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European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills

Welcome to the July e-newsletter

Welcome to the July edition of **50+ Matters** where we cover the Framework for the Work Programme released recently, and the launch of 50+ Works, a good practice guide for providers supporting 50+ jobseekers.

We welcome your views and comments about the content of this e-newsletter and any suggestions you have for items and features you would like to see included in future.

The Work Programme: Future of Welfare to Work Services

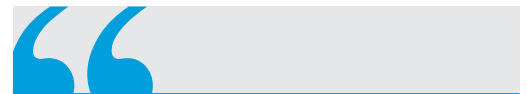
The Framework Agreement for delivery of the Work Programme was launched on 29 June.

The new Work Programme, which will replace the current range of welfare programmes with one integrated programme, will be the new approach to delivering employment-related support services.

Designed to provide greater freedom for suppliers to give people the support they need, rather than prescribing one-size-fits-all programmes from the centre, it will focus on providing personalised help for people who are without work into sustained jobs, regardless of the benefit they claim. This will also mean extending employment support to customers who have not traditionally had access to that service.

In addition to the decision about which support to deliver, the Work programme will also give providers longer to work with individuals (with some contracts lasting up to seven years).

The Work Programme will be heavily outcome driven and there will be stronger



The Work Programme will not be like the old style, centrally designed, over engineered welfare to work programme ... And success will be measured against the key goal of sustained employment.

Chris Grayling, Minister for Employment, Department for Work and Pensions

incentives for providers to work with the hardest to help and place them into employment.

Support on the Work Programme will be procured through the framework arrangement with providers from the private, public and voluntary sectors, or consortia including smaller, specialised organisations. Once in the framework,

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organisations will compete to supply employment support with contracts awarded in January 2011.

The value of contracts awarded through this new Framework could be between £0.3 - 3 billion per year, with average individual contract values estimated to be approximately £10 - 50 million per year.

Future providers must have the ability and capacity to manage large and diverse supply chains and be able to take on greater capital and supplier management risk. Contracts will require providers to support all claimant groups capable of work, with differential payments dependent upon claimant group.

Payment to delivery partners will be based on results they achieve, and made retrospectively, reflecting benefits expenditure saved from helping people into sustained work.

The Framework Agreement will be divided into 11 Lots:

North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands,

East of England, London, South East, South West, Wales and Scotland.

The Department of Work and Pensions expect to appoint between three and eight organisations to each lot, with contracts covering all or some of each Lot.

Once the Work Programme is implemented it will supersede much of the raft of national programmes currently on offer, which will be phased out. The support currently provided by programmes such as the Flexible New Deal will be folded into the Work Programme in the near future.

The Work Programme may be used by the DWP as match for its ESF Co-financing arrangements and where this applies Work Programme providers will be required to meet a range of ESF requirements.

Work Programme:

Providers and subcontractors who consider that they may have the necessary financial and organisational capability are being asked to express an interest by the timed deadline (see *Next Steps* in the attached link): <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/framework-eoi.pdf>

More Training for Advisers Working with 50+ Jobseekers

The Department for Work and Pensions has introduced more training to help personal advisers understand some of the detailed issues facing the over-50s.

The additional training results from [research](#) commissioned by the DWP which compared interactions between personal advisers and older and younger clients in Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) and found evidence of variation by client age, predominantly in the New Jobseeker Interviews.

In interviews with clients aged over 50, advisers:

- were more likely to agree fewer job goals
- conducted fewer assisted job searches and job submissions

- tended to give ‘softer’ explanations of the requirement to evidence job search activity.

Research looked at the following barriers to employment:

- Employer attitudes as a barrier to employment prospects
- Age-related capacity for work
- Personal employment aspirations.

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The research sample included six JSA claimants (all male, aged from 50 to 58) and one IB claimant (aged 54). Approximate length of time of current claim ranged from 18 months to nine years for JSA jobseekers and two months for the one female IB claimant.

Analysis of the interaction between adviser and client found that where advisers ‘picked up on’ client inferences about age, either they had difficulty in engaging the client about perceived age-related barriers or broadly accepted or empathised with these views.

In these snapshots of adviser / client WFI interaction, advisers missed opportunities to explain about age and employment or to offer suggestions as to how the client might counter employers’ ageist attitudes in work opportunities, for example by emphasising the strengths of an older worker that could make their application more appealing to employers.

Advisers who adhered rigidly to interview questions missed opportunities to expand on the information provided by the client and address the client’s age-related concerns. Discussion of the client’s age-related capacity for work and the possibility of their broadening their job goals were also overlooked in the WFIs.

It is notable that WFI recordings from interviews with clients in which employer attitudes to age are mentioned were with Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) claimants who had been in receipt of benefit for a relatively long time.

While the nature of the sample does not allow for firm conclusions to be drawn in this research, it suggests that the length of time spent on benefit, along with multiple experiences of unsuccessful job applications influenced jobseekers’ perception of age barriers, rather than being at the higher end of the 50+ age bracket.

50+ Works – Help for the Frontline

50+ Works, a good practice guide for providers supporting 50+ jobseekers was launched on 1st July 2010.

The new guide contains material developed by people who work at the frontline with this customer group. 50+ Works prototype provides information about characteristics of the 50+ jobseeker, confidence and motivation, engaging with employers, and age and the law, among other things. Useful links and resources provide a toolkit for trainers / advisers to work effectively with the older jobseeker.

Developed by TAEN in association with the Department for Work and Pensions and the European Social Fund, 50+ Works will be regularly updated, sharing the know-how and experience of providers like you.

The prototype is available at <http://www.50plusworks.com/>

We welcome your input, comments and suggestions at info@taen.org.uk.



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Networked Nation

The UK Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox's *Manifesto for a Networked Nation* aims to get the 10 million people in the UK who have never been online to start accessing the many benefits of using the internet by 2012.

In the UK, 70 per cent of households are online. But those who fail to join the technology advance will find themselves ever more isolated and disadvantaged as the government and industry expand faster into 'digital-only services', Lane Fox warns.

The private and voluntary sector could be called upon to use existing resources in order to engage users, through the network of libraries, Online Centres and the commitment from some 400 private organisations and public sector partners to support 1.6 million new people get online.

Government needs first to consider its own digital capability and think 'online first', rather than using outdated 'offline' media, Lane Fox said. Government savings of between £3 and £12 are possible for every one of the 1.8 billion annual contacts switched from phone or face-to-face.

The YouGov site set up by the last government could be further exploited to make savings for government.

Benefits for unemployed adults include faster job search and less money spent on benefits.

Of the 1.5 million unemployed people in the UK who claim Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), an estimated 270,000 do not currently use the internet and they claim an estimated £0.8 billion a year in JSA benefits.

Given that 90 per cent of all jobs require internet skills, and 7 million jobs were advertised online last year (with some only accepting internet applications), instead of shielding reluctant users from using the internet, they should be empowered to get online.

To read *Manifesto for a Networked Nation*, go to <http://raceonline2012.org/manifesto>.

Minimum Income Standard Outpaces Minimum Wage

Updated research [here](#) published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has shown that it is getting harder for people on low incomes to meet a minimum standard of living.

The Minimum Income Standard (MIS) shows how much various households need in 2010 to reach a minimum acceptable standard of living, according to sample groups comprising members of the public.

The research found that a yearly salary of £14,400 is the minimum a single person needs to achieve an acceptable standard of living; a couple with two children require a MIS of £26,900, far exceeding the adult national minimum wage of £5.80 per hour (equivalent to £10,556 for a single person).

Things people think should go in to a minimum budget, in addition to meeting physical needs such as food, warmth and shelter, are things that allow them to participate in society.

Some "essentials" that working age people need include a computer and home internet access, as well as other things that are an integral part of modern life: a mobile phone, socialising and at least one week's holiday.

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A minimum income standard for the UK in 2010 shows that people on low incomes face a much higher inflation rate than that shown in the official Consumer Prices Index, which the Budget announced as the future basis for uprating benefits. Government figures suggest that about 30 per cent of workers in the UK are paid less than £14,820.

In 2010, basic out of work benefits provide less than half of a minimum income for an adult with no children and about two-thirds for families with children.

The safety net benefit for pensioners, Pension Credit, pays just enough for them to meet the MIS, provided they claim this

means-tested benefit. The percentage of MIS provided by benefits fell for these groups (by 1-3 per cent), partly because benefit rises of around 2 per cent were less than the inflation rate.

For people in work, the gap between the minimum wage and the wages needed for a minimum household budget has widened too.

Donald Hirsch from the Centre for Research in Social Policy, and one of the contributors to the JRF research said:

“This new research underlines how people living close to the minimum income standard can end up not having enough if economic trends start going against them.”

News Briefs

New Adult Careers Service to be Named Next Step

Having thought long and hard about what to call a remodeled adult careers service in England, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has announced it will retain the ‘nextstep’ brand name, although it will be tweaked slightly to Next Step.

Next Step will offer information, advice and resources about skills, careers and qualifications. The service will be available online as well as through advisers on the telephone and face to face. The service is free to all adults, aged 19 and over, or aged 18 and over if a Jobcentre Plus customer.

The SFA is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the integrated Next Step adult careers service. And the SFA itself will deliver the online element of the service.

John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, said:

“By integrating adult careers services, we are building a more responsive system that will provide all the information and tools

people need in one place, making it easier and quicker for all users to get the right information and support for them.”

TAEN / ESF Seminars

50+ Matters seminars in the South East and in Yorkshire and Humber are now confirmed for the early Autumn in:

- Guildford on 5 October 2010
- Leeds on 12 (or 14) October 2010.

To book a place, check the Events section at www.taen.org.uk/esf/events next week.

Readership survey

We are still interested in hearing your responses about readership and use of the e-letter and would welcome your views and suggestions about content too. If you can take five minutes to complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/50PlusMatters_readership_survey, we can use your feedback to shape future editions.

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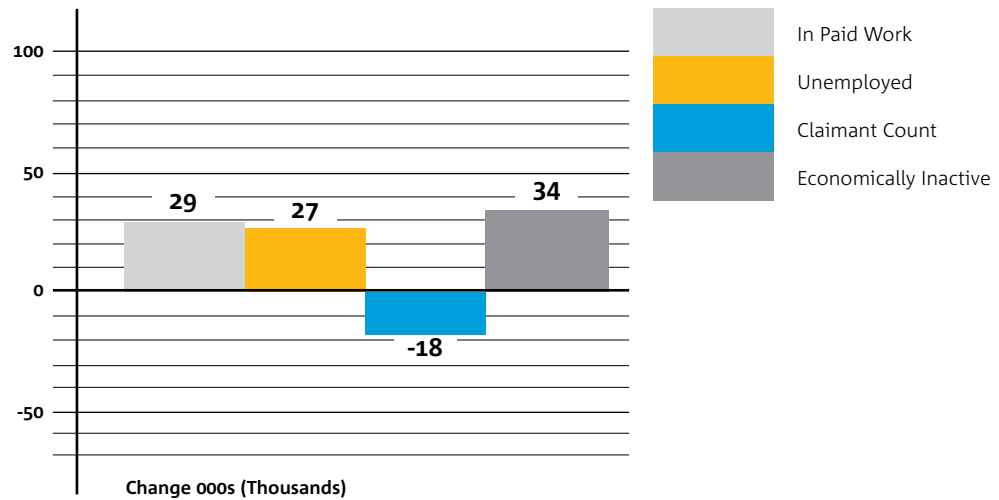
50+ Labour Market Spotlight

A monthly look at the 50 to state pension age employment figures and a specific item of interest regarding older workers.

Latest 50-State Pension Age Employment Figures

Mar-May 2010 : Changes versus same period last year

Source: Labour Market Statistics July 2010, Office for National Statistics



50 – State Pension Age Economic Inactivity by English Region

Source: ONS: Labour Force Survey: Jan-Mar 2010 : Not seasonally adjusted.

Region	Number of People 50-SPA Economically Inactive in the Region (000s)	50-SPA Economic Inactivity Rate (%)
East of England	193	21.9
East Midlands	156	22.4
London	255	27.0
North East	116	27.9
North West	280	26.6
South East	248	19.2
South West	202	24.2
West Midlands	201	24.6
Yorks and The Humber	210	26.7

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Ask TAEN

The column that answers a selection of questions we've received...
In this edition:

Can you tell me how many people are employed in the public sector in each of the English regions and what percentage of total regional employment that represents?

According to the most recently published figures covering Q1 2010, this was the current situation at that time.

Region	Number Employed in the Public Sector (000s)	% of Total Regional Employment
East of England	459	17%
East Midlands	389	19%
London	782	21%
North East	287	25%
North West	696	22%
South East	694	17%
South West	528	21%
West Midlands	507	21%
Yorks and The Humber	538	22%



Did You Know?

A random selection of demographic, labour market and age and employment statistics that caught our eye over the last month:

Skills and Learning

As proof it is never too late to learn, in the period from 1 August 2009 to 30 April 2010, provisional figures show that 30.6% of all Train to Gain 'starts' (130,600) were among people aged 45 and over. During the same period, people in that age group accounted for 31% (112,200) of total Train to Gain 'achievements'.

In unionlearn programmes, half of all learners are female and 60% are age 40 and over. In ESF-funded learning activity (predominantly workplace-based learning projects) half of all learners are female (50.1%) and 85% are aged 40 and over.

31%

Of total Train to Gain 'achievements' among people aged 45 and over (1 August 2009 – 30 April 2010)

Source: The Data Service : Statistical First Release: June 2010 / Union Learning Fund/unionlearn July 2010

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ESF News

50+ Matters in Newcastle

On 6 July we held the latest of our 50+ Matters seminar in Newcastle. Although it was primarily aimed at Personal Advisers of Jobcentre Plus in the North East region, other ESF providers also attended.

Romi Jones from Age Concern North Tyneside joined our normal roster of speakers to describe the activities and achievements of their local Back on Board (BoB) project with older jobseekers.

The session provided a useful opportunity to see how much these two groups of stakeholders know about each other and to discuss what more could be done to enhance the support for older clients.

From the ESF providers we heard that they were being reasonably successful working with their older clients. They had established a good relationship with local Jobcentre Plus staff and were receiving lots of referrals. But, as one of the providers noted, they can't just wait for older people to come to them, they have to engage in outreach activities, particularly in rural areas.

When discussing the sorts of typical labour market barriers older jobseekers might experience, a participant from JCP commented:

"Often the biggest barrier is the perception they have that it is their age that is the problem. It is usually not true, it might be, or example, a lack of the necessary skills or it might be qualifications.

"Very often I hear complaints about age from younger jobseekers too when they feel that they can't get a job because of their lack of work experience.



"So we need to work with this 'I am too old' perception, break it down to find out what the issue is and to deal with it."

Volunteering can be a very important tool in supporting unemployed people get back into paid work. Seminar participants shared some sources they used in the region to involve their older clients in volunteering:

Personal Best is a Skills Funding Agency-funded programme where JCP advisers can signpost customers: <http://www.personalbestprogramme.co.uk/>

SCAN (Student Community Action Newcastle) regularly advertise voluntary placements and despite what the name might suggest, it is widely used for older people too! <http://www.scan.ncl.ac.uk/>

Do it is a national website offering volunteering opportunities <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>

Finally, if you feel that your region would benefit from a 50+ Matters seminar that could provide a forum for stakeholders in Jobcentre Plus and the wider ESF provider community to discuss ideas about providing support to 50+ clients, please contact us at info@taen.org.uk.



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