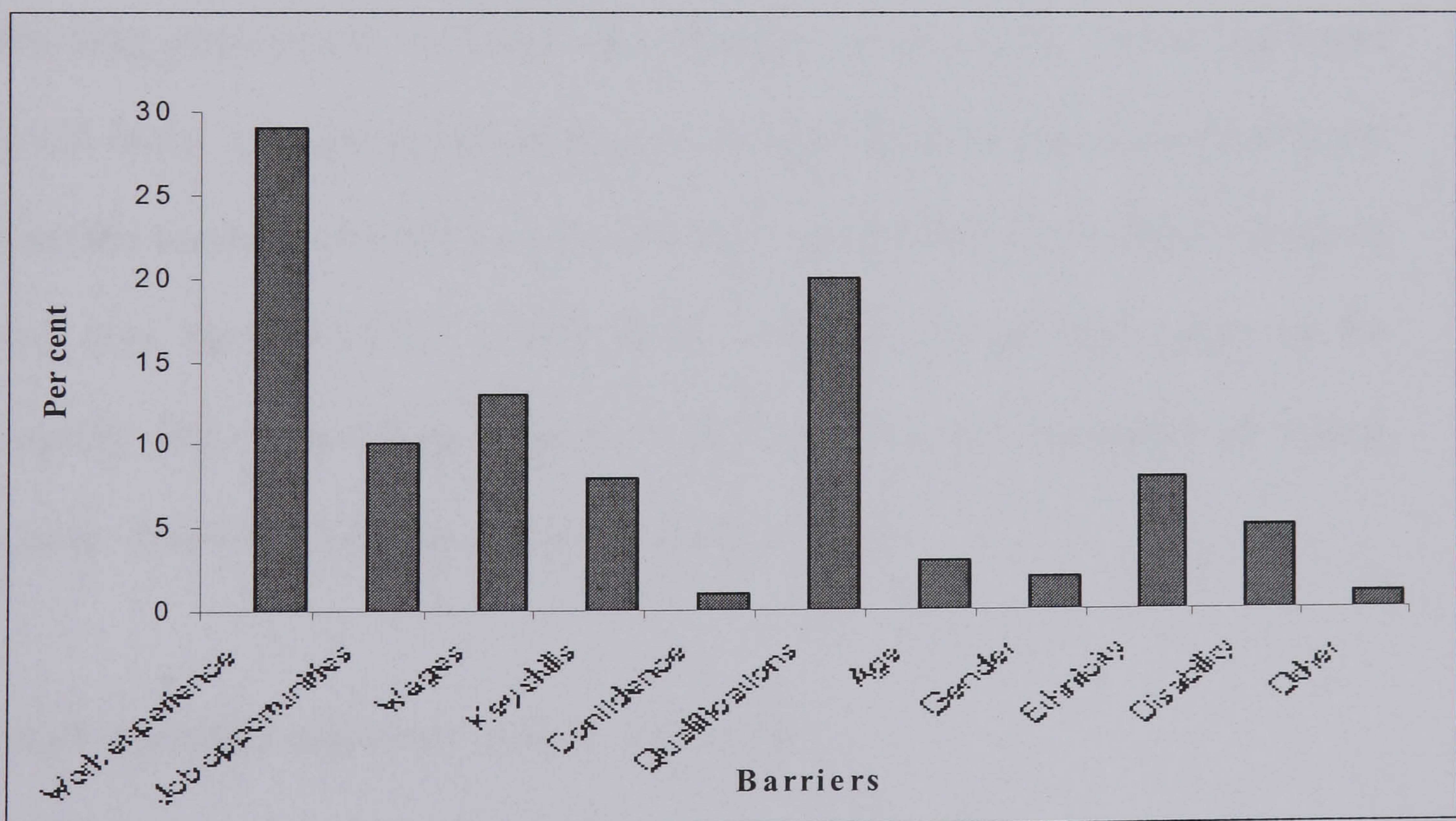
Ethnic origin	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
White	29	9	7	45
Black	2	5	-	7
South Asian	1	4	2	7
Total	32	18	9	59

Source: *New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data*

3.4.11 Barriers to employment among respondents

The New Deal programme is designed to meet the needs of all young people irrespective of their existing work experience, prior qualification or

Chart 1 - Barriers to employment for respondents



Source: *New Deal Respondent Questionnaire Data*

vocational aspirations. It aims to do this by providing a tailored series of support and interventions for each individual which, supposedly, could respond to

existing skills, work experience, qualifications and future aspirations. Chart 1 above provides a summary of the barriers identified by respondents in the survey as pertinent to the type of intervention and assistance they hope the programme would provide them with.

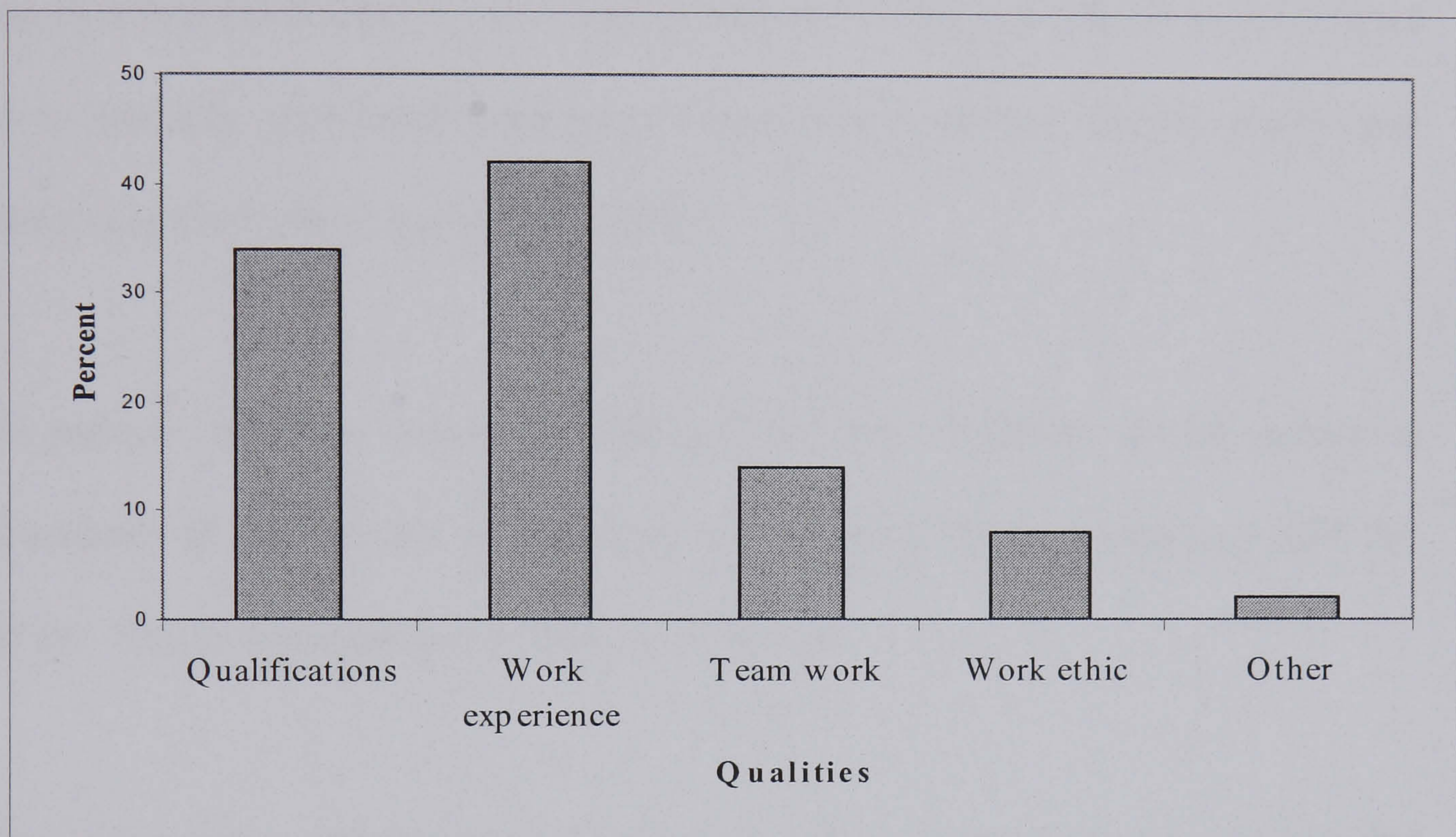
As expected, the dominant barriers identified by respondents as inhibiting them from gaining access to the labour market include: ‘lack of relevant work experience’ (29 per cent), ‘lack of qualifications’ (20 per cent), ‘poor wages’ (13 per cent) and ‘lack of job opportunities’ (10 per cent). The other key barriers identified by respondents as preventing them from obtaining a job include ‘lack of key skills’ (8 per cent), ‘ethnicity’ (8 per cent), ‘disability’ (5 per cent) and ‘gender’ (2 per cent). Perhaps, what was surprising was that a small proportion of respondents (3 per cent), did not mention ‘age’ as inhibiting them from obtaining employment, nor ‘lack of confidence’ (1 per cent). Some employers do not recruit younger people as they are perceived as lacking in confidence and therefore would not be able to cope with the responsibilities of particular types of work (see Section 6.4.3). Consequently, this also has adverse impact on the minority ethnic population with its higher than average proportion of young people. This issue is discussed later in Section 6.6.1.

3.4.12 Qualities employers look for in recruits

Respondents were also asked to indicate what they perceived to be the qualities employers look for when selecting applicants they wish to employ.

As Chart 2 shows, a large proportion of respondents (42 per cent), identified 'work experience' as the most important quality employers look for in recruits. This is followed by 'qualifications' (34 per cent), 'team work' (14 per cent) and 'work ethic' (8 per cent).

Chart 2 - Qualities Employers Look For in Recruits



Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data

This confirms earlier finding which indicated that a high proportion of respondents (around 78 per cent) had one form of qualification or the other (see Table 3.8). Perhaps, what the majority of these young people perceived they lacked, and which could improve their employability, was work experience. Lack of work experience was also one of the earlier findings which indicated that a high proportion of respondents have had less than six months work experience or none at all (see Section 3.4.2).

3.4.13 Geographical location of respondents

The Southern Derbyshire Employment Service District contains five towns and one city. These are: Belper, Derby, Heanor, Ilkeston, Long Eaton and Swadlincote. The largest concentration of population is in the urban area of the City of Derby. Heanor, Ilkeston and Long Eaton form an almost continuous band of urban development. In contrast, the rest of the population in the district live in sparsely populated rural areas where there are less than 2 people per hectare (see Derbyshire in Figures, 2002).

This section therefore considers whether there are variations in the survey of respondents of the take-up of New Deal across the different locations within the district. This is summarised in Table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13 presents the breakdown of respondents and shows that in general, the White group, is spread across the district. There were no appreciable variations in accessing New Deal across the district amongst ethnic groups. It was no surprise that nearly all the minority ethnic groups were concentrated in the urban area of Derby. The table also shows that in aggregate, just over half the respondents in the survey (32 people), were located in Derby. This may reflect the higher unemployment levels in the urban area.

Table 3.13 *Number of respondents by location, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Geographical location of respondents

Location	White	Black	South Asian	Total
Belper	7	-	1	8
Derby	19	7	6	32
Heanor	1	-	-	1
Ilkeston	11	-	-	11
Long Eaton	3	-	-	3
Swadlincote	4	-	-	4
Total	45	7	7	59

Source: New Deal Respondents' Questionnaire Data

3.5 Analysis of Employer Questionnaire Data

This section looks at the characteristics of employers who took part in the study. They are described in terms of the business sector in which they are operating, their size in terms of the number of people they employ and the type of activity they are engaged in. It will also consider the extent of the involvement of minority ethnic owned businesses in the delivery of New Deal.

3.5.1 Size of employer and Business Sector

As Table 3.14 shows, a large proportion of establishments recruiting to a subsidised employment through NDYP were located in the Private Sector (87 per cent). Public Sector and Voluntary Sector establishments were less represented in the sample – accounting for 8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

The table also shows the size distribution of establishments in the survey. Those recruiting to subsidised jobs through New Deal were small-scale businesses.

Over three quarters (78 per cent) of establishments employed up to 49 employees. Around 7 per cent were medium-size businesses employing between 50 and 249 employees. Larger establishments employing 249 or more employees accounted for 15 per cent of the sample of participating employers.

Table 3.14 *Participating employers by size and business sector, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Size and Business Sector

Size	Private	Public	Voluntary	Total
Less than 50 employees	76	-	5	81
50 to 249 employees	6	1	-	7
250 or more employees	9	7	-	16
Total	91	8	5	104

Source: Employer Questionnaire Data

3.5.2 *Type of Industry and Ownership*

Table 3.15 below describes the distribution of participating employers across economic activities and business ownership by ethnic background. Participating employers were spread broadly across economic activities, although relatively few (less than 10 per cent) were located in construction. Hotels and restaurants accounted for 7 per cent, transport, storage and communication, 5 per cent and finance, real estate, renting and business activities 8 per cent. There was, however, an appreciable concentration of establishments in manufacturing (19 per cent), wholesale and retail, repair of motor vehicles (17 per cent), public administration (13 per cent) and other community services (23 per cent). The

table also shows that minority ethnic owned businesses³ accounted for nearly 9 per cent of employers participating in the programme. The involvement of minority ethnic employers in the programme is discussed further in Section 3.6.

Table 3.15 *Participating employers by industry type and ownership by ethnic background, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Type of industry and ownership

Industry	White owned	Minority Ethnic owned	Total
<i>Manufacturing</i>	20	2	22
Construction	8	-	8
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	18	-	18
Hotels and Restaurants	7	2	9
Transport, storage and communication	5	-	5
Finance, real estate, renting and business activities	6	2	8
<i>Public Administration</i>	14	-	14
Other Services (including the Voluntary Sector)	17	3	20
Total	95	9	104

Source: *Employer Questionnaire Data*

3.5.3 *Reported subsidised Job Vacancies*

Before we consider the types of subsidised jobs offered by employers in the study, it is important to provide an understanding of the ‘Employer Agreement’. This is a document which employers wishing to participate in the Subsidised Employment Option are required to sign before notifying a vacancy. This includes commitments on the part of the employer: to offer a job which is not necessarily limited to the six-month subsidy period, subject to recruit ‘showing

³ Minority Ethnic Employers and Businesses refers to businesses and organisations that are completely owned and run by people of African-Caribbean, South Asian and Chinese origin.

the necessary aptitude and commitment'; not make other employees redundant to take advantage of New Deal; not to make a cash profit from the subsidy (i.e., pay a wage at least as much as the subsidy); to provide training to New Deal recruits equivalent to one day per week and aimed at an approved qualification, usually NVQ Level 2, as well as accreditation of key skills where feasible (DfEE, 1998).

The 'Employer Agreement' document also specifies the amount of subsidy payable as follows: for each full-time job placement (30 hours or more per week), the employer receives a cash subsidy of £60 per week plus a grant of £750 towards the provision of training. The wage subsidy is paid monthly, while the training subsidy is usually payable in three stages, with the first when the employer produces a training plan (usually required within four weeks), the second payment after thirteen weeks of attendance in training. The remainder of the training subsidy may be tied to achievement of a qualification. It is not necessarily the case that the employer receives a training subsidy. In some cases, the training could be contracted out to a training provider if the employer could not provide the training 'in house' (ibid).

Turning to the subsidised jobs offered by employers, Table 3.16 presents the type of job vacancies reported by employers in the study. As the table shows, 61 per cent of establishments in the sample reported that they had job vacancies, although 13 per cent reported that they had none, with a further 25 per cent of employers who were not participating in the programme. The proportion of job vacancies reported by White employers was 88 per cent, compared to 11 per cent by minority ethnic employers. In relation to the occupations in which the

vacancies were identified, just under one third (29 per cent) of all vacancies were in clerical and administration. These posts were entry-level jobs considered by a large proportion of employers as requiring either no or a minimum level of previous experience and application and therefore suitable for New Deal participants. The table also shows other vacancies which come under this category. These include manual, routine and semi-skilled jobs such as manufacturing (12 per cent), wholesale and retail (13 per cent), hotels and restaurants (11 per cent), leisure and recreation (5 per cent), social care (4 per cent) ICT (4 per cent) etc. There were relatively fewer reported vacancies in occupations for which training may be longer, expensive and which is delivered only by outside providers. These include: technical and engineering (6 per cent), finance and accountancy (6 per cent). Employers' views about the training requirement of the programme are further discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 3.16 *Reported subsidised job vacancies by occupation and NDYP, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Job vacancies by occupational type

Type of occupation	White employers	Minority ethnic employers	Total Vacancy
Clerical/Administration	24	2	26
Hotels and Restaurants	7	3	10
Technical/Engineering	5	-	5
Manufacturing	10	1	11
Finance/Accountancy	5	1	6
Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	4	-	4
Construction	3	-	3
Wholesale and Retail	9	3	12
Leisure/Recreation	5	-	5
Social Care	4	-	4
Transport	2	-	2
Total	78	10	88
Total number recruited	71	9	80
Number of employers with vacancies	58	6	64
Number of employers with no vacancies	11	3	14
Number of employers not participating in New Deal	26	-	26
Total number of employers	95	9	104

Source: *Employer Questionnaire Data*

3.5.4 Take-up of Subsidised Employment

Table 3.17 below describes the number of male and female recruits to NDYP by occupation. But before we analyse the data, it is worth noting that entry to subsidised employment takes place after a period of advice, guidance and intensive job search at the Gateway Stage (see Chapter 1). This is designed supposedly to prepare young people on the programme for work and intensify their job search in order to secure entry to unsubsidised employment for those who are 'job ready'. As a result, a large proportion of New Deal participants leave the programme for unsubsidised employment from these advisory stages. For example, at the end of May 2001, there were 236,220 young people in sustained jobs, of which 207,850 were unsubsidised and 28,370 subsidised (DfEE, 2001). This has an important consequence for participation in subsidised employment, as Gateway can be expected to sift out many of the most 'employable' and 'job ready' recruits before they reach the subsidised employment stage.

Further sifting also takes place when decisions are made by NDPAs about who participates in Options. As mentioned earlier, New Deal participants are required to enter one of the four Options available, but the 'choice' of Option will reflect a mixture of NDPA guidance, client choice and the provision available. Thus, those entering a subsidised job do so as the outcome of a complex selection and self-selection process. For this reason, the characteristics of New Deal participants entering subsidised employment are likely to be rather different from the characteristics of unemployed people on entry to the

programme or the characteristics of those involved in other Options. A survey of NDYP clients (Bryson et al, 2000) has suggested that compared with those who leave directly from Gateway, those on Options are likely to have experienced longer spells of prior unemployment and lacked work experience. They were also more likely to have literacy and numeracy problems. Whilst the former point may be true for young people from minority ethnic groups, the latter is not borne out by this study which found that more than half of young people from minority ethnic groups have NVQ Level 2 or over, compared to only a quarter of their White counterparts who had this level of qualification (see Section 3.4.6 above).

To continue with the data analysis of subsidised employment by occupation and gender, Table 3.17 shows that male and female recruits were evenly represented in occupations such as financial and accountancy, public administration and ICT. The table also shows that male recruits were over represented in the following occupations: technical and engineering (83 per cent) compared to 17 per cent of female, and hotels and restaurants (75 per cent male) compared to 25 per cent female. Also male recruits were exclusively employed in manufacturing and construction. These two occupational groups, together with technical and engineering, accounted for over a third (41 per cent) of male recruits to subsidised employment. In contrast to the pattern of male recruitment, female recruits to subsidised jobs were mainly employed in clerical and administration jobs (75 per cent) compared to 25 per cent of male recruits. This accounted for around half of all subsidised recruitment of female recruits from the programme. In general, the different occupational pattern of recruitment reflects the

traditional gender segregation of jobs, with the male occupying the predominantly manual, unskilled and semi-skilled sectors of the labour market, whilst the females are employed in non-manual clerical and administration jobs. It also reflects the different gender composition of NDYP in Southern Derbyshire (69 per cent of New Deal participants were male).

As has been pointed out earlier, figures for minority ethnic groups entering subsidised employment were very low and therefore statistical analysis between ethnic groups was not possible. Under-representation of minority ethnic groups on the Subsidised Employment Option of the programme is well documented. Moody (2000), for example, reported in his national survey of NDYP, that when minority ethnic young people leave Gateway, they are more likely to leave New Deal altogether rather than progressing on to the Option stage of the programme. According to Moody, some 63 per cent leave before needing to take an Option against 47 per cent for White participants, and that a small proportion (24 per cent) of those leaving Gateway go onto subsidised jobs compared to 27 per cent for Whites. Similarly, Hales et al (2000), in their survey of employers, found that the proportion of participants from minority ethnic groups recruited from NDYP was around 7 per cent.

Table 3.17 *Subsidised employment by occupation and gender and NDYP, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Subsidised employment by occupation and gender

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Clerical/Administration	3	9	12
Hotels and Restaurants	3	1	4
Technical/Engineering	5	1	6
Manufacturing	11	-	11
Finance/Accountancy	3	3	6
Public Administration	2	2	4
Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	2	2	4
Construction	3	-	3
Wholesale and Retail	9	-	9
Total	41	18	59

Source: Employer Questionnaire Data.

3.5.5 *Equal opportunities policy*

It was noted earlier that the New Deal tendering document produced by the ES required employers to uphold and promote equal opportunities. Crucially, it was important to find out whether employers in the study had implemented equal opportunities policies. As Table 3.18 shows, 57 employers responded to the equal opportunities question. Of those who responded, only 2 of the 44 small and medium sized employers indicated that they had developed equality policies, whilst all the 13 large employers indicated that they had such policies.

Table 3.18 *Employers who have developed equal opportunities policy by size, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Equal opportunities policy

Size of employer	Yes	No	Total
Small (up to 49 employees)	1	39	40
Medium (50 – 249 employees)	1	3	4
Large (250 and over)	13	-	13
Total	15	42	57

Source: Employers Questionnaire Data

It was also evident that all the public and voluntary sector organisations who responded indicated that they had equality policies compared to only 5 private sector employers (see Table 3.19 below). Worryingly, this confirms earlier research which found that relatively few organisations had equal opportunities policies (Jewson and Mason, 1989) and the reasons for introducing an equal opportunities policy were largely defensive, for example, being able to protect the organisation against claims of discrimination (Jenkins, 1989).

In relation to youth employment policies, none of the employers in the survey indicated that they had such policies. The only youth employment strategies, which were in the form of apprenticeship schemes, existed within a very small number of large establishments.

Table 3.19 *Equal opportunities policy by business sector, Southern Derbyshire, end June 2000*

Equal opportunities policy by business sector

Business Sector	Yes	No	Total
Private	5	42	47
Public	6	-	6
Voluntary	4	-	4
Total	15	42	57

Source: Employer Questionnaire Data

3.6 Minority ethnic businesses and New Deal for Young People

In 1998, the government launched its ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ under the banner ‘New Deal – Engaging Ethnic Minority Jobless and Businesses’ (see Partnership Practice, 1999) and also Chapter 6. One of the aims of the Strategy

is to ensure that Employment Service units of delivery and their local partnerships involve minority ethnic businesses, organisations and individuals in the design and delivery of New Deal. As was noted in Section 1 above, the membership of the Strategic Group of the Southern Derbyshire Joint Venture Partnership includes representatives of organisations from minority ethnic groups. The purpose of this section is to establish the extent to which minority ethnic businesses in the district are involved in the delivery of the programme.

Obviously, establishing the extent of minority ethnic businesses involvement in New Deal in comparison with White businesses requires a source of information that allows the two groups of employers to be identified and compared. Such a comparison would contrast a range of information on employers including for example, their market position, production activity and recruitment profiles. However, this is not possible because while much has been written about the involvement of white employers in New Deal, little information is available in relation to the involvement of minority ethnic businesses. However, to a limited extent, it may be possible to analyse the two groups of employers using fairly basic employer characteristics such as industry sector, size of business, type of business activity etc. A summary of these characteristics is presented below.

3.6.1 Characteristics of Minority Ethnic employers and White employers

The analysis of employer characteristics in this chapter has already suggested that three quarters (73 per cent) of employers in the survey were small, private businesses employing less than 50 employees (see Section 3.5.1). All the

minority ethnic businesses in the survey fall under this category, and account for around 11 per cent of all small businesses. As indicated above, the proportion of white businesses participating in New Deal, excluding the Public Sector, was 85 per cent. By contrast, around 9 per cent of minority ethnic businesses were involved in the programme, and were evenly distributed across a relatively small range of economic activity in Manufacturing, Hotels and Restaurants, Finance and Other Services sectors. In relation to the number of subsidised job vacancies notified to the ES, 95 White employers in the survey reported a total of 78 vacancies compared to 9 minority ethnic employers reporting 10 vacancies. Over one-third (36 per cent) of White employers either did not report a vacancy or did not wish to participate in New Deal compared to just under 3 per cent of minority ethnic employers reporting no vacancies.

3.7 Overview

This chapter has presented the findings of the quantitative survey of young people as well as employers who took part in the survey. It began with an overview of the Employment Service's structure and contracting arrangements with employers, voluntary sector organisations and other agencies for delivering NDYP in Southern Derbyshire. It then examined the experiences of young people from minority ethnic groups on New Deal in relation to their White counterparts. However, before we compare the experiences of the two groups, it is important to warn that due to the small sample size of respondents in the survey in general, and the proportion recruited to subsidised employment in particular, we need to be cautious about making definitive conclusions about the

relative involvement of White young people and young people from minority ethnic groups on New Deal.

Nonetheless, the evidence presented in this chapter has suggested that there may well be important variations in experience by ethnic group. The key ones are summarised as follows:

- more young people from minority ethnic groups than the White group were on the Voluntary Sector Option and the Environmental Sector Option;
- more young people in the White group were on the Subsidised Employment Option than minority ethnic young people, even though the latter had had more qualifications on entering New Deal than the former.
- more young people in the White group indicated that New Deal had improved their chances of obtaining a job on completing the programme than young people from minority ethnic groups.

The question which needs to be asked is why, in spite of the introduction of the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' to bring about fairer and equal outcomes for all ethnic groups, young people from minority ethnic groups are not benefiting from New Deal to the same extent as their White counterparts? This is worrying given that young people from minority ethnic groups in the survey, despite being generally better qualified than the White group, have lower rates of

placement in jobs. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide some of the answers to these questions.

The chapter also examined the data from the employer survey. The evidence shows that a large proportion of employers have not developed equal opportunities policies. Of those who claim to have developed such policies, a larger proportion was in the public and voluntary sector than the private sector.

We now turn our attention to the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with young people in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Differential experiences of New Deal: Some qualitative evidence

4.0 Introduction

The New Deal for Young People was one of the key policy initiatives of the Labour Party's first term in office, and remains central to the government's labour market policy and its programme of welfare reform. As mentioned in Chapter 1, previous labour market programmes, notably the Youth Training Scheme, which was aimed at tackling youth unemployment failed to cater for the needs of young people from minority ethnic groups. This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative study, and examines the experiences of 22 young people on New Deal. The purpose is to evaluate the extent to which the New Deal programme has met the needs and expectations of young people from minority ethnic groups.

4.1 Characteristics of participants

4.1.1 Gender and Age

The qualitative study aimed to achieve a relatively even balance of men and women and the final ratio was around two to one. The sample was also purposively selected to ensure that each of the age bands was covered. This was broadly achieved among participants within the 21-22 year group but with smaller numbers from both the 19-20 and 22-24 year groups (see Table 5.1).

4.1.2 Ethnic group

It was crucial to ascertain whether the ethnic origin of participants affected their experience of the programme. Among young people taking part in the qualitative study, 14 were from minority ethnic groups, and 8 were from the White group (see Table 4.1). Since the number of young people from minority ethnic groups was relatively small, it was decided to include all those who expressed a wish to participate in the study.

4.1.3 Options

The sample was also selected to ensure that the full range of activities at all the Option stage of the New Deal programme was covered. This was broadly achieved, although, there were relatively more young people represented on the Voluntary Sector Option than any of the other Options (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 *Characteristics of participants*

	Individual Interviews	Group Discussions	Total
Gender	No	No	No
Male	7	7	14
Female	8	-	8
Total	15	7	22
Age			
19-20	4	1	5
21-22	9	4	13
23-24	2	2	4
Total	15	7	22
Ethnic group			
White	4	4	8
Black-Caribbean	3	2	5
South Asian	8	1	9
Total	15	7	22
Options			
Employment	3	1	4
Full-Time Education	2	-	2
Voluntary	8	5	13
Environmental Task Force	2	1	3
Total: All study participants	15	7	22

Source: New Deal Participant Data

4.1.4 Interviews

Fifteen individual interviews and one discussion group were achieved. The discussion group was all male, and comprised of participants on the Voluntary Sector Option (see Table 4.1). The original plan to set up a mixed gender discussion group was not achieved.

Before turning to young peoples' accounts of their experiences of New Deal, three features of these interviews must be noted. First, the study involved the use of small, purposively selected samples in order to provide an in depth exploratory investigation of the impact of New Deal on young people. This

feature allowed a detailed examination of the range and nature of the perspectives that young people hold and the factors that have influenced different outcomes. However, with the aggregate sample of the size described above, this feature prohibits any statistical inference to be drawn about the wider population of New Deal participants. Where any such conclusions are suggested by the data, they are presented only as hypotheses to be tested. The full sample covered is described in Table 4.1.

Second, this Chapter contains the views and experiences of young people on New Deal. The perspectives of other agents involved in New Deal for Young People, such as employers and Personal Advisers are presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

Third, all the names cited in this chapter, or Chapters 5 and 6, are fictional but the experiences are real. In addition, for case studies where there may be a danger that a young person, or the Personal Adviser or the employer might be recognised, minor features of the account have either been omitted or changed.

4.2 The New Deal for Young People – Options

It was detailed in Chapter 2 that participants on NDYP begin the programme with a sustained period of advice and help known as Gateway. Following this, those who have not been able to secure employment, progress to the second stage of the programme – Options. During this stage, young people participate in placements on one of the following Options:

- a subsidised job with an employer;
- full-time education and training (FTET);
- work with the Environmental Task Force (ETF); and
- work with the Voluntary Sector.

Each of the Options has specific features in relation to provision, payment and duration. All Option placements are required to include elements of vocational training towards NVQ Level 2, or a recognised qualification; work experience; continued job search (with the exception of subsidised employment placements); and ongoing personal support from a provider or Personal Adviser. Individuals are expected to participate only in one Option during their time on New Deal, although some flexibility in switching between Options or placements is allowed during the early stages.

In addition to providing training and work experience in four different sectors, the Options also vary in two other ways:

- duration of placement – whilst FTET placements can last for up to one year, the other three Options last for a maximum of six months;
- financial remuneration – participants in subsidised employment placements are paid a wage, Voluntary and ETF participants may also be paid a wage,

but in practice they receive their Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) plus an extra £15 a week; those on FTET receive their JSA payments only.

4.3 The importance of Options

As will become apparent in the case studies presented in section 4.4 below, Options have significant effects on the lives of participants. That is, they can enhance participants' employability and/or improve their chances of finding sustainable employment. It is at this stage of the programme that sustained interventions and support (when required by participants), by the Personal Adviser, employer or provider, over a period of six to twelve months, can be provided.

The case studies will also show that participants' experiences of Options are improved when there is:

- an appropriate match between participant needs and Option content;
- ongoing personal support during Options from Personal Advisers, employers or providers;
- appropriate training leading to suitable qualifications.

4.4 Case studies

The following five case studies represent a cross section of young people in the survey. They were drawn from interviews with young people during the Option stage of New Deal, and illustrate the importance of the key elements discussed above in developing the skills and capabilities that are important for entering and sustaining employment.

4.4.1 *Barry*

Barry is a 21-year-old White male who was on the Subsidised Employment Option with a public sector organisation.

Q. *Can you tell me about your educational background and the jobs you have done since leaving school?*

A. I left school with eight passes, 'C' passes in Mathematics, Business Studies and Geography, and the rest were below 'C', so I didn't do brilliantly. I was sixteen when I left school. I didn't really know what I wanted to do at that time. I did some part-time work in customer care, working on tills etc. Then I decided to go to college although I didn't know what to do there but as I was really into sport, and still am, I decided to do a course on Sports Recreation - which I passed. I then decided to change direction, so I decided to take Computer Studies at college. I finished the first year with a pass but I really enjoyed it and

decided that was the type of work I wanted to get into - office work, computers, spread sheets, word processing etc. The following year, I decided to enrol for level 3, which is equivalent to 'A' level. I completed the first year but due to circumstances out of my control, I left home, so I needed to find employment. After completing the first year, I didn't go back to do the second year.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school. The main thing on my mind was being with my friends and just doing what I wanted. I would never have imagined doing what I am now but after a while I started getting a little scared that I would be left out. Eighteen seems to be a cut-off point, it does decrease your chances of getting training or a modern apprenticeship with training and employment which was what I really wanted. I felt that if I was earning a small amount of money I would still have my own independence. I enjoyed going to college but I didn't enjoy not having any money, but I knew my chances were decreasing as I got older.

Q. What other jobs have you been doing?

A. I spent a lot of time looking for work but it was only agency work, but only in factories but I needed to have the money coming in. It was easy finding a job but there was no job security, no holiday pay. Some of the jobs I held down for quite a long time, four months or so. I then worked through the agency at a place for six months but the money wasn't very

good, so I decided to move on. I went to agencies and asked if they could find me any office-based work, as I wanted to gain some experience. I got a month's work at a bookshop, covering for sick leave, which gave me some relevant experience. Also, whilst I was at college, I did some bar work and I became a supervisor organising shifts etc. I then went on to work full-time in a bar and then came across New Deal.

Q. How did you become involved in New Deal?

A. I heard about New Deal, actually before it came in. I went down to the Chamber of Commerce, when they had an open day. I was eighteen at the time and they were looking for sixteen-year-old school leavers. Someone told me to enquire at the Job Centre about New Deal as they thought they were looking for 18-24 year olds. I found out it wasn't available at that time, but when it did, you had to have been unemployed for six months or longer. I left it for a while and went back to do some agency work, keeping myself busy and going for interviews. I then became unemployed for a while and went on to the Job Seekers Allowance. During that time I applied for jobs in offices and had a few interviews, but they didn't want me as I had not had enough experience. They wanted someone who could get into the job and do it straightaway whereas I would have needed some training. New Deal came along and after six months I went on to it and met James, my personal adviser.

Q. *How did your first meeting with your Adviser go? And how did you get on with them?*

A. At my first meeting, James took all my details down and he went through my interests and needs. I told him I wanted to do office/computer work, nothing else basically. He was very supportive and helpful to me. I wrote all of my experience down - customer care, college work, cash handling and he pieced it all together. As I didn't drive, he wrote down the furthest places I could travel to. He then went over the process, Gateway, interview techniques, explained the different options which were available, so he covered everything, it lasted about an hour and a half.

Q. *How often did you meet your Adviser?*

A. We had a set interview every two weeks, when I had to sign on, but every week we always had an extra interview of half an hour, just to keep up on the progress etc. We decided that we would definitely have an interview every two weeks, just to check on progress and if I needed any assistance with anything he would always make time for me.

Q. *What is your understanding of New Deal?*

A. At that time I understood that New Deal was something like a modern apprenticeship, it supplied employment with training and it encouraged

that, you also got subsidised funding. That was the main point that really interested me, it also created opportunities for people who were not on New Deal, as there were jobs and courses available. After talking to the New Deal Adviser and reading the leaflet I felt really enthusiastic about it and felt that I was going to get somewhere. Before, I had just been going from job-to-job, not doing anything that really interested me, whereas this made me feel enthusiastic about it.

Q. How long were you in the Gateway? And what did you do when you were there?

A. I was only on the Gateway for about two months, during that time I had two interviews, the second one was at the Council. With it being the Christmas period, it took some time to get a reply and when it arrived, I had an offer of an interview. I was helped with filling in the form and advised on how to deal with the interview. I found out on the day of the interview that I had got the job, so I didn't actually go on to any Options, I was aware of them but I was lucky enough to get the job through the Gateway period. I was very fortunate.

What we did on Gateway was that we assessed basically what I wanted and we headed for that. So as I wanted employment, clerical work I decided that I did not want to settle for anything less. I went to a place called 'Steps to Employment', I had my CV done and they gave me some advice and help. They discussed with me any problems I felt I had when

attending interviews and how to overcome them. They went over questions which I should ask the employer and also finding out about them. We covered every ground, and I didn't feel uncomfortable at all and felt that I could answer anything which they asked me.

Q. You must have done well at the interview. Please, tell me about it.

A. There were two people involved in the interview. The day I attended, it was snowing and I arrived there an hour early. I sat down and they went through my application form and asked me in more detail about what I had done at school and college and also what I had done in any previous employment which was relevant to the job. I also talked about myself and my ambitions, it was quite an enjoyable interview, to be honest.

Q. What job were you offered, and what does it involve?

A. I am employed as a clerical assistant and my job is based in five different areas, the technical library, community services, communications office, despatch, post room, car allowances and claims and the reception area. My job is to assist and learn all the basic requirements of each department and I also have my own tasks which are set by my line manager.

Q. Have you settled in the job, and in the office? How do you get on with your colleagues?

A. The working environment is brilliant. I don't think I am seen as any less than any other employees. You can go in and some people have no idea of what a New Deal person is about; they may have the idea that the person is unintelligent, so it was something which I had to prove. I have got on really well, no one has ever looked down on me and I am treated the same as anybody else. They have confidence in me; they sometimes ask me to help them with their work. I do feel a valuable part of the team.

Q. Does your status as a New Deal employee affect the way you other colleagues see you?

A. If someone hadn't been informed about what a New Deal person was and they found out that to get on to New Deal they had to have been unemployed for six months, they may think that that person hadn't been trying to get a job or they were not good enough. I just thought that they might think that I didn't get the job off my own back.

I was conscious about the perception which some people had about New Deal, although that may have just been in my head, because as soon as I met the people in the office, I realised that didn't exist. I look on them all as my friends now, so I am fortunate. We all muck in together; also with

my job being to cover, I get to work with all of them, so it is a good working relationship.

Q. Any future career plans?

A. I am currently training for NVQ level 2 administration, then, hopefully, I may go on to something on a higher level or an NVQ in computer studies. I am training and covering all sorts of areas, so I have gathered a lot of experience in my work over the last few months, so I do feel that I have got good prospects for the future.

Q. What is your assessment of New Deal and how do you suggest it could be improved?

A. I think Gateway prepared me for employment. In my case because I had actually applied for a job which was only available to New Deal people, then there wasn't so much competition for the job. I suppose it did play a big part and also the assistance and help which I got in completing application forms and interviews etc. but I think a lot of it was down to myself as I was very enthusiastic. You can get all the advice in the world, and read books etc but if you are not willing to use it, but it did definitely help me, it played a big part in it.

I was very excited about New Deal because I was hoping that it would live up to everything it stated in the leaflet. I felt it was made for

someone like me, who had done all right at school but hadn't really focused enough on what I wanted to do. At an early age I wasn't ready for deciding on what I wanted to do, but when I reached seventeen/eighteen that was when I realised that you do not always realise what you want to do until you get older, so that gave me the opportunity to do it. With being unemployed for about two months, I found out that it was available to me and would give me the opportunity to enable me to do something which I really wanted to do. New Deal has really met my expectations; I haven't got any complaints, particularly as I got a job within two months of being on the Gateway programme.

When I used to go to the Jobcentre, there never seemed to be many employment advisers available. Perhaps more advertising, the name is quite catchy, so you tend to remember it, I even remembered it a year and a half later. Bringing it down from six months to three months, although I don't know how that would work. Also sometimes you may have to wait to get on to New Deal, it would be better if there was immediate entry on to it. When people go on to Job Seekers Allowance they should look at their profile and try and estimate if they are enthusiastic about getting a job and if so, they could perhaps go on to New Deal straight away. I think some of it depends on which adviser you get, if they are not happy, they should be able to change. I was lucky that I had James as my personal adviser; he was really good.

Comments

Barry's experiences on New Deal have identified a number of elements which fused together to make his Option successful and effective. The key factors underlying the success were: first, the positive and sustained support he received from his NDPA through regular review meetings. At the first meeting with his NDPA, they discussed his experience, the type of work he wanted to do, travel to work areas and the support available on New Deal. Together, they drew up action plans, looked for employment in clerical work and met regularly to review progress. This also reveals another important factor, namely that Barry was actively involved in the decisions affecting his future. In addition, his NDPA was helpful and supported him every step of the way.

Second, Barry's experience of Gateway was also positive. He had a comprehensive induction in job search and interview techniques – from writing up a CV, preparing for interviews, including how to answer interview questions to the type of questions to ask the employer.

Third, his positive experiences were also undoubtedly due to the successful matching between his needs and aspirations and the content of his placement. His work experiences and training were compatible and he was provided with suitable support by his line manager and established work colleagues. Additionally, his work was varied and challenging, and was in line with his future career aspirations as a clerical worker. He was also training for NVQ Level 2, with the possibility of pursuing another course in computer studies.

4.4.2 *Aftab*

Aftab is a 22-year-old Pakistani male who was on Subsidised Employment Option with a public sector organisation.

Q. Can I ask you about your educational background and qualifications attained?

A. I left school in 1993 with eight GCSEs grades A – C and from school I went straight on to Further Education College and took three ‘A’ levels, which I also achieved grades A – C. I made two applications, one to LSE in London, but unfortunately I did not make the grades. The course which I wanted to do, Law and Economics, I could only do at Leicester or Birmingham, so I chose Birmingham. I did a year but I missed a couple of exams, but due to personal problems, various things happening in my life, I never did re-sits, so I decided to look for a job.

Q. What jobs did you do before joining New Deal?

A. I did agency work, I then had a period of unemployment, then went back to agency work. I did manual jobs and a despatch clerk - despatching mail and orders for delivery. I applied for other jobs at the Council, but never had any interviews.

Q. *What types of jobs are you looking for at the Council and why?*

A. I always wanted a job with the Council, but somehow, I never saw myself as someone who would be able to get into that kind of organisation. I am going back, perhaps four years, and I did not know anyone of my ethnic background who worked for that organisation. Though I have gained a few qualifications, I am still unemployed.

I have made about forty-five applications to the Council, attended fifteen interviews but unfortunately, only found a Graduate Trainee post, but I couldn't take it because I couldn't survive on the pay. I went for another post (clerical), but unfortunately I was told that there was a problem with one of the references which I had from one of the managers at the Council. Apparently there had been a discrepancy in the references - what he had told them over the phone, did not match what he had written down on the paper about me, so because of that reason, I lost the job, even though an informal offer was made to me. I have had sixteen interviews already and will be having my seventeenth shortly.

Q. *How did you become involved in New Deal?*

A. I heard about New Deal from the news etc., but I had practical experience through signing-on at the Job Centre. The programme is a push by the government to get us into employment. Through New Deal I was offered

a placement on the Employer Option at the Council but I had to take a test and attend a full interview.

Q. Can you tell me a-bit about your first meeting with your Adviser.

A. At my first meeting with my New Deal Adviser, she introduced herself, gave me some paper work to complete and New Deal booklets. She explained what the programme was about. She also set out what I would be doing. Because of the difficulties I have encountered in securing employment, I asked if I could go into full-time education to improve on my qualifications. She told me that there was no student grant under New Deal, and that the Full-time Education Option offered under the programme was limited to NVQ Level 2. She mentioned that the opportunities for placement were available on the Voluntary and Environmental Task Force Options. I mentioned that I had worked for agencies and that I didn't want to do any more agency work as I felt I could do better than that and wanted to get into office-based work.

Q. What did you do at Gateway?

I attended a few mock interviews at the Careers Exchange and also did a CV. I went for interviews with career advisers, as I was unsure of what I wanted to do. The careers advice was not useful, but I did find the mock interviews helpful.

Q. Why did you choose this Option, and what does it involve?

A. I learned that the Council were recruiting for admin/support assistants. I put in an application and was called for an interview. I did a short numeracy and literacy test and attended an hour's interview. The placement involved moving within the Council; the aim being that eventually you would find a job. Two white colleagues and I were recruited on the programme. I have moved around four different departments but the White colleagues I started with have stayed in one department and have been employed.

Q. I take it you are not settled. What about your colleagues?

A. In the office they refer to me as a trainee and people know that I started as a New Deal person. To some extent it makes you feel inferior because they know that you don't belong there and you may end up doing the jobs which no-one else will do and you have no say in it. You are not really able to gain a lot of experience; they won't allow you to widen your experiences because of the mundane nature of the tasks. I was just limited to doing basic clerical work; I was not offered or trusted to do anything which involved greater responsibility. For example, when I was working in the Maintenance Section, I asked if I could go out with the Maintenance Surveyors so that I could gain experience in surveying but, unfortunately, I was refused. I was told that it was not my role so I could not go out with them. I asked initially if I could just go along and tick

their sheets for them while they did the surveying, but I was told that I couldn't do that. Basically, because I was just a trainee - an admin support assistant.

Q. What tasks do you undertake?

A. I have set duties to carry out: filing, archiving and general office duties. As soon as I had finished them I would then have to speak to the manager to see if there was anything else to do – usually putting letters in envelopes and sending them out.

Q. Does the working environment affect you?

A. I am made to feel insecure; you then question yourself whether you are really capable, or whether there are any other reasons. Sometimes you can feel out of place because you are different and you are seen as different, and made to feel different. I am not alone; another person I know, a Caribbean male graduate, was in a similar position – he left the placement and I may well follow in his footsteps. They know I am a Pakistani, but they constantly ask me about Indian related matters which I didn't know about.

One other thing, I achieved NVQ Level 2 in about two or three months but they couldn't fund me to do anything higher. I could have completed the course earlier if I wanted to. I found it embarrassing doing it; it was

so easy. I could literally sit down in a day and compile the portfolio because it was just gathering evidence. I had already been to University and obtained 'A' levels so I found it too easy. I think it is useful for some people, perhaps people who have just left school or those with no qualification.

Q. How has the programme helped you? Could New Deal be improved, and if so how?

A. I have not really benefited much from the programme. I think it may benefit people who need a 'kick up the backside', so it makes them go to work, rather than just sitting at home collecting their benefit. But for people who are qualified like I am, you get an opening but you are unable to progress; you are either made to quit or be kicked out. I would say that despite the negative experience, I have gained an insight into office work and bureaucracy. I have learnt a lot, more than I learnt when I was at university but it gives you a false promise, as you think you are going to progress but you don't.

Peoples' differences need to be taken into account. I think the programme should target people who have not done so well at school. I think for people who have had graduate training and also from different communities, should be taken into consideration. Different communities think differently, they are different, so that should also be taken into account. I have found that there is a lot of unemployment among male

ethnic minorities in my age group – 18-25 as they do find it more difficult to fit in or be accepted. It is difficult in an office situation. Here we face discrimination directly, and they need to do something about it.

The Employment Service has to realise that there is a problem of racism; I don't think they have realised this, or if they have, they may be ignoring it. New Deal Advisers should realise that and put people on a placement where there is unlikely to be any discrimination.

Comments

As with other young people on New Deal, Aftab began his time on New Deal by meeting with his NDPA to discuss the opportunities available on the programme. His initial hopes to pursue further studies under the programme were dashed as he was told there was no student grant under New Deal. It would appear that Aftab was destined to be placed on either the Voluntary Option or the Environmental Task Force Option. However, it was only by refusing to go on either of these Options was he placed on the Employment Option.

Aftab's experience at the Gateway stage was also mixed; he did not find the career's advice useful, however, he found the CV preparation, mock interviews and interview techniques helpful. There was no indication in Aftab's account of having received any support from his NDPA, nor any subsequent meetings taking place to review his progress.

Aftab's placement was anything but successful. There are a number of instances which account for his negative experiences. He found the tasks he was asked to undertake mundane, unchallenging, and lacking training or development component. This was compounded by the lack of support from his established colleagues, and this also affected his morale and confidence.

Aftab's experiences, together with his awareness of the plight of a black graduate, highlight one of the issues which has not been addressed by the Employment Service, that of graduate entry into NDYP. Unemployment amongst minority ethnic graduates is an issue of concern (see Modood et al 1997). The NDYP has no specific strategy for helping unemployed people with this level of qualification, but nonetheless, they remain an eligible group. While no generalisation could be drawn about the situation of minority ethnic graduates in this study, national research highlights the greater time taken for minority ethnic graduates to obtain employment (Pathak and Shalini, 2000), signifying the need for the issue to be addressed in the design and implementation of NDYP.

4.4.3 *Andy*

Andy is a 22-year-old Caribbean male on the Environmental Task Force Option organised by a public sector organisation.

Q. Can you tell me about your educational background and the qualifications attained?

A. When I left school, I went to play football for 'X' Football Club for two years but I didn't get a contract. I am twenty-two years of age now. I gained two GCSE - 'C' in English and 'D' in Science. I didn't think of going into further education at the time, I just wanted to play football.

Q. Did you apply for any jobs?

A. I didn't apply for any jobs when I left school; all I wanted was to play football; I just went to 'X' Football Club straight from school. It didn't work out after 2 years, so I came back home. After failing to get into other football clubs, I started looking for other jobs, but because I had no work experience, they didn't want to take me on.

Q. How did you become involved in New Deal, and what do you remember about the first meeting with your Adviser?

A. I became aware of New Deal when I was collecting my benefit. I was asked to see a New Deal Adviser. My first meeting was very brief; I was given a lot of information about New Deal to read up on, and go back the following morning, which I did. My Adviser asked me what I would like to do. Before I could answer, she mentioned voluntary work; but I couldn't work without being paid. I couldn't afford to go on that. She

also told me the other Options which were available were gardening, painting and decorating. I only took this Option because it was the only choice that was left. It was either ‘do this Option or you wouldn’t be able to sign on’.

Q. What have you done on your Option?

A. After I have failed to get into other football clubs, I was keen to make a career change but didn’t expect to find myself here – gardening. The work is hard and tiring, and takes a lot out of you. The garden tools didn’t help either – all of them needed replacing. There is a lot of waiting around when a request hasn’t come in. I have learnt a bit of typing and job search on the computer - when it is available, but I haven’t found a job yet.

Q. How has New Deal helped you? Do you think it could be improved?

A. I have learnt a lot about gardening and this would probably become useful in the future when I acquire a house with a garden. This is one of the problems with New Deal. If you don’t want to become a gardener, you are pushed into it; so what I have learnt for the past five months has been useless and nothing to show for it. My Option will end in a few weeks and if nothing turns up quickly, I will be back on benefits.

Comments

Andy was nearing the end of his Option when interviewed, and was not happy with his placement. There were a number of factors which contributed to his negative experiences on New Deal.

Andy's first meeting with his NDPA was not productive. It would appear that not enough time was given by his Adviser to explain in any detail the structure of New Deal in relation to the Options available to him. This may explain why Andy might have thought of the Voluntary Sector Option as voluntary work – an activity that he was reluctant to undertake, especially if it meant there was no payment at the end of it. Andy's lack of knowledge of the Options available on New Deal, may to some extent, have been the result of a 'filtering' of information and by his NDPA. This also resulted in Andy (in common with a high proportion of minority ethnic young people in the study) being 'steered' on to the ETF Option.

Although worried about being on the dole, Andy was at the verge of leaving the Option as he felt it had not improved his chances of securing employment. He completes his placement in a few weeks, but with the limited work experience he acquired on the programme, it is likely that Andy will be back on benefits as he has predicted.

4.4.4 *Joginder*

Joginder is a 21-year-old Indian female on work placement on the Voluntary Sector Option with a minority ethnic run voluntary organisation.

Q. What is your educational background and qualifications attained?

A. I am 21 years old; I have been to college and also to university. I left school in 1995 when I was sixteen with five GCSEs. I went to college to do a GNVQ and left in 1998. I then went to Oxford University for a year to do a course in computers. It was an Access course, so it only lasted for a year.

Q. What job search activities have you undertaken?

A. I have been looking for employment since 1999 in the airline industry as a steward, or something to do with travelling. I have applied to lots of airlines and have attended interviews but as yet haven't had much positive outcome. Different airlines have different selection processes but there are a number of stages you have to pass. They don't tell you why you haven't been successful – they just send you a letter, if you are lucky, to say that you have been unsuccessful. I wouldn't like to think that this is personal – but then I would never know. I have also applied to the Council for office-type jobs but six weeks on, I have had no response.

Q. How did your first meeting with your Adviser go?

A. My first meeting with the NDPA was okay. She wanted to know a bit about me and what type of job I was looking for. She told me about New Deal but I was never put forward for any airline work; I didn't know whether some airlines have signed up with New Deal.

She asked if I wanted to go on the FTET Option, but because I had been to college, I didn't really fancy going back; I want to work.

The NDPA also told me about the Voluntary Option where you do work experience for six months and do a one-day a week course. I didn't really have a choice, it was either that or I wouldn't get my benefit. The NDPA then put me on to an Asian guy from the Council for Voluntary Service who explained in detail what the Voluntary Sector offers, and where my placement will be.

Q. Did you discuss the other Options with your Adviser?

A. No, I was not aware of other Options. I learnt that there were other Options available half way into my placement. If I had a choice I would definitely have chosen the Employer Option, as that seems to be the one where I could get a job. When I finish this placement, I will have to sign back on and still look for a job.

Q. What do you do on your Option?

A. I have no specific job-title, however the work I do here is mainly clerical, administration and customer care. On the whole, I think my placement has gone well. My supervisor has put in a lot of time and effort to ensure I benefit from my placement. There has been a regular two-weekly supervision meetings at which all aspects of my placement are discussed. I have been encouraged to take part in all the activities of the organisation, including helping out at the reception desk, arranging appointments for visitors and clients.

Later on during my placement, I was invited to attend their management committee meetings to observe how decisions are made in the organisation, and also have a go at minute taking. I have learnt office work, audio typing and getting used to being in a working environment. I have also improved on my job search skills on the internet. I can now put all the experience gained here down on my CV, use the organisation as a referee and also put the skills into good use when I get a job.

Q. What has been your experience on New Deal? Can it be improved, and if so how?

A. New Deal should be a programme which introduces young people to employers. NDPA will first assess all your experiences, match them to

what an employer wants, and then you are put into a job and trained to do it.

NDPAs should find out the type of jobs people want to do and then give them the right work experience for that job. Also Advisers should be more aware of what different employers can offer. There is no point pushing someone into doing something which they do not want to do.

Comments

Joginder turned down her NDPA's advice to put her on the FTET Option as she felt she has had her share of education. Instead, she accepted, albeit reluctantly, to go on the Voluntary Sector Option.

However, despite the initial setback for not securing employment with an airline, Joginder's work experience on her placement was very positive. Her work experience is a good example of interaction between different elements of an Option, and how it can greatly affect an individual's experiences. She felt supported throughout her placement and it was important that her supervisor took an active interest in her progress

Her responsibilities increased as she became familiar with the activities of the organisation. In addition, Joginder also felt that her placement has provided her with office skills and increased her motivation and confidence. She believes that the experience she has gained from her placement would become useful as she

could use the organisation as a referee in job applications, and apply the skills she has acquired when she finds a job.

4.4.5 Janet

Janet is a 22-year-old Caribbean female on work placement on the Voluntary Sector Option in a white-run voluntary organisation.

Q. Can you tell me a-bit about your educational background and qualifications?

A. I am partially deaf. The school I attended has a unit which supports hearing impaired students without which I wouldn't have been able to get GCSEs. I got History, English Literature, English Language, Religious Studies, Textiles, Science and Maths. I also did City & Guilds in Community Studies. I then went to college and did NNEB (Nursery Nursing Education Board) but decided after one year that I didn't want to do it, so I just completed the first year. Then I did NVQ Level 2 in retail and also sign language.

Q. What jobs have you had since leaving college?

A. After college, I got a part-time job in customer service at a sweater shop for approximately a year and a half. I packed it in and started a care job in a private Nursing Home. It was absolutely diabolical, terrible. I complained so hard and got the sack for that because I stood up to the

manager and told her that they were not training us properly. She didn't like that and told me that as I did not have a job description, I had to do as I was told. I had to make ten cups of tea every half an hour. I left and shortly after that, I got another job, which also didn't work out. Every job I had that year, I was either sacked, laid off or walked out; it was terrible.

Q. What happened at you first meeting with your Adviser?

A. I moved to another area hoping my luck will change. I signed on at the Jobcentre and was put on New Deal. My meeting with the NDPA was so formal. I wasn't used to that formality. The place was so big; they don't care; you are just a number. That is the way it came across to me with the NDPA I had. I wanted to do some sort of marketing, but they couldn't offer me a college placement, which was what I wanted to do initially.

Q. What was your Gateway experience?

A. They sent me on to a training agency. It was brilliant, they were lovely people but there was no training in marketing. They could only train me in admin, retail, IT etc, but nothing in marketing - as they did not have any facilities for it. I started an NVQ in IT course, but there was no course material until after three months of the start of the course. I was then told that all the work I had done during that time wasn't relevant, so I was totally confused. I became unsettled and had to move again.

Q. Did you rejoin New Deal after you moved?

A. Everything changed after the move; I got into trouble with the police. I went shopping on a stolen credit card and I was caught for it. This meant I had to go to court. I was convicted and since this was my first offence, I had to do community service; so I had to wait until I had done my time before I could do anything on Gateway. I did my three months community service at a charity shop, and this helped keep me on the right track. I had some counselling and I tried to sort myself out. Things started to get more positive but there was a time when I felt ashamed of myself and I had no confidence. I felt that there was nothing left for me; there was nowhere to go and no employer would take me on.

After my community service, I reluctantly went back on New Deal to complete the remaining two weeks of my Gateway. My current New Deal adviser is the best I have ever had. She was so supportive and always there for me - as a friend as well as an adviser, which is what I need. I discussed my problems and what I wanted to do, and she told me she would help me in every way possible. I was given a chance to go to 'Progressions', where I job search one morning a week. They also put little talks on, giving help and advice with certain subjects. You put your name down to go on different courses, for example, letter writing, application forms, mock interviews etc, which was brilliant. My NDPA arranged my placement. I attended a half-an-hour interview, and was taken on.

Q. What did you do on your Option, and what was your experience?

A. I work in the office doing general administration – word-processing, photocopying, filing, arranging meetings etc. My line manager is brilliant. We work together; she teaches me and helps with any problems I encounter. Obviously when someone has been out of work for a long time and has been through some bad experiences as I have, they need support, and that is what I get here. My line manager guides me through the tasks I need to do and she pushes me to complete them when necessary. I attend college on day release to study for an NVQ in office administration, RSA word-processing and typing. They are thinking of creating an admin support post here in the near future, and I have been told that I would have a really good chance of getting it. If this happens, then coming here would have shown to everybody that there is life after a conviction. I also think that coming here was the best option that I could ever have had. It's too good a chance for me to mess up.

Q. How would you sum up your experience on New Deal, and how could it be improved?

A. One of the problems with New Deal is that there aren't many employers coming forward offering jobs to young people on the programme. I think the Employment Service could do more by going to employers and asking them to take on young people who have qualifications and have been trained. But employers prefer to take on people with experience,

and this means young people with no work experience have no chance of starting the employment ladder.

Comments

Despite her initial negative experiences with her NDPA and the training provision at the Gateway stage, Janet's life has been turned round by New Deal. With a chequered work history and limited vocational skills, she has faced clear obstacles to finding employment. These difficulties were compounded by her credit card conviction. The type of employment she has been able to secure has not been interesting to her and, almost invariably, has led to frustration and high job mobility.

Janet's second spell on New Deal has been successful. She had the opportunity to discuss what she wanted to do with her supportive NDPA who was able to place her on an Option which helped to enhance her skills and abilities. Being at college provided Janet with the chance to develop and update her vocational skills, and acquire relevant qualifications. The placement also increased Janet's motivation, improved her confidence and self-esteem.

4.5 Towards a model of a successful Option

The experiences of three of the five young people presented above demonstrate how a well-structured Option can bring about important changes to participants' employability, personal skills and confidence. It is important to note that each of

the three Options has affected the young person's long-term opportunities, whether through refining their occupational ambitions or by equipping them with much needed qualifications and experience.

As has been shown above, each of these Options has equipped the young person with the skills and abilities required to progress them towards employability and/or employment. It is also important to note that a successful Option does not only move the young person towards employment. Rather, it affects personal attitudes, motivation as well as confidence whilst at the same time equipping them with improved vocational skills, qualifications and work experience. Diagram 4.1 illustrates the elements of successful Options and shows the complex blend of elements which contribute to a successful Option. These positive outcomes are clearly underpinned by the extent to which participants and their NDPAs are able to identify and agree upon occupational goals and a preferred Option route. This is critical to the success of an Option and depends upon a range of key steps being taken.

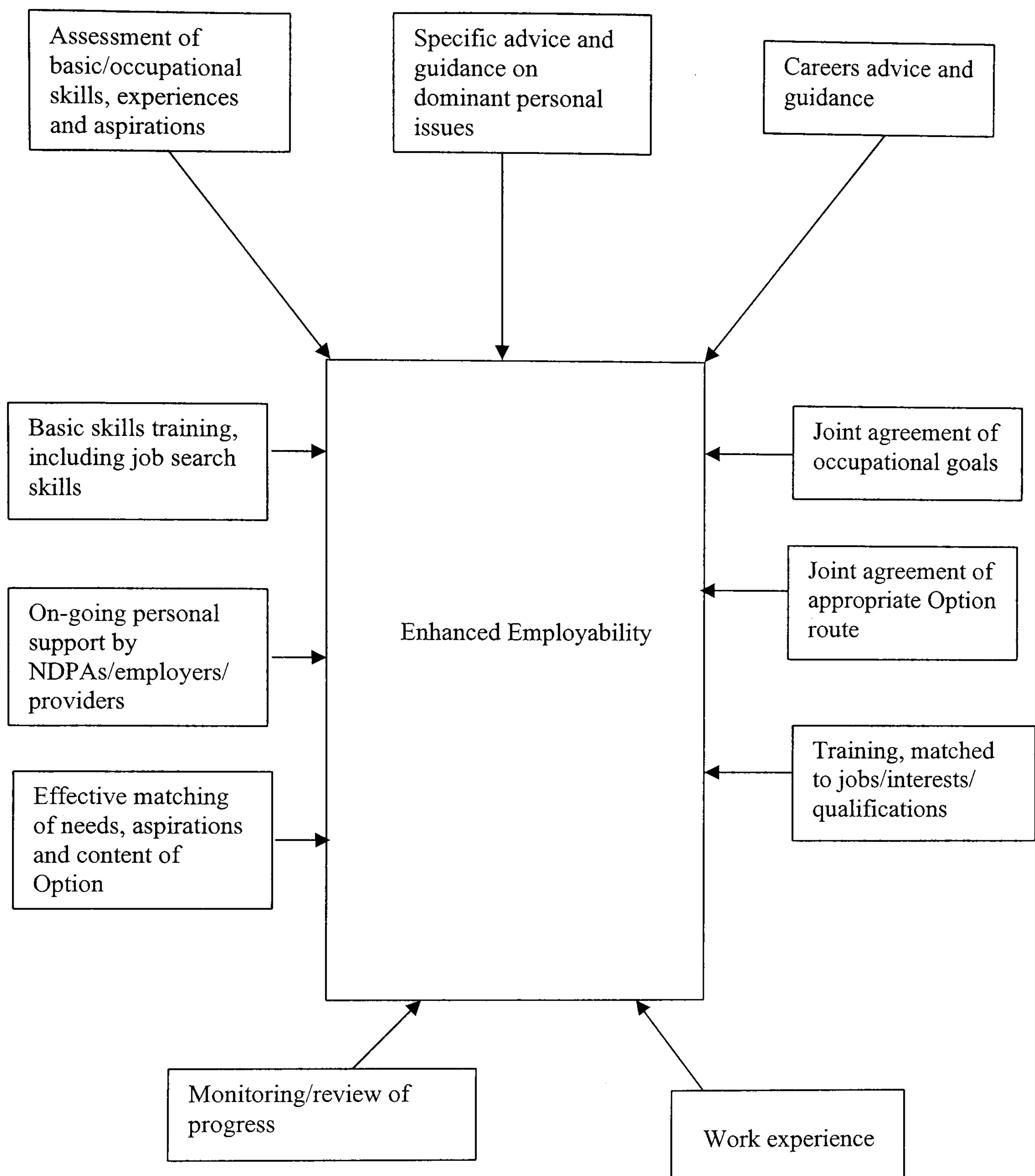
First, an assessment of participants' existing capabilities, experiences, qualifications etc. is required. As was evident in Barry's case (see section 4.4.1), identifying the nature and level of his existing skills, work experience and qualifications was important in ensuring that he was provided with an Option that was suitable. In other cases notably Janet's, particularly during her first involvement in the programme (see section 4.4.5), there was inadequate or no initial assessment of her capabilities, skills, nor work experience, including poor training facilities. Consequently, this led to her being placed on an Option

where she felt frustrated due to lack of fit to her skills, work experience or aspirations. The failure to meet Janet's needs and aspirations was a major factor in her decision to leave the programme.

Second, the degree of fit between an Option and the young person's occupational or career aspirations depends to a large extent on thorough discussions between the young person and their NDPA, which lead to mutual agreement of both occupational goals and appropriate Option route. Barry's case study, and to some extent, that of Janet's, particularly during her second spell on the programme, are examples of young people's involvement in decisions which affect their futures. This underlines the importance of the personalised approach of NDYP, for as the above cases have shown, it is the strength of the participant-Adviser relationship which shapes the process of Option matching, and subsequent satisfaction with the programme. See also Hasluck, 2000b; Woodfield et al, 2000. However, as the other case studies demonstrate, not all young people, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are accorded the opportunity to contribute to choosing their Option.

Diagram 4.1

Elements of a Successful Option placement



As has also been demonstrated above, the impact of Options has been variable and not all young people have encountered positive placements (see section 4.4.2). This latter case indicates how the process of Option matching could be seriously undermined by poor quality and content of the Option itself. Creating a positive and supportive environment by employers and New deal providers,

together with a mechanism for reviewing and monitoring progress, has been demonstrated by these case studies as crucial to effective placement.

4.6 Overview

This chapter has presented the findings of the qualitative study of young people on New Deal with particular reference to young people from minority ethnic groups. The evidence indicates that a small proportion of this group have gained some kind of benefit from the programme. Examples identified include: confidence, job search skills, work experience, ICT skills, motivation and sometimes, additional qualifications. Although the level of human capital of these young people was high, there was evidence that all attempts to secure employment had failed.

There was also evidence, which was common amongst a large proportion of these young people, that they did not achieve much on the programme. The problems include:

- poor advice and lack of adequate information from NDPAs as to what was available on New Deal; related to this, there was evidence of NDPAs placing them on Options which were not of their choosing;
- poor placement - with no support from NDPAs nor employer; no developmental opportunities and no prospects of job outcome.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, even where alleged employer discrimination has been identified by NDPAs themselves, they had taken no action to address the situation.

Chapter 5: New Deal Personal Advisers: Enablers or Gatekeepers?

5.0 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, NDYP is aimed at assisting unemployed young people to find sustainable employment by providing vocational training and work experience, and by encouraging personal development.

The role of NDPAs is one of the key elements in the delivery of the aims of NDYP programme. This Chapter presents three case studies of NDPAs who took part in the study and looks at how they carry out the functions of their role in the different locations within the Employment Service District. It also examines what factors enable or impinge on the ability of NDPAs to carry out their role most effectively. Drawing on the findings of these case studies and other research, it will also consider whether the NDPA function enables or hinders equality of outcome for young jobseekers of all ethnic groups on New Deal. Specifically, it will consider the extent to which the government's strategy for engaging minority ethnic jobseekers in New Deal is being applied at local level by the ES. But first, we set the role of the NDPA in context.

5.1 The New Deal Personal Adviser Role.

The introduction of the role of a NDPA is a key feature of the NDYP. The programme is designed to offer a range of tailored provision to young people, which for all intents and purposes is an innovation, and as previously mentioned,

departs from the form of advice and support provided on government youth training programmes (see Chapter 1). Prior to the NDYP, whatever the quality of advice on offer to the jobless, this was often overshadowed by a perception that the main function of the Employment Service was to 'police' benefit claimants and dragoon them onto low grade job schemes in order to satisfy performance targets (Employment Policy Institute, 1999; also see Chapter 1). This innovation, in part, represents a conscious attempt by the government to change that perception of the ES and ensure that its welfare initiatives adopt a higher quality and more client-centred approach (DfEE, 1998).

Implicit in the notion of a tailored response to the needs of unemployed young people is the recognition that no uniformly structured programme of advice and support is sufficient to meet the diverse needs of New Deal participants. The NDPA role is therefore designed to respond flexibly to those needs, and is expected to:

- help New Deal participants find jobs;
- improve immediate job prospects, by providing help and encouragement;
- prepare individuals for a New Deal Option, where appropriate;
- identify need and refer participants to specialist support agencies to respond to personal circumstances such as homelessness, debt and drug/alcohol dependency (see DfEE, 1997).

Indeed, the preferred model for the NDPA has been described by the Select Committee on Employment as that of a General Practitioner (GP) ‘equipped with a range of diagnostic tools and skills, and a thorough understanding of a wide range of external agencies and organisations to which clients with particular problems could be referred for specialist assistance (Select Committee Report, 2001). Clearly, to the extent that a NDPA has been successful has been down in part, to an individual’s ability to effectively diagnose participants’ needs, determine barriers to employment and subsequently develop appropriate action plans (see Chapter 4).

The GP analogy does collapse rapidly when the client base of the NDPA is considered (see section 5.2). It might have been initially assumed that the NDPA could have a high proportion of clients that needed a short amount of time and attention, like many users of a GP’s surgery, but in practice they will have had very few such ‘easy’ cases. Also, NDPAs are not the sole agents involved. As was noted in Chapter 2, the delivery of all the elements of the programme is based on wide-ranging local partnership arrangements which they have to deal with, including potential employers. The section which follows, presents a summary of the government’s ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’.

5.2 ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’

The New Deal strategy for engaging minority ethnic jobseekers, businesses and providers was introduced in 1999, and sets out actions at national and local level and throughout partnerships ‘to ensure the needs of ethnic minorities (*sic*) are

taken into account in the planning and delivery of the New Deal programme' (DfEE, 1999). This section summarises the Strategy under five key objectives as follows:

Objective One:

- To promote equality of opportunity and outcome for young jobseekers of all ethnic and racial groups.

Objective Two:

- To ensure that the design and future development of New Deal meets the needs of all young jobseekers, including those from minority ethnic communities.

Objective Three:

- To ensure that the design and future development of New Deal meets the needs of employers, including minority ethnic businesses and that they are able to take full advantage of the support available through New Deal.

Objective Four

- To ensure that wider minority ethnic networks are aware of and engaged with New Deal.

Objective Five

- To ensure that minority ethnic providers are represented, appropriately, and have the opportunity to participate in the delivery of New Deal (DfEE, 1999).

Objective One, which is more closely aligned to the issues raised in this Chapter, places a responsibility on the Employment Service to:

- Ensure that equal opportunities legislation will be applied across New Deal by explaining to employers and providers their equal opportunities and racial equality responsibilities.
- Provide guidance on good practice in the recruitment and treatment of young people, and encourage action that takes positive steps to overcome identified barriers to disadvantaged groups.
- Identify barriers to equal opportunity and assess racial equality outcomes.
- Develop local action plans and set equality targets against which progress can be measured.
- Ensure that NDPAs working with young jobseekers receive guidance and advice on the issues that face minority ethnic young people, and on the action to take to establish why individuals are not accepted for jobs or Options to which they are referred and take action with instances of discrimination.

- Ensure that NDPAs receive training in the particular barriers faced by minority ethnic jobseekers in the labour market, including training in the business case for diversity and equal opportunity.
- Ensure that the Gateway process provide advice and support that meets the particular needs of minority ethnic young people, including support in relation to discrimination - actual or potential (ibid).

The section which follows presents three case studies of NDPAs who took part in the study, comment on their role in general, and relate this, where appropriate, to the implementation of the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ in their area.

5.3 Case Studies: New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs)

The method for the qualitative study with NDPAs was presented in Chapter 2. It was pointed out that interviews with NDPAs were conducted, using topic guides, at their place of work, with each interview lasting around one and half-hours. All the data are recorded and transcribed verbatim. The verbatim transcripts were then analysed using a thematic method (see Chapter 2). Three of the six interviews with NDPAs were selected for the case studies to present not only the different views, experiences and practices, but also to reflect different geographic locations of the district, ie, urban, rural and semi-rural locations. This was to enable comparisons to be made, first, about the behaviour of NDPAs in the way they meet the needs and aspiration of young people in the respective locations;

and second, to ascertain how the barriers faced by young people are perceived by NDPAs and the actions taken to deal with them.

5.3.1. Fiona

Fiona started her career with the Employment Service two years ago as a NDPA, and works in a Jobcentre in a rural location in the district. She previously worked in the hospitality industry as a customer service adviser.

Q. What is your Understanding of New Deal and how do you see your role?

A. NDYP was introduced with the aim of helping unemployed young people back into work as soon as possible, in the quickest possible way with as much help or as little help as required. Obviously if these young people can't get straight into employment then the aim is towards getting them into training, and plugging any gaps in their knowledge, or getting them equipped with the knowledge that they are lacking to make them more employable in the future.

I see my role as that of advising, guiding, counselling - starting from when the young person walks into the office through to when we draw up the action plan. That then gives me an idea of where they are at, and what needs to be done to get them job ready.

Q. *What happens at the Gateway stage?*

A. The Gateway stage starts immediately a young person joins the programme. What has happened recently, which is definitely an improvement, is that every person now on Gateway has to do a mandatory two week Gateway course which is intended to plug a lot of the gaps and give them food for thought, and then come back to me after they have completed the course.

Q. *What are the employment opportunities available in this area?*

A. This is a tourist area, and there are seasonal jobs in the hotel and catering industries. There are also opportunities in the personal care sector and the service industry in general. In the majority of cases these jobs require a minimum of qualification. The local Council is another source of employment; however, most of the clients on my present caseload do not have even the basic skills required for their lower grade jobs.

Q. *What do you see as the barriers affecting young people's employment opportunities, and how do you help them overcome these barriers?*

A. This area covers some of the outlying areas and villages and places where there is no regular bus service. Consequently, one of the biggest barriers is transport. Young people in particular find it difficult coming to either the Jobcentre, work or an Option. Often they can't afford their own

transport, neither can they afford to take lessons towards getting their own transport. Clients who genuinely need help with their transport problems are helped using part of my 'Discretionary Fund'. The fund also goes towards helping other clients to smarten them up for interviews – clothes, shoes, haircut etc.

Lack of access to transport is certainly a big obstacle in a lot of cases; I mean it is an obstacle that has to be overcome if we are to improve the involvement and motivation of young people whose morale may already be at a low ebb. For those clients needing an excuse to remain on benefits, lack of transport is as good an excuse as any other.

However, the biggest obstacle of all is the attitude of a great number of young people towards the Jobcentre. I think for the majority of my clients, once they get over the fact that they are dealing with a NDPA who happens to work in a Jobcentre, and not seen as part of it, then we can have quite good relationships. They welcome the fact that I provide a central point of contact if they encounter difficulties with either a training provider or employer. If they will learn to let the barriers down a little bit, and put their trust in me, or the process I am trying to manage, New Deal can be successful.

Q. Have you had the occasion to deal with discrimination against clients?

A. No, no one has come to me personally that they felt they have been discriminated against because of their personal circumstances. I have recently placed ex-care leaver (a young person who has been in local authority care) on the Employer Option. And considering the different barriers and personal problems faced by this client, there was no mention of having faced discrimination.

Q. How are you dealing with the government's 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy'?

A. You mention the government's strategies for ethnic minorities; this is new to me. I may probably have heard it mentioned by colleagues, and that is as much as I know about it. It is difficult to maintain a focus on a new initiative such as the Strategy in an area where I have no black clients.

Q. What is your understanding of Job readiness?

A. Job readiness, in my view, is when a client is equipped with basic soft skills, able to get up and get to a certain place at a certain time on a regular basis, and not let people down. It's about unemployed young people taking ownership of their own life basically, treating people fairly, and having manners. Understanding that they have to adapt their

appearance to suit the job or the employer, making sure that they are getting the newspapers and actively looking for work, that they are checking that their C.V. is up to date. If there are any gaps in their knowledge they must ask for help. Proving to us that they are actively seeking work and available for work; taking up any job offers that we identify; and generally proving that they are satisfying the conditions for receipt of benefit - these are all indications of their job readiness.

It can also be a simple thing such as, how they are turning up for interviews. You make an effort in the majority of jobs and possibly go dressed how you wouldn't normally do when you're socialising. It could be something far more reaching. For example, it could be that they are not equipped with basic skills and no one has ever identified it before, and they need the basic numeracy and literacy skills. That can take a while to come out, as it depends on how forthcoming people are.

However, my clients may see job readiness differently. Certainly, a lot of them wouldn't know what you mean if you asked, are you job ready? It depends on what their other problems are. Half the young people I see, I would say, have either got a drug or alcohol dependency problems to varying degrees. They can appear to be job ready one day, and depending on what they have taken, they are not job ready the next day. There is a lot of peer pressure as well; if somebody starts to come to the Jobcentre, you tend to get their friends in as well. You can be just making headway with someone and then they realise their friends are watching. A lot of them as well will deliberately turn up at employers without

completing application forms, because then they think that they are job ready because we sent them, but they have no intention of actually getting that job. A lot of them don't realise that the basic numeracy and literacy skills are quite essential really, they've hidden it for so long and won't admit it. You can't really straight away give someone basic literacy, so again, it's a process through chipping away every week trying to find out.

The comments I receive from employers indicate that they also see job readiness differently. I have had employers ringing up and saying what did you send this and that person for, because for starters they were late, they didn't appear to have made an effort to look the part or they've offered them work and they've not seemed to want to take up that job offer. And with most of them it's not so much the qualification and work experience they are after, they want people who will fit in and not cause problems. That is why we make sure that the young people we send them meet their requirements. But I think where New Deal can help employers is the subsidy and the training grant and the on-going monitoring that we offer. Because under that type of employment the employer should feel more assured, but if there are problems they come straight to us and we will take the role over of getting that person in and trying to sort it out.

***Q.** How do young people choose the Options they want to go on?*

A. The way it is working now is that clients will already have done the Gateway to Work course, so for the first nine weeks of Gateway we

won't really have looked at Options, we would have looked at getting them into full time permanent work. Whilst on Gateway, they should have had at least one, if not more, taster sessions at local employers doing different types of work. That should give them an idea of the working environment. If we are still unsuccessful after all this, then we do look at other options and discuss with them long term job goals because if training or a short course is what really is needed, I think I'd start down that road pretty early to get them fixed up with the right course.

Obviously, the primary aim has got to be employment, that has got to come first. In the vast majority of cases I would put my energies into finding them employment first. If it then became obvious that they either weren't capable of holding down a job, or there just was something completely missing in their skills, we would look at training. Really, the training side should be used to get people up to NVQ Level 2 standard. So it's important that we find out from people what standard of general education they have had. We do have a 'Client Progress Kit' where the way that they ask the questions can give us an idea of whether a client has that educational standard. Having said that, if someone has got a clear job goal that needs a specific sort of training, and they would not get work in that job goal without the training, I wouldn't deter them from doing it. This is where some of the problems are, and I personally would like to see a little bit more flexibility, because we are now trying to fill the gaps in the local labour market. But some of these young people might want to do something that isn't available around here; well, I think

they should be able to. What the young person wants, I think, should really come before what is available to them. It's a question of getting the balance right, and this is not always easy to achieve.

Q. What is your case load, and how do you meet your targets?

A. My current Gateway caseload, that is, young people on the programme during their first 4 months, is 12 – five on the Employment Option, two on the Full-time Education and Training Option, two on the Voluntary Sector Option, one on the Environmental Task Force Option and two on Follow- Through. Currently, I have no one on the Self-Employment Option. I achieved this year's targets in all the Options except the Voluntary Sector Option. Next year's targets are not out yet; but whatever they are, I hope to improve on this year's.

Q. Is New Deal making a difference to young people's lives?

A. When New Deal works, as it should work, and the people are like the model people who you read about, but you don't think exist, it is really satisfying. The norm, however, is that the vast majority of young people I deal with are young males who have either had or have been tempted by drugs, crime or alcohol - not all of them, but more than half. When it's every day, all the time, seeing these same sort of people, it's really hard keeping yourself motivated. Okay, we can suggest to them to get help and we can identify that they have got problems but there is only so much

that we can do. We are not counsellors; we are advisers and we are giving advice and guidance. We are not equipped to counsel them. A lot of them haven't got settled addresses, so that is another barrier towards finding work.

Second, I think the Gateway to Work is a step in the right direction. However, what is lacking is that those young people who are job ready and keen to work have nothing for four months. I'd like to see fewer of such people getting on New Deal, because it would mean a few of them would be on 6 months unemployment. This would involve making help and support available before they get to New Deal. At present, there is nothing available for them unless they fall into exemption categories. They can't use the programme centre facilities, they can't go on work-based learning. I think we should be looking at ways of preventing young people becoming long-term unemployed, rather than thinking of what can be done for them when they are. After 6 months of unemployment, their heads have dropped and their morale has started to go; whereas if we had New Deal at 3 months or something like that, some measures could be taken to deal with the situation.

Comments

In her role as a NDPA, Fiona has identified a number of barriers faced by her clients, and also a range of strategies she employs to help her clients gain employment. Let us look first at the barriers. Transport, or the lack of access to

it by people living in rural areas, presents difficulties for people reaching advice centres, services and employment opportunities particularly if they are outside the immediate local area.

Fiona also identified young peoples' attitude towards the ES as a barrier. This raises two important issues: first, the negative attitude of unemployed young people towards the ES, (which, as indicated earlier, was supposed to improve with the introduction of NDPA's role) appears to persist. Second, a successful client-NDPA relationship relies as much on the assessment of the needs of young people and the support provided to address those needs, as much as the quality of the support provided (see Chapter 4). To portray unemployed young peoples' negative attitudes towards the ES as the biggest obstacle to their lack of progress is tantamount to blaming the victim. This also betrays Fiona's naivety in relation to the potential tension inherent in the NDPA's' role, not least of which is the need to be supportive while 'policing' compliance with benefit regulations and the New Deal rules (this issue is discussed further in Section 5.4 below).

Surprisingly, Fiona did not identify discrimination as one of the barriers to employment faced by jobseekers. She has no minority ethnic clients on her caseload and points to the low minority ethnic population in her area. The 'Ethnic Minority Strategy' therefore was 'not an issue' for her. In other words, equality and diversity issues were of low priority.

Views such as Fiona's, which she shares in common with other NDPAs operating in similar locations, take no account of the fact that if even she had no

minority ethnic clients, there may well be potential client groups, who, for whatever reason, may be reluctant to sign on. To be sure, the minority ethnic population may be low in Fiona's area, but race equality issues are not only relevant in areas with a large number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. It is a mistake in my view to link race equality issues with numerical or proportional size of the minority ethnic population in an area. To someone experiencing racial discrimination, it is irrelevant whether they live in an area where minority ethnic groups are a small or large group of the population. In areas where minority ethnic groups make up relatively small part of the population, the need for race equality measures is possibly even more crucial.

Additionally, in areas with relatively few people from minority ethnic groups, public agencies are often not used to devising policies which take into account the differing needs, views and experiences of minority ethnic groups. As a result, they often adopt so-called 'colour-blind' policies – ignoring the differing needs of minority ethnic groups – which can reinforce their exclusion (also see CRE, 1999). Indeed, similar sentiments have been expressed by a recent ODPM Report (2003) – 'Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England' which makes the point that knowledge, awareness and commitment on equality and diversity issues were particularly poor in some rural areas compared to urban and cosmopolitan areas which tend to demonstrate a better understanding and higher levels of commitment to these issues. The report acknowledges that some differences in beliefs and behaviours in rural areas were perhaps not surprising given smaller minority ethnic populations and therefore less direct personal

experience of some diversity issues. However, the report suggests that progress on the equality and diversity agenda will be hampered unless the beliefs and attitudes in these areas change.

It should also be noted that, potential minority ethnic jobseekers who do not sign on at the Jobcentre may well be encouraged to do so if they were confident that there were strategies in place that would seriously address the barriers which affect their successful participation in New Deal. The Strategy is therefore equally as important in areas of low minority ethnic population as it is in areas where minority ethnic communities are more visible. Issues such as scattered social isolation, discrimination, lack of cultural facilities, underdeveloped social networks as well as community infrastructure may be different, but the principles remain the same (see The Countryside Agency, 2000; Norwich & Norfolk Racial Equality Council, 1994).

Fiona, like other NDPAs, uses a combination of tools and strategies to deal with the different barriers to work faced by unemployed young people. The tools she identified include: client interviews; benefit sanctions; jobseekers direction; client progress kit and the mandatory gateway to work course. (Tools and Strategies used by NDPAs are discussed in Section 5.4 below).

Fiona believes that her primary role is that of finding employment for her clients and that in the vast majority of cases, she would put her energies to achieving this end. However the type of job opportunities available in the local labour market may not be the kind of jobs young people might want to take up.

Consequently, young people are placed into jobs which are available, rather than young people going for jobs they want to do. Fiona acknowledges the inflexibility inherent in the New Deal structure and points out that some of her clients prefer to seek employment opportunities outside their area. Although she further suggests that the needs of the young person should come first, however, this is hardly the reality, as young people are asked to apply for which become available.

Fiona also identified what job readiness meant, not only for herself, but also for her clients as well as employers. For Fiona job readiness is more to do with 'soft skills', that is, when a client is equipped with basic skills, able to get up and get to a certain place at a certain time on a regular basis, and not let people down. Her clients, on the other hand, perceive job readiness in a more literal sense, that is, 'being available for employment'. It is not clear why these young people, if they were job ready, would not take up job opportunities. Neither is it clear whether the available jobs are perceived by young people to be unsuitable, or the attendance at employers' workplace is simply a strategy adopted by these young people to comply with benefit rules. As for employers, job readiness is less about qualifications and work experience but young people's ability to fit in and cause no problem. Consequently, NDPAs screening processes have to meet the requirements of employers, thus, wittingly or unwittingly, providing a 'gate-keeper' function. The issues around employers' recruitment procedures and practices are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3.2 *Emma*

Emma has worked exclusively for the Employment Service for a number of years in a range of positions prior to becoming a NDPA. She works in a Jobcentre located in a semi-rural area of the district.

Q. What is your understanding of New Deal, and how do you see your role?

A. The aim of New Deal is to get people into work, and if not into work, to get them employable, as some of them are usually not yet ready for work because of all the problems they have.

I consider my role as finding out what their needs are and try to help them overcome them. The constraints of Gateway do not allow enough time to actually solve all of their problems. We are stuck with the sixteen weeks, which is not enough for a lot of our young people. Also the help and support out there is not always enough. Homelessness, for example, can take a very long time before something becomes available.

The NDPA's role is a difficult one, as young people don't believe we are trying to help them. They see us as an Employment Service and that we are here to control their dole money and enforce the rules. I keep telling them that I cannot help them if they don't tell me what their problems are. If they were to tell me that they were doing something fraudulent, then I would have to act on it, but they do not tell me everything.

I am also there to help them identify what it is they need to do to become employable; help them to identify the appropriate Option to suit their needs; and to try to help them to be realistic about what they want to do.

Q. What barriers face young people in the labour market, and how do you help them to overcome them?

A. These could be homelessness, drugs and alcohol abuse, disability, a question of confidence, lack of experience or qualifications, emotional problems at home, etc. We try to help them to solve their problems but there is not enough provision available. I see it as a way of moving them on to agencies that can help them. If they have learning difficulties, we put them on training. If they lack qualifications and work experience, they are on an Option, which will fill that gap. If they have drug problems they are referred on to an appropriate agency. I have to say some of them have chaotic life styles, really chaotic: no roots, no family to speak of and they are not ready for work. They are not only the most difficult group to help, but are also the ones who cause all the trouble.

Q. What happens at the Gateway stage?

A. This is when I try and find out all about them. When I do the action plan, I ask them what their ideal job would be. I know I have to be realistic and to try to get them into work but I try to look at their long-term aims at the same time. I try and identify if they want training or do they just want

a job, because a lot of them just want money, and they want it now. I send them for careers guidance, if they will go, to try and identify their long term and short term aims. I do simple things, eg. have they got a CV; how good are they at filling in application forms; do they get interviews. I try to find out how far through the process they can get, and where the stumbling blocks are.

I will then refer them to the Gateway to Work course, which is a new thing, where they do intensive job search. I ask them if they have any problems, for example, homeless, drug related problems, disabilities, etc, and try and find out what they see as their reasons for not working. They have all been unemployed for six months and I ask them why do they think they have not found a job so far. I spend that time finding out about them, I tell them about the New Deal Options and what New Deal can do for them - usually that is the first interview. I also tell them about the mentoring service. We both go away and think about it, they are also given a booklet, which tells them all about New Deal.

Q. How do young people choose their Options?

A. We discuss what it is they want. We look at what career guidance they have had and if they want to get straight into work or if they need to do training etc. If they identify that it is experience which they lack, we look at whatever Option will give them that experience. I also send them to speak to providers and have a pre-entry interview, if they turn up for it, to

find out what is on offer. If someone wanted to be a painter and decorator, it is on the Environmental Task Force Option. I would explain that it would give them work experience and some units towards NVQ as there isn't enough time to achieve a full NVQ. I would also tell them that they would get a bit of extra money at the same time, as that is important to them at this moment. I would tell them about the Full-time Education and Training Option. That is a big commitment: it can take a year, and they would have no extra money, but they will have a qualification and some work experience. So they must be sure that is what they want to do. They can then come back to me and tell me which choice they have made. It is not mandatory; it is their choice.

The focus of the programme has now moved towards getting people into employment. When New Deal first started, we were told to aim for sustainable employment. It was quality, not quantity and it was to stop this revolving door. It very soon changed and it became – ‘get them into work’. The target is a minimum of one placement a month. At a time when we have placed all employable clients into jobs, this target is unachievable and unrealistic. What we are left are the ones with the problems and the barriers. This most definitely creates a tension between the original New Deal idea and what we are supposed to do now. Also, young people themselves often don't think that far ahead, they just want to get a job and a bit of money, which is not always the best thing. I personally do not worry about this; I do what I think is best for the client. I was there when New Deal started and I work on the premise that I want

to get my clients into sustainable employment. There is no point getting them a temporary job through an agency, to then get them back again. That sort of thing is happening all the time, but I really do want them to get into a job with long-term prospects, but then, we do have targets to meet.

Q. What is your caseload, and how do you achieve your targets?

A. There are about forty clients on Gateway. I also have some on Follow-Through and some on Options. Most of my clients are on the Voluntary Sector Option because I like it. I find it really successful in providing young people with much needed work experience. The sort of people who work for the voluntary sector are helpful; they are interested in our clients; they are flexible and a lot of my clients find work at the end of their placement. I have some on the Full-time Education and Training Option, but none ETF Option. The ETF Option tends to be used for mandatory referrals, when people reach the end of the Gateway and won't do anything else. You cannot put people on the Voluntary Sector Option if they have behavioural problems, as people do not want to train them. If I have people who I think would enjoy the ETF Option, I think twice before I send them on it, as they will be with a lot of trouble-makers. I wish we had more than the one Option. I would like one for troublemakers and one for people who genuinely want to do that type of work.

Q. How do encourage employers to provide subsidised employment?

A. It is difficult finding subsidised employment for my clients in this area, as employers are not happy with the quality of the people we send them. In my opinion, it is an opportunity for employers to help this country and young people, by giving them employment opportunities. They ask for people who are already employable. The people we have on New Deal are here for a reason; it can be any number of reasons. If they were employable they would already have a job. When New Deal was first introduced, employers were coming on board because they said they wanted to help.

We don't get that impression now; they want people with driving licences, 'A' levels etc. At our first conference, employers told us that all they wanted from our clients was commitment. They said if they (New Deal clients) had commitment, they could do things with them. They are the people I have been trying to get into subsidised employment but employers will not have them. I also have people who have completed Follow-Through, having been on a course for a year at college. The college has seen their progress: they are never late nor off sick, and they are extremely hard-working. We try to get them into employment but employers still won't have them.

Q. What have been the successes and failures of New Deal so far?

A. The government made a big push on the New Deal when it started. We didn't have the clients, and employers were coming to us with all these vacancies but we had not had the clients through. So they got fed up waiting, as New Deal participants were coming through in small numbers at a time. Our vacancy team knew that was the wrong way to do it at the beginning, but there was nothing they could do about it. What we need to do now, is to have a NDPA with no caseload worries to work closely with employers and providers to market my good clients and New Deal as a whole.

Comments

Emma works in a Jobcentre within a semi-rural location, and the barriers preventing her clients gaining employment include: homelessness; drugs and alcohol abuse; disability; lack of confidence; lack of work experience and qualifications; and emotional problems. Emma also points to the difficulties she faces finding subsidised employment for her clients. She puts this down to employers' lack of commitment to helping young unemployed people and the level of qualifications they expect them to have. She gives an example of young people who have been to college and who have a good track record of attendance and hard-working, and yet employers would not employ them.

Emma's clients undertake the two-week mandatory Gateway Course where they do intensive job search, including CV preparation, completing job application forms and interview techniques. In addition, clients who lack work experience and basic qualifications are put on an Option; those with alcohol and drugs problems are referred to an appropriate agency; and those who have learning difficulties are referred to an appropriate training provider. Clients who have chaotic life styles – no roots, no accommodation, no family to speak of, and are not job ready – are the most difficult group to help, and are also the ones who cause all the trouble.

In contrast to the Employer Option, Emma finds the Voluntary Sector Option more useful as it meets the needs of her clients better. With the Employer Option route almost closed to her clients due to employers' reluctance to recruit unemployed young people, and also with the ETF Option being used for 'hard to help' and 'troublemakers', this raises a question as to whether Emma 'steers' her clients on to the Voluntary Sector Option.

As noted above, Emma uses the Environmental Task Force Option for mandatory referrals – involving people who have reached the end of the Gateway process and who will not do anything else, including troublemakers. This appears to suggest that she also uses a system of categorisation to put her clients into the different Options according to how easy or difficult they are to help and/or work with. This supports earlier research which found that some advisers categorise subconsciously, usually based on perceived levels of job readiness and the types of client barriers (see Joyce and Pettigrew, 2002). In practice, such

categorisation also affects the way NDPAs deal with clients, as NDPAs sometimes work more closely and more frequently with White young people who they perceive as having not only fewer barriers, but also as easier to place with employers.

Whilst there is no suggestion that minority ethnic young people in the study are treated as part of a group, it raises a question as to why this group of young people are less likely to be placed with employers as their White counterparts. This issue is considered further in Chapter 7.

5.3.3 Shona

Shona has worked for the Employment Service throughout her career. She has worked in a range of positions within the Employment Service before becoming a NDPA, for example, as receptionist, and also as new claims adviser. She is one of six NDPAs working from a Jobcentre in an inner city location.

Q. What is your understanding of New Deal, and how do you see your role?

A. New Deal was devised to help unemployed young people who perhaps don't have the necessary skills, qualifications, work experience and other barriers to achieve employment. Employers and others have told young people for an awful long time that they don't have GCSEs; they lack work experience; they don't have a good attendance record; they are disadvantaged because of their criminal record; they come from a poor background etc. These barriers are real,

and they affect young people's chances of getting a job. New Deal is seeking to make a difference to help and support those young people overcome these barriers and gain employment. As NDPA I see my role as helping this process as best I can.

Q. What happens at the Gateway stage?

A. The Gateway process is where you get to know your clients and establish what their problems are by asking, not in a judgemental way, but by getting them to open up.

On the first day they attend a group session for approximately an hour. They are told about New Deal and what it involves, why they are there and we then go through the action plan

Q. What is your caseload, and how do you meet your targets?

A. I had sixty-seven clients on my list, but at the moment, I am down to fifty-five. It is a seasonal type of thing, with new people coming onto the register, while others move out of the programme. They are spread across all the Options, including Self-employed Option, with none on the New Deal for Musicians.

Q. *How do your clients choose their Option?*

A. Since its introduction, the focus of New Deal has changed slightly. I should be encouraging people from day one to find work. Having gone through the Gateway process, if at the end of sixteen weeks we haven't secured work, then we would choose the most appropriate Option to help them to achieve work. Most of the young people I see don't really know what they want to do. They are quite happy if you sent them to an employer who will pay them what seems an enormous amount of money to them. So they are quite content to do any work for a bit of money.

However, I try to make them realise that they have potential. One of my clients, for example, a twenty-one year old male has had a variety of labouring jobs when I interviewed him. We got on really well and it was one of the first interviews I did. It was hard work gaining his trust, but when it happened, he opened up and told me what his real problems were. He had literacy and numeracy problems, and also lacked confidence and interview skills. He also had a low expectation of himself and had considered no other jobs except labouring. Nobody has ever said to him that he has the potential to do something better than labouring.

He thought that because he wasn't terribly literate, his chances of getting a better job were nil. I helped him complete an application form for a job as a booking clerk. I also helped him prepare for an interview, including the type of questions employers usually ask. We also kitted him out,

using the 'Advisers Discretionary Fund', so that he looked the part for the interview. He got the job, and with a bit of training and support by his employer, he is still employed.

Q. What is your understanding of job readiness?

A. Job readiness is where you have overcome the problems that have so far stopped employers taking them on. A lot of young people wear trainers to go for an interview, while in practice they need a pair of shoes. Sometimes they may need help in filling out an application form and selling themselves when they go for an interview. When I think they are job ready, we hold mock interviews where someone else will interview them and I will listen. Then I give them feedback on what they didn't do right or what they did well. Once we have overcome the social barriers of housing, get them looking the part, and identifying what jobs they want to apply for, we then consider them to be ready for employment.

Q. How do you address discrimination or potential discrimination facing your clients?

A. If I have a young person who I consider to be job ready and they are filling out application forms, getting interviews but are not been employed, I would discuss with them some of the issues that may be facing them out there. I am thinking of two Asian girls in particular who wear very traditional dress. They came to me and expressed concerns

about the difficulties they were facing obtaining employment in a specific retail shop and the retail sector in general. The girls wear a very specific type of clothing with a veil type headdress, and I suspect that was one of the issues facing them. One of them reported that she had a phone call from one employer inviting her to attend an interview, but on arrival, was told the vacancy had been filled.

In the past, some employers have raised health and safety concerns over the use of veil type headdress, and the problem they could cause when using a till. This is a difficult and complicated issue to deal with. I like to help my clients into employment, but I also need to keep in with employers if I am to gain their co-operation.

On the question of training to deal with discrimination matters, this will definitely be helpful and some of the NDPAs in this area in particular will welcome it as well. I am aware that there is a strategy being considered by managers. I only hope that this will help us work better with ethnic minority clients, but the details have not been worked out yet. Or if they are available, I haven't seen them yet.

Q. What do you see as the successes of New Deal; and what would you like to see improve?

A. The Advisor Discretionary Fund is excellent. In the past we had to check with our managers and get their permission and signature for anything

that was above a hundred pounds. We don't need to do that now; we have the authority to use it (£300) as we see fit to help the client.

However, what I find bureaucratic and time consuming is the amount of paperwork involved in the administrative tasks we are required to undertake. These include completing forms; filing; photocopying; and producing statistics. We used to produce statistics on a monthly basis, but this is now done weekly. The clients' statistics we produce include placements; submissions; employer referrals; client attendance; and client qualifications. What I really want to do is spending more time with my clients. I would also want to have some time visiting employers and providers.

Comments

Shona operates from a Jobcentre in an inner city location, and sees her role as that of helping and supporting her clients to overcome the barriers that affect their chances of gaining employment. She identifies these barriers as including: the negative attitudes and stereotypes employers have of unemployed young people. Shona was also aware of the cultural discrimination that posed as a barrier preventing two of her clients gaining employment. These were two Asian young women who, according to Shona, were job ready, and who were applying for jobs, being called for interviews, particularly in the retail sector, but because of the traditional clothing with a veil type head-dress they wore, they were never employed. Clearly, Shona was not able to deal with the apparent discrimination

by employers. Indeed, she also failed to raise the matter with the employers concerned.

It was also evident that Shona has had no equality and diversity training, guidance nor advice from her managers on the action to take in these circumstances, neither was she equipped to provide support to clients faced with discrimination. Whilst parity of outcome for minority ethnic young people on New Deal remains a meaningful target for the government, it appears that the Employment Service has yet to develop, not only the expertise and competence, but also the commitment to make it happen.

5.4 Tools and Strategies

As noted above, NDPAs utilise a wide range of strategies, programme initiatives and tools to enhance their clients' chances of gaining employment. This section looks at a selection of these tools and strategies, and considers how effective they are in dealing with different barriers to work faced by their clients.

5.4.1 *Client Interview*

The client interview, that is, the 'one-to-one' interview, is one of the tools used by NDPAs. As the New Deal participants' case studies have shown, there is potential for the NDPA to be more supportive and helpful where there is a trusting relationship and rapport between the NDPA and the client (see Chapter 4).

5.4.2 *Advisers Discretionary Fund (ADF)*⁴

NDPAs viewed the ADF in a very positive light for at least two reasons. First, under ADF, NDPAs are no longer required to obtain their managers' permission; they have discretion to use their budget as appropriate. More importantly, NDPAs view the ADF as a useful tool for dealing with a range of barriers to employment faced by their clients such as travel problems and appearance. They believed it was worthwhile to invest money in clients as it directly deals not only with barriers, but also it increases client motivation. (See Joyce and Pettigrew, 2002). As Jo, one NDPA put it:

Young people in particular find it difficult coming either to the Jobcentre, work or an Option. Often they can't afford their own transport, neither can they afford to take lessons towards getting their own transport. Clients who genuinely need help with their transport problems are helped using part of my Discretionary Fund. The fund also goes towards helping other clients to smarten them up for interviews – clothes, shoes, haircut etc (Jo, NDPA, Swadlincote).

5.4.3 *Benefit Sanctions*

In general, NDPAs viewed the use of benefit sanctions positively. Some NDPAs see the use of sanctions not as punishment but as discipline. However, there

⁴ The ADF was introduced in April 2001 as part of New Deal 'Next Phase', in order to increase NDPA flexibility. NDPAs can make ADF awards up to £300 to provide anything to help Jobseekers obtain or accept job offers.

were initial concerns when they were first introduced that it could undermine the relationship between the NDPA and the young people they seek to help.

Other NDPAs in the study reported that they use sanctions sparingly and only as a last resort. The client is made aware of the benefit rules when they sign their Jobseekers Agreement⁵ on joining the programme. By doing this, NDPAs believe the onus is on the client not to break the benefit rules, rather than on the NDPA to enforce them.

5.4.4 ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’

As mentioned earlier the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ was introduced by the government to ensure that New Deal actively promotes equality of opportunity and outcome for young jobseekers of all ethnic and racial groups (see Section 5.2). However, as this chapter has demonstrated, some NDPAs, particularly those who operate within rural locations, are either not aware or have vague recollections of the existence of the Strategy. On the other hand, NDPAs working in urban locations, are aware of the existence of the Strategy but have had no training or advice as to its practical application. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 6.

⁵Jobseekers Agreement is a formal agreement between unemployed individuals and the Employment Service. It specifies the detailed steps jobseekers intend to take to look for work. See Chapter 2 for detailed discussion.

5.5 Overview

This Chapter has presented the qualitative data of NDPAs who took part in the study. It examined how they carry out the functions of their role and the factors which affect their ability to carry out their role. Specifically, it examined the barriers to employment faced by minority ethnic young people, and whether the NDPA's role enables or hinders these young people's chances of obtaining employment. For our purpose, the key evidence includes the following:

- NDPAs operating in rural locations do not consider equality and diversity issues as relevant;
- NDPAs operating in urban locations are aware of discrimination as a barrier to employment for minority ethnic groups. Nonetheless, when NDPAs suspect that discrimination was taking place, they were not equipped by the ES to deal with it;
- employers' criteria for recruiting young people are less to do with their qualifications or ability to do the job but much to do with their ability to fit in and cause no problem. Consequently, NDPA's screening process had to meet employer requirements, thus providing a 'gate-keeper' function. And as will be discussed in the next chapter, this affects the chances of minorities who are perceived as 'outsiders';

- NDPAs use a system of categorisation to put clients into different Options according to how easy or difficult they are to help and/or work with. This has adverse effects on minority ethnic young people as NDPAs concentrate more to getting White young people into work as the latter are perceived by the former as having fewer barriers and therefore easier to help.

The next Chapter provides an analysis of the qualitative data of employers, and considers their knowledge and understanding of NDYP, including the factors which influenced or hindered their participation in the programme. It will then explore the characteristics they look for in New Deal recruits. It further examines employers' experience of the programme, and their procedure for recruiting New Deal candidates.

Chapter 6: New Deal for some, Raw Deal for others?: A qualitative Study of employers

6.0 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the key objectives of New Deal is helping young people find and keep jobs. Employers' reactions to the programme are therefore an important factor which will help determine its success or failure. Employers have a crucial role to play for at least two important reasons: first, in relation to providing unsubsidised employment opportunities for young people and second, in their willingness to provide subsidised employment and training as part of the New Deal Option.

This Chapter presents employers' views and responses to NDYP based on qualitative data collected between January and June 2000. It includes data from employers who have New Deal employees, those who have signed an employer agreement but have not yet employed a New Deal candidate, as well as employers who do not intend to take part in the programme. Factors which help explain employers' participation or non-participation in NDYP are analysed. Employers' accounts of their expectations of the programme and of New Deal participants are presented, along with their actual experiences of New Deal. It further examines employers' procedures for recruiting New Deal candidates and whether such procedures are underpinned by equality and diversity policies. The importance of the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' in employers' recruitment process are also examined, and in addition, highlight their

suggestions for how New Deal could be made more attractive and how more employers might be encouraged to participate. But before we proceed further, it will be useful to provide a brief background to the introduction of the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ and the obligations of both the ES and employers under the Strategy.

6.1 The ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’

As was shown in Chapter 1, previous government training programmes have failed to deliver equal opportunities and job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups. Evidence from this study which confirms a report produced by the DfEE (1999) on NDYP, suggests that outcomes for participants from minority ethnic groups are still worse than for their White counterparts. For example, the report shows that over the period January 1998 to March 1999, minority ethnic young people on New Deal, when compared with their White counterparts were:

- more likely to spend longer at the Gateway stage of New Deal during which the ES and their partners work with participants to improve their employability and find unsubsidised jobs before moving onto one of the four New Deal Options;
- more likely to end up on the Full-time Education and Training Option, even though they were more likely than their White counterparts to have a

qualification when they entered New Deal; and to have qualifications at NVQ Level 2 or more;

- more likely to be found on the Voluntary Sector Option;
- much less likely to be found on the Subsidised Employment Option; and
- more likely to have left New Deal completely without a positive outcome or to have come off the JSA register to unknown destination (ibid; see also DWP, 2000; Moody, 2000; and Owen et al, 2000).

It is against this background that the government introduced the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ for engaging minority ethnic jobseekers, businesses and providers. It sets out actions at national and local level and throughout partnerships ‘to ensure the needs of ethnic minorities are taken into account in the planning and delivery of the New Deal programme’ (DfEE, 1999). A summary of the Strategy is presented in Section 5.2 above.

Under the Strategy, the ES has a responsibility for ensuring that equal opportunities legislation is applied throughout New Deal by explaining to employers and providers their equal opportunities and racial equality responsibilities. In addition to having equal opportunities policies, employers are required to demonstrate how these policies are being implemented. The Strategy was accompanied by ‘Closing the Gap’ – A Self Assessment Pack for New Deal Partnerships. The pack was produced by the government to support the delivery

of the Strategy by providing a practical guide to developing equality action plans and targets against which progress can be measured (see DfEE, 1999). This issue is discussed further in Section 6.5, which looks closely at how the Strategy has been implemented at a local level.

6.2 Characteristics of Employers

6.2.1 *Sample Frame*

Sixteen employers took part in the study and were drawn from a list of twenty employers who had expressed an interest to take part in the interviews during the quantitative phase of the study. In order to achieve a balanced cross-section of employers, participants were selected on the basis of factors which could potentially influence their perspectives and/or expectations of New Deal. These factors include:

- Geography (urban, rural, mixed areas);
- Sector (public, private or voluntary);
- Size (number of employees);

Additionally, to achieve a broad perspective of employers, the sample was chosen to include those who were either committed, indifferent or not committed to NDYP. Chart 6.1 provides an overview of the achieved sample of employers.

Chart 6.1 Characteristics of Employers

Total of 16 employers

Sector	Total	No. of White Employers	No. of Minority Ethnic Employers
Private Sector	5	4	1
Public sector	6	6	-
Voluntary	5	3	2
Size of Business			
Small: 0-50 Employees	7	4	3
Medium: 51-500 Employees	1	1	-
Large: 501 and more Employees	8	8	-
Industrial Sector			
Construction	1	1	-
Health and Social Work	1	1	-
Community, Social and Advice Service	4	2	2
Catering and Retail trade	1	-	1
Transport	2	2	-
Public Service activities	4	4	-
Financial Services	1	1	-
Public Security, law and order	1	1	-
Childcare Services	1	-	1
New Deal Status			
Signed employer agreement (that is, have employed a New Dealer)	11	6	3
Signed up to NDYP, but have not employed a New Dealer	1	1	-
Signed up to NDYP, but have no intention of employing a New Dealer (that is, contribute to the work of the Employer Coalition)	2	2	-
Unsure about the nature of participation (that is, whether to provide work experience or subsidised employment)	1	1	-
Will not participate	1	1	-

Source: Employers' Qualitative Data

As Chart 6.1 indicates, the three sectors of the economy - Private, Public and Voluntary, were fairly evenly represented in the survey by five, six and five respectively. Eight large employers were represented in the study, followed by seven small employers, with only one medium-sized employer. In relation to industrial sector, four employers were providing 'Community, Social and Advice services'. Similarly, four employers were engaged in 'Public Service Activities'. The other employers were spread fairly evenly across a range of industrial

activities. The chart also shows the characteristics of both white and minority ethnic employers and businesses. Interestingly, a high proportion of employers support the programme, and nearly 70% of those that have signed an employer agreement have recruited New Deal candidate(s).

6.3 Analysis of Employer Qualitative Data

The employer qualitative data was analysed using the ‘framework’ method. Details of the research method, including the research strategy and analysis of the data are presented in Chapter 2 (see also Chapter 4). The section which follows presents employers’ perspectives of their experiences of NDYP. Rather than describing each case study exhaustively, the section provides examples and attempts to underline where important issues arise from which lessons might be learned.

6.3.1 *Quality of New Deal Candidates*

There was an expectation amongst employers’ that the NDPA would have a detailed knowledge of New Deal clients’ skills, abilities and attitudes and were therefore expected to be able to select suitable candidates for individual employers based on this information. Clearly, this was not the case, and as one employer puts it *‘We have never had anybody from the ES approach us to find out what we do in the nursery or what we look for in applicants. Some of the candidates sent here find the work daunting. Proper screening should be able to*

match candidates with employers, and I am not sure this is happening' (private sector employer).

Some employers expressed a belief that young people participating in the Subsidised Employment Option were given special preparation during the Gateway period to ensure that they were 'work ready' and were vetted to ensure that they really wanted to work. They therefore believed that New Deal participants were not forced into the Subsidised Employment Option and would rather be motivated and keen to work. For these reasons, some employers, particularly small businesses, noted that they had limited time and resources to conduct recruitment interviews, and therefore relied extensively on the screening and recommendations by the Jobcentre as the basis of their selection of New Deal candidates. These sentiments were summed up by one employer who was looking for trainee shop fitters as follows: *'It has been a complete waste of time and money. We were told prospective applicants were vetted before being put in contact with us, but this was not so. One boy for an interview admitted he really wanted to be a panel beater. Others were time wasters, did not turn up for interview or were merely uninterested in the position. Those engaged proved unsuitable – they did not want to work. We have subsequently left the scheme'* (private sector employer).

Employers' therefore anticipated that young people would arrive prepared to take part in job interviews, aware of the type of job they had applied for and willing and able to do the type of work advertised. However, employers' actual experiences varied considerably. Some employers' found that applicants did not

meet their basic requirements. For example one employer needed a trainee road worker and drew a shortlist of three candidates for interview. *'One of the three who attended was not motivated – I think he came just because if he didn't, he would not receive his benefit. He showed no interest in the interview and was totally unsuitable: scruffy torn jeans, open shirt, totally unpresentable. The second candidate had a little bit more to offer but we didn't feel that he was suitable for the post because his perceptions of what the post entailed was off the mark. The third candidate was quite well motivated, well presented and it was obvious that he had had the development and had a lot of work experience, and we felt that he was relatively motivated enough to rise to the challenge of being a trainee road worker. He was offered the job but he turned it down'* (public sector employer).

As mentioned earlier, a high proportion of employers in the study supported the New Deal programme, and a number of them were happy with their New Deal recruits and felt that they were a useful addition to the workforce. The comments which follow are typical of the positive experiences employers have had with their recruits: *'The programme has provided a limited number of young recruits who have proved to be successful appointments and which have helped to address the age profile of the workforce'* (private sector employer). Similarly, there were others who had mixed experiences: *'My contact with New Deal has generally been positive; however, I have been disappointed with the level of job search skills of many of the candidates. The response times and the number of suitable candidates have also been disappointing on occasions'* (voluntary sector employer).

6.3.2 *The training requirement of NDYP*

The New Deal programme requirement specifies that employers participating in the Subsidised Employment Option must provide training towards an NVQ Level 2. Employers in this study generally felt that this was a good idea because the combination of work experience and training were seen as furthering the long term employability of young people. However, while accepting the value of the training principle, employers' reported a range of difficulties with how the training requirement was implemented.

A key concern was that the training which could be undertaken during the six months subsidised period was not long enough to enable completion of the qualification. This meant that the New Deal recruit left the employer after the six months placement without a recognised qualification. If the New Deal employee stayed on in their job, then their employer had to pay the cost for the remainder of their course. Employers felt that was an area where the programme had positive goals but which could not be met within the current time-scale of the Option. Some employers suggested that the subsidy should be extended to cover the full duration of a relevant qualification. This would imply that more flexibility is needed to accommodate qualifications which take more than six months to complete.

6.3.3 *Training perceived as irrelevant*

Another concern raised by employers was that the training courses which were available were not relevant to the work New Deal recruits were doing. Some

employers reported that in cases where New Deal recruits were graduates or post-graduates, the training courses which were available did not reflect the needs of the employee nor the employer. Others tended to view this as '*training for training's sake*'. Some employers' commented that training which would be more relevant to both the employee and the employer was viewed by the ES as outside the New Deal training requirement, and therefore was not covered by the training subsidy. Employers felt that as long as the training they provided fulfilled the spirit of New Deal training requirements by giving recruits transferable skills and enhancing their employability, non-NVQ Level 2 accredited training should be viewed as acceptable.

6.3.4 Delivery of training as impractical

Some employers found the method of training delivery difficult to accommodate. For example, small employers felt that they lacked the staff resources to support the amount of time required for training, in terms of assessment and day release, and to provide cover during training-related absence. They noted that this was particularly difficult to deal with if the employee was part of a small team where a replacement had to be found a cover for them. Others emphasised the costs inherent in providing training, both in terms of actually paying for externally administered instruction, and in the time of experienced staff who supported trainees and paying a full salary of trainees who are not as productive as other members of staff. Additionally, there was concern about staff retention once the investment in training had been made. On the other hand, larger employers with 'in-house' training facilities and resources said that this presented less of a

problem as the amount of time the employee had to be away from work for training was minimal.

6.4 Employers perspectives on recruitment

This section looks at perspectives among employers with regard to the recruitment of young people on New Deal. It provides an analysis of employers' recruitment policies, procedures and practices, including their views and perceptions of recruiting unemployed young people.

6.4.1 Recruitment of young people

Employers were asked whether they targeted young people especially for recruitment and, if so, for what type of jobs. They were also asked to describe how they went about recruiting new young employees.

The extent to which young people were specifically targeted for recruitment depended primarily upon the nature of the job for which vacancies exist. Key factors mentioned by employers include the occupation, the amount of experience required, the customer base, working conditions and health and safety issues. There were four broad categories of jobs in this regard:

Jobs for which young people were generally targeted included:

- basic/junior retail, catering and administrative roles, work that involves part-time and/or flexible working (often targeted at students) and organisations for

which the customer base is primarily young (for example, clothing retail). In addition, jobs for which apprenticeships were typical in the past fall in this category;

- jobs for which young people are not necessarily targeted, but for which the majority of applicants tend to be young people. Examples include catering assistants, waiters/waitresses and other jobs in the leisure and hospitality sectors. Key reasons given by employers for the predominance of young applicants for such posts include the seasonal nature of the work and the low pay that is often on offer, which is not always attractive to more mature applicants.

The above two categories apply to around a quarter of the employers who took part in the study. The remainder fall into a further two groups:

- jobs for which young people generally compete with older applicants, with no particular targeting of or preference for young people. Examples include call centre work, food retailing and some catering roles;
- jobs for which young people are either excluded due to health and safety or regulatory constraints (some warehouse and factory work) or for which employers felt young people are not suited (for example, security work, some caring roles) or driving jobs which often attract higher insurance premiums for younger people.

6.4.2 *Methods for recruiting young people*

Employers in the study varied in the extent to which they recruited young people on New Deal, and appear to be related to the size, whether public, private or voluntary, and the frequency with which recruitment takes place. For example, smaller employers, family businesses and infrequent recruiters of young people mentioned ‘personal recommendation’, ‘word of mouth’, or similar phrases relating to informal methods. A particularly favoured route is to employ friends or family of existing employees or those of the business owners. This recruitment method was prevalent among this group of employers including minority run businesses. The Careers Service, the main agency on which minority ethnic young people traditionally depend for careers and jobs information, are bypassed by these employers.

This finding is consistent with earlier study by Lee and Wrench (1983) which found that *‘black youth lack the informal contact, which often alert white youth to the possibilities of openings, the ‘‘lads of dads’’ method of recruitment being important’*. The authors concluded that *‘Craft areas are predominantly white, and will remain so as long as the relations of the white craft employees get preference’*. Worryingly, twenty-five years on, the same recruitment practices apparently persist (see also, Johnson and Burden 2003). Not surprisingly, nearly all the employers in this category reported that they had no equal opportunities policy, and others who said they had adopted an equality policy could not provide evidence to support their claim. However, some employers mentioned that they would resort to more formal techniques such as advertising in the

Jobcentre and the press if nobody suitable could be found through informal approaches.

On the other hand, public sector and large private sector organisations tended to use more formal methods such as press advertising, professional publications and Jobcentres. All the employers in this category reported having equal opportunities policies under which all candidates were considered on their merit without regard to their age. *'We don't specifically have a scheme to recruit young people; we place adverts through the external press and the Jobcentre, and we take the best person for the job. We don't positively go out looking for young people, females or males; under our equal opportunities policy, we just take the best person for the job. Sometimes, that person may be sixty years old or it may be a young person'* (private sector employer). Some employers felt that having an equal opportunities policy may, in certain circumstances, work to exclude candidates without work experience. *'The authority does have an equal opportunities policy which means that there are equal rights to apply for a job. The normal recruitment process is that we have a person specification and we look for people who at the minimum, can fulfil that; but there is a reasonable amount of competition out there, and if you are a young person competing with people who have years of work experience, they will have a serious disadvantage'* (public sector employer).

There is no space here to rehearse the arguments advanced by Jewson and Mason (1989) in relation to liberal and radical approaches to equal opportunities except to note that the type of policies which the employers in this study claim to have

implemented are grounded in the liberal tradition. These authors argue that the liberal perspective of equal opportunities policy relies on a tradition which believes in a sense of fair play, and that the unfettered operation of the market will reward talent and merit. The converse of this perspective is the radical approach which is less concerned with the competition of individuals for jobs, but more with the unequal position and representation of groups such as minority ethnic groups. Additionally, this perspective is less concerned with providing a fair recruitment process, though this is recognised as a necessary adjunct; rather, it is more concerned with equal shares and outcomes in employment. These points are considered further in Section 6.6 below.

It is also important to note that whilst employers with formal recruitment procedures point to recruiting people on merit, there were clearly some jobs (mainly entry level jobs) which employers in the survey consider as more suitable for young people, given their likely levels of work experience. Additionally, while employers claimed that applicants were considered on merit alone, in practice, they made a number of assumptions about unemployed young people which indicated that in some circumstances, they were less inclined to view applications from young people favourably:

To be quite honest, they (young people) are not as reliable or dependable as an older person. I would sooner employ someone probably in their thirties, who is more settled and with family commitments. Eighteen year old youths, perhaps with attitude problems, can cause problems, problems which we can do without. With a bit of age and maturity,

comes reliability. Whatever financial benefits (wage subsidy and training grants) which come with them, are not worth it, as they will probably cause more problems than the money you may be saving (private sector employer).

This finding confirms earlier research which found that ageism, that is, discrimination on the grounds of age, significantly affects the job prospects of younger people (EFA, 2000). In their report, 'Releasing Potential', the authors found that almost half of the young respondents in their survey said that they had been held back because of their age. They also point out that one in four said that despite being qualified, they were considered too young for certain jobs; and that a similar number (24.2 per cent) 'complained that they would have to leave their current employers to gain promotion' (ibid: 6).

Another employer expressed the negative perception attached to unemployed young people as follows:

I think when you label a group of young people coming to you under a scheme such as New Deal, then there is a label. We (employers) tend to think, oh it's New Deal people, they will be rubbish, we are not going to waste our time as they are not going to be interested in working anyway. So, yes, there is a perception attached to the label, and the reality of the situation is that the perception becomes the reality (public sector employer).

These findings reveal the subjective nature of employers' employment decisions and in doing so, dispel the notion of objectivity in the recruitment process. Formal recruitment procedures and meritocratic appointments including their implications for people from minority ethnic groups are considered in Section 6.7 below.

6.4.3 *Reasons for recruiting young people and selection criteria*

Employers were asked for their views and reasons for the recruitment of young people in general. Clearly, what guide employers' recruitment decisions and the skills and attributes required of young recruits vary according to the nature of the job concerned. However, the study revealed a fairly consistent pattern across most types of employers. Surprisingly, a high proportion of employers placed little emphasis upon formal qualifications, experience and technical skills. Instead, their comments focused on generic skills and ability to fit in. The following recurring themes emerged about why young people as a group were viewed by employers as desirable additions to the workforce:

- The part young people play in helping to maintain a balanced age profile within the workforce, i.e., a mixture of employees of different ages, skills and experience believed to be beneficial to the organisation. For example, one employer acknowledged that the age profile of their workforce was such that recruiting younger workers had become a priority. *'The company has not recruited in the past five years and therefore has an ageing workforce. The New Deal programme offers the company a way of regenerating its skills base. They (young people) will come in and work alongside older workers*

who are approaching retirement. Ultimately, without the sharing of skills during this transition period, the company will not be able to compete in the future' (private sector employer);

- *their receptiveness to training and learning new skills - 'Young people tend to be more adaptable than older staff. We can train and develop them in the ways of the organisation. The methods of our operation are becoming complex and constantly changing, and young people are more ready for change' (private sector employer).*
- their perceived flexibility in relation to working patterns;
- their cost - they can be paid less than older people.

However, some employers were less positive about recruiting young people:

- they are perceived to have less 'life experience' and are believed to be 'immature' and 'less reliable' employees than older people;
- they may not be able to cope with particular types of jobs and therefore viewed as 'less suitable' for some types of work. *'As a construction company, the people we employ have to have physical ability, be multi-skilled, experienced in the construction trade and be safety conscious. It is not a situation where we can take on totally unskilled people without any*

training mainly because of the safety issues. This tends to deter us from taking unskilled, inexperienced people (private sector employer).

- they may ultimately be more expensive in terms of training and staff time in extra supervision than fully qualified recruits.

Leaving aside employers who do not wish to recruit younger people for the reasons given above, the finding that employers pay little or no attention to formal qualifications, but rather to personal attributes and ability to fit in their employment decisions is likely to impact disproportionately on minority ethnic young people as they are seen by employers as ‘outsiders’. These young people may be well qualified but they are likely to have had limited or no experience of work. This issue is further discussed in Section 6.7.

In contrast to the argument that younger people may cost more in terms of training and supervision, some employers emphasised that it was generally important to society as a whole to provide employment and training opportunities for young people. Most of the employers that took this stance were major employers (both public and private), who felt they had a responsibility to get involved in something offering wider social benefits to the community. Similarly, it was viewed as important to get involved in the programme *‘to alleviate the consequences of long-term unemployment, being responsible for the economic development of the locality, and recognising that social exclusion is a major cause of problems in this area’* (public sector employer). This wider view was more likely to be mainly found in this sector.

It was mentioned earlier that some employers have used NDYP as a way of attracting younger workers into their organisation. For example, one public sector organisation made a long-term commitment to bringing younger people in to permanent jobs. *‘We recognise that it is not enough just to offer New Deal jobs. Potential candidates are therefore supported at each stage of the recruitment process – from how the job advert is phrased, to filling in the application form and integrating successful applicants into a working environment’* (public sector employer).

In practice, these employers have tried to take on as many New Deal candidates as is practical, and have sought to recruit New Deal candidates by:

- encouraging different departments to get involved in the programme by establishing an inter-departmental working group which draws on and discusses the New Deal experiences of each department. The intention is that as the programme becomes established, other parts of the organisation will benefit from the ‘good practice’ established by the initial participants;
- helping New Deal candidates through the recruitment process by organising open days – to advise potential applicants how to construct an application form, including interview skills training.

6.4.5 *Minority Ethnic employers*

There was a set of complex reasons for the involvement of minority ethnic voluntary sector employers in the programme. First and foremost, these employers were motivated by a desire to *'fulfil our social responsibility'*. This responsibility was acutely felt, not least because all the New Deal participants referred to them by the ES were from minority ethnic groups. *'I actually feel that with it being a Black organisation it doesn't really appeal to White young people. No White young person has been sent to us; it may be because they (the ES and their clients) have a lack of understanding of what we do here and in our ability to be involved in the programme. Our organisation is located in the middle of the community, and we provide a service to all the community – Black and White alike. Even if it is only black and minority young people they are sending on placement with us, we are happy to be playing our part as a community organisation'* (voluntary sector employer).

These perceptions could potentially have a limiting effect on the involvement of minority ethnic organisations and lead to their being overlooked or undervalued in terms of their ability to participate or contribute to the programme. There was also a feeling amongst some of these organisations that they had an obligation to accept every minority ethnic young person who was referred to them, for to refuse to accept a candidate was seen as *'letting the side down'*. The involvement of these organisations in the programme needs to be applauded in view of the fact that they lack the resources - both personnel and materials - to provide the kind of training and support so critical to improving the employability of participants. This is not to suggest that the level of support

provided was inadequate, only to note that even with the limited resources available to them, these organisations were discharging what they believed to be their social responsibility.

The reasons for minority ethnic private sector employers' involvement in New Deal was similar to those of their voluntary sector counterparts, that is, a desire to be seen to discharging their social responsibility. However, unlike their voluntary sector counterparts, young people referred to the minority ethnic private sector employers by the ES were white. What these employers found surprising was that some of their recruits '*showed little interest in their work and lacked commitment and discipline*'. One employer expressed his frustration as follows: *I have suffered badly by the girl who was sent to me by the ES. She made unauthorised telephone calls to the mobile phone of her boyfriend. This cost me £120.72. She frequently took time off work. She owes me £144 towards the denture treatment, and a further £101 towards the college fees which I paid for her. I was keen to help this girl to qualify as a Dental Nurse – Receptionist, but all I got was a kick in the teeth* (private sector employer).

To the extent that White young people are placed with (minority ethnic) private sector employers and not with (minority ethnic) voluntary sector employers is consistent with the findings of this study. It is reasonable to assume that one of the underlying reasons for the government to seek to encourage minority ethnic employers to take part is so that minority ethnic young people would benefit from job outcomes which, as has been demonstrated by this study, has been denied them by White employers. Indeed, this finding is consistent with a

DETR Report (2000) which indicates that where minority ethnic businesses are involved in planning New Deal Options and providing placements, take-up by minority ethnic young people is better. However it also notes that this does not mean that all minority ethnic young people are placed with minority ethnic providers.

6.4.6 Different approaches to recruiting young people

In seeking to understand why employers had different responses to the recruitment of young people, a range of factors appear to be particularly important in differentiating employers' approaches. These include:

- the availability of jobs viewed as 'suitable' for young people. Employers that expressed this view tended to have limited employment opportunities for young people. It was felt that young people were largely unsuitable for their employment vacancies or because they employ very few people and seldom have vacancies and limited resources to devote to their training needs.
- the degree to which younger people are thought to possess specific desirable qualities which older people may not possess (this appears to be influenced to some extent by previous experiences of employing young people). Some employers viewed young people as useful for ensuring that skills were maintained within the workforce. In some cases, young people were part of a strategy for dealing with skills shortages in relevant job categories. Young

people employed in these organisations tended to receive specialist training with a view to filling the company's ongoing needs in these skills areas.

- the degree to which younger people are viewed as essential to ensuring organisational sustainability and stability. Employers who recruit on this basis tended to place the emphasis on achieving a balanced workforce, with people of different ages represented. Some employers tended to provide young people with relevant skills and qualifications in the hope that they will stay with the organisation in the long term. Career progression is emphasised as is secure employment. In some cases, there was also a desire to train and develop young people as they are perceived as valuable assets, and thereby lend greater stability to the company in the longer term.
- the resources available for meeting particular needs of young people (that is, for training, supervision, etc), and the degree to which these extra costs are perceived as sustainable (see Section 6.3.2)
- the desire to make a positive social commitment to helping young people and the local community. Employers with such a commitment view the recruitment of young people as either an essential part of the organisation's role in the community or alternatively, is viewed as consistent with their desire to be a 'socially responsible' employer. The priority is less on whether young people can help the organisation than on whether the organisation can help young people and the wider community or society in general. As mentioned earlier, this stance tended to be adopted by either public sector

organisations which viewed themselves as having a strategic role to play in helping the local community or by larger private sector employers with resources to devote to training and a desire to be seen as ‘socially responsible’.

6.5 From policy to practice: delivering change?

The government’s Strategy for engaging minority ethnic young people, business and providers in New Deal was described in Section 6.3 above. However, this study has found that despite the Strategy, minority ethnic young people are not benefiting from the programme to the same extent as their White counterparts. Analysis of a DWP report also shows that because of the younger demographic profile of minority ethnic groups, a larger number of them are found participating in NDYP⁶. Employment outcomes from the NDYP are significantly worse for minority ethnic groups than for Whites – for every 100 White people who get a job, only 86 minority ethnic individuals enter employment (DWP, 2002).

The differential is worrying and efforts need to be made to understand the needs of different groups and adjusting the way in which the programme is delivered. Ensuring that minority ethnic groups are aware of and are able to access the programme is the first crucial step to promoting employment opportunities. Second, this study has shown that minority ethnic young people participate in different Options from their White counterparts. This is significant as these

⁶ Approximately 18 per cent of the age cohort are known to be from minority ethnic groups. The breakdown by ethnic group is as follows: Black Caribbean 20 per cent, Pakistani 19 per cent, Black African 13 per cent, Black Other 10 per cent, Bangladeshi 6 per cent and Other 22 per cent (Source: Analytical services division, DWP, 2002)

constrained choices tend to result in minority ethnic groups being less likely to move into work partly because they are underrepresented in the Employment Option. Again, this is worrying because evidence from this study, which is also consistent with other findings referred to earlier, shows that minority ethnic entrants have better qualifications on entry to New Deal. This suggests that these young people should be getting work through the 'normal' routes rather than being on the New Deal programme, which as will be pointed out below, has also denied them employment opportunities.

As has been pointed out above, evidence from this study suggests that minority ethnic participants on New Deal do not gain maximum benefit from the programme because they do not always gain access to the Options for which they are best suited. It would therefore be more beneficial to place qualified minority ethnic participants on the Employment Option rather than the other Options. This means that, in developing tailored approaches to minority ethnic New Deal clients, NDPAs should ensure that they are fully aware of the support mechanisms best suited to minority ethnic individuals. This should involve an awareness of the fact that minority ethnic New Deal entrants are often well qualified and would benefit from participation in the Employment Option. In addition, this would require the Employment Service working closely with local employers and bringing job-brokering services to New Deal participants where they live.

The section which follows looks at how the government's 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' has been implemented by the Employment service at local level in South Derbyshire, and reviews its effectiveness.

6.5.1 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' – the reality

At the time of the study, South Derbyshire Employment Service had not started work on its 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy'. However, the unit had identified its key priorities for 2001/2002 which include the following:

Equal Opportunities Strategy

This was a general equal opportunities strategy under which the following activities were to be pursued:

- Collect detailed data on ethnicity, disability and gender, and monitor, identify and address potential reasons for inequality of New Deal take-up and outcomes;
- Monitor details of equal opportunities policies in place within contracted providers;
- Conduct a survey of all New Deal clients who were found jobs but were not able to sustain them; and

- Collect data on the barriers facing New Deal clients in rural locations (see South Derbyshire Delivery Plan 2001/2002).

A follow up telephone interview with a senior officer at the Employment Service's district office in November 2003 confirmed that the equal opportunities strategy outlined above was not carried out. Additionally, a study commissioned by the District Office to look into the reasons for the non-take up New Deal by minority ethnic young people in the area was not pursued, and that the implementation of the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' had been delayed. Surprisingly, it was also confirmed that specific projects aimed at achieving parity of outcomes for minority ethnic young people had not started but were being considered. Over five years of the introduction of the Strategy, details of these projects were not yet finalised, however the draft Strategy included the following elements:

Community outreach work – involving:

- the promotion of New Deal to hard to engage individuals, with the provision of mentoring and counselling support for those with deep-seated barriers to participation;
- signpost individuals to the most appropriate provision from a menu of options, including New Deal;

- job brokerage – involving liaison with employers on behalf of individuals, arranging appointments and negotiating access to employment.

Employer engagement – involving:

- establishing links with employers to promote the benefits of signing up to New Deal;
- encouraging employers to adopt equal opportunity policies and practices, and to raise awareness of their legal responsibilities relating to equal opportunities including race equality (South Derbyshire Employment Service, 2003).

Whilst these statements form the basis of the Strategy, it is difficult to analyse or comment on a proposal which is yet to be implemented. However, it is possible to speculate on the likely impact of these measures. First, the promotion of New Deal to the so called ‘hard to engage’ individuals and the provision of mentoring service for those with ‘deep-seated’ barriers to participation assumes that such individuals are unaware of the ‘benefits’ to be gained from their involvement. It is likely that these individuals are not claiming unemployment benefit and are therefore outside the JSA regime altogether and have moved to unknown destinations.

Significantly, one of the findings which has emerged from this study is that despite the introduction of the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’, young

people from minority ethnic communities are not benefiting from New Deal to the same extent as their White counterparts. If individuals are ‘disengaged’ from participating in New Deal, this may not be due to a lack of awareness of the programme. Rather, it is more likely to be due to a range of factors including doubts about the relevance of what the programme offers, and a lack of confidence and trust in the support offered by NDPAs and/or employers. Indeed, client advocacy is one of the best forms of advertising: however evidence from this study indicates that a high proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups (who presumably may come under the ES category of the ‘disaffected’ and ‘hard to reach’ groups) will not recommend the programme to their colleagues (see Chapter 2).

Second, New Deal will not succeed without the support of employers, and any strategy which seeks to engage, inform and encourage employers to implement equality and diversity policies is to be welcomed. Indeed, at local level, the ES has set up Southern Derbyshire New Deal Employer Coalition⁷. This is an employer-led group, comprising mainly of private sector employers, with some local government representation. However, instead of using the Coalition as a forum for addressing discrimination in the workplace and heightening awareness of equality and diversity issues, evidence from this study indicates that ES staff are more concerned with persuading employers to advertise their job vacancies at

⁷ The objective of the Coalition is to increase job opportunities for disadvantaged people by engaging local employers in the design and delivery of welfare to work programmes. The Coalition’s special focus is on developing access to better paid jobs in high demand industries and occupations. They also serve as a valuable sounding board for local Jobcentre Plus Districts as they develop their delivery plans (National Employment Panel, 2004).

I represent my employers on the South Derbyshire New Deal Employer Coalition, and have been on the group since 2000. However, I have received no invitation to attend meetings of the group since April 2002.

Jobcentres. For example, a high proportion of employers in this study confirmed that they had no knowledge of the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ or what it meant to them. One public sector employer confused the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ with the ‘Race Equality Standard’⁸ and said, ‘*We are drowning under the weight of race equality overload*’.

It seems likely that such confusion and a lack of understanding of different strands of equality strategies would make attempts to address equality and diversity issues even more difficult. Similar sentiments were expressed by the ODPM Report – ‘Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England’ – which points to evidence indicating that there was still a degree of confusion about the definition and scope of equality and diversity, and that the broadening-out of understandings of diversity seems to be adding to this confusion (2003: 46). Related to this, others had a poor understanding of the importance of race equality and diversity issues because of a small minority ethnic population and therefore were a low priority on their agenda. And as the Audit Commission point out in their report – ‘The Journey to Race Equality’ - inaction by some organisations on the equality front is justified on grounds of ‘proportionality’. The Commission believe that people of black and minority ethnic origin have the right to expect fair access to employment and good-quality services regardless of the size of their community (2004: 25). Furthermore, lack of resources, skills, knowledge and competence were identified by most of the small and medium

⁸ A Race Equality Standard is a statement of how a listed public authority plans to meet both its general and specific duties to promote racial equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

sized employers in the study as the reasons for not addressing equality and diversity issues. These employers mentioned that they had more important and pressing matters to fund and channel their energies into. Clearly, for these employers, equality and diversity issues were very low on their agenda. Perhaps, this strengthens the case for ‘mainstreaming’ whereby employers integrate equality and diversity issues into their every day business activities.

It is worth noting that the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ designed to encourage employers to implement race equality and diversity policies, has no positive action component, neither does it appear to build on existing measures. Instead, it duplicates current strategy and practices which have so far failed to deliver job outcomes for minority ethnic young people on New Deal. As will be demonstrated in Section 6.7 below, the recruitment process and practices of employers, even those claiming to have implemented equal opportunities and diversity policies, do not deliver job outcomes for minority ethnic applicants (see also Chapter 1).

6.6 Comments

This section provides comments on some of the key themes that have emerged from the study in relation to employers’ recruitment processes. It focuses mainly on ‘formalised’ recruitment approaches as all the large employers in the study use this approach. The informal ‘word of mouth’ approach used by small and medium sized employers was considered in Section 6.4.1 where it was argued that such recruitment practices exclude people from minority ethnic groups as

they lack the family networks and contacts on which the 'informal' method depends.

6.6.1 Formal recruitment procedures

It was mentioned earlier that large public and private sector employers in the study claim to have adopted equal opportunities policies and speak proudly and confidently about the fairness of their recruitment processes. There appears to be a belief among these employers that the route to more equality of access to employment lies in the formalisation of the recruitment process, whereby employment practices are regulated or bureaucratised by strictly defined rules and codes of practice.

To understand the recruitment process, it is necessary to distinguish between suitability and acceptability criteria. Jenkins (1986), for example, differentiates between technical ability to do the job (suitability) and the likelihood that the person will fit into the organisation without creating any problems (acceptability). So in the selection process, 'suitability' is often expressed in terms of education, skills, qualifications and technical abilities which are relevant to the job. 'Acceptability' on the other hand, is usually evaluated in terms of issues such as appearance, manner, attitude, personality and 'gut feeling' (Jenkins, 1986).

It should be noted that a key component of the formal approach to recruitment is the use of person specifications. These are those selection criteria which are considered to be essential for the posts to be filled. Such criteria are deemed to

be fair, objective and provide consistency across all shortlisting, interviewing and appointment of candidates for jobs. A key tenet of the person specification concept to which many equal opportunity employers are committed is that these will ultimately, through the introduction of a fair system, lead to equal access to jobs in the short term, and equal outcome in the long term. However, as has emerged from this study, possession of academic qualifications is often not a passport for minorities to gain access to employment. On the question of 'acceptability', the findings of this study are consistent with that of Jenkins' that what informs employers' selection decisions in the recruitment process includes factors such as 'maturity' and 'ability to fit in'. For this reason I echo the sentiments expressed by Jenkins that 'many of these component notions of 'acceptability' will systematically tend to discriminate against black applicants since the age component, for example, in maturity does not work in favour of the black population with its higher than average proportion of young people' (Jenkins, 1986).

6.6.2 Meritocratic appointments

Large public and private sector employers in the study also point to their 'meritocratic' approach to selecting candidates for jobs. Some sociologists, for example, Fox (1974), define meritocracy as follows:

More and more it becomes possible for talent and hard work to reap their reward through an upward progress in what is sometimes called meritocracy – a new aristocracy on individual ability and effort instead of on birth and social rank...It offers a view of society as a reasonable and

fair system of arrangements within which individuals and groups engage in healthy competition for the good things in life (Fox, 1974:7, cited in Rhodes and Braham, 1987: 191).

On the face of it, this appears to have the potential to address the issue of discrimination in the labour market: create a fairer recruitment and selection system and in the long-term you enable individual members of all ethnic groups to compete fairly for available jobs. However, in her study of 'non-meritocratic job requirements and the production of class inequality, Jackson (2001), evaluates the use of advertising by employers of merit-based criteria for selection. This includes amongst others, looking at qualifications, cognitive ability, technical skills and social or personal characteristics. Although the study is limited to analysing the advertisements (and also fails to incorporate any discussion of ethnicity), nonetheless it is relevant to the issues under discussion in this study. For, the analysis revealed that in 54% of advertisements, there was a requirement for some type of social skill or personal characteristic – a higher proportion than for qualifications. This finding further undermines the notion that selection for jobs is based on merit alone – personal, non-meritocratic characteristics are important for employers. For this reason Jackson concludes: *'While the principle of meritocracy may have been stressed by sociologists predicting increased merit selection, in a free market it is ultimately the employers who decide what "merit" is, and their definition of "merit" may be far wider-ranging than those traditionally considered by sociologists'* (Jackson, 2001: 626).

If Jackson is correct, it is possible to imagine a situation where individuals from minority ethnic groups who are sufficiently skilled, qualified, experienced, trained and holding other non-meritocratic characteristics secure higher level posts. Over a period of time, it is possible to see these individuals moving up the organisational ladder, on merit, to higher positions either within their existing organisation or move to others when the opportunity arises. Although there are signs of some progress in the position of certain minority ethnic groups in the labour market (see Jones, 1996; Modood et al, 1997; Karn et al, 1997), much of the research evidence points to this having had little to do with the implementation of effective meritocratic recruitment and selection processes or equal opportunities policies. Gibbon (1992), for example, suggests that neither the existence of an equal opportunities policy nor its implementation seems to produce any change in organisational employment patterns. Further more, as Welsh et al (1994) points out, ‘positive action’⁹, with its variant applications, has had limited success.

7. Overview

This chapter has presented a brief overview of some of the main themes that have emerged from the analysis of employers’ perspectives of their experiences of NDYP, including their recruitment practices as well as the role of the ES in delivering the ‘Ethnic Minority Strategy’ across New Deal.

⁹ Positive Action as permitted under the race Relation Act, 1976, allows employers where there is under-representation of ethnic groups, to engage in encouragement and training of potential recruits to enable them to compete effectively for jobs.

It is important to note that a large proportion of employers in the study support the New Deal programme and have demonstrated this by recruiting New Deal candidate(s). However, they expressed concerns about the quality of New Deal candidates and the lack of work preparation support provided to them; the lack of flexibility of the training requirement; and the difficulty of some employers fitting the training element in their schedule.

Significantly, analysis of employers' recruitment procedures and practices revealed that practices such as 'word of mouth', which have been found to exclude minority ethnic jobseekers, persist. Furthermore, equal opportunities policies claimed to have been adopted by employers, with their formal procedures purporting to bring fairness in the recruitment process, have not delivered job outcomes for minority ethnic young people. It also calls into question the assumptions which underpin the notion of meritocratic appointments which is encapsulated in much of equal opportunities policies. In addition, it is disappointing to find that there appears to be a lack of commitment or urgency by the ES and its partners to implement the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' which is supposed to improve job outcomes for minority ethnic jobseekers. Such strategies, masquerading as a policy commitment, need to be seen for their value as symbolic gesturers.

The next chapter draws together the main themes and findings of this study.

Chapter 7: Emerging themes and findings

7.0 Introduction

This chapter considers the range of data collected (both quantitative and qualitative) during the course of the study and presents the themes and findings that have emerged. The aim is to provide an overview of the experiences of young people on New Deal, with a focus on those from minority ethnic groups.

The most significant are summarised below:

7.1 The diversity of respondents on NDYP

There was a considerable diversity amongst the young people in the study. There was no 'typical' NDYP participant nor a group that could be easily stereotyped as 'the young unemployed'. Chapter 2, for example, showed that young people who had not had full-time employment formed at least four distinct groups with varying levels of work experience – ranging from those who had never worked before, those with less than six months work experience, those with between 6 months - 1 year work experience and those with 1 year - 2 years work experience.

Although all the young people shared a lack of sustained work experience, they differed considerably in terms of their existing skills and qualifications offered to employers, their motivation in obtaining employment, the level of self-confidence they held and their 'job readiness'. They also differed in the

interventions they required on one hand, and on the other, the actual help and support they received from NDPAs and the type of Option they ‘choose’ and whether this led to a job.

7.2 The role of NDPAs

The important role of NDPAs in ensuring the effective design and delivery of NDYP was highlighted in Chapter 5. It was identified that NDPAs had a number of crucial functions to play including help and encouragement with job search; preparation for Options; advice and support around personal problems; referral for specialist advice and support; and generally helping to build a young person’s assurance to gain and sustain employment. It was also shown that all of these required a focus on the individual’s needs and aspirations coupled with a responsive approach to designing the appropriate programme of activities for the young person.

7.3 Continuity of the advisory relationship

The study found that continuity of the advisory relationship was also important at certain stages after the Gateway period (see Chapter 4). The views amongst interviewees indicated that the first was the early weeks of Options when young people were settling into their Options. Problems that arise at this stage, if unresolved, could easily lead to discontinuation of the placement. The study also found that if a change in Option or placement was required, because of unsatisfactory matching, then early intervention was beneficial in the longer

term. Intervention was also found to be important towards the end of the Option period. This was both to consider and reassess any future action that might be required, most notably surrounding job search; and to ensure that the young person was clear about what the next steps were.

7.4 Individually tailored programmes

As mentioned above, the diversity of the needs with which young people enter NDYP, and their very different levels of job readiness, underpin the key requirements for individually tailored programmes of activities. Indeed, one of the features which young people in the study hoped for in their first encounters with New Deal was the prospect of a programme that was responsive to their needs and aspirations. And as has been shown in this study, NDPAs play a crucial role in both identifying, and then responding to the needs and requirements of the young person. However, one of the findings of this study has indicated that the first encounters of many young people from minority ethnic groups with NDPAs was formal, less sensitive and unhelpful. And in cases where this was the result of either poor advice and support or because of unsatisfactory placement, NDPAs were almost inevitably viewed as disappointing.

7.5 Responding to the needs of minority ethnic young people

The assessment of needs is a universal requirement and forms a crucial part of the New Deal process. Yet, this study has shown that the needs of young people

from minority ethnic groups, in particular, racial discrimination and race equality issues, were considered by NDPAs as less relevant particularly, in areas with relatively few people from minority ethnic groups. Similarly, in areas where alleged racial discrimination was believed to exist amongst employers, no action was taken by NDPAs to address the problem (see Chapter 5). In addition, the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ which was the government’s key instrument designed to deliver job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups was such a low priority for the ES that no action had been taken to implement it (see Chapter 6).

7.6 Option placement

All the young people in the survey were either in the middle of their placement or near the end of it. They were therefore sufficiently advanced to have a feel for how well the programme had performed in helping them to address their needs and aspirations. In these terms, young people’s assessments of NDYP were very varied depending on the experiences they have had and the outcomes that had resulted. The qualitative evidence showed that a small proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups felt they had gained some kind of benefit from the programme – for example, ICT skills, work experience, confidence, in-work routines and sometimes additional qualifications. The evidence appears to suggest a link between such assessment and the extent to which the individual felt they had been helped in relation to their circumstances (see Chapter 4). These negative assessments of the programme were also evident in the quantitative data in Chapter 3 which also indicated that young people from

minority ethnic groups were less likely to recommend the programme to other young people.

The above evidence also raises important questions about what facilitates successful Option placement. To this end, the following factors were identified as important:

- a well judged match between the young person's needs and aspirations, and the provisions of the Option;
- intervention of NDPAs at the appropriate time, particularly when difficulties arise at the Option stage;
- the availability of help to participants with personal or other problems that may arise during the course of the programme;
- greater monitoring/scrutiny of employers and other Option providers, particularly when difficulties with placements have been reported (see Chapter 5).

7.7 Effects of Options on participants

The Subsidised Employment Option was the preferred Option amongst the majority of young people on the programme as they felt it would lead to sustained employment, new skills and greater self-esteem – both directly through

training and more generally by being in a work setting. The Voluntary Sector Option was less popular. Nonetheless, participants saw it as ‘intermediate employment’ – providing them with job search skills, work experience, confidence and a useful source for a job reference. Participants on the Full-time Education and Training Option felt they would gain higher level of qualifications which would enhance their employment prospects. However, this Option was seen as providing little or no job search skills or work experience. The Environmental Task Force Option was the least favoured of all the Options. Participants on this Option felt that it lacked both the training element within the Full-time Education and Training Option and that of work experience and job search in the Voluntary Sector Option. However, participants felt that it helped those without previous work experience with basic skills. Its participants rated it low on helpfulness and had relatively negative attitudes towards New Deal as a whole.

7.8 Employers recruitment policies and practices

Employers in the study varied in their recruitment methods and practices. In general, there was evidence that the preferred recruitment method adopted by smaller employers was by ‘word of mouth’, whilst larger employers tended to use more formalised methods. It was pointed out that the ‘word of mouth’ recruitment method often excluded people from minority ethnic groups, not least because they lacked the ‘family or friends of the family networks’ (except those connected with minority ethnic run firms) and ‘informal contacts’ which underpin such practices.

In terms of the formal recruitment methods used by larger employers, equal opportunities policies informed their recruitment procedures and practices – believing that this would bring about equality of access to employment. More commonly, employers indicated that under their equal opportunities policies, people were considered on merit. However, as was pointed out in Chapter 6, equal opportunities policies within a purported meritocracy, centre on a series of assumptions which include apparent fairness and the ability of individuals to be socially mobile on the basis of a system of rewarding talent on merit. It called into question the apparent fairness of such a recruitment system.

7.9 Employers experiences of recruiting unemployed young people

As NDYP involves encouraging employers to recruit unemployed young people, the views and experiences of employers were paramount in these circumstances. It was evident in Chapter 6 that age was generally taken to represent, or was an indicator of other things, (ie, maturity, reliability, ability to cope with difficult circumstances, commitment to work, etc). In other words, young people as a group were generally considered to possess certain qualities and characteristics, except where proven otherwise in individual cases. Employers' assumptions about younger people underlined their responses to them in recruitment situations and influenced the types of criteria they were looking for in young people. This reinforces findings from other studies with employers about the recruitment of unemployed people (see Snape, 1998). As mentioned in Chapter 6, this has implications for young people from minority ethnic groups (see also Jenkins, *op. cit.*).

7.10 Employers approaches to training

One of the essential criteria of the Subsidised Employment Option of NDYP is that the equivalent of up to a day's accredited training per week must be provided for the first 6 months of the young person's employment.

However, whilst employers offered training leading to NVQ Level 2 – the minimum requirement of the programme, there was no evidence of employers offering training opportunities to New Deal recruits beyond NVQ Level 2. This meant that a larger proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups than their White counterparts failed to benefit from the type of formal, accredited training which was on offer since NVQ Level 2 was below the existing level of qualification they possessed (see Chapter 3).

7.11 Employers experiences of New Deal recruits

The evidence from this study, and also other research, is that fewer young people from minority backgrounds are entering the subsidised employment Option. Attempts were made to explore this issue with employers in the study. For example, employers were asked about their experiences with minority ethnic candidates, and whether this group had encountered any difficulties in the workplace. As might be expected, employers preferred to talk about their equal opportunities policies in general, rather than comment on their experiences with young people from minority ethnic groups.

However, whilst some employers noted that their potential New Deal recruits would not encounter difficulties in the workplace, they will not comment on why minority ethnic young people on the programme were less likely to be on the Subsidised Employment Option. Others felt that people from Asian backgrounds would prefer to work for Asian employers and that New Deal should be doing more to encourage these employers to recruit young people from their own communities. Significantly, employers who expressed these views had no employees from minority ethnic groups. Others said that they would recruit people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, but had difficulty recruiting New Deal candidates as a whole.

Importantly, a questionnaire response by one employer who recruited 5 New Deal candidates in 1999 summarised their current situation as follows:

'Julie (White female) left in October and the reasons for leaving was due to problems at home. Although a solution would have been part-time hours, she would not have been able to afford to travel to work'. The option of changing shift patterns was offered but again was not a solution and she left on her own accord'.

'Mohammed (Pakistani male) was late on a number of occasions and this did not improve following a one-to-one discussions confirming that disciplinary action would follow. His attitude, time keeping and involvement with the group failed to improve resulting in his dismissal'.

'Andrew (White male) declined an offer of employment after his six months contract'.

'Stephen (White male) joined us on a six months contract. He is now on a temporary contract. He was interviewed recently for a permanent IT role and currently awaiting the outcome to his interview'.

'Liam (White male) failed his probation and therefore did not join the Savings Team. He is currently temping on a week-to-week basis working within the Post and Print Team'.

On the face of it, it would appear that the support and apparent understanding shown to the White New Deal recruits by the employer were not extended to the minority ethnic employee.

It should be stressed that while employers' attitudes towards people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds may influence their recruitment and retention decisions, this does not necessarily help to explain why candidates from minority ethnic backgrounds are not entering unsubsidised employment in the first place.

7.12 Barriers to achieving parity of job outcomes for minority ethnic groups

There were a number of significant barriers identified by this study that prevented young people from minority ethnic groups achieving comparable job

outcomes with their White counterparts on New Deal. These include the following:

- *Equality and diversity issues are a low priority*

This barrier was expressed in a number of ways. For example case studies and interviews with NDPAs working in rural locations indicated that some have had no black and minority ethnic clients on their caseload and therefore had no experience of dealing with discrimination issues. Others indicated that due to the small minority ethnic population they serve, equality and diversity issues had little significance for their work. Similar barriers were identified by ODPM Report (2003: 46) which pointed out that such beliefs and behaviours need to change before significant progress could be made on the equality and diversity front. The report also notes that attitudinal change is difficult to achieve and that it would require ‘high profile and genuine commitment on behalf of senior staff...and the existence of skilled and confident middle managers who are able and willing to act as champions for equality and diversity and to cascade policy commitments down to the organisation’s front-line’ (ibid). Linked to this is a range of views expressed by employers in the study which prevent them from addressing equality and diversity issues. For example, some employers felt that they had developed an equal opportunities policy under which all applicants for jobs were treated fairly. Such ‘colour-blind’ approach to equality and diversity issues, according to the Audit Commission, ‘perpetuates the belief that there are no issues’ (Audit Commission, 2004: 24), and reinforces the exclusion of minority ethnic groups (CRE, 1999). Similarly, others used the ‘lack of

resources' argument to justify their inaction, arguing that other projects have a better claim on their limited resources than equality matters. Evidently, such arguments were not based on facts since no attempts had been made to find out the cost implications of equality plans; rather, this was a reflection of the low priority given to equality and diversity issues.

- ***Racial discrimination amongst employers***

Discrimination by employers was one of the key factors which were evident in the case studies and also identified by interviewees from minority ethnic groups as affecting their chances of getting a foot on the employment ladder. Whilst the study found no overt forms of discrimination, covert, indirect forms were widely recognised and reported by interviewees. Factors such as 'wearing a head dress', 'lack of feedback' following interviews, 'non-response' to job applications and 'lack of support' during Option placement were felt by young people from minority ethnic groups as affecting their prospects in the labour market.

- ***Job entry target structure***

The Employment Services' Job Entry target structure is designed to maximise job outcomes. Whilst this has brought successes in job outcomes for some jobseekers and boosted individual NDPA's targets, evidence from this study indicates that there was a tendency for NDPAs to place White young people who they consider most employable including those perceived to be acceptable to employers on the Subsidised Employment Option. As noted earlier, this tends to

encourage NDPAs to devote more time and effort to helping individuals who are easier to help. In practice, this means less time is allocated to helping minority ethnic groups overcome the barriers they face in the labour market. This evidence is consistent with the views expressed in a recent report by the National Employment Panel¹⁰ (2004:01).

- *Lack of sanctions for poor performance*

The government introduced the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ in a bid to improve parity of outcomes for job seekers from all ethnic groups. However, over five years since its introduction, there were no plans in place in Southern Derbyshire to implement the Strategy. In these circumstances, I echo the sentiments expressed by the ODPM Report (2003) which expresses doubts as to how much real change could be achieved in the absence of credible sanctions for inaction or poor performance.

8. Overview

This Chapter has presented a summary of the key themes and findings which have emerged from the study. It has drawn on relevant qualitative and quantitative data from young people, NDPAs and employers. These themes form the basis for the conclusions and implications presented in the final chapter.

¹⁰ The National Employment Panel (formerly, The New Deal Task Force) is an employer-led organisation that advises the government on labour market policies and performance. The panel comprises Chief Executives of UK companies as well as senior figures from education, Local authorities, community organisations and trade unions.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and implications for the future

8.0. Introduction

This study was undertaken to evaluate the experiences of young people on New Deal with particular reference to the impact the programme has had on the employment outcomes for all ethnic groups. In doing so, it examined the role and perspectives of the key players involved in delivering the programme, namely: the ES and its staff, in particular, NDPAs, and employers. For the former, the aim was to provide an understanding of their role including their practice in placing young people on the programme; and for the latter, to ascertain the reasons for, and views about, participating in the programme including their recruitment procedures and practices (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively).

In the wider context, it can also be seen as an evaluation of one of New Labour's strategies aimed at improving the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups.

Whilst Chapter 7 drew together the main themes and findings of the study, the purpose of this final chapter is to present an overview of what young people from minority ethnic groups have achieved from New Deal to date and consider the implications for the future.

8.1 Overview: the story so far...

Chapter 1 considered the key role of educational institutions and that of the Careers Service in the transition of young people from minority ethnic groups from school and further education into work. Analysis of the impact of the education system on the position of young people from minority ethnic groups was presented and highlighted the concern of racial discrimination in admission procedures of educational and training institutions, and the practices in schools which are found to affect the performance and the well-being of pupils from minority ethnic groups. In relation to the Careers Service, the chapter also identified some of the practices and stereotypes of Career Service staff which operate to limit the choices and options open to young people.

Continuing with the labour market integration theme, Chapter 1 also indicated that minority ethnic young people had a greater likelihood than their White counterparts of experiencing unemployment. Factors such as ‘ethnic penalty’, ‘meritocratic competition’ and ‘racial discrimination’ were analysed and in doing so contributed to our understanding as to why labour market disadvantage continuous to be a fact of life for some, if not all, minority ethnic groups in Britain.

Chapter 2 considered the varieties of ethical, methodological and political issues which surround social research and suggested that race or ethnic relations research was also fraught with its own problems. First, the arguments which surround the concept of racial or ethnic matching in the research process were

examined and doubt was expressed about its utility as a method of research which will further the cause of anti-racism. Second, doubts were also expressed about the need for further race relations research since all previous work over a number of years have not delivered any benefits, in policy terms, for minority ethnic groups. It was pointed out that researchers are not in a position to bring about meaningful social change particularly where there is no political will and commitment to do so. Nonetheless, it was argued that some of the ethical, social and political problems involved in race relations' research may be resolved when research manages to shape policies and political strategies which undermine racist ideologies and practices. The chapter also presented the methods and strategies adopted in carrying out the research including the framework for analysing the research data.

Chapter 3 presented the quantitative survey of young people and also of employers. In relation to young people, the evidence presented demonstrates that the take up of NDYP was relatively low amongst young people from minority ethnic groups compared with the White group; and that whilst the former groups were more qualified than the latter group, they were more likely to end up on either the Voluntary Sector Option or the ETF Option rather than the Subsidised Employment Option.

In general, the evidence presented in Chapter 3 suggested that there were more private sector employers involved in the programme than either the public or the voluntary sector employers. Consequently, a large proportion of these employers were small and medium-sized businesses which supplied the bulk of the

subsidised employment vacancies compared to public and voluntary sector establishments. It was pointed out that this has implications for job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups in that small-sized employers have little or no track record of equality or diversity recruitment practice and procedures.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 formed the qualitative element of the study. For example, Chapter 4 presented five case studies of young peoples' perspectives and experiences of the different stages of the programme – from Gateway to the Option stage. The evidence in this Chapter pointed to differential experience amongst different ethnic groups at the various stages of NDYP. It also showed that an effective Option placement involved a complex interaction between a number of different elements, and only the matching of a series of key elements ensured positive Option placement. Further evidence suggested that such positive outcomes were due mainly to the active support and advice provided by NDPAs and employers, as much as by the quality and content of the Option.

Similarly, the fifth chapter presented the qualitative data of NDPAs in the study. Interviews with NDPAs indicated the crucial role they play in the New Deal process – from the Gateway Stage to the time the young person left the programme. It was pointed out that whilst some young people from minority groups indicated that they had benefited from the programme, the assessment of the majority of them, in terms of its usefulness, was negative. It was further noted that there was a tendency amongst some NDPAs to 'steer' their clients onto the Option which conformed to what they perceived to be the purpose of the

programme as well as their perceived role. Additionally, it was argued that there was a tendency for NDPAs to getting White young people on to the Subsidised Employment Option not only to boost their target ratings, but were also perceived by them as more acceptable to employers.

It was also argued that geographical location of NDPAs contributed to their views of the significance of equality and diversity issues. Commonly, NDPAs based in rural areas with a smaller minority ethnic population were more inclined to have had less experience of dealing with diversity issues, and consequently, did not see the relevance of such issues. On the other hand, those operating in urban areas showed awareness of diversity issues: however, due to lack of training, they did not have the knowledge or the confidence to address diversity and discrimination issues.

Chapter 6 provided an analysis of the qualitative data of employers. It argued that the equal opportunities policies adopted by employers was the minimum that could be done to avoid lawsuits rather than any attempt to bring about meaningful change or improvements in their employment practices. It showed that much of employers' recruitment procedures and practices were based on notions of 'meritocracy', and that this has not delivered job outcomes for young people from minority groups. Furthermore, it called into question the commitment of the ES to implement the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' and therefore put at risk the government's stated policy for achieving parity of job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups on New Deal.

The extent to which minority ethnic employers were involved in the programme was also presented. The chapter noted that all the young people referred to minority ethnic voluntary sector employers by the ES were from minority ethnic groups. Here, like other Voluntary Sector Options, there is no opportunity for employment after the end of the placement. On the other hand, referrals to minority ethnic private sector employers were all White young people with potential for employment at the end of the placement.

Lastly, Chapter 7 presented a summary of the themes and findings that have emerged from the study and formed the basis for this concluding chapter.

8.2 Beyond the ‘spin’

Since 1979, there has been consistent approach by various Conservative administrations to dealing with high levels of unemployment among young people from minority ethnic groups. The aim has been to encourage these groups to participate in training programmes and acquire market driven skills (Edwards and Usher, 1994). Thus the underlying philosophy is that through increasing their ‘human capital’, excluded groups from the labour market such as minority ethnic groups can improve their employment prospects. However, evidence from this study suggests that the acquisition of ‘human capital’ alone by this group of young people is not sufficient to gain access to jobs.

The New Labour government came to office in 1997 to the tune of ‘things can only get better’. It is certainly true that the government has taken steps towards

placing 'institutional racism' on the political agenda, particularly in response to the report of the inquiry into the murder of the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson, 1999) and, as mentioned earlier, it has also placed on public authorities a statutory duty to promote racial equality through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Additionally, prior to the introduction of the government's NDYP programme in 1998, comments by ministers indicated the government's apparent concern about the difficulties encountered by minority ethnic groups in the labour market. For example, in 1997, the then Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman noted:

Far too long ethnic minority (*sic*) communities have had to face more than their share of social exclusion, poverty and unemployment. Unemployment among black men of working age is unacceptably high...Many women face a double discrimination because of both their gender and ethnic origin... The government will tackle these problems (Hermes, 1997, cited in Ogbonna and Noon, 1999: 167).

She outlined the government's preferred solution to the problem:

Work is the best form of welfare for all people of working age. We are determined to take action to ensure equal opportunities for people from ethnic minorities (*sic*) in helping them to find work (ibid: 167).

These sentiments were echoed by the then Employment Minister, Andrew Smith, who until early September 2004 was the Work and Pensions Secretary with responsibility for New Deal:

The government is determined to find a solution to the problems of unemployment and social exclusion...Our challenge is to tackle the problem of unacceptable levels of unemployment among ethnic minority people (*sic*) by initiating effective policies that will change this situation (The Guardian, 1997).

Undoubtedly, these comments brought the issue of differential labour market position of minority ethnic groups onto the political agenda. There was an expectation, particularly amongst individuals, groups and organisations with interest in race equality matters that the apparent policy intentions and pronouncements by the government would lead to actual outcomes in terms of greater representation of young people from minority ethnic groups in the labour market under the New Deal programme. In the same vein, a recent Cabinet Office Report (2003) includes a commitment by the government that, 'In ten years time, ethnic minority (*sic*) groups living in Britain should no longer face disproportionate barriers to accessing and realising opportunities for achievement in the labour market' (ibid: 8). Whilst this may not be a commitment to ensuring racial equality in employment, there is a clear implication that, by 2013, employers will no longer discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Yet, in terms of ensuring equality of opportunity for all, New Labour has adopted the stance of minimum intervention consistent with a neo-liberal perspective of equal opportunities (see Jewson and Mason, 1994). In this context, it can be argued that the introduction of the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’ by the government was a half-hearted attempt to bring about minor adjustments to minimise the sources of bias and distortion which impinge on the free working of the market rather than a direct intervention to achieve equal opportunity and equality of outcome. The apparent failure of the New Deal programme to bring about improvements in the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups is tantamount to a policy failure. This is likely to lead to cynicism that the Strategy was introduced to divert attention away from the social and economic condition endured by minority groups. Such cynicism may be well placed at a time when there are social tensions simmering within the minority ethnic communities which culminated in the disturbances in the major English northern cities in 2001.

8.3 Implications for the future

This section sets out future work that needs to be done in order to achieve the government’s stated objective for achieving parity of outcomes for young jobseekers of all ethnic and racial groups on New Deal. In doing so, it highlights the key areas emerging from this study where steps might be taken, backed by political will from central government, to address the blocks and barriers set out above.

8.3.1 Shared corporate Vision

This study has found that there was a low take up of New Deal by young people from minority ethnic groups compared to the White group; and that these on the programme were not benefiting to the same extent as their White counterparts. There were two main reasons for this. First, young people from minority ethnic groups were more likely to have higher qualifications than the NVQ level 2 offered under the programme; and second, they were less likely to be placed on the Subsidised Employment Option. It also identified factors which underline this disparity.

If the Employment Service is serious about delivering the ‘New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy’, and at the risk of stating the obvious - it needs to have a clear, shared understanding with its partners about where they are now, and where they need to be. It is by understanding the details of what needs to be done, that priorities for action can be identified. One possibility is to revisit the toolkit which was issued as a supplement to the Strategy. This includes a useful guide as to the practical steps that could be taken at local level to deliver the various elements of the Strategy. It might also include some examples of approaches taken from elsewhere in comparable Units of Delivery.

8.3.2 Working with employers

This study has established that employers’ recruitment procedures and practices, as well as discrimination, adversely impact on job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups. It is crucially important, therefore, that ES staff

work with employers and to highlight racial discrimination when they perceive it to be occurring. This study suggests that there is room for NDPAs to play a more active and preventative role particularly in making employers aware that discrimination still exists in the workplace, and also making them aware of the advice and support available. This might require not only building the capacity of ES staff by improving their knowledge, understanding and confidence in dealing with equality and diversity issues, but a significant shift in their attitudes and behaviour, which this study has found to be wanting.

8.3.3 Inspection, performance targets and sanctions

This study has identified the lack of credible sanctions as a significant barrier to achieving job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups. Thought needs to be given to what is needed to encourage the ES to deliver the Strategy. The government needs to consider whether the ES performance targets would be better integrated within established inspection regimes. This will require the ES to demonstrate how the Strategy is integrated into their overall priorities. It would also ensure that the ES cannot receive higher performance rating if they are failing to deliver job outcomes for all ethnic and racial groups. Unlike current arrangements which focus solely on job outcomes, such targets will need to focus, not only on job outcomes, but also on job retention - particularly those who face barriers in the labour market, including minority ethnic groups.

This section has focused on what the ES can do locally to help themselves overcome the barriers which prevent them delivering job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups. It has also explored the encouragement

which might be needed from central government as well as what it could do itself to improve the labour market position of young people from minority ethnic groups.

8.4 Significance and limitations of this study

This section provides a summary of the main research results including the significance and potential contribution this study could make to one important area of public policy. It also considers the lessons that could be learned to inform the methodology for similar future projects in this area.

The first point that needs to be made is that the results of this study came from a relatively short-term study, focusing on outcomes achieved within about 9 months after participants' entry to the New Deal programme. The findings are dependent on the assumption that this time period provides a reasonable estimate of at least medium-term impact of the programme which was in its 2 or 3 years of operation. Given the time and resources constraint, there was little scope to conduct a longitudinal study of young people in the study to investigate whether the effects of the programme persisted or altered when progressing from the medium to the longer term.

Second, it is important to stress again that due to the small sample size of young people from minority ethnic groups in the survey in general, and the proportion recruited to the Subsidised Employment Option in particular, we need to be cautious about drawing general conclusions about the relative involvement of

minority groups and the White group in New Deal. Nonetheless, the research methods and strategies used to collect data, together with the tools used for their analysis, enabled the study to map the delivery of the programme, the perspectives and experiences of the key actors in the study. These perspectives helped to build a detailed understanding of the experiences and outcomes in each specific case, and therefore a longitudinal approach, in this context, would have been redundant.

It should also be noted that the research endeavour has been academically challenging and has provided new insights to particular area of public policy which is of concern, not only to the potential beneficiaries, but also to central government.

Specifically, the research has shed light on the variations in experience by ethnic groups. For example, the quantitative evidence presented in Chapter 3 indicates that:

(i) Young people from minority groups are more likely to be on the Voluntary Sector and Environmental Task Force Options; and that they are also less likely to be on the Employment Option than their White counterparts. These results mirror the national picture in relation to the over representation of minority groups on Options with no immediate prospect of a job outcome.

(ii) One of the key principles which underpins the individually tailored approach to New Deal (which distinguishes it from previous programmes) is that

the needs of individual young person should be assessed irrespective of their job readiness on entering the programme. Yet, interviews conducted with NDPAs appear to show that NDPAs' processes for choosing which client to help and support is based, not on the assessment of the needs of the individual, but rather on those who could easily be helped. In this context, it was found that there was a tendency for NDPAs to concentrate more on young people they perceive to be easy to help and/or work with. In practice, this means NDPAs appear to devote more time and attention to getting White young people on the Subsidised Employment Option as they are perceived as having not only fewer barriers and therefore easier to help, but also perceived to be acceptable to employers. Whilst this has brought success in job outcomes for some jobseekers and boost NDPAs targets, less time was allocated to helping young people from minority groups overcome the barriers they face in the labour market. This may well account for, or contribute to, the over representation of minorities on the Voluntary and the Environmental Task Force Options. Related to this, further evidence also shows that NDPAs' screening processes have to meet the requirements of employers who rely more on candidates' ability to fit in and cause no problem, than qualifications and work experience. This also has implications for young people from minority groups as the evidence indicates that employers (and by implication NDPAs) are likely to perceive minority young people as 'outsiders'.

(iii) The placing of young people on Options also appears to have been influenced by the way NDPAs perceive the aims and objectives of New Deal. For example, the study found that there was a tendency for NDPAs who perceive New Deal as providing education and training to equip young people with the

skills for the future, 'steer' their clients towards the Full-time Education and Training Option. On the other hand, NDPAs who perceive the programme as moving young people from the dole to employment appear to 'steer' their clients to the Employment Option. Further more, there was also a tendency among some NDPAs to use the Environmental Task Force Option for clients who they consider to be either trouble makers, have multiple barriers to employment, or those who have reached the end of the Gateway process and will not do anything else. This finding also raises a question as to whether there is a link between the tendency among NDPAs to steer their clients on to Options and the over-representation of minorities on the Voluntary Sector and the Environmental Task Force Options.

(iv) Young people from minority groups were less likely to be on the Full-time Education and Training Option. This result is in sharp contrast to the national picture which indicates that more young people from minority groups take up this Option. The Full-time Education and Training Option is primarily aimed at participants without NVQ level 2 or equivalent. The quantitative data indicate that the majority of young people from minority groups have NVQ Level 2 or above on entering New Deal. It is not surprising therefore that there are fewer young people from minority groups on this Option since the case studies and interview data indicate that these young people find the NVQ Level 2 to be below the level of qualifications they already possess.

(v) In relation to interviews with employers, analysis of their recruitment procedures and practices appear to indicate that there is a tendency among small

businesses to use 'word of mouth' as a recruitment tool which has been found to exclude minority ethnic jobseekers who, in the main, are not connected to these employers. Further evidence appear to indicate that the equal opportunities policies claimed to have been implemented by employers, with their formal procedures purporting to bring fairness in the recruitment process, have not produced job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups. Related to this, there was also evidence which appear to indicate that NDPAs are more likely to encourage employers to advertise their vacancies at Jobcentre rather than promoting equality and diversity policies and practices amongst employers.

Additionally, interviews with NDPAs operating in rural areas indicate that they do not consider equality and diversity issues as relevant to their work since they claim to have no minority ethnic clients and/or fewer minority groups in their area. Similarly, the NDPAs working in urban areas, although aware of diversity issues and discrimination as a barrier to employment for minority groups, nonetheless, were not equipped to deal with employer discrimination when they suspected it occurring. Consequently, interviews with employers indicate that they were either not aware of, or confused by, the 'New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy' which the government hopes would improve job outcomes for minority ethnic jobseekers. The evidence shows that the Strategy has not been implemented not only by employers but also the ES as well. In other words, the New Deal programme has not influenced or brought about changes in employers' current recruitment policies, procedures and practices which have not delivered job outcomes for minority ethnic groups.

The literature review has brought up to date a body of research that has increased our knowledge and enhanced our understanding of sociological explanations of labour market differentials. This has provided the opportunity to contribute to debates about equality and diversity policy issues and connect these to wider debates about the purported meritocracy. It has argued the case for a more outcome-based youth employment and development policy as a means of achieving social and economic integration.

The starting point for this study was the premise that the integration of minority ethnic groups in the labour market could contribute to their integration into the civic and economic areas of British society, and that this in turn, could enhance important aspects of social cohesion.

However, as this study has shown, the New Deal programme has failed to deliver job outcomes for young people from minority ethnic groups to the same extent as their White counterparts. Consequently, in addition to developing a model for achieving a fairer outcome of Option placement (which could be used as a benchmark for future research on the effectiveness of youth employment and development programme(s) as well as the role of NDPAs), the study has also identified a complex set of barriers which have impeded the achievement of fair shares for minority ethnic young people, and has therefore suggested key areas for reflection or action by the ES at local level and also by central government at national level. This optimism must be tempered by the debates about the capacity of research to improve policy (see 1997; Silverman, 1997; Becker, 2000). However, if lessons could be learnt from the findings of this study and

steps are taken to improve job outcomes for young jobseekers of all ethnic and racial groups, then this study would have contributed towards the government's over-arching aim of achieving social integration.

Appendix A

Research Introductory Letters and Questionnaires

Appendix A1: New Deal Participant Questionnaire

January 2000

Dear New Deal Participant

New Deal Participant Questionnaire: New Deal for 18-24 Year Olds

I am writing to ask for your help. I am a part-time research student at the University of Warwick, and have a keen interest in looking into how New Deal is meeting the needs of young people. I would like to know about people's experiences, both good or bad, their views on the advice and help they have been given and I am interested to hear from people who are taking part in New Deal as well as those who have left the programme.

I am supported in this task by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), and the research forms an important part of a programme of study that will lead to a PhD. I have also received co-operation from South Derbyshire Employment Service in this endeavour.

The enclosed questionnaire is for you to complete; this will only take a few minutes of your time. **Anything you tell me will be in strict confidence. No information will be published in a form that could identify you, or passed on to anyone else.**

Please send the completed questionnaire to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope by 31 January 2000. If you require further information, please contact Ann Ryan on 02476-523147 or write to me at the above address.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I do hope you will feel able to take part in the research.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Boateng

Enc.

8. Which of the following do you consider are most important in securing a job?

- Qualifications
- Experience
- Ability to fit in
- Work Ethic
- Other *(please specify)*

9. (i) Do men and women have equal chance of securing employment which match their qualifications or not?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....

.....

.....

.....

(iii) If NO, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. (i) Does ethnic background affect people's chances of securing employment which match their qualifications/or not?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....

.....

.....

.....

(iii) If NO, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....
.....
.....
.....

11. (i) Do disabled people and non-disabled people have equal chance of securing employment which match their qualifications or not?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....
.....
.....
.....

(iii) If NO, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. (i) Do people aged 18-24 and those aged 25 plus have equal chance of securing employment which match their qualifications or not?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, please say why *(please use continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....
.....
.....

(iii) If NO, please say why (*please use continuation sheet if necessary*)

.....
.....
.....
.....

13. Have you had any paid full-time employment since leaving school or full-time education other than New Deal?

Yes No

14. What is the longest period of paid full-time employment you have had since leaving school or full-time education other than New Deal?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months but less than 1 year
- 1 year but less than 1½ years
- 1½ years but less than 2 years
- 2 years or more
- Never/Not applicable

15. (i) Have you been on any government training programme(s) since leaving school?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, what training programme(s) were they?

.....

(iii) Did you find the training programmes useful?

Yes No

16. In what month and year did you have your first New Deal interview with a New Deal Adviser?

.....

17. How many months had you been on Job Seekers Allowance before your first New Deal interview?

.....

18. How long were you on the Gateway stage of New Deal?

.....

19. How many interviews have you had in total with your New Deal Adviser? *(please enter number)*

.....

20. (i) Which New Deal Option are you currently on?

- Employer Option
- Voluntary Work Option
- Environmental Task Force Option
- Full-time Education Option

(ii) How long have you been on this New Deal Option?
(please enter number of weeks)

(iii) Was this your preferred Option or not?

Yes No

If NO which was your preferred Option?

- Employer Option
- Voluntary Work Option
- Environmental Task Force Option
- Full-time Education Option

21. What is the name of your New Deal employer/provider?
(For those in full-time Education Option, please go to Question 24)

.....

22. (i) What job are you doing on your New Deal Option?

.....

- (ii) Is this job: Full-time
- Part-time
- Permanent
- Temporary

(iii) Please briefly describe your role and responsibilities:

.....

.....

23. How would you compare your treatment at work/placement with that of your regular/established colleagues? *(please continuation sheet if necessary and go to Question 25)*

.....
.....
.....
.....

24. What courses(s) are you doing on your New Deal Option?
(For those on full-time Education Option please go to Question 27)

.....
.....
.....
.....

25. Thinking about diversity and dignity at work policies, which of the following policies has your employer/provider implemented?

- Equal Opportunities
- Equal Opportunities in Employment
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring
- Bullying/Harassment
- Youth Employment
- Other *(please specify)*

26. Please indicate whether your employer has a diverse workforce or not

- Yes No Don't know

27. Please indicate your ethnic origin

- White
- Black-Caribbean
- Black African
- Black Other
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other *(please specify)*

28. Would you describe yourself as a disabled person

Yes

No

29. At the end of your New Deal placement/course do you think you will be:
(please tick only one)

Confirmed in post

On another New Deal Option

Taking further studies

Back on benefits

Don't know

Other (please specify)

30. (i) Do you think New Deal has prepared you for long term employment or not?

Yes

No

Don't know

If YES, how has it helped to prepare you?

.....
.....

If NO, how has it not helped to prepare you for a job?

.....
.....

31. (i) Would you recommend others to go on your New Deal Option or not?

Yes

No

Don't know

(ii) If YES, why would you recommend others to go on your New Deal Option?

.....
.....

(iii) If NO, why wouldn't you recommend others to go on your New Deal Option?

.....
.....

(iv) If DON'T KNOW, please say why

.....
.....

32. (i) What things do you like about your New Deal Option?

.....
.....

(ii) What things do you dislike about your New Deal Option?

.....
.....

33. Is there anything else you would like to suggest which would improve New Deal for Young People? *(please add continuation sheet if necessary)*

.....
.....
.....

34. New Deal is the cornerstone of the Government's Welfare to Work initiative which aims to help young people come off benefits and into jobs. Clearly, young people's experiences and views of New Deal and how effective it is meeting the needs of young people are vital. I am organising a group discussion and as many young people as possible who are willing to take part are invited to do so. I do hope you will enjoy taking part in the discussion.

If you would like to take part in the Group Discussion, please give your:

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.....

Thank you for taking part in this research

Appendix A2: Employer Questionnaire

January 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Employer Questionnaire: New Deal for 18-24 Year Olds

I am writing to ask for your help. I am a part-time research student at the University of Warwick, and I am interested in finding out about employers' views of New Deal for young unemployed people which was introduced nationally on 1 April 1998. I am supported in this task by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), and the research forms part a programme of study which will lead to a PhD. I have also received co-operation from Southern Derbyshire Employment Service in this endeavour.

New Deal is the cornerstone of the Government's Welfare to Work initiative, which aims to help young people aged 18-24 come off benefits and into jobs. Clearly, employers have a very important role to play in this by offering jobs to young people through New Deal. The study focuses on Southern Derbyshire and it is important to ensure that a wide range of local employers as possible participate in the study, and this is why I am contacting you.

The enclosed questionnaire is seeking your views, including your involvement or otherwise in New Deal. The completion of the questionnaire will take a few

minutes of your time. All the information you provide will be regarded as strictly confidential. No information will be passed onto anyone or published in a form which could identify your organization or individual.

Please return the completed questionnaire to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelop by the end of February 2000. If you require any further information, please contact Ann Ryan on 02476-523147 or write to me at the above address.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I do hope you will be to take part in this research.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Boateng

Enc.

New Deal for 18 – 24 Year Olds

Employer Questionnaire

Name of Employer:

Nature of Business:

Address:

Contact Name: Telephone No:

Position Held:

1. Would you describe your organisation as: *(Please tick only one)*

- Private Sector
- Public Sector
- Voluntary Sector *(ie Registered Charity)*

2. (i) Has your Company/Organisation signed up to New Deal with the Local Employment Service?

Yes No

(ii) If YES, when did your Company/Organisation sign up to New Deal?
.....

(iii) If NO, is your Company/Organisation likely to sign up to New Deal within this year?

Yes No

(iv) If NO, please say why your Company/Organisation does not intend to take on New Deal participants
(Please use continuation sheet if necessary and go to Question 7).

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. (i) How many vacancies has your Company/Organisation referred to the Job Centre under New Deal since involvement?

(ii) How many young people has your Company/Organisation employed under New Deal?

(iii) How many of these young people are:

Enrolled for further training?

Found to be unsuitable?

Replaced with another set of young people?

4. Please indicate the type/nature of the vacancies referred to the Job Centre under New Deal (*Please tick all that applies*).

Clerical/Admin

Leisure/Recreation

Catering

Technical/Engineering

Finance/Accountancy

IT

Other (Please Specify)

.....

5. How many young people has your Company/Organisation confirmed in post so far under New Deal? (*Please complete the pro-forma attached*).

6. How has New Deal for Young People benefited/not benefited:

(i) Your Company/Organisation? (*Please use continuation sheet if necessary*).

.....

.....

.....

.....

(ii) Young People? (*Please use continuation sheet if necessary*).

.....

.....

.....

.....

(iii) Community in which your Company/Organisation is operating?
(Please use continuation sheet if necessary).

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Please indicate which of these policies has your Company/Organisation implemented:

- Equal Opportunities
- Equal Opportunities in Employment
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring
- Bullying/Harassment
- Youth Employment

8. Please provide suggestions as to how New Deal for Young People could be made more attractive to employers. (Please use continuation sheet if necessary).

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire

New Deal for 18-24 Year Olds

Name of Employer:

Number of New Deal (18 – 24 Year Olds) Employed by Ethnic Origin and Gender – June 2000

Ethnic Origin	Year			Male (1998 to date)		Female (1998 to date)		Total Employed (1998 to date)
	1998	1999	2000	Full-time 30+ hours	Part-time 0-29 hours	Full-time 30+ hours	Part-time 0-29 hours	
	White							
Black – Caribbean								
Black – African								
Black – Other								
Indian								
Pakistani								
Bangladeshi								
Chinese								
Other								
Grand Total								

Appendix A3: New Deal Personal Advisers' Letter

June 2000

Dear Adviser

New Deal for 18 – 24 Year Olds

I am writing to ask for your help. I am a part-time research student at the University of Warwick, and I am interested in finding out about Advisers' views of New Deal for Young Unemployed People which, as you know, was introduced on 1 April 1998. I am supported in this task by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), and the research forms part of a programme of study which will lead to a PhD. I have also received co-operation from South Derbyshire Employment Service in this endeavour.

As you are aware, New Deal is the cornerstone of the Government's Welfare to Work initiative, which aims to help young people aged 18-24 come off benefits and into jobs. Clearly, Advisers have a key role to play towards the success of New Deal. The study focuses on South Derbyshire and I would like to arrange interviews with as many Advisers as possible early in February 2000, and this is why I am contacting you.

The interview will only last about one hour, and will seek your views about the aims of New Deal for Young People and your role in this, including the processes involved in placing young people on New Deal Options; perception of job readiness and of young people's attitude to New Deal; barriers facing young people in the labour market; views about benefit sanctions and understanding of equality and dignity at work issues. I do hope you will feel able to take part in the interview, and you have the opportunity to indicate this in the enclosed pro-forma.

All the research work will be undertaken in strict confidence. No information will be published in a form that could identify you, or passed on to anyone else.

Please return the completed pro-forma to me at the above address by the end January 2000. If you require any further information, please contact Ann Arlidge on 02476-523147 or write to me at the above address.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I do hope you will be able to take part in the research.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Boateng

Enc.

Advisers Pro-Forma

New Deal for 18 – 24 Year Olds

I wish/do not wish to take part in New Deal for 18 – 24 Year Olds Advisers interview (*Delete as appropriate*)

Name:.....

JobTitle:.....

Address:.....

Telephone No......

Please send completed pro-forma to:

Patrick Boateng
Department of Sociology
Ramphal Building
University of Warwick
Coventry
DV7 4AL

Appendix B

Interview Topic Guides

Appendix B1: New Deal Participants' Topic Guide – Case Studies

1. Overall Aim:

- To examine the extent to which the New Deal programme has met the needs and expectations of young people from minority ethnic groups.

Specifically to:

- Obtain participants views about the concept of New Deal and its delivery;
- Provide information about participants experiences at the different stages of New Deal;
- Explore the impact of New Deal on participant's job readiness, employment outcomes and future plans.

2. Profile

- Details of age, education, school/college attended; qualifications obtained;
- Age at which participants left full-time education;
- Did they have any idea of what they wanted to do when they left school/further education – did they seek/receive any careers advice.

3. Local Labour Market

- How easy/difficult is it for young people to find work in the area:
 - Job availability;

- Levels of pay;
- Attitudes of employers.

4. Jobsearch prior to New Deal

- Length of unemployment prior to starting New Deal;
- Level and methods of jobsearch;
- How well prepared were they for finding work before they started New Deal
 - what else did they need.

5. Introduction to New Deal

- How did they first hear about New Deal;
- How did they come to enter New Deal;
- What did they expect New Deal might be able to offer them.

6. First interview with NDPA

- Details about the first interview;
- Initial impression of the Adviser;
- Did they feel able to say what they wanted to say to the Adviser;
- To what extent did they feel that their needs were being listened to;
- Views about the NDPA – manners, attitude, helpfulness;
- Has the Adviser taken any interest in their personal circumstances, for example, employer discrimination.

7. Activities during Gateway

- What kind of help have they had since they have been on Gateway:
- Help/advice with jobsearch;
- Courses to improve skills;
- Careers advice;
- Counselling;
- Has Gateway helped them to become more 'employable'.

8. Option

- Which Option are they on;
- How did this come about – why this particular Option selected;
- Who selected the Option;
- How much choice did they have;
- Was the Option what they really wanted to do;
- Is there another Option they would have preferred to have done;
- Was there a discussion of what the Option involved.
- How useful will the experience gained on the Option in terms of future employment prospects.

9. Coping with the Option

- Did they feel confident about the Option;
- Were they offered any kinds of support to help them do the Option, for example talking to NDPA;

- Was there any kind of support they would have liked, but were not offered;
- Did they contact their Adviser about difficulties they were experiencing;
- Were they given advice about what to do if experiencing problems on the Option.

10. Short term versus long term decisions

- What is most important to them – to get a job now, or to plan their longer term career.

11. Understanding of New Deal

- How much do they feel they know about New Deal – how well was it explained;
- How familiar are they with terms such as Gateway, Voluntary Sector Option, and Environmental Task Force Option.

12. Benefit Sanctions

- What do they think about the compulsory nature of New Deal;
- Do they think benefit cuts/sanctions are a good idea or not;
- Have they experienced benefit cuts since they have been on New Deal;
- What effect would the prospect of benefit cuts have on their participation in New Deal.

13. Evaluation of New Deal

- Has New Deal turned out to be as they expected – how has it differed from their expectations;
- How well do they think New Deal is meeting the needs of young people in general - which groups does it help most/least;
- To what extent do they feel New Deal will meet their particular needs and employment goals.

Appendix B2: Employers' Topic guide – Case Studies

1. Overall Aim:

- To provide an understanding of employers' experience of New Deal, examine their procedures for recruiting New Deal candidates and whether such procedures are underpinned by equality and diversity policies.

Specifically to:

- Ascertain employers' awareness and understanding of New Deal;
- Explore their reasons for participating/non-participation in New Deal;
- Examine their experiences of the programme, and of New Deal candidates;
- Investigate employers' recruitment methods, procedures and practices.

2. About the Interviewee

- Job title; main responsibilities; length of time in current post.

3. About the Organisation

- Describe your organisation; nature of business; workforce profile.

4. About the Option they provide

- What type of New Deal Option(s) do they provide – Voluntary Sector, ETF, FTET or Subsidised Employment;
- Profile of New Deal recruits (for example, numbers, age, educational background, special circumstances etc);
- Types of jobs New Deal candidates recruited into – tasks they perform, role and responsibilities;
- Training and support provided.

5. Recruitment

- Method(s) and procedures for recruiting generally;
- Whether there are any particular procedures/policies adopted in the recruitment of young people (18-24 year olds);
- Methods of adverting vacancies;
- Whether any particular types of jobs are considered more/less suitable for young people:
- What makes them suitable/unsuitable;
- How this relates to skills, experience, qualifications of individuals;
- Whether there are any policies (formal or informal) which inform the recruitment process;
- Nature/key features of any equal opportunities policies
- Nature of any monitoring of recruitment for equal opportunities purposes/factors monitored (eg, gender, age, ethnicity, disability etc).

6. Awareness of New Deal

- Understanding of New Deal, its structure and the process for recruiting candidates.
- Reasons for participating/non-participation in New Deal.

7. Experiences of New Deal

- Views about effectiveness of the screening process/administration of the programme;
- Calibre of New Deal recruits;
- Whether New Deal has helped employers fill any 'hard to fill' vacancies/improved workforce age profile;
- Assessment of experiences with New Deal recruits.

8. Suggestions for change

- Suggestions/improvements to the New Deal process/structure.

Appendix B3: New Deal Personal Advisers' Topic guide – Case Studies

1. Overall Aim:

- To explore how Advisers in NDYP deal with clients.

Specifically to:

- Investigate how Advisers carry out their role;
- Explore how they carry out the functions of their role with different client groups;
- Explore what factors impinge on the Advisers' ability to carry out their role most effectively.

2. About the Adviser

- How long have they been an Adviser; main responsibilities; length of time in current role.

3. Working Practices

- How would Advisers describe the range of clients they deal with;
- How would Advisers categorise clients;
- Do they identify the easier/harder to place clients;
- Do they feel able to deal with effectively with all the client 'types'.

4. The ES and its Objectives

- Does anything hinder/enable Advisers' ability to carry out their role;
- What targets do they have:
- Are targets realistic/achievable;
- Does Advisers' drive to meet targets impact on clients receiving most appropriate action;
- Size of their caseload.

5. Job broking versus 'policing' benefit rules

- Are there tensions between helping clients and policing benefits;
- How does this impact on their relationships with clients;

6. Views about Benefit Sanctions

- Describe the sanctioning process;
- Type of clients who get sanctioned;
- Reasons for sanctioning;
- What effect does sanctioning/threat of sanctioning have on clients.

7. Labour market awareness and barriers

- Awareness of job opportunities;

- Understanding of job readiness and employers' requirements;
- Understanding of barriers facing young people in the labour market:
 - What are the barriers;
 - How significant are the barriers;
 - How do you help clients overcome them;
- Awareness and understanding of equality and dignity at work issues.

8. Options

- The process involved in placing young people on an Option:
 - Do clients get the Option they want;
 - Are they offered a choice/how much choice do they have;
 - How do they feel about the Option they are on;
 - Do they have problems while on Option;

9. Suggestions for change

- Suggestions/improvements to the New Deal process/structure.

Appendix C

Charts devised for analysing transcripts of interview data

Appendix C1: New Deal Participants' charts

- Chart 1 Personal, education and employment history
- Chart 2 Labour market activity prior to entering New Deal
- Chart 3 Entry on to New Deal, understanding of New Deal, initial interviews and relationships with New Deal Personal Advisers
- Chart 4 Gateway activities including impact of Gateway
- Chart 5 Moving onto Option, decision-making and expectations of Option
- Chart 6 Experience and views about Option (Work Element)
- Chart 7 Experience and views about Option (Training Element, including Job Search)
- Chart 8 Experience and views about Option (Relationships with work colleagues)
- Chart 9 Experience and views about Benefit Sanctions
- Chart 10 Overall evaluation and impact of Option, including Job readiness
- Chart 11 Suggestions for improving New Deal programme

Appendix C2: Employers' charts

- Chart 1 Impact of participation/non-participation in New Deal.
- Chart 2 Influence of New Deal on recruitment method/practice/policy.
- Chart 3 Experience and views about New Deal participants (Job Readiness Element).
- Chart 4 Experience and views about New Deal participants (Training Element).
- Chart 5 Relationships with New Deal Personal Adviser.

- Chart 6 Initial and subsequent expectations of New Deal.
- Chart 7 Views about employer subsidy and training grant.
- Chart 8 Suggestions for improving New Deal programme.

Appendix C3: New Deal Personal Advisers' charts

- Chart 1 Understanding of New Deal and Adverse role.
- Chart 2 Understanding of Job Readiness.
- Chart 3 The Gateway and the interview process.
- Chart 4 Knowledge of local labour market and barriers facing young people in the labour market
- Chart 5 Views about Benefit Sanctions.
- Chart 6 Process of choosing Options by young people.
- Chart 7 Caseload of Advisers.
- Chart 8 Experience and views about dealing with discrimination.
- Chart 9 Young people's attitude to New Deal.
- Chart 10 Views about short-term employment/long term training and development of young people.
- Chart 11 Views about how New Deal could be improved.

List of abbreviations

CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EFA	Employers Forum on Age
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ES	Employment Service
ETF	Environmental Task Force
FTET	Full-time Education and Training
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NDPA	New Deal Personal Adviser
NDYP	New Deal for Young People
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

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