
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Andrew Dilnot CBE

Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9DA

3 May 2013

Dear Secretary of State

STATISTICS AUTHORITY REPORT ON STATISTICS RELATING TO DWP WORK PROGRAMME AND PRE-WORK PROGRAMME

I wrote to you on 1 November 2012 about the Statistics Authority's interim report on the development of official statistics relating to the Work Programme.

I said in that letter that both the development of the statistics themselves, and the views of the Authority on their adequacy and coherence, should be seen as work in progress and that they may be overtaken by the release of further statistical outputs. We have now had the opportunity to review the first statistical release on outcomes from the Work Programme issued on 27 November 2012 and have updated the earlier report to take account of this.

You will note from the main findings section of the report that we see considerable scope for further development of the official statistics, in terms of the range of the statistics published, their public presentation, their coherence and their compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

In preparing this report we have had regard to the observations in the report by the Public Accounts Committee published on 13 February on Work Programme Outcome Statistics and in the related report by the National Audit Office published in December 2012. The PAC report comments that "the information published by the Department was unclear, and Parliament, the public, and the media were left confused as to the relevance and meaning of the information that did enter the public domain" and "in publishing its data the department did not make clear what level of performance it had expected."

Whilst both the PAC report and the related National Audit Office report focus on the fact that 3.6% of people referred to the Work Programme between June 2011 and July 2012 achieved sustained employment (normally of six months) by July 2012, the Statistics Authority does not regard that as the most relevant measure to use - since many of the individuals would not have been in the scheme long enough to achieve six months sustained employment by July 2012.

Our conclusion is that the more relevant figure is that based on the June 2011 cohort on its own – namely that 8.6% of those referred to the Work Programme in June 2011 were in sustained employment of at least six months (or three months if hard to place) at some point during the 12 months following referral. That figure can of course now be updated for each month from June 2011 to give a monthly series. The existence of such different measures was the root of some concern at the hearing of the Public Accounts Committee on 17 December 2012 but there are good arithmetic reasons why one is a lot higher than the other and it is up to the authors of the Department's statistical releases to explain these points clearly and fully.

Whilst this is not directly a matter for the Statistics Authority, it might be helpful for users of the statistics if DWP provided contextual information to support the interpretation of this percentage of each cohort achieving sustained employment. This contextual information could take the form of, for example, DWP's prior expectations of the percentage achieving sustained employment, or information about target levels for providers, or about the performance other similar programmes.

Annex 3 to the Authority's report notes that many of the leading news media stated the relevant figure as either 3.5% or 2.3%. There can be no sharper illustration of the need to explain more fully and clearly the key figures.

We do recognise that the statistics on the Work Programme are relatively complex and unfamiliar to commentators, particularly at this early stage in their development. I hope that the Statistics Authority will be able to offer some further assistance. I have asked my colleagues to explore with DWP statisticians what further advice and support would be helpful.

I am copying this letter to Dame Anne Begg MP, Chair of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, to Rt. Hon Margaret Hodge MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and to Bernard Jenkin MP, Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Dilnot', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Dilnot CBE

Monitoring Review

Monitoring Review 2/13
May 2013

Final Report on Statistics Relating to the DWP Work Programme and Pre-Work Programme

Summary

1. In 2011, as part of the Programme for Government¹, the Department for Work and Pensions introduced a range of new schemes with the aim of helping unemployed people to gain sustained employment. Among these schemes, the Work Programme, aimed at the long term unemployed, is the one with the greatest number of places. Other schemes aimed at people unemployed for less than one year are grouped together under the label 'Pre-Work Programme'. Table 1 identifies the schemes and statistics to which this Review relates. Further background to the schemes is given in Annex 1.

Table 1: The schemes²

Programme type	Name of scheme	Official statistics
Work Programme	Work Programme	DWP Work Programme Official Statistics ³
	Work Experience	
Pre-Work Programme ⁴	New Enterprise Allowance	Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics
	Sector-based work academy pre-employment training	
	Mandatory Work Activity	Mandatory Programmes Official Statistics
	Skills Conditionality	
	Work Clubs	
	Enterprise Clubs	No Official Statistics published
	Work Together	

¹ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf - page 23

² This Review covers a number of specific welfare to work schemes rolled out during 2011, it does not for example include newer schemes such as that announced by DWP on August 28 2012 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2012/aug-2012/dwp093-12.shtml>

³ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

⁴ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/index.php?page=pwp>

2. The Statistics Authority published an *Interim Report on Statistics about Welfare to Work Schemes*⁵ on 1 November 2012. That report considered whether the statistics met the needs of Parliament and the public; and whether more could be done to ensure full compliance with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. This final report extends the review to incorporate the Authority's evaluation of the first release of outcome statistics from the Work Programme⁶.
3. The following section summarises our overall findings, followed by the findings from our review of the first Work Programme Outcome statistics, our detailed recommendations and an evaluation of the available statistics against the *Code of Practice*.

Main findings

4. **There may be scope to extend the published statistics.** The statistics currently presented in the releases (as at March 2013) are restricted to the numbers starting on each programme by month, together with a brief demographic breakdown. We think that there may be scope for DWP to extend the releases to include additional data held on its databases, to provide a more complete picture of the activity for each welfare scheme. [See paragraph 23]
5. **There are weaknesses in the presentation of the official statistics on employment outcomes.** DWP published the first statistics on outcomes from the Work Programme in a statistical release on 27 November 2012. The release could have been clearer in its presentation and explanation of the statistics, and this appears to have contributed to difficulties with the interpretation of the statistics by external commentators and the news media. [See the Detailed findings section below and paragraph 25]
6. **There is scope for greater coherence across statistical releases and research.** Following the Authority's interim monitoring review DWP issued a release strategy, *Statistics on Employment Programme Support*⁷, in November 2012. This set out plans for releasing official statistics on some of the welfare to work schemes. In April 2013, DWP replaced this strategy document with a new landing page⁸ on its website, presenting the release timetable for the Work Programme and Pre-Work Programme official statistics. The webpage also provides links to some of DWP's relevant topic-based research reports and ad hoc analysis releases, which is welcomed by the Authority. This information could be further enhanced by providing clearer guidance on the official statistics status of the ad hoc releases and how they fit within a coherent release framework, to support users in assessing the effectiveness of the schemes. [See paragraph 40]
7. **There is scope to improve compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.** Paragraphs 19-40 below describe the current statistical series and make some specific recommendations aimed at improving compliance with the *Code*. The recommendations are:
 - I. The needs of users, the use made of the statistics and the types of decisions they inform should be investigated and documented, as required by the *Code of Practice*. [Paragraph 33]

⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/index.html>

⁶ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

⁷ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/release_strategy.pdf

⁸ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/eps/index.php?page=eps>

- II. Information about users' experience of these statistics should be gathered and published, specifically in relation to data quality and the format of reports. [Paragraph 34]
- III. The extent of revisions should be made clear at the time the statistics are released. [Paragraph 35]
- IV. Users should be informed about the quality of the statistical outputs, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, and other aspects of the European Statistical System definition of quality. [Paragraph 36]
- V. The releases should be reviewed to consider how each meets users' requirements, and how their coherence with other relevant statistics can be enhanced. [Paragraph 37]
- VI. DWP statisticians should do more to prepare and disseminate commentary and analysis that aid user interpretation and make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable. [Paragraph 38]
- VII. The Pre-Work Programme statistics should be made available in forms that enable and encourage analysis and re-use. [Paragraph 39]
- VIII. The approach to the labelling of ad hoc statistical releases should be reviewed to ensure that all statistics are released in line with the *Code of Practice*. [Paragraph 40]

Detailed findings relating to the First Release published on 27 November 2012

8. The denominator used by DWP is the cohort that has had the potential for sustainable employment for the entire 12-month reference period. Hence it would be accurate to say that, for example, **'8.6% of those referred to the Work Programme in June 2011 were in sustainable employment of at least six months (or three months if hard to place) at some point during the 12 months following referral for which the providers received an outcome payment'**. (See Annex 2 for further information.)
9. **In the cross-sectional approach used by the media, the denominators include referrals for some claimants who had not been in the Programme long enough to achieve six months' continuous employment:** only referrals up to and including January 2012 could have been included in the numerator. This is not invalid in itself but is not central to assertions about the relative success of the Work Programme. The figures might be described as, for example, '3.5% of people referred to the Work Programme between June 2011 and July 2012 had been in sustainable employment by July 2012'. This cannot be used as a measure of the success of the Work Programme because those referred to it in, say, June 2012, could not have built up three (or six) months' sustained employment.
10. Ultimately, **it is too soon to make judgements about the performance of the Work Programme** – just two one-month cohorts (June and July 2011, at the time of publication) had had sufficient follow up (and data collection) time to allow the first 12-month performance to be assessed. Since the beginning of a new programme is not necessarily representative of the entire Programme's performance, further time is needed to assess the first year more fully.
11. In relation to the statistical First Release itself, **the fact that the media felt it necessary to try to calculate a success rate for themselves implies that the statistical release was insufficiently clear in explaining the statistics and their quality in relation to use.** The

figure of 8.6% quoted above does appear in the Key Findings section near the start of the First Release but it is not clearly explained that this is the most relevant figure to use.

12. DWP presented a cumulative total of 'job outcomes' (payments), for each month from September 2011 – the earliest point that the first referrals to the programme could achieve sustainable employment (three months for the hard to place claimants). **However it did not show the numbers of claimants who leave a job or the duration of employment. Furthermore the release did not provide the number of claimants who achieved more than one 'job outcome' during the reference period** and so make clear whether the total number of job outcome payments (31 thousand) was a good proxy for the number of people achieving sustainable employment.
13. It would be helpful if table 1.1 in the release presented the totals overall, as well as sub-totals for the two milestone groups and for each of the payment groups over time. **The accompanying text attempts to summarise the total outcomes for each payment group and percentage distribution of job outcomes across these groups; however, it is poorly phrased and unclear.**
14. **More explanation is needed of the strengths and limitations of the statistics to help guide their appropriate use.** For example, the release highlights that a data quality issue was identified after the production of the statistics. While the cumulative total is not affected, the monthly totals are, and may impact the cohort results presented in table 3.1. The release does not sufficiently explain the likely impact on the statistics.
15. **More explanation is needed of the choices made in compiling the statistics.** For example, the statistics covered a period of 14 months which could be confusing to users. DWP did not explain the reasons for this decision.
16. **Clearer terminology should be a priority.** For example, the main measure of job outcome payments was shortened to 'job outcomes' in descriptions of the statistics and provided an opportunity for confusion.
17. **In April 2013, DWP said that it planned to publish the Work Programme statistics every three months** – it previously had stated in its release strategy *Statistics on Employment Programme Support*⁹ that these statistics would adhere to a six month release schedule. User feedback, for example from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee¹⁰, strongly indicated a need for a more timely release and DWP has responded positively to that user need.

Code compliance

18. Under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, official statistics assessed as compliant with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* are designated as National Statistics. Bodies that produce National Statistics are required to ensure that the *Code* continues to be observed. For other official statistics, compliance with the *Code* is not a formal requirement. This section reviews compliance of the DWP welfare to work official statistics with the *Code* (see Annex 3 for a detailed review of the releases in relation to the Statistics Authority's *Standards for Statistical Releases*¹¹). This is not a formal assessment

⁹ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/release_strategy.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/work-programme/>

¹¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

under the provisions of the Act but may be regarded as an initial indication of what such an assessment would conclude. In February 2013 DWP requested that the Authority formally assess the Work Programme and Get Britain Working statistics. This assessment will be started later in 2013 and will take account of the response to the recommendations at paragraph 7 above.

19. DWP first released statistics on the welfare to work schemes in November 2011 with the publication of official statistics on the Work Programme and Work Experience. As of February 2013, it had released statistics on the New Enterprise Allowance, sector-based work academy pre-employment training, Skills Conditionality, and Mandatory Work Activity. The *Employment Programme Support Official Statistics* webpage¹² outlines DWP plans for the release of these statistics. The November 2012 release strategy¹³ stated that DWP has no plans to present statistics for Work Clubs, Work Together and Enterprise schemes.
20. Currently, DWP presents statistics on the schemes in the following releases:
 - *DWP Work Programme Statistical Release (Work Programme)* – numbers of referrals and attachments to the Work Programme, and numbers of job outcome payments;
 - *Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics (GBW Measures)* – statistics on Work Experience, New Enterprise Allowance and sector-based work academy pre-employment training; and
 - *Mandatory Programmes Official Statistics (Mandatory Programmes)* – statistics on Mandatory Work Activity and Skills Conditionality.
21. In addition, statistics on the numbers of sanctions imposed on claimants who did not comply with the conditions of the Work Programme and Mandatory Work Activity are presented in the quarterly National Statistics publication *DWP Quarterly Statistical Summary*.
22. **Work Programme**¹⁴ presents statistics on the numbers of people referred to the Programme and attached¹⁵ to one of the main providers over the first five months. It has brief commentary supported by summary tables and charts. It also provides some context for interpreting the statistics by describing the Programme and the types of claimants who are eligible to join. Additional statistics are available through the Tabulation Tool.
23. *Work Programme* does not set the presentation of the statistics in the wider context of the overall welfare to work strategy. It would be helpful if the release included comparisons by claimant and provider characteristics.
24. The Work Programme providers are required to meet minimum performance levels. DWP has identified the key performance measure as: *the number of job outcomes as a percentage of the number of people who have started on the programme in the previous 12 months*¹⁶. *Work Programme*, in November 2012, presented the number of job outcome payments made to Programme providers for those claimants achieving either three or six months in work (depending on the claimants' circumstances). It also provided the proportion of job outcomes

¹² <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/eps/index.php?page=eps>

¹³ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/release_strategy.pdf

¹⁴ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

¹⁵ Following the referral of a participant to a Work Programme provider, that provider is responsible for contacting the participant to discuss the programme and begin planning the steps needed to support them into sustained employment

¹⁶ Page 8: www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/the-work-programme.pdf

achieved during a 12 month follow up period after the referral to the Programme for two cohorts (those who were referred in June 2011 and July 2011).

25. The *Work Programme* release was not as clear as it could have been in explaining the statistics, for example, in its presentation and explanation of the main performance measure and, faced with some uncertainty about the relevant figures, the news media chose to calculate their own success rates. The release did not explain sufficiently the likely impact of quality issues or describe the choices made in compiling the statistics to inform their appropriate use. (See Annex 2 for detailed findings from the Authority's evaluation of the Work Programme outcome statistics.)
26. **GBW Measures** includes two tables. The first table presents the numbers of people who: started Work Experience; attended meetings with a New Enterprise Allowances mentor; claimed the New Enterprise Allowance weekly allowance; and who started sector-based work academy pre-employment training. The second table presents a breakdown of these starters by sex, age group, disability, ethnicity and geographic area.
27. *GBW Measures* explains how the start dates are defined, the source of the statistics, retrospection¹⁷, a publication schedule, and links to the revisions policy and to *Mandatory Programmes*. Explanations for the different schemes are included in an annex. DWP has published two sets of ad hoc analysis on the impact of Work Experience^{18 19}. Further ad hoc analysis provided the number of New Enterprise Allowance starts by region²⁰, by local authority only²¹ and by Jobcentre Plus district, local authority and parliamentary constituency²². The statistical releases do not provide links to these ad hoc publications. Statistics on the number of referrals for a JSA sanction for failure to participate in Work Experience or sector-based work academy pre-employment training are presented on the DWP Tabulation Tool, these statistics are not linked to from the release.
28. **Mandatory Programmes** presents statistics on the numbers of people who were referred to the Mandatory Work Activity and Skills Conditionality schemes; the numbers who started on these schemes; and a demographic breakdown by gender, age group, disability, ethnicity and geographic area.
29. Commentary in *Mandatory Programmes* does not provide context for the statistics, such as, reasons for the differences in the figures between those who are expected to start on a work placement and those who actually did so.
30. A report providing some indication of the outcomes for an early cohort of those referred to Mandatory Work Activity²³ was released as ad hoc analysis in June 2012 on the same day as the official statistics release. The ad hoc research provides greater detail on aspects such as the quality of the DWP statistics and the characteristics of those referred to Mandatory Work Activity – detail that could usefully be incorporated into the statistical release. Following the interim monitoring report, DWP provided signposting to the relevant ad hoc research in *Mandatory Programmes*.

¹⁷ Data subject to retrospection are collected not only at the reference date but also during further extracts which occur during a following set amount of time, permitting late information to be added to the database

¹⁸ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2011/work_experience_participant_outcomes.pdf

¹⁹ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/early_impacts_of_work_experience.pdf

²⁰ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/nea_starts_region.pdf

²¹ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/New_Enterprise_Allowance_Starts_By_Local_Authority.pdf

²² http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2013/nea_by_la_jcp_district_parl_c.xls

²³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/early_impacts_mwa.pdf

31. New legislation for Job Seeker Allowance sanctions came into force on 22 October 2012²⁴ and DWP ran a consultation to obtain user views on its plans to present more detailed statistics on sanctions via its Tabulation Tool from May 2013²⁵ ²⁶. It is not clear from the consultation document how the proposed changes will improve coherence or linkage across the releases.
32. Statistics on the numbers of referrals for JSA sanctions for claimants who refused to participate in Mandatory Work Activity and in the Work Programme are presented in *DWP Quarterly Statistical Summary. Mandatory Programmes and Work Programme* do not provide links to this *Summary*. These statistics, along with statistics relating to the number of JSA sanctions for failure to participate in sector-based work academy pre-employment training are available via the DWP Tabulation Tool, linked to from the new *Employment Programme Support Official Statistics* webpage²⁷.

Recommendations in relation to compliance with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*

33. There was some variation in the extent and nature of user consultation on the introduction of the statistics about these schemes, from a full external consultation for the Work Programme²⁸ to some targeted internal and external consultation for Work Clubs²⁹. It is not clear how user feedback has informed the design and content of the statistical releases. It is also unclear what steps DWP statisticians have taken to engage users of these releases, to understand their statistical needs and the types of decisions informed by the statistics. **The needs of users, the use made of the statistics and the types of decisions they inform should be investigated and documented, as required by the Code of Practice**³⁰.
34. The new *Employment Programme Support Official Statistics* webpage³¹ clarified the contents of future releases and the publication dates, moving to releasing statistics every three months instead of every six months as previously stated. This is in response to expressed user need by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee³². DWP has not published feedback about users' experience of the statistics. **Information about users' experience of these statistics should be gathered and published, specifically in relation to data quality and the format of reports**³³.
35. DWP has an organisational revisions policy³⁴ and has noted some revisions clearly on the website; for example the revisions applied to the May 2012 release of Work Experience statistics. The organisational policy is highlighted within the welfare to work statistical releases but these do not explain the likely impact of the complete historical revision on the

²⁴ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2012/9780111526149/pdfs/ukdsi_9780111526149_en.pdf

²⁵ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/jsa/jsa_sanctions_consultation.pdf

²⁶ The Tabulation Tool allows users to create their own tables for Work Programme Official Statistics using pre-defined variables. There is a lag in the statistics made available; as of March 2013 the most recent statistics for the Work Programme on the Tabulation Tool are for July 2012. The Tabulation Tool can be found at <http://83.244.183.180/WorkProg/tabtool.html>

²⁷ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/eps/index.php?page=eps>

²⁸ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/the-work-programme-your/>

²⁹ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-work-clubs.pdf> Para 17

³⁰ In relation to Principle 1, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³¹ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/eps/index.php?page=eps>

³² <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/work-programme/>

³³ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 4 and 5 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁴ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP_Revisions_Policy_final.pdf

statistics. **The extent of revisions should be made clear at the time the statistics are released**³⁵.

36. The releases for these programmes contain little information about aspects of statistical quality – specifically, the completeness and coverage of the releases – although for the Work Programme a separate background note³⁶ provides some information about accuracy and quality assurance. The Outcome statistics, however, did not provide sufficient explanation of the quality, such as their strengths and limitations or reasons for choice, to enable their appropriate use. More detailed quality information has been released in ad hoc studies; this was not signposted from *GBW Measures*. **Users should be informed about the quality of the statistical outputs, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, and other aspects of the European Statistical System definition of quality**^{37 38}.
37. DWP publishes statistics on the Work Programme and aspects of the Pre-Work Programme across a range of statistical releases and ad hoc papers. The new *Employment Programme Support Official Statistics* webpage³⁹ has brought together information on the statistical releases, research reports and ad hoc analyses. This improvement is welcomed. However, there is no published guidance to indicate how the statistics relate to each other and to the overall welfare to work programme. This continues to make it difficult to obtain a clear overview of the statistics. **The releases should be reviewed to consider how each meets users’ requirements, and how their coherence with other relevant statistics can be enhanced**⁴⁰.
38. The commentary in the releases does not present the statistics in the context of the DWP welfare to work strategy⁴¹ (see Annex 3 for detailed comments). The Work Programme statistical release was not sufficiently clear in describing the main statistics and performance measures of the Work Programme. An increased level of detail, with accompanying commentary, would enable the programmes to be better understood and their effectiveness monitored. DWP has made commitments to capture more data than has been published in the statistical releases. In the Equality Impact Assessment for Mandatory Work Activity, DWP states that it will “ensure it captures vital information including the number of customers referred, the numbers completed, alongside the characteristics of those referred and information on those who don’t attend or complete Mandatory Work Activity”⁴². Including such information in the statistical releases would enhance their value. **We think that DWP statisticians should do more to prepare and disseminate commentary and analysis that aid user interpretation and make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable**⁴³.
39. The statistical releases contain limited data which are presented at a high level. DWP releases some more detailed statistics via its Tabulation Tool for the Work Programme which can be downloaded into Excel. However the Tabulation Tool does not present statistics for the Pre-Work Programme. DWP does not make these data available for analysis in other

³⁵ In relation to Principle 2, Practice 6 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁶ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/work_prog_note.pdf

³⁷ The six dimensions of the ESS Quality Framework are: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence

³⁸ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁹ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/eps/index.php?page=eps>

⁴⁰ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 3 of the *Code of Practice*

⁴¹ See footnote 1

⁴² <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-mandatory-work-activity.pdf> - Para 50

⁴³ In relation to Principle 8, Practices 2 and 3 of the *Code of Practice*

easily accessible forms such as Excel. This limits the re-use and further analysis of the statistics. **The Pre-Work Programme statistics should be made available in forms that enable and encourage analysis and re-use⁴⁴.**

40. DWP has released several sets of welfare to work statistics in the form of ad hoc reports, arguing that this is the quickest approach to the release of the statistics. DWP told us that they class many of the ad hoc releases as official statistics. However, the ad hoc statistics are not clearly labelled as official statistics. We think that this is unhelpful in terms of building confidence in the statistical evidence. **The approach to the labelling of ad hoc statistical releases should be reviewed to ensure that all statistics are released in line with the *Code of Practice*⁴⁵.**

⁴⁴ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 6 of the *Code of Practice*

⁴⁵ In relation to Protocol 2 of the *Code of Practice*

Annex 1: The Welfare to Work Schemes

- A1.1. The **Work Programme**⁴⁶ was launched by DWP in June 2011 to support long-term unemployed people and Employment and Support Allowance⁴⁷ (ESA) claimants in finding sustainable employment. It replaced previous welfare to work programmes including the New Deals⁴⁸ and Pathways to Work⁴⁹. All people receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) are eligible for referral to the Programme after claiming JSA for 12 months; some are eligible sooner than this, particularly those seen to be at greatest disadvantage in finding work. These include young people and JSA early entrants such as: **ex-offenders; disabled people; homeless people; and those with mild-moderate mental health issues.** **ESA claimants in the Work-Related Activity Group (ESA WRAG) can also be referred** to the Work Programme; those in the Support Group (ESA SG), and those still on Incapacity Benefit, may choose to participate. Some others, such as lone parents with young children, are also eligible to participate.
- A1.2. The Programme⁵⁰ is delivered by providers from the private, public and voluntary sectors. Eighteen main providers are contracted by DWP to place participants in work. They have established partnerships with local providers and other organisations, including local government to deliver the services. Jobcentre Plus advisors first refer claimants to the Work Programme at a referral interview. Claimants are then allocated to a provider in their area who arranges work-related activities, such as training and work experience, to help participants find work.
- A1.3. Providers receive an attachment fee for each participant starting the programme, and then a job outcome payment after a participant has been in a job for three to six months (payments are greater when placing claimants who are seen to be at greatest disadvantage in finding work). Providers can claim sustainment payments every four weeks when a participant stays in work for longer (up to a maximum of two years, again depending on how far the participant was from the labour market). Payments are incentive-based, the amount varying for the different types of claimants. They are greater for jobseekers who are seriously disadvantaged in finding work and the ESA SG than for other types of participants.
- A1.4. **Work Experience** was introduced in January 2011 and extra places have been made available since April 2012 as part of the Youth Contract⁵¹. This scheme is aimed at people aged 18-24, especially those who have not worked before. The work experience placements are brokered by Jobcentre Plus, either through a national agreement via the National Employer Service Team or through local agreements within the Jobcentre Plus District⁵². The scheme is administered by Jobcentre Plus which matches individuals with a work experience placement lasting between two and eight weeks, of up to 30 hours per week. If an employer offers to take the participant onto an apprenticeship, the placement can be extended for up to four weeks (from October 2011). Claimants are not treated as if they are in remunerative work and must still actively seek employment. Entry to the scheme is voluntary. Originally the participants were subject to benefit sanctions if they either failed to attend a placement

⁴⁶ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/the-work-programme/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/employment-and-support/>

⁴⁸ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100210072046/dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/flexible-new-deal/>

⁴⁹ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=p2w_pl

⁵⁰ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

⁵¹ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/>

⁵² http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/early_impacts_of_work_experience.pdf

without good cause, or dropped out of the scheme after the first week of the work experience. However, following media reports in February 2012, DWP stated that sanctions would no longer apply, unless a person lost their place through misconduct⁵³.

A1.5. **Sector-based work** academy pre-employment training are collaboration between Jobcentres, employers, colleges and training providers and were introduced to address job vacancies in high-demand sectors of the local economy. The scheme is available in England (from August 2011) and Scotland (from January 2012). A placement on the scheme lasts up to six weeks and includes:

- Sector-based pre-employment training;
- A work experience placement with an employer in that sector; and
- A guaranteed job interview with an employer in that sector.

A1.6. The decision for an individual to participate is voluntary, but once a claimant has accepted a place, attendance in certain elements then becomes mandatory. JSA claimants are required to complete the pre-employment training and the guaranteed job interview. The work-experience placement is voluntary. ESA (WRAG) claimants are required to complete the pre-employment training element only. Claimants who fail to comply with these requirements can be subject to benefit sanctions.

A1.7. **New Enterprise Allowance** provides access to business mentoring and offers some financial support to unemployed people who want to set up their own business. The claimant's business idea is assessed by a mentoring organisation, and if considered viable they are matched with a volunteer business mentor. The mentor is expected to provide guidance and support in the development of the business idea. During the mentoring phase (8 weeks) the claimant still claims JSA and then if their business plan is approved they can then instead claim the New Enterprise Allowance weekly allowance for 26 weeks. This is paid at £65 for 13 weeks and then at £33 per week for a further 13 weeks. One difference in the benefits compared with JSA is that claimants will no longer receive mortgage payments if they were entitled to housing costs before signing off.

A1.8. **Skills Conditionality** is an initiative by which benefits are made conditional on recipients attending training, where a Jobcentre Plus advisor considers an identified skills need as being the main barrier preventing the person from finding employment. It is applicable in England (from August 2011) to JSA and ESA (WRAG) claimants aged 19 and over. DWP told us that it was introduced in Scotland (training only) in June 2012 for JSA claimants and ESA (WRAG) claimants aged 18 and over and in Wales in October 2012, for training that is not funded by the Welsh Government. Claimants have their potential skills needs identified at the Jobcentre. Where these needs are assessed as being the main barrier to finding work the claimant is referred to a mandatory interview with a training provider and if the provider agrees that training is both appropriate and available, the claimant is then mandated to start the training and to complete it. In England where the skills need is not clear to the Jobcentre adviser, the claimant is mandated to attend an interview with the National Careers Service. If an individual subsequently fails to attend, take part or to complete skills training without good cause, they could be subject to a benefit sanction. A pilot study⁵⁴ carried out by DWP in April 2010 made a number of policy recommendations, and highlighted the need for accurate data on training provision when assessing outcomes. In December 2010 DWP and BIS carried out

⁵³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17200688>

⁵⁴ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep768.pdf>

a public consultation to gather views on the implementation of Skills Conditionality. The DWP response to the consultation noted that the work was underway to develop the parameters for sharing feedback on attendance and participation⁵⁵. DWP has stated that it will not be able to measure the net impact of Skills Conditionality on job outcomes due to the lack of a control group⁵⁶.

A1.9. **Mandatory Work Activity** was introduced from May 2011 across Great Britain for individuals in receipt of JSA, aged 18 and over. It allows Jobcentre Plus advisors the authority to mandate claimants to a work experience placement. The placement is for up to 30 hours a week, lasts for 4 weeks and delivers a contribution to the local community. Participation in the scheme is mandatory. Any failure without good cause to participate, including a failure to undertake any specified task, leads to a benefit sanction. From 22 October 2012, a new three tiered JSA sanction regime came into force. Sanctions for those who fail to participate in Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) without good reason are 'higher' level sanctions⁵⁷, the most severe level of benefit reductions. The fixed period sanctions are explained in a document called JSA Sanctions from 22.10.12⁵⁸.

A1.10. Jobcentre Plus advisors can refer JSA claimants to the MWA scheme at any point in their claim. Prior to the start of the scheme, DWP expected that most referrals would be for claimants who have been unemployed for 13 weeks or more and who do not find work quickly⁵⁹. The scheme is run by external providers who source placements and assign claimants to these placements. While undertaking MWA individuals are subject to the normal conditions of their JSA agreement, including the requirement to attend the Jobcentre to sign on when required.

A1.11. **Work Together**⁶⁰, **Work Clubs**⁶¹ and **Enterprise Clubs**⁶² are voluntary initiatives; DWP announced that it will not be publishing any statistics on these schemes as 'the Department does not have robust data collection systems for people participating in these initiatives'⁶³. The Government committed to undertaking a high level review of the Work Together initiative in autumn 2011⁶⁴; however, it is unclear whether the findings have been released. The Equality Impact Assessments for Work Clubs⁶⁵ and Enterprise Clubs⁶⁶ do not make reference to any monitoring or evaluation strategies. Consultation for these schemes was targeted to internal and some external stakeholders.

⁵⁵ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/skills-conditionality-consultation-response.pdf>

⁵⁶ <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8058/8058.pdf>

⁵⁷ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/jsa-sanction-changes.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/m-37-12.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://ssac.independent.gov.uk/pdf/mandatory-work-activity.pdf>

⁶⁰ **Work Together** is an initiative which encourages the take up of volunteering. Any unemployed person can volunteer at any point in their claim, until they are required to participate in the work programme. Claimants cannot be sanctioned for refusing to participate

⁶¹ **Work clubs** aim to offer support to unemployed people and are run by local groups such as LAs, employers, voluntary sector orgs and community groups. There is no fixed delivery model. Attendance is not mandatory and any unemployed person can attend a work club at any point in their claim until they are required to participate in the WP

⁶² **Enterprise clubs:** The clubs provide community-based support, offering to help unemployed people who are interested in setting up a business. They are run by local groups such as LAs, employers, voluntary sector organisations and community groups. They might offer assistance such as the opportunity to network, financial advice and office services such as internet access. Attendance is not mandatory and any unemployed person can attend a work club at any point in their claim until they are required to participate in the WP

⁶³ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/release_strategy.pdf

⁶⁴ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-work-together.pdf>

⁶⁵ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-work-clubs.pdf>

⁶⁶ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-enterprise-clubs.pdf>

A1.12. These programmes are primarily aimed at two groups of people; those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and those placed into the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) following their Employment and Support Allowance assessment. Table A1 shows the different groups of unemployed people who are eligible for each of these schemes. The Work Programme is available across Great Britain; however not all Pre-Work Programme schemes are available in all areas, with scope for local Jobcentre management discretion and differences across the devolved administrations in the UK. For example, the provision of skills is a devolved policy, meaning that governments in Wales and Scotland are responsible for delivering skills training in those countries. DWP told us that Skills Conditionality is available in the following ways:

- introduced in England in August 2011 (interview and training elements);
- introduced in Scotland in June 2012 (training element only);
- introduced in Wales in October 2012 for DWP-funded provision. In Wales, only voluntary referrals to training provision funded by the Welsh Government will be accepted until it is evident that the scheme has resulted in improved job outcomes⁶⁷.

Employment Support Allowance

A1.13. DWP publishes quarterly statistics⁶⁸ of the monthly numbers and proportions of new Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claims for groups identified in the Work Capability Assessment (WCA)⁶⁹. The three outcomes of the WCA are:

- Support Group (SG) – for those with severe disabilities; they receive a higher rate of benefit entitlement overall; they can volunteer to receive employment support through the Work Programme;
- Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) – for those found to have limited capability for work; they receive a higher rate of benefit than those on Jobseeker's Allowance. They are not expected to work but are provided with help and support to prepare for work where possible;
- Fit for Work (FFW) – the ESA claim ceases and the claimant can move to JSA or appeal the decision.

⁶⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/skillsconditionality/?lang=en>

⁶⁸ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_wca

⁶⁹ The Work Capability Assessment, which determines whether a claimant receives ESA, is based on the functional assessment conducted by Atos Healthcare for DWP

Annex 2: Evaluation of the Work Programme Outcome Statistics

A2.1. This annex reviews the presentation of DWP's outcome statistics as presented in *Work Programme* published on 27 November 2012, in relation to their use by external commentators and with respect to the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Background to Work Programme Outcome Statistics

A2.2. The focus of the Work Programme is on supporting participants to achieve sustained employment. The main outcome measure in the Outcome statistical release was the count of job outcome payments: providers receive job outcome payments when a participant has been in work for either three or six months, depending on the participant's circumstances. This period, of three or six months, is referred to as 'sustained employment'.

A2.3. The Government's Impact Indicator Measure for the Work Programme measures the proportion of job outcomes achieved during a 12-month follow up period after referral to the Programme. It is calculated by dividing the total job outcomes paid to providers during the 12-month period following referral (the numerator) by the total number of referrals in the cohort month (the denominator). The 'cohort month' is the month that claimants were referred to the Work Programme. Once a job outcome payment has been made, providers receive sustainment payments for each subsequent four week period the participant spends in employment up to a maximum of two years, depending on the participants' circumstances.

A2.4. Some participants are required to join the Work Programme and some have the option to volunteer. Whether participation is mandatory or voluntary depends on a number of factors including: the benefit they are claiming; the length of time they have been unemployed; and their personal circumstances. Participants are classified into payment groups which reflect these varying circumstances. The three largest groups are: Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 18 to 24, JSA claimants aged 25 and over and JSA Early Entrants.

Review of the Work Programme Outcome Statistics

A2.5. The Work Programme Outcome statistical release received substantial media attention⁷⁰ that focused on the performance of the Programme in its first year. The media said that DWP had failed to achieve the minimum benchmark of 5.5%⁷¹ for people gaining sustainable employment through the Work Programme. However two different figures were reported in the media for the level of performance achieved so far by the Work Programme: the BBC⁷² and Guardian⁷³ reported a figure of 3.5%, while Channel 4⁷⁴ and FT.com⁷⁵ reported 2.3%. Neither of these percentages was published by DWP; they were derived from detailed figures given in the release:

⁷⁰ <http://www.google.com/news?q=work+programme+statistics&lr=English&hl=en>

⁷¹ This is the figure that DWP set out as the minimum that providers should achieve in the first year of the programme. 5% was said to be the proportion of people that would achieve sustainable employment without intervention.

⁷² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-20499836>

⁷³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/nov/27/work-programme-long-term-jobs>

⁷⁴ <http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/factcheck-why-the-work-programme-isnt-working-yet/11961>

⁷⁵ <http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/tag/work-programme/>

- The numerator for the percentage is the number of 'job outcomes', meaning the number of payments paid to providers for people achieving six months⁷⁶ in the job. This threshold is consistent with DWP's definition of sustainable employment.
- The denominator used by the media was the total number of claimants referred by Jobcentre Plus to the Work Programme providers:
 - The BBC/Guardian figure used the full time period covered by the release which was June 2011 to July 2012 (i.e. 14 months),
 - Channel 4 and FT.com said that the target applies to a 12-month period and so used the figures for June 2011 to May 2012.

A2.6. DWP presented outcome percentages at 12 months after referral for both of the cohorts referred to the Programme (in June and July 2011) for which data were available a year later. These were given in the Key Findings section on the first page of the release, and show levels of job outcomes at 8.6% and 8.1%, respectively. DWP also provided a summary table showing the proportion of claimants for whom providers received a job outcome payment by monthly cohort up to the September 2011 cohort. These figures at 12 months after referral are used by DWP as Impact Indicator measures⁷⁷ in monitoring its business plan, as part of the Open Data Strategy⁷⁸.

Detailed Findings

The statistics presented

- A2.7. The denominator used by DWP is the cohort that has had the potential for sustainable employment for the entire 12-month reference period. Hence it would be accurate to say that, for example, '8.6% of those referred to the Work Programme in June 2011 were in sustainable employment of at least six months (or three months if hard to place) at some point during the 12 months following referral for which the providers received an outcome payment'.
- A2.8. In the cross-sectional approach used by the media, the denominators include referrals for some claimants who had not been in the Programme long enough to achieve six months' continuous employment: only referrals up to and including January 2012 could have been included in the numerator. This is not invalid in itself but is not central to assertions about the relative success of the Work Programme. The figures might be described as, for example, '3.5% of people referred to the Work Programme between June 2011 and July 2012 had been in sustainable employment by July 2012'. This cannot be used as a measure of the success of the Work Programme because those referred to it in, say, June 2012, could not have built up three (or six) months' sustained employment.
- A2.9. An alternative approach might have been to use a cross-sectional success rate which restricted the measure to all referrals joining between June 2011 and January 2012 and followed up for at least six months (to July 2012). However, this measure also has a limitation in that it would miss some of the job outcomes for the hard to place referrals joining the programme between February and April 2012 that achieved three months continuous employment.

⁷⁶ 6 months is the threshold for most referrals - 3 months is used for the hard to place claimants

⁷⁷ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/corporate-publications/dwp-business-plan-2011-2015/business-plan-transparency/>

⁷⁸ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp/what-we-do/transparency/>

A2.10. Ultimately, it is too soon to assess the performance of the Work Programme – just two one-month cohorts (June and July 2011, at the time of publication) had had sufficient follow up (and data collection) time to allow the first 12-month performance to be assessed. As each month progresses, a further one-month cohort’s performance at 12 months will be able to be observed. Since the beginning of a new programme is not necessarily representative of the entire Programme’s performance, further time is needed to assess the first year more fully.

Clarity of the statistical release

A2.11. That the media had to calculate a success rate (however it was done) is an illustration that the DWP statistical release was insufficiently clear in explaining the statistics and their quality in relation to use. Users would have benefited from:

- The presentation of the statistical material in the form of flowcharts
- An explanation of the strengths and limitations of the statistics
- An explanation of the choices made in compiling the statistics
- Clearer terminology

A2.12. *The presentation of the statistical material in the form of flowcharts.* DWP presented a cumulative total of ‘job outcomes’ (payments), for each month from September 2011 – the earliest point that the first referrals to the programme could achieve sustainable employment (three months for the hard to place claimants). However it did not show the numbers of claimants who left a job or the duration of employment. Furthermore the release did not provide the number of claimants who achieved more than one ‘job outcome’ during the reference period and so make clear whether the total number of job outcome payments (31 thousand) was a good proxy for the number of people achieving sustainable employment.

A2.13. The release does not specifically present figures for the referrals grouped into whether the milestone is due to be measured at three months or six months but presents the statistics for the individual payment groups. It would be helpful if table 1.1 in the release presented the totals overall, as well as sub-totals for the two milestone groups and for each of the payment groups over time. The accompanying text attempts to summarise the total outcomes for each payment group and percentage distribution of job outcomes across these groups; however, it is poorly phrased and unclear.

A2.14. *An explanation of the strengths and limitations of the statistics* to help guide their appropriate use. For example, the release highlights that a data quality issue was identified after the production of the statistics (p3):

“The information available to allocate early outcomes to a particular month coupled with failures, errors and delays during the upload and input process have impacted on the resultant time series to May 2012.

“Following the production of the statistics, it was identified that a number of job outcomes (less than 1.5 % of total) have been incorrectly assigned on the Work Programme payment system. The cumulative total number of job outcomes is not affected just the month to which they are attributed.”

- A2.15. While the cumulative total is not affected, the monthly totals are, and may impact the cohort results presented in table 3.1. The release does not sufficiently explain the likely impact on the statistics, particularly in relation to the cohort outcome statistics.
- A2.16. *An explanation of the choices made in compiling the statistics.* For example, the statistics covered a period of 14 months which could be confusing to users. DWP did not explain the reasons for this decision. Some users commented that DWP extended the period so that more job outcome could be counted. By using the cohort approach DWP did not actually do this for its own performance measure as it reported on outcomes in the first year after referral. By allowing the 14 months, the full one-year follow up was possible for the July 2011 cohort.
- A2.17. *Clearer terminology.* For example, the main measure of job outcome payments was shortened to 'job outcomes' in descriptions of the statistics and provided an opportunity for confusion, such as whether it related to people who had started a job in the first 12 months or to those remaining in post for up to six months, or as noted above, whether it related to payments and not to people (if someone could be counted more than once).

DWP's future publication plans

- A2.18. In April 2013, DWP said that it planned to publish the Work Programme statistics every three months – it previously had stated in its release strategy *Statistics on Employment Programme Support*⁷⁹ that these statistics would adhere to a six month release schedule. User feedback, for example from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee⁸⁰, strongly indicated a need for a more timely release and DWP has responded positively to that user need.

⁷⁹ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/release_strategy.pdf

⁸⁰ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/work-programme/>

Annex 3: Review of the Work Programme and Pre-Work Programme Official Statistics

A3.1. This annex updates the Annex 2 that was presented in the Authority's *Interim Report*. It considers DWP's welfare to work statistics in relation to the Authority's *Standards for Statistical Reports*⁸¹, and refers to the most recent releases (as at April 2013):

- *DWP Work Programme Statistical Release* (November 2012)⁸²;
- *Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics* (February 2013)⁸³; and
- *Mandatory Programmes Official Statistics* (November 2012)⁸⁴.

Include an impartial narrative in plain English that draws out the main messages from the statistics

A3.2. The releases each have a summary section with bullet points giving the total number of placements and starts (for *Mandatory Programmes* and *GBW Measures*) and referrals and total attachments (for *Work Programme*). The statistics are available for over 12 months for each release.

A3.3. The statistics are described in an impartial way. However the range of statistics describing the programmes is limited. For example, in *Work Programme* the percentage distributions by payment group for referrals and attachments are given in the commentary, but the release doesn't give the rates of referral (overall or by claimant characteristics) or show statistics about the time between referral and attachment (an overall statement is made that 96 per cent of referrals are attached to the programme within three months, but without the underpinning evidence).

A3.4. Commentary is limited to the summary section, bullet points and footnotes to the tables. Each release gives a short description of the schemes covered. There are definitions of the main terms (referrals, attachments, starts). Some terms included in the footnotes to the tables are not explained, for example 'trailblazer' in *Mandatory Programmes*.

A3.5. For *Work Programme* further statistics are available through the DWP Tabulation Tool. These could be used to extend the release; for example, information about the characteristics of the participants (such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability status), statistics by region and by health condition.

A3.6. DWP has released ad hoc publications for the outcomes of Work Experience and the first three months of Mandatory Work Activity; it has stated that there are no plans to release statistics on the outcomes of Skills Conditionality. Further ad hoc releases present New Enterprise Allowance starts by region and by Jobcentre Plus district, local authority and parliamentary constituency.

Include information about the context and likely uses of the statistics

A3.7. The releases set the context for the statistics by describing the relevant programmes, but do not relate this to the overall DWP welfare to work policy, or present the statistics in the context of the overall numbers of unemployed people or numbers of ESA claimants. *Work Programme*, however, describes the impact of claimants moving from the Flexible New

⁸¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-reports.html>

⁸² http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/wp_release_nov12.pdf?x=1

⁸³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/pwp_gbw_feb13.pdf

⁸⁴ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/mwa_aug12.pdf

Deal to the Work Programme and the impact of a change to the referral process. The annex highlights the fact that DWP is developing outcome statistics to support the use of the release in evaluating the success of the programme and the performance of providers. *GBW Measures* does not refer to the ad hoc statistics released on outcomes.

- A3.8. The releases do not identify the use, or potential use, by types of users. There are no tentative suggestions about the uses which might be made of the statistics, and it is not made clear whether user feedback or engagement has informed the design of the release or selection of the content.

Include information about the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to their potential use

- A3.9. The releases provide explanatory information about the programmes, but little information about the quality and reliability of the statistics, such as the completeness of the administrative systems used and the coverage and timeliness of the returns for the wide range of providers delivering services. However, DWP has published a separate Background Information Note⁸⁵ that outlines the accuracy of the statistics for the Work Programme and some issues affecting specific variables. *Work Programme* refers to the data sources as Jobcentre Plus (for referrals) and the payment system for providers (as the source for attachments). It explains the difference between the two measures and outlines the composition of the payment groups. There is no corresponding background information available for *GBW Measures* or for *Mandatory Programmes*.
- A3.10. *Work Programme* provides links to other related statistics through the Tabulation Tools with statistics available for additional claimant characteristics, as well as to the Pre-Work Programme and ad hoc analyses. *Background Information Note* provides supplementary information about the Work Programme, with explanations of the main terms and a detailed description of the validation process. The note is helpful in outlining the quality assurance steps and the derivation of error rates for incorrect payment claims. These rates are used in the calculation of adjustment factors which DWP applies to the payment data in producing the Outcome statistics. DWP also released an Excel spreadsheet giving the job outcome figures for providers prior to validation. A link is given in *Background Information Note* to the spreadsheet but there is insufficient explanation to assist the interpretation of the statistics and any impact of validation on the Outcome statistics.
- A3.11. There is no narrative in the Pre-Work Programme releases about the strengths and limitations of these statistics in relation to their potential uses. There are no descriptions of likely errors and bias and no information on the procedures in place to audit these statistics.
- A3.12. *GBW Measures*, *Mandatory Programmes* and *Work Programme* state that the statistics adhere to DWP's organisational revisions policy. DWP refreshes the entire data set that it uses to populate its Tabulation Tool and the statistical releases when new data are added to a series. DWP provides an explanation for its scheduled revisions but does not make clear the likely impact on the published statistics. *Background Information Note* highlights that outcome payment claims that failed the initial validation check had accumulated since the start of the Programme and were not processed before the release of the first Outcome statistics in November 2012. DWP released a spreadsheet showing the numbers of claims for each provider prior to the validation. However, it did not sufficiently explain the scale of

⁸⁵ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/work_programme/work_prog_note.pdf

the impact on the statistics, particularly in relation to the June 2011 and July 2011 cohort statistics. It said that these payment claims will be processed and included in the next release of the Work Programme Outcome statistics and so revise previously released figures.

Be professionally sound

- A3.13. The releases include descriptive statements that are consistent with the statistics in the charts and tables. There is no attempt to identify increases or decreases in the Pre-Work Programme statistics across time periods or to provide possible reasons for these changes. The releases have a limited range of statistics – the most comprehensive statistics are in *Work Programme* which presents figures for each month. *Work Programme* is the only release that uses charts to show the cumulative rise in referrals and attachments since the start of the programme.
- A3.14. The Pre-Work Programme releases do not signpost specific ad hoc analysis that has been conducted on the welfare programme which would aid users' interpretation and use of the statistics. They highlight the next release date, the forthcoming release schedule and availability through the National Statistics Publication Hub. The Work Programme web page provides links to two relevant ad hoc releases which are both available through the Publication Hub.
- A3.15. *DWP Work Programme Statistical Release*⁸⁶ (*Work Programme*) highlights that the coverage is for Great Britain. The coverage is implicit in *Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics (GBW Measures)*. It is not made clear in *Mandatory Programmes Official Statistics (Mandatory Programmes)*, other than the abbreviation 'GB' used in the tables; for Skills Conditionality footnotes indicate that 'GB' refers to England and Scotland only. The introductory text in the three releases sets out the content of the releases and provides the frequency of publication. They make clear the responsible organisation and give the contact name and details of the lead statistician.

⁸⁶ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

Annex 4: List of relevant statistical bulletins and ad hoc analysis released by DWP

1. Official Statistics

Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics⁸⁷

9 November 2011

16 November 2011

15 February 2012

16 May 2012

15 August 2012

13 February 2013

Mandatory Programmes Official Statistics⁸⁸

15 February 2012

12 June 2012

14 November 2012

Work Programme statistical release⁸⁹ (attachments and referrals)

21 February 2012

9 May 2012

8 August 2012

7 November 2012

Work Programme statistical release⁹⁰ (outcomes)

27 November 2012

DWP Quarterly Statistical Summary⁹¹

Quarterly

⁸⁷ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/index.php?page=pwp>

⁸⁸ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/index.php?page=pwp>

⁸⁹ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

⁹⁰ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>

⁹¹ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistical_summaries

2. Ad hoc Releases

- Early Analysis of Work Experience participant outcomes⁹². November 2011
- Early Impacts of Work Experience⁹³. April 2012.
- Early Impacts of Mandatory Work Activity⁹⁴. June 2012
- Work Programme – analysis of early entrants⁹⁵. July 2012
- Ad hoc statistics on the volumes of young people entering employment from the Work Programme since the start of the Youth Contract⁹⁶. July 2012.
- Work Programme referrals, attachments and Jobseekers Allowance sanctions⁹⁷. July 2012.
- New Enterprise Allowance starts Regional Breakdown⁹⁸. October 2012.
- New Enterprise Allowance starts by local authority⁹⁹. November 2012.
- New Enterprise Allowance starts by local authority - Table¹⁰⁰. November 2012.
- Work Programme – analysis of benefit status of participants¹⁰¹. November 2012.
- New Enterprise Allowance starts by Jobcentre Plus district, local authority and parliamentary constituency¹⁰². February 2013.
- Work experience and Sector-based work academy pre-employment training starts¹⁰³, 8 March 2013.
- Skills Conditionality training referrals split by training type¹⁰⁴, 28 March 2013.

⁹² http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2011/work_experience_participant_outcomes.pdf

⁹³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/early_impacts_of_work_experience.pdf

⁹⁴ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/early_impacts_mwa.pdf

⁹⁵ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/wp_early_entrants.pdf

⁹⁶ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/wp_yp_job_entries.pdf

⁹⁷ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/work_programme_referrals_jsa_sanctions_jan12.pdf

⁹⁸ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/nea_starts_region.pdf

⁹⁹

¹⁰⁰ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/New_Enterprise_Allowance_Starts_By_Local_Authority.pdf

http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/Table_1_NEA_starts_by_Local_Authority.xls

¹⁰¹ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/wp_early_entrants_Nov12.pdf

¹⁰² http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2013/nea_by_la_jcp_district_parl_c.xls

¹⁰³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2013/WE_and_SBWA_JCP_district_LA_and_PC_tables.xls

¹⁰⁴ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2013/sct_refs_by_type.pdf