



BRIEFING PAPER

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Work and Health Programme

By Andrew Powell

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Summary

The Work and Health Programme is an employment support programme which was launched in North West England and Wales in November 2017. The programme rolled out across the rest of England during early 2018. It replaced the Work Programme and Work Choice schemes.

Up to November 2019, there had been almost 150,000 referrals to the programme, with the majority of these being people with disabilities.

The Programme provides support to help people find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people.

It will also provide support to those who have been unemployed for over two years, and it will be compulsory for this group.

In 2018/19, the DWP spent £46 million on the Work and Health Programme.

Service Providers

It will be run by five service providers across six regions in England and Wales. The successful providers were:

- Shaw Trust (Central England and Home Counties)
- Reed in Partnership (North East)
- Ingeus (North West)
- Pluss (Southern)
- Remploy (Wales)

Devolution

London and Greater Manchester have been given funding under devolution deals and have selected their own providers.

In Manchester the programme is called *Working Well* and launched at the end of January 2018. InWork GM have been appointed to deliver the programme.

The Work and Health Programme will launch in London in Spring 2018. The programme will operate on a "sub-regional basis with groups of boroughs working together through strategic partnerships". There will be four such partnerships:

- Shaw Trust (West London)
- Ingeus (Central London)
- Maximus (East London)
- Reed in Partnership (South London)

Funding for employment programmes in Scotland has also been devolved.

Work, Health and Disability White Paper

The Government published its White Paper, [Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability](#) in November 2017. The White Paper sets out the Government's strategy for reform over the next ten years with the intention of increasing the number of people in work by a million by 2027.

1. Background

The Work and Health Programme is an employment support programme which was launched in North West England and Wales in November 2017. The programme rolled out across the rest of England during early 2018.¹

The Programme provides support to help people find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people.

It will also provide support to those who have been unemployed for over two years, and it will be compulsory for this group.

The Programme will be targeted at people who with specialist support are likely to be able to find work within 12 months. The Government expects the majority of those referred to the scheme to be disabled.^{2 3}

It will be run by five service providers across six regions in England and Wales. London and Greater Manchester have been given funding under devolution deals and will select their own providers. Funding for employment programmes in Scotland has also been devolved. Further information on these devolution deals is in section three.⁴

The Work and Health Programme is not available in Northern Ireland.

1.1 Eligibility

As mentioned above people who are disabled and those who have been unemployed for more than two years may be eligible for the programme. In addition, people may be eligible if they are:

- a carer or former carer
- homeless
- a former member of the armed forces or an armed forces reservist
- the partner of a current or former member of the armed forces
- a care leaver
- a young person in a gang
- a refugee
- a victim of domestic violence
- dependent (or have been dependent) on drugs or alcohol and preventing them from getting work
- an ex-offender who has completed a custodial or community sentence
- an offender serving a community sentence

The programme is voluntary for all of the above groups.

¹ DWP, [Work and Health Programme statistics](#), February 2020

² DWP/DoH, [Work, health and disability: improving lives](#), 31 October 2016, p32

³ PQ [HL3190](#), 15 November 2016

⁴ DWP, [October 2017: Touchbase edition 122](#)

All Jobcentre Plus work coaches are able to refer people to the Programme. They can be referred if various criteria are met, such as the claimant being able to find employment within one year, or if they need more support than can be provided within the standard Jobcentre Plus offer.^{5 6}

1.2 Programme Statistics

The Government has reported that the programme will support 275,000 people over 5 years, including 220,000 disabled people.⁷

Up to November 2019:

- There had been almost 150,000 referrals to the programme, with the majority of these being people with disabilities.
- 122,000 individuals have been referred has been 122,000. There can be multiple referrals per individual.
- 92,500 individuals had started on the programme.
- 76% of the individuals who had been referred had started on the programme by November 2019.
- There had been almost 10,000 job outcomes.⁸

1.3 The Work Programme and Work Choice

It was announced in the [2015 Autumn Statement](#) that the Work and Health Programme will replace the [Work Programme](#) and [Work Choice schemes](#).⁹

Referrals to the current Work Programme ended on 1 April 2017. Referral to Work Choice ended in November 2017 with the last starts in early 2018.^{10 11}

A smaller population will be eligible for the Work and Health Programme than for the Work Programme, as most people claiming unemployment benefits will only be referred to the Work and Health Programme after claiming for two years (claimants were referred to the Work Programme after claiming for up to one year, and in some cases much sooner).

1.4 Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability

The Department for Works and Pension (DWP) published the White Paper [Improving Lives: The future of Work, Health and Disability](#) in November 2017. This set out the Government plans to “transform employment prospects for disabled people and those with long term

⁵ [PQ 231943](#), 20 March 2019

⁶ [PQ 137388](#), 27 April 2018

⁷ [PQ 880](#), 21 October 2019

⁸ DWP, [Work and Health Programme statistics to November 2019](#), February 2020

⁹ HM Treasury, [Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015](#), p89

¹⁰ Gov.uk, [Help with moving from benefits to work](#)

¹¹ DWP, [Work Choice Official Statistics change of publication schedule: statistical notice](#), July 2019

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health conditions over the next 10 years". The White Paper is covered in section 4 of this briefing paper.

2. Funding and procurement

2.1 Funding

In 2018/19, the DWP spent £46 million on the Work and Health Programme.¹²

The [2015 Spending Review](#) announced that funding for the Work and Health Programme would be at least £130 million a year by 2019/20. This includes funding to be devolved to Scotland.¹³

The Programme will be smaller and more focused than the Work Programme and Work Choice, for which combined expenditure was £540.8 million in 2015/16 (£416.4 million Work Programme, £124.4 million Work Choice).^{14 15}

The Work and Health Programme will be part of a wider support package for disabled people, outlined in [Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives](#) (see Section 4 of this briefing paper). [The Department for Work and Pensions' settlement at the 2015 Spending Review](#) included a "real terms increase in funding to help those with disabilities and health conditions to return to, and remain in, work".

In addition to the £130 million, at Summer Budget 2015 the Chancellor announced further funding on employment support of £330m over four years. Further details were provided in the written answer to PQ 59210 (9 January 2017):

At Summer Budget 2015, the Chancellor announced a support package of £330m over four years to provide support for people with limited capability for work from April 17...

...The £330m additional funding is targeted at new ESA Work Related Activity Group and UC Limited Capability for Work claimants from April 2017 and will deliver a broad range of employment and health support. This will rise from £60m in 2017/18 to £100m in 2020/21.

After referrals to the Work Programme end in April 2017, more employment support will be delivered through the Jobcentre Plus network than is currently the case. Employment support which is contracted out to service providers (for example, schemes such as the Work and Health Programme) will be "refocused" to cover a smaller population.¹⁶

The Work and Pensions Committee has expressed its concern "that the resources allocated to the [Work and Health Programme] do not match its ambition":

The DWP's Employment and Health Related Services "Umbrella Agreement", through which prospective Work and Health Programme providers are required to bid, has a total contract value of £1.77 billion. Not all of this will go to the Work and

¹² [PO 634](#), 21 October 2019

¹³ PQ [HL3190](#), 15 November 2016

¹⁴ PQ [60438](#), 23 January 2017

¹⁵ PQ [58964](#), 11 January 2017

¹⁶ PQ [50117](#), 25 October 2016

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Health Programme, however. The Umbrella Agreement suggests that it will have a budget of £554 million over its lifetime. This is a manifold reduction compared to what it will replace. In comparison, the DWP states that £492 million in total has been spent on Work Choice up to 2015–16 alone, and £2.2 billion had been paid to Work Programme providers as of December 2015. The Department states that it is not possible to calculate the proportion of Work Programme's budget spent on disabled people specifically over the programme's lifetime. External analysis, however, suggests that combined Work Choice and Work Programme spending on disabled people has been approximately £1 billion since 2010.¹⁷

¹⁷ Work and Pensions Committee, [The future of Jobcentre Plus](#), 2 November 2016, p26

2.2 Procurement

The Work and Health Programme was procured in two stages.

Stage 1

The Department for Work and Pensions started the procurement process in October 2016 for “a multi-supplier Umbrella Agreement for the provision of Employment and Health Related Services”. The Umbrella Agreement can be used to deliver various programmes providing employment and health-related support services, including the Work and Health Programme.¹⁸

With the exception of the devolved areas (see section 3), only organisations accepted on to the Umbrella Agreement were able to bid for the Work and Health Programme contracts.

The suppliers accepted on to the Umbrella Agreement were announced in January 2017.¹⁹

Prime/Lot	Central	Home Counties	North East	North West	Southern	Wales	No.Lots won
People Plus	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
G+S	X	X	X	X	X		5
Shaw Trust	X	X	X		X	X	5
Ingeus	X	X		X			3
Reed	X		X	X			3
Working Links			X		X	X	3
Pluss					X	X	2
APM		X					1
Prospects					X		1
Remploy						X	1
Work Company				X			1

Stage 2

The “Umbrella Agreement” includes several suppliers for each of six broad geographical areas in England and Wales, based on (but not coterminous with) current Jobcentre Plus groups (Central England, North East England, North West England, Southern England, Home Counties and Wales).

Suppliers in each area then took part in “mini-competitions” to win work. The mini-competition for the Work and Health Programme commenced in January 2017, and the successful bidders were announced in November 2017.²⁰

The successful providers were:²¹

- Shaw Trust (Central England and Home Counties)
- Reed in Partnership (North East)
- Ingeus (North West)
- Pluss (Southern)
- Remploy (Wales)

¹⁸ The Umbrella Agreement and process for awarding contracts is explained in a DWP specification document, [Umbrella Agreement for the provision of Employment and Health Related Services \(UAEHRS\) Specification and Supporting Information](#), 8 October 2016

¹⁹ Employment Related Services Association, [ERSA congratulates successful bidders for the Umbrella framework](#), 13 January 2017

²⁰ British Association for Supported Employment (BASE), [Changes to procurement of Work and Health Programme](#), 21 September 2016

²¹ DWP, [April 2018: Touchbase edition 126](#)

3. Localism and Devolution

Scotland

The [Scotland Act 2016](#) transferred certain welfare powers to the Scottish Parliament.²² As noted in Section 2 of this briefing paper part of the overall budget for the Work and Health Programme is devolved to Scotland. In September 2016 the Scottish Government announced the first two programmes delivered in Scotland under the new powers and in April 2017 'Work First Scotland' (delivered through three organisations: [The Shaw Trust](#), [Momentum Skills](#) and [Remploy](#)) and '[Work Able Scotland](#)' were both launched.²³

England

The powers to develop, procure and deliver localised versions of the Work and Health programme have been devolved to London and Greater Manchester, with the cities receiving around £100 million.²⁴

In Manchester the programme was launched as Working Well (Work and Health Programme) in January 2018. The original Working Well programme was launched in Greater Manchester in April 2014 with the intention of helping people move from Employment and Support Allowance to employment. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has appointed InWork GM to deliver the programme.²⁵

The Work and Health Programme launched in London in Spring 2018. The programme operates on a "sub-regional basis with groups of boroughs working together through strategic partnerships". There are four such partnerships:²⁶

- Shaw Trust (West London)²⁷
- Ingeus (Central London)²⁸
- Maximus (East London)²⁹
- Reed in Partnership (South London)³⁰

Through the [Devolution Deal process](#) the Government has agreed to "co-design" the Work and Health Programme with the following Local Enterprise Partnerships and City Regions:³¹

- The Tees Valley

²² Scotland Office, [New Welfare Powers Transferred to the Scottish Parliament](#), 5 September 2016

²³ Scottish Government, [Employment support programmes from April 2017](#), 8 September 2016

²⁴ DWP, Greater Manchester and London handed new disability powers, January 2017

²⁵ GMCA, [Working Well](#)

²⁶ London Councils, [The Work and Health Programme in London](#), 17 October 2017

²⁷ Shaw Trust, [Shaw Trust wins Work and Health Programme in West London](#), 13 October 2017

²⁸ Central London Forward, [Central London Works](#)

²⁹ Maximus, [Local London Work and Health Programme](#)

³⁰ Reed in Partnership, [Better Working Futures](#)

³¹ DWP and DoH, [Improving Lives: The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper](#), October 2016, pp 32

- East Anglia
- Sheffield City Region
- The West of England
- West Midlands
- Liverpool City Region
- Cardiff Capital Region

4. Proposals in the Future of Work, Health and Disability White Paper: Improving Lives

The Government published its White Paper, [Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability](#) in November 2017. The White Paper sets out the Government's strategy for reform over the next ten years with the intention of increasing the number of people in work by a million by 2027.

This document includes a review of the consultation that followed the publication of the [Improving Lives Green Paper](#) in October 2016.

A full description of the policies and proposals included in the White Paper is included in Section 4 of the Commons Briefing Paper, [People with disabilities in employment](#) (January 2018).

The White Paper reports that implementation of the **Work and Health Programme** started at the end of November 2017. In addition, the White Paper included the following policies and proposals:

- The rollout of the **Personal Support Package**. This includes the recruitment of 200 Community Partners, 300 Disability Employment Advisers and around 100 Small Employer Advisers. New mandatory training will be introduced for work coaches. There will also be an extra 1,000 Mental Health Support Service places.
- The Government will “increase the reach and effectiveness of **Disability Confident**”. The Disability Confident Business Leaders Group has been established to provide leadership and peer-to-peer support.³²
- The Government will explore the best options to provide support to those with **more complex needs**, and those who are furthest from the labour market.
- Proposals specifically targeted at **young people** with disabilities include a voluntary supported work experience programme, an increase in the number of supported internships and a cross-government approach to improve mental health support.
- The Government will look to improve the **Access to Work** scheme.
- The Government will explore how it can make **apprenticeships** more accessible to people with a disability, and also research the barriers that disabled people may experience when trying to become **self-employed**.

³² DWP/DoH, [Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability](#), pp 16-18

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