

Evaluation of Talent Match Programme: *Annual Report*

December 2014



Evaluation of Talent Match Programme: *Annual Report*

Big Lottery Fund

Author(s):

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)

and

Institute for Employment Research (IER), University of Warwick

December 2014

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to all those who have helped in the course of the evaluation. We are particularly grateful to the staff, young people and board members of the 21 Talent Match partnerships who have given their time freely to support the evaluation. A particular mention should be made of partnership leads and those involved in setting up the Common Data Framework (CDF). We trust that in time the considerable benefits of the CDF will be seen in terms of contributing to a robust evidence base on which to design future policies and programmes.

A wide range of staff and committee members at the Big Lottery Fund have helped, supported and advised upon the evaluation. Their time has been invaluable. We are particularly grateful to Linzi Cooke, James Godsall and Scott Greenhalgh for the ongoing support and assistance, their critical and challenging feedback, and for the new ideas they have brought to the evaluation.

Lastly, we would like to thank the evaluation team at Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Warwick: Duncan Adam, Gaby Atfield, Dr Sally-Anne Barnes, Nadia Bashir, Professor Jenny Bimrose, Dr Richard Crisp, Dr Maria de Hoyos, Dr Will Eadson, Professor Del Roy Fletcher, Professor Anne Green, Elizabeth Sanderson, Emma Smith, Louise South, Professor Pete Tyler, Sarah Ward and Ian Wilson.

Peter Wells (Evaluation Director) and Ryan Powell (Evaluation Project Manager)

For further information on this project please contact Peter Wells on 0114 225 3073 or email p.wells@shu.ac.uk

Contents

Executive Summary	i
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Introduction.....	2
1.2. About Talent Match	3
1.3. UK labour market context and young people	6
1.4. Policy context	8
1.5. Understanding the challenges facing NEETs.....	10
1.6. About the Evaluation	12
1.7. Conclusion	14
2. About the Partnership Plans and Projects Funded	16
2.1. Introduction.....	17
2.2. Partnership characteristics	17
2.3. Geographical and sub-group targeting.....	23
2.4. The nature of support	26
2.5. Conclusions: Towards a typology of Talent Match partnerships.....	29
3. Understanding Change at a Local Level	33
3.1. Introduction.....	34
3.2. Measuring and understanding Young People’s worklessness at the local level	34
3.3. Local Labour Market Profiles	38
3.4. Concentrations of Youth Worklessness	49
3.5. Conclusion	50
4. Partnership: approaches to programme design and delivery	53
4.1. Introduction.....	54
4.2. Design and Development	54

4.3. Delivery	60
4.4. Learning and Future Challenges.....	67
4.5. Conclusion	69
5. Individuals: baseline and progress to date	70
5.1. Introduction.....	71
5.2. Responses	71
5.3. Providing a Baseline.....	72
5.4. Early outcomes.....	78
5.5. Conclusion	88
6. Conclusion.....	90
6.1. Five Programme Challenges	92
7. References	94
Appendix 1: Common Data Framework Tables	96
Appendix 2: Partnership Survey.....	118

Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the first Annual Report of the Talent Match evaluation. It is intended to serve as a baseline against which the progress of the programme can be measured in future years. It provides information about Talent Match partnerships and participants from January 2014 to the end of June 2014. During this period, Talent Match projects were initially setting up their projects, and then beginning to deliver services for young people, as part of their planned timetables; and not all projects had commenced delivery by the end of June. Data from this period is therefore limited, and while this report provides some interesting findings, it also notes that further study as the programme progresses may show more developments.

The introduction to the report sets out that:

- Talent Match is a Big Lottery Fund strategic programme investing £108 million in 21 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas which have experienced particularly high levels of youth unemployment. The focus of the programme is on developing holistic approaches to combatting worklessness amongst long term NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment and Training).
- The programme includes key innovative features which set it apart from other existing approaches. Most notable amongst these is that the programme actively involves young people in the co-production of both design and delivery activities. Other features include the local term duration of the programme (five years), that the programme is delivered by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations working at Local Enterprise Partnership levels.
- Some caution should be shown in equating youth unemployment with those who are long term NEETs. They are related issues, but contain important differences. These manifest themselves not just in measurement issues but also in the design of interventions.
- Youth unemployment is more than a 'cyclical issue'. Changes in the labour market over the last 25 years suggest that there are increasing challenges for young people to gain a foothold in the labour market. Left unaddressed these will bring significant adverse effects to the young people concerned but also through a range of costs to society. A proactive response, such as Talent Match is therefore warranted.
- Alongside notable spatial variations in labour markets in the United Kingdom, a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a part in engaging young people in the labour market. On the one hand these include the importance of factors such as confidence, self-efficacy and social networks, and on the other factors including qualifications, experience and transport. Interventions therefore need to be designed with each in mind, and the rationale of Talent Match is that these are best undertaken through local, user-led approaches.

Talent Match is subject to a long term evaluation. Key features of the evaluation include: a strong focus on measuring the impact of the programme (not just in terms of employment outcomes but also in terms of distance travelled and wider effects on wellbeing and on society), testing of different local approaches; sharing experience to improve practice, and building a case for change for policy makers, practitioners and young people at a national and local level.

About the Partnership Plans and Projects Funded

Talent Match is being delivered by 21 cross-sector partnerships. Partnership funding awards were announced in January 2014, and partnerships spent the first part of 2014 on their planned project set-up phase. By end June 2014, 15 out of 21 partners had begun project delivery, although all were at different stages of this. Partnerships are extremely diverse in terms of their organisation, governance funding and local context. Key features of the partnerships include:

- The average Talent Match stage two grant award across the 21 partnerships is just over £5m but awards range from just less than £1m in Stoke and Staffordshire to over £10m in the Black Country.
- The average cost per beneficiary is £3,658 but ranges from just over £1,600 in the South East and Cornwall to over £7,500 in Greater Birmingham and Solihull.
- Collectively the 21 Talent Match partnerships aim to move over 29,000 young people closer to the labour market and help over 8,100 (28 per cent) into secure, sustainable employment or self-employment. This latter figure is well above the initial minimum target set by the Big Lottery Fund of 20 per cent.
- The average employment target for Talent Match overall is 28 per cent, but targets for individual partnerships range from a low of 20 per cent to a high of 40 per cent; that is all partnerships are at least seeking to deliver the Big Lottery Fund target, with some substantially more.
- Partnerships vary greatly in terms of their composition from those comprised of just seven partners to those with well over 20. The sectoral split between the private, public and the voluntary and community sectors also varies between partnerships, but is weighted heavily in favour of the public and VCS in most cases.
- The approach to spatial targeting across partnerships also varies greatly, as does the targeting of specific sub-groups of beneficiaries.
- There is a degree of commonality in the provision of pre-employment support and services but partnerships diverge much more in terms of employer engagement and job creation activities. While nearly all partnerships provide job brokerage and work placements for instance, only eight partnerships engage in significant demand-side interventions, and just seven provide a wage subsidy to employers as part of their approach.
- Though the Talent Match programme is still in its infancy in terms of the delivery phase, it is possible to begin to develop a tentative classification of partnerships based on some of the key characteristics outlined above. This classification will be refined over time, in particular as partnerships move into the delivery phase and interventions become much clearer in terms of their scale and scope.

Understanding Change at a Local Level

This section of the report examines secondary data for the Talent Match areas. Comparisons are made against average figures for England. The section outlines a series of data and methodological issues:

- A mix of indicators are required to show labour market change at a local level. We have focused on the most relevant, and in particular employment and unemployment.
- Data availability at small geographies (ward level) is limited and most analysis is presented at the LEP level (largely a composition of Local Authorities).
- These data are important in understanding the contexts in which Talent Match partnerships operate; however we should not expect these data to change significantly solely because of Talent Match.

- It would be very helpful to have vacancy based data showing available jobs at a local level - unfortunately no reliable data have been available since late 2012.

It should be noted throughout this report that there are different measures and definitions of worklessness; these include the narrower claimant based measures and wider survey based measures which include those who are of working age but out of the labour market. It should also be noted that NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) gives a further measure of a group who are not participating in the labour market. The following observations can be drawn from the data:

- We compare the *rate* of worklessness, as there are marked differences in the size of LEP areas.
- Change in youth worklessness at the LEP level varies markedly. Some partnership areas, such as Northamptonshire, Cornwall and Worcestershire, saw marked increases of four to five times their rate (from five to twenty per cent) during the recession following 2008 but then marked decreases so that today youth worklessness is at pre-recession levels of a similar level.
- Reliable data on 18-24 year old NEETs show the highest levels in the North West, West Midlands, London and Yorkshire and Humber (all over 12 per cent) but lower levels in the North East and South West (less than eight per cent).
- A key feature of Talent Match was that partnerships themselves identified key local needs: this might be in terms of socio-economic and demographic groups, the different factors seen to lead to worklessness (such as being in statutory provided care during childhood) or where there are geographic concentrations of workless. Most partnerships have used some form of geographic targeting, although this varies widely from quite small areas (including some non-standard areas) to whole districts. At small geographic levels it is worth noting that it is difficult to obtain reliable data particularly where non-standard geographies (e.g. a part of a ward) are used.

Partnership: programme design and delivery

The report explores the role partnership has played in the development and delivery of the Talent Match programme. From the design and development phase of the programme, four very different types of lead organisation have emerged:

- National VCS organisations such as the Prince's Trust
- Local 'infrastructure' organisations (e.g. Councils for Voluntary Service)
- Local specialist VCS organisations
- Consortia based organisations.

In all cases a key feature of partnerships has been the involvement of young people - and this is a key difference between this programme and other current and previous employment programmes delivered in the United Kingdom at this scale. Not only has this taken many forms (from involvement in groups, establishment of panels to wider consultation) but, in many cases, it is the move from engagement to involvement and then to genuine co-design and co-delivery which marks a unique departure point from other labour market programmes. Approaches have often broken new ground and will require further exploration over time.

The commitment of 'core' partners to the programme is noticeable in nearly all areas. Whilst partnerships vary in size, reflecting programme size, geography and existing structures, core partners typically made commitments to the programme in excess of the funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

Partnerships tend to be operating at two levels, strategically to inform the coordination of a diverse array of funding and also in delivery. However, there was quite considerable variation in the level of strategic involvement.

This is a key challenging ground for the Talent Match programme. The buy-in of organisations beyond a core group in the development and set up phase was found to vary. In particular, some partnerships had strong involvement of LEPs, whilst in others this was far weaker, or even tokenistic. Similarly, employer involvement was recognised by many as an area where further progress was needed, especially now that the programme is 'live'. The alignment, coordination, and joint working with national programmes, notably the Work Programme and the Youth Contract are areas requiring close observation; our findings suggest that this is an area for further development at a local and national level.

In most areas partnership working at a 'city region' or LEP-area level is relatively new, with strategies and relationships being formed, and new institutional capacity being established, in most areas during the Talent Match programme to date. Where these relationships existed already, often in the larger metropolitan city regions, then the alignment of programmes was possibly less problematic; indeed it was clearer for partnerships where Talent Match fitted in.

The role of the Big Lottery Fund was viewed positively by all partnerships, although many raised some particular concerns: notably around the length of the programme design and development phase; and the importance of consistency in terms of the focus of the programme. There were seen to be lessons to draw here for other strategic investment programmes.

Finally, partnerships very helpfully suggested some areas for development in the coming year. These included further support from the Big Lottery Fund, the role of the evaluation team in disseminating evidence, and the role of partnerships themselves in sharing good practice.

Individuals: baseline and progress to date

The report provides a profile of the initial entrants onto the Talent Match programme focusing on the first two quarters of 2014 (up until the end of June). At this point 664 individuals had been engaged in some way by the programme with a further 118 beneficiaries having been involved in the programme for at least three months. Collectively, partnerships have indicated that they will support 29,000 individuals with a programme wide goal that at least 20 per cent of these enter sustainable employment.

At this early stage of the programme it is worth highlighting the following:

- As would be expected at this very early stage progress by the partnerships varies considerably and largely reflects plans for the speed of roll out in different areas.
- 66 percent of beneficiaries of the programme to date are male. It is notable that partnerships did not highlight that they would have a specific focus on male NEETs and this is worthy of further consideration as to whether local targeting is working as effectively as it should.
- Half of those supported live with their parents (by far the largest single group), although at this early stage it is not clear as to whether this is in line with local partnership plans - notably few raised housing issues per se as an issue they would focus on, although given further proposed changes to housing benefit this issue should be tracked further.
- 49 per cent of those supported to date have qualifications of Level 2 or above. This might be higher than expected for a cohort of individuals deemed "hardest to reach"; indeed we would have expected a far greater focus on groups with 'no qualifications'.
- Access to and/or the cost of transport is the most significant barrier to employment, in 34 per cent of cases. The nature of work available (low pay, temporary nature of work) is also seen

as a barrier (in each category around a sixth reported this). This corresponds with known barriers for accessing employment.

- Additional barriers to employment were seen to be the lack of prior work experience, lack of job opportunities locally, lack of qualifications and lack of job specific skills (each category is a barrier in 50-60 per cent of cases). These findings correspond with reported barriers in wider surveys of both youth unemployed and employers.
- For those surveyed at the three month follow-up stage, three quarters had applied for jobs and more than half had attended at least one interview. This is a positive finding and may indicate that partnerships in an early stage have tended to work with groups who are easier to engage.
- 90 per cent of those engaged in the programme had received one-to-one support, with 80 per cent receiving information, advice and guidance about careers from Talent Match.

In terms of the initial outcomes of the programme, the data show:

- Positive change for at least 40 per cent of individuals supported in terms of their: communication, work with others, setting and achieving goals, managing feelings, confidence, and reliability. A broadly similar proportion report no change with less than 20 per cent reporting a negative change.
- In terms of well-being 73 per cent report improvement in their life satisfaction. However, the figure for positive change in terms of 'experiencing anxiety' drops to 43 per cent, with 30 per cent reporting a worsening score.
- In terms of employment outcomes, the data collected for the Big Lottery Fund indicator scorecard show that 28 people have secured employment since the start of the programme.

Conclusion

This is the first annual report from the Talent Match evaluation. The following 10 issues stand out, either in terms of programme learning or areas in which the Big Lottery Fund and partnerships may wish to reflect on and change approach.

1. **Programme Design:** Two issues are worthy of further reflection. Firstly, the approach to programme design and roll-out could have been clearer. Secondly, some reflection should be given to the timescale from programme inception to programme delivery. Both sets of issues are a real testing ground for programmes intended to bring a strategic focus to particular issues, but which seek to break new ground in terms of co-design and co-delivery.
2. **Involvement of Young People:** partnerships actively embraced this aspect of the programme, and in many cases, genuinely sought new and innovative approaches. What is perhaps difficult to capture at this stage is the creativity and genuine excitement this has generated in some areas. This is the main aspect of Talent Match which distinguishes it from current or previous programmes. Other features, such as engaging hidden NEETs would be expected to come to the fore as the programme moves into its deliver phase.
3. **Partnership Lead organisations** are a diverse group in scale, scope, experience of labour market programmes and geographic coverage. What will be interesting to observe is what effect these different types of lead partner have on delivery and impact.
4. **Make up and Role of Local Partnerships:** most partnerships are wide ranging and genuinely cross-sectoral. Some Partnerships struggled to engage particular groups: in some cases this included LEPs, in others employers. This was not the case everywhere but appears something some areas may need further support with to ensure that Talent Match has a form of legacy.
5. **Range of Interventions:** the involvement of young people, the importance given to prior evidence of 'what works' (for instance need for high quality and sustained IAG and outreach

provision), and the experience of partners has helped to shape projects. Notably, the partnerships with larger budgets typically intend to fund a wider range of interventions, including some demand-side activities such as wage-subsidies to employers. Prior evidence suggests that employment programmes such as Talent Match need to combine supply side and demand side aspects to be most effective.

6. **Distinction to other Programmes:** an observation from many partnerships was that Talent Match feels different to current and previous government programmes. This is particularly in regard to young people's involvement and the fact it is non-mandatory. Other features of distinction, such as targeting those furthest from the labour market, will become more and more apparent as the programme moves into its delivery phase.
7. **Hot spotting and targeting:** one aspect of the Talent Match programme has been its focus on geographic hotspots of youth unemployment. It is clear that different approaches to geographic targeting are being taken as well as the targeting of groups rather than areas. This variation seems to provide something of both a testing ground and challenge to the programme. On the one hand, it provides the opportunity to test and learn from different approaches and how they work in particular contexts; but on the other hand, it is important that the Big Lottery Fund ensure that targeting hidden NEETs and those furthest from the labour market remains a central aspect of the programme.
8. **Changes in Youth Unemployment:** claimant counts for 18-24 year olds have fallen, as has the ILO rate, with long-term unemployment lagging (but also falling). We reflect in the report on the effects of changes in the labour market which suggest that youth unemployment is both a cyclical, but also a structural or longer-term problem. Addressing some of these issues clearly lie beyond the scope of the Talent Match programme.
9. **Employment Outcomes:** Talent Match aims to support 25,000 young people over the next five years with at least 20 per cent (5,400) entering sustainable employment. By the end of June the partnerships had supported 664 young people and 28 had secured employment. It is notable that the cost per beneficiary of delivering the programme ranges from £1,603 to £7,550 with a much wider variation for the anticipated costs for each job outcome.
10. **Employment Barriers:** data collected through the Common Data Framework reveals some interesting initial characteristics of the programme (for instance, two thirds of those engaged are male, nearly a half live with their parents, and only eight per cent have no qualifications). What is also revealing is the range of barriers which young people identify. They include practical barriers (notably transport), issues of local job availability and quality, but also intrinsic factors (such as very low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem).

Five Programme Challenges

Talent Match is a complex programme which is still very much in its early stages. However, the first six months or so of delivery reveals a series of issues which we anticipate will present the real testing ground of the programme. Moreover, they are areas the Big Lottery Fund and Partnerships may wish to consider taking further action over:

1. **Targeting** in its many guises (by area, group or theme) should be informed by a much clearer rationale in many cases. Some of the programme-wide data reveals relatively high numbers of individuals with Level 2 and above qualifications. This might suggest that some individuals possessing formal qualifications lack some of the softer skills that are important for employment and/or there is a lack of employment opportunities locally for such young people. There is also a more fundamental issue, which for a programme seeking to support innovation and based on a 'test and learn' approach, there needs to be a much clearer case made for why particular groups are being supported.
2. **Value for money** considerations have not been at the forefront of discussions around the development of the programme. Indeed, traditional 'cost per-job' requirements and unit cost specification can stifle innovative approaches. Nonetheless, simply based on the agreed project plans there is considerable variation in the sought job out-turns across the different

partnerships. Different approaches to targeting may explain some of this variation, but we could not determine this at this stage. To give an example, the 'cost per sustainable job outcome' ranges from just over £4,000 in one partnership to £37,750 in another - more than a nine-fold difference. We recommend undertaking some further work to understand the composition of these costs, and that targets are revised.

3. **Sustaining the involvement of young people** is likely to be a key challenge faced by many partnerships. Where involvement is a core part of the normal work of lead partners and delivery organisations we would anticipate few problems, However, where organisations are perhaps not specialist youth involvement organisations then there may be greater challenges. Conversely, a rationale of the programme was to develop new approaches to involving a group (18-24 year olds) who traditionally have not been involved in programme design or delivery. It is probably here that there is some scope to develop and spread lessons from new approaches.
4. **Local coordination, capacity and capability** we find are likely to shape the performance of Talent Match. In particular, partnerships have formed at the same time as quite considerable change in institutional structures relating to local economic development and growth policy and in particular with the establishment of LEPs. Moreover, funding programmes including the Regional Growth Fund, City Deals and latest round of EU Structural Funds programmes all largely work through LEPs. It is arguable that the success of Talent Match will be the extent to which partnerships can work alongside and with these other programmes. Conversely, with further public expenditure cuts it can be anticipated that some partnership organisations (in particular delivery partners) will be at risk, and this in turn may bring risks to the programme. We would advise Partnerships to actively explore and secure a clear relationship with the LEP and associated key partners, including local authorities, which enables the youth employment agenda to be championed locally.
5. **Innovation** is intended to be at the heart of the Talent Match programme. The initial phase of the evaluation found that most innovation was in the involvement of 18-24 year olds in the development and delivery of local partnership plans. Indeed, this element of the programme appears to have worked very well. However, with a few exceptions, most of the interventions being proposed were largely similar to ones which had been used before, and indeed many with some considerable evidence of relative success. The recommendation here though is not to call for all activities to be innovative, but rather that there are considerable efforts made to share good/effective practice and to learn from mistakes.

Introduction

Summary

This is the first Annual Report of the Talent Match evaluation, and reviews project progress and data from January to June 2014, during which all projects were setting up and beginning delivery. It is intended to serve as a baseline against which the progress of the programme can be measured in future years. This section of the report highlights:

- Talent Match is a Big Lottery Fund strategic programme investing £108 million in 21 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas which have experienced particularly high levels of youth unemployment. The focus of the programme is on developing holistic approaches to combatting worklessness amongst long term NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- The programme includes key innovative features which set it apart from other existing approaches: most notable amongst these is that the programme actively and centrally involves young people in both design and delivery of activities. Others such as the targeting of those furthest from the labour market should be key features of the delivery phase. And indeed, working at the LEP level is very new for many involved in the programme, especially as this tier of coordination is itself developing.
- Some caution should be shown in equating youth unemployment with those who are long term NEETs. They are related issues, but contain important differences. These manifest themselves not just in measurement issues but also the design of interventions.
- Youth unemployment is shown to be more than a 'cyclical issue'. Changes in the labour market over the last 25 years suggest that there are increasing challenges for young people to gain a foothold in the labour market. Left unaddressed these will bring significant adverse effects to the young people concerned but also through a range of costs to society. A proactive response, such as Talent Match, is therefore warranted.
- Alongside notable spatial variations in labour markets in the United Kingdom, a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a part in engaging young people in the labour market. On the one hand these include the importance of factors such as confidence, self-efficacy and social networks, and on the other factors including qualifications, experience and transport. Interventions therefore need to be designed with each in mind, and the rationale of Talent Match is that these are best undertaken through user-led approaches.
- Talent Match is subject to a long term evaluation. Key features of the evaluation include: a strong focus on measuring the impact of the programme (not just in terms of employment but also in terms of wider effects on wellbeing and on society), the testing of different local approaches; the sharing of experience to improve practice, and the building of a case for change for policy makers, practitioners and young people at a national and local level.

1.1. Introduction

The Big Lottery Fund is investing £108 million in Talent Match, its innovative programme designed to address the problems of high levels of unemployment amongst 18-24 year olds. It is being delivered through voluntary and community sector led partnerships in 21 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas in England. It seeks to support those furthest from the labour market in their journey towards sustainable employment. The local partnerships have now had their grant funding approved and commenced delivery in early 2014, albeit with some getting off to an earlier start than others.

Talent Match is one of the Big Lottery Fund's five strategic investments in England. These programmes are designed to tackle society's most entrenched social problems in innovative ways.¹ These investments have been designed and are being delivered through a co-production approach with beneficiaries and service users. They each require organisations from different sectors to work together, using an approach focused on individuals and prevention rather than cure.

To support the delivery of the Talent Match programme, the Big Lottery Fund has commissioned an Evaluation and Learning contract. This contract is being led by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University with its partner the Institute for Employment Research (IER) at the University of Warwick.

The focus for this Annual Report is to provide a baseline assessment of the Talent Match programme. It therefore provides a framework against which progress by the programme, and its impact, can be measured. The evaluation methods are wide ranging and include:

- collection of consistent data on all programme beneficiaries through a Common Data Framework (CDF)
- collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market intelligence both at local and programme wide levels
- in-depth research in Talent Match partnerships, including longitudinal work with both stakeholders and beneficiaries
- thematic studies around key challenges facing the programme, including involvement of young people, partnership working and valuing the benefits of the programme.

The goal of the evaluation is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the programme - what changed as a result of Talent Match - and what can be learnt from this approach. At the heart of this approach is the involvement of young people, and their engagement especially in the learning and influencing activities. Evidence from each of these aspects will become more comprehensive as the programme evolves.

The report is concerned not simply with identifying the indicators against which the programme will be measured, although this is important, but also in providing details of how the programme is intended to work (the theory of change) and the approaches taken in each of the 21 partnership areas.

¹ Further details of the Big Lottery Fund's strategic investments in England are available here: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/about-big/countries/about-england/strategic-investments-in-england

This report is divided into five main sections:

- Section 1 (this section) sets out the rationale for Talent Match, the policy context for young people's employment, the challenges facing NEETs entering the labour market and the evaluation framework.
- Section 2 provides an assessment of the characteristics of each partnership, their funding and targets, and sets out different models of partnership and an indicative typology of the projects funded.
- Section 3 provides a baseline for understanding change and in particular the local labour market profiles. This includes our approach to measuring the impact of the programme.
- Section 4 sets out the progress made to date, both in terms of the setting up of the partnerships but also some insight into the young people supported by the programme.
- Section 5 presents a conclusion in the form an assessment of the rationale of the programme, the likely challenges the programme and partnerships will face, and some early learning points and recommendations for partnerships, the Big Lottery Fund and wider stakeholders in youth employment policy.

1.2. About Talent Match

Talent Match funding is for a period of up to five years. The programme aims to improve the lives of young people aged 18-24 who have been out of education, employment or training for 12 months or more. It also recognises that those furthest from the labour market are not a single group, but may have complex mental health and physical health barriers, face physical and practical barriers (such as transport access or availability of childcare) and may be seeking employment in areas where competition for (entry level) jobs is high.

The programme aims to do this through facilitating their pathways into secure, meaningful employment or enterprise. The Big Lottery Fund has set an initial minimum target of supporting 20 per cent of the total number of programme beneficiaries into secure and meaningful employment or self-employment. This is a minimum target and may be revised upwards on the basis of further local intelligence and through discussion and agreement between the partnerships and the Big Lottery Fund.

The programme intends to 'improve the pathways' for this group of young people through ensuring that lessons learnt from the funding inform provision and attitudes outside the areas of investment and beyond the life of the funding itself. To this end, the investment is designed around an analysis of the causes of these young people's circumstances, a set of principles or issues it wishes interventions in each of the areas to address, and a set of features that each intervention should embody.

Talent Match is targeted on areas with concentrations of young people who have been out of education, employment or training for 12 months or more. These areas were identified through:

- Identifying LEP areas with the highest percentage of 18-24 year olds who had been out of work for 12 months.
- Then, within each area, the Big Lottery Fund examined the 2010 NEET count, where it was available, to identify so-called 'hotspot' areas of youth unemployment.

- In each area, the Big Lottery Fund considered the opportunities that exist for enterprise and employment growth, which could potentially provide vacancies suitable for young people who benefit from the funded approaches.
- And finally, in line with the Big Lottery Fund's approach to test and learn from this investment, it considered a range of geographical characteristics, such as rural or urban, coastal or inland, to make sure the selected areas offered a breadth of approaches from which to gather learning.

From this voluntary and community sector (VCS) led partnerships in in the following 21 LEPs were invited to bring forward proposals for Talent Match funding:

1. Black Country
2. Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
3. Coventry & Warwickshire
4. Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire
5. Greater Birmingham & Solihull
6. Greater Lincolnshire
7. Greater Manchester
8. Humber
9. Leeds City Region
10. Leicester & Leicestershire
11. Liverpool City Region
12. London
13. New Anglia
14. North East
15. Northamptonshire
16. Sheffield City Region
17. South East
18. Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire
19. Tees Valley
20. The Marches
21. Worcestershire

An important impetus behind Talent Match was the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment (ACEVO, 2012). As the Chair of the Commission, David Miliband, stated on the launch of the Talent Match Programme:

“Youth unemployment, and especially long-term youth unemployment, is one of the biggest issues facing the country. We know this isn't just a problem of the economic recession; it goes deeper because even in the good times, too many young people didn't find their way into a decent job.

I'm absolutely delighted that the Big Lottery Fund is making this significant investment, not just in tackling the problems of young people but investing in their potential as well.

Talent Match, designed by young people for young people, has real potential to make a big difference to our country.”

As we discuss later in this section there is compelling evidence of the effects on life-time income and life prospects for people experiencing periods of youth unemployment - the process of 'wage scarring'. There is also evidence from cohort studies (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011a) that there is a cost to society and the state, in terms of benefits, lost taxes and other costs related to, for example, health. The rationale of Talent Match is that if tackled holistically and effectively, these costs and the lifetime effects on individuals can be reduced.

Whilst there is wide ranging evidence on the labour market outcomes of young people, not enough is known about the effectiveness of specific approaches to engage young people and help them progress towards work and to fulfilling employment. This is a key feature of the evaluation. Moreover, the evidence about typical ways of incentivising employers to help, such as wage subsidies and unpaid work placements, is mixed, both about how well they encourage employers to offer jobs which they otherwise would not have, and about their effectiveness as steps for the unemployed (Crisp *et al.*, 2012).

The partnerships Talent Match supports are seeking to address both the complex personal and situational barriers faced by young people who are long-term and hidden NEET, and the set of institutional and partnership blockages that limit the effectiveness of support. We explore these approaches in more detail in Section 2 of this report. The rationale for Talent Match is that *all* of these problems need to be tackled in concert, and through involving young people. Interventions will be designed which are holistic, person-centred and take a long term approach.

The overall approach to Talent Match should therefore:

- better locate and engage the client group
- provide an holistic service that (a) addresses the whole combination of factors that affect the young person's capability (b) builds on their passions and interests (c) starts from where they are and evolves individual pathways to a better life (these may involve detours rather than a straight line into employment)
- ensure that all the agencies providing elements of this service work together around a shared understanding of what these three things are for each young person
- better co-ordinate vocational training and business support with an analysis of the local labour market
- better engage employers and local enterprises (including the VCS and social enterprise), so that they see the benefits of recruiting young people; this may include engaging them in the provision and planning of services (e.g. through work placements).

The outcome of the programme is not simply about additional employment or enterprise for young people, but that this employment or enterprise is sustained and meaningful. This will be measured at both six months and 12 months after the start of the employment. Ultimately the benefits of Talent Match are intended to move young people closer to the labour market and improve their employability, as well increase employment, but also to reduce the economic and social costs of the high levels of NEETs.

1.3. UK labour market context and young people

With the so-called 'Great Recession' commencing in 2008 there was a sharp rise in unemployment in the UK. This increase in unemployment was uneven both spatially and by sub-group.

Geographically levels of unemployment were higher in much of northern England and the Midlands (especially in the North East and West Midlands) than in most local labour markets in the better performing regions of southern and eastern England, albeit smaller concentrations and pockets of high unemployment were evident in some parts of the latter (ACEVO, 2012; Crisp *et al.*, 2012). Likewise analysis of the geography of NEETs² (young people not in employment, education or training) shows high concentrations in towns and cities, primarily in the north, which have been worst hit by long-term de-industrialisation, and in some inner London boroughs (Lee and Wright, 2011).

Youth unemployment increased more rapidly from 2008 than the overall level of unemployment, peaking in 2011, albeit at a lower rate than in the 1980s and 1990s recessions. It is important to note that since those previous recessions the proportion of young people in the labour force has fallen, with rising participation in education. At the time of writing unemployment and youth unemployment rates are falling, but the emphasis in this section is on the experience of youth unemployment relative to other population sub-groups in the most recent recession, and what this means for the labour market position of young people in the context of changing profiles of employment.

The rise in youth unemployment in the 'Great Recession' was not UK-specific; from a European perspective the labour market situation of young people was, and remains, much worse in southern Europe, such that Simmons and Thompson (2013: 1) suggest that: "*Unemployment amongst young people is now at levels without modern historical precedent.*" Moreover, focusing solely on unemployment statistics provides only a *partial* perspective on the position of young people vis-à-vis employment. The economically inactive are also non-employed, suggesting a wider scale problem than might appear to be the case from unemployment statistics alone. Furthermore, there are concerns about the position of young people in employment. Firstly, there are higher levels of *under-employment* amongst those young people in relatively stable employment (including those with higher level qualifications). Secondly, a 'low pay no pay' cycle persists for those young people who are moving in and out of unstable employment (often with low or no qualifications) (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012).

The weakening of the economy in the 'Great Recession' and the fragility of the initial recovery go some way to explaining the relatively poor position of young people in the labour market. Part of the rise in youth unemployment since 2008 is due to the greater sensitivity of youth unemployment than of general unemployment to the economic cycle. High levels of unemployment generally lead to greater competition amongst job seekers and young people may be vulnerable because of their lack of work experience. With increased competition for jobs in a difficult labour market, older people and more highly qualified people 'bump down' to take jobs below their levels of qualifications, skills and experience. In so doing they tend to squeeze out younger people, the less well qualified and those in relatively poor health (Gordon, 1999)

² NEETs and youth unemployment are related concepts. The unemployed are those who are out of work, have looked for work in the past month and are able to start in the next two weeks. NEETs exclude all individuals in education, employment or training, but include some of the economically inactive (Sissons and Jones, 2012).

However, there were signs that the relative position of young people in the labour market was deteriorating before the 'Great Recession', suggesting that high levels of youth unemployment are not solely a consequence of recession, albeit they were exacerbated by it. Rather, the root cause goes beyond the state of the economy to underlying structural issues in the youth labour market (House of Lords European Union Committee, 2014). It should also be noted that the rising participation rate of young people in education has implications for the volume and characteristics of young people seeking work.

The labour market for young people started to worsen in the 1970s. Then young people were badly hit by the early 1980s recession. The relative labour market performance of young people continued to decline thereafter in the remainder of the 1980s and for part of the 1990s. Over this period the wage gap between adults and young people increased. There was some recovery in the years of sustained economic growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s, prior to further deterioration from 2008 (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011a). Analyses have shown that between 2007/08 and 2011/12 median income for young people fell by an annual average of three per cent per year, which was more than for any other population sub-group (Cribb *et al.*, 2013).

This medium-term deterioration in the position of young people in the labour market even before the 'Great Recession' has been highlighted in analyses. These show that since 1998/99 young people not in full-time education have gone from being four percentage points more likely than average to be in work, to five percentage points less likely to be in work in 2012/13 (Wilson and Bivand, 2014). The only other 'disadvantaged group' to witness a relative decline in employment (and one that is starker than for young people not in full-time education) is people with no or low qualifications. By contrast older people (aged 50-64 years), ethnic minorities, lone parents and disabled people witnessed a decline in the 'employment rate gap' over the period from 1998 to 2013.

Unemployed people saw their likelihood of finding work fall by one-fifth during the recession and the falls were more than average for young people and the lowest qualified (Wilson and Bivand, 2014).

There are two important ways in which the 'Great Recession' was different from previous recessions. Firstly, the rise in unemployment (although marked) was small relative to the fall in Gross Domestic Product; and secondly, the numbers receiving workless benefits other than for unemployment (e.g. Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance) did not rise (Gregg and Wadsworth, 2010). While these might be viewed positively in terms of fewer people becoming unemployed or economically inactive and also in relation to skills retention for the economy, both of these features have implications for the labour market prospects of young people. The fact that employers did not shed labour to the extent that they did in previous recessions suggests not only a reduction in vacancies (as might be expected in recession), but also greater slack available within the workforce to respond to increased demand with recovery.

Analyses of Labour Force Survey data for the period from Quarter 1 2008 to Quarter 2 2014 show that employment rates for people aged from their mid-30s through to the over-60s have risen to above pre-recession levels, whereas those for 18-24 year olds remain 5.5 percentage points below pre-recession levels. In the 'Great Recession' the youth unemployment rate was nearer three times that of prime age adults, rather than double as in the past (Gregg and Wadsworth, 2010).

Structural changes in the UK labour market provide some explanations for why young people in the UK are faring relatively badly in the labour market. In summary:

“The sorts of jobs that young people, particularly non-graduates, used to go into are declining. Those that are left are increasingly contested by older and more experienced workers” (UKCES, 2014a: 8) (including those ‘bumping down’ in the labour market). The structure of employment in the UK is changing to take on the shape of a so-called ‘hourglass economy’, as a result of three key trends. First, there is continuing *demand for high skills* in managerial, professional and associate professional and technical occupations at the top of the hourglass. Secondly, there is a *reduction in traditional mid-level jobs* in clerical and blue-collar occupations. Thirdly, continued *demand for low skill roles* in sectors such as care and hospitality, characterised by flexible working practices, has led to increases in employment at the bottom of the hourglass, but this has been coupled with a reduction in jobs in some other traditional low skill sectors (UKCES, 2014b). Young people are especially dependent on elementary occupations (across various sectors of the economy) and on sales and customer service occupations (e.g. in retail and hospitality) for job openings. Some (but not all) of these types of jobs are in decline and for those that remain young people are losing out in competition with older and more experienced workers (UKCES, 2014a). There have been marked changes in the sectoral profile of youth employment since the 1980s, reflecting shifts in the sectoral profile of employment that have affected everyone. This is exemplified by a decrease in the share of total employment of 16-24 year olds in manufacturing from 24 per cent in 1981 to eight per cent in 2011; and an increase in distribution, hotels and restaurants from 24 per cent in 1981 to 39 per cent in 2011 (Sissons and Jones, 2011).

Evidence suggests that in recent years a number of factors, including an increase in the number of small businesses with limited resources, have resulted in a move towards the expectation that people should be ‘work ready’ rather than trained ‘on the job’ (House of Lords European Union Committee, 2014). This disadvantages young people. The Employer Skills Survey 2013 shows that while the majority of employers find young recruits well prepared for the world of work, a significant minority do not. The main reasons for dissatisfaction do not relate to literacy or numeracy skills, but rather to lack of experience and poor attitude (UKCES, 2014a). This suggests that so-called ‘soft skills’ and work experience are becoming especially vital for young people in order to gain first employment as a precursor to sustained employment.

1.4. Policy context

One key reason for policy concern about youth unemployment is associated ‘scarring effects’ on individuals as a result of lack of opportunity to participate in employment and develop their skills. Research using birth cohort data has shown that such ‘scarring effects’ of lower wages can be present at the age of 50 years after prolonged youth unemployment (Gregg and Tominey, 2005; Bell and Blanchflower, 2011b).

This concern helps explain why past policy interventions have focused on the long-term unemployed and/or the otherwise most disadvantaged, rather than on those who are cycling between short-term employment and unemployment, or who are under-employed (including some graduates). Traditionally, the dominant policy discourse has focused on deficits located within the individual – so foregrounding supply-side interventions aimed at improving employability. With successive welfare reforms, over time the trend has been towards greater conditionality, underpinned by sanctions or compulsory unpaid work (Mandatory Work Activity) for JSA claimants to undertake activities designed to promote their employability, in addition to job search. Over time expectations of active job search have been extended to cover other groups of out-of-work benefit claimants, including lone parents and some claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (i.e. the work-related activity group).

From the late 1970s and through the 1980s there were several initiatives targeted at youth unemployment, including the Youth Opportunities Programme, the Youth Training Scheme, the Young Workers Scheme and the New Workers Scheme. Subsequently, in 1998 the New Deal for Young People, a compulsory active labour market programme, was introduced as the flagship of the UK Labour Government's New Deal policies. Reflecting an overtly supply-side focus, it involved an initial Gateway period in which New Deal advisors worked with the young person to improve their employability and to find unsubsidised jobs. For those young people not finding jobs this was followed by either a six-month period of subsidised employment, a course of full-time education and training, a job in the voluntary sector or a job in the Environmental Task Force.

Since the 1980s the national approach to tackling youth unemployment has widened, with greater emphasis on promoting education in addition to employment. With regard to education and training, policies include: increasing the participation age; greater emphasis on achieving Maths and English qualifications; funding of 18-24 year olds to get their first level 2 or 3 qualification; and increasing the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and sector-based work academies (providing pre-employment training, qualifications, and work experience), so providing route ways to jobs. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), providing 16-18 year olds from low income households and studying for at least a minimum threshold level amount of time with a weekly allowance to help with the costs of education, was ended in England in 2011 and replaced by the opportunity to apply for a bursary to help pay for essential education-related costs.

In terms of employment policy, at the time of writing the key measures to address youth unemployment are:

- *The Youth Contract*: this was launched in 2012 with the aim of helping young unemployed people prepare for work and find long-term employment. Key elements include funding for 'wage incentives' for employers who recruit 18-24 year olds who have spent six months or more on benefits, subsidies for small businesses taking on young apprentices, additional work experience/sector-based work academy places, more time with Jobcentre Plus advisers, and opportunities for careers interviews with the National Careers Service. Further changes announced in 2014 include the removal of the wage subsidy element.
- *The Work Programme*: this was introduced in 2011 and consolidated support for the long-term unemployed on a mandatory basis. Most young people are referred to the Work Programme after claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) for nine months. The Work Programme operates on a 'payment by results' model for sustained job outcomes through a 'black box' approach; with prime providers in large contract package areas delivering personalised support for programme participants through supply chains of specialist and/or local organisations. After being on the Work Programme for two years those individuals not in employment are referred back to Jobcentre Plus (as 'Work Programme returners').

Other broad policy approaches include: intermediate labour markets (ILMs), such as the Future Jobs Fund; promotion of volunteering as a way to gain experience; and a route to work, and self-employment/enterprise (Crisp *et al.*, 2012). Other policies have addressed specific sub-categories of workless people, such as disabled people.

At the national level in England three separate central government departments have responsibility for young people: the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Department for Education. Further to this, the next phase of cross-government youth policy is led by the Cabinet Office. This helps explain how numerous separate programmes and initiatives have

developed to keep young people in education, move them into training and assist them in finding work. National (and European Union) level initiatives to tackle youth unemployment exist alongside policy interventions at local level, including those by community and voluntary sector organisations. However, it is often unclear whether, or how much co-ordination there is between such provision. This can result in a fast-changing policy and institutional context which young people, parents and employers find difficult to navigate. Although coordination by central government seeks to address this complexity these issues are unlikely to be resolved in the short term without more significant national and local institutional changes.

In order to lead to greater efficiencies and in recognition that greater flexibility and partnership working at local level may lead to better outcomes, there has been a move towards so-called 'whole system' approaches, characterised by localisation and personalisation in service provision. Total Place and Community Budget pilots are examples of joined-up approaches, while City Deals give greater powers at local level.

Another important trend is towards co-design with service users. In the case of tackling youth unemployment this means meaningful consultation with young people leading to youth-led approaches and the co-production of interventions. Here Talent Match is very much at the forefront of policy development and implementation.

1.5. Understanding the challenges facing NEETs

The Department for Education releases official statistics on NEETs aged 16-18 years while some analysts present data across a broader age range (e.g. Sissons and Jones [2012] used 16-24 year olds in analyses of Labour Force Survey data while in EU comparisons the 15-24 year old age range is adopted). What is common is that 'NEET' denotes 'not in education, employment or training'. NEETs are a heterogeneous group, especially when the age group encompassed is extended to 24 years. As such the label 'NEETs' has been criticised as being "too broad", since it encompasses significant intra-group variation,³ and so is "unhelpful and ambiguous" (House of Lords European Union Committee, 2014). NEETs include graduates and the highly skilled, those who are less skilled and those who struggle most to access the labour market; so policy responses need to take account of these differences. Maguire (2013: 196) contends that the term 'NEET' is "commonly used to capture disengagement and social exclusion, as well as high levels of unemployment amongst young people". Yet not all NEETs are equally vulnerable or indeed vulnerable at all. Maguire (2013) suggests that there are increasing numbers of young people whose destinations are 'unknown'. Some of these individuals may be so-called 'hidden NEETs' and they are beyond the 'official statistical gaze'. Macroeconomic conditions are one of the factors influencing the numbers of NEETs, while the level and nature of labour market demand at the local level has implications for the number and profile of NEETs. Hence, as noted above, there are geographical variations in numbers of NEETs.

Young adults identify lack of experience as a key barrier to labour market participation (Crisp *et al.*, 2012). In a survey of young people by Reed in Partnership (2010), which asked respondents to cite as many barriers as applied to them in preventing them from gaining employment, 68 per cent identified lack of experience; (the next most cited barrier was 'too much competition' identified by 61 per cent of respondents and which empirical evidence from 2010/11 suggests is a very real issue [Tunstall *et al.*, 2012]). There is a clear link here with the work readiness issue

³ Including the unemployed and the economically inactive, those who are seeking work and those who are not, and those who would like to work and those who cannot.

highlighted in section 1.2. Lack of qualifications/skills is also a factor identified by young people as a barrier to employment, but it is not rated as highly as lack of experience. Evidence indicates that young people whose trajectories are characterised by long-term worklessness are more than four times as likely to have no qualifications than their peers who make 'successful' transitions (ACEVO, 2012).

A range of psychological factors - including confidence, motivation and aspirations - are also important in making a successful and sustained transition into employment (or further education and training). In the context of job search, self-efficacy refers to individuals' judgements about their skills to successfully perform search activities - such as looking for and applying for opportunities and performing at interviews, etc. (Green *et al.*, 2011). Research suggests that self-efficacy is a key psychological variable affecting job search behaviour and subsequent employment, albeit personal, behavioural and environmental factors can play a moderating role.

Individual and household factors influencing young people's labour market outcomes (other than those mentioned above) include ill health or disability and caring responsibilities, both of which reduce employment probabilities. Stable and affordable housing is also an important factor. Personal issues outside the workplace may affect an individual's ability to attend (at a workplace/place of learning) and perform properly. Social and behavioural constraints also influence outcomes: substance misuse and possession of a criminal record reduce the likelihood that a young person will be in employment.

Related to the factors above, social networks have been identified as a key factor influencing individuals' access to the labour market (Gore and Hollywood, 2009; Lindsay, 2010). For young people analyses by Green and White (2007) have shown that social networks can have a significant bearing on 'opening up' or 'closing down' education, training and employment opportunities and horizons. From a positive perspective, friends and family members can provide role models and offer useful intelligence about opportunities. Conversely, and perhaps particularly for NEETs, their influence can be negative in reducing ambition and curtailing choices.

Green and White (2007) have also shown how some young people have a narrow geographic search area, which in turn can limit opportunities that they consider. Transport issues might also pose a challenge in physically accessing opportunities - especially in rural areas where there is more limited public transport. However, even in urban areas where public transport networks are more extensive, the spatial and temporal pattern of services may constrain access to employment, especially in the case of jobs requiring flexible working patterns. Access to private transport - especially to a car - brings more opportunities physically within reach of individuals.

The most disengaged young people generally face many barriers to employment and participation in education and training. This highlights the need for a holistic approach. As noted by the House of Lords European Union Committee (2014: paragraph 89): *"The successful provision of support to young people to prepare them for work demands a holistic approach centred around the individual, such as their access to transport, the need for a safe and welcoming environment at home and in the workplace, criminal records, learning difficulties and other personal considerations, need to be taken into account."* For the most challenged young people this implies a need for intensive one-to-one support through transitions from pre-employment to employment entry, and when in work. Provision of such a holistic approach is aided by appropriately resourced and relatively stable institutional structures and effective local partnership working. In this regard relatively rapid and far-reaching institutional and policy changes in recent years, coupled with the impact of austerity on the public, voluntary and private sectors and on service provision, pose a significant challenge in the external environment facing NEETs. In this regard,

Talent Match may seek to play some particular roles, including that of local coordinator between institutions as well as demonstrator of new approaches which can be then replicated by mainstream providers. However, Talent Match alone cannot solve these issues and some focus is required as to which ones are the greatest priorities and where Talent Match may add most value to existing local and national initiatives.

1.6. About the Evaluation

Aims and Objectives

A key rationale for the evaluation is to support and help the Talent Match partnerships. This is through the sharing of good practice and evidence around what works. The evaluation is also a key part of informing future policy and practice to address youth unemployment, and in particular, the effectiveness of an approach which places young people at the heart of the programme.

The overall requirements for the evaluation are as follows:

- to track the success of the programme and projects and interventions within it
- to identify what works well, and what does not, for whom and in what circumstances
- to share learning and improve practice (including amongst grantholders).

Key aspects of the evaluation for the Big Lottery Fund include:

- estimates of the costs and benefits to society and the state of intervening with young people aged 18-24 who have been out of education, employment or training for 12 months or more
- an evaluation of whether the principles in the programme have made a difference
- a better understanding of the kinds of approach to intervention that work well, with whom and why, at different stages of the young person's journey toward and into sustained employment
- a better understanding of how those approaches can be implemented.

An Overarching Framework

The over-riding aim of the research is to provide a robust assessment of what works in assisting unemployed young people into sustainable employment and to disseminate this knowledge and evidence more widely.

There are five guiding principles of the Talent Match programme:

- engaging young people in all aspects of delivery and evaluation
- providing structured opportunities for young people
- a person-centred approach
- supporting local solutions
- strong and positive communications.

These principles call for a responsive approach to capturing change. The 21 partnerships are operating in widely differentiated local labour market contexts, focus

on different issues and barriers, and vary in terms of their experience and delivery capacity.

The evaluation of Talent Match is multi-faceted and involves the following key components:

- Collection of information from each partnership in the form of a **Common Data Framework (CDF)**. This has been a key area for engagement with partnerships to date. An agreed framework is now in place, including common questions, systems for collecting and transferring data, and data sharing agreements. The CDF will be used to provide each partnership with summary information as to the progress they are making against key indicators. The CDF is a vital requirement of the Big Lottery Fund for the evaluation to understand the progress individual beneficiaries have made in progressing towards the labour market. The CDF questions are mainly based on existing ones used in other surveys. This does not preclude individual partnerships supplementing these with their own questions.
- **Local labour market profiling and benchmarking.** We have profiled the local labour market conditions for each Talent Match partnership. This information will also be vital in helping to understand the labour market contexts in which each partnership is working and how these change over time.
- **Typology of Interventions and Partnerships.** A key aspect of Talent Match is the 'Test and Learn' approach the Fund are using across its strategic programmes. The working typology of interventions (presented in section 2 of this report) will help inform how we engage with partnerships over time, identify some key questions to ask and identify some of the areas of innovation.
- In each year of the evaluation we will be taking a **thematic approach**. The two most prominent areas at this early stage of the programme are around partnership development and the involvement of young people. Case study research for both is underway and will be concluded in September 2014.
- **Involving Young People** is at the heart of the Talent Match programme. To provide the support to partnerships in this area we are proposing that our initial focus is on two issues: understanding how young people have been involved across the partnerships; what has worked well; what have been the challenges; and how partnerships are involving young people to collect information and research information. From these we anticipate that further issues will arise.

Each of these research components will involve specific research methods, including:

- discussions through interviews or focus groups with each partnership (the lead partner, the partners and young people)
- case study based research (for example around the specific research themes)
- collection and analysis of administrative and monitoring data (the Common Data Framework)
- surveys of partnerships, delivery partners and other stakeholders
- analysis of secondary data from national statistics (the Local Labour Market profiling)
- undertaking evidence reviews around specific themes to support and challenge practice.

Evaluation Outputs

Specific outputs from the evaluation will include:

- summaries of existing evidence (undertaken as part of a thematic study)
- initial and ongoing support to all Partnerships in the implementation of the CDF - with all data quality assured and checked
- a series of Quantitative and Qualitative reports to BIG and Partners which include:
 - quarterly progress reports allowing for analysis by partnership
 - detailed annual reports on economic impact including analysis by groups, project types and partnerships.
- thematic reports around specific topics which link together different forms of evidence
- working with the Big Lottery Fund's Communications team to provide multimedia Case Studies of individuals benefiting from the programme
- a series of good practice guides.

Learning

We have divided the stakeholders into four main groups, each with their own specific learning needs:

- **Local Talent Match Partnerships:** this group is the main focus for the **learning activities in this contract** and includes the lead partner, VCS delivery partners and other local stakeholders. The main points of engagement are: support from a contact point in the evaluation team; participation in case studies and workshops; and participation in programme-wide events.
- **National stakeholders** ranging from government departments, parliament through to other funders and the media. This group is the subject of an **Influencing Plan** and involves the evaluation team working with the Big Lottery Fund to run a range of different events for national stakeholders.
- **The Big Lottery Fund** itself as client is also a major stakeholder in learning.
- **Young people** are at the heart of Talent Match and distinguish the programme from other national programmes. Our work with young people will be primarily through the local partnerships: involved and consulted in the analysis and reporting of the findings, in the organisation and delivery of events and in the development of personal accounts of the programme.

1.7. Conclusion

Talent Match is a complex, long-term programme which seeks to test innovative new approaches to engaging young people who are long term and potentially hidden NEET. Although unemployment levels, including youth unemployment levels, have fallen as the UK has emerged from the 'Great Recession' levels of long term youth unemployment, and in particular levels of long term NEETS, remain high and in some areas are increasing. A message which can be drawn from this is that there is a continuing relevance for Talent Match to work with these groups and in these places.

The section has also highlighted some noticeable changes in the policy context since the inception of Talent Match, especially in terms of the introduction of the Youth Contract and then subsequently changes including the removal of wage subsidy elements. The roll out of City Deals and approval of EU Structural Funds programmes, whilst bringing new funding opportunities, may also lead to greater pressures to align programmes at a local level. This may prove a key task of the next phase of the programme and an issue for the evaluation to explore further.

This section has not considered in detail the impacts of austerity and public sector expenditure cuts on the delivery of Talent Match. The ongoing work on the partnership theme is likely to explore this further and also begin to anticipate some of the effects of public expenditure cuts including welfare reform. Again, this may bring challenges to the programme in ways including: the loss of core capacity to coordinate and deliver youth employment support; effects on specific localities (given the uneven spatial distribution of welfare expenditure cuts) (Beatty and Fothergill, 2013); and risks to voluntary and community sector organisations which are reliant on particular funding streams.

About the Partnership Plans and Projects Funded

Summary

The 21 Talent Match partnerships are extremely diverse in terms of their organisation, governance funding and local context. Key features of the partnerships include:

- The average Talent Match stage two grant award across the 21 partnerships is just over £5m but awards range from just less than £1m in Stoke and Staffordshire to over £10m in the Black Country.
- The average cost per beneficiary is £3,658, but ranges from just over £1,600 in the South East and Cornwall to over £7,500 in Greater Birmingham and Solihull.
- Collectively the 21 Talent Match partnerships aim to move over 29,000 young people closer to the labour market and help over 8,100 into secure, sustainable employment or self-employment - nearly 28 per cent of those being supported. This last figure is well above the initial minimum target set by the Big Lottery Fund of 20 per cent
- It should be noted that the target varies between Partnerships, from a low of 20 per cent (the Programme target) to a high of 40 per cent.
- Partnerships vary greatly in terms of their composition from those comprised of just seven partners to those with well over 20. The sectoral split between the private, public and VCS sectors also varies between partnerships, but is weighted heavily in favour of the public and VCS in most cases.
- The approach to spatial targeting across partnerships also varies greatly, as does the targeting of specific sub-groups of beneficiaries.
- There is a degree of commonality in the provision of pre-employment support and services but partnerships diverge much more in terms of employer engagement and job creation activities. While most partnerships provide job brokerage and work placements for instance, only eight partnerships engage in significant demand-side interventions and just seven provide a wage subsidy to employers as part of their approach.
- Though the Talent Match programme is still in its infancy in terms of the delivery phase, it is possible to begin to develop a tentative classification of partnerships based on some of the key characteristics. This is presented in this section.

2.1. Introduction

Talent Match awards to partnerships were announced in January 2014. From January onwards, partnerships were in the set-up phase of their projects, and varied in the length of time they took to achieve delivery according to their individual delivery plans. This report draws on this early phase in the project life.

Given the innovative nature of the Talent Match Programme it is inevitable that partnerships will differ in their respective approaches to tackling youth unemployment and moving young people closer to the labour market. They also differ in terms of their local context, resources, capacity and experience of labour market interventions. This section explores the characteristics of the 21 Talent Match partnerships drawing on information from three different sources:

- Partnership data received from the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) (e.g. final grant award amounts)
- a review of final project plan documents
- interviews with partnership leads and young people involved in the design and development phase conducted in early 2014.

Data for a number of variables were collated for each partnership drawing on the sources above. The data were then shared with partnerships and validated (usually by partnership leads) in spring 2014 with any errors corrected and missing data inserted where possible. The data contained in this section are therefore accurate as at Spring 2014, but there may have been changes to partnerships since then not reflected here.

2.2. Partnership characteristics

There are 21 partnerships across England, each covering a separate Local Economic partnership (LEP) area, and each led by a voluntary organisation. They are listed in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: LEP areas and Lead Partner Organisation

LEP Area	Lead Partner
Black Country	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	Real Ideas Organisation
Coventry & Warwickshire	Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Partnership Ltd
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	Groundwork Greater Nottingham
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
Greater Lincolnshire	The Prince's Trust
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation
Humber	Humber Learning Consortium
Leeds City Region	Your Consortium
Leicester & Leicestershire	The Prince's Trust
Liverpool City Region	Merseyside Youth Association
London	London Youth
New Anglia	Prince's Trust
North East	The Wise Group
Northamptonshire	Enable
Sheffield City Region	Sheffield Futures
South East	Prince's Trust
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	Lichfield & District Community & Voluntary Sector
Tees Valley	Prince's Trust
The Marches	Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service
Worcestershire	The Shaw Trust

Looking down the list there is a real mixture in terms of the organisation acting as lead partner, from large scale national bodies to more locally focused ones. Five of the 21 partnerships are led by either a Voluntary Sector Council or some other *local infrastructure organisation*. A further five partnerships are led by the Prince's Trust. Two other *national VCS organisations* also lead partnerships: the Wise Group in the North East; and the Shaw Trust in Worcestershire. The remaining nine partnerships are led by local *specialist VCS organisations* operating over a smaller geographical scale, but often still sub-regional or regional in terms of coverage. Two of these, Humber and Leeds City Region, are *consortia based organisations* (see also section 4.2 below).

Table 2.2 below ranks partnerships by stage two grant award in descending order, with total funding amounting to over £106m across England. The Table illustrates the massive variation in grant funding between partnerships: from the Black Country at over £10.2m, to Stoke and Staffordshire at just under £1m.

Table 2.2: Stage 2 Grant Awards

Partnership	Stage 2 Grant award (£)
Black Country	10,270,938
London	9,944,800
Sheffield City Region	9,898,497
Greater Manchester	9,554,906
North East	8,700,000
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	7,550,000
Leeds City Region	6,869,797
South East	6,812,260
Liverpool City Region	6,599,958
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	6,149,998
Humber	5,232,809
Coventry & Warwickshire	3,167,105
New Anglia	2,534,975
Leicester & Leicestershire	2,484,710
Northamptonshire	1,794,918
The Marches	1,792,801
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	1,728,085
Worcestershire	1,500,000
Tees Valley	1,481,349
Greater Lincolnshire	1,130,446
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire	990,000
TALENT MATCH	106,188,352

Given the innovative nature of the Talent Match programme, variations in grant funding are to be expected as partnerships target different groups, follow different approaches and respond to different local needs. In fairly crude terms, however, those partnerships receiving the most funding tend to be located in the larger urban areas of northern England and the Midlands, though also including London and the South East. All partnerships receiving stage two grant funding of more than £5m fit this category (from the Humber upwards in Table 2.2). The next highest grant recipient is Coventry and Warwickshire at over £3.1m. Less densely populated and more rural areas of England tend to receive less Talent Match grant funding. The average stage two grant award for the Talent Match programme as a whole is a little over £5m.

Table 2.3: Beneficiary and employment targets

Partnership.	Beneficiary target	Employment target	Employment target (%)	Cost per beneficiary (£)
South East	4,250	1,700	40	1,603
Leeds City Region	2,300	897	39	2,987
North East	2,000	750	38	4,350
Greater Manchester	1,600	560	35	5,972
The Marches	300	100	33	5,976
Coventry & Warwickshire	503	136	27	6,296
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	1,075	290	27	1,608
London	2,500	625	25	3,978
New Anglia	1,500	375	25	1,690
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	390	95	24	2,538
Greater Lincolnshire	370	85	23	3,055
Humber	1,455	320	22	3,596
Black Country	1,417	304	21	7,248
Liverpool City Region	1,625	327	20	4,062
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	1,000	200	20	7,550
Northamptonshire	500	100	20	3,590
Sheffield City Region	3,000	600	20	3,299
Tees Valley	500	100	20	2,963
Worcestershire	300	60	20	5,000
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	1,244	248	20	4,944
Leicester & Leicestershire	1,200	238	20	2,071
TALENT MATCH	29,029	8,110	28	3,658

Table 2.3 above presents the beneficiary and employment outcome targets by partnership. The beneficiary target relates to the total number of young people planned to be engaged in the Talent Match Programme in one way or another, regardless of specific outcomes. The employment target represents the total number of young people that partnerships are aiming to support into sustainable employment in their area. That is, employment of more than 16 hours per week lasting for at least six months, or self-employment. This is expressed as an absolute number and also as a proportion of the total number of beneficiaries engaged, which provides a consistent measure with which to compare partnerships.

The final column provides an indicator of the cost per beneficiary (i.e. the beneficiary target divided by the total stage two grant award). Given that young people accessing Talent Match will vary in terms of their distance from the labour market, and therefore the level and intensity of support required, this is an indicator only. Furthermore, some Partnerships have accessed additional funding from elsewhere. Nevertheless it does provide a consistent indicator for comparative purposes that can shed light on the different targets and expectations across partnerships.

Perhaps far more telling, and worthy of considerably more investigation, are the cost-per-job estimates which can be derived from the partnership targets. These appear to range from £4,007 per sustainable job outcome to £37,750 per sustainable job outcome, with an average of £16,736 across the partnerships. It should be stressed that these are essentially 'gross' cost per job estimates before allowance is made for deadweight, displacement and substitution effects (or the net cost per job). Considering these will mean that the actual net figures are higher. Evidence from other programmes suggest that these could be as much as 50 per cent higher.

Overall, Talent Match aims to engage over 29,000 18-24 year olds and move over 8,100 into sustainable employment, an employment target of 28 per cent. This is significantly higher than the initial minimum target set by the Big Lottery Fund of 20 per cent of beneficiaries moving into sustained employment. Based on these targets, the average cost per beneficiary engaged for the Programme as a whole is £3,658. The average beneficiary target across the 21 partnerships is 1,382 and the average employment target is 386. However, as noted above, when cost-per-job figures are compared there is an even wider range of figures. This is of some concern and will be explored further in the next stage of the evaluation.

Table 2.3 is ranked by the employment target expressed as a percentage. Most partnerships have an employment target of between 20 and 27 per cent. Several partnerships have higher expectations than this. The South East has the most ambitious target at 40 per cent, but is obviously operating within a more favourable labour market context relative to most other areas. This is closely followed by the Leeds City Region (39 per cent) and the North East (38), and then Greater Manchester (35) and The Marches (33).

There is no obvious and clear relationship between the amount of grant funding received and employment targets. This is further illustrated by the cost per beneficiary measure. While the South East has the highest targets among the Talent Match Programme this Partnership, along with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and New Anglia, is also the least expensive in terms of cost per beneficiary, at just over £1,600. In contrast, the Black Country and Birmingham and Solihull have lower employment targets and a cost per beneficiary of over £7,000.

It is important to reiterate here that Talent Match is an innovative funding programme employing a "test and learn" approach with partnerships free to decide on the best approach in their area. In both the Black Country and Birmingham and Solihull a supported employment approach is being pursued involving wage subsidies to employers. While evidence from other programmes on this approach is positive, it is often, at face value, more expensive than some other labour market programme models. The differences in terms of the cost per beneficiary can also relate to the specific groups targeted with those furthest from the labour market often needing more holistic and longer term support, which is more resource intensive. As noted these variations will be explored further as the programme provides 'out turn' data which allows for different approaches to be compared.

Table 2.4 below presents the composition of partnerships in terms of the split between organisations from the private, public and VCS sectors. The table is ranked by the total number of partners on the core partnership in spring 2014.

Table 2.4: Talent Match Partnership composition

LEP Area	No. of partners on core partnership	Private-public-VCS-Other split
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	23	3-10-8-2
Leeds City Region	21	2-9-6-4
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	21	4-9-8-1
Liverpool City Region	19	3-5-9-2
South East	19	3-7-8-1
Black Country	15	1-5-4-4
Northamptonshire	15	1-4-4-6
Worcestershire	15	2-1-11-1
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	14	1-7-4-2
Leicester & Leicestershire	14	3-6-3-2
London	14	2-4-7-1
North East	14	1-6-2-5
Sheffield City Region	14	0-6-5-3
Humber	12	2-6-3-1
Coventry & Warwickshire	11	0-6-4-1
New Anglia	11	1-4-5-1
Tees Valley	9	2-4-3-0
Greater Lincolnshire	8	2-3-3-0
Greater Manchester	8	2-2-2-2
The Marches	8	2-3-1-2
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	7	1-1-4-0

The average number of partners per partnership for the Talent Match programme as a whole is 14 (mean and median). Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire have the largest partnership comprised of 23 different organisations, closely followed by Leeds and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire (both 21). Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, The Marches, Greater Manchester, Greater Lincolnshire and Tees Valley all have less than ten partners on their core partnership. It is important not to read too much in to the size of partnerships. For example, in some cases the large number of organisations reflects the fact that a sizeable number of local authorities are covered by the Partnership and all have a place on it (see Table 2.5 below). By contrast, Cornwall and Tees Valley focus only one Council area and therefore have just one local authority represented. The composition and size of partnerships can mean different things, for instance the working of a large partnership of 23 members is likely to be very different to one with seven members. Indeed, what is important in both is the role of the partnership lead.

In terms of composition, most partnerships have strong public and VCS representation, which is unsurprising given that they are VCS led and often linked in with LEPs. Most also have two or three private sector partners on board too, although a small number of partnerships have struggled in this regard. This also reflects a preference on the part of some private sector companies to engage once

things are "up and running" or "happening on the ground". It is also worth noting that most partnerships have experienced some turnover in membership from the design and development phase onwards. This is to be expected to some extent as partnerships develop and priorities and focus shift and alter. However, evidence suggests that consistency and continuity in labour market partnerships is a factor influencing their relative success (Crisp *et al.*, 2011).

There are lessons to draw here around partnership composition. The Big Lottery Fund has not been overly prescriptive in terms of partnership scale, other than to indicate that there needed to be a lead organisation, the partnership needed to be cross-sectoral, and there needed to be a partnership agreement in place. At face value, partnerships with more funding are more likely to be larger. Moreover, larger partnerships are more likely in areas covering multiple local authority areas - again highlighting that LEP institutional arrangements are still in their infancy and there is a tendency to involve all areas rather than ceding authority to a few. Where arrangements appear more fully developed, such as in Greater Manchester, there are fewer partners.

A final issue is not simply with partnership scale but also the capacity and capability of individual partner organisations and especially the lead. For all partners, Talent Match is one funding stream amongst many. Different approaches to Talent Match have been taken - with some areas perhaps seeing it more as a funding stream and others as more catalytic funding to achieve more strategic and positional goals in the youth employment arena locally and nationally.

2.3. Geographical and sub-group targeting

Table 2.5 below provides information on the geographical coverage, context and targeting of the 21 Talent Match partnerships. As noted above, there is a great deal of diversity in terms of the number of local authorities covered: from 14 in the South East and 12 in the North East to just one or two in several areas. Over half (11) of the partnership areas are classified as urban and nine as mixed, which means they are comprised of both urban and rural parts. Only Cornwall is classified as wholly rural, which represents a unique set of challenges and has informed the approach adopted there. The last column in Table 2.5 refers to the approach towards geographical *targeting* within partnerships.

Table 2.5: Geographical context and targeting

LEP Area	Number of LADs covered	Urban-rural classification	Targeting category
Black Country	4	Urban	4
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	1	Rural	4
Coventry & Warwickshire	3	Mixed	2
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	2	Mixed	1
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	2	Urban	1
Greater Lincolnshire	4	Mixed	1
Greater Manchester	10	Urban	1
Humber	4	Urban	1
Leeds City Region	5	Urban	3
Leicester & Leicestershire	2	Urban	1
Liverpool City Region	6	Urban	1
London	11	Urban	1
New Anglia	4	Mixed	4
North East	12	Mixed	5
Northamptonshire	2	Urban	1
Sheffield City Region	8	Mixed	2
South East	14	Mixed	4
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	3	Urban	4
Tees Valley	1	Urban	1
The Marches	2	Mixed	4
Worcestershire	6	Mixed	4

Across the 21 partnerships there is significant variation in whether and how partnerships have chosen to target their resources by geography (see also section 3). This is evident through reviews of project plan documents, but also through interviews with partnership leads conducted in late 2013.

In the initial stages of the Talent Match programme it was assumed that partnerships would be targeting beneficiaries by geography or by need/theme or a combination of both. It was envisaged that partnerships would identify specific areas within the LEP area where there were high proportions of young people not in education, employment or training and aged 18-24. These areas would be the “hotspots” and, crucially, local eligibility for the Talent Match programme would be restricted to individuals from those areas.

In the event, the approach to geographical targeting across the 21 is much less consistent. The approaches adopted fall into the following **five categories**, which relate to the targeting category in Table 2.5:

1. *Defined spatial targeting on specific wards (10 partnerships)* - This represents the anticipated approach given the focus on hidden NEETs and geographical hotspots. Although this represents the most common approach, less than half of the partnerships fall into this group.
2. *Specific wards are defined but where there are also specific estates within them that are targeted (1)* - A variant that is similar to Type One above and which only applies to Talent Match Sheffield.
3. *A mix of whole local authority districts and wards (2)* - In this case specific wards in one local authority district (LAD) are clearly defined as a target hotspot, whereas in other LADs the entire district is included. For example, in Talent Match Leeds wards are targeted in Bradford, Calderdale and Wakefield, but beneficiaries from Kirklees and Leeds can be drawn from anywhere within those two districts. This reflects the views expressed by young people in Leeds at the design stage.
4. *A focus on undisclosed parts or across all parts of LADs (7)* - This is the second most common approach. In a number of cases "hubs" are identified but there is no focus on a specified and bounded geographic area. This approach is more common in sparsely populated rural areas, though not exclusive to them.
5. *A mix involving a strong thematic approach (1)* - This applies only to Talent Match North East. It was difficult to ascertain the approach to geographic targeting there given the prominence given to delivering across areas with a **thematic** rather than geographic focus.

It is also worth noting that evidence from interviews with partnership leads and young people involved in the design and development of projects informs that nearly all partnerships report that they will not turn away potential beneficiaries if they are not resident within a specific boundary.

As well as geographical targeting partnerships also target specific sub-groups of unemployed people aged 18-24. These vary by area and represent the particular needs and concentrations within different localities. A comprehensive list of target groups by partnership can be found in Appendix A1.41. Typically, sub-groups specifically targeted by partnerships consist of a combination of the following (these are in no particular order and are not mutually exclusive):

- young people not in education, employment or training ("NEETs")
- long-term unemployed
- offenders
- care leavers
- lone parents
- young parents
- people with physical disabilities
- people with learning disabilities
- people suffering from mental ill health
- carers
- homeless people
- BME groups
- refugees / asylum-seekers

- Gypsies and Travellers
- people engaged in alcohol and/or substance misuse
- those in isolated, rural areas
- people with low levels of literacy and numeracy problems
- people with low confidence levels.

Given this targeting approach and the fact that many of these sub-groups can be "hidden" from mainstream services and support, all partnerships are engaged in some form of outreach activity in trying to recruit individuals to the programme. A key aspect of finding "hidden" NEETS has been the role played by VCS organisations, often working at very local levels, and of sustained outreach. In addition, most partnerships also have many referral routes on to the Talent Match programme with the most common being the Work Programme (typically Work Programme leavers still unemployed), local Jobcentre Plus offices and local authorities.

2.4. The nature of support

There is a relative degree of consistency in terms of partnership approaches to pre-employment support. All partnerships engage beneficiaries in some form of pre-employment support, from an initial assessment on first engagement through to more specialised services and job search. The following were typical activities prominent in the project plans of partnerships. With the exception of therapeutic support and peer mentoring - some of the more innovative approaches - all 21 partnerships provide these services or offer referral routes to them:

- initial assessment
- development of an individualised plan
- information, advice and guidance (IAG)
- basic skills (e.g. literacy and numeracy provision)
- soft skills (e.g. confidence building)
- employability skills
- peer mentoring
- therapeutic support
- specialist support
- job search.

Likewise, in terms of pre-employment training that takes place in the workplace, the vast majority of partnerships offered:

- pre-enterprise advice and support (often through a mentoring approach with an established entrepreneur or businessperson)
- short term work experience and work placements to give an initial experience of employment
- structured volunteering with clear benefits for volunteers in terms of job skills
- internships were less popular among partnerships, and this, to some extent, reflected the bad press they have received in recent years as they are sometimes seen as an exploitative form of cheap labour.

Though the exact nature of pre-employment support will inevitably vary by partnership and by individual, there is a degree of commonality in the kinds of support that Talent Match partnerships have in place. There is more divergence however with regard to employer engagement and the inclusion of demand-side interventions. Table 2.6 below provides an overview of partnership approaches in terms the ways in which they engage employers and whether they are actively involved in job creation. This gives a flavour of some of the differences across partnerships in terms of their interventions in the local labour market.

Almost all partnerships perform some form of job brokerage - linking beneficiaries to labour market opportunities. A majority are also engaged with employer mentors. That is, local employers who support beneficiaries in various ways, such as through enterprise development and support. All partnerships also provide opportunities for work experience or placements which provide beneficiaries with important experience in the work environment.

There is less consistency in terms of job creation activities and the development of demand-side interventions. Around half of partnerships provide employment opportunities directly through the Talent Match programme. Typically this relates to Talent Match apprentices employed through the projects but in some cases other job roles are being filled by Talent Match beneficiaries. This may be a challenging ground for Talent Match, as it may be expected that demand-side interventions would be developed by LEPs.

Direct employment at Talent Match partnerships aside, only eight partnerships are engaged in demand-side activities involving the creation of jobs for Talent Match beneficiaries. These tend to be the larger urban partnerships and those which have received the larger grant support: the Black Country, Birmingham and Solihull, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Leeds, Liverpool, London and Manchester. New Anglia represents an outlier in this regard given its mixed urban-rural context and a relatively smaller grant award. However, it should be noted that a rationale of the Prince's Trust led partnerships, which include New Anglia, is that they will feed into other provision offered by the Prince's Trust.

Seven partnerships provide employer subsidies to those who employ Talent Match beneficiaries with a view to more sustainable employment further down the line. Again these tend to be larger urban partnerships with sizeable grant awards.

Table 2.6: Partnership approaches to employer engagement and job creation

LEP Area	Job brokerage	Employer mentors	Work experience / placements	Direct employment on TM project	Job creation / ILM / supported employment	In-work support	Employer subsidies
Black Country	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Coventry & Warwickshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greater Lincolnshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Greater Manchester	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Humber	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Leeds City Region	Yes	Yes	Yes	TBC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leicester & Leicestershire	TBC	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Liverpool City Region	Yes	TBC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
London	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New Anglia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
North East	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Northamptonshire	TBC	TBC	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sheffield City Region	TBC	TBC	Yes	TBC	No	No	Yes
South East	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Tees Valley	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
The Marches	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Worcestershire	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

2.5. Conclusions: Towards a typology of Talent Match partnerships

Though the Talent Match programme is still in its relative infancy in terms of the delivery phase, it is possible to begin to develop a classification of partnerships based on some of the key characteristics discussed above. Tables 2.8a and 2.8b below present some of the key characteristics of partnerships used for comparative purposes. From the information in these tables a tentative classification can be arrived at. This is shown in Table 2.7 below. Given the diversity of partnerships this is inevitably interpretative and arguments could be made for some partnerships to fall into a different grouping, or even two. The purpose is to illustrate the relative similarities and differences across the partnerships.

Table 2.7: Classification of partnerships

LEP area	Classification description
<i>Black Country</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban
<i>Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large grant award
<i>Greater Birmingham & Solihull</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher than average cost per beneficiary
<i>Greater Manchester</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairly high TM staff numbers
<i>Leeds City Region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job creation approach
<i>Liverpool City Region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly defined spatial targeting of hot spots
<i>London</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local infrastructure or specialist VCS organisations.
<i>Sheffield City Region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mixed geography but with large urban centres
<i>North East</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large grant award • no job creation but employer wage subsidy approach • largely thematic rather than geographical targeting
<i>Cornwall & Isles of Scilly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural or mixed urban/rural
<i>Greater Lincolnshire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No geographical targeting (except Lincolnshire)
<i>The Marches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller grant funding of less than £3m
<i>New Anglia</i>	
<i>Worcestershire</i>	
<i>Leicester & Leicestershire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban - second tier cities (i.e. not in the 'core cities' group)
<i>Northamptonshire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller grant funding of less than £3m
<i>Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower beneficiary targets.
<i>Tees Valley</i>	
<i>South East</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group represents outliers that are not easily classified alongside the other groups.
<i>Humber</i>	
<i>Coventry & Warwickshire</i>	

Table 2.7 groups partnerships into five categories. The classification description provides details as to why these partnerships have been grouped together. The first group consists of seven partnerships which show similarities on a number of key characteristics. Key distinctions in this group relate to the urban nature of partnerships, the high grant award and fairly high costs per beneficiary, their tight spatial targeting (with the exception of the Black Country and Leeds) and the

demand-side aspect of the labour market intervention. On several of these indicators they also show similarities with Humber, the North East and Sheffield.

The North East and Sheffield have been grouped together due to their mixed geography, which incorporates former coalfield areas, the wage subsidy approach and a strong thematic aspect in their approach to the targeting of beneficiaries.

The third group is comprised of Partnerships which cover rural, sparsely populated areas - though most are geographically mixed. These partnerships do not have a tight focus to geographical targeting, as a direct result of that rurality in many cases, and they are also recipients of smaller grant awards of less than £3m.

The fourth group consists of urban areas which are a little further down the pecking order in terms of an urban hierarchy. While they cover the urban centres of Leicester, Middlesbrough, Northampton and Stoke, respectively, these towns and cities fall out of the 'core cities' group. These partnerships receive grants of less than £3m and have relatively lower beneficiary targets.

The final group comprises partnerships which are outliers in terms of the classification approach adopted. A case could be made for them to fit into one or two of the other groups but they are not as closely aligned as those which have been classified. Worth noting is that the Humber represents the partnership closest to the Talent Match average across funding and outcome measures, such as total grant award, beneficiary targets and employments targets.

The indicative typology presented above represents a starting point. As the programme and the evaluation progress a fuller, more detailed picture of the exact nature of service provision, specific interventions, delivery partners and the approach to involving young people will be developed. This will make for a richer and more nuanced approach to classifying partnerships than is possible at this stage. The test and learn ethos of Talent Match also implies that partnerships will alter their approach, or aspects of it, in light of findings on the relative effectiveness of interventions. In this sense a working typology is necessary that can accommodate this dynamism. Other factors are also likely to come to the fore during the delivery of Talent Match: most notably the capability of local partnerships to deliver not just this programme but to work effectively alongside LEP partners; but also local labour market context and the strength of local economies.

Table 2.8a: Key characteristics of partnerships - organisation and grant award

LEP area	Lead organisation	Lead organisation Type	Dedicated TM staff (FTEs)	No. of partners	Stage 2 grant award
Black Country	Wolverhampton VSC	Local infrastructure organisation	6	15	£10,270,938
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	Real Ideas Organisation	Local specialist VCS organisation	1.5	7	£1,728,085
Coventry & Warwickshire	CSWP Ltd	Local infrastructure organisation	2	11	£3,167,105
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	Greater Nottingham Groundwork	Local specialist VCS organisation	8	23	£6,149,998
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	BVSC	Local infrastructure organisation	7.5	14	£7,550,000
Greater Lincolnshire	Princes Trust	National VCS organisation	2.3	8	£1,130,446
Greater Manchester	GMCVO	Local infrastructure organisation	3	8	£9,554,906
Humber	Humber Learning Consortium	Consortia based organisation	3.5	12	£5,232,809
Leeds City Region	Your Consortium	Consortia based organisation	4	21	£6,869,797
Leicester & Leicestershire	Princes Trust	National VCS organisation	1	14	£2,484,710
Liverpool City Region	Merseyside Youth Association	Local specialist VCS organisation	14	19	£6,599,958
London	London Youth	Local specialist VCS organisation	7	14	£9,944,800
New Anglia	Princes Trust	National VCS organisation	1	11	£2,534,975
North East	The Wise Group	National VCS organisation	4	14	£8,700,000
Northamptonshire	Enable	Local specialist VCS organisation	10	15	£1,794,918
Sheffield City Region	Sheffield Futures	Local specialist VCS organisation	6	14	£9,898,497
South East	Princes Trust	National VCS organisation	2	19	£6,812,260
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	Lichfield and District CVS	Local infrastructure organisation	3.2	21	£990,000
Tees Valley	Princes Trust	National VCS organisation	1.3	9	£1,481,349
The Marches	HVOSS	Local infrastructure organisation	5	8	£1,792,801
Worcestershire	The Shaw Trust	National VCS organisation	4.9	15	£1,500,000

Table 2.8b: Key characteristics of partnerships - outcome targets, geography and demand-side approach

LEP area	Beneficiary target	Employment target (%)	Cost per beneficiary	Urban-rural classification	Geographic targeting category	Job creation/ supported employment
Black Country	1,417	21	£7,248	Urban	4	Yes
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	1,075	27	£1,608	Rural	4	No
Coventry & Warwickshire	503	27	£6,296	Mixed	3	No
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	1,244	20	£4,944	Mixed	1	Yes
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	1,000	20	£7,550	Urban	1	Yes
Greater Lincolnshire	370	23	£3,055	Mixed	1	No
Greater Manchester	1,600	35	£5,972	Urban	1	Yes
Humber	1,455	22	£3,596	Urban	1	No
Leeds City Region	2,300	39	£2,987	Urban	3	Yes
Leicester & Leicestershire	1,200	20	£2,071	Urban	1	No
Liverpool City Region	1,625	20	£4,062	Urban	1	Yes
London	2,500	25	£3,978	Urban	1	Yes
New Anglia	1,500	25	£1,690	Mixed	4	Yes
North East	2,000	38	£4,350	Mixed	5	No
Northamptonshire	500	20	£3,590	Urban	1	No
Sheffield City Region	3,000	20	£3,299	Mixed	2	No
South East	4,250	40	£1,603	Mixed	4	No
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	390	24	£2,538	Urban	4	No
Tees Valley	500	20	£2,963	Urban	1	No
The Marches	300	33	£5,976	Mixed	4	No
Worcestershire	300	20	£5,000	Mixed	4	No

Understanding Change at a Local Level

Summary

This section of the report examines secondary data for the Talent Match areas. Comparisons are made against average figures for England. The section outlines a series of data and methodological issues:

- a mix of indicators are required to show labour market change at a local level. We have focused on the most relevant, and in particular employment and unemployment
- data availability at small geographies (ward level) is limited and most analysis is presented at the LEP level (largely a composition of Local Authorities)
- these data are important in understanding the contexts in which Talent Match partnerships operate; however we should not expect these data to change significantly solely because of Talent Match
- it would be very helpful to have vacancy based data - unfortunately no reliable data have been available since August 2012.

The following observations can be drawn from the data:

- we compare the *rate* (rather than actual numbers) of worklessness, as there are marked differences in the size of LEP areas
- change in youth worklessness at LEP level varies markedly. Some partnership areas, such as Northamptonshire, Cornwall and Worcestershire have seen marked increases of four-five times their rate (from five to twenty per cent) but then marked decreases of a similar size
- reliable data (available at a regional level) on 18-24 year old NEETs shows the highest levels in the North West, West Midlands, London and Yorkshire and Humber (all over 12 per cent) but lower levels in North East and South West (less than eight per cent).

The approach to geographic targeting (based on hotspots) was considered at the outset an important feature of Talent Match. It is important to raise two concerns at this stage:

- the approach to geographic targeting varies markedly between partnerships and it is unclear whether these approaches will change further
- data availability at small geographic areas is limited, especially where non-standard areas are used.

3.1. Introduction

This section of the report informs the baseline for assessing the impact of the programme. The focus in this section sets out the overall approach to understanding change at a local level (drawing on secondary aggregate data) and in measuring impact through triangulating different methods.

3.2. Measuring and understanding Young People's worklessness at the local level

Introduction

This section highlights key labour market characteristics at the local level with a view to showing the differences in labour market profiles according to a range of indicators across the 21 partnerships. Comparisons with England are also included to indicate how far each partnership differs from the national average. Though the national position is used as a reference point, it is not the purpose of this section to describe the national labour market as it relates to young people; that has been covered in broad terms in section 1. The local labour market context is especially important in the case of a programme such as Talent Match. As Green and White (2007) have shown, for some young people with lower levels of qualifications, job search areas can be highly geographically restricted. Thus for these types of young people, suitable 'local jobs' have higher importance.

In summary the data are designed to show:

1. The general state of the labour market for the partnership areas in comparison with one another and with the national average
2. The trends in the local labour markets leading up to, during, and emerging from the recession
3. The differences in employment structure and opportunities across the different partnership areas
4. The local labour market picture for young people and the differing opportunities and structures within it across different partnership areas.

The data are taken from the pre-recession period (typically 2005/2006) to show the effect of recession in the different areas and the extent to which areas have or have not recovered subsequently. The medium term sweep allows for an understanding of the trends in various employment indicators over a period of time, rather than just providing estimates at a particular time point. It is important to indicate this historical perspective; some of the areas have long-established economic issues which are well entrenched, whereas other areas may have fewer historical problems but have been experiencing higher levels of unemployment and worklessness since the recession. Data are presented up to the latest available for the particular dataset at the time of writing.

The information here is taken from the profiles which have been prepared for each partnership. Data spreadsheets for each of the 21 partnership areas across a wider range of indicators than are presented here have been shared with the partnerships, and in addition a wider selection of indicators will also provide greater levels of disaggregation (e.g. by sex).

This sub-section provides a selection of the key variables to allow comparison across partnerships. Selected features of local labour market profiles are outlined in section

3.3. Discussion of the figures and general messages around measuring impact for this project follow in section 3.4.

Where possible, indicators are provided for “young people”. In some instances this is people aged 16-24, and in other cases it is those aged 18-24, depending on data availability. Different data sources provide the data in different formats. Other indicators show the whole population and are not broken down by age. These are included to illustrate the general state of the labour market for that area. There are some indicators which are provided to show the differences between the labour market opportunities for young people as compared with older age groups.

Some partnerships have identified particular hotspots where young people’s worklessness is particularly high. Partnerships have adopted different approaches to the issue of hotspots (as outlined in section 2). Some have formally identified hotspots and will use these areas as an eligibility criterion for participation in Talent Match. Some have identified hotspots, but will not use them as an eligibility criterion. Others have not identified hotspots. In some cases the partnership has identified that there will be targeting of certain areas, though the definitions of the areas are vague and rely on a common understanding of localities rather than on statistical units. The approaches taken by the partnerships in regard to identifying geographical hotspots and the extent to which this determines service delivery and eligibility for Talent Match support is provided in Table 3.1 below. The difference in approaches to this issue is not surprising given the fact that interviews with partnership contacts uncovered some ambiguity as to whether or not identification of hotspots and/or targeting resources on these areas was a requirement of Big Lottery Fund funding. For those areas which have identified hotspots, whether or not they are used as a means of determining eligibility for the programme, and where it is possible to construct the areas using pre-defined geographical units, some data are reported.

Table 3.1: Talent Match Partnerships' approach to geographical targeting

TM partnership	Defined hotspots Y/N	Comments
Black Country	N	There are six target zones, but in practice this covers the majority of the LEP area.
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	N	Eight towns / cities are highlighted as areas where service will be physically located.
Coventry and Warwickshire	Y	The definitions for targeting are somewhat vague. Some wards have been identified and in addition some areas have been defined in non-statistical units. Only the ward level data have been selected until greater clarity can be established.
Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	Y	
Greater Birmingham and Solihull	Y	
Greater Lincolnshire	Y	
Greater Manchester	Y	
Humber	Y	
Leeds	Y	The approach varies across the partnership by LA. Geographical targeting is not being used in Leeds LA, but is being used in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.
Leicester and Leicestershire	Y	
Liverpool City Region	Y	
London	Y	
New Anglia	N	Four LAs have been identified as being in significant need of intervention.
North Eastern	N	A thematic rather than geographical focus is being followed.
Northamptonshire	Y	
Sheffield City Region	Y	
South East	N	There are target zones which cover all the LAs in the LEP.
Stoke and Staffordshire	N	A thematic rather than geographical focus is being followed.
Tees Valley	Y	
The Marches	N	Shropshire, which is part of the Marches LEP area will not be covered by TM activity.
Worcestershire	N	The business plan notes certain towns / cities and areas, but in practice there is no geographical targeting.

This section therefore presents data for three different geographies:

1. For the partnership area (LEP);
2. For “Talent Match Hotspots”, where applicable;
3. For England (for purposes of comparison).

Talent Match areas are defined in terms of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, which themselves are made up of Local Authority (LA) areas. LEPs vary greatly in terms of scale. The Marches LEP, for example, is comprised of three LAs whereas Greater Manchester LEP contains ten LAs. There is undoubted variation within partnership areas by LA on the various labour market indicators. Analysis of this variation may provide some interesting patterns, but these data are not reported here. This may be something which the national evaluation team looks at in future, but for pragmatic reasons, as much as anything, data are presented at LEP level for the partnership areas.

Further work may be done around the hotspot areas in future reporting. However, it should be noted that there are fewer indicators which are available at the hotspot area level. The main source of the indicators which are used to provide an overview of the labour market conditions is the Annual Population Survey (APS) which is not available at smaller geographical areas (i.e. not available at the ‘hotspot’ level). As a general rule, estimates based on smaller sample sizes have greater margins of error. This is something which should be kept in mind in interpreting the data.

The indicators presented are:

- Employment Rate
- Unemployment Rate
- Claimant Count
- Claimant Count aged 18-24
- Claimant Count aged 18-24, duration over one year
- DWP benefit claimants.

Some of the data are based on ‘census’ data of the relevant populations – that is they are actual (absolute) counts of all the people who comprise a particular category. Claimant count data for example are counts of the entire claimant population for Jobseekers’ Allowance (JSA). Other data are based on survey estimates.

From a technical point of view there will be a requirement to update the data periodically throughout the lifetime of Talent Match. The national evaluation team has committed to supplying six-monthly updates of the data workbooks to the Talent Match partnerships.

Data Limitations – what is not included

The most obvious area which is not covered in these profiles is vacancy data. Jobcentre Plus vacancy data were discontinued in November 2012 when the previous service was replaced by Universal Jobmatch (UJ). No official statistics on UJ have yet been published and it has been criticised as not being fit for purpose, with reports of multiple entries of the same job, erroneous entries and even “joke entries”. Until such time as a robust data series on vacancy data, which supplies estimates at smaller geographical levels, is produced, it is not possible to provide vacancy data. Vacancy data have been used for a long time as one of the main

indicators of labour market performance, hence it is disappointing that we do not have these.

Presentation and format of the data

Given that the partnership areas are of different sizes, it is not helpful to compare absolute figures for some of these indicators. For example it is of little help to know that the latest figures show that one LEP has twice as many JSA claimants as another, without knowing the relative sizes of the populations. For this reason we present claimant count rates, though because these figures are based on population estimates, they will have a margin of error associated with them, and estimates for smaller areas will have larger margins of error.

For future work it may be helpful to monitor change in some of these indicators since the start of the Talent Match programme. This could be done by indexing absolute data for Talent Match partnerships to the programme's start date. That date gives a value of 100 for all partnerships, and then monitoring the levels in relation to that points for the duration of the programme. This technique has the advantage of being based on absolute counts and not on population estimates.

There are however two main issues which may make this approach more complicated if it is used to compare partnerships:

1. Talent Match partnerships did not all 'start' at the same time. It is evident from the Common Data Framework (CDF) returns and from interviews with partnership contacts that partnerships had different lead in times to becoming operational. Over time it is not yet clear whether these differences will dissipate or whether longer-lead in times masked weaknesses around operational capability, which may affect performance.
2. Indexing to one point in time may be considered to place too much emphasis on that one point.

The data do help in understanding the particular challenges which may be faced by Talent Match participants in different areas. For example where Talent Match operates in more challenging labour markets it would not be reasonable to accept the same level of performance as where the labour market provides greater opportunities. The areas which have been selected as partnership areas and at hotspot level, where some of the partnerships are concentrating their efforts, may well have a long history of issues with worklessness. Expectations about labour market performance should be moderated by the local context.

Section one has outlined some of the key features of the UK labour market context, particularly with regard to the effects of the recession and the situation facing young people today. The data here which go down to Talent Match partnership area level show the degree to which there is variation in labour market profile across the areas, both in general and specifically for young people.

3.3. Local Labour Market Profiles

Employment Rates

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in England has consistently been above 70 per cent since December 2005. Even through the recession the employment rate remained largely resilient to the problems in the economy. This feature of the recent recession is in contrast to the employment effects of earlier recessions (see Chapter 1). The latest figure for employment rate in England is 71.9 per cent (March 2014).

The employment rate for England has been increasing steadily quarter on quarter since the low of 70.1 per cent in September 2011.

Across the partnerships, there is some considerable variation in the current employment rates as of March 2014. For example the LEP with the highest current employment rate is Worcestershire (77.6 per cent) and the LEP with the lowest rate is the neighbouring Black Country (65.6 per cent). Areas which include major urban centres and / or Northern areas tend to be the ones which show the lowest employment rates. By contrast those in the South East tend to show higher employment rates.

The chart shows the employment rates for the 21 Talent Match areas and for England (shown in black) from December 2005 to March 2014. This shows both the degree of change before, during and after the recession as well as the relative positions of the Talent Match areas throughout that time.

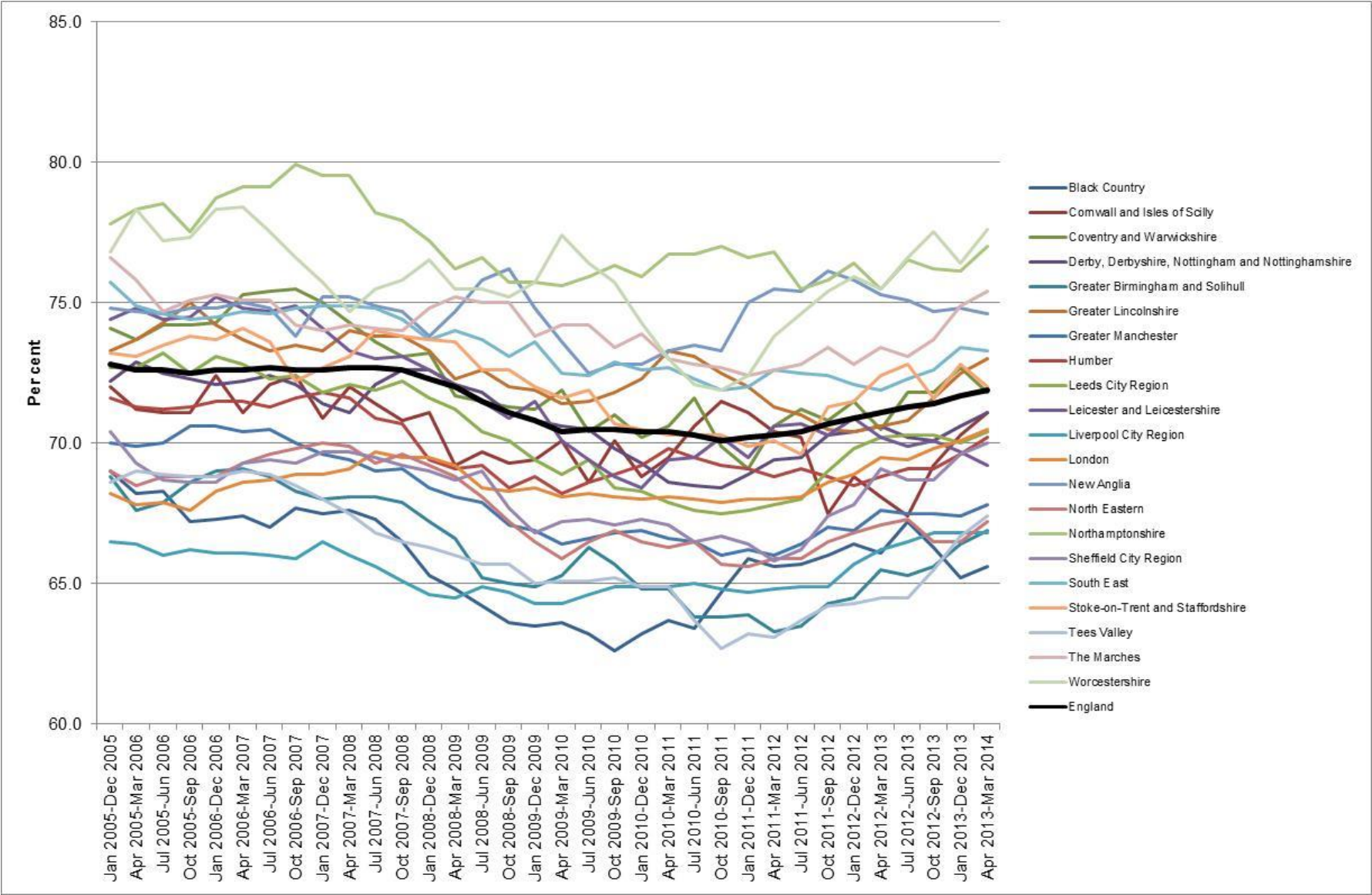
Unemployment Rates

The chart of unemployment rates for the Talent Match areas shows:

- the extent to which unemployment rates increased due to recession across the 21 Talent Match areas
- the extent to which Talent Match areas have recovered their pre-recession levels
- the timing of the recessionary effect in the 21 areas.

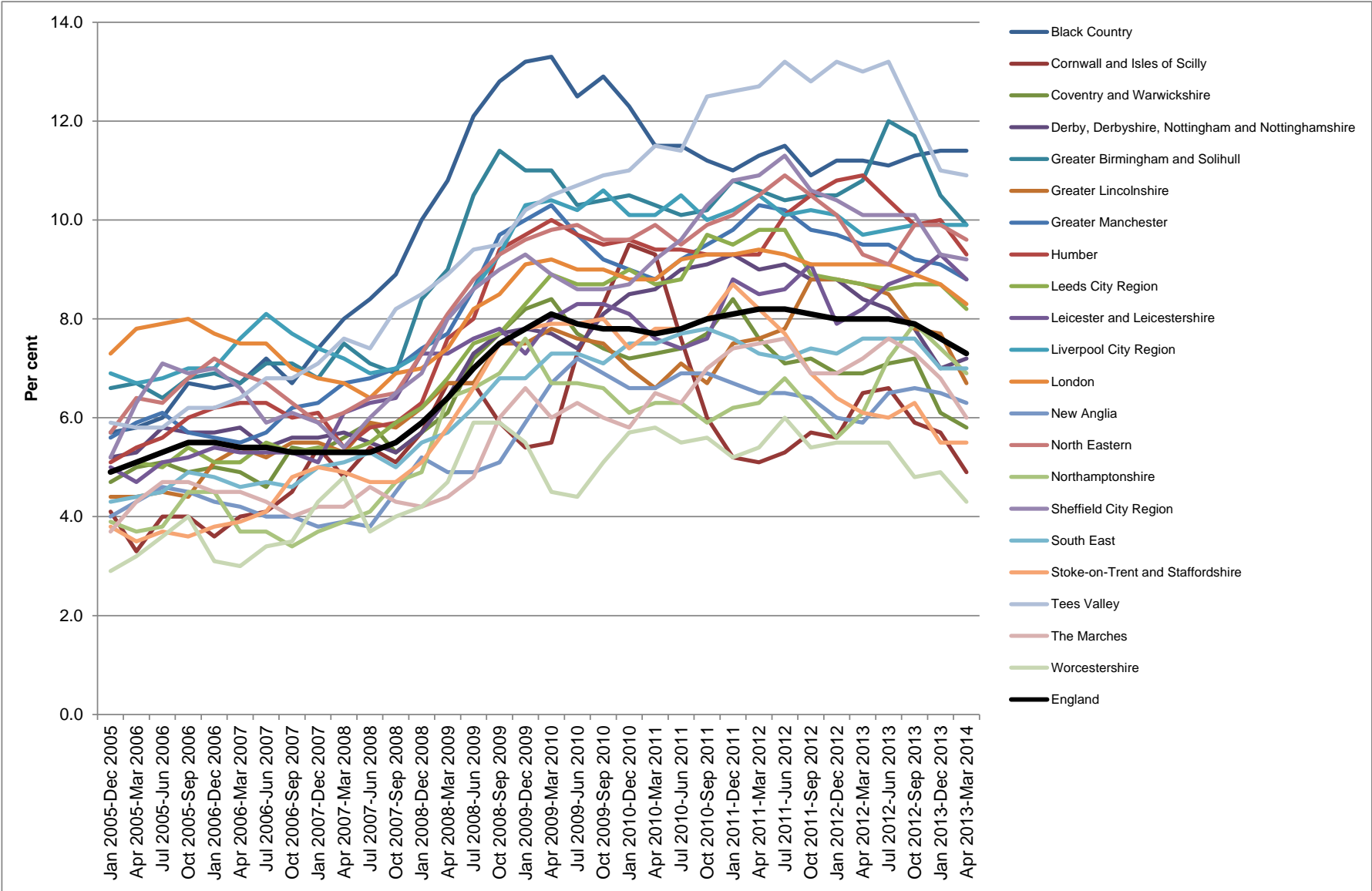
The data show that for example the recession hit harder in some areas than others. Greater Birmingham and Solihull, the Black Country and Tees Valley all show unemployment rate spikes at various times. The general trend is that the latest figures show that the unemployment rates have declined since the previous quarter, suggesting that the end of the recession is being translated into new job opportunities.

Figure 3.1: Employment Rate - Talent Match LEP Areas



Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.2: Unemployment Rate - Talent Match LEP Areas



Source: Annual Population Survey

Claimant Count Data

Claimant count data which disaggregate age and duration and which are reported here give the numbers as proportions of all age/durations. It is not reporting the proportion of claimants as a percentage of that population. It would be useful to know for example the proportion of 18-24 year olds who have been part of the claimant count for over one year, but this is not possible. Instead we have data for young people expressed as a proportion of the claimant count.

In our example this therefore shows the proportion of claimants who are 18-24 as a proportion of all JSA benefit claimants. These figures may give some indication of the difficulties faced by young people in entering the labour market, but they also may in part be a function of young people adapting their behaviours / choices in response to the labour market conditions. For example it has been argued that one response young people have taken to the poor labour market situation is to stay in education or training for longer, both as a means of acquiring better qualifications with which to find a job and to avoid entering the labour market at a particularly challenging time. See ACEVO (2012) for an example of this argument of young people substituting education for labour market entry.

Arguably this option is not so readily available for older age groups (i.e. 21-24 year olds), so the figures which show a decline in both the absolute numbers of young people in the claimant count and as a proportion of all in the claimant count may be in part due to the choices that young people have made to stay in education.

In recent times, benefit reforms have also increased the obligations on people claiming JSA (i.e. conditionality) and introduced tougher sanctions for those found not to be complying. It may be the case that the combined effects of these reforms have had a disproportionate effect on younger people.

The general trend is that 18-24 year olds are making up a smaller proportion of all JSA claimants than they were prior to and during the recession. The latest figures for England show that 18-24 year olds account for 23 per cent of all JSA claimants, which is low in the context of recent years. In the Talent Match areas the lowest proportion is found in the London LEP at 18.1 per cent. This is the only instance of a Talent Match area having a proportion below 22 per cent and reflects something of the special nature of the London labour market. The next lowest proportion is found in the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP at 22.0 per cent. The highest proportion is The Marches at 27.3 per cent.

However, as Sissons and Jones (2012) have pointed out, NEET numbers were on the rise before the recession took hold. Note that NEET does not necessarily mean that these people will be in receipt of benefits, hence claimant count data may not be the most appropriate indicator of the scale of the worklessness problem for young people. It would be helpful perhaps to present data on NEETs, but the figure produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) are not readily available at LEP level. Further work will be done to establish whether any data can be presented on this measure.

Economic Status

The charts for economic status show that the percentage of 18-24 year olds in employment varies considerably by Talent Match area. For example, the latest figures indicate that less than half of that age group in the Black Country (49.7 per cent) are in employment. By contrast the figure in Northamptonshire is 71.1 per cent. The time line for England shows that there has been a gradual decline in the

percentage in employment, though since March 2010 the figure has been fairly stable around 56 or 57 per cent.

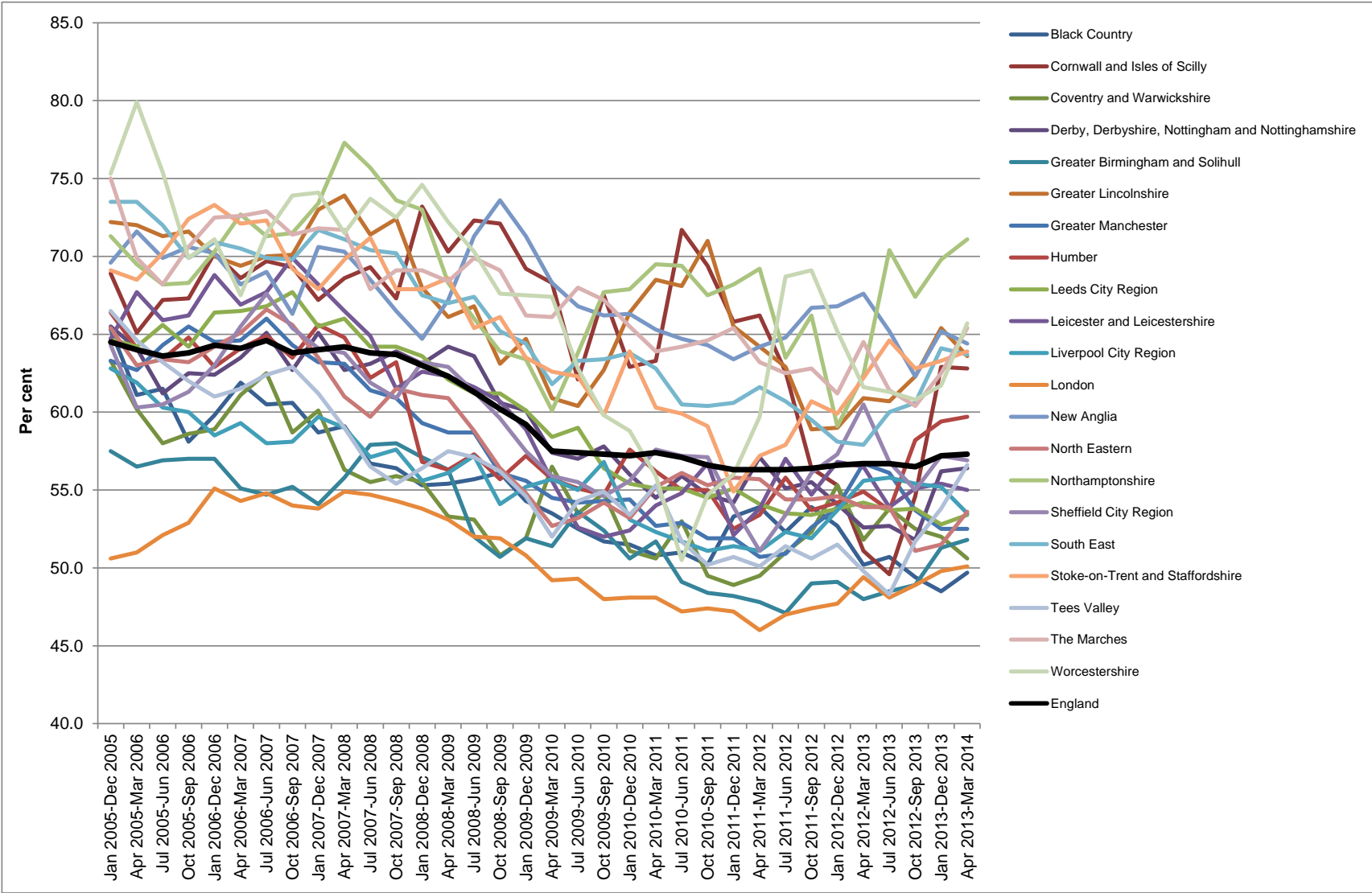
Note that these figures are not calculated in the same way as the employment rate, so cannot provide a direct comparison. These figures use the 18-24 year old population in each geography as the denominator. Therefore the denominator includes those who are not economically active, which in the case of young people is most likely to be those who are still in education. Similarly the percentage of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed is not calculated in the same way as the unemployment rate. As above, the effect of including more categories in the denominator than for unemployment rate results in lower proportions. With that in mind, it is still instructive to compare the overall unemployment rate with the percentage of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed.

Looking firstly at the proportion of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed, what is striking is the degree of volatility in the measure, partly due to small sample sizes for the smaller, more rural localities. For example, the current figure for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly is six per cent, yet at its highest was 22.7 per cent (December 2010). Similarly for Northamptonshire, the figure was 15.8 per cent in December 2012, whereas the latest figure is 4.1 per cent. Generally the data show a gradual increase on this measure, since the start of the time series, though the latest figures show drops in the proportion in many of the Talent Match areas. As noted though, these measures are subject to decisions which young people are making, that is whether to try to find employment or whether to stay in education. The figures will also mask either more considerable falls at small geographic levels or the persistence of unemployment in some neighbourhoods. This is where available data and local knowledge need to be allied. Finally, APS based data are subject to quite wide ranging confidence intervals between LEPs; that is, data on LEPs with smaller populations, such as Northamptonshire or Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, will be subject to greater numbers of confidence intervals.

Comparing these figures with the overall unemployment rate, it is apparent that the proportions are higher for the overall measure than for the 18-24 age group, which does indicate that the labour market may be more challenging for them. It should also be noted that the ranking of the Talent Match areas between the two measures is fairly consistent. In other words, areas which have higher overall unemployment rates tend to also have higher proportions of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed.

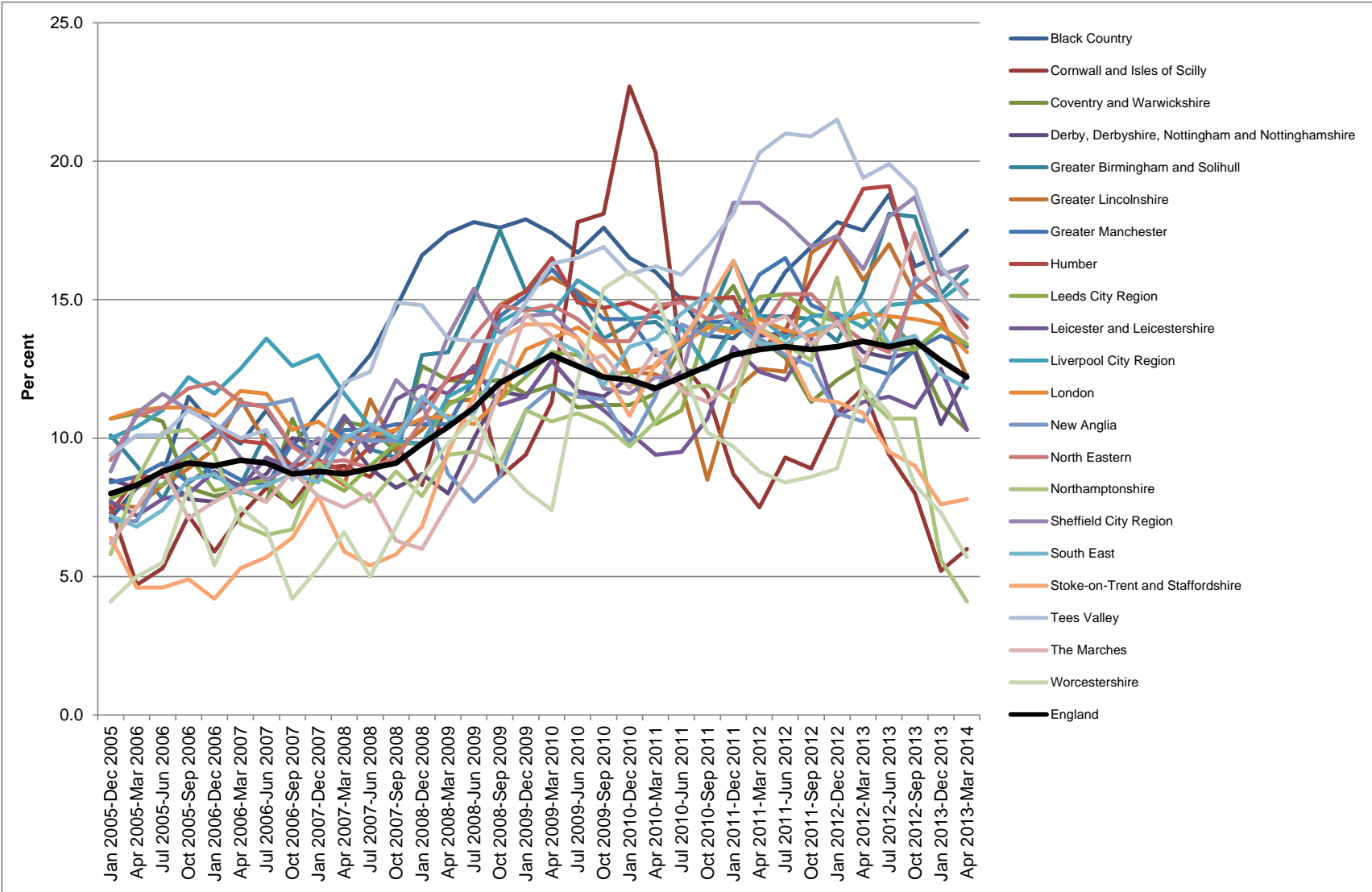
The economic status data also show that the proportion of 18-24 year olds in full time education has increased. This provides some evidence to support the hypothesis that young people are choosing to study for further qualifications or stay in education for longer in response to the perceived limited opportunities in the labour market as well as being part of a longer term trend of increasing participation in post-compulsory education.

Figure 3.3: 18-24 Year olds in Employment



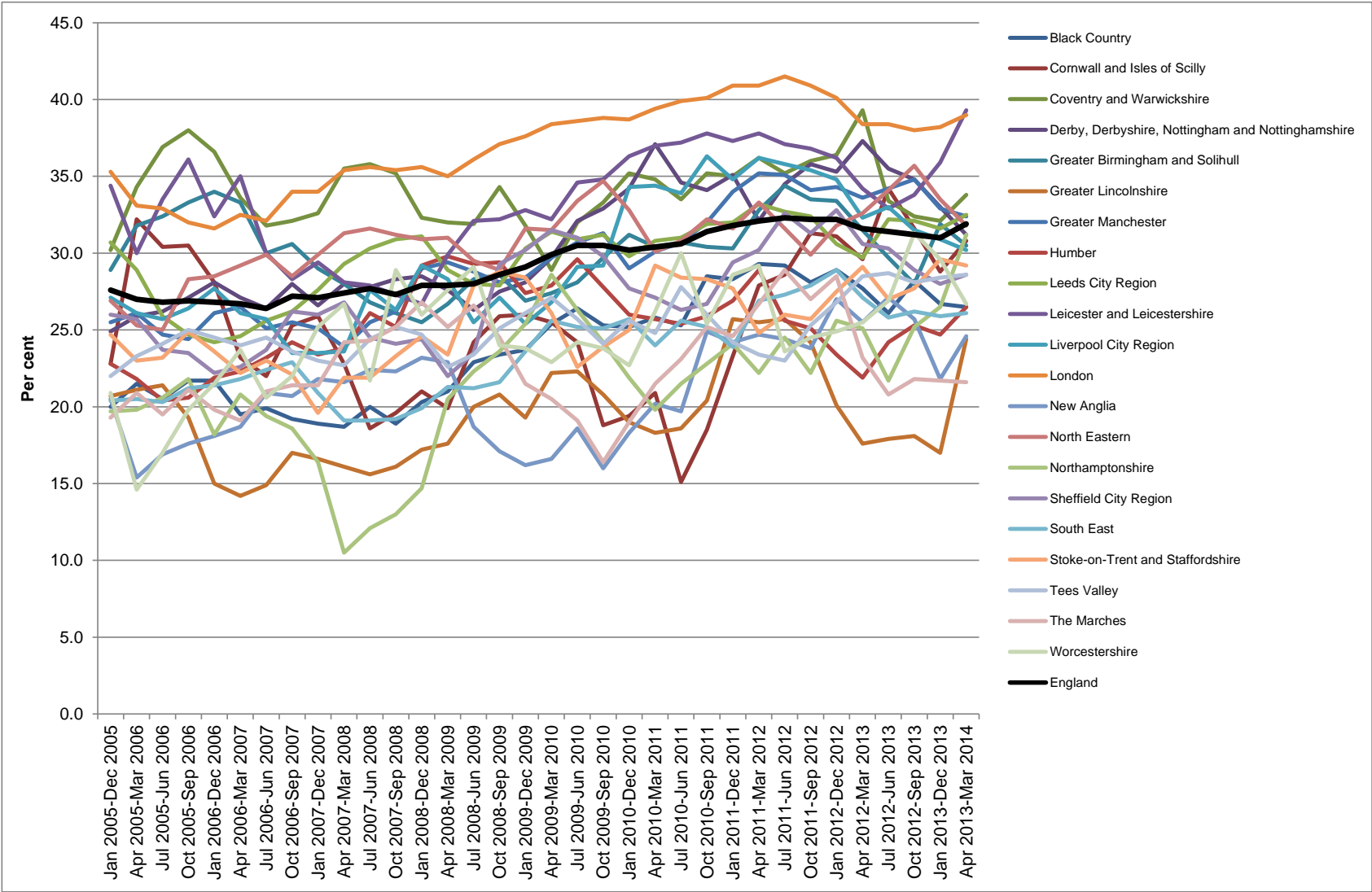
Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.4: 18-24 Year olds Unemployed



Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.5: 18-24 Year olds in Full Time Education



Source: Annual Population Survey

DWP Benefit data for those aged under 25

DWP benefit data are based on absolute numbers rather than survey estimates (i.e. a 100 per cent sample). The latest data available for this dataset, at the time of writing, are for November 2013, though data for February 2014 are due for publication in August 2014.

The data are broken down by the three main benefit categories (Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit (ESA/IB), and Income Support for lone parents (IS)). Over the period covered by the time series (February 2006 to latest) there have been significant reforms to the benefits system relating to eligibility, conditionality and sanctions; the changes are summarised in section one. It is therefore not necessary to repeat the detail, but taken together these reforms have made claiming IS and ESA/IB more difficult because of restrictions to eligibility, and JSA claimants are subject to greater conditionality which is underpinned by a tougher sanctions regime, whereby benefits can be reduced, suspended or withdrawn for non-compliance. Of course one of the effects of the eligibility restrictions on the two traditionally 'non-active' benefits (ESA/IB and IS) may be to move people into claiming JSA when they are ill-equipped to meet the demands of the benefit's conditionality.

The overall effect of these reforms would suggest that even without other changes to the labour market happening, reductions would be expected in some of the benefit levels and rises in others. It might also be expected that some of these changes will be more likely to hit younger claimants (such as young lone parents) as well as certain other groups. It is beyond the scope of the work here to investigate some of these ideas in greater depth. The figures for out-of-work benefit claimants aged under 25 show that the current levels for England have not been lower since May 2008.

Of the three main out of work benefits JSA shows greater fluctuations due to the nature of its claimant base. The JSA count peaked at 485,000 in late 2011, compared with the latest figure of just a shade under 220,000. To give further context the lowest level in the time series was for November 2007 at just over 190,000. Of course these recent reductions may be due to improvements in the labour market resulting in more jobs, decisions taken by young people to pursue full time education, young people being sanctioned and removed from the benefits system or young people choosing not to claim benefits.

Evidence has been presented to indicate some support for the idea that more young people are making the choice to continue with education in response to lower levels of opportunities in the labour market. With these data it is impossible to tell how many young people have dropped out of the system as a result of the combination of poorer labour market opportunities coupled with a stricter benefits regime. These are the sorts of people which Talent Match should be seeking to pick up (i.e. hidden workless) and to help get closer to the labour market.

NEETs

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides estimates of the level of young persons aged 18 to 24 years who are NEET using information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). These data consider a young person to be in education or training if they:

- are doing an apprenticeship
- are on Government employment or training programmes

- are working towards a qualification
- have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks
- are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for the term to (re)start.

The NEET estimates are calculated by first deriving a variable to distinguish those in employment or training from those who are not then cross-tabulating this against economic status.

The data estimate that there were 728,000 NEETs aged 18 to 24 year olds in England in the first quarter of 2014: 15.4 per cent of all 18 to 24 year olds. This number is down from the recent high in quarter 3 for 2011 when 1,034,000 18 to 24 year olds were NEET (21.5 per cent).

Table 3.2 presents the number of NEETs in the first quarter of 2014 by region. The largest absolute numbers of NEETs were located within the North West (118,000), the West Midlands (100,000) and London (92,000). In terms of rates of NEETs, the West Midlands (20.3 per cent) had the highest rate followed by the three northern regions: the North East (19.1 per cent), the North West (17.6 per cent) and Yorkshire and the Humber (15.9 per cent).

Table 3.2: NEET 18 to 24 year olds in England; Quarter 1 2014

	Number	Percentage of total	Percentage of 18 to 24 year olds
North West	118,000	16.2	17.6
West Midlands	100,000	13.7	20.3
London	92,000	12.6	13.4
Yorks & Humber	88,000	12.1	15.9
South East	85,000	11.7	11.9
East of England	73,000	10.0	15.4
East Midlands	64,000	8.8	15.7
South West	57,000	7.8	12.7
North East	51,000	7.0	19.1
England	728,000	100.0	15.4

Source: /Labour Force Survey

The proportion of 18 to 24 year old NEETs who were female (56.0 per cent) is higher than their male equivalents (44 per cent).

Estimates of the labour market status of 18 to 24 year old NEETs reveal:

- 24.6 per cent were classified as ILO unemployed for less than six months
- 27.2 per cent were ILO unemployed for more than six months
- 17.6 per cent were economically inactive but wanted a job
- 30.6 per cent were economically inactive but did not want a job
- of inactive 18 to 24 year olds: 50 per cent were looking after family/home and 25 per cent were long term sick or disabled.

This section has presented some of the key labour market information available at the partnership area level. The data are included to illustrate the degree of variation

across and, where possible, within partnerships. The final part introduces some of the challenges of measuring change using labour market data.

3.4. Concentrations of Youth Worklessness

Talent Match Hotspots

As noted above, Talent Match partnerships have adopted different approaches to geographical targeting. The differences in these approaches will need to be clarified by the national evaluation team. It should be noted that the approach taken by a partnership at the start of the programme may not be the one which is operating at the end of the programme. There is a need to continue to monitor the approaches. The likely direction of any change over the programme's life is clear. For example, a partnership which started with a tight definition of geographical targeting may have decided over time to relax the rules with the hope of achieving greater numbers.

It is straightforward to differentiate between areas which have identified hotspots and those which have not. It is less easy to know what it means in different areas which have hotspots. The following approaches may have been taken, all representing different operational approaches:

1. Hotspots are defined as the most deprived wards, so it is expected that the majority of the Talent Match clients will come from these areas;
2. Hotspots are defined as the most deprived wards, so the majority of activity will be organised in these areas;
3. All Talent Match clients need to be resident in the hotspot areas in order to be eligible for the programmes' assistance.

Defining geographical areas and availability of data

For some partnerships the areas have been defined by common understandings of areas, or in some cases by housing estates. In these instances we do not yet have enough information to extract data for these areas. For this reason, a complete set of hotspot data are not provided. Instead the discussion below uses some data from hotspot areas to illustrate concentrations of worklessness.

In addition to instances where some partnerships have defined areas as 'commonly understood localities', partnerships have also used different geographical units to define the areas. Hotspots have, in the majority of cases, been defined by partnerships in terms of wards. However, different definitions of wards are available. The majority of data are available at 2003 CAS ward. Data are not so readily available for 2005 or 2009 statistical wards. Where Talent Match partnerships have defined areas in terms of 2005 or 2009 statistical wards, this presents a problem in terms of providing the same information across the partnerships. For this reason and where this is the case the national evaluation team have used look-up tables to define the areas in terms of CAS wards. This mapping exercise is an approximation rather than an exact match. Further discussion with partnerships may be required to ensure that these areas are the best fit for the intended hotspot areas (if indeed the hotspots are being used to define Talent Match eligibility).

Hotspot area data

APS data are not available for lower level geographies such as the hotspot areas. Data which are available for hotspots are claimant count data and DWP benefit data. Due to how data are supplied, it is difficult to present information which shows concentrations of young people's worklessness. A method is suggested for how

young people's worklessness can be tracked as the Talent Match programme evolves.

The most straightforward way to compare hotspot ward data with the wider LEP area is to compare rates for the two areas. However, when disaggregating claimant count data to isolate young people, rates are suppressed which makes comparison more difficult. Using the claimant count data for all age groups indicates that the rate in hotspots is typically around double that for the entire area. For example the latest data for the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire area show that the overall claimant count for the LEP is 2.6 per cent, compared with 5.5 per cent in the hotspot areas. Similarly for Tees Valley the rate in the LEP is 4.5 per cent and 8.8 per cent for the hotspot areas. The claimant count data for young people in these areas are likely to be significantly worse than for all age groups; claimant count data for all ages are likely to be a poor proxy for the specific challenge faced by young people. The data also masks the fact that, for certain wards, there will be much higher claimant levels than for others within the same Talent Match partnership. That is, hotspots areas themselves are heterogeneous.

Similarly there are issues with DWP benefit data when trying to look at specific age groups. The data allow those aged 16-24 to be defined for analysis, but rates are not expressed as proportions of the 16-24 population, but as proportions of the 16-64 population. Comparison across areas is therefore more difficult as the age profiles within the hotspot areas are not known. It is also more difficult to compare benefit claimant rates within the same partnership across age groups. Comparison within areas is easier as the data allow identification of where there have been changes in the 16 to 24 year old benefit population. However this can also be identified by the raw count data, rather than having to rely on proportions. Given issues with data, it may be sensible for future reporting to use a method which indexes young people's claimant count and benefit data to the start of the Talent Match programme. For example claimant data for 16-24 year olds and for all ages could be indexed for hotspots to 100 for the start of the programme. Tracking this over time would allow the relative performance of the 16-24 age group in the hotspot areas to be measured against the total population.

Lessons for Big Lottery

The discussion regarding geographical targeting highlights the tensions between allowing partnerships to determine their own approaches and the sponsor's desire to have a particular issue addressed across all the partnerships. As noted, the interviews with partnership contacts revealed differences as to whether geographical targeting was required. Past experience on such matters has indicated that in such circumstances it is far better for the sponsor to be directive. This gives the best chance of ensuring that an issue is tackled and / or a particular approach is followed.

3.5. Conclusion

This section summarises some of the main challenges and issues relating to measurement of success of the Talent Match programme. Some of the points could be applied to other cases of labour market intervention, but are nevertheless valid here. Some relate specifically to the Talent Match example and the client base with which Talent Match partnerships will work with over the period of the programme.

- Aggregate level data for the whole LEP areas do not isolate Talent Match participants; individual level data would be preferable. This will partly be picked up by the individual longitudinal level tracking which will be done for a sample of individuals in a small set of Talent Match areas. The issue with having only

aggregate level data relates to Talent Match coverage, attribution and interventions received, which are discussed in greater detail below.

- Talent Match only covers a small section of the workless population so even in the case of the intervention being incredibly successful, it would still be difficult to detect the effect from aggregate data. The numbers which the partnerships have predicted they will support, whilst proportionate to their means and the aims of the programme, are only a fraction of the workless population for their areas. Detecting an aggregate effect from this is therefore difficult.
- Given the proliferation of services and support mechanisms which operate in other areas, it is difficult to identify an obvious counterfactual. One way in which the effect of Talent Match could be detected is by comparing with a predicted outcome which would have occurred in its absence. However constructing that counterfactual is far from straightforward.
- Construction of comparison groups is hampered by some of the same issues. It is not easy to identify who might form a suitable comparison group, either within one Talent Match area or in another geographical location.
- There are margins of error associated with survey data and population estimates (for measuring employment rates and benefit proportions) which mean that “changes” in aggregate data may be a result of measurement error.
- The target population may be difficult to pick up using these official measures. At least part of the challenge for Talent Match is locating and helping people who are outside the ‘mainstream’. These sorts of people, by their nature, will not be appearing in benefit statistics for example.
- Large areas will and do have pockets of higher worklessness. Aggregate data do not indicate the degree of variation within a larger area. Data from hotspots may pick up some of the changes which have happened in the areas with the highest levels of worklessness, however these have not been identified by all of the areas. Moreover, where hotspots have been defined the way that they have been defined has not been consistent. For example if partnerships had all defined hotspots as the ten per cent of worst performing wards as measured by the out of work benefit rates, then there could have been some measurement of the degree to which the situation in these wards changes compared with the rest of the partnership area. The situation is also complicated because hotspots mean different things for different partnerships in terms of eligibility and allocation of resource. Nevertheless, for individual partnerships which have identified hotspot areas some work can be done to illustrate the labour market changes in those areas compared with the wider partnership area.
- The issue of pockets of worklessness highlights the importance of scale of measurement, and the possibility that some areas will suffer more than others from issues of spatial mismatch between the supply of and demand for labour. If and when suitably robust vacancy data become available the match between supply and demand at different scales can be mapped.
- Although the target population may not and should not be receiving support from other providers without the Talent Match framework, it may be the case that individuals have received support prior to Talent Match or concurrently which has had more impact on an eventual job outcome. In such circumstances attribution of the outcome to Talent Match activity is uncertain. In short it is difficult to say that the outcome is related to a specific intervention when an individual may have received numerous types of support and guidance.
- It is difficult to assess in employment support programmes whether outcomes which are observed are ones which would have happened anyway or whether the outcome is additional. In this case, Talent Match clients may be helped into

work at the expense of other (young) people who are workless. Again this points to difficulties in assessing outcomes using aggregate level data. Of course in such situations the person being supported into work by Talent Match may not have found work without that assistance.

- Given the particular nature of the Talent Match programme with the focus on “hidden NEETs”, it is more than conceivable that a move closer to the labour market for an individual is evidenced by that individual moving from not claiming out of work benefits to claiming out of work benefits. In the situation where a young person was disengaged and not receiving any support, part of the support which might be secured through engaging with Talent Match might be an ‘income maximisation’ strategy whereby the young person is encouraged to claim JSA (or other appropriate out of work benefit) in order to give some stability and structure to their lives.
- There is temptation when figures are reported to use them as a basis for comparison of partnerships’ performance – i.e. to determine which partnerships are performing better than others. There will be differences in performance levels between the partnerships, but the aggregate figures are not the best indicator of this. Partnerships have different starting points, different client groups and different local labour market conditions to contend with. It should be noted that the purpose of the national evaluation is, in any case, to evaluate the programme and determine what works, and not the relative performance of the individual partnerships.

4

Partnership: approaches to programme design and delivery

Summary

This section of the report explores the role partnership has played in the development and delivery of the Talent Match programme. The outcome of the design and development phase of the programme is the emergence of four very different types of lead organisation:

- National VCS organisations such as the Prince's Trust
- Local 'infrastructure' organisations (e.g. CVSs)
- Local specialist VCS organisations
- Consortia based organisations.

In all cases a key feature of partnerships has been the involvement of young people. Not only has this taken many novel forms (from involvement in groups, establishment of panels to wider consultation), but it is the move from initial engagement through to genuine co-design and co-delivery which marks Talent Match out from other programmes. Approaches in many cases have broken new ground and will require further exploration over time.

The commitment of 'core' partners to the programme is noticeable in nearly all areas. Whilst partnerships vary in size, reflecting programme size, geography and existing structures, core partners typically made commitments to the programme in excess of the funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

Partnerships tend to be operating at two levels, strategically to inform the coordination of a diverse array of funding and also in delivery. However, there is quite considerable variation in the level of strategic involvement.

This is a key challenging ground for the Talent Match programme. The buy-in of organisations beyond a core group varies. In particular, some partnerships have the strong involvement of LEPs, whilst in others this is far weaker or even tokenistic. Similarly, employer involvement is recognised by many as an area where further progress is needed, especially now that the programme is 'live'. The alignment, coordination, and joint working with national programmes, notably the Work Programme and the Youth Contract are areas for close observation.

The role of the Big Lottery Fund was viewed positively by all partnerships, although many raised some particular concerns: notably around the length of the programme design and development phase; and the importance of consistency in terms of the focus of the programme. There were seen to be lessons to draw here for other strategic investment programmes.

Finally, partnerships very helpfully suggested some areas for development in the coming year. These included further support from the Big Lottery Fund, the role of the evaluation team in disseminating evidence, and the role of partnerships themselves in sharing good practice.

4.1. Introduction

This section of the report explores the role partnership has played in the development and delivery of the Talent Match programme. In the guidance for the programme, the Big Lottery Fund, clearly set out some of the principles which would underpin the programme:

- partnerships would be led by voluntary and community sector organisations
- young people would be active in the design and delivery of the programme
- partnerships would operate at a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) level, recognising the growing importance of LEPs to economic development, including employment and skills agendas
- partnerships would engage key stakeholder organisations, notably Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers
- employers would be engaged in the partnerships.

The decision of the Big Lottery Fund to focus on youth unemployment hotspots and to invite applications from specified LEP areas were important key features in shaping how partnerships formed.

This section is structured around the key stages set out above. The section is based on qualitative interviews with lead organisations and young people in the partnerships and from a survey of partnership leads. The qualitative interviews largely took place between December 2013 and February 2014 and the partnership survey in spring 2014. We recognise that for many partnerships this was a period of intense activity, involving the recruitment of new staff, engagement or commissioning of delivery organisations and in setting up governance arrangements for delivery.

4.2. Design and Development

Organisations involved and lead organisations

The Big Lottery Fund required local areas to identify a lead organisation. Approaches locally varied; in some cases there was a more obvious lead organisation, whilst in others this was done through a process of deliberation and discussion. At the same time local areas were establishing 'shadow' partnership structures to develop proposals for funding. The outcome of this phase was the emergence of four different types of lead organisation:

- *National VCS organisations*, in particular the lead role played by the Prince's Trust in five areas (New Anglia, South East, Tees Valley, Leicester and Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire), the Wise Group (North East) and Worcestershire (Shaw Trust)
- *Local 'infrastructure' organisations* (e.g. CVSs) in areas including Stoke and Staffordshire, Greater Manchester, Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire, and The Marches
- *Local specialist VCS organisations* including Cornwall, Northamptonshire, London, Sheffield City Region, Liverpool City Region, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire
- *Consortia based organisations*, including Humber and Leeds City Region.

At face value these organisations bring very different capacities and capabilities to bear on the programme. As some acknowledged in interviews, their strengths were different, either in having specialist expertise in the involvement of young people, extensive experience the delivery of employment programmes, their connection with the local VCS or their national remit. The scale of the organisations also varied. An observation at this stage is that it will be interesting to track the evolution of these different sets of partnerships over the duration of the programme.

The scale of resources allocated to partnerships also shaped their approach to partnership involvement, some being deliberately broader than others. Most interviewees also reflected on two roles of partnership: *strategy* and *delivery*.

Most partnerships attempted to retain a relatively tight strategic partnership with relatively few partners. An example here is Greater Manchester which was led by GMCVO and included the LEP, two private sector organisations and New Economy. In contrast Worcestershire deliberately set out to involve organisations on partnerships with specific expertise in engaging NEETS, for instance involving a homeless charity.

Geography clearly played a part in the composition of partnerships. Areas which included many local authority areas had, understandably, larger numbers of organisations. Examples here included London, Sheffield City Region and the Black Country. The latter two observed that this was a challenge of the programme and there were risks in being "pulled in many directions".

However, partner interviews also recognised the key role the lead partner played in all cases. This was not always straightforward, but one which was largely accepted.

There were some other notable features of partnership working:

- *Involvement of LEPs*. This varied considerably and took different forms. It ranged from no, or token, involvement (one interviewee remarked about the 'empty seat' for the LEP) to more active involvement.
- *Involvement of Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers*. All partnerships had some contact with these, although engagement varied and generally there was some caution. A common observation was that in a Work Programme provider RAG (Red, Amber, Green) risk assessment, Talent Match beneficiaries were red or amber and not their main focus.
- *Involvement of Employers*. This varied and was understandably not straightforward. Most partnerships engaged local Chambers of Commerce or Employer Federations, with some involving local or national firms.

These issues in part reflected the two stances partnerships took: either as groups of organisations which would operate at a strategic level to coordinate employment and skills action and working to coordinate other funding streams; or as deliverers of the programme through a series of projects. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages but may be features which influence programme outcomes. The lack of involvement of LEPs in some partnerships should be a concern to the Big Lottery Fund. However, it should be noted that the set-up of Talent Match coincided with that of the LEPs, most of which at this time had limited resources to engage in programmes such as Talent Match.

Involvement of Young People

All partnerships recognised this as the key distinguishing feature of the Talent Match programme. In the design phase of the programme three broad (and overlapping) approaches to engagement were taken:

- involvement of young people on the main partnership group and sub-groups
- formation of a young people's consultative panel
- wider consultation with young people.

This description of the forms of engagement does not do justice to the activities which occurred in the development of the programme: in the majority of cases partnerships developed an array of creative, innovative and genuinely young people-led approaches to shape the programme. An example of involvement of young people in the development of the London Youth-led proposal included a Youth Board whose members:

- attended meetings
- helped to draw up the short list of partner delivery organisations
- informed the design of the programme
- were involved in partnership away-events and meetings with external organisations (e.g. an Employer's breakfast).

It was observed that the 20 members of the Youth Board reflected the diversity of the target groups for the programme in London but also that the board had developed a strong collective ethos. As one interviewee noted: "*each member feels they have contributed something*". The boxed example below outlines the series of themes that inform the design of interventions.

London Talent Match Partnership: design themes

- **Individual:** recognising young people are brilliant and unique
- **Youth-led:** involving young people in planning and delivery
- **Connected:** helping young people create positive and useful networks
- **Fun:** using the youth-led approach
- **Owned:** young people taking responsibility for themselves and their own career goals
- **Real life:** employability training based on the current job market
- **Test and learn:** helping organisations prove what they do works
- **Partnership based:** long term relationships that will continue after the funding has ended.

This approach recognised the heterogeneity and diversity of young people, the barriers they may face and the contribution they could make to the programme.

Partnerships worked with both pre-existing young people's groups but also formed their own where necessary. Importantly, partnerships appeared to dedicate appropriate resources to engaging young people, and this was a strong feature of organisations with a long track record of working with young people. Typically it was

reflected at different levels, in the ethos and governance of lead organisations (young person engagement was almost second nature), to staff with expertise in engaging different groups, to the role of young people as staff and volunteers in organisations.

This of course was challenging ground for many partnerships and the following observations were made:

- *Engagement of young people on formal partnership groups* needed careful consideration, appropriate capacity building (for both young people and representatives from stakeholder organisations) but also a willingness to change established approaches to running partnership groups.
- *Maintaining involvement of formal groups over time but also between the phases of the programme:* one partnership reported that its youth panel started with ten members and now had six. Partnerships recognised the need to replenish and refresh young people's panels over the course of the programme.
- *Challenge and debate around ideas:* one partnership lead had challenged quite strongly the proposal from a young people's panel for 'youth coaches' based on their experience of previous programmes.

Interviews with young people and lead organisations also revealed a further novel dimension of the programme. Youth-led involvement has traditionally focused on people under the age of 18 and not on adults. This was reflected in two broad approaches being taken by partnerships, in part reflecting their traditional focus:

- youth involvement based approaches often developed with younger groups but applied to 18-24 year olds (e.g. mentoring, including peer mentoring)
- 'employment first' approaches based much more on labour market interventions and associated with partnerships with a strong track record of employment programmes (e.g. information, advice and guidance and training).

This aspect appears a real testing ground for the programme, partly in the sustainability of both approaches throughout the programme's life course, but also in which approach is most effective.

Involvement of Employers

All partnership interviewees raised the importance of engagement with employers. Nonetheless, it was found to be an area of considerable variation between the partnerships, and an area some observed had been a difficult one.

The main observation made by many was that it is unhelpful to think of employers as a single group. A more nuanced approach was required which was carefully developed by some partnerships. In the design and development phases most partnerships had sought to engage employers in the following ways:

- through local Chambers of Commerce or Employer Federations
- through involving one or two business 'leaders' on steering groups. These came from large and small firms. In the Black Country for example the co-chair of the partnership was from the private sector
- through organisations such as Business in the Community
- through LEPs and in particular through the strategic sectors LEPs prioritise for investment

- through the long established networks of lead organisations (for example the Prince's Trust led partnerships and the Wise Group in the North East).

Beyond this group of business representatives who were keen to engage in the programme at a strategic level, most partnerships recognised that employers would be engaged once the programme was 'live'. As an interviewee in the Humber observed, *"employers will engage once they seen something credible"*.

The area of employer involvement was seen by some to be challenging. Many recognised the need for business 'champions' to celebrate the benefits of the programme once the programme was live. Others were aware of the importance of demand-led approaches, including in-work support and near-work mentoring which involved employers. The role of apprenticeships was seen as an important part of unlocking employer engagement, and again, requiring work alongside other programmes and providers.

Role of the Big Lottery Fund

Partnerships were generally very grateful and appreciative of the support and assistance they had received throughout the design and development phase. One interviewee stated that the Big Lottery Fund was *"really important in the initial phases"* and that the Adviser [supporting their partnership] *"understood what we were doing, and was very responsive"*. Also cited was the local support of Big Advisers which was deemed to have worked very well in most partnerships and was described as "fantastic" in one case.

A dedicated development lead was often cited as instrumental, and even "critical", to the development of projects, especially where there had been continuity in terms of Big Advisers. Several respondents spoke of the important dual role of Advisers in terms of reassuring and prompting partnerships on the one hand, but also challenging and critiquing them on the other. As one respondent noted:

"The support we received from stage one through to prospectus was absolutely critical. They brought a level of critique to the process and guided and encouraged" (partnership lead)

One interviewee noted how the Big Lottery Fund were seen as an active member of the steering group and helped the Partnership recognise the value of employer engagement and youth involvement. It was stated that the partnership would have engaged employers anyway, but may not have had as prominent a focus on young people's involvement without the steer from the Big Lottery Fund. It was also noted that the Big Lottery Fund have also increasingly *"practised what they preached"* in terms of partnership working and have been *"open in their communication...it's all about making things better"*.

One respondent also spoke positively about the fact that they were essentially given free rein to propose what was best for their local area, and there was no sense of the Big Lottery Fund having an agenda, or predetermined ideas about what they should do.

Specific help cited from the Big Lottery Fund included:

- drafting partnership agreements
- easing the transition to a change of lead organisations
- helping and ensuring the engagement of employers
- reaffirming the focus on youth involvement.

Partnerships did however raise some concerns with the role of the Big Lottery Fund. A common concern was the duration of the *development phase* with one respondent noting that the time from initial bid to "*going live was ridiculously long*". Typically this was between 18 months and two years in length. Some specific issues raised around this included:

- the longer development phase meant that partnerships had to commit considerably more time to Talent Match than they had intended, and this was beyond the resources provided as a development grant
- retaining involvement of young people over a long development period was seen as a challenge and also raised the risk of raising hopes too soon
- it was noted that communication could have been quicker, with responses to questions seemingly too prolonged in some cases
- rapid changes in the local and national economy threatened to render some plans redundant before the programme had started.

Many respondents, with experience of grant funding, noted that these are well known concerns and issues with grant funding, especially for programmes of this scale. Nonetheless, some suggested that it is an issue which the Big Lottery Fund and other grant providers need to consider.

Although the personal and local approach of the Big Advisers was welcomed, it was noted that their role was sometimes hampered by changes in the guidance for the programme (sometimes in response to issues raised by a partnership). It was noted that Talent Match was a complex programme and one of the Big Lottery's first to directly focus on labour market issues. A reflection from one partnership was that the programme did evolve, not least in terms of its relationship with government programmes such as the Work Programme.

Specific issues raised around the relationship between the Work Programme and Talent Match included: how partnerships could work with people mandated onto the Work Programme; a clearer steer from DWP centrally to Work Programme prime providers to engage with the programme; and specifically the clarification during the development phase around the counting of beneficiaries (i.e. outcomes) on both programmes.

A specific outcome of these tensions was seen to be the shift in focus on the Talent Match programme to 'hidden NEETs' and away from the more generic long term unemployed.

These are important issues which in part reflect the development by the Big Lottery Fund of a strategic investment approach to funding, requiring a range of features from user involvement, partnership working and additionality (i.e. non-duplication).

Understanding Context and Local Labour Market Intelligence

Interviewees reflected on the local context in which their projects had been developed. Many felt that this had helped them design and develop projects which would be additional to previous support. Some felt that their partnership was in fact well established but what was novel was the involvement of young people in the process.

Many partnerships commented that these features helped give a very clear direction to the projects from an early stage. Examples here included:

- the service user-led approach meant that the gap was not the provision itself but the peer-led support to help navigate services (Humber and Greater Manchester)
- to avoid replicating what the mainstream was already doing, including for the good reason that it was "turning young people off" (Black Country)
- providing an intensity to support for young people which was missing in mainstream provision. In particular personalised one-to-one support for hard-to-reach groups sustained over a longer period (Worcestershire).

As discussed above, this led to a range of projects which were seen to be novel and additional to their particular areas. The following were cited most often:

- widespread support of mentoring to build trust with young people and guide them through existing provision
- a balance between area-based and thematic approaches to build support around particular target groups. Both were seen in different cases to have merit and were not mutually exclusive
- the importance of outreach either in particular areas, or with particular groups, to engage and build trust with those furthest from the labour market
- offering a flexible and personalised approach
- allocation of budgets for young people led or commissioned projects.

Ultimately partnerships reflected that they needed to make choices around what could be funded and what would help achieve the output and jobs targets. The use of labour market intelligence was seen to be important here, either in drawing down national administrative data or using locally commissioned data. This helped inform partnership approaches to targeting. An example given by the Black Country partnership was of data showing increasing job densities in Wolverhampton at the same time as long term unemployment amongst young people remained high there.

4.3. Delivery

As part of the evaluation an online partnership survey is being conducted with partnership leads every six months. The survey is intended to help provide a regular snapshot of the Talent Match partnerships against some specific indicators and capture any changes as the Programme progresses. The first of these surveys was sent out in May 2014. All 21 partnerships responded to the survey and this section presents data on their responses. These responses allow us to understand and validate some of the issues raised in the development phase of the programme.

Delivery Structures

The confirmed number of organisations in the core partnerships including the lead organisation ranges from four to over 20. Both the mean and median number of organisations across the Programme is 13. This is wide ranging and reflects issues of funding, geography and strategic decisions.

At the time of the survey the full time equivalent staff funded solely by the Talent Match programme within Core partnerships ranges from 1 to 14. One partnership did not provide a response to this question. Staffing levels reflects a focus evident in interviews to have a small core team with most activity dispersed through a provider network.

Nineteen partnerships are engaging with Jobcentre Plus and 15 are engaging with one or more local Work Programme providers. Table 4.1 below details the nature of

this engagement and shows that the main method of engaging with both services is through discussions about provision. Intelligence sharing is the second most common method for engagement with Job Centre Plus while for the Work Programme it is through referrals. It is worth noting however, that less than half of partnerships reported that referrals would be received from the Work Programme, representing a key disparity in partnerships in terms of one key access route to target beneficiaries, that is, those finding it most difficult to access employment. We would expect higher levels of involvement with Work Programme providers and this may be something which Partnerships address in the delivery stages.

Table 4.1: Engagement with other services

<i>All partnerships engaging with either Job Centre Plus / Work programme</i>		
	Job Centre Plus	Work Programme
Discussions about provision	18	15
Intelligence sharing	15	7
Referrals	10	10
Sharing outputs and outcomes	2	2
Financial payments	1	-
Co-delivery of services	1	-
Co-location	1	-
Other	7	1
Base	19	15

*One partnership did not provide a response when asked if they engaged with Job Centre Plus, or when asked if they engaged with local Work Programme providers.

Involvement of Young People

Young people have been involved in the development and delivery of the Talent Match Programme in a variety of ways since the Programme began. As Table 4.2 below illustrates, across the Programme, the two most common elements young people have been involved in are marketing and media and dissemination. The majority of partnerships are also involving young people through membership of their core partnership group or committee, and in evaluation and research.

Table 4.2: Involvement of Young People so far

	All Partnerships		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Marketing	20	1	0
Media and dissemination	18	3	0
Membership of the Core partnership group or committee	17	3	0
Evaluation and research	17	4	0
Management of the Talent Match Partnership and/or service delivery	16	3	1
Engaging other young people/Outreach	16	3	0
Commissioning of services	15	4	0
Delivering services	11	7	0
Other	7	4	1
Minimum base	12		

Results suggest partnerships see young people's involvement as an overwhelmingly positive thing. When asked if the involvement of young people in the elements listed above had either assisted or constrained the development and delivery of their programme, only one partnership said it had constrained delivery. This was with regard to their membership of the core partnership group. The majority of responses received across the different elements said the involvement of young people had assisted delivery (see Table B1 in the appendix for a full breakdown of responses).

When asked to expand further on how the involvement of young people has constrained or assisted delivery so far, unsurprisingly, the vast majority of comments were positive. While some of the comments simply described how young people have been involved, many explored how this involvement has enhanced delivery of the programme.

“The young people have had a huge impact on Talent Match Humber...The young people attended the Core Partnership meetings but have now been asked to actively chair and lead the meetings.”

“Our young people are advising on use of media and how this should look i.e. Facebook - to engage other young people.”

“Our Youth Action Team (YAT) have been an integral part of the success of the project to date, the young people report ownership of the project and are very focussed in tasks given to them. ... The speed the project has developed is down to the fact that it is truly led by the young people themselves and is at a speed they are comfortable with.”

“Young people (particularly the Apprentices) continue to play an integral role in the development and delivery of provision including sign ups, marketing and communications and developing links with employers (with support of Enterprise Coordinator, Data Admin & Enrolment and Contract Manager).”

"All decisions in the commissioning process have been made by trained young commissioners. Young people developed the brand, organised and executed the launch event and continuously run our marketing activities."

"The Youth Ambassadors have been brought 'into' the Programme gaining first-hand experience of mentoring and support in order to help promote the programme wider. They have participated at events to promote Talent Match and have also attended the Launch of 100 Apprenticeships for Carillion and the new Royal Liverpool University Hospital Build."

"We see Youth Involvement as central to the way we work and we could not deliver on any of our objectives without seeking the views of and working alongside both our youth board and service users."

"Our Talent Match Ambassadors have been instrumental in shaping the programme e.g. they asked for the paid subsidised wage option, they suggested the services required for wrap-around support."

"Young people have been involved in and assisted delivery across all current areas of activity. Their input has significantly benefited the credibility of Talent Match."

"We've engaged with young people from across the region in several ways: - Programme content development - through consultation - Programme Providers - reviewed tender submissions, scored content and provided feedback as part of the Commissioning Panel - Chose the branding colours/identity for the XXX marketing material - Reviewed the copy of the marketing material - Set up SCT TM social media - Are currently being trained to quality assure the programme and providers - Young Inspectors - Are going to conduct the evaluation with beneficiaries during the lifetime of the Programme - Organising the launch event(s) to raise awareness of the programme across the region".

There were also a small number comments received on how involvement had been hampered or constraining however:

"The sometimes chaotic lifestyle of some young people has meant that consistency of input has presented some challenges and this could be seen to constrain progress on occasion. That said, our focus is on ensuring young people are at the very heart of decision making and delivery and this will continue to be the case even if this impacts on some timings."

"Due to the stage that the project is currently at, YP involvement has been limited. ... The project has reformed its young persons 'challenge board group' activities recently, which will hopefully lead to better planned and facilitated young person involvement."

"Constrained delivery: formation and recruitment to formal youth board that come together as a group was hampered by delayed start of some providers. We needed to make sure on equal and fair access for all YP engaged with TM."

Nineteen partnerships have one or more members of staff responsible for the involvement of young people. Two partnerships said they do not have any members of staff responsible. Of the 19, 14 said they have a dedicated youth liaison officer(s) responsible for the involvement of young people. At the time of the survey eight partnerships employed young people who are part of their targeted beneficiary groups.

Fourteen partnerships have a dedicated budget for the involvement of young people, the other seven do not. The figure for this budget ranges from £5,700 per year to £200,000.

Factors assisting or constraining delivery

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements related to different aspects of their partnerships. All 21 partnerships agreed that they employed staff with sufficient skills and that they had received support from the Big Lottery Fund. The vast majority were also in agreement that they had good delivery arrangements across the partnership, cross-partnership agreement on the overall approach and successful involvement of young people.

There were low levels of disagreement across statements although fewer than half agreed that they had the right number of people involved, that they had been affected by cuts in other parts of the VSC, or that they had good quality data on the local needs of hidden NEETS.

Table 4.3: Agreement with statements

	<i>All Partnerships</i>	
	Agree	Disagree
Employed staff with sufficient skills	21	0
Support from the Big Lottery Fund	21	0
Good delivery arrangements across the partnership	19	0
Cross-partnership agreement on delivery approach	19	0
Successful involvement of young people	18	1
Retained staff	16	0
Good links with Job Centre Plus	16	0
The ability to reach hidden NEETs	15	1
Good links with employers	14	0
Good links with other labour market/employability programmes	14	0
Good links with the Work Programme	11	2
The right number of young people involved	10	5
Been affected by cuts in other parts of the VCS	9	7
Good quality data on local needs of hidden NEETS	8	7
Min base	20	

Partnerships were also shown a list of factors and asked the extent to which they had assisted or constrained the development and delivery of their partnership so far. Their relationship with the Big Lottery Fund was seen by the majority of partnerships as a factor which has assisted them so far, in line with the results to the previous question above. Almost as many partnerships saw the ability to employ staff with sufficient skills and the involvement of young people as factors also assisting their partnerships. A number of partnerships felt some of the factors listed had constrained them. Five partnerships stated that the lead-in time to Programme

launch and funding cuts in other parts of the VCS locally had adversely affected the development and delivery of their Talent Match Programme.

Table 4.4: Factors assisting or constraining development and delivery

	<i>All Partnerships</i>	
	Assisted	Constrained
Relationship with the Big Lottery Fund	19	0
Ability to employ staff with sufficient skills	18	1
Involvement of young people	18	0
Level of cross-partnership agreement on delivery approach	16	1
Ability to retain staff	15	0
Delivery arrangements across the partnership	15	1
The number of young people involved	14	1
Engagement with Job Centre Plus	13	1
Engagement with employers	11	2
Engagement with other labour market programmes	9	1
Lead-in time to Programme launch	9	5
Ability to reach hidden NEETs	8	3
Quality of data on local needs of hidden NEETS	7	3
Engagement with the Work Programme	5	2
The local economy/labour market	5	4
Funding cuts in other parts of the VCS locally	2	5
Base	21	

When asked to list the three main factors which have assisted their partnerships in delivery, the key aspect which came through in the responses received was strong partnership working and relationships. These responses either pointed to the partnership generally or the core partnership group. Some respondents also highlighted the quality of delivery partners. The second strongest theme in the responses was around the involvement of young people and the benefits this has brought. The quality of staff involved with the programme was also raised by a number of partnerships. The following comments were made about the assisting factors:

“A committed core partnership that meet monthly with a set agenda and priorities. Sustaining a consistent level of involvement is testament to clear governance agreements, agendas, roles and responsibilities.”

“Having young people involved and listening carefully to them [and] a core of committed members of the Young People's Panel [and] research and understanding of the needs of young people in the region.”

“Dedicated staff and skills and experience of Staff employed directly on TM activity.”

“Experienced and well-connected Delivery Partners.”

“Having the time to build the business plan and collaborate from the start with the organisations delivering to develop a shared vision.”

“Having dedicated Key Workers with relevant skills to immediately work with young people.”

“A clear mandate from employers and young people on delivery model, based on a significant period of consultation.”

“Grant funding (not payment by results).”

“Support from local authorities.”

“Support from the Big Lottery in creating a flexible programme that can respond to individual need and offer personalised support”.

Respondents were also asked to list the three main factors which have constrained them in delivery. The responses to this question were more diverse. Some of the themes the comments touched upon were: lack of engagement with employers, poor links with Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme, length of lead-in time, and the ability to reach NEETS:

“Lack of engagement from local employers [and] lack of involvement from employers due to delay in Delivery Partner mobilisation.”

“Young People's Participation - it has taken a while to set up our young people's panel which has meant in some cases young people haven't been as involved as we would have liked.”

“Emerging difficulties with financial monitoring processes leading to lack of trust and relationship issues with lead partner [and] becoming a Contracting Authority.”

“Recruitment”.

“Ability to reach NEETs [and] building contacts with hidden / disconnected young people.”

“Navigating the complex and changing environment in which we are working.”

“Time lapse between decision and start date of delivery.”

“Being able to navigate delivery amongst other unemployment programmes for this age group and to know who should be eligible for the programme.”

“Lack of engagement from some Job Centre staff.”

“Restructures and organisational changes in key referral organisations (probation/council).”

“We have struggled to engage with some Work Programme Providers.”

“Our commissioning process failed to identify an appropriate partner to deliver to one of our target groups (young carers).”

“Service Level Agreements from core partnership as some organisations were unable to legally sign the first one and a further one was developed with support from Big Lottery.”

“Marketing materials - needed Youth Board involvement...YP did not fully understand TM and are not embedded - until this is achieved marketing activity is limited.”

Support and Learning

Partnerships were asked since the award of full funding how useful they had found the support from the Big Lottery Fund. Comments received were mainly positive with respondents praising the support they had received most notably from individual contacts assigned to their partnerships.

“Our Contract Manager at the Lottery is very helpful, always responds quickly and endeavours to sort any issues or questions immediately. Our Contract Manager has attended our Core partnership meeting which the CP very much appreciated and appreciated the fact he had taken time to come and visit.”

“Very helpful both at Core Group meeting and also through one to one discussions as issues have arisen.”

“The support has been timely, staff have been on hand to support with queries and assist with additional guidance as and when required. They all seem friendly and approachable.”

“The support from Big Lottery has been sufficient in allowing us to get the programme up and operational without any constraints but with an understanding that help is only a phone call away. This has been beneficial as a new team were being formed and a programme designed to follow required paperwork, referrals processes, assessment paperwork etc. all to be designed. This is now in place as are the systems for monitoring and recording progress which enables completion of Qtrly returns with accurate information. We have had a visit from Big Lottery with another scheduled for end of May.”

“Our funding officer has been very supportive of the development of the project. ... A critical colleague is useful as you can get so engrossed in your own delivery. Important that we are able to disclose things that do not work - with full transparency otherwise it will hinder research.”

“We have enjoyed a great relationship with Big Lottery to date, and find them to be a really supportive funder in terms of understanding the flexibilities required in working with this group of young people. However, the requirements on monitoring and dates for grant payment were not clear from the start, and there is still some ambiguity around dates for payment which affects our getting this out to lead partners and then them to their sub partners which affects delivery on the ground as well as relationships.”

“We appreciate that Talent Match was the first of the Fulfilling Lives suite of programmes. This sometimes appeared to hamper the speed at which decisions were made and this did at times slow down development.”

4.4. Learning and Future Challenges

In both interviews with partnerships and the subsequent survey we discussed where the future challenges for the programme may lie and what lessons they could draw so far. Many partnerships reflected on issues around the coordination of activities in a policy landscape which was changing quickly, notably due to changes in policy direction and funding cuts. Partnerships had foreseen these issues but nonetheless needed to shape their response.

A couple of partnerships observed that the main lessons from the programme could only be drawn once delivery had commenced.

Particular risks which were identified included the (weak) state of the local labour market and importance of engaging SMEs. These were seen as particularly challenging by some partnerships. Reflecting this concern a common response was that the programme needed to retain its focus on job quality and supporting those furthest from the labour market.

A common challenge identified was how the message of Talent Match needed to widen and engage more young people, and perhaps amongst young people who were less likely to engage and more likely to be sceptical. Approaches to this varied. Some partnerships favoured a slower and more gradual start in which a message was carefully built whilst other partnerships focused far more on delivery at a larger scale earlier on. Both approaches have logic and may be appropriate to local circumstances.

In the partnership survey, the following more specific responses were received with regard to learning and future challenges:

"We have found that a proportion of our young people may be experiencing some mental health challenges which may not have been diagnosed and to which there is no obvious support in [this area]. Many of these people refuse to go to their GP with their Key Worker and will not admit that anything is wrong. This can be a massive barrier to employment and requires specialist approach and support".

"Young people's involvement - direct and indirect and how to monitor this".

"I think that there are areas with regard to funding allocation and monitoring that could be clarified and especially around evidence requirements BIG Lottery have for partners. It is also apparent that the engagement of young people is becoming an issue and it may be helpful to understand what issues other partnerships are facing in this area and how they can be overcome".

"Understanding, awareness and links with national employment programmes particularly around engaging with employers (needs to be coordinated at a local level)".

"As national research is pulled together - it would be good to see if the 21 partnerships - have any similarity / differences [and to] disseminate what works. I would be keen to see if we have any statistical neighbours that have similar characteristics to our geographical areas. National communication and feedback would be useful. Our partnership has not budgeted for partner or YP attendance at any national events and this would need to be factored into any plans".

"Would welcome the opportunity to be linked to other Talent Match programmes to share experiences and learning"

"We'd like a clearer idea of the national plan for leverage of learning from the grant at a policy and commissioning level, and what other areas are doing in terms of influencing strategic change from their grant. Our Youth Board are really keen to run a national event with other youth boards to bring together their learning and leadership which we have offered to host. Have spoken to our grant manager about this and hope to progress it soon. Some support from CRESR on this would also be really valuable".

Many of these issues are directed towards either the Big Lottery Fund or the evaluation team and are ones which a response will be given in the near future and as part of the Talent Match conference.

4.5. Conclusion

This section of the report has set out some of the key features of the Talent Match partnerships and what has worked well so far drawing largely on qualitative data. It finds considerable progress and innovation in the engagement of young people; partnerships have responded imaginatively and creatively to this aspect of the programme. Core partnerships are now well established and the commitment of partners to the programme was seen as a key feature.

Respondents reflected on some of the more critical aspects of partnerships working so far, and areas in which attention had to be given, both locally and nationally (by the Big Lottery Fund and other stakeholders). It should be stressed that these issues were not being experienced by all partnerships and in some cases workable solutions had been found. In broad terms the issues are around the strategic coordination of labour market interventions at a local level, which involve young people. They include the Work Programme and Youth Contract, but also as LEPs develop, with funding from EU Structural Funds programmes, the Regional Growth Fund, and City Deals.

Relationships with the Big Lottery Fund were seen on the whole very positively. Nonetheless, there are lessons which can be drawn for other strategic investment programmes. These are largely around setting a clearer and tighter focus for the programme at an earlier stage in programme development. The principle that the Big Lottery Fund funds innovative and novel approaches, the results of which can inform mainstream action whether through national policies or local strategies and practices is an important one which should remain. However, Talent Match has shown some risks in this approach, principally due to the time taken to launch the programme and for projects to be 'live'.

Responses to the partnership survey also reveal some of the roles the Big Lottery Fund, the evaluation team and the partnerships themselves may play in ensuring learning from the programme.

Individuals: baseline and progress to date

Summary

This section of the report provides a profile of the initial entrants onto the Talent Match programme. The analysis is largely based on a group of 664 individuals who were engaged in some way by the programme by the end of June 2014, and a follow-up of a further 118 three months after their initial engagement. The overall objectives of the programme are to support 25,000 individuals with the goal of 5,400 entering employment.

At this early stage of the programme it is worth highlighting the following:

- Initial progress by the partnerships varies considerably, this may not require immediate further action other than to monitor the progress of those five partnerships which had not recorded any cases of support at the end of June. In most cases this appears to be in line with their initial plans to have a clear set-up phase.
- 66 percent of beneficiaries of the programme to date are male and this is surprising as no partnerships indicated that the targeting of young men was a specific focus of their work
- Half of those supported live with their parents (by far the largest single group), which is perhaps not surprising given the spread of beneficiaries from 18-24, but there are possible implications here due to changes the withdrawal of housing benefit for young people.
- 49 per cent of those supported to date have qualifications of Level 2 or above. This might be higher than expected, given a widespread concern with the long term prospects for those with 'no qualifications'.
- Access to and/or the cost of transport is the most significant barrier to employment, in 34 per cent of cases. The nature of work available (low pay, temporary nature of work) is also seen as a barrier (in each category around a sixth reported this).
- Additional barriers to employment were seen to be the lack of prior work experience, lack of job opportunities locally, lack of qualifications and lack of job specific skills (each category is a barrier in 50-60 per cent of cases.)
- For those surveyed at the three month follow-up stage, three quarters had applied for jobs and more than half had attended at least one interview.
- 90 per cent of those engaged in the programme had received one-to-one support, with 80 per cent receiving information, advice and guidance about careers.

In terms of the initial outcomes of the programme, the data show:

- Positive change for at least 40 per cent of individuals supported in terms of their: communication, work with others, setting and achieving goals, managing feelings, confidence, and reliability. A broadly similar proportion report no change with less than

20 per cent reporting a negative change.

- In terms of well-being 73 per cent report improvement in their life satisfaction. However, the figure for positive change in terms of 'experiencing anxiety yesterday' drops to 43 per cent, with 30 per cent reporting a worsening score. It should be stressed that there were a relatively small number of follow-ups recorded, but nonetheless this would raise concerns if it were to be replicated across the programme.
- In terms of employment outcomes, the CDF data collected for the scorecard show that 28 young people had secured employment up until the end of June 2014.

5.1. Introduction

A Common Data Framework (CDF) has been designed to collect standard monitoring data from all partnerships on all beneficiaries. The CDF is of central importance to the success of the contract and aims to collect robust and reliable beneficiary level data across the Programme. This beneficiary data will allow monitoring of: who has participated in Talent Match; what they have done; what difference it has made to them; and what impact it has made on their labour market outcomes.

The CDF has been designed in the form of an online questionnaire. Delivery organisations within partnerships are required to collect baseline data on all beneficiaries at an initial meeting with the young person where they will need to fill in a baseline questionnaire. Change and outcome data will then be collected approximately three, six, 12, 18 and 24 months later through the completion of a follow-up questionnaire.

This section of the report presents data on responses received to both the baseline and initial three month follow-up surveys which were submitted either online or via encrypted email by 14 July 2014 and had been completed during Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014 (January - June, 2014).

Over time we will collect other data on individuals. This will include:

- qualitative evidence of the individual's experience of the Talent Match programme
- longitudinal data on a cohort of individuals, to supplement and validate the CDF evidence
- data on a comparator group of young people against which we can establish the impact of the programme.

Individual young people will also be involved in the evaluation, for instance in the organisation and delivery of events, work placements and theme based research.

5.2. Responses

664 responses to the baseline survey and 118 responses to the initial follow-up survey were submitted by 14 July 2014. The baseline responses were submitted across 15 partnerships and the follow-up surveys were submitted across nine partnerships.

At this stage we are not reporting progress made by individual partnerships. This is partly because of the variation in (planned) start-up phases for the partnerships. By mid-July six partnerships had engaged over 50 young people each, whilst five partnerships had not recorded any individuals supported on the CDF.

237 responses to the baseline survey were completed during Quarter 1 (January - March 2014) and 367 responses were completed during Quarter 2 (April - June). All follow-up responses were completed during Quarter 2.

5.3. Providing a Baseline

The first half of this report looks at the responses received to the baseline survey and provides a baseline for the Programme following the first six months since it commenced.

The majority (78 per cent) of young people completing a baseline questionnaire during Quarters 1 and 2 completed it together with an advisor or mentor. A further 16 per cent completed the questionnaire together with a support worker. There were a small number of beneficiaries (five per cent) who completed the survey on their own.

Respondent characteristics

- two thirds of young people responding to the baseline survey were male (66 per cent) and 34 per cent were female. This is surprising given that the Programme and the individual Partnerships do not state explicitly that they will focus to a greater extent on young men.
- twenty one per cent considered themselves to have a disability and of these respondents, 65 per cent said their disability limits their activities
- eighty two per cent of respondents were White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. A full breakdown of respondents by ethnicity is detailed in Table A7 in the Appendix
- as Table 5.1 below illustrates, responses were spread across age groups, although fewer respondents were aged 24. Two respondents said they were 17 and another said they were 25, which would make them ineligible for the Programme.

Table 5.1: Age of respondents

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
17	2	0
18	94	14
19	126	19
20	112	17
21	108	16
22	88	13
23	76	11
24	57	9
25	1	0
Total	664	100

The majority of respondents (82 per cent) were in receipt of some form of benefit (see Table 5.2 below) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) was by far the most common - claimed by 71 per cent of respondents. A further 17 per cent were in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) - the main sickness and disability benefit - and three per cent on Income Support for Lone Parents. Taken together this amounts to 91 per cent of respondents receiving benefits being on "out-of-work" benefits at the time they joined the Talent Match Programme.

Housing Benefit was the second most common benefit received at 29 per cent, which corresponds to the 30 per cent of respondents who were renting from a private or social landlord (see Table 4 below). Twelve per cent of respondents were in receipt of Personal Independence Payments (or its predecessor Disability Living Allowance). It is fairly common for ESA claimants to also be eligible for PIPs/DLA to assist with the costs of care and mobility.

Table 5.2: Benefits received

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey who receive benefits</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Job Seekers Allowance	384	71
Housing Benefit	156	29
Employment and Support Allowance	91	17
Personal Independence Payments / Disability Living Allowance	64	12
Council Tax Benefit	44	8
Income Support	40	7
Income Support for Lone Parents	18	3
Carer's Allowance	5	1
JSA Severe Hardship Payments (16-18 year olds only)	2	0
Other	18	3
Don't know	1	0
Base	544	-

Note: Column percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could tick more than one response.

Half (50 per cent) of young people completing the baseline survey said they lived with their parents. Almost one third (31 per cent) said they rented, with a Housing Association the most common type of landlord. Respondents who said they had 'other' living arrangements were asked about these and responses are detailed in Table A1.12 in the Appendix. Of this sub-group (122 individuals in total) 32 per cent were in hostel accommodation and a fifth were in supported accommodation. Just over a quarter were temporarily staying with friends or relatives - a housing situation often used as an indicator of "hidden homelessness."

Table 5.3: Tenure

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Live with parents	333	50
Rented from a Housing Association	92	14
Rented from a private landlord	68	10
Rented from Local Authority	42	6
Owner occupier - without mortgage/owned outright	3	0
Owner occupier - with mortgage	1	0
Other	123	19
Total	662	100

Note: Column percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

When asked about the highest level of qualification they have, almost one in ten (eight per cent) young people said they have no qualifications. One third stated that they have Level 2 qualifications, the highest proportion among respondents. Only 16 per cent hold any qualifications higher than this. It is perhaps surprising that the figure for those holding 'no qualifications' is not significantly higher.

Table 5.4: Highest level of qualification

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
No qualifications	56	8
Entry Level	55	8
Level 1 (e.g. GCSEs D-G)	193	29
Level 2 (e.g. GCSEs A*-C)	220	33
Level 3 (e.g. AS/A levels)	91	14
Level 4 (e.g. Certificate of Higher Education, HNC)	8	1
Level 5+ (e.g. HND, Degree)	6	1
Don't know	34	5
Total	663	100

Labour Market engagement

When asked to detail what they were doing in the four weeks prior to starting on the Talent Match Programme, over three quarters (77 per cent) of young people indicated that they were '*Not working and looking for work*'. A further one fifth (19 per cent) said they were '*Not working and not looking for work*'. Table 5.5 below provides further information on what young people were doing before joining Talent Match.

Of those who were not working and were looking for work, the mean time period for this status was 2 years and 0 months and the median time period was one year and six months. More information on what young people were doing before joining Talent Match and the length of time for each category is detailed in Table A16 in the Appendix to this report. These data do not show whether Talent Match beneficiaries were 'hidden' before being engaged by the programme.

Table 5.5: What respondents were doing in the 4 weeks prior to starting on the Talent Match Programme

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Not working and looking for work	510	77
Not working and not looking for work	125	19
Volunteering	76	11
Formal education e.g. college	48	7
In training	25	4
Unable to work	17	3
Work placement	16	2
Caring	14	2
In custody	10	2
Working less than 16 hours per week	9	1
Travelling	3	0
Apprenticeship	2	0
Maternity leave	2	0
Working 16 hours or more per week	0	0
Self-employed	0	0
Other	24	4
Base	664	

When asked specifically if they had volunteered during the last three months, over one fifth of respondents (21 per cent) said they had done so.

The vast majority of respondents (88 per cent) said they had experience of applying for jobs (see Table 5.6 below). Almost four fifths had undertaken some form of work experience and over two thirds (70 per cent) had attended at least one interview. The proportion stating that they had gained employment at some point was noticeably lower at just below 40 per cent.

Table 5.6: Experience of the labour market

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Applied for jobs	569	88
Undertaken some form of work experience	508	79
Attended at least one interview	453	70
Completed a formal education course (e.g. college course)	356	55
Undertaken some form of volunteering	352	55
Taken up additional training	330	51
Gained employment	246	38
Completed a training course (e.g. not formal education)	222	34
Completed an apprenticeship	33	5
Set up my own business	13	2
Base	645	

Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents said they were on or had just completed the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Work Programme.

Respondents were asked if they had turned down a job, or decided not to apply for a job they were interested in due to problems with any of the barriers listed in Table 5.7 below. Just over one third of young people said they had done so due to issues with access to and/or the cost of transport. Almost one fifth (18 per cent) had turned down a job due to low pay and slightly fewer had turned a job down due to problems with internet access (16 per cent) or the temporary nature of work (15 per cent).

Table 5.7: Barriers to employment

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Access to and / or cost of transport	227	34
Low pay	120	18
Internet access	105	16
Temporary nature of work	102	15
Variable pay	76	11
Access to and / or cost of childcare	39	6
Access to support for disabled people	23	3
Access to support for young carers	21	3
Min base	662	

Young people completing the baseline questionnaire were also asked if any other things had stopped them from gaining work in the past 12 months. Lack of prior work experience and a lack of job opportunities locally were the two barriers cited most frequently by respondents (59 per cent and 58 per cent respectively). Over half of respondents also stated that a lack of qualifications (56 per cent) or a lack of job specific skills (54 per cent) had held them back from getting a job.

Table 5.8: Further barriers to employment

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Lack of prior work experience	391	59
Lack of job opportunities locally	385	58
Lack of qualifications	372	56
Lack of job specific skills	357	54
Lack of confidence	302	46
Lack of interview skills	279	42
Not sure which jobs would suit me	222	34
Lack of basic skills (reading/numbers)	161	24
Ill health / disability	133	20
Employer prejudice	79	12
Other responsibilities (e.g. caring)	75	11
Other	79	12
Base	662	

Goals from the Programme

Respondents were asked to identify what they wished to gain through taking part in the Talent Match Programme from a list of goals provided. They were then asked which three goals were *most* important to them. Results are detailed in Table 5.9 below. Gaining employment was the most common goal selected by respondents in their top three, with over half of respondents (56 per cent) including this goal. Almost two fifths said they wanted to gain confidence. Other goals received less of a response.

Table 5.9: Three most important goals from the Talent Match Programme

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
I want to have gained employment	362	56
I want to gain confidence	250	39
I want to apply for jobs	136	21
I want to take up additional training	129	20
I want to improve my basic skills (reading/numbers)	122	19
I want to develop good specific skills for the job I am looking for	110	17
I want to identify short and long-term career goals	108	17
I want to undertake some form of work experience	104	16
I want to have attended at least one interview	94	15
I want to put together a CV	88	14
I want to identify additional training I want to take up	87	13
I want to understand the skills employers are looking for	71	11
I want to set up my own business	69	11
I want to understand how to set up my own business	64	10
I want to do some volunteering	44	7
I want to understand a specific job or area of work	42	6
I want to have appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	33	5
Base	647	

5.4. Early outcomes

The second half of this section examines responses received to the initial three month follow-up survey and considers any early outcomes from the Programme. 118 responses to the initial follow-up survey were submitted by 14 July 2014. Of these young people, 86 per cent were still participating in the Talent Match Programme. Tables A1.3 - A1.15 in the Appendix provide detail on the characteristics of these respondents and how their profile compares with the baseline.

Given that it is still relatively early in terms of Programme delivery and the sample size is fairly small ($n = 118$), these figures should be treated with a degree of caution. Therefore, while they provide an indicator in the very early stages of delivery as to how the programme is working, it would be wrong to attach too much significance to these outcomes at this stage.

To set this in context, the programme aims to support 25,000 people and to at least 20 per cent (5,400) into sustainable employment (including self-employment). Sustained employment is defined as continuous employment lasting six months or more.

Scorecard

Responses to the CDF are being used to provide data for the Big Lottery Fund's investment scorecard. Table 5.10 below shows the scorecard measures covered by the CDF and the counts for young people attaining each outcome.

By the end of Quarter 2, 28 young people had secured employment (these are young people working 16 hours per week or more and are also shown on Table 5.11 below). A further proxy measure has been used which counts those who are working less than 16 hours per week but who stated that either ill health/disability or other responsibilities (e.g. caring) had stopped them from previously gaining work at the baseline stage. This is in recognition of the fact that these individuals may not currently, wish, or be able to, work more than 16 hours a week - and this is something which the Big Lottery Fund has stressed as an important measure of employment. A further two respondents have been counted on this proxy measure. A further respondent had secured self-employment.

Counts for measures across work experience, training, skills and education and volunteering are also shown below. The number of young people engaged represents the number of baseline survey responses received. Young people previously classed as "hidden" are beneficiaries who were not receiving benefits and were not working (either less than 16 hours per week or 16 hours or more a week), self-employed, on apprenticeship, in formal education or in training at the baseline stage. These 95 beneficiaries represent 14 per cent of the total young people engaged in Quarters 1 and 2.

Table 5.10: Talent Match Investment Scorecard

Measure	Count
<i>Employment/Enterprise</i>	
No of young people securing employment	28
No of young people securing employment (proxy measure)	2
No of young people securing sustained employment (at least six months)*	-
No of young people securing self-employment/enterprise	1
No of young people sustained self-employment/enterprise*	-
<i>Work Experience</i>	
No of young people undertaking work placement	17
<i>Training, skills and education</i>	
No of young people undertaking basic skills training opportunities	13
No of young people into apprenticeships	9
No of young people completed apprenticeships*	-
No of young people into formal education	2
No of young people who receive peer mentoring	20
<i>Volunteering</i>	
No of young people undertaking volunteering	34
No of young people regularly undertaking volunteering	32
<i>Young people engagement</i>	
No of young people who were previously classed as "hidden"	95
No of young people engaged	664

Note: the scorecard presents outcomes up to and including June 30th only.

* denotes measures where it is too early to record any outcomes.

A number of the scorecard measures above were derived from the question "Which of the following currently apply to you?" which was asked to all respondents to the follow-up survey. Table 5.11 below shows responses received to this question. Over two fifths of respondents said they were not working and looking for work after three months of being on the Programme. The 28 young people securing employment shown on the scorecard above represent almost one quarter (24 per cent) of those who had completed a follow-up survey in Quarter 2.

There were three respondents who stated they were in formal education. One of these respondents was also in formal education at the baseline stage so has not been included on the relevant scorecard measure above.

Table 5.11: Current situation

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Not working and looking for work	53	45
Working 16 hours or more per week	28	24
Work Placement	17	14
Volunteering	16	14
Not working and not looking for work	14	12
In training	13	11
Apprenticeship	9	8
Working less than 16 hours per week	5	4
Formal education e.g. college	3	3
Unable to work	2	2
Caring	2	2
Self-employed	1	1
In custody	0	0
Travelling	0	0
Maternity leave	0	0
Other	3	3
Base	118	

Actions

Respondents to the initial follow-up survey were also asked about any actions undertaken since starting on the Programme. As Table 5.12 below indicates, three-quarters of young people had applied for jobs and over half had attended at least one interview. One third stated that they had gained employment and one other had set up their own business (38 in total). This count of 38 is slightly higher than the 34 respondents who stated they *currently* had a job at the three month follow-up stage (i.e. those in employment or self-employment in Table 5.11 above).

Just under one third had also undertaken some form of volunteering (this represents the 34 young people shown on the scorecard above). This is in line with a later question in the survey which asked if respondents had volunteered during the last

three months. Almost a third of respondents said they had volunteered and of these, 86 per cent had volunteered for at least one hour in the past four weeks (this 86 per cent represents the 32 respondents shown on the regularly undertaking volunteering measure on the scorecard above). One respondent also stated they had completed an apprenticeship; however this would not be possible in the timeframe so they have not been included on the scorecard.

Table 5.12: Actions undertaken since starting on the Talent Match Programme

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Applied for jobs	83	75
Attended at least one interview	59	53
Undertaken some form of work experience	41	37
Taken up additional training	41	37
Gained employment	37	33
Undertaken some form of volunteering	34	31
Completed a training course (e.g. not formal education)	14	13
Completed a formal education course (e.g. college course)	5	5
Completed an apprenticeship	1	1
Set up my own business	1	1
Base	111	

Almost two thirds (63 per cent) of respondents said they had looked for any kind of paid work in the four weeks prior to being surveyed. Table 5.13 below details the active steps young people had taken to find work. Three fifths said they had searched for jobs/information about jobs on the internet and just over half said they had applied directly to an employer. Almost one third (31 per cent) however had not taken any of the steps listed.

Table 5.13: Active steps taken by respondents to find week in the past 4 weeks

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Searched for jobs/information about jobs on the internet	72	61
Applied directly to an employer	61	52
Studied or replied to advertisements	48	41
Asked friends or contacts	45	38
Contacted a private employment agency or job centre	42	36
Taken steps to start your own business	6	5
None of these steps	36	31
Base	118	

Support received

When asked what support they had received from the Talent Match Programme, nine out of ten respondents said they had received one to one support. Almost the same proportion had received information, advice and guidance about careers and only slightly fewer had received advice on personal development. Just under one fifth had received peer mentoring and these respondents have been counted on the relevant scorecard measure included in Table 5.10 above.

All respondents rated the support they had received as good (86 per cent very good and 14 per cent fairly good).

Table 5.14: Support received from the Talent Match Programme

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
One to one support	106	90
Information, advice and guidance about careers	105	89
Advice on personal development	99	84
Support in addressing practical barriers	83	70
Financial support	45	38
Support with travel	37	31
Basic skills (reading/numbers) training	30	25
In-work support	21	18
Peer mentoring	20	17
Counselling	11	9
Other	8	7
Base	118	

Progress on goals

Respondents to the follow-up survey were asked to consider the three goals they previously selected as most important to them and indicate the extent to which these goals had been met. Responses are detailed in Table 5.15 below. *Due to the small base sizes across the majority of goals, only counts are shown.* Respondents who had met their goals were asked how important the support they had received through the Talent Match Programme had been in helping them meet them. The vast majority of respondents indicated that the support had been important. Only two responses indicated that the support received had not been very important. A full breakdown of responses for this question is detailed in Table A1.38 in the Appendix.

Table 5.15: Progress on most important goals

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>				
	Not at all met	Made progress	Met goal	Total
	Counts			
I want to have gained employment	15	21	26	62
I want to gain confidence	3	30	9	42
I want to undertake some form of work experience	4	13	11	28
I want to have attended at least one interview	6	2	16	24
I want to identify short and long-term career goals	3	13	7	23
I want to improve my basic skills (reading/numbers)	4	12	4	20
I want to apply for jobs	2	3	14	19
I want to take up additional training	2	8	5	15
I want to put together a CV	2	3	9	14
I want to understand how to set up my own business	3	4	4	11
I want to develop new job specific skills	0	7	3	10
I want to understand the skills employers are looking for	1	6	2	9
I want to identify additional training I want to take up	2	3	4	9
I want to do some volunteering	3	2	2	7
I want to understand a specific job or area of work	1	3	2	6
I want to set up my own business	0	5	0	5
I want to have appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	1	0	1	2

Respondents into work

Respondents who indicated they were working (either less than 16 hours per week or 16 hours or more a week) or were self-employed were asked a series of questions about their employment.

- Almost all those in employment (37 out of 38) stated that the support received through the Talent Match Programme had been important in helping them to gain work (27 very important and ten quite important).
- Two thirds (25 out of 38) were in a permanent job, while six had a temporary job with no fixed end date and seven had a job for a fixed period with an agreed end date. Although one respondent indicated earlier that they were self-employed they did not provide an answer to this question so they are not shown in these counts.
- There were three respondents on zero hours contracts, and of these, one would prefer a contract with guaranteed hours. The other two respondents didn't know if they would prefer a guaranteed hours contract.
- The majority of those in employment were satisfied with their present job overall. On a scale of one to seven where one is 'completely dissatisfied' and seven is 'completely satisfied', 31 out of 39 respondents gave a score of five or above.

Responses to further questions asked to those in employment are detailed in Tables A1.22, A1.23 and A1.25 in the Appendix.

My Journey

At all stages of data collection, beneficiaries are asked to indicate how accomplished they feel they are with certain sets of skills using the My Journey Scale. The My Journey scale was developed by the Prince's Trust and is shown in Figure A1.1 in the Appendix to this report.

The following Figures show the sets of skills and how strong beneficiaries felt they were with each of them at both the baseline stage and at the initial three month follow-up. The My Journey scale runs from one to six where one represents "I find this skill really difficult and I don't care" and six signifies "This skill is a strength of mine and I excel at it." On the following Figures, "low" represents a score of one or two, "medium" a score of three or four and "high" a score of five or six.

On all measures except reliability the proportion giving a high score increases at the follow-up stage. For a detailed breakdown on responses to these questions see Tables A1.34 and A1.35 in the Appendix.

Figure 5.1: Communication (speaking, listening paying attention)

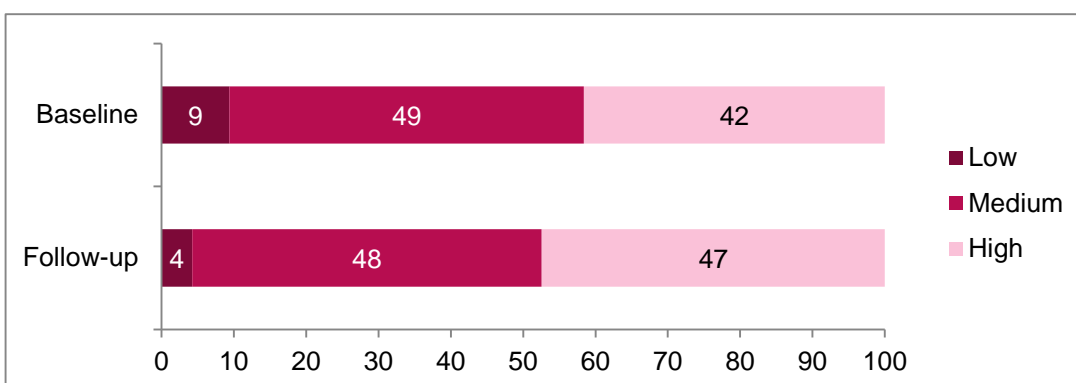


Figure 5.2: Working with others (Teamwork, getting on with people, respecting others)

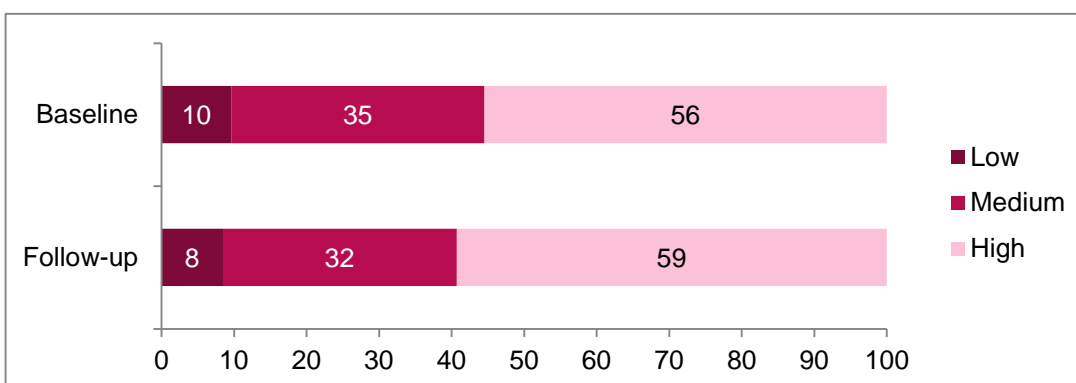


Figure 5.3: Setting and achieving goals (Motivation, planning and organising, problem solving, hard work)

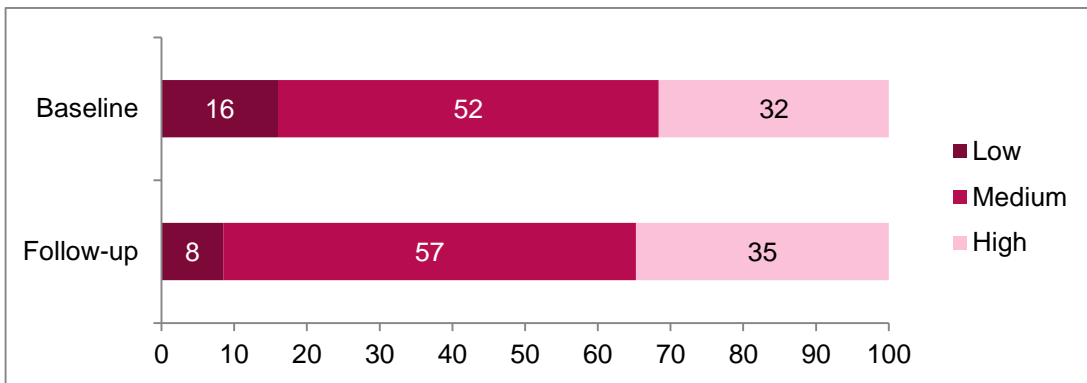


Figure 5.4: Managing feelings (Dealing with issues, coping, managing problems)

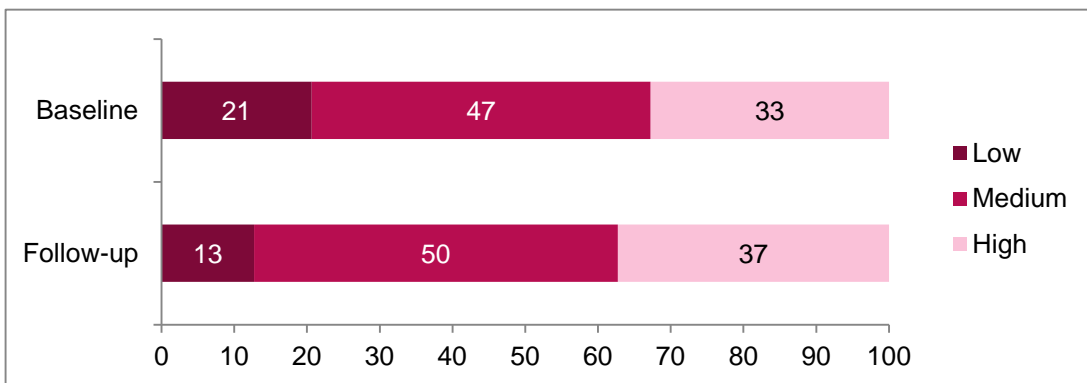


Figure 5.5: Confidence (Self-esteem, self-belief, self-respect, self-awareness, dealing with nerves)

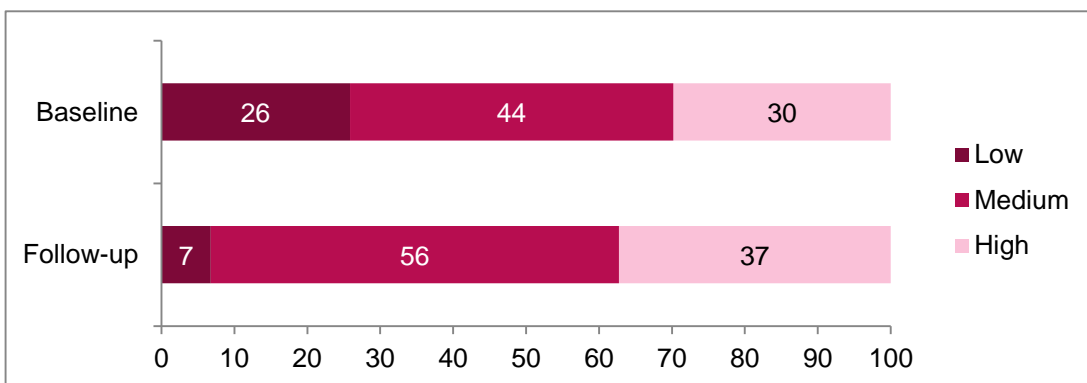


Figure 5.6: Reliability (Time keeping meeting deadlines, taking responsibility, attendance)

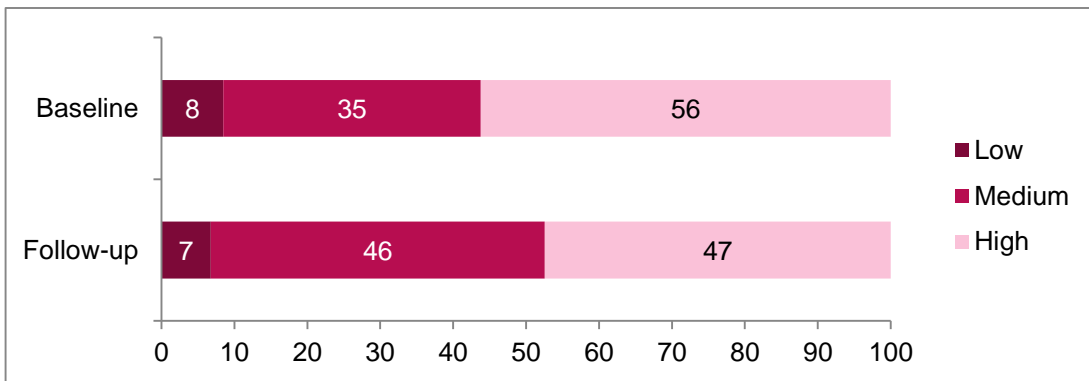
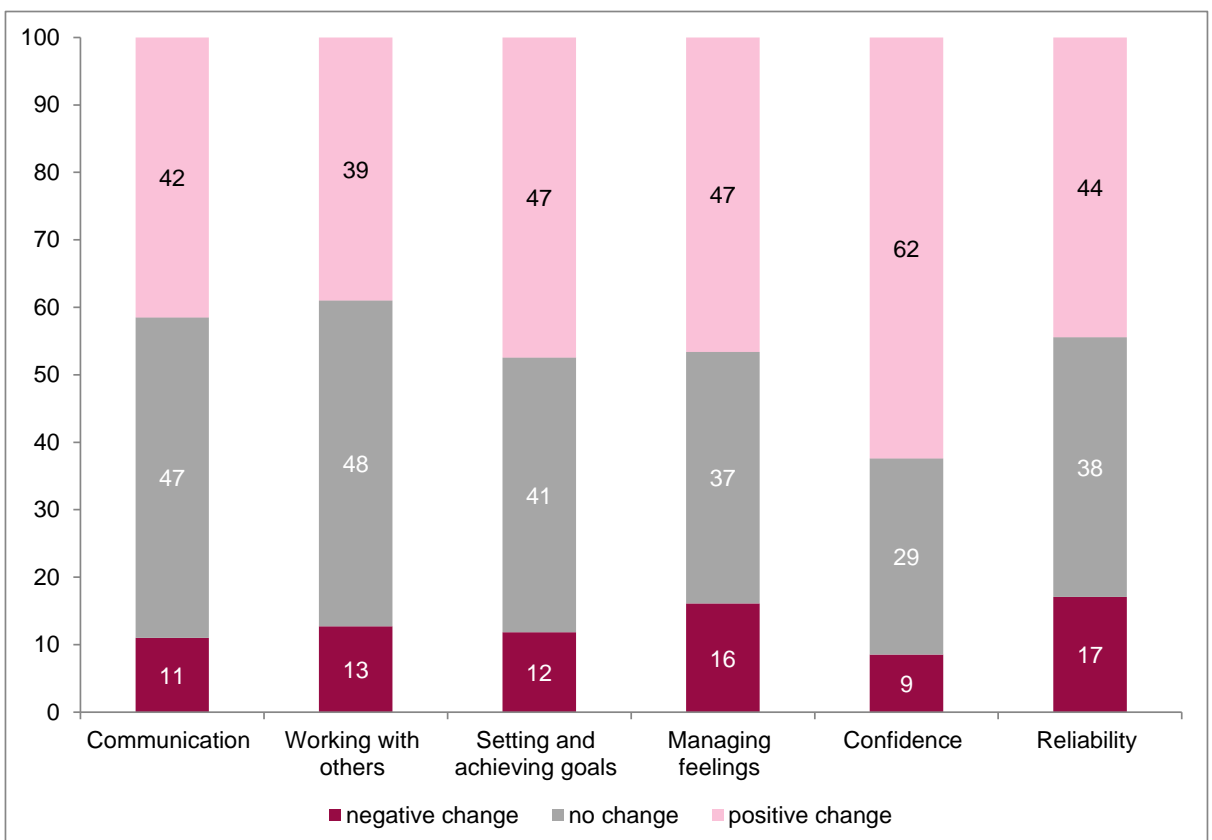


Figure 5.7 below shows how individual's scores changed between the baseline and the initial follow-up stage. Over two fifths of respondents gave a higher score at the follow-up stage on every measure apart from 'working with others' where just under two fifths did so. Perhaps most noteworthy, 62 per cent gave an improved score when asked about their confidence.

Figure 5.7: My Journey Scale - individual change



Well-being

At each wave of the survey young people are being asked four subjective questions regarding their well-being. These questions are taken from the Annual Population Survey and have been designed by the ONS to provide a fuller picture of how society is doing.

Figure 5.8 below shows these four measures and compares the well-being of Talent Match beneficiaries at both the baseline and initial follow-up stage with that of the UK

adult population as a whole (age 16 or over). While this is not a like-for-like comparison, it is illuminating all the same.

Levels of well-being are startlingly lower among those completing a baseline survey when compared to the UK adult population. Most notably the percentage giving a high rating for "satisfaction with their lives nowadays" and the percentage giving a high rating of how "worthwhile they think the things they do are" are 51 and 50 percentage points lower than the national score respectively. Encouragingly, this gap narrows when looking at those completing a follow-up survey; however a noticeable difference still remains across all measures when results from the follow-up stage are compared to the UK scores.

It is important to include a health warning here over the validity of these data. We are reporting change in a relatively small set of individuals and we need to understand the change in well-being over a longer time period.

For a detailed breakdown on responses to these questions see Tables A1.39 and A1.40 in the Appendix.

Figure 5.8: Well-being

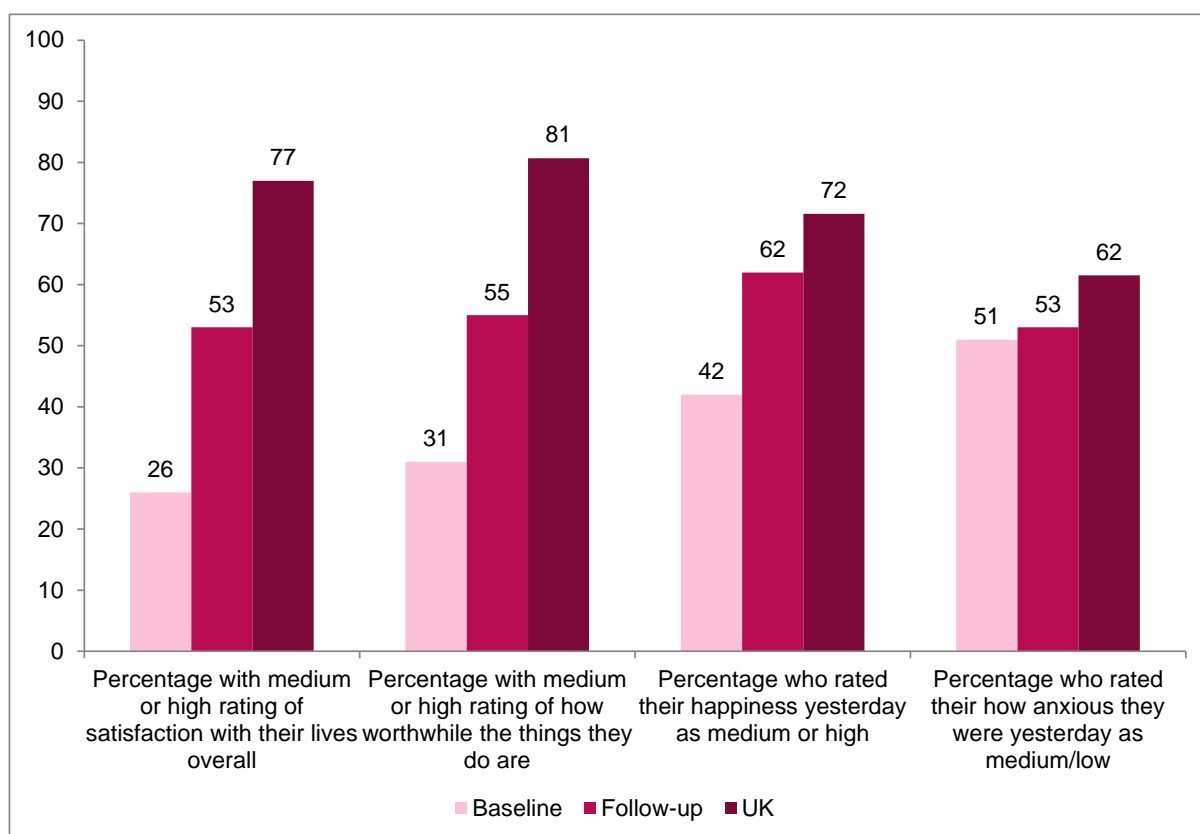
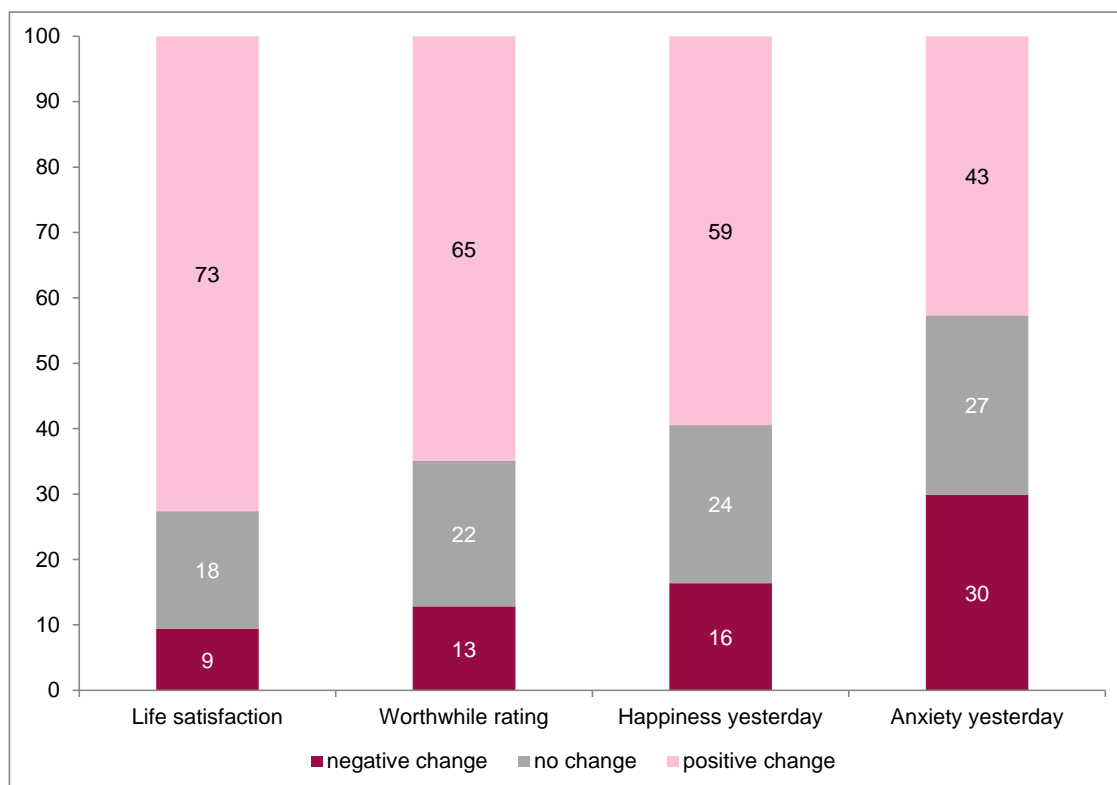


Figure 5.9 below shows how individual's scores changed between the baseline and the initial follow-up stage. Sizeable proportions across all four measures reported a higher score at the follow-up stage than at the baseline, rising from 43 per cent giving an improved score regarding their anxiety levels yesterday, to 73 per cent giving a higher score for how satisfied they are with their life nowadays. On a more concerning note, almost one third (30 per cent) actually reported a more negative score for how anxious they felt yesterday.

Figure 5.9: Well-being - individual change



Further data from the both the baseline and follow-up surveys is detailed in the following Appendix.

5.5. Conclusion

This section of the report provides a profile of the initial entrants onto the Talent Match programme. The analysis is largely based on a group of 664 individuals who had been engaged in some way by the programme by the end of June, and a follow-up of a further 118. At this stage of the programme we have not undertaken a more detailed analysis into the relationships between, for example, the characteristics of those entering the programme and outcomes. In particular, we have insufficient data on outcomes to make any meaningful analysis at this stage.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile drawing attention to the following:

- Initial progress by the partnerships varies considerably, at this stage this may not require further action other than to closely monitor the progress of those partnerships which had by the end of June not recorded any cases of support.
- 66 per cent of beneficiaries of the programme to date are male, which is surprisingly high given that this was not an explicit target group.
- Half of those supported live with their parents (by far the largest single group), which on its own is not significant, but with the withdrawal of Housing Benefit for many young people the housing situation of many young people may become more precarious.
- 49 per cent of those supported to date have qualifications of Level 2 or above. This might be higher than expected; it would be expected that those with no qualifications would form the largest group.
- Access to and/or the cost of transport is the most significant barrier to employment, in 34 per cent of cases. The nature of work available (low pay,

temporary nature of work) is also seen as a barrier (in each category around a sixth reported this).

- Additional barriers to employment were seen to be the lack of prior work experience, lack of job opportunities locally, lack of qualifications and lack of job specific skills (each category is barrier in 50-60 per cent of cases).
- For those surveyed at the three month follow-up stage, three quarters had applied for jobs and more than half had at least one interview.
- 90 per cent of those engaged in the programme had received one-to-one support, with 80 per cent receiving information, advice and guidance about careers.

In terms of the initial outcomes of the programme, the data show:

- A positive change for at least 40 per cent of individuals supported in terms of their: communication, working with others, setting and achieving goals, managing feelings, confidence, and reliability. It should be noted that a broadly similar proportion report no change with less than twenty per cent reporting a negative change.
- There appears some significant positive change in terms of the well-being of those supported. For example, 73 per cent reported improvement in their life satisfaction. However, it is noticeable that the figure for positive change in terms of experiencing anxiety yesterday drops to 43 per cent, with 30 per cent reporting a worsening score in terms of their anxiety levels.
- In terms of employment outcomes, the CDF data collected for the scorecard show that 28 people have secured employment.

Conclusion

This is the first annual report from the Talent Match evaluation. It is intended to provide an initial assessment of the programme, reflect on its development, and provide a baseline against which to assess future performance.

The following ten issues stand out, either in terms of programme learning or areas in which the Big Lottery Fund and partnerships may wish to reflect on and change approach.

- 1. Programme Design:** Talent Match was one of the first strategic investment programmes of the Big Lottery Fund to be launched. Partnerships welcomed this strategic focus and the profile the programme brought to a particular issue. The day-to-day support from the Big Lottery Fund was also valued and respected. Nonetheless, a couple of areas are worth further reflection. Firstly, the approach to programme design and roll-out could have been clearer. In particular, more clarity at an earlier stage around the beneficiary group, the relationship with government policies, such as the Work Programme, and sharing of experience between partnerships would have been welcomed. Secondly, some reflection should be given to the timescale from programme inception to programme delivery. This was seen by many to be too long. Both sets of issues are a real testing ground for programmes intended to bring a strategic focus to particular issues but which seek to break new ground in terms of co-design and co-delivery.
- 2. Involvement of Young People:** partnerships actively embraced this aspect of the programme, and in many cases, genuinely sought new and innovative approaches. The report captures some of these approaches. They included involvement from participation and leadership roles in formal decision making groups through to consultation led by young people. What is perhaps difficult to convey here is the creativity and genuine excitement this has generated in some areas.
- 3. Partnership Lead organisations:** the partnerships are a diverse group - in scale, scope and geographic coverage. Perhaps one of the most interesting features is the nature of the lead organisations. Four main types were identified: national organisations brought into a local area (such as the Prince's Trust, Wise Group or Shaw Trust); local VCS 'infrastructure' bodies, such as Councils for Voluntary Service; local specialist organisations (either in employment or young people's involvement); and consortia based organisations. What will be interesting to observe is the different effect these different types of lead partner have on delivery and impact.
- 4. Make up and Role of Local Partnerships:** most partnerships are wide ranging and genuinely cross-sectoral. In the majority of cases partnership members

have given far more than they have necessarily got back. Partnerships also seem to be playing two principal roles: as strategic bodies engaged actively in the coordination of the partnership and other local programmes; and as Talent Match delivery bodies. Not all partnerships played both roles and some felt strongly that the two should be separate. Finally, some partnerships struggled to engage particular groups, in some cases this included Local Enterprise Partnerships, in others it was employers. This was not the case everywhere but appears something several partnerships may need further support with to ensure that Talent Match has some form of legacy across all sectors.

5. **Range of Interventions:** the involvement of young people, the importance given to prior evidence of 'what works', and the experience of partners has helped to shape projects. The involvement of young people in particular has typically led to approaches which have a strong focus on peer support and support to navigate existing provision. Some partnerships have also actively given control over some parts of the budget to local young people-led commissioning groups. Notably, the partnerships with larger budgets typically intend to fund a wider range of interventions, including some demand-side projects such as wage-subsidies.
6. **Distinction to other Programmes:** an observation from many partnerships was that Talent Match feels different to government programmes. This is particularly in the area of young people's involvement, but also in terms of the flexibility of the programme, the lack of prescription, its non-mandatory nature, and the acceptance that some innovative aspects of the programme may be tested even though they may fail.
7. **Hot spotting and Targeting:** the original focus of the programme was on geographic hotspots of youth unemployment. This focus has changed and we identified a range of approaches being used by partnerships to target young people. These ranged from the retention of original hotspots, a more flexible approach which used hotspots as the focal point for delivery, the broadening of small hotspots to include larger parts of towns and conurbations, through to targeting based on Thematic groups and not geography. The driver for these changes was a combination of pragmatism in reaching the required number of beneficiaries, labour market intelligence suggesting a wider approach was needed, and the desire to maintain involvement of a wider group of partner organisations. Although these changes are understandable, they present some challenges to effectively understanding what impact different interventions have on labour market outcomes.
8. **Changes in Youth Unemployment:** although claimant counts for 18-24 year olds have fallen steadily in most areas since 2011, long term youth unemployment has remained persistently high. We also reflect in the report on the effects of changes in the labour market which suggest that youth unemployment is both a *cyclical* and a *structural*, or longer-term, problem. A range of interventions are inevitably required, alongside efforts on the demand-side which recognise that in some areas there are simply too few jobs. Some of these macroeconomic issues clearly lie beyond the scope of the Talent Match programme.
9. **Employment Outcomes:** Talent Match aims to support 25,000 young people over the next five years with at least 20 per cent (5,400) entering sustainable employment. By the end of June the partnerships had supported 664 young people in some way and 28 had secured employment. The programme is clearly in its early stages of delivery and some partnerships have started quicker than others, and this is largely in line with plans agreed with the Big Lottery Fund. It was noticeable that the cost per beneficiary of delivering the programme ranges from £1,603 to £7,550 and from £4,000 to £37,750 in terms of the anticipated cost per job outcome. Of course this in part reflects differing labour market

contexts and the chosen target groups of partnerships, but also that these are simply estimates developed in planning. We would recommend that these be refined over time.

- 10. Employment Barriers:** data collected through the CDF reveals some interesting initial characteristics of the programme. For example, that 66 per cent of beneficiaries are male and nearly half have qualifications at least Level 2. What is also revealing is the range of barriers which young people identify. They include practical barriers (notably transport), issues of local job availability and quality, but also intrinsic factors (such as very low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem).

6.1. Five Programme Challenges

Talent Match is a complex programme which is still very much in its early stages. However, the first six months or so of delivery reveals a series of issues which we anticipate will present the real testing ground of the programme. Moreover, they are areas the Big Lottery Fund and Partnerships may wish to consider taking further action over:

- 1. Targeting** in its many guises (by area, group or theme) should be informed by a much clearer rationale in many cases. Some of the programme-wide data reveals relatively high numbers of individuals with Level 2 and above qualifications. This might suggest that some individuals possessing formal qualifications lack some of the softer skills that are important for employment and/or there is a lack of employment opportunities locally for such young people. There is also a more fundamental issue, which for a programme seeking to support innovation and based on a 'test and learn' approach, there needs to be a much clearer case made for why particular groups are being supported.
- 2. Value for money** considerations have not been at the forefront of discussions around the development of the programme. Indeed, traditional 'cost per-job' requirements and unit cost specification can stifle innovative approaches. Nonetheless, simply based on the agreed project plans there is considerable variation in the sought job out-turns across the different partnerships. Different approaches to targeting may explain some of this variation - we could not determine this at this stage. To give an example, the 'cost per sustainable job outcome' ranges from just over £4,000 in one partnership to £37,750 in another - more than a nine-fold difference. We recommend undertaking some further work to understand the composition of these costs, and that targets are revised.
- 3. Sustaining the involvement of young people** is likely to be a key challenge faced by many partnerships. Where involvement is a core part of the normal work of lead partners and delivery organisations we would anticipate few problems, However, where organisations are perhaps not specialist youth involvement organisations then there may be greater challenges. Conversely, a rationale of the programme was to develop new approaches to involving a group (18-24 year olds) who traditionally have not been involved in programme design or delivery. It is probably here that there is some scope to develop and spread lessons from new approaches.
- 4. Local coordination, capacity and capability** we find are likely to shape the performance of Talent Match. In particular, partnerships have formed at the same time as quite considerable change in institutional structures relating local economic development and growth policy and in particular with the establishment of LEPs. Moreover, funding programmes including the Regional Growth Fund, City Deals and latest round of EU Structural Funds programmes all largely work through LEPs. It is arguable that the success of Talent Match will be the extent to which partnerships can work alongside and with these other

programmes. Conversely, with further public expenditure cuts it can be anticipated that some partnership organisations (in particular delivery partners) will be at risk, and this in turn may bring risks to the programme. We would advise Partnerships to actively explore and secure a clear relationship with the LEP and associated key partners, including local authorities, which enables the youth employment agenda to be championed locally.

- 5. Innovation** is intended to be at the heart of the Talent Match programme. The initial phase of the evaluation found that most innovation was in the involvement of 18-24 year olds in the development and delivery of local partnership plans. Indeed, this element of the programme appears to have worked very well. However, with a few exceptions, most of the interventions being proposed were largely similar to ones which had been used before, and indeed many with some considerable evidence of relative success. The recommendation here though is not to call for all activities to be innovative, but rather that there are considerable efforts made to share good/effective practice and to learn from mistakes.

References

- ACEVO (2012) *Youth Unemployment: The Crisis we Cannot Afford*. London: ACEVO.
- Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2013) *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: the local and regional impact of welfare reform*. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.
- Bell, D. and Blanchflower, D. (2011a) Young people and the Great Recession. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 27, pp. 241-267.
- Bell, D. and Blanchflower, D. (2011b) *Youth unemployment in Europe and the United States*, IZA Discussion Paper 5673.
- Cribb, J., Hood, A., Joyce, R. and Phillips, D. (2013) *Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK*, IFS Report R81. London: IFS.
- Crisp, R., Gore, T. and Powell, R. (2012) *Scoping Study on Worklessness and Employability*, Report for the BIG Lottery Fund. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.
- Gordon, I. (1999), 'Move on up the car dealing with structural unemployment in London', *Local Economy*, 14 (1), pp. 87-95.
- Gore, T. and Hollywood, E. (2009) The role of social networks and geographical location in labour market participation in the UK coalfields. *Environment and Planning C*, 27, pp. 1008-1021.
- Green, A. and White, R. (2007) *Attachment to Place: Social Networks, Mobility and Prospects for Young People*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Green, A.E., de Hoyos, M., Li, Y. and Owen, D. (2011) *Job Search Study: Literature review and analysis of the Labour Force Survey*. DWP Research Report 726. London: Department for Work and Pensions.
- Gregg, P. and Tominey, P. (2005) The wage scar from youth unemployment. *Labour Economics*, 12, pp. 487-509.
- Gregg, P. and Wadsworth, J. (2010) Unemployment and inactivity in the 2008-2009 recession. *Economic & Labour Market Review*, 4 (8), pp. 44-50.
- House of Lords European Union Committee (2014) *Youth unemployment in the EU: a scarred generation?* 12th Report of Session 2013-14, HL Paper 164. London: The Stationery Office.
- Lee, N. and Wright, J. (2011) *Off the map? The geography of NEETs*. London: The Work Foundation.

Lindsay, C. (2010) In a lonely place? Social networks, job seeking and the experience of long-term unemployment. *Social Policy and Society*, 9, pp. 25-37.

Maguire, S. (2013) What measures can be taken to address the specific problem of NEET young people? *Intereconomics*, 4, pp. 196-201.

Reed in partnership (2010) *Learning from experience? Young people and unemployment*. London: Reed in partnership.

Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., Webster, C., and Garthwaite, K. (2012) *Poverty and Insecurity: Life in low-pay, no-pay Britain*, Bristol: Policy Press (winner of British Academy/ Policy Press Peter Townsend Prize 2013).

Simmons, R. and Thompson, R. (2013) Reclaiming the disengaged: critical perspectives on young people not in education, employment or training. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 18, pp. 1-11.

Sissons, P. and Jones, K. (2012) *Lost in transition? The changing labour market and young people not in employment, education or training*. London: The Work Foundation.

Tunstall, R., Lupton, R., Green, A., Watmough, S. and Bates, K. (2012) *Disadvantaged Young People looking for work: A job in itself?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

UKCES (2014a) *Precarious futures? Youth unemployment in an international context*. Wath-upon-Deerne and London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

UKCES (2014b) *Climbing the Ladder: Skills for Sustainable Recovery*. Wath-upon-Deerne and London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Wilson, T. and Bivand, P. (2014) *Equitable Full Employment: Delivering a jobs recovery for all*. London: Trades Union Congress.



Appendix 1: Common Data Framework Tables

Completion and Participation

Table A1.1: Completion method

	<i>All respondents</i>			
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
With an advisor/mentor etc.	521	78	104	88
With a support worker	108	16	9	8
Self-completion	35	5	5	4
Total	664	100	118	100

Table A1.2: Still participating in Talent Match?

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Yes	101	86
No	17	14
Total	118	100

Characteristics

Table A1.3: Age

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
17	2	0	0	0
18	94	14	16	14
19	126	19	25	21
20	112	17	23	19
21	108	16	18	15
22	88	13	17	14
23	76	11	14	12
24	57	9	5	4
25	1	0	0	0
Total	664	100	118	100

Table A1.4: Gender

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Male	436	66	88	75
Female	228	34	30	25
Total	664	100	118	100

Table A1.5: Disability

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	137	21	29	25
No	508	77	87	74
Prefer not to say	18	3	2	2
Total	663	100	118	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Table A1.6: Disability limits activities in any way?

<i>All respondents with a disability</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	87	65	22	76
No	46	35	7	24
Total	133	100	29	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Table A1.7: Ethnicity

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	542	82	101	86
White: Irish	0	0	0	0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	3	0	0	0
Other White	8	1	4	3
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black Caribbean	9	1	1	1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black African	6	1	0	0
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Asian	2	0	0	0
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: Other Mixed	6	1	0	0
Asian/Asian British: Indian	3	0	0	0
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	14	2	1	1
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	10	2	0	0
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1	0	1	1
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	1	0	0	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	19	3	0	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	15	2	0	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	3	0	0	0
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	0	0	0	0
Any Other Ethnic Group	7	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	15	2	10	8
Total	664	100	118	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Table A1.8: Religion

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
No religion	444	67	78	66
Christian (all denominations)	139	21	20	17
Muslim	38	6	1	1
Jewish	2	0	0	0
Buddhist	1	0	1	1
Hindu	1	0	0	0
Sikh	1	0	0	0
Any other religion	5	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	29	4	18	15
Total	660	100	118	100

N.B: This question was not asked at the follow-up stage. All data are based on baseline response

Table A1.9: Receive benefits?

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	550	83	79	67
No	113	17	39	33
Total	663	100	118	100

Table A1.10: Benefits received

<i>All respondents who receive benefits</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Job Seekers Allowance	384	71	54	68
Housing Benefit	156	29	27	34
Employment and Support Allowance	91	17	18	23
Council Tax Benefit	64	12	6	8
Personal Independence Payments / DLA	44	8	9	11
Income Support	40	7	5	6
Income Support for Lone Parents	18	3	0	0
Carer's Allowance	5	1	1	1
JSA Severe Hardship Payments (16-18 year olds only)	2	0	0	0
Universal Credit	0	0	0	0
Other	18	3	0	0
Don't know	1	0	0	0
Base	544		79	

Table A1.11: Tenure

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Live with parents	333	50	61	53
Rented from a Housing Association	92	14	12	10
Rented from a private landlord	68	10	12	10
Rented from Local Authority	42	6	5	4
Owner occupier - without mortgage/owned outright	3	0	0	0
Owner occupier - with mortgage	1	0	0	0
Other	123	19	26	22
Total	662	100	116	100

Table A1.12: Other living arrangements

<i>All respondents with 'other' living arrangements</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Hostel	39	32	9	35
Temporarily staying with friends / relatives inc. sofa surfing	32	26	4	15
Other supported accommodation	24	20	4	15
Other	19	16	5	19
Foster care	4	3	2	8
Sleeping rough	2	2	1	4
Children's Home	1	1	0	0
Night shelter / temporary hostel	1	1	1	4
Custody	0	0	0	0
Total	122	100	26	100

Table A1.13: Sexuality

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Heterosexual (straight)	575	87	86	73
Bisexual	19	3	1	1
Gay	9	1	2	2
Lesbian	4	1	0	0
Don't know	3	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	54	8	29	25
Total	664	100	118	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Table A1.14: Achieved 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths (or equivalent)?

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	184	29	35	30
No	446	71	80	70
Total	630	100	115	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Table A1.15: Highest qualification received

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up*	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
No qualifications	56	8	7	6
Entry Level	55	8	7	6
Level 1 (e.g. GCSEs D-G)	193	29	34	29
Level 2 (e.g. GCSEs A*-C)	220	33	48	41
Level 3 (e.g. AS/A levels)	91	14	13	11
Level 4 (e.g. Certificate of Higher Education, HNC)	8	1	3	3
Level 5+ (e.g. HND, Degree)	6	1	6	5
Don't know	34	5	0	0
Total	663	100	118	100

*Question not asked at the follow-up stage, data based on baseline response

Labour Market engagement

Table A1.16: Length of time respondents were doing the following prior to Talent Match

<i>Respondents providing length of time for each activity at the baseline stage</i>									
	Minimum		Maximum		Mean*		Median		Base
	Yrs.	Mths.	Yrs.	Mths.	Yrs.	Mths.	Yrs.	Mths.	
Not working and looking for work	0	1	7	7	2	0	1	6	488
Not working or looking for work	0	1	8	0	2	2	1	7	114
Volunteering	0	1	5	0	1	2	0	8	73
Formal education e.g. college	0	1	8	0	2	4	2	0	45
In training	0	1	3	0	0	6	0	3	24
Work placement	0	1	0	10	0	2	0	1	13
Working less than 16 hours/wk	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	7
Apprenticeship	0	8	0	8	0	8	0	8	1
Working 16 hours or more/wk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-employed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Rounded to the nearest month

Table A1.17: On or just completed the Work Programme?

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Yes	181	27
No	427	65
Don't know	53	8
Total	661	100

Table A1.18: Importance of support received from the Talent Match Programme in helping gain employment

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
Very important	27
Quite important	10
Not very important	1
Not important at all	0
Total	38

Table A1.19: Type of employment

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
Permanent	25
Temporary - with no agreed end date	6
Fixed period - with an agreed end date	7
Self-employed	0
Total	38

Table A1.20: Zero hours contract?

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
Yes	3
No	33
Don't know	2
Total	38

Table A1.21: Prefer a contract with guaranteed hours?

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working and on a zero hours contract</i>	
	Count
Yes	1
No	0
Don't know	2
Total	3

Table A1.22: Pay before tax and deductions

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
£60 or less per week (£3,120 or less per year)	1
£61 - £100 per week (£3,121 - £5,200 per year)	3
£101 - £130 per week (£5,201 - £6,760 per year)	6
£131 - £170 per week (£6,761 - £8,840 per year)	9
£171 - £220 per week (£8,841 - £11,440 per year)	7
£221 - £260 per week (£11,441 - £13,520 per year)	6
£261 - £310 per week (£13,521 - £16,120 per year)	5
£311 - £370 per week (£16,121 - £19,240 per year)	0
£371 - £430 per week (£19,241 - £22,360 per year)	0
£431 - £520 per week (£22,361 - £27,040 per year)	0
£521 - £650 per week (£27,041 - £33,800 per year)	0
£651 or more per week (£33,801 or more per year)	0
Don't know	1
Total	38

Table A1.23: Pay before tax changes from week to week because of overtime, or because of working different hours each week?

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
Yes	9
No	29
Total	38

Table A1.24: Satisfaction with present job overall, where 1 is 'completely dissatisfied' and 7 is 'completely satisfied'

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>	
	Count
1	0
2	4
3	1
4	3
5	4
6	19
7	8
Total	39

Table A1.25: Agreement with statements about current job and future career

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who were working</i>							
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
I see my present job as part of a career	12	17	4	2	3	1	39
I see my job as a stepping stone, to provide me with worthwhile experience for my future career	14	21	3	0	0	1	39
I can't see this job going anywhere, there are no promotion prospects	1	3	13	12	6	4	39
My job is important and it makes me feel worthwhile	10	23	4	1	1	0	39
My job is interesting	13	21	2	2	1	0	39
All things considered, I am happy with the level of pay	7	26	4	0	1	1	39

Table A1.26: Looked for any kind of paid work in the last four weeks?

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Yes	74	63
No	44	37
Total	118	100

Table A1.27: Volunteered during the last 3 months?

<i>All respondents</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	135	21	37	32
No	514	79	78	68
Total	649	100	115	100

Table A1.28: Approximately how many hours in total respondents volunteered in the past four weeks

<i>All respondents who had volunteered during the last 3 months</i>				
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
0	20	15	5	14
1-5	15	11	3	8
6-10	25	19	8	22
11-20	34	25	10	27
21-40	22	16	4	11
41-100	14	10	3	8
Over 100	5	4	4	11
Total	135	100	37	100

Table A1.29: What respondents think they have achieved through volunteering

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey who had volunteered during the last 3 months</i>		
	Count	Per cent
I gained work experience	36	97
I increased my confidence	34	92
I helped other people	33	89
I gained or improved skills	30	81
I became more employable	30	81
I made new friends	26	70
I helped make the world, or my local area, a nicer place to be	18	49
Other	2	5
I didn't achieve anything	0	0
Don't know	1	3
Base	37	

Services

Table A1.30: Services respondents involved with prior to Talent Match

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
Job Centre Plus / Jobs and Benefits Office	484	73
Education, training, skills development	136	20
Community, youth or voluntary organisations	134	20
Mental health services, counselling	98	15
Police, probation or legal services	80	12
Social services	67	10
Careers / business advice or support	56	8
Drug / alcohol support	40	6
Other	31	5
None	80	12
Base	664	

Table A1.31: Services respondents currently involved with

	<i>All respondents</i>			
	Baseline		Follow-up	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Job Centre Plus / Jobs and Benefits Office	504	76	69	58
Community, youth or voluntary organisations	109	16	24	20
Mental health services, counselling	71	11	18	15
Education, training, skills development	59	9	21	18
Police, probation or legal services	54	8	2	2
Social services	46	7	10	8
Careers / business advice or support	38	6	5	4
Drug / alcohol support	30	5	5	4
Other	32	5	3	3
None	77	12	28	24
Base	664		118	

Skills

Table A1.32: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree they have particular skills (baseline responses)

All respondents to the baseline survey

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Don't know		Total	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Good basic skills (reading/numbers)	222	33	271	41	89	13	49	7	22	3	11	2	664	100
Confidence in myself	103	16	246	37	157	24	97	15	55	8	6	1	664	100
An understanding of the skills employers are looking for	99	15	323	49	124	19	79	12	24	4	15	2	664	100
Identified my short and long-term careers goals	104	16	241	36	144	22	110	17	44	7	21	3	664	100
An understanding of a specific job or area of work I am interested in	158	24	289	44	111	17	71	11	22	3	12	2	663	100
Good specific skills for the job I am looking for	92	14	251	38	175	26	90	14	29	4	27	4	664	100
The ability to put together a CV	123	19	300	45	114	17	86	13	33	5	8	1	664	100
Identified additional training I want to take up	91	14	243	37	164	25	107	16	30	5	28	4	663	100
Appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	214	32	257	39	60	9	71	11	50	8	12	2	664	100
An understanding of how to set up my own business	30	5	91	14	132	20	123	19	183	28	105	16	664	100

Table A1.33: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree they have particular skills (follow-up responses)

All respondents to the follow-up survey

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Don't know		Total	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Good basic skills (reading/numbers)	30	25	61	52	19	16	7	6	1	1	0	0	118	100
Confidence in myself	18	15	68	58	18	15	12	10	2	2	0	0	118	100
An understanding of the skills employers are looking for	17	14	79	67	12	10	9	8	1	1	0	0	118	100
Identified my short and long-term careers goals	15	13	72	61	23	19	6	5	2	2	0	0	118	100
An understanding of a specific job or area of work I am interested in	18	15	75	64	14	12	9	8	1	1	1	1	118	100
Good specific skills for the job I am looking for	15	13	70	59	20	17	9	8	1	1	3	3	118	100
The ability to put together a CV	26	22	76	64	10	8	4	3	1	1	1	1	118	100
Identified additional training I want to take up	20	17	52	44	26	22	14	12	2	2	4	3	118	100
Appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	48	41	54	46	1	1	10	8	5	4	0	0	118	100
An understanding of how to set up my own business	4	3	23	19	38	32	7	6	16	14	30	25	118	100

Figure A1.1: My Journey Scale

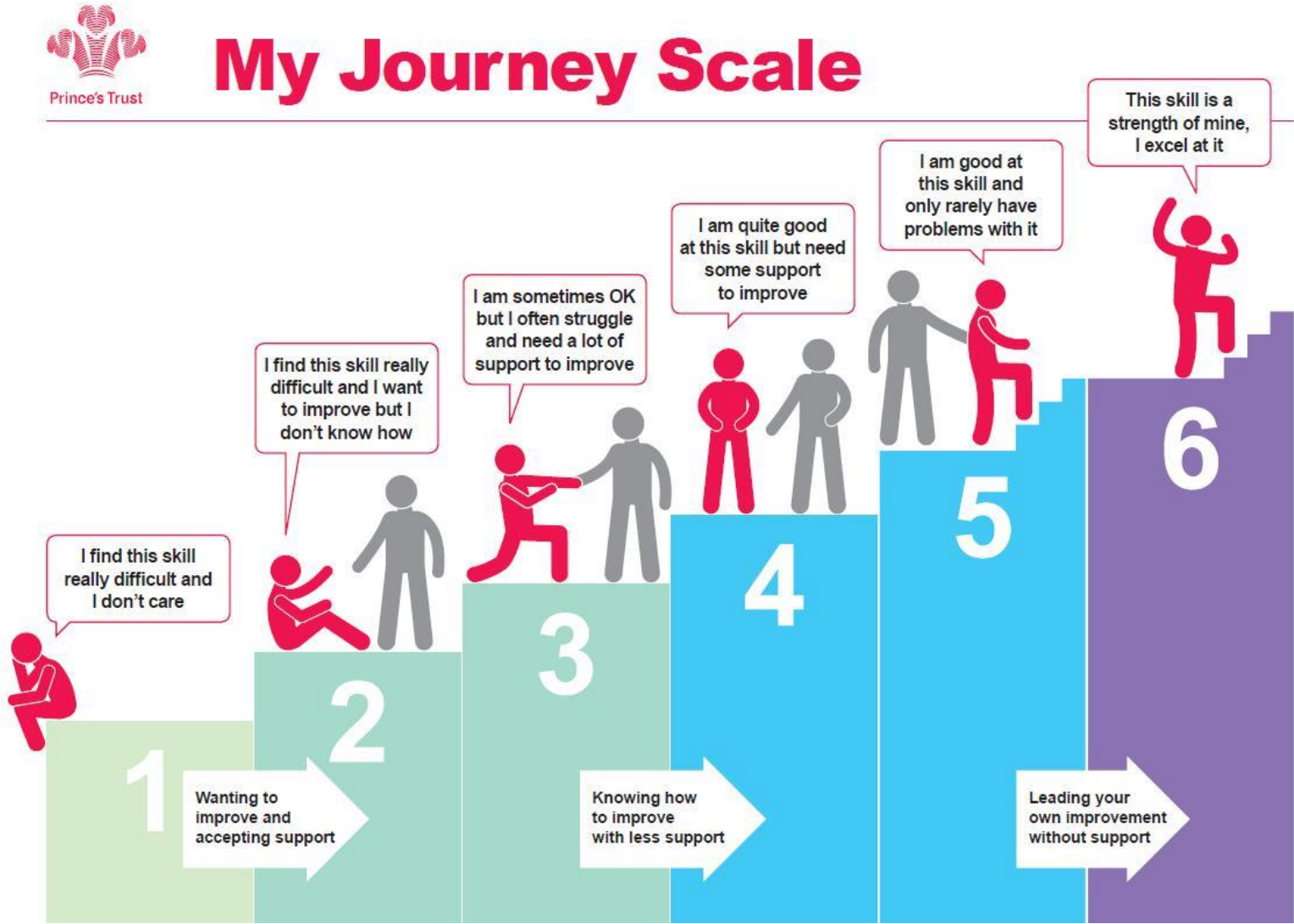


Table A1.34: How good respondents feel they are with certain sets of skills (Using the My Journey Scale - baseline responses)

All respondents to the baseline survey

	Communication		Working with others		Setting and achieving goals		Managing feelings		Confidence		Reliability	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
1	7	1	9	1	18	3	27	4	34	5	12	2
2	55	8	55	8	88	13	109	17	136	21	44	7
3	131	20	89	13	180	27	161	24	150	23	99	15
4	193	29	141	21	166	25	146	22	142	22	134	20
5	185	28	195	30	140	21	141	21	129	20	208	32
6	90	14	172	26	69	10	75	11	67	10	163	25
Total	661	100	661	100	661	100	659	100	658	100	660	100

Table A1.35: How good respondents feel they are with certain sets of skills (Using the My Journey Scale - follow-up responses)

All respondents to the follow-up survey

	Communication		Working with others		Setting and achieving goals		Managing feelings		Confidence		Reliability	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
2	3	3	8	7	8	7	12	10	6	5	6	5
3	19	16	15	13	22	19	24	20	26	22	16	14
4	38	32	23	19	45	38	35	30	40	34	38	32
5	34	29	43	36	25	21	28	24	31	26	31	26
6	22	19	27	23	16	14	16	14	13	11	25	21
Total	118	100	118	100	118	100	118	100	118	100	118	100

Barriers to employment

Table A1.36: Whether respondents had turned down a job or decided not to apply for a job they were interested in due to the following problems

	<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>									
	Yes		No		Don't know		Not applicable		Total	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Access to and / or cost of transport	227	34	320	48	21	3	95	14	663	100
Internet access	105	16	438	66	15	2	105	16	663	100
Access to and / or cost of childcare	39	6	324	49	17	3	283	43	663	100
Access to support for young carers	21	3	327	49	18	3	298	45	664	100
Access to support for disabled people	23	3	330	50	21	3	289	44	663	100
Temporary nature of work	102	15	383	58	32	5	146	22	663	100
Low pay	120	18	385	58	20	3	138	21	663	100
Variable pay	76	11	417	63	34	5	135	20	662	100

Goals

Table A1.37: Goals from the Talent Match Programme respondents wish to gain

<i>All respondents to the baseline survey</i>		
	Count	Per cent
I want to have gained employment	555	84
I want to apply for jobs	496	75
I want to develop good specific skills for the job I am looking for	447	67
I want to identify additional training I want to take up	431	65
I want to gain confidence	420	63
I want to take up additional training	403	61
I want to identify short and long-term career goals	395	60
I want to undertake some form of work experience	394	59
I want to have attended at least one interview	393	59
I want to understand the skills employers are looking for	389	59
I want to understand a specific job or area of work	344	52
I want to improve my basic skills (reading/numbers)	298	45
I want to do some volunteering	287	43
I want to put together a CV	286	43
I want to understand how to set up my own business	229	35
I want to have appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	219	33
I want to set up my own business	187	28
Base	663	

Table A1.38: Importance of support received through the Talent Match Programme in helping meet goals

<i>All respondents to the follow-up survey</i>					
	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total
	Counts				
I want to have gained employment	20	2	0	0	22
I want to apply for jobs	10	1	0	0	11
I want to have attended at least one interview	8	3	0	0	11
I want to gain confidence	7	1	0	0	8
I want to undertake some form of work experience	5	2	1	0	8
I want to identify short and long-term career goals	5	2	0	0	7
I want to put together a CV	5	1	0	0	6
I want to take up additional training	5	0	0	0	5
I want to understand how to set up my own business	2	1	1	0	4
I want to improve my basic skills (reading/numbers)	3	0	0	0	3
I want to identify additional training I want to take up	3	0	0	0	3
I want to understand the skills employers are looking for	2	0	0	0	2
I want to understand a specific job or area of work	2	0	0	0	2
I want to develop new job specific skills	1	1	0	0	2
I want to do some volunteering	2	0	0	0	2
I want to have appropriate clothing I can wear to an interview	1	0	0	0	1
I want to set up my own business	0	0	0	0	0

Well-being

Table A1.39: Well-being measures* (baseline-responses)

All respondents to the baseline survey

	Life satisfaction		Worthwhile rating		Happiness yesterday		Anxiety yesterday	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
0	17	3	16	2	23	4	134	21
1	21	3	22	3	25	4	52	8
2	45	7	43	7	43	7	72	11
3	75	11	58	9	59	9	66	10
4	94	14	71	11	61	9	69	11
5	138	21	139	21	101	15	92	14
6	91	14	99	15	69	11	39	6
7	84	13	77	12	88	13	49	8
8	53	8	70	11	86	13	29	5
9	23	4	30	5	55	8	17	3
10	12	2	26	4	42	6	19	3
Total	653	100	651	100	652	100	638	100

Table A1.40: Well-being measures* (follow-up-responses)

All respondents to the follow-up survey

	Life satisfaction		Worthwhile rating		Happiness yesterday		Anxiety yesterday	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	23	19
1	1	1	2	2	2	2	9	8
2	3	3	4	3	4	3	17	14
3	6	5	7	6	8	7	13	11
4	9	8	10	8	7	6	16	14
5	13	11	10	8	9	8	9	8
6	24	20	20	17	14	12	11	9
7	22	19	28	24	22	19	4	3
8	23	19	18	15	24	21	9	8
9	9	8	11	9	13	11	4	3
10	8	7	8	7	13	11	3	3
Total	118	100	118	100	117	100	118	100

- ***Life satisfaction** - 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'
- ***Things you do in life are worthwhile** - 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'
- ***Happiness yesterday** - 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy'
- ***Anxiety yesterday** - 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'.

Table A1.41: Beneficiary sub-groups targeted by Talent Match Partnerships

LEP Area	Target beneficiary sub-groups
Black Country	Young people aged 18-24 who have been out of work, training or education for at least 12 months and who require help to overcome specific barriers to employment. Specific groups focused on are: young offenders, care leavers, members of travelling families, young carers/ parents, those engaged in substance misuse; those who are homeless or in housing need
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	10 groups identified: 12 months plus unemployed; young people with learning difficulties or disabilities; care leavers; people with mental health conditions; homeless / sofa surfing; young people from multi-generational workless households; Young fathers; Young parents; Gypsies and Travellers; BME groups.
Coventry & Warwickshire	Hardest to reach NEETs aged 18 to 24 who have been unemployed for at least 12 months and who are based within the three geographic hot spots. Particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who are on benefits but who require individualised motivational support and advice; • Young people lacking the vocational or social skills to match themselves to opportunities; • Young people with specific needs that are not adequately supported, for example those with special needs who receive less support once they pass their teens/early 20s; • Young people rebuilding their lives after periods of alcohol or substance misuse; • Young people in isolated rural areas; • White, working class males; • Young people facing cultural and/or generational barriers, e.g. third generation unemployed families, young people in North Warwickshire who have never been out of their home town.
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire	Ex-Offenders; Drug/Alcohol Users; BME groups; and Lone parents
Greater Birmingham & Solihull	All NEETs
Greater Lincolnshire	2 main groups: (1) 18-24 at least 12 months on JSA; (2) 18-24 'hidden NEETs' - especially those with low or no qualifications, with learning difficulties, with physical disabilities, experiencing mental ill health, those who are looked after or living in informal care; homeless; offenders and ex-offenders; from BME; those with drug and substance misuse; those with anti-social behaviour.
Greater Manchester	Six groups: Lone parents; carers; alcohol & substance misusers; ex-offenders; care leavers; those with health related issues i.e. mental health (including those claiming ESA).
Humber	9 groups identified: Homeless; Ex-offenders; BME; Gypsies and Travellers; Lone parents; Young carers; Physical disabilities; Learning disabilities; Mental Health
Leeds City Region	Vary by LAD
Leicester & Leicestershire	2 overarching target groups: (1) young people aged 18-24 who have been on JSA for more than 12 months; (2) hidden NEETs. (There are some specific groups identified in hotspot wards)
Liverpool City Region	1. Care leavers; 2. Ex-offenders; 3. Those with mental health issues; 4. Disabled young people; 5. Young parents; 6. Homeless and those in insecure housing; 7. Geographical unemployment hotspots based on wards with the highest levels of 18-24 JSA claimants (12+ months), incapacity, ESA and lone parent claimants and the region's most deprived wards based on the indices of multiple deprivation
London	"Hidden" young people not accessing other provision; Unemployed for 1 year prior to engagement; Some partners will specifically target individuals with disability or mental health issues; and those with caring responsibilities for family members or young children.

New Anglia	Target group is people between ages of 18 - 24 who have been NEET for 12 months or more. 4 priority groups: hidden NEETS LTU 12+; LTU 24+ not accessing WP; WP leavers LTU 18+; LTU 12+ not accessing WP (including ESA/IB).
North East	Communities where a high proportion of young people face long-term unemployment; young people facing rural isolation; long-term unemployed males; lone parents; young carers; young people with mental health issues.
Northamptonshire	5 groups of LTU 12+: People from BME communities; Ex-offenders; Lone Parents; People with Mental Health issues; People with moderate learning difficulties and disabilities.
Sheffield City Region	5 groups: young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties; lone parents before they sign on to JSA; young people with mental health issues; homeless young people; care leavers.
South East	Care Leavers, Lone parents, Refugee/asylum seeking young people, young carers, young people involved in substance misuse, young people who have left prison, young women who are pregnant, young parents not caring for own child, young people with learning and other disabilities, black and minority ethnic young people, young people with multiple and complex needs, young people with low-level mental health issues, this not engaged in any activity or service, young people in areas of deprivation
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A cohort identified by the Government's Troubled Families project which contains a statistically significant number of under 25's, with low educational achievement, a range of barriers or issues and often chaotic home lives; 2. Young adults at the younger end of the Talent Match age range that could have been on Work Programme but have not engaged successfully. They often have few qualifications having left school at age 16; 3. Young people who have come to an end of their time on Work Programme who subsequently then disengage with DWP mainstream services and support.
Tees Valley	The partnership targets 3 groups based on benefit status and involvement with the Work Programme: Hidden NEETs not claiming JSA; NEETs who have been unemployed for 2 years plus and have failed to engage or progress after mandatory support, including the Work Programme; Young people who are 12 months plus unemployed and engaging but not progressing with Work Programme.
The Marches	4 main target groups identified: individual young people with additional needs and issues who struggle to succeed in the employment market; those who are disconnected from societies' social structures and public services; those who are leading unstructured and chaotic lifestyles, those who are risk taking, those who prefer not to register their existence officially; those who are not benefitting from job centre and work programme support, those who are returners of the programme or those who have been sanctioned from JSA.
Worcestershire	Young people who are socially excluded, experience learning difficulties, at risk of offending, are in the looked after system and/or are NEET. Problems that are likely to be disproportionately common amongst these young people are homelessness, physical and mental illness, numeracy and literacy problems, low confidence

Source: Talent Match Project Plan documents and Partnership data validation.

Appendix 2: Partnership Survey

Table A2.1: Involvement of young people assisting or constraining development and delivery

All Partnerships								
	Greatly assisted delivery	Assisted delivery	Neutral	Constrained delivery	Seriously constrained delivery	Don't know	N/A	Base
Marketing	11	8	1	-	-	-	-	20
Commissioning of services	10	5	-	-	-	-	-	15
Membership of the Core Partnership group or committee	9	5	2	1	-	-	-	17
Management of the Talent Match partnership and/or service delivery	9	4	2	-	-	-	1	16
Media and dissemination	9	8	1	-	-	-	-	18
Engaging other young people/Outreach work	9	4	3	-	-	-	-	16
Delivering services	4	3	2	-	-	-	2	11
Evaluation and research	4	10	2	-	-	-	1	17
Other	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	7

Sheffield Hallam University

Evaluation of Talent Match Programme: Annual Report

CENTRE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH (CRESR), and
INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH (IER),

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/29290/>

Copyright and re-use policy

Please visit <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/29290/> and
<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html> for further details about copyright
and re-use permissions.