

# Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme

## Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme



### 1 Description

**Timespan**

Following the pathfinder soft launch, a national roll-out of the programme took place across England between November 2016 and March 2017.

**Stage**

**PILOT**

**Focus area**

**MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

### 2 Foundations

**Policy area**

**GENERAL EDUCATION**

The instrument aims to establish at least one full-time equivalent Jobcentre Plus Programme Adviser to work within schools to provide students with 'high quality and impartial careers advice', as well as information on traineeships and apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers expect. It aims to specifically target young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, and who face potential difficulty in entering the labour market (for example, due to disability). The instrument has not yet been implemented at universities.

**Policy goal**

The instrument aims to tackle the barriers to work faced by 16-24 year olds (who in the UK are disproportionately more likely to be unemployed than the general population) before young people leave education. The policy goal is to help reduce unemployment and economic inactivity, and to support the associated individual and societal benefits of early employment. The intervention aims to combat the barriers to work faced by young people before they leave education, and to facilitate a more effective school to work/training/further study transition. To do this the pathfinder programme established at least 1 full-time Jobcentre Plus Programme Advisor in each area to work within schools to provide students with information on traineeships and apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers expect (such as team working, punctuality, etc).

**Mismatch**

**PART OF BROAD POLICY MEASURE OF WHICH SKILL MISMATCH IS ONLY A MINOR PART**

As part of the Jobcentre Plus Programme initiative.

**Aim of policy instrument**

 **BROADLY ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH**

**Legal basis**

**MINISTERIAL ORDER**

**Administrative level**

**NATIONAL**

**Main responsible body**

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

**Stakeholders**

 **GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**

 **TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)**

 **EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS**

Jobcentre plus - staff provision and training  
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) - assisted with provision  
Local employers - promote networks and connections with training and work possibilities  
The National Careers Service, the Local Authority children's services (e.g. Troubled Families/Looked After Children teams) and Local Learning Provider networks - expertise and advise

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**Funding** The programme was announced as part of the Conservative Government's 2015 Summer Budget. However, exact funds committed to the instrument were not stated.

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**Intended beneficiaries** The intended beneficiaries are 16-24 year olds, and those at risk of becoming NEET or who face potential barriers to accessing the labour market. The beneficiaries are expected to benefit by gaining advice/training/support/access to the following areas: work experience placements, employer visits to schools, taster days in industry, apprenticeship advice and guidance, skills workshops, local labour market information, careers fairs/assemblies, resource development and financial management.

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### 3 Processes

**Use of labour market intelligence**

 **INFORM CAREER-MAKING DECISIONS OF STUDENTS**

Evidence of the proven societal benefits of high youth employment levels was drawn from Youth Unemployment data. Additionally, existing local and national interventions such as the National Careers Service and the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) were used to inform the instruments goals and target population.

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**Financial schemes** The programme is free for schools and young persons schools, which allows both parties to benefit from the added value of receiving an additional resource to schooling and new opportunities for careers education activities.

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**Frequency of updates** The instrument was first launched in 10 pathfinder areas between February and July 2016. It will be rolled out to 1,000 state secondary schools in England in 2017, including changes and updates noted from the pathfinder launch. A full evaluation of the initiative is planned, although no publication dates have been provided.

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**Development** The pilot/pathfinder evaluation has highlighted areas for adjustment for the national roll out, and a further stage of research is planned to evaluate the full programme, following national roll out in 2017.

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## Barriers

In some of the pathway districts the programme was slow to be taken up. This was due to a lack of awareness of the offer or a lack of capacity. Once schools were made fully aware of the programme and understood that it was free, the demand grew and the instrument was successful. Ensuring a clear understanding of the programme from the beginning has been highlighted as a priority for national roll-out. Additionally, there were some cases where schools were informed about the programme towards the end of their term, which made it difficult for them to find space in their curriculum to arrange any activities before the end of the school term.

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## Success factors

The tailored and flexible approach of the instrument, as well as the input of local employers and stakeholders. Additionally, support was given by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) where needed. However, it was the responsibility of the Jobcentre Plus staff to share their knowledge of the local labour market, facilitate employer engagement and provide opportunities for pupils to understand employer's real life experiences of specific industries.

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## Monitoring

Case studies with those involved (including Jobcentre Plus advisers in each district, as well as LEP/EAN staff, careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools, and employers connected to the programme) were used to gain an in-depth analysis of the pathfinder programme. As part of this, structured interviews took place, covering: the role of the stakeholder, how they heard about the programme, what impact they felt the programme made, and demand for future interest. This analysis has been used to inform the full national roll-out.

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## Innovativeness

### SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE

The instrument is innovative as it applies a flexible and tailored approach to assisting schools and their students, as well as providing the skills, experience and existing employer networks through its connection to Jobcentre Plus.

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## Sustainability

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**Evidence of effectiveness**

Due to the instrument's flexible implementation, different models were executed in the districts included in the Pathfinder evaluation. While explicit impacts were not specified in the evaluation report, initial discussions with Jobcentre Plus staff suggested that a collaborative approach to engaging with schools improved the instrument's effectiveness. Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff also reported making use of existing school networks and contacts to arrange face-to-face meetings, and the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme proved to be an effective way of engaging schools. Overall, the programme was well received by both schools and employers. As expected, the schools involved benefited from the added value of receiving an additional free resource and new opportunities for careers education activities. Although not a cost, demand was not as expected (in the first implementation stage) based on the lack of information given to schools. However, once schools were properly informed, demand rose to the expected level.

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**Engagement of stakeholders**

Stakeholders have been heavily involved in the evaluation process of the instrument. The stakeholders chosen to partake in the evaluation are as follows: Jobcentre Plus schools advisers; key local partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP, coalition organisations formed of local businesses) and the Careers and Enterprise Company's (CEC) Employer Advisor Network (EAN, a network set up to facilitate stronger links between businesses and schools and colleges) staff; career leads from both participating and non-participating schools; and employers connected to the programme. Involvement generally took place through Jobcentre Plus contacting schools directly (and then organising events with employers), and once schools became better informed of the programme, they would also reach out to Jobcentre Plus about potential opportunities.

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**Transferability**

**NOT EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

As the instrument is connected to Jobcentre Plus, it would be difficult for it to be transferred to a country which does not have a similar service in place. However, provision could be granted by connecting schools to local employers and similar job-training services, and by providing targeted in-school careers advice.

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**Sustainability**

Full national roll-out is planned for 2017 following the pathfinder evaluation.

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