Worklessness Customer Insight

This listing of improvement resources concentrates in particular on recent contributions to knowledge, evidence and techniques relating to the needs and experiences of customers of worklessness services, including those in specific disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Customer insight: segmentation work - DWP & DfE

DWP (2010) **Analysis of the DWP working age customer base**
http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/wacb/wacb_nov2010.pdf
Exercise to identify working-age customer segments to inform a range of business needs in strategy and operations. Sets out 10 segments based on shared characteristics such as length of time on benefits, demographics and situation, using DWP administrative data supplemented by Mosaic socio-demographic profiling. Segments defined: Young jobseekers; Recession-hit middle class; New to sickness benefits; In-and-out of work - better off; In-and-out of work - poor; Lone parents; Working class, 'retired' onto sickness benefits; Empty nesters supported by spouse; Middle aged, middle class, long term sick; and Long term benefit dependent.

DWP (2011) **Analysis of the DWP working age customer base by Community Budget Local Authority in London**
http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/wacb/wacb_apr2011.pdf
This analysis is intended to enrich partner understanding of the characteristics of customers, using the DWP customer segmentation above, with a view, eg, to mapping services against types and location of customers, informing prioritisation and service planning, and developing staff skills to match customer needs.

DWP (2011) **Beliefs about work: an attitudinal segmentation of out-of-work people in Great Britain**
http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/corporate-publications/comms-ci-research.shtml
Research to enable DWP to understand and communicate with key out-of-work customer better focusing the segmentation more towards attitudes, beliefs and behaviour towards work – and the scope to influence these. Categories identified: 'Determined seekers'; 'Thwarted seekers'; 'Balanced seekers'; 'Status quo seekers'; 'Constrained by circumstance'; 'Defeated by circumstance'; 'Benefits are better'; and 'Home focused'.

DfE (2011) **Segmentation of parents and carers**
http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DFE-00008-2011
Similarly inspired work looking at parents and carers. Segments identified: Comfortable and confident; Committed but discontented; Struggling through; Supportive but frustrated; Relaxed and caring; Stepping back; Separate lives; Family focused; and Content and self-fulfilled.

Customers on DWP programmes

ESA and Pathways to Work customers

DWP (2008) **Pathways to Work: the experiences of existing customers**: Findings from a survey of existing incapacity benefits customers in the first seven pilot areas
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_527.asp
Early research into Pathways customers, focusing on IB claimants on the benefit for between one and three years. Describes the customer profile, their experiences of involvement with Pathways and their work and other outcomes. Also provides analysis according to different age groups and for customers with mental health conditions. This was later complemented by **Pathways to Work: the experiences of longer term existing customers** (2009)
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_586.asp.This involved a large scale, face-to-face survey of customers longer on the benefit (around four to seven years).

DWP (2009) **A qualitative study of the customer views and experiences of the Condition Management Programme in Jobcentre Plus Pathways to Work**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_582.asp
Findings from qualitative research exploring the views and experiences of participants on the Condition Management Programme (CMP), which helps IB customers better understand and manage their health condition with a view to them returning to work at some point in the future. The research focused on their reasons for taking up CMP, or not; their experience of CMP provision; their views on the impacts of CMP on their health management, their confidence and progress towards work; their perceptions of gaps in provision and suggestions for improvements

DWP (2009) **People with mental health conditions and Pathways to Work**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_593.asp
Findings from qualitative research to explore how Jobcentre Plus Pathways to Work may better meet the needs of diverse mental health clients. Focused on the key areas of JCP and non-JCP staff perceptions and experiences of working with these clients; clients' attitudes towards and beliefs about work; their experiences and perceptions of Work Focused Interviews, and of referrals to other services, and issues in entering and sustaining paid work.

DWP (2010) **WORKSTEP customer survey**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_622.asp
Findings from piece of research into customer experience and a baseline of the WORKSTEP customers. (WORKSTEP was a broad range of programmes and schemes to help disabled people find and retain work, through supported work placements with mainstream employers and in businesses established to employ disabled people. WORKSTEP was replaced by Work Choice in October 2010.)

DWP (2010) **Employment and Support Allowance: Early implementation experiences of customers and staff**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_631.asp
Findings from an early study of the implementation of ESA, involving customers and a range of staff from JCP and Pathways Providers. Customers interviews covered a range of topics including their ESA experience, their health condition, and the outcome of their ESA claim. See also DWP (2011) **Employment and Support Allowance: Findings from a follow-up survey with customers** http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_745.asp

DWP (2010) **Employment and Support Allowance: Customer and staff experiences of the face-to-face Work Capability Assessment and Work-Focused Health-Related Assessment** http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_719.asp
Presents findings from qualitative research on the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and Work-Focused Health-Related Assessment (WFHRA) exploring customer and staff experiences.

DWP (2011) **Provider-led Pathways to Work: the experiences of new and repeat customers in phase one areas**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_723.asp
Describes the pattern of customers' engagement with the programme, their experiences and assessments of the process and services and their work and health outcomes in the medium term. Highlights the importance of strong referrals and clarity of communication, and greater use by providers of information previously gathered by JCP staff on customers' situations. Also points to the need to give greater priority to interventions to help customers manage their health conditions.

DWP (2011) **Trial incapacity benefits reassessment: customer and staff views and experiences** http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_741.asp
Presents the findings of qualitative research into trials for incapacity benefits reassessment, which began in October 2010. Looks at customers' views and experiences of reassessment and whether customers felt adequately supported during this process

Referral practices & experience of front-line services

DWP (2009) **Pathways to Work from incapacity benefits: A review of research findings on referral practices and liaison with service providers**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/wp_abstracts/wpa_057.asp
Review of research findings on referrals and working relationships between JCP and other organisations helping people with health problems and disabilities. Drew on previous research for Pathways to Work, and other published reports on a range of disability employment services.

DWP (2009) **Pathways to Work from incapacity benefits: A study of referral practices and liaison between Jobcentre Plus advisers and service providers**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_555.asp
Findings from qualitative research to explore referral practices and liaison amongst JCP staff and providers involved in helping incapacity benefits recipients move towards, and into, paid employment. Focused on the knowledge of external (and internal) services Incapacity Benefit Personal Advisers (IBPAs) and Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) on other services; influences on their referral decisions and practices; differences and overlaps in the roles of IBPAs and DEAs; working relationships between JCP staff and external providers; and the understanding and practice of the 'case management' of Pathways clients.

Citizens Advice (2010) **Fair Welfare - A report on 'back-to-work' support based on the results of a client survey** http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/pdf-sp-fw-report.pdf
Survey of Citizens Advice clients which highlighted dissatisfaction with support provided by JCP and welfare-to-work programmes, including a lack of tailored support offered which was thought to limit the effectiveness of interviews and courses. A need for improved expertise of personal advisers, particularly in relation to disability and sickness issues was also identified.

Life circumstances & events: national research

Consumer Focus (2009) **At the centre: Finding the Plus for unemployed people during the recession**
http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/assets/1/files/2009/06/Atthecentrefor-web1.pdf
Research by the national statutory body for consumers to determine how effectively customers are being served by JCP, in particular those recently unemployed. Found that, while many saw JCP as their first port of call, they tended to find it difficult to access the wider set of services they need in their new circumstances – with Personal Advisers seen more as gatekeepers than gateways. Furthermore, the evidence pointed to those least informed obtaining the worst service, and posed serious questions about consistency in applying customer service standards. The report recognises proposals to develop the role of JCP Advisors, which should help address such issues.
http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/assets/1/files/2009/06/Annex-3-Ipsos-MORI-research-report.pdf

CRESR (2010) **Women on Incapacity Benefits**
http://www.shu.ac.uk/_assets/pdf/cresr-woib-report-2010.pdf
Survey and in-depth interviews with claimants and staff in JCP and partner organisations. Found little difference between the indicators the for men and women on IB, and little evidence of cultural acceptance of being 'on the sick'. Also identified changes in practice whereby GPs and benefit officers now encourage people to remain in or move towards employment whenever possible. In practice, most women on IB appear to be both 'sick' and unemployed'. Once out-of-work on incapacity benefits, however, their self-image can shift from being a 'worker' to being 'sick'. Extended periods on IB also appear to be associated with accumulating or worsening health problems. Likewise, rather than being either 'rational' or 'dependent' in claiming incapacity benefits, most could be better described as 'risk

averse'. To a woman who is risk-averse, 'dependency' is a rational choice because entering employment risks their health and financial stability should a job not work out.

DWP (2011) **Developing a clearer understanding of the Carer's Allowance claimant group** http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_739.asp
Research exploring the situations people on Carer's Allowance (CA), highlighting a wide range of demanding caring roles, often poor health, the challenges they face in managing their caring responsibilities, and their difficulties in combining their caring with paid work. Draws particular attention to the service and support needs of CA customers, their aspirations relating to paid employment, and how the design of CA interact with carers' other benefits and with other services and support carers may receive.

DWP (2011) **Well enough to work: Customer transitions**
http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/customer-insight-well-enough-to-work.pdf
This research sought to identify core issues being faced by customers who had recently, or were in the process of, moving from Incapacity Benefit (IB) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or into work. It identified scope for improvements, in minimising the need to repeat information, the address financial concerns caused by gaps in payments, and improve communications within DWP and with customers.

DWP (2008) **Work and well-being over time: lone mothers and their children**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_536.asp
Findings from the third wave of a qualitative longitudinal study (which started in 2003), following a sample of lone mothers who elected to move into employment supported by tax credits following a period of unemployment in receipt of Income Support (or in a few cases Jobseeker's Allowance). Examines employment sustainability, exploring the factors that influence how the mothers and children have experienced employment over time and how they have managed the everyday challenges of combining work and care.

DWP (2009) **Reporting changes in circumstances: factors affecting the behaviours of benefit claimants** http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_544.asp
Investigated the levels of awareness and motivations of people in receipt of the benefits, Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; Council Tax Benefit and Pension Credit, and attempted to identify the factors that lead some claimants to declare changes of circumstances promptly and others to delay or not to report the change at all. Purpose: to inform DWP's approach to tackling fraud and error.

DfE (2010) **Families Experiencing Multiple Disadvantage: Their use of and views on childcare provision**
http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-RR191&
Research using data from the 2008 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents to explore the experience of multiple problems among parents and the relationship between multiple disadvantage and childcare, using a specially devised index of multiple disadvantage to

explore: childcare use, parents' views on local childcare provision, and how childcare and other issues influence maternal employment decisions.

DWP (2010) **Problem drug users' experiences of employment and the benefit system**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep640.pdf
Research into issues surrounding employment and benefit uptake by individuals who use illicit drugs, in particular heroin and crack cocaine. Highlights barriers to claiming benefit included lack of knowledge and advice, difficulties filling in forms and attending appointments, and feelings that drug users are stigmatised by Jobcentre Plus staff. Barriers to employment included lack of self-confidence, mental and physical health problems, a criminal record, lack of skills and qualifications, ongoing drug use, treatment programmes and employer discrimination. Parallel research:
DWP (2010) **Alcohol misusers' experiences of employment and the benefit system**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_718.asp

DWP (2011) **Families and work: Revisiting barriers to employment**
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_729.asp
Study exploring whether incentives were helping parents to overcome the barriers known to impede their engagement in the formal labour market. The research focused on two main tasks, re-analysing interview data from a previous study in 2008 which focused on the interaction between parenthood and work, and a series of supplementary interviews. Policy implications were identified in relation to: full-time parenting and decisions about returning to work; job search and important considerations for parents; easing the financial transition to work; and in-work experiences and demands.

Commission for Rural Communities (2008) **Major Life Events: job loss**
http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/projects/majorlifeevents/overview
Part of a research programme into events that define and shape the lives of rural residents, how they see the world and their future prospects, and looking at their experiences of public services. The aim was to understand more about challenges in rural service delivery and inform CRC's work in stimulating and informing better service provision for people living in rural areas. Background research (2008) also included *Service needs and delivery following job loss: evidence based review*
http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/publications/serviceneedsanddeliveryfollowingjoblossevidencedbasedreview
See also Commission for Rural Communities (2010) **Losing your job in Rural England: summary report** http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/2010/11/30/losing-your-job/

Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) **Childcare: a review of what parents want**
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/here-for-business/working-better/
Research to identify parents' preferences for childcare and assess the impact of childcare on outcomes. Highlights considerable childcare gaps, eg, for disabled children, older children, out-of-school and holiday provision and childcare for parents working atypical hours. Other

outstanding issues include needs to improve quality, increase affordability, and respond to parents' preferred working patterns.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2009) **Work and worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods** (report & film)
http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/work-worklessness-deprived-neighbourhoods
Research testing policy assumptions about work and worklessness against the personal experiences of residents living in deprived neighbourhoods. Draws on interviews with residents in deprived neighbourhoods in exploring four themes: how workless residents perceive the availability of work in a recession; their experiences of work and how this compares with official claims about the benefits of work; how workless parents feel about returning to work; and the potential for training and education to help workless people enter the labour market or, once in work, secure a better job.

Examples of local customer insight research

Kent County Council (2009) **Just coping: A new perspective on low income families**
http://socialinnovation.typepad.com/silk/2009/10/just-coping.html Research to develop a richer understanding of families 'on the edge', involving in-depth qualitative research, asking what they wanted and needed, and observing their everyday lives over a number of days.

Lewisham Council (2010) **Researching worklessness in Lewisham**
Research for the Lewisham Total Place project using ethnographic research into the experiences of workless people, with individual case studies, a short film, and a case study on the research (produced for LGID Customer Led Transformation Programme) – see http://www.lewishamstrategicpartnership.org.uk/totalplace.asp The research used in-depth interviews along with visual and participatory tools such as 'life maps' and geographical location exercises, and sought the perspectives of different groups. It highlighted the importance of tailored services, interest in volunteering opportunities and avoidance of misplaced support such as customer being sent on courses repetitively or otherwise inappropriate to their personal circumstances. The research has led to piloting of individual budgets for tackling barriers to work and exploring a community-based employability model, which features as part of their DWP Co-Design pilot. This model provides customers with a greater degree of ownership of the support they receive, using the budget (with the support of a case worker) to purchase goods or services which will tackle their own personal barriers to employment.

Nottinghamshire Customer Services Group (2010) **'Losing Employment' Life Event Project** www.esd.org.uk/esdtoolkit/Documents.ashx?doc=3379&agency=573
This made use of Aperia's Circles of Need methodology in seeking to improve understanding of the needs and aspirations of newly unemployed people, capture feedback from their experiences as service users, and identify opportunities for improving services and delivering efficiencies. Highlighted common frustrations, weaknesses in signposting and referrals, inadequacies of local authority websites, and the need for a partnership-based

database of relevant services and a move towards a 'tell us once' principle in applying for various services and forms of assistance. The research led to a further project, also funded by East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, to develop a 'Common Approach to an Integrated First Point of Contact for the County' relating to a range of life events backed by appropriate customer standards and ICT infrastructure.

Young Foundation (2010) **Signing on: Experiences of worklessness in Birmingham** http://www.youngfoundation.org/publications/reports/signing-experiences-worklessness-birmingham-january-2011 Birmingham City Council with LGID commissioned the Young Foundation to explore experiences of worklessness in Birmingham – a project combining ethnography and one-to-one interviews to "build a rich picture of peoples' lives that gives an insight into the lived experience and complexities of worklessness". Highlights needs to simplify pathways and focus services more on families, not just individuals, recognising the importance of social support structures.

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This is one of a series of resource briefings produced as part of Local Government Improvement and Development's contribution to the DWP Worklessness Co-Design pilots. Further briefings are available at http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=23548170 and the report on the DWP Co-Design Pilots at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/policy-publications/worklessness-codesign.shtml

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