

# **Desk-based research on ‘What Works’ to support the development of the Employment Support Framework within the West Midlands Combined Authority**

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## Introduction

### **Scope of the review**

This review represents a summary of key (recent) evidence on ‘what works’ at various stages of the job seeking journey. It draws on international, national and selected local reviews from the academic and policy literature. Given the wide range of material on the subjects covered it is by no means comprehensive; rather it seeks to highlight findings on ‘what works’ (there is less evidence on ‘what does not work’) from key studies. The review is intended to serve as a platform to inform primary research to be undertaken in localities in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

### **Organisation of the report**

This review is organised in accordance with seven stages of a job seeking journey (see Figure on the next page):

1. Stabilisation/ resilience development
2. Referral, engagement and assessment
3. Needs assessment and barrier removal
4. Vocational activity
5. Employer engagement and job matching
6. In-work support and aftercare/ retention service (with either the same or another employer)
7. Progression (in the internal or external labour market)

To some extent these stages are artificial: they represent a continuum rather than discrete stages. Within each of the stages the material presented is organised under four generic headings:

- Information, advice and guidance (IAG); training and skills
- Employer engagement
- Financial incentives
- Support services/enablers

Again these categories are to some extent arbitrary and although some information does not fit easily within a single cell of the resulting ‘7x4’ matrix to some extent this organising schema does help in organising the material covered in the review.

### **Influential factors shaping the job seeking journey**

A wide range of factors impact on/ help shape the job seeking journey, including:

- *Individual factors* – encompassing employability skills and attributes, confidence, motivation, labour market and job seeking knowledge, work history, health and well-being;
- *Individual circumstances* - household characteristics, caring responsibilities and access to resources, etc.
- *Employer practices* - business model and organisational culture/ ethos which shape the employment opportunities and progression pathways available;
- *Local contextual factors* - features of the local labour market; and
- *Macro level factors* - macroeconomic conditions and welfare policy regime

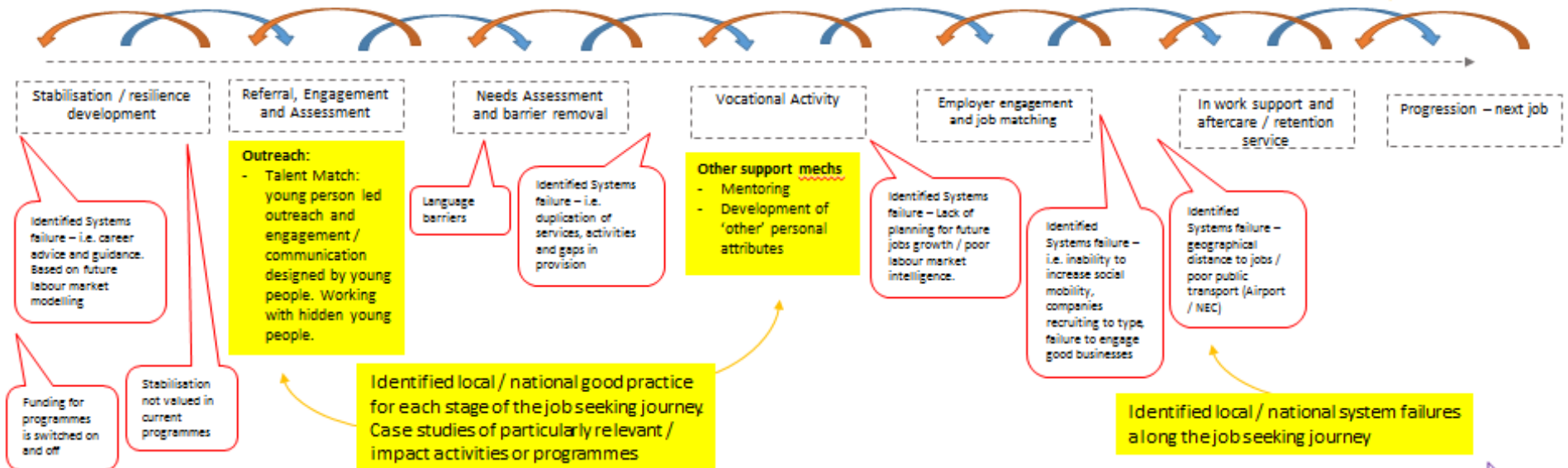
Labour market intermediaries – including education and training providers, local government, trade unions, employer organisations, sectoral organisations, voluntary organisations, etc. – may be thought of as *enabling support factors* within this broad context.

Link to other employability strategies i.e. skills?

WM Employment Framework Straw person v.2 (22.10.18)

Agreement to the job seeking journey... (below based on the Scotland model as an example) with agreed / identified target places/ themes by segment?

Not a linear model – but a journey that allows ‘forward’ and backwards movement. Reflective of a life cycle.



Common measurement of job seeking journey framework – previous example JET pack (could it be made available / useful to employers?)

Suggestion: Segmentation of key groups of people and identified good practice ‘what works’ – rather than separate job seeking journeys for each segmented group.

- Recommendations to policy makers of systematic failures for example (opportunities / collaborations) short / medium and long term:
- Employer Kite marks / awards
  - Charter
  - Online portal / database of provision (navigational)
  - Joined up commissioning



## What works?

Policy initiatives/ employability programmes may be targeted at one point or at several points along the job seeking journey. As noted by Adam et al. (2017: 1165) the reality of policies to enhance employability “is not one of simple, clearly ring-fenced policies with single goals. Rather it is one of a heterogeneous plethora of programmes and interventions. The foci of policies may be multiple rather than single, they may be targeted at several sub-groups and geographical areas, eligibility rules may be enforced unevenly and how a policy is implemented may vary within and between organisations.” An individual may be subject to several policy interventions to improve their job seeking journey. This means that ‘*what works*’ might be more about getting the mix of policy interventions right in a particular context, rather than any particular ‘*silver bullet*’ (Hasluck and Green, 2007: 15).

## Cross-cutting themes and broad principles

Synthesising across the evidence presented subsequently across the entire job seeking journey several generic principles emerge regarding ‘what works’. These include:

1. The value of *personalised support* – especially on a one-to-one basis
2. *Peer support* and *mentoring* (encompassing both work-related and non work-related issues) is helpful
3. The *quality of key worker support matters* – in terms of local knowledge, staff turnover, etc.
4. *Co-design* can yield better policy and improve the well-being and employability of those involved
5. The job seeking journey encroaches on a range of policy domains and so there are benefits from *co-ordination of local provision* and from *local partnership working*
6. *Co-location of staff* can help *integration across the different policy domains* that impinge upon employability
7. *Close collaboration* between providers of employability support and other types of support matters
8. *Holistic intensive support* (i.e. wraparound services) is needed for the most disadvantaged
9. *Long-term support* is beneficial for the most disadvantaged – but it is important that individuals to not become overly dependent on ‘key worker’ support
10. *Links with employers* are fundamental to success in a job seeking journey – employers are the gatekeepers to jobs so it is important to understand their recruitment and selection procedures
11. *Work placements* can be helpful in providing work experience and building confidence
12. The *quality of work* matters for retention and for in-work progression opportunities
13. There are positive benefits for in-work progression from policies that support the objectives of both employers and (prospective) employees (i.e. a ‘*dual customer*’ approach)
14. *Training and skills acquisition* facilitates in-work progression
15. Ideally *local policy and national policy* operate in the same direction and there will be scope to tailor national policies to meet local needs

# 1. Stabilisation/resilience development

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

## **Personalised employment support within treatment services for people with drug and alcohol issues**

Black (2016) in her review of the challenges faced by individuals who are addicted to alcohol or drugs, or are obese, when they seek to enter, return to and/or remain in work, argues for the introduction of *high-quality employment support within treatment services* accompanied by improved performance metrics for providers e.g. Jobcentres and treatment services in order to "target, deliver and benchmark their efforts to find work for these groups" (p.9). Black advocates the introduction of on a trial basis of *Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approaches* and the *co-location of Jobcentre staff in treatment centres*, maintaining that this would enable unemployed people in treatment to access individual advice and support with regards to finding a job, as well as ongoing support once in work. Black notes the success of the IPS approach in relation to patients with severe mental health patients, including addictions, who have complex support requirements and a lack of work experience. This recommendation fits with Bond et al.'s (2012) finding, based on analysis of 15 randomized controlled trials of IPS programs, 9 in the US and 6 outside the US, that "consistently positive competitive employment outcomes strongly favouring IPS over a range of comparison programs in a group of international studies suggest that IPS is an evidence-based practice that may transport well into new settings as long as programs achieve high fidelity to the IPS model" (p.9). Adams et al (2017) evaluated two Work Programme proof of concepts intended to better support individuals with drug/alcohol dependency into employment, arguing that close collaboration between providers in employment support services and dependency support service can be beneficial for individuals through helping to ensure that their preparation for employment does not negatively impact on their addiction treatment/recovery and vice versa. Barriers to positive outcomes include challenges in building up constructive working relationships due to staff turnover, dispersion of clients across Work Coaches and Work Programme Provider Teams, and a lack of trust towards employment support services. Hansen et al (2015) found in a study of employment support for individuals with alcohol issues in Denmark, that adviser's personal attitudes towards alcohol (in general, not considering a high alcohol intake to be a barrier to employment, or that alcohol problems were just symptoms of more profound issues) and their understanding of their own roles and responsibilities in relation to welfare participants hindered implementation of the schemes.

## **Pre-employment training and advice as part of broader, longer-term support with clear progression routes**

Taylor (2016, 2015) analysed pre-employment support in France and the UK. She argued that Community Forums in the UK were good at engaging hard to reach participants e.g. mothers of young children with low skills levels in pre-entry training (e.g. IT). Participants valued the friendly environment in classes and the employment of 'local' staff created a sense of trust. However, she questioned the value of the courses in the long-term as courses were short in duration and did not appear to be clearly linked to subsequent training or employment opportunities. By contrast, Taylor (2017) underlined the strength of the French system in offering longer-term training courses run in associations e.g. Culture et Liberté which represented the first step on a clearly identified path to future employment.

## **Identification of addiction and storage of health information in the benefits system**

Black (2016) identifies a number of failings in the UK benefits system with regard to alcohol and drug dependence. First, Black suggests the system is failing to identify people suffering from addictions, further noting that the system can only record a single health condition "usually originating in the General Practitioner's Fit Note, which is rarely reviewed or updated and seldom includes addiction".

Black suggests this is exacerbated by how due to a lack of trust between claimants and Jobcentre Plus as well as a lack of a clear, high-quality offer of support on offer, individuals rarely disclose addictions.

### **Involvement of health professionals in discussions with claimants regarding entering work**

Black (2016) argues that a programme should be trialled where shortly after applying for benefits, claimants attend a structured discussion with a healthcare professional in order to discuss the impact their health condition will have on their ability to work and provide insight for the work coach. Public Health England's (2014) report on increasing employment opportunities and retention for people with a long-term health condition or disability stresses the benefit of personalised, tailored support with this group and suggests that there is evidence a 'health-first' approaches which seek to improve health to increase the employability of incapacity benefit claimants is showing early promise. It also notes the benefit of individual placement and support programmes for people with mental health problems. The Centre for Mental Health (2013) calls for health and wellbeing boards to support commissioners to develop pilot schemes in primary care to enable investigation of how employment outcomes for people with common mental health can be achieved. In particular, they recommend individual placement and support services.

### **Peer mentoring**

Black (2016) stresses the potential role that peer mentors could play with regard to encouraging drug and alcohol addicts to successfully transition into employment through acting as advocates and visible symbols of recovery, encouraging claimants to trust and disclose information to support services and engage with appropriate support. McEnhill et al (2016) conducted a literature review of peer support for employment. They found that all of the academic studies which they reviewed indicated some level of positive outcomes, but underlined how *peer support models should be designed based on the condition(s) in question and the desired outcomes* (e.g. job retention, reducing sick leave, or supporting unemployed service users to return to work). They underlined how the programmes they reviewed demonstrated benefits of peer support in terms of 'direct outcomes' e.g. improved job retention; reduced time on sick leave; entering a new job or moving into education) as well as broader benefits e.g. improved self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills. The Employability in Scotland website includes case studies of a variety of peer support and mentoring initiatives in Scotland. For example, The Orbit Approach run by the Dundee Association for Mental Health and funded by Big Lottery Fund for three years (Scottish Government, no date given). The voluntary service supports people with various mental health needs and provides different ways for them to become involved through sharing their interests and hobbies. In return, participants earn "Galaxies" in a Local Exchange and Trading Scheme which can be exchanged for complementary therapies that increase their sense of wellbeing. The project enables participants to move from patient to contributor and earning galaxies, offers participants work experience as well as hope. Whilst developing new skills and experience, participants, begin interacting with others and the wider community, helping them to in turn reflect on their future plans. Focus group evaluation of the approach with participants underlined benefits of peer support and mentoring in terms of friendship, one-to-one mentoring in a befriending context, and the opportunity to learn from mentors who share their experiences in a group setting.

### **A holistic approach integrating social and employment-related support**

Evidence from Talent Match (TM) - a £106 million programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund to address unemployment amongst 18-24 year olds who often faced multiple barriers in securing employment by supporting them with voluntary personalised flexible provision delivered using National Lottery funding between 2014 and 2018 through partnerships in 21 Local Enterprise Partnership areas in England – provides evidence at a number of staging posts along the employability journey. It emphasised the importance of broader outcomes beyond employment as

integral to success. As such TM partnerships adopted a person-centred approach recognising that confidence, self-belief and well-being are key to progressing along the journey to, and within employment. Key worker support played an important role in supporting young people into work and this support continued once young people had entered employment. Interviews with young people revealed that some saw improving their wellbeing – rather than employment - as their main priority (Crisp et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of the integrated nature of Talent Match in providing non-work support, which included personal development, social and peer activities and counselling alongside employment-related support. More generally – and of relevance across the entire employability pathway – support may be in various forms: (1) in terms of addressing often very practical barriers including transport, childcare and for some housing; (2) in terms of improving wellbeing and confidence (for instance through counselling or peer support – as emphasised here); and (3) in the provision of high quality employment information, advice and guidance. Evidence points to the positive impacts of an *integrated package of support centred on the needs and capabilities of the young person* (Crisp et al., 2018).

### **The role of key workers – at the stabilisation stage and at subsequent stages**

This support may be best delivered through a key worker (providing one-to-one support and advice to beneficiaries) throughout the employability journey as individuals prepare for, enter, sustain and progress in work. The type of support required varies at different stages of the journey. Evidence from Talent Match revealed that key workers needed to draw upon the tools of a youth worker and a careers guidance worker. The former approach creates an open and safe environment for a young person to start their journey to employment. Then drawing upon the practices of a careers guidance worker approach, a young person can be supported in developing their knowledge and understanding of the labour market and the opportunities available to them (Barnes et al., 2017).

### **English Language Employment Support Provision**

Foster and Lane (2012) underline the importance of improving English language provision within JSA and ESA WRAG recipients into employment. They recommend that ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) providers, JCP and WP providers should work together on referrals for ESOL training, the design of ESOL provision for jobseekers and the measurement of job outcomes.

### **Employer engagement**

#### **Work trials and meaningful activity (including volunteering) alongside successful treatment completion for unemployed people with drug and alcohol addictions**

Black (2016) conducted an independent review of the challenges faced by individuals who are addicted to alcohol or drugs, or are obese, when they seek to enter, return to and/or remain in work. Alcohol dependence causes harms to individuals, their children and families, and society as a whole. Approximately, one million adults in the UK suffer from some form of alcohol dependence, with alcohol overall costing society £21 billion to year, of which an estimated £3.5billion is spent by the NHS. Likewise, drug abuse is having a negative impact on society with the cost of drug use and supply to society estimated to be around £10.7 billion per year, of which £6 billion is attributed to drug related crime. Black found that although the UK governments 2010 Drug Strategy includes a series of recovery-focused aims, among which is sustained employment, this aim has yet to be achieved. Black argues that "work and other meaningful activity are essential elements in recovery" from drugs and alcohol addiction (p.9), suggesting any IPS trial in the UK should include work-trials so that employers can observe candidates in action over a period of time prior to committing to offering a contract. Black suggests this would be a way of overcoming reluctance among employers to recruit candidates in recovery from addiction, arguing that the government should also consider creating a discretionary fund to support smaller employers with expenses incurred employing candidates in recovery.

## Financial incentives

### **Financial incentives to study**

Bivand et al (2011) argue that in order to tackle youth unemployment, it is necessary that education is "financially viable" and incentives exist to complete study (p.5). Evidence from the Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme (EMA) in England which was rolled out from 2004/5 and stop at the end of academic year 2010/11 provided (at the end of the programme) up to £30 per week for students from low income households to encourage them to stay in education beyond the end of compulsory education. There was higher overall EMA receipt and average weekly amounts among minority ethnic groups (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani), 'lower' socio-economic groups, those who received free school meals while at school (almost 90% of students who received free meals at school received EMA and almost all of them at the top rate), those whose parents were less well educated, and those students living with only one parent. Research with participants indicated that the EMA had a 'deadweight' (i.e. participants said receipt did not affect participation) of 88 per cent and the Government concluded that this was too high. However, analyses by the Institute of Fiscal Studies suggested that that the benefits of EMA in terms of higher wages 'completely offset' the costs (Bolton, 2011). Relatedly, there have been concerns that the challenges of surviving on an apprenticeship wage are off-putting for young people who wish/need to live independently (Kingstone, 2017).

### **Personal motivation and quality of working relationships more effective than financial incentives among individuals with a drug/alcohol dependency**

Findings from two Work Programme proof of concepts designed to better support individuals with a drug/alcohol dependency into employment found at this stage personal motivation and quality of working relationships was more effective than financial motivations to enter employment this client group felt achieving job outcomes was too remote for enhanced payments to be motivating (Adams et al, 2017).

## Support services/enablers

### **Supporting homeless people into sustainable employment as a priority to tackle homelessness**

The Transitional Spaces project in the UK demonstrates how long-term unemployed people can be best prepared for employment. Set up in 2006 as a response to hostels increasingly being used on a long-term basis by single people and aimed to offer support into both sustainable employment and housing, it sought to move people into employment first as it was felt that hostel residents with a job, are more likely to be accepted as tenants by private landlords. Evaluation demonstrated it was very successful in moving the target group into employment. As Green et al (2015) argue it "compared very well with Jobcentre Plus programmes aimed at the general population of unemployed individuals, rather than with those programmes aimed at the most deprived" (p.20).

### **Skills and development training within programmes considering the wider needs of the long-term unemployed and of specific populations furthest away from the labour market**

An example of such a project is the Employment Boot Camp, launched by Family Mosaic (a housing provider in London and the south east). An intensive pre-employment course designed to challenge unemployed participants to rethink their lifestyle, identify and address personal barriers, change their attitude and feel positive about the future, it emphasised a personal approach supporting individual development. Participants benefit from individual coaching and group sessions which are designed to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and prepare participants for world of work. As part of a six-week programme, participants attend sessions focusing on interview and interpersonal skills, creating and maintaining self-confidence, fitness and health, nutrition and well-being and financial

management. Green et al (2015) note how 850 participants entered employment between April 2012 and June 2014 following the programme. The average salary of participants who gained employment between October 2012 and February 2014 was above the London Living Wage (£18,000 compared £16,450.6).

**Supported employment programmes for people with mental health problems leaving prison**  
Durcan et al (2018) examine the use of Individual Placement and Support, a supported employment programme designed to help people with mental health problems leaving prison. The programme supported prison leavers in the West Midlands. They underline how nationally although employment is central to integration with reoffending likely without support, there is a gap in support services for people leaving prison with only 6% of people leaving prison receiving support (p.3). Participants on the programme were supported by an Employment Specialist trained in Individual Placement and Support, who aimed to understand their goals for employment, find them a paid role and then provide support to help them maintain the role. IPS schemes also involve employment support being embedded within a mental health team. However, Durcan et al stress how most of their participants did not receive any community mental health support even though they had accessed mental health in-reach services whilst in prison. They argue that "having a standalone supported employment service, rather than one integrated within community mental health treatment detrimentally affected the project's success". The report concludes the cost of the project was slightly lower than the cost of his is slightly lower of providing a "similar-sized community service" but that "in light of the multiple and complex needs of people leaving prison with a mental health problem, and the costs incurred by criminal justice and health care as a result, there is a strong case for more research to investigate the cost benefits of this type of programme". They recommend HM Prison and Probation Service together with other stakeholders commission a larger-scale pilot of the programme.

### **Voluntary, local health and employment support programmes for people with disabilities and long-term conditions**

The Work Foundation (2016) reviewed national and local programmes supporting people with long term health conditions to return to work. They note local initiatives often have more freedom to introduce innovative policies. One example of good practice they identify is the Bromley-by-Bow Centre. It is argued that the voluntary nature of the programmes contribute to their success. Individuals often self-refer to take part and so may be more motivated to moving into work and accessing employment support.

### **Co-production**

Lindsay et al (2018) argue that co-production in employment support programmes will be more successful in helping disadvantages individuals to move out of poverty and progress in the labour market than traditional approaches. Through analysis of local services targeting lone parents led by partnerships between third sector organisations and the public sector in five Scottish localities, they maintain that co-production between stakeholders and service users resulted in several beneficial social outcomes which were "facilitated by processes of co-governance and co-management". Co-production was shown to empower and build on the talents of disadvantaged individuals such as lone parents. Lindsay et al stress the importance of up-front stable funding to the success of the project. Similar positive benefits from co-production were evident from the experience of involvement of young people in Talent Match. Bashir et al. (2018) highlight that approaches to involvement included: (1) youth-led governance and consultation groups which have a representative function on or influence on wider governance structures such as partnership boards, steering groups and commissioning panels; (2) individuals or groups of young people engaging young people in Talent Match and delivering peer support and training (often termed as Talent Match 'Champions' or 'Ambassadors'); (3) helping to develop and/or deliver services which respond to the

needs of young people, either through advising service development or direct delivery; and (4) influencing policy and practice locally, giving feedback to employers, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus. Involving young people helped improve service quality. It also was an important mechanism for supporting young people facing some of the most challenging barriers to labour market participation and helped bring them closer to the labour market – in part through building their skills and confidence. However, involvement needs to be seen as a complement to, but not a replacement for, a range of other activities to support young people to overcome barriers to labour market participation.

## 2. Referral, Engagement and Assessment

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

### **Understanding of needs of and targeted support for long-term unemployed to overcome lack of access to labour market information.**

Advice and guidance provide useful assistance to individuals who are not yet employment ready. Campbell et al. (1998) stress a lack of access to job market information including employer recruitment channels prevent long-term unemployed people in the UK from securing employment in improving/buoyant labour markets. Green et al (2015) argue "addressing this particular barrier requires a strong commitment and understanding of the needs and situation of long-term unemployed individuals. Information, advice and guidance can then be provided as a source of support leading to employment entry at a later stage" (p.16). Green et al (2015) stress HR professionals have an important role to play in providing information, advice and guidance designed to lead to employment entry at a later stage. They note the success of Steps Ahead Mentoring Scheme, run by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) with support from NESTA and the Cabinet Office via the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund. As part of the programme, Jobcentre Plus advisers are able to refer young people aged 18–24 who are struggling to get jobs to a CIPD mentor who will give them 1 hour of one-to-one mentoring per week over a six-week period designed to build their confidence and help them find work. 73 per cent of people who had completed the programme had gone to enter work or further training.

**Quality pre-employment training** Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Programme (I-BEST) - programme of occupational courses which include basis skills content, with students receiving college-level credits for their 'occupational coursework'. It aims to improve progression into and through a 'high demand field' of employment including health services, computer technology, and automotive technology. Ziedenberg et al (2010) found the programme impacted positively on all education measures (except rate of drop-out). But these differences on employment variables were not statistically significant. This may be the result of the impact of the recession on employment probabilities. This is discussed in more detail in Green et al (2015).

**Quality careers advice in schools** Green et al (2015) argue career guidance in schools is important in enabling young people to make education and training choices that will positively impact on their future awareness of, and decisions about education, training and employment, and pathways to desired outcomes. Evidence from case study work with young people from the Midlands from a range of educational and socio-economic backgrounds (Purcell et al., 2017) reveals that a lack of adequate advice and guidance as school students was a theme that ran through many of the graduate and virtually all of the non-graduate respondents' accounts of their experience of pathways to employment. Those who had had access to excellent careers guidance and came from families who were able to help and advise them, and sometimes open doors to opportunities, were at an enormous advantage. The evidence indicates that achievement and attitudes are related to earlier social and educational advantages and disadvantages; the family and community support and the quality of education; and careers guidance to which they had access.

**Quality personal development support for individuals struggling in/ outside the school system** Training and skills development programmes aimed at supporting young people at risk of underachieving or becoming early school leavers. The Building the Future Together project in Wales, a £15 million project was partly funded by the European Social Fund (Priority 1) and delivered by the Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) Council in partnership with Coleg Morgannwg. "The project was launched in 2009 to improve the education, employment and life outcomes of young people aged 11–19 and at risk of underachieving. The programme's central management team was seen as successful in co-



ordinating recruits and the support they received from a range of actors including youth coaches, keyworkers and other providers. An evaluation of this project indicated that the project overachieved in four out of its five performance indicators: number of participants recruited; number of participants gaining qualifications; number of participants entering further learning and number of participants entering employment. There was a reported positive impact on soft skills and confidence, and families and teaching staff reported having benefitted from a family member or student taking part in the programme. The evaluation also showed a positive impact beyond its performance indicators and participating students (Green et al, 2015, pp. 17-18). Evidence from career academies in the US which aim to reduce young people's risk of social exclusion by keeping them in high school and encouraging successful transitions to post-second education or employment, had a strong positive impact on earnings but little impact on educational outcomes. The analysis focused on the career paths of young people over the eight years following when young people were scheduled to graduate from high school. The evaluation focused on nine sites, in or near a large urban school district that had above national average rates of Hispanic and African-American students, higher drop-out, higher local unemployment and higher proportion of low-income families (Green et al, 2015). The 'Learning to be job ready' (L2BJR) pilot scheme in a department responsible for social care of an unidentified city council in northern England was designed to provide support to long-term unemployed individuals. Participants were provided with 6 months of quality training and work experience aimed to equip them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to improve their likelihood of being employed at the end of the period as they were considered unlikely to apply for jobs due a lack of confidence in understanding and navigating the (public sector) labour market. Half of participants on the scheme gained a job with the council department following the end of the programme and all but one joined the registry for temporary workers to cover care roles across the council (see Green, 2015 for more info).

#### **Use of sports to engage young people at risk of exclusion from the labour market in pre-employment training**

Skinner and Zakus (2008) analyse the example of Street League in London and Glasgow, a sport for employment charity which aims to end youth unemployment in the UK. The scheme now exists in 14 regions across the UK, operating sport for employment programmes running in 38 local communities. They offer 10-12 week long programmes supporting unemployed 16-24 year olds to learn key skills, and gain qualifications and work experience to move into a sustainable job or further training (Street League, 2017). Target groups include: the homeless, drug and alcohol dependent individuals in rehabilitation, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, people with identified learning disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with mental health issues and individuals at risk. More broadly, Palmner and Micallef (no date given but 2013 at earliest) argue that football-based employment programmes are transformative. The initial attraction of football lead to participants subsequently gaining new skills either directly or indirectly e.g. teamwork, communication and confidence, apparent within the game and adopting values e.g. respect, punctuality and behavioural change.

#### **Information and advice on broadening spatial horizons can help facilitate employment entry**

Green and White (2007) and White and Green (2011) underline how the outlook of some jobseekers is localised which in turn leads them to restrict themselves to a smaller set of local job opportunities than exist in reality (i.e. 'subjective' employment opportunities are more restricted than 'objective' ones). This highlights the importance of taking people outside of their 'comfort zone' and exposing them to new experiences/people. Travel training and other initiatives (discussed below) are also of relevance here.

## **Community Champions**

Evidence from the New Deal for Communities programme indicates that using community activists/champions and 'Learning Champions' to attract residents to use the opportunities on offer has worked well (for example see Kirton and Lall, 2004). Many residents in disadvantaged areas have not been successful in the educational system and a smaller proportion than the national average stay on post-16. Simply providing lifelong learning facilities will not guarantee take up in practice. It is crucial, therefore, that opportunities for lifelong learning are linked to the needs and interests of local residents and community champions/learning champions can help in providing routes to engagement and role models. Evidence from Connecting Communities (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) also points to an important role for local people in encouraging their neighbours take steps towards positive change for themselves and their communities.

## Employer engagement

### **Linking employers and young people to overcome employers' concerns that young people are not work-ready**

Green et al (2015) describe an initiative in Scotland which involves the employer-led development of a Certificate of Work Readiness. This enables employers to see young people in a work setting over a longer period, while young people gain valuable experience of the workplace and the opportunity to be provided with an employer reference important for future job search. This highlights the importance of developing work experience and also certificating it so that job seekers have a formal record of what they have done.

### **Awareness of training and skills development and support services needed for individuals in the local area to access jobs created when new businesses/ developments are planned**

Better identification of the training and skills development and support services needed can improve the employment prospects of local jobseekers. McKinstry (2003) analyses how the £12 million Days Inn Hotel development in Sandy Row (a deprived area in south Belfast, Northern Ireland) resulted in uptake of programmes aimed at helping jobseekers prepare for interviews and employment as well 21 members of the community being employed by the hotel, 13 of which were still employed five months later. They outline how a local employability working group was established to act as a single contact point with the employer. Recommendations from the report for the pre-employment phase include scheduling potential recruitment exercises jointly with the local community; collaborate with between employers and the local community to develop capacity-building programmes; reduce barriers to participation by encouraging employers to review their recruitment requirements and methods; and encouraging employers to visit local communities to promote job opportunities and demonstrate commitment.

### **Holistic and inclusive employer engagement from pre-employment phase to maximise the job opportunities open to disadvantaged groups**

McGregor et al. (1999), underline how area regeneration initiatives represent an ideal opportunity to work with employers to maximise local job gains from local schemes. They give the example of Glasgow where Drumchapel Opportunities worked in conjunction with businesses in the new Great Western Retail & Leisure Park to maximise the employment of locals. Green et al (2015) argue this initiative illustrates "how local regeneration partnerships can facilitate more effective employer involvement by reducing the number of organisations involved, simplifying the process of approaching employers for help, building up the capacity of smaller businesses to participate, and facilitating staff exchanges between initiatives and employers" (p.19). Eurofound (2012a) found "Successful policies offer good quality career advice and comprehensive holistic guidance" (p.2).

They also argue that policy which aims to increase the employability of young people should focus on the buy-in of employers and their representatives.

## Financial incentives

### **Better-off calculations**

As Green et al (2015) argue, although 'better-off' calculations for people in work as opposed to out-of-work benefits have been included in various programmes, robust evidence of the value of such calculations compared to broader policy initiatives is not available. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that of the factors motivating individuals at the pre-employment stage to undertake training is "clearly the prospect of financial gains" (Green et al, 2015, p.20). The OECD (2005) suggested that policies involving raising financial incentives to work are one method of increasing the labour supply but that their analysis requires further scrutiny using refined empirical techniques. Their analysis suggests there are moderate labour market effects of marginal effective tax rates. ... Indeed, a reduction of marginal effective tax rates by 20% (which is what some of the most ambitious reforms have tried to achieve) implies a rise in the probability of moving from unemployment to employment by nearly 10%, i.e. from 45% to 49%. The strongest effects are found for the unemployed with a working partner, whose re-employment probability would increase by seven percentage points, from 51% to nearly 58%. The evidence on transitions from inactivity to work is more mixed. Significant effects are found for single women only: for this group, the probability to move from inactivity to work would increase by almost 13%. Finally, the reduction in marginal effective tax rates is also found to encourage transitions from part-time to full-time work or promote moves to higher-paid jobs, especially for second earners in couples without children.

### **Awareness of financial initiatives and perceived ease of application**

Financial incentives are more effective if they are widely known among their target group and the administrative process to receive them is not overly bureaucratic. The ability of the system to respond to changes in family needs is also important (OECD, 2005). The OECD (2005) suggests that "integration with the tax system and payment through the wage package could be an improvement for recipients, and a cost-saving solution for governments" (p.128). Conversely, work on the impact of sanctions from a qualitative longitudinal study suggests that welfare conditionality within the social security system is largely ineffective in facilitating people's entry into or progression within the paid labour market over time. The Welfare Conditionality Project (2018) concluded that benefit sanctions do little to enhance people's motivation to prepare for, seek, enter or increase paid work. Rather, the evidence suggested that they routinely trigger profoundly negative personal, financial, health and behavioural outcomes and push some people away from collectivised welfare provisions.

## Support services/enablers

### **Targeted pre-employment support for specific groups**

As Green et al (2015, p.20) argue targeted support is needed not just for young people (as implied in some of the literature) but for a wider range of groups e.g. the homeless, the long-term unemployed, those with caring responsibilities or the low-skilled in order to help them to develop the skills, attitudes and resources required to enter the labour market. The OECD notes "when working with those some distance from the labour market, the importance of personal support from coaches and mentors cannot be over-emphasised" (p.66).

*Older people:* The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2017) reports on the experiences of people aged over 50 who are out of work or in insecure work across Greater Manchester. They underline how the economic inactivity rate of people aged 50-64 is twice as high as that for people that aged 35-49 (p.3). Whilst they acknowledge that for some people this is a choice, for many people it is not. According to Franklin et al (2014) of those people aged 50-64 in the UK who report themselves as

economically inactive, it is estimate that 1 million left work involuntarily (Franklin et al, 2014). The Learning and Work Institute (2016) found that the Work Programme is not providing effective employment support for people aged over 50. Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2017) aimed to provide deeper insight into the issues faced by jobseekers in this group. They found jobseekers over 50 face "multiple and interrelated barriers", many of which are specific to their age group e.g. health and care issues, suitability of work, employability, suitability of services such as employment support services, institutional ageism, internalised ageism (p.4). The report concludes that to address the challenges faced by older people in entering and remaining in employment, proactive change is needed at national and local level. They argue that "employability and employment support should be better tailored to older jobseekers, building on their skills and experience, and better meeting their needs" and that "Increased flexibility is needed in the benefits systems and employment support service provision needs to recognise the particular challenges that people over 50 face in returning to work" (p.5).

*Mothers – including lone parents and women with partners:* The Young Women's Trust (2017) (YWT) examined the views of mothers aged over 25 years regarding work, children and employment support, through a literature review, focus groups and a survey. They found that mothers who worked or planned to work struggled with balancing work and family considering formal childcare to be expensive and inflexible. The report underlines how Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has a "poor reputation" among this group and suggests this is "partly down to its habit of implementing policies rigidly and causing harm in the process" (p.2). It recommends that future JCP policy seeks to address this negative perception in future policy, involving the target group more in policy design. The need for policy to be more flexible, and personalised is underlined. It is suggested that policy adopts some of the principles of YWT's Work It Out employability service: flexibility, remote provision, and support for young women as individuals with distinct aspirations and strengths. Taylor (2016, 2017) found that the income support benefit system in France, where inactive individuals were provided with an advisor at Mairie (City Council level) who offered broader, more personalised advice than advisors at the Employment Support Service. was effective in engaging hard-to-reach clients (e.g. mothers). Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2014) argue that lone parents face multiple barriers regarding employment and that policymakers should better consider responses "across a range of areas that include childcare, employment support, in-work poverty, transport, future welfare reform and partnership work" (p.1). In their study, they found that although most lone parents are looking for employment, they have to balance their employment goals with their childcare responsibilities and ideals. Research on women in London and the South East (Tunstall et al., 2015) also highlighted a similar range of constraints to work entry and progression, including: accessibility and affordability of formal childcare, difficulties organising informal childcare with friends and family, accessibility and availability of local work compatible with responsibilities for children (allowing travel time to reach child care and with enough flexibility to allow cover for child illness and school holidays), availability of better paid jobs that could compensate for costs of childcare, travel and lost benefits and made work pay, and availability of and access to jobs that enabled progression. In addition, many were affected by one or more additional constraints, such as marginal or out-of-date work experience, lack of education and qualifications, for those educated abroad difficulties getting recognition for foreign qualifications or carrying out necessary requalification, lack of confidence, lack of information on training and job opportunities, availability of funding for training, their own or a family member's mental or physical ill health or care needs. While a single constraint might be enough to markedly reduce options for work and the likelihood of work, multiple constraints could have cumulative effects. Botfield et al (2014) identify areas of good practice in terms of employability services for women. They analyse the Women Onto Work, employment support project in Scotland, that aims to provide a safe and motivating coaching environment where women can set and meet employment goals and deliver integrated employment services. They stress the value of personalised employment support and clear progression routes. Key to personalised support provided by the project is the lack of stringent job outcome targets for coaches enabling

them to concentrate on developing the skills and confidence of individual clients and addressing complex and multi-dimensional barriers to employment.

*Ethnic minorities:* The Joseph Rowntree Foundation with the Black Training & Enterprise Group (BTEG) have been focusing on promoting employment entry and in-work progression routes as part of a 'Poverty and Ethnicity Demonstration Programme'. Emerging results (presented at a seminar in late October 2018 [Weekes-Bernard, 2018]) suggest that a targeted approach is needed rather than ethnicity-blind approaches (i.e. running programmes which are open to all ethnic groups without targeting any specific groups) which may or may not result in people from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty taking up the support services on offer. Targeted approaches can understand and respond to the barriers and needs which are specific to ethnic groups with high poverty rates. (Echoing points made elsewhere in this review) using trusted intermediaries works in take-up of support services. People from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty lack knowledge of and confidence to use existing support services, including services provided by Job Centres and other public, private and voluntary sector agencies. They need the encouragement and reassurance of trusted intermediaries. The intermediaries can be individuals or agencies but must be locally based, committed to and trusted by the target communities. Trusted intermediaries are critical for encouraging people from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty to take up mainstream and other support services. Finally, long-term support is needed to make a difference to employment outcomes.

*Refugees:* Shutes (2011) examines the impact of a job-orientated performance system on the responsiveness of providers to the requirements of unemployed refugees, arguing that the existence of a focus on short-term needs can be a source of tension when seeking to move refugees who face complex barriers to employment, particularly those with English language needs. The opportunities promoted by providers may also not be appropriate for refugees with providers concentrating on easy-access, low-skilled and low-paid jobs. A review of the literature suggests there is a gap in more recent evaluations of refugee support programmes. The Refugees into Sustainable Employment Evaluation (RISE) programme is currently being evaluated by the Institute for Employment Studies. Eurofound in their review of European policy (2012a) argue for personalised support for young people, focused on the client, not the provider. Examples of good practice given include one-stop-shops for young people or tailored, personalised advice by mentors.

### **Multiple partners working together**

"Key success factors in servicing the needs of disadvantaged communities involves developing, engaging and retaining multiple partners that can support the delivery of programs and outcomes through a range of different mechanisms including funding, delivery, expert advice and referrals" (Skinner and Zakus, 2008, p.265). Street League, a UK-wide charity aiming to end youth unemployment through football-based employability programmes has over 80 different partners, including 20 funding partners. In addition to providing office space, partners provide financial support and the provision of office space, and CSR activities e.g. volunteering to support program delivery. "Other partnership models used by Street League include: twinning businesses to Street League teams, buddying a Street League player to provide mentoring and coaching support in a professional and sometimes emotional capacity, work experience and employment, sponsorships and in-kind resource provision" (p.265). Whitworth (2018) argues that City-regions "are uniquely positioned in the English context to create the type of positively networked integrated employment support 'ecosystem' that 'harder-to-help' individuals in particular require" (p.274). One stop shops integrating various different services and service providers are a common feature of models to support people into work internationally. An example of such a 'one stop' model in England is the MyGo service in Ipswich which integrated Jobcentre Plus support with a locally led employment, skills, apprenticeship and employment services for young people involving both public employment service and voluntary sector providers (Wilson et al., 2017). The OECD (2013) underlines the

importance of understanding the area and context when designing interventions and monitoring, supporting linkages with other schemes.

### **Early personalised intervention**

The Moving On Up Learning Report (2016) evaluates the Moving On Up Initiative which aimed to increase the employment rate among young black men in London. They argue that "young black men face more challenges than most jobseekers" and that early intervention with long-term personalised support is needed to help them move into employment. They suggest that young black men engage most with specialist support services e.g. Moving On Up most when they first claim JSA and that early intervention is therefore vital. They underline advisers listening to clients, advisers having a positive attitude and building a rapport with clients and offering 1:1 long-term support are important factors in successfully moving clients into work. Barnow et al (2013) in their study of educational and employment outcomes for children and alumni of foster care services conclude that length of stay in employment programmes is central to unemployed young people entering employment. They argue that this suggests young people who have been in foster care need not only need "additional services as they transition into adulthood but they need those services over a period of time". Public Health England (2014) argue local authorities may be able to influence the provision of local employment services by inviting employment service providers to be members of health and wellbeing boards. The Centre for Mental Health (2013) briefing on barriers to employment for people with mental health problems argues that improving access to employment for this groups needs to involve health and wellbeing boards, GPs, mental health services, local authorities, employment services and Work Programme providers.

### **Work placements in conjunction with provider-led job-search support**

Analysis of a DWP trailblazer scheme suggested the potential of a Community Action Programme (CAP) involving a six-month work placement together with provider-led supported job search for long-term jobseekers whose main barriers to employment were: recent work experience, motivation or work ethic.

### 3. Needs Assessment and barrier removal

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

#### **Tailored employment support**

Green et al (2015) underline how "case study evidence suggests that intermediate labour market initiatives, providing training alongside work experience at the pre-employment stage, can be useful in facilitating successful entry to employment" (p.24). They suggest, based on expert interviews that engaging employers and understanding employers' need is crucial for such schemes to be successful. Meager et al (2014) stress the key role of tailored support from personal advisors but note that the quality of support provided on the programme can be affected by large caseloads and staff turnover. Eurofound (2012a) list as the first learning point of their report investigating how policy can improve the employment rate of young people, "Successful policy measures specify their target group and find innovative ways to reach them, for example by establishing a good reputation or creating a positive 'brand' for the measure or working with relevant community groups for hard-to-reach groups" (p.2). In relation to claimants' experiences on the Work Programme. Meager et al (2014) note that the programme adopts a 'work-first' approach designed to enable people to move into work quickly, and places less emphasis on human-capital based approaches such as training programmes. Although they note that the majority of participants who described experiencing difficulties finding work, described the support they received from the Work Programme as "helpful in overcoming their barriers and moving closer to work", older, disabled and better-qualified participants reported the interventions as "helpful" less frequently (p.20). They suggest this was because participants with health conditions and disabilities often did not feel they were in a position to move towards work and were looking most often for support related to medical or disability matters. Taylor (2016) underlined how out-of-work partnered parents with health conditions in both France and the UK reported a lack of tailored support in overcoming their health needs and finding suitable employment.

#### **Investment in modified Individual Placement and Support models of employment support for unemployed individuals with health conditions and disabilities**

This can deliver financial savings whilst moving participants into employment. Whitworth (2018) found that "Modified IPS services offer a viable route to delivering enhanced employment outcomes for individuals with health conditions and disabilities and financial savings for governments" (p.568).

#### **Sector-based training and/or occupational certification**

In a review of employment entry in growth sectors (Green et al., 2017) highlight how policy has traditionally focused on population sub-groups. There is a longer history of sector-focused initiatives in the US than in the UK and robust US evaluation evidence point to potential benefits of a sector-focused approach to employment entry policy. Holzer and Martinson (2005) underline how education and job training for actual/potential low earners is most likely to be effective when it enables workers to gain a certification which employers value and when the content of the training corresponds to private sector demand. (Sector-based training initiatives are discussed in more detail in the 'Vocational Activity section.)

Employer engagement

#### **Need to make recruitment practices accessible to disadvantaged people**

Business, particularly smaller ones, may not have the resources or expertise to assess applications based on meritocracy, rigour and objectivity (Millar, 2012), instead they may recruit candidates according to convenience, stereotyping applicants employing workers who fit "culturally" with their organisational culture and brand/image (Warhurst et al, 2015). Candidates from different

backgrounds may therefore be disadvantaged. The use of social and informal criteria is likely to particularly disadvantage long-term unemployed people and those who have limited work-experience (Green et al, 2015). Local intermediaries and organisations e.g. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development are important in encouraging employers to adapt their practices to recruit 'non-standard' applicants. Rudiger (2013) highlights how Nestle have adjusted their recruitment and selection criteria introducing a competency-based approach where young people can demonstrate their potential in scenario-based situations.

### **Need to bridge gap between employers' expectations of young people and young people's understanding of what is expected of them**

Rudiger (2013) underlines the existence of a mismatch between employers' expectations of young people and young people's understanding of what is expected of them. Mentoring, work placements and awareness raising activities of opportunities available can play a role here.

### **Sectoral focus in training and employment policies**

Evidence from Australia on the development of sector and local skills strategies (Martinez-Fernandes, 2009) and the UK with the Employer Ownership of Skills (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2011) agenda suggests input from employers can drive up the quality and use of skills. Employer engagement was also tested in the UK Futures Programme (UKFP) which offered small scale public co-investment to employers and industry in order to design and test their own solutions to emerging or long-standing skills and productivity challenges. The approach adopted supporting collaborative approaches to workforce development issues amongst employers and, where applicable, wider social partners, and also encouraged innovative approaches to addressing workforce development issues on a sectoral basis. An initial evaluation of UKFP (Thom et al., 2016) showed that small firms face significant information and resource barriers to engagement. Hence employer engagement with such firms can work better when there is a product or solution that is tangible, rather than an idea. Not all employers are sure of their needs or the benefits to be gained from training. The experience of UKFP showed that senior managers within employer organisations need to be engaged to ensure organisational buy-in and commitment to change, and middle managers need to be on board for effective implementation. Evidence from two sector workforce centres in Chicago suggests that sectoral variations are likely to occur in how sector-led workforce development schemes operate and how well they move people into sustainable employment (Schrock, 2013).

### Financial incentives

#### **Adult social care personal budgets**

Watts et al (2014) examine how adult social care personal budgets are used to purchase employment support by disabled people. They conclude only limited evidence exists that personal budgets are used to support disabled people into employment, particular provider-led rather individualised employment support. They demonstrate how personal budgets can enable employment outcomes for people but note problems with implementation. They recommendation supported employment provision should be universally available and accessible for everyone in a local area, funded through core funding and the addition of personal budgets. They also contend Local Authorities should "Focus on young people coming through transition from children's services to adult services, as part of the 'Local Offer', such that the presumption of employment should be introduced as early as possible. Options for encouraging this can include work-based learning (WBL), traineeships and internships" (p.36).



Support services/enablers

**Wrap around services**

Hamilton (2012) in a review of local and state level employment and workforce development initiatives in the US, examined career pathway models and cluster skill development model, showing the importance of 'wrap around' services (e.g. transport, childcare, housing assistance, coaching, counselling and subsidies for books and equipment) in supporting low-income adults to complete education and/or attain employment. This highlights the importance of joined-up working across different policy domains.

**Trained and supported staff**

Eurofound (2012a) list the need for trained and supportive staff as a necessity for effective delivery of policy across the EU supporting out-of-work young people into employment. As employability programmes change, the range of knowledge required by support staff can increase; for example, with the advent of Universal Credit work coaches have a greater range of individuals to deal with. Adams et al (2017) how high staff turnover prevents staff on the Work Programme from building strong relationships with clients.

## 4. Vocational Activity (moving towards being job ready)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

### **Classroom-based learning**

Fitzenberger et al (2008) evaluated three types of vocational training in Germany for unemployed people. They analysed the impact of the training on the chance of employment for unemployed individuals using data from individuals who became unemployed in 1986/87 and 1993/94 in (the former) West Germany. Participants were on one of three German further vocational training programmes before entering employment from a period of unemployment, and were aged 25 to 55. The programmes evaluated were: (1) Practice firms (PF): 5–6 month work placements in a company; (2) Provision of specific professional skills and techniques (SPST): the median duration of these programmes was 4-6 months - they involved classroom training and/or practical work experience to prepare individuals for a job and successful completion of the programme led to a certificate recognising skills acquired; and (3) Retraining (RT): these programmes involved the provision of 'new and comprehensive vocational training' with a median duration was 12–16 months (p. 329) leading to widely accepted certificates in occupations with high demand in the labour market. "The evaluation showed that for a short period after starting on a programme there was a negative lock-in effect (i.e. because participants were training they were not moving into employment); however, in the medium- and long-term the effect on the employment rate was significantly positive. They also found that SPST and PF outperformed RT (in comparisons of the three treatments) and based on this proposed that the best initiatives are not necessarily those focusing on offering more formal qualifications. Overall, SPST (by far the largest programme) showed the best results, consistently during the two periods" (Green et al, 2015). Classroom training appears beneficial for basic skills (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2016).

### **Less formal training is most effective when programmes are short**

"Short programmes (below six months and probably below four months) are more effective for less formal training activity" (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2016, p.30). After reviewing programmes varying in length from 10 days up to three years, the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (2016) found short programmes generally have positive or mixed impacts on employment and wages and that they tended to focus on upskilling and were either partially or entirely classroom-based. The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth noted an evaluation of training programmes in Mexico found negative coefficients but "questioned the reliability of the sample selection methods utilised and thus the reliability of the results in general" (p.24).

### **Sector-focused training**

As indicated above, over recent years one element of provision to support individuals to enter employment in the UK has been the development of a sector-focus, most obviously through the development of sector-based work academies (SBWAs). SBWAs are designed to help unemployed benefit claimants gain the relevant skills and work experience to gain employment in a specific sector and allow employers to fill vacancies with suitable applicants. Introduced in August 2011 in England and in January 2012 in Scotland, the SBWA programme has three elements which together should not exceed six weeks in duration (i.e. this is a short-term focused programme): (1) Sector-specific pre-employment training of up to 30 hours per week; (2) A work experience placement with an employer; and (3) A guaranteed job interview linked to a genuine vacancy. SBWAs are run by Jobcentres and are developed in partnership with (predominantly large private sector) employers in sectors with high volumes of current local vacancies – notably, retail, hospitality, transport and logistics, food, care, manufacturing and engineering, and administration, with elementary occupations accounting for the single largest proportion (around a third) of work experience placements. The results from an impact evaluation show that SBWAs have a positive impact on

moving participants off benefits and into work, with most positive results for those participants who participated in all three elements of the SBWA programme (Ward et al., 2016). This latter point reiterates the point above about the importance of programme implementation and of participants being exposed to all elements of a programme. A similar sector-focused scheme – Get into – is run by the Prince's Trust. Get into is a short vocational course that develops young people's skills in a specific sector for 16 to 25-year-olds. As in the case of SBWAs, courses are run in sectors where it is known that jobs are likely to be available, such as retail, logistics and hospitality. The focus of SBWAs and 'Get into' is on short-term programmes, but there is evidence that where the focus of sector-based programmes extends beyond employment entry to progression, screening job seekers for interest in, and attributes/ skills required in, the sector is likely to enhance the success of policies. It is possible that sector-focused policy may be more important for employment progression than for employment entry (Green et al., 2017). Indeed, US sector-focused programmes tend to target a pathway approach to employment entry, retention and progression. Evaluation evidence from these programmes – which sometimes are open to those wanting to move from existing jobs as well as the unemployed - is positive (Maguire et al., 2010; Gasper and Henderson, 2014; Hendra et al., 2016).

### **A 'dual customer' approach**

Following on from the discussion above, several US programmes adopt a 'dual customer' approach involving: (1) an employer need or driver of engagement (such as retention problems); and, (2) a participant benefit (see Conway, 2014). Sector-focused interventions are also of value in opening up opportunities for labour market intermediaries to forge closer relationships with employers and to tailor labour market interventions to employer requirements. They are also of particular value in encouraging employment of under-represented groups in particular sectors.

### **Use of sports to make job seekers job ready**

There is some positive evidence of using sports to make jobseekers job ready. Spaaj et al (2013) analyse the Sport Steward programme in Rotterdam which mixes educational work with sport activities to help workless young people to develop new skills. Funded through ERDF and consisting of a four-month programme designed to create an educational platform where workless gain knowledge and experience of the profession of sport steward, as well as communication, computer and job search skills. No direct analysis of outcomes for participants but Spaaj et al (2013, p.1616) argue "the use of sports activities in helping young people to improve their skills can enable them to compete for jobs more effectively". This underlines the importance of local economic context. Spaaj et al. (2013) also analyse NEET Stoke Challenge (NSC) which is funded through contributions from partner agencies and the Football Foundation. It "provides sports-based activities and personal development education workshops over two days a week for 10 weeks to participants aged between 16 and 24". The education sessions focus on CV writing, team work, problem-based learning, interview techniques and developing social skills. "The programme also seeks to equip participants with a range of predominantly sports-based qualifications including coaching awards" (p.1615). Palmner and Micallef (no date given but 2013 at earliest) found sports-based employment programmes help participants to move towards being job-ready through gaining qualifications, receiving advice on employment (CV writing, interview and job searching techniques) and improving their transferrable life skills.

### **Ongoing, participatory employment assessment**

Crosby et al (2014) analyse new approaches to how jobseekers' needs and abilities can be assessed. They argue that properly understanding jobseekers' needs and abilities is crucial to employment support services successfully helping individuals into long-term, sustainable jobs. They suggest that ongoing assessment and taking into account jobseekers' own perspectives are key. (This also links with the ethos of programmes such as Talent Match which focus on individual action planning and seek to improve individuals' well-being [Crisp et al., 2018]).

Employer engagement

### **Work tasters/ work experience providing a range of skills**

Hamilton (2012) stresses how a balance must be found between individual and employer needs. She suggests that whereas employers often adopt a relatively narrow view of the skills individuals require, individuals have longer-term needs to develop a broader range of occupational options and transferable skills. This highlights employers' focus on firm-specific skills, whereas individuals' longer-term employability also rests on portable generic skills.

### **Brokerage between local employers, HR managers, educational establishments and jobseekers**

Green et al (2015) argue that "a key issue at local level is which players are best placed to work on the employer engagement agenda" (p.26). Fitzgerald (2004) outline how community colleges in the US play an important role in engaging city employers in a co-ordinated way, thus preventing them from being approached by a range of different suppliers of training and associated services. Green et al (2015) point out that although many further education colleges in the UK are "active in this agenda, they tend not to be as respected and established in playing such a key role as community colleges in the US" (p.26). Better links between these organisations would enable employers to be better engaged in local hiring and for job seekers specific skills needs to be better conveyed.

### **Informal contact with employers**

Evaluation of the Moving On Up project (2016) in London found *informal contact with employers* was important for young black men in entering employment as it can lead to job offers, removing the pressures of formal recruitment processes where they can often do badly. Informal contact is important in helping young black men in developing social capital which many lack. This highlights the importance of opportunities to engage with employers in a range of different settings – whether at school, college or elsewhere.

Financial incentives

### **Impact of free public transport in reducing barriers to employment**

Taylor (2017) compared the experiences of out-of-work partnered parents in the UK and France by conducting interviews with out-of-work couples in Sheffield and Lille (northern France), noting the importance of free public transport for job seekers in Lille. Whereas parents in France stressed the benefit of the public transport subsidies in terms of increasing the radius in which they could look for work and underlined how this helped them to move towards their ideal work-care scenarios, parents interviewed in Sheffield revealed how the limited nature of help with transport costs in the UK was and that this was an important obstacle in terms of travelling to different neighbourhoods to look for work and attend interviews. Taylor (2016) explored the impact of free public transport in more depth highlighting how although jobseekers in the UK were able to be reimbursed by Jobcentre Plus for travel costs, this still required them to have the money up front to pay for costs which was often not possible. These findings are echoed by the conclusions of several other reports which stress the value of free public transport with regard to transport and poverty. For example, Titheridge et al (2014) demonstrates the strong link between poverty and travel behaviour for different social groups in the UK, with unemployed people, elderly people, women tending to be more restricted in their travel behaviour. This suggests a need for sustained increased support for job seekers including a combination of concessionary fare schemes, wheels to work schemes, bicycle loan schemes and season ticket loans. Although Lucas et al (2008) is now slightly dated, the report analyses the social and monetary value of public transport initiatives in four deprived areas of England and concludes that "public transport for services are a vital component in the social inclusion of individuals and for maintaining the vitality and vibrancy of low-income neighbourhoods" (p.xiv). With regard to employment, the report noted that at local level more needs to be done to systematically evaluate

and communicate the social benefit of new transport projects and articulate these in terms of wider social policy objectives. More recently, Raikes (2015) has maintained that the devolution of transport powers in England to city-regions has the potential to impact positively on the lives of citizens as well as save money for central government in the form of higher taxes and lower departmental spending. He notes that "the lack of transport connectivity can often be a barrier to employment, and so there is the potential to fund, for example, bus passes for jobseekers based on the welfare savings and increased taxes that result from their employment" (p.497). In turn, he suggests that city-regions may be able to be rewarded for reducing dependency on benefits. Cats (2017) assesses the impact in Tallinn of the introduction of free public transport for all residents, demonstrating that the scheme has led increased public transport usage and increased mobility among low-income residents; (however, it did not find that employment opportunities increased due to the policy). This suggests that transport availability, accessibility and cost issues are important in facilitating access to work, but are insufficient on their own to guarantee entry to, and progression in, employment.

Support services/enablers

### **Apprenticeships and traineeships**

Bivand (2011) stresses the value of apprenticeships to long-term unemployed people; (this implies that traineeships are important too in preparing people without the necessary qualifications for apprenticeships). O'Reilly et al (2015) in their evaluation of policy targeting unemployed young people in the EU underline the need for apprenticeships to provide trainees with high-quality work experience under safe and fair conditions to increase their chances of finding a good quality job. The European Commission (2013) note it is widely acknowledged in the existing literature that apprenticeships positively ease the school-to-work transition. Quintini and Manfredi (2009) demonstrate that the *school-to-work transitions are best in countries with widespread existence of apprenticeships*; (albeit different national institutional structures are important here). Bonnal et al (2002) analysed the expansion of apprenticeships in France as a means of tackling youth unemployment. They argue that apprentices "have a distinct advantage" over people leaving vocational school in securing employment (p.426) as the period before finding their first job is shorter. Cahuc et al. (2014) underline the importance of ensuring apprenticeship systems are easy to navigate. Ryan (1998, 2001) concludes that the effectiveness of apprenticeships varies according to gender, arguing that the positive impact of apprenticeships on transitions and pay are not true for women in all countries. They suggest this is primarily because of occupational and sectoral segregation (Ryan, 1998 and 2001).

### **Youth guarantees**

O'Reilly et al (2015) assess five characteristics of youth unemployment across Europe: flexibility, education, migration, family legacies and EU Policy. In terms of EU policy, they underline the potential of youth guarantees - schemes providing guaranteed entitlement to a job, training, or education for a defined group of young people together with an obligation for a Public Employment Service or another public authority to provide the services and/or implement the programs within a given period of time - in helping young people into work. They cite the examples of Finland and Sweden where youth guarantees have resulted in lower unemployment. In Finland the Youth Guarantee has led to a significant reduction in youth unemployment with young people on the scheme entering either direct employment assistance or further training leading to a job (European Commission, 2014). A 2011 evaluation of unemployed young people aged 24 who participated in the Swedish Youth Guarantee in 2008 concluded participants found a job faster than participants in a control group in other Public Employment Service (PES) measures (Eurofound, 2012a, 2012b). Eurofound (2012b) argues that strengths of youth guarantees include: enabling young people to make more informed decisions about their transition to work (in terms of their personal development plan and needs assessment); and improving the quality and speed of services provided

to young people. Youth Guarantees work best with young people who are already work ready rather than 'hard-to-help' unemployed groups (Eurofound, 2012b). Nonetheless, O'Reilly et al (2015) argue that in spite of the positive impact of youth guarantees in these Nordic countries, only limited evidence exists concerning their long-term effectiveness. They call for improved monitoring and impact evaluation of the schemes. Existing studies indicate that youth guarantees are more effective with new labour market entrants than for long-term unemployed young people (Eurofound, 2012a, 2012c). O'Reilly et al argue that "given the significant share of young people who fall out of the reach of employment services in many countries, it would seem important to extend participation of these young people, including through flexible design and outreach strategies" (p.11). They also underline the need for sufficient public or private sector investment in youth guarantees. Although they acknowledge that Youth Guarantees are "resource intensive" and require "substantial" public or private sector investment, they underline that the costs should be seen against the much higher cost overall of NEETs in EU budgets (p.11). They also stress the importance of Public Employment Services providing individual young people with "appropriate advice on job, education, and training opportunities most relevant to their own needs" (p.11). O'Reilly et al (2015) also consider the difficulties of comparing programmes cross-nationally. As Kluge et al (2006) point out, this can be problematic in view of different programme designs, national frameworks, conditions, and target groups. Based on a review of the evidence (Card, Kluge, & Weber, 2010; Martin & Grubb, 2001), they stress positive medium run effects of publicly sponsored training. They stress the need for employers and local communities to be mobilised in order to ensure training is high quality and tailored to the labour market needs of firms' skill demands, which is critical for young people entering sustainable employment.

## 5. Employer engagement and job matching (when individuals are job-ready and move into employment)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

### **In-firm/on-the-job training**

In-firm / on-the-job training programmes tend to have a more positive impact on supporting jobseekers into employment than classroom-based training programmes with employer co-design and activities that closely mirror actual jobs being crucial to this (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2016, p.30). In their review of evidence on different programmes, the What Works Centre for Economic Growth (2016) notes that workplace-focused training may be more effective due to a range of factors. First, "when employers engage directly with developing course content and with delivery, that content may be more relevant and useful in the marketplace" (p.27). Secondly, as underlined by Schiller (1978) in-firm training provides trainees with firm-specific skills and knowledge that, in turn, increases the likelihood they will be employed by the firm following completion of the programme. This mirrored the finding of The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (2014) that on-the-job training mirroring actual jobs outperformed classroom-based learning (see also Green et al [2015]). Polidano and Tabasso (2013) stress the importance of workplace-based training and experience in successful employment entry and that vocational education and training (VET) courses which include a short-term structured workplace learning element lead to better transitions from education to work than those which are solely classroom based. In Australia, Polidano and Tabasso found classroom-based VET courses with workplace learning were associated with individuals earning an extra \$AU 25–33 per week, in turn reducing the risk of poverty. Green et al (2015) stress that at city level it would therefore be beneficial if local employers offer more opportunities for short-term workplace learning. They underline that this is likely to lead to increased costs for employers and suggest financial inducements (or other incentives) are likely to be necessary to engage employers.

### **Skill-intensive training is most effective when programmes are longer**

The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (2016) argue after reviewing programmes varying in length from 10 days up to three years that although a lock-in effect can occur where participants reduce their job-searching activity while completing training, longer studies tend to result in longer employment periods but that benefits typically play out over a longer time frame. Based on a French comparative evaluation of public training programmes by Crepon et al (2007), the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (2016) argues that the reason longer employment periods appear more successful is due to increased job-matching. A longer study in Germany by Fitzenberger et al (2010) suggests that after the initial locking in period, long-term programmes deliver more persistent, longer term effects on employment levels than shorter programmes (see What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth [2016] for details of more studies on this topic). The Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise (2015) argue that improved job search and job matching support is necessary for older workers as at present older workers people often carry out job search on their own and where they do find employment, they are more likely than other groups of jobseekers to take types of employment that may not be the best fit for their needs and desires, impacting on their job sustainability.

### **Investment in support organisations to develop bridging and linking networks**

The channels employers use when recruiting staff influence the variety, quality and size of the pool of people they have to select from, and are important in ensuring equality among job seekers in terms of the range of opportunities available to them. Social networks have historically been an important source of information for jobseekers on employment opportunities and informal methods

remain important for job search. Evidence from the Employer Perspectives Survey (2016) indicates that employers were more likely to make use of internal resources, such as word of mouth or personal recommendations (79%), placing adverts on their website (54%) and through social media (46%), as opposed to external resources (Shury et al., 2017). Disadvantaged job seekers have long been considered for a long time to be disproportionately negatively impacted in accessing information due to how it circulates on social networks with a socio-economic and geographical bias towards network members with similar experiences (Granovetter, 1974; Niles and Hanson, 2003). Green et al (2013) argue that this problem becomes more acute when the labour market is weaker and employers are consequently likely to use informal recruitment methods more frequently, particularly for low-skilled jobs. Green et al (2015) contend there is a need for services to expand jobseekers' knowledge of different recruitment channels, and where they should look for different types of jobs. Afridi (2011, pp. 13) argues on the basis of a review of the evidence that poverty cannot be addressed by participation in existing social networks.

### **The 'digital divide' and resources to address it**

Access to and the ability to use the internet is increasingly important in finding Labour Market Information (LMI), job search, recruitment and screening. However, concern has been expressed by researchers (e.g. Green et al, 2015; Green et al, 2012; Green et al, 2011; Tremblay and Boyle, 2016) that a 'digital divide' has appeared between jobseekers with access to the internet and information and communications technologies to look for job opportunities and to pursue them, and those who have little or no access. As Green et al (2012) argue, the digital divide is multifaceted, influenced by socio-economic and educational inequalities and by choice (i.e. people who have internet access but decide not to use it). Green et al (2011) identified disparities in internet access according to ethnicity and occupation. Their analysis of the Labour Force Survey revealed a higher than average use of the internet is higher than average among Indian jobseekers but lower than average among than average among Pakistani and Bangladeshi jobseekers. Adam et al (2011) in their review of digital access among Jobcentre Plus claimants, underlined how different interventions are required over the short, medium and longer-term for the 'unaware', the 'unready', the 'uninterested' and the 'unable' to facilitate using the internet in order to access LMI, to search and apply for jobs, and to engage with other services. Examples of services that have been set up to address this issue include: the 'My World of Work' from Skills Development Scotland, the national careers service website for Scotland which provides online information and resources for individuals in Scotland who are seeking work and/or to develop their careers. Applications enable individuals' to assess their strengths, write CVs, gain advice on interview techniques and search for jobs. Similar information is provided by The National Careers Service website (National Careers Service). At the regional level, Liverpool City Region Labour Market Information Service established by the Employment and Skills Board and funded by the Skills Funding Agency's City Skills Fund links research, data and analysis with sector based consultations with local businesses and skills providers to help articulate the needs of the demand-side of the economy to help inform education and training providers. Nonetheless, as Green et al (2015) argue, although it is possible to collect statistics on the use of such services, assessing their direct impact on job entry is complex.

### **ALMPs complemented by additional demand-side measures in areas of high unemployment**

Active labour market programmes (ALMPs) generally include at least one supply-side measure such as job search and training and/or work placements, sometimes in conjunction with benefits sanctions for non-compliance. However, as McVicar and Podivinsky (2010) underline analysis of ALMPs reveals that irrespective of support services the *local labour demand context* is an important factor in whether a programme will be successful.



### **Provision of apprenticeships**

Greene et al. (2015, pp.25-26) provide a review of the national and international literature on apprenticeships. The Richard Review of Apprenticeships (2012) concluded that apprenticeships are most suitable for people not having had a job (generally, young people) and who need substantial training. Green et al (2015) argue apprenticeships are most successful when they are based on strong partnerships and include a strong commitment from employers. Fuller and Rizvi (2012) evaluate an example of such a scheme - an apprenticeship scheme developed by the Southampton Skills Development Zone which sought to address local skills and employment needs through four public sector employers working with partners to create new training and employment opportunities for local unemployed 18 to 25-year-olds. It involved a partnership between Jobcentre Plus (JCP), employers, a training provider and a college. JCP advisors selected the participants who were then given access to pre-employment training, taster days with employers, careers events, and support throughout the recruitment process. The apprentices, who had been out-of-work for at least six months, were very positive about the scheme. They argued that the scheme had significantly improved their CV and their chances in the labour market, provided them with increased self-confidence and self-esteem expanded their inter-personal skills. The scheme had a high success rate with over three quarters of participants subsequently gaining employment, mostly with the apprentice employer. Whilst Fuller and Ritvi (2012) note these outcomes could not be assessed against a comparator group, the high success rate suggests locally designed apprenticeship schemes can have a positive impact (Green et al, 2015).

### Employer engagement

#### **Use of sports-based employability programmes to offer work experience**

Palmer and Micallef (no date given) in their review of football-based employability programmes in the UK praised the inclusion of the opportunity for participants to undertake pertinent work experience through either volunteering or part-/fulltime work following completion of the programme. They compared the employment and crime re-offending rates of participants completing the programme against national statistics so as to create a Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio, in which an overall social value was formed for each organisation. "Across all programmes a positive ratio was found ranging from 1:1.27 to 1:9.07" (p.3).

#### **A more flexible and proactive approach from employers to recruiting older workers**

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2017) in their review of the experiences of people aged over 50 who are out of work or in insecure employment conclude that employers offering more flexible open opportunities and taking a more proactive approach in which they promote positive messages about employing older workers is central to addressing the challenges faced by older workers.

#### **Joined-up offer**

The OECD (2013) underlines how employers confused by the array of employer programmes and possible projects and programmes. Drawing the programmes together under a common identity can facilitate employer involvement.

#### **Ring-fencing of jobs for local people**

Green et al (2015) argue ring-fencing of jobs for local people is an important way of ensuring job seekers are connected to jobs at the local level and supported to move into employment (see also the later discussion on 'Mechanisms requiring employers to recruit locally'). They note ring-fencing of jobs is easier with new developments by major employers that involve the creation of relatively large numbers of jobs. McQuaid et al. (2005) analyse an example of such a project - the Alloa Initiative: a local, partnership-based employability training and job guarantee scheme developed in

partnership with Tesco, prior to the opening of a new store. The initiative funded by the New Deal and Training for Work, involved Tesco (as the employer), Jobcentre Plus, the local authority, the local enterprise company and a private sector organisation which co-ordinated the initiative's activities. Features of the scheme included an eight-week pre-employment Employability Training Course (ETC), work placements at other stores, and childcare support and public transport subsidies to facilitate take-up. Importantly, McQuaid et al. (2005), note there was also a 'job guarantee': all trainees completed the eight week training programme were guaranteed jobs at the store, with positions, pay and working hours agreed between the company and trainees before the course started. The job guarantee acted as an incentive to programme participants to attend and complete the training course. McQuaid et al. (2005) also underlined how access to jobs was aided by the standard selection procedures being changed, with supportive interviews and a flexible discussion-based approach adopted rather than competency-based assessment. Green et al (2015) discuss the results of several other similar training initiatives. They also point out that it is standard practice to use Planning Obligations and Agreements to formally link new developments and the provision of employment opportunities for local residents. For example, they underline how 306 jobs were created for local residents (54% of which were taken up by priority area residents in the new Library of Birmingham with jobs and skills requirements being stipulated in the contract. They note how a mandatory procurement policy for jobs and skills now exists at Birmingham City Council for procurements above thresholds. The Birmingham Employment Access Team supports this process. MacFarlane in conjunction with Community Development Consultants (2000) evidences the strong financial contribution this has made to the budget for training and recruitment activity in Greenwich. Shared Intelligence (2011) cites the strong customer focus of Greenwich Local Labour and Business working in conjunction with contractors as a key factor in its success.

## Financial incentives

### **Increased earnings - top ups, living wages, employer subsidies, tax breaks**

In the UK, under the New Labour Government in-work support through the use of tax credits grew in importance compared to wages as an income source for families on low incomes (Hirsch and Valadez, 2014). Conversely, the growth in zero-hours contracts has increased income instability (CIPD, 2013; Pennycook et al, 2013). Gardiner (1997) assessed 42 welfare-to-work programmes in the UK, finding that the two most effective schemes (Jobmatch and Jobfinder's Grant) in terms of value for money, participation and the number of participants who found work, both provided financial incentives to individuals when they entered employment. Green et al (2015) note a gap exists in terms of robust evidence of how a living wage impacts on employment entry. Nonetheless, (Fairris, 2005) indicates that in Los Angeles living wage companies increase starting wages for the lowest wage occupations first. However, other evidence from Los Angeles (Farris and Fernandes Bujanda, 2008) suggests that employers may change their hiring patterns following the introduction of the living wage, employing workers with somewhat different characteristics and greater productivity. Overall evidence from cities in the US, suggests that living wages generally result in reduced employment among the lowest skilled workers and higher wages for employees remaining in employment Newmark et al, 2012). Subsidies to employers can help to mitigate employers' risk in employing workers who they would not normally have shortlisted due to a lack of experience. Although a 1990s review of wage subsidy schemes in the UK as well as evidence from Australia (Gardiner, 1997) suggests many employers do not take-up wage subsidy schemes, evidence from the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) in the UK is more positive. Fishwick et al (2011) contend, based on their independent evaluation of the programme, that even short subsidised jobs can enable participants to subsequently gain employment in the open labour market. They underline how it was important for participants that FJF was considered to differ from work experience and unpaid placements, resulting in more positive attitudes among participants towards the job and other employees. DWP (2012) underlined the substantial and positive impact of FJF on the chances of participants being employed and/or off benefit. "At 104 weeks following the start of their FJF job, participants were

less likely to be in receipt of welfare support by 7 percentage points (or 16% less likely) and more likely to be in unsubsidised employment by 11 percentage points (or 27% more likely) per participant than they would have been had they not participated" (p.67).

## Support services/enablers

### **Transport-related interventions**

Green et al (2015) note that "although support services and enablers operate across a range of policy domains, transport-related interventions, addressing issues of transport availability and cost, are especially important at employment entry stage" (p.31). Mackie et al (2012) underline the importance of effective and affordable bus provision for lower socio-economic groups. Inadequate public transport may cause jobseekers not to take-up employment (Mackie et al, 2012, Green et al, 2015). People transitioning into employment are primarily concerned about transport affordability with knowledge of public transport services representing a secondary concern (Green et al, 2015). "At local level Neighbourhood Travel Teams (NTTs) with a local knowledge of neighbourhoods and the location of jobs, can play an important role in helping address these problems through information provision on transport services, personal travel advice, personal journey plans (including how to get from A to B and when, where and how to access services), provision of free travel passes where necessary, travel buddying (the travel officer accompanies the client on their first journey to give them extra confidence and support), feedback to transport operators on transport gaps, service demands, etc." (Green et al, 2015, p.31). Lucas (2011) evaluated NTTs established in five Merseyside local authorities in 2006, showing how travel passes were requested by jobseekers more frequently than journey plans. The scheme can be considered to have led to financial savings compared to the individual cost of basic Jobseeker's Allowance although not all of the savings can be attributed to the transport scheme due to impact of other aspects of the NTT programme e.g. training. Lucas (2011) underlines the need for long-term commitment and large-scale funding for such schemes to succeed. MVA (2014) report on the Workwise Initiative in the West Midlands which aimed to increase usage of public transport in order to help unemployed people to find, enter and remain in work, encouraging them to adopt sustainable travel habits, ensure access to employment sites and better integrate the transport system with Jobcentre Plus requirements. They particularly considered the Connecting Communities initiative operating from the Chelmsley Wood Jobcentre. Supporting Workwise through a monthly travel pass compared to savings in JSA over the same period resulted in net cost savings of £180-£230 per client (excluding impact of other policy supporting jobseekers into employment). It demonstrated the importance of local partnership approaches.

### **Childcare**

Green et al (2015) underline the importance of childcare support at all stages of the employment pathway but particularly when people are moving into employment. Lack of capacity and gaps in provision commonly impact on parents' ability to take up work (McQuaid et al, 2009). Reviewing the Working for Families Initiative in Scotland, McQuaid et al underlined the importance of a holistic approach linking childcare and employment support through a keyworker. Green et al (2015) argue this demonstrates "the importance of support services working together and the value of a personalised caseworker approach to help achieve this". Yeandle et al (2002) underlined the importance of care provided by family in Sheffield and Canterbury. Taylor (2017) underlined how a lack of available family support was a key factor in why out-of-work partnered mothers in Sheffield were reluctant to enter employment, due to a lack of trust of formal childcare services. Yeandle et al's (2002) argument for investment in employer-community initiatives and improved communication between employers and care providers still appears valid.

**Health services**

Green et al (2015) argue people with disabilities/health problems need additional support throughout the employment pathway. Evaluation of the People into Employment Project in Sunderland which was established in 2000 to support people with disabilities and former carers into employment through mobilising, matching, mediating and supporting clients and employers, indicated the cost of supporting participants into employment was favourably comparable with the cost of the New Deal for Disabled People (Arksey, 2003). Success factors include: tailored job-search actions, accompaniment of clients to job interviews, good job matching and ongoing practical/emotional support for employers and clients. Freeze et al (1999) in a Canadian study, stressed the importance of individualised support as well as a commitment from employers to successfully place people with disabilities in employment. Green et al (2015) note that cross-national differences between benefit regime and health services as well as differences between older and current systems in the UK are likely to impact on the transferability of findings.

## 6. In-work support and aftercare (with either the same employer or another employer)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

### **Types of employment entry and in-work support and aftercare needs**

In-work support for sustaining (and progressing) in employment is likely to vary by the character of initial job entry. Where prospects for retaining employment and prospects for progression are limited more in-work support is likely to be needed to avoid a 'lock in' to low wages. Conversely, where there are clear progression pathways within an internal labour market the intensity of in-work support required is likely to be less *ceteris paribus* because a supporting infrastructure is generally 'built in' (Sissons et al., 2016).

### **In-work support through intermediaries to improve retention**

Green et al (2015) note IAG is predominantly associated with helping people into work but can be important in relation to in-work support. Reviewing the literature they suggest it can be important in remaining in employment for disadvantaged groups e.g. disabled people/ carers (Arksey, 2003); ethnic minorities, lone parents and people experiencing substance misuse (Metsch et al, 1999). Arksey (2003) conducted a qualitative study of factors influencing unemployment and employment retention for disabled people and their carers. Based on analysis of the People into Employment programme in Sunderland, they found that appropriate and timely IAG from intermediaries could be considered to be successful in addressing internal (work-based) and external issues (circumstance-based) that threatened the capacity of vulnerable employees to remain in employment. Access to enabling support services (as discussed further below) was crucial. Lee and Cassell (2008) suggest the value of IAG within community-based learning with regard to in-work support but as Green et al (2015) point out they do not quantify the impact of IAG and further research is needed. Meadows (2008) argues that entering and remaining in work are strongly impacted by local factors as workers seek employment in a limited geographic area. This is restricted further the lower the wage and socio-economic status of the job. Meadows argues that IAG policies and interventions are therefore required which acknowledge the importance of local factors but seek to encourage jobseekers to expand the geographical remit of their job search. Evaluation of the 'Moving On Up' Project with young black men in London (2016) underlined the importance of in-work support in moving this group into sustained employment.

### **The Employment, Retention and Advancement pilot**

A major intervention to assess developing employment services aimed at sustainability of employment entries was the Employment, Retention and Advancement (ERA) pilot. The UK ERA drew heavily on delivery models developed in the US. In the UK ERA targeted two groups: the long-term unemployed and lone parents. The programme provided a range of support for individuals including access to job coaching, services and guidance, and a financial incentive (Hendra et al, 2011). As noted by Sissons et al (2016) ERA was extensively evaluated, with the evaluation demonstrating positive outcomes (Hendra et al, 2011). However these gains faded over-time for the lone parents group (Hendra et al, 2011). The training element of the ERA programme appeared less successful than other elements. Although the programme increased training take-up, those that undertook training did not experience earnings gains. This may be because training was not well-aligned to local labour market opportunities or because there was insufficient complementary support to help individuals make a switch to a better paying role following training completion (Ray et al, 2014).

### **Vocational and non-vocational skills development (lifelong learning and community-based learning)**

Green et al (2015) note the crucial role of training and development in facilitating the retention of employees, research into the role of training in retention is limited. "Training once in the workplace does not tend to be a major element of public policy approaches towards retention (though there are a number which are associated with progression, [...], which would also support retention). At this stage training is more likely to be employer-funded and there is very little evidence on these internal processes or their results" P.37). Nonetheless, several training and skills development initiatives using lifelong learning or community-based learning can be identified. Sharma and Monteiro (2010) examine the potential of a lifelong learning model in New Zealand as a holistic means of equipping individuals longer-term for employment in knowledge-based or tertiary sectors. They outline 4 types of lifelong learning which might improve employment retention but Green et al (2015) point out weaknesses with the strength of the research and question the extent to which the wider skills could be used by employers adopting a short-term approach. McTier and McGregor (2011) suggest a role for community-based learning to improve retention, robust performance measurement mechanisms need to be adopted to demonstrate its value. Holzer and Martinson (2005) analysed the skills development strategies implemented via community colleges in the US, showing certification valued by employers was the most effective type of training and education.

### Employer engagement

#### **Strong commitment from employers to training addressing local employers' needs**

Green et al (2015) identify weaknesses in the quantity and quality of research on this topic. They note that the available literature indicates employer engagement is central to the success of employment retention initiatives. Lee and Cassell (2008) in their comparison of Learning Representative initiatives in the UK and New Zealand argue that committed employer engagement is crucial to the effectiveness of work-place based training and their subsequent impact on retention. However, they underline that employers may be reluctant to engage in such training if they do not feel that it will be beneficial for them. This fits with Meadows' (2008) finding that support/provision is most successful when it is based on and engaged with the needs of local employers. Meadows suggests training is most effective when involving employer-engagement and part of a well-established partnership.

#### **The role of employer engagement staff in street level organisations**

Wright (2012) has identified employers as the most significant 'upstream' actors in recruitment of disadvantaged groups. Ingold (2018) highlights the importance of, but relative lack of knowledge about the boundary spanning role of staff with an employer engagement remit. Based on interviews with staff involved in the Work Programme she found that their activities involved three key activities: first, business-to-business type 'sales' approaches to employers; secondly, matching clients to employers' requirements through intra-organisational interactions; and thirdly, building and maintenance of intra-organisational trust relationships with employers. She concluded that successfully striking the balance between the interests of unemployed individuals and employers is the greatest challenge for further development of 'demand-oriented' active labour market policies (ALMPs).

#### **Distinguishing employer engagement and employer involvement – and the benefits of both**

In the National Evaluation of the Talent Match programme Green et al. (2015) made a distinction between *employer involvement* and *employer engagement*. Employer involvement entailed the strategic involvement of employers, employers' organisations, business-led organisations and recruitment agencies in guiding the activities of Talent Match (TM) partnerships. They identified four main ways employers may be involved in strategic activities of TM (some of which can be quite time consuming): direct involvement on the core partnership; through membership of a TM employer

forum or sub-group; through providing strategic or operational advice to a delivery organisation; and finally through more arms-length involvement in guiding specific TM activities, for example, how to engage with employers. Learning from employer perspectives brings a kind of ‘business realism’ to the partnerships. It gives them an insight into what employers want and reminds them that while TM is focused on the needs and aspirations of beneficiaries, these needs and aspirations do not exist in a vacuum, and employers play a key role in fulfilling these aspirations. For employers, involvement can give them a new perspective on the lived-experiences of often marginalised young people, who, with some support, can become part of their workforce of the future. As emphasised by Orton et al. (2018) the TM experience demonstrates that it is perfectly feasible for employers to be involved in ALMP not merely as passive recipients of job-ready candidates but as proactive strategic partners, with benefits for employers, jobseekers and programme providers. In contrast, employer engagement focused on the practical issues of making contact with employers to raise awareness of TM and to encourage them to offer jobs, work placements and other employment-related opportunities to TM beneficiaries. Employer engagement can be pro-active and demand-side led, comprising identification of vacancies and awareness-raising in sectors or occupations where there is likely to be future demand for workers and ‘directing’ beneficiaries to such opportunities. It can also be reactive and supply-side led, focusing on the identification of the employment preferences of beneficiaries and then finding an employer match that ‘fits’ those preferences. The case study TM partnerships investigated for the thematic study used a mix of these two approaches. Key learning points from TM are that *reputation and trust* are very important in relationships with employers and can take time to build. They can be destroyed easily and so it was important that TM partnerships are open and honest in their dealings with employers.

#### **‘Fit’ between recruits and employers**

The evidence from the TM case study on Employer Involvement and Engagement (Green et al., 2015) highlights that entry to employment is more likely to be sustained if there is a good ‘fit’ with the role and the employer. Employers particularly praised TM’s ‘pre-screening’ approach of taking time to match a suitable young person to a suitable job, which reduced the burden on employers. This is in contrast to a more ‘numbers-driven’ approach which can result in employers seeing large numbers of unsuitable candidates for jobs that they were not particularly interested in or qualified for (see also Green [2017]). (It is important to note here that TM is a voluntary programme, whereas in mandatory programmes job seekers may be required to apply for a certain number of jobs over a fixed period and this can lead to employers receiving unsuitable applicants.)

#### **Mechanisms requiring employers to recruit locally**

There is a body of research on mechanisms such as Planning Agreements (UK) and Development Agreements (US) in contributing to the retention of local workers (MacFarlane with local community consultants, 2000; Fitzgerald, 2004). Fitzgerald underlines the importance of ‘workforce intermediaries’ in ensuring agreement benefit the local workforce. While et al. (2016) highlight that major development projects can be an important source of local employment and training opportunities because of relatively long lead-in times and opportunities to develop required employment and skills support and powers to lever benefits through procurement and Section 106 agreements, but that these opportunities do not come about automatically. They recommend that local authorities should make full use of policy levers in procurement and planning to maximise those opportunities and note that city-regional co-ordination can help overcome barriers to local intervention. They also highlight that explicit targeting of priority groups is often needed to support people with more complex needs. They also suggest that in a context of greater devolution to city-region level proactive local intervention could be incentivised and rewarded by allowing local authorities to receive directly some of the welfare savings when people move into work.

### **Promoting employer awareness of national employment programmes**

Public Health England's (2014) report into how employment opportunities and retention can be improved for people with a long-term health condition or disability argues it is important that local authorities promote local employer awareness of national employment programmes, such as Access to Work which can provide financial support to businesses to support employees with a disability or long term physical or mental health condition to stay in work.

### Financial incentives

#### **A role for financial incentives in retention – alongside other features**

As noted in an international evidence review on progression by Sissons et al (2016), there is some robust evidence relating to retention from the Employment, Retention and Advancement (ERA) pilot. ERA targeted two groups – lone parents and the long-term unemployed and provided a range of support. The financial incentive included in ERA was a work retention bonus payment of £400 every 17 weeks for working 30 hours a week or more (reaching a maximum of £2,400). Financial support for training was also available (up to £1,000) and a training bonus payment was made on course completion. The experience of ERA suggests that some combination of services and financial incentives can generate positive impacts (Ray et al, 2014).

#### **Increased earnings - tax credits**

Generally implemented nationally, policies aiming to improve job retention through financial incentives are generally administered through the benefits system and target low-income households. They can generally be considered to have a positive impact on employment retention (Green et al, 2015). Eissa and Liebman, 1996 and Meyer and Rosenbaum, 2001) indicate that the Earned Income Federal Tax Credit (which provides a 40% earnings subsidy to low-income working parents up to \$10,000 dollars has raised employment levels among low-income mothers. Zabel et al (2010) evaluated the Self-Sufficiency project - a voluntary project in Canada addressing lone parents in two provinces where participants were given 12 months from entering the project to find full-time employment and benefit from a subsidy roughly doubling their pre-tax earnings over the subsequent three-year period. They found financial incentive was strongly associated with a positive impact on work entry and retention. Holzer and Martinson (2005) analysed local and regional initiatives in the US aiming to improve job retention for low-income workers, underlining the need for permanent/ongoing income subsidies arguing that otherwise the positive impact of subsidies on people who had been long-term unemployed weakens over time.

### Support services/enablers

#### **Job search and job matching**

Green et al (2015) argue that job search and job matching are likely to be highly important in regard to patterns of retention as not all jobs/ work placement are equally valuable. Analysis of Detroit's Work First programme which provides short-term intensive job placement services in which jobseekers were offered either 'direct job hire' or a 'temporary' help job (similar to agency work in the UK) revealed that candidates placed in direct-hire jobs had significantly higher subsequent earnings and improved job outcomes whereas temporary-help placements did not improve, and sometimes hindered subsequent employment and earnings (Autor and Houseman, 2010). Green et al (2015) argue that is not clear whether such findings would be replicated in the UK but maintain they show the importance of quality job entry for future employment progression prospects.

#### **Holistic support interventions**

Meadows (2008) underlines the effectiveness of holistic support interventions addressing a variety of barriers (e.g. housing, health, childcare, transport, substance abuse issues. Meadows found that



initiatives only addressing work issues were less effective. Mackereth (2007) underlines the importance of specific support interventions for lone parents, arguing that mental health and self-esteem building and accessible and low-cost childcare can help lone parents to remain in employment. Childcare issues can be considered an important barrier to remaining in employment for parents more broadly (Gardiner, 1997). Arksey (2013) found extended in-work support in the People into Employment Initiative was necessary for disabled people and their carers to remain in employment. The key form of support was a project development officer. Although Metch et al (1999) suggest many factors enabling substance abusers to remain in employment are within their reach (e.g. a supportive family, not using drugs after leaving a programme, a high school education), they underline how it is important that drug treatment is comprehensive .

### **Evidence from Talent Match on 'good practice' relating to in-work support**

Staying in work can be hard and although potentially any individual can benefit from in-work support those individuals who face labour market disadvantage often need in-work support if they are to sustain employment. In practical terms in-work support encompasses a range of different types of support. A thematic case study of in-work support for Talent Match (Green et al., 2017) highlighted in-work support as involving one or more of the following elements (although the wider literature suggests that integrated support is particularly beneficial): (1) practical measures to assist TM beneficiaries to sustain employment – e.g. help with transport to work, assistance with organising caring responsibilities, help with training relevant to the job, etc.; (2) guidance on work-related matters – including how to deal with workplace matters; (3) supporting beneficiaries with non-work related issues that impinge on their ability to hold down a job from an adviser/mentor on a formal or informal basis; and (4) assistance provided to an employer to support a beneficiary's job retention. The evidence from Talent Match case studies of support for in-work progression also revealed that there are two main times when in-work support is particularly important: first, in the early days of employment; and secondly, at times of crisis in a beneficiary's home and work life. Employment retention (and progression) is eased by individuals being in a job they like and which suits their skills and preferred hours of working, and that is relatively easily accessible geographically; and also by employer commitment to sustaining employment of the individual employee.

### **Proactive support from employers and local services to prevent people aged over 50 from falling out of work**

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2017) in their review of the experiences of people aged over 50 who are out of work or in insecure employment argue that employers need to be more proactive in preventing people aged over 50 from falling out of work. Examples include: "developing new approaches to managing health in the workplace, providing more flexible working to accommodate the changing needs of employees as they age and offering continued opportunities for learning, development and re-skilling" (p.30).

### **Mentoring**

Logiktree (2010) evaluated a mentoring programme for staff who had previously been workless established at the Learning Hub, University Hospitals Birmingham. The Learning Hub is a purpose built training centre funded by University Hospitals Birmingham, Advantage West Midlands and European Regional Development Funds. Based next to the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham their aim is to assist unemployed people within the local community back into work, by providing pre-employment training, advice and guidance. The specific programme evaluated by Logiktree involved job mentor/ coaches supporting new members of staff who were previously workless. Some mentors had previously been out of work and benefited from mentors themselves. Best practice in mentoring identified by Logiktree in the programme included: the structured approach to the mentoring relationship, how the structure of the mentee's development around the four Employability Building Blocks (a bespoke element of the programme) has actively enhanced

self-esteem and confidence; how each mentoring relationship is observed against National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Mentoring and Coaching; how the staff development aspects of the project are evaluated from both the mentor and the mentee perspective. Logiktree underlined that the benefit of the programme both to the mentee and the mentor in terms of career development. The focus on career development led both to develop good personnel practices contributing to increased retention. Logiktree argued the results in the first six months of the programme were "outstanding" (p.4), with a 100% retention rate after 6 months. Mentees on the programme reported greater self-confidence, feeling happier, more motivated and better able to ask questions as a result of the programme. The employer described benefits of the programme to the organisation: "Mentors benefit in terms of their own personal development, communication skills and valuing difference. This will be reflected in an improved ability to manage teams. Mentees will hopefully feel valued, listened to and see an improvement in their own communication skills. Issues will be jointly tackled rather than allowed to fester, removing barriers to knowledge and skill development. By helping us to become an employer of choice and developing a culture that promotes equality and values difference and diversity" (p.15). The programme provides a model, which as Logiktree underline, could be easily replicated elsewhere.

## 7. Progression (in the internal labour market or external labour market)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG); Training and skills

### **What is progression?**

The term progression can be defined in various ways (Sissons et al., 2016). It is mostly associated with attaining monetary increases from either a higher hourly rate or from more hours. Broader definitions also include some non-monetary measures such as increased job stability, which can also increase earnings over the longer-term (Wilson et al., 2013). Some forms of progression may also be horizontal (as opposed to vertical) and involve a shift to a different employer, sector or occupation which may (or may not) offer better prospects over the long-term.

### **A limited but growing evidence base on progression**

A sizeable proportion of low-paid workers experience limited pay progression, even over extended periods of time. Yet progression has not been a focus for employment policy until recently. Policy is beginning to shift in the UK, and recent changes suggest some greater role for a focus on progression. Examples include the introduction of Universal Credit, which will have a progression dimension; the UK Futures Programme which was run by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES); and progression initiatives which have been agreed as part of 'City Deals'. There is also some emerging evidence on in-work progression from Universal Credit. Overall, there is relatively little evidence relating to initiatives targeting progression that might be classified as 'proven' (i.e. robustly assessed). This is an important finding in itself. The most robust studies come largely from the US. The US evidence is primarily from localised targeted initiatives which target entry into good quality employment opportunities, which are more likely to offer chances for career advancement. These studies provide demonstrate that initiatives can be designed to support worker progression. (Sissons et al., 2016).

### **Recent UK evidence on 'what works' in in-work progression: 'proofs of concept' studies**

The Department for Work and Pensions commissioned three small-scale 'proofs of concept' (PoC) on in-work progression over the period 2014-2016. The first was a Timewise Foundation's Universal Credit intervention which aimed to support and increase 102 low-income parents' incomes beyond proposed Universal Credit income thresholds while maintaining flexible working. The model provided one-to-one tailored support for parents and employer facing support. The second was the GOALS UK: Step Up model, which aimed to motivate and support 80 low-income, part-time workers towards progression in work and greater financial independence. The model was based on a motivational coaching programme. Thirdly, the UK Futures Programme, run by Timewise in partnership with a national retailer, aimed to tackle progression barriers and increase part-time, entry level, female workers' earnings. The model examined and implemented job redesign to include part-time and flexible working access for first step promotion to managerial roles. Positive progression outcomes were achieved by all three interventions. Aspects rated as most useful by participants in achieving positive outcomes included peer support (in group sessions); one-to-one sessions (in particular); advice on training, interview and pay negotiation and emotional support. It was also noted that effectiveness was enhanced when both pre-progression and employer-facing teams worked closely together – so highlighting the importance of employer involvement in in-work progression initiatives. Barriers to progression identified across two or more of the interventions included caring responsibilities, confidence issues, motivation, part-time or irregular shifts, finances, soft skills, and a lack of relevant skills (including English language issues in some cases), experience and qualifications.

### **Recent UK evidence on 'what works' in in-work progression: evidence from Universal Credit research**

Evidence from a Universal Credit in-work progression randomised control trial (Department for Work and Pensions, 2018) tested two progression measures: (1) the earnings impact 52 weeks after the trial start date; and (2) the percentage of claimants who had seen earnings progression of at least 10 per cent since their start date. Claimants were divided into three treatment groups (frequent, moderate and minimal) based on the frequency of support for Universal Credit claimants. For both the 'frequent' and 'moderate' support groups the results indicated significantly significant (albeit relatively small) differences in progression when compared to the 'minimal' support group. Other factors emerging from a related evaluation revealed statistically significant differences in progression outcomes between those participants that undertook job-related training and those that did not, with the former group seeing a greater increase in earnings on average than the latter. Qualitative research also highlighted that progression outcomes were associated with participants' personal motivation and their relationship with their Work Coach. For claimants with lower levels of motivation and greater barriers to progression, success was far more closely linked to the type of support offered and the motivational aspects of the Work Coach role were crucial. Qualitative research with employers showed that employees valued employees who demonstrated a desire to progress; employers recognised motivation as the most important personal driver of progression. Employers also noted the existence of structural barriers to progression, including 'flat' organisational structures limiting opportunities for vertical progression (as highlighted also by Lindsay et al. [2013]), low staff turnover limiting replacement demand opportunities, and employees not possessing the skills required for progression.

### **IAG and progression**

In slightly older research, Green et al (2015) identify a gap in understanding of the role of local IAG services in regard to in-work progression. They suggest that "the impact of the availability and access to information on progression outcomes is difficult to measure, and the evaluation of advice and guidance services has typically focused on its role in supporting individuals into work, rather than on progression once in employment. This reflects the greater intensity of individual support which is targeted at those seeking to enter the labour market, and the larger public subsidy directed towards this (and hence the need to evaluate)" (p.41).

### **Careers information and/or advice**

Green et al (2015) note how UK policy is increasingly orientated around online careers information and self-service. Whereas they stressed the lack of access to the internet among jobseekers, they were unable to find information regarding access to the internet among people in work. They nonetheless identify the existence of promising website with regard to careers advice but state they are unable to comment on the profile of the users. They suggest that more in-depth advice and guidance is associated in the UK with a greater likelihood of workers changing employers. Pollard et al (2007) found those accessing in-depth services were more likely to change the type of work they do as well as work in higher occupations sectors. Bimrose et al (2011) in a qualitative study of 'career adaptability' among workers in the UK and Norway, argued that workers in disadvantaged position in the labour market including those employed in low-skilled employment, are helped if they receive quality careers advice. The study did not provide clear conclusions regarding the relative merits of face-to-face versus online support. Several studies in the US (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2004; Holzer and Martinson, 2005), suggest the importance of advice and guidance in supporting workers but do not assess the individual impact of advice and guidance within the overall programmes.

### **Vocational and non-vocational skills development (lifelong learning, sector-based training)**

With regard to training and skills development, Green et al (2015) note the lack of city or local-level studies examining the role of training in facilitating individuals to remain in employment, arguing this is likely to be linked to how public subsidies for training focus on supporting individuals into employment. Furthermore, as King and Heinrich (2011) point out initiatives are often not assessed over a long enough period to analyse their impact on job retention. Government can seek to increase employer investment in employee skills through compelling business as a result of regional/local levies and/or industry licencing and occupational certification, or encouraging businesses through co-funding (Billett and Smith, 2003). Several national studies in the UK have considered the association between learning/training and progression in work. Dorsett et al (2010) estimated the association between lifelong learning and earnings for men, arguing it is associated with higher earnings. Nonetheless, they point out that the qualification type and labour market value are important as returns are larger for individuals upgrading qualifications. Stuart et al (2010) suggest training provided through UnionLearn has been successful in engaging under-represented groups. Maguire et al (2010) and Martinson (2007) have analysed programmes integrating training and skills development with the needs of local employers/ sectors, and in-turn provide opportunities for in-work advancement. Green et al (2015) and Sissons et al (2016) underline how the success of the training programmes are reliant on the initial quality of the match to a suitable employer. Specifically Maguire's (2010) evaluation focused on three US programmes: The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), the Jewish Vocational Service – Boston (JVS Boston); and Per Scholas). These industry-specific training programmes were designed to prepare unemployed and under-skilled workers for skilled positions and connect them with employers, with a focus on labour market entry to 'good jobs' which offered prospects for decent initial wages, as well as retention and progression opportunities. The programmes were characterised by strong links with employers an importantly the delivery partners demonstrated 'adaptive capacity' (i.e. the ability to ask, listen, reflect and adapt), and this was identified as a crucial factor underlying success, alongside individualised support during training and employment (e.g. childcare and transport) during training and employment. The overall findings from the evaluation were positive in terms of employment retention and increased pay (for an assessment of this and related programmes see Sissons et al [2016]).

### **Career Ladders and Pathway Models**

A lack of knowledge and/ or transparency about routes to progression is often an issue facing workers seeking to progress. 'Road maps' which describe jobs in key industries and indicate the connection between education and training programmes at a range of levels - were one of the areas of good practice identified in the Martinson's (2007) review of local and regional employer-focused strategies towards training. In a more recent synthesis of job progression models, Webb et al. (2018, page 22) identify five principles supporting 'pathway models' that focus on supporting workers both into work and then as they progress in work: (1) collaboration between employers, employees and training providers in designing progression pathways; (2) being objective oriented – ideally with a sector focus; (3) demonstrate an identifiable path of progression for employees from entry to progression; (4) provide appropriate skills that are relevant to organisations and sectors; and (5) employers have a long-term vision, supported by a commitment to providing more work and flexible job-design through adequately resourced training and development programmes. Webb et al. (2018) also note that procurement initiatives are potentially an effective policy tool for encouraging progression models.

Employer engagement

### **Business models and 'hooking' in employers to progression initiatives**

Green et al (2015) argue there is a gap in evidence regarding how employers can be engaged to support those on low income already in work. They argue it is nonetheless clear that variations in

sector skills structures and in the business models adopted by organisations provide difference opportunities for progression according to the sector and company. As highlighted by Sissons et al (2016), in terms of engaging employers into thinking about progression and designing pathways/ initiatives to facilitate it, it has been noted above that a 'dual customer' approach - where providers seek to help both employers and jobseekers/low-wage workers through the same programme, appears to have promise. Addressing skills shortages and/or tackling high turnover are the sorts of business issues that may be required to effectively engage employers. A dual customer approach requires identification of a 'promising' sector/sub-sector which has the potential to offer opportunities for those on low incomes, and then developing a strategy to improve access to or outcomes in that sector (Conway, 2014). An example of such a model is the WorkAdvance programme in the USA which create a progression pathway that serves the employer (addressing skills gaps and increasing productivity) and workforce needs (meeting training needs and providing progression opportunities) concurrently (see Webb et al. [2018] for further details. Local partnership working is important (Conway and Giloth, 2014).

### **Imperative of creating quality of local jobs**

The length of time people can remain in work and their prospects for progression once in work is influenced by the types of jobs available locally for participants in ALMPs to move into underlining the need to create good quality jobs locally. Evans (2007) examined Ontario Works, one of the most developed workfare systems in Canada which obligated lone mothers of young children to participate in work-related activities in order to be eligible for social assistance, finding that lone mothers typically only moved into jobs with low pay and a high turnover. Evans (2007) argues that increasing the number of jobs in the social economy/enterprise sector is vital in supporting lone mothers to achieve sustainable employment.

### **Programmes to develop career paths**

Several programmes in the UK have responded to skills shortages and the high turnover of employees to seek to develop individuals' career paths (Morgan and Konrad, 2008); Duke et al, 2006). As Green et al (2015) point out several of these have not been officially evaluated. Nonetheless, some evidence has been evaluated more substantially. Maguire et al (2010) conclude the programmes benefit participants in terms of employment outcomes, wages and accessing jobs with benefits. Important success factors include effective engagement with employers and employers' detailed sectoral knowledge.

### **Financial incentives**

#### **Increased earnings**

Public financial incentives are less important here than earlier in the pathway as progress is realised through higher pay. Nonetheless, earlier programmes including financial incentives may only payout longer term. Hendra et al (2011) found for the New Deal 25 Plus, ERA had a longer-term impact on earnings for long-term unemployed individuals which persisted for the five years studied. Overall, though evidence on the impact of financial incentives over the longer-term is mixed (see Ray et al, 2014).

#### **Provider targets for progression**

Green et al (2015) note service provider targets and financial incentives can be linked to progression. For example, whereas the Work Programme only include financial incentives on providers to support people into work, this could be extended to supporting individuals to remain in work. They suggest although this would be a "relatively straightforward change", it "could open up greater innovation in service delivery around supporting progression" (p.45). MacFarlane (2000) argues planning

agreements could be used more often to force employers to provide more opportunities for local residents. This could be extended to progression activities (Green et al, 2015).

Support services/enablers

**Support with childcare and access to transport**

They consider many of the issues which apply to retention, also apply to progression. They identify some issues more specific to progression including factors affecting the ability to work additional hours (e.g. transport access and childcare) and factors affecting the ability to find and access employment at other locations.

**Wraparound services**

Hamilton (2012) in a review of 'career pathways' and 'clusters' in relations to skills development in the US, suggest the importance of employer engagement, effective local/ state-wide partnership working and wraparound services such as childcare, transport availability and career counselling. These findings are transferable to the UK.

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