



Jobcentre Plus

Business Plan 2008–2009

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department for Work and Pensions

Our services

We are an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). DWP delivers its business strategy based on a vision of ‘Work, Welfare, Well Being, Well Delivered’ to help people achieve their potential and live longer, more active lives. Jobcentre Plus plays a major role in helping people to gain the support and skills they need to move from benefits into work by providing our services based on individual customers’ needs to achieve the best outcome for them, while continuously building on our performance and efficiency, and value for money.

We provide the following range of services for individuals and employers direct, and by working in partnership with other organisations.

Helping our customers find and stay in work

We will help our customers find work by:

- supporting them to find and apply for jobs, including increasing the support our personal advisers give to all parents and families to support the Government’s aims to stamp out child poverty
- increasing opportunities for work through our Local Employment Partnerships
- making sure the way we work with other organisations and the agreements we share with them support our customers fully
- giving specialist help to people who face the most disadvantages in the job market (such as lone parents, customers who face disadvantages because of their age, people from ethnic backgrounds, people with health problems or disabilities and people with caring responsibilities)
- helping people compete effectively in the job market, giving them the skills they need to help them compete for jobs and to move into and stay in work, and
- providing in work support to customers in their first few months of employment.

Supporting our customers

We will support our customers by:

- providing advice on the benefits available including those that will help them to be better off in work
- paying their benefits accurately and on time
- giving parents advice on formal childcare
- making payments or loans from the Social Fund, and
- helping them understand the conditions for receiving benefits, which helps prevent fraud and people claiming more benefits than they are entitled to.

For employers

We will help employers by:

- encouraging more people to apply for jobs
- advertising jobs and finding people with the right skills to apply for them
- working closely within Local Employment Partnerships, and providing extra support for employers and those customers facing greater challenges in securing employment through extended Work Trials, training and work induction seminars
- providing advice about the job market and recruitment, including advice on diversity (valuing people’s differences)
- providing support and advice on employing people with disabilities, and
- developing an employment and skills service in partnership with other organisations to achieve the Government’s ambition for helping people gain world-class skills.

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The Jobcentre Plus Board



Members from Jobcentre Plus (from left to right)

- Matthew Nicholas
- Mel Groves
- Jeremy Groombridge
- Lesley Strathie
- Roland Ginn
- Doug Watkins
- Malcolm Whitehouse
- Phil Bartlett
- Ruth Owen



Non-executive Board members (from left to right)

- John Clare CBE – Chair
- Sarah Anderson CBE
- Kenneth Ludlam



Members from the DWP

Sharon White – Departmental policy adviser to the Jobcentre Plus Board (currently on maternity leave – post being covered by Stephen Martin)

Foreword

I am proud that Jobcentre Plus has built up a genuinely world-class track record in helping people to move out of poverty through employment. By working in partnership with other organisations we have been able to focus our services on people who need the most help to find work, such as people with caring responsibilities and those with health conditions or disabilities.

In 2007–2008 we completed setting up our national network of jobcentres, contact centres and benefit delivery centres, which provides a solid platform on which to make changes and deliver future welfare reforms. Our priorities in 2008–2009 will be to build on this success and to play a central role in delivering a challenging programme of change for the wider transformation of services across DWP, including introducing the new Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) regime.

Introducing ESA will be our top priority in 2008–2009. This represents a new regime for new customers who would have claimed Incapacity Benefit or Income Support due to ill health or because they have a disability. It includes an allowance payment, a new process for medical assessments which focuses on a person's capability to work, and provides return to work support through Pathways to Work. In 2008–2009 we will also extend our support to the partners of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, and provide lone parents with extra support.

We have reviewed our approach to working in partnership with other organisations to make sure we have stronger relationships with our partners including meeting our responsibilities to central and local government. Through our Local Employment Partnerships we will build an approach that benefits employers, helps more of our customers find work and makes communities stronger. By developing



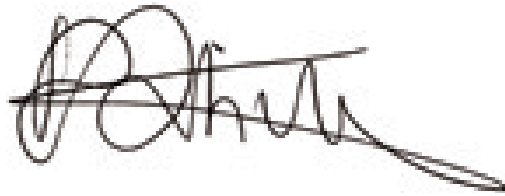
Local Employment Partnerships we can build an employment and skills service to help individual customers improve their skills, stay in work and make progress at work, and create pre-employment training to meet employers' needs. We will do this in England by working with the Learning and Skills Council, and in the longer term creating an integrated service that supports the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service. We are working with the Scottish and Welsh assemblies to consider how we can integrate employment and skills services in Scotland and Wales.

This year we will also build on the success of transforming our business, to further improve our customer service. In 2007–2008 we finished our Jobcentre Plus network to create a professional and welcoming environment for our customers, and we set up our network of benefit delivery centres. Our contact centres have made significant progress and have now received professional recognition from the contact centre industry.

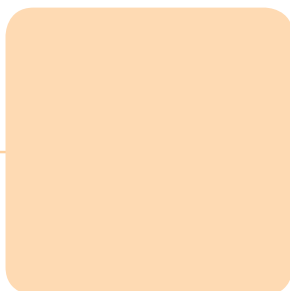
Our next steps are to build on this by improving all our telephone services to make it easier for customers to reach the right person the first time they call and to sort out their enquiry in that call. We will also be looking to transform services for our customers who need to deal with more than one part of the department and we will change the way we work to make sure we put the customer first in everything we do.

The year ahead presents Jobcentre Plus with stretching performance targets and a demanding financial settlement. This means we need to continue to improve every part of our business and keep reviewing how we work. We must also introduce a wide range of welfare reform which offers increased opportunities to make a real difference to the lives of the customers we serve.

To meet these challenges, we will continue to invest in our people to give them leadership and customer-service skills, along with the ability and knowledge they need to create the best outcome for all our customers. I am confident that our people and the partners and organisations we work with in Jobcentre Plus will make 2008–2009 another successful year for our customers.



Lesley Strathie
Chief Executive

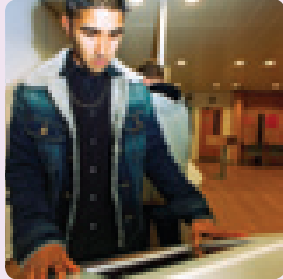


Our priorities in 2008–2009

Transforming our services

We plan to:

- introduce the new Employment and Support Allowance regime for new customers claiming benefits for a sickness or disability
- make our Local Employment Partnerships a success
- introduce a new range of services for lone parents, including new group seminars, and supporting lone parents with children aged 12 and over when their entitlement to Income Support ends, and
- prepare for introducing a flexible 'New Deal' of more tailored support for people looking for work, alongside an integrated employment and skills service.



Delivering our performance

We plan to:

- deliver all of our targets, including reducing staff absence
- work within our allocated budget
- improve how productive we are
- keep our customers' personal information safe
- improve the accessibility and level of service to all our customers, and work in partnership with other organisations and our customers' representatives to the benefit of our customers and promote equal opportunities and diversity.



Delivering services more efficiently and effectively

We plan to:

- constantly review our internal processes using continuous improvement techniques
- continue to modernise and expand our telephony services, spreading contact centre best practice across our business
- work with the Pension, Disability and Carers Service to improve how we deal with customers who use both agencies, and
- get the best value from our estate and information technology.



Delivering our values through our people

We plan to:

- help our staff put the customer first in everything we do
- support our staff and the organisations we work in partnership with to develop the skills we need for the future
- develop our leaders at all levels to inspire our people, deliver results and achieve our vision for the future, and
- change the way in which we work so we become more cost-effective for our customers and our people.



Transforming our services

In 2008–2009 Jobcentre Plus will deliver welfare reforms through working in partnership with more organisations, improving our IT and telephone systems and developing services that are more customer focused. These changes will enable us to:

Help more people to find and stay in work by:

- introducing the new Employment and Support Allowance regime which, alongside the Pathways programme, offers return to work support including access to skilled advisers and Condition Management support, and focuses on capability to work through a revised medical assessment (the Work Capability Assessment) and a new Work Focused Health Related Assessment
 - supporting lone parents whose youngest child is 12 years old or more to find work or appropriate financial support as their entitlement to Income Support ends
 - aiming where possible to guarantee lone parents who are willing and able to work a job interview with an employer, and provide in work support and guidance from our advisers
 - introducing group seminars for lone parents to help them in their search for work
 - completing the roll out of Provider Led Pathways, to offer all our customers on Incapacity Benefit access to this successful programme
 - contributing to local area agreements for tackling unemployment as a priority at a local level, in partnership with public organisations including local authorities
- introducing a new Working Neighbourhoods Fund to target support to help customers in areas of high unemployment in England through combined funds with local authorities
 - building and delivering on our commitments within our Local Employment Partnerships to focus on the needs of our customers who need our help the most and make sure pre-employment training supports industry requirements
 - extending our services to meet the needs of the partners of customers who claim Jobseeker's Allowance
 - preparing to introduce a flexible New Deal which will offer new personalised advice and support for jobseekers, involving our partners in the private and voluntary sectors more in helping customers who need extra support to find work



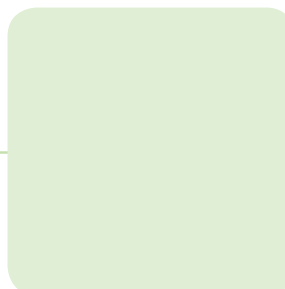
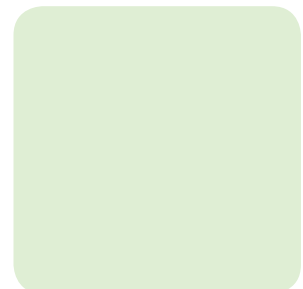
- trialling a system to bring together our personal advisers' services with skills advisers to start to develop a combined employment and skills service
- testing a credit which helps make sure customers are better off in work and off benefits, and
- developing our Labour Market and Employer Insight to understand the qualities and skills employers value.

Make our services better and easier to access by:

- providing benefit information, entitlement advice and 'better off' calculation tools online
- enabling benefits customers to resolve certain enquiries online
- rationalising our phone numbers and updating our telephone systems so that more customers reach the right person the first time they call
- continuing to improve how we deliver the Social Fund by using our telephone systems better
- helping our customers to access benefits managed by the Pension, Disability and Carers Service
- reducing the need for customers who receive more than one benefit to tell each DWP agency separately about a change in their circumstances
- simplifying our policy so that we can make faster benefit payments with fewer errors by aligning a number of benefit rules and the treatment of income across the benefits we pay



- making it easier to move from benefits into work and from one benefit to another
- working with HM Revenue & Customs and local authorities to trial and create simple, efficient processes for customers receiving a working age benefit, Tax Credits and Housing and Council Tax Benefits, and
- working with the Pension, Disability and Carers Service to smooth the transition to pension age benefits.



Delivering our performance for 2008–2009

Our targets reflect the way we improve how we deliver our services and put the customer at the centre of all that we do, in line with the Government's 'welfare to work' strategy.

Job Outcome Target

This target measures the results of the support we give to customers to help them find work. The target uses information from HM Revenue & Customs to identify when people we have supported start work.

The target is measured by awarding points based on the priority we place on customers in relation to our work-focused activities. We award points for each job outcome we identify. For example, we award 12 points for lone parents or customers who receive Incapacity Benefit, 4 points for people who start work who were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and 1 point for people who change jobs.

Our target for 2008–2009 is to achieve a 5% increase in the total points we achieved in 2007–2008.

Employer Engagement Target

The Employer Engagement Target measures how well we deliver our services to our customers who are employers.

Our target for 2008–2009 is to achieve 92% in the delivery of services to the standards we have set for our business. We measure:

- **the outcome** – whether the employer filled their vacancy and whether it was in the required timescale
- **timeliness** – the availability of Employer Direct Online and telephone response times for Employer Direct
- **the accuracy and professionalism** of the Employer Direct vacancy taking service.

Customer Service Target

The Customer Service Target measures how well we deliver our services for our customers.

Our target for 2008–2009 is to achieve 86% in the delivery of services to the standards we have set for our business. We measure:

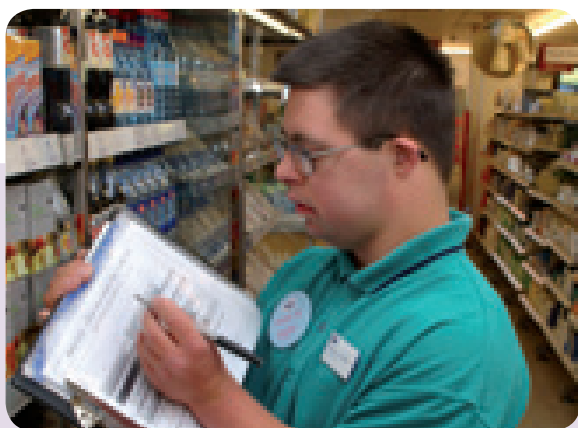
- **timeliness** – how quickly we deal with customers and the availability of our services
- **professionalism** – that we are friendly, polite and sympathetic to customer needs
- **information** – that the information we give to customers is accurate and comprehensive. This includes the information we display in our offices and on our website, information we give directly to customers and, where appropriate, how well we understand customers' requests and anticipate their needs.

Interventions Delivery Target

The Interventions Delivery Target is about helping our customers move into work by providing work-focused support, in a given time, to customers entitled to Incapacity Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance and lone parents receiving Income Support.

The target for 2008–2009 is to deliver the following labour market interventions, for 86% of cases:

- To carry out 85% of initial Incapacity Benefit work-focused interviews between week 9 and week 13 of the claim
- To carry out 85% of Income Support lone parent work-focused review interviews within 3 months of them becoming due



- To carry out 90% of specific Jobseeker's Allowance interviews within 6 weeks of their due date.

Average Actual Clearance Time Target

This target aims to improve how quickly we deal with benefit claims.

In 2008–2009 we aim to process claims within the following average number of days for customers receiving the following benefits:

- Incapacity Benefit – 15 days
- Jobseeker's Allowance – 11.5 days
- Income Support – 10 days.

Fraud and Error

We will play a key role to prevent and detect overpayments and underpayments of benefit, consistent with DWP's aspiration for the proportion of expenditure overpaid and underpaid due to fraud and error, as set out in the Department's Business Plan for 2008–2009.

To support this there will be an internal Fraud and Error Target set by the Chief Executive to ensure the external fraud and error business target can be delivered, covering all our counter-fraud and error activities.

Reporting our targets

We measure how well we have performed throughout the year against each of our targets and use this information to manage and improve what we do. These targets are supported by key management indicators against which business units are measured.

It is important to make sure we are consistent in our performance across our business. We will achieve this by bringing all of our offices up to the levels of the higher-performing offices. We report regularly to government ministers on our progress and performance.

You can find more information about our targets and how we are doing locally and nationally on the Jobcentre Plus website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk



Delivering services more efficiently and effectively

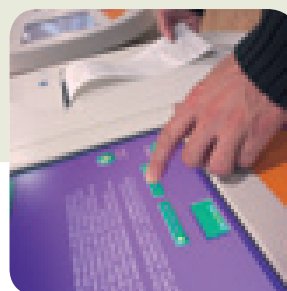
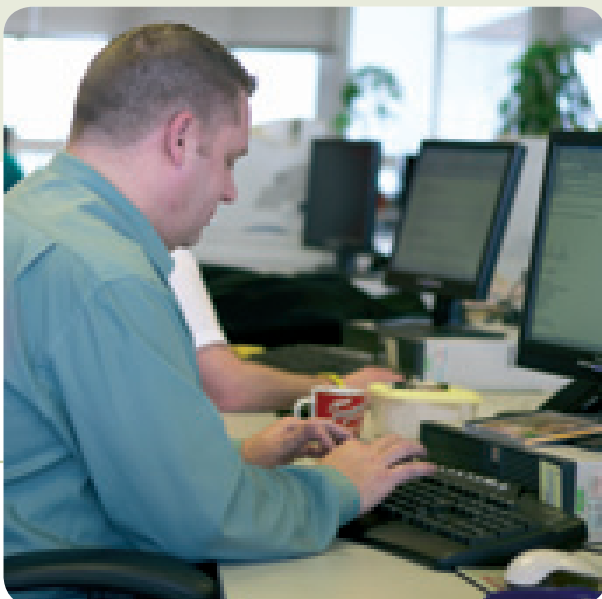
In 2008–2009 we aim to improve how efficient and effective we are while maintaining our standards by:

- reducing waste by continuing to improve our business processes and training our people in continuous improvement techniques
- continuing to play a key role in the DWP objective to reduce fraud and error by developing how we prevent and detect fraud, working in partnership with other organisations and government departments where this is appropriate
- tackling error in the benefit system to support the Department in reducing the level of both official and customer error
- developing our information technology systems to help staff to see, change, and share, relevant information to meet more of our customers' needs first time
- implementing a modern integrated telephony network delivering improved messaging and call routing
- improving our internet services so that customers can find the information they want more easily

- improving and replacing some of our Jobpoints to provide a better service for our customers through improved technology
- listening to our customers and acting on their feedback
- embedding the principles of Sustainable Development into our policy, planning and decision-making, and
- maximising our contribution to the social and economic well-being of the community.

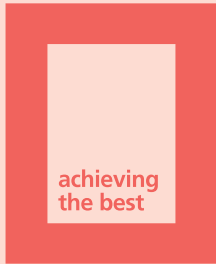
We will manage our people and resources by:

- focusing on improving attendance and reducing the number of days lost due to sickness
- developing our workforce plans to make best use of our people's skills and manage our staffing levels in line with business priorities
- using our estate and information technology more efficiently to reduce costs, and
- making effective use of environmental resources.



Delivering our values through our people

Our values encourage people to work consistently using a common approach. They underpin all that we do.



Using our resources efficiently, continuously improving our performance, delivering high and consistent standards and setting a benchmark for the quality of public service



By treating our customers, colleagues and partners with respect (and expecting the same in return), delivering real equality to our customers and ourselves, and responding positively to feedback from customers, colleagues and partners



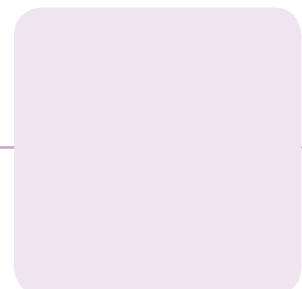
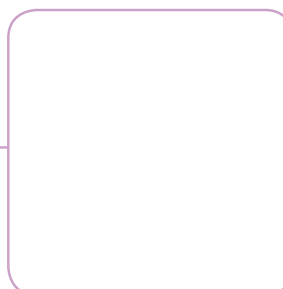
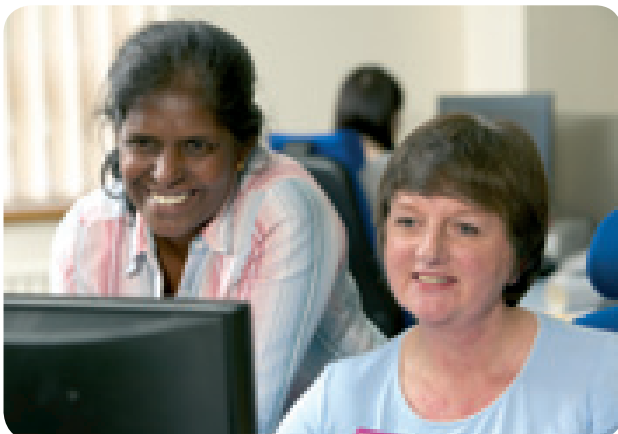
By supporting, challenging and inspiring ourselves so that we can make a difference to our customers' lives, and by going the extra mile to help our colleagues and all of our customers, including employers



By working together with employers, partners, local communities and others to achieve their goals and ours, and by consistently identifying best practice opportunities to enhance our customer service

We will use our values in our day-to-day work environment, focussing on delivering high-quality customer services. We will make full use of our people's skills and reward their contribution to our business.

We will also build upon the significant progress we have made towards achieving our diversity and equality goals by raising awareness of and following the actions set out in our Equality Schemes and 'Diversity Challenge'.*



* For further details please visit the Jobcentre Plus website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

In 2008–2009, we will make sure our people are in the best position to meet our business needs by:

- supporting our people to develop their skills in their current roles and in learning to support new or changing job roles
- improving the quality of our existing learning and development products to make sure they support the delivery of change and maintenance of our performance
- building our leaders' skills to help them lead, train, support and develop the people they are responsible for through changes in our business
- improving our people's performance by rewarding them and recognising the contribution they make
- introducing new ways of working to improve how effective we are and how well we respond to change
- enabling our people to put the customer first in dealing with any part of our organisation
- identifying and building on our people's ability by recognising talent and using the Professional Skills for Government, and
- improving succession planning for our key roles in line with our talent management.

We will support our people during a period of change to our business by:

- building capability and creating the working environment, abilities and ways of working we need, and
- providing effective Human Resource (HR) support for change and effective workforce management.

We will work more closely with our people to build positive relationships by:

- improving the way we tell them about changes and involving them in how we develop these changes and put them in place
- listening to and working with our people to sort out issues raised in the yearly DWP staff survey
- maintaining a positive relationship with our trade unions
- building our continuous improvement programme based on the input and ideas of our people in how to improve customer service, and
- providing our people with the skills and environment to use continuous improvement techniques.

We will support the delivery of welfare reform and achievement of the 2007 Spending Review settlement by:

- working with HR colleagues across DWP to structure our HR functions so that they best support the business while taking account of our financial settlement
- providing HR expertise to help deliver both the welfare reform agenda and the efficiency programmes that will enable us to deliver more for less, and
- creating a culture in which efficiency and continuous improvement is key.

Our resources

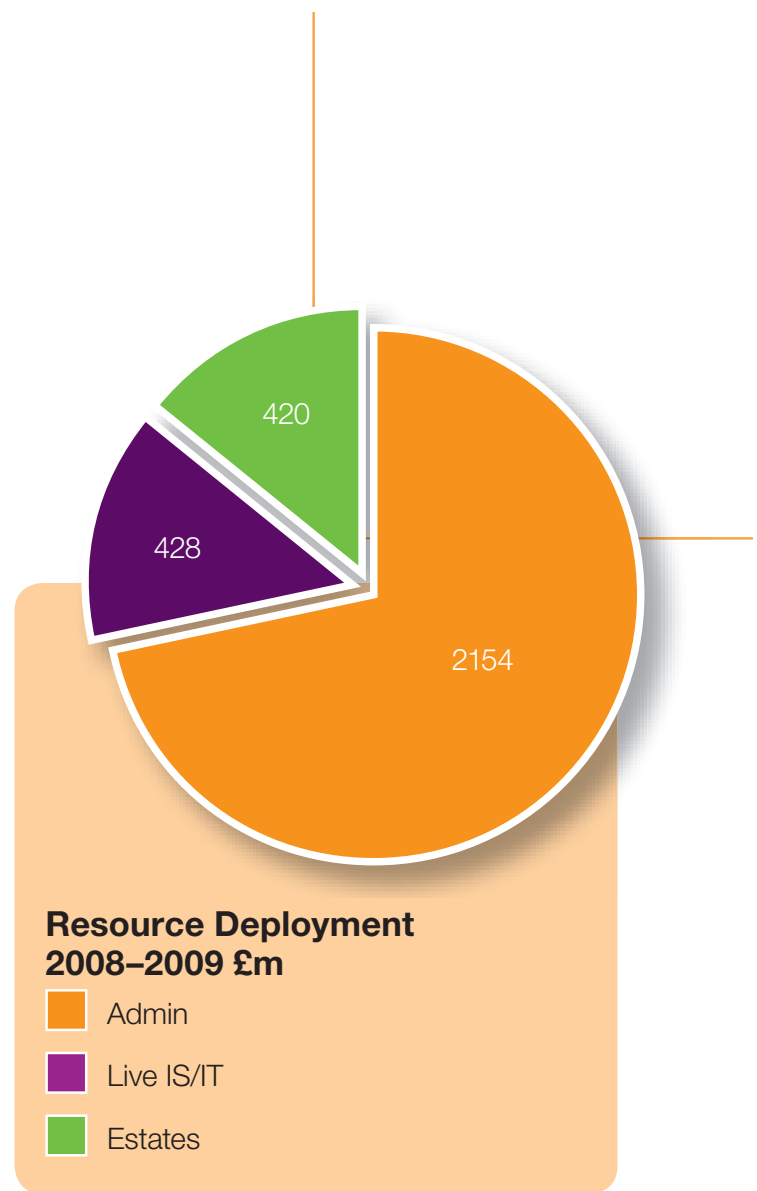
Our spending review financial settlement is challenging, and we must continue to deliver and manage our spending while meeting our objectives and targets and carrying out a programme of considerable change.

We need to:

- reduce our number of employees by improving and increasing how productive we are over the next 3 years while still delivering the same outputs
- reduce our non-staff costs, and
- improve our methods of monitoring and forecasting so that we can better predict what is going to happen in the business and provide business plans that make more efficient use of our resources and deliver value for money.

We plan to do this by:

- continuing to improve how efficiently we work
- capitalising on efficiencies from our telephony channels and from centralised benefit delivery
- creating capacity to invest more in our jobcentre based services while working more efficiently
- requiring our central and support functions to deliver an increase of 20% in their productivity through implementing new ways of working, and
- reducing our non-staff running costs to reflect a smaller workforce with focus on:
 - the cost of running our information technology systems
 - the size of our estate, and
 - travel and utilities expenditure.



The money we receive to deliver services falls into the following 3 categories:

Administration

This covers staff costs, general administration, related investment costs and major contracts such as medical services and office services.

Live information systems and information technology

This covers the costs of running our information technology systems including desk top computers and major information technology development (for example, to introduce the new Employment and Support Allowance).

Estates

The cost of renting office space and ongoing costs for running an office.

Jobcentre Plus – working towards 2011

In 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 we will build on progress we made in 2008–2009 to help our customers into work, to remain in work and help them obtain the services and financial support they need from the ‘welfare to work’ system. In particular, we will introduce the next phase of New Deal. Flexible New Deal will replace the existing New Deal programmes with a more personalised approach tailored to a person’s circumstances. We will deliver Flexible New Deal by working in partnership with other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Our wider partnerships with a new Adult Advancement and Careers Service will also see us complete the formation of an integrated employment and skills service.

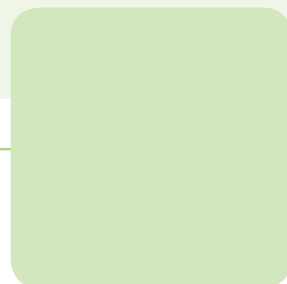
We will help more people to find lasting employment and continue to build their skills in employment by:

- introducing individual tailored help for people looking for work from 2009 through new high-quality employment programmes which give value for money run by the private and voluntary sectors as part of the Flexible New Deal
- introducing in 2009 a revised programme for people looking for work for the first 12 months that they claim Jobseeker’s Allowance
- introducing mandatory fast-tracking support for 18 year olds who have not been in work, education or training for 6 months, by 2009
- phasing in an extension of Pathways to Work to existing Incapacity Benefit customers under the age of 25, by 2009
- trialling the introduction of skills accounts for Jobcentre Plus customers from 2009, prior to rollout in 2015
- extending help to lone parents whose youngest child is 7 years old or over so that they can get better access to help overcome barriers to work when their entitlement to Income Support ends, by 2010
- rolling out an integrated employment and skills service in 2010–2011, which will include skills screening and skills health checks for our customers, and
- increasing access to full-time, short, employment-focused training courses for Jobseeker Allowance customers supported through training allowances, by 2011.



We will make our services better and easier to access by:

- developing more self service options for customers, including notifying certain changes in circumstances online
- implementing the Improving Specialist Disability Services from October 2009 following the Public Consultation which ended in March 2008
- implementing new information technology so that customer data can be viewed through a single screen so that our people can deal with enquiries more easily and give a better service to our customers
- improving and developing our telephone based service delivery, allowing us to meet most customers' needs in one call, including via self-service telephone options
- making benefit rules less complex for customers by completing plans to simplify the treatment of child maintenance income by 2010, and completing work to pay all working age benefits on a common benefit payday by March 2011, and
- helping customers who claim more than one benefit (including tax credits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit) to tell us about a change in their circumstances, and give them one clear response by sharing information securely with all the relevant agencies, by 2011.



Departmental Strategic Objectives

DWP have developed a full set of strategic objectives that focus on the outcomes we aim to deliver to our customers. The objectives outlined below are most relevant to Jobcentre Plus, and aim to:



Reduce the number of children living in poverty



Maximise employment opportunity for all and reduce the numbers on out-of-work benefits



Promote independence and well-being in later life, continuing to tackle pensioner poverty and implementing pension reform



Promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people



Pay our customers the right benefits at the right time



Make DWP an exemplar of effective service delivery to individuals and employers

Accessing Jobcentre Plus services

Jobcentre Plus is working to make it easier for our customers to get access to our services quickly and efficiently, depending on their needs. We run a network of telephone contact centres and offices across Great Britain.

If someone is looking for work:

By visiting www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk a person can search through our vacancies online at times that suit them.

They can call Jobcentre Plus on **0845 60 60 234** to find out what vacancies are available, and how to apply for them. They can call **0845 60 55 255** if they use a textphone*. We also have a service for people who speak Welsh and live in Wales on **0845 60 67 890** (or **0845 60 44 022** if they use a textphone).

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, and Saturday, 9am to 1pm.

To make a new claim for benefit:

People can call Jobcentre Plus on **0800 0 55 66 88** (or **0800 0 23 48 88** if they use a textphone). We also have a service on **0800 0 121 888** (or **0800 0 23 48 88** if they use a textphone) for people who speak Welsh and live in Wales.

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

To apply for a National Insurance number:

People can call **0845 600 0643** (or **0845 600 0644** if they use a textphone).

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

If someone suspects benefit fraud:

They should call the national hotline on **0800 85 44 40**. If they use a textphone they can call **0800 32 80 512**.

Lines are open every day, 8.30am to 6.30pm.

To find out more about New Deal:

People can visit our website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

For employers who need to fill vacancies:

Employers should call Jobcentre Plus on **0845 601 2001** (or **0845 601 2002** if they use a textphone).

There is also a service on **0845 601 4441** (or **0845 601 4442** if they use a textphone) for employers who speak Welsh and live in Wales.

Lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

Employers can advertise their vacancies online at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/postjob

0800 calls are free from BT landlines, but if you call from a mobile phone or other phone network the cost may be different. 0845 call charges may also vary according to phone company and tariff.

* Textphones are for customers who find it hard to speak or hear clearly. They do not accept text messages from mobile phones.

Want to know more? Then visit our website:

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

We welcome your feedback. Please send any comments, questions or views about anything in our Business Plan by:

E-mailing us at:

Business-plan@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Or, posting them to:

The Strategic Planning Division
Jobcentre Plus
Room 4C06, Quarry House
Quarry Hill
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Other formats

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

