

## New Deal for Disabled People: Survey of Registrants - report of Cohort 3

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### Key findings

The New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) was implemented nationally in July 2001. Its evaluation includes a Survey of Registrants, which aims to obtain information on NDDP participant characteristics, their experiences of, and views on, the programme. The research reported here is of the survey of the third cohort of programme participants or registrants.

The survey entailed face-to-face Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing with people who were registered with NDDP between August and October 2004, and fieldwork was conducted between February and May 2005. Interviews were achieved with 2,531 respondents.

The sample was stratified by whether or not registrants were within Pathways to Work pilot areas and whether they had registered with new or existing Job Brokers.

### New Deal for Disabled People

NDDP is the major employment programme available to people claiming incapacity-related benefits. It is a voluntary programme that provides a national network of Job Brokers to help people with health conditions and disabilities move into sustained employment.

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### Participants' characteristics

In general, the profile of this third cohort of registrants is similar to earlier cohorts.

Three-fifths of registrants were male (61 per cent) and just over one-quarter were aged 50 or over (28 per cent). Registrants had a wide range of qualifications. One-fifth had no qualifications (21 per cent) and one-third had relatively low levels of qualifications (34 per cent qualified at S/NVQ Levels 1 or 2), but a sizeable minority were qualified to a high level (22 per cent to S/NVQ Levels 4 or 5).

The majority of main disabilities or health conditions reported by respondents fell into three categories – musculo-skeletal (38 per cent), mental health (31 per cent) and chronic, systematic or progressive (23 per cent). In a self-assessment of the state of their general health, three-quarters of registrants perceived their health to be fair, good or very good (76 per cent).

Over the two years leading up to registration there was a steady fall in the proportion of registrants in paid work; 40 per cent were working two years before registration, falling to 13 per cent at the point of registration. Correspondingly, there was a rise in the proportion of registrants who said they were mainly occupied with their health condition (rising from 21 to 28 per cent

over the period). These broad trends, however, mask changes at the individual level. For example, 49 per cent of registrants were in paid work at some point over the two years prior to registration, but only six per cent were in paid work for the full two-year period. Forty per cent of registrants had a period where their health had been their main focus.

In general, registrants in Pathways to Work areas appeared to be closer to the labour market than those outside the pilot areas. Higher proportions of those in Pathways to Work areas had worked in the six months prior to registration and had worked for longer periods in the two years up to registration. However, registrants living in Pathways to Work areas were more likely to have had no qualifications and less likely to have academic qualifications in particular.

## Registration process

Registrants could first hear about NDDP or Job Brokers in a number of different ways, although the most common source was via Jobcentre Plus (44 per cent).

The most cited reason for registering with NDDP was to obtain help to move into work (59 per cent). The programme being recommended was important to one-fifth of registrants (21 per cent).

## Service provision

Following registration most people (92 per cent) had further contacts with their Job Broker in order to discuss progress in getting a job (45 per cent), to help look for work (37 per cent) and to have a regular follow-up meeting (33 per cent).

The registrants' discussions with Job Brokers covered:

- Work and/or training-related issues (93 per cent).
- Job-seeking strategies (59 per cent).
- Disability and health-related issues in relation to finding employment (70 per cent).
- Financial issues (71 per cent).
- Provision of in-work support (54 per cent).

One-quarter of all registrants had been in contact with an organisation other than the Job Broker for which they were sampled (27 per cent). These registrants tended to contact Jobcentre Plus (37 per cent) and recruitment agencies (22 per cent), because they thought these organisations would provide another way of helping them to find work (29 per cent), and/or they believed the organisation would be useful to them (27 per cent).

## Registrants' assessment of Job Broker and Jobcentre Plus services

In general, most registrants found their discussions with Job Brokers and Jobcentre Plus (very) helpful.

There was an association between the overall assessment of usefulness of the service and whether the respondent had found (new) paid work after registering with the Job Broker. Sixty per cent of those who had found work said their Job Broker had been very helpful compared with 40 per cent of those who had not.

## Registrants' work expectations, and barriers and bridges to work

Around six months after registration 37 per cent of registrants were in paid work and a further 24 per cent were actively looking for work and expected to be back in work within six months, hence a total of 61 per cent of registrants were actively engaged with the labour market. A further 18 per cent of registrants expected to be in work within a year, but seven per cent said they did not expect to move into work at any stage.

Registrants who were not in employment when they were interviewed six months after registration were asked to identify (from lists) their barriers and bridges to work. The barriers and bridges they identified are unchanged from earlier surveys of registrants. The factor most commonly cited as a barrier to finding work was the lack of suitable job opportunities in the local

area (56 per cent), then the registrants' disability or health condition (47 per cent) and difficulties working regularly (45 per cent).

The most commonly cited factor that could act as a bridge to work for registrants was knowing they could return to benefits if they needed to - an issue for which policy is already in place. The next most cited bridge to work was being able to decide how many hours would be worked (59 per cent).

## Intermediate outcomes - steps to employment

Two-thirds of all registrants said they had increased their efforts to move into work since they registered (68 per cent). Almost one-third (31 per cent) of these registrants claimed they had done so as result of contacting their Job Broker. Indeed, a half of registrants had looked for work since they registered with a Job Broker (52 per cent).

Just over two-thirds of registrants said they had applied for at least one job (68 per cent), and of these applicants three-quarters (76 per cent) had at least one interview and almost three-fifths (58 per cent) were offered a job. Less than one-quarter of registrants who had had interviews turned down any job offers they subsequently received (23 per cent).

The proportion of registrants who were economically active increased from 33 per cent at registration to 57 per cent six months later. Underpinning this is a dramatic increase in the percentage in work - from 14 per cent to 41 per cent - and a slight fall in the proportion looking for work - 19 per cent at registration and 16 per cent at the time of the survey. This rise in the percentage in work is matched by a fall in the proportion who were economically inactive, which decreased from 68 per cent at registration to 43 per cent six months later.

## Employment outcomes

Overall, 31 per cent of registrants had entered paid work about six months after registration. Statistical modelling shows that those more likely

to have entered work were:

- women;
- those holding a full driving licence and with access to a vehicle;
- those who reported having good health status or a health condition that had no, or little, impact on everyday activities;
- those registered with existing (as opposed to new) Job Brokers;
- those living in Pathways to Work areas (rather than in non-Pathways to Work areas);
- those who made use of Jobcentre Plus and recruitment agencies to find employment **before** registration;
- those making postal contact with their Job Broker; and
- those having discussions with their Job Broker on how to present themselves at a job interview, how to complete benefit and Tax Credit forms, how to approach their health condition with (potential) employers or about the provision of a job coach.

The statistical modelling highlights associations between these variables and entering employment, however, the underlying direction of causality needs to be carefully considered in each case.

In addition, having a mental health condition, having difficulties with basic skills, looking at job advertisements in papers **after** registration, and discussing with a Job Broker doing voluntary work, what work a registrant might do, or how their health may limit work, were associated with a reduced chance of entering work.

Registrants appear to have entered a post-registration job fairly quickly. Seventy per cent did so within three months of registration - with 18 per cent entering paid work within one week and 41 per cent within one month of registration. However, these durations do not allow for any pre-registration time that Job Brokers may have spent working with registrants prior to their actual registration, and consequently may underestimate the **total** time taken to enter employment.

The majority of registrants entered work as employees (84 per cent) and a small proportion entered self-employment (eight per cent) or Permitted Work (eight per cent). Average hourly earnings for employees (£6.09) and the self-employed (£7.51) were above the National Minimum Wage, which at the time of the survey fieldwork was £4.85 per hour for an adult.

It is also possible to examine exits from paid work, and 16 per cent of registrants who entered work of at least eight hours per week had left their first post-registration jobs by the time of the survey. The factors associated with an increased risk of leaving work include having poor health status, having a mental health condition, having problems with employers or work colleagues, and having low job satisfaction. The most commonly cited reason for leaving work was giving up work for health reasons (35 per cent), followed by temporary work/contract/Permitted Work coming to an end (25 per cent).

## Partners of NDDP registrants

Forty-four per cent of registrants had a partner, and of these partners 64 per cent had been in paid work since the date of registration. Partners were more likely to be female and to have a qualification, but less likely to have a disability or health condition than registrants (45 per cent compared to 97 per cent). Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of partners had worked since the time of registration.

Statistical modelling showed that having a partner or a partner that worked were **not** significant independent factors associated with the movement of registrants into work. However, having a partner with a positive attitude towards work was associated with registrants' movement into paid work. It is not clear whether the partners' positive attitudes assisted the registrants' movement into work or were a product of it.

## Conclusions

The research team conclude that the higher proportion of job entries for Pathways to Work areas compared to elsewhere might be attributable to the Incapacity Benefit reforms implemented in the pilot areas. The lower

proportion of registrants of new Job Brokers entering paid work reflects an 'implementation lag', that is, it simply takes time for new providers to achieve job entry rates comparable to existing providers.

The full report of these research findings is published for the Department for Work and Pensions by Corporate Document Services (ISBN 1 84712 051 2. Research Report 369. July 2006).

It is available from Paul Noakes at the address below.

You can also download this report free from: [www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp)

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