

Working Together to Benefit our Community

North Somerset Learning Disability Partnership Board Employment Sub Group

Supported Employment Standards Guide for North Somerset

Introduction

The North Somerset Learning Disabilities Employment Strategy says that its first priority is to develop a Supported Employment Expectation Guide. (See LD4U.org.uk for a full and easy read version of the strategy document) This Supported Employment Standards Guide has arisen out of this priority. The goal is for The Guide is to provide clear information about what is expected for employment and people with a learning disability and specify the standards for supported employment that we expect to see provided.

The Guide is based upon guidance from Valuing Employment Now and a range of national and regional supporting documents and studies. The Guide has been developed following scrutiny and feedback by The NSPB Employment Sub Group between September 2010 and March 2011. It has also included feedback from Kathy Melling – the Valuing People Employment Lead who attended the Employment Sub Group meeting in March 2011.

Message from Kathy Melling - 6th April 2011

I congratulate the North Somerset Employment sub-group on making a very good start on a comprehensive employment strategy document. However, there is still work to do to make sure that everything you have in your plan makes a difference so that more people with learning disabilities get and keep jobs. I think that your priorities for the way forward should be:

- *Making sure that everyone can access good quality supported employment*
- *Checking that the supported employment paid for by North Somerset council is working to best practice guidelines*
- *Making sure that people with learning disabilities think about jobs first, and fit their leisure and voluntary activities around work - not the other way around*
- *Working together to make hard decisions about day services where these are not helping people to find and keep real jobs.*

The subsequent Guide has been adapted to take account of Kathy's comments.

Supported Employment Standards Guide for North Somerset –

1) Real Jobs:

1.1 Paid jobs. The aim of The Employment Strategy is to enable as many people as possible to have paid work of over 16 hours per week, since this is the point at which most people will be financially better off and achieve greater social inclusion.

1.2 Real jobs. Work for people with a learning disability should be in 'Real Jobs'. Real jobs are those where:

- wages are paid at the going rate for the job, with the same terms and conditions as all other employees;
- the job helps the person to meet their life goals and aspirations;
- the role is valued by managers and colleagues;
- the job has similar hours and times at work as other employees, with safe working conditions.

(Based on guidance in: VEN; Job Coaching or Supported Employment: Approach and progress in developing standards; D of H 2010)

1.3 Different types of employers. Real jobs are provided by different types of employers across the private, public and third sectors. It also includes self-employment, where additional specialist support may be needed for spotting opportunities and enterprise development, testing and refining the proposition, and launching the venture.

(Based on VEN guidance above)

1.4 Social enterprises. People could also work as a part of a 'social enterprise' or a 'social firm'.

A 'Social Firm' is a market-led enterprise set up specifically to create good quality jobs for people disadvantaged in the labour market. An 'emerging Social Firm' is an enterprise that is working towards becoming a Social Firm, usually in the early stages of trading and not yet in a position to employ numbers of people, but working to a business plan which illustrates how they're going to achieve their goal. The 'Social Firm sector' is the collective term used for emerging Social Firms and Social Firms.

(See socialfirmsuk.co.uk)

1.5 Voluntary work. Voluntary work is unpaid work. Sometimes people might want to do voluntary work in addition to paid work in a 'real job'. In some cases someone might choose to do long term voluntary work rather than paid work. In these circumstances there should still be opportunities and encouragement for the person to progress into a 'real job'. Longer term unpaid work placements should be viewed as volunteering and not falsely presented as 'work preparation placements'.

Work that would ordinarily be done by a paid worker in a normal commercial environment should not be done by volunteers.

Voluntary work should take place as a valued activity in line with the standards indicated within The Compact Code of Good Volunteering Practice.

(See appendix 1 for details from The Compact Code of Good Volunteering Practice)

1.6 Being work ready. A key question often posed is when is a person ready for work? Often the argument that someone is not 'work ready' can impose a lifetime of limitations on people's progress into employment.

"Almost two-thirds of people with a learning disability are keen to work but prejudice means less than 10% have a paid job.....With the right support and opportunities, people with a learning disability are able to make a valuable contribution in the workplace". (Dame Jo Williams, Mencap's chief executive – Guardian 18.5.08)

Often the best way to help someone to learn how to do a job is to give them the experience of doing a job. With the right support they will then learn on the job.

2) Supported Employment and Job Coaching:

2.1 Supported employment. Valuing Employment Now says that supported employment is a well evidenced way for people with learning disabilities to access and retain open employment, with support. Within this, Valuing Employment Now promotes a 'customised approach' of Job Coaching which starts from the premise that severely disabled people may not be able to compete in the labour market, even with reasonable adjustments. A job coach therefore negotiates a bespoke (customised) job that matches the individual's interests and talents, before supporting the person in work. Job coaching is particularly key for people with moderate or severe learning disabilities.

Job coaches can come from supported employment services, statutory, public, private or voluntary sectors, employers, the industry in question or even people's families. (See Valuing Employment Now, DOH 2009)

2.2 Indicators of the sorts of support provisions that a good supported employment service would provide are:

STAGE ONE – Person Centred Employment Planning

- Providing individual advice and counselling about work;
- Giving careers/training advice;
- Giving or arranging for effective benefits advice – particularly focusing in on 'better off calculations';
- Doing job/vocational profiling (identifying employment goals and abilities);
- Developing with the individual a Person Centre Employment Plan.

STAGE TWO – Initial Job Coaching and Employer Engagement

- Providing job search training (E.g. CV and interview preparation/support);
- Setting up work tasters/trials (short term);
- Undertaking job matching and placement/matching jobs to individuals (long term);
- Providing work skills training/social skills training prior to placement;

STAGE THREE – Employment support whilst in work

- Providing on-site and off-site support and coaching sessions;
- Drawing on and developing networks and 'circles' of support outside and within the workplace.
- Reviewing and developing client's job;

STAGE FOUR – career development

- Career development, enhancement opportunities and career progression. Support for employees to benefit from training opportunities and, where appropriate, to work towards qualifications.

(Based from: S.Beyer: "Scoping study on existing courses and qualifications for job coaches"; Cardiff University 2010)

Also see Appendix Two - VEN - The key stages that supported employment provisions should provide.

2.3 Skilled job coaches do the following:

- market the employability of people with learning disabilities;
- positively influence local employers to secure jobs;
- spend time discovering an individual's skills and interests (sometimes called 'vocational profiling' or 'discovery');
- match these to a job or self-employment, or help an employer to 'carve' a customised role from tasks within existing posts or unmet employer needs;
- negotiate and support the employer to make reasonable adjustments;
- support the person when they start work, using assistive devices and systematic instruction to teach tasks where needed;
- build natural supports in the workplace;
- reduce their input over time; and
- support individuals to remain in work if their or their employer's needs change.

(From: Valuing Employment Now, p50)

Also See Appendix Three – 'What makes a good job coach?'

2.4 Training and accreditation of job coaches.

"Job Coaching is not an entry level role. Job Coaches don't grow on trees. We will need to grow our own local workforce and nurture it".

(Chris East: B&NES Council 21.10.10)

There is at present no clear set framework for the training and accreditation of job coaches. However, there are some clear expectations around the country on what this should include and growing indications on what a skilled job coach should be able to do. Job coaching is a skilled role and people doing the role need to have received some substantial level of appropriate training to do the job successfully and also need to have support from suitable avenues to ensure the role is being undertaken effectively.

(See S.Beyer: "Scoping study on existing courses and qualifications for job coaches; Cardiff University 2010)

Kathy Melling says that good supported employment workers need to have competence in Job Coaching and Employer Engagement. Job Coaching needs to have a focus on 'systematic instruction' and Employer Engagement around job searching, setting up job tasters/trials and support for employers and work colleagues. These areas of competence need to be viewed as requiring discreet workforce training. Employer engagement should be an activity that DWP funded providers can do.

3) Day services and work training projects

3.1 Day Services. Day Services should make sure that people with learning disabilities think about jobs first, and fit their leisure and voluntary activities around work - not the other way around. North Somerset Council and day service providers will need to work together to make hard decisions about day services where these are not helping people to find and keep real jobs. For a few people (e.g people with long term institutionalised low expectations) it is recognised that we may not be able to achieve progress on employment outcomes.

3.2 Work Project. A 'Work Project' is a term that we have agreed to use in the Employment Sub Group. A Work Project should be involved in some level of commercial activity such as catering, recycling, gardening, pottery, etc. A Work Project should provide either one or a combination of the following;

- a) Paid work for disabled people within the definition of 'real work' as specified in 1.2 above;
- b) Time limited work experience linked to an education programme through which the learner would be helped to use the work experience to a achieve qualifications and pathways to paid work;
- c) Longer term voluntary work opportunities – within the boundaries for volunteering as specified in 1.4 and appendix 1.

Funding for Work Project usually come from education sources or from adult social services as a part of day services. All Work Projects need to make sure they are clear about the status of all of the people participating with them. Work experience placements should not exceed one year.

3.3 Social firms. A social firm needs to be set up in accordance with the expectations form Social Firms UK. See 1.4 for further details. A social firm can also provide all of the opportunities outlined in 3.2 above.

See – 'A Job Well Done: Social enterprises and the learning and skills sector: a partnership for the education, training and employment of disabled people September. 2010 Easy-read summary'

4) What do we want to see happening?

To create the environment for successful pathways to work for people with a learning disability in North Somerset we need to see the following happening.

4.1 Good supported employment. We need to make sure that everyone can access good quality supported employment. We need to check that the supported employment paid for by North Somerset Council - and other commissioners - is working to best practice guidelines as laid down in section 2 and Appendix 2 of this guide.

Supported Employment service providers need to be clear about what they can offer and for what price. They might want to 'package' their service into discreet 'packages'. See pointers in section 2.2 to the sorts of packages that could be offered. These packages will need to be clear on the 'outcomes' they will achieve. This could be presented as a 'Supported Employment Service Charter' that lays out what the customer will get. For example see the 'Charter' presented by North Lanarkshire's Supported Service. (<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4762&p=0>).

North Somerset Council - and other commissioners - need to make sure they specify what is expected from Supported Employment Providers and monitor the quality of the provision. This should be a part of the 'framework' for contracting with providers. The standards specified in section 2 and appendix 2 should inform these contracting frameworks.

Self directed support plans need to make sure clear employment outcomes are specified and that there are regular reviews of the progress towards those outcomes and the quality of the employment support provided.

4.2 Personal Budgets are used to fund supported employment. To achieve good supported employment we need commitment and capacity to deliver Personal Budgets for job coaching and employer engagement:

- Social worker's need to make sure this happens
- People with a learning disability, family carers and supporters need to make sure this happens
- Employment needs to be a high priority in Self Directed Support Plans
- Employment Support Providers need to do more to offer out Supported Employment Services that people can purchase through their personal budget – and other funding streams available.

(See: Jobs First briefing on funding Support for Employment with Individual Budgets: draft paper by Susan Allott. Find details on LD4U)

NB Job coaching provided through a 'managed/non-cash personal budget' with North Somerset Adult Social Services need to be arranged in accordance with the Learning Disabilities Community Based Care and Support Framework Agreement. Contact North Somerset ASS Brokerage Team for further details.

4.3 Person Centred Employment Reviews. Present supported employment providers that are funded by North Somerset ASS, need to focus their provision on vocational profiling (sometimes called 'discovery') and initial Person Centred Employment Review. This is as outlined in 2.2 stage one. This should also include a proportion of the provision from existing day service providers.

We need to have some capacity for this to be available to people with a learning disability without necessarily having to resort to a personal budget. The goal would be for the findings from the Person Centred Employment Review to then inform the specified outcomes within the Self Directed Support Plan.

4.4 Transition reviews. We need to ensure employment is a major factor for consideration from year 9 reviews and beyond in schools and colleges. This should happen as a part of Person Centred Transition Review for all young people with a learning disability.

4.5 'Better off in work calculations'. We need easy access to better off in work calculations.

4.6 Modernisation of Day Services. We need to develop Day Services with a greater focus on employment support. Also need alternatives for leisure rather than attendance at a Day Centre. See 3.1 and 3.2 for further details.

4.7 Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme. We need to see that the new provisions available through Jobcentre Plus and the new 'Work Programme', provide avenues for supporting people with a learning disability into work opportunities. (See appendix Four for details about 'Welfare Benefits and Jobcentre Plus')

4.8 Promotion. We need promotion of the message – “jobs for people with a Learning disability”.

4.9 On the job training. Education courses need to have more delivery of “on the job training” and work experience as a part of the course.

4.10 Exit job coaching. Employment education courses need to include 'exit' job coaching (towards the end of the course) – as a part of the course.

4.11 Part-time and holiday jobs. Whilst young people are at school/college we need to support them to secure part-time jobs (evening/weekends) and temporary holiday jobs.

4.12 Workforce training. We need more trained, competent job coaches available through accreditation and funding for a job coach training programme. We also need more basic training on the case for employment and avenues for support.

Peter Harding, Area Manager, North Somerset Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities 11.4.11

The Compact Code of Good Volunteering Practice

The 2005 Compact Code of Good Volunteering Practice says volunteering is an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than or in addition to close relatives.

The four principles of The Volunteering Compact are:

- **Choice:** Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to be involved.
- **Diversity:** Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, race, colour nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Giving time voluntarily must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also benefits and feels that his or her contribution is personally fulfilling.
- **Recognition:** Explicit recognition that valuing the contribution of volunteers is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, voluntary and community organisations and Government. This includes recognising the contribution to the organisation, the community, the social economy and wider social perspectives.

A volunteer is not...

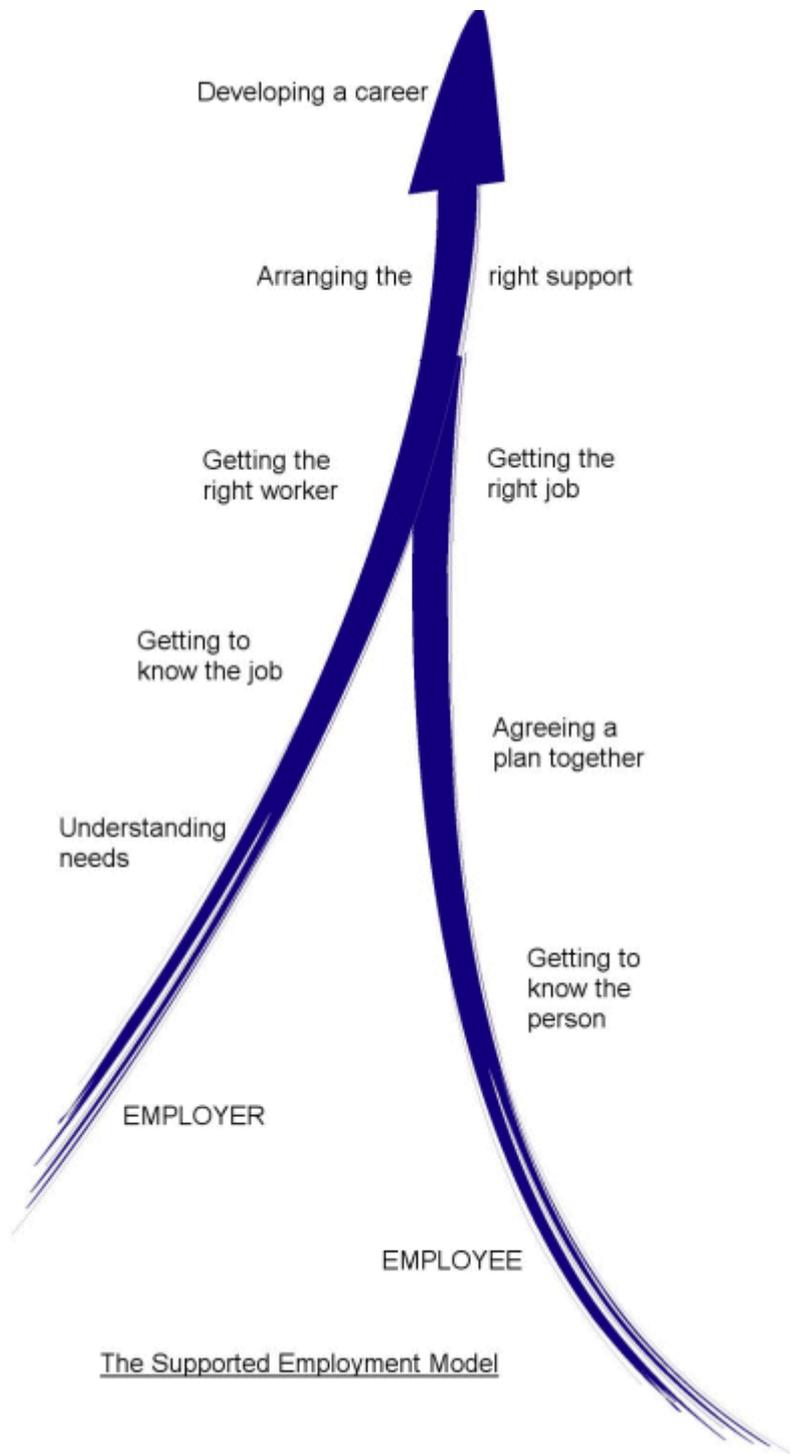
- An employee or a substitute for one.
- Someone who has a role created to suit their skills or needs. This includes someone who needs to gain particular work experience to further their training.
- A general 'helper' with no clear role or responsibilities.
- Someone who is instructed or obliged to give their time without payment in order to meet the requirements of other organisations. This includes placements required to keep receiving government benefits and activities pressed upon an individual such as by their family, social worker or community nurse.

(From the '2005 Compact Code of Good Volunteering Practice')

APPENDIX TWO

Key stages that supported employment services should provide

Supported employment can best be illustrated as follows:



The key stages that supported employment provisions should provide are:

STAGE	WORK WITH EMPLOYER	WORK WITH JOB SEEKER/EMPLOYEE
<p>Stage One</p>	<p>Employer engagement This starts with researching the local job market and contacting employers that best match the skills and interests of the individual job seeker. It requires a professional approach to promote and sell the business case of a diverse workforce to employers, and secure their commitment to participate fully in the supported employment process.</p>	<p>Job seeker engagement This involves identifying those people with learning disabilities who aspire to work, preferably in jobs of at least 16 hours per week, (recognising that some people may need to work less than 16 hours or may need to build up their hours over time). Support is gained from family carers and community supports, ensuring all believe that their employment aspirations are achievable. Accessible information is provided to job seekers to develop self-determination and to make informed decisions. It is important that the impact on benefits is discussed from the outset. This stage should ensure that the job seeker is a full and active participant in the process from the outset and is supported to become highly motivated to work.</p>
<p>Stage Two</p>	<p>Understanding needs and identifying vacancies An employer's needs are understood so that they can be good employers of disabled people. It also identifies an employer's unmet needs and opportunities for undertaken in partnership, to understand a customising or developing jobs (jobs that will add value to the employer's business) for an individual job seeker. The recruitment and retention policies of an employer also need to be understood so that a recruitment strategy can be agreed.</p>	<p>Getting to know you This is often referred to as vocational profiling, person-centred employment planning or discovery. It is a non-traditional, holistic and person-centred approach to assessment, person's aspirations, skills, needs, abilities, talents, experiences, preferences, and informal supports and connections. Information on benefit income is gathered to ensure a better-off calculation is undertaken. The process is led by the job seeker, to get to know them well enough that the information will lead to a job and an effective support strategy.</p>
<p>Stage</p>	<p>Getting to know the job</p>	<p>Agreeing a plan together</p>

Three	A job analysis is carried out to understand all aspects of the job, together with the workplace culture and environment. It also involves identifying potential natural supports and begins to build on these.	A plan is agreed in partnership to find and keep a job that matches a person's skills, interests and all information gleaned during the 'getting to know you' process. It also looks at making sure that people will be financially better off in work. This process identifies each person's unique pathway into employment, which is led by the job seeker.
Stage Four	<p>Job Match</p> <p>Employers get the right worker and job seekers get the right job! This may involve developing, designing or customising jobs. This will require negotiation with the employer, to agree the reasonable adjustments that are needed for the individual to do the job. It also requires risk assessment to address equality and diversity, health and safety and safeguarding issues. Both the employer and employee, together with their family carers and community supports, need to be involved in the process so their respective needs are met.</p>	
Stage Five	<p>Arranging the right support</p> <p>A person-centred plan is agreed with employee and employer in conjunction with family carers and community supports, which is properly considered and justified to make sure the most 'natural' ways of providing support are used. It makes sure that people will get the right support to become valued employees and maintains their health and wellbeing. It makes sure that employers understand how to create workplaces that are supportive of disabled people. Support to employee and employer may include systematic training or structured training; travel training; advocacy; disability awareness; job re-adjustments; ongoing problem solving; and ongoing development of natural supports.</p>	
Stage Six	<p>Developing a career</p> <p>Career development, enhancement opportunities and career progression are agreed with the employee and employer to the benefit of both. Support is provided for employees to benefit from training opportunities and, where appropriate, to work towards qualifications.</p>	

(From: VEN; Job Coaching or Supported Employment: Approach and progress in developing standards; DOH 2010)

APPENDIX THREE

What makes a good job coach?

Personal attributes that are either essential or important:

- Strong beliefs and values that do not preclude anyone from the possibility of employment, and a sense of justice to ensure peoples rights are upheld;
- Being very flexible and adaptable to meet any number of different circumstances;
- Being creative – the ability to see what a person might be good at or enjoy when they may not know themselves; the ability to see new opportunities in the workplace; and be innovative about the adjustments that may be necessary;
- Perseverance and tenacity, because this is not always easy, and there may be many barriers to overcome that may take time and suffer innumerable setbacks;
- Confidence that what they are doing is right, achievable, justifiable and be credible.
- Deliver home truths. Confront someone about something that may not be easy.
- Team player –Often a job coach will need to work in partnership with others.
- A job coach needs a very practical understanding of what makes up a job, and the ability to see it as a set of stepped tasks, and the ability to see practical adjustments that may make a task easier.
- Socially adaptable, meeting a lot of different people in different roles from different agencies, with differing perspectives.
- Not interested in power and control, because job coaching in many respects is about empowering someone to take control of their own life through work.
- Emotional intelligence as job coach relies instinctively on understanding people, workplaces, cultures, norms in assessing the needs of individuals and employers.
- Unflappable –By its very nature things will go wrong in the job coaching process, sometimes seriously. Part of the process is helping people learn by their mistakes.

Skills :

- Communication: with some very specific relevance to people with learning disabilities, especially with those with little or no speech, and limited conceptual abilities.
- Interpersonal: the need to work with many different people at many different levels requires interpersonal skills of the highest order.
- Marketing and negotiation: at the individual level, the job coach needs to know how to sell somebody to an employer. And at a wider level, to sell the idea of employing people with learning disabilities generally. It is the task of the job coach to sell both the business case for employing people, and why a particular individual.
- Analytic: being able to understand the complexities around the lives of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities, being able to understand different jobs and break them down in to tasks, being able to assess the detail of different workplaces and their potential impact on the person seeking employment all need analytical/assessment skills.
- Instructional: how to provide systematic instruction to individuals, and use other technologies to equip people with the behavioural and other supports they need on the job.
- Organisational: time management, priority setting, recording, measurement, quality assurance will all be important aspects of the job coaching process, and knowledge of and some skills in these areas are likely to be needed.
- Problem solving: a successful job coach will need a repertoire of skills, tools, approaches to bring to bear on different situations where things are not going so

well, or a particular difficulty has arisen with the person, or the job, or the workplace. They may also need to know who else to engage for a particular form of intervention.

(From: Chris East: "Planning a Workforce to enable people with severe learning disabilities to get jobs"; B&NES Council 21.10.10)

APPENDIX FOUR

Welfare benefits and Jobcentre Plus

The Benefits Trap

Under the welfare system, a person can get benefits to live on when they are not working. These benefits could exceed the amount of income they could earn by working. People for whom that situation holds true are said to be in the benefit trap; they maximize their "earnings" by remaining out of work.

It's the classic dependency trap. The unemployed need support, yet it can make them dependent, and lead to long-term unemployment.

When a person thinks: "I cannot go to work because I'll lose my Jobseeker's allowance or housing benefit", they are likely to be in a benefit trap.

Another example is if a person works 16 hours because they get more in Tax Credits than if they worked full time.

Jobcentre Plus

Better Off Calculation (BOC).

BOC is the web based version of the Integrated Benefits Information System (IBIS) Personal Benefit Advice (PBA) application and is the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) preferred tool for providing estimates of potential in-work benefits/tax credits for customers. **The process of comparing a customer's current financial circumstances against their potential circumstances is referred to as a Better Off Calculation.**

The better off calculation is an integral part of the process within Jobcentre Plus for helping customers into work.

A better off calculation can be a powerful and valuable tool in influencing customers to leave benefit and enter paid employment. Independent research has shown that some customers really value knowing how much they could be better off in work. BOC produces accurate estimates, based on information supplied by the customer, of potential in-work benefits and tax credits. It is important to remember that this estimate records a 'snapshot' in time and may differ from the actual circumstances when the customer is in work. For instance, the customer may have underestimated their travel costs or childcare expenses during the completion of the BOC or may work less hours.

Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers offer a better off calculation during **all** interviews, as their prime role is to help and encourage the customer to move into work. Judging the correct

time for a calculation is crucial for maximum impact. The most appropriate time for maximum effect is when the customer believes they can do their job goal.

As a minimum, we would expect each Jobcentre Plus customer to receive a calculation during the course of his or her claim. For some customer groups more than this will be appropriate.

Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) customers, by definition, are ready and able to work so a BOC will be most relevant during contact when specific job vacancies are discussed.

A Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) customer may be:

- in receipt of any benefit
- not receiving any benefit, or
- be in employment.

DEA customers face complex employment situations and may have substantial support needs. It may be that a calculation would not be appropriate at the Initial Assessment Interview stage. However, once the customer has moved closer to work a calculation is completed at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Customers can request a better off calculation at any time during their claim and one can be completed on the same day or as early as possible following their request.

Work Trials

The purpose of a **Work Trial is to overcome any remaining suitability doubts an employer and/or disadvantaged group customer may have following a formal interview for a vacant post.** In simple terms, for both customers and employers Work Trial is an opportunity to 'try before you buy'.

A Work Trial relates to a specific vacancy that an employer is actively trying to fill and is offered to a customer on a strictly non-competitive basis. This means that for the duration of the trial, the person taking part is the only person under consideration for the vacancy in question i.e. the job is theirs if **both** they and the employer are satisfied following a trial period.

These crucial points give Work Trial its unique identity and separate it from work placements, work sampling or work-based training which might be undertaken within other labour market programmes.

A Work Trial through the DEA can be done for up to 4 weeks.

Work Placements (Jobcentre Plus Definition)

Work Placements via Jobcentre Plus focus on assessing, practising and improving work-related skills in realistic work settings, usually with an external employer. Aspects of job search and making a final choice of job may be included

In order to benefit from a Work Placement programmes, customers must be unemployed and:

- be on the DEA caseload, regardless of employment or benefit status
- have a realistic defined job goal
- have disability-related needs in making a final choice of occupation or looking for work effectively
- be likely to be capable of working or undertaking training by the end of the programme
- be at least 16 years old (there is no upper age limit for this programme, it would be at the discretion of the DEA to consider if the person is suitable for the programme)

The DEA will decide, with the customer, which barriers result from their disability and could realistically be addressed through a Work Placement and may be able to suggest other actions the customer could take to overcome barriers that face them in taking up work.