European Social Fund
Objective 3 case study research

GHK Consulting and the Gilfillan Partnership

A report of research carried out by GHK Consulting and the Gilfillan Partnership on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions
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Summary

Introduction

GHK and the Gilfillan Partnership were commissioned to undertake a programme of research into the delivery of European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 projects and the beneficiaries they work with. The purpose of the research was to update the ESF Objective 3 evaluation report to the European Commission. This included case study fieldwork with 40 Objective 3 projects supported under the current 2000-2008 programming round. The research was undertaken between June and December 2004. In summary, the specific objectives of the study included to:

- further knowledge on a range of delivery issues, including provision in relation to individuals’ needs and characteristics, how projects operate, the relative effectiveness of the approaches followed, and the processes and interventions that can be effective for different target groups;
- identify the factors leading to participation in Objective 3 projects and positive outcomes;
- assess the added value of ESF support in relation to domestic programmes, distinguishing between co-financed and alternative bidding projects; and
- examine the factors causing the relatively low take up of Objective 3 Policy Field 2, measure 1 – widening access to basic skills provision.

A mainly qualitative methodology was followed, with fieldwork being undertaken on an anonymous basis to ensure openness amongst the case study interviewees.

The case study projects exemplified the diversity of provision and target groups served by the Objective 3 programme. The projects broadly reflected the distribution of Objective 3 projects nationally, by variables such as Policy Field and measure, size, and target group. The sample included both live and closed projects, and those operating under co-financing and alternative bidding regimes.
While the target groups served by the individual projects broadly corresponded to their Policy Field and measure, significant degrees of overlap existed between them, with beneficiaries commonly having multiple and overlapping needs. This supported the rationale for the multifaceted approaches followed by the majority of the projects, following the ‘pathways’ approach developed in the previous programming period.

Study context – the Objective 3 programme in Great Britain

The current Objective 3 programme operates between 2000 and 2008, with an initial financial allocation of €3,960 million and accounting for 87 per cent of the total GB ESF budget. At the time of study, some 6,000 projects had been supported under the current programming round.

The programme’s headline objectives are to: tackle long-term unemployment; promote equal opportunities; improve life-long learning; encourage entrepreneurship and adaptability; and improve the role of women in the workforce – expressed as five programme Policy Fields reflecting the European Employment Strategy and the GB National Action Plan.

Accordingly, the programme targets individuals not in work, those in work, and companies; although a series of more specific, and often overlapping, target groups have also been established. These include the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, carers, individuals facing multiple disadvantage (such as the homeless, refugees and ex-offenders), the economically inactive and employees of small to medium size enterprises (SMEs) – each of which may face a range of barriers to participation in the labour market. The report reviewed the challenges facing each of these target groups, which included: disaffection and disengagement from employment, training and education; limited self-esteem, confidence and motivation; poorly developed employability skills and limited work experience; language and cultural issues; and chaotic and unstable lifestyles – which could be experienced either singly or serially by individual beneficiaries.

Project delivery processes

A simple five-step model was developed to characterise the delivery processes followed by the case study projects – namely beneficiary identification; beneficiary engagement; assessment and diagnosis; delivery and ongoing support; and exit procedures. This model was used to explore the delivery approaches followed by the projects – both generically and in terms of the target groups they worked with.

A series of common approaches were identified across the projects, including:

- **Step 1 – Identification** – Steps taken to identify potential beneficiaries included a range of marketing, referral and outreach activities. Word-of-mouth referrals emerged as the most effective means of attracting committed individuals, but required time for project credibility to be established and could lead to issues with eligibility and client expectations.
• **Step 2 – Engagement** – While often inter-linked with the initial identification process, the engagement approaches followed varied from the straightforward and immediate (e.g. for individuals closer to the labour market) to the more extended (e.g. for individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics or with chronically low self-esteem). In the latter case, community and voluntary sector outreach emerged as key components, along with informal one-to-one discussions. The voluntary nature of participation, followed by the vast majority of the case study projects, also helped promote beneficiary engagement. However, the projects in some cases had to alter perceptions of training and professional development activities amongst their beneficiaries, and work with considerable sensitivity to engage with harder-to-reach target groups.

• **Step 3 – Assessment/diagnostic processes** were particularly important in ensuring that any services provided to beneficiaries were appropriate to their needs, and allowed more informed decisions to be taken on specific packages of services and arrangements for their delivery. This could lead to challenges for projects working with beneficiaries with a broad range of needs that had to be met in the context of cost effectiveness and overall delivery management. For the most part, the assessment approaches followed tended to be informal or loosely structured, and were based on interviews and discussions, although in some cases, written tests were included. More formal or ‘scientific’ approaches, such as psychometric tests, were used less often. Consequently, most of the assessment approaches featured a considerable degree of subjectivity, although in the majority of cases they were considered by the projects and their beneficiaries to be effective and to result in the provision of appropriate services. A series of key components in beneficiary assessment were identified, including:
  – knowledge of the beneficiary groups in question;
  – knowledge of other suitable provision and providers – for referral or inclusion as part of wider project ‘offers’;
  – being prepared to invest project staff time in assessment;
  – following staggered assessment approaches; and
  – the skills, experience and aptitudes of project staff.

• **Step 4 – Service delivery and ongoing support** – The services delivered by the case study projects varied considerably in their nature, intensity and duration, with delivery mechanisms depending on project objectives and target group needs. On average each case study project offered six discrete services, with the most common being the assessment of individual needs, preparation of action plans and interventions to enhance beneficiary motivation and orientation. Training, work experience and job search assistance services were also commonly offered. The review of services provided by Policy Field showed that:
  – Policy Field 1 projects were more likely to offer job search assistance and work experience, and provide basic skills training and motivation support;
Policy Field 2 projects were more likely to provide basic skills training and basic vocational training;

Policy Field 3 projects reflected the diversity of approaches to support participation in lifelong learning, with a particularly wide range of services being provided;

Policy Field 4 projects were more likely to deliver intermediate and higher level vocational training and help into self-employment, reflecting the employed status of their target groups;

Policy Field 5 projects offered the narrowest range of services, and were more likely to offer job search assistance, help into self-employment, higher vocational skills training and individual action planning.

In terms of services delivered by target group, projects working with individuals closer to the labour market tended to focus on the provision of advice and guidance, job search support and training with a focus on securing job outcomes. Projects working with individuals facing greater or multiple challenges, and requiring greater support, provided a range of services to move individuals closer to the labour market, recognising that direct progression to employment was unlikely for many of their beneficiaries. Key success factors for effective service delivery included: pitching services at an appropriate level; creating welcoming (and unthreatening) environments; following flexible approaches; and celebrating achievement.

The provision of appropriate ongoing support was an essential component for some, particularly the more challenging, target groups. Support offered included the provision of information, advice and guidance, financial support for transport and childcare, debt counselling and benefit advice as well as more specialist inputs. Key factors in the effective provision of ongoing support included a detailed knowledge of the issues facing beneficiaries, the ability to respond to additional beneficiary needs, the use of role models and peer support and the provision of intensive, one-to-one support where appropriate.

**Step 5 – Exit procedures** – Two-thirds of the case study projects had some form of exit procedure in place, which allowed individual achievements to be reviewed and opportunities for further progress maximised. These most commonly took the form of informal discussions with project staff, although more structured processes to support continued progression and future follow-up were identified. However, in some cases the absence of appropriate ‘follow-on’ services hampered further progress, especially for beneficiaries who remained some distance from the labour market.

**Activities by target group**

For the most part, the case study projects offered a range of services to meet the needs of their different target groups, with the most commonly offered services being the assessment of individual needs, preparation of action plans and interventions
to enhance motivation and orientation. The services delivered by the projects varied in terms of the beneficiary groups they were working with. For example:

- **Unemployed beneficiaries** were offered a wide range of services, with job search, work experience and training services (from basic skills and pre-vocational training to higher level skills training) being most common.

- **Individuals with disabilities** were commonly offered basic skills, basic vocational training and work experience placements, alongside confidence building and ‘life experience’ support. Work placements focused in many cases, on the social and developmental aspects of the work environment, as much as on preparation for employment, and offered beneficiaries the opportunity of showing families, carers and potential employers what they were capable of.

- **SME and SME employee** beneficiaries most frequently received intermediate and higher level vocational training, as well as training in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In one case, Objective 3 funds were used to support employees in receipt of redundancy notices, to help them secure new jobs or to consider self-employment.

Project delivery processes also varied to meet the needs of their different target groups. Differences in the process ‘steps’ followed were identified, including:

- **Identification and engagement** – A combination of approaches were followed to identify potential beneficiaries, including project marketing and referrals from a range of organisations. Where beneficiaries were at a greater distance from the labour market, or had hard-to-reach characteristics, identification and engagement was more challenging. Approaches commonly featured community-based outreach, and referrals from grass roots and voluntary and community sector providers. Key components in engaging with more challenging target groups included extended outreach work, taster days and offering different and extended engagement routes.

- **Assessment/diagnostic processes** were most commonly found to be informal or loosely structured, and generally the closer the beneficiary groups were to the labour market, the less formal the assessment approach followed. The use of personal profiles and individual action plans was widespread, as well as basic skills assessments for unemployed beneficiaries. For individuals with more profound disabilities, the assessment approach was more complex, and built on existing specialist or clinical assessments. Assessments for individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics were often undertaken on a flexible basis to avoid putting off potential clients, and could be undertaken over extended periods of time. These relied on the skills and experience of project staff, and often merged with the previous identification and engagement stages.
• **Exit procedures** – in most cases projects had developed exit procedures which ranged from informal interviews to more formalised approaches. Differences emerged for projects working with different target groups in terms of the extent to which exit procedures focused on options for progression. These included progression to a particular destination for projects with a preparatory focus (e.g. in preparing beneficiaries for entry to the New Deal), or to employment opportunities within particular industrial sectors. In some cases, projects utilised follow-up contacts with beneficiaries as a means of ensuring that progress was sustained and built upon, in one case providing continued support for individuals in their first 13 weeks of work.

**Impacts and added value**

The 40 case study projects had worked with approximately 13,500 beneficiaries at the time of the study, with a range of **impacts and outcomes** being reported for individuals completing and currently participating in their projects. The majority of projects were progressing well towards, or had achieved, their performance targets, although those working with the hard-to-reach considered that the programme outcome measures were not always appropriate to capture the achievements of their specific target groups.

The interviews with beneficiaries who had completed their projects, although small in number and likely to represent project ‘success stories’, provide useful insights into the type and nature of the outcomes achieved. Of the 35 beneficiaries able to describe their achievements and progression routes, 17 had progressed into employment, four were actively volunteering, seven progressed to additional education and training activities and seven were, or remained, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owner-managers and employees. In addition to these ‘hard’ outcomes, both the project completers and current participants reported a series of additional benefits resulting from their time with their projects, including ‘soft outcomes’ such as raised confidence, increased self-esteem and feelings of achievement and respect (in some cases for the first time in their lives).

Four main areas of **added value** were identified across the projects, namely:

- extending the coverage of provision – in terms of extending the range of beneficiary groups targeted beyond the mainstream, filling gaps and supporting individual progress;
- supporting innovation and change – by supporting the development of new services or enhancing existing services to better meet beneficiary needs, for example by supporting more tailored or more intensive service provision;
- links with mainstream services – by supporting or enhancing existing provision;
- promoting partnerships – both operational and strategic, where the experience of collaborative work as part of Objective 3 delivery led to new or enhanced partnership links.
1 Introduction

This study aims to provide in-depth information on the implementation of European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 projects and the individual beneficiaries they work with. The report presents the findings from each stage of the study, but draws primarily on the findings from case study fieldwork with 40 Objective 3 projects, which were either currently operational or had completed following funding from the current 2000-2008 programming round. The study was commissioned in May 2004, with the project fieldwork being completed in December 2004.

1.1 Study aims and objectives

The primary aim of the study was to provide information on the operation of a sample of ESF Objective 3 projects providing support to individual and company beneficiaries, as well as examining the experiences of the individuals participating in them. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

• further knowledge on:
  – the type and content of provision in relation to individuals’ needs, characteristics, attitudes and labour market circumstances;
  – how projects operate, in particular how they recruit beneficiaries and the relative effectiveness of the different approaches, integrated or otherwise;
  – the processes and interventions that can be effective for different target groups, particularly people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, people with caring responsibilities and those classed as economically inactive; and
  – the range and extent of existing support for individuals facing multiple disadvantages, compared to the provision and processes in place for those with fewer disadvantages;

• identify the factors leading to participation in Objective 3 projects and positive outcomes; and whether the mandatory or voluntary nature of projects affects outcomes;
In summary, the study sought to add to the existing knowledge base of ESF Objective 3 project activity, which derives primarily from project application and closure data, to provide insights into the way projects operate on the ground and help inform policy in the light of a potentially smaller Objective 3 programme post-2006. Clearly, as it was based on case studies with 40 of the 6,000 plus projects supported at the time of the research, the study did not aim to be representative of the programme at the national level. However, the case studies were selected to try to capture indicative examples of project activities and the experiences of the individuals participating in them.

1.2 Study methodology

The study followed a qualitative methodology approach, with three distinct stages:

- **Stage 1: Preparation stage** – Including interviews with key programme stakeholders to inform sample and questionnaire development; and the production of an assessment framework and survey tools.
- **Stage 2: Fieldwork stage** – Case study fieldwork with 40 Objective 3 projects, including the review of project documentation and management information (MI); consultations with project providers, partners and stakeholders; and over 120 interviews with current and former project beneficiaries.
- **Stage 3: Project completion stage** – Featuring the analysis of the qualitative data collected during the study, and production of a project report.

All of the fieldwork was undertaken on an anonymous basis, to ensure openness amongst the various case study interviewees. The different stages of the methodology are described in more detail in Appendix A.

1.3 The Objective 3 programme in England

The Objective 3 programme is the main channel through which ESF is provided in Great Britain, with the others being Objective 1 (focusing on the development of underdeveloped regions) and Objective 2 (aiming to renew industrial, urban, rural and fisheries areas which are in decline). Objective 3 has the largest ESF allocation of the three programmes, with an original allocation for the 2000-2006 programme period of €3,960 million in England, which represented 87 per cent of the GB Objective 3 budget. The Objective 3 programme covers all of England with the exception of the Objective 1 areas of South Yorkshire, Merseyside, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
The Objective 3 Operational Programme document\(^1\) set the context and rationale for the use of Objective 3 resources in England, and described how these resources would be targeted. The programme has five key objectives, to:

- tackle long-term unemployment;
- promote equal opportunities;
- improve lifelong learning;
- encourage entrepreneurship and adaptability; and
- improve the participation of women in the labour market.

The above objectives relate to five different **policy fields**, which relate in turn to the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy, namely: employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. Each policy field includes two or three **measures**, with the structure of the programme in terms of policy field and measures being described in Appendix B.

In terms of scale and coverage, approximately 6,000 projects had received support under the current Objective 3 programme at the time of study, with between 40 and 50 per cent of these having completed prior to the start of the study. The Operational Programme document suggested that expenditure by policy field should be as follows:

- Policy Field 1 (active labour market policies) – 25 per cent of expenditure
- Policy Field 2 (equal opportunities and social inclusion) – 26 per cent
- Policy Field 3 (lifelong learning) – 29 per cent
- Policy Field 4 (adaptability and entrepreneurship) – 13 per cent
- Policy Field 5 (improving the participation of women in the labour market) – seven per cent.

### 1.4 Objective 3 target groups

The Operational Programme document described how the current programme would focus on moving individuals outside the labour market towards employment, in a context of falling unemployment (from a peak of over two million in 1993 to 960,000 in 1999) and an accompanying concentration amongst more disadvantaged and ‘hard-to-reach’ groups.

Appendix B describes the Policy Fields and measures set out in the Operational Programme, and their specific target groups. While the headline target groups are individuals out of work (including those experiencing/at risk of long-term

\(^1\) England Objective 3 Operational Programme, European Social Fund 2000-2006.
unemployment and the economically inactive), individuals in work (with low levels of, or outdated, skills), and companies receiving support, a set of more specific, and often overlapping, target groups can be identified. These individuals, who may be experiencing particular labour market disadvantage, include:

- people with disabilities or ill health which restricts their ability to work;
- ethnic minorities and individuals for whom English is a second language;
- lone parents/people whose caring responsibilities restrict their ability to work;
- individuals facing a range of labour market challenges – including particularly those in ‘hard-to-reach’ groups such as ex-offenders, the homeless, refugees, substance misusers and disaffected young people.

Since the Operational Programme was drafted in 1999, social and economic conditions, and patterns of employment and non-employment, have continued to change. As the mid-term evaluation of the Objective 3 programme² described, unemployment continued to fall and reached its lowest level for almost 25 years at the end of 2002. Long-term unemployment (12 months or over) also continued to fall, although these positive changes were not reflected in the numbers of individuals classed as economically inactive, with little change being identified over the position in 1999. Indeed, the numbers of individuals claiming non-unemployment-related benefits grew over this period, in part due to individuals rarely leaving such benefits. Consequently, the mid-term evaluation recommended that projects ‘should be encouraged to provide more effective and focused support to help the economically inactive’, through activity under Policy Field 2 and support for those closer to the labour market under Policy Field 1.

Defined as individuals of working age not in employment, education or training and not actively seeking work, the economically inactive encompasses individuals with a particularly broad range of characteristics, labour market disadvantages and distances from the labour market. The inactive can include:

- individuals with disabilities and long-term illnesses;
- lone parents and individuals with caring responsibilities;
- individuals returning to the labour market; and
- individuals not claiming any form of benefit and being supported by family or through undeclared earnings.

However, given that the mid-term evaluation reported in December 2003 and the case study research took place in mid- to late 2004, it was too early for any refocusing of projects to be detected as part of this study.

While the Objective 3 beneficiaries can be broadly grouped into the categories above, it is recognised that these groupings are not rigid, and that many individuals

may experience multiple and combined labour market disadvantages. Research undertaken by Berthoud\(^3\) explored the influence of multiple disadvantages on the probability of unemployment using data from the Labour Force Survey, and tested a series of hypotheses for the impact of their combination. While concluding that an additive model was effective in estimating the probability of unemployment (i.e. adding together the independent effects of each contributory factor), a series of specific combinations of disadvantages were identified as particularly strong predictors. The prevalence of beneficiaries joining the programme with multiple disadvantages was evidenced as part of the case studies and illustrated by the findings from the Objective 3 Leavers Survey for 2002\(^4\). This found that 19 per cent of the leaver sample experienced three or more labour market disadvantages on entry to the programme, with a further 21 per cent experiencing two disadvantages.

1.5 The characteristics of the case study projects

The 40 case study projects were selected to be broadly representative of projects supported under the current Objective 3 programming round, although they were not intended to be ‘statistically representative’ of this wider universe. The case studies were broadly comparable with the wider programme in terms of their distribution by:

- **Policy Field and measure** – with projects being distributed as follows:
  - Policy Field 1 – 11 projects;
  - Policy Field 2 – 12 projects;
  - Policy Field 3 – eight projects;
  - Policy Field 4 – six projects;
  - Policy Field 5 – three projects.

- **Target groups served** – The projects encompassed the wide range of potential Objective 3 target groups, and were found to be working either with individuals from a single target group (24 projects) or from combinations of target groups (16 projects). To aid subsequent analysis, a ‘**primary target group**’ was established for each project, based on the characteristics most commonly exhibited.

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4 ESF Leavers Survey 2002 Objective 3: England. John Atkinson, 2004. The disadvantages referred to the characteristics of individuals on entry to their projects, and included: lacking qualifications, being unemployed or inactive, returning to the labour market after an absence of over one year, being a lone parent, belonging to a minority ethnic group, English not being the first language at home, having a disability or health problem or being a carer.
by their beneficiaries. The distribution of project by primary target group is provided below:

- the unemployed – including long-term unemployed, those at risk of becoming long term, and returners to the labour market – 14 projects;
- individuals with disabilities – ten projects;
- lone parents and others with caring responsibilities – one project;
- the ‘hard-to-reach’ (including ex-offenders, the homeless, substance misusers and disaffected young people) – five projects;
- SMEs and their employees – six projects; and
- other – four projects.

However, classification by primary target groups obscures the range of beneficiary groups that the projects were working with. For example, while the primary target group for five projects was the ‘hard-to-reach’, a total of ten projects were working with individuals sharing similar characteristics. In addition, while none of the projects had minority ethnic groups as their primary target group, 12 projects included such individuals in their wider target audience.

- **Budget** – As a proxy for the scale of project activities, with combined ESF and match budgets ranging from under £23,000 to over £1.3 million. The projects most commonly had budgets of between £100,000 and £300,000 (19 of the 40). In terms of the numbers of beneficiaries supported, the projects varied between over 3,000 (a three year, £1 million project working in schools to combat bullying) to just five (a £23,000 project working with individuals recovering from mental ill health.

The case study sample also included a mix of live and closed projects (27 to 13 respectively) and included those supported under co-financing (23) and direct bidding (17) regimes.

The summary characteristics of the 40 projects are provided in Table 1.1, with more detail being provided in Appendix C.

### 1.6 Report structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 reviews the challenges and barriers to labour market participation faced by the different Objective 3 target groups.
- Chapter 3 presents an overview of the processes followed by the case study projects in identifying and delivering their services, and includes project examples to illustrate the diversity of groups targeted and services offered.
- Chapter 4 explores, in more detail, the services offered to the individual Objective 3 target groups, and reviews the different steps in the delivery processes at the target group level.
Chapter 5 examines the impacts of the case study projects, the added value resulting from their Objective 3 funding, and the sustainability and continuation of completed projects in the case study sample.

Chapter 6 provides our concluding comments.

The report also has three appendices:

- Appendix A provides additional details of the research methodology followed.
- Appendix B summarises the structure of the Objective 3 programme and the target groups served.
- Appendix C provides additional characteristics of the 40 case study projects.

**Table 1.1 Case study projects, by policy field/measure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Field 1 – Active labour market policies – Tackling long-term unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>Provided training to unemployed individuals unsuccessfully applying to work in the transport industry, tailored to their specific needs and including driving theory and practical. The project also supported progress towards employment by arranging interviews with bus garages and across the passenger transport sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>1 (2,3,4,5)</td>
<td>Worked with unemployed individuals aged 25 and over facing a range of barriers to employment to deliver personalised support programmes to progress them towards secure employment. The project provided information, advice and guidance services and job search training and support for individuals out of work for over 18 months, as well as those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Worked with individuals with profound learning disabilities and particularly complex needs to provide a range of supported development opportunities, including work experience, vocational and basic skills training, project placements and relevant professional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>Supported long-term unemployed individuals with barriers to accessing the labour market by offering training, work experience and qualifications specifically in the travel industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provided support and development opportunities to jobless and ‘hard-to-reach’ young people aged 16 to 24, to help them overcome disaffection and other barriers to progression. Services provided included advice and guidance, job search activities and basic vocational training, and the project encouraged collaborative work through new experiences such as outdoor pursuits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>Helped arts students and alumni from an higher education (HE) institution to access training to supplement their studies, and to showcase their work on a website which was promoted to the media and performing arts industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Developed employment initiatives for unemployed and inactive individuals in eight wards in the South West, including providing a community-based advice, support and job seeking service, offering introductions to employers and providing work tasters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
### Table 1.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>2 (1,3,5)</td>
<td>Supported individuals with learning disabilities to enter work-based training and employment opportunities through the delivery of specialist training, job search support, and one-to-one job coaching / mentoring during work placements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Was a pilot programme working with individuals with mental health and physical disabilities to secure mainstream employment, by providing catering-related training and appropriate work experience opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Supported men aged 45 and above who had been unemployed for six months or longer, and offered services including vocational guidance and support, personal development planning, work placements and part-time education opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>1 (2,3,4,5)</td>
<td>Provided a rolling programme of radio training courses for individuals who were unemployed and included individuals with mental ill health and hard-to-reach characteristics. The training included basic skills, IT and other pre-vocational support, and other services included work experience and work guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Policy Field 2 – Promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 (1,3,4,5)</td>
<td>Worked with sheltered housing tenants with histories of mental illness, to provide basic vocational training in catering and customer care and support with job search. Over time, non-residents have also been recruited, and a 26-week course is now offered providing qualifications in food hygiene and customer care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enhanced the training and work experience elements of recovery programmes in a residential rehabilitation centre for substance misusers. Specialist staff were employed to provide flexible and individually tailored support, address individuals’ skills gaps and improve their work-readiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Worked with individuals with mental health problems in a rural area, using volunteer mentors trained to provide support to individuals at risk of exclusion. Mentors are trained and ‘matched’ to clients, who then meet to plan and undertake activities to build confidence and social skills – and ranging from going shopping to sports activities and jointly attending evening classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>5 (1,2,3)</td>
<td>Worked with youth services and community projects across a city to encourage, support and accredit basic skills learning for disengaged young people aged 13 to 24 at risk of exclusion from education and the world of work. A team of accreditation workers was recruited and trained to develop a community-level infrastructure and provide local outreach approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provided customised support, advice and information to voluntary and community groups in a New Deal for Communities area, to consolidate and build capacity in the local voluntary sector. Initially funded through alternative bidding, the project had been extended with co-financing support from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engaged with refugees from two wards with a view to integrating them in projects delivered through a local neighbourhood centre. Refugees living in the area were offered a range of support and development opportunities, including ongoing support through mentoring, with a view to combating social and economic exclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provided a multi-agency approach to tackling bullying amongst 13 to 16 year olds, working with bullies and victims of bullying and helping schools develop and implement anti-bullying strategies and procedures. Services provided included peer support, buddying and counselling for pupils, and awareness raising, training and network development for teachers, local education authority (LEA) and partner staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provided vocational support and experience for visually impaired young people aged 16 to 24 attending specialist college provision. The project services included preparation for, and the provision of, work experience placements, and appropriate pre-vocational guidance and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Worked with lone parents seeking to return to work and engage with the New Deal programme. The project had a ‘brokerage’ role including motivating beneficiaries, planning services to meet their needs and co-ordinating the inputs from different providers – from basic skills training to debt counselling and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>Was an arts-based training programme operating in the summer months, seeking to engage vulnerable groups (unemployed 16 to 24 year olds and adults) back into education to develop new skills and work towards qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Worked with disaffected 16 to 18 year olds to prepare them for entry to the uniformed services or the sport and leisure industry. A programme of accredited (e.g. ASDAN) and physical activity was provided, including personal and social skills development, and a training allowance was provided. Project staff included youth and drug counsellors, reflecting the need for support amongst their client group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provided support for people recovering from mental ill health to progress towards paid employment, including individualised support and training (in basic, employability and transitional skills), work placements and job search training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Field 3 – Lifelong Learning

1 (2,3,4) Originally developed to support training for special constables, ESF extended Project 1’s coverage to raise employability amongst unemployed individuals. The project featured tailored personal development and employment skills programmes, followed by volunteer work placements supported by the project’s outreach workers.

18 2 Enabled students attending a further education (FE) college with learning difficulties and other disabilities, to undertake work experience with local employers. Prior to the project, disabled students had few opportunities to experience a work environment, and the college now offers work placements to most of its disabled students.

3 2 Worked with individuals with a range of learning disabilities to provide opportunities to gain basic skills and a basic understanding of the world of work through exposure to the public in a range of ‘project based’ settings. The project also supported progression to the local social service department’s employment support service, which further develops work experience opportunities and helps individuals enter part- or full-time work.

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Table 1.1  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provided catering training for individuals with mental illness and learning disabilities to increase their confidence, offer experience of a real work environment and provide a set of skills and qualifications to enable progression to employment. Work experience options included a café to provide supported training opportunities, as well as part-time or placement opportunities elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Was an environmental awareness and training initiative for employees of SMEs, developed from a local Green Business Network to promote environmental services to local small businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>Supported the development of a culture of lifelong learning by recruiting individuals recently completing further education or training, and using their positive experiences to encourage others to re-engage with the learning process. The project provided a range of directional services and support for individuals to re-engage in learning, as well as training for the individual ‘recruiters’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Encouraged and supported owners and employees in the hotel and guesthouse sectors to participate in training, and so contributed to the regeneration of a northern seaside resort as a tourist destination. The project included raising awareness of the need for training, providing appropriate training and gathering information to forecast future training needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>7 (1)</td>
<td>Sought to address the financial barriers to second degrees/further HE participation experienced by disadvantaged beneficiaries. Targeting graduates considered capable of taking their studies further, beneficiaries receive help towards funding HE/Level 5 qualifications, to prepare them for direct entry to management/technical posts or for self-employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Field 4 – Adaptability and Entrepreneurship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 (1)</td>
<td>Provided professional and business development support for employed and unemployed artists, providing information, advice and support at all stages of their careers. Services included training and skills development, networking and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sought to enhance the competitiveness of employers (SMEs and large firms) in the automotive supply chain in the South East, by providing training to enhance the advanced engineering, management/supervisory and e-commerce skills of the workforce. The project encouraged firms to view lifelong training as a positive long-term investment, and one essential to the continued competitiveness in the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>1 (2,3,6)</td>
<td>Supported a declining local ceramic workforce by helping former workers re-enter the labour market, and providing those still in work with the opportunity to up- or re-skil. This included providing a range of advice and guidance services and job placements to those made redundant and seeking to secure employment elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>Sought to address the limited development of higher level skills of individuals with the potential to start new businesses/expand existing smaller firms, following a novel approach to learning with ‘membership’ carrying a status and association with business growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1.1  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provided training to SME employees in marketing, delivered in the workplace on a one-to-one basis. The project offered a 15-week programme to help individuals design a marketing strategy, and included a sales training seminar and the provision of a marketing toolkit for future use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Developed and trialled a flexible on-line training package for SMEs seeking to export and trade in the Far East, and covering topics such as business culture, work methods and marketing. More widely, the project promoted market entry for companies that had not previously considered working overseas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Field 5 – Improving the participation of women in the labour market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Summary project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 (2,3,4)</td>
<td>Encouraged women to return to work, participate in education/training activities, or undertake volunteering. Services offered included training in ICT and basic skills, and personal/career development support. The network operated through a series of local outreach centres, and provided support with childcare and transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1 (3,4)</td>
<td>Targeted women with experience in the media sector but who were failing to progress, particularly in technical areas, and provided a rolling programme of radio training courses and workshops as well as introductory training in the use of ICT. Links into the broadcast media sector supported the job search element of the project, with former beneficiaries providing links into the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Was a research-based project which focused on gender inequalities in the regional sport sector, and how sport could be used to support regeneration and the progression of women in the local sport training and education fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to target groups – Primary target groups (additional groups served in brackets)
1 – The unemployed (long-term, at risk of becoming long-term, and returners)
2 – People with disabilities
3 – Ethnic minorities
4 – People with caring responsibilities and lone parents
5 – The ‘hard-to-reach’, including ex-offenders, the homeless, refugees, substance misusers and disaffected young people
6 – SME employees
7 – Other
2 The challenges facing Objective 3 target groups

Key points

- The Objective 3 programme has a broad range of target groups, including individuals not in work, those in work, and companies (including small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owner-managers and their employees). A series of more specific, and often overlapping, target groups has been established, including the long-term unemployed, the economically inactive, people with disabilities, people from ethnic minority groups, carers, and individuals displaying ‘hard-to-reach’ characteristics (such as disaffected young people, ex-offenders, the homeless, individuals with refugee status and drug misusers).

- Each of these target groups may face a range of issues and barriers to participation in the labour market, which projects seek to address. These barriers are many and varied, and can include:
  - disaffection with, and disengagement from, employment, training and education;
  - limited self-esteem, confidence and motivation;
  - poorly developed basic, social and employability skills;
  - few or outdated workplace skills, and limited or no previous experience of work;
  - language and cultural issues; and
  - chaotic and unstable lifestyles.

- The different target groups faced the barriers above either singly or serially, with interviews with beneficiaries providing additional detail on the issues facing individuals participating in the case study projects.
2.1 Introduction

Having described the different Objective 3 target groups in Chapter 1, this chapter explores the challenges and barriers to participation in the labour market they face, and which have a significant bearing on the responses engineered by projects. A series of common issues and barriers to participation can be identified across the different target groups, including:

- poor or limited basic, vocational and broader ‘life’ skills;
- low levels of confidence, self-esteem and motivation; and
- a lack of experience of, disengagement from or disaffection with, the world of employment, education and training.

As would be expected, individuals not in employment made up the vast majority of the beneficiaries amongst the case study projects, and included individuals at varying distances from the labour market – from labour market returners (whose support needs may be limited) to the long-term unemployed (for whom barriers to work and so support needs may be greater).

Some of the key issues facing individuals within each of the main Objective 3 target groups are summarised below, including examples of the characteristics and issues facing beneficiaries interviewed as part of the project case studies.

2.2 The long-term unemployed

While sharing many of the barriers to employment experienced by individuals with recurrent spells of unemployment, individuals remaining on the unemployment register for six months or more are likely to need additional support, and where other measures have been unsuccessful, more intractable barriers are likely to exist. Key issues for the long-term unemployed include:

- **Disaffection and disengagement with mainstream provision** – Many individuals who have been unemployed for six months or more will have received a significant amount of assistance from Jobcentre Plus such as fortnightly job reviews and participation in New Deal programmes.

- **Unfamiliarity with, or mistrust of, training/learning environments** – Older jobseekers, who are further from the formal education system, may struggle to feel comfortable in a learning environment. For younger, long-term unemployed who may have negative experiences of school, engaging them in learning or training will be a challenge.

- **Skills deficiencies** – With individuals with low levels of basic skills being up to five times more likely to be unemployed than the overall population. Long spells out of employment may also erode life skills, and lead to difficulties in adhering to the workplace disciplines such as time-keeping.
Beneficiary perspective – issues and challenges for the long-term unemployed

The case study beneficiary interviews allowed the characteristics and circumstances of a sample of project participants to be explored. Projects were working with individuals with different backgrounds and challenges, including: different levels of skills and work experience (from low-skilled manual/clerical workers to highly skilled and experienced former senior executives); different ages; and different levels of motivation to find work. For example:

**Project 1** aimed to increase employability through a programme of skills training and volunteer work placements, following a portfolio approach to meeting the often different needs of their beneficiaries. The seven beneficiaries interviewed included:

- long-term unemployed individuals – two beneficiaries had remained unemployed for one and over two years respectively following redundancy from manual jobs, and recognised the need to improve their skills to return to work;

- individuals taking voluntary redundancy – one woman in her 50s had taken voluntary redundancy from her local government job two years ago, and described looking for a ‘happy ending’ to her working life. She was seeking to utilise counselling skills from her previous post in a voluntary or charity setting, and was keen to receive training to improve transferable life and workplace skills.

**Project 37** worked with unemployed individuals aged 45 and above, five of whom were interviewed. They shared many common characteristics with the project’s wider beneficiary group, in that they: were aged between 49 and 57; had been unemployed for at least one and up to five years; and in most cases, had held senior executive positions with high levels of skills and considerable experience. As they described, the main barriers to employment were age discrimination and maintaining motivation, for example:

- Beneficiary 1 was aged 57 and was the last senior manager to be made redundant from the closure of a local aerospace firm, where he had worked for the previous 30 years and had become marketing manager. He had applied for 41 marketing jobs without success.

- Beneficiary 2 was dismissed from his post as a marketing director with a blue chip firm during the course of a long illness, and after winning his case for unfair dismissal had not been able to find work for the previous five years.
2.3 People with disabilities

People with disabilities can form a particularly broad group, encompassing individuals with a range of sensory, physical and learning disabilities and different intensities of disability which influence their potential to participate in the labour market. In many cases, individuals with disabilities want to, and are capable of, some work, and suitable employment can bring both physical and mental benefits. Indeed, periods of inactivity may worsen the health and isolation of many, and make a return or entry to work increasingly difficult.

As well as recognising the benefits of labour market participation for disabled individuals, concern over increased numbers claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) since the 1970s (more than trebling to 2.7 million, and greater than those receiving Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and lone parent benefits combined) has led to increased efforts to assist those with disabilities into the labour market.

The case study projects illustrated how poor or limiting vocational, basic and life skills; limited vocational awareness/experience of the labour market; and a lack of confidence and self-esteem were common amongst their target groups. In addition, individuals with disabilities were found to face more specific barriers, including:

- **actual or perceived employer discrimination** – leading to a lack of confidence on the part of the disabled jobseeker, and possibly less of an inclination to submit themselves for vacancies;

- **employer preconceptions** – in spite of the Disability Discrimination Act, preconceptions about the types of employment people with disabilities can enter remain rife;

- **service provider preconceptions** – preconceptions around the capabilities of individuals with disabilities, and appropriate interventions to realise them, could also extend to those providing services for them.

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6 These figures relate to May 2002.
Beneficiary perspective – individuals with disabilities

Individuals with physical or mental disabilities featured as both ‘primary’ target groups and amongst the case studies’ wider target groups. Where featuring as primary target groups, individuals faced particularly profound disabilities, which often required specialist inputs and served, in many cases, to provide experience of the world of work (and for some, experience of the wider world).

Beneficiaries of Project 3, for example, had a range of profound learning disabilities, which ranged from Downs Syndrome to other less obvious disabilities, but all requiring different types of intensive support. The beneficiaries interviewed all had experience of segregated education or training, but had little knowledge or experience of the wider world and lacked basic social and communication skills. The majority were living in residential accommodation and receiving specialist education and day care services, and all were in the care of social services. Two of the six beneficiaries interviewed had some experience of work, both on a part-time basis, both on an ‘assisted’ basis with one working in a community coffee shop and the other in a supermarket.

Specialist college-based Project 23 worked with individuals with visual impairments, although they were far from homogenous and included individuals with additional needs such as learning difficulties. Project staff described how beneficiaries often came from a low or unskilled background (sometimes due to over-protective families/carers, sometimes where insufficient support had been offered), lacked vocational awareness (not least as they miss out on visual cues), and suffered from employer ignorance (rather than prejudice) in the labour market.

The five beneficiaries interviewed were aged between 16 and 19, and had come to the project directly from (often special) school to the college. Common issues faced included limited confidence, with one beneficiary having severe learning difficulties and needing constant assistance from her support worker.

2.4 People from minority ethnic groups

Although the employment gap is decreasing, individuals from ethnic minority groups are twice as likely to be unemployed, and one and a half times as likely to be economically inactive, than the general working age population. Members of ethnic minority communities are also more likely to live in poverty and earn less per week than the White population.\(^7\)

The minority ethnic population is far from a homogenous group, however, and perform differently by group, gender and generation. Although some groups perform better than the general population in compulsory and higher education,

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attainment levels for others are below average, for example with black Caribbean boys having the lowest educational attainment rates at school. Employment and economic activity rates also vary considerably between ethnic minority groups and by gender, with Indians tending to have higher employment and economic activity rates than Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, and black Caribbeans are more disadvantaged in many respects than black Africans.

A report by the Government’s Strategy Unit found that some ethnic minority people do not have the levels of education and skills – or human capital – that are essential for employment success. While a factor underpinning variable labour market performance between groups, the report also identified concentration in poor housing, a lack of mobility and concentration in areas of high unemployment as contributory factors. Discriminatory recruitment practices are also a factor in labour market performance.

2.5 Lone parents and people with caring responsibilities

People with caring responsibilities can be found within other disadvantaged groups, including women, ethnic minority communities, people in poor health, older people and those living in rural or deprived areas. The report ‘Redressing the Balance’ identified three types of barriers to employment that carers may face:

- **individual barriers** – such as a lack of confidence and appropriate skills, particularly if people have spent some time out of the labour market. Other problems may include poor health or age;

- **system barriers** – such as a lack of information and problems finding alternative care from support services when they work. Carers may face financial disincentives to work and training, and their needs may not always be recognised by support agencies;

- **labour market barriers** – such as employers not always understanding the needs of carers, or offering appropriate flexible working practices.

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The cost of childcare represents a major barrier to labour market participation for lone parents (as it can for other individuals seeking to return to the labour market), especially as their re-integration can often be into low paid jobs. Case study Project 28 described the key issues facing their lone parent target group, which included:

- **limited availability of childcare provision** – combined with restrictive costs;
- **a sense of isolation** – with few other adults to share experiences, challenges and successes with on a day-to-day basis;
- **negative employer perceptions** – notably, concerns about childcare cover and individuals taking time off;
- **pressures of sole responsibility for financial matters and child-rearing** – with responsibilities for childcare subsuming all other concerns.

### Beneficiary perspective – lone parents and individuals with caring responsibilities

**Project 8** worked specifically with female clients to encourage participation in employment, education/training or voluntary opportunities. While their unifying beneficiary characteristic was gender, beneficiaries also included: those with different levels of educational attainment, skills and work experience; variable levels of confidence and self-esteem; and patterns of project participation.

One of the beneficiaries interviewed was a lone parent and had been working as a dinner lady at her child’s school for four years, although she sometimes helped with reading and PE in class. Aware that she could do better for herself, she wanted to gain confidence and improve her literacy skills so she could work as a classroom assistant. Flexibility around project delivery timings were key to her participation, as her low paid job did not allow her to fund childcare for outside school hours.

### 2.6 SMEs and SME employees

Individuals employed within SMEs are also a target group for the programme, with projects under Policy Fields 3 and 4 supporting interventions including the improvement of skills amongst the unskilled or poorly paid. Practitioner and academic experience have identified a range of barriers to provision amongst SMEs, and which projects must negotiate. Commonly identified barriers included:

- time and resource constraints – in particular around employers funding training and finding replacement staff to cover for colleagues undertaking training;

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• lack of awareness of the benefits of training – or previous experiences of ineffective provision;
• concerns that newly trained staff will be ‘poached’ by other employers;
• the lack of internal resources/infrastructure to effectively plan, source and evaluate employee training;
• a tendency to concentrate training on higher occupational groups, and limited incentives to train individuals with poor qualifications.

Examples of research funded by ESF into the barriers to SME participation included work undertaken in Nottingham to identify local barriers\(^{13}\), which revealed similar barriers to SME participation including:

• lack of funding to pay for training;
• lack of suitable provision – either to cover the range of staff needs, or more general availability in the area;
• the unwillingness of some staff to participate;
• high staff turnover;
• lack of time to release staff for training, and the lack of cover for staff released.

Additional research undertaken by NfER\(^{14}\) into SME participation in Modern Apprenticeships also identified that the culture of the firm and the extent to which they had a developed staff development infrastructure were also important factors.

### Beneficiary perspective – SMEs and SME employees

Beneficiaries included owner/managers and employees (across the occupational range) of SMEs from a range of industrial sectors, and who illustrated many of the barriers to participation highlighted above. In many cases, the steps taken by projects to minimise the burden of participation were key factors, including providing services on a flexible basis. One beneficiary of Project 17 reported how, as a new business owner, the provision of training in ‘bite-size’ pieces allowed them to take part, as they could only spend limited time away from their business.

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\(^{13}\) Barriers to Training in Small to Medium Sized Enterprises. Nottingham Research Observatory Ltd and Nottingham Trent University, 2002.

\(^{14}\) Barriers to Take-up of Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships by SMEs and Specific Sectors. National Foundation for Educational Research, June 2000.
While some beneficiaries described how their projects were just what they were looking for (‘at the right place at the right time’), others needed to be convinced of the benefits prior to engagement. A beneficiary of **Project 19**, which supported businesses seeking to export overseas, described how initial contacts with the project had made them aware of the opportunities available to them, which had convinced them to take part.

Beneficiaries of **Project 38**, which developed marketing strategies for SMEs, described being attracted to the project for a number of reasons, including offering a product they were seeking to develop anyway, offering a practical solution cost effectively and being delivered over a long (and flexible) period of time to allow delivery to fit in with other commitments.

### 2.7 ‘Hard-to-reach’ target groups

Finally a target group, or more accurately a set of characteristics/disadvantages, can be identified which can operate singly or serially to place the individual at greatest distance from the labour market, and make efforts to move them towards it, particularly challenging. Individuals such as the homeless, refugees, ex-offenders and substance misusers face both individual and systemic barriers to employment entry—a cluster of barriers augmenting the risk of social exclusion and unemployment. In addition, individuals within this group will often face multiple disadvantages, which combine to both make them harder to reach and, once reached, particularly challenging to move towards employment.

The needs of this group will often extend beyond the purely vocational, as many face immediate practical needs such as housing, and may require emotional or medical support before, or at least alongside, employment interventions. Examples of the characteristics and barriers amongst individuals in these ‘hard-to-reach’ groups include:

- **Refugees** face unemployment rates of around six times the national average, with unemployment standing at around 36 per cent. Refuges have to overcome many individual barriers, and on a personal level may:
  - have experienced severe mental and physical trauma;
  - face language and cultural challenges, and be unfamiliar with the UK labour market;
  - not have their qualifications recognised in the UK, and so be underemployed.

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15 Working to Rebuild Lives – DWP.
Research undertaken in 2002 for DWP\textsuperscript{16} showed that limited language skills acted as barriers to both training and employment, along with a lack of knowledge of available training and statutory support provision, childcare and other family commitments and health problems. It also identified that refugees in employment are more likely to have poor terms and conditions (for example part-time or temporary/short-term contracts, and less likely to receive training).

- **Substance misusers** commonly face additional problems, either as a direct result of their addiction or that have played a role in their substance misuse. Research undertaken into services for people with drug problems and employment\textsuperscript{17} identified that a high proportion of individuals with substance misuse issues had been raised in care or in single-parent families, and had experienced divorce or family breakdown and so disrupted schooling. In the individuals studied, over three-quarters had a criminal record by adulthood. These underpinning factors impinge on individuals’ abilities to secure and maintain employment, with specific barriers including:
  - problems with housing – such as a lack of/temporary accommodation, and/or a poor physical environment;
  - emotional, physical and mental health problems associated with substance misuse;
  - a chaotic lifestyle;
  - family breakdown;
  - involvement in crime to subsidise drug and/or alcohol misuse, including having a criminal record and spending periods of time in custody.

- **Disaffected young people/13 to 17 year olds dropping out of education** have been introduced as a target group in the current programme period, recognising that social exclusion is a process that can begin in childhood and that exclusion/disengagement from education is a key risk factor in future social exclusion and unemployment. The case study projects focusing on this group described some of the issues and barriers they faced, including:
  - poorly developed/limited social and personal skills – including poor relationships with peers and elders;
  - poor health – potentially including substance or self-abuse, poor diet and a reluctance to seek medical attention;
  - living in temporary accommodation – for a variety of reasons, including leaving care placements and family breakdown;

\textsuperscript{16} Refugees’ Opportunities and barriers in employment and training, DWP Research Report No. 179, Bloch, A.

\textsuperscript{17} Employing Drug Users: Individual and Systemic Barriers to Rehabilitation, Klee, H., McLean, I. and Yavorsky, C., Manchester Metropolitan University 2002.
- mental health issues – from severe mental illness to low-level anger management issues;
- having offending histories – accompanied by unsuitable peer relations;
- lack of motivation, with low self-esteem and limited self-worth.

**Ex-offenders** face particular barriers to employment, as summarised in a recent report for DWP[^18], which include a combination of individual characteristics and the effects of employer discrimination. Key barriers can include:
- health problems – which can include drug and alcohol misuse;
- housing problems and homelessness;
- low self-esteem and confidence, and limited motivation to find employment;
- poor literacy and numeracy skills;
- early school leaving age, a history of truancy and low levels of qualifications;
- a history of unemployment, including long-term unemployment, and little experience of legitimate employment.

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**Beneficiary perspectives – individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics**

Beneficiaries of projects targeting individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics displayed many of the issues and challenges described above, often combining to show multiple disadvantage.

In **Project 14**, for example, working with disadvantaged and disaffected young people aged 16 to 24, 32 per cent of beneficiaries were ex-offenders, 48 per cent were homeless and 20 per cent were drug and alcohol misusers and all were unemployed, one in five for over 12 months. The beneficiaries interviewed described their backgrounds, including having to leave work after illness followed by a period of depression from which they were recovering, and one who was living in a homeless hostel following the breakdown of family relationships. In both cases the individuals had former histories of offending, in the second case combined with a period of Class A drug misuse.

**Project 21** worked with recovering substance misusers as part of their residential treatment programme. Beneficiaries faced a range of issues in addition to successfully completing their treatment, and the project had been developed to fill skill gaps and make progress towards work readiness. Interestingly, the project described how they expected basic skills to be a key area of deficiency for their clients, although in reality, their apparent poor performance was due more to a lack of confidence.

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3 Overview of delivery processes and project examples

Key points

- A simple five-step model was developed to explore delivery processes amongst the case study projects – including beneficiary identification; engagement; assessment and diagnosis; delivery and support and exit stages.

- Identification and engagement processes featured a range of marketing, referral and outreach activities. Importantly, projects often had to work against ingrained perceptions and with considerable sensitivity when engaging with harder-to-reach target groups.

- Assessment and diagnostic processes were particularly important in ensuring that services provided were appropriate. In most cases assessments tended to be informal or loosely structured, and featured considerable subjectivity, although few of the beneficiaries interviewed considered that the services provided to them failed to meet their needs.

- The services delivered by the case study projects varied considerably in their nature, intensity and duration, with delivery mechanisms depending on project objectives and target group needs. Generic key success factors for effective delivery included pitching services at an appropriate level, creating welcoming (and unthreatening) environments, flexible approaches and celebrating achievement.

- Providing appropriate support was an essential component for certain target groups, and a knowledge of the issues facing beneficiaries and an ability to respond to additional, non-vocational needs were amongst the good practice examples identified.
Overview of delivery processes and project examples

- Exit procedures were most commonly informal, although more structured processes to support continued progression and future follow-up were identified. Contacts (including former beneficiaries) within sectors targeted for employment opportunities were a useful mechanism for supporting beneficiary progression.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the processes by which the case study projects targeted and delivered their services to their different target groups. It describes a simple ‘process model’ which illustrates key steps from the identification and engagement of potential beneficiaries, through service delivery, to project exit processes and means of supporting progression. This model is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

The chapter describes the different steps in the model in generic terms, illustrating the processes followed across all the case study projects, introducing the services provided by them, and providing a series of ‘whole project’ summaries drawn from the case study sample. Chapter 4 then describes more specific aspects of the ‘process model’ as they apply to projects working with different beneficiary target groups.

In the majority of cases, projects were working with beneficiaries with a combination of needs, even when their ‘primary characteristics’ suggested some commonality between the individuals they sought to serve. Consequently, the combinations of services required to meet these needs had implications for service delivery, with providers needing to provide multiple services themselves or to work with local partners to develop combined service offers. Although the delivery of services at the individual target group level is explored in more detail in Chapter 4, beneficiaries’ potentially multiple and interlinked barriers to employment also have implications for the processes of initial identification, engagement and the provision of ongoing support. These may include additional ‘facilitating’ services to support participation, such as (the provision of, or funding for) childcare and transport services.
Each of the steps in the model is summarised in the following sections, although it is important to note that while common approaches could be identified at each step, variations were identified by target group or due to other local circumstances (such as the existing local infrastructure, relationships between projects and potential referral agencies, etc). The following sections, therefore, provide an overview of activities across the case study projects, with approaches of relevance to different target groups appearing in the following chapter.

### 3.2 Step 1 – identification

This step features the processes by which projects initially identify potential participants, although in some cases, the beneficiary identification and engagement processes were closely linked. The most common approaches included:
• **Project marketing activities** – following a range of approaches and using a range of media, including: local media advertising (via the local/regional press, radio and television); leaflets, pamphlets and posters; and more targeted mailshots. Commonly, marketing efforts were directed towards both potential beneficiaries and referral sources, with the aim of raising awareness of their projects as widely as possible. Websites were also frequently used – although this relied on target audiences being ‘internet savvy’ and having access to suitable technology. Consequently, internet-based marketing was most commonly reported by projects targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and individuals closest to the labour market.

• Projects also promoted themselves through **presentations at appropriate events or meetings** – for example, to potential referral sources and agencies working with appropriate target groups through conferences, networking events and meetings at local community venues. Projects targeting certain groups, particularly those considered ‘hard-to-reach’, found community-based outreach approaches effective, often involving intermediaries such as voluntary and community organisations and local colleges.

• **Referrals** – while apparently less common than marketing efforts across the case studies, a range of referral routes were identified for different target groups and in different circumstances. Perhaps surprisingly, Jobcentre Plus did not emerge as a major referral route for many projects, although where it was acting as a co-financing organisation, these links were stronger. More specialised agencies often instigated referrals, for example social service departments where projects were working with clients with disabilities, or the Connexions service where young people were involved.

• **Word of mouth** – word-of-mouth referrals emerged as the most effective means of attracting potential (and committed) participants. They appear to work well where potential beneficiaries know each other, have some form of previous relationship, or where they imply credibility to a project or service. The case study projects described how word-of-mouth referrals tend to grow over time, and rely in the early stages on perceptions/reputations of delivery partners. However, such referrals can be problematic, in terms of eligibility or establishing appropriate client expectations.

3.3 Step 2 – engagement

The engagement step follows the initial identification of potential beneficiaries and ends with them formally joining the project, although in some cases, these steps are often interlinked. The ease of the engagement process could vary considerably:

• In some cases it could be straightforward and immediate, for example, with individuals closer to the labour market or potential ‘returners’, who are more likely to respond directly to marketing or signposting activity.
• In others, the process could be more extended – for example, for individuals with ‘hard-to-reach’ characteristics, disabilities or chronically low self-esteem. Here, community and sector outreach emerged again as a key component, and in the more challenging cases, focused on one-to-one informal interviews and discussions. This approach was popular as it allowed project staff to get a sense of the individual’s capabilities without risking scaring them off, and raising concerns of being judged or tested.

• Engagement difficulties were also experienced with some SMEs who had to be convinced of the benefits of participation, particularly when previous staff development activities had been limited.

Participation in the majority of the case study projects was on a voluntary basis, although participation in a project for recovering drug users was a mandatory part of their rehabilitation programmes. Elsewhere in a couple of projects targeting disaffected young people, it was apparent that some participants had been ‘strongly advised’ to participate. The voluntary nature of participation was also part of the wider ‘positioning’ of many of the projects, who sought to set themselves apart from statutory mandatory provision (such as New Deal) and the involvement of statutory agencies.

A key issue raised by projects was the need to alter perceptions amongst some of their beneficiary groups—in particular around views towards training and professional development. This also applied to parts of the existing support infrastructure which could, in the case of disabled beneficiaries, have a set view of what their clients were capable of achieving.

3.4 Step 3 – assessment and diagnosis

Having identified and engaged with their target groups, the assessment and diagnosis step is crucial to ensuring that any services provided are appropriate to beneficiary needs. While the identification and engagement steps will have considered the broad appropriateness and relevance of the project ‘offer’, this step allows more informed decisions to be taken on specific service packages and arrangements for their delivery.

Assessment approaches are important to effective delivery not only in terms of ensuring the correct match of service to need, but also the level of service provided and the linkages between different services offered. Projects described how individuals’ perceptions of their distance from the labour market could be at odds with the view of the project, and where their ability to match beneficiary expectations, and avoid potentially demoralising ‘failure’, were key outcomes of the assessment process. Inevitably, particularly where projects worked with individuals with a broad range of characteristics, challenges were faced in delivering services to meet the needs of all. In a (comparatively small) number of cases, out-of-work and ‘hard-to-reach’ beneficiaries described finding the content of their provision inappropriate in terms of the focus and level of activities and training provided. Projects will similarly
inevitably face issues in achieving the degree of flexibility their target groups require, against issues of cost effectiveness and overall delivery management. Nevertheless, the findings from the beneficiary interviews suggested that in the majority of cases projects were delivering services of a nature and in a manner considered appropriate for their needs.

Given the importance of the assessment process, it is perhaps surprising that most of the case study projects followed informal or loosely structured assessment procedures. The most common assessment methods across the case study projects included:

- **informal interviews and/or discussions** – taking place between the beneficiary and project staff;

- **written tests and assessments** – occasionally used to establish basic literacy and numeracy levels, against the requirement for successful course completion;

- **group discussions** – were also used in some cases, primarily with those most distanced from the labour market, to assess individuals’ suitability for group work, as well as their degree of self-confidence and communication skills;

- **sector specific assessments** – particularly where projects were operating with specific industry sectors, assessments were tailored to the requirements of the jobs beneficiaries were looking for;

- **assessment of motivation and commitment** – for example, the desire to get a job or work in a specific sector. Although beneficiaries may have some way to go before securing employment, their commitment to progress towards work was often a factor for consideration.

In comparatively few cases, more ‘scientific’ assessment procedures were followed, and in others, referrals were provided that were considered sufficiently robust and relevant to allow decisions on provision to be made. A number of the projects had established and introduced structured procedures and formal tools for their assessments, which often complemented more informal conversations with participants about their needs, expectations and aspirations. A series of ‘key components’ for beneficiary assessment were identified, as shown below.

### Key components in beneficiary assessment

A series of common key components could be identified across the case study projects, and which applied across their different target groups and contexts, including:

- A **knowledge of the relevant beneficiary group**, their needs and approaches that work effectively for them. In several cases, where projects had recruited staff from the beneficiary groups targeted, these individuals were often effective in assessing the needs of others, while also empathising with their position and acting as potential role models.
• A **knowledge of other suitable provision and providers** – in terms of including other potential services as part of the project ‘offer’, as well as being able to refer on individuals ineligible or not appropriate for support under the project.

• Being prepared to **invest potentially significant amounts of time** in assessment – particularly valuable for those furthest from the labour market, and for whom tailored holistic packages may be most suitable. One project described spending over two hours on each individual assessment, while a second working with women wishing to progress in the media industry, set aside two weeks specifically for diagnostic purposes, and to provide underpinning knowledge so participants would enter the programme at the same level.

• **Staggering initial assessments** – following from the examples above, a number of projects described how their assessment procedures could be undertaken on separate days or over a longer period of time, to allow participants to become familiar with the project and its staff and be more likely to commit to the project or at least make a more informed choice not to participate. One project described how their potential participants are ‘not pushed but encouraged’ to try different employment opportunities.

As the above would suggest, the **skills, experience and aptitudes of project staff** were a crucial component. In many cases this included: experience of working with particular target groups (with an established local ‘reputation’ amongst them); awareness of, and sensitivities to, target group needs (and the most appropriate services and delivery strategies), and the ability to make judgements based on previous experience (including being sufficiently confident to reject potential recruits when the project is not the most appropriate option for them).

### 3.5 Step 4 – service delivery and ongoing support

Once individual beneficiaries had been identified, engaged with and their needs assessed, the delivery of project services could commence. While a considerable range of services was offered by the case study projects, it was often the **way in which these services were delivered** that marked the difference between projects targeting different beneficiary groups.

These differences, which included variations by the types and ranges of services available, different ‘dosages’ or input costs per beneficiary, and the nature and level of support provided at different stages, are examined in more detail in Chapter 4. Here a generic overview of service and support provision is presented.
3.5.1 Service delivery

The case study projects provided a variety of services to their beneficiary groups, in different intensities and dosages and working towards a range of beneficiary outcomes. The majority of the projects offered more than two services, with one offering a single service (environmental training to SMEs) and two offering just two services. On average the case study projects provided six different activities, with seven providing ten services or more.

These services were classified according to the categories established in the Objective 3 mid-term evaluation, with their distribution of services by project being illustrated in Table 1.1, and across the case studies in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Services provided by the case study projects

For the most part, projects were providing packages of services to meet the often multiple needs of their target groups. Across the case study projects the assessment of individual needs emerged as the most common ‘service’ (75 per cent of projects), followed by support to enhance motivation and orientation and the preparation of individual action plans. Training (at a variety of levels), advice and guidance and job search assistance were also common services (provided by over half the projects) – a distribution that broadly matches provision across the Objective 3 programme more widely. However, the proportion offering work experience or IT training was smaller than for the wider programme19.

Services offered less frequently across the case study projects included contributions to wages, grants to individuals and job rotation (all offered by fewer than ten per cent of the projects), with none of the projects offering job guarantees. This again reflects the programme more widely.

Broadly, projects working with individuals closer to the labour market (such as the short-term unemployed and motivated labour market returners) focused on the provision of advice and guidance, job search support and training with a clear focus on securing job outcomes. Other projects working with individuals facing greater/multiple challenges and requiring more intensive support (such as the longer-term unemployed, individuals with profound disabilities and ‘harder-to-reach’ groups) aimed to move participants closer to the labour market, recognising that direct progression to employment was unlikely for their beneficiaries and softer outcomes may be more appropriate measures of progress.

While some of the case study projects provided as many as ten different services, not all clients received the entire range of options available. Projects often provided a combination of ‘core’ (i.e. those most commonly applied to their target groups, such as training, work placements etc) and ‘peripheral’ services (i.e. those drawn upon as necessary, including guidance and support with issues indirectly related to employability but critical to beneficiary outcomes). The distribution of service use largely depended on the needs of individual beneficiaries, as identified through projects’ assessment processes and any continued review.

As described in Chapter 1, the case study projects focused on either single (24) or multiple (16) beneficiary groups – with the 16 working with between two and five groups. However, in reality the majority of projects were working to different extents with individuals displaying characteristics of different target groups. While project objectives and target groups were key influences on the type of services delivered, other influences included: lead and delivery partners’ capacities, capabilities and specific experience; the evolution of the project (i.e. if building on existing provision to fill identified gaps); and the requirements of co-financing organisations in the case of co-financed projects.

Across the 40 projects, commonly identified services (excluding needs assessment, motivation and individual action planning) included:

- training – delivered on an formal and informal, experiential and accredited basis, and ranging from basic skills to higher occupational levels;
- job search assistance – encompassing activities from CV preparation and interview training to supported job brokerage with follow-up support once in work;
- work experience – from supported placements to introductory sessions for permanent employment.

These main service areas are discussed below, with examples to illustrate differences across and between projects working with different target groups.
Training services

The training provided by the projects ranged from basic skills to high level training, accredited or more ‘experiential’ learning, and following a range of different delivery models. Across the case studies:

- 38 per cent provided basic skills training;
- 38 per cent pre-vocational training;
- 45 per cent basic vocational skills training;
- 23 per cent intermediate level vocational training;
- 25 per cent higher vocational training;
- 48 per cent provided information technology (IT) training.

IT training was commonly available across all of the main target groups, with the intermediate or higher level training being concentrated amongst SMEs and their employers, and amongst individuals closest to the labour market (including individuals re-skilling or updating their skills after time away from work or redundancy). In addition, activities providing more ‘experiential’ learning opportunities, or focusing on key/core and employability skills’ development were also provided by the projects.

In some cases, projects had to contend with beneficiary-based barriers to effective provision, most commonly amongst individuals with harder-to-reach characteristics and the long-term unemployed, and based on their disaffection with and disengagement from all forms of learning. This disengagement had a range of underlying causes, including negative previous experiences of education and training, a lack of confidence around participation and taking exams, and a general demotivation combined with the inability to appreciate the benefits resulting from training.

Job search assistance

Another common service was assistance with job search, featuring in 55 per cent of projects’ service offers with the exception of projects targeting SMEs and their employees. Job search activities encompassed a range of approaches, dependent on the capabilities of the individual in terms of their distance from the labour market and degree of job readiness.

In some cases, job search comprised of supporting individuals to find work in specific sectors through directional activities, with some ‘brushing up’ of CVs and interview techniques resulting from time away from work. In other cases job search provision started from the basics – including motivation to even considering the possibility of work, guidance on what to wear to and how to behave in interviews, where to find vacancies, CV preparation and fundamental interview techniques.
Work experience

Some 58 per cent of the case study projects offered a work experience component for their beneficiaries, which in many cases formed a central plank of their approach.

Projects’ objectives for offering work experience included providing (in some cases for the first time) an introduction and experience of the world of work, through to helping secure employment on a permanent basis. Placement types understandably varied, based on a range of factors including placement availability and the individual’s capabilities. Placements also varied in terms of their duration and sector, (if applicable, although social enterprises and firms in the catering sector were particularly prevalent in offering placements), fit with other elements of the project and individual capabilities. In some cases, particularly with individuals with disabilities, placements took the form of supported employment, the nature of which depended on the ability of project staff to offer any necessary support.

In several cases the provision of work experience was considered by project staff to have contributed to influencing the views of organisations and individuals working with certain target groups. Projects securing work placements for individuals with disabilities described actively challenging perceptions and expectations about what their clients are capable of. These changes in expectations were also reflected in the views of the beneficiaries themselves, and their parents and carers. One project, providing work experience placements as part of a rehabilitation programme for substance misusers, also considered that work placements had helped reduce potential employer discrimination against recovering users.

Across the case study projects a series of key success factors could be identified for the effective provision of work experience placements, as summarised below.

Key success factors for work experience provision

A series of key success factors were identified amongst the projects providing work experience services, including:

- **Established stocks of placement opportunities** – with projects tending to have existing relationships with employers that provided a ‘bank’ of potential placement opportunities, rather than having to source each placement independently. While these banks could take time to establish from scratch, a number of providers or their delivery partners had pre-existing resources to build on.

Continued
• **Relationships with placement providers** – work experience services appear to work best when project staff have close working relationships with particular employers, or where they have detailed knowledge of the industry where placements are sourced. While this is an inevitable function of the placement bank approach, such relationships also assisted the process of matching individuals’ abilities with available options, and making providers feel more secure about offering placements to more challenging clients.

• **Flexible and supportive placements** – project staff and beneficiaries considered that employers need to be flexible and supportive in offering work placements, particularly for some of the harder-to-reach groups, for example by ensuring the individual is capable of performing the tasks assigned while also offering a worthwhile experience.

### 3.5.2 Key success factors for effective service delivery

The case study projects were able to identify a series of generic key success factors for (and good practice in) service delivery. These included:

• **Pitching activities at an appropriate level** – essential to help build confidence and, equally importantly, avoid potentially demoralising failure. For individuals facing barriers to labour market participation, activities are often designed to ease participants into the project gently. One project working with the mentally ill described designing services to be low pressure and prevent intimidation – ‘it’s about taking small steps and gradually addressing problems’. In some cases groups are split by ability, to ensure that participants work alongside others at a similar level.

• **Creating an informal, unthreatening and nurturing environment** – for beneficiaries suffering from a lack of confidence and/or self-esteem, an encouraging environment that highlights positives and views ‘failure’ as a learning process was widely seen as good practice. One project working with disaffected young people followed ‘a success-orientated approach, as many [beneficiaries] have experienced personal setbacks’. Project staff often referred to creating non-intimidating environments for their beneficiaries, or used small group working. Similarly, creating environments sufficiently different to those experienced previously by their clients (and where they had experienced failure) was key to both initial engagement and effective delivery.
• Following a **flexible approach** – that considers the reality of beneficiaries’ lives and their likely levels of engagement and attendance. This can include offering a range of services, combinations of services and different dosages. Being flexible with timings, and allowing ‘breaks’ in attendance, can be important in this regard. Courses allowing flexible patterns of attendance are considered to be well suited to individuals who may have chaotic lives, and can only manage sporadic attendance. For example, a project working with unemployed people aged 25 and over gave beneficiaries autonomy in terms of their attendance, provided they attended for the required number of hours per week. The option for flexible provision was also vital in securing the participation of SME employees – with one project managing to attract many individuals into its learning centre through flexible opening hours. Nevertheless, encouraging buy-in to learning from companies remains a challenge, as evidenced by many individuals on that project attending infrequently due to time constraints.

• **Ensuring learning and feedback are fed back into project content and delivery** – not all of the case study projects felt that their delivery models were operating as effectively as possible, and were able to discuss where delivery or the content of the project intervention could be improved. It was common for projects not to have stuck rigidly to original plans, especially where these were found not to be working or to be unpopular, and this flexibility was seen as one of the benefits of working with ESF funding. For example, in one project it was originally thought that beneficiaries would choose certain course modules, although in practice they chose to take them all, and the course structure was altered to accommodate this. In another, the project team’s commitment to responding to the needs of their beneficiaries translated into a continuous evolution of the training content. This had been particularly important as the beneficiary needs were different from those envisaged at the time of application, and a group discussion/participative review approach was introduced at the end of each session to review what had been achieved and what should be covered in the following session.

• **Celebrating achievement** – finally, many projects recognised that for some of their beneficiaries achievements supported by European Social Fund (ESF) may be amongst the first ‘successes’ they experience. Be these ‘soft’ outcomes or in the form of more traditional ‘progression or qualification’ outcomes, the importance of demonstrating progress and reviewing success were widely considered to enhance motivation. This benefit of success was in many cases seen to apply to both beneficiaries and the staff who supported them.

### 3.5.3 Providing ongoing support

The provision of ongoing support to beneficiaries during service delivery was an important element of provision amongst the case study projects, particularly for those working with individuals at greatest distance from the labour market, with profound disabilities or with hard-to-reach characteristics. Indeed, in many cases it appeared that the **provision of such support was the most beneficial aspect of**
delivery – which is not to undervalue the other services provided, but to stress the importance of consistent and positive support for those in the most challenging circumstances.

The form of support varied across the case study projects – from participation in progress reviews/updating action plans to more intensive work with the hardest to reach/more difficult to help. Some 60 per cent of the case study projects reported using personal action plans, which provided a potentially useful tool for beneficiary support. However, it was not clear from the beneficiary interviews how frequently such plans were being used to measure progress. The range of support offered across the case study projects included:

- **Providing general information, advice and guidance** – project staff frequently extended support to beneficiaries beyond the precise remit of the project to offer advice or information on a range of issues. Although in some cases, apparently trivial (such as questions about public transport), the provision of support and advice, and the availability of an individual to discuss issues with, was very useful to participants.

- **Financial support for transport, clothing and childcare** – in some cases ESF funding supported participation by reimbursing transport costs, or providing specialist clothing where required. Although not a feature of all the case study projects, childcare provision (or funding for childcare) was particularly valued in allowing lone parents, almost invariably female, to participate in their projects.

- **Flexible arrangements** – the ability to offer flexible provision was seen as a part of project support, and often involved staff identifying reasons for non-attendance and re-arranging delivery timetables. More widely, projects often offered flexibility in course duration and scheduling – an important consideration for beneficiaries unable to participate in a more rigidly structured project.

- **Advice on benefit entitlement** – often concerning how participation in Objective 3 projects might influence payments of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and other benefits, which were widely reported concerns at engagement and throughout delivery. In some cases, projects had established relationships with agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and local advisory groups who were best placed to provide suitable advice.

- **Debt counselling** – where individuals had accumulated debts which were at the forefront of their thinking, rather than participation in the project. Again, local community agencies and the CAB were often involved as referral agencies or having discrete inputs into project provision.

- **More specialist inputs** – including additional training provision (from basic skills to IT and accredited training), medical/mental health advice and support and substance misuse counselling. Here, projects commonly brought in specialist staff to address these and other specific beneficiary needs, and to complement in-house provision.
Informal follow-up – many projects welcome, and some actively encourage, visits from former beneficiaries for a chat and to discuss their progress. Although not seen as formal support, project staff felt this could be important for beneficiaries, either by continuing to support with positive progression, helping at times of crisis, or by reminding them of the progress they have made.

Examples of good practice in providing ongoing support to beneficiaries were identified across the case study projects, as summarised below.

Good practice in providing ongoing support to beneficiaries

The following elements were considered central to the provision of effective support:

- An essential ingredient for projects working with all target groups is a detailed knowledge of the issues facing beneficiaries. Here, the expertise of other organisations can supplement those of the lead partner, such as social services, Youth Offending Teams and local education authorities (LEAs) for disaffected young people, and ensure they are best equipped to provide appropriate tailored support.

- The ability to respond to additional non-vocational beneficiary needs is particularly relevant to individuals facing multiple barriers to labour market participation. Holistic packages of support addressing such needs are key to moving participants towards employment, and enhancing employability. Some beneficiaries require practical help with housing or benefits advice, and many will also need assistance with softer ‘life’ skills. Examples of additional support included projects targeting disaffected young people or those with substance misuse issues, which frequently offer help in independent living skills.

- Where projects are providing sectoral or vocationally specific training and support, knowledge of the particular target sector is vital. This can include knowledge of skills needs and employer recruitment processes to ensure training, careers advice and additional support is appropriate and relevant. Importantly, this sectoral awareness also benefits participating employers and the sector as a whole – in one example giving the project an air of authority and credibility both locally and regionally.

- Providing positive role models was a common approach to motivating and working with beneficiaries particularly from hard-to-reach groups, and to illustrate what beneficiaries can achieve when the targets set for them are realistic. As in other cases, the use of project staff with similar backgrounds or a history of facing the same problems as current beneficiaries, could be particularly effective – both in terms of empathy and understanding the issues faced by beneficiaries as well as demonstrating what can be achieved.
The provision of different types of peer support was also highlighted as working well, particularly when offered by individuals with direct experience and knowledge of the issues facing the particular target group. For example, volunteers from target group communities have been used to good effect in some projects: in one case a project working with the mentally ill employed volunteers who had suffered from mental illness themselves. Here, the beneficiaries interviewed felt that they and their needs were understood, and were encouraged to express their views openly. Originally labelled ‘mentors’, the role of the volunteer changed to ‘befriender’ when a mentoring relationship was considered too rigid and too firmly focused on progression towards agreed objectives. In Project 24, which sought to secure employment for women in the media sector, mentors from the BBC were used to provide beneficiaries with support and advice from within the target industry.

Intensive one-to-one support, particularly for individuals at some distance from employment, was a vital component in projects targeting certain groups. One project providing support to disaffected, isolated or disadvantaged young people with learning disabilities, phases out the support provided to match the increasing confidence of the individual. This approach is also considered critical in ensuring that individual capabilities continue to be expanded while avoiding issues of dependency. It was widely recognised however, that one-to-one support is particularly resource intensive, and projects considered that financial resources were key in this regard. One completed project illustrated how ESF had added value by funding more intensive client support than had been possible previously, making the project ‘more beneficiary focused and targeted’. However, the project was unsuccessful in a second application for ESF funding, and the continuity of support established had been lost in its absence.

3.6 Step 5 – exit procedure

The final step in the project model refers to the procedures established by projects to manage the exit of beneficiaries from their programmes, including any steps taken to maximise progression opportunities. Formalised exit and progression procedures can have many positive benefits, including the opportunity to review individual achievements and progress made, and allowing the beneficiary to recognise and build upon progress made.

Two-thirds of the case study projects had some type of exit procedure in place, ranging from informal and unstructured to more formalised approaches, and most commonly taking the form of informal discussions with project staff. Some projects held specific exit interviews, which typically included reviewing progress and providing advice on further training and/or job search.
Several projects had specific progression routes in place from the outset, including those providing services to prepare individuals for additional programmes. However, in other cases, the absence of appropriate ‘continuation’ services for beneficiaries who had made progress, but were still some distance from the labour market, was felt to block further progress at best and at worst to be counter-productive.

In other cases, projects had introduced follow-up procedures where former participants were contacted to report on progression and offer additional services/ signposting where appropriate. These included one project where support continued to be offered to beneficiaries during their first three months of employment. However, examples of such ‘aftercare’ services were comparatively rare amongst the case study projects.

Finally, a small number of projects held graduation ceremonies to which beneficiaries, their families and friends were invited. Rewarding achievements in this way was seen as particularly beneficial where participants may not have been successful in previous training, or where their project success may be the first ‘achievement’ in their lives. The ceremonies were also helpful in supporting motivation, and providing beneficiaries with the confidence to make further progress.

3.7 Individual project summaries

While the previous sections of this chapter have provided an overview of the individual steps in the project delivery model, this can only give a piecemeal view of individual projects. Therefore, this final section provides an overview of several case study projects in their entirety, prior to the more detailed examination of the different steps in the model by target group in Chapter 4.

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**Case study Project 35 – working with unemployed individuals**

Co-financed Project 35 worked with unemployed individuals aged 25 and over facing a range of barriers to employment, to deliver personalised support programmes to progress them towards secure employment. The project provided combinations of information, advice and guidance services and job search training and support for individuals out of work for over 18 months, as well as those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. As such, it allowed access to services normally available to individuals unemployed for over 18 months.

The project identified three broad groups within their unemployed beneficiaries, who often had common characteristics and so required similar responses. This broad segmentation was based on the duration of unemployment (less than six months, six to 18 months and over 18 months), and allowed specific needs to be addressed and services provided by group:

Continued
• **Unemployed under six months** – here, individuals were more motivated to find work, support requirements were minimal, and delivery focused on information, advice and guidance provision. As beneficiaries in this group were commonly more independent, they tended to use the project’s job search services and facilities on a drop-in basis.

• **Unemployed over 18 months** – here, motivation was often lower, with beneficiaries often facing a wider and more entrenched range of challenges (such as limited confidence and outdated skills and work experience) and requiring more intensive support. Provision for this group centred around a structured 16 week, eight hours per week programme including job search training and support, advice on personal appearance and interview preparation and help with preparing applications and CVs. Provision also included help with basic skills, looking at transferable skills and IT training, with more intense support on an ongoing basis.

• **Unemployed between six and 18 months** – here combinations of the above approaches were followed, depending on individual needs, capabilities and motivations, in the form of a 13 week/six hours per week programme. This allowed specific areas of need to be addressed, for example, help with basic skills while using job search facilities on a drop-in basis.

Delivery was undertaken primarily by the lead partner, although advice and guidance services were provided by a Connexions adviser, who was seconded to the project for one day per week. The project’s main referral source was Jobcentre Plus (its co-financing partner), but referrals were also received from Connexions, local community groups and self-referrals.

In terms of performance, the project has exceeded its throughput and achievement targets to date – working with 1,500 beneficiaries, between 80 per cent and 85 per cent of whom progress to employment (well above the target of 45 per cent set by the co-financing organisation).
Case study Project 6 – working with disabled beneficiaries

Co-financed Project 6 worked with individuals with a range of profound learning disabilities and other complex needs, which were beyond the range catered for by Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers. Individuals targeted by the project were of all ages and considered particularly vulnerable. The majority had not worked before (those that had being mainly in sheltered/supported employment), and had typically attended special school followed by special provision at college and day care support. The project aimed to progress beneficiaries towards paid employment, and was met with initial scepticism by the local social services department as they did not consider their target group capable of entering and sustaining work. Existing provision consisted of ‘social education centres’, which had not previously supported progression into paid employment. The project aimed to change this position, and shift the ethos away from doing everything for their clients to one which supports progress and increased independence.

The project delivery process was characterised by intensive support and the development of individualised packages of support to meet beneficiaries’ varied and complex needs. Individuals could spend two years with the project, although the most common duration was around 12 months or earlier if a work opportunity was secured. Key processes included:

• **Identification, engagement and assessment** – most referrals came from social services, Jobcentre Plus, MENCAP and a range of other statutory and voluntary agencies, although word-of-mouth and self-referrals increased over time. Initial interviews explored individuals’ commitment to the project and their wish to find paid employment – key criteria for involvement. The assessment process then varied depending on individual need, and incorporated professional, medical, vocational and basic skill assessments. However, assessment was rarely a ‘one-off’ event, and more of a rolling process of planning, review and re-planning. Action plans were produced and updated monthly with inputs from other agencies as relevant, including externally provided services (such as speech and language therapy). The extent to which individuals were able to contribute to the review and re-planning exercises was itself seen as an indication of progress.

• **Delivery** – beneficiaries follow individually tailored programmes but also include group sessions, which follow a programme including an introduction to employment, job search skills (CV production, interview skills and role playing), games and quizzes and exchanges of experience. The individualised programmes could include work experience, basic skills training and vocational training (college-based) – depending on individual capabilities and preferences. Work experience placements proved to be difficult to secure in commercial or public sector organisations, and the beneficiaries interviewed described undertaking placements at a supermarket, doing gardening work with MENCAP and at a local crèche.
Support – the project provided intensive support on an ongoing basis, including steps to promote independent living such as training to use public transport and a harassment workshop. Support also included extra-curricula activities, like ‘meet a mate’ evenings where beneficiaries met for events to overcome isolation and extend social networks.

The project had made good progress towards its target of 50 starters, ten progressing to employment and 40 to other positive outcomes. Inevitably, given the nature of the target group, a range of soft outcomes was achieved, which was recorded according to Jobcentre Plus guidance, and included the ability to use transport unaccompanied and improved social skills.

Key success factors for the project included the professionalism, sensitivity to client needs and dedication of the project staff, the emphasis on ‘respect’ for their clients, the ability to develop flexible programmes and draw in other agencies as necessary, and the way in which the project successfully challenged pre-existing views of what their clients were capable of achieving.

Case study Project 14 – working with disaffected young people

Project 14 provided support and development opportunities to young people aged between 16 and 24, to assist them in overcoming disaffection and other barriers to training, job outcomes and social inclusion. The project worked with a particularly challenging target group, with their clients being disadvantaged, disaffected and disengaged and having a range of other ‘hard-to-reach’ characteristics. Of the 51 young people participating in the project until its completion in June 2002, 32 per cent were ex-offenders, 48 per cent were homeless and 20 per cent were drug and alcohol misusers. All of their beneficiaries were out of work, one in five for over 12 months.

The project was led by a national charitable trust, with a considerable record and reputation for work with hard-to-reach young people. The project provided a range of services including advice and guidance, job search activities and basic vocational training delivered through a ‘tried and tested’ delivery model, which also encouraged collaborative work through new experiences such as outdoor pursuits. Individuals could remain on the course as long as necessary, and development co-ordinators worked closely with them to determine appropriate exit points.

The project worked collaboratively with a local college and training providers, as well as referral agencies. Key aspects of the delivery model include:
• **Identification** – with potential beneficiaries being referred by partner agencies (such as LEAs, Connexions, drug and alcohol services, homeless hostels and the probation service) or through outreach activities. ‘Taster days’ were found to be an effective means of introducing individuals to the project prior to engagement.

• **Action planning** – on joining the project, an action plan with clear development goals is established. This process is based on assessment information received from referral partners, which is then verified and extended in one-to-one interviews with project staff.

• **Residential course** – each beneficiary attends a 50 hour residential ‘access’ course, featuring activities such as abseiling and canoeing to develop basic skills, and group exercises to challenge perceptions and provide positive learning experiences. The course also aims to foster work-relevant skills like communication, negotiation and planning skills.

• **Follow-up programme** – after the ‘access’ course, beneficiaries can access a follow-up programme designed to appeal to their interests and help develop core skills such as independent living, social and employability skills. Programme content is established individually, and can include work skills projects (such as Streetwise MBA and Learn to Earn), art and drama courses, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) courses, work advice and experience and pre-vocational and basic skills training. In addition, support with job search is also available.

Support is available to beneficiaries throughout their time with the project, with counselling, advice and guidance services being supplemented with support with subsidised transport, childcare and other tailored provision.

Agencies referring individuals to the project considered it to be effective, by developing a positive environment while establishing boundaries for behaviour and conduct. In addition to the skills and qualifications acquired, the flexibility and ability to allow individuals to progress at their own rates were considered to be key success factors.

In terms of performance, the project exceeded its target beneficiary numbers, and while the project duration was open-ended, most beneficiaries left within six months. In terms of outcomes, two-thirds progressed to positive outcomes, with almost one in five continuing to work with the provider on a voluntary basis.
Case study Project 21 – working with substance misusers

Project 21 used European Social Fund (ESF) funding to enhance the training and work experience elements of a residential drug rehabilitation programme, so filling a recognised gap in provision and offering a tailored route back into employment for recovering addicts.

The project aimed to address the skills shortages faced by their clients, and help prepare them for work after the completion of their rehabilitation programmes. Individually tailored packages of services were developed to meet the different needs of their clients, which could include poor basic and social skills, disaffection and previous offending histories, or limited experience of work. Many also suffered from chronically low self-esteem, lacked confidence, and needed a high level of ongoing support.

The project worked with the local careers company (who conducted psychometric testing with beneficiaries to identify their strengths and weaknesses) and a local college (who provided an IT tutor). Other tutors were sourced from the lead partner’s sister organisation.

Beneficiaries were recruited solely from individuals participating in the rehabilitation programme. Following the development of individual action plans, beneficiaries entered a programme, tailored to individual capabilities and aspirations, with two key components:

- **Training** – a programme of 22 weeks of vocational training, most commonly in IT, and delivered on-site as external provision was felt too structured for the beneficiaries early in their recovery.

- **Work experience** – a programme of 18 weeks of work experience, which was made a mandatory part of the wider rehabilitation programme. Considerable care was taken to arrange placements that would not jeopardise recovery, and the project worked with a ‘bank’ of employers aware of the participants’ backgrounds and so making placements straightforward to set up.

Confidence building was a central theme of the project, both to compete for work but also to encourage the widening of employment horizons. Indeed, while basic skills tuition was available, this was needed less than expected as participants’ apparent low basic skills levels were often a function of their low confidence.

In the final month of the programme, assistance would be offered to help beneficiaries find employment. This also often included helping individuals find suitable accommodation, and was described as ‘moral support’ rather than being a series of structured activities.

Continued
Some 37 individuals had participated in the project, which was progressing well towards its output targets. The project had also estimated the wider savings to society it had generated, and considered that some 13,000 potential ‘offending days’ had been saved based on the previous offending patterns of its beneficiaries.

**Case study Project 38 – working with SMEs and SME employees**

Local research identified that the competitiveness of SMEs was being hindered by poor or underdeveloped marketing practices and strategies, which were key areas for improvement. Completed Project 38, led by a local business support agency in partnership with a local college and training provider, offered a response by providing training to SMEs and their employees resulting in the development of individualised marketing strategies.

The project featured a 15 week programme (of ten hours per week), although this could be as short as 12 weeks or extended to as long as six months if necessary. The programme was based on an existing model for developing marketing plans and strategies, tailored to the circumstances and needs of the individual business. A training toolkit took beneficiaries through the model’s nine stages – namely positioning, projection, product, pricing, place, promotion, PR, protection and persuasion. The final output of the programme was a completed marketing strategy, although the course content also linked to portfolio requirements towards certification for four NVQ Level 4 units in marketing (with the option also being available to take the two extra units to complete NVQ accreditation via the lead partner). Each beneficiary was charged a small fee of £200, in part, at least, to avoid the ‘free means little value’ stigma.

Key features of the project delivery process were as follows:

- **Identification and engagement** – beneficiaries were required to be employed in local SMEs, having, or aspiring to, positions of authority and having a recognised need for a marketing strategy. The benefit of involvement was emphasised in all contacts with potential beneficiaries, with commitment to completion being a key recruitment criterion. Recruits were drawn initially from the lead partner’s existing clients, and the project followed a mixed media approach to raise wider awareness of its activities. An outreach approach was also followed, in the form of visits to potential clients where the project and its benefits would be explained. Once engaged, a skills need analysis was undertaken to identify any areas of emphasis or pre-start needs.
• **Delivery** – the training was delivered on employers’ premises on a one-to-one basis – this was considered particularly efficient and a major strength of the project by the beneficiaries interviewed. The project was flexible about both the duration and timing of delivery, in some cases with sessions starting at 6am or 6pm to fit beneficiaries’ schedules, and at least one of the beneficiaries claimed they would not have been able to participate without it. At the end of the project a ‘graduation’ ceremony was held, which also acted as a networking meeting for the beneficiaries.

• **Support** – support was available to beneficiaries outside training time through email or telephone contact with the lead partner. On completion of the project, beneficiaries continued to receive information on services that may be appropriate to them and, as such, served to extend the client base of the lead partner.

The project approach was widely considered to be successful, with all 66 completers leaving with ready-to-implement marketing strategies. A couple of individuals did not complete the course, and left early due to business pressures that could not be avoided.

The project described a series of key success factors, including overall flexibility in delivery timing, being able to offer participants a tangible end product, pricing (minimal rather than free) and delivering a quality product.
4 Activity by target group

Key points

- For the most part, the case study projects provided multiple services to their clients, with all but one offering more than one service and seven offering ten services or more. Across the projects, the most commonly offered services were the assessment of individual needs, preparation of action plans and interventions to enhance motivation and orientation.

- Differences emerged in the nature of services delivered by the projects in terms of their specific objectives and the beneficiary groups they were working with. For example:
  - unemployed beneficiaries were offered a wide range of services, with job search, work experience and training services being most common;
  - individuals with disabilities were commonly offered basic and basic vocational skills support and work experience placements. Confidence building and ‘life experience’ support was also a common feature;
  - small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and SME employee beneficiaries frequently featured intermediate and higher level vocational training, as well as training in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

- Project delivery processes also varied to meet the needs of their different target groups. For example, differences in identification and engagement processes were identified between unemployed individuals at different distances from the labour market, as well as for individuals with ‘hard-to-reach’ characteristics. Beneficiary expectations were also found to vary, both individually and by target group.

- These process differences were identified across the project sample and at different stages of delivery – for example, assessment and diagnosis was particularly key for beneficiaries with disabilities and those from ‘hard-to-reach’ groups.
4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the services offered by the case study projects to the different target groups they served. It begins by describing the services most commonly received by the different target groups, before examining the process of delivery to identify approaches that are considered effective with different client groups. Throughout the chapter examples are provided from individual case study projects, including beneficiary testimonies, where appropriate.

4.2 Review of activity by target group

As the previous chapter described, projects working with individuals closer to the labour market tended to focus on the provision of advice and guidance, job search support and training, while those targeting individuals facing greater/multiple challenges aimed to move participants closer to the labour market, recognising that direct progression to employment was less likely for their clients. This section describes the services offered to beneficiaries from different target groups in more detail.

4.2.1 Target group 1: unemployed individuals

By definition, most of the case study projects were working with individuals not in employment, including the unemployed and economically inactive. Fourteen projects were working with unemployed or inactive individuals as their primary target groups (but which also included individuals with additional characteristics, such as disability, ethnicity and having caring responsibilities), with a further five including those not in employment in their wider target populations.

The breadth of characteristics of the ‘unemployed’ target group was matched by the range and number of services provided to them, which ranged between three and 14 distinct services with an average of seven per project. Amongst the 14 projects working primarily with the unemployed:

- the assessment of individual needs and services to support motivation and orientation were most commonly provided – by 11 of the 14 projects;
- the use of individual action plans was also common – ten projects;
- also common were job search assistance and work experience services – with nine projects each.

The projects also offered a range of training provision, ranging from basic skills and pre-vocational training to higher level skills training. None, however, offered job guarantees or job rotation programmes, and only one project offered grant funding for individuals and contributions towards wages.
Examples of provision for unemployed individuals

Project examples included:

- **Project 27** provided a community based service providing advice, job search support, work tasters and support during the first 13 weeks of employment. Targeting unemployed and inactive individuals in a series of local authority wards, the project was co-financed by Jobcentre Plus who identified a gap in provision around the New Deal (dealing only with the long-term unemployed) and recognised that community-based provision was the most appropriate delivery mechanism. The project was approaching completion at the time of study, and performance had not been as expected. The project was considerably behind on its output targets (150 against a target of almost 400), although 80 per cent of beneficiaries progressed to positive outcomes (56 per cent into work and 19 per cent to training, and higher than expected). The work-related outcomes were felt, at least in part, to be due to the support the project provided in the first weeks of employment, which raised individual confidence both before starting and helped ensure retention, thereafter.

- **Project 11** targeted the long-term unemployed and ethnic minority groups to help them secure jobs in the travel industry. Participants are generally close to the labour market and eager to find work, with key components of the project including a nine week/15 hours per week training course (leading to ABTA and City and Guilds qualifications), information technology (IT) training (leading to Level 1 CLAIT qualifications), work tasters and placements and support with job search. At the time of study, 110 individuals had completed the training, at least 50 of whom had progressed to employment in the sector, and experienced ABTA pass rates of 80 per cent (against the national average of 65 per cent).

4.2.2 Target group 2: individuals with disabilities

Ten of the case study projects worked with individuals whose severe disabilities put them at a considerable distance from the labour market, and limited their likelihood of direct progression to unsupported employment. Beneficiaries included individuals with a range of learning disabilities, histories of mental illness or physical disabilities. Projects’ lead and delivery partners often had considerable experience of working with their target groups, and included social service departments, charitable trusts/not-for-profit organisations and a series of specialist providers.

The projects commonly offered a combination of services to support basic skills and basic vocational skills development and work experience placements. Assessments of individual needs were also commonly provided and considered particularly important given the characteristics of the target group. The emphasis on work experience for this target group is interesting given their distance from the labour market, although in many cases, the objectives of the placements focused on the social and developmental aspects of the work environment (such as getting on with
colleagues and building working relationships), providing insights into the world of work and dealing with the public. The environment in which the placements were set, and the support provided throughout them, were key features of work experience provision for this group.

The opportunity to undertake work placements also offered beneficiaries the chance to demonstrate to themselves, their families, carers and potential employers what they were capable of – which was considered to have helped stimulate progress towards increased independence amongst the client group.

Examples of provision for disabled beneficiaries

Project examples included:

- **College-based Project 18** provided work experience to students with often severe mental and physical disabilities, who had traditionally been difficult to place and were often given ‘pseudo’ work experience on college premises. While not all disabled students were capable of sustaining a placement, it was considered the placements provided did not offer exposure to a realistic working environment. Within the college, disabled students were allocated learning support assistants, whose role was expanded under the project to include work placement activities. The intensity of support varied by individual, from full-time shadowing to attending mock interviews or beneficiaries’ first placement day. The benefits resulting included improving the participants’ prospects, changing employer attitudes and in some cases paid employment with their placements, an outcome considered unthinkable without the project. The project exceeded its beneficiary target of 150 young people (actual – 199), but just failed to meet their placements target (93 per cent of target). The average placement length was nine days, arranged according to capability on a part-/full-time basis.

- **Project 29** was a small project working with individuals with mental health problems in a rural area, using volunteer mentors to support individuals at risk of exclusion. Mentors received 30 hours training over a six week period. Mentor and ‘mentee’ met on a weekly basis to undertake activities to build confidence and social skills – ranging from shopping to sport and attending evening classes. The mentors and ‘mentees’ interviewed all described benefiting from the project – ‘mentees’ by making new friends and contacts, feeling less isolated and progressing to new challenges independently. One former ‘mentee’, who suffered a nervous breakdown after caring for a family member, felt the project had allowed him to consider his own life and provided useful support and advice. He was about to start a part-time job, and was becoming a mentor himself at a local drop-in centre.
4.2.3 Target group 3: ethnic minorities

While 12 of the case study projects identified individuals from ethnic minority groups as beneficiaries of their activities, they did not represent the primary target group for any of the projects studied (NB projects targeting refugee groups are included in target group 5, the hard-to-reach). Consequently, ethnic minority individuals were included as target groups for projects working with a number of different target groups, and featured across all five Policy Fields.

Consequently, individuals from ethnic minority groups for the most part, received the same, or very similar, services to other beneficiaries within their specific projects, with the exception of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training where appropriate. That is not to say that ethnicity was ignored by the case study projects, rather that individuals infrequently raised issues which demanded responses at the provision level. This is supported by the views of projects working with ethnic minority beneficiaries, as the examples below illustrated.

Examples of projects with beneficiaries from minority ethnic communities

Project examples included:

- **Project 11** specifically targeted the long-term unemployed to provide training to address labour market and skills shortages in the travel sector. Having recognised the need to broaden the ethnic diversity of the local travel workforce, the project sought to recruit a significant share of its beneficiaries from the ethnic minority community. Similarly, local authority-led Project 1 was keen to ensure that the project worked with individuals from the local black and minority ethnic (BME) population, and set a target for a 30 per cent participation rate which had been exceeded at the time of interview.

Where specific services to meet the additional needs of ethnic minority individuals were described, they invariably related to the need for ESOL training. For example:

- In the case of **Project 24**, which worked to support the progression of women in the media sector and targeted BME women in particular, the need was identified to provide specific training around technical language and terms in common use. The project induction process included a two-week introductory period to allow all beneficiaries to reach similar levels across a series of variables, and this allowed the lead partner to deliver ‘technical ESOL’ training on site.
4.2.4  **Target group 4: lone parents and individuals with caring responsibilities**

Just one of the case study projects (28) had lone parents/individuals with caring responsibilities as its primary target group, although six other projects also worked with carers (most commonly lone parents) as part of their wider client groups.

**Example of provision for lone parents**

Completed **Project 28** was co-financed by Jobcentre Plus and targeted lone parents seeking to return to employment with support from the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP). The project was led by a charitable trust and provided a brokerage role to identify, secure and co-ordinate intermediary services to help lone parents engage and benefit from New Deal services, prior to the introduction of the current Gateway services. The project itself provided initial assessments, referrals and ongoing support, with direct delivery being the responsibility of a network of local providers. The range of services provided included: motivation and confidence building, careers advice, support with job search skills, counselling for personal issues and advice from specialist agencies (such as debt advice).

Funding for childcare and transportation was also available from beneficiaries via Jobcentre Plus, a key factor in allowing many of the client group to participate. The project had met its target for working with 130 beneficiaries in the 12 months of operation, and while no further targets were set for outcomes, 20 were believed to have progressed into employment prior to leaving the project, with the remainder progressing to the New Deal. The provider has continued to deliver a similar ‘preparatory’ service after the project was ‘mainstreamed’ under the local NDLP programme.

4.2.5  **Target group 5: hard-to-reach groups**

Individuals classified as ‘hard-to-reach’ face a series of particularly challenging disadvantages that place them at some distance from the labour market. As Chapter 2 described, the needs of individuals with single or multiple ‘hard-to-reach’ characteristics can extend beyond the vocational, and may need to be addressed (possibly through external services) before progress towards employment can be made.

Individuals defined as ‘hard-to-reach’ formed the primary target groups for five of the case study projects, specifically, disaffected young people (aged 16 to 24), substance misusers and refugee groups. However, ‘hard-to-reach’ individuals were also beneficiaries of other case study projects, and displayed characteristics such as disaffection with learning and work and histories of offending and substance misuse.
The five case study projects with the ‘hard-to-reach’ as their primary target groups most commonly featured the provision of job search assistance and basic skills training, with four including assessments of individual needs, motivation and orientation support and IT training. Examples of projects working with different ‘hard-to-reach’ groups are provided below.

Examples of provision for hard-to-reach groups

Disaffected young people

Completed Project 22 worked with excluded young people aged 16-18 to prepare them for entry into the uniformed services or the sport and leisure industry. A 13-week training programme of academic (e.g. ASDAN) and physical activity was offered, with the emphasis on physical, although personal and social skills development was a key component of the overall service offer. The project staff included full-time youth and drug counsellors, reflecting the need for additional support amongst their client group. A range of specific training options was offered, including certified training in diving, and a training allowance of £45 was also provided.

Refugees

Project 9 engaged with refugees from two wards with a view to integrating them in projects delivered through a local neighbourhood centre. Refugees living in the area were offered a range of support and development opportunities, with a view to combating social and economic exclusion, including language training (at five different levels, and through qualified ESOL teachers), a citizenship course (delivered to groups of ten for two to three hours per week, over four weeks) and a mentoring programme (delivered by an external individual, and training refugees who have become established in the country to become mentors to newcomers). There was a considerable emphasis on supporting beneficiaries, commonly on an informal/as-and-when basis. Project staff may be asked to provide advice on a range of issues, not all of which will be strictly project related. However, stepping beyond the project’s remit is considered key by the project in building trust, as well as providing more traditional support such as childcare, which allowed many female refugees to participate.

The project has faced challenges, including achieving the learning outcomes required by their Learning and Skills Council co-financing organisation (LSC CFO), as individuals may be reluctant to or not see taking exams as a priority. However, it was on target to work with 250 beneficiaries, with 50 taking ESOL courses and 40 citizenship courses. The project and its CFO recognised that its main impacts would be ‘softer’, such as integration into the local community, and so lead to involvement in future skills development activities.
4.2.6 Target group 6: SMEs and SME employees

Six of the case study projects were working with SMEs and SME employees as their primary target groups. Two other projects also targeted SME employees: one to support workers in receipt of redundancy notices and the second to support higher level skills development, encourage entrepreneurship and new business formation.

The assessment of individual need, individual action planning and motivation and orientation support were the most commonly provided services (by five of the six projects). However, services for SME beneficiaries were distinguished by their focus on higher and intermediate training and ICT training (each provided by four projects).

**Examples of provision for SMEs and SME employees**

**Projects targeting employees**

Completed **Project 17** encouraged and supported owners and employees in the hotel and guesthouse sectors to participate in training, and so contributed to the regeneration of a northern seaside resort as a tourist destination. The project included raising awareness of the need for training, providing appropriate training and gathering information to forecast future training needs. The project had exceeded its performance target for participation (working with almost 500 individuals) and in terms of completers, qualifications and positive destinations. The views of beneficiaries interviewed were uniformly positive (both as individuals and as businesses), with flexibility and approachability being commonly reported strengths. Delivery partners considered that the links between the project and wider local authority promotion activities were key.

**Projects targeting SMEs**

**Project 19** developed and trialled a flexible on-line training package for SMEs exporting-seeking to export to the far east. The provision covered topics such as business culture and methods and marketing. More widely, the project promoted market entry for companies that had not considered working in overseas markets. The project worked with UK Trade and Investment and local Business Links, which provided both a promotion and ‘credibility’ for the project. The three of the 60 participating employers interviewed were positive about their project experiences, but were less able to identify tangible examples of impact. Rather the project, and information provided/operational contacts made, had helped them to make progress in areas they had previously considered.
4.3 Delivery by target group

The previous chapter described a ‘process model’ comprising the key steps in project delivery, and reviewed their application across the case study sample. This section reviews each of the steps in the model in terms of their application to the different ESF target groups, to identify differences in approach and highlight examples of effective practice.

Each step is reviewed in turn, starting with approaches followed to identify potential beneficiaries and progressing to project exit procedures.

4.3.1 Identifying beneficiaries

A range of approaches to beneficiary identification were reported by the case study projects, including a range of marketing activities, presentations and awareness raising activities, referrals from other agencies and by word of mouth. The approaches followed by target group are provided below.

**Unemployed beneficiaries**

Projects commonly followed a combination of approaches to identifying potential beneficiaries, including advertising and features in the local (and in one case national) press and radio, and the distribution and display of leaflets and posters. While newspaper and local promotion activities were most commonly reported as being most effective in generating interest across the projects, other successful approaches included project visits and open days. Referrals from other organisations were also important sources of potential beneficiaries, most commonly from Jobcentre Plus, but also from the Connexions service, Surestart and other community projects. Beneficiaries commonly described responding to marketing materials such as leaflets picked up at their children’s schools, to information collected from organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and adverts in local papers. Some also described being directed or referred through ‘intermediary’ agencies – such as training providers, a recruitment agency, or statutory agencies such as Connexions and Jobcentre Plus.

As would be expected, **individuals closer to the labour market** were most likely to respond to promotion or signposting from other agencies, making the identification of potential beneficiaries comparatively straightforward. Examples included recruiting individuals who had been unsuccessful in recent job applications (and who needed additional development support), and recruiting from current and former college students. One project used Trade Union membership lists, and referrals from employers and Jobcentre Plus to target individuals employed or formerly employed in a declining industrial sector.

Where unemployed individuals were considered to be at **greatest distance from the labour market**, and/or faced additional barriers to participation, beneficiary identification was more challenging. Community-based outreach approaches were often reported, and used in parallel with marketing and referrals, were widely
considered to be essential for identification and engagement. In one case, the lead partner’s network of community organisations was utilised to deliver an outreach programme which included basic introductory sessions and short ‘taster’ events. Elsewhere, schools, visits to mother and toddler groups and the use of a community bus supported projects’ efforts to promote their services.

Finally, word of mouth emerged as an increasingly important means of promotion and referral throughout many projects’ lifecycles. While reliant on a suitable number of individuals who left following positive experiences, this emerged as an important source of participants for several of the projects.

*Individuals with disabilities*

The projects targeting disabled individuals most commonly used a combination of marketing and referrals from specific agencies/carers to identify potential beneficiaries. Social service departments, community mental health teams, occupational therapists, Jobcentre Plus disability advisers and a range of community-based support services were all useful referral sources, with projects also describing direct ‘marketing’ to individuals, parents and carers and promotion in the local press.

Word of mouth and (limited) self-referral also emerged as popular entry routes for some projects, often following discussions between support services, families and carers as well as beneficiaries themselves.

The importance of marketing and raising awareness of available provision to potential referral agencies, was emphasised by a number of projects. In the case of *Project 29*, the lead partner’s established links with other agencies were used to help identify potential beneficiaries, and involved working closely with community mental health teams, GPs, and other groups working with the mentally ill.

*Hard-to-reach groups*

Individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics emerged as the most challenging group to effectively identify and recruit; unsurprising given the nature of the characteristics that define them. Again outreach emerged as a common (and effective) approach, with individual beneficiaries describing finding their projects through referrals from local agencies (such as the Prince’s Trust and Connexions), grass roots and voluntary and community providers, hostels and other providers of support services.

Again, the importance of outreach work, and spreading awareness of the project to such agencies was emphasised, as the examples below illustrate:

- *Project 14* was able to use their reputation and regional networks to identify potential beneficiaries and deliver their outreach work. Key contacts used to identify potential beneficiaries included bail and homeless hostels, Youth Offending Teams and probation services, youth drug and alcohol services (both statutory and community), drug rehabilitation hostels, social services and school and local education authority (LEA) education services.
• **Project 9** worked with asylum seekers and refugees, many of whom were extremely unlikely to come forward otherwise due to limited understandings of support mechanisms and poor language skills. The project sought to promote itself, and set up mechanisms for attracting beneficiaries, by first advertising at the main organisation for newcomers in the city, and so linked in with the city-wide referral system. The project also used local neighbourhood centres as referral points, and developed relationships with the other key contact points for new entrants – such as the LEA, schools and colleges and local ‘newcomer support’ services.

*SMEs and their employees*

Here, projects commonly used websites; television, radio and even cinema advertising; direct mailshots and telesales, and presentations at different events and venues to raise awareness and attract potential beneficiaries. Existing contacts were also used to identify initial beneficiaries, although ‘outreach’ approaches were also followed to engage ‘harder-to-reach’ employers, namely those with limited experience of providing training or accessing publicly-funded support. Mixed media approaches were considered to be effective with SMEs, with one employer describing seeing an advert for a project at their local cinema at the weekend, hearing it promoted on local radio on their way to work, and arriving at their office to find a direct mail letter.

Other approaches found to be effective in attracting beneficiary interest included:

• **Using the business support infrastructure** – **Project 19** used contacts in their local Business Link network and joint Business Link/UK Trade and Investment presentations to establish contacts with companies interested in, or capable of, overseas trade. The latter were particularly effective as they included attendees already considering overseas trade, and also established the credibility of the project from the start.

• **Using local supply chains** – **Project 20** followed an innovative approach to contacting ‘harder-to-reach’ employers by working with large regional companies to access their local supply chains, and market the project through these links. The effectiveness of this approach was due at least in part to the transference of the large employers’ credibility and authority to the project.

• **Building on previous experience** – **Project 4** used contacts from a previous pilot programme to identify potential beneficiaries. It also used its Advisory Board, membership of which included local employers, to both shape the project and identify potential participants.

### 4.3.2 Engaging beneficiaries

In many cases the engagement process was straightforward, notably where individuals showed an immediate commitment to their projects and were (generally) closer to the labour market. In other cases, particularly individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics, who were at a greater distance from the labour market or were
lacking in confidence or self-esteem, the engagement process could be more challenging, and the identification and engagement processes were often intertwined.

Approaches found to be effective for engaging more challenging beneficiary groups included extended outreach approaches, providing taster days, and allowing extended engagement periods to allow relationships and trust to be developed. Voluntary attendance was also considered an important factor in fostering individual commitment, with projects highlighting that when individuals decide for themselves that they want to participate, they are more likely to co-operate fully and benefit from support. Examples of engagement approaches followed for hard-to-reach groups and found to be effective included:

- **Offering different engagement routes** – Project 14 used a combination of ‘taster’ days and continued outreach to engage the disaffected young people they worked with. Individuals could ‘join’ the project during taster days (where young people visited the project and talked with project staff and clients), as part of the project’s extended outreach work (which included the use of positive role models) as well as joining the project directly after presentations at/by different organisations and agencies. While supporting initial engagement, the project placed the responsibility for progression through the project firmly on the beneficiary, which was found to be an effective means of securing commitment.

- **Establishing trust** – Project 9 worked with refugees and described how gaining their trust was key to effective engagement. This presented a series of challenges, as potential beneficiaries tended to regard any form of interview or questioning as a form of interrogation. The project found that trust was most effectively established by assisting beneficiaries in different aspects of their lives and the wider ‘settling in’ process, which frequently extended the project remit. The willingness of the project to be flexible was also important, as was an understanding and appreciation of the issues facing refugee beneficiaries – with several project staff having experience of refugee status themselves.

SMEs could also provide challenges to initial engagement, particularly when they were less familiar (or did not see the benefit of) staff development activities. Here effective engagement practice focused on maximising convenience and ease of accessibility around the time constraints faced by businesses, including: providing flexible delivery options (including using different/combined delivery modes and at non-traditional times); demonstrating service quality (for example emphasising professionalism, using high quality trainers, etc); and providing one-to-one support (often through ‘account manager’ approaches). Other key success factors included:

- **Appreciating the importance of the business case** for training – for example, through clearly describing the aims and benefits of the project from the outset, reducing training time to a minimum to reduce time away from the workplace, and working with partners with detailed knowledge of SMEs and good networks.
• **Exposure to provision** – getting employers to visit provision sites was key for some projects, where project staff described how once ‘over the threshold’ individuals were much more likely to participate. This was due to number of factors, including the opportunity to demonstrate professionalism and the quality and appropriateness of the services available, and to show a real commitment to understanding business needs and flexibility in meeting them.

The beneficiary perspective – engagement, expectations and attractors

The beneficiary interviews revealed that individuals often had different expectations of what they would get from their projects, and so different motivations for engaging with them. **Individuals not in employment** were most likely to engage to increase their chances of entering employment – either generally, in a particular sector or to securing higher level, more satisfying or better paid work. Examples included a school dinner lady seeking to improve her literacy levels to become a supply teacher to redundant, often highly-skilled, older workers accessing new opportunities through networking and contacts with a local college.

However, some beneficiaries’ initial expectations could be quite limited, particularly amongst the **long-term unemployed, harder-to-reach groups and individuals at greatest distance from the labour market**. Here, projects played a key role in motivating and energising individuals to commit to their projects, and even consider that a return to employment was possible or desirable. Beneficiaries’ initial expectations were described in terms of making small gains (such as meeting new people, increasing confidence and building motivation) rather than entering employment directly – which for some of the interviewees, represented a realistic view.

Conversely, the management of expectations for projects working with **individuals with severe disabilities** emerged as an issue. This involved the expectations of the beneficiaries, their parents/carers, and employers, training providers and work placement providers, and often required perceptions over limited ability to be addressed. Projects frequently challenged disabled beneficiaries’ own perceptions of their (limited) abilities through empowerment, and by offering choice in an environment that previously offered limited self-determinism. By challenging beneficiaries rather than merely ‘helping them’, individuals were encouraged to take ownership of their project activities, and as a result were able to challenge perceptions about what this particular target group were able to achieve. Across the projects serving individuals with profound disabilities, beneficiary achievements were used to challenge such assumptions and change the perceptions of parents and carers, who in some cases may have been inadvertently cossetting their charges and opposed to notions of challenging or pushing them.

*Continued*
Finally, the beneficiary interviews also identified the **key factors attracting them to their projects** in the first case. The responses from beneficiaries with hard-to-reach characteristics and the longer-term unemployed were particularly instructive, and included:

- **Differences to traditional mainstream provision** – the most commonly described attraction factor, based on negative experiences of previous mainstream school or college provision and the hope that the European Social Fund (ESF) can offer them something different.

- **Dissatisfaction with statutory provision** – in particular, long-term unemployed beneficiaries, whose experiences of successive programmes led to disaffection and withdrawal from the labour market. As above, beneficiaries hoped that their projects would offer more useful support, or services not available through mainstream providers.

- **Projects appearing less intimidating than mainstream options** – a key influence for a range of target groups, including returners apparently closer to the labour market but still seeking confidence to move forward. Particularly for socially isolated individuals lacking confidence, ESF was often considered a less daunting prospect due to sensitive outreach work, more empathetic staff, options for staged/delayed entry and the presence of participants with similar needs and in similar situations.

- **The social aspect of involvement** was also often a key attractor in itself, particularly for more socially isolated individuals where limited confidence and social skills were barriers.

- In the case of SMEs and their employees, participation decisions were often based on the **combination of an identified business need and the availability of attractive and convenient provision**. Broadly, employers tended to become involved in projects responding to a particular business need (such as developing websites, or understanding business culture overseas) rather than a more general desire to upskill.

It was also apparent that changing perceptions of, and attitudes towards, training and development could be an important part of the engagement process for some individuals.

### 4.3.3 Assessment and diagnosis

The previous chapter emphasised the importance of the assessment and diagnosis step in ensuring that the most appropriate package of services was assembled to meet individual beneficiary needs. In most cases these processes were found to be informal or loosely structured, although some examples of more formalised approaches were identified. Across all target groups, factors such as an understanding of specific target groups and their needs, a knowledge of available provision and being prepared to be flexible in the timing of assessments emerged as key to effective assessment.
This section explores in more detail, the assessment processes followed by projects whose primary target groups were the unemployed, individuals with disabilities and those with hard-to-reach characteristics.

*The unemployed*

In general, *the closer the target group was to the labour market, the less formal the assessment process followed*. Projects such as *Project 8* (working with women experienced and returning to a particular sector) and *Project 7* (a signposting project) followed ’minimal’ approaches based around informal one-to-one interviews. However, *Project 11* worked with individuals at different distances from work to find jobs in the travel sector. They followed an informal self-assessment approach which included basic skills, IT, timekeeping and confidence.

All projects included *one-to-one interview sessions* as part of their assessment processes, and the use of *personal profiles and individual action plans* (irrespective of the titles applied to them) was equally widespread. Action plans were used to capture the outcomes of assessments, to set and agree expectations and to plan services, as well as providing a template for monitoring throughout the project.

Projects also frequently included *assessments of basic skills*, on a formal or informal basis. For example, *Project 1* used a formal written test to assess basic skills levels and needs (using a questionnaire provided by the Basic Skills Agency), while in *Project 35*, beneficiaries’ abilities to complete a questionnaire were used as a measure of literacy. Finally, the assessment process also had a clear *directional/guidance function* for many, particularly the longer-term unemployed. This could result from the process of formulating action plans, or from direct advice and guidance inputs.

**Examples of effective practice – the unemployed**

Examples of the effective practice followed by projects working with this target group include:

- *Project 35* identified three groups within its target beneficiaries according to their duration of unemployment. Their assessment approach featured initial one-to-one interviews including an informal assessment of needs and aspirations, and the different services available discussed. A questionnaire was completed including employment, education and training histories, and a job-match stencil completed to map individual skills against job aspirations and identify training needs. The process resulted in a personal development profile, setting out long and short term goals and the steps required for their achievement.
Elsewhere, assessment approaches were more staggered. **Project 27** followed an informal interview approach, and allowed time for beneficiaries to reflect before committing to the programme and preparing an action plan. **Project 24**, while working with motivated individuals closer to the labour market, allowed a two week period for assessment activities before producing individual action plans. This allowed a rounded picture of each beneficiary to be developed, but also for the project to provide underpinning knowledge so they entered the programme at a similar level. **Project 33**, providing summer school activities for young people, held initial one-to-one interviews followed by attending an initial ‘training week’, where support needs were identified and training profiles produced.

All aspects of beneficiary assessment were not always undertaken solely by project staff. **Project 32** worked with newly redundant workers, and featured informal one-to-one interviews with project staff to initially assess needs and aspirations. Beneficiaries were then referred to a partner college for a more formal assessment, advice and guidance support. A file is prepared, outlining education and career details, career aspirations and any training or other needs identified, which forms the basis of an action plan prepared with project staff. The process was considered effective (by the project and its beneficiaries) as it allowed immediate (such as finding work to pay mortgages) as well as longer-term needs (such as changing careers and setting up businesses) to be supported.

**Individuals with disabilities**

Given the nature of this target group, notably individuals with more profound disabilities, beneficiaries were often referred to their projects by specialist services. In these cases, beneficiaries had already been **subject to a range of professional assessment processes**, including specialist or clinical assessments and information from Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs), which were considered in designing packages of services. These professional assessments often formed the basis of initial discussions, or early actions plans where individuals were less able to engage with the planning process, and were invariably combined with interviews with beneficiaries.
Examples of effective practice – disabled beneficiaries

Examples of the effective practice followed by projects working with this target group include:

- **Project 10** had initially followed a psychometric-based approach, with quite rigid risk assessments for potential beneficiaries. However, as delivery continued this was found to be unnecessary, as many of their clients had been referred by psychiatrists or clinics where assessments had already been completed. In addition, the project found that following a less intensive approach over a longer period of time was more suitable for, and effective with, their clients – as project staff spent time with them individual needs, strengths and barriers became more apparent and could be responded to in context.

- **Project 29** included establishing matches with mentors in their initial assessment session. However, the project found that some of their beneficiaries were reluctant to question what was planned for them, so introduced an additional one-to-one follow-up meeting to ensure the beneficiaries were happy and felt they could work with their mentors.

*Individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics*

In the case of this target group, assessment and diagnostic approaches often relied on the skills and experience of project staff, not least in being able to develop the necessary levels of trust and confidence amongst potential beneficiaries to allow an effective assessment to take place. Assessments were frequently undertaken on an informal, one-to-one basis – to avoid putting off individuals, and completed over a period of time to allow the necessary confidence and trust to be established.

In addition, providers’ generic assessment practices were followed, for example using social service departments’ procedures and, in one case, procedures followed when individuals joined a drug rehabilitation programme.
Examples of effective practice – individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics

Examples of the processes followed and considered to be working effectively included:

- **Project 14** followed a well established approach, using information from referral agencies as the basis for their assessment of the disaffected young people they were working with. This information was then verified and extended in one-to-one interviews with project staff, which identified barriers to employment and training, what the young person wanted to get from the project, and led to the development of individual action plans. Considerable attention was paid to establishing groups of young people who faced similar issues, were at similar levels and had similar training needs. This could be a complex process, with wider factors being considered including age, gender and levels of social and basic skills.

- **Project 9** had no formal selection or assessment criteria for their beneficiaries other than having refugees or asylum seeker status. This was considered appropriate by project staff, as their beneficiaries were unlikely to respond well to even light-touch assessments early in their service relationship. However, beneficiaries were assessed in terms of their suitability for ESOL or citizenship training, which were undertaken by the delivery provider.

- In the case of **Project 21**, considerable information was already available on each beneficiary as part of their engagement with their wider drug rehabilitation programmes. In addition, a psychometric testing approach was introduced to identify the strengths and weaknesses of rehabilitating individuals, with particular reference to the nature of work experience provision to which they would be best suited. The testing was delivered by the local careers service, who could also draw on their bank of work opportunity placements if necessary.

Effectiveness of assessment procedures

Overall, the assessment and diagnosis procedures followed by the case study projects were considered to be effective and fit for purpose, not least as examples of inaccurate assessment were identified comparatively rarely in the project and beneficiary interviews. However, the procedures were by no means universally flawless, as the following example illustrates.
Beneficiary perspective – challenges with the assessment process

One young person completing Project 14 described how, despite the robust assessment approach followed by the project, he considered his needs had not been effectively met. This example illustrated the difficulties associated with group composition, with the individual being one of the project’s older beneficiaries, with qualifications and considerable life experience, who joined the project after a period of depression.

The individual found the level of training provision (particularly food hygiene and money management) too basic, patronising and irrelevant to his circumstances. He also found it difficult to relate to other beneficiaries, many of whom were described as ‘being rehabilitated’ from drug or alcohol abuse or had difficulties with basic social skills, and with whom he had little in common.

The vast majority of projects described rarely ‘rejecting’ individuals at the assessment stage – which was more likely to take place at the identification and engagement stages, with assessment being seen as a means of more precisely matching need to provision. Where individuals were considered unsuitable, the majority of projects attempted to find more suitable provision for them.

Although rarely leading to individuals not participating in projects, the assessment process often identified additional and significant beneficiary characteristics and needs. These were most commonly identified amongst projects targeting individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics, for example:

- Project 30 worked with disaffected young people and described how, although not always influencing their ability to work with the individuals in question, previously unidentified characteristics and issues amongst their beneficiaries emerged over time. These included issues such as dyslexia, alcohol or drug misuse, parent/carer abuse or bullying or ill health. In one case, a project worker identified a participant as having a broken collar bone which had not healed properly following a previous accident. Poor dental care was also common, and in both cases referrals to appropriate medical assistance were provided.

However, although rare, examples of characteristics sufficiently serious to preclude continued participation and identified late, were reported by projects. In the most serious case, a young person with a record of sexual offences was referred without staff being informed of their history. The project had received incomplete referral information in the past, and following this case, introduced a formal requirement: for all referral partners to disclose young peoples’ offending histories; and that their referral forms are completed fully. The forms now include information on previous convictions and any risks they may pose to themselves, project staff and other beneficiaries.
4.3.4 Service delivery

Previous sections have illustrated the range of services provided by the case studies overall, and the specific target groups they were working with. Three groups of services – training, job search assistance and work experience – were most commonly identified after the more generic assessment, action planning and motivation/confidence raising type of support.

The provision of each group of services, in the context of the beneficiary groups targeted, is explored below.

Training services

The projects provided a range of training opportunities by level, topic area and location/mode of delivery. Across the projects, more ‘experiential’/key or core skill training tended to be delivered by project staff, with more formalised, accredited training tended to by the established educational infrastructure.

While examples of the training provided to individuals from different beneficiary groups are provided below, two subject areas were commonly available across many of the projects and utilised on the basis of beneficiary need. These were:

- **IT training** – ranging from introductory to advanced in the case of SMEs and their employees. Training was commonly introductory or CLAIT-accredited, with much being delivered on project premises, although other venues such as colleges and Learn Direct centres were also used;

- **ESOL training** – featured across projects including ethnic minority or refugee individuals within their target groups. Provision varied from the intensive generic (as in Project 9 working with newly arrived refugees and providing five different ‘levels’ of ESOL training) to the more focused (as in Project 24, focusing on technical language associated with the media sector). Delivery was either through partner agencies (FE or community-based, at their sites or the project’s premises on an outreach basis), project staff, or in one case, on an informal basis between mentors and beneficiaries.

Examples of the training provided for different target groups are provided below.
Training services provided by the case study projects

Unemployed individuals

- **Project 11** provided training as part of their wider approach to assisting unemployed beneficiaries to secure employment in the travel sector. Beneficiaries received 15 hours training a week towards ABTA primary certificate and City and Guilds qualifications, with topic coverage including travel geography, the travel industry, package holidays, passports and visas, finance, legislation, insurance and currency. The project also provided IT training (CLAIT computer literacy and IT level 1) where individuals’ IT skills needed to be developed/updated. The beneficiaries interviewed described the ABTA certification as a key part of the project offer, as it provided a ‘passport’ into the sector.

- **Project 37** worked with older unemployed men, many of whom possessed medium to high level skills, and where ‘training’ focused more around personal development activities and on updating IT skills. In addition, university-accredited training was available in the form of weekly two-hour sessions for 11 weeks, and provided, on completion, 20 units towards a degree.

Individuals with disabilities

- **Project 3** worked with individuals with a range of learning disabilities, providing basic skills and wider ‘informal’ vocational training based on individual needs and the ability to participate. The basic skills training was provided on-site and led to ASDAN qualifications, while the vocational training component was based on work in a sheltered project setting, such as local community cafes, in a ‘stitch shop’ sewing bags and in a local environmental project. One particular success was a link established between the stitch shop and the Ability Gallery in London, which displayed the work completed by the beneficiaries.

Hard-to-reach groups

- **Disaffected young people – Projects 14, 22 and 30** provided a range of training options, most commonly focusing on basic skills to help beneficiaries to ‘catch up’ with their basic education and life skills. Commonly provided by project staff, training included accredited training (such as ASDAN) and less formalised experiential learning through classroom and small group sessions. More advanced level 2/3 training was also available in some cases, depending on beneficiary ability and whether they were capable of/trusted to attend independent provision on their own. In these cases, project staff were involved in arranging and monitoring provision, so in some cases building relationships with local providers was an important part of their preparatory activities.

Continued
SMEs and their employees

All the projects targeting SMEs or their employees, offered vocational training for their beneficiaries, which tended to be at intermediate and higher levels, and included:

- **Marketing training** – focusing on the practical in *Project 38*, and leading to the development of marketing plans following a ‘tool kit’ approach with an NVQ level 4 portfolio attached. The course lasted ten hours a week for an average of 15 weeks, but could last up to six months to maximise flexibility. It took beneficiaries through nine stages until they had produced a marketing plan – with the promise of a tangible outcome being a key selling point for the project and a key benefit for the beneficiaries interviewed.

- Training for owners, managers and staff in the hospitality sector, with *Project 17* providing half- or one-day courses including introductory IT, food hygiene, business management and risk assessment. Employers selected from over ten different options, and paid a £30 charge per course.

- **Advanced engineering, management and e-commerce** training for employers and employees in the automotive sector. *Project 20* provided courses of between one and five days’ duration, under the themes of engineering, management and e-commerce, and delivered by a combination of public and private sector providers.

Job search assistance

As well as providing training to help beneficiaries compete in the labour market, other ‘job finding’ activities include CV preparation, supported job search (for example using the internet to identify advertised vacancies) and training in interview techniques.

A series of approaches which projects considered had worked effectively for different target groups were identified, and are summarised the following case studies.
Job search assistance provided by the case study projects

The unemployed

**Project 35** worked with unemployed individuals to provide information, advice and guidance and a programme of job search support. A Connexions Careers Adviser is seconded to the project for one day per week to deliver specialist information advice and guidance support for individuals unemployed for less than six months, while individuals out of work for over 18 months can access the longer programme which includes: access to potential vacancies; support with interview techniques and personal presentation; and help with CV preparation, letter writing and completing application forms.

**Project 27** provided community-based job search support and job tasters across eight local authority wards. Job search activities included reviewing jobcentre vacancies and help with CVs and applications, with the project also contacting potential employers themselves to try to broker opportunities for their clients. Two of the beneficiaries interviewed described how the project’s efforts to support them had been central to finding work: one where help with CV preparation had helped secure a job at a DIY store, and the second where the project had established a contact for a potential job for which the beneficiary had been interviewed and recently secured.

**Individuals with disabilities**

The nature and extent to which job search services were offered to individuals with disabilities depended on the extent of individual disability and their distance from the labour market. For individuals with profound disabilities job search support was limited, given the challenges facing beneficiaries in anything but the most supportive of working environments.

Most commonly, job search activities centred on preparation for work placements in terms of preparing for interviews, developing CVs (that, for example, demonstrated individuals’ practical achievements such as getting up on time, etc) and identifying the type of placement they would like or consider for the future.

**Hard-to-reach groups**

**Project 14** provided job search support to disaffected young people, timed to match their individual work readiness. In some cases, job search activities start on joining the project, and focus on practical, directional and motivational support to assist job search efforts. In other cases, beneficiaries need considerable initial development to help them with their personal attitudes, presentation and commitment to successfully finding work. Some beneficiaries also need to develop their core skills to allow them to compete in the labour market.
As would be expected, job search activities rarely featured in the service offers of projects targeting SMEs and their employees, although in several instances receiving services to help secure employment elsewhere was an implicit function of projects’ activities. Project 32, however, worked with employees who had received redundancy notices from their current employers but were still in work. Again, activities focused on identifying suitable work opportunities (such as potential sources of information on opportunities and identifying individual preferences).

Work experience

Work experience was widely offered across the case study projects, and sought to achieve a series of objectives including providing experience of the workplace, raising individuals’ confidence and helping to secure employment. For some beneficiaries, work experience also challenged their own, and others’, perceptions of them. Examples of work experience provision considered effective with the different target groups are provided below.

Unemployed individuals

Work experience placements for this group ranged from offering a ‘refamiliarisation’ with the workplace to providing a first experience of the world of work. Accordingly, different levels of pre-placement preparation were required, dependent on individuals’ distances from the labour market and any underlying characteristics or challenges they faced. Nine of the 14 projects with the unemployed as their primary target group offered some form of work experience, with examples being provided below.

• Projects 11, 12 and 24 provided targeted work experience placements on a sectoral basis, in the travel, transport and media sectors respectively. In each case links with employers in their respective target sectors were key, in both identifying suitable placements and maintaining intelligence on skills requirements and other relevant industry trends. These more targeted placements might be expected to lead to a higher ‘conversions’ to permanent employment, given the targeted nature of support provided. While each project described successes in this regard, Project 12 had quantified their successes with 70 per cent of beneficiaries finding work with their placement providers. However as their beneficiaries were recruited from individuals who were unsuccessful in their initial applications, this high conversion rate was partly to be expected. In Project 24 this ‘conversion’ rate was thought to be 30 per cent, although the project did not routinely follow-up to see if beneficiaries had remained with the placement employers.

• Project 27 provided work ‘tasters’ as a means of providing both work experience for beneficiaries and the opportunity for employers to ‘try out’ potential future employees. Support is offered to prepare for their placements, with individuals not considered to be ready for placements being referred to other employment training programmes or courses.
• **Project 1** included work placements either with the Special Constabulary or on a voluntary basis with local community organisations, and which could take place at any time during the project. Support during placements was provided on a mentoring basis by the project’s outreach workers on an as and when basis.

**Individuals with disabilities**

Work experience provision for individuals with disabilities often provides a first experience of the world of work, as well as supporting beneficiaries’ social and personal development. A common theme across the projects working with individuals with more profound disabilities was that work placements allowed them to demonstrate what they were capable of, where employment expectations were often limited. The type of work experience placements and the level of support required varied by case, although projects sought to extend beneficiaries’ experiences beyond the highly supported placements often offered. For example:

• **Project 23** provided work experience to visually impaired young people aged 16 to 24 attending a specialist college, and was developed to fill a gap in the vocational support provided by the LSC or Jobcentre Plus programmes such as Workstream. The duration and nature of placements depended on students’ existing timetables, preferences and if work experience was a course requirement. Placements were identified through a database of ‘disability-friendly’ employers held by the college, and if no suitable employer was available, cold calling would be attempted. This had mixed results, and would always be followed by a health and safety check if not carried out already. Preparation for placements was key, with many students not being wholly ready and needing help with confidence and social skills. Each placement included an initial familiarisation visit, a contract between the employer and the college, and monitoring and support throughout. Five beneficiaries were interviewed, three of whom had completed their placements, which included a shop, an animal sanctuary, another college and a stables, with one being placed with the college due to their limited confidence. The beneficiaries showed the diversity of individuals participating in the project – from one 19 year old who progressed to a Business and Management degree at Oxford Brooks University to a girl with severe learning disabilities whose experience at the stables gave her the confidence to take a Skills for Life course with a local provider.

• In the case of **Project 10**, a café had been established where basic training (in catering, food hygiene and customer care) and work experience could be provided in a friendly and welcoming environment. The café also acted as a meeting place for beneficiaries and their friends after ‘work’, so providing a social support mechanism. The beneficiaries interviewed reported that working in the café gave them a reason to get up in the morning, stopped them from feeling isolated and forced them to deal with new people and hoped that their experience might lead to employment in catering at some stage.
Project 23 suggested a series of key success factors for effective work experiences for their (and other profoundly disabled) clients, including:

- the provision of social opportunities for individuals placed – to maximise the benefit of a ‘rounded’ work experience;
- both projects and placement providers having a clear understanding of the beneficiary needs – so emphasising the need for effective initial planning and ongoing communications;
- a staff team who are able to provide support and mentoring opportunities – notably for those beneficiaries where elements of work placements present a particular challenge;
- participants being given responsibility in the form of concrete, meaningful tasks – which can result in more focused and realistic progression routes.

These views tallied with the findings of the beneficiary interviews, where the supportive nature of their placements and support from project staff appeared to be key factors in their success.

**Hard-to-reach groups**

Although not an homogenous group, projects working with individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics faced similar issues in providing work experience for their clients, including their ability or willingness to participate and the potential reluctance of placement providers based on their perceptions of risk. The latter issue was commonly addressed by projects or their partners establishing banks of placements, where employers were known to be amenable to taking placements from hard-to-reach individuals. Most projects also undertook specific assessments (mainly informal reviews of characteristics, needs and progress on the project) to decide if individual beneficiaries were suitable for placement. Consequently, not all beneficiaries would receive a placement, or would do so at different stages in the project as progress allowed.

Examples of work experience provision considered effective included:

- **Project 21 worked with recovering substance misusers** and provided work experience placements for two days per week, and relied on a bank of employers who had taken their clients previously. By offering a thorough introduction process, and frequent monitoring through placement visits by project staff, employers joining their ‘bank’ had been retained. The assessment process followed was also key, with individuals’ counsellors being involved to identify if an individual was ready for a placement or if a particular placement might risk their recovery. Several examples were identified where individuals had been offered employment with their provider, or at least were able to leave with positive references to be used in future.
• **Project 14 worked with disaffected young people** and provided work experience to enhance individual employability. In some cases their clients had never worked before, and so the service provided them with their first experience of work. For others, notably their older clients, the work experience option allowed them to re-familiarise themselves with the workplace. Considerable care was taken to assess whether work experience was a suitable option for the individual young person, and the project manager described a tendency to ‘veer on the side of caution’ to avoid damaging provider relations or the progress of the beneficiary. Frequent placement monitoring was considered important, again to ensure providers would take their clients again as well as maximising the benefits to their clients.

### 4.3.5 Exit procedures

In most cases, projects had developed exit procedures for individuals coming towards the end of their time with them, which ranged from the informal and loosely structured to more formalised approaches.

Often these approaches were similar in content and delivery between different target groups, although differences emerged in the extent to which they focused on progression options for individual beneficiaries. In some cases beneficiaries had joined their projects with a specific destination in mind on completion, for example:

- Jobcentre Plus co-financed **Project 28** provided preparatory support to lone parents before entry to the NDLP programme. This met a recognised need to fill a gap in existing statutory provision, and has since been ‘mainstreamed’ to form part of the local NDLP programme;

- **Project 3** worked with individuals with profound disabilities, with the intention that some would progress to an employment support service provided by the local social services department. This second programme (itself funded by ESF Objective 3) develops work experience and employment opportunities further, with the aim of securing sustainable job outcomes unlikely to be achieved without a preparatory stage.

In other cases, where projects aimed to facilitate entry into particular types of work, **contacts within the industrial sectors targeted** had proved to be extremely useful and were felt by a series of projects to have assisted positive progression. For example, **Project 24** assisted women to secure technical employment in the media sector, and utilised a combination of routes to support their beneficiaries into employment. These included:

- the continual supply of industry information from the BBC;
- the supply of informal job opportunities from a former beneficiary employed in the sector;
• a regularly updated notice board providing job and training opportunities;
• the availability of research into vocational and other training opportunities available to participants, and labour market research to identify local opportunities for progression.

In other cases, follow-up contacts following project completion were seen by some projects as effective means of ensuring beneficiary progress is sustained and built upon. Project 27 provided continued support to clients once they had gained employment, maintaining contact for the first 13 weeks of work and most intensively during the first few days. While individual support requirements varied, they most commonly consisted of telephone contact after the first days at work, with contacts on a monthly basis, thereafter. One of the beneficiaries interviewed had gained employment following a considerable period of illness in which he claimed Incapacity Benefit. While he considered the project had helped him find work again, he was particularly impressed with the personal telephone calls to find out how he was doing and if there was any additional help he needed. While he had not needed to call on their services again, knowing the support was there was helpful and added to his newly improved confidence.
5 Objective 3 impacts and added value

**Key points**

- A range of benefits and impacts were reported by both the case study projects and a sample of the 13,000 beneficiaries they had worked with at the time of study, covering both hard and soft outcomes as well as business benefits for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

- Four main areas of added value were identified across the case study projects as well as the provision of additional funding, namely:
  - extending coverage, e.g. allowing work with new target groups and filling gaps in provision;
  - supporting innovation/change, e.g. supporting new, different or more appropriate activities;
  - mainstream links, e.g. enhancing existing provision and preparation for mainstream provision;
  - promoting operational and strategic partnerships, as part of or following, project activity.

- Of the 11 completed case study projects able to comment on sustainability and continuation, six had continued, at least in part, supported by a range of funding sources. Of the five projects not continuing, two described how lessons from their activities had influenced current provision.
5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks across all 40 case study projects to identify their main impacts and examine the nature and extent to which Objective 3 funding can be seen to have added value. The chapter closes by exploring the ‘legacy’ of the completed projects in terms of the extent to which they have been sustained, or exerted other influences through mainstreaming.

5.2 Performance and impacts

In total, the 40 case study projects had worked with approximately 13,500 individual or employer beneficiaries at the time of study. While the numbers of beneficiaries participating varied considerably (from just five in Project 29, providing intensive support to profoundly disabled beneficiaries, to over 3,000 in Project 15 providing referral and signposting services to potential learners), and were a function of project budgets and service intensity/dosage, this number gives an impression of the coverage achieved.

The outcomes and impacts resulting from the activity of the projects also varied considerably, again in terms of the variables listed already but importantly, also in terms of their objectives and target groups supported. As would be expected, projects working with individuals with harder-to-reach characteristics, and others requiring more intensive support and assistance, illustrated the heightened costs of working with such challenging groups.

An additional consideration, raised by projects working with the more challenging groups and others at some distance from the labour market, was the extent to which the ‘hard’ outcome measures by which performance is judged were universally appropriate across the different target groups. In many cases it was obvious that individual participants would be unlikely to achieve hard outcomes, such as progression into employment, after a single intervention, even when that was with projects with the potential to provide multiple services in a co-ordinated fashion. While a number of projects described how their ‘key stakeholders’ (i.e. Government Offices and/or co-financing organisations (CFOs)) were, to different extents, interested in the ‘soft’ outcomes they were achieving, few robust approaches to their collection were identified and the issue of measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled remained a perplexing one.

The vast majority of the 40 projects were either progressing well towards, or had achieved, the performance targets set out in their applications or those agreed with their key stakeholders if different. While some projects reported a number of challenges, issues and examples of ambitious target setting at the outset, the majority were performing well – which was perhaps a function of the means by which the project sample was identified and selected.
5.2.1 Project performance – closed projects

A total of 13 of the case study projects were closed at the time of interview, with most having completed Project Closure Reports (PCRs) or at least being able to provide details of their overall achievements. Of these projects:

- five targeted unemployed individuals – Projects 12, 24, 25, 32 and 39, who targeted a range of individuals not in employment, ranging from the long-term unemployed to returners;
- one targeted individuals with disabilities – Project 26 which targeted individuals with mental health problems in a rural area;
- four targeted SMEs and their employees – Projects 17, 19, 20 and 38 which provided a range of training and development services to businesses and their employees;
- one targeted individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics – Project 22 which worked with disaffected young people;
- two projects had more of a research or developmental focus:
  - Project 13, a research project and as such having no direct beneficiaries;
  - Project 15, which provided a multi-agency approach to tackling bullying amongst school pupils aged between 13 and 16.

The beneficiary interviews with individuals who had completed their time with both closed and live projects, allowed their perspectives of impact to be assessed, as well as providing some insight into whether these impacts had been sustained and built upon. The following section examines the benefits and impacts reported.

5.2.2 Beneficiary perspectives – impacts and other benefits for completers

A total of 50 beneficiaries were interviewed who had completed their projects between three and 18 months previously. Interviewees were distributed between the target groups as follows:

- the unemployed – 19 completers;
- people with disabilities – 11 completers;
- SME managers and employees – nine completers;
- individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics – two completers;
- nine individuals whose target groups were unclear, but who had been attending projects targeting unemployed individuals.

Of the 50 completers, 35 were able to describe achievements and post-project progression that were attributed, at least in part, to their time with their projects. While, by definition, it is likely that those interviewed represented the ‘success stories’ for their projects, progression across the 35 was positive and included:
• **Seventeen individuals progressing to employment** – with the nature and quality of jobs varying from senior permanent positions to more transitory part-time service jobs (although some beneficiaries described being in part-time jobs while applying for what they considered to be more appropriate positions). However, the quality of jobs must be seen in the context of individual backgrounds and characteristics. In addition, a number of cases illustrated that beneficiaries may continue to face many of the challenges facing them prior to their projects, and that employment opportunities may not always be sustainable.

• **Four were participating in voluntary work** – two with their former projects and two with other local organisations while continuing to secure full-time, permanent employment. In each case, beneficiaries considered that their projects have given them the confidence, focus and direction to take on voluntary work. However, in two cases where beneficiaries had histories of mental illness it was unclear if they would be capable of progressing into permanent unsupported employment.

• **Seven had progressed to additional education and training activities** – two into higher education (HE), three to further education (FE) and two to specific vocational courses which were linked to identified employment opportunities (one with a former placement provider).

• **Seven were, or remained, SME owner/managers or employees** – but were able to describe impacts of relevance to them as individuals and/or their companies.

The distribution of impacts for individual completers across the different target groups is summarised below.

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**Beneficiary impacts by target group**

**The unemployed**

Completer beneficiaries from this target group described experiencing a range of impacts as a result of their time with their projects, and progressing to a range of destinations. For example:

- Three completers from **Project 32**, which targeted long-term unemployed and newly redundant individuals from a single sector, were keen to stress how their project had led to high quality, sustainable employment outcomes. By supporting careers advice, guidance and providing funds for training courses to meet individual requirements, two had realised their ambitions of becoming a fitness trainer and a pub landlord respectively, and the third received support for training as a gas fitter and had gained a well-paid job at a local hospital. For all three, the project had facilitated detailed thought about the areas of work they wanted to enter, as well as providing support for training.

Continued
• **Project 39** provided a programme of radio training for learners between 19 and 64, resulting in a range of outcomes for its beneficiaries. The four interviewed described being ‘amazed’ at what they were able to achieve whilst on the project, with two finding full-time work, one continuing to train in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the fourth continuing to volunteer with the project lead partner. A fifth individual, who left the project early to secure the first job offered to them which turned out to be poorly paid and boring, described wishing they had continued with the provision to improve their prospects later.

**Individuals with disabilities**

The impacts and outcomes reported varied considerably, and while predicated by individual capabilities they often represented progress towards future outcomes than final achievements in themselves. Where job outcomes were reported they were often in part-time, unskilled work, although still representing considerable achievements. The interviews also illustrated the continuing challenges faced by beneficiaries in maintaining employment outcomes, with one completer describing being unable to cope with full-time work and losing the job they had worked hard to secure. Examples of achievements included:

• **Project 26** worked with individuals with disabilities and a range of mental health issues who were able to undertake unsupported work but found such positions challenging. Three completers were interviewed: one was a woman in her 50s who had spent time in and out of mental hospitals and, as such, was unable to find permanent work, who regarded the project as a ‘lifeline’ and had led to her securing a voluntary post with a local social enterprise. The second was a woman in her 30s who, despite attending a range of administrative training and gaining qualifications, continued to be unsuccessful at interview or if successful, finds that jobs don’t work out. Having been identified as being unusually prone to stress, the project directed her away from office work and she is currently investigating options to work in arts and crafts.

The case study projects also included individuals with physical as well as learning disabilities, such as visual impairments, as in **Project 23**. In this project the three completers interviewed had progressed to mainstream college or university places and were undertaking NVQ or degree level courses. Each beneficiary considered that they would progress to employment following their studies, and that the work experience element of the project had helped them to not only secure their current college places, but would help them find work in the future.

Continued
SMEs and employees

Seven completers were owner/managers or employees of SMEs, and as described already, were not always able to convert the benefits from their project experiences into quantifiable improvements in business performance. However, all described qualitative benefits, such as:

- acquiring new skills – even if they were not always fully used in their current jobs, or had not yet led to individual career progression in the workplace. In one example, however, one beneficiary had been promoted to take the newly created post of sales and marketing manager, as part of the planned growth of his employer;

- supporting the development of their companies – three completers were SME owner/managers, each of whom considered that their firms had benefited and become healthier, better structured and now more able to manage and benefit from growth. In one case, participation in a marketing programme had led to the development of a marketing strategy for the business, but also the successful signposting to additional funds to support its implementation. In another, the interviewee considered that the learning from their project had allowed the firm to become stronger and to directly employ new staff. In the third, both skills and contacts acquired on their project had helped them introduce computerised systems to their business.

In addition to the ‘hard’ outcomes reported above, both project completers and current participants described a range of additional benefits they considered to have resulted from their involvement with their projects. In many cases, the achievement of ‘soft’ outcomes was the main benefit resulting from their participation, and often represented small steps that in turn would lead to greater advances and outcomes. An increase in confidence, for example, was felt to have given one woman the courage to take on more responsibilities in her voluntary work position. In many cases, progression represented the development or enhancement of employability skills, to contribute to breaking the cycle of low aspirations, low self-esteem and low life expectations. Other examples identified amongst the individual beneficiaries interviewed included:

- One completer displaying a range of hard-to-reach characteristics, described benefiting particularly from the residential aspect of her provision, which offered her the opportunity to conquer her concerns and gain self-confidence through a range of new activities. A second completer from the same project felt that his progression into employment was not directly related to the courses taken during the project, but that the main benefit for him was increased confidence which had allowed him to become more focused on his future.
Many of the disaffected and disengaged young people interviewed described how their projects had brought them respect for the first time in their lives. In one case, a young male participant described his considerable satisfaction and pride at being given the role of a ‘senior’ on the team, which had improved his attitude and made him feel mature.

In some cases, in projects working to return redundant and long-term unemployed individuals to work, beneficiaries considered that their participation had illustrated and increased their confidence that employment opportunities were available to them. Individuals also described how their horizons had been broadened, with several completers describing how they had considered new options that, for some, had led to a significant career change. One respondent, who had fulfilled a dream of becoming a pub landlord, commented that ‘people don’t realise that there are jobs and opportunities out there, and with the help of the project they can look forward to a future’.

Exposure to IT as part of their projects had helped to break down mental barriers and increased confidence in the use of computers for many of the beneficiaries interviewed. In several cases, these benefits were considered to extend beyond simply the pure acquisition of new skills, for example, one woman who had been taking an IT course considered that she now had more in common with her children, and was able to take a more active role in their school lives and studies.

In the case of SMEs and their employees, it was often difficult to quantify the impact of their involvement in their projects in terms of improved company turnover or performance. However, two beneficiaries in one project considered that the increased profitability their firm had experienced was directly attributable to the course they had taken. Other concrete benefits reported by beneficiaries were dependent on the focus of their particular projects, and as well as workforce qualifications included:

- improved levels of customer service;
- improved working relationships with sister companies;
- greater understanding of overseas business culture;
- opportunities for business networking;
- development of web-sites and IT capacity within SMEs to increase efficiencies.

Impact was, for some, dependent on the ability to apply the learning from their projects to the workplace. In a small number of cases, participants described that although the quality of training received had been good, there was little opportunity to apply it in their working environment. In an extreme example, one former participant described taking an IT course at a time when her business was not using computers and, consequently, the benefit of the learning was lost.
5.3 Objective 3 added value

One of the key aims of the study was to identify and investigate the ways in which Objective 3 had added value to the projects supported under it, the individual beneficiaries participating in them, and the wider provider and strategic infrastructure.

As the mid-term evaluation report describes, managing authorities are required to ensure as far as possible that European Social Fund (ESF) support is used to obtain added value in a cost effective way by supporting projects that would otherwise not have taken place or would have taken place in a less effective way. The report identifies two types of added value: ‘scale additionality’ where ESF support enables the amount or range of existing provision to be increased; and ‘qualitative additionality’ where it allows the type of provision or range of beneficiaries to be extended. The case study projects were identified as adding value in both ‘scale’ and ‘qualitative’ terms, by:

- **extending the coverage of provision** – in terms of the range of beneficiary groups covered, filling gaps in existing provision and supporting continued individual progress;

- **supporting innovation and change** – by facilitating the development of new services or the modification/enhancement of existing services to better meet beneficiary needs;

- **linking with mainstream provision** – influencing mainstream provision by supporting/enhancing existing provision or by developing and testing new approaches;

- **promoting operational and strategic partnerships** – where the experience of collaborative work as part of Objective 3 delivery has led to new or enhanced partnership links.

The following sections provide examples of how the case study projects are adding value across these criteria.

5.3.1 Extending coverage

In many cases, the case study projects were found to have extended the availability of locally available services, or the coverage of existing services, in a variety of ways to meet identified local needs. In some cases, Objective 3 funding was used to provide services where demand/need had previously been identified, or where changes in national or more local policy had identified new areas of need or new potential beneficiary groups. Elsewhere, Objective 3 had allowed gaps in provision to be filled where no other support was available, or allowed new developments to be introduced at a more rapid pace or on a larger scale. Examples of extending coverage identified amongst the case study projects are provided in the following sections.
Working with different target groups

Here the case study projects had supported the provision of services to individuals and target groups who would not otherwise have been able to access them, and/or who were not served by existing local mainstream provision. Examples of where Objective 3 had extended provision to such target groups included:

- **Subsidising training courses** – including provision that allowed participation by those who would not normally engage with training (such as hotel employees in Project 17, which also encouraged the sharing of good practice and a support network for participants). Elsewhere, co-financed Project 34 provided training and support in job search for disabled individuals, and illustrated how ESF could fill gaps in local provision. The regional Jobcentre Plus CFO manager described how mainstream funding was restricted for this client group, with mainstream training provision being largely unable to provide the level and intensity of one-to-one support available under the project.

- **Extending provision to individuals outside the reach of mainstream programmes** – here the potential for added value is considerable, and examples were identified amongst the case study projects where services were provided for beneficiaries not covered by mainstream programmes. While examples of extended provision could be identified across each of the target groups, particularly strong examples of added value were identified amongst projects working with:
  - **individuals with disabilities** – where both ‘scale’ and ‘qualitative’ examples were found. Projects worked with individuals whose severe disabilities, according to their co-financing and delivery partners, placed them outside the range of available mainstream Jobcentre Plus/Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) services. Here, ESF had both enhanced the scale of coverage and provided access to new types of service not previously available to such groups. College-based Projects 18 and 23, for example, used Objective 3 funding to offer work experience placements to their disabled students, where previously, placements had been within the college and failed to provide proper work experience or exposure to the world of work. Elsewhere social service-based Projects 3 and 6 extended the provision of work experience to their profoundly disabled clients, who previously either did not receive such opportunities or did so in an extremely sheltered environment. In both cases the projects not only sought to shift the aspirations of their beneficiaries towards some form of employment where none had been considered previously, but also the views of both carers and the care infrastructure about what their clients could achieve. Projects 3 and 6 were both co-financed (by Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and Jobcentre Plus, respectively), and their CFOs verified that neither the funding nor the skills to deliver would have been available from existing mainstream sources;
Challenging perceptions

Project 6 is changing partners’ views about possibilities for individuals with learning difficulties. By challenging the beneficiaries and ultimately proving to themselves and others what they are capable of, they are moving away from a cosseted approach in which individuals acquiesce to decisions made on their behalf.

Most of the target clients are on a variety of benefits and have been in the care of social services, with little or no experience of the world of work. The idea of considering the client group for employment was met with some initial scepticism by a number of people in social services. Social services run two social education centres where clients can access support, but historically, there has been little or no progression from these centres into paid employment.

One expected outcome of the project is a shift in the ethos of the social services department away from looking after and ‘doing everything for the client’ to one that supports the client and also encourages them to progress and become more independent – an example of this being ‘transport training’, where beneficiaries are provided with training in how to catch a bus on their own.

Interviews with the department confirmed that they were interested in learning from the project and would consider altering provision accordingly.

– individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics – and where again mainstream services or funding were not able to support provision. For example, Project 21 provided enhanced training and work experience services to a residential drug rehabilitation centre, to allow their clients additional support with finding employment on their discharge. Prior to ESF, few employment-related services were available to their clients, and no funding opportunities available to introduce them, as the project manager described: ‘ESF monies made us more beneficiary focused and targeted’. The importance of ESF to the provision was evidenced when the project ended, and the centre was unable to support continued work experience provision. Although they had attempted to identify new funding, the project had recently been unsuccessful in a bid for mainstream Jobcentre Plus funds as they are an all-male establishment. In the case of Project 22, ESF funding allowed the services of a basic skills tutor and drug counsellor to be included in their provision to disaffected young people. Given the varied and often complex needs of their clients, and the difficulties of finding individuals with the relevant skills and experience, the funding had been key to working effectively with their clients.
• **Supporting older people, and those with significant levels of work experience and skills** – individuals in both of these groups are not typically targeted by public sector interventions, and in both cases, opportunities were provided for them under Objective 3. One project (37) targeted individuals from both groups and filled an apparent gap in employment support provision for unemployed individuals aged 45 and above and with higher-level qualifications. Interviews with beneficiaries attending the project illustrated how they had sought support from other sources (particularly Jobcentre Plus), but found that services were geared either to younger age groups or those aged 50 and above, and were focused on people with few qualifications or limited work experience.

**Overcoming financial barriers**

Objective 3 funding also allowed coverage and participation to be widened by leading to reduced cost provision for its beneficiaries. In the case of services for SMEs and their employees, funding allowed the cost of training services to be reduced as part of the strategy to engage with employers with a limited history of staff training and development. However, as the example below illustrates, while the provision of ‘free’ training would appear to be a strong attraction factor, SME perceptions of the linkage between provision cost and value can work against free training, and projects should consider charging nominal fees to ensure employer commitment.

**Tackling negative perceptions of ‘free’/highly subsidised training**

**Project 38** supported the development of marketing strategies for SMEs, and decided that charging a fee for beneficiary participation would lend the project more credibility and overcome the negative perceptions they had previously experienced around ‘free’ training.

Other projects working with SMEs were, however, offering training for free. This was described by some of the beneficiaries interviewed to be a major factor in their participation and so a source of added value by attracting employers to training that they might otherwise not have paid for. However, further investigation suggested that in many cases, there appeared to have been a lack of commitment amongst beneficiaries, and in several cases, limited benefits were derived from their participation.

While promoting the uptake of training with previously ‘resistant’ employers is a notoriously difficult task, it would appear that while the offer of ‘free’ training may be a useful initial hook, employers would be prepared to pay (an admittedly smaller amount) to receive training they considered effective, and so represented good value for money.
Accessing relevant qualifications and supporting continued learning

Objective 3 funding has also added value by providing access to appropriate, achievable and accredited qualifications for members of the different target groups. For example, **Project 30** sought to introduce a community-level infrastructure for the accreditation of basic skills and other learning accessed by disaffected young people through community-based provision. ESF support allowed a model of accreditation to be developed and implemented across 12 sites, with ‘accreditation workers’ being employed to support existing learners and attract new ones. The project pre-empted national requirements for accrediting the outcomes of Youth Service work, and influenced the local infrastructure to both consider providing accredited courses as well as including a wider range of individuals to participate. More broadly, ESF funding allowed the local Youth Service to have a ‘head start’ in terms of emerging policy regarding the emerging national agenda to ensure more Youth Service work results in accredited outcomes.

Elsewhere, ESF funding, often in combination with mainstream resources, was used to promote a culture of continuous or ‘lifelong’ learning, often with individuals who would not traditionally be involved in such activities. In the example below, **Project 31** provided financial support to students from less well off backgrounds to continue post-graduate learning.

**ESF funding lowers financial barriers to continued learning**

A project in the North East is supporting ongoing learning in a range of areas. Some 85 per cent of beneficiaries achieve a full qualification equivalent to NVQ level 5 with almost all of the remainder achieving a diploma, equivalent to NVQ level 4. The aim is to prepare students for direct entry to technical and management posts and also for self-employment. A key rationale for the project is the fact that many graduates simply cannot afford to do a second degree because they are too heavily burdened by debt from their first degree.

Where students are eligible for Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding, ESF covers the costs of training and subsistence or other costs, e.g. travel or childcare, which enables more disadvantaged beneficiaries to participate in second degrees. Normally (and very broadly as the prices and costs vary between degrees) for a degree costing £5,500, if HEFCE pays £2,500, the student will need to find £3,000. ESF funding enables the fees to be waived and to provide a bursary of £2,000 for a year of study. This had originally been costed at £70 per week but was latterly reduced to just over £40 per week in order to support more students.

5.3.2 Supporting innovation and change

In many cases, ESF funding had supported either the enhancement of existing services or the development and introduction of new services to better meet beneficiary needs.
Allowing things to be done differently/supporting different activities

One important area of added value was in allowing providers the opportunity to ‘do things differently’, be that through the introduction of new services, by raising the quality (or more frequently, the focus and relevance) of provision to meet the needs of their target groups, by developing and testing new approaches and by extending coverage as already described. For example:

- **Raising the quality, relevance and appropriateness** of provision – this was most commonly focused on supporting different approaches which were often more costly than traditional methods, but which were considered essential for engagement and effective delivery to particular target groups. Examples of this nature included projects working with individuals with hard-to-reach characteristics or the profoundly disabled, and where considerable ‘support’ resources were required to enable beneficiaries to be identified, engaged with and supported during service delivery, for example, by including drug counselling in one project working with hard-to-reach young people. As described previously, projects working with these groups in particular often considered that ESF was the only source of funding available to them, and so critical to effectively targeting and working with their target groups.

- **Offering provision to individuals and in geographic areas that would normally be excluded** – similarly to adding value by extending coverage, funding allowed new provision to be developed for individuals and in new spatial areas. For example, **Project 29** provided support for individuals with mental ill health living in a rural area where population distribution and transportation had been limiting factors previously.

- **Piloting new approaches for different target groups** – an area of considerable potential for sustained influence on delivery as well as added value, was the use of Objective 3 funding to develop and trial new services and delivery approaches. Examples of ‘pilot’ approaches were identified across the range of individual beneficiaries and projects working with SMEs and employees. For example, **Project 40** developed genuine work experience provision for individuals with disabilities, a group where provision of this nature had been limited to sheltered or intensely supported work placements, as described overleaf.
Offering work experience to students with disabilities

College-based Project 18 responded to dissatisfaction with the types of work experience being offered to their students with a range of disabilities. Typically these students were either not offered work experience or were offered a placement within the college or highly sheltered environments.

The project felt that this approach did not offer the individuals concerned the range of benefits associated with a work placement, as well as reinforcing negative stereotypes and limiting beneficiary ambitions. ESF funding allowed the college to extend genuine work experience placements to students with the most severe disabilities by employing ‘working support assistants’, and by funding cover for college teaching staff so they could visit disabled beneficiaries more frequently during their placements.

More broadly many projects were, as part of their combined delivery packages, providing services which other mainstream services were not currently offering in their areas or to their specific target groups. These often related to individuals at furthest distance from the labour market, where either positive employment outcomes were less likely to be achieved or where beneficiaries were seen as being challenging to work with. Such services included:

- personal development activities – such as enhancing motivation, building self-confidence and developing both life and employability skills;
- support with other issues affecting beneficiaries’ lives – such as finding accommodation, advice with benefits and legal issues, etc;
- resources to support beneficiaries’ continued engagement with their projects – such as directly providing or funding transportation, childcare, and other expenses that would otherwise be barriers to participation.

More tailored provision

One central element of ‘doing things differently’ was the ability to tailor provision to better meet individual beneficiary needs. In many cases, Objective 3 funding had allowed projects to tailor provision in a wide range of ways – from the use of non-standard teaching methods and visual aids to the increased availability of support on a one-to-one basis for individuals with high-level needs.

The provision of a more tailored and personalised approach, made possible with ESF funding and in many cases unaffordable without it, was considered an important factor by the projects. They considered that such tailoring was key to ensuring that the needs of many of their target groups were adequately met, in lowering the likelihood of early drop-out and in raising the chances of positive outcomes being achieved.
One element of tailoring associated with Objective 3 provision was the use of individualised monitoring systems to identify and promote individual achievement. While the use of robust approaches to measure ‘soft’, and often more appropriate, outcomes was widely described but less often evidenced, such approaches offered the potential to tailor the assessment of individual progress. As the example below shows, tailoring monitoring approaches to the beneficiary group in question can also have learning benefits for the individuals concerned as well as enhancing motivation.

**Motivating participants via innovative approaches to measuring achievement**

**Project 6** worked with individuals with severe learning difficulties, and provided a variety of opportunities for beneficiaries to gain basic skills, develop an understanding of the world of work and, for some, be exposed to the public in a range of ‘work based’ settings.

One aspect of the project that proved particularly successful was the use of visual materials and photography to develop individuals’ portfolios for ASDAN awards. The participants interviewed as part of the case study described how they were very proud of the achievements recorded in the photographs, and some had tried to write up or copy simple sentences written by project staff to describe the photographs.

**More intensive service provision**

In addition to increasing the extent to which services can be tailored to meet needs, Objective 3 funding also allowed the intensity/level of ‘dosage’ of services to be varied within a single project to meet individual need. Most commonly, this was expressed by the ability to fund the combinations of services, activities and support that characterise Objective 3 projects in the current programming round, and which allow them to meet the multiple needs of many of their target groups.

**Project providing an integrated package of services to meet complex needs of beneficiaries**

**Project 14** provided an integrated personal development programme to enable unemployed and disaffected young people to equip themselves with a range of basic vocational, social and key skills. These new skills, combined with other measures delivered by the project including job search support, aimed to enhance beneficiaries’ abilities to obtain and remain in employment in a number of areas of identified growth and demand in the region.

Continued
The project provider has significant experience of working with young people and takes an innovative approach which succeeds in motivating young people who may have disengaged from formal learning. The project uses a range of activities which individuals appear to enjoy/be interested in as levers to gain their interest, and which ranged amongst the beneficiaries interviewed from rock climbing to running a music business. Every programme is tailored to meet the needs of the individual, and lasts for as long as a young person needs support: be that three weeks or three years.

5.3.3 Linking with mainstream provision

A number of cases were identified where Objective 3 had influenced mainstream provision, most frequently by supporting or enhancing existing provision and, as above, by developing and testing new approaches.

In one example, Objective 3 added value by supporting additional services to existing mainstream HE provision, to involve a university in working with individuals not usually targeted by their services. This new experience provided a series of lessons for the university, as well evidencing the importance of being flexible in responding to beneficiary needs.

Enhancing mainstream services – the importance of flexibility and responding to needs

Project 37 aimed to support men aged over 45 who had been unemployed for six months or longer to find jobs. The actual needs of the target group turned out to be considerably different to those envisaged at the time of the application – which had implications for the way in which the project was delivered.

The provider had expected key issues to be a lack of skills and the need to update skills for this age group (particularly in areas like information technology (IT)). However, the majority of current beneficiaries are very highly skilled (partly from previous employment but also because they have been on many ‘back-to-work’ programmes since becoming unemployed) so many have very up to date IT skills and, for example, have achieved European Computer Driving Licence qualifications.

The key beneficiary need was for vocational guidance and support: how to find out about job vacancies, particularly those which are not advertised; how to break into a new industry/sector, etc. They are looking for something similar to the Connexions service which would give them individual careers advice and guidance for their age group. They find that Jobcentre Plus does not provide this service to them, and that private sector agencies which do provide this are prohibitively expensive.
A second way in which projects supported mainstream provision was by providing a range of **intermediary and preparatory services** to individuals prior to their engagement with mainstream provision.

For example, co-financed **Project 28** sought to prepare individuals to engage with the NDLP programme prior to such services being available via the Gateway. The project allowed additional time for the diagnosis and support of needs that, in many cases, would have hampered progress under the New Deal. These services ranged from confidence building to advice on benefits, debt counselling and the provision of childcare. As a completed project, the case study research identified that many elements of the project had been adopted under the local Gateway service, with the initial project provider continuing to deliver the core preparatory provision. Similar examples were found for disabled beneficiaries and other unemployed groups.

### 5.3.4 Prompting operational and strategic partnerships

Finally, projects (and their partners) also reported how their experiences under Objective 3 had both supported new collaborative activities and more formalised partnership arrangements. While the latter were more commonly described than the former, many of the lessons resulting from working with new target groups and in new areas were shared between delivery partners.

**Project 13** provided an example of how Objective 3 funds had mobilised a range of local partners, not all of whom had worked collaboratively before, to focus on a specific issue.

### 5.4 Project legacies – sustainability and continuation amongst the closed projects

An additional way in which projects could add value was by leaving behind a sustained service offer, or other form of legacy, from their Objective 3 experience. Of the 13 completed case study projects, issues of sustainability and continuation were discussed with 11. Of these:

- **five did not continue in any form** after the end of Objective 3 funding. Two of these, however, described how lessons from their experience had been used to inform other provision, as summarised overleaf;
Objective 3 lessons inform other provision

**Project 19** developed an online training tool for SMEs looking to do business in new overseas markets, although little further development or updating took place following the end of ESF support. However, the technology and expertise developed under the project has been used to develop existing and new equivalent projects (websites), and the lead organisation is now offering a similar market entry advice service for other regions (namely Eastern Europe and Latin America). The lead partner also described learning about how best to offer these types of training services to SMEs, and how to ensure that their particular needs are satisfied.

Although experiencing a combination of a lack of continuation funding and a reluctance to carry the associated administrative burden, **Project 25** described sharing the lessons from their experience on a regional basis, including with regional LSCs and other members of the regional skills infrastructure.

- more positively, **six of the completed projects had continued** after the end of Objective 3 funding – either in full or in part, with modification or by components combining with more mainstream services. The continuing projects are summarised below.

Sustainability and continuation under Objective 3

**Project 12** provided training for individuals seeking employment in the passenger transport sector, with the lead partner being established for the purposes of delivering the project. Since completion the lead partner has grown significantly and now secures funding from a number of different streams – including projects co-financed under ESF. Both the services offered by the project and the referral routes by which individuals came to be on the project have expanded.

While the initial project was very closely focused on taking individuals who had applied for and failed the tests to become a bus driver in London and subsequently trained them to ensure they are able to pass the tests in future, subsequent provision has become broader. Provision has also expanded, and while still closely related to the transport sector, beneficiaries are now offered training in more areas, for example, on job search outside the transport sector.

**Project 26** was established by Jobcentre Plus as a pilot under the New Deal programme, and has continued to operate with ESF Objective 2 and 3 and SRB funding from the Government Office for the South West. The revised project has a two-year target to work with 700 clients, and is progressing well towards this total.
Project 13 is continuing with funding from one of its former match-funders for another two years, and aims to build on the research and findings from their ESF funded work. The project plans to work on the two successful pilot projects and roll them out further, with an ESF-legacy being the partnership formed to deliver the original project. The original steering committee has maintained regular contact, and has provided a forum for the partners to work out issues regarding project objectives. It has now been established as a regional network on gender and sport, meeting twice a year.

Project 17 submitted an application for SRB funding to continue their work and address some of the issues uncovered in the initial project. The local authority has committed to the project by supporting the recruitment of a full-time project manager for three years, and there is considerable interest amongst former trainees and employers to take part in the successor project and undertake further training.

Project 39 has continued to support spin-off workshops running on a regular basis, and staff from the lead agency have continued to provide technical and development support to volunteers interested in community radio (funded via a parallel Objective 2 project).

Project 28 was co-financed by Jobcentre Plus to provide preliminary/preparatory training services for individuals seeking to join the NDLP programme, prior to the development of the appropriate Gateway services. Following completion of the project, the provider was contracted to deliver the services for lone parents as part of the new Gateway provision, and following the approach developed for the initial project.

Of the completed projects where some degree of continuation was identified, half were delivered under co-financing and half under alternative bidding approaches. A similar distribution between co-financed and alternative bidding projects was also identified where no evidence of continuation was found. Although the completed case study projects would have been launched early in the life of the co-financing approach, it would perhaps be expected that the additional strategic positioning offered would lead to increased sustainability or at least sharing of key lessons with other partners and interested organisations. It may be that as the co-financing approach has matured, more CFOs are taking steps to build sustainability into projects from the outset.
6 Concluding comments

6.1 Introduction

Rather than providing a series of formal conclusions and recommendations, this final chapter provides a series of concluding comments which emerged from the considerable amount of information collected during the case study research.

The case study projects exemplified the wide variety of provision supported under Objective 3, under the current programming round, in terms of their:

- objectives – as indicated by the programme Policy Fields and measures, as well as the more specific objectives of individual projects funded;

- target groups worked with – which ranged from employees in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to harder-to-reach individuals and those at greatest distance from the labour market, and included individuals with single identifying characteristics and those with multiple, complex and frequently interlinked needs;

- services and activities provided – which included a range of accredited, vocational, employability and basic skills training, support with personal development including motivation and confidence building services and a range of supportive services to allow beneficiaries to participate.

In this context, it is clear that there is no ‘average’ Objective 3 project, with considerable variation in service provision and targeting being found between projects operating within a single Policy Field; this makes drawing conclusions across such a diverse range of activities difficult. As the aim of the study was to explore the delivery of Objective 3 projects on the ground, rather than explicitly evaluate their performance, the research brief posed a series of objectives and questions for the study to address. These objectives provide a structure for our concluding comments.
6.2 Study Objective 1 – furthering knowledge of Objective 3 provision in relation to individuals’ needs, characteristics and labour market circumstances

The main objective of the study was to investigate the operation of Objective 3 projects ‘on the ground’, and so contribute to knowledge of the processes followed and services provided by projects in order to inform policy and help assess European Social Fund (ESF) added value.

Chapter 2 described the potential issues and challenges faced by the different Objective 3 target groups, and so the considerations for projects working to meet their needs. Clearly these needs, and the broader characteristics of the different target groups, varied considerably: for example, services and processes to support training for SME employees under Policy Field 4 would be expected to be, and were, significantly different to those for potentially harder-to-reach beneficiaries under Policy Fields 1 and 2.

The case study projects illustrated that they had considered the needs of their beneficiaries and, in some cases, had adapted provision based on their early experiences of delivery to ensure these needs were most effectively met. Crucial to meeting needs were the assessment and diagnostic approaches followed in projects’ recruitment and induction processes. Here, an element of subjectivity frequently placed considerable emphasis on the knowledge of the project staff – with awareness/experience of specific beneficiary groups and their characteristics and needs being a key success factor in project delivery.

Chapters 3 and 4 described the activities, groups targeted and processes followed by the case study projects, and illustrated how projects were meeting the challenges of working with their different target groups. While most projects were working with individuals which matched the appropriate Policy Fields and measures, the study provided an insight into the range and complexity of actual target group coverage, even when projects initially appeared to be working with a single target group. Clearly the extent to which projects were working with multiple target groups varied between the projects, for example, those working with harder-to-reach groups, the employed workforce or individuals with more severe disabilities were more likely to focus solely on individuals from these groups.

However, many others described working with individuals who, while sharing the common characteristic of being unemployed or excluded from the labour market, featured a wider range of characteristics and potential challenges. Put simply, few projects considered the characteristics of their target groups solely in terms of their employment status, and reported a wider range of characteristics including: disaffection with employment and learning; having poor vocational, basic and personal skills; being homeless, ex-offenders or substance abusers; facing language or cultural issues associated with their ethnicity; and having different degrees of disability. It was clear that many more of the case study projects’ beneficiaries were
in reality, facing multiple labour market disadvantages than their formal categorisation would suggest and supported the rationale for the multi-faceted project approaches commonly identified.

The vast majority of the case study projects were following this ‘pathways’ approach, with an emphasis on providing multi-service, multi-faceted offers to meet clients’ often multiple needs. The case study projects offered an average of six services, with just one offering a single service and seven providing ten services or more. Some broad variations were identified in service provision by Policy Field and primary target group when compared to an ‘all case study average’, as summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1  Variation in service provision by policy field or primary target group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation by Policy Field</th>
<th>Variation by Primary target group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Field 1</strong> projects were more likely to offer job search assistance and work experience, and provide basic skills training and motivation support, given the nature of their target group.</td>
<td>The long-term unemployed were offered the greatest number of services of all target groups, and most likely to receive job search assistance and work experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Field 2</strong> projects were more likely to provide basic skills training and basic vocational training.</td>
<td>Individuals with disabilities were more likely to receive work experience, pre/basic vocational skills training and job search assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Field 3</strong> projects reflected the diversity of approaches to supporting participation in lifelong learning. While no individual services were more likely to be provided than the case study average, the number of different services provided was greater than for any other Policy Field.</td>
<td>Although based on only two projects, ethnic minority participants were more likely to be offered basic skills training, job search assistance and pre and basic vocational training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Field 4</strong> projects were more likely to deliver intermediate and higher level vocational training (including IT training) and help into self-employment, reflecting the employed status of their target groups.</td>
<td>Individuals facing multiple labour market disadvantages were more likely to receive basic skills training, basic vocational training, IT training and job search assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Field 5</strong> projects offered the narrowest range of services, and were more likely to offer job search assistance, help into self-employment, higher vocational skills training and individual action planning.</td>
<td>Again applying to just two projects, individuals classed as economically inactive were more likely to receive work experience, IT training and help into self-employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMEs and their employees</strong> were more likely to receive all types of training (with the exception of IT training), and interestingly, assistance with job search.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, the case study projects were considered to be delivering appropriate services, in an appropriate manner, to their respective target groups. While the beneficiary interviews identified a few examples of mis-matches between beneficiary needs/expectations and the services provided, these were limited and to an extent inevitable given the often wide range of groups covered by single projects.
6.3 Study Objectives 2 and 5 – furthering knowledge of how projects operate, and identifying factors leading to participation and positive outcomes

At the outset of the study a simple model or typology of project delivery was developed, featuring a series of steps from the initial identification of potential beneficiaries through their recruitment, assessment and service provision to their eventual exit from the programme. This model was used to review the operation of the case study projects, with Chapter 4 presenting the findings for the different steps within it. As would be expected, a range of different processes were followed, dependent on the different target groups and project objectives. In addition, a series of key success factors and good practice examples were also identified for project participation and supporting the achievement of positive outcomes.

A range of recruitment routes were described, including responses to projects’ marketing efforts, word of mouth and outreach and community-level approaches. Where projects were working with harder-to-reach target groups, considerable efforts were expended on recruiting (and retaining) individuals – commonly including outreach approaches but also featuring lengthy ‘courtships’ and the establishment of relationships based on trust. Clearly for these projects, considerable resources were used at this early stage of project engagement, although time invested in developing such relationships appeared to be invested well. In some cases, initial engagement processes also included changing individual perceptions of employment and training to viable options for beneficiaries – a phenomenon confined not only to individual beneficiaries but also affecting SMEs.

As mentioned above, the initial engagement and assessment approaches were key to ensuring that individuals most likely to benefit from the project were recruited to it, and once recruited, received the most appropriate combination of services. While the assessment and diagnostic approaches described were mostly informal, they appear in the most part to have been effective. A series of common key features emerged, including:

- knowledge of the target group in question – with projects using individuals from, or with, working knowledge of their target groups;
- knowledge of provision appropriate to beneficiary needs – either within the project or from other providers;
- prioritising/being prepared to invest time in assessment procedures – in recognition of their importance, as well as the need to ‘stagger’ assessments for certain individuals and target groups.

While the services delivered by projects varied in the content and focus according to project objectives and target groups, a series of common factors was identified, including:
• the use of non-traditional settings for delivery – to emphasise the difference to mainstream provision, and establishing informal, unthreatening and nurturing environments;

• the importance of specialist inputs where appropriate – often complementing and adding value to projects’ ‘in-house’ provision;

• pitching activities at an appropriate level for the individual beneficiaries concerned;

• celebrating achievement – with, in many cases, Objective 3 participation being beneficiaries first experiences of tangible achievement, and so motivating them to progress further.

Key to success for the more challenging target groups was the availability and level of support from project workers, as identified in the beneficiary interviews and contacts with projects more widely. While the majority of beneficiaries were highly satisfied with their project experiences, it was clear that the support provided to them was a key contributor to their views and had ensured they remained committed to their involvement. The support offered included one-to-one contact to discuss progress and any barriers to participation encountered, advice and guidance on benefit entitlements and progression issues, and financial support with transportation and childcare.

Finally, while the majority of projects described following some form of exit procedure with their beneficiaries, these were most commonly in the form of informal discussions but also included more formalised interviews and advice on progression. The extent to which beneficiaries found such exit procedures useful was unclear, although in a number of instances, both projects and former beneficiaries described an absence of options for individuals to progress to when they were not ready for entry to either employment or education and training opportunities. This was a particular issue for individuals at greatest distance from the labour market, where it was clear that for certain individuals the progress made whilst on their projects was at risk of being lost.

6.4 Study Objective 3 – furthering knowledge of what processes and interventions are effective for different target groups

Although the study did not aim to evaluate provision under Objective 3, it allowed an investigation of the processes and interventions which appeared to be effective for the different target groups covered by the case study projects. In terms of their overall performance, the majority of the projects had, or were progressing well towards, the achievement of their respective objectives and performance targets.

While this was to some extent expected given the case study selection process, (which included an inevitable skew towards better performing projects and so better practice), in many cases the programme monitoring procedures failed to
capture the more subtle ‘soft’ outcomes achieved by their beneficiaries. Indeed, for many projects achievement will focus on soft outcome measures, especially when working with the hardest to reach or those at greatest distance from the labour market. The issue of soft outcomes and how best to capture them was commonly raised in discussions with projects, but few examples of noteworthy practice were identified. Knowledge of the centrally available guidance on measuring soft outcomes was extremely limited, while demand for such guidance was high, and we suggest that steps are taken to raise awareness of the available materials with existing projects and via co-financing organisations (CFOs).

The review of project processes, and the experiences of current and former beneficiaries, led to the identification of a series of ‘good practice’ examples and principles for working with the different Objective 3 target groups. While by no means exclusive to the specific target groups, with many of the underlying principles being applicable to all, Chapter 4 set out a series of good practice points. For example for:

- the long-term unemployed – the importance of flexible delivery, close working with individuals to specify and plan interventions, and services to build confidence, motivation, personal and employability skills within a non-threatening environment;

- individuals with disabilities – here, awareness and understanding of individual challenges and capabilities was key, as was the design of packages of services to meet (and in some cases challenge) individual needs and expectations. However, it is important to find an appropriate balance between pushing beneficiaries too hard (and risking drop-out) and challenging their own, and others’, expectations;

- SME beneficiaries – good practice and key success factors identified included approaches to initial engagement, the importance of stressing the business case for services provided, evidencing the quality of provision and the use of flexible delivery models.

6.5 Study Objective 4 – furthering knowledge of the range and extent of existing support for individuals facing multiple disadvantages

Projects working with individuals facing multiple labour market disadvantages faced a series of challenges in working with, and maintaining the commitment of, members of their target groups. However, as suggested earlier, many of these challenges were shared by projects more widely, who were working with individuals in the other target groups where multiple needs were also identified.

As Chapter 3 illustrated, beneficiaries facing multiple disadvantages were found to be more likely be offered basic skills training, information technology (IT) training, work experience, job search assistance and basic, intermediate and higher vocational
training opportunities. However, the most significant differences between the provision offered by projects targeting this group was the range of both direct and supporting services available as part of their offers. The good practice and key success factors identified for working with this group included: the ability for projects to address the range of individual and multiple needs (either through their own provision or by referral to other providers), the provision of one-to-one support and taking steps to foster and sustain commitment. Importantly, projects often had to address client needs extending beyond their main remits, for example, assisting homeless beneficiaries to find accommodation, fitting provision around other commitments (ranging from childcare to treatment for substance abuse), and providing a plethora of advice with benefit queries and other issues to ensure continued participation.

It is this truly ‘multi-service’ approach that differentiated Objective 3 provision from other available mainstream provision, and it is noteworthy that for many of the beneficiaries interviewed, it was this ‘difference from the mainstream’, and previous experiences of provision thereof, that attracted them to their projects in the first case. This ‘difference’ was expressed in a variety of ways, including experience of previous contact with the provider involved, the nature of initial contact with the project and their method of recruitment, and the extent to which project staff were able to empathise and establish positive relations with individual beneficiaries.

The issue of challenging preconceived ideas also emerged in work with individuals with multiple disadvantages, and often referred to their own (often limited) expectations of what they could achieve. While care needed to be taken not to stretch individuals beyond their (enhanced) capabilities, successful projects challenged their beneficiaries to exploit the potential for achievement not recognised prior to their participation.

6.6 Study Objective 6 – assessing the added value of ESF support in relation to domestic programmes

Chapter 5 identified the added value offered by the case study projects, as well as examining the legacies left by the completed projects in the sample. Where appropriate, projects described their experience of operating under co-financing and alternative bidding arrangements.

In addition to the provision of funding, four main areas of added value could be identified across the case study projects. These were where ESF support had allowed projects to:

- **extend coverage** – by supporting work with target groups where no specific provision was available and by filling gaps in provision, based on identified need;

- **support innovation and change** – by supporting new, different or more appropriate beneficiary activities;
• **make links with mainstream provision** – for example, through activities to prepare for, or enhance, existing provision – and so contribute to the effectiveness of mainstream services;

• **promote operational and strategic partnerships** – through contacts made in service planning and delivery.

A further aspect of potential Objective 3 added value was through the **continuation of project activities** once funding was completed. The interviews with completed case study projects allowed this area to be examined, with six of the 11 able to comment describing how their activities had been sustained, at least in part. Of the remaining projects, two reported how although their work had not continued, lessons from their experience had influenced and made a useful contribution to provision elsewhere.

Given that in many cases, Objective 3 projects could be seen as having a demonstration role, through working with new target groups or trialling different models/combinations of services, they present a potential reserve of experiential learning that appears to be often untapped. While it appears that some CFOs and Government Offices have taken steps to tap this resource, the case study findings suggest that such approaches could be extended to reap the wider benefits of Objective 3 funding.

6.7 **Study Objective 7 – examining the factors causing the relatively low take-up of Policy Field 2, measure 1 – widening access to basic skills provision**

Finally, the study sought to identify any evidence into the relatively low take-up under Policy Field 2 measure 1, which focuses on widening access to basic skills provision.

Four of the case study projects were operating under Policy Field 2 measure 1, three of which included the provision of basic skills training for their beneficiaries. Elsewhere basic skills provision was included in the project offers of a further 11 projects, spread across all five Policy Fields but most commonly under Fields 1 and 2.

The case study fieldwork identified little information of direct relevance to the question posed in the study brief. However, it may be that basic skills provision is taking place to a greater extent than data from project application (or even closure) data suggests. Our research commonly identified examples where projects were delivering services in addition to those described in their applications, but which were considered to be essential to ensure beneficiary progress towards employment.
Appendix A
Study methodology

The study featured a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, across three stages of activity as follows:

- **Stage 1: Preparation stage** – including the review of relevant programme documentation; interviews with key programme stakeholders; the production of a case study sample and the development of an assessment framework and survey tools.

- **Stage 2: Fieldwork stage** – case study fieldwork with 40 Objective 3 projects, including the review of project documentation and management information (MI); consultations with project providers, partners and stakeholders; and beneficiary interviews.

- **Stage 3: Project completion stage** – featuring the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the study, and production of a project report.

All of the fieldwork was undertaken on an anonymous basis, to ensure openness amongst the various case study interviewees. Each of the study stages are described in more detail below.

**Stage 1: Preparation**

This stage consisted of a series of tasks to prepare for the case study fieldwork, including:

- **Document review** – the review of the Objective 3 Operational Programme, previous research and evaluation reports of relevance to the current programming round.
• **Stakeholder interviews** – to inform the context for the study, and in particular further our understanding of the needs of the specific Objective 3 target groups, through consultations with organisations working with these specific target groups. In addition, initial consultations also took place with representatives of the European Social Fund (ESF) Division and regional Government Office staff.

• **Development of the case study sample** – although the study was not intended to establish a scientifically representative sample of Objective 3 projects, it was important that the projects selected were broadly representative of the wider population in terms of:
  - policy field and measure, and target groups coverage;
  - project size (in terms of budget);
  - project status, i.e. live and completed projects;
  - co-financed and alternative bid projects.

Having established a sample frame for case study project selection, the frame was populated on the basis of recommendation from the Government Offices (and in some cases, co-financing organisations) contacted. As the study aimed to examine project delivery on the ground, the emphasis was on projects which were operating effectively and which offered potential learning opportunities.

• **Checklist development** – the final preparatory task was the development of a series of qualitative, semi-structured checklists to be used in the case study interviews. These included checklists for project staff, key partners and beneficiaries (both current and former project participants).

Stage 2: Fieldwork

The bulk of the study resources were dedicated to fieldwork with the 40 case study projects, taking place between August and December 2004. Each case study featured:

• the review of project documentation and management information – including initial applications and significant profile change documentation;

• project visits and interviews with project managers, delivery staff, key partners and local stakeholders, including co-financing organisations where relevant;

• interviews with beneficiaries – including current project participants, and follow-up contacts with project completers. These included attempts to investigate labour market histories, and questioning on comparative experiences of ESF and other labour market interventions.

The composition of the case study projects by Policy Field and measure is given in Table A.1.
### Table A.1  Case study projects by policy field and measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Case study projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Active labour market policies</td>
<td>1.1 2 &lt;br&gt; 1.2 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Equal opportunities and social inclusion</td>
<td>2.1 4 &lt;br&gt; 2.2 6 &lt;br&gt; 2.3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Lifelong learning</td>
<td>3.1 4 &lt;br&gt; 3.2 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Adaptability and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>4.1 3 &lt;br&gt; 4.2 2 &lt;br&gt; 4.3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Improving the participation of women in the labour market</td>
<td>5.1 2 &lt;br&gt; 5.2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 40

In addition to project managers, staff and partners in each of the 40 case studies, a total of 123 project beneficiaries were interviewed. Of these, 73 were actively engaged with their projects at the time of interview, and 50 who were completers.
Appendix B
Programme structure and target groups

ESF Objective 3 Structure – Policy Fields, measures and target groups

Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies

Objective – to reduce the flows into long-term unemployment through the use of active labour market measures, targeted at those recently unemployed or about to become unemployed.

Measure 1 – To provide advice guidance and support to enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies to prevent them from moving into long-term unemployment.

Target groups – adults unemployed for less than one year/young people for less than six months, and facing the risk of long-term unemployment – especially those lacking appropriate, or with low-level, skills, with no/outdated qualifications, who have not worked before, young people leaving care, living in rural communities, and people previously working in declining industries.

Measure 2 – To improve the employability of the unemployed, returners and young people of working age through targeted intervention to enhance vocational and other key skills and removing external barriers to labour market entry.

Target groups – long term unemployed people, especially those lacking appropriate, or with low-level, skills, with no/outdated qualifications, who have not worked before, living in rural communities, older people young people leaving care, and people previously working in declining industries.
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities and social inclusion

Objective – to reduce the impact of disadvantage faced by excluded groups and support their integration into the labour market through target group or area based approaches. To promote equality through research into direct and indirect discrimination in the labour market and support follow-on actions to combat the institutional aspects of discrimination.

Measure 1 – To widen access to basic skills provision: through the development of innovative and effective ways of promoting and providing basic skills, directed at those groups disadvantaged, excluded from or underrepresented in the workplace.

Measure 2 – To provide help to improve the employability and remove barriers to labour market entry for those groups disadvantaged in the labour market, such as: people with disabilities; ethnic minorities; 13-17 year olds who have opted out of the educational system; lone parents; older workers; ex-offenders; the homeless; refugees; those recovering from addiction.

Measure 3 – To combat discrimination in the labour market, in particular to combat race, disability and age discrimination and improve the employability of these groups.

Measure 1, 2 and 3 target groups – individuals facing a range of labour market challenges, including disabled people from ethnic minority groups; older people; carers; those with mental health difficulties; people with severe literacy/numeracy problems and lacking key skills; people needing help with personal effectiveness and self-esteem/lack of motivation; people with substance abuse problems; teenager parents; refugees and asylum seekers; the homeless/rough sleepers; people completing a custodial sentence; people for whom English is a second language; lone parents; people in rural communities, and young people with learning difficulties.

Policy Field 3: Lifelong learning

Objective – to widen participation in lifelong learning so that more people continue throughout their lives to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and improve their employability in a changing labour market.

Measure 1 – Promoting wider access and participation in lifelong learning (especially for those groups least likely to take part in lifelong learning activities and lacking basic and key skills).

Target groups – individuals facing a range of labour market challenges, including those lacking basic, or key, skills (in or out of employment); on low incomes, especially unskilled workers; young people not undergoing training or education; young people who are, or may become, disaffected; people less likely to consider further learning – e.g. older people, single parents and people with dependent children; disabled people; and the recently unemployed.
Measure 2 – Improving the employability of those in work through lifelong learning provision.

Target groups – employees in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including people with low incomes, especially unskilled workers; those less likely to benefit from in-work training, including unskilled and semi-skilled staff; young people in work without training; people less likely to consider or undertake further learning, e.g. older people, single parents and people with dependent children.

Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship

Objective – To improve the skills base and adaptability of the employed labour force, and increase the level of entrepreneurship.

Measure 1 – To update and upgrade employees’ vocational skills including basic and key skills.

Target groups – employers and workers – including employers involved in improving employees’ skills; and workers affected by industrial change, changes in production systems, and workers threatened with unemployment or redundancy.

Measure 2 – To identify and meet emerging skills shortages.

Target groups – organisations undertaking national, regional and sectoral research into adaptability, the effects of new technology and training needs; businesses needing higher level skills for growth; technicians, managers, in-house trainers, mentors and key individuals in SMEs; business organisations/trade unions; and partnerships encouraging networking on training/development.

Measure 3 – Encourage entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of businesses particularly SMEs.

Target groups – companies and individuals trying to expand and create new employment opportunities; people with good ideas for new businesses; trainers and managers; SMEs employers seeking to develop strategies to overcome employees’ childcare difficulties; and rural communities.

Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market

Objective – to reduce the level of disadvantage faced by women in the labour market.

Measure 1 – To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.

Target groups – women and employers, including women working in underrepresented areas, in part-time or job share employment, seeking to start their own businesses or expand their SMEs, and women managers; and all employers aiming to support and deliver family-friendly working practices.
Measure 2 – To research issues related to gender discrimination in employment.

Target groups – organisations undertaking research/follow-up activities, including the Equal Opportunities Commission; policy research organisations; local employment or regeneration consortia; social partners; and organisations in training/employment.
Appendix C
Key characteristics of the case study projects
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project number</th>
<th>Policy Field/Measure</th>
<th>Total project budget £</th>
<th>ESF contribution £</th>
<th>Project live or closed</th>
<th>Project Target Groups</th>
<th>Primary Target Group</th>
<th>CFO or AB Target (and CFO type)</th>
<th>Target beneficiary numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>£208,100</td>
<td>£208,100</td>
<td>Live</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CFO (LA)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>£262,914</td>
<td>£118,149</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
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<td>£34,500</td>
<td>Live</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CFO (LSC)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>£83,393</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td>£118,500</td>
<td>Live</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>CFO (JC+)</td>
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<td>£76,000</td>
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<td>£101,000</td>
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Table C.1  Continued

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Key to target groups in Table 3.1 – Primary target groups (additional groups served in brackets)
1 – The unemployed (long-term, at risk of long term, and returners)
2 – People with disabilities
3 – Ethnic minorities
4 – People with caring responsibilities and lone parents
5 – The ‘hard-to-reach’ – including ex-offenders, the homeless, refugees, substance misusers and disaffected young people
6 – SME employees
7 – Other