ONE year on:
clients’ medium-term
experiences of ONE

Qualitative research with ONE participants

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This report presents the qualitative findings of research conducted with individuals who claimed benefit through the ONE service in summer 2000. The overall purpose of the research was to determine the impact of ONE on its participants. More specifically, it explored the service’s impact on participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit.

Objectives of ONE

The overall purpose of ONE was to establish a work-focused benefit service to improve the quality and quantity of labour market participation of people of working age. More specifically, the objectives of ONE were:

- to put more benefit recipients in touch with the labour market through the intervention of a Personal Adviser;
- to increase the level of sustainable employment by getting more benefit recipients into work;
- to ensure that more clients experience an effective, efficient service that is tailored to their personal needs;
- to change the culture of the benefits system and the general public towards independence and work rather than payments and financial dependence.

The evaluation

The Department for Work and Pensions (formerly Department of Social Security) has commissioned a wide-ranging evaluation of the ONE service, using a variety of research methodologies including: social research with ONE participants, staff and employers; operational research; costs-benefit analyses; and a database of administrative records. The overall aims of the evaluation were to assess:

- the feasibility of delivering ONE in the different models;
- the effectiveness of the different models in improving both the quality and quantity of labour market participation.

This report presents the findings from the second of two stages of qualitative research with individuals who claimed benefit through ONE since full participation was introduced.
The objectives for this qualitative element of the policy evaluation were:

- to consider the impact on people’s attachment to the labour market;
- to consider how far clients can be refocused on work as a first priority;
- to consider whether more people get jobs and whether they get them more quickly than they might otherwise;
- to see if more people stay employed for longer periods;
- to assess whether there has been a reduction in inactivity;
- to examine the effectiveness of the Personal Adviser in identifying barriers to work, in considering whole needs and in offering appropriate advice.

The prime concern for all ONE participants at the time of their claim was to secure some money, irrespective of their intentions towards the labour market, to support them in their everyday lives. All participants discussed their need to claim within the context of their immediate intentions and personal circumstances. For many this referred directly to their relationship with the labour market, implying that they perceived the benefit system to be a source of support in the absence of financially rewarding work. Other participants emphasised the need to claim so that they could fulfil intensive caring responsibilities for family members. This relationship between work and claiming benefit was used as the framework for identifying participants’ position in the labour market before and after visiting the ONE service.

Before exploring the effects of ONE after a year, it is useful to revisit participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit when they first entered the service and any impact achieved in the first three to four months. This will help to disentangle short and medium-term results, and show where, how and when ONE has made an impact.

Generally participants acknowledged a link between work, or their ability to work, and the support available through the benefit system. The research identified four different groups of participant, based on their attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit:

**Participants who were in work on entry to ONE**

Some participants were already in work when they made their initial claim for benefit through the ONE service. Most of these participants were working on a part-time basis, juggling work with their caring commitments, and did not feel able to work full-time. On entry to ONE, PAs concentrated on checking and submitting benefit forms at the initial meeting. Work was only discussed in the context of the immediate claim. There were no examples of PAs exploring participants’ work options in any depth during these meetings, although
some lone parents and carers were interested in increasing their hours, and jobseekers wanted full-time work. As a result, there were no changes in the attitudes and/or behaviour of those already in work three months after meeting with their ONE adviser. Instead, these participants perceived ONE to be primarily concerned with claiming benefit, and would only return to make further claims when necessary. (Section 3.1)

Participants for whom work was an immediate priority.

Claiming benefit was viewed as a temporary or short-term measure for those who perceived themselves to be ‘job ready’. These participants, from all client groups, were focused on finding work as an immediate priority in order to support themselves, and their families. Yet few had developed a clear, targeted strategy for finding work. Instead, many relied on advertisements in local newspapers for information on job vacancies. Where these participants discussed their work ambitions with a Personal Adviser during their first ONE meeting, the PA was often able to provide focused advice on how and where to look for jobs. In these scenarios, ONE made a direct, short-term impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those who lacked a clear or comprehensive job-search strategy.

ONE did not change the behaviour of those participants who had developed their own targeted job-search strategy prior to meeting with a PA. These participants were confident that they would find work relatively quickly and felt that they were using the most effective approach to finding work in their target labour market. Many of these participants found jobs within the first few months of claiming, without any direct, work-related assistance from their PA.

Finally, some people claiming sickness benefits perceived themselves to be ‘job ready’ and felt that work was an immediate priority. Most of these participants were unsure what work they were able to do since the nature of their illness or injury prevented them from returning to the same job that they had held prior to claiming benefit. Where PAs explored work opportunities with these sick or disabled clients, participants responded positively by engaging in a dialogue about the possible options. In these instances, individuals’ motivation and confidence in finding work increased and their job-search strategy was modified to reflect the new areas of work discussed. This impact was most pronounced when PAs’ advice and guidance was tailored to the participant’s existing skills and interests, and considered their illness or injury. A small number of sick or disabled clients moved into work as a direct result of the advice they received through the ONE service. (Section 3.2)
Participants for whom work was an option in the future.

Some participants were not focused on work at the time of their initial PA meeting, but did want to work within the next two years. A variety of personal circumstances influenced these participants’ ability to focus on work, including: participation in education or training (lone parents); the sudden end of a relationship (lone parents and widows); a recent illness or injury to themselves or close family member (carers and those claiming sickness benefits).

The extent to which ONE made an impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those participants who considered work to be an option in the future was limited, often because PAs concentrated on benefits and did not discuss work in any depth. The greatest impact was achieved with those individuals who had recently lost a partner, either through death or separation. The ONE service focused on benefit claims, providing financial security during a period of uncertainty and disruption. Although work was not really discussed, the space and sympathy afforded by PAs allowed these participants to come to terms with their new situation and reflect on their next steps. After three months, some of these participants were beginning to think about the type of jobs they were interested in but they had not started to actively seek work (Section 3.3).

Participants for whom work was not an option.

Lastly, some participants from all client groups (except jobseekers) did not consider work to be an option in either the foreseeable future or at all. These participants fell into three broad groups: those who did not feel it was possible to combine work with caring responsibilities (lone parents and carers); those who did not want to work alongside their other commitments (also comprising lone parents and carers); and those who suffered continuous serious illnesses.

Personal Advisers were able to change a few participants’ attitudes to work and claiming benefit by raising work as an option or exploring training courses for personal development. These effects were, however, an exception to the wider experiences of those participants who did not feel that work was an option. Many participants claiming sickness or disability benefits in this group did not feel that ONE was appropriate for them because they were not able to work due to the nature and/or severity of their illness, and did not feel that work was a realistic option in the foreseeable future (Section 3.4).

Follow-up contact in ONE

(Chapter 4) The research found that further contact with ONE, after participants’ initial PA meeting, was either made as a result of a change in personal circumstances or because work-focused individuals expected the service to help them find work. The majority of meetings were ‘one off’
discussions focusing on a new or repeat claim for benefit, particularly for jobseekers who were ‘between jobs’ or for those on sickness or disability benefits who had undergone a Personal Capability Assessment (PCA). These discussions were usually concerned with the individual’s movement back into, or towards, the labour market. Not all participants felt that this was appropriate, however, particularly when their benefit had been changed from Incapacity Benefit (IB) to Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and the individual did not feel ready to work.

Some lone parents and jobseekers specifically asked to return to ONE for further contact. These subsequent meetings were often wholly work-focused, discussing job-search methods and alternative types of work with appropriate hours. Participants appreciated the opportunity to return to the service at their own pace to see the same adviser. This was particularly the case for lone parents, where advisers were successful in building up a relationship with individuals over time. Even where these lone parents did not perceive ONE to be a work-focused service, and felt that work was a longer-term goal, subsequent meetings with a PA would gradually shift the focus of discussions from benefits to work (Section 4.4).

Many of the widows, lone parents and carers who were in work at the start of their ONE claim were still working with the same employer a year later. They had held these jobs for a considerable period prior to, or alongside, claiming benefit and were motivated to keep their job. A few of the participants who were in work when they entered ONE had since changed jobs, either to a similar position with a new employer, or to a new job in a different sector. The reasons for these changes were varied. None of these participants contacted their PA prior to leaving their job because they perceived ONE to be a service for people needing to claim benefit, not for people in work (Section 5.1).

Of those participants who were focused on work as an immediate priority at the time of their initial PA meeting, many had moved into work. The majority of these were jobseekers, and lone parents. For some, this movement was supported and guided by their PA’s job-search advice. For others, their success in finding work was independent of any ONE intervention. A few work-focused participants who did not move into work did return to ONE, or the Jobcentre, for follow up contact (Section 5.2).

On entry to ONE, some lone parents, carers, widows and sick or disabled participants had felt that they would like to return to work in the near future but that this was not an immediate priority. ONE continued to provide support to lone parents, in particular, and as a result their confidence and motivation to continue with their goals, and progression towards the labour market, were sustained. A small number of people claiming sickness or disability benefits had moved
closer to the labour market as a result of their recoveries from their illness or injury. Many of the carers and sick or disabled clients who had considered work to be an option for the future had not attended a follow-up meeting with ONE, and as a result their relationship to the labour market, and claiming benefits, had not changed. Similarly, a few carers, widows and people claiming sickness or disability benefits moved further away from the labour market. Their PA meetings had been confined to processing their claims, and they had not had follow up contact. As time passed, these individuals became resigned to the fact that they would not, or could not, work in the foreseeable future, if at all.

The labour market positions of those who had not regarded work as an option at the time of their PA interview had rarely changed. For the most part this group’s personal circumstances and responsibilities were their primary concerns. However, in a few cases, particularly for lone parents and people claiming sick and disabled benefits, participants were able to move towards the labour market as a result of advice and support that they received from either their ONE PA or a specialist adviser (Section 5.4).

Broadly the same client groups moved towards, and into the labour market as this includes jobseekers and lone parents, some of whom attributed their movement to ONE or, in some cases, New Deal. For many lone parents work became an option in the shorter-term, as they completed education and training (or moved into further education and training). Additionally, there were a number of widows, lone parents and sick or disabled participants who began to think about work as a result of contact with ONE. There was also some substantial movements for those who felt work was not an option, or not an immediate option, into work or towards actively seeking work, as a result of changes in their personal circumstances. However, a year after participants’ entry into the ONE service, there has also been some movement away from the labour market. This tended to refer to widows and sick or disabled participants.

One of the key objectives of this research was to explore how the ONE service helped people to stay in work. ONE could potentially contribute towards the sustainability of a participant’s employment by:

- changing their attitude and/or behaviour in relation to the labour market;
- addressing the individual’s specific barriers to work, such as skills needs;
- considering participants’ whole needs, including wider personal commitments.
Participants’ intentions in relation to the labour market were often a reflection of their previous experience of work; their skills; and attitudes to benefit. All of these factors were likely to impact on participants’ willingness and ability to remain in the labour market over time.

Participants who intended to stay in the same job

Those participants who intended to stay in their jobs tended to have a commitment to their work and the requisite skills for their job. They had moved into work in a number of different ways. In some cases ONE had supported participants by giving them advice on job-search methods. Advice on in-work benefits, and better-off calculations, were also often offered to participants by PAs, and were a key factor in helping people move into work, and sustaining them once they were there.

Those participants who intended to change jobs, but stay in employment

These participants were generally fairly work motivated, but had become dissatisfied with their current position for a number of reasons. Most often this was because they had no real commitment to their job as it did not reflect their personal interests, previous work experience, education or training. In some cases the hours, and pay, were not sufficient for the participants’ needs. Where this was the case, participants intended to move on, and usually had a specific job, or type of work in mind, and believed that it would be readily available (Section 6.3.2).

Those participants who intended to leave their job, and go onto benefits

In these cases the quality of contact that participants had with the ONE service did have a potential impact on their decision to move out of work. Some of these participants had initially regarded some type of work as a possibility, were they to find an appropriate job. This might have entailed finding a part-time job to fit in with other commitments, or the correct type of work for someone with an illness or disability (Section 6.3.3).

Conclusions

Participants’ attachment to the labour market, and the priority they afforded to work, often reflected their personal circumstances and previous history of claiming and working.

ONE improved and increased some participants’ engagement in the labour market, but for others there has been little, or no, impact on their attitudes and behaviour regarding work. Direct impacts were made on those for whom work was an immediate priority but who needed additional help or support of some kind. It did not change the behaviour of those who had a targeted job search strategy prior to their
involvement in the service, particularly lone parents and younger jobseekers, although they appreciated the additional support. In some cases, PAs were also able to explore the possibility of work with participants who were more distanced from the labour market. This was achieved most successfully with sick or disabled clients and less frequently with widows and carers. The extent to which ONE made an immediate impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those for whom work was an option in the future was limited. ONE was able to make an impact on those lone parents for whom work was not an option by undertaking some exploratory discussions around personal interests and relating them to work.

Where ONE had successfully refocused some participants on work in the period after their first PA meeting, this momentum and focus was often lost where participants had no further contact with the service. It was often the case that participants would not return to see their PA if they did not have a specific inquiry to raise with their PA.
In 1999, the Government launched ‘ONE’ as a pilot programme to test new ways of delivering benefits to people of working age. Based on the philosophy of ‘work for those who can, security for those who cannot’, ONE sought to establish a work-focused benefit service in 12 pilot areas across Great Britain. After March 2000, all new and repeat benefit claimants in these pilot areas were allocated a Personal Adviser (PA) and were required to attend an interview to discuss options for work at the start of their claim for benefit.

This report presents the qualitative findings of research conducted with individuals who claimed benefit through the ONE pilots - the ONE ‘participants’. It is based on two stages of fieldwork: the first conducted in autumn 2000 and the second completed in early summer 2001. The report focuses on the ONE service’s impact on participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit. More specifically, it assesses whether ONE has helped to improve and increase participants’ engagement with the labour market and how this has occurred.

1.1 Aims and objectives of ONE

The overall aim of ONE was to establish a work-focused benefit service to improve the quality and quantity of labour market participation of people of working age. The service also sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To put more benefit recipients in touch with the labour market.
- To increase the sustainable level of employment by getting more benefit recipients into work.
- To ensure that more clients experience an effective and efficient service that is tailored to their personal needs.
- To change the culture of the benefits system and the general public towards independence and work rather than payments and dependence.

1.2 The delivery of ONE

Three different ‘models’ of delivery were implemented across the 12 pilot areas to test new ways of providing services to benefit claimants:

**Basic Model**

The Benefits Agency, the Employment Service and local authorities delivered ONE through local Jobcentres and benefit offices. The Basic Model was the first to start operating, beginning in June 1999. It was tested in four areas: Clyde Coast and Renfrewshire; South East Essex; Lea Roding (North East London and West Essex); and Warwickshire.
Call Centre Model

Call centres, and call-centre technology, were used for participants’ first contact with ONE to collect individuals’ details and background information to their claim. Subsequent work-focused meetings with a PA were held in local Jobcentres and benefit offices. Call-centre variants of the Basic Model started in four of the 12 pilot areas in November 1999: Buckinghamshire; Calderdale and Kirklees; Somerset; and South East Gwent.

Private and Voluntary Sector (PVS) Model

The PVS Model was delivered by private and voluntary organisations, instead of traditional government front-line agencies, but worked in a similar way to the Basic Model. This variant began operating in November 1999 and was tested in the four remaining pilot areas: Leeds; North Cheshire; North Nottinghamshire; and Suffolk.

The ONE service had three separate stages: a Start-up meeting with a Start-up Adviser; a work-focused meeting with a Personal Adviser (PA); and follow-up meetings also held with a PA. This report is primarily concerned with the impact of participants’ interaction with their PA, particularly through follow-up meetings, and therefore does not cover Start-up in great detail. Further information on the impact of Start-up and how it operates can be found in Green et al. (2000) ‘First Effects of ONE: Findings from Survey and Qualitative Research with Clients’ DSS Research Report No. 126 Leeds: CDS; and in Osgood et al. (Forthcoming Winter 2001/02) ‘Delivering a Work - Focused Service: Views and Experiences of Clients’.

1.3 The ONE evaluation

The Department for Work and Pensions (formerly Department of Social Security) commissioned a wide-ranging evaluation of the ONE service in 1999\(^1\). The overall aims of the evaluation were to assess:

- the feasibility of delivering ONE using different models of delivery;
- the effectiveness of the service in improving the quality and quantity of people’s labour market participation.

Given the different focus of these two aims, the evaluation was divided in two ‘strands’: a delivery evaluation and a policy evaluation. This report forms part of the policy evaluation and does not detail how ONE was being delivered at the time of the research. Further information on the delivery of the ONE service can be found in Osgood et al. (Forthcoming Winter 2001/02) ‘Delivering a Work - Focused Service: Views and Experiences of Clients’; and in Kelleher et al. (2001) ‘ONE in

\(^1\) Responsibility for which was transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in June 2001.
1.3.1 The policy evaluation

The policy strand of the evaluation has been primarily concerned with the outcomes achieved by the ONE service and how these have been realised. These outcomes relate directly to the labour market and may include increases in individuals’ motivation and confidence to work as well as clear movements off benefits and into paid employment. The research objectives for the policy evaluation included:

- To consider the impact on people’s attachment to the labour market.
- To consider how far clients can be refocused on work as a first priority.
- To examine the effectiveness of the Personal Adviser in identifying barriers to work, in considering whole needs and in offering appropriate advice.
- To consider whether more people get jobs and whether they get them more quickly than they might otherwise.
- To see if more people stay employed for longer periods.
- To assess if there has been a reduction in inactivity.

It is important to stress that this report is concerned only with the qualitative findings related to these objectives. It does not, and cannot, address quantitative questions concerning the number of people getting jobs, whether they get them more quickly or if they stay in work for longer periods. These questions are being fully addressed by a quantitative survey being carried out by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) and Office for National Statistics (ONS) with participants. Interim findings are available in Green et al ‘The Medium Term Effects of Voluntary Participation in ONE’ DWP Research Report 149, CDS Leeds. The findings presented here, however, do aim to inform the results of the quantitative survey by explaining how ONE influenced individuals’ decisions about work. These may include: how ONE encouraged individuals to refocus their priorities and activities towards work; and how the service provided support with claiming benefit for those who were unable to work.

1.4 Research approach

As mentioned above, this report presents the findings from qualitative research with ONE participants as part of the policy strand of the overall ONE evaluation. It is based on in-depth qualitative interviews with individuals who claimed benefit through the ONE service and attended an initial meeting with a PA in summer 2000. It represents the culmination of two stages of fieldwork completed over a year in six of the 12 pilot areas, and looks at participants’ attitudes and behaviour a year after they first entered ONE.
1.4.1 Round one: Initial interviews with participants

In all, 106 interviews were held in autumn 2000 with participants drawn from five specific ‘client groups’: Jobseekers, lone parents, carers, widows and people claiming sickness or disability benefits. This fieldwork was timed to take place approximately three months after participants had attended their initial PA meeting, to determine the short-term effects of the ONE service. To ensure that the research captured a wide range of attitudes and outcomes achieved after the first PA meeting, respondents for this first stage of the qualitative research were purposively recruited. This also allowed the research to collect substantial evidence to robustly reflect the diversity of views and experiences encountered. The interim findings from this preliminary stage of the research are available in Davies and Johnson (2001) ‘Moving towards work: The short-term impact of ONE’, DSS Research Report No. 140 Leeds: CDS.

1.4.2 Round two: Follow-up interviews with participants

All 106 respondents from the first round of qualitative research were invited to meet with the research team again some nine months later, in summer 2001. The aim of this follow-up research was to explore the impact of ONE a year after participants’ initial meeting with a PA. In all, 63 respondents from the first stage were recruited, but very few of them had had further contact with the ONE service since they were last interviewed by the research team. Therefore a ‘booster’ sample of ONE participants was used to recruit individuals who had been in contact with ONE since their initial claim in summer 2000. This was necessary to ensure that the research could explore the timing, appropriateness and impact of follow-up meetings in ONE. Using the same client groups, 42 individuals were recruited from this booster sample and interviewed in summer 2001.

A full account of the methodology used for the qualitative research is provided in Appendix A at the end of this report. A brief profile of the respondents is presented in Chapter 2.

1.4.3 Research context

As is often the case, this research was conducted during a time of ongoing policy development and change. In March 2000, the Prime Minister announced plans to introduce a new agency to provide work-focused services and benefits for everyone of working age: ‘Jobcentre Plus’. The philosophy underpinning Jobcentre Plus is the same as that for ONE – work for those who can, security for those who cannot. Some 56 Jobcentre Plus Pathfinders will come into being during October 2001 delivering a service similar, but not identical, to that provided by the ONE Call Centre variant. Many of the process changes are to take on board lessons from the ONE pilots including the need to keep the benefit separate and before the work-focused interview. The findings of this qualitative research relate specifically to participants’ experience and perceptions of ONE. Many of the lessons from this research are relevant and transferable to the new working age agency both now and in the future.
1.5 Report structure

Chapter 2 provides some background information on how ONE was delivered, the pilot areas covered by this qualitative research and a brief profile of the individuals interviewed.

Chapter 3 summarises ONE’s impact on individuals’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit three months after entering the service. It draws on the findings from the first round of qualitative interviews, but also incorporates additional evidence from interviews held with individuals from the new booster sample.

The extent and nature of further contact made with the ONE service by participants is explored in Chapter 4. This chapter also investigates whether participants felt that this further contact was tailored to their needs and appropriately timed.

Chapter 5 analyses the attitudes and behaviour of participants a year after their initial ONE experience to determine the service’s medium-term impact and how participants’ engagement with the labour market was affected.

Chapter 6 considers the sustainability of employment for those participants who have moved into work at any point since their first meeting with a Personal Adviser, and the role played by ONE in supporting this movement into work.

Finally, Chapter 7 draws some conclusions from the main findings, identifying those aspects of the service that did, or did not, work for the participants interviewed in this research.
As background information for the rest of the report, this chapter explains the service offered to benefit claimants through ONE, the labour market conditions in the six pilot areas included in this research, and a brief description of the characteristics of the participants interviewed.

2.1 The ONE process

As indicated in Chapter 1, three different delivery models were tested during the ONE pilots. The process by which participants interacted with the service was broadly similar across all three models. The ONE service had three separate stages: a Start-up meeting with a Start-up Adviser; a work-focused meeting with a Personal Adviser (PA); and follow-up meetings also held with a PA. The following description of how ONE worked is based on the original design and therefore reflects how it was intended to operate. It does not necessarily reflect the way the service actually worked in practice at the time of this research. For further information on actual practice please refer to Chapters 4 and 5 and other research reports available from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)2.

2.1.1 Start-up meeting

An individual entered ONE through a ‘Start-up meeting’ during which background information, such as the person’s name and work history, was collected by a Start-up Adviser. The purpose of Start-up was to elicit, as quickly and comprehensively as possible, sufficient information about participants’ circumstances to enable them to participate fully in the ONE process. During this relatively short, informal meeting the Start-up Adviser would:

- explain the ONE service and check that the participant was eligible to take part in ONE;
- establish which benefit(s) the participant wished to claim, assess for additional benefits and ask relevant questions to enable accurate completion of the claim form;

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• gather information on employment history, job readiness, and barriers to employment – if the participant was ‘job ready’, the Start-up Adviser would also conduct a job-search and refer the participant to suitable vacancies;

• explain the PA service and book the participant’s first meeting with a named PA, usually to take place within three days;

• advise the participant on the evidence and documentation to be brought to the PA meeting to support their claim for benefit.

In the Call Centre pilots the Start-up meeting, including the completion of certain claim forms, was done over the telephone. If prospective claimants visited their local Jobcentre or benefit office to make a claim, they were given the telephone number for the call centre and asked to call the number in order to start the claim process. Dedicated telephones were provided on Agency premises for this purpose, or participants could call from their own home. Calls were charged at the local rate and, on contact, a Start-up Adviser arranged to call the participant back.

2.1.2 The initial Personal Adviser meeting

The second stage of the process was an initial meeting with a named Personal Adviser (PA). This meeting was conducted on a face-to-face basis and was intended to last up to one hour. During this meeting the PA was expected to:

• explain the PA’s role and what the ONE service offered;

• check the participant’s personal details to establish that the person attending was the intended benefit recipient;

• explore the participant’s circumstances, barriers to work, establish job goals and refer to suitable vacancies;

• identify if the participant qualified for New Deal;

• identify training or specialist support needs;

• discuss with the participant, where appropriate, the benefits of making an application to the Child Support Agency (CSA);

• consider the need for an in-work benefit calculation;

• agree and complete a Jobseeker’s Agreement (JSAg) for jobseekers or a ONE action plan for other participants.

All participants were required to attend a meeting with a PA as a condition of receipt of benefit from March 2000 onwards. While this was intended to occur within three days of the Start-up meeting, there was scope for the initial PA meeting to be deferred under certain circumstances. It might not have been appropriate, for example, to invite someone recently widowed or a lone parent with a new baby to attend a PA meeting to discuss the possibility of work in the immediate future. In such circumstances, PAs were expected to use their judgement to determine what immediate action was appropriate and to identify a later date when the initial meeting might be held.
2.1.3 Follow-up meetings

The process design for ONE anticipated that most participants would have further contact with the PA or a specialist adviser, such as a Disability Employment Adviser, after their initial PA meeting. All jobseekers were required to attend two key meetings after their initial PA meeting: one after 13 weeks of unemployment; and another after 26 weeks of unemployment. Similarly, other non-JSA participants were expected to attend further meetings at defined points in time, ‘trigger interviews’. Examples include following a Personal Capability Assessment (PCA) for individuals in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB) and annual triggers for lone parents.

In addition, it was assumed that half of all client groups (except jobseekers) would have ad hoc follow-up contact with a PA, depending on their circumstances. This would allow ongoing contact to be established between participant and adviser to review progress, provide support and examine suitable work opportunities. The number of instances and duration of this ad hoc follow-up contact would be agreed between the PA and participant, according to each participants’ individual circumstances. It was not mandatory, however, for non-JSA participants to participate in this type of further contact.

2.2 Study areas

As indicated in the previous chapter, this qualitative research covered six of the 12 pilot areas. The six areas were chosen because they exhibited different labour market characteristics, as described in the economic summaries below. Five of these areas were selected to be pilots on the basis of higher unemployment rates, while North Nottinghamshire was chosen for its lower unemployment. However, recent labour market analysis for North Nottinghamshire shows that employment and inactivity rates have deteriorated since November 2000 and are now below the rates for Great Britain as a whole.

Please note that the following data is based on local authority district boundaries rather than local benefit districts, and so should be used as guidance only.

2.2.1 Basic model pilot areas

Clyde Coast and Renfrew

Clyde Coast and Renfrew covers a resident population of approximately 440,000 people in four local authority districts: Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire.\(^3\) The proportion of women of working age in employment was highest in this pilot area (75 per cent in Inverclyde, for example) compared with a UK average of 68.3 per cent.\(^4\) Employment tends to be concentrated in the service industries (27.84 per cent), wholesale and distribution (17.6 per cent) and manufacturing (18.5 per cent of

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\(^3\) Estimated mid-year resident population, NOMIS, 1999.

all employment), where two in every five jobs is related to the manufacture of electrical equipment\(^5\). Unfortunately no reliable unemployment data was available for the Clyde Coast pilot area.

**Lea Roding**

The Lea Roding pilot area covered part of North East London (the London boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge) and West Essex (Epping Forest). With a local population of almost 600,000 people, Lea Roding was the third largest pilot area. It consists of a mix of urban and suburban areas. Employment and unemployment differs considerably within the pilot area. There is a significant amount of local employment in banking and finance in the more suburban parts (21.7 per cent in Redbridge compared with 14.6 per cent in Waltham Forest) for example. Unemployment is particularly high in Waltham Forest (7.5 per cent compared with a UK average of six per cent) while Redbridge benefits from relatively low rates of unemployment (4.9 per cent).

**Calderdale & Kirklees**

Among the pilot areas, Calderdale and Kirklees was the largest suburban-rural mix area, with a population of 585,000. Almost a third (30.8 per cent) of the local workforce is employed in manufacturing, with one in every four jobs in textiles despite recent years of decline in the industry. The proportion of people of working age in employment is slightly higher in Calderdale and Kirklees (76.4 per cent) than the UK average (73.8 per cent). This is mainly due to a higher proportion of men of working age in employment (81.4 per cent in Calderdale and 80.2 per cent in Kirklees) than found nationally.

**South East Gwent**

South East Gwent was the smallest pilot area included in this qualitative research, with a local resident population of almost 300,000. In close proximity to the valleys of South Wales, the area is predominantly rural, but includes the towns of Newport, Chepstow, Cwmbran and Abergavenny. The local workforce is mainly employed in wholesale and distribution, service industries and manufacturing, where one in four jobs are in metal manufacture. Recent announcements on the closure of Corus, a major local employer in the steel industry, is likely to adversely affect the number employed in manufacturing. Unemployment in Newport is 9.9 per cent, the highest level of unemployment across all six pilot or control areas, at ward level. Economic activity rates and the proportion of working age people in employment are the lowest of the study areas: 60.5 per cent of all people of working age are in employment in Blaenau Gwent compared with a UK average of 73.8 per cent.

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Leeds

Leeds is a large metropolitan city in Yorkshire. It was the largest of all the six pilot areas, with a population in excess of 725,000 people. Local employment is concentrated in wholesale and distribution (17.6 per cent) and banking and finance (22.4 per cent). Unemployment stands at 5.3 per cent of the local labour force, below the UK average of six per cent, while economic activity rates are similar to that found in the UK as a whole.

North Nottinghamshire

The North Nottinghamshire pilot area covered five local authority districts: Amber Valley; Ashfield; Bolsover; Mansfield; and Newark & Sherwood. The area is predominantly rural, with a local population of approximately half a million people. Local employment is concentrated in manufacturing (32.4 per cent), particularly metal, textiles and timber, rubber and plastics. The local labour market varies considerably across local authority boundaries. There are low economic activity rates, a low proportion of people of working age in employment, and relatively high rates of unemployment in Amber Valley, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood compared with Ashfield and Bolsover.

This qualitative research does not purport to be statistically representative of the entire ONE participant population, so it is important to show the type of people who were interviewed. The rest of this section provides some data on their characteristics, including age, gender and previous contact with the benefit system. This serves two functions: firstly, it shows exactly who the research has consulted; and secondly, it allows the reader to see if any differences exist in the people interviewed across the three delivery models.

Individuals were selected to participate in the research, and to an extent were defined, on the basis of the type of benefit claimed. Jobseekers were characterised by their claim for Jobseeker’s Allowance, for example, and widows by their claim for Widow’s Pension or other widows or bereavement benefits. However, it should be remembered that the ONE participants were individual service recipients and made up a diverse group. The interests and/or characteristics of carers, for example, might be similar to those of lone parents. Indeed carers might also be lone parents. Further, all individuals allocated to any one group cannot be considered to be homogenous in that they may have different attitudes and behaviour towards work. Participants’ attitudes and behaviour are explored in detail in Chapters 3 and 5.

A total of 105 participants were interviewed for the second stage of this qualitative research, as shown in Table 2.1. They were drawn from five client groups and from the three delivery models. Of these 105
interviews, 63 were with individuals who had been interviewed by the research team nine months previously and 42 were new respondents from a booster sample (as explained in Chapter 1).

**Table 2.1 Number of participants interviewed, by client group and delivery model**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JSA</th>
<th>Lone Parents</th>
<th>Sick or Disabled</th>
<th>Carers</th>
<th>Widows</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Centre Model</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVS Model</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1 Age

Figure 2.1 provides a graphical representation of the age distribution of the individuals interviewed by delivery model.

**Figure 2.1 Age range of interviewees, by delivery model**

The age profile of respondents drawn from the Basic Model pilot areas was different to that from the Call Centre and PVS models. More specifically, fewer individuals were interviewed from the 18-24 age group, representing younger jobseekers in the other models, and the 50+ age group, as a result of there being limited numbers of widows in both Lea Roding and Clyde Coast. These differences did not prompt variations in the research findings according to delivery model. There was sufficient evidence from other pilot areas on these two groups to confidently reflect their experience and views of ONE.
2.3.2 Gender

Figure 2.2 shows the composition of research participants according to their gender. By the nature of some of the client groups of interest to this research – namely lone parents, carers and widows – the individuals in these three categories were predominantly women and thus more women were interviewed than men.

Figure 2.2 The gender of interviewees, by delivery model

Female perspectives, therefore, heavily influence the research findings for these client groups reported later in this report. More importantly, the impact of ONE on men’s attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit is largely limited to cases from jobseekers and people claiming sickness or disability benefits.

2.3.3 Previous contact with the benefit system

Figure 2.3 shows that the research findings from the Call Centre Model were dominated by participants who were new to the benefit system, while respondents from the Basic and PVS Models tended to have previous or current experience of claiming benefit. This could have introduced some bias into the research findings for call centres, but participants’ experience of ONE was so varied that this was not the case.
The rest of the report now turns to the main findings from the research. Where appropriate, the following chapters highlight links between participants’ experiences of ONE, and their attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit, within the contextual factors outlined here.
Before exploring the effects of ONE on its participants after a year, it is useful to revisit participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit when they first entered the service and any impact achieved in the first three to four months. This will help to disentangle short- and medium-term results, and show where, how and when ONE has made an impact.

The key findings from previous qualitative research with participants for the ONE evaluation form the basis of this chapter. It uses participants’ relationship with the labour market at the start of their ONE experience as its main analytical framework, and is split into the following sections:

- Participants in work.
- Participants for whom work was an immediate priority.
- Participants for whom work was an option in the future.
- Participants for whom work was not an option.

Any new or additional evidence collected from the second round of qualitative interviews has been incorporated throughout the chapter. This has been done in order to reflect accurately the experiences and perceptions of those individuals who were not interviewed in previous qualitative research on ONE.

3.1 Short-term impact of ONE on participants in work

Some participants were already in work when they made their initial claim for benefit through the ONE service. Of these, a few widows had full-time jobs while jobseekers, lone parents, carers and other employed widows were working part-time. Lone parents and carers juggled their part-time work commitments with caring responsibilities and so did not feel able to work full-time. The widows who were in part-time work were in the same job, and often working the same hours, as they had prior to their husband’s death. Jobseekers perceived their part-time work to be a ‘rung on the ladder’ and a good opportunity to gain work experience in the absence of a full-time job. For all participants in work on entry to ONE, their claim for benefit represented an additional source of income to boost that derived from paid employment.

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7 Defined as working 16 hours per week or less.
Where participants were already in work, Personal Advisers (PAs) concentrated on checking and submitting benefit forms at the initial meeting. Work was only discussed in the context of the immediate claim. There were no examples of PAs exploring participants’ work options in any depth during these meetings, although some lone parents and carers were interested in increasing their hours, and jobseekers wanted full-time work. As a result, there were no changes in the attitudes and/or behaviour of those already in work three months after meeting with their ONE adviser. Instead, these participants perceived ONE to be primarily concerned with claiming benefit, and would only return to make further claims when necessary. None felt that they would, or could, return to seek advice specifically about work.

Claiming benefit was viewed as a temporary or short-term measure for those participants who perceived themselves to be ‘job ready’. Many expected the ONE service to focus on their benefit claim, and very few anticipated any work-related assistance. These participants, drawn from all client groups, were focused on finding work ‘as soon as possible’ in order to support themselves, and their families. Financial independence, ‘earning your own money’, and financial reward were cited as the main factors driving people to find work.

Lone parents, jobseekers and carers who considered work to be an immediate priority had clear ideas about the work they were seeking, often based on their prior experience. However, few had developed a clear strategy for finding work. Instead, most were applying for jobs on an ad hoc basis through local papers when they first entered the ONE service. Where these participants discussed their work ambitions with a Personal Adviser during their first ONE meeting, the PA was often able to provide focused advice on how and where to look for jobs. In these scenarios, ONE made a direct, short-term impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those who lacked a clear or comprehensive job-search strategy. Participants’ confidence in themselves, their job-search activities and in their work goals increased. They changed their job-seeking behaviour in line with the advice given and adopted a more targeted strategy to finding work.

This impact was augmented when PAs were familiar with participants’ circumstances or work goals, either through their own experience or because they knew someone personally who had been in a similar situation. Many of these participants moved into work or started vocational training to improve their skills and qualifications in their target labour market within three months of their initial ONE claim.

ONE did not change the behaviour of those participants who had developed their own targeted job-search strategy prior to meeting with a PA. These participants, including some jobseekers and lone parents, had a consistent work history, often with recent and relevant work
experience for the job sought. They were confident that they would find work relatively quickly. Where participants held ‘insider’ knowledge of recruitment practices in their target labour market, they felt that they were using the most effective approach to finding work in that market, and did not require assistance from their PA. In contrast, lone parents’ confidence and motivation was boosted by simply talking through their plans with an adviser and receiving reassurance that they were ‘on the right track’ and doing something worthwhile. Many of these participants found jobs within the first few months of claiming, without any direct, work-related assistance from their PA.

Similarly, ONE did not seem to challenge or change the attitudes and behaviour of those younger jobseekers with previous experience of claiming benefit. These participants were generally less motivated because their experience of working was characterised by low pay, long hours (often involving shift work) and temporary or casual contracts. They often dismissed any advice given by their ONE Personal Adviser, either because they didn’t believe that the system could help them or because they perceived the advice to be irrelevant to their needs. These participants largely perceived ONE to be the same ‘process’ they had experienced before. In some instances, they compared the advice received through ONE unfavourably with that offered through the Jobcentre. Three months after their initial ONE meeting, a few had moved into low-paid employment but many remained unemployed.

Finally, some people claiming sickness benefits perceived themselves to be ‘job ready’ and felt that work was an immediate priority. However, most of these participants were unsure what work they were able to do when they made their initial claim for benefit through the ONE service. Their recent illness or injury often prevented them from returning to the same, or similar, job that they had held prior to claiming benefit. These participants perceived ONE to be primarily concerned with benefits, and so few of them discussed with their PA their aspirations to return to work. Consequently, there was little or no change in their attitudes and behaviour towards work or the benefit system three months after making their ONE claim.

Where Personal Advisers did explore work opportunities with those sick or disabled clients who felt they were job ready, participants responded positively by engaging in a dialogue with their PA on the options available to them. PAs suggested participants start training to develop new skills, or encouraged them to consider different types of

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8 All of these participants had received Statutory Sick Pay for some time prior to claiming benefit through ONE.
jobs in the same field as their previous work experience. This type of advice and guidance was well received by participants when it was tailored to their existing skills and interests, and was feasible in light of their illness or injury. In these instances, individuals’ motivation and confidence in finding work increased and their job-search strategy was more focused after meeting with their adviser. A small number of sick or disabled clients moved into work as a direct result of the advice they received through the ONE service.

Some participants were not focused on work at the time of their initial PA meeting, but did want to work within the next two years. The extent to which ONE made an immediate impact on their attitudes and behaviour was limited, often because PAs concentrated on benefits and did not discuss work in any depth. A variety of personal circumstances also influenced these participants’ ability to refocus on work as a priority, falling into the following broad groups:

- Lone parents who had recently been separated from their partner and women who had been recently widowed.
- Participants who had recently become ill or were looking after a close family relative who had recently suffered ill-health.
- Lone parents in part-time education or training.

Following a sudden change in circumstances, such as the end of a relationship, some lone parents and widows felt that work was not a priority at the time of their claim because they needed time to adjust and look after their dependants. Instead they wanted some time to grieve, to look after themselves and their children, and to establish some stability in their lives. Support during the first PA meeting focused on benefit claims, providing financial security during a period of uncertainty and disruption.

Although work was not really discussed, the space and sympathy afforded by PAs allowed these participants to come to terms with their new situation and reflect on their next steps. The way in which PAs handled the meetings conveyed to these participants that help and support was available when they were ready. As a result, many stated that they would return to ONE when they felt that work was a more immediate priority. Three months after their initial meeting with a ONE Personal Adviser some of these participants were beginning to think about the type of jobs they might be interested in.

Claiming benefit was perceived to be a medium to long-term situation by those participants who had recently suffered an injury, were depressed or were off work due to ill-health. This was also the case for those participants caring for a close member of their family suffering poor health. In these instances, work was not their first or immediate concern. Instead, securing a source of income to support themselves...
and/or their dependants was the most important consideration. In line with these concerns, the initial PA meeting often focused on completing and submitting the relevant claim forms. Discussions about work tended to be confined to participants’ need to claim - explaining the events that led to their claim and exit from the labour market. Consequently there was little change in these participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work or the benefit system three months later.

In a few examples, participants claiming sickness or disability benefits asked their PA for advice about the type of work they would be able to do. In these instances, PAs advised participants to retrain in order to learn new skills. Possible areas of training were not discussed during the meeting. Instead participants were advised to think about their options and interests and return when they had a clearer idea of the area in which they wanted to work. This advice increased participants’ confidence in their ability to return to work in the future, but did not prompt changes in their behaviour towards the labour market. Most of these participants said that they were considering returning to their adviser after a period of reflection, though none had actually done so three months after their initial PA meeting.

A number of lone parents were in part-time education or training at the time of their claim, as part of a longer-term strategy to return to work. These ONE participants had decided on the type of work they wanted to do in the future and were taking concerted steps towards achieving their goals by enrolling and participating in vocational studies. For these individuals, PAs often provided advice, support and encouragement. Again, PA meetings tended to concentrate on completing claim forms. Participants felt this to be appropriate since they had already formulated their own medium-term plans in relation to the labour market. The advice and assistance on claiming given by PAs was considered to be valuable because it provided them with financial security while they embarked on something new or completed their studies. Where PAs gave their support to the plans laid out, participants’ confidence was increased and they were encouraged to consolidate their long-term plans to move back into work.

Lastly, some participants from all client groups, except jobseekers, did not consider work to be an option in either the foreseeable future or at all. They planned and expected to claim benefit(s) for a considerable period of time and so may be considered to be dependent on payments from the benefit system. Personal Advisers were able to change a few of these participants’ attitudes to work and claiming benefit by exploring the different options available. For lone parents, this often entailed exploratory discussions about individuals’ interests and hobbies, which allowed the PA to suggest training opportunities. More general discussions around work, including previous experience and options for the future, enabled some of those claiming sickness or disability...
benefits to feel work was a realistic and achievable option, when previously they had not felt that work was possible.

These impacts were, however, an exception to the wider experiences of those participants who did not feel that work was an option. Many participants claiming sickness or disability benefits did not feel that ONE was really appropriate for them because they were not able to work at the time of their claim. These claimants tended to suffer with continuing serious illnesses, such as emphysema and tuberculosis. Although many wanted to work, they felt that it was not a realistic option given the nature and/or severity of their illness.

Other participants, namely lone parents and carers, were not prepared or willing to work when they first entered ONE. Some felt that it was not possible to combine work with their caring responsibilities, and questioned the cost, availability and quality of ‘good’ alternative sources of care. Others had made a very definite decision not to work. Where Personal Advisers began to discuss work goals and job-search strategies before addressing concerns about benefit, participants reacted negatively and sometimes angrily because they perceived the meeting to be principally concerned with benefit. Many told their PA that they were not prepared to work and were only seeking help with their claim. Generally, PAs did not challenge these assertions and proceeded to go through the claim forms. As a result, participants’ attitudes towards work and claiming benefit were unchanged. Most continued to expect, and rely on, payments from the benefit system for the foreseeable future.

Figure 3.1 shows the different ways in which ONE caused a change in participants’ relationship to the labour market over the first three months after claiming, either by altering their attitude or their behaviour towards work. The actual impact achieved varied according to participants’ original position in the labour market at the start of their claim. Where changes occurred, they tended to relate to progression into or towards the labour market.

The most common effects of ONE observed in the short-term by this qualitative research, as depicted by the thicker arrows in Figure 3.1, were:

- facilitating movement into work for those who considered it to be an immediate priority;
- enabling participants to progress towards work by providing support with benefit claims;
- raising work as a realistic goal in the future when participants did not necessarily consider it to be an option at all.

3.5 Summary: Distance travelled over three months
The ONE service affected the way in which many participants thought about the benefit system and the support available. Fundamentally, and as a direct result of their involvement in ONE, many realised that the benefit system was not solely concerned with processing benefit claims and generating payments. Instead, participants across all client groups, and regardless of their position in the labour market, became aware that they could and in some cases did seek advice and support relating to work. However, some perceived ONE to be the same type of service offered by the benefit system that they had experienced previously and, as a result, ONE failed to change these attitudes.
4 FOLLOW-UP CONTACT IN ONE

This chapter explores ONE participants’ subsequent contact with the service after their initial meeting with a Personal Adviser (PA). More specifically, it discusses the extent and quality of further contact with the PA, how additional contact was initiated and by whom. The chapter also considers whether participants’ felt that this follow-up contact was appropriate to their needs and whether aspects of ONE have deterred other individuals from using the service more extensively.

4.1 Follow-up contact: How it worked

The process design for ONE anticipated that participants would have some sort of further contact with a PA or a specialist adviser, such as Disability Employment Adviser (DEA), after their initial PA meeting. There were several ways that this could occur:

**Trigger interviews**

‘Triggers’ related to existing benefit claimants and were designed to prompt further intervention from ONE at defined points in time on benefit. These trigger points included: following a Personal Capability Assessment (PCA); when entitlement to Invalid Care Allowance (ICA) ceased while other ONE benefits remained in payment; when the carer premium in Income Support (IS), Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) ceased; when part-time work began or ended; when training or education arranged through ONE came to an end; when the participant reached 17 or 18 (for 16 and 17 year olds claiming through ONE); and annual triggers for all lone parents, except those claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA).

**Caseload meetings**

Initial plans for ONE assumed that half of all participants would have discretionary follow-up contact with the service according to their circumstances. PAs could offer voluntary caseload meetings where they felt participants would benefit from additional contact. This would allow ongoing contact to be established between participant and adviser to review progress, provide support and examine suitable work opportunities. The quantity and duration of follow-up contact would be agreed between PA and participant, according to each participant’s individual circumstances.
Review meetings

All jobseekers were required to attend two key meetings after their initial PA meeting: one after 13 weeks of unemployment and another after 26 weeks of unemployment. These meetings were mandatory for all participants claiming this benefit, not only those within the ONE service.

Referrals

Personal Advisers could also refer those participants who were eligible to New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), and New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP). The way in which these New Deal programmes, particularly NDLP, interacted with the ONE service varied between the different pilot areas. In some areas, specialist lone parent advisers were absorbed by the service while in others the two programmes ran alongside one another but separately. Distinctions are made, as far as possible, throughout this and the next chapter to indicate whether participants’ further contact was with ONE, another government agency or programme such as New Deal, or with external organisations.

4.2 Extent of follow-up contact

The extent to which this research’s respondents made further contact with the ONE service was limited. Many participants, from all client groups, attended additional PA meetings to make either a new claim for the same benefit or a claim for a different benefit after a change in their personal circumstances. Some jobseekers, lone parents and sick or disabled participants attended further (caseload) meetings with a PA to discuss work and receive advice and guidance on job-search methods. There were a few examples of participants attending trigger interviews, although these tended to be confined to those people who were claiming sickness benefits and had undergone a PCA.

Very few carers and widows made any subsequent contact with ONE after their initial PA meeting. These participants only returned to the service to make new or repeat claims, or to raise ‘one-off’ queries.

4.3 Initiators of follow-up contact

Contact was mostly made by highly work-focused and motivated participants concerned about their finances particularly when there had been a change in personal circumstances. Jobseekers and lone parents were most willing to initiate further contact with ONE, often after finding work, or reducing their workload to fewer than 16 hours per week. These participants wanted to inform ONE of the change in their situation to ensure a smooth transition to Working Families’ Tax Credit (WFTC) or Income Support (IS), and felt that prompt contact with ONE would prevent any problems with benefit payments or tax credits. Participants were also concerned that if they did not advise ONE on changes in eligibility, however temporary, they would be penalised.
Anne made her initial claim through ONE when she finished her part-time administration job at a homeless hostel. A few months after she met with a ONE PA, she found another part-time job at a nursing association, for 10 hours per week. With a good knowledge of the benefits system and experience of temporary contracts, Anne was quick to inform the service of her change in circumstances.

‘I went back in October to let them know that I had got the job, to let them know that I was working again, because I was still getting WFTC at the time. My new job was only 10 hours a week though and I knew I could get IS. I went back again in January because my WFTC had ended and I wanted to claim the full amount of IS I was entitled to.’

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

Subsequent contact with ONE occurred for a variety of reasons, most of which related to benefit claims and work. For most individuals, the focus of their subsequent meeting with ONE was confined to their reason for attending. However, in a few examples where participants had come in with a query about benefits, PAs widened the discussion to include work. Yet this tended to be the exception rather than the rule, and only occurred when participants had built up a relationship with a particular adviser since their initial meeting.

Some participants initiated follow-up contact to find out when they could expect to receive payment of their benefit. In a small number of cases, participants would speak to the same adviser they had seen when making their original claim. During follow-up meetings, the PA would check on the status of the claim and participants reported that they received their payment soon after their additional contact. Yet many participants did not contact their PA and instead telephoned the central processing office, particularly if they had previous experience of claiming the benefit concerned and good knowledge of which office to contact.

The most prevalent reasons for further contact were changes in participants’ circumstances which required them to make a new claim for benefit. These participants were simply repeating the claiming process that they had experienced on entry to ONE a year ago, and the focus of discussions was almost always limited to benefits.
James had planned to move abroad shortly after his initial contact with ONE to take up a job as a computer programmer. However, he was unable to set up his own business because he couldn’t get a work permit. As a result he had to return to the UK and start a new claim while he continued to look for work in computers.

‘I did try to get a Visa … [but] By January I found out there was no way they were going to give me one and that is when I met up with an adviser again, I had to get my money to live.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 24)

Some participants amongst lone parent and carers needed to initiate a change in their benefits following a separation from, or return to, their partner/spouse. Participants often felt vulnerable after such separation and were unsure what claim they could make. However, most had previous experience of the benefits system and knew what support would be available, particularly if they were reverting to previous personal circumstances.

Simon had been caring for his wife for six years after she developed muscular dystrophy. His main responsibilities were helping her with mobility and looking after his three children. As the result of a turbulent relationship, Simon briefly separated from his wife. He made a new claim for JSA and began looking for full-time work. Two months later Simon moved back in with his wife and renewed his claim for ICA because of his regained responsibilities. He has since separated from his wife again and is claiming JSA once more.

‘When me and my wife split up I went on JSA and then we sorted things out and we got back together until three months ago. When we got back together I had to change it all again and claim ICA and everything so I wasn’t available for work.’

(Male carer, aged 37)

In most cases, discussions with this group of participants was limited to the new benefits being claimed, often because PAs judged that the clients were either too upset or distracted to think about moving into work, and wanted to concentrate on their other responsibilities (in particular childcare), or their own adjustment to the new circumstances. These participants were sometimes open to discussion about the possibility of work in the future, whilst there were others who thought it was inappropriate for their PAs to have raised this subject.

Lone parents were particularly motivated to return to ONE to enquire further about the benefits of WFTC and whether they would be financially better off in part-time or full-time work.
‘I enquired about Working Families’ Tax Credit because I had heard about it from a friend, but she didn’t have a mortgage and I do. I rang up the ONE and got another appointment. I decided to ring up because they had been quite helpful before. We discussed what type of work I’d be looking for, that kind of thing. Then she did a calculation to see if it would be worth my while.’

(Female lone parent, aged 41)

4.5 Personal Capability Assessment (PCA)

Sick or disabled participants who had undergone a Personal Capability Assessment (PCA) returned to ONE when their sickness or disability benefits were changed to Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA). These participants had received a letter explaining the outcome of their PCA and asking them to attend another meeting with a PA. Claimants were often upset about the outcome of this assessment. They felt unable to return to work and wanted their PA to explain why their sickness or disability benefits had been stopped.

‘I went back to see an adviser in February after the doctor said I was fit to go to work. I had told them before that I could hardly walk in the mornings because of my condition. I said I could not work.’

(Female with diabetes and spongolosis in the spine, aged 58)

In some instances where further contact was benefit-focused, participants were disappointed that they did not receive any support or advice about moving back to work. Sick or disabled participants in particular felt ‘written off’ by their PA and as a result were reluctant to return for any more support. If participants had raised work as a longer-term goal at their initial PA meeting, advisers appeared more willing to discuss it again during subsequent contact.

4.5.1 Work focused

There were instances where participants initiated further contact themselves, with the explicit aim of finding work. This group usually included motivated, work-focused jobseekers’ lone parents and some people claiming sickness or disability benefits. Discussions concentrated on current job-search activities, looking for vacancies on the computer, and making referrals to local support agencies. For lone parents this help was discussed within the context of their caring responsibilities and involved looking for part-time work within school hours.

‘I’ve been looking intensively for work. My adviser has been very helpful. If ever I’m stuck or down I go there and they are marvellous. It’s been pretty much constant, we do the same things in pretty much every one. Job-search, that kind of thing.’

(Female lone parent, aged 48)

These meetings offered participants ‘an extra set of hands’ in the search for employment. In some instances, participants had been in contact with the adviser before entering the ONE service, as the PA was their previous New Deal adviser. Continuation of this relationship through
ONE cemented the participants’ views of their adviser as understanding, knowledgeable and reliable.

Although some sick or disabled participants were distressed that they had ‘failed’ the PCA and felt forced to consider work as a more immediate priority, a few returned to see their adviser more than once. This was to discuss personal barriers to work after a personal relationship had been established between the individual and the adviser. These instances arose when the PAs seen at further contact had given the participant an opportunity to discuss their personal circumstances and reservations about returning to work in more detail. As a result, individuals felt that they could return to the adviser at a later date once they felt ready to think about work.

JSA claimants were asked to return to ONE at three monthly intervals to attend mandatory reviews. This was a familiar requirement for those participants who had previous experience of claiming JSA. These meetings involved looking for current vacancies and discussing job-search methods. A small number of participants felt that advisers at JSA reviews were more forthcoming in providing guidance on job-search methods and sign-posting to various sources of careers advice. This was in comparison to ‘signing-on’ meetings and previous experience of JSA reviews.

‘The second time after three months, they told me that it was an interim meeting to talk about how I was doing. We talked about my strategy for getting a job and how many times I looked in the papers or went to the Jobcentre. ONE interviews wanted to know more than at signing on meetings. Rather than just signing on they gave you a bit more help and advice and kept you on the ball. One man gave me website addresses for jobs and other different advice.’

(Female jobseeker, aged 36)

4.5.2 Focus on other subjects

A number of participants, especially lone parents, contacted ONE when they began to think more actively about the possibility of starting education and training. In some cases participants simply wanted a referral to a local college, while other participants wanted to discuss different training options that would improve their chances of finding work.

‘I went in the second time to get a referral to the local college so that I could do my business administration NVQ Level 2. They [the college] told me I had to do this to get onto the course in time for January.’

(Female lone parent, aged 29)
In general the appropriateness of follow-up contact for each participant related to four factors:

- The relationship established between adviser and participant.
- The availability of specialist knowledge.
- Timing of support.
- Tailored advice according to participants’ needs and personal circumstances.

Where participants had a positive first experience of ONE, they liked meeting the same adviser at further contact. This allowed participants to discuss concerns regarding their claim and, in some instances, to then move on to think about work and initiate job-search. Continuity of a PA enabled participants to feel more comfortable with the adviser and talk more freely about their personal circumstances and aspirations. This was particularly the case where participants initiated contact, and helped the ongoing contact to be progressive. Personal Advisers were able to build on the support and advice provided at initial contact, instilling confidence in the individual with regards to ONE and moving back to work.

Mary had finished a degree in media and visual culture before making her claim for ICA, and wanted to study for a PGCE in secondary school teaching. Work was an option for Mary but she was also caring for her grandmother and her two young children. She had already discussed her work options with her adviser at initial contact. Since that first meeting, Mary had devised a CV and quickly found a temporary job. When this work ended, Mary returned to her PA to make a new claim, and to discuss her job goals and the different types of part-time work that would suit her caring responsibilities. Mary has since returned to her PA on a number occasions to obtain further advice on job-search methods and local vacancies.

‘I’ve been back I suppose about six times since the first time I went. It was good to see the same adviser each time. At first it was mainly about ICA stuff, then about part-time work and how many hours I should do. Then I decided I needed a full-time job and we discussed that, it was all sorts of things really. She sent off faxes for me so I could apply for jobs and so on. To know straight away that there’s someone there who knows you is invaluable.’

(Female carer, aged 33)

Participants also reported that they had wanted to see the same adviser that they had met with initially, but were not able to do so. They felt that seeing a different adviser each time had a detrimental effect on their ability to form a relationship with the ONE service and become confident enough to move towards work.
'I didn’t see the same adviser, but you should be able to see the same one. Sometimes you phone up and speak to someone, but then you actually see someone else when you go down there. But I liked the third adviser I saw in November as it was the same person I spoke to over the phone, so that gave me a bit of continuity.'

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

However, where participants had received limited support, with either their benefit claim or regarding work, in their first PA meeting or had not developed a rapport with their PA, they were not concerned if they were not able to see the same PA at subsequent meetings.

Participants were more likely to feel that follow-up contact was appropriate when their PA appeared knowledgeable about benefits and work. Participants were appreciative of specialist knowledge when offered, particularly when it directly answered their concerns or was tailored to their needs and circumstances.

‘To me it was a personal thing, she knew me quite well. She gave me advice on education, college, computer skills - a wide range really. She knew my situation. It was brilliant.’

(Male lone parent, aged 40)

Contact was felt to be most appropriate where the content of subsequent meetings met participants’ expectations. If the participant was expecting specialist knowledge regarding their claim but it was not provided, participants were disappointed with the ONE service. In a few cases, participants wanted to appeal against failing a PCA and felt that they should still be entitled to their sickness or disability benefits. In these instances, most advisers at follow-up meetings said that they were unable to help because they had little knowledge of the process concerned.

‘I was upset when I got the letter from the Benefits Agency saying that I had failed my medical. But it said I could appeal. I had to go back to ONE then. She [the adviser] understood my circumstances. I said I could not work but she did not help. She said she didn’t know anything about appeals or how to go about making one.’

(Female with diabetes and spongolosis in the spine, aged 58)

Participants were also disappointed when there was a lack of advice on alternative types of work, jobs to suit particular hours, and information on accessible childcare. In most cases, individuals did not return to ONE if the advice they requested was not provided.

‘He [the adviser] asked me what types of jobs I had done in the past. He asked me what I do to look for jobs and I told him that I look in the papers on a weekly basis. He didn’t say anything else. Nothing about training was suggested to me. I would have liked to have done computing. I would go back if I had to, but none of them seemed to know a great deal.’

(Widow, aged 56)
4.6.3 Timing of follow-up contact

Many participants expressed a desire to return to see their PA but often found this difficult to achieve because of their own commitments. As a result, many did not initiate follow-up even though they felt such meetings would be beneficial to them. Where participants attended caseload meetings with a PA, they were usually initiated by the individual participant. The timing of support in these instances was largely felt to be appropriate because the advice and guidance provided was in response to an acknowledged demand. The timing of contact was also appreciated by jobseekers who attended automatic review meetings since these participants were generally work-focused and actively seeking work.

Many lone parents reported that further contact would be appropriate for them once their children were at an age where they could be left either on their own or with a childminder. The age at which lone parents were prepared to leave their children varied considerably amongst participants, ranging from starting school age to the mid-teens. Once children reached these points, lone parents said that they would consider entering full-time employment.

‘I can see myself working full-time when my boys can hold their own, when my oldest son is about nine and he can take a bit more responsibility.’
(Female lone parent, aged 38)

‘Probably when my kids are a bit older, I may look for work when they are thirteen-ish, when I can trust them.’
(Female lone parent, aged 42)

‘I do two full days [at work]. When Ryan grows up I’ll just increase my hours and keep on working there.’
(Female lone parent, aged 24)

Some lone parents with young children did feel that follow-up contact with ONE to discuss work and childcare options would have been appropriate for them. Their children were usually at school and these participants had achieved some stability in their lives following recent separations.

‘I had only just split up from my husband [at time of first PA meeting]. I didn’t want to leave my children at the time… The children are what’re stopping me. The youngest is only five… If I could get 9 to 3 I’d work tomorrow.’
(Female lone parent, aged 32)

Participants claiming sickness or disability benefits did not feel able to work in the near future but many did consider work as part of their long-term plans. These participants felt that they would benefit from further contact with ONE once their health had improved, but the timing of this was difficult to predict.
‘Once I get my eyes sorted I will look for another job… I would try to go back to the same PA when I know I can work – the only thing keeping me out of work is my eyes.’

(Female waiting for an eye operation, aged 51)

‘My immediate plans are to get better and try to get back to work. I have to wait ten weeks to see a specialist and then go from there.’

(Male suffering with a foot injury, aged 57)

The timing of further contact for widows was a delicate issue as these participants were often emotionally confused and vulnerable at the time of their first PA meeting. After a period of grieving many felt that they were ready to consider work and further contact with ONE would have been appropriate. However, there were very few examples where widows had further contact with ONE after their initial PA meeting.

‘My life was in turmoil, I didn’t know what to do. I knew I did want to get back into work, but they left me to my own time… If they’d got in touch with me six or eight weeks later that would have been the nudge I needed. I want to look for work now.’

(Female, widow, aged 57)

For carers, the main purpose of the first PA meeting was to process claims. Carers tended to see no need for a second PA meeting unless their situation changed, for example if their caring responsibilities ceased. Most carers acknowledged this possibility, but some would not consider the prospect of returning to work at all. For those who did consider work a future option, the timing of a further PA meeting would depend on when the caring responsibilities ended or when other circumstances changed.

‘If my husband loses his job I might have to go back to work. I might think about doing some temporary work in a shop to give us some extra money… I wouldn’t rule out work.’

(Female caring for daughter with Cystic Fibrosis, aged 40)

4.7 Contact with and referrals to other agencies

Many jobseekers, lone parents, people claiming sickness or disability benefits and some widows were either referred to, or used, Jobcentre services. These services included information on local vacancies, advice on finding work, access to specialist job newspapers and magazines, and guidance in writing a CV. Participants found this last aspect particularly useful. New claimants, or individuals who had not claimed benefit recently, found this help encouraging and felt that it improved their confidence levels and moved them closer to the labour market.

‘The adviser told me to go down to this place by the Jobcentre where they help you look for jobs. We looked at the newspapers and the computer and they give you assistance in writing letters and doing a CV. They were encouraging and made me feel more comfortable looking for work as I knew what I was doing then. It definitely made a difference.’

(Widow, aged 50)
Some lone parents and jobseekers also used the careers service at the university or college that they were attending but without direction from their ONE PA to do so. The careers guidance provided participants with ideas on how to use the qualifications they had been working towards, and alerted participants to part-time work opportunities to gain work experience while studying. Participants perceived this support to be specialist and outside the remit of the ONE service. In most instances, individuals assumed that this information would not be available through the PA since it had not been offered at initial contact. As a result, these participants did not feel it was appropriate to request such advice or guidance from ONE.

‘I would not go to ONE for help, I would go to the Jobcentre or careers advice at the university, I have been going there since I started my course. They have a library and a website there with literature on different organisations and what they are looking for in employees. ONE is general in jobs, but at the university, the information is specific to what I want to do. ONE is not appropriate for me.’

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

A few people claiming sickness or disability benefits used local disability advice centres for support after receiving a recommendation from a friend or family member. This was primarily to acquire information on benefits rights and help with mobility issues, such as obtaining specialist equipment. Again, participants using such services did not feel that their ONE adviser could have offered this type of information or support.

A few claimants also visited local voluntary sector agencies for advice on their benefit claim after initial contact with ONE, usually on their own initiative. Contact was often made with drop-in centres for advice on how to appeal against benefit decisions, such as when a participant failed a PCA. In some cases, participants had actively asked the PA for advice, either at initial or one-off follow-up contact, but the adviser was unable to provide the appropriate guidance. More often, however, participants did not ask their adviser for this type of information because they assumed that their PA would not be able to help.

Many participants were unaware of, or confused about, what ONE could offer them. A substantial number perceived ONE to be wholly benefits oriented, and did not realise that their PA could help with employment and training issues.

‘I didn’t know what ONE was until you [ECOTEC] came…I thought it was to stop fraud.’

(Female carer, aged 35)

This lack of understanding prevented some participants from making further contact in various ways: some did not realise PAs could help
them with work and education opportunities; other participants were unsure of their role and whether they could go back to ONE without being told; and a few participants felt that they could not go back to their PA until they had made independent progress.

When Suharti first entered ONE the PA provided help with her claim and as a result they built up a good relationship. Suharti then went back to see her adviser to discuss the possibility of an IT course, working with children and whether she was able to extend the hours in her current job without losing any money. Following positive advice from her PA, Suharti started to actively look for a job with more hours. However, she found application forms difficult to fill in and was not confident about her interviewing skills. She wanted to ask for more help from her PA but was reluctant to return because she did not feel that she had made much progress and was worried about taking up too much of the PA’s time.

‘I felt if I didn’t get a job quickly she might not want to help me… she might strike me off her list. It would be useful to see her again but I’m not sure if she’s got the time for me.’

(Female lone parent, aged 42)

Many participants wanted to make further contact with their PA but had been unable to do so. They had attempted to telephone or visit their PA but had not seen them because the PAs were often busy or lines were engaged. Some participants had not been given a name or telephone number for their PA, making it harder for them to get in contact.

‘You’ve got no hope in hell of getting through to them. Sometimes the line was busy, sometimes I got an answering machine. I never got through.’

(Female lone parent, aged 24)

David suffers from heart problems and has been claiming IB. Despite his poor health, he would like to get back to work and “do something rather than sit here all day”. He tried to contact ONE by telephone to ask to see his PA again but was unable to make an appointment and his phone calls were not returned.

‘I kept phoning and asking but I never heard anything… I wanted to do something and wasn’t too sure of what sort of job I might be able to do. I was expecting an appointment to discuss employment … I phoned them about five times before I gave up.’

(Male suffering with heart problems, aged 52)

Initial PA meetings were a considerable influence on whether or not participants made further contact with ONE. Where claimants perceived ONE in a negative light, after a poor initial PA meeting, they were very reluctant to return unless required to do so. These bad experiences were often due to a lack of specialist benefit knowledge provided during the first ONE meeting which undermined participants’
Ann was looking for work when her husband died. She was referred to ONE to claim a widow’s pension. Ann found the first meeting with her PA unhelpful and unorganised. As a result Ann was put off by the experience and does not plan to return to the service.

‘She didn’t know the circumstances. She hadn’t been briefed properly. She didn’t know how I could claim for the widow’s pensions and then just gave me the same booklet to fill in as I’d already done. If the girl didn’t know she should have asked someone else … I won’t go back.’

(Widow, aged 59)

Some participants felt that a substantial age gap between themselves and their PA dissuaded them to return to their PA for further advice because they did not feel that the adviser understood their circumstances and so could not address their needs.

‘I’d rather talk to someone near my age.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 24)

Other participants reported on their PA’s lack of interest. They were discouraged from returning, as they did not feel that the PA had their best interests at heart.

‘The PA was cold and disinterested. This made me not bother going back.’

(Female lone parent, aged 33)

In certain cases participants felt that their PA had not listened to their personal circumstances and, as a result, offered inappropriate advice. Participants, therefore, saw little point in returning to use a service that did not meet their needs.

Julia cared for her husband Trevor, who suffers from epilepsy, on a full-time basis. When she claimed benefit through ONE, Julia explained to her PA that work was not an option because of her intensive caring responsibilities. However, the PA did not appear to consider Julia’s circumstances and seemed intent on persuading Julia to return to work.

‘All they were interested in was getting me back to work and not looking after Henry [participants’ husband] even though they knew my situation … they were being pushy … and made me feel guilty about being at home.’

(Female carer, aged 52)

Despite Julia’s protests, the PA put her down as available for care work vacancies. As a result, Julia has not been back to see her PA and considers that any subsequent meetings would be a ‘waste of time’.

confidence in the system.
This research found that follow-up contact with ONE was limited, in terms of both the numbers of participants who returned to use the service and the scope of discussion in subsequent PA meetings. Participants initiated further contact in almost all cases. There were only a few examples where follow-up contact was ‘triggered’ by ONE, either after a PCA or where participants had started or ended part-time work. Participants often sought further contact with ONE when their circumstances had changed, resulting in a change in their benefits eligibility. Some participants returned for support with looking for work, or exploring the options available. Participants were more confident about returning to the service where their first PA meeting had been positive.

The content of follow-up meetings was usually determined by participants’ primary reason for seeking further contact with ONE. This meant that discussions were often limited to dealing with benefits claims and questions on entitlement, and in some cases, to limited job-search activity. In a few cases PAs were able to widen discussion around work.

The timing of further contact with ONE was felt to be appropriate by participants, mainly because they had initiated the follow-up. The content of these meetings was also regarded as appropriate by participants, particularly when PAs had listened to their needs and responded accordingly. However, some participants had returned to ONE because their needs were fairly complex. In these instances participants were particularly appreciative where the PA took the time to explore their circumstances, offer them advice or support, or refer them to the appropriate agency or individual (for example a disability adviser).

Barriers to further contact existed in a number of forms. In some cases participants felt that they would benefit from additional support but felt that follow-up contact would not be appropriate – either because of a lack of understanding of the purpose of ONE or a negative initial experience of the service. Other participants could not get hold of ONE to arrange further contact. In some cases these participants sought assistance from other agencies, and organisations. Otherwise, these participants would not have received support, and would not progress.
This chapter explores participants’ attitudes and behaviour towards work and claiming benefit one year after they first entered the ONE service. More specifically, it considers whether ONE has influenced participants’ decisions about claiming benefit and working, how this occurred and the impact on their relationship with the labour market. This analysis considers individuals’ personal circumstances, their employment and benefit history, motivation to work, work-related activity, and the appropriateness of any advice, guidance and support provided by Personal Advisers over the year. Contributions made by other agencies or initiatives, such as New Deal for Lone Parents, are also included where relevant to show how ONE works alongside other sources of support. Finally, the chapter looks at participants progression towards, and movements away from, work and the overall impact achieved by ONE. Further analysis on those participants’ who have been in work since making their initial claim for benefit through ONE, and their intention to stay in work, is provided in Chapter 6.

5.1 Participants who were in work at the start of ONE

Many of the widows, lone parents and carers who were in work at the start of their ONE claim were still working with the same employer a year later. They had held these jobs for a considerable period prior to, or alongside, claiming benefit and were motivated to keep their job. None were actively seeking alternative employment. The benefit focus of these participants’ initial PA meeting dominated their subsequent views and understanding of the ONE service and what it could offer. Very few had returned to ONE for follow-up contact because they perceived the service to be primarily concerned with benefits. Furthermore, there had been no change in their personal circumstances that required them to make a new claim. As a result, these participants’ attitudes and/or behaviour towards work and the benefit system were unchanged after their interaction with ONE.

A few of the participants who were in work when they entered ONE had since changed jobs, either to a similar position with another employer, or to a new job in a different sector. The reasons for these changes were varied: some participants’ temporary work came to an end while others simply wanted to move on to a more challenging job. None of these participants contacted their PA prior to leaving their job because they perceived ONE to be a service for people needing to claim benefit, not for people in work.

‘I wouldn’t expect them to help me because I’m in work. They’re there to help people on benefits.’

(Female lone parent, aged 52)
‘I’d go back if I lost my job, but at the moment I don’t need to.’
(Female jobseeker, aged 20)

‘I didn’t need to contact them then [when the participant was in work], but when my job finished I needed some money to tide me over.’
(Male jobseeker, aged 34)

Participants who were in work at the start of their original ONE claim only met with an adviser again if they needed to start a new benefit claim. These subsequent meetings were often more work-focused than participants’ initial experience of ONE, challenging their original perceptions and understanding of the service available. After addressing any concerns about benefit, PAs steered discussions onto work and asked participants about their employment history, immediate plans and work goals. With recent and substantial work experience these participants perceived themselves to be ‘job ready’. PAs therefore tailored their advice and support on where and how to look for jobs, using the financial benefits of being in work as an incentive. This worked well where participants felt that their PA listened to their circumstances and tailored advice to their targeted labour market. As a result, participants’ confidence in finding work increased and they were more willing to attend further meetings with their adviser for ongoing advice and support. Although ONE did not directly place participants into jobs, the time afforded by PAs did help to sustain participants’ motivation to find work. All of these participants moved back into work within three months after seeing their adviser again.

Elaine first claimed Income Support through ONE when her temporary, part-time work in a school ended. Her initial PA meeting was entirely concerned with checking Elaine’s benefit forms. Shortly after claiming, Elaine found temporary part-time work as an assistant for a school club. The job came to an end in September and Elaine needed to make a new claim for Income Support and went to ONE. She met with a new PA, explained her situation and outlined her work plans. With experience of working in a school and working with children, Elaine wanted to find similar work. The adviser asked Elaine how far she was willing to travel for work and the number of hours she wanted to work. The PA also explored whether Elaine would be willing to work more hours, completed a better-off calculation and showed the financial benefits of increasing the hours worked. With this information, Elaine and the PA did a quick job-search and discussed alternative ways of finding jobs.

‘I was very pleased. I got an adviser who understood my problems and helped me through the claim process. We did a quick look on the computer, discussed how far I’d be willing to travel and how I could go about getting another job. She made me realise that I could work full-time if I wanted to. Now the boys are old enough to look after themselves, I feel this is a real possibility and what I want to do. She was very helpful.’
(Female lone parent, aged 41)
Elaine went back to see her adviser on a number of occasions, to discuss her progress and to find out whether training would help to find a permanent job. Elaine soon found part-time work as a classroom assistant in a local school. She used this opportunity to become a qualified teacher and is now studying, with her employer’s support.

As explained in Chapter 3, some participants were highly motivated to find work at the time of their initial PA meeting. It was their intention to claim benefit for a short time while they actively sought work. PAs were able to make a direct impact on the job-seeking behaviour of those participants who lacked a clear or comprehensive job-search strategy. Many of these ONE participants found work relatively quickly after making their benefit claim, and were still in work a year later. The medium-term impact, however, is less clear to determine since many participants did not return to the service and so their attitudes and behaviour did not progress beyond the short-term changes observed in previous research.

Many jobseekers and lone parents who were focused on work as an immediate priority had moved into work relatively quickly after attending their initial PA meeting. For some, this movement was supported and guided by their PA’s job-search advice. For others, their success in finding work was independent of any ONE intervention. Most of the participants were still in work at the time of the second round of this research, a year after their initial ONE claim. None had sought further help from a PA because they now perceived themselves to be independent of the benefit system and hoped to stay in work for the foreseeable future.

Jake claimed JSA through ONE after he left University and wasn’t sure what to do. After going through Jake’s benefit forms, his PA asked him what kind of job he was thinking about, but he was unsure. Jake and the PA discussed what he enjoyed doing, to see what type of jobs might appeal. The PA established that Jake liked to meet people, was relatively outgoing but didn’t want to work in a big team and suggested that sales jobs might be a good idea.

‘I kind of knew what I wanted to do but they helped push me towards sales and pointed out my strengths for getting a sales job. It was good to talk things out with someone who was independent.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 22)

Within a short period of time, Jake found a permanent, full-time job as a sales representative through a local employment agency. He enjoys the challenge of the job, and the pay, and hopes to stay with the company for at least three years.
A few work-focused participants who did not move into work quickly did return to ONE, or the Jobcentre, for follow-up contact. For jobseekers, this contact was through JSA Reviews and so was not initiated by the individual since these meetings were mandatory. In contrast, lone parents appeared more willing to initiate further contact to seek advice and guidance from a Personal Adviser they knew and trusted – often a New Deal for Lone Parents adviser. In all instances, participants and PAs discussed the type of work sought and job-search methods. In most cases, PAs tried to encourage participants to widen their job-search to include a broader range of work. This advice had an impact on those participants who were willing to consider different types of work. However, there were also examples of jobseekers who were unwilling to listen or take such advice. These individuals had often worked in specialised industries with wages that were considerably greater than those offered in, what they perceived to be, more mundane, ‘run-of-the-mill’ jobs. Furthermore, these participants often felt that the alternative jobs offered by their PA were inappropriate because they did not see how they would be able to use their existing skills.

Martin claimed JSA through ONE when his temporary contract as a welder came to an end. This was a common pattern in his working life as the trade ‘came in cycles and it’s always temporary contracts’. After being unemployed for six months, Martin was asked to attend a JSA Review meeting with a ONE adviser. They checked the computer for vacancies in welding but nothing was available. The PA then explained to Martin that he would need to start looking for other jobs beyond his trade.

‘I told her I could do some sort of engineering and so she offered me a job packing parachutes, but that’s stupid. I would have had to drop the minimum wage I was prepared to work for.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 48)

Finally, there were a few jobseekers whose personal circumstances changed over time while they were claiming benefit and looking for work. In some cases, old injuries or infections returned, limiting individuals’ ability to work. These participants had very little work-focused contact with ONE but instead needed to make new claims for a different benefit, usually Incapacity Benefit. As a result of the deterioration in their health, these jobseekers no longer felt that work was an immediate priority. Instead, they needed time to become accustomed to their new situation and concentrate on getting better.
Ben was dismissed from his job before he made his first JSA claim through ONE. As soon as he lost his job, he wanted to find another as quickly as possible so he could continue earning his own way while taking his old employer to an industrial tribunal. After four months of claiming and no luck in finding work, because he had no recent work references, Ben became depressed and was unwilling to leave the house. His doctor diagnosed him with depression and advised Ben to claim Incapacity Benefit.

Ben occasionally looks for work but with no references he feels it is probably better to wait for the tribunal verdict before deciding what to do.
(Male jobseeker, aged 46)

5.3 Participants for whom work was an option in the future

On entry to ONE, some lone parents, carers, widows, and sick or disabled clients had felt that they would like to return to work in the near future but that this was not an immediate priority.

ONE continued to provide support and encouragement to those lone parents who had plans to return to work in the future. All had clear, well thought-out plans for returning to work and were undertaking vocational training. Their initial meeting with a PA brought about the greatest impact on their attitudes about work. PAs provided support and encouragement that these participants were taking highly appropriate steps to become ‘job ready’. This validation of their plans and goals increased participants’ confidence and motivation. In a few instances, participants moved into work following advice and support with claiming Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC). Most lone parents in this group initiated contact with their PA although not all were able to meet with the same adviser. These meetings were generally benefit-focused but PAs also used the opportunity to go over participants’ plans and provide further encouragement. As a result, these lone parents’ confidence and motivation to continue with their goals, and progression towards the labour market, were sustained.

Leah was forced to leave her job in a shoe shop, due to cut-backs, when she claimed for Income Support through ONE. She spent some time thinking about what to do next when she first met with her PA. Leah had decided to go to college to do a course in childcare. She explained her plans to her PA and was surprised when the adviser said she thought it was a good idea. They discussed how suitable training could be arranged and the PA asked Leah whether she had any plans to use the qualification.

‘It was great. She listened and said it was the right thing for me to do. I was so pleased that I registered with the college as soon as I could.’
(Female lone parent, aged 36)
Leah has completed her first year of training and was about to start an HNC in childminding. Leah’s also visited her ONE adviser twice to tell her about her progress and plans to return for advice on looking for work when her course finishes.

A small number of people who were claiming sickness or disability benefits had moved closer to the labour market, and in some cases into work, within six months of making their claim for a ONE benefit. Time out of work had allowed these participants’ injuries to improve within a relatively short period of time. All had found stable, part-time employment that was appropriate and feasible giving their previous condition. Although most had made no further contact with ONE, a few had returned to meet with their adviser for guidance on looking for work. Where participants did return and ask for help, PAs explored the individual’s previous work experience, the type of work they were physically able to do and the number of hours they were able to work. PAs often encouraged these participants to consider jobs in areas related to their previous experience, but of a different nature. Participants appreciated this advice because they felt that their PA had listened to them, considered their personal circumstances and tailored advice according to the individual’s interests and abilities. As a result, these participants became more confident in their ability to work and altered their job seeking behaviour in line with the advice given.

Chloe had worked full-time as a staff nurse before she had to leave her job after suffering an arm injury. With a ten year old son, Chloe wanted to return to work at some point in the future. Her initial meeting with a PA was entirely focused on benefit since Chloe was still technically working for the hospital.

Nine months after claiming, Chloe went back to ONE to claim JSA after a Personal Capability Assessment. On this second meeting, the PA explored Chloe’s work options in depth and outlined the support and services available through ONE. The PA then collected details on Chloe’s work history and asked whether Chloe would be able to do similar work that she had done prior to her injury. Chloe explained that this was not possible because she could not take any weight on her arm. The PA then suggested looking for work in health services, but something more desk-based. Chloe agreed that these were good ideas and asked where she should look for such jobs. The PA checked the computer and advised Chloe to visit a local voluntary organisation that helps people look for work, learn IT and write CVs.

Chloe found temporary part-time work as a researcher for a Health Trust. While working, Chloe heard about a permanent position in
the organisation, applied, and was offered the job.

‘She matched me up with a specific job after asking what I wanted to do. This was really helpful because I wasn’t sure what I could apply for before then.’

(Female jobseeker with a repetitive arm injury, aged 41)

Chloe is enjoying her role in the Health Service and is planning to undertake some training in her job so that she can progress into management.

Many of the carers and sick or disabled clients who had considered work to be an option for the future had not attended follow-up meetings with ONE. As a result, their relationship to the labour market, and claiming benefit, was often no different from when they had first entered ONE. Where these participants had benefited from a positive and constructive initial meeting with a Personal Adviser, their confidence and motivation to return to work when they, or their dependants, were fit had increased. However, as time passed and with no changes in their circumstances, and no further contact with ONE, these participants’ motivation and confidence were eroded.

Brian stopped work and started claiming Incapacity Benefit when his doctor diagnosed him with angina. When he first entered ONE, Brian wanted to return to work when he was fit enough and explained his situation to his PA. She was very understanding and discussed different types of ‘lighter’ work that Brian would be able to manage.

‘She was really supportive and made me feel that work would be a real possibility again.’

A year later, Brian was still unable to work although he still wanted to get back into employment. He was unsure what work he could do, or whether he needed to learn new skills, and was starting to feel that work was not a possibility for him. He has not returned to see his adviser because he didn’t realise he could.

‘I don’t know what to do really … if this [heart problems] had happened when I was 60, I would retire. But I don’t want to be on the scrap heap at 56 …I haven’t been back to my adviser because I didn’t know how the system works. I thought they’d call me. They could have asked me back after several months to see how I was doing.’

(Male suffering with angina, aged 56)

Similarly, a few carers, widows and people claiming sickness or disability benefits moved further away from the labour market. These participants’ initial PA meetings had been focused entirely on the claim process and they had made no further contact with ONE. As time passed, these individuals became increasingly resigned to the fact that they would not, or could not, work for the foreseeable future if at all.
Esther was considering looking for part-time work when she first visited ONE to sort out her widow’s benefit and was interested to hear what advice they could offer. At this initial meeting, Esther felt that her PA was disorganised and unprepared, and concentrated entirely on benefits. She was put off by this and made no attempt to get in contact with the PA again. Esther quickly became disillusioned with ONE and lost interest in returning to work altogether.

‘I’m not really looking for work anymore, I’m resigned to retiring early.’
(Widow, aged 59)

After a year, there were three clear groups emerging from the participants who did not feel that work was an option before they entered the ONE service. These were:

- lone parents and people claiming sickness and disability benefits who moved closer to the labour market as a direct result of advice and support provided by their PA or Disability Employment Adviser;
- lone parents, carers and sick or disabled client whose attitudes and behaviour to work and claiming benefit had not changed;
- a few people claiming sickness or disability benefits who had recovered and returned to work, independently of ONE.

The labour market position of some carers, lone parents and people claiming sickness or disability benefits did not change over the course of a year. The immediate personal circumstances and responsibilities of these participants were their primary concerns. Many had not attended any follow-up meetings with a Personal Adviser. However, some of these participants reported that they would have liked the PA to offer additional support and advice regarding their situation and their claims, but they had not felt that this was possible during their initial meeting and so had not returned to ONE.

‘She [the PA] knew nothing about ICA so nothing about the circumstances. If you don’t know anything about someone how can you help them?’
(Female carer, aged 37)

Where participants initiated, or were invited to attend, further contact the meetings were largely benefit focused, either to deal with queries on delays of receipt of benefit or to make a new claim for a different benefit as a result of a change in individuals’ personal circumstances.

The previous sections of this chapter have outlined participants’ attitudes, perceptions and behaviour towards claiming, the benefit system and work a year after they first entered the ONE service. As shown, there has been a high degree of change in these individuals’ circumstances, both in their personal situations but also their position in the labour market. Figure 5.1 illustrates the distance travelled by these participants since they started their claim. Please note that the
The diagram uses participants’ position on entry to ONE, not after their initial PA meeting, as the baseline position and charts the direction and scale of movements made a year later.

**Figure 5.1 Distance travelled**

Where changes occurred, they tended to relate to progression into or towards the labour market although there is also some evidence that some participants have become more distanced from work, indicated by the arrows on the right of the diagram pointing downwards. Not all of these movements are a result of the ONE service. In fact, the most common changes prompted by ONE that were observed by this qualitative research over the year were similar to those identified in the short-term. These are depicted by the thicker arrows in Figure 5.1, and were:

- facilitating movement into work for those who considered it to be an immediate priority;
- enabling participants to progress towards work by providing support with their benefit claims and long-term goals.
A key objective of this qualitative research was to assess whether ONE helped people to stay in their jobs for longer and how this occurred. This chapter considers this objective by exploring participants’ intentions in relation to their jobs and the factors that support and inhibit their ability to stay in work, paying particular attention to the influence and impact of Personal Advisers (PAs). It draws on the experiences, perceptions and intentions of those participants who were either in work when they entered ONE or had moved into work since making their initial claim for benefit through the ONE service. This includes those individuals who have since left work and returned to claim benefit. It therefore includes very few participants whose circumstances mitigated against any active engagement with the labour market, such as carers and sick or disabled people. Issues relating to participants’ initial movement into work are covered in Chapters 3 and 5.

For the purposes of this research two definitions of sustainable employment were used. The first, time-bound definition was derived from central government’s conventional approach, where sustainable employment is considered to be ‘an individuals’ maintenance of constant employment for a period of thirteen weeks or more’. A wider definition might consider a pattern that allows people to secure continuous employment in one or a variety of jobs over the longer course of their working lives. Here, sustainable employment could be defined as: an individual’s maintenance of constant, paid employment (the number of jobs is immaterial) over time (undefined) by sustaining the skills levels relative to the requirements of their job and the wider labour market.

Both definitions are used throughout the chapter to show the extent to which participants’ employment was sustained. The results reflect the research respondents’ perspectives of employment, and their position within the labour market.

As outlined in Chapters 3 and 5, the ease with which participants moved into work tended to reflect the skills they possessed, their work experience, and the appropriateness of their job-search activity. At the same time, barriers to work – including hard, soft and circumstantial barriers – impacted on both the effectiveness of participants to look for, and secure, work and their ability to retain their job. This research identified a number of distinct factors that affected ONE participants’ ability to sustain employment over time, as described in the following sections.
For many participants the primary significance of being in work was financial. More specifically, they wanted to be financially ‘better off’ in work than they had been on benefits, either with in-work support such as tax credits or without. Some participants chose to leave their jobs when they felt that they were not much better off in work than they had been (or would be) on benefits. These perceptions undermined their commitment to work, and stay in work, and so prevented these individuals from sustaining their employment. Often their belief that they were better off on benefit was compounded by their need to fulfil other personal commitments,

‘[I] was working part-time in a shop and was on family tax credit. I gave this up and went to claim Income Support. I realised I was worse off working 18 hours a week and claiming WFTC than if I was unemployed so I gave up. It coincided with the time my son needed me so I could look after him.’

(Female lone parent, aged 36)

In contrast, ONE was highly effective in persuading and demonstrating to participants the financial value of employment. This was achieved when PAs conducted better-off calculations for participants during ONE meetings, and clearly explained any entitlement to in-work benefits and how these worked. In these cases, participants understood their financial situation and could see the immediate benefits of moving into, and staying in, work. The provision of clear, appropriate and accurate information and advice increased participants’ confidence to make decisions about work. However, participants’ commitment to work was weakened when they had received misleading or incorrect information about in-work support.

‘It was very hard with WFTC as you don’t get the money till the end of the month. So in a way you are no better off once you have paid all your bills at the beginning of the month. Everything always went out at the same time. I was always chasing my tail. Now I am a bit better off because I am getting money weekly, and I don’t have to deal with my rent, that is a big weight off the shoulders.’

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

‘When I went to work they helped me as well with my Council Tax and Housing Benefit, how they were going to be paid for, because I’d only been on the social for three months so I didn’t know what to expect. They promised that my first month’s Council Tax and Housing would be paid when I went to work, but they weren’t which was a bit gutting.’

(Female lone parent, aged 38)

The level of pay was, of course, important to many participants. Participants were often unwilling to move into, or stay, in a job where the pay was less than that which they had received in the past. This was particularly the case for those client who had previously received
a high level of pay for skilled work within traditional industries, but because of their health, or the availability of work, were having to apply for poorly-paid unskilled work. Where participants also had other responsibilities, low pay often compounded the sense that working was not ‘worth it’. Nevertheless, some participants persisted with their job despite the relatively low pay and, in some instances, increased the number of hours they worked in order to boost their weekly wage.

‘It’s alright, a bit stressful, but I like it. For my age, getting that job is like a big bonus for me. Not many people my age are probably on what I’m on. I do get good money for it, but you’ve got to work the hours to get the money. I sometimes work 50 hours a week. The pay is probably three times what I got at my previous job.’

(Female jobseeker, aged 24)

6.2.2 Financial and personal independence

Many participants in work perceived it to be a source of independence and personal achievement. They were motivated to stay in work in order to support themselves, clear any debts, and move away from reliance on benefits.

‘[my aim was] To get full-time work. I would like to stay in this job as I am now getting my bills and debts paid off. I will need to get more hours in the future.’

(Female jobseeker, aged 27)

‘I don’t like being on Income Support, you can’t even feed a cat on it. I like to work and be doing something anyway.’

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

For other participants, work provided a greater sense of control over their future or a break from other personal commitments, and a chance to demonstrate their skills in other areas. Most often, work represented an opportunity for lone parents and carers to assert an identity separate from the role they played in the home.

‘I want to stay in this permanent job and make a better life for myself, for me and my little girl.’

(Female lone parent, aged 33)

‘If I didn’t have to work I wouldn’t but I enjoy the work itself and it’s nice to get away from the kids and have some adult company. Repetitive work doesn’t bother me and I enjoy the hours and I like the fact I know what I’m doing.’

(Lone parent, aged 37)
‘You’re independent I suppose, there’s the money, meeting other people. I don’t know, I just enjoy it really. I’ve never had a job before. As soon as I had Jack he was my main priority. I feel a lot better about myself now that I’m in work’.

(Lone parent, aged 36)

6.2.3 Employment patterns

The working hours involved in a job were often important to participants, particularly for those who were concerned about their ability to reconcile work with their personal commitments. Many parents, particularly lone parents, felt that they would only be able to maintain jobs that fell within school hours. Other participants stated preferences for jobs that fell within ‘sociable hours’.

‘[my] Last job was a nightmare. I worked very long hours, five twelve-hour shifts, with terrible wages…[I’m] just about to start a new job which is thirty hours a week and I am feeling very positive about it.’

(Female lone parent, aged 34)

‘[it’s a] Bit boring. I don’t like working 7-11 really, when everyone else is relaxing you have to go out to work, it’s a bit soul destroying. It would be difficult to work during the holidays when the kids are at home if I did different hours.’

(Female carer, aged 38)

6.2.4 Commitment and interest in work

Financial considerations were less significant where participants had an interest in their job and were focused on their long-term progression in work. Although financial reward and independence were perceived to be important, these participants wanted to stay in work in order to gain vital work experience and to apply the skills they had acquired through training or studies.

‘The work I do is interesting. I believe in the cause. I do enjoy it. I intend to stay for the full two year contract.’

(Female lone parent, aged 35)

‘I am earning more [than on IS], especially when I get my other job, but I still have to pay rent and council tax, but I am a bit better off. It is a very thin line. I need the experience and skills to get where I want to go, so I have to look at it that way. I know I will be better off in the long run when I get a better paid job because of the training I am doing now.’

(Female lone parent, aged 38)

Where participants were confident in their skills and abilities, they wanted these to be recognised by their PA and employer. Decisions to stay in work were sometimes influenced on the extent to which employers recognised participants’ strengths and, ultimately, helped individuals progress in their career. Where participants were highly motivated, it was important that their jobs offered them an ongoing challenge.
‘I enjoy) the idea of making a difference with it, it’s a decent challenge. I don’t like working in a big team, you get lost. I like working where your work gets noticed. And I get bonuses on top of my salary.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 24)

**6.2.5 Other factors**

Various practical factors encouraged, or made it possible for participants to remain in work, many of which were related to barriers to work. Transport, for example, was often very important in terms of convenience and cost, but also because some participants were not confident about travelling outside a certain geographical area.

‘The only reason I’d leave is if they relocated and I couldn’t get there.’

(Widow, aged 42)

Soft skills, such as the ability to effectively communicate with colleagues, also made an impact on participants’ confidence to stay in work. Many participants cited good relationships at work as the main reason to stay in the same job.

‘You don’t always get on with everybody you work with. Luckily there was three of us starting at the same time.’

(Female jobseeker, 25)

‘[it’s] Not very stimulating, but the people are nice and it suits me. The hours suit. It’s just a job really.’

(Female carer, 34)

**6.3 Participants’ intentions**

In order to determine whether ONE helped people to stay in work for longer periods, it was necessary for the research to explore the intentions of those participants who were in work, or who had been in work. These intentions were shaped by a number of different factors as outlined above, but were also influenced by individual’s work history, personal circumstances, the type and availability of work they sought. Three broad groups were identified, covering those who intended:

- to stay in the same job;
- to change jobs but stay in employment (and not claim, except for in-work benefits);
- to leave their job and return to benefits.

Individuals from all participant groups were represented across these categories. However, there was some clustering as explained in the following sections.

**6.3.1 Those who planned to stay in the same job**

Many participants who were in work at the start of ONE or who found work after claiming wanted to stay in the same job for the foreseeable future. These choices were made independently of ONE or any interaction with a Personal Adviser, although some individuals had received specific support from their PA with considering and looking
for work. There were two distinct groups amongst those participants who wanted to stay in the same job:

- New (or relatively new) claimants, from all client groups, with substantial, constant employment histories.
- Lone parents and younger jobseekers with little or no work experience in their target labour market.

Firstly, some participants’ employment history was characterised by a high degree of stability, experience and usually some progression into areas of management and responsibility. Some of these individuals had stayed in one job for most of their working life prior to claiming benefit through ONE. For many, the wages that they had commanded in previous work compared favourably to the receipt of benefits and most had little or no experience of claiming benefit before they entered ONE. They typically made their benefit claim after redundancy, illness or when other personal circumstances prevented them from working.

This group was particularly attracted to work because of the longer-term security it offered them and their families. Most participants had found permanent positions, often on a full-time basis, without direct assistance from their PA or the ONE service. They planned to stay in the same job for the foreseeable future in order to secure their financial and job security, and felt confident about their ability to sustain this employment because of previous knowledge and experience of the world of work.

‘[I want] To go to my new job and give it my all. I’m looking to work in the job for a while. I want to use my working years wisely. I want to build up a pension and give the kids a good life.’
(Female lone parent, 36)

‘[I] Changed jobs. With the textile industry the way it is we were on short time at the beginning of the year. Being on my own, I needed some security so I couldn’t do this and thought it was time for a career change. The new job is steady work and regular and I get more holidays and am enjoying it. I plan to stay there until I retire.’
(Widow, aged 50)

The second group of participants who wanted to stay in their job for the foreseeable future included jobseekers and lone parents in part-time work who were working on temporary and permanent contract. Many took these jobs either as a ‘way in’ to the labour market and full-time work, or because reduced hours fitted in with other personal commitments. Most of these participants had relatively little previous work experience in relation to the nature of these jobs and wanted to use the opportunity to build up skills to support further progression.
‘When the youngest starts school I might look for more hours. I think the headmaster might want me to become the full-time secretary.’

(Female jobseeker, aged 36)

‘I do two full days and you get to see lots of different people, and all the other girls I work with are really nice, so I’m happy to stay there. It’s a bit daunting thinking about leaving, I don’t know what else I’d do if I left. If I was to leave, I’d have to go and work for another big company I think. When Max grows up I’ll just increase my hours and keep on working there.’

(Female lone parent, aged 24)

The sustainability of these participants’ employment was, however, fragile since some clearly wanted to increase the number of hours that they were working in order to earn a ‘decent living’. While the duration of employment would qualify as sustainable under the conventional definition, there were doubts whether it would remain so in the longer-term. The potential to increase the number of hours worked in a job would be a key factor in participants’ decision to stay or leave.

Jenice left a part-time hairdressing job before claiming benefit through ONE because her employer could not offer her enough hours and the pay was poor. Shortly after claiming, Jenice found another part-time job, with more hours, through a friend. However, Jenice wanted to work full-time and her boss has said that they might be able to offer her more work if she can learn how to handle different types of hair. Jenice plans to enrol with a local college to widen her hairdressing skills so that she can stay in her job and earn more money.

‘I want to stay put, but I need to earn more money. If my boss can increase my hours, then I can stop claiming JSA, but I’ll do the course whatever happens.’

(Female jobseeker, aged 34)

None of these participants had considered returning to ONE for in-work support because they did not perceive the service to be targeted at people in work. Instead, these individuals stated that they would only return to see an adviser when they were unemployed. As a result, it appeared that there was little scope for ONE to directly support participants to stay in employment for longer if their aspirations, such as full-time work, were not being met.

6.3.2 Those who intended to change jobs, but stay in employment

Some participants planned to stay in their job for the short-term but intended, or expected, to change jobs within three to six months. This group included jobseekers, lone parents and those claiming sickness or disability benefits, all of whom had previous work experience. However, these participants tended to remain in their jobs for shorter
periods, either because of the type of contracts available or out of personal choice, interspersed with time spent claiming benefit. Individuals’ areas of work experience were often broad, equipping them with a range of hard and soft skills. The main exception here was a few older jobseekers who had built up substantial work experience in a specialised job, often in declining industries.

Many of these participants were working in particular sectors or jobs characterised by seasonal, temporary, or fixed-term contracts, such as tourism, teaching or marine welding. They often moved between jobs relatively quickly to maintain a regular income, except for those in temporary jobs in declining industries where work was scarce and intermittent. With up-to-date, and sometime specialised skills, these participants were able to command a wage that was significantly above the income available from benefits.

Rebecca worked in a local school on a part-time basis as a special needs teaching assistant. When the school holidays began, Rebecca’s temporary contract came to an end and she needed to claim Income Support to maintain a regular income. When starting the claim, Rebecca knew that she would be offered a new temporary contract in six weeks’ time, at the end of the holidays, and so planned to stay at home and look after her children in the interim period.

Rebecca returned to the same school and has continued working on temporary contracts that are renewed every term. (Female lone parent, aged 36)

Participants appeared to expect their patterns of employment to be repeated over time, reinforcing their cycle of employment-claiming-employment, although they did intend to move smoothly from one job to the next. A few, however, had made independent plans to break this cycle and move towards more stable, permanent employment.

This group included both those who intended to stop working altogether and those who wanted to stop work but with a view to looking for a new position in the future. There was a key distinction between these two sub-groups in terms of their immediate motivation to leave their present job:

- the first sub-group did not remain in employment because they lacked interest, prospects or skills, and were repeating patterns of ‘on and off’ benefits
- the second group were not able to maintain their working commitments because of a change in their personal circumstances and/or caring responsibilities.
In the first group many had a weak commitment to staying in employment. This was reflected by patterns of short-term employment in unrelated jobs and often with long gaps (of months) between jobs while claiming benefits. These participants were poorly skilled, in terms of both hard and soft skills. They were less likely to have received 'on-the-job' training either because of their tendency to move on too quickly or because their employer did not invest in training and development of staff. The work that these participants had accessed in the past was poorly paid and offered little potential for progression. As a result, some participants felt that the work available to them was not particularly attractive, and did not leave them financially better off than benefits.

They often moved into work after being offered a job on an informal basis, and left employment after this job ended. Participants in this sub-group usually envisaged moving into another job in the future, but not within a fixed timescale, and had few long-term plans with regard to the labour market. Participants in the first sub group generally felt that they were less likely to remain in jobs where they had not made a positive choice to move into that particular job in the first place. This was often the case with jobs found through informal mechanism, or just by chance. In these cases the job was less likely to fit with their particular interests, skills or work experience.

‘For me I’ve always found my own job through contacts that I know, people I’ve worked with before, so I don’t think (the ONE service) could help me.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 48)

In other cases, participants’ intention in relation to their jobs (and work generally) depended on the length of their contracts, and in the long-term ready availability of work, and in particular, the type of work which they can do.

‘I’m a welder…trade comes in cycles. I’ve had about a month’s work in the last 18 months- it’s always temporary contracts. I’ve not had a permanent job for about 20 years. And it’s getting harder. The main companies now take on sub-contractors, which are harder to get rid of.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 48)

Other participants were leaving work because their personal circumstances prevented them from being able to maintain employment. They were finding their work commitments difficult to manage alongside other personal commitments, such as childcare, and were considering leaving the labour market for the medium-term. In these cases they were usually able to identify a point at which they would be able to return to the labour market, for example once children entered full-time education, or were old enough not to need constant minding.
There were two distinct ways in which ONE promoted sustainable employment. In the first instance, PAs offered in-work advice to participants who had moved into employment. Secondly, Personal Advisers prepared participants to move into work, either in the short or medium-term by providing clear information on the nature of particular areas of work, offering referral to training to help participants’ acquire employability, or job-specific skills, and demonstrating the longer-term financial benefits of being in work.

Very few participants received in-work support or advice. This was largely because participants perceived ONE to be a service for people claiming benefits and unemployed, and not for people in work. Therefore, participants only anticipated returning to work if they became unemployed again.

‘If I was going to go back on benefits, or look for another job, I’d go back to them. But I don’t think there would be any need to go back.’

(Female lone parent, aged 24)

‘No, I’ve got no reason to because I am in employment, so not entitled to any benefits.’

(Male jobseeker, aged 48)

The most common reason for participants to return was that they wanted some help or advice with in-work benefits, where they had moved into employment of 16 hours per week or more. Participants generally regarded ONE as a benefits service, or where their contact had been more extensive, a work seeking service. But in both cases they thought that the PA’s role did not extend to in-work support. They thought that once they moved into work they were ‘on their own’.

‘Any problems I’ve got with my current employer would probably be my own making, like time keeping, and the only person who could solve that would be me.’

(Male jobseeker, 48)

Those who then came up against real difficulties in work were unlikely to return to the service.

In some cases the problems they were having at work meant that they felt they would have to leave the job regardless. These included problems such as poor relationships with their employers.

‘I never thought of contacting ONE with the problems I had had in the last job - I knew I had to leave and there was nothing else I could do apart from leave.’

(Female lone parent, aged 36)
However, in few instances PAs and participants had positive relationships. Participants were sometime offered ongoing support, and this made them feel more confident about returning to the service, once they had moved into work.

‘Because she was really helpful and knew all the benefits and she said I could always phone her with any queries I had. She is at the end of a free phone number - you just phone that and ask to speak to her. She said that if I was not happy in that job, to go back and she would find me something else with the right hours for me. She knows all about the hours I was looking for.’

(Female lone parent, aged 38)

‘They said that any time I wanted to chat about a job or needed extra training for a job e.g. about Health and Safety, they said I could get in contact with them and the offer of help is there. I would use them again.’

(Male lone parent, aged 36)

Sometimes participants were given more technical advice,

‘If I came up against something in my job I wasn’t sure about - for example recruiting members of staff - they know more than me and I would go and ask them for advice’.

(Female Lone parent, aged 36)

Some differences in ONE’s impact could be seen between the different categories of participants identified earlier in relation to their intentions with regard to the labour market:

6.4.1 Those participants who intended to stay in the same job

These participants had moved into work in a number of different ways. In most cases they had found work on the basis of previous experience, or personal contacts. In some cases ONE had supported them, and given them advice in relation to their job-search. PAs also often offered these participants advice on in-work benefits, and did better-off calculations. These were supportive factors in moving participants into work, and sustaining them once they were there. For those who were not happy in their jobs, though, support was much less readily available. Participants did not feel that they could, or did not want to, contact their PA once they had moved into work, they felt their position was the result of a negative first experience of the ONE service.

6.4.2 Those participants who intended to change jobs, but stay in employment

These participants were generally fairly work motivated, however, they had become dissatisfied with their current position for many different reasons. Most often this was because they had little real commitment to their job, as it did not reflect their personal interests, or previous work experience, education and training. In these cases participants felt that they would have benefited from further advice, or a chance to explore their options with their PA. In other cases the hours that the job involved
6.4.3 Those participants who intended to leave their job, and go onto benefits

These participants included those who intended to stop working altogether, as well as those who intended to stop work but with a view to looking for a position sometime in the future. In the first instance participants did not remain in employment because of lack of interest, poor prospects or skills. In the second instance, participants’ personal circumstances had changed in such a way that they were no longer able to balance work with other responsibilities. In these cases the quality of contact that participants had with the ONE service had little impact on their decision to move out of work. Some of these participants had initially regarded some types of work as a possibility, were they to find an appropriate job. This might have entailed finding a part-time job to fit in with other commitments, or the correct type of work in the case of those with an illness or disability.
ONE has improved and increased some participants’ engagement in the labour market, but for others there has been little, or no, impact on their attitudes and behaviour regarding work. In general, those who were focused on work as a first priority felt that personal advisers had usually provided appropriate advice, guidance and support at their initial meeting. However, those who were still out of work, and those who had been in work but had then returned to benefits, often felt that further, and more active, support could have been provided following their first meeting.

The level of support offered to those participants who were further from the labour market was mixed. In a few instances, participants were encouraged to think about work earlier than they might otherwise have done. In some of these cases the participants returned to ONE after their PA meeting to seek additional support and advice, and subsequently moved closer towards the labour market. For many, however, their first discussion, and some of their subsequent discussions were focused on participants’ benefits claims rather than work.

This final chapter of the report draws out key findings and conclusions from the research. It makes distinctions between the positive and negative aspects of ONE, based on the perceptions of participants. It identified where, and for whom, ONE has achieved a significant impact, both at the point of first contact with the service, and over time. In addition, it highlights those participants who had not benefited from the service, a year after their first contact with ONE.

7.1 Client expectations

Participants’ expectations could usually be explained in the context of their immediate intentions and personal circumstances. They envisaged the PA meeting as being concerned with the claim that had initiated their entry into ONE. Their expectations were also dependent on their previous experience of claiming benefits. Many participants did not realise ONE could offer advice or guidance with work. Participants’ claims for benefit were often initiated by a change in the intensity of their participation in the labour market. Others needed to claim because of their personal circumstances.

Participants’ first contact with ONE often determined the extent to which they were likely to seek assistance from the service in the future. Where their benefits were dealt with quickly and efficiently, this was appreciated by the participants, as it allowed them to refocus on other concerns, including finding work. Where they were not, participants often associated this with ONE. There was considerable variation in
the extent to which work was discussed, depending on how ‘job ready’ participants were. Where work was addressed, discussions were most often focused on short-term actions that the participant might take in relation to the labour market.

In many cases, and especially where they had had a positive first experience of ONE, participants felt that further contact would have been appropriate. Most participants were aware that they could return to ONE, to seek further advice on benefits, and work, and said that they might have anticipated returning at an appropriate time or if their circumstances changed. A few had been told that they would be contacted by their PA at a certain point in time.

Those who returned to see their ONE Personal Adviser usually did so as a result of a change in personal circumstances. The majority returned with one-off queries to make a new or repeat claim (these included JSA claimants out of work temporarily, or sick and disabled clients who had failed their Personal Capacity Assessment). In some cases these claims related to changes in the intensity of their work patterns, where participants wanted to claim for either WFTC (where they were moving to jobs of 16 hours per week or more), or Income Support (where they were reducing the hours they worked). The majority of these participants were lone parents.

Where participants had a good relationship with their PA, they were more likely to have returned to the service on a number of occasions. Those who were work-focused expected the service to be able to help them with work. In these cases, the PA was sometimes able to widen the discussion around work and provide participants with the information or support they needed to move into, or increase their participation in, the labour market. However, in many cases participants felt that because of time constraints, or the PA themselves, they had not been able to think of and explore different possibilities in as much depth as they would have liked.

In some instances, participants felt that they could have benefited from further contact, on work and non-work related issues, but had not had further contact with ONE. This was either because they had difficulty contacting the service, or because they did not feel, on the basis of their first PA meeting, that their PA would be able to help them.

ONE had variable impact on participants’ perceptions, depending on their relationship to the labour market. The service had very little impact on those already in work. In some cases ONE had a direct impact on those for whom work was an immediate priority, and who had a clear, comprehensive job strategy. In these cases confidence, job-search activity, and work goals increased. ONE did not change the behaviour of those with a targeted job-search strategy prior to

7.2 Changes in participants’ perceptions towards the benefits system and work
meeting with the PA, in particular lone parents, and younger jobseekers, although these groups did appreciate the support that their PAs offered them. In some cases, PAs were able to explore the possibility of work with participants who were further away from the labour market. This was achieved most successfully with sick or disabled clients, and less so with widows and carers.

The extent to which ONE made an immediate impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those for whom work was an option in the future was limited. This was often because PAs concentrated on benefits and did not discuss work, and the guidance and support that ONE could offer, in any depth. ONE was able to make some impact on those participants for whom work was not an option by undertaking exploratory discussions on interests and relating them to work. This was primarily effective for lone parents who had been out of the labour market for some time, and in more general discussions around work for sick or disabled participants. ONE had no impact on some lone parents and carers for whom work was not an option.

Where ONE had successfully refocused some participants on work in the period after their first PA meeting, this momentum and focus were often lost where participants had no further contact with ONE. It was often the case that participants would not return to see their PA if they felt that while they were still interested in the possibility of work, they had no specific inquiry with which to approach their PA.

As indicated above, participants’ attachment to the labour market, and the priority they afforded to work, often reflected their personal circumstances and previous history of claiming and working. To reflect these varied levels of attachment, four different ‘groups’ were identified as the basis of the analysis:

- Participants in work.
- Work as an immediate priority.
- Work in the future.
- Work not an option.

The labour market position of participants within these groups before and after contact with ONE allowed the research to record changes, both attitudinal and behavioural. In some cases these were directly attributable to the ONE intervention. In others, the support provided through the service, coupled with the passage of time, enabled participants to move into or towards the labour market.

There were two dominant trends: in the first, participants seeking work moved into a job shortly after their PA meeting; in the second, work became a realistic and achievable goal in the future for some participants who previously did not perceive it to be an option.
7.4 The differential impact of ONE

Whilst ONE has certainly generated changes in the attitudes and behaviour of some of its participants, this change has not been uniformly distributed. Across all client groups and regardless of their labour market position at the start of ONE, some participants have moved towards or into work following ONE. However, within client groups there has been considerable variation in the extent of movement towards the labour market, suggesting that ONE has benefited some participants more than others.

7.5 Those who were helped by ONE

As already indicated, in all client groups some participants moved closer (or into) the labour market in the three months following the ONE intervention. The participants whose attitude or behaviour changed exhibited one or more of the following characteristics:

- strong, consistent employment history;
- strong work ethic;
- highly motivated to find work or progress towards work;
- clear ideas of the type of work wanted;

Those who were claiming benefit for the first time and were focused on work as an immediate priority benefited considerably from the service. Their attitudes regarding the role of the benefit system and the type of service offered, were challenged and changed by the approach adopted by their PA. As a result, these participants actively engaged in their first PA meeting. Similarly, job-ready participants with previous experience of claiming were open and receptive to advice and support offered by their PA in the first meeting when they recognised that ONE was a new, more personalised approach. ONE also increased the confidence and motivation of lone parents who were planning to start or complete education and training in specific vocational areas. These participants had devised their own strategy for returning to work, but their engagement with the labour market was still increased where they had received encouragement and support from their adviser.

The research respondents’ further contact with the ONE service was limited. Consequently, the majority of participants who had moved closer towards the labour market nine months after their entry into the service had done so because their circumstances had changed, or because they were motivated to do so, regardless of their contact with ONE. In a very few cases participants had moved into work or closer to the labour market at least in part because of their first PA meeting.

Where participants had had further contact with ONE, it was usually initiated by the participant. Many participants attended PA meetings to make a new claim either for the same benefit as on entry into ONE or a different benefit after a change in personal circumstances. In these cases, further contact tended to be confined to one meeting, and discussions were limited to the claim. In other cases participants attended
further meetings with the ONE personal adviser to discuss work and to receive advice and guidance on job-search methods. These participants were highly motivated jobseekers, and lone parents.

7.6 Those who were not helped by ONE

ONE was not able to make an impact on all groups following their first contact with the service, and as a consequence some participants did not move closer to the labour market. ONE was unable to change the attitudes or behaviour of jobseekers - and in particular younger jobseekers - who held strong beliefs and were ill-disposed towards the benefits system. These participants had considerable previous experience of claiming, and often, an identifiable pattern of moving onto and off benefits. In some cases these participants compared ONE unfavourably to alternative support and guidance services. PAs did not appear to be able to challenge their views. However, as jobseekers receive a work focused service outside of ONE, it had not been anticipated that ONE would have a comparable effect for jobseekers, as for other client groups.

The impact on those for whom work was not an option was also limited, either because interviews were brief or focused on benefits, or because PAs were not able to challenge the assumptions and perceptions of these individuals. Often these individuals faced considerable barriers to work, including caring responsibilities, ill-health or their age. In many cases, these barriers were so considerable or numerous that it was unlikely that these participants would be able to return to work in the foreseeable future. PAs rarely discussed these issues with them in any depth, and did not suggest any possible ways of overcoming barriers. Similarly, ONE provided little advice and assistance to those individuals facing multiple barriers to work (often a combination of hard, soft and personal barriers occurring simultaneously).

Few of these participants initiated further contact with ONE, and there were very few instances of PAs initiating contact with participants. Some participants had follow-up contact with their PA as a result of a new claim, but in these instances, discussions were usually limited to the claim. Other participants returned to see their PA for work-related advice. Participants’ feelings about the advice that they received were mixed. In a number of cases, participants felt that they would have benefited from the opportunity to discuss their work options in some depth. They would have welcomed suggestions and advice from their PA regarding work or training, but did not receive any. This was particularly the case for sick or disabled participants, and for jobseekers who were considering a change in the type of work they pursued.
7.7 Follow-up contact  
In general the appropriateness of follow-up contact for each participant related to four factors:
- The relationship established between adviser and participant.
- The availability of specialist knowledge.
- Timing of support.
- Tailored advice according to participants’ needs and personal circumstances.

7.8 Sustainable employment  
Those participants who had moved into work since their first contact with ONE usually had clearly definable intentions. These were:
- To stay in the same job.
- To change jobs, but stay in employment.
- To leave their job, and go onto benefits.
- To leave their job, but without going on to rely on benefits.

These intentions were determined by a number of factors, including participants’ work histories, attitudes to benefits, skills levels, and personal circumstances. For the most part, however, those participants who had moved into work intended to stay in their job for the foreseeable future, or so long as their personal circumstances allowed. Factors that supported sustainability of work for participants included: financial reward, a sense of personal independence, commitment to their jobs, the use of relevant skills and experience, and practical experience. ONE had the most impact in promoting the financial value of work, for example, through explaining in-work benefits, and handling these in-work benefits once a participant had moved into work.

Participants who intended to leave their jobs usually did so in part because of personal circumstances or responsibilities, but factors that inhibited sustainability included financial considerations, and convenience. Some participants also intended to leave their present job because they felt that it did not reflect their skills, experience and interest. They often felt that they would have benefited from more extensive discussions and job-search activity with their PA. The type of employment (especially in terms of type of contract and security) was also important.

ONE could also potentially offer participants in-work support, however, this was offered to a very few participants, and there were no examples of participants taking up in-work advice.

7.9 The ONE experience in summary  
On the whole, participants were supportive of the principle and the theory behind ONE. In particular, participants who felt that they required advice and support in relation the labour market were supportive of the idea that they could return to see a ONE personal
adviser to explore certain issues in more depth. However, for many their experiences were often strikingly different from the ONE design. Where they received follow-up, those who felt that they would have benefited from further advice following their first PA meeting were often disappointed by subsequent discussions. Others did not initiate further contact, either because they did not know that the possibility was there, or because they had difficulty in contacting the service. Some other participants would have benefited from further assistance, but did not think that ONE was best placed to help them, either because they had had a negative or limited introduction to the service.

Where ONE has helped participants think about or move into or towards work, they have appreciated the personal and tailored support received from their PA. There are a number of these for whom the support offered from the service remains valuable.
As with previous tranche of the fieldwork in designing the methodology for the round three fieldwork the following considerations had to be taken into account:

a) Meeting the specific information requirements of the client.

b) Collecting the information in a way which would capture as much usable data as possible.

c) Classifying the data collected in such a way as to allow the opinions of the client group to be delineated and represented in as robust a way as possible.

The methodology, described in detail below, was adopted because ECOTEC researchers considered it to be the best way of achieving these objectives. This methodological approach was the most appropriate way of gaining a truthful insight into the experiences of users of the ONE service as well as to present findings in a way that would be meaningful to those working in a policy-making context. It must be highlighted at this point that the aim of the research was not to present the opinions and experience of a representative sample of ONE clients but was more to capture examples of client experience against the background of a known context (the benefit system, claiming regimes and the intended functioning of ONE). There follows a detailed description of the methodological approach for the third round of the fieldwork.

This report evaluates the findings from the third round of research for the evaluation of ONE. In order to place this round of research in context it is necessary to briefly describe the three rounds of research which have been carried out for the evaluation of ONE.

**Round 1:**
This tranche of the fieldwork was undertaken when participation in ONE was voluntary. When making a new claim clients would have been invited along to ONE and they would have been free to accept or reject the invitation. Fieldwork took place between January and March 2000 and involved semi-structured interviews with a sample of clients, the majority of whom had been claiming for 2-3 months and who had had contact with ONE.

**Round 2:**
The second round of fieldwork took place in autumn 2000, more than five months after full participation in ONE was introduced. A similar methodological approach to that used in the previous round was adopted.
using semi-structured interviewing and covering six of the 12 pilot areas. As well as jobseekers, lone parents and sick or disabled clients who were targeted client groups in the first round, the client groups covered by the fieldwork in round two also included widows and carers.

**Round 3:**

The primary aim of the third round of fieldwork was to gain as detailed and robust a longitudinal view as possible through interviewing a large number of clients who we had interviewed in the last round of research. As will be discussed in more detail below the research approach was similar to the previous two rounds using semi-structured interviewing and covering the same areas and client groups as the second round.

**A.3 The Round Three Research Process**

**A.3.1 Aims and objectives**

The main aim of the third round of fieldwork was to gain a longitudinal perspective on clients’ experiences and perceptions of the ONE service. This was to be achieved by interviewing a large number of clients who had been interviewed previously. The aim was to gain an insight into if, and in what way, their original contact with ONE had had an impact on their personal situation, for example in relation to contact with the labour market, employment/benefit status and also whether their opinions of the service had altered since our initial contact with them. The aim of the methodology, which is described below, was to allow for optimal reporting of the qualitative information we received. As well as the above aims the third round of fieldwork also attempted to contribute to the continuing, overarching objectives of the ONE evaluation:

- To consider the impact of ONE on an individual’s attachment to the labour market.
- To consider if there has been a reduction in inactivity.
- To consider how far clients can be re-focused on work as a first priority.
- To consider whether more people get jobs and whether they get them more quickly than they would otherwise.
- To see if people stay employed for longer periods.
- To look at the effectiveness of the Personal Adviser in identifying barriers to work and considering clients’ whole needs and in offering appropriate advice.

**A.3.2 The Recruitment Process**

There were two main aims when recruiting clients for the third round of the fieldwork. The priority aim was to recruit clients who had been interviewed in the second round of fieldwork in order to gain a longitudinal perspective of the service. At the same time it was also important to recruit clients who had had meaningful follow-up contact with the ONE service. This was in order to see the impact of further contact on the client’s actions or progress and on their perceptions of the ONE service. It was also an aim of the research to see whether those clients who were employed, were in work as a result of ONE and if they were in sustainable employment.
It was agreed prior to the recruitment stage that with the above aims in mind it would be impossible to use exactly the same sample in the third round of interviews than was used in the second round. Firstly some of the round two clients were bound to be uncontactable or unwilling/unable to take part in any further research and secondly it could not be guaranteed that a large number of Round 2 clients would have had meaningful, further contact with the ONE service. It was anticipated that the original sample from the second round of the fieldwork would be reduced by 20-25% as a result and the shortfall would be replaced by clients from a booster sample who had had meaningful follow-up contact with the ONE service. In fact clients were recruited from the Round 2 and booster samples on an approximate ratio of 60:40.

In order to achieve the above aims and the numbers required, as in the second round of fieldwork, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling describes a process in which respondents are recruited prior to interview, in line with the purposes of the research brief, in order to capture those clients whose responses are likely to provide relevant data. In the first instance clients were recruited on the basis of their position in relation to the labour market and the possible impact of ONE on their position. In the second instance clients were recruited on the basis of whether they had had follow-up contact with ONE.

Clients interviewed in the Round 3 fieldwork were selected by a recruiter using a telephone screening method. The recruiter used a standard pro forma once in contact with the client. The pro forma included an introductory section which aimed to refresh the client’s memory about their previous contact with ECOTEC and to introduce and explain the new round of the fieldwork. The telephone discussion asked the client about their current benefit status, about the nature and extent of any further contact with ONE and about what they are doing now, and identified any change in status since the last round of interviewing/their last contact with ONE. From this discussion the recruiter made a decision about whether to recruit the client or not. It became evident in the pilot stages of recruitment that follow-up contact was not always as substantial as had been indicated in the DSS database. In response, our recruiter probed as to the quality and quantity of further contact and booked interviews with those who had had ‘meaningful’ contact with the ONE service.

As far as possible, throughout the recruitment process the recruiter has attempted to balance the need to recruit round two clients and those who have had meaningful follow-up contact with the need for as equal a number of clients as possible from the different client groups and different benefit types covered in the research.
As with previous rounds of the fieldwork, semi-structured interviewing was the primary research method used. Interviews were structured with experience of previous stages of the fieldwork in mind and incorporated lessons learned from them. They were structured in such a way as to extract the most relevant and comprehensive information about experience of the ONE service and to make it as simple as possible to draw lessons from the responses reported in terms of the ONE experience and labour market outcomes.

The interview was structured, as far as possible, as a naturally-developing informal conversation, which would allow the respondents to express themselves freely and reduce the level of perceived cultural inequality between interviewer and interviewee. It was considered advantageous for the research to be conducted in this way, due to the nature of the clients involved, who may have had previous negative experience of ‘official’ interviewing and may thus be negatively predisposed to overly-structured questioning. At the same time it was vital to design the topic guide in such a way as to gather as much concrete detail as possible within the time limits defined by the research timetable.

It should be noted at this point that respondents were offered a small incentive payment for their participation. ECOTEC’s experience in this type of research suggests that this increases the response rate, without any significant evidence to suggest, as some researchers claim, that payment encourages a certain type of response (disproportionately positive).

Each interview was conducted by a study team of two researchers, with one conducting the interview and the other taking written notes and posing additional questions. The interview was also recorded, providing the permission of the respondent was obtained - it was stressed that this recording was made solely for the convenience of the researchers and would not be passed on to any other authority.

In order to promote ease of use for the interviewer, the topic guide was broken down into a number of sections.

- **Introduction to interview**: Explaining the purpose of the research, introducing the content of the interview, assuring confidentiality and seeking consent to tape the interview.
- **Personal Information**: Checking personal details, current status and members of household.
- **Recent work, training and benefit history**: Exploring the recent employment, education and/or benefit history of the client to provide a picture of client’s attachment to the labour market/dependency on benefits.
- **Recent/current claim**: Asking about events leading up to the original ONE claim and current benefit status and immediate plans at the time of making the original claim.
• **The Personal Adviser at recent claim**: Exploring what was discussed at the client’s initial ONE meeting and establishing whether the client has had any further contact.

• **Activity since recent/current claim**: Exploring details about the client’s activity since their claim or ECOTEC’s last contact focusing on the level and nature of labour market related activity.

• **Sustainability of employment outcomes - for those in work only**: Asking details about the job, longer-term work plans and in-work support from the client’s personal adviser.

• **Further contact with ONE - further contact participants only**: To ascertain the reason for the further contact and focus of discussion. To explore if and why the further contact was appropriate or inappropriate for the client.

• **Further contact for participants who have had no contact only**: To explore under what circumstances a client might make further contact with ONE and if there was anything lacking in the initial service they received.

• **Plans and close of interview**: Exploring immediate/longer term plans and general perceptions of the ONE service and its impact on the individual client.

In addition to suggesting the lines of questioning and the order of discussion (although this was left, within reason, to the discretion of the interviewer), the topic guide also prompted the interviewer to probe for specific pieces of information required from the client. This allowed information to be collected to a necessary degree of depth in a consistent way by all members of the study team.

**A.3.4 The Client Groups**

The client groups approached in the third round of fieldwork were the same client groups interviewed during the second round. The client groups approached during the third tranche of the fieldwork were:

• Jobseekers (i.e. current JSA claimants who experienced a ONE referral or individuals who have made a new claim for JSA).

• Lone parents (who had been referred to ONE as a result of an Income Support or other similar claim, or through New Deal).

• Sick or disabled clients.

• Widows.

• Carers (i.e. those with significant caring responsibilities for a person solely dependent upon them).

An attempt was made to approach an adequate number of clients from each client group during the third round of fieldwork so that we could draw some valuable findings in relation to each of the identified groups. As well as contacting the above client groups, another aim of the research was to explore experience of clients who had had further contact with ONE after the initial meeting with their advisers. This recruitment process has been described above in full.
The study was carried out in six of the 12 areas in which different delivery models of the ONE service are being piloted:

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<td>Calderdale and Kirklees</td>
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An aim of the research is to see if and how different delivery models have affected clients’ experience of the ONE service and so it was necessary to attempt to contact an equal number of clients who fell under each delivery model in order that findings could be drawn from each.

There is a contentious issue in qualitative social research about how and why people explain and interpret past events differently at different points in time. There is often an issue as to whether a person’s interpretation of events can change as a result of the passage of time, new events or a possible attitudinal change. As the research team were interviewing clients about their past experiences of the ONE service at more than one point in time this is an issue, which was bound to arise. Moreover, as the same clients were approached a second time to interview them in depth about their experiences of the ONE service, it was a concern that this in itself could have had an impact on the views expressed.

It is commonly accepted that data recovered from qualitative research will never present a completely truthful or unbiased description of an event or experience ‘instead we should see such responses as displays of perspectives and moral forms.’9 There are a number of factors, which will affect an interviewee’s interpretation and opinion of a chain of events. These can include factors brought on by the interviewee such as memory recall or over-reporting and also factors introduced by the interview situation itself, such as the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, the physical context of the interview and the interviewer’s conduct. Furthermore, the fact that clients are describing an experience, in some cases over a year after the event, is bound to have an effect on the validity of the data they provide.

In the third tranche of the fieldwork some clients were visited who had been interviewed in the second round to discuss among other things, their further contact with the ONE service. It was an initial concern of the research team, that this second visit could have produced different responses when asked about experience of past contact with the ONE service than were produced during the initial interview. In fact in

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comparing topic guides from the second and third round interviews it can be seen that post-hoc rationalisation has occurred infrequently. In both interviews, clients tended to use similar language, tone and general expressions and there was much continuity regarding attitudes and behaviour towards work and benefits. Where different accounts of experience were given in Round 2 and Round 3 interviews it cannot always be attributed to post-hoc rationalisation. For example, problems of recall and different interviewing techniques are other determining factors which might bring some variation in describing events and this has also been taken into account.

All in all, however, it can be safely stated that the effect of post-hoc rationalisation on our findings is negligible.

**A.4.2 Impact of Researchers**

It is possible that as a result of the first meeting with our researchers, clients may have taken action in relation to the ONE service, which they may not have done otherwise. Although the researchers tried not to influence clients’ actions or views directly, as a result of talking them through their experience with ONE and refreshing their memories about what ONE has to offer they may have indirectly caused clients to seek further advice from the service or even affected their views or perceptions of the service to a small degree.

The topic guides used for the interviewing aim to allow the client to discuss fully their experiences with the ONE service, their opinions of it and how it has affected their situation. Experience with the second tranche of fieldwork has shown that the natural course of the interview has made it necessary in some cases for the researcher to describe a bit more about what the ONE service has to offer. As a result clients often indicated that they had learned a bit more about the ONE service and that they may follow-up further queries they had as a result. This inevitably means that the third round of fieldwork may throw up cases where clients have initiated contact with ONE as a direct result of their previous interview with one of our researchers. As the third tranche of the fieldwork is particularly concerned with the nature and experience of further contact with ONE, the impact of our researchers could be an issue in analysis of the data collected particularly when we are looking at reasons for initiation of the further contact and therefore this has been taken into account in analysis of the data received.
Follow-up discussions with ECOTEC about your experiences with claiming benefit

As you may recall last autumn you took part in a one-to-one discussion about your experience of claiming benefit with a researcher from ECOTEC. Your views and personal experience of the service provided by ONE were very valuable for the research.

Further to our letter dated November 2000 we would like to arrange another discussion with you, to see whether there have been any changes in your situation, an ECOTEC Researcher will contact you to arrange an interview. **We value your contribution to the research and would like to give you £15 in cash as a ‘thank-you’ gift for your help with this study and this will not affect your entitlement to benefits in anyway.**

Should your contact details have changed, please write (remembering to give your name) to Vicky Davies at ECOTEC, using the Freepost envelope provided by no later than 14th May 2001.

I do hope you will continue to help with this important study and that you will enjoy the opportunity of giving your views. If you’d like to know more about this second stage of research, please call either Vicky Davies at ECOTEC on 0207 630 6090, or Leah Harris, at the DSS Social Research Branch on 020 7962 8325. We would be pleased to answer any queries you may have.

We hope that you will be able to take part in the second stage of this research.

Kind regards

Victoria Davies
Senior Research Manager
Dear «Title» «Surname»

I am writing to ask for your help. The Department of Social Security (DSS) and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) want to improve the services provided to people claiming benefit. We have therefore asked ECOTEC, an independent research organisation, to carry out some one-to-one discussions with people claiming benefit, or who have claimed benefit recently. ECOTEC is completely independent of government departments and political parties.

Your name has been selected at random from the records of people visiting selected offices. We would like to know about your experiences of claiming benefit and what you think of the advice and assistance you have been given whilst claiming. **We are interested in your contribution, whether you are claiming benefit, or whether you have now moved off benefit.**

An interviewer from ECOTEC will be contacting you some time during the next few weeks, to explain more about the study. The interviewer will ask you a small number of questions over the telephone concerning your claim and may ask you to take part in a face-to-face discussion. This is a voluntary study and anything you tell the interviewer will be treated in the strictest confidence. The findings will not identify you or your family and the names of those who take part will not be passed on to the DSS, or DfEE, or anyone outside ECOTEC. **If you do take part in the face-to-face discussion, you will receive £15 in cash, as a 'thank-you' gift for your help with this study.** This will not affect your entitlement to benefits in any way.

I hope you decide to take part in the study. If, however, you do not wish an interviewer from ECOTEC to contact you, please write (remembering to give your name) to Vicky Davies at ECOTEC, using the Freepost envelope provided by no later than Friday 11th May. Whatever your decision, it will not affect your benefit entitlement or any dealings you may have with DSS, the Benefits Agency or job centre, either now or in the future.

I do hope you will be able to help with this important study and that you will enjoy the opportunity of giving your views. If you’d like to know more about the research, please call either Vicky Davies at ECOTEC on 020 7630 6090, or myself, at the DSS Social Research Branch on 020 7962 8325 We would be pleased to answer any queries you may have.
We hope you will be able to take part in the research.

Yours faithfully

Leah Harris
Research Officer
APPENDIX D  TELEPHONE SCREENER FOR ROUND 2 PARTICIPANTS

Discussion Guide for Telephone Contact with 2nd Round Participants

Interviewer’s notes:

We need to contact all those individuals interviewed during the last round of fieldwork to determine whether they have had any further contact with the ONE service, where they are now (primarily in relation to the labour market) and to agree a mutually convenient time for a second interview.

Please ensure you read the relevant client summary sheet for each individual before contacting them by telephone. This will provide you with some background information on each person and help steer the telephone discussion.

Participant Contact Details

Name:
Address:
Tel.:

Interview Details
Date:
Time:
Interviewer:

Interview confirmed within 24hrs of visit?  Yes  No

Part One: Introduction

• Check that you are talking to the right person
• Introduce yourself, explaining that you’re from ECOTEC (refer to recent letter sent)
• Introduce/remind the respondent of the research:
  - Researcher (Name:) visited you in (Month:) last year to ask for your views on the ONE service
  - Check recall
  * If respondent is hesitant, provide more information.
• Explain that we’re now contacting all those people we spoke to last year to see
  - where they are now and what plans they have
  - whether they’ve had any further contact with the ONE service and, if so, what this was
  - Check the respondent understands
  - Check it’s OK to ask a couple of questions over the telephone now – takes no more than 2 minutes
If respondent is hesitant
   o reiterate that there are only a couple of questions and they will only take a couple of minutes to answer
   o emphasise our gratitude if they are able to help
   o assure them that any information provided is treated as confidential, is for ECOTEC’s use only and will not be passed onto any third party.

When OK, continue overleaf.

Interviewer’s Notes: Check DSS database to see whether individual is recorded as having had further contact with ONE. Insert nature of subsequent contact recorded on DSS database (tick all that apply):

- [ ] Caseload meeting
- [ ] Review meeting
- [ ] Trigger meeting
- [ ] Other contact

Part Two: Telephone Discussion

1. Can I ask you what benefits you are currently claiming?

   - [ ] Jobseekers Allowance
   - [ ] Income Support
   - [ ] Council Tax Benefit
   - [ ] Housing Benefit
   - [ ] Incapacity Benefit
   - [ ] Severe Disablement Allowance
   - [ ] Invalid Care Allowance
   - [ ] Widows and Bereavement Benefits

2. Since our researcher met with you, have you had any further contact with the ONE service?

   Further contact:  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

   Nature of contact:  [ ] Face-to-face in ONE Suite  [ ] By telephone
   [ ] Other (Pls. specify……………………………)

   Length of contact:  [ ] Short (< 5 mins)  [ ] Medium  [ ] Long (> 30 mins)

   Initiator:  [ ] Participant  [ ] ONE/DSS  [ ] Other (Pls. specify .......)

   Note any other useful information:

3. What are you doing now? Let the participant respond and tick the appropriate box below. If the participant is unsure how to answer, ascertain whether they are employed or not.

   ➞ If employed, determine the nature, length and/or pattern of employment. Determine what priority the individual places on work and whether they are looking for work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>Tick Box</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am unemploy (Seeking work and available):</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am employed:</td>
<td>Full-time employed</td>
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<td>Part-time employed</td>
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<td>Self-employed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>On a government training programme</td>
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<td>In Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other (pls. specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am inactive:</td>
<td>Seeking work, but not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not seeking, but would like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not seeking and would not like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Three: Recruit**

**Recruit**

- Explain to the participant that we would like to arrange another interview with them, similar to last time. We’re particularly interested to hear:
  - if they’ve had further contact, what happened and whether they felt it was appropriate or useful
  - what has happened since we last met
- Check the fieldwork schedule and let them know when we will be in their area
- Agree a date and time for the interview to take place and give the name of the researcher that will be visiting

* If the participant declines the opportunity to be interviewed, ascertain a clear reason for this. Responses such as ‘not interested’ are not sufficient – ascertain exactly why the participant is not interested.

⇒ When recruiting, emphasise the £15 cash gift for the client’s time and that researchers will be visiting the client’s home address for the interview.

Thank the participant for their time and close.

Please attach the relevant client summary sheet and completed interview from the last round of research to the back of this discussion guide.
Discussion Guide for Telephone Contact with Booster Sample

Interviewer’s notes:

We need to contact some new people who were not interviewed during the last round of fieldwork to boost the total number of participants involved in this round of research who have had further contact with the ONE service.

Please ensure you have details of the number of interviews already booked for each pilot area, showing the number of participants recruited for each client group and level of further contact with ONE. Please complete the data requested on this front page (except interview details) prior to contacting people. This will provide you with some background information on each person and help steer the telephone discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Contact Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel.:</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview confirmed within 24hrs of visit?  

Yes  
No

Part One: Demographic and Other Criteria

Please note: This data is available in the Excel database with contact details for participants.

Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Lea Roding</th>
<th>Clyde Coast</th>
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<th>Leeds</th>
<th>North Notts</th>
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</table>
Part Two: Introduction to Telephone Conversation

- Explain that ECOTEC recently sent you a letter asking if you would be interested in participating in some research about claiming benefits, and the ONE service. We’d like to ask you a few questions over the telephone - this should only take a couple of minutes - and everything discussed will be treated as confidential.

  * If respondent is hesitant
    - reiterate that there are only a couple of questions and they will only take a couple of minutes to answer
    - emphasise our gratitude if they are able to help
    - assure them that any information provided is treated as confidential, is for ECOTEC’s use only and will not be passed onto any third party.

When OK, continue with the questions below.

Part Three: Telephone Questions

4. Can I ask what benefits you are currently claiming?

   - Jobseeker’s Allowance
   - Income Support
   - Council Tax Benefit
   - Housing Benefit
   - Incapacity Benefit
   - Severe Disablement Allowance
   - Invalid Care Allowance
   - Widows and Bereavement Benefits

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Group (on the basis of claim that initiated)</th>
<th>Jobseeker (JSA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>50+</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please specify ethnic group (if appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Further Contact with ONE (tick all that apply)</th>
<th>Caseload meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trigger meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Since you made your current claim for (insert benefit claim that initiated entry to ONE), have you had any further contact with the ONE service?

Further contact:  □ Yes  □ No
Nature of contact: □ Face-to-face in ONE Suite  □ By telephone
               □ Other (Pls. specify…………………………………)
Length of contact: □ Short (< 5 mins) □ Medium  □ Long (> 30 mins)
Initiator:       □ Participant  □ ONE/DSS  □ Other (Pls. specify .....)

Note any other useful information:

6. What are you doing now? Let the participant respond and tick the appropriate box below. If the participant is unsure how to answer, ascertain whether they are caring for a close relative, or whether they are working or not.

- ➤ If employed, determine the nature, length and/or pattern of employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>Tick Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am unemployed (Seeking work and available):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am employed:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time employed</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (pls. specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am inactive:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work, but not available</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not seeking, but would like</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not seeking and would not like</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part Four: Recruitment

Sample position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Further contact</th>
<th>No contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobseeker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled client</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Check with recruitment requirements for the relevant pilot area

- if still needed, recruit

⇒ Provide an outline of the study: the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education and Employment want to improve the services provided to people claiming benefit. They are funding ECOTEC to talk to people like yourself to find out more about your experience of the ONE service. We are particularly interested to find out whether you found the further contact you have had with the ONE service useful, whether it was tailored to your needs but also if the service made you think differently about being on benefit and looking for work (either now or in the future).

⇒ When recruiting, emphasise the £15 cash gift for the client’s time and that researchers will be visiting the client’s home address for the interview.

  • Check the fieldwork schedule and let them know when we will be in their area
  • Agree a date and time for the interview to take place and give the name of the researcher that will be visiting

* If the participant declines the opportunity to be interviewed, ascertain a clear reason for this. Responses such as ‘not interested’ are not sufficient – ascertain exactly why the participant is not interested.

  • If not needed, thank them for their time and close.
Notes for Interviewers

The overall aim of the qualitative interviews is to consider the policy impact of ONE on the individual - in terms of their attitudes and behaviour towards the labour markets and the benefit system (welfare to work, reducing ‘dependency’ on the state). More specifically, the objectives for this third round of qualitative policy research are:

• to determine the longer-term impact of ONE on its participants’ labour market outcomes (at least six months after initial entry to the benefit service via ONE)
• to determine the impact of follow-up contact on participants’ labour market outcomes
• to determine the sustainability of employment outcomes.

Take care to tailor the interview according to the experience and position of each respondent.

Introduction to Interview

➔ First of all, thank the individual for agreeing to speak to us.
➔ Explain that you work for ECOTEC, an independent research organisation with no links to government departments or political parties.

The Department for Social Security and the Department for Education and Employment want to improve the services provided to people claiming benefit. They are funding ECOTEC to talk to people like yourself to find out more about your experience of the ONE service. We are particularly interested to find out whether the service you receive is tailored to your needs but also if the service made you think differently about being on benefit and looking for work (either now or in the future).

The interview should last no longer than one hour and there are a number of questions I need to ask. Before we start, it is important to emphasise that everything discussed during the interview will be treated as confidential.

Is that all clear? Do you have any questions you’d like to ask before we start?
Check that it is OK to record the interview – reassure the individual that the tapes will only be used by ECOTEC and will not be passed onto the DSS or any other government department.

Part One: Personal Information

Can I just check some information with you?

- Age
- Ethnic Group (where relevant)
- Current status (in work, on certain benefits, other, length of time in current status)
- Household – do you live alone or with family/friends? (Record details of other home sharers: No. living in same home, their ages, status (in work, claiming benefit) whether they are dependant on the interviewee)

Part Two: Recent Work, Training & Benefit History

Interviewer Notes: These questions allow you to explore the recent history of the individual being interviewed. These serve three purposes: to ease the individual into the interview by talking about themselves, to understand the individual’s personal circumstances, and to provide you with a picture of their attachment to the labour market / dependency on benefits. For interviews with previous research respondents, use this section to summarise and verify the information collected in the previous interview. For booster, or new, research respondents, please ensure all the following information is collected.

Can you tell me what you’ve done in the two years prior to your recent benefit claim?

(Collect a comprehensive record of any employment, training or other benefit claims. Ascertain the level of priority the individual attributes to work, given their personal circumstances.)

- Employment History. Collect details of jobs held, concentrating on the two most recent prior to ONE. Probe:
  - number of hours worked (part-time or full-time)
  - main roles and responsibilities
  - how did they find the job
  - how did they feel about it
  - duration of each job held
  - reason for leaving

- Education or Training History. Distinguish between in-work and independent learning. Probe:
  - motivation for undertaking training/education
  - how did they find the course and enrol
  - subject areas studied, vocational or academic
  - did they complete the course
  - did they receive a qualification
• Benefit History. Concentrate only on benefits claimed or received prior to entry into ONE. Probe:
  - reasons for claiming
  - details of different benefits claimed
  - length of receipt of these benefits
  - reasons for changing or ceasing different claims

• Other Responsibilities, including caring for child or other close family relative. Probe:
  - ascertain the nature and level of caring responsibilities,
  - caring for children, elderly relatives, or another type of caring - specify
  - identify the need for caring responsibilities
  - how extensive are these responsibilities, level of support available from others
  - number of hours involved per week
  - what level of priority was attributed to working, given caring responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Three: Recent/Current Claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

New Respondents:

Reason for recent claim: Can you explain for me the events which led up to your recent claim (which initiated ONE contact)? Be very specific about which benefit you are referring to. (Probe: made redundant, widowed, began caring responsibilities, relationship broke up, fell ill or became disabled - please state clearly on the interview guide the nature of the disability or illness, indicating the level of severity, other.)

Was this a new claim or a repeat claim? (Confirm whether this was an entirely new claim or if the participant was changing from one benefit onto another.)

All respondents:

What benefits are you currently claiming? (Use show card of ONE benefits and check what is determining respondent’s eligibility for that benefit. Clarify discrepancies with benefit information drawn from sampling data - use this as an opportunity to explore whether the client started a claim for a different benefit when they entered ONE and what changes have been made since. Probe: reasons for change, who initiated it and whether the client felt this was appropriate.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Original ONE Claim</th>
<th>Current Benefit</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobseeker’s Allowance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Tax Benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incapacity Benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe Disablement Allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widows and Bereavement Benefits</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further comments on any changes to benefits and whether this was appropriate:

**If the client is currently in work:** Are you currently receiving any of the following:

- [ ] Housing Benefit
- [ ] Council Tax Benefit
- [ ] Working Families’ Tax Credit
- [ ] Disabled Person’s Tax Credit

**What were your immediate plans at the time of making this claim?**

- to stay at home  
  *(Probe: is this due to personal circumstances, caring responsibilities, or attitude towards the benefit system/work?)*

- to look for work  
  *(Probe: motivation, type of work, occupation, nature of activities, part-time or full-time, permanent or temporary, why this choice, what job-search methods were used, how intense were these efforts and how likely does the individual feel they would be in finding work in this area – why they would be likely, and why not (barriers to work)).*

- to start some training or education  
  *(Probe: motivation, subject of training/education, part-time or full-time, intended length of course.)*

- Other (e.g. Voluntary work)  
  *(Probe: what and why? Explore motivation for these activities and their relation to the labour market.)*

**If work was not an immediate plan:**

Was work an option for you at the time of your claim?  
*(Explore the reasons for responses given, such as other responsibilities or personal circumstances. If work was an option, probe level of priority/activity/focus given to work, job-search methods used.)*

**If work was not an option:**

Do you feel that work may be an option for you in the longer term?  
*(Explore the reasons for responses given, try to ascertain when work may become an option - if at all – and the type of jobs the individual would be interested in.)*
Part Four: The Personal Adviser at Recent Claim

Can you remember what you discussed with your Personal Adviser (at the initial ONE meeting when claim was made)?
(Start by probing personal circumstances and support needs before mentioning employment etc. Probe: the focus of discussions, why this focus and whether this was appropriate for the individual. Collect evidence to support claims of appropriate focus or not. Please probe under the following prompts if necessary)

- Personal circumstances (housing, family, other responsibilities)
- Support needs (Level of support wanted by client.)
- Benefit claim (advice, help with forms)
- Employment (work history, job readiness, type and level of employment sought/considered, work as a future option or a long-term goal, advice on other jobs available, where to look for jobs, how to look for work, other.
- Barriers to work (housing, basic skills, confidence, self-esteem, substance misuse, access to transport, mental health issues, finance/debt issues, childcare, other skill needs)
- Training needs
- Calculation of in-work benefits

Were you offered any further help with another agency or member of staff? (i.e.: Disability Employment Adviser, Lone Parent Adviser, other training organisation. Probe: Reason for help being offered, who offered this help, was it appropriate for the client.)

Have you had any contact with your PA since your first meeting? (Probe: Type/nature of contact, how many times, who initiated the contact, timing of meeting in relation to first contact.)

If individual has met with the PA since the first meeting: go to Section 6

If individual has not met with the PA since the first meeting: go to Section 7

Part Four: Activity Since Recent/Current Claim

Interviewer’s Notes: Please probe clients for details about their activity since their claim or our last contact (according to whether we have interviewed the individual before or not). This should focus on the level and nature of labour market related activity. If we have interviewed the individual before, please familiarise yourself with their previous responses.
Can you explain what you have been doing since your claim/we last met? Please complete all sections below that are relevant to the participant’s recent activity.

• **If in Work:**
  - collect details of the job
  - determine whether this is the only job they have had during this period
  - if they have had other jobs, ask them what they were doing, and why they left this job
  - number of hours worked, main roles and responsibilities, pay
  - how did they find the job
  - how do they feel about it, how long do they intend to stay in the job
  - how does it compare to any jobs the respondent has had prior to ONE
  - if intend to leave, why and what are the client’s plans and how will they achieve this

• **If in Education or Training:**
  - collect details about the course
  - number of hours per week, subject area
  - how did they find the course and get enrolled
  - do they enjoy it
  - how long does the course last
  - how will the knowledge gained be used (in relation to work)

• **If Caring:**
  - ascertain the nature and level of their caring responsibilities
  - caring for children, elderly relatives or another type of caring - specify
  - how extensive are these caring responsibilities, number of hours per week
  - what priority do they attribute to work, given their personal circumstances?

• **If Looking for Work / Unemployed:**
  - have they been looking for work
  - collect detailed evidence of the nature and level of job-search activities - newspaper searches, CV writing, attending interviews, writing speculative letters
  - how much time is spent looking for work per week
  - what is preventing the individual from finding or securing work, has anything been done to counteract this?

• **Other Responses:**
  - Probe: what and why?
  - how do they relate to work? If at all
  - what are the client’s long-term goals and when would the client seek to achieve these
  - what priority is attributed to work?
Part Five: Sustainability of Employment Outcomes - For Those in Work Only

Interviewer’s Notes: The following questions should only be addressed to those participants who are currently in work or who have been in work for a period of time (not specified) since their initial ONE interview.

Summarise and verify the information already collected earlier in the interview about the participant’s job to check you have correct information.
- business activity of employer
- nature of participants’ roles and responsibilities
- skills required, how and when these were acquired
- hours of work
- duration of employment
- pay (in comparison to previous employment)

What do you enjoy about working/your job? (Probe: specify whether responses are specific to the current job or working in general)

What aspects of working/your job do you dislike? (Probe: specify whether responses are specific to the current job or working in general)

What are your longer-term work plans?

What support, if any, do you feel you have received from your Personal Adviser or from the ONE service that has helped you to stay in work? (Probe: collect concrete evidence on specific actions taken by the PA that has helped the participant stay in work, or move into another job.)

- If the participant is considering leaving current job in the near future

Can you explain why you want to leave this job? (Probe: is it the job itself, the pay, personal circumstances?)

What would you do next? (Probe: claim benefit, look for another job, where would the participant look, would they seek any advice or support looking for work or claiming benefit, where would they go.)

Part Six: Further Contact with ONE - Further Contact Participants Only

Interviewer’s Notes: Some of the questions here refer to the delivery of ONE. This allows the individual to explain what happened to them and will help focus their mind on the service they received and how it has helped them (or not). When discussing the further contact with ONE, ascertain what the focus of discussion were, whether these were appropriate for the individual concerned and why they were (or were not) appropriate. Collect concrete evidence to support respondent’s claims that the focus of their discussions was or was not appropriate.
Can you explain what further contact you have had with the ONE service since your first meeting with a Personal Adviser?
(Probe: reason for further contact, how many times, who initiated the contact, what was the nature of the contact - telephone, written correspondence or face-to-face meeting, length of contact, was the timing appropriate or not, and why, if timing was not appropriate then when would have been better?)

Were you told that this attendance at this meeting was compulsory? (How did you feel about this)?

Can you remember what you discussed on these occasions?
(Probe: the focus of discussions, why this focus and whether this was appropriate for the individual at this later time. Collect evidence to support claims of appropriate focus or not. Please probe under the following prompts if necessary)

- Benefit claim (advice, benefit change, help with forms)
- Employment (work history, job readiness, type and level of employment sought/considered, advice on other jobs available, where to look for jobs, how to look for work, other.)
- Personal circumstances (housing, family, other responsibilities)
- Calculation of in-work benefits
- Barriers to work (housing, basic skills, substance misuse, access to transport, mental health issues, other skill needs)
- Support needs (Level of support wanted by client.)
- Training needs (was a training programme offered, if so what kind of programme,
  when could the respondent start it, and how did they feel about going on it, was it the right type of programme for them?)
- Work trials or voluntary work

Can you describe how these instances of contact have, or have not, helped you?
(Probe: Identify specific actions of support or assistance that have helped or hindered the client. Collect evidence to support claims - identify instances where the service received has made a clear impact. Has there been a change in attitude towards benefits and/or work?)

Do you feel there was anything more that the ONE service could have done to help you?
(Probe: What would have helped, determine exactly how it would have helped the client. Is this something peculiar to the individual, client group or all ONE participants.)

What do you feel about your Personal Adviser? (Prompt: What do you think about the way in which they responded to your personal circumstances? Has the way that you feel about your PA changed over time?)
Have you been offered another meeting with your Personal Adviser?  (Probe: how was this offered, attitude towards another meeting, what happened, reasons for decline / non-attendance if relevant.)

Have you thought about trying to contact the ONE service or to arrange another meeting with your Personal Adviser?  (Probe: participant’s understanding of whether they could contact the service or not, reasons for this understanding, motivation/reasons for contact or no contact, outcome/response of any attempt at further contact, level of client ownership, empowerment or proactiveness.)

Have you been in contact with any other agencies/ organisations about work or your benefits e.g. the Citizens’ Advice Bureau?  (Probe: why was this? Could your PA have helped you with this? What did you feel that the other organisation could offer you?)

**Part Seven: Further Contact For Participants Who Have Had No Contact Only**

Have you been offered another meeting with your Personal Adviser?  (Probe: how was this offered, attitude towards another meeting, what happened, reasons for decline / non-attendance if relevant.)

Have you thought about trying to contact the ONE service or to arrange another meeting with your Personal Adviser?  (Probe: participant’s understanding of whether they could contact the service or not, reasons for this understanding, motivation/reasons for contact or no contact, outcome/response of any attempt at further contact, level of client ownership, empowerment or proactiveness.)

Can you explain the circumstances under which you would consider contacting your Personal Adviser?  (Probe: what would be the participants’ main motivation for contacting the service themselves - benefit-related queries or work-related queries, what do they perceive to be the role of the Personal Adviser or ONE.)

Have you had any problems/difficulties at work?  (Prompt: what were they? How did you deal with them, including any contact with PA)

Do you think that any help or advice would have been useful in dealing with this problem/difficulty?  (Prompt: what type of help or advice? where would you have tried to get this support from?)

Do you feel there was anything else that the ONE service could have done to help you?  
NB: Not just related to work/employment problems.  
(Probe: What would have helped, determine exactly how it would have helped the client. Is this something peculiar to the individual, client group or all ONE participants.)
Have you been in contact with any other agencies/ organisations about work or your benefits e.g. the Citizens’ Advice Bureau? (Probe: why was this? Could your PA have helped you with this? What did you feel that the other organisation could offer you?)

**Part Eight: Plans & Close of Interview**

Can you explain what your immediate plans are? (Prompt: Have you any personal goals, in particular in relation to work? How will you go about doing this?)

What are your plans for the six months or a year after that? (Probe: what might prevent you from achieving these aims?)

Overall, what impact do you feel your Personal Adviser has made on your personal situation or circumstances? (Did they make it easier to start thinking about work/ stay in work?)

What do you think of the ONE service?

How do you think it can be improved to help people in your situation?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time and help.

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