From Entitlement to Experiment:

The new governance of welfare to work

UK Report back to Industry Partners

Feb 2017

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Welcome

This report is our second major output from the project, *From entitlement to experiment: the new governance of welfare to work*. The three-year project commenced in early 2016 and is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and our industry partners: the National Employment Services Association (NESA), Jobs Australia (JA) and Westgate Community Initiatives Group (WCIG). The report details the results of our 2016 survey of the UK employment services sector workforce, including both advisors working for the public employment service, *Jobcentre Plus*, and frontline staff within agencies that have been contracted to deliver welfare-to-work programmes. It was carried out in late 2016, when the Work Programme was still the main employment programme for people receiving Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants with work-related activity requirements. However, this is set to change from mid-2017, when a new Work and Health Programme will be introduced.

This is the fourth time we have surveyed the UK employment services sector, beginning in 1998 when contracting had yet to play a major role in the UK employment services system. The longitudinal nature of this research affords us a unique insight into the UK's evolving, contracted employment system and the impact of policy decisions made by government on service delivery at the frontline.

The report describes how UK employment services professionals decide to work with job seekers; when to report job seekers for non-compliance; and how they perceive the job seekers that they work with. It also provides an overview of who frontline staff are, and how they perceive the employment services system that they work in and the agencies that they work for. We hope you enjoy the report and we look forward to sharing the report comparing the findings between Australia and the UK in coming months.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The UK employment services sector is a dynamic landscape that has been the subject of several major waves of reform over the past decade. This has included the consolidation of centrally-contracted programmes focused on particular localities and discrete cohorts of job seekers into much larger programmes aimed at broader groups of unemployed people. For the past five years, the Work Programme has been the main contracted welfare-to-work programme in the UK, although the Department for Work and Pensions has also established a smaller Work Choice programme for those with more substantial barriers to employment related to disability and ill-health. In addition, *Jobcentre Plus* continues to provide a public employment service to many people during the earlier stages of benefit claims. It will take on an even greater role in doing so when the Work Programme and Work Choice programmes come to an end in mid-2017 and are replaced by a new Work and Health Programme.

Since the introduction of the Work Programme in June 2011 there have been a number of important welfare reforms and changes to the UK employment services system. Unemployed job seekers and ESA claimants with work-related activity requirements are now subject to increased benefit conditionality and more stringent sanctions for non-compliance as a result of changes to sanctioning rules and penalties under the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The way in which contracted providers are funded to deliver employment support has also evolved, as the Work Programme has developed into an entirely payment-by-results rather than fee-for-service model. The 2016 survey of the UK employment services sector workforce provides an opportunity to assess how these and other related changes have impacted the frontline of employment service provision.

The survey was undertaken as part of a three-year Australian Research Council funded project, *From entitlement to experiment: the new governance of welfare to work*, in conjunction with a related survey of the Australian employment services sector. The aim of this project is to model and explain two organisational dynamics underlying major changes to contemporary welfare systems: the shift towards governance driven by performance and the way changes 'from above' seek to stimulate real service delivery change. It builds on the work undertaken in previous projects with our industry partners: *Increasing Innovation and Flexibility in Social Service Delivery* and *Activating States*. Information about these prior projects, including research outcomes, is available at: [http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/ssps/research/projects/ employment-services](http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/ssps/research/projects/employment-services).

This UK report back to industry is the second major output of the new project, following the Australian industry report which was released in October 2016. The UK survey was conducted between September and November 2016, and the Methods Section of the report details how the survey questionnaire was adapted from the Australian survey instrument and previous surveys conducted in 1998, 2008 and 2012.

In the Findings section of the report, different aspects of the UK employment services sector are described under discrete subsections. This commences with an overview of the distribution of jobs performed by client-facing staff within the UK employment services industry, followed by the survey findings on their demographic characteristics, work patterns, and how long they remain in their jobs and within the sector.

The next subsection of the report, *Employment Sector Agencies,* considers the geographical spread of the industry, the type of offices that employment services professionals work in, and the level of training that client-facing staff receive to do their jobs.

In the section entitled, *Working with Job Seekers*, the survey findings concerning employment services staff's work patterns and their perceptions of clients are presented. This includes a discussion of the extent to which frontline staff consider that their clients are easier or more difficult to place into employment, the range of benefits that their clients predominantly receive, and how closely they work with and follow the job seekers in their caseload. This is closely followed by a more detailed discussion of the work demands faced by employment services professionals and the factors influencing how they work with clients, which are discussed in the section on *Working as an Employment Services Professional*. This section of the report also details the survey findings on the proportion of time that employment services professionals spend on various tasks, ranging from meeting with clients, to working with employers and other service providers, to completing compliance requirements and other administrative duties. This is complemented by a discussion of the main work priorities of frontline staff, and how these compare to what they perceive to be the priorities of their organisation.

Following on from this discussion, the survey findings on whether, and how, employment services staff enforce welfare conditionality are presented in the section entitled *Sanctioning Powers*. This section describes how frequently client-facing staff report job seekers for sanctioning, and the main circumstances under which they are likely to seek compliance actions. This is followed by an exploration of the views held by frontline staff about a range of issues related to how they do their jobs, in the section titled *Factors Influencing Employment Services Agencies and how Staff do their Job*. These include their perceptions of the level of discretion and flexibility they have in their jobs, their attitudes towards the IT system that they use, and their views about the broader effectiveness of the UK employment services system.

The Findings section of the report closes with a section on *Perceptions of the Employment System*, which considers how client-facing employment services staff conceptualise the main elements of their job and the objectives of the sector and the agencies that they work for. The report concludes with a discussion of the main differences between the 2012 and 2016 survey results, which highlight how the attitudes and behaviours of frontline staff with the employment services sector have changed since the previous survey.

Method

Survey Instrument and Adaptation

The questionnaire used in the 2016 survey of the UK employment services workforce comprised around 100 mostly closed questions. It was modelled on a questionnaire originally designed by Mark Considine in 1998 and which has since served as the basis for subsequent surveys in the UK and Australia in 2008 and 2012, and the Netherlands in 2008. The findings from these surveys are detailed in the book, *Getting Welfare to Work: street-level governance in Australia, the UK, and the Netherlands* (published in 2015). The initial survey instrument and findings are featured in Mark Considine's book *Enterprising States: the public management of welfare-to-work* (2001). Country specific industry reports for the 2008 and 2012 surveys are also freely available online at http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/ssps/research/projects/employment-services along with our most recent industry report detailing the results of the 2016 Australian survey.

The 2016 UK survey was adapted from the Australian version of the survey following consultations with a range of industry professionals and field research in the UK. This included discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions, attending a major industry conference and meeting with employment services managers and peak body representatives to discuss recent changes to the employment services sector in the UK. During this time, a version of the survey was also piloted with staff from both a private and community-sector employment service provider. This was to ensure that the survey instrument adequately captured changes in industry practice and language use since the previous UK survey in 2012.

Survey Administration

The survey was conducted online and hosted on University of Melbourne servers to ensure the integrity of the data and to eliminate the need for third-party involvement in programming and managing the survey data. Participating agencies were each given a unique pathway into the survey and eligible frontline staff were invited to complete the online survey via an email sent directly from their manager. Before entering the main body of the survey, respondents had to read and acknowledge a plain English statement describing the research, and read and respond to an initial screening question (designed to screen out service staff who do not work directly with job seekers). After that, they were able to progress through the survey even if they did not answer all the questions. Generally, respondents took 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey and participation was encouraged by the use of prize incentives. However, the prize draw information and the survey responses were kept in two separate data files so that survey responses remained anonymous.

The survey was filled out between 5 September and 21 November 2016, with some agencies commencing earlier than others. All participating agencies were given an initial period of two weeks to complete the survey, although this was extended by a further two weeks in the case of several agencies where there were delays in sending out the survey invitations to staff.

Participation Parameters and Sample Profile

The UK employment sector is divided between government service providers supporting claimants from welfare to work via *Jobcentre Plus* offices, and private and community sector agencies delivering contracted employment services programmes. At the time of the survey, the largest of these contracted welfare-to-work programmes was the Work Programme, which is delivered in 18 contract package areas by 15 prime contractors including agencies that operate on a for-profit basis, not-for-profit (or Third Sector) agencies, and some mixed ownership organisations that are partly owned by the government. In addition, many prime contracting agencies further subcontract other agencies to deliver elements (and in some cases all) of the Work Programme in their contract area.

The Work Programme is mandatory for Job seekers' Allowance (JSA) claimants who are referred to it by *Jobcentre Plus* advisors, and also for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who are required to undertake work-related activities in preparation for returning to work. In its early years of operation, ESA claimants only comprised a very small proportion of Work Programme participants. This has changed in recent years however – and since our previous 2012 survey – as the number of ESA claimants referred into the programme has increased while the proportion of programme participants on JSA has declined.[1] Just under 30 per cent of those referred into the programme in September 2016 were from ESA claimant groups compared with less than 5 per cent in the first months of the programme. Consequently, the caseload of the Work Programme has shifted over the past four years to 'contain a higher proportion of individuals expected to require more support and assistance.'[2]

There have also been important changes in the caseload composition of Work Choice, a much smaller contracted employment programme established in October 2010 for job seekers with more substantial barriers to employment such as disability and long-term health conditions.

Work Choice is delivered by a network of contracted independent providers many of whom also deliver the Work Programme. However, the funding structures of the programmes differ, with Work Choice providers receiving both a fee-for-service and outcome payment while Work Programme has been entirely funded on a payment-by-results basis since April 2014.[3] Also, Work Choice is a voluntary programme so, unlike the Work Programme, eligible claimants cannot be compelled to participate in it if they do not want to. But despite being designed as a voluntary welfare-to-work programme for those with a disability or long-term health condition, over half of the 11,450 people who started Work Choice in the twelve months to September 2016 were JSA claimants.[4]

For the 2016 UK survey, the research team initially approached all prime contractors delivering the Work Programme as well as eight agencies subcontracted by primes to

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[1] See Dar, A. (2016) *Work Programme: background and statistics.* House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper No. 6340, 21 March 2016.

[2] Department for Work and Pensions (2016) *Work Programme National Statistics: data up to September 2016*, p.3. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580107/work-programme-statistics-to-september-2016.pdf

[3] House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2015) *Welfare-to-Work: second report of session 2015-16*, p. 6,

[4] Department for Work and Pensions (2016) *Work Choice Official Statistics: data for 25th October 2010 – 24th September 2016.* Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572804/work-choice-statistics-to-sep-2016.pdf

deliver end-to-end employment support to job seekers on JSA or ESA. Ten of the prime agencies and five of the subcontracted employment agencies agreed to participate in the study while the Department for Work and Pensions also agreed to allow frontline staff from *Jobcentre Plus* to take part in the survey.

During a field visit to the UK prior to the launch of the survey, we were advised by managers within the industry that many JSA claimants were now receiving employment support through Work Choice rather than the Work Programme. It was therefore decided to allow Work Choice frontline staff to also participate in the survey, particularly as several of the agencies that had already agreed to be part of the survey were also contracted to deliver this programme. In total, we received 87 usable responses from frontline staff delivering Work Choice compared with 365 usable responses from employment services professionals delivering the Work Programme and 156 responses from the public employment service. However, a preliminary analysis comparing the responses from frontline staff delivering Work Choice with those of staff delivering the Work Programme showed that there were substantial differences between the two groups. As shown in Table 1 below, principally these were related to differences in the extent to which they would report clients for sanctioning but there were also important differences in their perceptions of job seekers and whether clients generally complied with their obligations to look for work.

Table I Differences between respondents delivering Work Programme (WP) and Work Choice (WC)

	WP respondents	WC respondents
Perceptions of clients		
Proportion (%) of clients perceived to have a mental health problem	46.3	55.0
Percentage of job seekers not complying with their obligations	32.8	26.2
Which is more often to blame if a person is on benefits (%):		
- Lack of effort by the job seeker rather than circumstances beyond their control	49.7	21.7
- Neutral	28.6	37.5
- Circumstances beyond the job seeker's control rather than lack of effort on their part	21.7	46.9
Working with job seekers		
Number of job seekers seen on an average day as individual appointments	8.8	4.2
Estimated number of people placed in work in the last month:		
- People placed in work	8.8	3.3
- Percentage of caseload	10.6	18.4
Estimated number of people placed in work in the last year:		
- People placed in work	67.1	30.5
- Percentage of caseload	36.7	50.6
Are you normally logged on and accessing your computer when interviewing job seekers (%)?		
- Always	61.1	29.2
- Most of the time	28.0	44.6
- Sometimes	7.8	13.8
- Never	3.1	12.3
How much does your agency emphasise giving job seekers more choice about the services they receive (%)?		
- None or a little	14.1	9.5
- Neutral	19.2	12.7
- A good or a great deal	66.5	77.8

	WP respondents	WC respondents
Sanctioning behaviours		
Number of job seekers reported for sanctioning in the last two weeks	5.6	0.1
Does your office encourage staff not to be lenient or to be lenient in the use of Participation Reports (%)?		
- Not to be lenient or too lenient	69.4	16.8
- Neutral	18.1	35.4
- To be more lenient than not	12.6	47.9
When would you normally sanction a jobseeker (%)?		
- A jobseeker is dismissed from a job or a training program	55.0	37.3
- A jobseeker refuses to apply for a suitable job	80.9	38.5
- A jobseeker refuses a suitable job offer	90.1	53.8
- A jobseeker fails to commence an employment program or training course	90.2	48.0
- A jobseeker leaves a training course	54.6	24.5
- A jobseeker fails to contact our office	67.6	36.0
- A job seekers fails to attend a job interview	86.3	48.0
- A jobseeker does any of these for a second time	89.2	53.2
- A jobseeker doesn't turn up for an appointment at our office	89.9	20.4

Given the significance of these variations in the behaviours and perceptions of frontline staff working on different contracts, it was decided to omit the responses of Work Choice staff from the main findings of this report. This decision was taken in order to preserve the comparability of the data with earlier surveys such as the 2012 UK survey, which only included staff working for either the public employment service or an agency contracted to deliver the Work Programme. Once the sample was cleaned, a total of 521 usable responses remained from 16 different participating agencies. As Table II below shows, just under 30 per cent of respondents were directly employed by the government to deliver public employment services, with just over a third working for a for-profit agency and nearly a quarter employed by a not-for-profit agency. A further one in ten respondents worked for a mixed-ownership agency.

Table II Sample overview

|	Number	Percentage
Government participants	156	29.9
Participants from a not-for-profit agency	121	23.2
Participants from a for-profit agency	185	35.5
Participants from another agency type	59	11.3
Total actual participants	521	

Findings

The Employment Sector Workforce

The survey captured various data about the profile of people working in the UK employment sector and the type of jobs that they perform. The vast majority of those surveyed (64.3%) described their job as being an employment advisor or employment consultant. This was followed by almost 15 per cent of participants who reported that they manage an employment services office (while also working directly with job seekers at times). Only a very small proportion of participants indicated that they worked as a reverse marketer - someone who brokers job vacancies through contacting employers - or a trainer (less than 3 per cent respectively) whereas more than 1 in 10 reported that their job was not one of the options listed on the questionnaire.

Figure I Job description
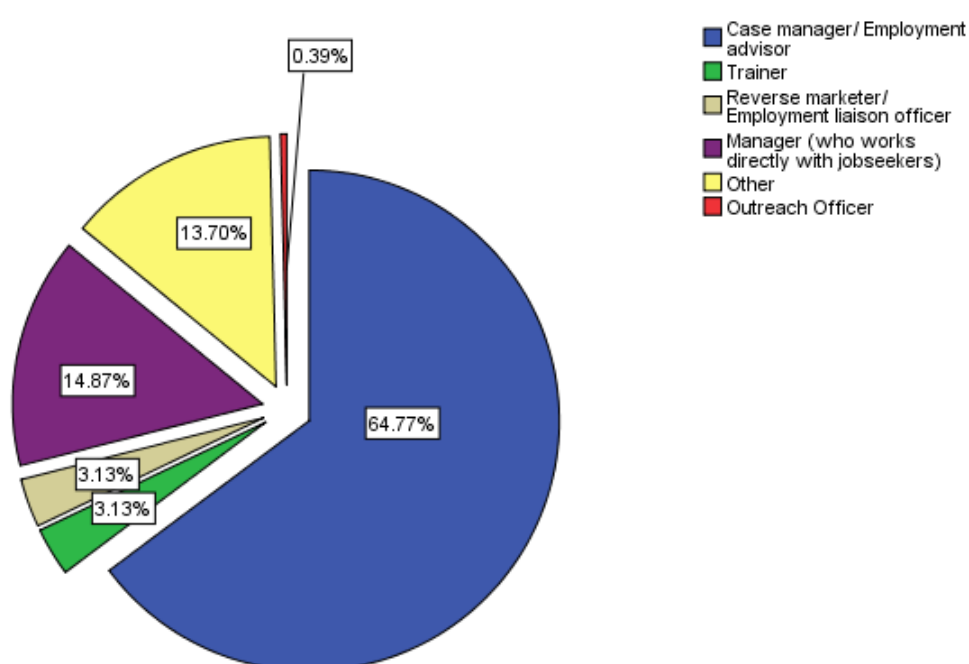
Consistent with previous surveys and also with the results of the Australian survey, frontline employment services staff in the UK are predominantly female (65.1%) and work on a full-time basis. As Table III shows, less than 17 per cent of those surveyed work on a part-time basis. A slightly higher proportion (22.2%) are members of a union and this has declined from 2012 when over 40 per cent of respondents were union members. This may be due to the higher proportion of survey participants working for contracted agencies in the 2016 compared with the 2012 survey, which had a higher proportion of public employment services staff. The results reported in Table III also suggest that the employment services sector workforce is quite experienced, with just under two thirds of participants (65.7%) having worked in the sector for more than five years and a little under half (44.7%) having worked for the same employer for more than five years. Conversely, only a very small proportion of those surveyed (6.3%) had recently moved into the industry within the past twelve months. The stability of the UK employment services sector workforce reflects the fact that the Work Programme is now more than five years old and suggests that many of those who entered the sector when the programme first commenced have remained in the employment services industry.

Table III Employee profile

	Number	Percentage
Full-time/part-time work		
Work full-time	419	83.1
Work part-time	85	16.9
Gender		
Female	205	65.1
Male	110	34.9
Years worked in the employment sector		
Less than 1 year	20	6.3
1 – 5 years	88	27.9
More than 5 years	207	65.7
Years worked for current employer		
Less than 1 year	28	8.8
1 – 5 years	148	46.5
More than 5 years	142	44.7
Employees who are members of a union		
Yes	70	22.2
No	246	77.8

As shown in Figure II, the 2016 survey shows that the age profile of frontline employment services staff is quite mixed. Although the largest proportion are between 25 and 34 years of age (28.5%), about a quarter of employment services professionals are each aged between 35 and 44 years and between 45 and 54 years respectively. Moreover, close to a fifth (18.5%) of frontline employment services staff are 55 or older.

Figure II Age groups
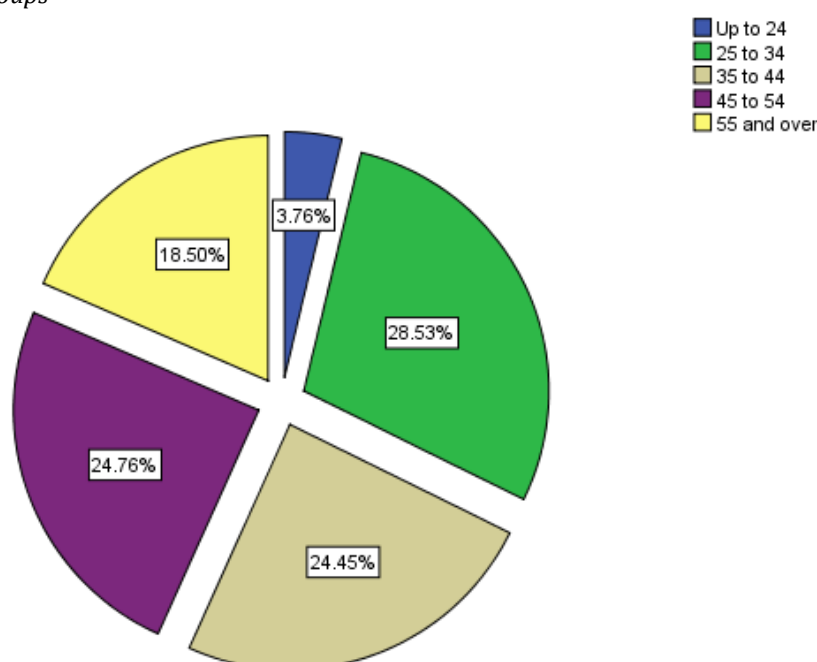
Qualification levels within the UK sector workforce are similarly varied, although the proportion of staff with no post-secondary qualification is quite high. As Figure III shows, A-levels is the highest qualification completed by over a third of survey respondents (34.6%) while a further 1 in 10 frontline staff obtained a GSCE but did not complete A-levels (12%). Just over 30 per cent of employment services professionals have completed a university degree, of which the vast majority have attained a

Bachelor degree compared with less than 7 per cent who have completed a postgraduate degree.

Figure III Highest education level
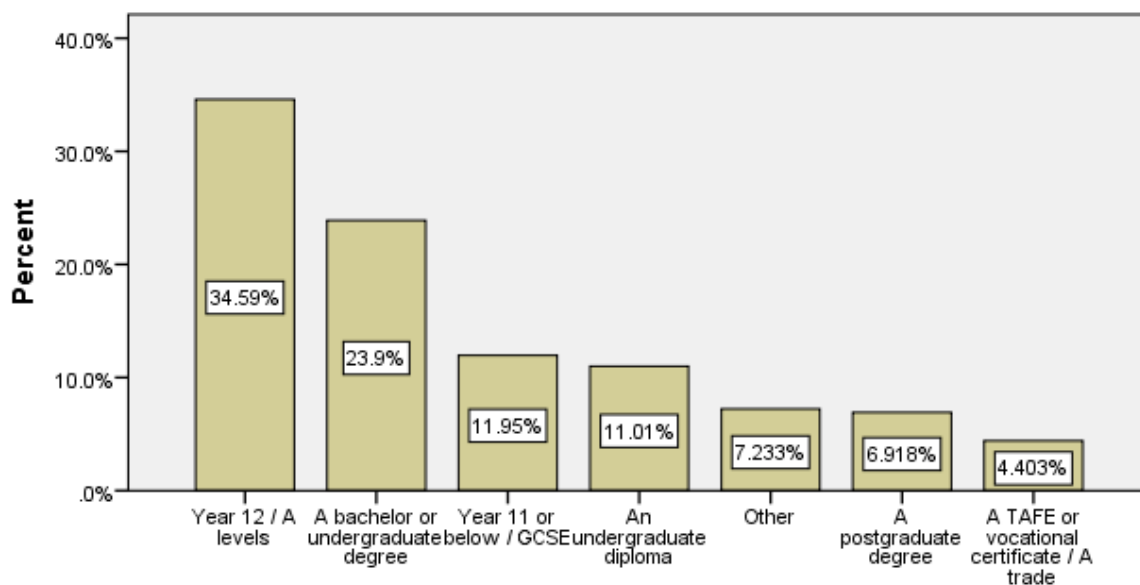
Employment Sector Agencies

The frontline employment services staff surveyed in this study predominantly work in a town or rural area (42.5%) or a large city (38.1%). Only 1 in 5 of those surveyed work in an employment services office that is located in a small city.

Figure IV Agency location
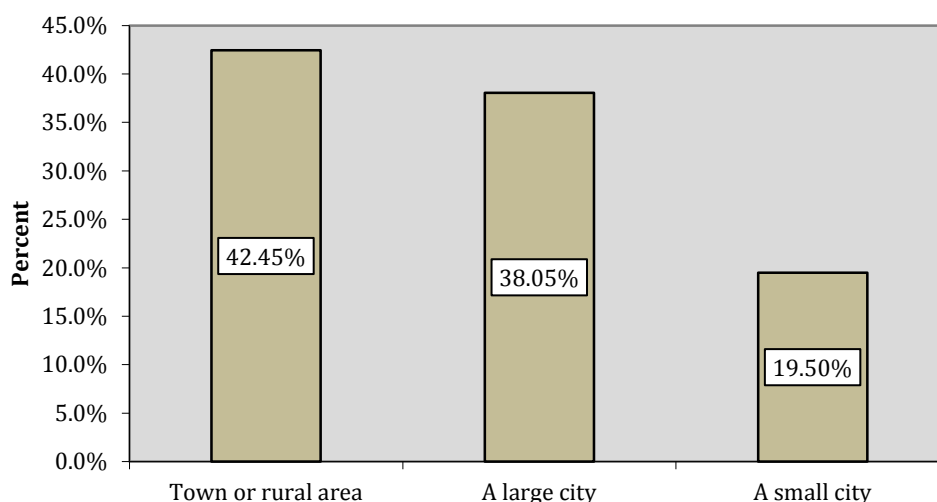
Table IV below also shows that very few of those surveyed (2.6%) work in an outreach office, perhaps indicating the limited availability of outreach support for job seekers within mainstream welfare-to-work programmes in the UK. In terms of the training received to do their jobs, the survey results indicate that the vast majority of UK employment services professionals receive formal in-house training to do their jobs (72.4%). This is followed by informal training from colleagues, and just over half of employment services professionals report receiving this. Only 1 in 20 of those surveyed indicated that they received no training to do their jobs (4.9%). These results show that employer-run and on-the job training are the principals ways that staff within the UK employment services sector workforce learn about how to do their jobs.

Table IV Agency profile

|	Number	Percentage
Outreach Office		
- Yes	6	2.6
- No	223	97.4
Training prior to commencing work		
- Formal training run in-house	368	72.4
- Formal training run by an outside trainer	87	17.1
- Informal training by colleagues	256	50.4
- No training	25	4.9
- Other	33	6.5

Working with Job seekers

As noted earlier in the report, the caseload of the main contracted employment programme in the UK (the Work Programme) has changed considerably over recent years, with a higher proportion of job seekers now requiring more intensive support and assistance. These caseload changes are evident in how survey participants responded to various questions about their perceptions of job seekers and the degree to which they consider their clients to be difficult to place into employment. As shown in Table V, the employment services professionals surveyed indicated that they now spend, on average, more than 40 per cent of their time providing support to job seekers from ESA claimant groups. Nevertheless, the results reported in Table V still suggest that JSA claimants comprise the majority of employment services staff's caseload, with respondents indicating that they spend approximately 55 per cent of their time, on average, on JSA claimants.

The increasing complexity of caseloads within the main UK welfare-to-work programmes was also reflected in the high proportion of job seekers perceived as having a mental health issue. On average, frontline employment services staff estimated that nearly 45 per cent of their clients had a mental health problem. The extent of their clients' perceived barriers was further reflected in the answers that survey respondents gave about the proportion of their clients who they considered easier vs. more difficult to place into employment. Using a scale of 1 to 4, survey respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients that are 'easier to place' into paid work compared with the proportion that are 'more difficult' to place. Whereas frontline staff estimated that about a third of their clients on average were either 'easier' (18.5%) or 'easy' (15.6%) to place into employment, they categorised nearly 47 per cent of their clients as being in the most difficult group to place into employment and a further 19.2 per cent as 'difficult' to place into paid work. In other words, on average across the survey participants, the combined percentage of clients who were estimated to be in the more difficult groups to place into employment was

66 per cent compared with a combined percentage of 34 per cent of clients who were estimated to be in the easier to place into work categories. However, the standard deviations for these answers of between 10 and 23.4 indicates that there is considerable variance in the proportions of clients that frontline staff perceive as 'easier' versus 'more difficult' to place into employment. This is also true for the proportion of clients who are perceived to have a mental health problem, where the standard deviation is even higher (25.3).

The results reported in Table V show that a very high proportion of job seekers are considered by employment services professionals to have complex barriers to employment and to be particularly difficult to place into work. But they also suggest that frontline staff believe that many job seekers would prefer not to work and that their clients often do not comply with their obligations. Indeed those surveyed estimated that, on average, just over 31 per cent of job seekers did not comply with benefit conditionality obligations while they perceived that an even higher proportion of claimants (41.1%) would prefer to be on welfare rather than work to support themselves and their families. Again, these comparatively high figures are tempered by the standard deviations for these survey measures which point to considerable variance in participants' responses.

The questionnaire also captured information about how closely employment services professionals monitor their clients and about the proportion of their clients who are participating in activities and actively looking for employment. The findings in terms of the proportion of job seekers who are perceived to be neither participating in an activity nor looking for work are consistent with the view reported by frontline staff that many of their job seekers are not complying with their obligations. According to those surveyed, a fifth of job seekers are estimated to be 'not participating in an activity or not looking for work' compared with a third who are estimated to be looking for work only as their principal activity and a further 31.1 per cent of job seekers who are participating in another activity. A little over 15 per cent of clients, on average, are estimated to be 'receiving support after being placed in a job or programme.'

In terms of the monitoring of job seekers, survey respondents were asked to indicate the proportion of their clients that they follow either closely, somewhat, a little or not at all. The survey results suggest that job seekers are very closely monitored by employment services professionals in the UK, with frontline staff reporting that they 'closely' follow over 60 per cent of their clients, on average, compared with just 8.3 per cent of clients who are not followed at all. A further 20.5 per cent of clients, on average, are followed 'somewhat' while frontline staff indicate that they follow 1 in 10 of their clients (10.7%) only 'a little'. The extent to which employment services professionals are able to closely follow their clients is most likely related to the number of job seekers they have on their caseload. The very high proportion of clients who are monitored either 'closely' or 'somewhat' by frontline services staff in this survey may be an indication of smaller caseload sizes. This is considered in the next section of the report on *Working as an Employment Services Professional*.

Table V Job seeker profile

	Mean	Standard deviation
Of the job seekers you work with, what proportion of your time is spent assisting:[5]		
- JSA claimants (n=505)	54.9	26.9
- ESA WRAG claimants (n=488)	30.9	24.1
- ESA Support claimants (n=447)	10.2	15.3
Proportion (%) of clients perceived to have a mental health problem (n=452)	44.7	25.3
Percentage of job seekers not complying with their obligations (n=368)	31.1	20.8
Percentage of job seekers that are followed (n=333)		
- Closely	60.4	31.4
- Somewhat	20.5	19.5
- A little	10.7	14.5
- Not at all	8.4	21.3
Approximately what percentage of people who apply for benefits or an allowance do you think would rather be on benefits than work to support themselves and their families? (n=358)	41.2	24.7
Proportion of job seekers that are easier to place versus more difficult to place (n=361):		
- 1 (easier to place)	18.5	17.2
- 2	15.6	10.0
- 3	19.2	11.7
- 4 (more difficult to place)	46.8	23.4
Estimated number of job seekers that are (n=295):		
- Participating in an activity	31.2	24.3
- Looking for employment but not participating in an activity	33.4	24.2
- Receiving support after being placed in a job or program	15.4	16.5
- Not participating in an activity and not looking for work	20.0	20.6

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[5] The answers do not add up to 100 per cent as frontline staff may also spend part of their time assisting job seekers from other claimant groups.

Working as an Employment Services Professional

On average, those surveyed reported having a caseload of 94.7 clients. Although the standard deviation of 48.8 indicates that many frontline staff have a considerably larger caseload than this while others have a very small caseload. As shown in Table VI, employment services professionals see just under 10 clients per day as individual appointments, with a further seven job seekers seen each day, on average, in group activities.

In addition to the number of job seekers on their caseload and how many clients they see each day, frontline staff were also asked about the number of job seekers they had placed in work in the previous month and within the past year. In terms of the number of job seekers they had placed in the previous month, those surveyed reported that they had placed just over 9 clients into jobs on average – or 12.6 per cent of their caseload – during the previous month. Among contracted provider staff, these figures were even lower at 8.8 clients or 10.6 per cent of their caseload respectively (see Table 1 for details of Work Programme only staff). This is considerably lower than the placement rates reported in official Work Programme statistics. For example, data reported by the Department for Work and Pensions up to September 2016 shows that 20.9 per cent of those referred to the Work Programme in August 2015 went on to spend at least three months in employment over the following twelve months.[6] It is also well below the placement rates reported by survey participants for the previous twelve months, with frontline staff estimating, on average, that they had placed 68 job seekers – or 36.6 per cent of their caseload - into employment during the last year. This variance in responses about placement rates suggests that frontline staff either under-estimated the number and proportion of job seekers they placed into employment during the previous month or they exaggerated this number for the previous year.

The survey questionnaire also contained a series of questions about the tools and approaches relied upon by employment services professionals when deciding how to work with job seekers and what actions to take. Client classification tools are used by nearly half of frontline staff (48.4%) 'when deciding how to work with clients'. On the other hand, well over a quarter of employment services professionals (28.4%) report that they do not use such tools at all.

Another notable finding evident from the results reported in Table VI is the high rate of computer use among frontline employment services staff during client interviews. Almost 90 per cent of frontline staff are either 'always' logged into their computers or logged on and accessing their computers 'most of the time' while interviewing job seekers. Indeed, nearly two thirds are always logged on and accessing their computers during client interviews compared with only 3.4 per cent of participants who report that they are 'never' logged on to the computers while interviewing job seekers.

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[6] Department for Work and Pensions (2016) *Work Programme National Statistics: data up to September 2016*, p.1. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580107/work-programme-statistics-to-september-2016.pdf

Table VI Working with job seekers

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Current caseload (n=323)	94.7	48.8
Number of job seekers seen on an average day:		
- as individual appointments (n=479)	9.7	10.3
- in group activities (n=470)	7.5	19.3
Estimated number of people placed in work in the last month:		
- People placed in work (n=310)	9.1	19.8
- Percentage of caseload (n=183)	12.6	14.8
Estimated number of people placed in work in the last year		
- People placed in work (n=243)	68.0	47.5
- Percentage of caseload (n=145)	36.6	26.6
	Percentage	**Number**
Use of a client classification tool:		
- Used when deciding how to work with clients	48.4	201
- Not used	28.4	118
- Not applicable	23.1	96
Computer use		
- *Always* logged on and accessing a computer while interviewing job seekers	65.6	248
- *Most of the time* logged on and accessing a computer while interviewing job seekers	23.8	90
- *Sometimes* logged on and accessing a computer while interviewing job seekers	7.1	27
- *Never* logged on and accessing a computer while interviewing job seekers	3.4	13

Besides whether or not they made use of client classification tools, employment services professionals were also asked to evaluate the influence of a range of factors such as labour market demand, their own judgement, and the government's benefits conditionality policy (among others) on their decision-making.

Among the options available as shown in Table VII, frontline staff indicated that their 'own judgement' was by far and away the most influential factor determining which activities they recommend to clients. Over half (51.6%) of those surveyed reported that their own judgement was 'very influential' in this regard compared with just 1.3 per cent who said that it was 'not at all influential'. Other particularly influential factors on the decision-making of employment services staff are: 'labour market demand', the 'availability of labour market program vacancies', and 'job seekers' preferences for activities'. Just over three quarters of participants reported that the 'availability of labour market programme vacancies' and 'labour market demand' were either 'quite' or 'very influential' factors on their decision-making. A little under 70 per cent agreed that 'jobseeker's preferences for activities' were also either 'quite' or 'very influential' factors.

One surprising result is the comparatively low weight given to the 'need to get an outcome quickly' by frontline employment services staff. Indeed, those surveyed considered it among the least influential factors determining the activities they recommend for job seekers, with just 13.5 per cent of respondents reporting that it was a 'very influential' factor in this regard compared with 22.2 per cent who said that it was 'not at all influential'. This is surprising given that the Work Programme has evolved into an entirely payment-by-results model so it would be expected that frontline staff are under increased pressure to achieve outcomes. Nevertheless, a third of participants still reported that 'the need to get an outcome quickly' was a 'quiet

influential' factor on their decision-making so the combined proportion who considered it either a quite or very influential factor in determining the activities they recommend is still almost half (47.1%). But this is well below almost all of the other factors listed in Table VI, with the exception of 'answers to a standard set of assessment questions', 'other assessment results', and the 'need to substantiate a case for sanctioning someone'.

Table VII Influences when determining what activities are recommended for each job seeker

	Percentage			
	Not at all influential	Somewhat influential	Quite influential	Very influential
Answers to a standard set of assessment questions (n=396)	15.9	42.7	29.3	12.1
Other assessment results (n=384)	14.1	48.7	28.1	9.1
My own judgment (n=397)	1.3	11.1	36.0	51.6
Job seeker's preference for activities (n=395)	1.8	28.6	48.1	21.5
Labour market demand (n=394)	3.0	18.5	49.5	28.9
Availability of labour market program vacancies (n=396)	3.5	19.2	46.7	30.6
Access to funds for special assistance (n=395)	10.6	36.5	33.9	19.0
Need to substantiate a case for sanctioning someone (n=392)	22.2	33.2	31.1	13.5
Need to get an outcome quickly (n=395)	14.9	38.0	33.9	13.2
The government's benefits conditionality policy (n=395)	13.7	37.5	32.9	15.9

Table VIII shows the regularity of contact between frontline staff and various service providers, excluding contact associated with assisting a job seeker obtain a job interview. The results illustrate that employment services staff coordinate closely with other offices in their organisation, with 1 in 3 frontline staff reporting that they are in 'daily' contact with other offices in their organisation and a further 31 per cent indicating that they are in 'weekly' contact with other offices in their organisation. Similarly, employment services staff regularly contact employers, with a quarter (24.5%) reporting that they communicate with employers on a daily basis and a slightly higher proportion (28.2%) maintaining weekly contact with employers. There is also a considerable amount of interaction between employment services staff and training providers, with over a third of respondents (36.3%) indicating that they are in weekly contact with training providers and a further 13.1 per cent reporting that they contact training providers on a daily basis. A similar proportion of frontline staff (13%) are in daily contact with officials from a government department although 1 in 5 respondents reported that they are 'never' in contact with government officials. The frequency of contact between employment services staff and welfare agencies also appears to be quite low given the high proportion of job seekers that respondents perceive as having mental health problems and as being difficult to place into employment (see Table V). Less than 1 in 10 (6.6%) employment services professionals are in 'daily' contact with welfare agencies, while a combined proportion of 23 per cent indicated that they either 'never' (7.4%) contact welfare agencies or do so only 'less than quarterly' (15.6%).

Table VIII Regularity of contact outside the office (excluding contact associated with assisting a job seeker obtain a job interview)

	Percentage					
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Less than quarterly	Never
Another office in this organisation (n=378)	33.9	31.0	15.9	9.0	6.1	4.2
Officials from a government department (n=378)	13.0	27.0	16.7	8.7	15.3	19.3
Local government (n=374)	3.2	12.0	16.8	12.3	20.6	35.0
Welfare agencies (n=379)	6.6	21.6	32.2	16.6	15.6	7.4
Employers (n=379)	24.5	28.2	20.1	8.4	8.2	10.6
Training providers (n=375)	13.1	36.3	25.3	10.7	7.7	6.9
Another employment agency (n=379)	12.7	27.7	22.4	10.3	9.2	17.7
Local service clubs (n=277)	4.0	14.1	22.4	17.3	14.1	28.2
Schools and universities (n=378)	0.8	7.1	10.6	11.9	20.1	49.5
Local media (n=378)	1.3	1.6	6.1	1.3	11.6	78.0

One of the issues explored in the 2016 survey of the UK employment services sector workforce was the amount of time that frontline staff spent on various aspects of their job each week, such as meeting with job seekers, liaising with employers, working with other service providers, and completing documentation and other compliance requirements related to their jobs. This provides a measure of the extent to which employment services staff can devote their time to meeting with job seekers and supporting them to look for work or whether heavy administrative burdens interfere with this aspect of their job.

As shown in Table IX, frontline staff overwhelmingly spend the largest proportion of their time each week in direct contact with job seekers (53.9%), with a substantial proportion spending considerably more time than this in contact with job seekers as indicated by the standard deviation of 26.4. Nevertheless, the survey results also show that employment services professionals spend a considerable proportion of their time each week doing administration. Indeed, those surveyed reported that they spend just under 30 per cent of their time each week on average on either 'contract compliance' (14.2%) or other administrative tasks (14.7%). To put this into perspective, the average proportion of time that frontline staff reported spending each week on working with employers and on working with other service providers was each only about five per cent of their time.

The extent of time that employment services staff spend on contract compliance and other administrative tasks is partly reflected in the attitudes that survey respondents display towards the amount of evidence that they are required to provide for each client. The largest proportion of frontline staff surveyed (47.2%) felt that the amount of evidence required was 'excessive', although the proportion who felt that it was 'fair enough' was only marginally below this at 45.7 per cent. Only seven survey respondents reported that the amount of evidence required was 'inadequate'.

As reported earlier (see Table VI), frontline staff in employment services are almost always logged on and accessing a computer during client meetings. Consequently, survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of the IT system they use to do their jobs and whether sufficient accurate information is available to them via this system. Although just over 40 per cent of participants felt that it was not, most survey

respondents (58%) agreed that enough accurate information is available via the IT system.

Table IX The employment services workplace

	Mean	Standard deviation
Proportion of time per week spent (n=325**)**		
- In direct contact with job seekers	53.9	26.4
- Working with other service providers	4.9	7.1
- Working with employers	5.5	10.9
- On contract compliance to meet government	14.2	17.4
- reporting/administration requirements		
- On other administration	14.7	14.3
- On other tasks	6.7	10.3
	Percentage	**Number**
Regularly of feedback to your manager(s) in the past six months		
- Often	60.1	227
- Several times	20.6	78
- A few times	15.9	60
- Never	3.4	13
The amount of evidence required for each client is		
- Excessive	47.2	161
- Fair enough	45.7	156
- Inadequate	2.1	7
- Not relevant to my job	4.1	14
- Don't know	0.9	3
Is enough accurate information available via the IT system?		
- Yes	58.0	196
- No	40.5	137
- I don't use the IT system	1.5	5

The funding model for contracted employment programmes in the UK has changed over recent years, with the aim of producing a greater focus on achieving results. Provider funding within the Work Programme is now very heavily contingent on delivering job outcomes for clients and meeting performance benchmarks. The survey questionnaire explored the extent to which meeting management targets, along with a number of other factors, was an important factor in determining work priorities within the UK employment services sector both for individual frontline staff and at an organisational level. As shown in Figure V, survey respondents were given a choice between four different factors and asked to choose which best reflected, firstly their own personal work priorities, and secondly, the priorities of their office. These factors ranged from 'meeting the targets set by management' to 'knowing the rules and official procedures' to 'having the best possible set of contacts' to 'competing successfully with other service providers'. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents (70.1%) reported that 'meeting the targets set by management' was the most important factor determining work priorities *within their office*. This was followed by 'knowing the rules and official procedures', although a much smaller proportion of frontline staff (23%) indicated that this was the most important factor determining work priorities *within their office*.

Very few employment industry professionals perceived that either 'competing successfully with other service providers' or 'having the best possible set of contacts' were important factors determining work priorities within their office. However, a considerably higher proportion of survey respondents indicated that these were important factors determining their own *personal work priorities*, with just over 15 per

cent of participants indicating that 'having the best possible set of contacts outside the organisation' was the most important factor for them personally. Nevertheless, 'meeting the targets set by management' was still the most frequently cited factor determining the personal work priorities of employment services staff. Almost half of those surveyed indicated that this was the most important of the factors determining their personal work priorities, followed by a third of employment services professionals who suggested that 'knowing the rules and official procedures' best determined their work priorities at a personal level. What these results show is that 'meeting targets' is clearly a very important work priority for employment services professionals, and especially the organisations that they work for. Although many frontline staff are also personally focused on keeping abreast of official rules and procedures despite less attention being paid to this at an organisational level.

Figure V Office vs. personal priorities
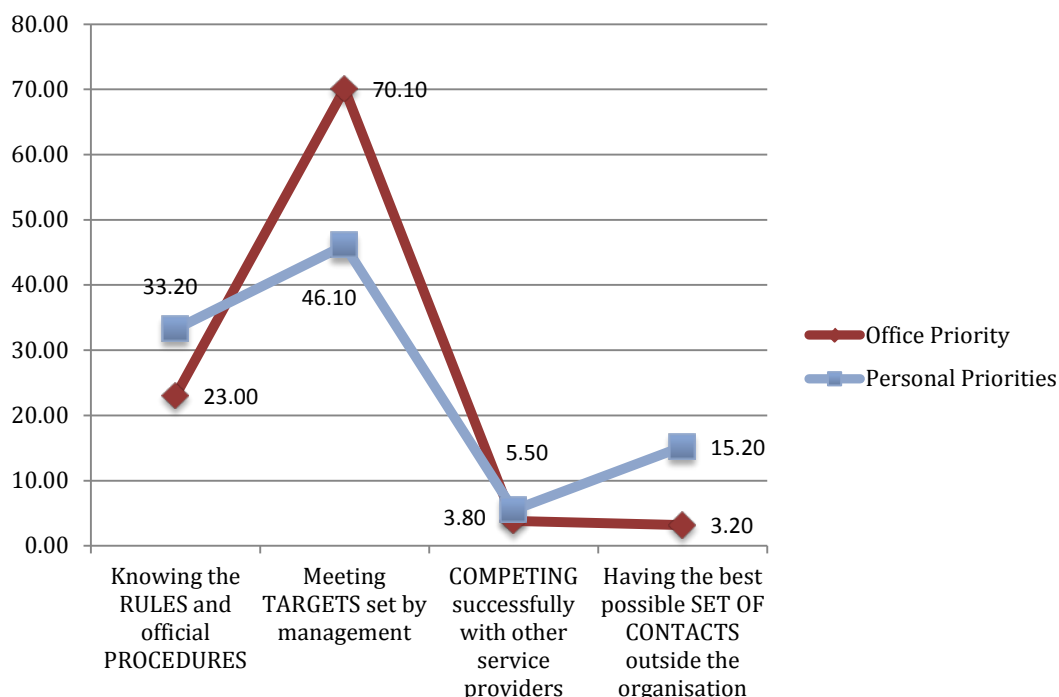
The survey questions comparing the personal work priorities of employment services professionals with those of their employers were followed by further questions exploring the degree of say that frontline staff have in relation to different dimensions of their job, from how the job is done to the speed and order in which tasks are performed. The results reported in Table X suggest that the employment services sector workforce has either a 'good' or a 'very great deal of say' about many aspects of their jobs. In particular, more than two thirds of participants (68.9%) perceived that they had a good or very great deal of say over how they engaged with clients, with 23.4 per cent reporting that they had 'a very great deal of say' in relation to this aspect of their job. 'The order in which tasks are performed' was another area that employment services professionals perceived they had a good or great deal of say over. The dimension of their job that frontline staff perceived they were least able to influence was 'changes to how the job is done'. A third of survey respondents (33.6%) reported having either 'no say at all' or only 'some say' over changes to how their job is done compared with 41.3 per cent who perceived that they had either 'a good' or 'a very great deal' of say in this regard. All in all, however, the findings described in Table X

indicate that employment services staff have a considerable degree of influence over the organisation of their work and how job seekers are engaged with.

Table X Employee influence and work related decisions

	No say at all	Some say	Moderate say	A good deal of say	A very great deal of say
How the job is done (n=336)	2.7	20.8	26.5	39.6	10.4
The order in which tasks are performed (n=334)	3.9	15.6	20.1	44.6	15.9
Speed at which work is performed (n=333)	6.9	17.1	23.7	38.1	14.1
Changes to how the job is done (n=334)	11.7	21.9	25.1	30.8	10.5
How clients are engaged with (n=334)	3.0	11.1	17.1	45.5	23.4

Frontline employment services staff also appear to be well informed about how they are to do their jobs and about how they are to prioritise their work, and the policies and procedures they are to follow. This is shown in Table XI, which demonstrates that 4 out of 5 employment services professionals perceive that they are either 'very well informed' or 'quite well informed' about 'what is to be done' (80.8%), 'policies and procedures' (80.4%), and about the 'priority of work to be done'. Two thirds report that they are 'very well informed' or 'quite well informed' about 'how well the job is done' (67.1%) and about how they are supposed to do their job (66.7%). Where employment services staff perceive that they have a need for greater information is in relation to the money value of their interactions with job seekers. A third of those surveyed reported that they were only 'somewhat informed' or 'hardly informed at all' about this aspect of their job compared with 19.7 per cent of participants who indicated that they were 'very well informed' about the money value of their interactions with job seekers and a further 19.4 per cent who reported that they were 'quite well informed'.

Table XI How well informed frontline staff are about various aspects of their job

	Very well informed	Quite well informed	Fairly well informed	Somewhat informed	Hardly at all informed
What is to be done (n=318)	43.7	37.1	12.3	5.7	1.3
Policies and procedures (n=317)	41.0	39.4	12.9	5.7	0.9
Priority of work to be done (n=318)	41.8	39.6	11.9	4.1	2.5
How well the job is done (n=319)	32.6	34.5	20.4	9.1	3.4
Technical knowledge (n=318)	25.5	32.1	24.8	12.9	4.7
How you are supposed to do the job (n=318)	30.5	36.2	19.5	10.1	3.8
Money value of your interactions with each job seeker (n=318)	22.0	24.2	20.4	15.7	17.6

Sanctioning Powers

Access to unemployment benefits in the UK has long been conditional on claimants undertaking mandatory job searching and participating in employment programmes, with sanctions for non-compliance. Under changes to the JSA sanction regime, which came into effect in October 2012, job seekers that fail to comply with work-related conditionality requirements can face complete withdrawal of benefits for up to three years for repeated 'high level failures' such as 'failure to accept a reasonable job offer or leave a job voluntarily.'[7] Previously, the maximum period that JSA payments could be suspended for was six months. The sanctions regime that ESA claimants are subject to has also been strengthened under the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

In the past, ESA claimants who were assessed as capable of undertaking work-related activities (known as ESA WRAG claimants) could have a proportion of the work-related activity component of their payment suspended if they failed to attend a Jobcentre Plus appointment or did not carry out an agreed activity. But their full benefits would be reinstated once they started to comply with their obligations again. However, since December 2012, ESA WRAG claimants now face fixed periods of sanctions even after they resume complying with their obligations. The sanction period can range from one to four weeks depending on whether it is the claimant's first, second or third participation failure within a 52-week period.[8]

Participants in the 2016 survey were asked various questions about their use of sanctioning powers, including the number of job seekers they had reported for sanctioning within the previous two weeks and the circumstances under which they were most likely to report job seekers and claimants for non-compliance. Frontline staff indicated that they had reported 4.5 clients, on average, for sanctioning within the previous two weeks although some respondents had sought to sanction a considerably greater number of their clients than this while others had not sanctioned any of their clients. For example, 62 respondents reported that they had sought to sanction 10 or more of their clients in the previous two weeks compared with 121 respondents who had not reported any of their clients for sanctioning.

Table XII contains the answers that frontline staff gave about the circumstances under which they would normally report a client for sanctioning due to non-compliance. The results show that employment services professionals are most likely to report a client for sanctioning if a job seeker refuses a suitable job offer, with 91.4 per cent of participants indicating that they would report a client for sanctioning for this reason. A similar proportion of employment services staff would report a client for sanctioning if they failed 'to commence an employment program, activity or training course' (90.8%) or if a job seeker failed to comply with any of their obligations 'for a second time' (90.7%). Failing to keep an appointment with their provider was another circumstance under which job seekers were particularly likely to be reported for sanctioning, with more than 85 per cent of frontline staff indicating that they would report clients for sanctioning for non-attendance. A similar proportion indicated that they would report clients for sanctioning if they failed 'to attend a job interview' (84.3%) or if they refused 'to apply for suitable job offer' (82.9%). Conversely, the results show that employment services staff are less inclined to report clients for

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[7] House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2014) *The role of Jobcentre Plus in the reformed welfare system: second report of Session 2013-14.* Available from
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmworpen/479/479.pdf
[8] House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2014) *The role of Jobcentre Plus in the reformed welfare system: second report of Session 2013-14.*

sanctioning for voluntarily leaving a job (63.6%) or a training course (57.7%) or in cases where 'a jobseeker is dismissed from a job or training programme' (64.4%).

Table XII Sanctions are normally filed under the following circumstances

	Percentage
A job seeker is dismissed from a job or a training program (n=343)	64.4
A job seeker refuses to apply for a suitable job (n=346)	82.9
A job seeker refuses a suitable job offer (n=348)	91.4
A job seeker fails to commence an employment program, activity or training course (including Mandatory Work Activity) (n=349)	90.8
A job seeker leaves a training course (n=345)	57.7
A job seeker fails to contact our office (n=347)	69.7
A job seeker fails to attend a job interview (n=345)	84.3
A job seeker voluntarily leaves a job (n=338)	63.6
A job seeker fails to keep an appointment with my office (n=347)	85.3
A job seeker does any of these for a second time (n=344)	90.7
When a job seeker refuses to sign their Claimant Commitment/Jobseeker Agreement (n=87)	66.7

Employment services staff were also surveyed about the reasons why they might decide *not* to report a job seeker or claimant for sanction, as shown in Table XIII. The principal reason given by respondents for not filing a compliance report is that 'the case can't be substantiated' (59.2%), followed closely by the view that 'the job seeker is normally a good client and it is more effective to issue a verbal warning only.' About a third of frontline staff cite concerns about whether job seeker agreements are specific enough (38%) as a reason not to report a client for sanctioning, while about 16 per cent of respondents indicate that they believe 'sanctions are often overturned' or that 'sanctioning is not an incentive to compliance'. Very few employment services staff report that they would avoid reporting clients for sanctioning because they don't want a reputation for being too tough (1.6%) or because their office does not encourage sanctioning (2.4%). Moreover, the proportion of survey respondents who indicate that they believe 'the penalties are too harsh on the job seeker' is also comparatively low (8.7%) when it is considered that the penalty regime for non-compliance has been considerably strengthened over recent years.

Table XIII Sanctions continued

Sanctions NOT filed for the following reasons	Number	Percentage
The case can't be substantiated	218	59.2
The job seeker agreement was not specific enough	140	38.0
Fear for personal safety	29	7.9
Sanctions are often overturned	61	16.6
Sanctioning is not an incentive to compliance	59	16.0
Avoiding a reputation for being too tough	6	1.6
The office does not encourage sanctioning	9	2.4
The penalties are too harsh on the job seeker	32	8.7
The job seeker is normally a good client and it is more effective to issue a verbal warning only	194	52.7

Factors Influencing Employment Services Agencies and How Staff Do Their Job

Table XIV shows the results of a series of questions about frontline staffs' perceptions of the effectiveness of the system that they work and the extent to which they feel that the job they do is routine or determined by standardised rules and procedures. Employment services staff perceived that the current system is largely effective in helping job seekers into work, with just under two thirds of respondents reporting positive views in this regard. Less than 1 in 5 respondents expressed negative views about the effectiveness of the employment services system in helping claimants into jobs, although a slightly higher proportion (21.9%) were less convinced about whether it was effective in moving people off benefits. Still, a combined proportion of just below 59 per cent of participants perceived that the system was effective 'in getting job seekers off benefits'.

While employment services staff expressed very positive views about the effectiveness of the system they work in, satisfaction with their conditions of work such as pay, hours and promotions opportunities was low. Less than half (46%) of the frontline staff surveyed reported that they were satisfied with their working conditions, and 17.8 per cent indicated that they were 'not very satisfied' at all. In total, a combined proportion of 44.5 per cent of employment services professionals indicated that they were dissatisfied with working conditions within the sector.

The results reported in Table XIV also reveal that a large proportion of employment services professionals feel that their jobs are quite routinised and that their work is heavily determined by standardised rules and regulations. Although one in five survey respondents (20.9%) indicated that they have 'a great deal of leeway in deciding which program or activity their clients should be assigned to, just under a quarter (23.1%) perceived that the decisions they make about job seekers were determined to 'a great deal' by standard program rules and regulations. Indeed, the range of answers that respondents gave to this question show that a little over three quarters (75.4%) of frontline staff feel that standardised rules and regulations play an important part in determining the decisions they make about job seekers. There is similarly a very strong perception among employment services professionals that their jobs involve a lot of routine activities. Nearly 1 in 5 survey respondents (18.2%) reported that the activities that make up their jobs are 'very routine' while, overall, 70 per cent agreed that their jobs were routine to some extent compared with just 2.1 per cent of participants who reported that their jobs involved 'little or no routine.'

A similar pattern is evident in employment services staff's responses about the extent to which they feel that their IT system dictates how they do their job. Again, the vast proportion (59.8%) of frontline answered this question in a way that indicated they felt that their IT system did dictate how they did their jobs, with almost a quarter (23.5%) perceiving that their IT system dictated how they did their jobs 'to a large extent.' Just 6 per cent of those surveyed reported that their IT system dictated how they did their jobs only 'to a small extent'.

In summary, what the findings detailed in Table XIV suggest is that employment services staff view the employment services system positively in terms of its effectiveness in getting people into jobs and moving people from welfare to work but they are less enamoured by the conditions of work within the sector. In particular, there is a very strong impression among frontline staff that their jobs are heavily

routinised and largely determined by IT systems and the application of standardised rules and procedures.

Table XIV Views on the employment system

	Percentage						
	1 Not effective	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very effective
How effective is the whole employment services system in helping job seekers find a job? (n=361)	1.9	5.0	12.2	17.5	33.0	18.8	11.6
How effective is the current employment services system in getting job seekers off benefits? (n=362)	2.8	7.5	11.6	19.3	28.2	21.0	9.7
	1 Very satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Not very satisfied
To what extent are you satisfied with your present conditions of work (pay, hours, promotion etc.)? (n=326)	8.0	19.9	18.1	9.5	14.4	12.3	17.8
	1 Very routine	2	3	4	5	6	7 Little or no routine
To what extent are the activities that make up your job routine? (n=336)	18.2	28.3	23.5	14.6	9.5	3.9	2.1
	1 To a small extent	2	3	4	5	6	7 To a large extent
To what extent do you feel the IT system you use dictates how you do your job? (n=336)	6.0	9.5	11.3	13.4	16.1	20.2	23.5
	1 Very little	2	3	4	5	6	7 A great deal
To what extent are the decisions you make about your job seekers determined by standard program rules and regulations? (n=363)	2.2	1.7	5.2	15.4	27.0	25.3	23.1
	1 Very little leeway	2	3	4	5	6	7 A great deal of leeway
How much leeway do you have in deciding which program or activity your job seekers should be assigned to? (n=363)	9.6	5.8	5.0	16.0	22.3	20.4	20.9

Besides exploring employment services staff's perceptions of the system they work in, the survey questionnaire also contained several items designed to elicit frontline staff's views about the practices of their agencies. These included questions about the extent to which frontline staff perceived that their agencies targeted resources towards particular clients, whether they perceived that their agency prioritised moving people into jobs as quickly as possible over developing the education and skill levels of job seekers, and whether they felt that their agency encouraged the use of sanctions in how they worked with clients.

The findings described in Table XV show that most employment services professionals disagreed that their agency prioritises servicing the most capable job seekers. Only 1 in 5 frontline staff (20.1%) reported that the practice in their agency was 'to pick out the most capable job seekers and give them the best service' compared with two thirds

of respondents (66.2%) who disagreed with this statement. A similar proportion of employment services professionals (63.7%) indicated that their agency gave job seekers a considerable degree of choice about the services they received, with less than 17 per cent of frontline staff reporting that job seekers were given little or no choice about the services they received. On the other hand, there was a strong tendency among frontline staff to perceive that the use of sanctions for non-compliance was actively encouraged by their agencies. Only 12.7 per cent of those surveyed reported that they were encouraged 'to be lenient in the use of sanctions' compared with a combined proportion of 64.3 per cent of frontline staff who perceived that they were encouraged not to be lenient in reporting job seekers for sanctioning.

As with the perceived focus on enforcing compliance, there was similarly a strong perception among employment services professionals that the priority of their agency was to move clients into jobs as quickly as possible. When asked whether their agency would encourage a client who is offered a low-skilled low-paying job to take the job or remain on welfare and wait for a better opportunity to come along, over 91 per cent of respondents stated that management within their agency would advise clients to take the job. Of these, almost 70 per cent reported that management within their agency would advise clients to do so in the strongest possible terms. By comparison, less than 3 per cent of frontline staff in total perceived that management within their agency would be more likely than not to advise a client to remain on benefits in such circumstances and wait for a better opportunity to come along.

The perceived work-first emphasis of the agencies that they work for was also reflected in the responses that frontline staff gave about which was the more important goal of their agency: to help job seekers get jobs as quickly as possible or to raise clients' education or skill levels so that they can get the job they want, in the future. Although nearly 30 per cent of employment services professionals responded to this question in a way that suggested raising clients' education or skill levels was the more important goal of their agency, the majority of those surveyed (50.3%) still reported that their agency would prioritise getting job seekers into a job as quickly as possible.

Table XV Views on how agencies carry out their business

Percentage							
	1 Strong agree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly disagree
The practice in my agency is to pick out the most capable job seekers and give them the best service (n=358)	6.7	7.3	6.1	13.7	12.0	24.3	29.9
	1 To get a job quickly	2	3	4	5	6	7 To raise skill levels
What would you say is the more important goal of your agency: to help job seekers get jobs as quickly as possible OR to raise education or skill levels of clients so that they can get the job they want, in the future (n=358)	24.6	14.2	11.5	20.4	11.2	10.3	7.8

Percentage							
	1 Take the job and leave the benefits	2	3	4	5	6	7 Stay on benefits and wait for better opportunities
After a short time attending your service, an average job seeker is offered a low-skill, low paying job that would make him or her better off financially. Assume he or she has two choices: either to take the job and leave welfare OR to stay on benefits and wait for a better opportunity. What advice would management in your agency give to a client/job seeker of that type? (n=354)	69.8	15.0	6.5	5.9	2.3	0.3	0.3
	1 None	2	3	4	5	6	7 A great deal
How much does your agency emphasise giving job seekers more choice about the services they receive? (n=350)	2.3	6.6	7.7	19.7	25.4	20.0	18.3
	1 Not to be lenient	2	3	4	5	6	7 To be lenient
Does your office encourage staff not to be lenient or to be lenient in the use of sanctions (n=348)	28.4	21.8	14.1	23.0	7.2	2.6	2.9

The findings reported in Table XVI suggest that the personal views of employment services staff in relation to whether to encourage clients to move into low-paying work quickly or remain on benefits align quite closely with what they perceive to be the priorities of management within their agency. Only 1 in 20 (5.3 per cent) frontline staff in total report that they would be more likely to advise a client to remain on benefits until a better opportunity comes along compared with a combined proportion of over 85 per cent of respondents who indicate that they would likely advise the job seeker to take the job and leave welfare. There is also a very high level of commitment among frontline staff to the organisations that they work for, with just under 40 per cent indicating that they are 'very willing' to exert considerable extra effort on behalf of their agency. By comparison, less than 2 per cent of survey respondents report that they are 'not very willing' to exert extra effort on behalf of their agencies.

When asked whether lack of effort or circumstances beyond job seekers' control are to blame for a person being on benefits, the largest proportion of employment services professionals assume a neutral position (31.2%). Nevertheless, the combined proportion of frontline staff who indicate that being on benefits is partly due to a lack of effort on the part of job seekers is considerably higher (43%) than the combined proportion who suggest that it is more the result of circumstances beyond job seekers' control (25.9%). This finding is consistent with the result reported in Table V that frontline staff estimate that 41.2 per cent of their clients, on average, would prefer to remain on welfare rather than work to support themselves and their families.

Table XVI Personal views of employment services staff

	Percentage						
	1 Take the job and leave benefits	2	3	4	5	6	7 Stay on benefits and wait for better opportunity
After a short time attending your service, an average job seeker is offered a low-skill, low-paying job that would make him or her better off financially. Assume he or she has two choices: either to take the job and leave welfare OR to stay on benefits and wait for a better opportunity. If you were asked, what would your personal advice to this client be? (n=356)	53.4	18.3	14.0	9.0	2.5	1.1	1.7
	1 Effort on their part	2	3	4	5	6	7 Circumstance beyond their control
Which is more often to blame if a person is on benefits: lack of effort on their part, or circumstances beyond their control? (n=356)	9.6	15.4	18.0	31.2	14.6	6.2	5.1
	1 Very willing	2	3	4	5	6	7 Not very willing
To what extent would you be willing to exert considerable extra effort on behalf of your organisation? (n=326)	39.3	29.8	13.5	8.0	3.1	4.6	1.8

Perceptions of the Employment System

The 2016 survey of the UK employment services sector concluded with a series of questions about how employment services professionals conceptualise their jobs and their approach to working with job seekers. The findings reported in Table XVII below suggest that frontline employment services staff perceive that they are free to exercise a considerable degree of discretion in how they service and work with job seekers. This is reflected in the results for question ix, which show that over 70 per cent of frontline staff either agreed (52.3%) or 'strongly' agreed (18%) that they are free to decide what to do with each job seeker from day-to-day. An even higher proportion (82.3%) indicated that they use a lot of personal judgement in deciding what is best for each jobseeker (see question xvii), with nearly a third of respondents (32.8%) 'strongly' agreeing that they do so. On the other hand, the answers to question viii suggest that many frontline staff feel that their jobs are quite routine and that they 'can be done by following a few basic rules.' Nearly 1 in 3 respondents (32.3%) agreed with this statement and a further 7.9 per cent 'strongly' agreed that their jobs could be done 'by following a few basic rules.'

While frontline staff report that they are mostly free to decide for themselves what steps to take with job seekers, and that they use quite a lot of personal judgement when carrying out their jobs, there is also evidence that they work quite closely with their supervisors on a daily basis. As shown in the responses to question x, a quarter of

employment services professionals (24.8%) 'strongly' agreed that their supervisor knows a lot about the work that they do from day-to-day, while a further 51.5 per cent agreed with this statement. The answers to question xv also reveal that frontline staff regularly consult with their supervisors when they come across issues not covered within procedural guidelines. Almost half (48 per cent) of participants agreed that they would refer issues not covered by the procedural guide to their supervisor while a further 23.4 per cent 'strongly' agreed that they would do so.

In addition to the extent to which they consult closely with their supervisors and exercise personal judgement in carrying out their jobs, the findings described in Table XVII also reveal that employment services professionals are results-driven. For example, when asked about the main objective of their job, nearly 80 per cent of frontline staff either agreed (44.1%) or 'strongly' agreed (33.9%) that it is 'to shift the maximum number of job seekers off benefits'. As shown in question xxv, only 8 per cent of respondents disagreed (6.8%) or 'strongly' disagreed (1.2%) that this is the main objective of their job. Equally, there was a strong view among employment services professionals that maximising their organisation's financial outcomes was increasingly the objective in their job (see question xxiv). Only 13.7 per cent of respondents either disagreed (11.2%) or 'strongly' disagreed (2.5%) that this was the case compared with a combined two thirds of employment services professionals who agreed (38%) or 'strongly' agreed (28.3%) that 'more and more the objective in this job is to maximise the organisation's financial outcomes. Similarly, as shown in the responses to question xxx, just under two thirds (62.7%) of frontline staff reported that they were aware that their organisation pays attention to the income that they generate by placing job seekers, with nearly 28 per cent 'strongly' agreeing that they were aware of this.

The importance that employment services professionals attach to delivering outcomes is further reflected in the answers to question xii. A quarter (24.6%) of frontline staff 'strongly' disagreed that they are 'NOT influenced by numerical targets' compared with just 6.4 per cent of respondents who 'strongly agree' that they are not influenced by numerical targets in their jobs. In total, the combined proportion of respondents who indicated that numerical targets influenced how they did their jobs was just under 68 per cent. We see this further in the answers to question xiv, which asked employment services staff about whether their organisation has targets for certain types of job seekers. According to more than 80 per cent of respondents, their organisations do with 40.5 per cent of frontline staff 'strongly' agreeing that they do.

Table XVII Perceptions of the employment system

	Strongly agree	Percentage agree	Neither	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
i) Many of our job seekers will never find open or regular employment (n=353)	11.3	29.5	14.7	34.3	10.2
ii) I consider myself to be an advocate for the client/job seekers' rights (n=351)	10.5	37.0	34.8	12.8	4.8
iii) Public servants have special responsibilities which are different from other service delivery staff (n=352)	15.6	34.9	31.0	11.6	6.8
iv) Governments should do more to help job seekers (n=353)	26.6	37.4	23.2	10.2	2.5
v) I find that sanctioning can really damage your reputation with job seekers and others in the employment field (n=332)	9.0	24.7	24.4	32.2	9.6
vi) The lines of authority are not clear in my work (n=328)	3.4	8.5	14.6	47.3	26.2
vii) I do not like my competition (internal or external) to know how I go about getting my results (n=329)	4.3	10.3	26.7	34.3	24.3
viii) My job can be done by following a few basic rules (n=328)	7.9	32.3	19.5	26.8	13.4
ix) When it comes to day-to-day work I am free to decide for myself what I will do with each job seeker (n=327)	18.0	52.3	14.7	11.9	3.1
x) My supervisor knows a lot about the work I do day-to-day (n=330)	24.8	51.5	11.8	8.5	3.3
xi) The really important rules in this job are the ones to do with obtaining assistance from other organisations (n=330)	2.1	19.1	46.1	26.1	6.7
xii) In my job, I am NOT influenced by numerical targets (including star rating) (n=329)	6.4	12.2	13.7	43.2	24.6
xiii) The main thing I have to do in this job is gain the trust of the job seeker (n=328)	30.8	44.8	14.9	7.0	2.4
xiv) Our organisation has targets for certain types of job seekers (n=328)	40.5	40.2	9.1	6.1	4.0
xv) When I come across something not covered by the procedural guide, I refer it to my supervisor (n=329)	23.4	48.0	14.0	8.8	5.8
xvi) The goal in this work is to find a middle ground between the needs of job seekers, employers, and the social security system (n=330)	17.0	45.8	22.1	10.9	4.2
xvii) I use a lot of personal judgement to decide what is best for each job seeker (n=329)	32.8	49.5	12.2	4.0	1.5
xviii) Before reporting a job seeker for non-compliance, I would always consider which classification group they belonged to (n=324)	23.8	40.1	15.4	13.0	7.7
xix) I like to keep my own records and files on job seekers and programs (n=322)	10.6	29.2	18.6	24.8	16.8
xx) Our computer system tells me what steps to take with job seekers and when to take them (n=321)	5.0	23.4	23.7	33.3	14.6
xxi) When you get a good result with job seekers it's usually a team effort by yourself, trainer, other staff in your office, and the employer (n=322)	22.0	44.7	14.0	16.5	2.8

	Strongly agree	Percentage agree	Neither	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
xxii) To get job seekers to pay attention I often remind them that enforcing compliance is part of my job (n=320)	9.7	48.1	16.9	18.8	6.6
xxiii) My job is determined by goals set elsewhere (n=321)	21.2	41.7	21.5	14.3	1.2
xxiv) More and more the objective in this job is to maximise the organisation's financial outcomes (n=321)	28.3	38.0	19.9	11.2	2.5
xxv) I think the objective in this job is to shift the maximum number of job seekers off benefits (n=322)	33.9	44.1	14.0	6.8	1.2
xxvi) I use our information technology system to track priority job seekers (n=321)	16.5	39.3	26.2	13.4	4.7
xxvii) I do tend to take note of those actions with job seekers that will generate a payable outcome for the office (n=319)	12.5	36.1	28.5	14.7	8.2
xxviii) All my job seekers receive a similar service (n=319)	32.9	45.8	9.1	11.0	1.3
xxix) I am often asked to suggest ways to improve things (n=322)	19.3	51.2	14.9	10.6	4.0
xxx) I am aware that my organisation pays attention to the income I generate by placing job seekers (n=322)	27.6	35.1	19.9	12.1	5.3
xxxi) If an official from another employment organisation asked for help in using the IT system, I would help them (n=319)	18.5	32.0	26.6	7.8	15.0
xxxii) In my job, job seekers are organised into formal and informal priority groups (n=236)	8.1	36.4	30.5	15.7	9.3

Employment services professionals were asked to identify one measure that they thought could improve the existing employment services system. As shown in Figure VI, respondents were presented with a list of options and asked to choose the option they believed could improve the system the most. 'More flexibility at the frontline' was the option selected by the greatest proportion of respondents (25.4%), despite frontline staff indicating elsewhere in the survey that they use a lot of personal judgement in deciding what is best for job seekers and that they are largely free to decide for themselves what to do with clients. This was followed by 'better links to employers', which a fifth of respondents indicated was the option that would improve the employment services system the most. 'Better quality annual activity requirements' was another option that a considerable proportion of frontline staff (18.4%) felt could improve the existing employment services system.

Figure VI Measures to improve the employment services system
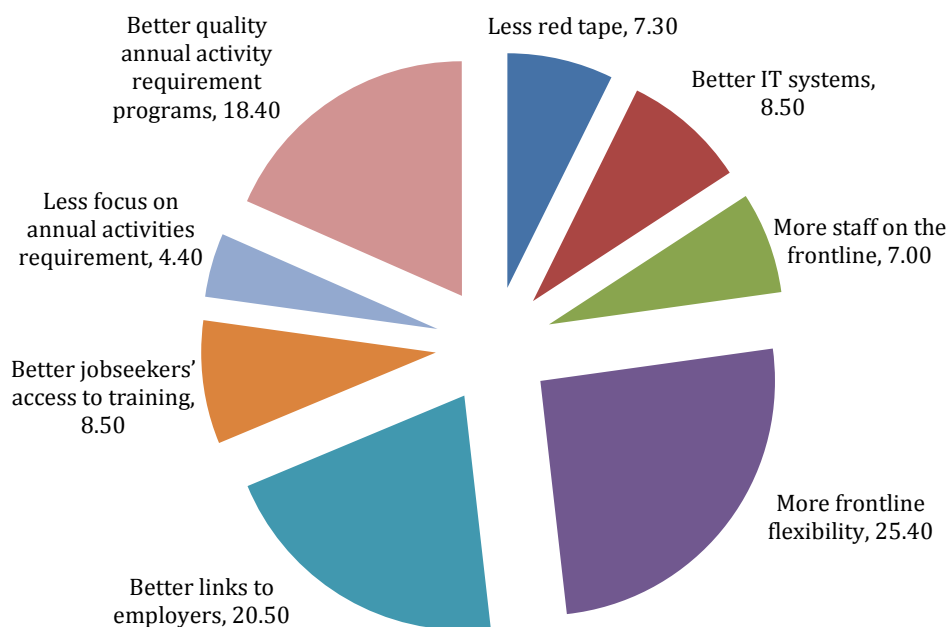
Differences between the 2012 and 2016 survey results

There are a number of notable differences between frontline staff's responses to the 2016 survey of the UK employment services sector workforce, and responses to the previous survey in 2012 (see Table XVIII). The profile of participants in 2016 also differed in terms of the number of years' experience that frontline staff had in the sector and in terms of union membership:

- Almost two thirds (65.7%) of employment services professionals who participated in the 2016 survey reported that they had been working in the sector for more than 5 years, compared with just under half of respondents in 2012.

- In 2016, less than a quarter (22.2%) of frontline staff reported that they were members of a union compared with 41.2 per cent in 2012.

This increase in sectoral experience among 2016 participants reflects the maturing of the Work Programme, which only launched a year before the 2012 survey.

One of the principal areas of difference between the 2012 and 2016 survey results is in terms of the caseload size and characteristics of the job seekers that employment services staff predominantly work with. The mean caseload size reported by employment services professionals has decreased considerably, from an estimated 117.3 clients, on average, in 2012 to an estimated 94.7 clients in 2016. At the same time, the complexity of frontline staff's caseload has increased:

- The proportion of job seekers that frontline staff perceive to have a mental health problem has more than doubled from an estimated 22.3 per cent in 2012 to 44.7 per cent in 2016.

- In 2016, frontline staff estimated that just under 47 per cent of their clients, on average, were 'more difficult to place into employment' compared with an estimated 36 per cent in 2012.

- There has been a corresponding decline in the proportion of clients that frontline staff consider 'easier to place' into employment, from an estimated 21.3 per cent of clients in 2012 to 18.5 per cent in 2016.

These changes in the perceived complexity of caseloads most likely reflect the greater proportion of clients now from ESA claimant groups compared with 2012, when very few ESA claimants were being referred into the Work Programme. The 2016 survey results also suggest that employment services staff are now more closely following their clients than they were in 2012, which is perhaps related to their smaller caseload sizes. For example, although respondents in the 2012 survey estimated that they 'closely' followed 53.5 per cent of their clients, on average, they also reported that they did not follow almost 20 per cent of their clients 'at all'. In contrast, respondents in 2016 estimated that they followed more than 60 per cent of their clients 'closely', while the proportion of clients who were not followed 'at all' was estimated to be just 8.4 per cent.

While the 2016 survey results point towards substantial changes in the size and complexity of caseloads, little appears to have changed in how employment services professionals exercise their sanctioning powers. This is despite the strengthening of sanctions regimes since late 2012. Indeed, the proportion of frontline staff who perceive that their agencies encourage staff NOT to be lenient in the use of sanctions has actually decreased from 71.8 per cent in 2012 to 64.3 per cent in 2016. The

circumstances under which employment services professionals are likely to pursue non-compliance action against job seekers for not complying with their obligations have changed only marginally:

- On the one hand, in 2016, over 90 per cent of frontline staff indicated that they would report a client for sanctioning for failing to commence an employment programme, activity or training course (compared with 79% in 2012) while 85.3 per cent indicated that they would report a client for sanctioning for failing to keep an appointment with their office (compared with 76.5% in 2012).

- On the other hand, the proportion of respondents prepared to report clients for sanctioning for leaving a training course or voluntarily leaving a job has declined marginally from 61.8 and 67.6 per cent respectively in 2012 to 57.7 and 63.6 per cent respectively in 2016.

The 2016 survey results do, however, indicate that employment services staff place more emphasis on meeting numerical targets and achieving outcomes than they did in 2012. For example, compared with the 2012 survey results, a higher proportion of frontline staff reported that:

- 'Meeting targets set by management' best described their personal work priorities (46.1% vs. 42.2% in 2012).

- The 'need to get an outcome quickly' was quite or very influential in determining what activities are recommended for job seekers (47.1% vs. 39.8% in 2012).

- They do tend to take note of those actions with job seekers that will generate a payable outcome for the office (48.6% vs. 42.9% in 2012).

- They are aware that their organisation pays attention to the income they generate by placing job seekers (62.7% vs. 58.8% in 2012).

This increased emphasis on meeting targets and achieving outcomes could reflect the evolution of the Work Programme into an entirely payment-by-results model. However, those surveyed do not give any indication that this has precipitated a more intensive work-first orientation at an organisational level:

- The proportion of respondents who reported that 'getting clients into jobs as quickly as possible' was a more important goal of their agency than raising job seekers' education or skill levels decreased substantially from 66.3 per cent in 2012 to just over 50 per cent in 2016.

- When asked whether management within their organisation would advise a job seeker who is offered a low-paying, low-skilled job 'to take the job and leave welfare OR to stay on benefits and wait for a better opportunity', nearly 3 per cent of frontline staff stated that management within their agency would advise the job seeker to stay on benefits compared with just 0.6 per cent in 2012.

Other notable changes between the 2012 and 2016 surveys include a perceived increase in the level of discretion and leeway that frontline staff have when working with clients, and considerably more positive attitudes about the effectiveness of the employment services system:

- Although a higher proportion of employment services professionals reported that they used a lot of personal judgement to decide what is best for each job seeker in in 2012 (86.7%) than in 2016 (82.3%), on most other measures they reported

having a higher degree of say and greater leeway to decide which activities to recommend and what to do with each job seeker.

- In 2016, just under two thirds of employment services professionals reported that they believed the system was effective or very effective in helping job seekers find a job compared with 38.3 per cent in 2012.

- The proportion of respondents who perceived that the UK employment services system was effective or very effective in getting job seekers off benefits similarly nearly doubled from 32.2 per cent in 2012 to 58.9 per cent in 2016.

While perceptions of the effectiveness of the system have improved greatly among the employment services sector workforce, this has been offset by a decline in satisfaction with working conditions within the sector. In 2016, nearly 45 per cent of respondents reported that they were dissatisfied or not very satisfied with their working conditions compared with just under 39 per cent in 2012. Frontline staff also reported that they were spending an increased proportion of their time on administration and contract compliance activities:

- The average proportion of time that employment services professionals reported spending each week in direct contact with job seekers declined from just under 64 per cent of their time in 2012 to 53.9 per cent of their time in 2016.

- At the same time, frontline staff reported spending 14.2 per cent of their time each week, on average, on contract compliance to meet government reporting requirements (compared with 11 per cent in 2012), and a further almost 15 per cent of their time on other administrative tasks.

Table XVIII Comparison between 2012 and 2016 survey results

Employee profile	2016	2012
Years worked in the employment sector (%)		
- Less than 1 year	6.3	12.8
- 1 – 5 years	27.9	38.2
- More than 5 years	65.7	49.0
Employees who are members of a union (%)	22.2	41.2
Caseload size and jobseeker profile	**2016**	**2012**
Average (mean) number of job seekers in caseload	94.7	117.3
Proportion (%) of job seekers that are perceived as easier versus more difficult to place :		
- 1 (easier to place)	18.5	21.3
- 2	15.6	20.2
- 3	19.2	22.6
- 4 (more difficult to place)	46.8	35.9
Proportion (%) of job seekers that have a mental health problem	44.7	22.3
Proportion (%) of job seekers that are followed:		
- Closely	60.4	53.5
- Somewhat	20.5	16.9
- A little	10.7	10.5
- Not at all	8.4	19.1
Sanctioning Powers	**2016**	**2012**
Proportion (%) who would report a client for sanctioning if:		
- A job seeker fails to commence an employment programme, activity or training course	90.8	79.0

	2016	2012
- A job seeker fails to keep an appointment with my office	85.3	76.5
- A job seeker leaves a training course	57.7	61.8
- A job seekers voluntarily leaves a job	63.6	67.6
Does your office encourage staff not to be lenient or to be lenient in the use of sanctions? (%)		
- Not to be lenient	64.3	71.8
- Neutral	23.0	19.8
- To be lenient	12.7	8.4
Outcomes and getting clients into jobs quickly	**2016**	**2012**
The factor which best describes my personal work priorities (%):		
- 'Meeting targets set by management'	46.1	42.2
- 'Knowing the rules and official procedures'	33.2	38.9
In my job, I am NOT influenced by numerical targets (%):		
- Agree or strongly agree	18.6	22.3
- Neither	13.7	12.3
- Disagree or strongly disagree	67.8	65.4
How influential is the 'need to get an outcome quickly' in determining what activities are recommended for each job seeker (%):		
- Quite or very influential	47.1	39.8
- Not at all or somewhat influential	52.9	60.2
I do tend to take note of those actions with job seekers that will generate a payable outcome for the office (%):		
- Agree or strongly agree	48.6	42.9
- Neither	28.5	29.2
- Disagree or strongly disagree	22.9	27.8
I am aware that my organisation pays attention to the income I generate by placing job seekers (%):		
- Agree or strongly agree	62.7	58.8
- Neither	19.9	21.0
- Disagree or strongly disagree	17.4	20.2
What would you say is the more important goal of your agency (%):		
- To get clients into jobs quickly	50.3	66.3
- Neutral	20.4	19.8
- To raise education or skill levels	29.3	13.8
A job seeker is offered a low-skill, low-paying job that would make him or her better off financially. What advice would management within your agency give to a client in such circumstances (%):		
- Take the job and leave welfare	91.3	95.9
- Neutral	5.9	3.5
- Stay on benefits and wait for a better opportunity	2.9	0.6
Say over job and time spent on contract compliance and administration	**2016**	**2012**
When it comes to day-to-day work I am free to decide for myself what I will do with each jobseeker (%):		
- Agree or strongly agree	70.3	67.8
- Neither	14.7	12.0
- Disagree or strongly disagree	15.0	20.2
I use a lot of personal judgement to decide what is best for each job seeker (%):		
- Agree or strongly agree	82.3	86.7
- Neither	12.5	7.5
- Disagree or strongly disagree	5.5	5.7
To what extent do you feel the IT system you use dictates how you do your job (%)?		

	2016	2012
- To large or good deal of extent	59.8	66.1
- Neutral	13.4	11.7
- To a little or a small extent	26.8	22.3
How much leeway do you have in deciding which program or activity your job seekers should be assigned to (%)?		
- A good or great deal	63.6	57.8
- Neutral	16.0	17.4
- Little or very little	20.4	24.9
Proportion (%) who report having a good or very great deal of say over how the job is done	50.0	42.7
Proportion (%) of time spent per week:		
- In direct contact with job seekers	53.9	63.6
- Working with other service providers	4.9	3.6
- Working with employers	5.5	5.2
- On contract compliance to meet government reporting requirements	14.2	11.0
- On other administration	14.7	-
- On internal staff meetings	-	6.5
- On other tasks	6.7	10.1
Perceptions of employment services system and satisfaction with conditions	**2016**	**2012**
How effective is the whole employment services system in helping job seekers find a job (%)?		
- Effective or very effective	63.4	38.3
- Neutral	17.5	27.1
- Not effective or not very effective	19.1	34.6
How effective is the current employment services system in getting job seekers off benefits?		
- Effective or very effective	58.9	32.2
- Neutral	19.3	24.1
- Not effective or not very effective	21.9	43.7
To what extent are you satisfied with your present conditions of work (pay, hours, promotion etc.) (%)?		
- Satisfied or very satisfied	46.0	49.1
- Neutral	9.5	12.3
- Dissatisfied or not very satisfied	44.5	38.7
The amount of evidence required for each client is (%):		
- Excessive	47.2	59.0
- Fair enough	45.7	32.8
- Inadequate	2.1	1.7

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Title:
From Entitlement to Experiment: The New Governance of Welfare to Work. UK Report back
to Industry Partners

Date:
2017

Citation:
Lewis, J. M., Considine, M., O'Sullivan, S., Nguyen, P. & McGann, M. (2017). From
Entitlement to Experiment: The New Governance of Welfare to Work. UK Report back to
Industry Partners. University of Melbourne.

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