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**What works? Policies for employability in cities**

**Abstract**

Employability policies targeting urban job seekers have often had a 'work first' focus on quick job entries, neglecting sustainability and progression. This article reviews evidence on 'what works', drawing generic lessons from research on locally-focused urban policy initiatives in Great Britain operationalised in the context of persistent worklessness in many cities. The findings highlight the importance of employer engagement to open up job opportunities, recognising the diverse needs of individuals, the significance of personalised support for those furthest from the labour market, and co-ordination of local provision. It is argued that providers need to ensure workless groups have the skills and support to access opportunities created by economic growth. Robust local policy analysis remains challenging but important in the context of limited budgets, payment-by-results and a fragmented policy landscape.

**Key Words:** Employability, Labour market, Localisation, Welfare to work, Worklessness

## Introduction

This article addresses the question of 'what works' in tackling worklessness in urban labour markets. Evidence is drawn from selected evaluations looking at operation and outcomes of locally-focused policy initiatives in Britain. A key source of evidence is the City Strategy (CS) initiative which empowered local partnership 'pathfinders' to reduce persistent worklessness in fifteen urban areas across Britain (see Green and Adam, 2011; Green et al., 2010). Other material is presented from syntheses of evidence of worklessness interventions in Britain, including the Work Programme (WP) (DWP, 2012a). Although examples are taken from Britain, the ideas and practice have wider applicability, not least because worklessness is an issue faced, to a greater or lesser extent, by cities elsewhere.

Similar to the approach taken by Green and Hasluck (2009), this article identifies generic lessons and good practice elements about what works in reducing worklessness. The question of transferability relates to identifying ideas and principles which underpin good practice rather than on direct transplantation of initiatives from one context to another. Spatial variations in local labour market fortunes and their relative strengths and weaknesses affect the impact and effectiveness of policy responses (Lee et al. 2014, Davies and Raikes, 2014). Thus what works in one context may be ineffective elsewhere. Hence policy transferability is confined to good practice elements.

It is beyond the scope of this article to consider every type of intervention, so particular attention is paid to four topics: personalised support, intensive services for those furthest from the labour market; employer engagement; and co-ordination of local provision. These topics relate to both supply- and demand-sides of the employability equation and their alignment, in addition to questions about optimal organisation of services in a policy landscape where provision is fragmented across numerous providers and policies are formulated at a range of spatial scales.

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3 The article focuses on initiatives and interventions since the 2005 Special Issue. The  
4 context for the initiatives was largely one of economic crisis, albeit some policies  
5 implemented in this period were framed beforehand. Many urban areas already experienced  
6 persistent levels of high worklessness, compounded by increased unemployment in the  
7 recession. Looking at this period is particularly interesting because the economic context  
8 challenged and rejected some of the assumptions on which the policies were predicated and  
9 notions of success were recast.  
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18 When analysing initiatives the article seeks to place them in terms of their specific  
19 objectives, describe who was targeted, and consider whether initiatives had a predominantly  
20 supply- or demand-side focus. Where outcomes or targets are clearly stated, the initiatives  
21 are discussed in those terms of 'success' (increasing skills levels, reducing skills and spatial  
22 mismatches, addressing particular barriers, etc.).  
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29 The next section sets out key features of the economic and policy context in more detail  
30 Key issues relating to evidence and measurement are then outlined, before discussion of the  
31 evidence itself. The four selected key labour market intervention topics are addressed in  
32 turn before the paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the evidence  
33 presented.  
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### 39 **Context**

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42 An individual's journey from worklessness to work is conceptualised as having three stages:  
43 gaining, sustaining and progressing (in) employment. Worklessness policy may be directed  
44 at some or all of these. Conceptually, gaining employment is largely unproblematic.  
45 Sustaining employment is often defined in policy terms as maintaining employment for a  
46 defined duration; typically three or six months. Progressing in employment includes  
47 advancement with the same employer/organisation as demonstrated by pay rises or  
48 promotion, or by securing employment with a different employer.  
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3 Historically there has always been more focus on getting people into work (or more simply  
4 reducing the benefit count) whether that is through the carrot of support and guidance and/or  
5 through the stick of restricting the levels of and access to out-of-work benefits. Policies have  
6 been criticised for almost exclusively focusing on the transition between welfare and  
7 employment, with very little attention given to keeping people in work, and for taking a 'static,  
8 short-term' view (Mulheirn et al., 2009).  
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13 Since 2005 policy developments have led to a landscape in which responsiveness and  
14 personalisation are key features, but at the cost of increased conditionality: workless  
15 individuals are not only provided with increased support, but they are to be compelled to use  
16 it: welfare support has been restated from passive to active (Fuller *et al.*, 2010). The global  
17 economic crisis and recession have also brought cost-containment to the fore as a policy-  
18 making rationale via austerity measures.  
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29 The financial crisis provides a sharp break in the policy context and challenged the largely  
30 supply-side notions on which policies were predicated formerly. New Labour's worklessness  
31 policies followed a 'work first' approach which conceptualised employment as inherently  
32 beneficial, economically and socially, albeit certain elements of human capital development  
33 could be detected (Lindsay et al., 2007). Frameworks for personal advisers in the public  
34 employment service used targets for benefit reductions and job outcomes, but not for  
35 sustainability (Finn, 2009).  
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44 Governance arrangements have evolved also. There is increased private sector  
45 responsibility for employability services (Wright *et al.*, 2011) and greater localism through  
46 local partnerships (Fuller *et al.*, 2010). The Freud Report (Freud, 2007) was particularly  
47 influential here, with subsequent changes in governance arrangements exemplified in such  
48 policies as Flexible New Deal (FND, introduced 2009) and the WP (introduced 2011).  
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55 The WP is supports the long-term unemployed into work. It uses a payment-by-results  
56 model, in which the bulk of payments to providers are triggered by workless individuals  
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3 achieving sustained employment; (those who are classified as hardest to help attract the  
4 highest payments). It takes a 'black box' approach to service provision; there is no  
5 stipulation of what services should be provided, rather providers are encouraged to decide  
6 what services are most appropriate and how they should be delivered (DWP, 2012a). The  
7 WP has stimulated more concern with issues of sustainability than was the case formerly.  
8 Indeed DWP now produce figures on sustainability payments as part of their regular  
9 reporting on WP performance. Certainly relating payments to sustained outcomes elevates  
10 the issue in minds of practitioners, though good evidence is required of shifts in practitioner  
11 approaches to reflect the policy change. Issues of sustaining work and progressing are  
12 often seen as the remit of employers, who may choose to instigate their own policies in  
13 relation to business case considerations (UKCES, 2012).  
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26 Even though governance of employment/employability programmes has shifted from  
27 centralised models to various devolved models, the voice of service users has largely been  
28 overlooked (e.g. Green and Orton, 2009), though some recent programmes such as Big  
29 Lottery's Talent Match seek to place service users at the heart of programme design and  
30 delivery (CRESR and IER, 2014). Demand-side considerations have also been  
31 underdeveloped, although there has been some limited policy-making incentivising  
32 employers to take on and retain employees, such as the Youth Contract in 2012 and  
33 previously the Future Jobs Fund (Fishwick et al., 2011).  
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43 In summary, the economic and policy climate since 2005 has undergone a series of reforms  
44 and ideological shifts that have played a key role in shaping interventions to tackle  
45 worklessness. The following section discusses the criteria by which an intervention is  
46 considered a success or a failure.  
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### 51 **Evidential and methodological issues**

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55 Ascertaining 'what works' with regard to employability policies in cities depends on  
56 assessment of interventions to produce the necessary evidence. Such assessment is most  
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3 straightforward where an intervention is targeted by population sub-group and/or  
4 geographical area and is implemented uniformly, is informed by a theory of change with a  
5 simple single objective and where there is a clear logic chain of measurable outputs and  
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7 outcomes, and adequate resources are available to conduct assessment.  
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11 There are different types of evidence, including those provided by impact evaluation vis-à-vis  
12 process evaluation. Impact evaluation seeks to understand the causal effect of policy  
13 interventions and (ideally) to establish their cost-effectiveness by estimating the difference  
14 between the outcomes for individuals treated in the intervention and the average outcome  
15 that they would have experienced without it (i.e. the counterfactual) (What Works Centre for  
16 Local Economic Growth, 2014). Process evaluation is concerned with examining the ways  
17 in which a policy intervention is implemented and can help inform policy focus and delivery.  
18 Evidence from both impact and process evaluation is of value in assessing 'what works'.  
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29 The evidence base on 'what works' with regard to employability policies in cities is  
30 quantitatively and qualitatively uneven. Quantitatively, there is more evidence on gaining  
31 employment than on sustaining and progressing in employment; (see Hendra et al. [2011]  
32 for a relatively rare example of evidence on retention and progression in employment).  
33 Qualitatively there are variations in standards of evidence (as measured by scientific  
34 standards [e.g. the Maryland Scale]) and in types of evidence, including whether outcomes  
35 measured are 'hard' (e.g. employment entry) or 'soft' (e.g. enhanced self-efficacy which is  
36 likely to be associated with a workless individual moving closer to employment). In general,  
37 there is more and higher quality evidence available in the public domain on national policy  
38 interventions, which have been commissioned centrally, than on local policy interventions  
39 (Green et al., 2013). In part this reflects the greater resource applied to evaluation of the  
40 former than the latter. This has implications given the drive to greater localisation of  
41 provision; who is responsible for funding and carrying out local evaluation is significant here.  
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3 The reality of policies to enhance employability in cities tends not to be one of simple, clearly  
4 ring-fenced policies, with single goals. Rather it is one of a heterogeneous plethora of  
5 programmes and interventions. The foci of policies may be multiple rather than single, they  
6 may be targeted at several sub-groups and geographical areas, eligibility rules may be  
7 enforced unevenly and how a policy is implemented may vary within and between delivery  
8 organisations. Hence measures of success, as captured by outcomes, vary between  
9 policies. Moreover, an individual may be subject to numerous policy interventions impinging  
10 directly or indirectly on employability, so raising questions about attribution to one  
11 intervention rather than another. Indeed, 'what works' might be more about getting the mix  
12 of policy interventions right in a particular context, rather than any particular 'silver bullet'  
13 (Hasluck and Green, 2007: 15). The trend in policy towards more localised and  
14 personalised interventions operating across policy domains, at a time of pressure on  
15 resources, makes policy assessment both more challenging and more important.  
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30 These issues have implications for interpretation of available evidence. On the one hand  
31 methods used in an evaluation may not capture the success of an intervention (e.g. moving  
32 individuals towards employment is not captured in job outcomes and employment rate  
33 changes), while on the other an individual subject to a policy intervention may have moved  
34 into employment but may have achieved this without policy support (i.e. a deadweight  
35 outcome) (Green and Adam, 2011). As far as possible such issues are taken into account  
36 here.  
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45 The following section examines what works in relation to four topics selected due to their  
46 prominence in recent worklessness initiatives; (it is acknowledged that other types of  
47 intervention could have been included, but space precludes an exhaustive review).  
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## 51 **Selected policy interventions**

### 52 *Personalised support*

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3 Much of the evidence relating to personalised support relates to policies and practices  
4 concerned with individuals gaining work. Personalised support may be more suited to  
5 instances where an individual is distant from the labour market, rather than job-ready  
6 (Longlands *et al.*, 2009). Rationales for personalised support are often given in terms of  
7 providing jobseekers with a 'familiar' face. From a practitioner perspective there may be  
8 operational advantages to individuals being attached to particular advisers. Time can be  
9 saved by advisers being familiar with individual cases, rather than having to start afresh at  
10 each meeting. Personalised support can also mean that individuals are directed to particular  
11 learning and training options which are tailored to them, or individuals receive support and  
12 help to remove particular barriers. Sainsbury (2010) notes the greater use of personalisation  
13 within welfare-to-work services and further work has outlined different typologies within the  
14 personalised approach (Toerien, et al 2013).

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28 A personalised approach may be one way in which service users gain voice within a system.  
29 There is increasing evidence that with some of the wraparound services (relating to help with  
30 caring responsibilities, transport, etc.) an approach based around negotiation and  
31 cooperation, rather than compulsion, is favoured. One approach taken by many CS  
32 Pathfinders was to place the individual at the centre of the process through the practice of  
33 individual learning contracts, or variants thereof. Practitioners regularly talked of money  
34 following clients, rather than clients following money; individuals would be given  
35 training/support best suited to their individual circumstances, rather than being allocated to  
36 training merely because it was available. Service providers have sought to bring users into  
37 the system by basing improvements on user feedback. An approach based on negotiation  
38 and consent, as opposed to compulsion, can be possible in the context where the state does  
39 not place obligations on these individuals to seek work, but looks to encourage them to do  
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56 Mentoring and support may be provided by different types of advisers. For example, the CS  
57 initiative provided examples of partnerships recruiting mentors from local communities,  
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3 selecting people who had often themselves been through anti-worklessness programmes.  
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5 Ethnic minority engagement staff members were used in many CS Pathfinder areas with  
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7 high ethnic minority populations, reflecting the importance of having people to whom  
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9 workless communities can relate and trust. In Nottingham learning champions from local  
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11 communities were employed to engage individuals in priority wards. This experience  
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13 revealed that the role was interpreted in different ways: some learning champions adopted  
14  
15 an approach of 'engage and refer' whereas others had sought to 'support and mentor'. For  
16  
17 the approach to work well, advisers needed to be well-informed about the range of provision  
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19 available for people to access and be willing to refer to the most appropriate of the provision  
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21 available (as discussed below in the sub-section on co-ordination of local provision). There  
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23 were instances where referrals were made to provision in the same local area rather than to  
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25 provision further afield, which might have been more suitable (Green *et al.*, 2010). Lack of  
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27 adviser skills and knowledge of particular labour markets was also cited in Green *et al.*  
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29 (2013) as a constraint on individuals being able to find the most appropriate work. Reviews  
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31 have also noted the importance of the personal adviser and the positive contribution that this  
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33 can make on an individual's chances of success, provided that the advisers are properly  
34  
35 resourced in terms of both time and knowledge of local labour market provision available for  
36  
37 jobseekers (Longlands *et al.*, 2009; Casebourne and Coleman, 2012). Indeed the way in  
38  
39 which advisers engage with participants initially is important for motivation and commitment  
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41 (Meager *et al.*, 2014). Anecdotal evidence suggests that personalised support is appreciated  
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43 by both individuals and practitioners. Self-referrals to services may be suggestive that a  
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45 particular approach is appreciated by clients, and this is more likely where the support is  
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47 independent of mainstream delivery. The Muirhouse area focus pilot, convened by the  
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49 Edinburgh CS Pathfinder to cover a specific neighbourhood in the city, which involved  
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51 intensive support for certain groups underpinned by mentoring throughout, had high levels of  
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53 self-referral, indicating that the approach was well received by those who had received the  
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55 service and this reputation was spreading through word of mouth to other benefit claimants.  
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3 Reviews have suggested that the key role which personalised support can play in helping  
4 the individual progress towards work in ways which sometimes cannot easily be measured  
5 (Longlands *et al.*, 2009). Working closely with an adviser may increase an individual's sense  
6 of 'ownership' of their journey to employment, improve confidence levels and develop softer  
7 skills which are important for employability. Despite personalised support being valued,  
8 Green and Hasluck (2009) raise questions about personal adviser turnover, how such  
9 support can be funded and whether the funding can match the requirement. Will PAs have  
10 caseloads so large that they are unable to spend the time required with each individual?  
11 The question of how personalisation is being addressed in the 'payment-by-results' model of  
12 the WP shows further tensions. Personalisation of service is a key tenet of WP design.  
13 Newton *et al.* (2012) note that while strong elements of procedural personalisation can be  
14 seen within WP provision, substantive personalisation, in terms of offering distinctive and  
15 individualised provision is 'patchy'. Intentions regarding personalisation are hampered by  
16 reluctance to make referrals to specialist support, though the ability to do so itself is shaped  
17 by the payments model. Work-first approaches continue to predominate, despite the  
18 rhetoric, with less emphasis on human capital approaches (Meager, *et al.* 2014). Given this  
19 it is not unexpected that CESI (2015) notes poor performance for Employment and Support  
20 Allowance groups and people with disabilities compared with other groups.

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40 *Intensive services for those furthest from the labour market*

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43 The challenge of working with individuals at some distance from the labour market is that  
44 they may require support and help from a range of specialist providers before they are job-  
45 ready (hence the need for local co-ordination of provision, as discussed below). It remains  
46 the case that many programmes of support and assistance for people to enter paid  
47 employment are predicated on the idea that the problem lies primarily with issues of labour  
48 supply. Yet, the largest challenge to promoting the employability of individuals who are  
49 some distance from the labour market has been provided in recent times by the sheer  
50 numbers of people who are seeking work; especially in urban labour markets.

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3 It is clear that in many cases where an individual is some distance from the labour market  
4 that the process from initial engagement to sustained employment is a long one. At the  
5 outset, there may be problems with simply engaging certain subgroups (Green *et al.*, 2010).  
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7 The experience of CS indicates that as far as engagement is concerned some generic  
8 strategies might be useful, such as community job fairs, taster days, door knocking, etc.. If  
9 certain hard to help workless groups are spatially concentrated in particular neighbourhoods,  
10 then specialist services can be directed to those areas, as illustrated by the development of  
11 neighbourhood plans in the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country CSP. In East London  
12 it was found that the availability of non ring-fenced funding enabled a more flexible approach  
13 which resulted in engagement of workless people who would have been unlikely to engage  
14 with or benefit from mainstream provision (Green and Adam, 2011).  
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26 CS, through its partnership approach, provided a useful illustration of how to work with those  
27 furthest from the labour market. It adopted a more 'holistic' view of employability and,  
28 though its roots undoubtedly remained supply-side focused, a wider view of that supply-side  
29 was taken. It was recognised that many of these individuals also had issues which although  
30 not directly related to issues of worklessness, nevertheless had a significant impact on their  
31 likelihood of gaining and sustaining work. By working with other services, such as housing,  
32 alcohol and drug charities, and health services, individuals were engaged through services  
33 which traditionally had little to do with worklessness. Working in partnership is discussed  
34 further below, but this element of widening the worklessness agenda to services which have  
35 traditionally been separate is of particular relevance to developing a more intensive service  
36 for those furthest from the labour market.  
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49 Intensive services which link to emerging labour market opportunities are one way in which  
50 long-term unemployed and others some distance from the labour market can be brought into  
51 employment. Major developments are relatively rare, but where they do occur, local  
52 worklessness services need to take advantage opportunities to work with employers in order  
53 to place people into work. Working with employers is explored in further detail below, but it  
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3 is worth noting here that an approach which allies training to demand may be more likely to  
4 be successful. Public sector developments and social clauses in private investments have  
5 been shown to be a useful way to link training to jobs and have proved useful models in a  
6 number of contexts, again especially for people distant from the labour market (Lee *et al.*,  
7 2014, Adam *et al.*, 2014), albeit there are more opportunities for such arrangements in some  
8 urban labour markets than in others. The advantage of training directed towards specific  
9 opportunities is that individuals see the training as relevant and this is likely to increase  
10 motivation and reduce drop-out rates; risks of 'training fatigue' or being allocated to  
11 inappropriate provision are therefore reduced.  
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22 Previous research has noted that those who are in certain categories are more vulnerable to  
23 early job exits (Rigg, 2005; Evans *et al.*, 2004). For example, work has detailed the  
24 increased chances of disabled workers or of lone parents leaving jobs and later research  
25 has tended to address the general issue of the revolving door between out-of-work benefits  
26 and low paid insecure work. Even though churn between welfare and jobs was a known  
27 issue, in the initiatives the authors evaluated they found little evidence of policy (at local or  
28 national level) to address the point. FND and the WP did link payments to providers to  
29 sustained work outcomes.  
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39 Emerging evidence from WP performance has revealed concerns about the ability of  
40 providers to work with those furthest from the labour market. Lack of support with upfront  
41 costs and the higher costs of dealing with participants with multiple needs have led to  
42 smaller specialist providers such as charities or social enterprises withdrawing from sub-  
43 contracted provision (Foster *et al.*, 2014, London Councils, 2013). This suggests that certain  
44 harder to help client groups may not receive the support required and are 'parked' in the  
45 system. Rather than the WP giving more support to claimants distant from the labour  
46 market, the evidence suggests that specialist provision is reduced and the personalisation of  
47 service is limited (Foster, *et al.* 2014).  
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3 Ultimately, though, the challenge of working with an individual who is some distance from the  
4 labour market is that intensive support may take considerable time before the individual is  
5 ready for or gets a job. There may be many milestones which are passed on the way to that  
6 job entry, such as increased confidence, qualifications or new skills (formal or informal)  
7 gained, but frameworks, which look solely at job-entry, are not set up to record these. In the  
8 context of payment by results, the payments structure and the incentives to work with groups  
9 furthest from the labour market need to be examined carefully to ensure that parking within  
10 the system is minimised.  
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### 20 *Links with employers*

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23 There are several important reasons why engaging employers has an important role to play  
24 in employability policies. Most obviously employers are the gatekeepers to jobs. Hence  
25 there is a role of policy makers and delivery partners in understanding employers' current  
26 and likely future needs for labour, since this can help inform design of training and skills  
27 needs matching of individuals to opportunities. They also need to know about employers'  
28 recruitment and selection procedures in order that they can help make these processes  
29 more transparent to job seekers and the one hand and seek to influence employers to  
30 change their perceptions and/or amend their procedures to make opportunities more  
31 accessible to workless individuals (e.g. through ring-fencing of some vacancies and/or  
32 guaranteeing some guaranteed interviews) on the other. Yet despite the crucial role of  
33 employers as key actors in policies to enhance employability in cities activities associated  
34 with engaging and influencing employers traditionally have been under-developed (Green *et*  
35 *al.*, 2010), albeit this may be beginning to change given the increasing emphasis in national  
36 policy on the employer ownership of skills agenda and sector-focused skills policies, which is  
37 in turn reflected in Local Growth Deals in England (OECD, 2015).  
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54 So why has employer engagement tended to be under-developed in employability policies?  
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56 In order to avoid multiple approaches to the same employer, CS Pathfinders posited that to  
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3 be most effective employer liaison and engagement needed to be unified, co-ordinated and  
4 undertaken systematically on a partnership basis at a sub-regional level. However, this is  
5 difficult to achieve operationally given existing practice and vested interests of different  
6 organisations and the challenges involved in recording and sharing such information (Green  
7 *et al.*, 2010). Hence, practically it is easier to focus on delivery of supply-side interventions  
8 to address employability. Moreover, from a political perspective a supply-side focus puts  
9 greater onus on workless individuals' shortcomings for their plight.  
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18 Nevertheless, evidence from the evaluation of CS suggests that positive effects can be  
19 achieved by linking training and work experience of individuals to specific job openings with  
20 particular employers in a targeted fashion. A targeted approach prioritises the quality of the  
21 match between the individual jobseeker and the job, rather than placing any individual in any  
22 job in order to achieve an outcome. 'Fitting' an individual to job to which they are suited, and  
23 endeavouring to map out routes to advancement, either in the same job or in an allied better  
24 paid job, is key to individuals' prospects for sustaining and progressing in employment  
25 (National Audit Office, 2007). Though the issue of what makes a job more suitable than any  
26 other is contestable. Certainly there is literature around what has been termed 'quality  
27 employment' (e.g. Warhurst *et al.*, 2012), though in practice this literature and interventions  
28 are not well aligned. More evidence is required around what makes jobs more suitable for  
29 the individual and more likely to be sustained. A mix of objective and subjective factors is  
30 likely to be important. In the case of the WP, it appears that in-work support is not a major  
31 factor leading to sustained outcomes. As Meager et al (2014) note two-thirds of those who  
32 have received in-work support believed it made no difference to their retention chances. The  
33 question of what factors are most important in job retention is clearly important from a policy  
34 perspective, yet the evidence around this question is underdeveloped, albeit debates tend to  
35 assume that job quality has a key role to play and that work-first approaches which result in  
36 'any' job rather than the most appropriate job will lead to lower levels of sustainability. Other  
37 policies such as Universal Credit (DWP, 2010) also presuppose progression and  
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3 sustainability rather than work-welfare cycling. Given the continued dominance of work-first  
4 strategies within WP provision, factors affecting sustainability and progression ought to be  
5 better researched.  
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10 An apprenticeship scheme devised by four public sector employers in the Southampton  
11 Skills Development Zone also exemplifies how employer involvement and tailored training  
12 opportunities may be structured in such a way as to provide a pathway with training linked to  
13 specific employment opportunities for workless individuals. In this case the employers joined  
14 with the public employment service, a training provider and a local college to set up taster  
15 days, pre-employment training and careers events for young unemployed individuals prior to  
16 recruitment in the apprenticeship scheme. Those individuals who were recruited then  
17 received ongoing support by the partnership during their apprenticeship with the employer.  
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20 47 apprentices started the scheme, 36 successfully completed their apprenticeship  
21 framework and 34 gained employment, mostly with their apprenticeship employer (Fuller and  
22 Rizvi, 2012).  
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33 In large cities one of the key ways to link with employers and provide access to training and  
34 employment opportunities for workless individuals is to make training provision part of the  
35 contract award process for major developments and contracts above certain value as part of  
36 local procurement policies. Utilising such policies, Birmingham City Council stipulated jobs  
37 and skills requirements in the £193 million Library of Birmingham contract, resulting in 306  
38 jobs for Birmingham residents, including 82 apprenticeships, with priority area residents  
39 taking up 54 per cent of these opportunities (Macfarlane, 2014).  
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49 Aside from such targeted interventions which may take the form of a clearly defined package  
50 of support, there are two main generic types of employability interventions in which links with  
51 employers are foregrounded. The first is work placements and work experience. These can  
52 take a range of forms but usually involve unpaid work experience providing an opportunity to  
53 develop and/or demonstrate employability skills. Evidence on whether such interventions  
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3 work is mixed, depending on the nature of the customer group, whether involvement is  
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5 voluntary or compulsory and whether any financial assistance is provided. The second  
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7 involves subsidised jobs and paying employers a wage subsidy to take on a workless  
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9 individual. This type of intervention is expensive relative to conventional supply-side  
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11 interventions and so may be difficult to sustain. Concerns about deadweight, substitution,  
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13 displacement and providing subsidised recruitment for employers suggest that careful  
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15 targeting is needed (Gore, 2005; Casebourne and Coleman, 2012). However, evidence  
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17 from the Future Jobs Fund, introduced in 2009 to create additional subsidised jobs of at least  
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19 six months duration in areas with high levels of worklessness, suggests that the programme,  
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21 which placed over 105 thousand workless people in employment created net benefits to  
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23 participants, to employers and to society which easily outweighed the net cost to the  
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25 Exchequer (DWP, 2012b). An independent evaluation of the programme indicated the six-  
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27 month period of employment was long enough to raise employability and suggests that even  
28  
29 a short period in a subsidised job can provide a gateway into the open labour market for  
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31 many participants (Fishwick et al., 2011), with participants valuing that these were 'real jobs'  
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33 with 'real pay'.  
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36 Preliminary findings from the WP suggest that good initial job matching is the key to  
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38 achieving sustainable employment, and this may 'carry more weight than subsequent in-  
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40 work support' (Newton *et al.*, 2012). The strength of relationships between providers and  
41  
42 employers is thought to be highly important to future success, including effective job  
43  
44 matching. However, the evaluation of the WP suggests that employer-provider relationships  
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46 are still under-developed, especially among smaller employers (Ingold and Stuart, 2015).  
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49 While the focus in this section has been on links with employers, what is clear from the  
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51 selected evidence presented is that many local interventions are part of broader models  
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53 resting on local partnership working. Co-ordination of local provision is examined  
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55 explicitly next.  
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