

South West Workways project evaluation

Final Report

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July 2013

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Summary of performance against targets	6
Workways participants	6
Progress against outcome targets	8
Overall progress	8
Progress by Local Authority area.....	10
Progress for specific groups of participants.....	11
Employment details.....	11
Accessing Workways.....	15
Engaging participants	15
The importance of outreach and partner engagement.....	15
Recent referrals from JCP	16
Participants’ preconceptions of Workways	17
Locations of services	17
Reaching “hard to reach” groups	18
The distance from the labour market of project participants.....	19
Conclusion	22
Delivering Workways.....	23
The Gateway process and other ESF projects	23
Perceived barriers to work and additional support received to overcome them	25
Responsibilities of mentors and ELOs.....	27
The role of mentors	28
Employer Liaison Officers	30
Engaging employers.....	30
Support for employers.....	31
Finding vacancies.....	32
Temporary Job Opportunities	33
TJO participants and outcomes.....	33
TJOs in different Local Authority areas	34
Engagement with participants on TJOs.....	35
Conclusion.....	36
Experiences of Workways.....	37
From employers	37

From participants	38
Participant experiences of mentors and ELOs.....	38
Action plans and Rickter Assessments	40
Participant experiences of TJOs	42
Areas for improvement.....	43
Overall satisfaction with Workways	44
'Soft' outcomes and skills gained.....	46
Differences in delivery arrangements, key strengths and areas for improvement	51
Main differences between areas	51
Key strengths	52
Areas for improvement	53
Conclusions and recommendations	55
Annex 1 – List of Abbreviations	57
Annex 2 - Constructing a barriers typology	58
Annex 3 – Telephone survey of participants.....	60
Sample	60
Fieldwork	60
Response rates.....	61
Weighting	61

Introduction

The South West Workways project aims to provide targeted support to economically inactive and unemployed people across four Local Authorities in South West Wales. Led by Neath Port Talbot Council (NPT) in collaboration with Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils, the project is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Welsh Government.

The project is intended to support participants to make the transition into employment by supporting them to overcome their barriers to work, by working with employers, and where appropriate by providing access to Temporary Job Opportunities (TJOs).

The project has four primary aims, as defined in its Business Plan:

- To reduce the number of individuals in South West Wales who are economically inactive or long-term unemployed by working in a joined up, client-centred way.
- To develop a regional client engagement and assessment Gateway, utilising links that already existed as well as proposed new provision, alongside innovative outreach work that reflects the requirements of each Local Authority area.
- To provide TJOs for those participants who require the extra support needed to move from receiving benefits to sustainable employment.
- To continue to develop collaborative working practices across South West Wales for the benefit of participants, employers and the region as a whole.

The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion was commissioned by the project team to evaluate the delivery of the South West Workways project.

This final report is based on a number of pieces of research. It provides:

- an assessment of the project's performance against objectives based on project management information;
- findings from interviews with regional staff overseeing the project;
- findings from a comparative focus group with one mentor and one ELO from each local authority;
- findings from a telephone survey of 721 participants (see annex 3 for details); and

- findings from in-depth case studies in each of the four local authorities delivering the project – which involved focus groups with participants as well as interviews with project teams, employers and other stakeholders.

Summary of performance against targets

Progress against key targets is summarised below. Workways targets have been re-profiled twice during the project, as a result of changing priorities in response to the economic downturn. Where possible, the most recent profiles (October 2011) have been used in this assessment.

Workways participants¹

By the end of June 2012, there had been **6,903** project participants. This is 90% of profiled starts to the end of June 2012 (7,705).

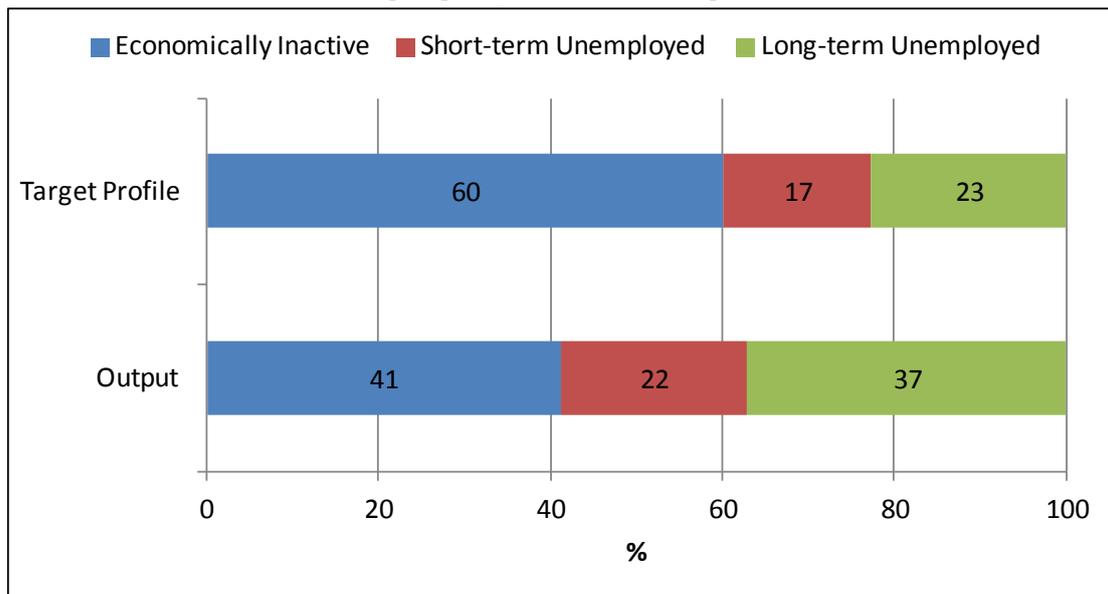
As of June 2012, around 600 new participants had started the project every quarter. In order to reach the project target of 9,954 by March 2013, this would need to increase to around 1,000 per quarter over the last three quarters of the project.

At a Local Authority level, Carmarthenshire was at 94% of profile, with NPT at 94%, Pembrokeshire at 91% and Swansea 80%.

Participants were more likely to be unemployed and less likely to be economically inactive than was anticipated when targets were set. In total, 41% of participants (2,840) were inactive, against a profile of 60%. Most of the difference is explained by higher than anticipated participation by the long-term unemployed – with 37% of starters long-term unemployed against a profile of 23%. This reflects both changed priorities in response to the recession (a large increase in unemployment) and different referral patterns from Jobcentre Plus (JCP), who account for the majority of referrals to the project.

¹ This section is based on analysis of the results up to June 2012, submitted to WEFO.

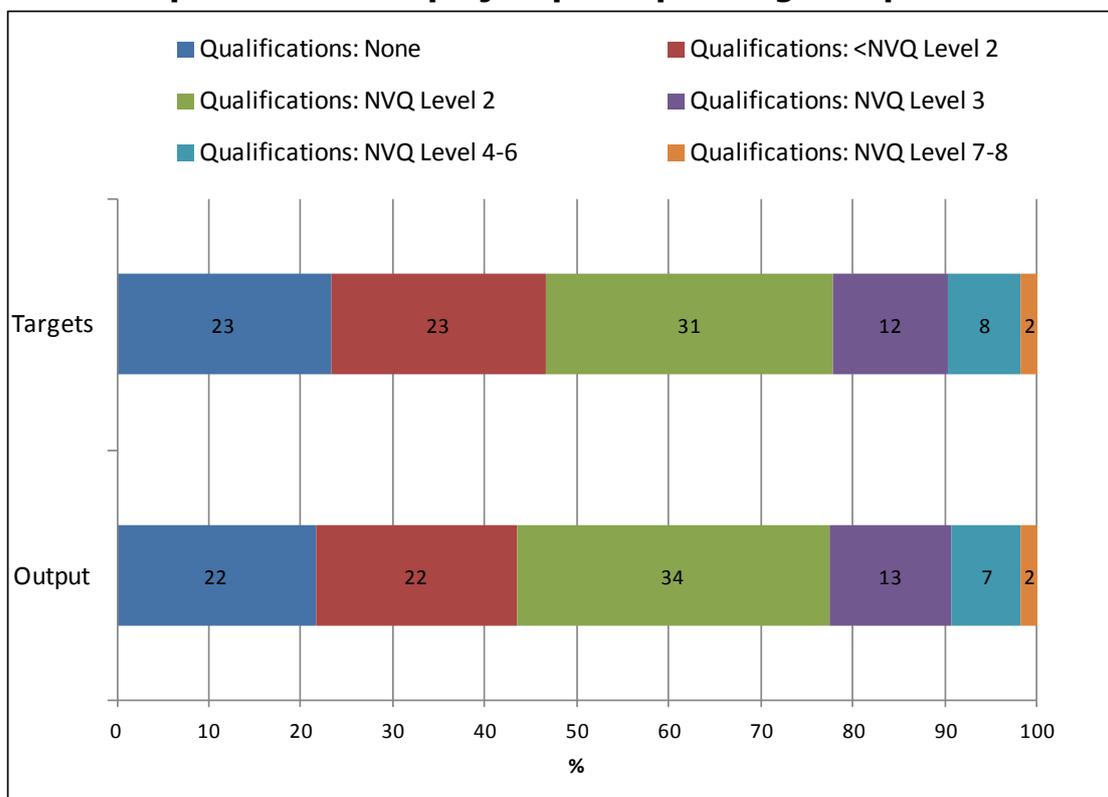
Chart 1 - whether unemployed/economically inactive



Source: WEFO submission June 2012

Notwithstanding this, the qualifications of participants were broadly in line with the profiles for the project, as illustrated in the table below. Overall, 77% of participants had qualifications at or below Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs) against a target of 78%, and 22% had no qualifications against a target of 23%.

Chart 2 – qualifications of project participants against profile



Source: WEFO submission June 2012

The higher proportion of participants that were unemployed rather than inactive has also led to the proportion of male participants being higher than anticipated – with a gender split of 67:33 between men and women against a profile of 49:51.

Participation of ethnic minorities and of those with work-limiting health conditions or disabilities were somewhat below project profiles, with:

- 1.6% of participants were from ethnic minority groups compared with a profile of 2.1%; and
- 7.1% of participants had a work-limiting health condition or disability compared with a profile of 9.9%.

However, participation of those aged 55 was broadly in line with the project profile (7.3% of participants were aged 55 or over compared with a profile of 7.5%)

In addition, 16% of participants had sole caring responsibilities (there was no specific target in this regard).²

Overall then, a higher proportion of unemployed participants has not necessarily translated into referrals of individuals who were substantially less disadvantaged in the labour market.

Progress against outcome targets³

Overall progress

As noted above, participant starts have been lower than anticipated – therefore in absolute terms the number of outcomes achieved has also been below profiles.

However looking at the proportion of project completers achieving outcomes, performance has been higher than the profiles set for the project. In fact, management information suggests that **40%** of project completers had entered employment, which is 5 percentage points higher than the target proportion of 35%.

Other project outcomes are set out in the table below.

² Taken from management information data.

³ This section is based where possible on analysis of project management information of participants who have completed the project. Elsewhere it is based on analysis of the results submitted to WEFO up to June 2012 based on all participants, and survey data.

Table 1 – Achievement of outcomes against targets⁴

Outcome	Number of participants achieving outcome	Proportion achieving outcome	Target proportion achieving outcome	Variance
Entered voluntary work, completed short job-focussed course or attended job interview ⁵	2387	35%	32%	+3%
Gained qualifications	357	5%	5%	0%
Entered Further Learning	48	1%	1%	0%

In total, management information suggests that **52%** of participants have achieved at least one positive outcome, including entering voluntary or paid work, completing a course, or having a job interview. One quarter of participants have achieved multiple positive outcomes, with an average of 2.5 positive outcomes achieved by these participants.

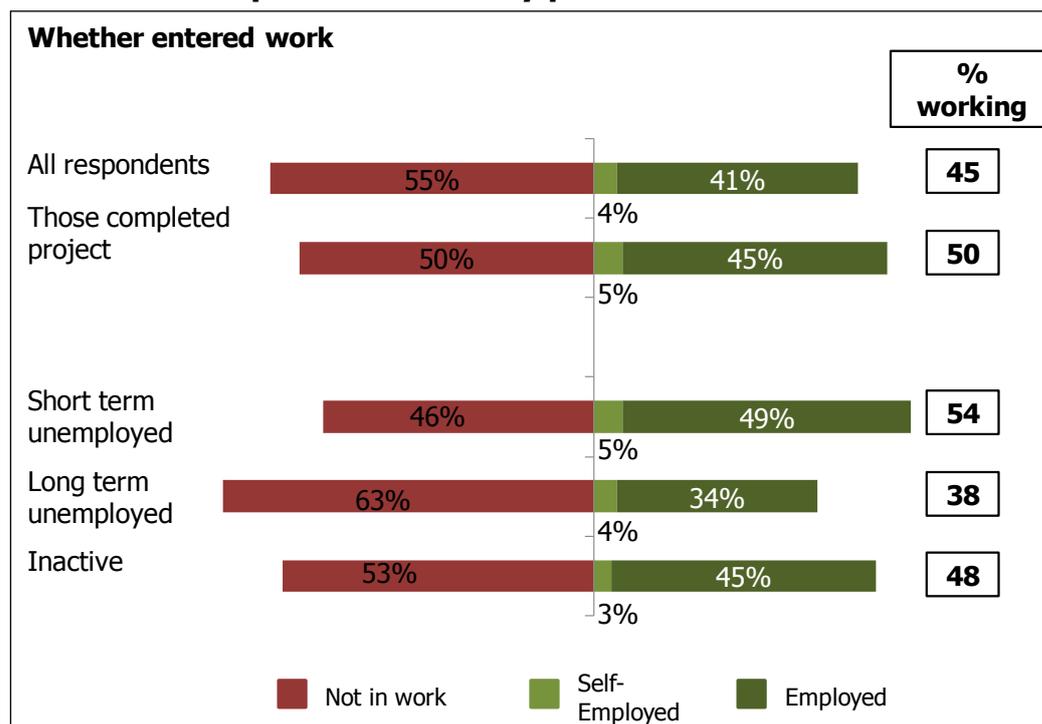
The telephone survey of 721 Workways participants found an even higher proportion of those who completed the project achieved an employment outcome whilst on the project or within six months of leaving it – with **50%** either gaining employment (45%) or self-employment (5%). As shown in Chart 3, employment outcomes were highest amongst those who were short-term unemployed before starting on the project (54%). This is unsurprising. However, interestingly, those participants who had previously been inactive had significantly better employment outcomes (48%) than the long-term unemployed (38%).

Overall, these appear to be impressive results – particularly given the deterioration in the labour market, as a result of the recession, since the programme was established.

⁴ Data taken from June 2012 WEFO return of participants.

⁵ Defined as "Other positive outcomes"

Chart 3–Participant outcomes by prior status



Source: participant survey. Base: All (721); completers (580); short-term unemployed (156); long-term unemployed (222); inactive (293).

Progress by Local Authority area

Detailed analysis of the management information from the project shows that NPT and Pembrokeshire were substantially ahead of their targets for the proportion of participants entering employment, while Carmarthen and Swansea were operating on target. This is set out in Table 2 below. The survey also found that, compared to all participants, those from NPT were more likely to be employed within 6 months of completing the project.

Table 2 – Proportion of project completers entering employment by Local Authority

Proportion of participants entering employment (%)	Proportion entering employment	Target	Variance
NPT	47	35	+12
Pembroke	42	34	+8
Carmarthen	35	34	+1
Swansea	31	31	0

Progress for specific groups of participants

The participant survey found that a number of groups were more likely to have entered work whilst on Workways or within six months:

- Participants aged 25-34 were most likely to have entered work (52% were employed at the time of survey), with those aged 44-54 (37%) and over 55 (36%) significantly less likely to be employed.
- Participants without a disability were more likely than those with a disability to have found work (47% compared to 36%).
- Those with higher qualifications (Level 2 and above) were more likely to have found work (52%) than those with no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2 (35%).
- Interestingly, the survey also found that those participants that had done a Temporary Job Opportunity were a lot more likely than those that had not done a TJO to have entered work (59% compared to 41%).

There were not significant differences depending on whether respondents had caring responsibilities or not, or by gender.

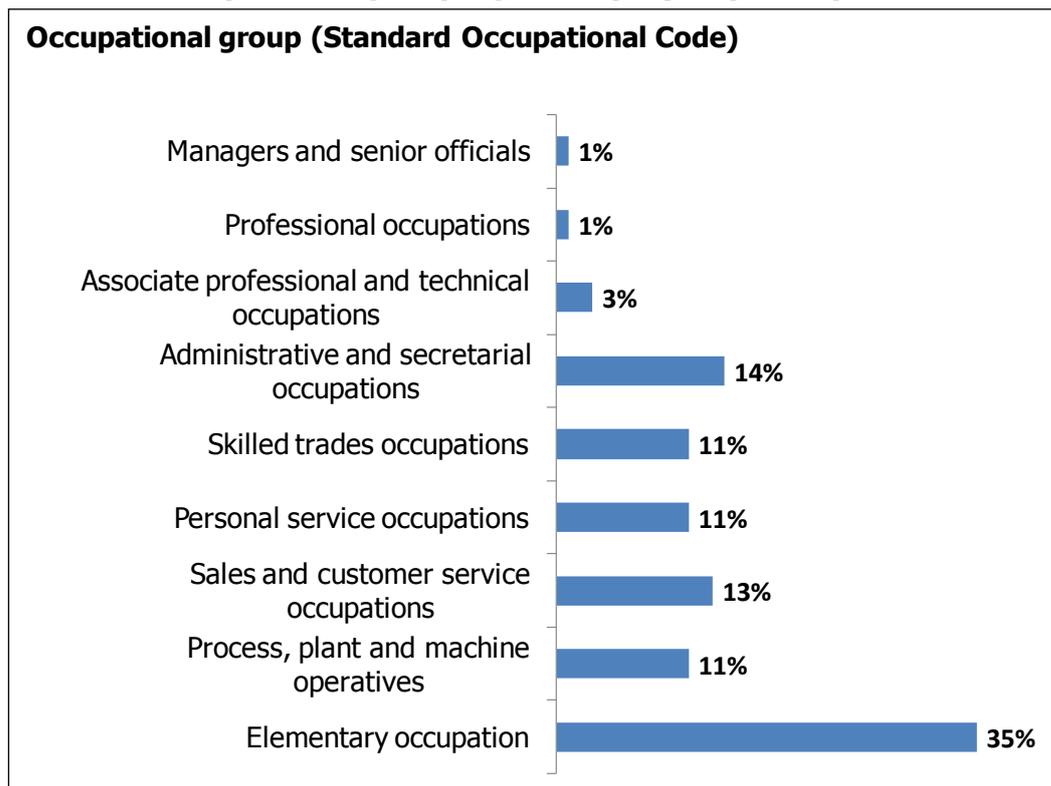
Employment details

The survey data and management information also offer insights into the types of work that participants went into and how long they stayed in those roles.

As Chart 4 shows,⁶ participants who were employed at the time of the survey had predominantly entered elementary occupations, followed by administrative and secretarial occupations.

⁶ Occupational groups are based on Standard Occupational Classification 2000 codes. For more details see <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/archived-standard-classifications/standard-occupational-classification-2000/about-soc-2000/index.html>

Chart 4—Occupational grouping of employed participants

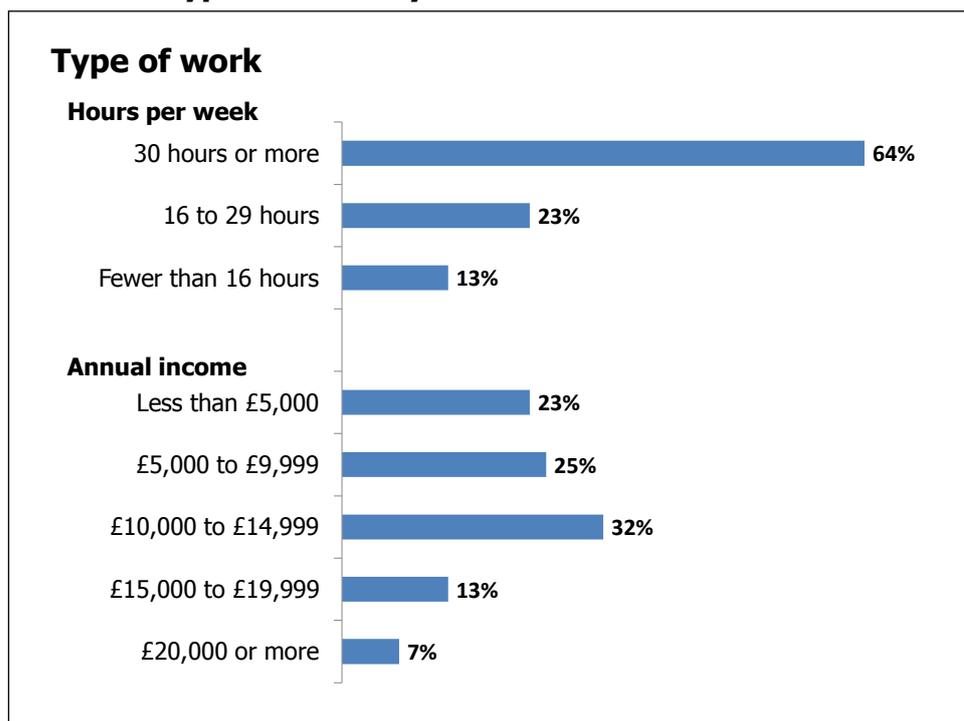


Source: participant survey. Base: all entering work (336)

Participants with qualifications at Level 3 and above were more likely to be in administrative and secretarial occupations than those with lower level qualifications who were more likely to be found in elementary occupations. The type of work entered by Workways participants was also affected by their work history. Those who were formerly inactive were more likely to have gone into personal services such as caring, whereas the unemployed were more likely to be in elementary occupations.

Chart 5 shows that nearly two-thirds of employed participants were in full-time jobs of 30 hours per week or more (64%) and around one quarter working 16-29 hours.

Chart 5 – Type of Work by Hours and Income



Source: participant survey. Base: all entering work (336) ; all able to provide salary (306)

Again there is difference between those who were formerly unemployed and those formerly inactive, with those formerly unemployed more likely to be working over 30 hours and those formerly inactive more likely to work 16-30 hours. It is likely that this may reflect a greater likelihood among the economically inactive to have caring responsibilities and/ or health conditions that limit the hours that they can work.

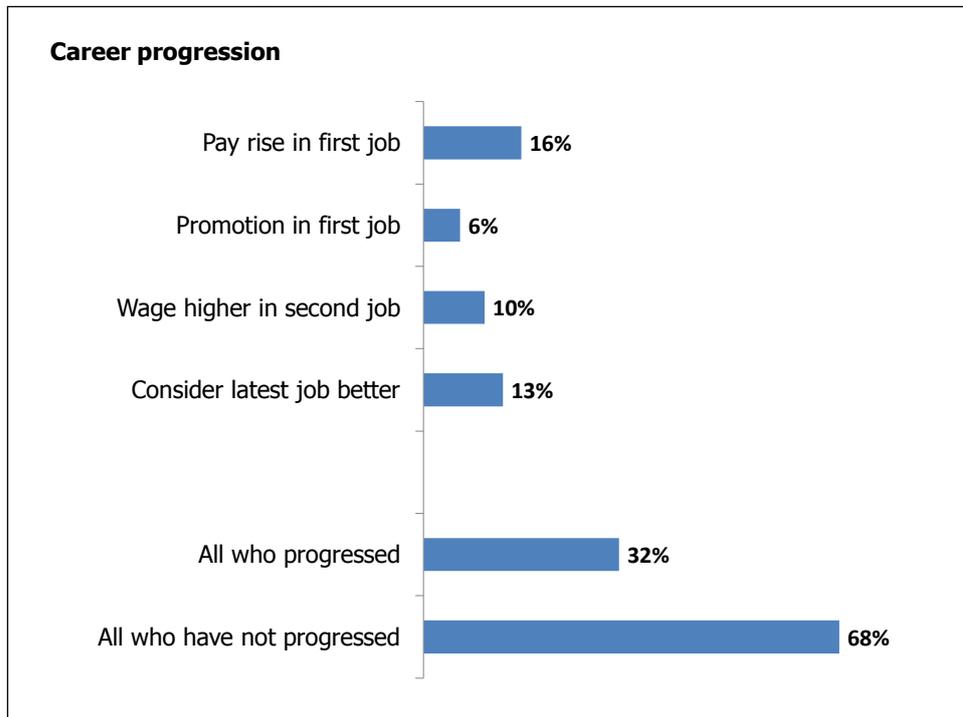
Of those respondents that gave their rate of pay, the majority (80%) were earning less than £15,000. Unsurprisingly, higher qualifications were associated with higher earnings – those with Level 3 qualifications and above slightly more likely to be earning £10,000 to £19,999.

In terms of sustaining and progressing in work, analysis of management information for those who completed Workways more than twelve months earlier⁷ shows that of those Workways participants who had entered work 46% had sustained it for six months, while 13% had sustained employment for twelve months. However, these figures should be treated with caution – much of the data is incomplete so these figures are likely to under-estimate sustained employment.

⁷ i.e. management information of those who completed Workways 12 months earlier than when the MI was drawn, in order to ensure that they had the opportunity to have sustained employment for at least a year.

Survey respondents were asked whether they had progressed their career since they first got a job with Workways. In total, 16% reported receiving a pay rise from their first employer, and six per cent had received a promotion with their first employer. In addition, 10% had moved employer and received a higher wage. Finally, 13% had moved job and considered that their new job was better than their original job. All in all, a third (32%) of all those who had entered work reported that their career had progressed in one of the ways above. Those with higher level qualifications were more likely to have progressed their careers than those with lower or no qualifications.

Chart 6–Career progression



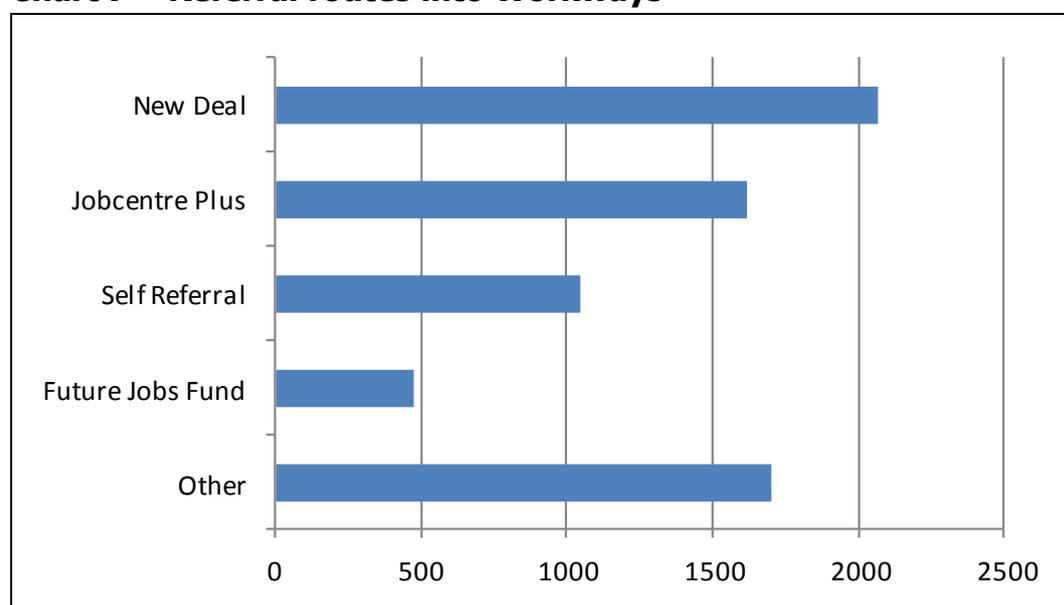
Source: participant survey. Base: all entering work (336)

Accessing Workways

Engaging participants

The chart below sets out referral routes to Workways. The most common routes of referral have been from JCP and from Department for Work and Pensions programmes – accounting for 4,154 referrals (or 60% of the total). Fifteen percent of referrals were self-referred, while 25% have been referred from “other” routes – primarily from other local partners. Word of mouth referrals were noted as being important in some areas; for example, in rural areas of Pembrokeshire.

Chart 7 – Referral routes into Workways



Source: Management information

With the ending of the Future Jobs Fund and the New Deal in 2010, JCP had become more important and in most areas was now the most common route through which participants were accessing the project, although referrals of Jobseekers’ Allowance (JSA) customers from JCP in one area had stopped as a result of hitting their “quota” of JSA participants.

The importance of outreach and partner engagement

Mentors were responsible for ensuring links with local organisations in their areas and for planning outreach activities to recruit to the project. Staff across the local authorities highlighted how important it was for them to get out into communities to attend as many events and engage as many people as possible. They were being innovative and flexible with this work to ensure

that they could quickly respond to approaches that worked well and those that did not. In NPT, staff reported using outreach work to ensure delivery within isolated communities and to target harder to reach groups. This outreach activity was also co-ordinated with jobsearch sessions run by Employer Liaison Officers (ELOs).

In all areas, close relationships with partner organisations facilitated and encouraged a steady flow of referrals. In Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, it was noted that most staff had been working in the area for long periods of time, and had pre-existing good relationships with partner organisations. However in Swansea there have needed to be greater efforts to build relationships with local organisations to encourage referrals – this has included working with the Want to Work team to resolve concerns around overlaps of responsibilities, and to ensure high referral rates into Workways.

In all case study areas the project teams had invested in maintaining a high profile within their local communities and undertaking outreach to engage participants. This included attending a range of local events to promote Workways amongst people who were not receiving support from JCP or other organisations. Within Swansea, this included attending children's centres in order to reach economically inactive parents, as well as handing out leaflets in town centres. In Carmarthenshire, staff held a stand in the town centre which they found very effective.

In some areas it was considered that the project had previously relied on JCP or the Flexible New Deal (FND) too much for referrals. As one member of staff noted, "FND was our bread and butter... We had become reliant on FND". This meant JSA claimants had been over-recruited and the project now needed to focus on recruiting inactive people, especially women. As a result, in these areas there was a great deal more outreach being undertaken than previously, including leaflet drops, and attending events. Conversely, in NPT outreach activity appeared to be long-established and particularly important.

Recent referrals from JCP

Staff in one area explained that they had seen referrals from JCP increase since the Work Programme was introduced. They understood that JCP was increasingly accessing Workways as they considered that there was a high chance that participants would find work more quickly through the project. The team were working closely with JCP to try to target provision at inactive groups (in particular lone parents and claimants of Employment Support Allowance).

In one area, it was noted that JCP referrals focussed on inactive customers, but that they would also refer JSA claimants when there was a “quick win,” such as when Workways could procure training for a participant more quickly than JCP and the participant needed the training quickly to enter a particular job. In another area, there was also a close relationship with JCP and regular meetings were held. Although JSA customers could no longer be referred to Workways, staff were in the process of arranging a presentation about Workways to JCP staff who worked with economically inactive customers, to remind them of what they could offer and encourage referrals of economically inactive participants.

The relationship between the project and JCP in NPT had recently changed as JCP had put in place a process to screen all benefit claimants with a face-to-face interview before they were allowed to start Workways, even if they had been engaged through a different source. This was to ensure that advisors referred their customers to the most suitable provision available, and did not start provision shortly before they were due to be referred to the Work Programme. As a result of this, NPT were finding it more difficult to get potential participants that they had engaged through outreach activities and other work referred to them via JCP. Staff were frustrated by the amount of time this new process was taking and were worried that they were losing some potential referrals.

Participants’ preconceptions of Workways

In general, participants that had heard about the project via word of mouth appeared to have far less negative preconceptions than those referred from JCP. This was in part because some participants referred by JCP believed they had been mandated onto Workways (although Workways and JCP interviewed staff were clear that this was not the case). For example, in one area, JCP staff were understood to have told their customers that ‘everything’ they sent them to must be attended otherwise they would lose their benefits – which participants inferred included Workways. Even when it was clear that participation was voluntary, one mentor said that those referred from JCP were less likely to attend their initial meetings. It was an important initial role of mentors to explain the nature of the services on offer, and that participation was voluntary.

Locations of services

The location of services was also important in engaging participants. In most areas it was felt that services were available in suitable locations. In all areas mentors spend time in outreach locations in the principal towns and areas. In

Swansea, Pembrokeshire and NPT staff were based in one location but would work with participants in particular areas.

However, in Carmarthenshire staff were based in three different locations. Staff reported that although being based out of three offices was necessary, delivery was sometimes disjointed due to the fact that not all staff were operating from one central base. This had the potential to impact on internal communications and made covering periods of leave and absence difficult. In addition, in Llanelli some felt that the building Workways was based in was too far out of town, and was less accessible for some participants.

Reaching “hard to reach” groups

Workways has not met targets to recruit economically inactive participants. Clearly, the onset of the recession, large increases in unemployment, and subsequent changes to priorities had influenced this, as, in some areas, had reliance on JCP/FND for referrals and not enough outreach activities.

However, it also appears that the project teams found it harder to reach and engage inactive participants than had been anticipated. It was noted that the pool of inactive people who could be identified by their benefit status was getting smaller, as a result of Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants being reassessed (with many being found fit for work and instead claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance) and reforms to lone parent entitlement to Income Support. Staff acknowledged the need to do more to increase recruitment of inactive groups.

“In terms of our targets, we’re low on our economically inactive client group. We do need to improve on it but you can only improve on it if the people are there”

Similarly, in Carmarthen it was noted that many economically inactive women, especially lone parents, did not want to work for 16 hours or more, preferring ‘mini-jobs’ of fewer than 16 hours.

The project teams in all areas felt that they could be doing more to engage with hard-to-reach groups. In particular, given male JSA claimants had been over-recruited early in the project, there was now a need to recruit economically inactive females. Swansea was considering recruiting a marketing manager to take responsibility for outreach at a more strategic level.

Both NPT and Swansea had developed good links with organisations to refer young people to the project. In NPT this included a project called Engage as

well as working with the Youth Offending Team. In Pembrokeshire, Workways worked with youth clubs and the council Youth Service to engage NEETs, but did not do a great deal more outreach towards NEETs, as they felt the Youth Service was doing this and referring appropriate participants, and they did not want to duplicate the work.

In all areas, the project teams had developed successful partnerships to engage women, including by working with Genesis, Women's Aid and attending local parent and toddler groups. In addition, there was increasing outreach in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, as mentors visited schools, soft-play areas, and leisure centres in order to engage inactive lone parents.

People with health conditions were perceived as particularly hard to engage. In some areas, it was suggested that JCP and Workways should run joint events with people with health conditions to try to engage them. It was noted in some areas, including Pembrokeshire, that engaging with health services had been particularly difficult.

The Swansea team had also worked with several organisations (AWEMA and the Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council) to encourage referrals from ethnic minority groups, although this was seen as less of a priority in some areas.

The distance from the labour market of project participants

The following section draws on analysis of project management information, to examine the distance from the labour market of different types of participant. It uses a typology of barriers, giving each participant a score out of 10 based on indicators of their distance from the labour market, with a higher score meaning participants were further from the labour market.

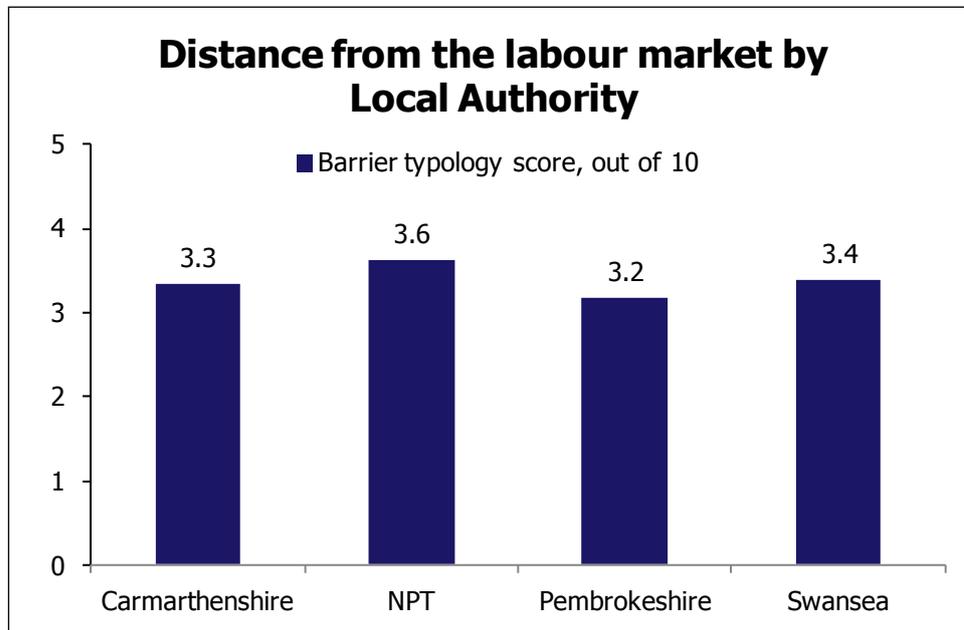
Scores are based on:

- Participants' duration of unemployment
- Whether they had a disability or work-limiting health condition
- Whether had sole caring responsibilities; and
- Qualification levels.

Broadly, if a participant had one of the barriers to work listed above they scored 2.5, if they had two they scored 5 and so forth (see Annex 2 for more details). The average score for all participants was 3.4, meaning that on average participants had more than one but fewer than two of these barrier to work.

There was limited difference in distance from the labour market of participants in different Local Authorities. However, participants in NPT, where outreach activities were more embedded, were on average slightly further from the labour market.

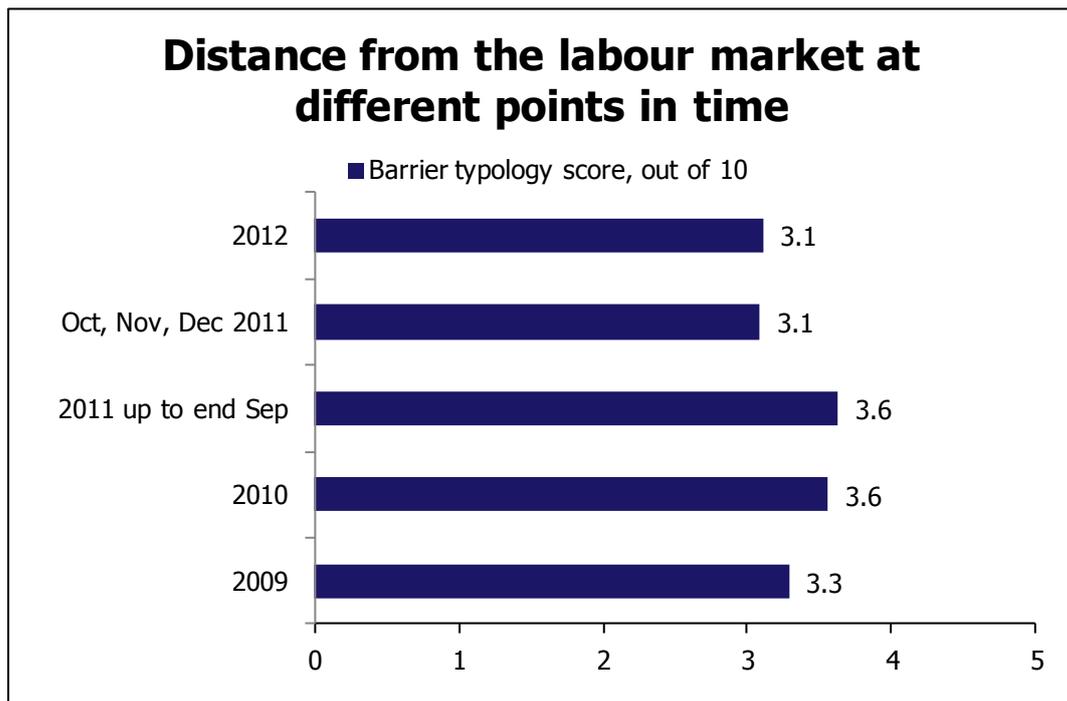
Chart 8—Distance from labour market by Local Authority



Source: Management information and Inclusion calculation

Distance from the labour market varied slightly depending on when participants joined Workways. In particular, there is a noticeable difference from autumn 2011 (which coincides with the rollout of the Work Programme), with participants after this point on average closer to the labour market.

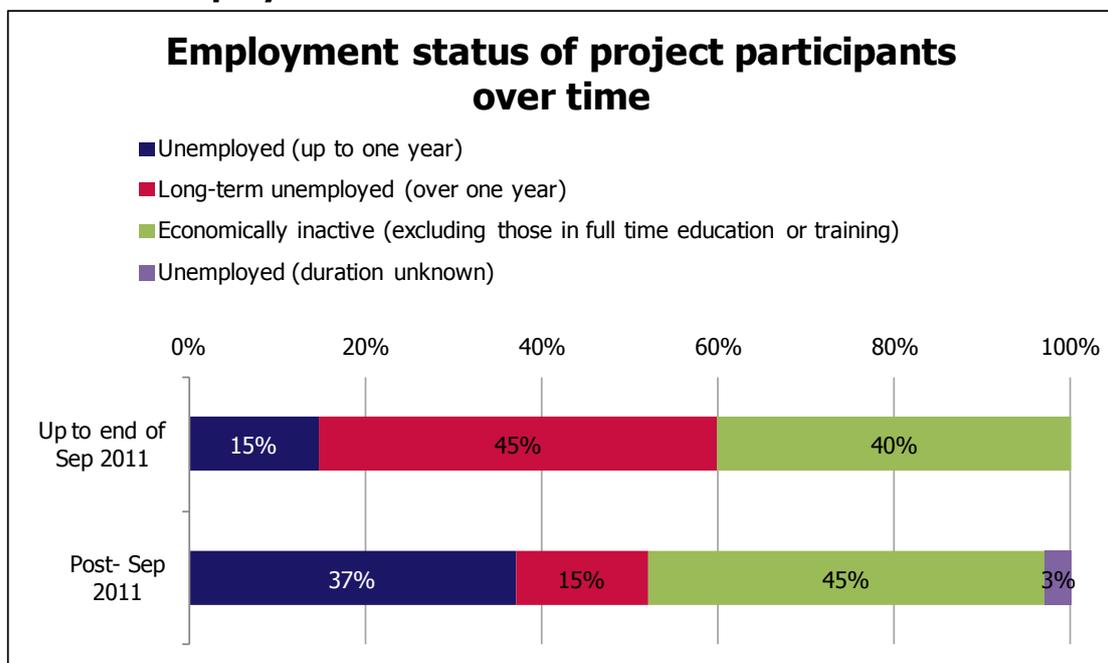
Chart 9—Distance from labour market over time



Source: Management information and Inclusion calculation

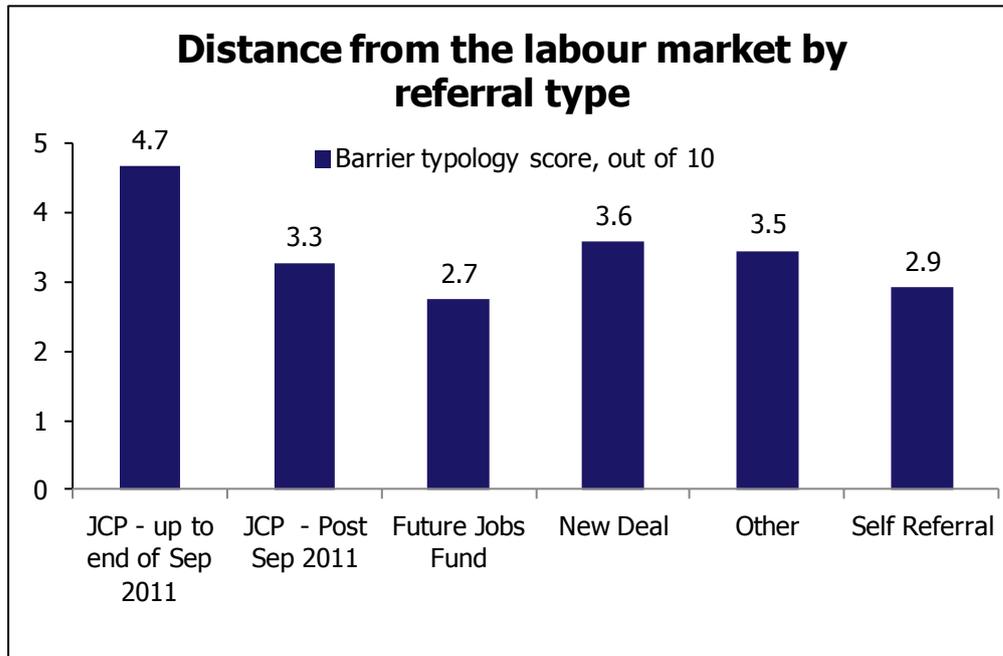
This is likely to be because Work Programme participants are not eligible for Workways – meaning that more recent entrants have been more likely to be shorter-term unemployed. This is illustrated clearly in the chart below.

Chart 10—Employment status over time



There are wide variations in distance from the labour market depending on where participants were referred from, as Chart 11 below shows. Those closest to the labour market were those referred from the Future Jobs Fund and self-referrals. Those referred from JCP before the introduction of the Work Programme were furthest from the labour market.

Chart 11–Distance from labour market by referral type



Source: Management information and Inclusion calculation

Conclusion

Overall the engagement process appeared to be working well at the time of this evaluation. Delivery teams appeared to be well networked with local partners, and were increasingly undertaking outreach activities to engage hard to reach groups. However, it was apparent that in some areas innovative outreach methods could have been utilised earlier in the project, rather than relying on easier referral sources, including JCP and FND. This has likely contributed to the project reaching fewer economically inactive participants and women. Relationships with JCP appear to be good, although the referral process in NPT has made engaging participants more difficult.

Delivering Workways

The Gateway process and other ESF projects

The Gateway is a key part of the Workways offer. The Business plan states that the project will “provide a co-ordinated client engagement and assessment Gateway for economically inactive and long-term unemployed people across South West Wales”. The Gateway was intended to be a particularly innovative aspect of the project and is a mechanism to co-ordinate referrals to ensure that participants receive the most appropriate support. At the Gateway stage, it was intended that potential participants would be accepted onto the project or referred to other more suitable provision dependent on their circumstances.

The Business Plan specifies that the project would adopt a “standardised process which will be adhered to by all engagement and mentoring staff across the region”. Whilst staff in all areas were referring participants to other services, and knew well the different services in their local area, it did not appear that there was a “standardised process” across the region. In some areas, staff were not aware of the term Gateway, and the process varied between the areas.

NPT appeared to be operating their Gateway function in a more structured way than other areas. Here there seemed to be a higher degree of central co-ordination of provision accessible through the Gateway. A regular ‘Provider Engagement Group’ meets with a remit to support local organisations to work closely together in co-ordinating provision. At these meetings, organisations share information on available provision, discuss possible referrals and progress against targets. Referrals between organisations involved in the Gateway were reviewed regularly by project staff.

"We put in our business plan [...and] what WEFO are keen for us to do is to coordinate... an engagement Gateway, so if a participant came to us, we were able to refer them to the correct project."

In other areas staff met regularly with other projects. For example, staff in Pembrokeshire regularly attended a group for ESF projects, and the Communities First Hub. Swansea explained that they used to attend ‘Priority two’ meetings, but that these stopped around a year ago. They reported that this was disappointing because it was a useful way of staying in touch with other projects and organisations delivering similar and complementary services.

In Swansea, the Gateway was supported by a virtual resource where mentors could access (and keep up to date) information about organisations and provision that could address particular needs or barriers. This led to concerns that the tool relied on mentors utilising and updating it on a regular basis.

Some areas felt that it would be worthwhile to standardise how Workways engages with other organisations and projects.

Nevertheless, even where there was not a clear understanding of the term Gateway, staff reported that they would always consider referring participants to other sources of support if appropriate. In one area, for example, Workways staff were not aware of the term 'Gateway' as part of Workways, but they did report that they would always refer participants to other sources of support that were appropriate. They also said that they would offer support to anyone who was eligible, so other support would be in addition to the support provided by Workways. This could in theory lead to some duplication in services, although this evaluation did not uncover any examples of this.

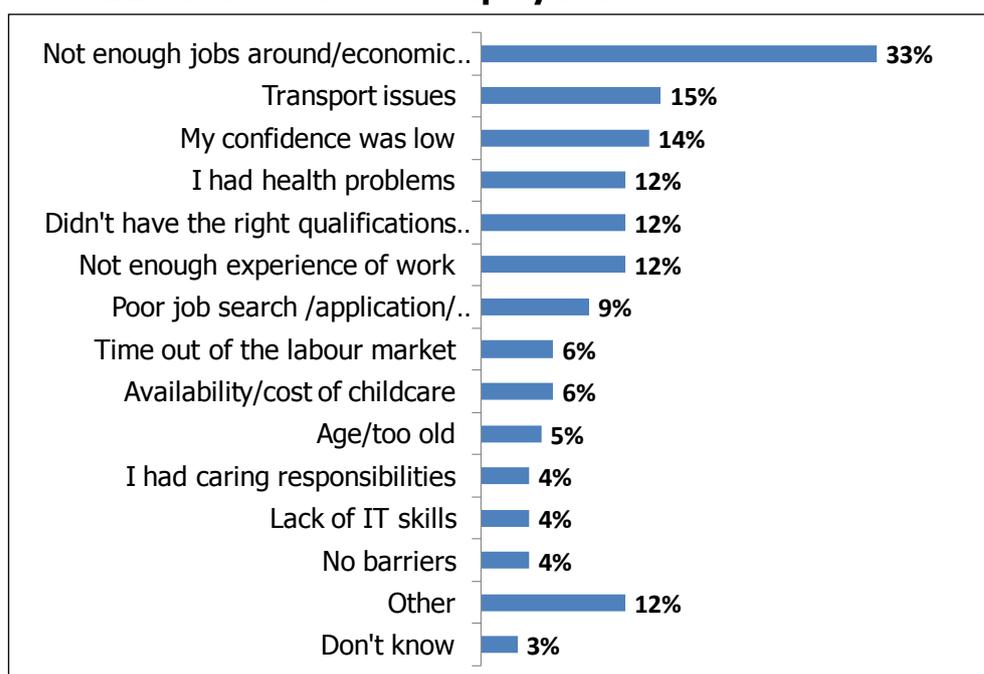
Staff at the strategic level insisted that they were still referring participants on to other specialist provision, especially where they did not have the specialist knowledge themselves. Nevertheless, in all areas, there was concern that collaboration between ESF projects had been undermined by recent changes to WEFO guidance that mean that only one outcome could be claimed per participant on ESF projects. Despite efforts to mitigate this, operational staff felt that local organisations were now more reluctant to work together, as they have a vested interest in claiming outcomes for themselves. This appeared to be resulting in fewer referrals into Workways. One mentor went as far as to say that they were "fighting for the same participants" as the Coastal and Want to Work projects, although there was a better relationship with the Genesis project because the projects had slightly different aims.

Overall, Workways staff had a good knowledge of the different organisations and support available, and were referring participants to other support where appropriate. However, understanding of the Gateway varied between areas. Some felt that strong processes were in place to ensure appropriate referrals, whilst in other areas staff were unaware of the term 'Gateway' and were referring participants to support in a less structured way. Clearer articulation of the Gateway and its purpose may be required in future.

Perceived barriers to work and additional support received to overcome them

Survey respondents were asked about the barriers that they faced to entering employment. The most commonly mentioned reason was that there were not enough jobs in the local area (33%), but a range of other barriers were mentioned, including transport (15%), confidence (14%) and health problems (12%).

Chart 12–Main barriers to employment



Source: survey of participants. Base: all (721)

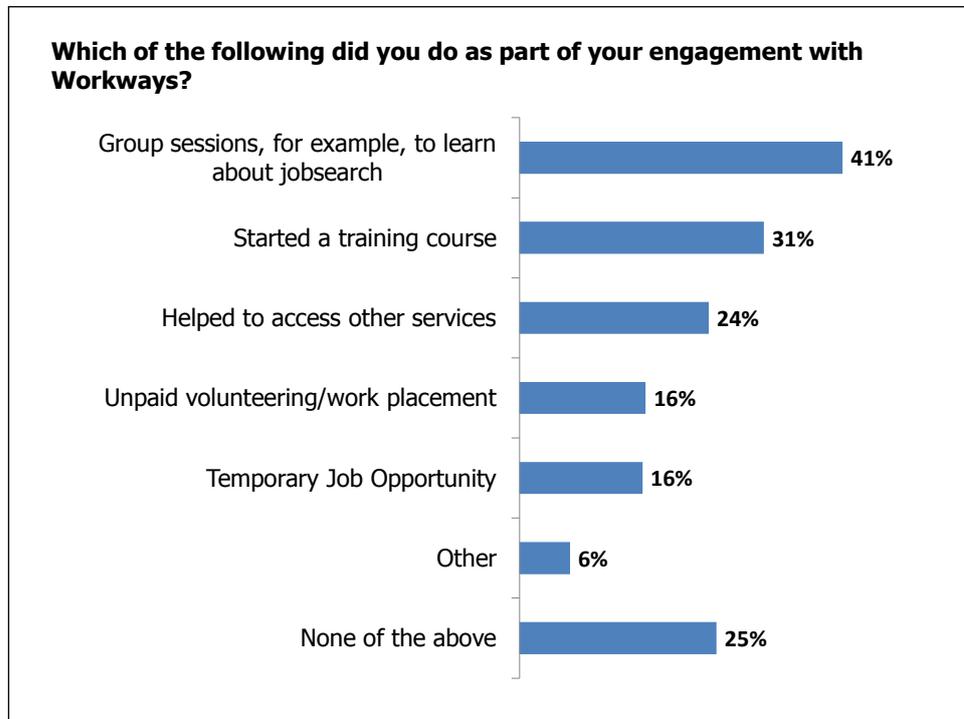
There were some variations in barriers to employment noted by different groups, including:

- Short term unemployed participants were more likely to note the poor labour market (42%) than others;
- Those aged 18-24 were more likely to say that they did not have enough work experience (26%) than others; and
- Those who went on a TJO were more likely to say they had low confidence (20%) than those who did not (13%).

Survey respondents were asked what support they had received from Workways, in addition to one to one support from their mentor or ELO. The most common type of additional support was group sessions, which 41% of participants had done, followed by going on a training course (31%) and

helping gain access to other services (24%). A quarter of respondents had just had one-to-one contact with their mentor and ELO.

Chart 13—Activities undertaken through Workways



Source: survey of participants. Base: all (721)

Providing training was seen as an important element by participants and employers. There was little 'further learning' (such as NVQs) undertaken partly due to funding (these longer courses were too expensive), inflexibility of training provision (courses started at particular points in the year which might not suit participants), or because mentors were focused on more immediate support to move into work.

"We are not a training project – we are an employment project"

Shorter courses, however, were very important. These included SIA security licenses, site safety certification such as CSCS, and licenses to drive HGVs/PCVs. In the Llanelli site in Carmarthenshire, Workways had become a learndirect centre, which allowed them to deliver online training in their base.

In NPT and Pembrokeshire, training frameworks allowed mentors to draw down courses quickly and easily. In other areas, or when the required training was not on the framework, three quotes were required, which was time-consuming for mentors. Frameworks were positive, but it was noted that some training providers had closed down in the recession, or did not want to bid to go on the framework, so they did not cover all training needs.

Management information shows that 16% of participants had been on a TJO. Of those who had been on a TJO, 70% had received training as part of the TJO.

There was some evidence that more intensive support was targeted at those who were further from the labour market. For example, those who had been out of work for longer periods of time were more likely to have: gone on a TJO; started a training course; gone on unpaid work experience or work placement; or been to group sessions.

Responsibilities of mentors and ELOs

In all areas, mentors started working with participants as soon as they were referred to the project. The mentor role was to undertake initial assessments, plan support and assist participants in removing barriers to work. ELOs began supporting participants when they were ready to start looking for work, by providing jobsearch support and liaising with employers. In most areas a crossover in the roles was highlighted, with mentors also doing some of the jobsearch work with participants.

The point at which the ELO began to work with participants differed between the areas and was dependent on staff capacity and the way that the office(s) were set up to deliver support. In NPT, the equal split of mentor and ELO roles (8 Mentors and 8 ELOs), and the fact that they were all based in the same office seemed to allow the project to be delivered in a very integrated way. ELOs developed informal relationships with participants quickly because they were coming in to contact with them at an early stage. In addition, because there was an equal split between the roles, the ELOs had the capacity to work alongside mentors to discuss employment or TJO opportunities relatively soon in the process. This enabled ELOs to accurately match vacancies with participants.

Mentors and ELOs also worked alongside each other in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. In Pembrokeshire there were six Mentors and three ELOs and in Carmarthenshire, five Mentors and four ELOs. In both areas feedback suggested that the split between the two roles was working well, especially where ELOs were getting early access to participants to plan interventions, although some project workers thought communication could be better, and that mentors and ELOs were sometimes "a bit detached" (although this was not reflected in participant opinions).

Swansea were delivering the project with ten mentors and three ELOs; significantly more mentors to ELOs than in the other areas. This meant that in

Swansea, the ELOs were only supporting participants in more limited way (primarily whilst they were on TJOs). Participants were mostly referred to an ELO in Swansea for a TJO. Up until this point, the mentor was the main member of staff supporting the participant to secure real vacancies. Moreover, given the limited time ELOs had, participants were referred to job-search sessions with a specific job-search tutor rather than doing this with ELOs.

The number of ELOs also appears to be linked to the number of companies engaged in different areas. Around 200 employers had been engaged in Swansea since the project began, compared with 1,900 in NPT, 450 in Pembrokeshire, and 400 in Carmarthenshire.

Overall, the ELO and mentor roles seemed to work better when there were more opportunities for them to work alongside each other to support participants. Respondents across all areas felt that it was good for ELOs to be involved in the participant journey at an early stage, as this enabled them to develop relationships, helping to match individuals to the right vacancies and TJOs, as well as engaging with more employers. This seemed to happen more successfully where there were more equal numbers of ELOs and mentors.

Nevertheless, staff considered that the split in roles was a key strength of the project, as it allowed mentors to focus on the participant, and the ELO on finding jobs.

The role of mentors

Mentors were supporting participants to overcome work and non-work related barriers and to improve soft skills – for example communication and confidence. All staff recognised the benefits of delivering services that were flexible and responsive to some of the more structural barriers that participants face.

"If you have to pay £4.75 return, people wouldn't come. I wouldn't. You've got to be out there, and to build that trust, particularly in small communities"

Mentors would go through a process of action planning with the participant at the start of the project. This would include exploring support options available to them (for example training, referral to specialist support, and work experience). Depending on the participant, and whether the mentor thought a formal plan would motivate or intimidate them, the plan would either be shared with them or kept informal. Planning the support offered to participants depended on their individual priorities and circumstances, and

participants noted that mentors took the time to get to know them properly, including asking about hobbies that might help them find work.

Mentors were also completing “Rickter Assessments” with participants, which measured soft outcomes and were used to contribute to the way that provision was planned. Most mentors considered that these assessments were helpful in identifying additional needs and in providing a good basis for the mentor to discuss personal information and to develop relationships. One mentor said that by looking at the relative differences in scores for measures of where participants said they were now and where they wanted to be, they could determine the key areas to work on. However it was noted that the questions could be very personal, and that this could sometimes hamper gaining participants’ trust. As a result of this, in Carmarthenshire it was noted that Rickter Assessments were always completed in a private room.

Mentors would then go through what one described as the ‘job kit.’ This involved:

- Building CVs. It was noted by participants that CVs were not generic like those provided through JCP;
- Telephone techniques. For example, participants would go into another room and call their mentor to enquire about a job advert, and the mentor would give feedback. In addition, one mentor said he impressed the importance of first contact with employers, as this would form employers’ opinions of the participant;
- Help with applications. Including help filling forms and writing letters; and
- Interview preparation. Mock interviews were important in preparing participants, by boosting their confidence. It was noted that sometimes a mentor and ELO would conduct these together.

Beyond this practical help, mentors helped to boost participants’ confidence and motivation. This could be through taking a genuine interest in participants and reaffirming what was possible. One mentor noted that empathy was important, as she was able to talk about her own experience of unemployment to show what was possible. It was also evident that mentors would ‘pick up’ participants when they suffered setbacks.

Overall, mentors provided a very high level of support, tailored around participant needs. The approach was informal and distinctly different to employment-related support that participants may have received in the past.

Workways staff insisted that this approach was key to achieving a high level of cooperation and commitment from participants.

Employer Liaison Officers

Employer Liaison Officers (ELOs) were responsible for three main areas within Workways (although not all ELOs were doing all roles):

- Work with employers to source opportunities, both TJOs and other vacancies;
- Place Workways participants and support them in work; and
- Provide jobsearch support to participants who were considered “work ready.”

Engaging employers

Engaging employers was a key role of ELOs. There were some differences in the types of employer who had been engaged in different Local Authorities. In NPT there had been more success in engaging larger employers than other areas. This was because ELOs had been able to spend more time with large employers navigating their more bureaucratic processes, and overcoming concerns about involvement. In addition, the Council’s Economic Development department had been effectively mobilised to encourage large employers to engage. In other areas, particularly Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, smaller community employers were more commonly engaged.

ELOs had to work flexibly with large employers to get them to engage with the project. This was successful in NPT in the case of Tesco. When first approached, Tesco had been concerned about engaging, because of bad publicity about unpaid work experience, and also because of limits on the number of people they can have on their payroll at any time. In order to overcome this, the ELOs in NPT negotiated a number of TJOs by arranging amended Service Level Agreements whereby the council accepted participants on to the payroll for the period of the TJO. Other than pay, all other rights and responsibilities were the same as other Tesco employees. Staff in other areas agreed that using Service Level Agreements flexibly was a good way of engaging with larger employers.

Some staff from other areas felt that they had not had as much success with larger employers because they did not have the ELO capacity to forge productive relationships with such organisations. Swansea particularly felt that they were limited in this way with one ELO explaining that the majority of

employers they engaged with were those who were proactively seeking to be involved with the Workways project. Nevertheless, other members of the Swansea team were seeking to actively target expanding companies – in particular through attending events, referrals from mentors, and word of mouth.

In one area, a mentor was concerned that ELOs engaged employers without thinking about the types of work that participants wanted. However, in the same area ELOs reported that it was their aim to be “participant centred.” Clearly there is a need to balance the twin imperatives of engaging employers in sectors where there is participant demand, and engaging employers who need to recruit new staff. On the whole, it appeared that a good balance was struck.

The process of engaging employers relied on face-to-face contact, as it was felt that employers could more easily dismiss or ignore phone calls or emails. One ELO reported that he would pop in, explain what Workways could offer and discuss whether they had any plans to recruit. An ‘employer pack’ would be left, with leaflets, information and case-studies. The ELO would then revisit the employer to keep up to date and ensure any vacancies were identified.

Some employers were sceptical of employing inactive and long-term unemployed participants. ELOs were able to persuade them that participants were keen, as engagement was voluntary, and that only suitable participants (often with suitable training) would be recommended.

Support for employers

ELOs were able to offer employers a range of support. The most important of these was offering help in recruiting. Workways would offer to provide suitable candidates to fill vacancies, meaning that employers did not need to expend so much effort to recruit. Moreover, ensuring that candidates had the necessary training, such as safety certificates, was important. If the employer was not in the position to recruit, the possibility of a TJO was mentioned.

However, in some areas, it appeared that the focus of employer engagement work was finding TJOs as a means for participants to build relationships with employers.

“It’s a very useful tool to get your foot in the door with a company. You go in and talk about TJOs and then move on to discuss how you might work with an employer to offer vacancies that are not funded.... It’s not the be all and end all, it’s just a very useful bargaining tool.”

Other support included advice about recruitment and training of non-Workways participants (if Workways was unable to help with recruitment directly), and referrals to other sources of support including the Health and Safety Executive or HMRC. One ELO mentioned providing advice about Sage accounting software, and business insurance. If a participant did a TJO, the ELO would conduct a risk assessment and provide advice about health and safety. It was reported that this support was particularly valued by smaller employers.

A key feature of the support offered to employers was that the ELO would make efforts to be proactive in determining employers' needs and providing support where needed quickly and efficiently. This would include seeing the employer wherever and whenever was convenient for them, and this accessibility encouraged close working relationships.

Finding vacancies

The first thing most ELOs did having engaged an employer was discuss their recruitment plans and offer support in filling vacancies. Despite the recent recession, ELOs found that employers often struggled to fill vacancies and retain staff, and so welcomed this support. Engaging employers often allowed Workways to put people forward for jobs before they were publicly advertised. Access to these 'hidden' vacancies was valued by participants. One participant who was looking for jobs in JCP and with Workways noted that Workways would have jobs that JCP did not.

An important element of finding vacancies was knowing where gaps in the labour market were likely to emerge and targeting opportunities. As noted above, ELOs would aim to target companies that wanted to expand their business and would need to recruit. In Pembrokeshire, Workways was proactive at targeting particular refinery shutdowns, during which additional employment would be created. To ensure that this opportunity could be maximised Workways targeted companies who would need to recruit to fill the shutdown vacancies, and liaised with them to determine the skills and safety certification that would be required so that there would be enough time to prepare participants.

In Swansea, Carmarthenshire and NPT close working with the Local Authority Economic Development team has led to social clauses being built into Local Authority contracts, and into other economic development work (for example in the building of a new power station in NPT). This ensured that Workways participants could benefit from important developments in the Authority.

It was noted that when a good relationship had been built up between the ELO and employer, sometimes the employer would trust the ELO to pick participants to start on the job without interviewing them. Ensuring that appropriate participants were selected to fill vacancies was extremely important in maintaining good relationships with employers.

Temporary Job Opportunities

ELOs considered a large part of their role was to source and manage Temporary Job Opportunities (TJOs) – which are subsidised, temporary jobs paying the National Minimum Wage. TJOs are required to be additional jobs (i.e. that would not have been created without the additional funding) and to be targeted at disadvantaged people.

TJO participants and outcomes

In total, 1,080 Workways participants (15.6% of project participants) had taken part in a TJO by summer 2012.

Analysis of project management information suggests that in practice, participants who have taken TJOs have not faced any greater or fewer barriers to work⁸ than those who have not taken these opportunities. However, the survey found that those who had been on a TJO were slightly more likely to cite low confidence as a barrier to employment than those who had not been on a TJO.

One stakeholder noted that TJOs were particularly useful for those exiting the criminal justice system, because it provided a positive focus for their time.

In one area it was noted that earlier in the project filling TJOs was more target-driven, so that ELOs were keen to hit their targets of number of people on TJOs and were less careful about targeting those furthest from the labour market, or ensuring that there was likely to be unsupported employment at the end of the TJO. However, when fieldwork was conducted, in all areas there was a notable focus on working with the employer and the participant to seek to ensure that temporary opportunities would lead to permanent employment. These attempts seem to have been successful; the survey of participants found that participants who had undertaken a TJO were more likely to have subsequently entered employment than those who had not (59% compared to 41%).

⁸ Barriers are defined as long-term worklessness; low or no qualifications; caring responsibility; and disability or health condition

To ensure that TJOs were not subsidising employment that would have happened anyway, ELOs reported always checking that the vacancy had not been advertised anywhere else, and they never worked with employers who they felt had exploited Workways in the past. Nevertheless, it was felt by some staff that that large employers should be recruiting staff into unsubsidised jobs rather than using TJOs.

TJOs in different Local Authority areas

TJOs have developed in different ways in different areas – in particular, reflecting different “Intermediate Labour Market” projects that previously existed in Swansea and in NPT. The main differences were related to the length of TJO and payment arrangements.

In Swansea, TJOs were originally designed to last 50 weeks, compared to 26 weeks in other areas. In all areas, there was originally a 16-week period before participants could be put forward for a TJO, with the rationale being that they needed to receive support to become ‘job-ready.’

In NPT, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, TJOs have been used increasingly flexibly. First, the length of TJOs can be shorter or, in some cases, longer than six months, with some lasting for as little as eight weeks. In addition, while the expectation was that participants would not be referred to TJOs until they had been on Workways for 16 weeks, mentors in practice had the flexibility to discuss and refer participants for TJOs from the start of their time on the project, where this was considered appropriate. Staff felt that being able to offer TJOs flexibly had worked well. (In Swansea, at the time of the case study visit, there was less evidence that participants could access TJOs before being on the project for 13 weeks.)

One area reported that the turning point for them was when the Work Programme was introduced – suddenly the profile of individuals they were working with changed, and they were on average much closer to the labour market than they previously had been. They then began offering shorter TJOs because participants were more work-ready. It has meant that they have been able to offer more opportunities to more people, and also build relationships with more employers, by getting them initially involved in the project through offering them a TJO.

In most areas (NPT, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire) Workways participants were paid directly through the employer and the Workways team would refund the wages. The point of this was to ensure that Workways participants were paid and treated the same as other members of staff.

Workways staff reported that this arrangement helped participants to feel more attached to their workplace because they enjoyed the same rights and benefits as other employees, as well as meaning the employer has showed some commitment to the participant. Being formally enrolled on the employer's payroll also assisted employers in setting expectations.

In Swansea, Workways participants were paid through the council, sharing the same rights and responsibilities as council employees. Swansea staff felt that this arrangement meant that the expectations on employers offering TJOs were not always clear and that participants did not always feel part of the workplace. They reported that the arrangement also meant that the employer had to go through the process of formally taking employees on when it came to the end of the TJO. In addition, it raised confusion about whether the participant was covered by Local Authority or the employer's employer liability insurance. Staff reported that this arrangement would be reviewed in the near future and it was possible that Swansea would decide to follow the method used by other areas and have employers paying participants directly.

In Pembroke, match funding arrangements were more complicated than elsewhere. As in NPT and Carmarthenshire, the employer initially paid the participant and then invoiced Workways to recover the money. In Pembrokeshire, Workways then invoiced the employer for £30 for match funding element of the project. This was needed because two sets of accounts were required, but some employers had not paid and it was felt that the process was unnecessarily complicated and time-consuming. It was suggested that the employer should simply submit an invoice of £30 less than the wages they paid.

In one area there were two types of TJO: those in which the employer took the participant on and invoiced Workways, and those in which the TJO was with the Council, who then seconded the participant elsewhere. It was noted by one participant who had undertaken the second type, that others had been on similar TJOs before them and these had not led to unsupported employment in the organisation they had been seconded to.

Engagement with participants on TJOs

Once a participant starts a TJO, the ELO would always keep in touch with the employer and the participant at least once a month. The objective of this engagement was primarily to try to secure permanent employment for the participant, as well as to support them with addressing outstanding barriers. Moreover, this allowed the ELO to ensure that the employer was providing

valuable work experience as laid out in the SLA, rather than just making the participant perform menial tasks. NPT in particular had a formalised process for monitoring sustainment beyond the agreed length of the TJO using a traffic light system. Although it wasn't as structured in the other areas, all would refer to job-search activity if there was a chance that the TJO would not be sustained.

Conclusion

Overall, TJOs offered vital work experience and unique opportunities to participants who could benefit from them. The increasing flexibility that ELOs have been able to utilise when negotiating TJOs has been useful, especially in allowing them to engage with a wider pool of potential employers, including in NPT, larger employers like Tesco. Sometimes, however, it appears they have been used in ways that were not originally envisioned, including as a way to open doors and build relationships with employers, and short TJOs being given to claimants closer to the labour market.

Experiences of Workways

From employers

Feedback from employers was strong. All reported that they had had positive experiences of engaging with Workways. They considered that the support from ELOs had been high quality and effective – supporting them in the recruitment of participants to posts, supporting them in work, and accessing and delivering in-work training and support. One employer reported that it was refreshing that the ELO approached them to say “this is what we can offer you,” rather than asking for help. Another employer described their ELO as “terrifically supportive” because they were able to give time to the employer, were flexible, and were quick to answer questions.

Comparisons with other public sector organisations were positive. One employer had once tried to access a grant through the Welsh Government to help recruit and up-skill staff, but found it a “nightmare of paperwork.” Engaging with Workways was easier because the ELO guided them through the paperwork and made the employer feel that “they’re on your side,” which made them more engaged. Another said that previously they had tried to fill vacancies with JCP, but Workways staff were more attuned to their needs and more proactive in providing support.

Most of the employers interviewed had offered TJOs. All considered that this had enabled them to expand their workforces and create additional jobs, and where appropriate to “trial” participants who may become suitable for existing opportunities.

“It’s a wonderful way to try someone out”

The ability of Workways to provide suitably trained/accredited staff was very important to employers. One employer went as far as to describe Workways as “a training programme.” Employers also valued support with recruiting staff. One employer needed to recruit around 20 people at short notice, and the employer was able to fill most vacancies through Workways because Workways had such a good understanding of the type of candidate that was needed.

“I’m trying to create a job where we can grow and earn money and all be comfortable but there’s only me...so any way that I feel if I’ve got a problem it can be sorted, they know my business, they know from past experience the people that I want and that I don’t want, so the people coming through the door now are pretty much 9 times out of 10 going to be successful”

From participants

Feedback from participants was very positive.

Participant experiences of mentors and ELOs

Participants highlighted high quality personal support from Mentors and ELOs, which for many was in contrast to their experience in other employability projects. In particular it was felt that mentors took a more holistic approach to identifying barriers and then supporting participants to overcome them.

Pastoral support was noted as being very helpful. One participant was very frustrated and upset at a setback she had suffered, and her mentor helped her calm down and refocus. She noted that they were “on your side” and that it was important that she felt they were genuinely interested in her; “there’s light behind their eyes.”

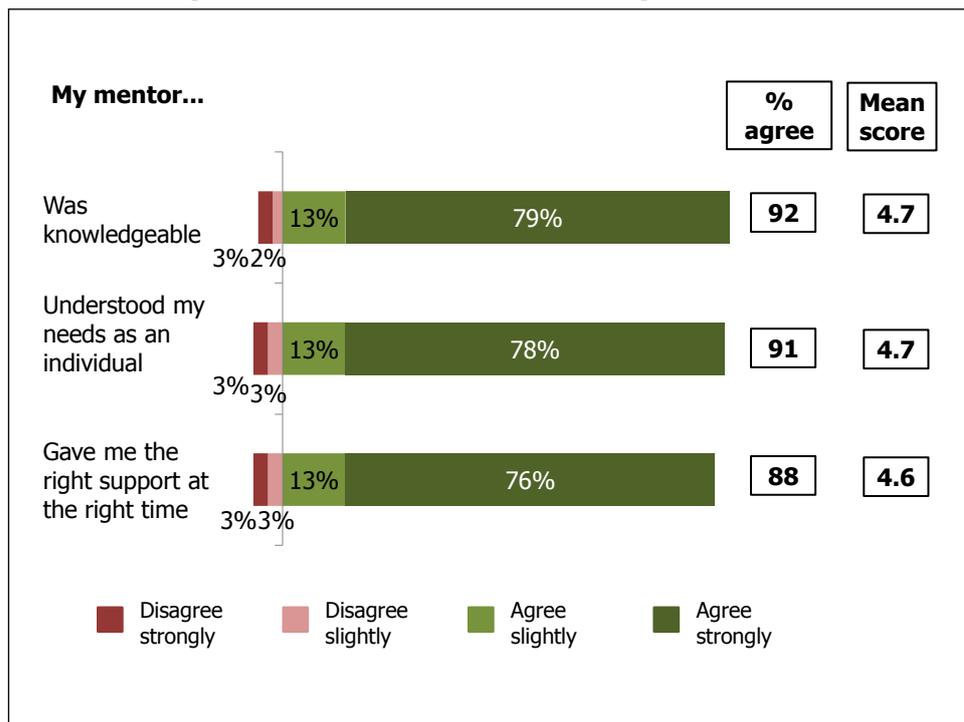
It was noted that mentors did not push participants too hard, as this could be counterproductive, although more pressure was applied towards the end of TJOs as participants neared the end of their involvement with the project, or when mentors felt it would be beneficial for participants. Overall, participants reported a “supportive, relaxed atmosphere,” which overcame thoughts that Workways was “just another programme.”

"You can have a cup of tea with them, it's more welcoming, like a drop in centre"

In general, feedback on the additional support available was good – which included support with writing CVs, interview techniques, filling in application forms, ensuring they were receiving all the benefits they were entitled to and applying for tax credits, finding childcare, accessing training and addressing specific needs. In addition, in Carmarthenshire participants noted that mentors had arranged for external speakers, including a CAB adviser.

Feedback in the participant survey was also very positive about mentors. Participants were asked to say how far they agreed to a number of statements relating to their mentor’s competence, with a score of 1 being disagree strongly, and 5 being agree strongly. Around 90% of participants reported that their mentor was knowledgeable, understood their needs as an individual, and gave them the right support at the right time. It was striking that nearly 80% of respondents agreed strongly to all of these statements.

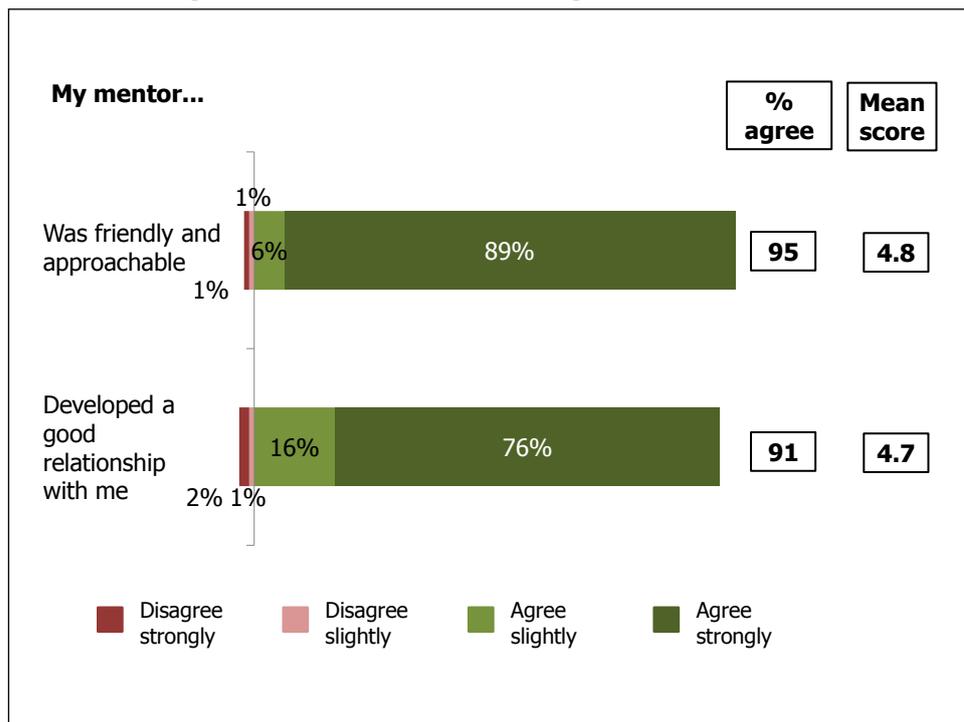
Chart 14—Opinions about mentor’s competence



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

In addition, there were very high levels of agreement about the mentor’s personal characteristics, with nine-in-ten strongly agreeing that their mentor was friendly and approachable, and only 2% disagreeing.

Chart 15—Opinions about mentor’s personal characteristics



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

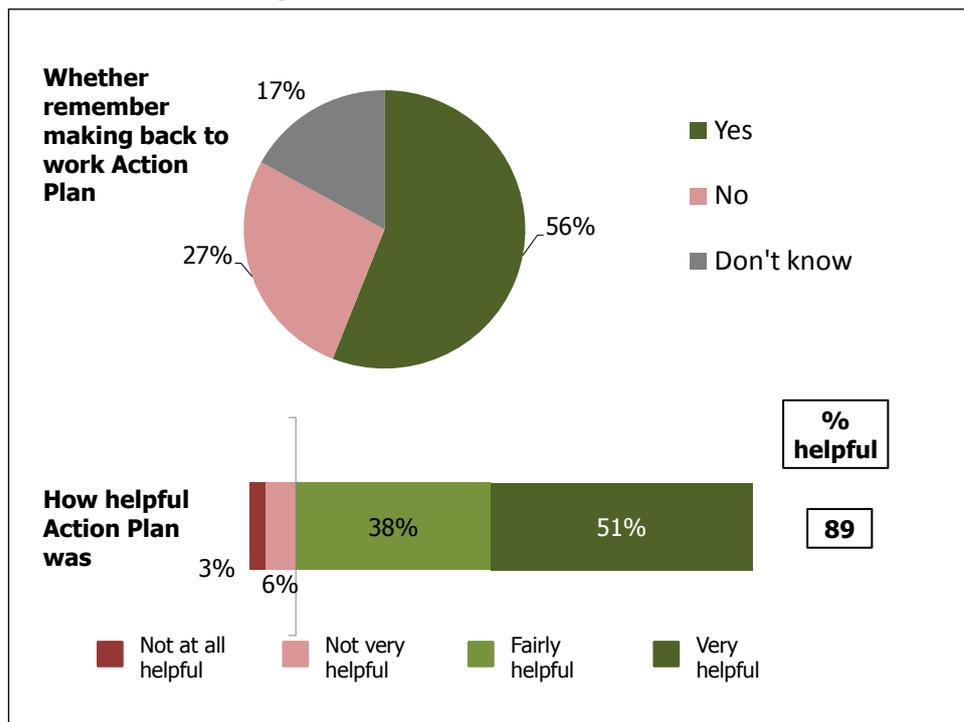
Agreement with these five statements tended to be higher among a number of groups, particularly:

- those with lower qualification levels;
- younger respondents;
- those who had been longer out of work; and
- those who entered work or had done a TJO.

Action plans and Rickter Assessments

Respondents were asked about how support was planned. Just over half remembered making some sort of plan. This is lower than may be expected, but appears to confirm mentors’ feedback that these plans were only be made formally if they thought it would be beneficial for the participant. The targeting of action plans seemed to be working, as nearly nine-in-ten of those who remembered making one found it useful.

Chart 16–Action plans

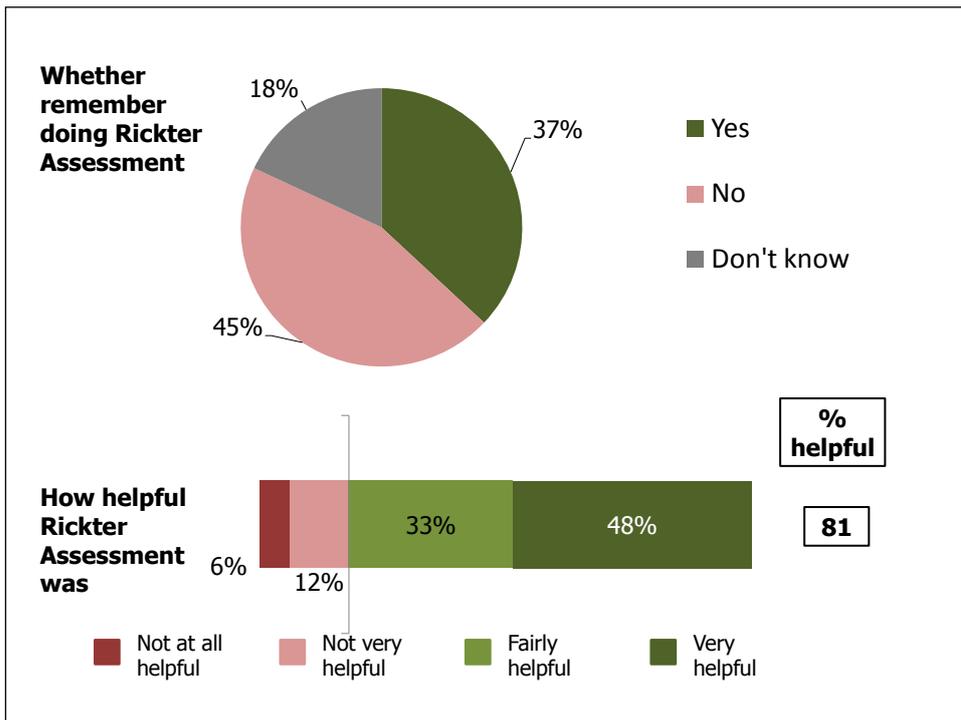


Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721); those who did plan (404)

Fewer respondents (37%) remembered conducting a Rickter Assessment. Older participants, those who had been out of work for longer periods of time and those with higher level qualifications were more likely to recall having conducted one, whilst only 20% of those in Pembrokeshire recalled having done so.

Moreover, Rickter Assessments were considered less useful than Action Plans with 18% finding them not very or not at all helpful. Nevertheless, 81% of those who recalled conducting one found it useful, suggesting that most participants did get something helpful from the process.

Chart 17–Rickter Assessments



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721); those who did assessment (276)

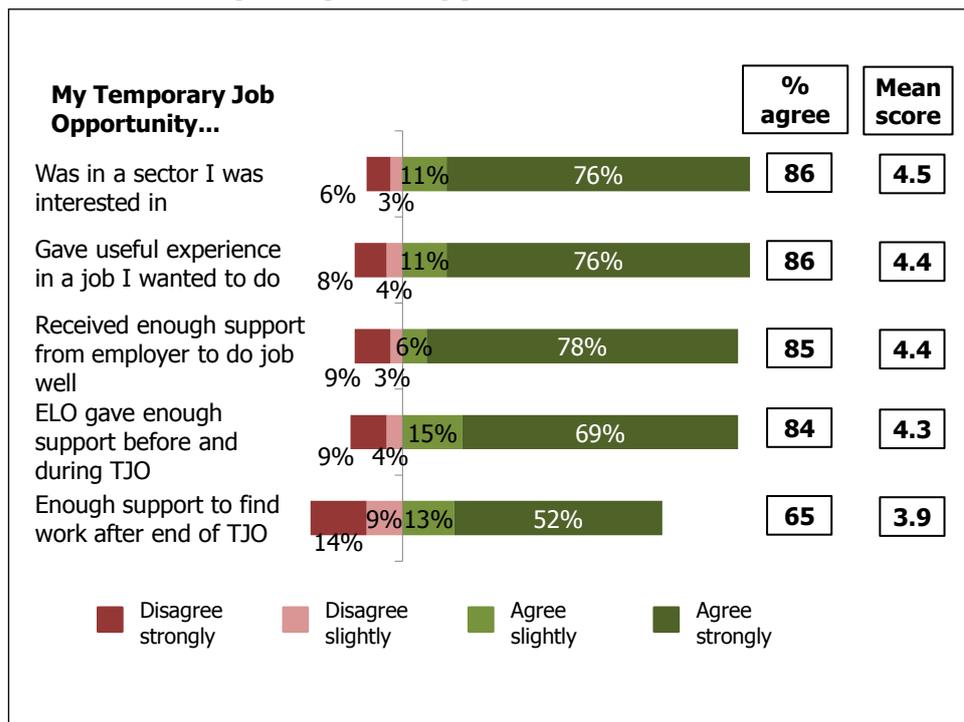
Respondents also felt that meetings with Workways staff were held at a location at which they felt comfortable; 95% agreed that this was the case, with only 2% disagreeing.

Participant experiences of TJOs

Most of those who had taken part in TJOs gave positive feedback on the experience – TJOs had increased their confidence, got them back into a routine and given them valuable work experience. Most felt that the opportunity would either lead directly to a job or be of benefit in finding a new role quickly.

Survey responses about TJOs were also very positive. Participants were asked how far they agreed with a number of statements about their TJO, with a score of 1 being disagree strongly, and 5 being agree strongly. Around 85% of respondents agreed to most statements. The one area with less agreement was with regard to having enough support to find work for when the TJO was finished. Only 65% agreed they had received enough (and only 62% of those who had left Workways), and nearly a quarter disagreed that they had.

Chart 18–Temporary Job Opportunities



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721); those who did assessment (175)

Areas for improvement

There were some areas identified by participants where the project could be improved. While mentors' holistic approach was welcomed, some participants interviewed highlighted that mentors could have been more focused on supporting them to search and apply for jobs earlier. A minority also said that more advice about different careers would have been valued. It was also felt that Workways could be better promoted, and in Pembrokeshire it was noted that the information on the web did not make clear what the service actually was.

Moreover, participants in more than one area noted in interviews that the support they received was not tailored to their career aspirations (although this was not reflected in the survey data). Whilst this was a minority view, it was mentioned in a number of different circumstances. Two participants, while overall having positive experiences of the project, noted that they had previously built skills in particular sectors in which there was employment in their area, but Workways staff pushed them towards unskilled labour that they did not want to do, including TJOs. One participant valued the work experience and the generic workplace skills provided by the TJO even though the sector was not relevant to his career aspirations, whilst the other felt it was inappropriate. Other participants felt that mentors did not understand the

sectors in which they wanted to work, particularly where the jobs were non-vocational/professional or specialised.

Some participants in Swansea also felt that the project could be more flexible – some said that they were “desperate” to work and did not want to have to wait for long periods before being able to access TJOs. Those participants felt that the purpose of this wait was so that they could “prove” that they were reliable enough to take up the opportunity, rather than it being to allow time to address barriers or find unsubsidised work. For those who did take up TJOs, some said that they felt that they lost access to their Mentor. In NPT and Pembrokeshire on the other hand, participants considered that the additional flexibility on TJOs was welcome. Many also said that they continued to stay in touch with their Mentors in work, and that there was good communication between mentors and ELOs.

In addition, Rickter Assessments were highlighted in some cases as an area for improvement. Many participants in focus groups seemed to consider that they added little value in identifying barriers, and most did not recognise that they were being used to measure progress. Nevertheless, a minority of participants did say that it motivated them when the Assessment demonstrated the progress they had made. In addition some participants could not recall having had assessments themselves.

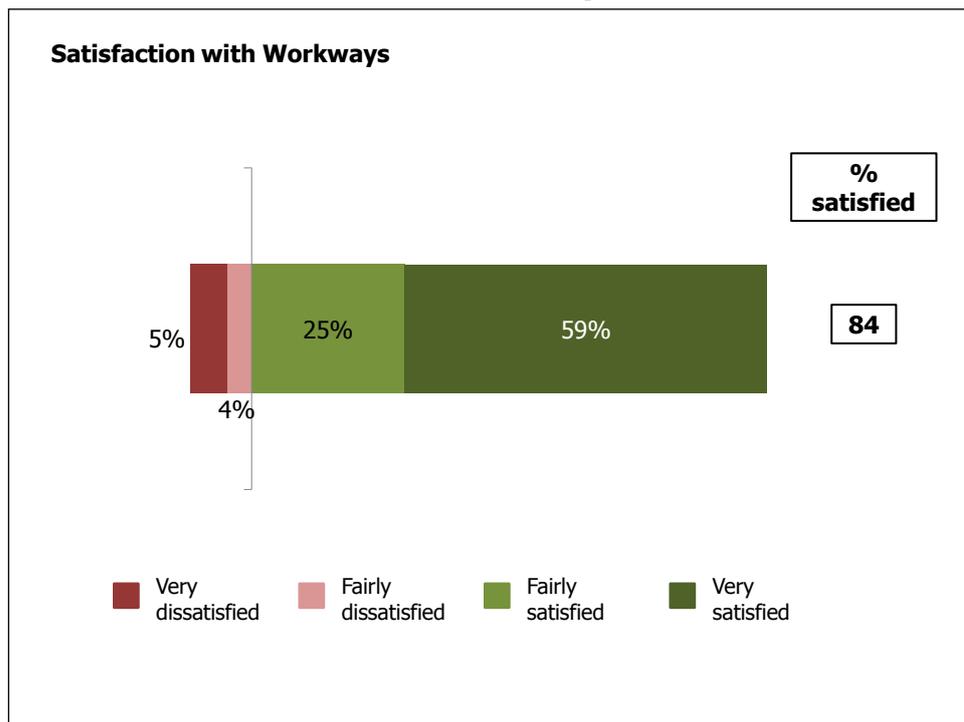
Overall satisfaction with Workways

Overall, participants were positive in their assessments of the project, with many participants being extremely positive. Most participants described that the benefits of participation had exceeded their expectations, and that Workways had been a more beneficial experience than other employment support they had received.

"The job I've got now, I'd never have got it if it hadn't been for my mentor, because I didn't think I could do it."

In total, 84% of survey respondents were satisfied with the service they had received from Workways, with 59% saying they were very satisfied. In total, 10% were dissatisfied with Workways. There was no variation in satisfaction by Local Authority.

Chart 19—Satisfaction with Workways



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

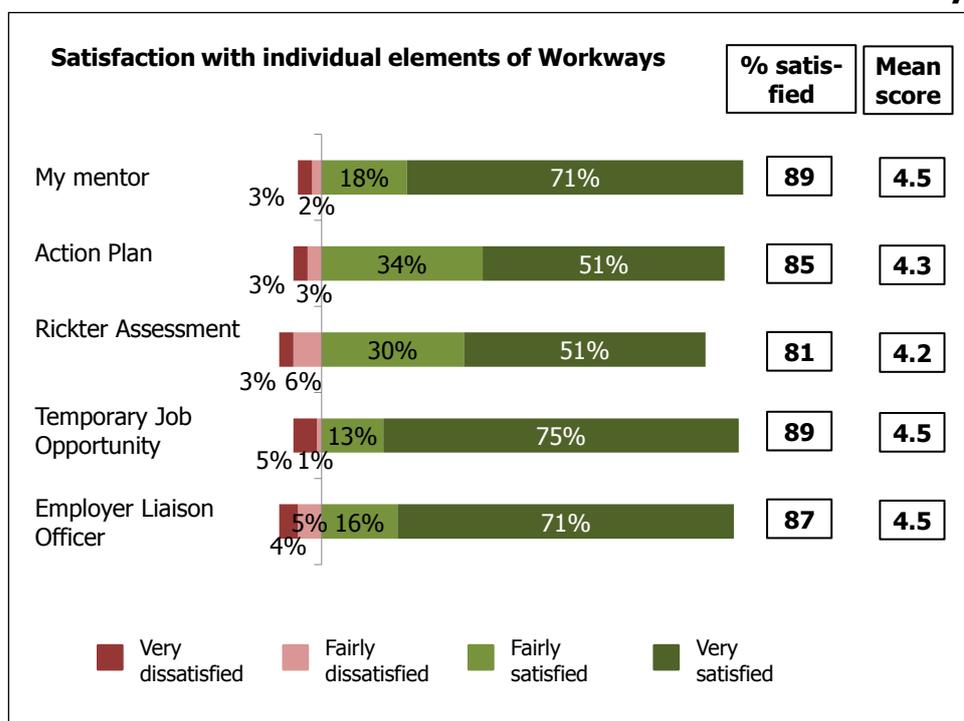
Satisfaction was higher among certain groups of participants.

- Younger participants were more satisfied than older ones. Whilst 92% of those aged 18-24 were satisfied, 84% of those aged 45-54 were. Younger participants were more likely to have qualifications and have been unemployed for shorter periods of time, and less likely to have a health condition or caring responsibilities.
- Those without a health condition (85%) were more satisfied than those with one (79%).
- Those with no qualifications were more satisfied (90%) than those with qualifications (84%).
- Those who had been out of work for 35 weeks or more were more satisfied than those who had been out of work for shorter periods. In total, 89% of those who had been out of work for 35 weeks or more were satisfied, compared to 83% of those who had been out of work for less time.
- Those who had been on a TJO were more satisfied than those who had not (91% compared to 82%), and those who had found work were more satisfied than those who had not (90% compared to 79%).

Those who were dissatisfied with their experience of Workways were asked why this was the case. This question was only asked of 76 respondents, so results should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the most common reason for dissatisfaction was that Workways did not help dissatisfied respondents find work (reported by 39% of those who were dissatisfied)

Participants were also asked about satisfaction with the individual elements of Workways, on a scale of 1-5, where 5 was very satisfied and 1 was very dissatisfied. Satisfaction was particularly high with mentors (89%), ELOs (87%) and TJOs (89%). There were high proportions of respondents who were very satisfied with these aspects of Workways.

Chart 20—Satisfaction with individual elements of Workways



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721); those with action plan (404); those with Rickter Assessment (276); those doing TJO (175)

'Soft' outcomes and skills gained

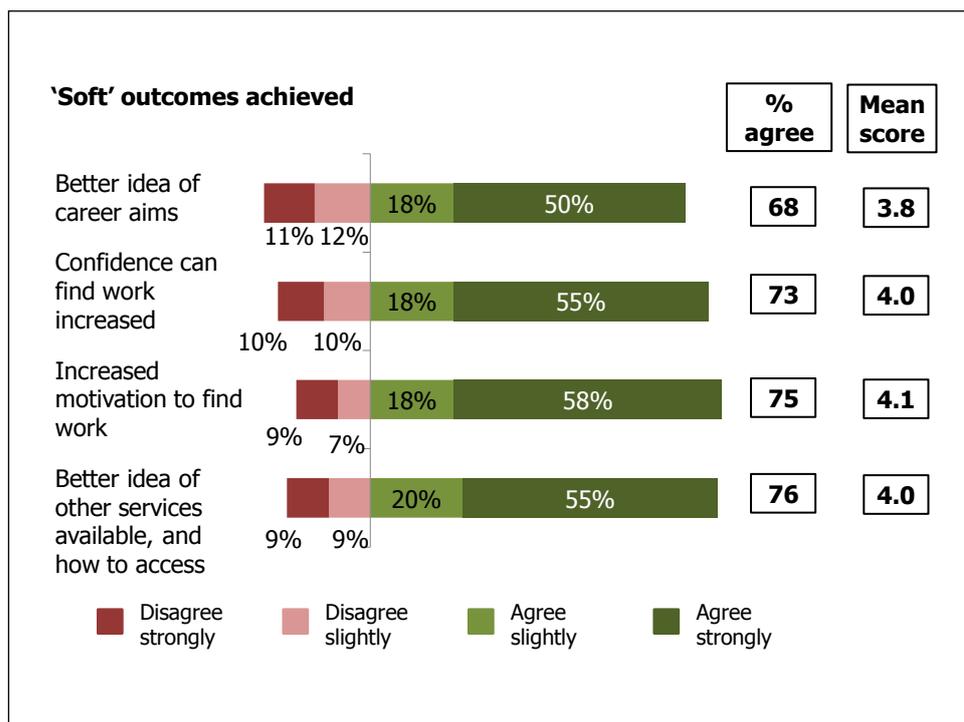
Participants reported that the person-centred, holistic approach to support delivered through Workways boosted their confidence and that this was very important. Other 'soft' benefits noted were that there was a social element to the project, which was important for some participants. It was noted that they liked going to Workways as they would meet other people on the project, and help each other with jobsearch.

"They make you feel like you're worth something, not just oh, here's another person that doesn't want to work. It gives you that confidence as well. It's like someone to talk to as well."

"They put you in the mindset that you have self-worth"

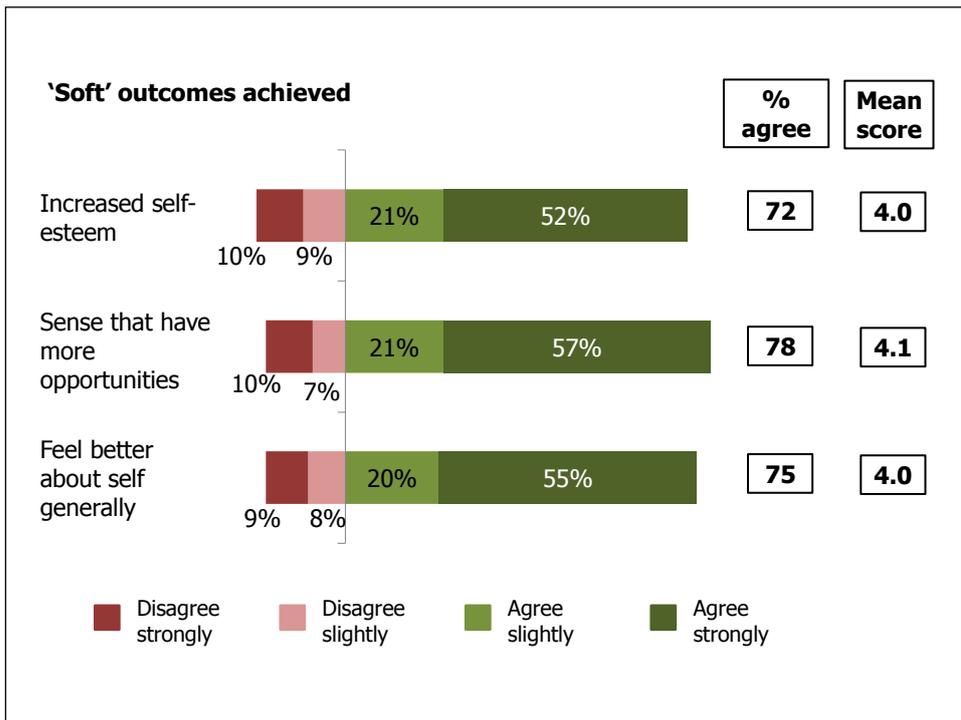
These findings from the qualitative research were supported by the telephone survey. Respondents were asked whether they agreed that they had experienced a range of soft outcomes on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was disagree strongly, and 5 was agree strongly. Between 68% and 78% of respondents agreed they had achieved each of these soft outcomes. The most commonly achieved soft outcome by participants was having a sense that they had more opportunities than before they started the project. The least commonly achieved soft outcome was having a better sense of career aims, but even so, 50% of respondents agreed strongly that they had achieved this. Large increases in motivation and self esteem were also reported.

Chart 21–Soft outcomes 1



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

Chart 22–Soft outcomes 2



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

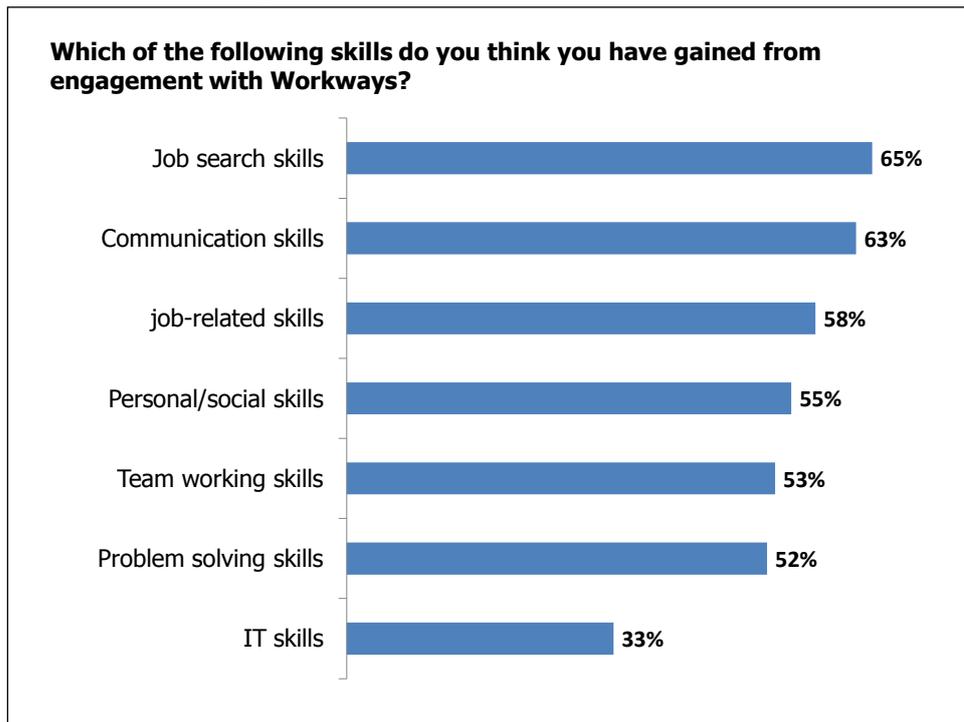
Again, some groups were less likely to report that they had achieved these soft outcomes. These groups included:

- Older people;
- Those with health conditions; and
- Those with caring responsibilities.

As expected, those who had been on a TJO or who had entered work were more likely to report achieving these soft outcomes.

Respondents were also asked whether they had gained any skills whilst on Workways, including skills gained during temporary jobs or training. The most common skills respondents reported gaining were jobsearch skills (65%), communication skills (63%), or skills related to specific employment (58%). The least commonly mentioned skills were IT skills, which only a third of respondents gained.

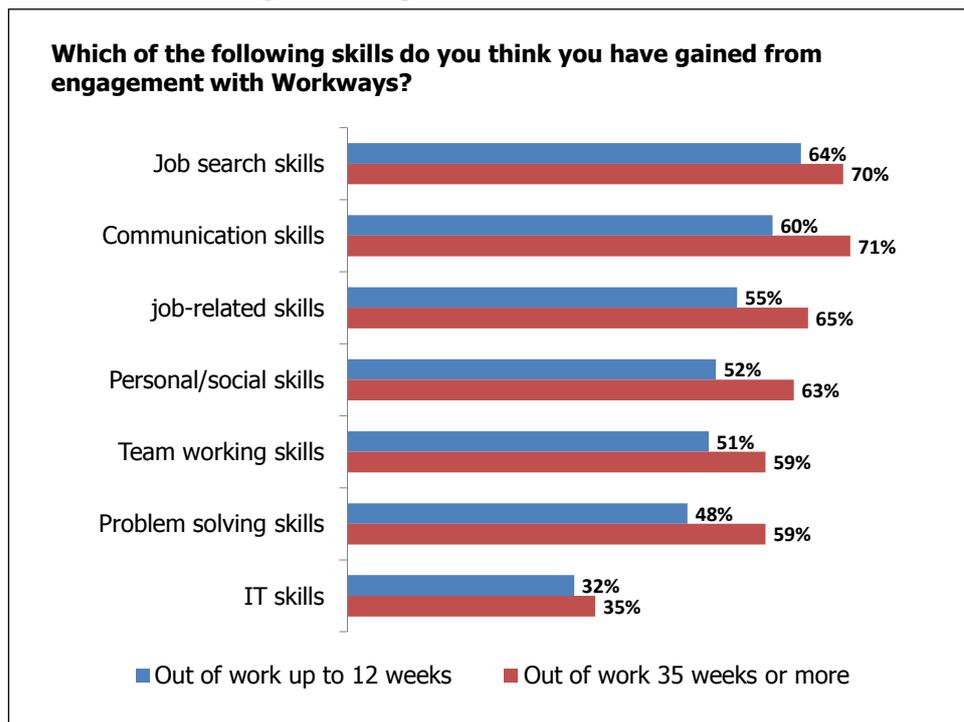
Chart 23—Skills gained



Source: Survey of participants. Base: all (721)

Those who had been out work for longer periods were more likely to have reported gaining skills, as shown in the chart below.

Chart 24—Skills gained by time out of work



Source: Survey of participants. Base: out of work up to 12 weeks (205); out of work 35 weeks or more (253)

In addition, younger respondents were more likely to have gained skills, as were those with lower qualification levels.

Differences in delivery arrangements, key strengths and areas for improvement

Main differences between areas

The Gateway was administered more formally in NPT than other areas. Whilst staff in all areas were referring participants to other services, and knew well the different services in their local area, there was not a standardised Gateway process across the region. In some areas, staff were not aware of the term Gateway, and the process varied between the areas.

Swansea had significantly fewer ELOs compared to mentors, unlike other areas. A roughly equal proportion of ELOs and mentors seemed to work better. This allowed ELOs to engage more employers, be more proactive, particularly in targeting larger employers and looking for vacancies, and have more involvement with participants.

The use of training frameworks in NPT and Pembrokeshire had allowed Workways to respond quickly to training needs, and reduced the resource needed to commission each training course, although both felt the need to refresh organisations on the frameworks. Other areas may wish to follow this example.

Swansea was using TJOs less flexibly than other areas. The flexibility to deploy shorter TJOs earlier in the process was welcomed in NPT, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. However there is a balance to be struck here, with ensuring that opportunities are targeted at those furthest from work and are always focused on creating additional jobs.

In Swansea, participants on TJOs were paid by the Local Authority, not the employer as in other areas (in most cases). It was seen as preferable for participants on TJOs to be paid by the employer, rather than the Local Authority, as this ensured they were more integrated into the organisation and so the employer had made more of a commitment to the participant.

In Pembrokeshire, match-funding arrangements for TJOs were more complex than other areas, which absorbed administrative resources that could better be used in other areas.

The relationship with JCP in NPT had recently changed and NPT were finding it harder to encourage referrals to the project for JCP customers. JCP advisors in NPT were now screening customers before allowing them to be referred to Workways which was having an impact on the flow to the project. JCP and Workways staff in other areas seemed to be working more flexibly together to facilitate referrals onto the project.

Key strengths

Despite the profile of referrals – with more unemployed people and fewer economically inactive – the project does not seem to have lost its focus on supporting those further from work.

The survey found that half of project completers had entered work, and management information found that over half of all participants have achieved positive outcomes. This is a considerable achievement given the economic environment.

As well as these 'hard' outcomes, a range of soft-outcomes were achieved. These included, clearer career plans, increased confidence, motivation and self-esteem, and better knowledge of other services available. In addition, participants had gained a range of skills, including jobsearch, communication and job-specific skills.

Feedback from participants was very strong. Mentors were praised for addressing barriers holistically, and all considered that their experiences had exceeded expectations. In total, 84% of participants were satisfied with Workways, with 89% satisfied with their mentor and 87% were satisfied with the ELO.

Feedback on TJOs was also strong. 89% were satisfied with their TJO, and those who had been on TJOs were considerably more likely to have entered work than those who had not (59% compared to 41%).

Employers gave strong positive feedback on the support received from ELOs, in particular the fact that they were accessible, proactive and saw things from the employer's perspective.

Mentors had excellent knowledge about other local projects, and it appeared to be helping to ensure that participants were referred to the most appropriate provision at the right time.

All areas had worked to ensure that Mentors and ELOs have clearly defined roles but work effectively together. This appeared to be working well, and particularly well in NPT, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

Workways staff reported that one of the key strengths of the project was that it supported local employers, contributing to the regeneration of local rural areas.

Areas for improvement

The project remains below its profile for participant starts, and significantly below profile for starts from economic inactivity. Evidence was found that in some areas outreach had been more limited earlier in the project, with referrals from JCP and FND being the "bread and butter". There is a balance to be struck to ensure that the project targets those furthest from work, whilst also recruiting enough participants. The team will need to continue to take steps to increase participation, particularly among economically inactive women. In all areas steps were being taken to reach these groups, including more outreach activities.

Clearer articulation of the Gateway and its purpose may be required in future, and in some areas there is a need to better formalise how Workways engages with other organisations and projects. Concerns were raised in all areas that changes to how ESF projects claim outcomes had served to undermine joint working between projects. Work should continue to ensure that closer working relationships are possible.

Participants taking up TJOs have broadly the same profile of 'objective' barriers to work, such as health conditions, time out of the labour market, qualifications and caring responsibilities, as those that do not. However this does not take into account more "subjective" barriers, such as confidence or attitudes to work, and the survey found that those who had been on a TJO were more likely to cite confidence as a barrier to work. Nevertheless, evidence was found that not all TJOs have always been targeted at those with the greatest barriers to work, although ensuring appropriate targeting of TJOs did seem to be a focus during the case study visits.

Although staff felt that Rickter Assessments were useful in helping them to engage with certain participants and gain a more holistic understanding of their needs, Rickter Assessments were not considered beneficial by some participants interviewed in case study areas (although survey feedback was more positive). It was not felt that they were being used to measure progress, nor that they identified barriers to work that were not already being

identified with their mentor. Some members of staff considered them to be too intrusive.

In some areas, ELOs had been able to engage larger employers. However, this had not been possible in some other areas. Utilising Local Authority ties and influence, and ensuring enough ELO resource is available will be key in doing this in the future.

The survey found that only two thirds of those on TJO felt they were or had been given enough support to find work after the TJO was finished. Whilst still reasonably high, this is less positive than other aspects of TJOs in participants' opinion. It may be better if ELOs focus more on finding work after the end of the TJO, particularly if the TJO employer cannot take the participant on formally.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, Workways is performing well against its key outcome targets, with high levels of satisfaction from participants and employers, and an excellent employment-outcome rate.

It is clear from the four case study visits that the project teams have worked hard to build partnerships, develop new ways of working, address participant barriers in a holistic way and work closely and effectively with employers. Splitting the 'personal adviser' role into participant-facing mentors and employer-facing ELOs has been a key strength of the project, allowing greater specialisation in roles. Nevertheless, ensuring that there is some crossover in roles, particularly ensuring the ELOs have contact with participants, is important in order to provide a 'joined-up' service.

In particular, there has been a clear sense that the teams have worked to continually review, and improve, how the project works. For example, the evaluation found that there was more outreach to inactive participants in most areas than there had been previously, and that the way TJOs had been used has been refined, as more flexibility has been introduced.

The one area where it is clear that the project must maintain and increase its focus going forward is on increasing referrals, particularly of inactive and hard to reach groups. In addition, building on the areas for improvement identified by this evaluation, there are some further areas where the project may wish to consider reviewing its systems and processes.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- 1. We recommend that the four Local Authorities continue to review their processes for increasing referrals of inactive groups, in particular women. As part of this, we recommend that Local Authority teams look to develop and learn from best practice – in engaging Jobcentre Plus, engaging other projects and partners, engaging specialist groups, and increasing self-referrals.**
- 2. We recommend that project teams keep under continuous review how TJOs are used – to ensure that they are targeted at those furthest from work, but also are deployed flexibly for employers and participants. We also recommend that employers should pay participants on TJOs directly.**
- 3. We recommend that there should not be considerably more mentors than ELOs in project teams. The research found**

considerable benefits of a roughly even split in staff roles, including the ability to engage larger employers and spend time with participants.

- 4. We recommend that there is a clearer articulation of the Gateway process to project staff. Not all staff were aware of the term 'Gateway' in the context of Workways, and improved structures in some areas could improve the efficacy of referrals.**
- 5. We recommend the project reviews the support given to participants on TJOs by ELOs, to ensure they have enough support to move into unsupported employment after their TJO.**
- 6. We recommend that training frameworks are created or renewed, as these will reduce the burdens of procuring training.**
- 7. We recommend that the project reviews how Rickter Assessments are being used, to ensure that these are being used both to identify participants' starting positions and to measure their progress at the end of their time on Workways.**
- 8. We recommend that there are regular, formalised opportunities for both strategic and operational staff to share best practice across the local authorities.**

Annex 1 – List of Abbreviations

CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
ELO	Employer Liaison Officer
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESF	European Social Fund
FND	Flexible New Deal
IB	Incapacity Benefit
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JSA	Jobseekers' Allowance
NPT	Neath Port Talbot
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TJO	Temporary Job Opportunity
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office

Annex 2 - Constructing a barriers typology

To help understand the distance participants were from the labour market we have used a barriers typology system that takes into account a number of factors available in project management information. These are duration of unemployment; whether have a disability or work-limiting health condition; whether have sole caring responsibilities; and qualifications levels. A scoring system was developed where each of the four categories was marked out of a score of four, as show below. Thus, each participant was given a score between 0 (those closest to the labour market) and 16 (those furthest from the labour market).

Length of time out of work

<6 months	0 points
6-11 months	1 point
12-23 months	2 points
24-35 months	3 points
>36 Months	4 points

Qualifications

None	4 points
<NQF Level 2	3 points
NQF Level 2	2 points
NQF Level 3	1 points
>Level 3	0 points

Whether a sole carer

Yes	4 points
No	0 points

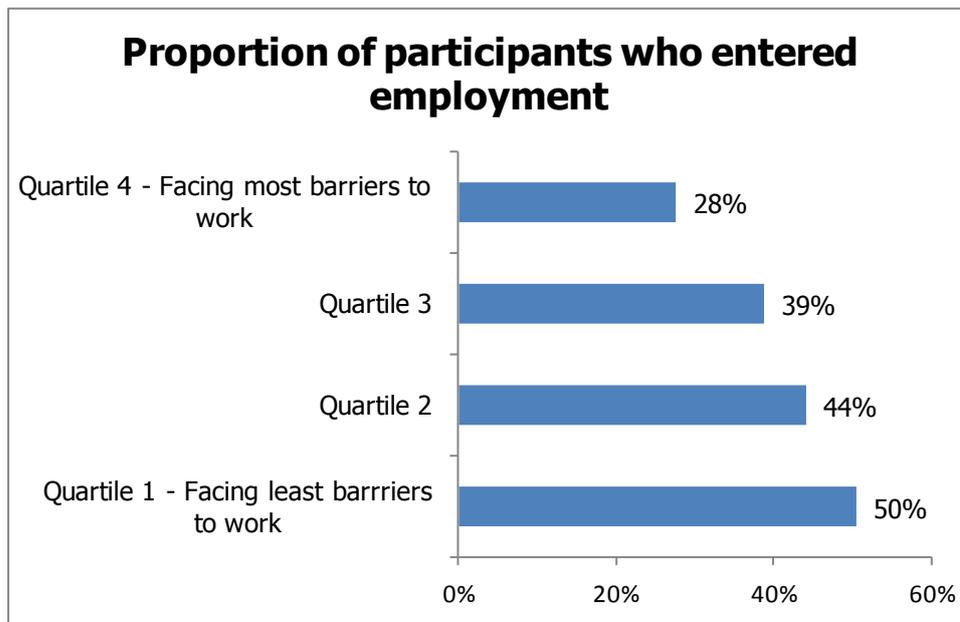
Whether disabled or work limiting health condition

Yes	4 points
No	0 points

These values were then scaled down by 5/8 so that scores were then out of a maximum of ten, making them easier to interpret.

These barrier typology 'scores' are indicative of patterns emerging, allowing comparisons in distance from the labour market between different groups. However, these score only take into account 'objective' criteria, and cannot include 'subjective' criteria such as confidence and motivation.

The validity of these groups has been tested by examining employment outcome rates for different groups of participants. As shown in the chart below, when we split participants into quartiles based on their barrier typology score, the quartile facing most barriers to work were nearly half as likely to enter work than the quartile facing least barriers, suggesting that they were indeed further from the labour market (assuming they received the same level of support from Workways).



Annex 3 – Telephone survey of participants

This annex provide technical details of the survey of participants, which was conducted by Ipsos MORI.

Sample

The target population was comprised of individuals who have been on the South West Workways project between February 2009 and April 2012.

South West Workways provided Ipsos MORI with a full list of all individuals who had started the project within this timeframe.

The original sample comprised 6,905 leads. A number of sample leads without phone number details, duplicates and those who had been on the course for less than four months (after April 2012) were removed from the sample before starting fieldwork, meaning 6,120 sample leads with phone numbers were useable.

A sample of 2,360 leads was selected at random from this sample of 6,120 leads and contacted during the fieldwork period. This sample was representative of the total population.

Fieldwork

Ipsos MORI interviewed 721 participants by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) between 9 August and 16 September 2012, using Ipsos MORI's in-house specialist telephone interviewing team. No quotas were set, although several variables were monitored during the fieldwork period to ensure the sample would be representative of the target population.

The average interview length was 11 minutes which was slightly longer than anticipated. This was partly due to the higher proportion of respondents being in work than originally assumed (the questionnaire is longer for those in work due to also answering questions about their employment outcomes).

Prior to starting fieldwork, interviewers were fully briefed by the Ipsos MORI project team. They also received full written instructions about all aspects of the survey.

Response rates

Ipsos MORI achieved 721 interviews from a total sample of 2,360 individuals. The unadjusted response rate is therefore 31 per cent, while the adjusted response rate, based on valid sample, is 78 per cent. Valid sample refers to sample that was eligible (i.e. not screened out) and contactable.

Weighting

With this research it was necessary to compare the profile of those who took part in an interview against the population of all those who have used South West Workways. Based on this comparison we weighted the data by age, qualifications, whether did a temporary job opportunity, and whether unemployed (short or long term) or economically inactive.