

1. Introduction

The figures in this Statistical Factsheet cover referrals to and starts on the Steps 2 Success (S2S) programme in Northern Ireland. Steps 2 Success was introduced on 20th October 2014 in replace of the Steps to Work (StW) programme. The aim of the programme is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.

The Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) [website](#) contains further information on the programme.

2. Eligibility

Jobseeker's Allowance Clients

Participation on Steps 2 Success is a mandatory requirement for all Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants who are:

- Aged between 18 and 24 and have been claiming JSA for 9 months or more;
- Aged 25 and over and have been claiming for 12 months or more.

JSA claimants, who, in the opinion of their Employment Service Adviser, have significant barriers to work which cannot be addressed by the Employment Service, may be considered for referral to the Steps 2 Success programme at an early stage.

JSA Credits Only clients do not have to participate on Steps 2 Success as a mandatory client. They can participate on the programme on a voluntary basis if they and their Employment Service Adviser are of the opinion that this is the most cost effective and appropriate route for them.

Employment and Support Allowance Clients

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who are in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) can be referred to Steps 2 Success if it is agreed that Steps 2 Success would be the best opportunity to help meet their needs. Clients referred from the ESA WRAG category are expected to fully participate in the programme.

Voluntary Clients

Steps 2 Success offers access to provision to voluntary participants aged 18 or over who are existing Employment and Support Allowance clients in the Support Group, lone parents in receipt of Income Support, Carer's and Pension Credit claimants who are looking to prepare for and find work and wish to join the programme. Voluntary clients are not subject to benefit sanctions at any time as there is no legislative requirement for them to prepare for or take up employment.

3. Phased Referral of Initial Clients

When Steps 2 Success was introduced on 20th October 2014 a group of clients had accumulated who were immediately eligible for the programme once it commenced. The reasons for the build up of this group are listed below:

- (i) Clients who became eligible due to the change in criteria for the JSA 25+ group. Under Steps to Work JSA clients aged 25+ were required to start the programme after claiming JSA for 18 months. For Steps 2 Success this has been reduced to 12 months. Clients who had been claiming JSA for between 12 and 18 months were therefore eligible to start the programme immediately on commencement.
- (ii) Clients who became eligible for Steps 2 Success during the gap between Steps to Work ending and Steps 2 Success starting. Steps to Work stopped taking new referrals on 30th May 2014 and Steps 2 Success commenced on 20th October 2014.
- (iii) Clients who were previously referred to Steps to Work but who had not been placed with a Contractor.
- (iv) Longer term claimants who for various reasons had remained on JSA.

The size of this group was estimated to be around 17,000. Given its magnitude an individual management plan was agreed with each of the three Lead Contractors to refer these clients on a phased basis over the first 6 months of the programme. Clients not in this group were referred as and when they became eligible.

4. Programme Design

Steps 2 Success is a new approach to the delivery of employment programmes in Northern Ireland. The focus is firmly on job outcomes and Contractors are paid on the basis of results achieved. Contractors have been given freedom and flexibilities as part of the design of Steps 2 Success enabling them to focus on each individual's needs and barriers to work instead of providing a menu of provision as happened with DEL's previous employment programmes, New Deal and Steps to Work.

Steps 2 Success is being delivered by three Lead Contractors with each Contractor delivering the programme across a commercially similar (in terms of client numbers) geographical region within Northern Ireland.

Clients referred to Steps 2 Success will receive help and support from the Lead Contractor for a period of 52 or 78 weeks depending on their client category. The attachment period is 52 weeks for those clients within the JSA 18-24, JSA 25+ and voluntary categories and 78 weeks for JSA Early Entry and ESA WRAG clients. Clients remain attached to Steps 2 Success for the 52 or 78 weeks even if they find work as it is the Lead Contractor's role to help them to remain in work throughout the attachment period and beyond.

5. Methodology and Definitions

Clients' details are recorded on the Department's Client Management System (CMS) which is installed in JobCentres/Jobs & Benefits offices throughout Northern Ireland. This is an IT system which is used to facilitate the interface with the Department's customers. It maintains a basic client record; allows the preferred occupation stated by clients to be matched against suitable vacancies; and records actions such as interviews, referrals to training opportunities and placings into jobs etc. In particular, it has been significantly enhanced to record Steps 2 Success specific actions. The CMS database can be updated manually as well as being automatically updated from other sources. This includes information provided by Lead Contractors who update client details on TMS which are automatically read into CMS.

The relevant data are extracted from CMS each month to form a Steps 2 Success database maintained by the Department's Programme Information and Analysis Branch within Analytical Services. The data presented in this Statistical Factsheet are derived from the Steps 2 Success database.

The following notes explain the definitions underlying the data presented in this statistical factsheet except where these are self-explanatory – e.g. gender.

Referral: A referral is the point at which a client is referred by their Employment Service Advisor within the Job Centre/Jobs & Benefit Office to the Steps 2 Success programme. It is expected that the client will normally start the programme within 15 working days of the referral.

Starts: A client is deemed to have started Steps 2 Success on the date they have their first meeting with the Contractor.

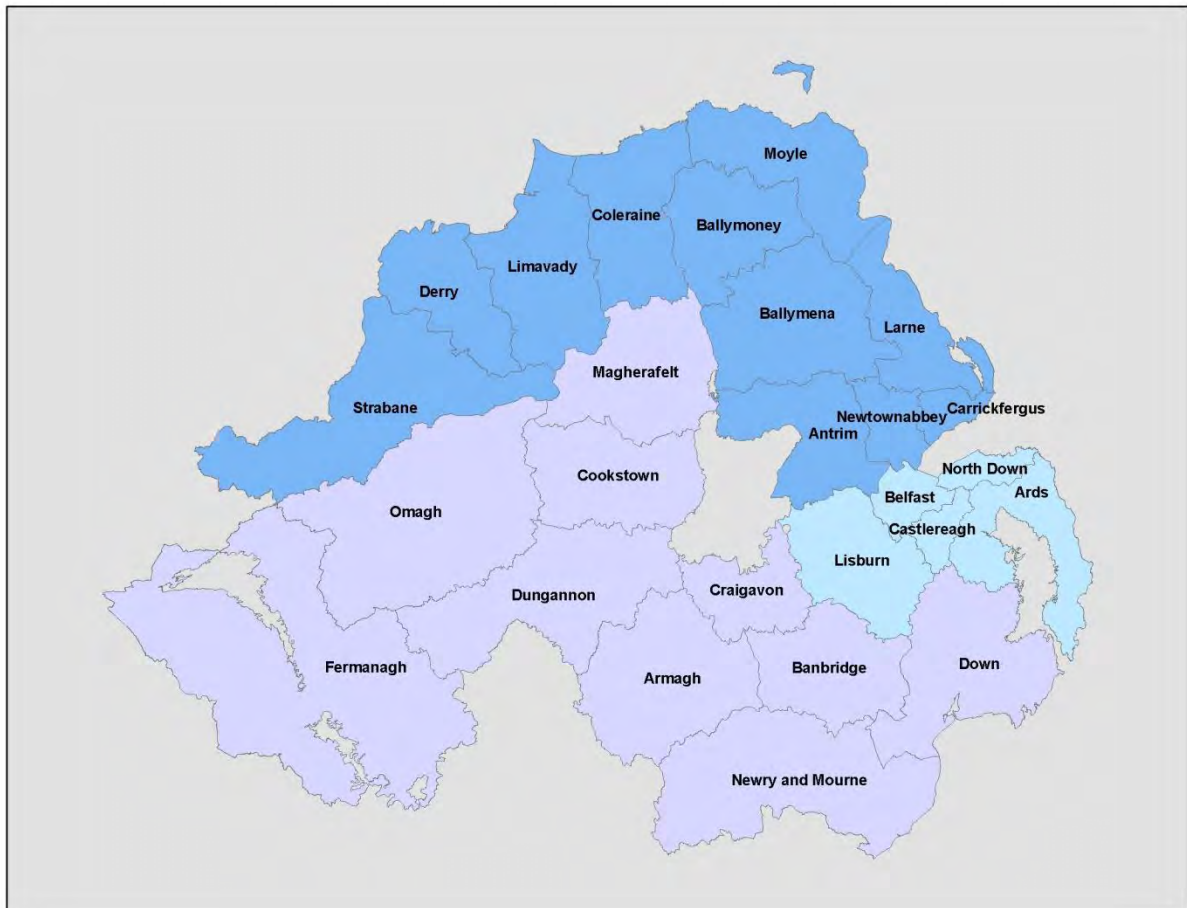
Attachment Period: The 52 or 78 week period from the programme start date during which the client receives help and support from the Lead Contractor.

Contract Areas: The delivery of Steps 2 Success provision is provided by 3 Lead Contractors. Clients are allocated to each Contractor based on which Job Centre/Jobs & Benefit Office they are associated with. [Table 1](#) provides details of the 3 contract areas and their associated office areas and [Figure 1](#) provides a map outlining the district councils in each contract area.

Table 1: Steps 2 Success Lead Contractors and Office Areas

Contract Area	Lead Contractor	Office Areas
Belfast	Ingeus	Andersonstown, Bangor, Corporation Street, Falls Road, Holywood Road, Knockbreda, Lisburn, Newtownards, Shaftesbury Square, Shankill
Northern	EOS	Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Foyle, Larne, Limavady, Lisnagelvin, Newtownabbey, Strabane
Southern	Reed in Partnership	Armagh, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, Cookstown, Downpatrick, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Kilkeel, Lurgan, Magherafelt, Newcastle, Newry, Omagh, Portadown

Figure 1: Map Outlining the District Councils in Each Contract Area



Notes:

- (1) Contract Areas are an amalgamation of DEL office areas and therefore do not completely fall within the District Council Area Boundaries.

6. Revisions Policy

Over time, as more information becomes available, estimates can be revised to improve quality and accuracy, which will provide a better picture of that being measured. As the Steps 2 Success database is built and updated from a live administrative system there is potential for some revision of statistics in the future. Any necessary revision will therefore be incorporated into future Steps 2 Success statistical publications. Revisions are expected to be minimal but may be due to database changes applied or to a lag in recording information on the system.

7. Quality Measures

Relevance: This Steps 2 Success Statistical Factsheet has been drafted following consultation with customers. The key customers within Government use the data to monitor performance of the programme and consider operational impacts of delivering the programme. There is ongoing interaction with users to ensure the data remain relevant to their needs.

Accuracy: The statistics included are representative of the administrative database (CMS) at the time of data extraction. The administrative system has in-built validation checks to minimise user error and can be interrogated to assess data quality and cross check statistics. Validation checks are also carried out on the Steps 2 Success database. A small number of erroneous records are excluded from the Steps 2 Success database.

Timeliness and Punctuality: Data on starts are published up to the end of the previous quarter. Statistics on moves to employment will be published once sufficient time has passed to allow people time to find and sustain employment. The publication schedule for the Department for Employment and Learning can be accessed via the following link: [Statistics Publication Schedule](#).

Accessibility and Clarity: A Steps 2 Success statistical release will be published quarterly on the Department for Employment and Learning website and is free of charge. The Factsheet includes text and charts. The Factsheet is available in other formats upon request. The accompanying tables are provided in the MS Excel and Open Document Spreadsheet formats.

Comparability: The Factsheet provides data by month since the programme was introduced in Northern Ireland to enable comparisons over time. When methodological changes or other effects such as programme changes are made, every effort will be made to ensure that all previous data are amended to make them directly comparable.

8. Comparison with Great Britain

In Great Britain (GB) referrals to the [Work Programme](#) began in June 2011. This single Welfare to Work programme offers targeted, personalised help for those benefit claimants who need it most.

It is important to note that the Steps 2 Success programme in NI and the Work Programme in GB have significant and fundamental differences regarding target group, eligibility and the nature and extent of provision; this limits the scope to compare the performance of the two programmes.