

Training Older People

March 2001

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FOREWORD

I'm sure most people are aware that the UK is facing a major demographic change. There is a decrease in the birth rate and an increase in the older population as the sixties 'baby boomer' society moves into the 50 plus age group. At present there are around 19 million people aged 50 and over in the UK, which accounts for 40% of the adult population.

Our improved standard of living, health care and changes in working practices means that many more older people are living longer, healthier and active lives. Unfortunately, though we are aware that some of these individuals remain active through new work experiences, further or vocational educational courses or other community activities such as volunteering or mentoring, many are forced out of the labour market and in many cases become detached from work and society. There are currently 2.8 million people aged 50 to State Pension Age who are unemployed in the UK.

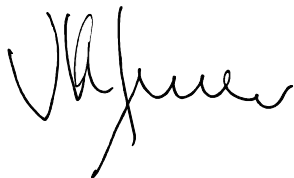
In addition to this, statistics show that older people in general have fewer qualifications than their younger counterparts and are more than twice as likely to have no formal qualifications. There is evidence to suggest that those who are not working, particularly those who are economically inactive, are less likely to be involved in any type of training or learning activity. This has encouraged employers and individuals to consider all older people as both unwilling and incapable of learning.

I'm pleased therefore to be able to introduce this report. It has highlighted that this type of thinking is inaccurate. The report shows that people aged 50 and over cannot be classed together as a homogeneous group. Each person is an individual with a wealth of experience, a history of employment and a range of qualifications and life skills. It shows that those who participated on Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA) were as likely to gain a qualification as their younger counterparts, older people were as likely to remain employed after a Work Trial and were as likely to benefit from the help provided through programme centres. The results however are not all so positive. Fewer older people participated in the programmes and there were far fewer older people finding work after WBLA than their younger counterparts.

This does however reinforce the message the Government has been trying to get out into the workplace. Age discrimination is a waste of the talents and abilities of a large part of our population.

Since 1997 the Government has worked hard to change this type of inflexible thinking through a range of policies aimed directly at helping older people. We have worked to enhance the quality of older people's lives and change attitudes. One of our main tools is the Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment published June 1999. The Code gives good practical advice to employers on six aspects of the employment cycle including training and development. The effectiveness of the Code is being fully evaluated, but we know that will not answer all our questions. This is why we have commissioned a range of other research projects, including this one, to look at specific areas requiring additional study.

The results from this report, the evaluation of the Code and the other related projects will be made available Spring 2001. The results will help inform future plans for age policy and legislation and promote a wider understanding of the issues.



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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Aims and Objectives	
1.3 Background	
1.7 Methodology	
1.10 Recent Policy Developments	
2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	4
2.1 The Client Group	
2.8 Entry Through Jobcentres to the Three Programmes	
2.9 Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA)	
2.19 Programme Centres	
2.23 Work Trials	
2.25 Overview of the Three Programmes	
2.26 Equal Opportunities	
3. RECOMMENDATIONS	9
3.1 Equal Opportunities	
3.4 Work Based Learning for Adults and Other Learning	
3.9 Guidance and Jobcentre Services	
3.13 Programme Centres	
3.17 Work Trials	
4. WHO ARE OLDER UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE?	12
4.1 Characteristics of Older Unemployed People	
4.10 Moving out of Unemployment	
4.11 Perceptions About the Older Unemployed	
4.18 Main points	
5. EFFECT OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY	17
5.5 Transport Issues	
6. ENTRY THROUGH JOBCENTRES TO THE THREE PROGRAMMES	19
6.10 Suggestions to Improve Jobsearch Help and Services for Older Unemployed	
6.11 Suggestions for Changes to the Welfare System	
6.12 Conclusions	
7. WORK BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS	23
7.1 Participation	
7.5 Are There Differences in the Types of Trainees?	
7.12 Provision on Offer	
7.16 Are Older People's Training Needs Different?	
7.24 Qualifications	
7.27 WBLA Managers Comments	
7.45 Eligibility Criteria	
7.48 Trainees' Comments	
7.57 Separate Provision for Older People?	
7.61 WBLA Outcomes and Performance	
7.69 Other Suggestions for Changes to Learning Available to Older People	
7.72 Conclusions	

8	PROGRAMME CENTRES - ARE THEY HELPING?	35
8.1	What do Programme Centres Offer?	
8.4	Participation and Performance	
8.12	Special Provision in the Studied Programme Centres	
8.16	Users Views	
8.21	Programme Centre Managers Comments	
8.26	Links Between Programme Centres and Jobcentres and WBLA Providers	
8.32	Conclusions	
9.	WORK TRIALS - DO THEY WORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE?	40
9.1	Provision	
9.3	Participation and Performance	
9.14	Jobseekers Views and Participants Experiences	
9.18	Conclusions	
10.	OVERVIEW OF THE THREE PROGRAMMES	44
10.5	Range of Learning Provision	
10.7	Basic Skills	
10.8	Advice and Guidance	
11.	AGE DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	46
11.1	Equal Opportunities Strategies and Performance Monitoring	
11.8	Examples of action on Age Issues or Provision for Older People	
11.9	Stereotyping and Ageism	
11.16	Countering Age Discrimination	
11.19	Conclusions	
ANNEX 1	- SAMPLE DETAILS	51
ANNEX 2	- STUDY TEAM	53
ANNEX 3	- PREVIOUS OCCUPATION OF LONG TERM UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMANTS	54
ANNEX 4	- PROGRAMME CENTER MODULES FOR OLDER WORKERS	55
ANNEX 5	- WORK BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS STATISTICS	59
ANNEX 6	- WBLA AIMS AND ELEIGIBILITY CRITERIA	64
ANNEX 7	- INTERESTING PRACTICE	67
ANNEX 8	- RSD PUBLICATIONS	70

1. INTRODUCTION

Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 The study aimed to investigate the use and experience of Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA), programme centres and Work Trials by people aged over 50 and the factors associated with participation, achievement and successful provision.
- 1.2 The study's objectives were:
 - to examine the access to and participation in Work Based Learning for Adults, programme centres and Work Trials by people aged over 50;
 - to look at achievement of the over 50s and factors associated with success;
 - to assess whether the funding systems enable appropriate provision for the over 50s;
 - where appropriate, to look at other types of training provision for the over 50s provided by TECs¹ or others (but excluding Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and New Deal provision); and
 - to identify good and poor practice and to make appropriate recommendations for change.

Background

- 1.3 Older people can be disadvantaged within the labour market. Although many older unemployed people do find work quickly, they are more at risk of long term unemployment. In 1999 nearly six out of ten people aged 25-49 entering unemployment found work within six months compared to half of those aged 50 plus. However, as unemployment duration increases, this gap between the over 50s and those aged 25-49 in finding work widens. Longer durations of unemployment are more common among older people and the proportion of older people in employment is lower than that of a decade ago.
- 1.4 DfEE is interested in how effective its labour market interventions (including training) are in helping people of different ages into work. This study is part of a range of research for DfEE and the Employment Service (ES) looking at how helpful and suitable its policies are for older people. For example, other research is evaluating New Deal for 25 plus and New Deal for 50 plus.
- 1.5 Older people however, can face age discrimination from employers in recruitment. Whilst this research does compare the experience of people aged 25-49 with those aged 50 plus on the programmes it is recognised that employment rates for people leaving programmes will also be affected by employers' attitudes to employing older people as well as by the attitudes and skills of the individual and their experience on the programme.

1. Throughout this report the term TEC or TECs is used to represent both Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and/or Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs).

- 1.6 The Government is opposed to age discrimination in employment and in 1999 DfEE launched the Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment. Consequently this study looked at the equal opportunities strategies of TECs, providers and the Employment Service, and what was done to address age related issues.

Methodology

- 1.7 There were two strands to the study. The first was analysis of statistical and management information about:
- participation in Work Based Learning for Adults, programme centres and Work Trials by the over 50s compared to other age groups;
 - characteristics of the over 50s and under 50s - do they differ in ways (besides age) which might suggest they have different training needs; and
 - success rates for the over 50s compared to younger age groups.
- 1.8 The second strand involved qualitative face-to-face interviews with 180 programme participants and jobseekers aged 50 and over in group interviews and with 104 staff including Employment Service claimant advisors and tutors or managers from programme centres, training providers and TECs who were involved in delivering the three programmes. Interviewing took place in February 2000 in seven TEC areas. These were chosen to give a cross section of different labour markets and a range of outcome and participation rates for older people on WBLA. A few of the areas were ones where we were aware that some specialised provision or recruitment agencies for older people existed. Further details are in Annex 1. The seven areas do not form a statistically representative sample of unemployed older people and labour market conditions on all variables. That would not have been possible with just seven areas. Consequently the qualitative research findings are not expressed in percentage terms. However, the seven areas are similar to others in terms of their labour market type and WBLA participation and so are not atypical.
- 1.9 In addition, comments made by ex-participants of WBLA who are aged over 50 on their replies to the DfEE's follow-up survey forms were analysed to look at issues such as suitability of training.

Recent Policy Developments

- 1.10 Since interviewing for this research took place in February 2000 some changes to the provision for unemployed adults were made and these are described in the following paragraphs.
- 1.11 New Deal 50 plus was introduced nationally in April 2000. It is part of the Government's wider strategy for helping people move from welfare dependency and into work. This voluntary initiative is open to people aged over 50 who are not working and either: a) have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance for six months; or b) whose husband/wife or partner is claiming benefit for them. It is made up of three elements:
- Caseloading - a wide range of practical help from a Personal Adviser at the local Jobcentre;

- Employment Credit - The participant receives payments if they start work for a year. These are £60 per week for full time work (30 hours and above per week) or £40 per week for part time work (between 16 and up to 30 hours per week).
- Training Grant - Clients in receipt of Employment Credit are also eligible for a Training Grant of up to £750. This has two components. Up to £600 can be used while the Employment Credit is in payment and is based on an Individual Training Plan (ITP) agreed with a New Deal personal adviser. This is followed by a final payment of £150 into an Individual Learning Account (ILA) at the end of the 52 week period.

- 1.12 Since April 2000 all programme centres have been required to use the modules for Older Workers. This provides complementary provision to New Deal for 50 plus.
- 1.13 Jobfinder Plus for Work Based Learning for Adult Leavers was designed to provide additional help from the Employment Service for people who leave WBLA without a job to go to. It offered them the chance to go on an advisor's caseload and access to ES programmes for the long term unemployed. It has been amended from April 2000 to encourage more participation and a more seamless transition. The advisor will visit the trainee at their training providers' premises about four weeks before they are due to leave and the advisor, tutor and trainee will agree a plan of what they will do next to help the trainee find work. This might for example include work experience, associate membership of a programme centre or staying longer on WBLA.
- 1.14 From April 2000, DfEE extended the range of training and qualifications it would fund through WBLA to cover: a) all qualifications approved for use in Further Education (Schedule 2 (a) to the Further and higher Education Act 1992) as well as NVQs and units of NVQs; and b) occupational specific learning courses meeting local labour market demand which would help long term unemployed people into work.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Client Group

2.1 The research highlighted that unemployed people aged 50 plus:

- are not a homogeneous group;
- vary in their employment history and occupations, skills, qualifications, attitudes;
- vary in the extent of their IT skills from 'no experience and nervous' to well skilled; and
- some have caring responsibilities for parents, grandchildren or their own children.

2.2 It also found that as a group, unemployed people aged 50 plus:

- have higher levels of health problems or disabilities²;
- are less likely to have formal qualifications³;
- have a different mix of occupations to the long term unemployed aged 25-49. There are higher proportions of managers, teachers, science and engineering professionals, skilled engineering trades and machine operatives in the older long term unemployed;
- have a higher incidence of redundancy⁴ (especially after working in one industry a long time); and
- seem to prefer more privacy when talking to ES or programme centre staff about themselves and their situation.

2.3 Although many older people who become unemployed do find work quickly, long term unemployment is more common amongst older people. Some of these come to see themselves as effectively having become early retired.

2.4 Some older jobseekers felt they had a lot of skills and experience to offer and were interested in being mentors, trainers, or assessors or in doing community/environment activities.

2.5 Older workers employment prospects were affected by their local economy. Several of the study areas suffered from closed or declining manufacturing industries or were ex-coal mining areas. These had left a legacy of many unemployed older workers and higher levels of health problems. Their skills did not match current vacancies. In contrast, in another area with a very buoyant labour market most of those becoming unemployed, even older workers, were finding work quickly so the few who were long term unemployed usually faced other problems or barriers.

2. **Labour Force Survey**, Winter 1999-2000.

3. **Labour Force Survey**, Winter 1999-2000.

4. Redundancies in the UK, pp251-258 **Labour Market Trends**, May 1999.

- 2.6 Limited and/or costly public transport was a barrier in many study areas to jobseekers taking work or training. Improvements to public transport were wanted. Transport subsidies for unemployed people were also suggested by a few respondents.
- 2.7 A minority of older unemployed people needed help with basic maths, or to improve their reading or writing skills. It would be helpful if all staff are aware of where to refer such clients to for additional help and encouraged to do so. Free Basic English and Maths courses (funded by DfEE) are widely available.

Entry Through Jobcentres to the Three Programmes

- 2.8 Generally, entry to training or jobsearch was working well and jobseekers get sufficient information. Jobseekers found claimant advisors helpful. A few difficulties were reported. The main factors causing these appear to be high staff turnover, insufficient training and poor communications between providers and ES (including lack of sufficient information about the available Provision). These are addressed in the study recommendations. Some improvements were suggested to services such as larger type on vacancy notices and more jobmatching of older jobseekers and vacancies.

Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA)

- 2.9 People aged 50 or over are under-represented within WBLA. In November 1999, about 17% of trainees who had been unemployed for over 6 months were aged 50 plus compared to a quarter of all the long term unemployed claimants aged 25 plus⁵.
- 2.10 This is consistent with lower participation by older people in other forms of learning. Also, The National Adult Learning Survey 1997 found that more older people expressed a lack of interest in learning. In some areas the range of occupations available in WBLA was rather limited. These may not have met the needs of all older jobseekers.
- 2.11 WBLA trainees aged 50 plus are a different group to those aged 25-49: more had been unemployed for over 3 years; far more had health problem or disabilities fewer were of non-white origins; and more were on Basic Employability training. Although there is no longer an upper age limit for WBLA very few trainees starting in 1999-2000 were aged over 60 and six out of ten were aged under 55.
- 2.12 WBLA leavers aged 50 plus in England and Wales were:
- almost as likely as those aged 25-49 to achieve a qualification, 37% of the 50 plus compared to 38% of those aged 25-49 in 1999-2000; and
 - but fewer older leavers found employment, 36% compared to 41% in 1999-2000⁶.

5. The comparison between trainees unemployed for over six months on entry to unemployment claimants unemployed for over six months is made because they are the main and majority client group for WBLA and because precise data on the potential size of the special eligibility categories are not available.

6. Source: WBLA Trainee database. Ex-trainees are surveyed six months after leaving.

- 2.13 Much of this difference can be explained by the higher proportions of longer term unemployed and of Basic Employability trainees among those aged 50 plus. Fewer trainees of these types in both age groups get jobs. But trainees aged 50 plus who had been unemployed for 3 years or more and non-Basic Employability trainees who had been unemployed for less than six months were less likely to get jobs than their younger counterparts. Ageism by employers is probably also a factor in the lower employment rates for older leavers.
- 2.14 Most older trainees interviewed were pleased with their training provision and felt it was meeting their needs in terms of quality of teaching, learning style and resources. Often they were enjoying their training and found it a positive experience. DfEE's follow-up survey results show that about eight out of ten of leavers rated WBLA as useful and helpful in increasing their confidence and in improving their skills/learning new skills. Leavers aged 50 plus were slightly more satisfied than those aged 25-49 with these aspects.
- 2.15 Improvements to jobsearch help for WBLA leavers are recommended particularly for older trainees.
- 2.16 One problem identified in most study areas, mainly by training providers but also by ES and TECs, was the limited number of employer placements available for trainees. In one area this had limited WBLA training places as well because providers need placements to offer training. Two areas reported that New Deal for Young People exacerbated this: it attracted many of the employers willing to take unemployed people on placements and consequently cut the number available for older trainees on WBLA. Previous research⁷ has found that trainees who had employer placements were more likely to get jobs, therefore this could be reducing older WBLA trainees' employment chances.
- 2.17 Training providers and some TECs said the design and funding system for WBLA constrained what they could offer. The smaller WBLA budget and high proportion of outcome funding was restricting the quality, range and sometimes length of training available.
- 2.18 Low level vocational qualifications (NVQ level 1 or equivalent) are funded by DfEE for Basic Employability WBLA trainees only. But training providers reported that some mainstream clients, particularly older ones, also need them and suggested the rules should be changed.

Programme Centres

- 2.19 Overall, the study found that older jobseekers liked and appreciated programme centres because:
- the staff were helpful and supportive;
 - the training and jobsearch resources (newspapers etc.) were useful; and
 - they liked the social contact.

7. DfEE Research Report RR96 **Work-Based Training and Job Prospects for the Unemployed: An Evaluation of Training For Work**

- 2.20 The new modules for older workers about ageism and confidence building were reported to be working well. One centre found a special 4 day course for jobseekers aged 50+ worked better than mixed age provision. The clients felt more comfortable with their peers and the tutor could spend more time to issues affecting older jobseekers than in a mixed age group.
- 2.21 Management information data for April - October 2000 indicate that older people who use programme centres are as successful as those aged 25-49, with 38% getting a job. However, participation in programme centres by those aged over 50 seems low: they formed only 10% of all starts unemployed for over six months but they comprised about 22% of long term unemployed claimants.
- 2.22 The design and funding of programme centres and referral process from Jobcentres was working well.

Work Trials

- 2.23 Work Trials do work for many participants, with about half getting the job at the end of the trial period. Recent Management Information data suggest that they are not used as much by older clients. Just under 5% of participants in April - October 2000 were aged over 50. This is considerably lower than their representation among the long term unemployed. About half of older participants got the job, which is the same rate as for participants aged 25-49. More older people could probably benefit from work trials as an opportunity to demonstrate what they can and improve their chances of employment.
- 2.24 The study found several factors causing low take up of Work Trials. The most common reason given by Jobcentre or programme centre staff were that Work Trials were unpopular with clients, especially in those areas where the local culture was against 'working for nothing'. Jobseekers themselves can suggest a Work Trial to an employer during an interview, but many find this difficult. Although most of the long term unemployed jobseekers interviewed in this study were aware of Work Trials, it appeared that Jobcentre and programme centre staff did not often promote them strongly to clients. Work Trials were not a key target for staff. Some offices did not sell Work Trials strongly to many employers.

Overview of the Three Programmes

- 2.25 The staff interviewed at training providers or in Jobcentres and programme centres regarded success as a job or qualifications or successful referral to other provision *and quality changes* such as increased confidence or, motivation, better coping, gaining a network of support, widening the jobseeker's outlook to change occupations. Programme centre staff mentioned the development of personal plans and achieving milestones. Training provider staff mentioned trainees achieving personal milestones. Success was not viewed only in terms of payable outcomes and qualitative improvements for unemployed people were viewed as equally, or sometimes more, important.

Equal Opportunities

- 2.26 Most of the organisations in the study had written equal opportunities policies or strategies but often age was not mentioned. Some TECs and training providers did include age, though gender, disability and ethnicity attracted more attention and action. Very few organisations routinely monitored participation or outcomes for older jobseekers/trainees and so were not aware of differences between age groups.
- 2.27 Most staff from Jobcentres, programme centres and training providers had not considered or treated older people as a distinct separate group. They tended to say they saw and dealt with people as individuals. This research did not find evidence of staff stereotyping older unemployed people in ways that affected access to provision.
- 2.28 The research highlighted that both jobseekers aged over 50 and many staff in Jobcentres, programme centres and training providers thought some employers and a few private employment agencies discriminated against older people. Some jobseekers had experienced it and felt it keenly.
- 2.29 A few ES advisors and programme centre staff commented that whilst age discrimination does exist some older jobseekers believed it is more prevalent than it really is. It can be easier or more comfortable for older people to say they had not got the job because of their age rather than other factors such as lack of skills or relevant experience or attitude.
- 2.30 Many staff, particularly those in Jobcentres and in programme centres tried to help older unemployed people deal with age discrimination. For example, they gave encouragement and examples of older people getting work or employers who were interested in older workers. Some suggested older people can improve their chances by not giving their age on CVs or applications and by stressing their (transferable) skills and the benefits of their work and life experience. Some examples of action on age issues or special provision for older people were found in the study areas. These are described in Chapter 11 and Annex 7.
- 2.31 There was widespread support amongst interviewees for a Government information programme which promotes older workers to employers and counters age discrimination.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Equal Opportunities

- 3.1 DfEE, the Learning and Skills Council and ES should require their education and training providers to include age within their equal opportunities policies or strategies for their clients and to monitor participation and performance for different age groups.
- 3.2 Age diversity should be included within equal opportunities training for staff working in WBLA training providers and programme centres. The Employment Service should consider extending its guidance and training on age diversity and on monitoring equal opportunities within the services provided by its sub-contractors.
- 3.3 As part of DfEE's work to encourage Age Diversity and to discourage age discrimination, it should disseminate examples of helpful action on age related issues to encourage their wider application and raise awareness of age issues.

Work Based Learning for Adults and Other Learning

- 3.4 Participation in WBLA by older people should be encouraged and monitored.
- 3.5 Funding to WBLA providers was heavily weighted to outcomes for most trainees (except for those who were doing basic employability training). A greater proportion of the funding for WBLA should be related to on-programme provision to facilitate more tailoring of the available provision to the trainee's needs.
- 3.6 In a few areas the range of occupations in WBLA provision seemed rather limited. The Employment Service, DfEE, and the Learning and Skills Council should reconsider if the current mix is appropriate when planning and contracting for the year 2001/2002 and ensure that a sufficient range of work based learning and other learning is available in all areas. Also, the Employment Service should check if there is equality of access to employer placements for people of different ages.
- 3.7 The Employment Service, DfEE, Learning and Skills Council and training providers should consider if there is scope to develop more opportunities to enable older people to pass on their skills to younger people. For example, they could train to work as trainers\tutors or assessors or become mentors, perhaps through a volunteering programme. Many older people felt they had a lot of skills and experience to contribute to society.
- 3.8 The Employment Service, TECs and the local Learning and Skills Councils should ensure that staff in Jobcentres, programme centres and training providers are aware of the (free) local Basic English and Maths provision and encouraged to suggest it to clients with poor literacy or numeracy skills.

Guidance and Jobcentre Services

- 3.9. DfEE and ES should encourage advice and guidance services to work more in partnership to provide a more joined up service to jobseekers. This would for example, include staff being aware of each others services and referring clients to each other when appropriate.

- 3.10 The Employment Service should consider the suggestions made for improving its Jobcentre services such as:
- more in-depth advice for older clients at an earlier stage in unemployment;
 - more privacy for clients;
 - seating in all waiting areas;
 - trying to reduce waiting times;
 - using success stories more to encourage jobseekers;
 - more jobmatching of vacancies and clients; and
 - larger type on vacancy adverts.
- 3.11 WBLA providers and the Employment Service should try to improve communications between them. This includes WBLA providers ensuring that they give Jobcentres full and up to date information and Jobcentres ensuring it is passed onto all relevant staff and also that other staff know where or whom to refer to get such information if necessary.
- 3.12 ES should issue guidance so that ES local managers are aware that suggestions or requests for improvements to local public transport which would improve access to employment and training should be directed to their Local Authority. County Councils and, in Metropolitan Areas, Passenger Transport Authorities, have responsibility for subsidising public transport services.

Programme Centres

- 3.13 Extra assistance with jobsearch for people leave WBLA, particularly for older people, should be encouraged to increase their chances of finding work. Examples of ways to do this are more jobsearch assistance within WBLA, associate membership of programme centres by WBLA participants or Jobfinder Plus for WBLA leavers.
- 3.14 Jobcentres should be asked to encourage more older people to attend programme centres. The centres are successful with these clients but participation at present is low. Participation and performance by the over 50s should be monitored.
- 3.15 The Employment Service should consider undertaking further research and monitoring to investigate if specialised Programme Centre provision or courses for older people are more effective.
- 3.16 The Employment Service should consider the likely costs and benefits of introducing a limited follow-up support service for Programme centre leavers who may need some help at first to ensure they stay in employment.

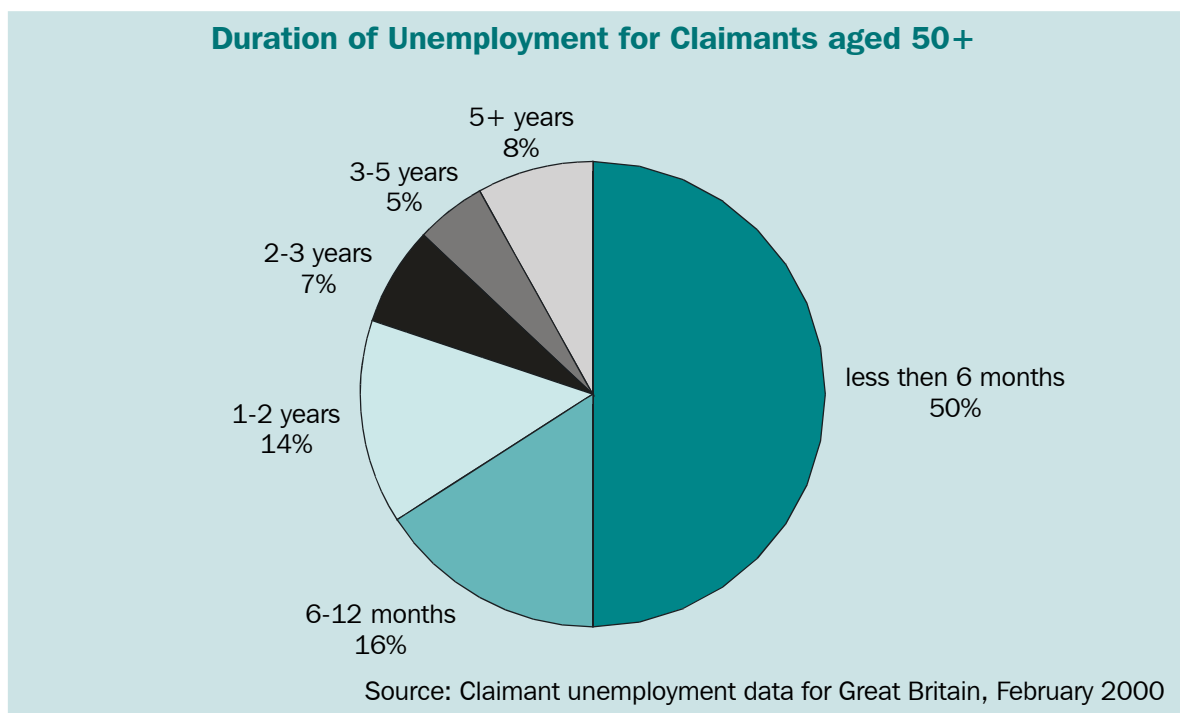
Work Trials

- 3.17 Jobcentres should be encouraged to use Work Trials for older long term unemployed people. Re-issuing the Open Learning Pack for staff; appointing an office co-ordinator and addressing some of the issues making staff reluctant to use Work Trials; and using special markers to highlight vacancies where a Work Trial is available could help.
- 3.18 Participation in Work Trials by older people should be monitored closely in future. If it does not improve, it is recommended that the situation should be investigated further, including looking at referral rates.

4. WHO ARE OLDER UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE?

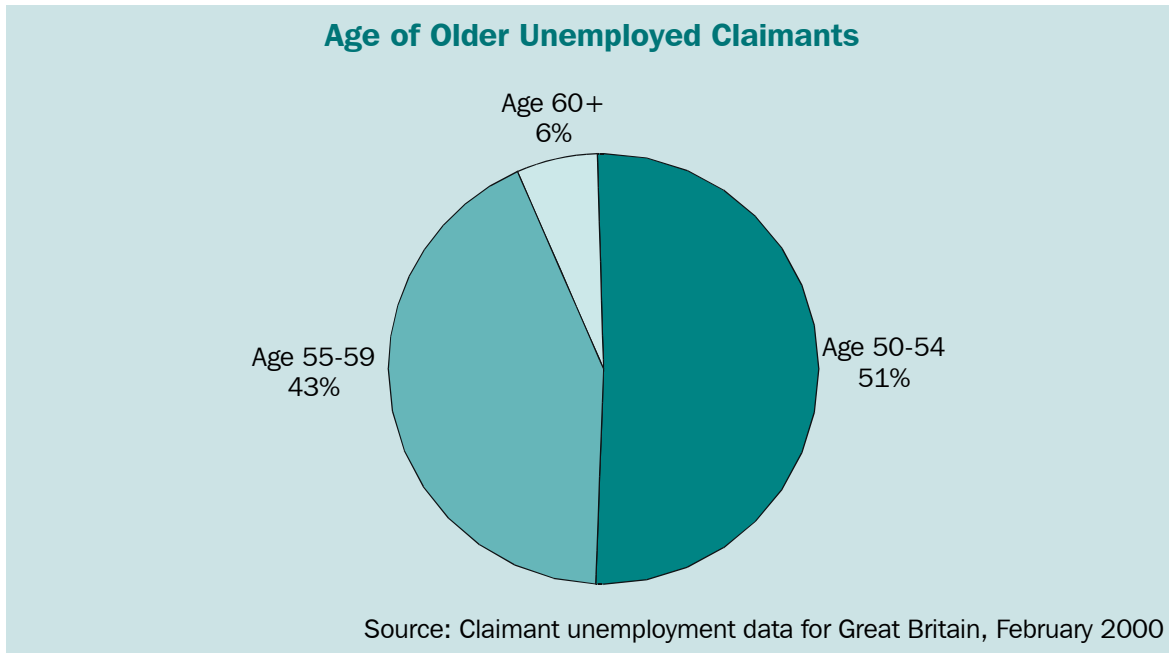
Characteristics of Older Unemployed People

- 4.1 There are 8.3 million people in Great Britain aged between 50 and state pension age⁸. Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Winter 1999-2000 show that of these the majority, (5.8 million) were in work and only a small minority, 257,000 were unemployed and actively seeking work. The economic inactivity rate for this age group is high, though, at 31%. This comprised people 2.5 million people who were not in or available for work, (including those who are retired), and those who had not looked for work within the last four weeks.
- 4.2 There were 198,000 people aged over 50 registering as unemployment claimants in Great Britain in February 2000. (This is lower than the LFS figure above because some people who are unemployed and want work do not register as unemployed or claim benefits.) A quarter of these were women. 98,000 claimants had been unemployed for 6 months or more. This group forms the main client group for the three programmes looked at in this study. To be eligible for these programmes, people normally have to be registered as unemployed.
- 4.3 Long term unemployment is more prevalent amongst older people; 34% of claimants aged 50 plus had been unemployed for over a year compared to 27% of those aged 25-49.



8. State pension age is 60 for women and 65 for men.

- 4.4 Half of the 198,000 claimants are aged under 55 and only 6% over 60.



- 4.5 Disability is more common amongst older unemployed people (19%) compared to those aged 25-49 (14%). Though it should also be noted that many older disabled people are not in or looking for work: seven out of ten older disabled people are economically inactive compared to about half of disabled people aged 25-49⁹.
- 4.6 Older people were more likely to suffer redundancy. LFS estimates for 1998 give a redundancy rate for people aged over 50 of 10 per 1000 employees compared to 8 for people aged 25-49¹⁰. Men were more likely than women to be made redundant. Redundancies were more common in manufacturing industry and for craft or plant and machine operative occupations.
- 4.7 There were differences between the past occupations of older long term unemployed people and those aged 25-49. The study looked at the six months plus claimant unemployed as they form the main client group for the three programmes. Most noticeable is that the proportion of managers amongst the older group at 7% is double that of the 25-49 age group. Also higher are the proportions of: professionals, (particularly teachers and male science and engineering professionals); women secretaries or clerical workers; men from skilled engineering trades; industrial plant and machine operators; and male drivers. The proportion of women working in 'other elementary occupations', which includes cleaners, shelf fillers, catering assistants, and postal workers, was higher in the older age group. The higher proportions of craft and factory workers seem consistent with the higher redundancy rates described above. Occupation data are shown in a table at Annex 3.

9. **Labour Force Survey**, Winter 1999-2000

10. Redundancies in the UK, pp251-258 **Labour Market Trends**, May 1999

- 4.8 Fewer older people have formal qualifications, and this is particularly so for the unemployed. A third of older unemployed people have no formal qualifications compared to a fifth of unemployed people aged 25-49.

Highest Qualification by Age-group, 1999. England		
	All Persons	Unemployed
Age 50 or over¹		
Thousands	7,141	213
Qualified to:		
level 3+ ²	37%	34%
level 2 or below ³	36%	32%
no qualifications	27%	34%
Age 24-49		
Thousands	17,914	737
Qualified to:		
level 3+	44%	30%
level 2 or below	44%	49%
no qualifications	12%	21%

Notes:

- 1 - Includes men aged 50-64 and women aged 50-59
- 2 - Level 3 includes qualifications such as advanced GNVQs, 2 or more A levels or SCE Highers/Scottish Certificate of Sixth Year Studies at level 3 and vocational qualifications such as RSA Advanced diploma, BTEC Nationals, ONC/OND, City & Guild Advanced Craft, some trade apprenticeships and NVQ level 3. Qualifications above level 3 include degrees and higher degrees, sub-degree higher education qualifications such as teaching and nursing, HNC/HND NVQ level 4, and NVQ level 5.
- 3 - Level 2 or below includes GCSEs O levels, CSEs, NVQs at levels 1 or 2, RSA Diplomas BTEC first or general certificates, City and Guilds craft and any other vocational qualifications below level 3.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Autumn 1999

- 4.9 The qualitative interviews found that older unemployed people varied in the extent of their IT skills from 'no experience and nervous' to well skilled.

Moving out of Unemployment

- 4.10 Many people of all ages who become unemployed find work quickly. Almost six out of ten of those aged 25 to 49 leave the unemployment register and enter work within 6 months of becoming registered unemployed. This compares to half of those aged over 50¹¹. However, as unemployment duration increases the gap between the over 50s and those aged 25-49 widens. Of claimants who left the unemployment register between 2 and 4 years unemployment half of those aged 25-49 found work compared to less than a third of those aged over 50. Older claimants were more likely to leave to transfer to other benefits.

11. Claimant outflows data for 1999: source NOMIS

Perceptions About the Older Unemployed

- 4.11 The qualitative research for this study included discussing their perceptions of older unemployed with staff working in Jobcentres, programme centres, or at training providers and, in a more limited way, with older unemployed people themselves. The picture that emerged was that unemployed people aged over 50 were not 'all the same' but a diverse group who varied in many attributes - as, of course, do other age groups.
- 4.12 Most staff working in Jobcentres, programme centres, or at training providers did not seem to have really considered older people as a distinct group. Many staff would, after some thought, identify circumstances or characteristics applying to groups of some older unemployed people during discussion with the interviewers. Some also pointed out that these characteristics were not restricted to older people and applied to some people aged under 50 as well.
- 4.13 Clients vary but some, aged under or over 50, demonstrate a range of characteristics or circumstances which can categorise them into groups. Examples are:
- people who become unemployed, but have skills or characteristics which match available jobs and so find work quite quickly;
 - people with few or no skills or who have redundant skills. Sometimes they also have low literacy and/or numeracy skills. They often outnumber the available suitable vacancies. Also, the benefit trap can apply - the only work they could get is very low paid;
 - people who have another barrier preventing them getting employment which is often a greater obstacle than their age. For example, they might speak little or no English; have alcohol or drugs problems; be lacking in personal hygiene, have a criminal record or have poor work attitudes. Some staff commented that attitude is as important as skills in finding employment; and
 - very long term unemployed people who are not now seriously seeking work and are just going round the system and through the motions.
- 4.14 However, some characteristics and circumstances, though not restricted to older people tended to be more readily associated with age in the sense that they are more likely to happen to an older person. This can mean they are more common amongst older rather than younger unemployed people. Some of these are:
- well qualified people, often made redundant, who have pensions/other income and are selective about what work they will take;
 - people who have been made redundant and may need their confidence building after this shock and rejection;
 - older people who see themselves as effectively early-retired. Some of these are 'signing on' for NI credits towards their state pension only and are not receiving other benefits;

- women, sometimes returning to the labour market, who have caring responsibilities for parents or grandchildren. This limits the hours and locations in which they can work. Some of these older women are caring for their pre-school grandchildren, or collecting school age grandchildren from school and caring for them afterwards. This enables the actual parent(s), usually the mother, to work; and
 - people with health problems which limit the work they can do. Some want part-time work of a suitable nature, being unable to manage full-time work but could not survive on the very low income this would give. In work benefits are only available to those with dependants.
- 4.15 Some staff also mentioned the attitudes of older people. Some thought there may be a stronger preference or desire for financial security amongst older people and so temporary or agency work is more unattractive to them than to younger people. Sometimes this preference reflected greater financial commitments e.g. to dependants or higher mortgage or accommodation costs. Temporary work is often viewed as unsatisfactory.
- 4.16 A few interviewees also commented that attitudes to work or unemployment for older unemployed people can vary in different ethnic groups. For example, within the Turkish community it can sometimes be considered 'unseemly' for older women to work. Within some communities, older people can reasonably expect their adult children to support them.
- 4.17 Some staff commented that older unemployed people in particular often preferred to work in their previous occupations even though there may be few vacancies. Sometimes they found it hard to see themselves in a different 'occupation' after so many years of work, or at least did initially. They could be encouraged by claimant advisors or programme centre staff to broaden their jobsearch and recognise the transferable skills they had.

Main points

- 4.18 The research highlighted that unemployed people aged over 50 as a group are a diverse group who vary in their employment history and occupations, skills, qualifications and attitudes. Some have caring responsibilities for parents or grandchildren.
- 4.19 Older unemployed people do constitute a group with different characteristics compared to unemployed people aged 25-49. They have a higher incidence of redundancy (especially after working in one industry for a long time); a higher incidence of health problems or disabilities; and fewer of them have formal qualifications. The mix of past occupations is different to that in the 25-49 age group, with higher proportions of managers, teachers, science and engineering professionals, skilled trades and machine operatives amongst the six month plus unemployed. These characteristics may influence their jobsearch or other training needs.
- 4.20 Although many older unemployed people do find work quickly they are more at risk of long term unemployment. Some of these come to see themselves as effectively having become early retired.

5. EFFECT OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- 5.1 The local economies and labour markets influence both the job prospects of older unemployed people and the composition of the client group.
- 5.2 Many of the study areas suffered from closed or declining production or manufacturing industries, e.g. mining or engineering, which had left behind a legacy of many unemployed older semi-skilled or skilled male workers. The skills they did have were no longer needed so there was a mismatch between them and the vacancies available. Some had been unemployed for many years. In some areas, there were substantial proportions of unemployed older people with health problems. For men, this was often a legacy of working in heavy industries for many years. A few areas had ex-miners who became unemployed when the mines closed in periods of general economic recession and 'have got left behind'. In contrast, one area had a very buoyant labour market with most of those becoming unemployed, including older workers, finding work quickly. So those who were or do become long term unemployed usually face other problems or barriers.
- 5.3 In most areas unemployment had fallen in recent years with the general economic upturn but older jobseekers said that often the job vacancies, particularly those advertised in job centres, were for low paid work, and many were part-time. Often these offered too low a wage to be regarded as a living, or acceptable, wage for the over 50s.
- 5.4 In some study areas there was a 'cultural mismatch' between jobs wanted and jobs available now as the economy changed. Staff commented that many unemployed men did not want the part-time low paid service sector jobs.

Transport Issues

- 5.5 Some unemployed people do not have their own transport such as a car or bike. Low income households are less likely than others to have a car. The National Travel Survey for Great Britain 1995/97 found that two thirds of households in the lowest 20% of incomes did not have a car. Consequently unemployed people are more dependent upon public transport.
- 5.6 Poor, and often costly, public transport was a barrier to jobseekers taking training or employment in several of the study areas. Some were more rural; having small villages or remote small towns with poor public transport links. Some of these had a local culture and tradition of not travelling out of the village or town e.g. in rural or ex-mining villages. The local culture could be rather parochial in some ways. The two factors are probably inter-linked and exacerbate each other. Even in areas with better public transport some unemployed people would not travel far; for example, if they did not have their own transport, needing to take two buses to get somewhere was a big disincentive.
- 5.7 Staff from the different organisations in several areas thought the lack of good public transport was a problem for jobseekers in their area, but often they were unsure about who had the responsibility or authority to influence and change it. It would be helpful if local managers were informed how to approach Local Authorities on transport issues.

5.8 Suggestions made by respondents to ease these transport difficulties for older unemployed people were to:

- negotiate subsidised transport for outlying areas;
- improve bus services;
- pay travel costs for training and for interviews in full. Currently WBLA trainees have to pay about the first £4 of travel costs, which for many is a significant amount relative to their weekly income;
- introduce bus passes for unemployed people; and
- make jobseekers aged over 50 eligible for subsidised transport in employment - as is provided for 18-24 year olds on New Deal for Young People.

6. ENTRY THROUGH JOBCENTRES TO THE THREE PROGRAMMES

- 6.1 The process of giving information and advice about these programmes and referring to them from Jobcentres was working well overall. In general, unemployed people got referred to the training or jobsearch help they wanted and most felt they had sufficient information. Only a very small number of WBLA providers and programme centres reported problems of insufficient referrals or too many inappropriate or unwilling ones.
- 6.2 However, there were a few difficulties or examples of poorer service in some study areas. These probably apply generally to adult clients, not just to those aged over 50. They were mainly due to poor (usually insufficient) information, or poor links between training providers or programme centres and Jobcentre staff.
- 6.3 An earlier QPID study, 'Entry to Work Based Training for Adults' (Study Report No. 77, September 1999) investigated the various routes, including Jobcentres, in detail. This found some difficulties with communication and links between training providers and Jobcentres, so the issues found in this study are not new. However, their prevalence does seem to have reduced. The Employment Service and DfEE made efforts to remedy the problems identified by that study.
- 6.4 Employment Service staff in several study areas did not have sufficient information about all the available provision or sufficient supplies of publicity leaflets. The information chain from *training providers to Jobcentre to all relevant Jobcentre staff* did not always work well enough. This could affect the quality of advice that some jobseekers received as well as making advisors' jobs more difficult.
- 6.5 Some offices had high staff turnover and this led to difficulties with lack of expertise and/or knowledge. Several interviewees thought more training was needed for Jobcentre staff. A few training providers felt they needed to repeatedly spend time explaining what they do to new Jobcentre staff. Employment Service District Managers will continue to discuss training and staff turnover with Jobcentre managers to identify any local difficulties and work to resolve them within available resources.
- 6.6 Jobcentres play a key role in advising unemployed people on the range of government funded services and provision to help them find work. The service jobseekers received could vary somewhat depending upon which person they dealt with. Generally staff were appreciated by jobseekers. They said staff were 'helpful' or 'trying to help' and 'well-meaning'. To their credit, it was reported that Client Advisors were more helpful and tended to be much better informed than other staff. In one Jobcentre, advisors would even take IT shy jobseekers across the road to the training provider's premises to give them a quick tour and reassure them.
- 6.7 Some other Jobcentre services, though, were thought poorer by some older clients. For example, they said that queues and waiting times were too long or vacancies were already filled when they arrived for interviews. A few thought counter signing staff should provide more help and advice e.g. if they did do a vacancy job search it was rarely helpful and they would only do one. Counter signing staff could not always answer jobseekers queries; which is to be expected given the different roles of Jobcentre staff. However, there were one or two isolated cases where jobseekers were not effectively referred to another member of staff who could help.

- 6.8 Most jobseekers or programme participants interviewed felt they had been given sufficient information about what was available but a few commented that they had not been given enough. In one area, Jobcentre advisors used to assume that jobseekers would read the leaflets they were given but training providers and programme centres informed the Jobcentre that some of the those referred had complained they were not given sufficient information. Consequently Jobcentre advisors now talked clients through the provision and process in more detail and this worked better.
- 6.9 There were a few reports of people being referred to unsuitable options or even to a different provider against their wishes. This suggests that for these clients the advisory process had worked poorly. Also, a few WBLA providers reported that the quality of initial assessment of client training and development needs was variable and some clients had been inappropriately referred causing delay, frustration and loss of motivation. However, thorough assessment of training needs is actually part of the role of training providers. ES advisors are not trained or qualified in assessment or counselling techniques.

Suggestions to Improve Jobsearch Help and Services for Older Unemployed

- 6.10 The jobseekers and staff interviewed often had ideas or suggestions to improve jobsearch services. These included:
- older jobseekers would prefer to have the option of some privacy when talking to ES staff or using the Job Line phones as they disliked feeling other people could hear their conversations. They also found witnessing disputes between some difficult jobseekers and ES staff upsetting and off-putting. Such privacy was available in some, but not all, of the Jobcentres studied;
 - some older clients found the type on Jobcentre vacancy cards too small to read. Larger type would be more helpful and a more spacious layout so they were not jostling with other people. Colour coding to help people who cannot read well was also suggested;
 - some older clients said they would appreciate some seating in the waiting areas (and reading materials). Those with health problems such as back problems found standing for a length of time uncomfortable or painful. Seating was available in many but not all the study Jobcentres;
 - Jobcentre staff should match vacancies to jobseekers more often. Some ES staff mentioned that advisors do match new vacancies against clients on their caseload. Or there should be a programme which matches older unemployed people to relevant employers and advocates for them so that employers appreciate their capabilities;
 - a few jobseekers suggested having a separate section of the Jobcentre dealing with the older people;
 - use success stories more - to market programme centres or training options to clients;
 - some unemployed 50 plus need an introductory and support option to help them return to work and break down the barriers they have;

- the Employment Service should contract with other specialist agencies to place people into work;
- specialist recruitment agencies for older people are needed;
- some older jobseekers had previously used Executive Jobclubs, the Professional and Executive Register or Occupational Guidance advisors. They had found these services very helpful in the past and thought they should be provided again by the Employment Service. Claimant advisors were not considered expert enough;
- ES staff would find it helpful to have a contingency fund from which to make ex gratia payments to over 50s for resources that would help them to secure work. (e.g. payments for suits, alarm clocks);
- some ES staff suggested there should be more publicity that their services are not just for unemployed people;
- some ES staff would like to provide a more friendly client-centred service with less emphasis on the compulsion, censure and withdrawal of benefits elements. They stressed that they are there to help people;
- improve advice on where older people could find access to capital for self-employment. These older jobseekers were aware that Young People could apply to the Prince's Trust; and
- Jobseekers should have easy and free or cheap access to computers and the Internet at Jobcentres and programme centres.

Suggestions for Changes to the Welfare System

6.11 A few older unemployed people also suggested changes to the welfare system and all these are reported here. They were:

- improve the benefits system because currently it is not sensible to take agency work. This was because of the problems caused through signing off and on which could result in weeks with no benefits - often housing benefit was really the problem. Many low or semi-skilled jobs, e.g. warehouse vacancies, suitable for some of the older jobseekers interviewed, are now filled through agencies on short-term contracts;
- some jobseekers would like to work part-time for more than 16 hours but could not afford to do so because they could not replace the level of income achieved through benefit payments. They suggested that the tax or benefit system was changed;
- allow employment credits for part time work; and
- lower the retirement age.

Conclusions

- 6.12 Generally, entry to training or jobsearch was working well and jobseekers get sufficient information. Jobseekers found claimant advisors helpful.
- 6.13 A few difficulties were reported. The main factors causing these appear to be high staff turnover, insufficient training and poor communications between providers and ES (including lack of sufficient information about the available provision).
- 6.14 Some simple improvements such as: more privacy; seating in all waiting areas; and larger type on vacancy adverts would improve the general service of the Jobcentre, particularly for older clients. More use of success stories would be encouraging to jobseekers and help them appreciate the potential benefits of programme centres, Work Trials and Work Based Learning for Adults.
- 6.15 Some older jobseekers would appreciate more jobmatching and more 'advocacy' on their behalf by Employment Service staff with employers in stressing their capabilities.
- 6.16 Some older jobseekers wanted to use specialist recruitment agencies for older people. These do exist in some areas of the country and one source for more details of them is The Third Age Employment Network¹².

12. Third Age Employment Network (TAEN) St James Walk, Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R OBE.
Tel: 020 7 336 7477.

7. WORK BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS

Participation

- 7.1 People aged 50 and over were under-represented within WBLA. In November 1999, about 17% of trainees who had been unemployed for over 6 months were aged 50 plus compared to a quarter of all the long term unemployed claimants aged 25 plus¹³. Participation seems to drop further at ages close to state pension age.
- 7.2 This is consistent, though, with lower participation by older people in other forms of learning such as Further Education, Higher Education, and other job related training. The National Adult Learning Survey of 1997 found that participation in learning falls as age increases: eight out of ten adults under 50 took part in some form of learning in the past three years compared to 67% of people aged 50-59 and 47% of those aged 60-69. It also found that people aged 50 and over were more likely to agree with the attitude statements: "I'm not interested in learning of any kind", "I feel I'm too old to learn", or "Nothing would encourage me to do some learning".
- 7.3 Participation in learning by older people may be lower but that does not mean that they are not interested in learning. Their attitudes vary and many are interested. The National Adult Learning Survey found that the majority of people aged 50-60 had done some learning in the past three years.
- 7.4 Lower participation in WBLA might be due to less interest in training by some older people. Other causes might be that the training offered through WBLA does not suit their needs or interest; or that there are additional difficulties for older people in entry or access to WBLA. This study looked at these issues.

Are There Differences in the Types of Trainees?

- 7.5 WBLA trainees aged 50 and over were a different group to those aged 25-49:
 - more were unemployed for over 3 years;
 - more were on Basic Employability training;
 - far more had health problem or disabilities; and
 - fewer older trainees were of non-white origins.
- 7.6 Between April 1999 and March 2000, 41% of trainees aged over 50 who started WBLA were doing Basic Employability training compared to 37% of those aged 25-49.
- 7.7 Overall, a quarter of starters aged 50 plus had been unemployed for over 3 years, compared to a fifth of those aged 25-49. For Basic Employability trainees the difference was larger, 38% of these aged over 50 had been unemployed for over 3 years compared to 29% of those aged 25-49.

13. The comparison between trainees unemployed for over six months on entry, to unemployment claimants unemployed for over six months is made because they are the main and majority client group for WBLA and because precise data on the potential size of the special eligibility categories is not available.

- 7.8 28% of starters aged 50 plus had a disability compared to 19% of those aged 25-49.
- 7.9 Fewer trainees aged over 50 were of ethnic minority origin, just 11% of starters compared to 20% of those aged 25-49. This probably reflects differences in the overall client group and population.
- 7.10 There were slight differences in referral: 76% of starters aged over 50 were referred by ES compared to 73% of those under 50. Older trainees were rather more likely to enter through the special eligibility category of redundancy but far fewer entered as lone parents. (See table 1 in Annex 5.)
- 7.11 Older trainees formed 18% of starters on WBLA. Although there is no longer an upper age limit for entry to WBLA, the majority of older trainees, (nearly two thirds), were aged 50-54. (See table 2 in Annex 5.)

Provision on Offer

- 7.12 WBLA offers both occupational training for skills wanted in the local labour market, which often also includes self-employment support, and Basic Employability training.
- 7.13 Basic Employability Training is designed to provide a seamless programme of high quality training for people who do not have the work disciplines, basic skills or work experience needed to enter, and sustain, employment. It should be an individually tailored programmes which not only addresses Basic Employability Needs but also provides any additional Occupational Training needed for sustained employment. To undertake Basic Employability Training an unemployed person must be assessed by the TEC or its provider as having a need arising from at least two of the following barriers:
- an erratic employment record resulting from inappropriate behaviour;
 - low self esteem/poor self presentation to the extent that it represents a significant barrier to entering or sustaining employment;
 - low levels of basic skills, i.e. literacy or numeracy skills below Entry Level;
 - no significant experience of employment;
 - a continuous period of unemployment of two years or more, or have never worked;
 - a learning disability;
 - a history of health problems or disability substantially affecting their employment prospects;
 - a history of offending;
 - a significant history of alcohol/drug/substance abuse.
- 7.14 The majority of WBLA provision is within the private sector which takes seven out of ten trainees. The distribution of older trainees across types of provider is very similar to that for those aged 25-49. (See table 3 in Annex 5.)

- 7.15 Nationally, by far the most dominant occupations within WBLA are clerical and secretarial work; accounting for 37% of occupational training starts in 1999-2000, and 24% of starts on Basic Employability training. The 'average' TEC offered about 15 occupations in 1999-2000 and most offered between 10 and 25, but the range extends from just 3 up to 50. Those with a wide range tended to be large TECs or large metropolitan TECs. In a fifth of TEC areas though, there were less than 10 occupations. More details are in Table 4 in Annex 5.

Are Older People's Training Needs Different?

- 7.16 In one or two of the qualitative study areas the range of training on offer was rather limited. For example, business administration or IT training were available but not many other occupations. Here, some ES staff suggested that other occupations were wanted by some older jobseekers e.g. horticulture or outdoor type work. The range of training offered had reduced in recent years in many of the study areas because of lower funding and falling numbers. Also, in a few areas, the local training strategy did not seem sufficiently informed by local or future industry needs, Employment Service input, and feedback from clients. One TEC seemed less interested in WBLA than in its other activities.
- 7.17 In one of the study areas, there was an example of WBLA being used because it provided funds when there could be a cheaper alternative. Several unemployed older people had out of date licences for forklift truck and stacker truck driving which they could not afford to update. Re-assessment at no cost to unemployed people was not readily available. A limited amount of training was offered but it took five weeks (1-week induction and four weeks employer placement to generate income to cover the cost of the licence.) The programme was designed to meet DfEE requirements for training but for these jobseekers seemed to be a waste of government resource. It would appear cheaper to pay for licence updates which cost around £300.
- 7.18 A few trainees were only on WBLA because it was free and their benefit income level is maintained. The FE college offered other courses which would have suited their needs better but they could not afford to take them as this would have meant losing their benefits. Full time students cannot normally claim benefits but people taking courses for less than 16 guided learning hours a week who are still available for work can continue to claim. These trainees suggested that financial support should be available to enable unemployed people to take FE college courses. This is possible under New Deal for 25 plus for people who have been unemployed for over 2 years but these jobseekers had not been unemployed that long.
- 7.19 A higher proportion of older trainees do clerical and secretarial training: 43% of starters on occupational training in 1999-2000 compared to 34% of starters aged 25-49. This category includes office IT training. See tables 5 and 6 in Annex 5 for details.
- 7.20 Skilled trades and drivers/mobile machine operators are prevalent occupations within WBLA but not quite as prevalent among older trainees. Slightly lower proportions of older participants were training in associate professional and protective and personal service occupations, which would include care work, too. Also, slightly fewer older trainees took sales training. Care and retail work could offer opportunities for unemployed older people. Older people's life skills might be an advantage in these occupations. They are not declining sectors and now more employers are taking positive attitudes to employing older people. Also, part-time work is available. Wages can be lower than average in these sectors however; which may be off-putting to some older people.

- 7.21 Almost half of Basic Employability trainees began training on initial assessment rather than in a specific occupation. Many Basic Employability trainees have literacy or numeracy learning needs but these were slightly less common among older trainees. 25% of older Basic Employability starters had such needs identified in their initial training plan compared to 32% of those aged 25-49.
- 7.22 A minority of trainees require English (or Welsh) as a second language training, but fewer older trainees needed this. 7% of older Basic Employability starters had this need identified in their initial training plan compared to 13% of those aged under 50. Only 1% of occupational trainees required it.
- 7.23 In summary, compared to younger trainees those older people who did participate in WBLA were:
- more likely to do clerical or secretarial training (including office IT);
 - less likely to do skilled construction or engineering;
 - slightly less likely to do care or retail work;
 - less likely to require English or Welsh as a second language training; and
 - less likely to need literacy or numeracy help.

Qualifications

- 7.24 There was no real difference between older and younger occupational trainees in 1999-2000 in the level of qualifications worked towards. Most occupational trainees work towards NVQ level 2 (about 75%). Among Basic Employability trainees however, slightly fewer older trainees were aiming for Wordpower or Numberpower qualifications (15% compared to 20% of those aged 25-49). More older trainees were doing pre-vocational qualifications: 49% compared to 45% of trainees aged 25-49.
- 7.25 Low level vocational qualifications (NVQ level 1 or equivalent) are funded by DfEE for Basic Employability WBLA trainees only. In the qualitative interviews, some staff reported that some mainstream clients, particularly older ones, also need them. For example some older unemployed people, who had only ever worked on factory production lines, wanted Business Administration training but really needed to start with an NVQ level 1 before being ready to start on the NVQ level 2 programme. Training providers could not usually afford to offer NVQ level 1 qualifications without specific funding and some of them and a few TECs, suggested the rules should be changed. Nationally, about 6% of leavers from occupational training in 1999-2000 reported that they gained an NVQ level 1.
- 7.26 A few trainees commented that they found the NVQ processes and jargon difficult and the paper work excessive. A couple also expressed concern at the lack of value NVQs had with some employers e.g. through over use of simulation. A few interviewees reported that they had not been recruited by employers because they lacked real work experience.

WBLA Managers Comments

- 7.27 WBLA managers from training providers and TECs were asked to comment on how well the programme was working and on its design and funding system. Some constraints were identified and these seemed to arise from the interaction of the DfEE programme design and funding system, how TECs implemented WBLA locally and the funding and number of trainees available.

Employer Placements

- 7.28 One problem identified in most study areas, mainly by training providers but also by some Employment Service and TEC staff, was the limited number of employer placements available for trainees. Two areas reported that New Deal for Young People exacerbated this: it attracted many of the employers willing to take unemployed people on placements and consequently reduced the number available for older trainees on WBLA.
- 7.29 Previous research¹⁴ found that trainees who had employer placements were more likely to get jobs, therefore this might be reducing older WBLA trainees' employment chances.
- 7.30 In two areas the lack of employer placements had limited WBLA training places, because providers needed placements to offer training. Some suppliers could no longer afford to train clients in their centres beyond induction. Clients and Employment Service staff commented that several training providers would no longer start clients on programmes if they did not have an employer placement available, because of the cost involved in keeping clients at the training centre with no income. Start payments are low. A few clients had been terminated from vocational training programmes for the same reason. This was depressing for trainees and for ES staff as a considerable amount of time can be spent persuading jobseekers to take training. Also, it gave WBLA a poor reputation amongst unemployed people.
- 7.31 Fewer placements also meant that simulation was used more within some WBLA training.
- 7.32 Many of the trainees interviewed particularly valued getting a work placement with an employer.

WBLA design and funding

- 7.33 Training providers and some TECs said the design and funding system for WBLA constrained what they could offer. The smaller WBLA budget and high proportion of output or outcome funding was restricting the quality and range of training available, and in some areas also the length of training. More explanation of this is given in the following paragraphs.
- 7.34 Falling numbers of trainees on the programme meant that there was less money in total for WBLA for TECs or providers. It was reported that the majority of providers were able to offer WBLA because they also provided government funded training for young people and so had enough trainees to be viable.

14. DfEE Research Report RR96 - **Work-Based Training and Job Prospects for the Unemployed: An Evaluation of Training For Work.**

- 7.35 There was a very high proportion of outcome funding and little funding attached to a trainee starting or being on the programme. Less than half of WBLA clients found employment on leaving so many trainees did not attract a job outcome payment. Qualification payments were not guaranteed either as the trainee might not succeed. This was a DfEE design that the study TECs passed onto training providers.
- 7.36 Only a few TECs provided small amounts of additional money for particular special needs or to fund some training places to meet local demand which could not be funded through DfEE's design.
- 7.37 The difficulties with the outcome funding system seemed to apply mainly to occupational training rather than to Basic Employability training where there are stage payments. In particular, some older 'mainstream' clients who had been unemployed for some time or who had personal, social or health problems needed more time and help on the programme. They were not however, eligible for Basic Employability training. Some on-programme or stage payments for mainstream clients (e.g. as applied through FEFC funding) were considered desirable, as they would mean providers could improve quality.
- 7.38 Some TECs had in effect put maximum length of stay time limits on WBLA. Examples were 16 weeks or 6 month limits. However, for some trainees or occupations this is too short a time to get an NVQ level 2. This meant some trainees' needs were not met so raising issues about poorer quality and the real cost effectiveness of WBLA. In one area, even training organisations that recruit for IT positions were not recruiting IT workers from their trainees. Yet in another area, some providers routinely recruited their administrative staff from their business administration trainees, and often chose older trainees. Providers wanted these time restrictions on WBLA removed.
- 7.39 There is no maximum time limit for WBLA within DfEE programme rules. It seems likely that some TECs used them to deal with the combined effect of the numerical targets for starts and the fixed budget for trainee's allowances. Allowances replace trainees' benefit payments and the assumed average for budgeting was £73 per week per trainee. TECs administer trainee allowances and receive a fixed budget for them. Training fees are a separate budget. If they exceed the training allowance budget, the shortfall must be met from their own funds. In effect, TECs deduced a total number of trainee weeks they could fund. Some TECs applied maximum stay limits to manage this budget. Others were more flexible in their approach and funded a mix of provision of different lengths e.g. Care qualifications take about a year.
- 7.40 A few WBLA providers suggested that funding to them should vary to reflect the differing costs of training for different occupational areas.
- 7.41 Extra funding was wanted by a few providers to support clients who need additional support on NVQ level 2 programmes, such as help with dyslexia.
- 7.42 Staff in a few areas complained about the range of qualifications funded, particularly that employers or clients often did not want full NVQs. So the recent changes increasing the range of qualifications which DfEE will fund through WBLA (see paragraph 1.14) should, presumably, be a welcome improvement.

Enhancements to their provision

- 7.43 A few providers suggested introducing a facilitating service, to help older trainees during periods where they might drop out of training/placements due to domestic and other problems. At some of the training providers studied, it was clear from trainees that there was additional personal support for trainees with such problems from staff.

- 7.44 Extending the training period to enable trainees to taste a variety of activities and do work tasters across different jobs were suggested by a few providers.

Eligibility Criteria

- 7.45 Some interviewees thought the requirement to be unemployed for six months (normally) to qualify as eligible for training affected people aged 50 plus adversely. This criterion was mentioned by many clients and training provider staff and a few TEC staff and many suggested allowing those aged 50 plus earlier access. Older unemployed people already have their age against them and so have less time to wait. Their motivation and self-confidence drops more quickly and they either have more difficulty when starting or will not start and drift into longer term unemployment risking its associated problems e.g. debt, depression. Considerable effort was needed to boost them.
- 7.46 A few providers also suggested that ex-trainees should be allowed immediate re-entry to WBLA, particularly if their job did not work out satisfactorily, rather than waiting to re-qualify by a further six months unemployment. Actually this was available in 1999-2000 through the Employment Service Jobfinder Plus provision that gives unemployed WBLA leavers access to all programmes available for the six month plus unemployed, but it seems that these training providers were not aware of this.
- 7.47 It is understandable that jobseekers who had reached 6 months plus unemployment would say this and that training providers would like to help them earlier. Yet the majority of adults under or over 50 becoming unemployed leave the register for work within 6 months. So extending eligibility by allowing earlier access would probably reduce cost-effectiveness by increasing the proportion of trainees who would have found work without WBLA help (deadweight). In 1999 half of those aged 50 plus entering unemployment found work within six months compared to nearly six out of ten people aged 25-49. However, DfEE could consider the advantages and disadvantages of allowing access at some point before six months unemployment, e.g. at 3 or 4 months, for some or all unemployed over 50s and assess its feasibility further. In 1999-2000, 22% of trainees in both age groups entered WBLA before six months unemployment through the special eligibility categories.

Trainees' Comments

- 7.48 Most older trainees interviewed were pleased with their training provision and were often enjoying it. The company of other trainees was welcomed. Some particularly valued the peer group support they now found in the 'classroom' and outside as they had felt socially isolated through divorce or ill health. Many said their self-confidence had increased and that they were learning new skills. Many seemed optimistic about their job prospects, particularly in comparison to the Jobcentre users interviewed who were people who were not currently on WBLA or in programme centres.
- 7.49 DfEE's follow-up survey results also show that the majority of leavers in 1999-2000, (over eight out of ten) rated WBLA as useful and helpful in increasing their confidence and in improving their skills/learning new skills. Leavers aged 50 and over seem more satisfied than those aged 25-49 with these aspects as higher proportions rated the programme as very helpful. (See table 7 in Annex 5 for more details.) Older Basic Employability leavers were more likely than their younger counterparts and than occupational trainees in either age group to say that WBLA was very helpful in terms of building their confidence.

- 7.50 Ratings for how helpful WBLA was in terms of providing work experience were not as high, with about a quarter saying it was very helpful and over a quarter fairly helpful. Over half of leavers said WBLA was fairly or very helpful in looking for work.
- 7.51 DfEE's follow-up survey includes an optional question where leavers can write any comments they wish to make about their training. These are read as part of DfEE's quality monitoring system, but only a very small proportion of respondents make additional comments. Some of the positive comments from these older leavers were:
- "Training course was very interesting and stimulating. Lecturer coped well with the wide spread of experience and expertise of attendees."
 - "It was very daunting for me returning to learning after nearly 40 years. I was really nervous but the staff were very kind, helpful and did their best to make me feel at ease. I can honestly say that one of the best things that ever happened to me was going to this college."
 - "When you have been out of work for a long time, you can feel low and depressed. These courses can and do refresh you thinking and ideas to try other jobs like I did. My training certificates for First Aid, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety in the Workplace got me the job."
- 7.52 In the study areas, the trainees we interviewed often praised their trainers for being 'helpful and supportive'. They thought they were knowledgeable and the materials they used were good. Some commented that they liked their learning style and often also being able to 'learn at their own pace'.
- 7.53 A very few trainees did say they needed more personal one-to-one support from their tutors. One suggestion was that those needing additional help should be grouped together, rather than being in mixed groups left to help each other out. Whilst peer support was valued, this was not seen as an adequate substitute for tuition.
- 7.54 Most were content with the pace of teaching, with only just a few saying it was not suitable. These trainees said that their course had been too intensive at first or the pace was dictated by the pressures of completing the exercises and NVQ documentation and made the training too regimented. Few in WBLA provision at an FE college commented that there was little appreciation or allowances made for the fact that most of them had not studied for years – they would have liked a short course or extra help to familiarise them with study skills etc. A few of the written comments from older leavers on their follow-up survey replies were about the pace being too fast or that the training did not meet their needs because it was too limited.
- 7.55 A very small minority of trainees said there were some difficulties with retention of learning in the design of the programme. They needed to use and practice their new skills or they forgot them. One trainee wanted the opportunity to continue learning whilst working on placement. The trainee was concerned that every time he began to learn to read and write he went on placement and then forgot what he had learned. Additional help with literacy or referral to a separate literacy course might have been helpful for this trainee.
- 7.56 Generally the older trainees interviewed were satisfied with the resources available; they felt they had what they needed. Examples of comments include 'good range of facilities', 'good open learning packs and materials'. In a few places though, some improvements were wanted such as more up to date IT resources, more printers. At one centre the

computers were too close together for safety or comfort, creating problems for a left-handed trainee. Other examples were: insufficient resources on a plumbing course; the addition of a small switchboard would enhance training for customer service and administration. A couple of comments were about premises: in one centre the communal facilities (e.g. the breakfast/coffee room) were not always available since they were used for tuition and in another the rooms were too cold.

Separate Provision for Older People?

- 7.57 The trainees interviewed in the study areas were asked if they would prefer being in mixed age groups or just with trainees their own age. The vast majority were in mixed age groups and most of these thought mixed age groups were fine. Some said it was beneficial in terms of developing a flexible attitude and broadening their perceptions, while others said 'that is how the work place is' and that ages should mix. Some felt they helped younger trainees. Peer support, however, was mentioned and valued by trainees and several commented on having been pleased to find someone their own age in the group. One trainee did feel isolated, being the only older person in a class of young people. A few leavers commented on their follow up survey replies that they had found the course unsuitable for someone their age. A few trainees interviewed said that it could be disruptive to have too many young people in the class.
- 7.58 The minority of trainees in specialised provision for older people did like it and thought it worked well. Some thought it would be difficult keeping up with youngsters in IT training.
- 7.59 Most training providers interviewed commented that specialised provision was not needed: they tried to meet each individual's needs anyway. They felt trainees benefited and learned from each other, older trainees life or work experience can help other younger trainees. One provider, though, had identified this as a special need for IT training in its area and was running a successful and popular course for the over 50s.
- 7.60 In many cases it would probably be too costly for providers to run specialised provision for the over 50s because the number of trainees would be too small to run courses frequently enough. Unemployed people do not want to wait months for WBLA training. However, training providers might note that trainees often value peer support and that one older trainee alone in a group of much younger people seems less likely to find this from their fellow trainees. So a different group mix or additional support for that older trainee might work better.

WBLA Outcomes and Performance

- 7.61 Data for 1999-2000 from DfEE's survey of ex-trainees six months after they leave WBLA were analysed to look at any differences between older trainees and those aged 25-49.

Obtaining Qualifications

- 7.62 Older leavers in England and Wales in 1999-2000 were almost as likely to gain a qualification than their younger counterparts, 37% compared to 38%. In the previous year, the same proportion of both age groups achieved a qualification. Forty-two percent of older occupational training leavers and 34% of older Basic Employability leavers in 1999-2000 gained a full qualification. See table 8 in Annex 5.

Completing the programme and length of stay

- 7.63 Older trainees were slightly more likely to complete their training, 73% compared to 71% of those aged 25-49 in 1999-2000. Older trainees who did leave early were more likely to leave because of illness or disability problems: 16% compared to 12% of trainees aged 25-49 who left early. They were less likely than those aged 25-49 to leave for personal or domestic reasons (9% compared to 13%). Some trainees (35%) leave early because they find work, but there was no difference between the proportions of older or younger trainees doing this.
- 7.64 There was little difference in the length of stay on WBLA between occupational trainees aged under or over 50. There were small differences, though, for Basic Employability trainees and fewer older ones stayed less than two months, 24% compared to 28% of those aged 25-49. Over half of Basic Employability trainees in both age groups said their length of stay on the programme had been about right but over a third said it was too short. From the qualitative interviews, there were only a very few trainees who said they would like longer on the programme, but as most were not at the end of their training it was unlikely to be an issue for them.

Finding work

- 7.65 Nationally, even though similar proportions of older WBLA leavers and leavers aged 25-49 achieve a qualification fewer older leavers find employment: 36% compared to 41% in 1999-2000¹⁵. Much of this difference can be explained by the higher proportions of longer term unemployed and of Basic Employability trainees among trainees aged 50 and over. Fewer trainees of these types in both age groups get jobs. Table 9 in Annex 5 shows that 27% of Basic Employability leavers find employment compared to 48% of occupational trainees. Only 25% of leavers who had been unemployed for over three years on entry to WBLA found employment (see table 10 in Annex 5).
- 7.66 For Basic Employability trainees who had been unemployed for less than 3 years in entry there was little difference between the age groups in the percentage getting work. However, among occupational trainees differences did occur, particularly within the short term unemployed: 60% of older trainees who had been unemployed for less than six months found work compared to 65% of those aged 25-49.
- 7.67 The percentage of leavers finding work in both age groups was similar for most training occupation groups, apart from 'sales' and 'clerical and secretarial', where fewer older trainees found employment. The difference in sales was quite large: 34% of older sales trainees found employment after leaving compared to 50% of those aged 25-49.
- 7.68 The success rates of older WBLA leavers getting jobs compared to their younger counterparts were discussed with the training providers interviewed in the study areas. Many training providers and TECs did not routinely monitor outcomes for different age groups and had not known there were differences, although a few said their impression was that older trainees found it harder to get work. Many providers felt employer discrimination in recruitment was the major factor in why fewer older trainees found work. In two TEC areas in 1998-9 older WBLA trainees were as, or more, likely to get work than those in the 25-49 age group but the reasons for this did not seem clear.

15. Source: WBLA Trainee database. Ex-trainees are surveyed six months after leaving.

Other Suggestions for Changes to Learning Available to Older People

- 7.69 All interviewees were invited to suggest ideas or changes that they thought would help older unemployed people. Some of these were about training or learning. A number of older jobseekers were keen to pass on their skills to younger people and help them learn, for example through:
- being trained as assessors or work based trainers; or
 - becoming mentors/helpers. There could be a national team of older people who are trained and accredited to befriend and assist young people in training.
- 7.70 Some older jobseekers want more community and environment based projects, e.g. a community service option. A few ES advisors suggested these too. They thought it would be particularly suitable for those adults who do not want to study for an NVQ - often older people - but who do need work experience. Also, it would meet their social and personal needs and provide a little extra money on top of benefit.
- 7.71 Other suggestions made were:
- introduce a bursary scheme for individuals to buy their own training;
 - Jobseekers referred to WBLA could be asked to carry out work to build up a fund which will cover the full cost of their training in expensive areas such as large vehicle driving or coach driving;
 - one trainee asked for there to be a guaranteed job at the end of training; and
 - access to computers and the Internet in public libraries should be free, as it is for access to books, so older unemployed people can afford to learn how to use them.

Conclusions

- 7.72 Participation in WBLA by older people is lower. There may be several factors causing this. Access to the training on offer generally worked quite well. Some improvements to entry to WBLA were recommended in an earlier QPID report and ES has made changes. It does not seem that older trainees have particularly more difficulties with entry or are less likely to be offered WBLA by Jobcentre advisors. For example, the jobseekers interviewed were aware of WBLA. However, the lack of suitable occupational training was a problem for some older jobseekers in a few areas. Difficulty in finding employer placements seemed to be reducing opportunities. Older people's attitudes, are probably also a factor.
- 7.73 The responsibility for WBLA transfers to the Employment Service in April 2000. In future the Employment Service and the local Learning and Skills Councils should take account of the needs of older unemployed people when planning provision for work based training and other learning in their areas. There could be scope to develop a programme enabling older people to pass on their skills to younger people, either as mentors or working as trainers/tutors or assessors. Also, they should check if there is equality of access to employer placements for people of different ages.

- 7.74 Older unemployed people generally find WBLA a positive experience; they are almost as successful in achieving qualifications as the 25-49 age group; and over a third do find work after leaving. Therefore participation in WBLA by older jobseekers should be encouraged and monitored.
- 7.75 Most older trainees felt WBLA was meeting their needs quite well in terms of quality of teaching and learning styles and resources. A few suggested improvements to resources or more personal attention. This seems consistent with the non-completion rate for older trainees being lower and that they are as successful as younger ones in terms of getting qualifications.
- 7.76 Whilst much of the difference between the proportion of older trainees and those aged 25-49 getting jobs on leaving WBLA can be explained by the different client group, some differences do remain. Some possible factors that could be causing this are employer discrimination against older trainees; different skills or attitudes of the trainees; differences in jobsearch; or that WBLA as currently delivered is not as effective for older trainees. Older leavers are as satisfied or more so than the 25-49 age group with WBLA in terms of overall usefulness and in improving their skills and confidence. So there does not appear to be much difference here. Nevertheless, performance for older trainees should be monitored and providers should endeavour to ensure that their training does meet all their trainees' needs and ask trainees' views. Employer discrimination probably plays a major role in explaining the lower percentage of older trainees getting jobs. Providers reported that they thought this was the explanation.
- 7.77 Trainees do not rate WBLA as helpful for jobsearch as they do for improving their skills. Improved links to jobsearch help such as Jobcentre advisors and programme centres through associate membership could help here. It may well be more helpful for older trainees, as some respondents commented that older trainees were less used to selling themselves to employers. It should be routine practice to refer those trainees who do not have a job to go to at the end of their training to such help. Jobfinder Plus for WBLA leavers has been introduced to address such needs and its use should be encouraged.
- 7.78 Some changes to the funding system for WBLA to reduce the level of output funding and increase the on-programme payments would be desirable and would make it easier to improve the range and quality of what is offered. Also, if there are cheaper ways of meeting unemployed people's needs such as paying for fork lift truck licence updates (see paragraph 7.17) rather than using a full training course the funding system should ensure these are possible.

8 PROGRAMME CENTRES - ARE THEY HELPING?

What do Programme Centres Offer?

- 8.1 Programme centres offer modules flexibly: to enable jobseekers to broaden the range of employment opportunities sought; to update their job search techniques; and to cultivate the skills needed to look for and find work. They also offer Resource Areas for job seekers to attend on a regular basis, to actively apply for jobs which include newspapers, vacancies, free stamps. This is one of the main opportunities available to help older unemployed people back into work.
- 8.2 Participants are normally eligible to join a programme centre when they become unemployed for 6 months, although the ES District Manager may use his/her discretion in allowing a jobseeker aged over 25 who has been unemployed for over 13 weeks to join. Some groups are exempt from the six month unemployment eligibility criteria (these are the same as for WBLA).
- 8.3 The majority (about eight out of ten) of participants are voluntary but Employment Service staff can mandate jobseekers to attend if necessary. Mandated participants tend to have been unemployed for longer.

Participation and Performance

- 8.4 In 1999-2000 about 200,000 Jobseekers in Great Britain started at a programme centre. Of these about a third had been unemployed for less than 6 months, nearly half for between 6 months and 2 years and the remaining fifth for over 2 years. 14% had health problems. A third of programme centre leavers were placed in a job (28% of those unemployed for over 6 months and 47% of those unemployed for less than six months). The majority of these jobs were not Jobcentre vacancies.
- 8.5 Participants aged 50 or over were not identified separately in the Employment Service's regular monitoring data before April 2000. Most of the study programme centres did not monitor them either when interviewed in February 2000, though some had calculated recent figures to discuss with our interviewers.
- 8.6 From April 2000, the Employment Service has collected separate data on participants aged 50 plus and those entering through New Deal 50plus. Between April and October 2000, around 10,000 people aged over 50 started at programme centres in Great Britain. This is 10% of all starts. The majority of these came through the mainstream route. Only 8% (around 720) of these older participants were from New Deal 50plus, which started nationally in April 2000.
- 8.7 Fewer older unemployed people seemed to use programme centres. Although, people aged 50 plus formed about 22% of all people registered as unemployed for 6 months or more, they formed only 10% of all starts at programme centres by people unemployed for over 6 months between April and October 2000. Participation by the long term unemployed has been compared because entry to programme centres before six months unemployment is discretionary.
- 8.8 Of those older jobseekers that do participate in programme centres, the data indicate that two fifths entered early at ES discretion. This is very similar to the proportion of participants aged 25-49. There was no difference between participants aged 25-49 and 50 plus in the percentage that were mandated (21%).

- 8.9 Older participants were more likely to have health problems, (20% compared to 14% of those aged 25-49) or to have been unemployed for over 2 years 22% (compared to 19% of those aged 25-49).
- 8.10 Older jobseekers who were referred to programme centres were much more likely to start than their younger counterparts, whether mandated or not. Management information data for April - October 2000 about this are consistent with comments made by a few of the interviewed programme centre staff about the greater reliability of older people, e.g. 'if they say they will come, they will'.
- 8.11 Figures for April - October 2000 also suggest that older participants do as well as or better than the average participant in getting jobs: 38% of leavers aged 50+ were placed in a job compared to 37% of all leavers. Though, young clients on New Deal for 18-24 year olds did better still; 46% were placed in a job. New Deal 50 plus participants had a very high job placing rate; 51%.

Special Provision in the Studied Programme Centres

- 8.12 ES Head Office issued guidance on modules specifically designed for jobseekers aged 50 plus in Autumn 1999. These were based on good practice at a centre in Plymouth running successful specialist courses for the over 50s. Use of the modules was not compulsory in 1999-2000 though it has been made so from April 2000 with the introduction of New Deal for the 50 plus. Full details of the modules are at Annex 4. They were designed to:
- build confidence by exploring negative experiences and how these can be overcome;
 - start the process of changing negative views and preventing ageism;
 - develop participants' awareness of their own strengths and skills by examining their previous experience;
 - identify each jobseekers' own needs and goals;
 - research local employers and opportunities available;
 - carry out effective jobsearch activities; and
 - overcome negative employer perceptions about older workers.
- 8.13 Nearly all the programme centres studied were aware of the modules and many were using them, or at least the ageism parts along with other existing modules that covered other aspects. The new modules were working well. One centre had just started running a special four day course for the over 50s using these modules. This worked better than mixed age provision, as clients felt more comfortable with their peers and the tutor could spend more time on issues affecting older jobseekers.
- 8.14 No other programme centres offered any other provision specifically for older people, though one centre dealt with all voluntary clients (which most of their clients aged over 50 were) individually at first to avoid exposing them to the disruptive behaviour of some mandatory clients. This enabled staff to focus more on their individual needs in choosing which modules they would take. This centre had found that older clients were reluctant to explore their strengths and weaknesses in a group (i.e. in 'public').

- 8.15 In one centre groups of clients were given personal projects which involved them working together, using the local library and developing some study and research skills. These were popular with clients and helped boost their confidence.

Users Views

- 8.16 Programme centres were largely liked and appreciated by users. They liked the staff, finding them helpful and supportive. They felt well treated. They found the jobsearch advice and resources useful. Several of those who had attended Jobclub in the past commented that programme centres were better.
- 8.17 Many older users liked the social contact and company they got through attending the centre and found it helpful to meet other older people in their situation. They did get some peer support and whilst there may not be as much of this as in the previous Jobclub style provision, lack of peer support was not found to be an issue.
- 8.18 A very small number of the Jobcentre users interviews referred to programme centres or Jobclub as not having been much use to them. These were people who were still unemployed.
- 8.19 Some programme centre users said they wished they had come to the programme centre soon after they became unemployed, rather than now when they were long term unemployed. It would have been very helpful and they might have been in work by now.
- 8.20 In some areas the Employment Service used the local discretion on eligibility and allowed some jobseekers entry before six months unemployment. Here a very few clients interviewed complained that they did not get to come to the programme centre until they had been 6 or more months unemployed following a Restart interview but when they got to the programme centre they found out that people who had been unemployed for 3-6 months were there. They felt they should have been told about the centre sooner.

Programme Centre Managers Comments

- 8.21 The funding system and programme design were not constraining providers. Only a very few centres said more resources were needed to give clients more individual support, in one case this was to give English as a Second Language help.
- 8.22 The time limit for clients to attend programme centres did not cause problems in the vast majority of cases. Most clients' needs were met within it and a few programme centres did have the flexibility to allow the few clients who needed longer to carry on attending. This flexibility should be encouraged, as the small numbers involved are manageable. One centre, which had found the allowed time insufficient, had recently negotiated a longer time period with their ES Area Manager. One Jobclub, though, did say that the course time had been cut from 3 to 1 weeks and this was a problem for those needing more support. These were often older people who had much to offer but no experience of selling themselves.
- 8.23 Repeat attendees were rare and not usually a problem. In many cases the centres were too new for many users to return. Some clients liked to come back as they valued the social contact. A few managers thought it possible that if there were many repeat attendees, it could dampen morale for other first time users: seeing so many people still unemployed after attending the centre.

- 8.24 Programme centre managers were invited to suggest improvements. Some proposed reducing the qualifying period of unemployment to catch clients when they were more motivated. However, as many newly unemployed people under or over age 50 find work within three or six months this might not be cost effective.
- 8.25 A few centre managers suggested that some resources to enable them to follow up or support some clients when they leave the centre would be helpful in assisting these people in their first stages in a job and ensuring that they stay in employment. Some long term unemployed people lack communication skills to sort out problems and having an advisor or mentor to assist them for, perhaps, the first six months in a job would benefit them.

Links Between Programme Centres and Jobcentres and WBLA Providers

- 8.26 The majority of Jobcentre staff interviewed thought programme centres were useful and working well. Most programme centres were content with the referral process from Jobcentres too, though a couple felt they needed more clients. Working relationships between the two were good in the majority of cases.
- 8.27 Examples of practices which staff had found effective in the referral process were:
- the Jobcentre sends people referred to programme centres a letter two weeks before they are due to join. This is followed up by a letter from the programme centre one week later;
 - in addition, the programme centre telephones clients before they are due to start to encourage attendance;
 - people who are referred but who do not attend are telephoned by the programme centre as well to remind and encourage them;
 - the lead Jobcentre Advisor visits the programme centre regularly to keep in touch with clients and discuss referrals and outcomes with the programme centre manager; and
 - programme centre staff visit the Jobcentre when needed, to brief client advisors or for some 'floorwalking' to stimulate interest amongst jobseekers.
- 8.28 In just a few cases improvements in the links or processes between Jobcentres and programme centres were wanted. Some Jobcentre staff were not completing the section of the referral sheets which gave information about the client. A few programme centres wanted their local Jobcentre staff to talk more to clients; sell the programme centre service more positively; and give them better information about it. Also, one or two Jobcentres should stop using mandates excessively. This led to many resentful clients and too high a proportion of clients with low motivation in the centre. In one area, about half of all their clients were mandated to attend. Nationally though, 22% of all starts at programme centres were mandatory referrals in 1999-2000.
- 8.29 A few programme centres felt that Jobcentres had not always been such good partners. For example, there had been some competition and unwillingness to advertise Jobcentre vacancies at programme centres. Jobcentres have numerical targets for placing jobseekers in Jobcentre vacancies but did not score for programme centre clients placed in one of them. Now that these placings did count towards Jobcentres' targets, co-operation had improved.

- 8.30 Suggestions made by programme centre staff to improve links with Jobcentres included:
- inviting Jobcentre staff to attend a programme centre induction session as part of their training; and
 - permitting the programme centre to put up advertising posters in the Jobcentre. This was allowed in some areas but not in all. It could depend upon the area's interpretation of the Employment Service publicity policy.
- 8.31 Some centres did report having some associate members (e.g. WBLA trainees). However, management information figures suggest that the total number of associate members is probably small. Nationally, in 1999-2000, about 7% of people leaving programme centres started on to TEC/LEC programmes. Associate members placed in jobs formed only about 2% of all placings.

Conclusions

- 8.32 The early data suggest that older unemployed people who use programme centres are as successful in finding work than users aged 25-49.
- 8.33 Programme centres do help older unemployed people into work and are popular with them. Their use by older people should be encouraged, particularly as participation by people aged over 50 seems low at present.
- 8.34 The special modules for older workers were working well and have subsequently been introduced nationally. There were not enough examples of specialised provision for older people using other modules as well to be conclusive about whether this is more effective. Further research and monitoring of performance could investigate this.
- 8.35 The effective practice found through this research could usefully be circulated to Jobcentres and programme centres. Some guidance about making good use of programme centres and having good links could also be issued to address the few cases of poorer links or practice found.
- 8.36 The design and funding of programme centres works well. The suggestion for a limited follow-up support service aiming to ensure sustained employment for those placed in jobs could be considered, perhaps for more needy or vulnerable clients.

9. WORK TRIALS - DO THEY WORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE?

Provision

- 9.1 The aim of Work Trials is to help priority job seekers into work. Employers fill an actual job vacancy with a long term unemployed person on an unpaid and trial basis for up to 15 working days. During this time the person remains on benefit. It offers the opportunity for the employer to assess the suitability of the job seeker and the individual to try out the job, without obligation on either side. If the person decides they do not want the job they do not incur benefit sanctions for refusing it.
- 9.2 Work Trials can be useful for jobseekers who want to try out a new occupation or would benefit from the chance to show what they can do rather than relying just on a job interview. They are open to all those unemployed for over 6 months, and unemployed people with disabilities, or those who have been made redundant or recently finished work based training.

Participation and Performance

- 9.3 In 1999-2000 there were around 8,000 Work Trials by people aged 25 plus. The number of participants is small but this programme has a high success rate, with about half getting the job at the end of their Work Trial.
- 9.4 At the time of the study Employment Service monitoring data on the age of participants was limited to under or over 25 so it was not possible to look at separate data about those aged over 50.
- 9.5 From April 2000, however, separate data for older participants were collected. These indicate that participation in Work Trials by those aged over 50 is low. Data for April - October 2000 for Great Britain show that 240 people aged over 50 started on this programme. This was just 4.7% of all starts, yet older people comprised about 22% of all long term unemployed claimants. The majority of older Work Trial participants entered through New Deal 50plus. Work Trials seem to be much more popular with the young unemployed, as over half of the participants entered through New Deal for 18-24 year olds.
- 9.6 About half of the older participants (53%) were placed in the job. This is the same rate as for participants aged 25 plus. So whilst Work Trials do work for many participants these figures do suggest that they are not being used as much for older jobseekers.
- 9.7 Low take up of Work Trials was discussed with Jobcentre and programme centre staff and the most frequent reason they gave was that Work Trials were unpopular with many clients; for example, they were viewed as 'working for nothing', 'a 3 week interview', or clients felt they 'should be accepted on our merits'. They were especially unpopular in some areas where local attitudes are strongly against 'employer exploitation' and working for nothing. In one of these areas the Jobcentre staff seemed to try to arrange long Work Trials; often the full 3 weeks was mentioned. Given local attitudes, this probably deterred clients more. By contrast, a Jobcentre in another area which had many Work Trials would arrange them for only 3 days usually, or, at the most, a week. Their view was that an employer should know within a week if the applicant was suitable and shorter trial

periods prevent exploitation. Also, it was easier to 'sell' short Work Trials to unemployed clients. As part of its employer marketing, this particular Jobcentre had actively signed up local employers to the Work Trials concept in advance of them having vacancies and had made the necessary checks. This made it quicker and easier for that employer to take someone on a Work Trial when they did have a vacancy.

9.8 Other factors causing low participation found in the study areas were:

- Work Trials were not strongly promoted to clients. Some Jobcentre staff preferred to achieve job outcomes as they had targets for these. Often the staff were very busy and had other priorities and targets to meet. Many programme centres mentioned Work Trials but did not push them;
- some Jobcentre staff were 'nervous' of marketing jobseekers or Work Trials to employers, so there was low awareness amongst employers. Jobcentre staff in one area did not think their relationship with employers was strong enough to ask for the 'favour' of a Work Trial;
- although jobseekers are permitted to suggest a Work Trial to an employer during an interview, many would find it difficult to do this or lack the skills to 'sell the concept', even if they did realise that they were allowed by ES to do this;
- staff reductions or shortages in Jobcentres meant that Work Trials tended to get overlooked, especially if the staff who used to be dedicated/targeted to achieve them had left;
- in a few offices Jobcentre staff seemed to use Work Trials for hard to fill long term vacancies. But then, whilst clients may have liked the work experience, they often refused to take the jobs because of the low pay and poor conditions;
- bureaucracy was a minor factor: only a very few programme centres and training providers and ES staff in one office thought too much time and paper work were needed to arrange them; and
- Work Trials were unpopular with ES staff in one area because they said 'only the dross employers are interested'. The local programme centre was more interested in using them but felt the Jobcentre was reluctant to arrange them.

9.9 Previous research by the Employment Service on employers' attitudes to Work Trials found that many employers were interested and participating employers were satisfied with it. The role of the Jobcentre Work Trial Co-ordinator was very important in marketing and supporting employer participation. Employers who did not want to participate were often larger employers or part of chains that felt Work Trials would not sit well with their well-established formal recruitment procedures.

9.10 One Jobcentre which had many Work Trials, effectively had one member of staff championing them within the office and also marketing them to employers and signing them up as potential participants and making the necessary health and safety checks.

9.11 One area used to have more Work Trials when they were often used at the start of the employed status (i.e. 'recruit and train') WBLA programme to allow employers to assess the individual's suitability before taking them on. This programme had shrunk considerably in recent years. Work Trials were not unpopular with Jobcentre staff in this area.

- 9.12 It was suggested that jobseekers might be encouraged to use Work Trials if the Jobcentre first agrees with the employer that they are willing to take a long term unemployed person on a Work Trial and makes the necessary checks. Then the Jobcentre vacancy advert could have a coloured flag saying “Work Trial possible”. This might work well with employers who regularly use Jobcentres and with whom the Jobcentre has discussed the range of help it can provide.
- 9.13 ES head office issued a “Work Trials Open Learning Pack” for Jobcentre staff to encourage their use at the end of 1999. This had been seen in many of the offices studied and staff said it was helpful. One even commented that it was a good self-help pack for jobseekers to use. Some other offices were not aware of it though, and some advisors had not used it, e.g. because there was only one pack for 4 advisors. Nationally, participation in Work Trials increased in January - March 2000.

Jobseekers Views and Participants Experiences

- 9.14 From our study interviews with jobseekers we found that most had heard about Work Trials - usually from advisors when the menu of opportunities was explained. This was not universal though, and in one area none of the jobseekers or programme centre clients interviewed were aware of Work Trials. Few jobseekers, though, seemed interested in doing a Work Trial or had considered using it to help sell themselves to an employer. A small minority seemed to confuse them with work placements and did not realise that chances of a job offer were usually good. Nationally, about half of Work Trial participants get the job.
- 9.15 The number of Work Trial participants in the study areas was small. Indeed in many of the study Jobcentres there were so few Work Trial participants aged over 50 within recent months that we were able to interview only five in total.
- 9.16 These ex-participants were satisfied with the information they received about Work Trials from ES staff and the leaflet they were given. The jobs were vacancies notified to the Job centre and ES staff suggested the Work Trial to the jobseeker.
- 9.17 Most felt they had been treated satisfactorily by the employer whilst on the Work Trial. Some, but not all, would try Work Trials again or recommend them to other jobseekers.

Two who did not get the job ...

One man had been on a Work Trial in a butcher's shop, after doing a training course and getting an interview for the job. The Job Centre arranged a Work Trial which went well until the employer discovered the man was a qualified butcher and then would not employ him because he could not afford to pay the commercial rate for a qualified butcher.

The jobseeker did a three week Work Trial at a shop in December repairing and maintaining electric guitars. He had some previous experience of repairing musical instruments. He was not offered the job. He felt it became apparent that he did not fit in and suspects the shop might have just wanted temporary extra help in the busy period just before Christmas.

... and two who did get the job.

The jobseeker was an ex-welder and had been unemployed for over five years. The advisor suggested he try this job spraying special coatings onto furniture as a Work Trial. It is low paid, but the New Deal 50 plus grant of £60 week was attractive and the chance to try something new without commitment was encouraging. However, he has now become concerned about supporting his family on the low wages when the New Deal 50 plus grant runs out.

The jobseeker had been at managerial level, and then was made redundant. Whilst on New Deal he persuaded an employer to take him on a Work Trial. The employer was not enthusiastic, but ensured that the client got a full range of work to do in his three weeks. At the end of this the client was given a permanent job as a salesman – complete with company car, mobile phone and good salary.

Conclusions

- 9.18 Participation in Work Trials by older people is low, yet they are about as successful as jobseekers aged 25-49 in obtaining the job so potentially Work Trials could be helpful to them. Older jobseekers are discriminated against in recruitment by some employers. If employers are persuaded to give an older person the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do, it could improve their chances of employment. It is recommended that Employment Service and programme centre staff are encouraged to suggest Work Trials to older people when appropriate. Work Trials should only be used when appropriate, of course, but currently participation by older people is so low compared to that of other age groups that it seems unlikely to be at its upper limit of appropriateness.
- 9.19 Although many older jobseekers did not appear interested in Work Trials initially, most were not aware of the programme's high success rate and few staff seemed to actively sell Work Trials. It seems likely that participation could be increased through more encouragement from Jobcentre and programme centre Staff, including stressing the high employment rate for participants and that it gives the jobseeker a better opportunity to show an employer they can do the job than an interview or application form alone can do.
- 9.20 Re-issuing the Work Trials Open Learning pack (revised if necessary) with a note to office managers on increasing participation for older people would be one way of doing this. Work Trials are used much more for young unemployed people aged 18-24. Appointing office co-ordinators, to act as local champions for Work Trials and using flags on vacancies to indicate if a Work Trial is available might be helpful too.
- 9.21 Participation in Work Trials by those aged 50 plus should be monitored closely in future. If it does not improve, it is recommended that the situation should be investigated further, including looking at referral rates for different age groups, perhaps at ES district level.

10. OVERVIEW OF THE THREE PROGRAMMES

- 10.1 Participation in WBLA, programme centres and Work Trials is lower for the older unemployed. Within WBLA participation tended to tail off when clients get within a couple of years of retirement age. It is possible that this is also the case in the other two programmes, but such detailed data are not available.
- 10.2 Generally there were quite good links between the Employment Service, programme centres and training providers in the studied areas. There were examples of good links between different parts of this system which did seem to make referrals work more smoothly. Sometimes programme centres, Work Trials and training were being used as a package of help. In some areas, though, some improvements to the links between different parts of the system were needed.
- 10.3 Sometimes there was a tension between individuals' needs and fitting those individuals into the groups and categories of programmes. Some staff found these rather inflexible or incomplete, rather mechanistic and overly output focused. They wanted a wider range of provision, which was more flexible and modular so that a package of more personalised support could be agreed and delivered.
- 10.4 Staff working in the various organisations regarded success as a job or qualifications or successful referral to other provision *and quality changes* such as increased confidence, or motivation, better coping, gaining a network of support, widening the jobseeker's outlook to change occupations. Programme centre staff mentioned the development of personal plans and achieving milestones. Training provider staff mentioned trainees achieving personal milestones. It was very encouraging that success was not viewed only in terms of payable outcomes and that qualitative improvements for unemployed people were viewed as equally (or sometimes more) important.

Range of Learning Provision

- 10.5 The range of learning available was quite wide in some areas and jobseekers and ES staff did not report a lack of suitable learning opportunities. There were a couple of examples of where some ES staff said that jobseekers would like training in a particular minority occupation that was not available but the TEC would explain that there was not really sufficient demand locally from employers to justify the expense of providing it. In some areas FE colleges were providing some outreach courses locally or ran bus services from villages to the College's main site. In a few study areas, though, the actual range of provision and help on offer locally or accessible to clients, did seem too limited to meet the needs of some older jobseekers.
- 10.6 Also, a few interviewees thought that the range, speed and method of training were not sufficiently learner or employer focused but it did suit supplier's needs. Literacy or numeracy help was often free.

Basic Skills

- 10.7 A minority of older unemployed people need help with basic maths, or to improve their reading or writing skills. Some training providers and programme centres were giving such clients this help or coaching themselves. They, particularly programme centres, may not be resourced to be able to do more than assist with the particular task or

application. So it is important that all staff within the system are aware of where to refer these clients for additional help and encouraged to do this. Free Basic English and Maths courses (funded by DfEE) are widely available. These should be promoted verbally at WBLA training providers and programme centres as well as by advertising posters. This could increase the chances of such clients increasing their own literacy or numeracy skills for the long-term.

Advice and Guidance

- 10.8 Little mention of other local adult guidance/careers services was made by programme centres or by WBLA providers as sources of referrals or by Jobcentre staff as places they referred clients to for more detailed guidance. Few of the older unemployed people interviewed mentioned them either. Research into how much older people use these services might be helpful to DfEE and Employment Service policy makers.
- 10.9 In one study area there were many training providers competing with each other with similar provision and some also ran programme centres. Some of the other training providers were concerned that these programme centres' advice on training to jobseekers might not be impartial.
- 10.10 Several interviewees thought that advice and guidance for older unemployed adults needed improving. They suggested that more in-depth advice and counselling at an early stage that included more assessment of transferable skills and options would be beneficial. By the time they are given their first review by ES many older unemployed people (unlike younger people) have already lost confidence and are becoming alienated. The POPE project in Bradford and ADAPT AGE in Barnsley were visited as part of this research and were doing interesting and beneficial work in providing counselling and motivational training as well as recruitment agency services.

11. AGE DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal Opportunities Strategies and Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 Most of the organisations in the study had written equal opportunities policies or strategies but often age was not mentioned. A significant proportion did not seem to have considered older people as a distinct group. They were simply regarded as part of the adult population. Here adult really means age 25 or over as there are various specific Government initiatives and provision for young people aged under 25 that distinguish them as a separate group.
- 11.2 This study focused on equal opportunities policies and practices relating to how the organisations delivered their services and programmes to their clients rather than on their equality policies for their own employees. It is worth noting, though, that it was quite common for age to be included within policies relating to their own employees.
- 11.3 Some training providers and half of the study TECs did include age within their equal opportunities policies for their clients, though gender, disability and ethnicity attracted more attention and action. These, unlike age, were perhaps monitored more closely by Government Offices when approving TEC strategies. This is consistent with the findings in QPID Study 86¹⁶.
- 11.4 When interviewers discussed equal opportunities and age with Employment Service staff, some talked about the ES Values instead of any specific Equal Opportunities policy. This deals with how they should treat jobseekers. Often, they also mentioned that ES will no longer accept age restrictions on vacancies from employers and that referrals could not be pre-selected on the basis of age. A small minority of ES staff did not seem to be aware of an EO policy. Programme centres' Equal Opportunities policies tended to follow that of the Employment Service.
- 11.5 Typically, strategies would talk of "equality of opportunity for all". Then some would list certain disadvantaged groups as further explanation of who should not be discriminated against. TEC strategies often detailed the groups they planned to focus attention or action on to improve their opportunities. Several TECs' strategies include promoting equal opportunities to local employers and often age was included within this. For example, one TEC's policy states:

" We believe strongly that we must combat discrimination, alleviate disadvantage and react positively to special training needs. This applies not only to our programmes and initiatives but we must also try to persuade and influence all those with whom we have contact to do likewise. Our aim is to help all groups in society fulfil their potential.

... We are committed to equality of opportunity for all embracing the following: gender, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and special training needs, older workers, former detainees and ex-offenders, disaffected young people, people at a geographical disadvantage, people with care responsibilities, sexual orientation, and people who are HIV positive."

16. "Implementation of TEC/CCTE Equal Opportunities Strategies" published in June 2000.

- 11.6 A few of the studied organisations were members of the Third Age Employers Network, that aims to improve opportunities for older workers.
- 11.7 Very few organisations routinely monitored participation or outcomes for older jobseekers or trainees apart from a couple of TECs and some training providers. So most organisations did not know if there were differences between age groups. Some providers or programme centres worked out the recent figures to discuss with our interviewers but in others the information was not readily accessible. Surprisingly, even a few organisations who identified older people as a special group within their equal opportunities strategy did not monitor their participation or outcomes separately.

Examples of Action on Age Issues or Provision for Older People

- 11.8 Some organisations had taken action on age issues, including some who did not have age identified as an issue within their Equal Opportunities strategies. Quite often, better monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives would have helped them understand how effective these were and would assist in their future development. Examples of the action or initiatives are:
- TECs gave copies of the Code on Age Diversity to their training providers and one promoted it to local employers through equal opportunities conferences.
 - A TEC funded adult guidance services. It encouraged older workers to use them and the jobsearch help and to consider learning opportunities through a leaflet entitled "*It takes ages to be this good.*"
 - Guidance, counselling services and a motivational training course for older unemployed people, linked to a recruitment service.
 - One TEC writes a quarterly newsletter for Equal Opportunities and Special Training Needs which has included features about older people and ageism and special IT provision for the over 50s.
 - One training provider ran a course for employers on the 'Benefits of a mixed age workforce'. During the course many of the employers attending admitted to having ageist policies or procedures and some are beginning to consider employing more older people as a result of the course.
 - Providers' advertising leaflets that do not include pictures of trainees to avoid stereotyping or show silhouette figures of indeterminate gender, ethnicity or age.
 - IT training courses specifically for older people and advertised as such.
 - Re-training and up-skilling programme for those recently or just about to be made redundant. This was for trainees of any age but many were approaching or over 50.
 - One programme centre promoted people aged 50 and over to local employers as part of its marketing.
 - One TEC offered employers free training to up-skill an existing member of staff if they take on a Modern Apprentice. Often this was an older worker.

- Specialist training provider helping people with long-term health problems or disabilities into work (many of whom are older people) and offering on-going assistance to their employers.

Stereotyping and Ageism

11.9 Most staff from Jobcentres, programme centres and training providers had not considered older people as a distinct separate group. They did not appear to have treated them differently either. Staff tended to say they saw and dealt with people as individuals. Nearly all the older unemployed people interviewed reflected this too. A few jobseekers in one area commented that they felt that ES staff spent most of their time with younger unemployed people. This view might perhaps be influenced by the extensive publicity for New Deal for 18-24 year olds. The study interviews did not find real evidence of stereotyping which actually affected clients access to help, the offers made to them, or the provision available.

11.10 However, both jobseekers aged 50 and over and many staff in ES offices, programme centres and training providers thought some employers, and a few private employment agencies, discriminated against older people in recruitment. Some jobseekers had experienced this and felt it keenly. Some were despondent and felt it was a major barrier to them getting work. Examples they gave included:

- being told “you sounded a lot younger on the phone”;
- being asked their age and then the employer was no longer interested or even said they wanted someone younger;
- being told “you’re too old for the job - we want someone who will be with us at least 15 years”; and
- recruitment/work agencies saying ‘nothing for someone your age’ or ‘at your age you’re only likely to get contract work, nothing permanent’.

11.11 Older unemployed people also expressed views about themselves to our interviewees,

- Employers don’t want older people.
- Employers don’t want someone due to retire in less than X year’s time.
- Too old to do long training/education course now - I haven’t got time to do a 2 or three year course.
- I’m too old or slow to learn. Won’t be able to keep up with youngsters.
- I’m 50 years old and have a third of my working life left and I want to work. Why should some employers think I’m too old?

11.12 Whilst ES staff encouraged employers not to have age restrictions and would not take vacancies with an age limit, some employers still continued to discriminate at application sifts or interviews which was frustrating for jobseekers.

- 11.13 Staff in ES offices, programme centres and training providers did not think there were problems with discrimination against older people in terms of access to, or treatment on, Government funded provision to assist unemployed people. They did think that employers' ageist attitudes in being reluctant to employ older workers (and this could be over age 45 or 40 rather than 50) were a *significant* factor in why fewer older clients might get work.
- 11.14 In a few cases this seemed to result in some degree of collusion between ES client advisors and older claimants for whom they felt there was no realistic hope of suitable work before retirement age, as both parties believed opportunities were very limited. The advisors were perhaps more sympathetic than they might have been with younger people and less likely to press hard or to encourage options strongly. For example, one advisor remarked "Why should some one who has worked all his life be forced into a low status job?". One jobseeker, in his late fifties commented that his interview at 18 months unemployment with an advisor consisted of less than 10 minutes discussing his situation and jobsearch and 20 minutes discussing holidays.
- 11.15 A few ES advisors and programme centre staff commented that whilst age discrimination certainly does exist some older jobseekers believed it was more prevalent than it really is. It can be easier or more comfortable for a person to think they were rejected because of their age rather than because they lacked the skills or experience wanted or because their attitude did not suit. This view was informed by their knowledge of the local labour market and local employers attitudes to age.

Countering Age Discrimination

- 11.16 Many staff, particularly in ES offices and programme centres, did try to help older unemployed people deal with age discrimination. Most would encourage them to keep trying and point out that older people do get work and not all employers discriminate. Indeed B&Q was widely quoted by staff and some jobseekers as an employer who wanted older workers and some staff gave other examples too. Some staff would suggest to older unemployed people that they could improve their chances by not giving their age on applications or CVs, by stressing their skills and the benefits of their life and work experience that often give people transferable skills.
- 11.17 There was widespread support amongst interviewees for a Government information programme aimed at employers which would promote older workers and counter age discrimination. Some suggested that such a campaign should say that older employees are reliable, able, responsive and responsible and use real success stories.
- 11.18 A minority of jobseekers or trainees suggested that the Government should legislate against age discrimination. A very small number of jobseekers even suggested quotas for numbers of older people and women employed should be imposed on employers. A few others proposed that the Government should introduce incentives for employers to take on unemployed people aged over 50, as they do for young people.

Conclusions

- 11.19 Age should be included with the Equal Opportunities policies or strategies for clients of programme centres, education and training providers. Participation and performance of programmes/provision should be monitored for separate age groups.

- 11.20 Age diversity should be included within equal opportunities training for staff working in TECs, training providers, programme centres and the Employment Service.
- 11.21 Age discrimination by employers in recruitment was reported and many older claimants felt it was widespread. DfEE should continue with its policies to counter age discrimination in employment and to encourage age diversity and equality of opportunity within both the workplace and in learning provision. The publicity campaign about age diversity in Spring 2000 would have been welcomed by many study interviewees.
- 11.22 Examples of helpful action on age related issues should be disseminated to encourage their wider application and raise awareness of age issues.

SAMPLE DETAILS

Selected Labour Market Characteristics of the Study Areas

TEC/CCTE	Labour Market Characteristics				
	Size population of working age (1991 data)	Unemployment level compared to England at Oct 1999	% of population qualified to level 3 or higher (LFS winter 97-98)	Proportion of claimants unemployed aged 50+	Level of long-term illness in area
Cumbria	294,000	average	slightly above average – 44%	below average	average
South Derbyshire	321,000	average	average 42%	average	slightly below average
North Derbyshire	196,000	high	average 40%	above average	high
Humberside ¹	518,000	above average	low 35%	average	average
North London ²	477,000	high	high 52%	low	low
Surrey	636,000	low (very)	high 52%	high	very low
Barnsley/Doncaster ¹	313,000	high	low 36%	average	very high

Note:

1. For older people, recruitment agencies exist in this area.

2. Specialised provision for older people exists in Humberside and in Barnsley and Doncaster

Work Based Learning for Adults Data

TEC/CCTE	Work Based Learning for Adults Data				
	Job entry rates for the over 50s in 1998	Are older trainees more or less likely than those aged 25-49 to get a job?	% of starts aged over 50	% of starts who are 2+ years unemployed	% of starts who are from an ethnic minority
Cumbria	very high 56%	more	low 12.7	31.8	low 0.3
South Derbyshire	high 49%	more	16.9	above average 35.0	medium 8.5
North Derbyshire	average 36%	less	17.4	high 36.0	low 1.5
Humberside	average 35%	more	low 13.2	31.3	low 2.6
North London	near average 38%	less	14.4	31.9	very high 51.6
Surrey	low 32%	a lot less	high 25.5	low 26.9	medium 8.7
Barnsley/Doncaster	very low 28%	less	15.5	high 38.1	low 1.0
England (shown for comparison)	37%	less - for age 25-49	16.2	31.8	18.2 (median TEC area is 6.0)

Note:

Starts are trainees who started in the period June 1998 - June 1999

Interviewee Details

TEC/CCTEs	7
TEC/CCTE staff	16
Jobcentres	14
Jobcentre staff	35
Jobseekers	75
Programme centres	16
Programme centre staff	22
Programme centre clients	58
WBLA providers	20
WBLA staff	31
WBLA trainees	66
Work Trial participants	5
Total staff	104
Total jobseekers and programme participants ¹	202

Note:

1. Two of the work trial participants were interviewed originally in other roles - one as programme centre client and the other as a jobseeker in a jobcentre.

STUDY TEAM

The study team included:

Study Lead:	Alison Neave
Consultants:	Robert Balmer Edward Brittain - B&M Associates Wendy King Don Rush - HRH Associates Gillian Stephenson - Focus Consultancy Anne Preston
Additional support:	Dr Vince Keddie - Head Studies Team, DfEE Paul Turner - Studies Team, DfEE Joanne Wheeler - Studies Team, DfEE

Special thanks go to Bradford and District TEC, Strawberry Fields Training Centre and POPE in Bradford who kindly helped with the development and testing of qualitative interview guides.

PREVIOUS OCCUPATION OF LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED CLAIMANTS

Long Term Unemployed Claimants: Occupation by Age
Great Britain, January 2000

Occupation	Men aged 25-49	Men aged 50+	Females aged 25-49	Females aged 50+	All aged 25-49	All aged 50+
1. Corporate Managers/Administrators	2.0%	5.1%	2.1%	1.9%	2.0%	4.3%
2. Managers/Proprietors: Agriculture/Services	1.2%	1.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.7%
3. Science/Engineering Professionals	1.0%	1.8%	0.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.4%
4. Health Professionals	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
5. Teaching Professionals	0.7%	1.3%	1.7%	2.4%	0.9%	1.6%
6. Other Professional Occupations	0.6%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	1.0%
7. Science/Engineering Associate Professionals	1.3%	1.5%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	1.2%
8. Health Associate Professionals	0.1%	0.1%	0.7%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%
9. Other Associate Professional Occupations	3.8%	2.8%	5.5%	2.7%	4.0%	2.8%
10. Clerical Occupations	9.6%	9.2%	14.8%	17.1%	10.4%	11.0%
11. Secretarial Occupations	0.2%	0.2%	4.0%	6.1%	0.8%	1.5%
12. Skilled Construction Trades	6.0%	5.4%	0.3%	0.1%	5.0%	4.2%
13. Skilled Engineering Trades	2.8%	4.2%	0.2%	0.2%	2.4%	3.3%
14. Other Skilled Trades	8.2%	8.5%	2.6%	2.9%	7.3%	7.2%
15. Protective Service Occupations	1.4%	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	1.2%	0.9%
16. Personal Service Occupations	3.7%	2.9%	12.2%	9.8%	5.1%	4.5%
17. Buyers, Brokers/Sales Representatives	0.9%	1.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%
18. Other Sales Occupations	3.4%	1.9%	12.5%	11.9%	4.9%	4.2%
19. Industrial Plant/Machine Operators	4.8%	5.2%	4.6%	5.7%	4.8%	5.3%
20. Drivers/Mobile Machine Operators	7.3%	8.6%	0.9%	0.6%	6.3%	6.8%
21. Other Occupations: Agric/Forestry/Fishing	0.9%	1.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.9%	0.9%
22. Other Elementary Occupations	28.5%	26.1%	15.9%	21.5%	26.4%	25.1%
23. No previous/Unknown	11.7%	8.2%	17.3%	13.3%	12.6%	9.4%
TOTAL	254,028	76,927	50,174	23,122	304,202	100,049

Source: NOMIS

PROGRAMME CENTRE MODULES FOR OLDER WORKERS

JOBSEARCH MODULES FOR OLDER WORKERS

Leader Objectives

To deliver 2 modules aimed specifically at New Deal 50 plus participants, but which may also be used for older workers in general, if a need has been identified. The modules are used to address the particular problems and issues that older jobseekers encounter. They may be used as a stand alone package, or in conjunction with other modules e.g. interview techniques, CV etc.

The modules are designed to:

- Build confidence by exploring negative experiences and how these can be overcome.
- Start the process of changing negative views and preventing ageism.
- Develop participants' awareness of their own strengths and skills by examining their previous experience.
- Identify each jobseekers' own needs and goals.
- Research local employers and opportunities available.
- Carry out effective jobsearch activities.
- Overcome negative employer perceptions about older workers.

General

Research has shown that older workers feel particularly disadvantaged in the current labour market. Participants will need to be treated sensitively and with respect. The choice of Leader and his/her approach is also very important. Participants will need to feel reassured by the leader and feel that s/he empathises with the group. Participants are also known to respond better to a mature leader or one with a mature outlook. Past experience has shown that groups of between 8 and 15 work best for this client group, although group size will inevitably vary from location to location. If appropriate, leaders may wish to use these modules in conjunction with the **CV** and **Letters of application** (and possibly other) **modules**, where a need has been identified.

Leaders may find the following leaflet useful:

Too old, who says?

Available from DfEE publications orderline - 0845 602 2260.

Module 1

1. Introduction & domestics

A welcoming environment should be created and jobseekers will need to feel that they are being treated with courtesy. Many participants will be lacking in confidence and may be hesitant when they first attend. It may be helpful to meet and greet people on a one-to-one basis. It is important that the purpose of the modules and the benefits are fully explained at this initial stage and that participants are clear about their objectives and the aims of the course.

The Leader's role will be more of a facilitator. S/he will help guide people and allow them to plan their own way ahead. It may be helpful at this stage to hand out ring binders or folders so that they can keep their own notes or handouts.

2. Ageism and other barriers to work

Divide into two groups and using flip charts, direct groups to discuss and identify any barriers and problems that they have encountered or expect to encounter in searching for or entering work. Also discuss and note the general needs and concerns of the groups. Bring groups back together to discuss and compare. Solutions are best addressed at this point, but leaders may prefer to say that solutions will be identified and discussed in the later sessions.

Prompts for group discussion:

- ageism - what do they think employers expect, require;
- skills - are they outdated, still relevant, how can they be updated;
- confidence - any anxieties, perceived problems;
- qualifications/training;
- literacy/numeracy problems;
- health - and how this might affect employment;
- income - required/realistic levels, effect of pensions, benefits etc.;
- changes in the work place, e.g. information technology;
- changes in the job market and patterns of employment;
- length of time since the participants last worked.

3. Confidence Building

Participants engage in syndicate work with comments recorded on flipchart and general group discussion. Participants will need to assess all the positive qualities and attributes that they have and will be directed to concentrate on the wealth of experience and lifeskills that they have accumulated.

Leaders may wish to use the following prompts:

- learn from past experiences and look to the future;
- learn how to emphasise your experience and skills positively;
- keep your options open;
- be aware that you may have to look for new and sometimes daunting occupational areas (e.g. part-time working, self-employment, 'portfolio of jobs'), but you are perfectly capable of moving on; and
- Strengths of older workers - i.e. tend to: be more loyal; have good customer service skills; have less short-term absence; a stabilising effect on younger workers. Commitment, job satisfaction and involvement with work have been found to be higher among older employees. Older workers have a continuing ability to learn and apply knowledge pragmatically, and to support and develop younger/less experienced staff.

Links to other modules

Coping with setbacks and overcoming hurdles modules

Module 2

1. Personal skills/strengths and how to use them effectively.

By building on the previous confidence building session, encourage jobseekers to build up a personal profile by looking at their own areas of strength and weakness. Encourage participants to start to think of their personal qualities/attributes and transferable skills. In turn, this will help participants to make effective decisions about their future plans.

A careful introduction is needed by leaders. Participants should be encouraged to highlight the positive when drawing up lists of their own qualities. Leaders can then go on to show how these personal lists can be used in action planning and Jobsearch activities.

2. Motivations to work

This session should be used to encourage participants to think about why they wish to work and how this impacts on the type of work they could be looking for. Participants engage in syndicate work with comments recorded on flipchart and general group discussion. The group should be encouraged to be positive when listing motivating factors. Leaders can then go on to show how personal motivations can impact on the type of work sought e.g. a person with other incomes and a desire for the interest and stimulation afforded through work may consider part-time working.

Leaders may wish to use the following prompts:

- finances - 50 plus clients may be worse off now than when they were working and some are financially straitened. Other income rarely removes all financial incentive;
- interest and stimulation - this is commonly missed, especially by those constrained by poor health;

- social expectations - people in the age group expect to work until retirement; and
- retirement - 50 plus clients need to prepare financially for upcoming retirement.

3. The local labour market and what is available to me

This session should be used to introduce participants to the concept of labour market information and to encourage use of a wide range of jobsearch methods (including networking, shop windows, Jobcentre displays etc.).

Older workers with fewer job search skills (lower job search self-efficacy) report higher levels of depression. As a result they need to:

- become aware of the major local employers, types of industry and range of jobs in the locality. It may be helpful to allow participants to carry out their own research and in particular by allowing them to visit local libraries and civic information centres, where they can gain access to the information that is kept here about local businesses;
- understand the opportunities offered by an increasingly flexible labour market to organise their working lives in a way that is more in tune with their capacities (health, finance, leisure etc.). Therefore, part-time working, self-employment and building up a 'portfolio of jobs' all need to be considered;
- look at ways in which they can begin to break down employment barriers e.g. cold calling, by asking employers what difficulties they might perceive in taking on older workers; and
- utilising any links that the programme centre may have with Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and other Employer associations.

Links with other modules

Job Leads module, analysing vacancies module.

WORK BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS STATISTICS

Table 1: WBLA Referrals
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

Referred by	Age 25-49	Age 50+
ES	73%	76%
Provider	13%	11%
Assessor or other	14%	13%
Total	100%	100%
	89,400	18,900
of whom: eligibility code		
lone parents	6%	0.5%
Redundancies	3%	5%

Source: WBLA Trainee Database

Note:

Percentages have been rounded individually to the nearest whole number and so may not always total precisely 100%.

Table 2: Age of WBLA Starts
England and Wales, 1999 - 2000

Age	
25-49	82%
50-54	11%
55-59	6%
60-64	1%
65+	*
Total	100%
	108,300

Source: WBLA Trainee Database

Note:

* less than 1%

Table 3: Type of Training Provider
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

Type of Training Provider	Age 25 - 49	Age 50 plus
Training provider in business in its own right and not specifically for WBLA	32%	31%
Chamber of Commerce and/or Trade	5%	5%
Other private sector	37%	36%
Local Authority & other public sector	13%	13%
Further Education college	5%	5%
Voluntary organizations	8%	9%
Total	100%	100%
	89,400	18,000

Source: WBLA Trainee Database

Note:

Percentages have been rounded individually to the nearest whole number and so may not always total precisely 100%.

Table 6: Number of Occupations on Offer and Where at Least One Trainee Started

START TEC	1998-1999	1999-2000	Change
Wider range			
BIRMINGHAM	38	50	12
MERSEYSIDE	10	49	39
FOCUS CENTRAL LONDON	43	49	6
DEVON & CORNWALL	47	44	-3
SOLOTEC	48	40	-8
TYNESIDE	34	36	2
TEESSIDE	35	35	0
STAFFORDSHIRE	23	31	8
MANCHESTER	26	30	4
Wider range continued			
NORTH LONDON	28	29	1
NORFOLK & WAVENEY	13	25	12
SANDWELL	23	25	2
SUNDERLAND CITY	25	24	-1
LONDON EAST	27	24	-3
HUMBERSIDE	21	23	2
AZTEC	17	23	6
GREATER NOTTINGHAM	15	21	6
COUNTY DURHAM	23	21	-2
LEEDS	28	21	-7
SUSSEX	20	21	1
NORTH WEST LONDON	21	21	0
HAMPSHIRE	22	19	-3
Middle range			
BARNSLEY/DONCASTER	23	18	-5
BRADFORD & DISTRICT	16	18	2
ELTEC	17	18	1
LAWTEC	18	18	0
CALDERDALE & KIRKLEES	14	17	3
ST HELENS	14	17	3
BOLTON & BURY	15	17	2
METROTEC (WIGAN)	18	17	-1
LEICESTERSHIRE	21	16	-5
ROTHERHAM	20	15	-5
WEST LONDON	15	15	0
DUDLEY	14	14	0
HERTFORDSHIRE	9	14	5
KENT	24	14	-10
NORTH DERBYSHIRE	16	13	-3
SUFFOLK	16	13	-3
COVENTRY & WARWICK	14	13	-1
WALSALL	10	13	3
DORSET	13	13	0
LINCOLNSHIRE	13	12	-1
SHEFFIELD	18	12	-6
WAKEFIELD	13	12	-1
NORTH YORKSHIRE	12	12	0
CUMBRIA	17	12	-5
CEWTEC	21	12	-9

Training Older People

START TEC	1998-1999	1999-2000	Change
Narrower range			
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	14	10	-4
WESTEC	10	10	0
BEDFORDSHIRE	14	9	-5
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	9	9	0
NORTHUMBERLAND	7	9	2
HAWTEC (HEREFORD & WORCESTER)	9	9	0
WOLVERHAMPTON	10	9	-1
SOMERSET	10	9	-1
HEART OF ENGLAND	10	9	-1
THAMES VALLEY	7	9	2
NORTH NOTTINGHAM	18	8	-10
Narrower range continued			
NORTH & MID CHESHIRE	10	8	-2
ROCHDALE	7	8	1
SOUTH & EAST CHESHIRE	8	7	-1
OLDHAM	9	7	-2
SHROPSHIRE	11	7	-4
STOCKPORT & HIGH PEAK	9	6	-3
GLOUCESTER	11	6	-5
WILTSHIRE	8	6	-2
WIGHT TRAINING & ENTERPRISE	2	6	4
GREATER PETERBOROUGH	-	4	4
ESSEX	-	4	4
CAMBSTEC CENTRAL & SOUTH CAMBS	4	3	-1
MILTON KEYNES	5	3	-2
SURREY	6	3	-3
number of increases since the previous year 26			
number of decreases since the previous year 36			

Table 4: Training Occupation of Starts
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

Occupation of training	Age 25 - 49	Age 50 plus	All ages
Initial assessment	3%	4%	3%
Managers	6%	6%	6%
Professionals and associate professionals	8%	7%	8%
Clerical and secretarial	34%	43%	36%
Skilled trades	13%	10%	12%
Protective and personal services	8%	6%	8%
Sales occupations	6%	5%	6%
Industrial plant and machine operators, assemblers	14%	12%	14%
Drivers and mobile machine operators	11%	10%	11%
Elementary occupations	7%	7%	7%
All Occupational Training starts	100%	100%	100%
	56,200	11,100	67,300

Source: WBLA Trainee Database

Note:

Percentages have been rounded individually to the nearest whole number and so may not always total precisely 100%.

Table 5: Training Occupation of Starts on Basic Employability Training
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

Occupation of training	Age 25-49	Age 50+	All ages
Initial assessment	49%	49%	49%
Managers	2%	2%	2%
Professionals and associate professionals	1%	1%	1%
Clerical and secretarial	23%	24%	23%
Skilled trades	5%	4%	5%
Protective and personal services	3%	2%	3%
Sales occupations	3%	2%	3%
Industrial plant and machine operators, assemblers	4%	3%	4%
Drivers and mobile machine operators	3%	2%	3%
Elementary occupations	12%	13%	12%
All starts on basic employability	100% 33,200	100% 7,800	100% 41,000

Source: WBLA Trainee Database

Table 7: WBLA Leavers' Views of the Programme
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

	Age 25-49	Age 50+
Overall usefulness		
Very helpful	49%	53%
Fairly helpful	35%	32%
Not very helpful	10%	9%
Not at all helpful	6%	5%
Increase confidence		
Very helpful	38%	42%
Fairly helpful	40%	37%
Not very helpful	13%	12%
Not at all helpful	9%	9%
Improving skills or learning new skills		
Very helpful	48%	50%
Fairly helpful	35%	33%
Not very helpful	10%	10%
Not at all helpful	7%	7%
Get work experience		
Very helpful	27%	26%
Fairly helpful	29%	28%
Not very helpful	22%	21%
Not at all helpful	22%	25%
Look for work		
Very helpful	24%	24%
Fairly helpful	33%	31%
Not very helpful	22%	22%
Not at all helpful	21%	23%

Source: WBLA Trainee Database - follow up survey

Note:

Percentages have been rounded individually to the nearest whole number and so may not always total 100%.

Table 8: WBLA Leavers Gaining Qualifications
England and Wales, April 1999 - March 2000

	Age 25-49	Age 50 plus
Occupational training leavers		
gained full qualification	43%	42%
gained part qualification	5%	6%
awaiting results	4%	4%
no qualification awarded	47%	49%
Basic Employability leavers		
gained full qualification	35%	34%
gained part qualification	10%	12%
awaiting results	5%	6%
no qualification awarded	49%	48%

Source: WBLA Trainee Database - follow up survey

Note:

Percentages have been rounded individually to the nearest whole number and so may not always total precisely 100%.

Table 9: WBLA leavers finding work by age group
England and Wales, 1999 - 2000

	Age 25-49	Age 50+	All ages
Basic Employability	28%	23%	27%
Occupational Training	49%	44%	48%
All leavers	41%	36%	40%

Source: WBLA Trainee Database – follow up survey

Table 10: WBLA Leavers Finding Work by Age and Prior Duration of Unemployment
England and Wales, 1999 - 2000

Unemployment duration on entry to WBLA	Age 25-49	Age 50+	All ages
Less than 6 months	59%	55%	59%
6-12 months	44%	42%	44%
1-2 years	35%	30%	34%
2-3 years	30%	26%	29%
3 years and over	27%	19%	25%
All durations	41%	36%	40%

Source: WBLA Trainee Database – follow up survey

WBLA AIMS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Aim

To help adults without work move into sustained employment, including self-employment, through work based learning.

Key Objectives

- to help adults without work with poor employability skills move into sustained employment;
- to help long term unemployed people to gain the occupation skills needed to relieve local skills shortages and recruitment problems; and
- to enable long term unemployed people to make a success of self employment: through a locally determined combination of work based learning and other learning activity customised to trainee need including:
 - discrete standardised occupational training modules;
 - transitional support to help trainees capitalise on their training by finding and keeping jobs;
 - compacts brokered between employers with skills shortages and potential recruits who need training to reach recruitment standard;
 - employed status apprenticeship models using existing learning frameworks with credibility in their sectors, such as those for MAs; and
 - employed status involving training which is additional to that normally provided by the employer, leading to a qualifications of at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent standard training.

Programme Strands

The priority for TEC/CCTE WBLA is to help the most disadvantaged. For this reason in 1999-2000 it will be delivered through entry to:

- Basic Employability Training (designed to provide a seamless programme of high quality training for people who do not have the work disciplines, basic skills and work experience needed to enter, and sustain, employment. Individually tailored programmes not only addressed Basic Employability Needs but also provide any additional Occupational Training needed for sustained employment);
- Occupational Training (training for skills identified to be in demand in the local labour market, which enhances the job prospects of the individual); and
- Employed Status with Additional Training, including self-employment support.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for TEC work based training for adults a person must:

- be at least 25 years of age; and
- not be on another Government Funded Programme; and
- have been continuously unemployed for 26 weeks or more; or
- be unemployed and be a person with a disability (PWD) or need Entry Level Training (including English for Speakers of Other Languages); or
- be a qualifying ex-offender, ex-regular or lone parent; a returner to the labour market; or have recently become redundant in a large scale redundancy (and have since been continuously unemployed for a period not exceeding 26 weeks).

A person need not meet the above criteria if they are:

- aged 18 plus and need Special Local Training (SLT) for the severely disabled.
- aged 25 plus and eligible by referral from an Employment Zone, or the New Deals for 25 plus and for Lone Parents; or
- aged 18 plus, who have a disability and are unemployed and not claiming Jobseekers allowance.

Note for these purposes an unemployed person is a person who is:

- (i) claiming Jobseekers Allowance with the ES (or equivalent Department in Northern Ireland) and is available for work in accordance with Section 1 of the Jobseekers Act 1995;
- (ii) claiming Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Maternity Benefit, or in receipt of Income Support (excluding Qualifying Lone Parents);
- (iii) a non-employed dependant of a person who satisfies the criteria set out in (i) or (ii) above;
- (iv) a non-employed dependant of a person who is a trainee in TEC managed training for adults and who immediately prior to entry satisfied the criteria set out in (i) or (ii) above;
- (v) an Asylum Seeker in receipt of Income Support;
- (vi) for persons who indicate they have a health problem/disability (PWD) or have a need for Entry Level Training (including ESOL) and who are not registered as in (i) above but would otherwise be able to be registered, the date of authorisation of eligibility code on the form AT8 should be regarded as a deemed date of registration; or
- (vii) is not an overseas national subject to employment restrictions or a time limit on his stay in Great Britain (other than a Refugee or an Asylum Seeker).

Access Criteria

To join TEC work based training for adults a person must:

- need training to help them get a job (including self-employment). Their need must be established by initial assessment prior to, or on entry to, TEC work based training for adults; and
- have their eligibility confirmed by a Pre-Entry Eligibility Check (PEC) before the planned start date.

In addition, to undertake Basic Employability Training a person must be assessed by the TEC or its provider as having a need arising from at least two of the following barriers:

- an erratic employment record resulting from inappropriate behaviour;
- low self esteem/poor self presentation to the extent that it represents a significant barrier to entering or sustaining employment;
- low levels of basic skills, i.e. literacy or numeracy skills below Entry Level;
- no significant experience of employment;
- a continuous period of unemployment of two years or more, or have never worked;
- a learning disability;
- a history of health problems or disability substantially affecting their employment prospects;
- a history of offending; or
- a significant history of alcohol/drug/substance abuse.

INTERESTING PRACTICE

1. Leaflet “**It takes ages to be this good**” which advertises adult guidance services to older workers, and points out the benefits that mature employees can bring.
2. Tutors with particular empathy for older clients (often the tutor is an older person too).
3. Re-training and up-skilling programme for those recently or just about to be made redundant. This is for trainees of any age but many are approaching or over fifty.

The training is less than 16 hours *per week*, so trainees can still receive benefit payments.

Wherever possible a full NVQ or units of an NVQ are taken. Training is provided by FE colleges mainly and a few private providers. Currently, 55 trainees are on IT training and 108 on the other courses. Most of the training is completed in 4 months, the average time being 12 weeks. The project is funded by the TEC, ESF Objective 4, Local Authority, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (Trade Union) acting in partnership.

Success rates are high: over three-quarters of trainees obtain employment and almost 100% obtain an NVQ or NVQ units. It is thought that the high success rate is because the trainees begin the training either while under the threat of redundancy or immediately following loss of employment. Their behaviour patterns are therefore still those of an employed person. Drop out rates are also low.

4. Basic employability training.

The assessment procedures for Basic Employability applicants channel them into employer placements or further basic training. Almost all trainees go on an employer placement. The over 50s often have set coping strategies for dealing with their own inability and can be difficult and slow to change but the training provider has developed ways to deal with this. The main tutor for the Basic Employability trainees is particularly good at building a rapport with clients, motivating and helping them. He also does the initial interviewing and has found that continuing their training with the same person helps the client.

5. ESF funded CLAIT programme for people aged over 50.

This has good success rates: so far it achieved 20 jobs from 60 participants but not all of these were seeking work. It is popular locally, and there is a waiting list for this course. It recruits via local adverts, word of mouth, Jobcentre and local adult guidance providers. The provider felt this level of IT training was a particular need for the over 50 age group - many lacked skills and were nervous of IT. Clients liked being in their own age group and had not wanted to be in a wider age group for fear of not being able to keep up with youngsters.

6. Increasing number of people starting training through:
 - dedicated sales and marketing team;
 - training information advisor in Jobcentre paid for by the TEC, (who also 'trains' ES staff in what is available); or
 - weekly visit by training provider to the Jobcentre to give personal advice to potential trainees and assess suitability.
7. TEC offers employers free training to up-skill an existing member of staff if they take on a Modern Apprentice. Often this is an older worker.
8. POPE (People of Previous Experience) - Bradford

An integrated recruitment, guidance and counselling service for unemployed people aged 40 plus or part of a Large Scale Redundancy. The service has particularly strong links in placing people with small and medium sized enterprises. It has been running since 1993. It runs a motivational training course in work search which aims to restore confidence and self-esteem; to identify transferable skills; and encourage people to think more widely about job opportunities, self-employment and further education or training.

The POPE project workers commented that one of the crucial ways to help older people is that they need to be given some sense of control and understand that they do have choices to make, ownership and their own plans for their future. This helps them deal with the difficult life changes of unemployment and redundancy. Also, older workers who become unemployed after working for many years in one company, can lack skills in self-presentation at interview and in interpreting job adverts. It was a long time since they last looked for a job. POPE has provided help in learning these skills.

The project is due to close in late March 2001.

9. ADAPT AGE aims to increase the competitive chances of the older at risk worker to retain their employment and/or re-skill or up-skill to find alternative employment or self-employment. It is open to people aged over 40 who have been unemployed for one year or more. It provides guidance, counselling and a motivational programme. The provider uses NLP (neuro linguistic programming). Clients complete self-assessment on arrival, and then evaluate themselves on a daily and then weekly basis to see the differences achieved. A networking facility, free membership of Third Age and job search facilities are available. Local employers are encouraged to register their vacancies with this provider, particularly for older workers. If clients are aged 50 plus and have a disability they can register with the Work Clinic who actively seeks work on their behalf.

It is run by a training provider who also offers WBLA and runs a scheme to help people start their own businesses in sheltered premises.

The project has developed a computerised job diagnostic survey for use by employers which analyses the job rather than the person. This looks at qualities needed and held, and motivational potential. So far it has found that mature workers have higher motivational potential than younger ones. This fits well with Investors in People and is being considered for wider use within the sponsoring local authority.

ADAPT AGE evolved out of a previous project, FENIX, focusing on issues confronting mature people and a similar project elsewhere in the region. It has been funded through ESF, SRB, Local Authority and, in the past, TEC funding.

10. Programme centre - an example of generally good provision that also linked effectively to local community education provision.

There is an informal atmosphere. Induction is one-to one and the full range of modules are offered through a mixture of group and individual tutor support. Clients liked the approach (better than Jobclub); the staff were very helpful and their personal involvement and interest was praised and the standard of training, support and resources were considered good. Computers were available to use, including Internet access and one attendee had found a job through the Internet recently. The centre staff also 'chase' potential employers and build up contacts. The centre is in the same building as the Community Education Centre and all their courses e.g. Internet course, RSA Word processing, are available free to Programme Centre clients and are popular.

11. Separating mandatory and voluntary referrals at Programme Centre induction.

Most clients aged over 50 in the area are voluntary referrals. This avoids exposing them to disruptive behaviour of some mandatory clients and enables staff to focus more on their individual needs. Voluntary clients are seen individually for induction and to decide which modules they will take. The centre had found that older clients were reluctant to explore their strengths and weaknesses in a group (i.e. in 'public').

12. Programme centre which is promoting the over 50s to local employers as part of marketing itself to employers as a source of recruits. Employers are contacted by phone or visited and asked about their firm, how they recruit and their attitudes to speculative applications. Clients, of any age, with suitable skills are suggested, and the employer is encouraged to approach the centre in future with vacancies and to consider the benefits of older workers in general.

13. Programme Centre where groups of clients work together to do projects involving research e.g. at the local library. These are popular.

14. Job Friends - volunteers working with 'Pride at Work' help unemployed people look for vacancies, write CVs and fill in application forms, prepare for interviews, and provide relevant information. They work with the person on a one-to-one basis, spend time to listen and to understand their needs and if needed, give one-to-one support in improving written English skills. The service is free and confidential.

15. A specialist training provider working with people with long term health problems or disabilities to participate in appropriate training and to match their capability with jobs. Some of these are aged over 50. It seeks to develop stepping stones for people to begin to access work, rather than full time permanent jobs. Sympathetic, smaller employers are most supportive and many links have been established. The organisation also provides complementary help to employers who offer work to these carefully matched clients and who actively encourage them to be successful in their chosen careers. It works with employers in support of Disability Discrimination legislation and often persuades these employers to offer placement opportunities by promoting clients and developing a support network.

RSD PUBLICATIONS

QPID Study Report Series

Study No.	Title	Published	Prolog Product Code
69	Funding Sources for Projects for Disaffected Young People	February 1998	QPID69
70	Work Based Assessment : National Vocational Qualifications and Youth Programmes	December 1998	QPID70
71	Modern Apprenticeships and Gender Stereotyping	March 1999	QPID71
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74	Modern Apprenticeships in Licensed Premises	April 1999	QPID74
76	Tackling Early Leaving from Youth Programmes	September 1999	QPID76
77	Entry to Work Based Training for Adults	September 1999	QPID77
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88	Investors in People Assessment and Recognition Units.....	October 2000	QPID88
89	Delivery of Key Skills in Modern Apprenticeships.....	November 2000	QPID89
90	TEC/CCTEs, Careers Services and Work-based Training for Young People	February 2001	QPID90

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