



Just the Job

A summary report by St Mungo's for Action Week 2010 on supporting homeless people's journey into work

Introduction

This report draws heavily on the report, *Work Matters*, written by Demos and commissioned by St Mungo's, looking at homeless people's journey into work that, in turn, draws largely on our own peer research. It considers how the state supports homeless people and where the state has failed. It explains the impact and cost benefits of specialist services such as those provided by St Mungo's (largely through our charity fundraising). It makes some key recommendations about improving the system so that all those who are vulnerable have the chance to get back to work.



For centuries homelessness was understood as a phenomenon linked to migrant labour. People in common lodging houses clung on to the labour market by their fingertips, never more than a step away from destitution. In 1983, when the national unemployment rate reached 3 million, St Mungo's carried out a survey of its hostel residents, and found that 86% were in some form of paid employment. The survey was repeated in 1997 and the employment rate was 10%. Since then, despite the economic boom before the recession, the employment rate among our clients now stands at 4%.

If that were not bad enough, 15% of our residents have never worked; and two thirds have been out of work for 5 years or more.¹

To address this problem we need an end to the quick fix, mass-market approach to solving worklessness and to create a commissioning structure which allows room for those with special expertise for distinct sub-sets of the unemployed to be fully involved.

This report has been developed with the help of peer researchers who helped devise questions about employment and homelessness and then went on to interview 43 other St Mungo's clients. We also asked our clients to fill in questionnaires. Clients also discussed the findings with Demos in relation to their own experiences and the experiences of their peers.

The people most in need are simply being lost within our bewildering welfare system.

The evidence shows the inability of the current welfare system to provide support on a human scale. In relying only on massive welfare to work programmes, which cater for the majority, society has lost the flexibility to provide services to the minority – homeless and vulnerable people - who need support so much more. The people most in need are simply being lost within our bewildering welfare system. It's as if the state had a single approach to childbirth so that maternity wards discharged every mother after two days, and all neo-natal intensive care was closed down.

Over half of our clients cannot read and write to a functional level², 50% say their lack of self confidence is holding them back³ and three quarters have some form of mental health condition.⁴ But 80% say that it is their goal to get back to work.⁵ Why can't we help them achieve that?

What are the barriers to employment for homeless people?

A lack of skills

Our surveys have revealed:

- More than half of the residents (52%) needed support with basic literacy⁶
- More than a third (36%) had numeracy levels below those needed for most jobs⁷
- In our larger client survey 59% of the participants agreed with the statement: 'I need to get new skills to get back into work'.⁸

Poor health

The St Mungo's 2009 survey of client needs found:

- Two thirds (66%) suffered from a physical health condition
- More than two thirds (69%) had mental health issues (including suspected or diagnosed conditions; depression, self harming or both)
- Substance use is a significant contributor to poor health – 68% of St Mungo's clients had issues with substance use (drugs or alcohol or both).⁹

Practical barriers

Homeless people can face practical barriers related to a lack of resources and their housing situation, for example:

- Lack of appropriate, work-related clothing¹⁰
- Insufficient access to computers to search for vacancies and write applications
- Not having a current mailing address
- Costly public transport.¹¹ Most St Mungo's clients live in London, with its high cost transport.

Culture and networks

Some researchers have suggested that there is a culture of homelessness that can pose a barrier to moving into work.¹² Constrained social networks can result in little meaningful contact with people who are not homeless or unemployed.

Perceptions and experience

Employers' prejudices: Negative perceptions can prove particularly problematic for those vulnerable to homelessness. Homeless people often point to a stigma that can make entering or re-entering the world of work especially problematic.¹³ Of St Mungo's clients, 30 per cent agreed with the statement: 'people are not going to employ anyone who has been homeless'.¹⁴

Negative past experiences: These can become a considerable deterrent to engaging in work or training again. Once a person has tried and failed to move into employment, they can then become more averse to making a second attempt.¹⁵ In some instances previous negative experiences can perpetuate mistrust or low levels of respect for 'authorities', including homelessness agencies.¹⁶

Benefits barriers

The benefits 'trap': In some cases, individuals who do move into work find themselves caught in the 'benefits trap' – where their net income leaves them little or no better off financially in work than on out-of-work benefits.¹⁷

The perceived benefits trap: Problems caused by the benefits system include misperception and misunderstanding. While safety net-type measures are available, many people remain uncertain about the financial benefits of moving into work and fear the departure from out-of-work benefits.¹⁸

The gap between benefits and a pay packet: Also worrying is evidence to suggest that the gap between the cessation of benefits and the receipt of a person's first pay packet can increase the risk of homelessness. A recent survey of 100 housing benefits claimants revealed almost a quarter (24 per cent) of those who had experienced shortfalls between their benefits and their rent said it had contributed to them becoming homeless.¹⁹

What works in supporting homeless people into work?

St Mungo's asked clients what they find useful in their journey into work. Of the 124 clients surveyed:

- 69% said they could get back to work with more support
- 63% said project activities boosted their confidence
- 69% said support from their key worker around activities, training and work had been useful
- 70% said volunteering and work placements would make the transition into work easier.

St Mungo's asked their clients to suggest what additional things could help them get back to work. They offered a range of different responses:

- 23% wanted some form of vocational training or training linked to work:

“A training scheme that offers full support such as train to gain with a positive chance of gaining employment.”

- 13% said they needed to tackle health needs first:

“I would like my key worker to liaise more with my doctor so that I can get onto a stabilised detox.”

- 19% wanted some form of one to one employment support:

“One to one support from hostel staff around training and self employment, someone to talk to when confidence is low.”

- 12% Work placements and voluntary work
- 9% IT literacy support
- 9% Confidence building and key worker support
- 5% Self employment help.

Individuals also mentioned:

- Help to obtain a driving licence
- Travel expenses
- A buddy system to support in new employment
- Financial advice on moving off benefits and into work
- Child care
- More wireless broadband connections in hostel
- New clothes²⁰

What are the principles of effective back to work support?

A system in which the benefits of working are clear and real
A wholesale reform of the benefits system, including housing benefit, is needed to ensure that homeless people do not face high withdrawal rates as they enter employment.

Personalisation

Individuals with complex, multiple needs have a much longer journey into work than those without. A personalised approach to job-seeking and work-related development is therefore important.²¹ Additionally, flexibility in the initial stages of engagement, which is flexible and 'light touch', will enable people to move at their own pace.²²

A holistic approach

Being homeless has an impact not just on physical and mental health but also on a person's sense of self and individual autonomy.²³ What is needed is an approach that assures people that they can be the author of their own life, building self-esteem and self confidence, and developing soft skills. Homeless people face multiple barriers to employment; therefore, such barriers need to be addressed on multiple fronts.

In-work support

Entering employment can be a daunting experience for those who have been out of work for a long time. It can be stressful and has the potential to perpetuate feelings of loneliness and isolation and can even re-ignite previous mental health problems.²⁴ In-work support – possibly in the form of a mentor, supervisor or coach – is crucial to making work a meaningful and positive experience.

“My personal view when we work with vulnerable people, some people can work but need support. We resettle or retrain people, but then they get left alone because they are seen as capable. There are plenty of vulnerable people who just haven't got the skills to do the lot.” St Mungo's staff interview.²⁵

A good example of what works

St Mungo's Pathways to Employment

Overview: Pathways to Employment was first established in January 2008.²⁶ As part of this scheme, St Mungo's provide work and learning services along with activity programmes, which are delivered on-site at five hostels. Within three weeks of arriving a new resident will have an occupational health check, which assesses their existing skills and abilities as well as their aspirations and the steps they need to be 'work ready'. With the support of a keyworker, clients devise their own Pathways to Employment plan and can participate in an activity programme to help them prepare for employment by building confidence and motivation. On-site vocational guidance and coaching specialists help them work out how best to achieve their aims and ambitions. These plans are dissected into achievable stages and clients seeking employment receive sustained support from their assigned specialist.

The model of delivery consists of four main stages:

1. Engagement
2. Skills and training
3. Participation in external activities; and
4. Employment.²⁷

As part of Pathways to Employment, clients are offered support with writing CVs, developing literacy, numeracy and other key skills, and searching and apply for jobs or training.²⁸ Clients are also provided with appropriate clothes for job interviews.²⁹

Evaluation: The Pathways programme is designed to help those who are a long way from the labour market move closer. Many of the people taking part in the programme have multiple needs and a snap shot of 244 clients in the programme found that:

- 14% had a diagnosed mental health problem
- 21% had depression
- 26% displayed challenging behaviour
- 42% had a substance use problem
- 40% had a physical health issues
- 59% had an offending record
- 72% of clients had more than one complex need
- Only 7% had no needs recorded.³⁰



The programme is designed for long term interventions. Although many outcomes were achieved in the first six months, the real gains are seen among those who are in the programme nine months or longer. In a recent evaluation of some within this group:

- 13% had gone into a full or part-time job
- 6% had gained a work placement
- 6% were doing voluntary work
- 17% were taking a further education course
- 14% were completing a vocational training course.

An early evaluation of the pilot, conducted by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, noted that many participants made 'significant progress' towards employment and had been able to build their self-esteem and confidence as a result.³¹

Client apprentices

In 2009 St Mungo's employed 16 apprentices with experiences of homelessness into fully supported one-year full-time work. The structured programme offers apprentices the opportunity to gain the skills and experience needed to equip them to work in frontline services in the homelessness and social care sectors. The first cohort received their first pay cheques shortly before Christmas 2009 - for one, their first wages in nearly 13 years. Another group of apprentices are set to be recruited in September 2010.



Putting Down Roots

St Mungo's gardening project is an opportunity for clients to learn horticultural skills, have fun, get physically active and have the chance to achieve NVQ level qualifications. In 2008-09 Putting Down Roots volunteers gave more than 11,000 hours to help make London's parks and gardens more beautiful. They also helped with the landscaping on the 2010 silver medal winning 'Places for Change' garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



WoodWorks

Since the WoodWorks wood workshop opened 20 years ago over 1,000 clients have used the service and, through it, around 15 people a year move into employment and further education. Recently refurbished with a grant from Westminster Council, the workshop helps people to develop practical skills as well as self esteem and confidence. Groups of up to ten homeless people each day work there. Products made in the workshop, including bird boxes and spice racks, are sold online at www.mungos.org/shop and beds and wardrobes are built for use in hostels.

With 13 different work and learning schemes, in 2009 St Mungo's helped:

- 120 people into jobs
- 700 into training
- 700 into first step activities



Case study: **Dennis's story**

Dennis, 55, wants to take part in the 2012 Olympics. Formerly homeless, and now successfully tackling a 20 year heroin and cocaine problem, he may well be able to – as one of the thousands of stewards at the event.

Dennis worked as a plasterer and in other casual jobs till he was around 30. Then he began taking drugs, which rapidly became a serious problem until he lost his own place and finally ended up in prison, receiving a 12 month sentence for shop lifting to fund his drug use.

On his release, he was put up in bed and breakfast accommodation briefly before moving into a St Mungo's hostel in Southwark in August 2009. Seven months later, in March this year, he moved out into a shared house and is on a drug programme which is helping him a great deal. ***"I'd just had enough. I should have stopped ten years ago but didn't. This medication I'm on now might not suit everyone but it's working for me."***

While at St Mungo's, staff told him about the Personal Best programme, a programme which St Mungo's runs with City Lit college and the London Development Agency. This enables homeless and vulnerable people to receive training in health and safety and stewarding at events, and guarantees them an interview for Olympic volunteer steward roles.

Dennis moved from ESA to JSA recently. This means he's been deemed eligible to find work, and has to meet with Jobcentre Plus staff every two weeks to show that he's been actively seeking work. He was receiving £101 every two weeks on ESA. He was switched after an interview with a doctor: ***"He asked me 'can you walk upstairs, can you bend down?' I told him I could and so I was switched and that means my money's been cut in half to £60 every two weeks. I appealed but was knocked back."***

He's given particular help through Ingeus, a company contracted through Jobcentre Plus. He says staff there are helping him with his CV and have advised him to carry on building up his voluntary experience. He's recently been a steward at the London Marathon and for the women's Moon Walk event.



Why is the mainstream system currently failing?

I. Homeless people's experiences of Jobcentre Plus

The research undertaken by St Mungo's clients focused on homeless people's experiences of the current mainstream system. Much attention was therefore given to how effective Jobcentre Plus is at supporting St Mungo's clients.

Jobcentre Plus provides an effective service for most unemployed people with the vast majority finding employment within six months. Those a long way from the labour market, however, need intensive support in order to become work-ready – including many homeless people.

In the quantitative survey of clients the majority did not rate the support they received from Jobcentre Plus highly. Among those clients receiving Job Seekers Allowance:

- only 16% agreed with the statement: 'the job training offered to me by the Job Centre has been useful';
- less than a fifth (19%) agreed with the statement: 'the Job Centre has offered me work that suits me well';
- less than a third (28%) agreed with the statement: 'the support I received from the Job Centre to get my CV sorted out was helpful';

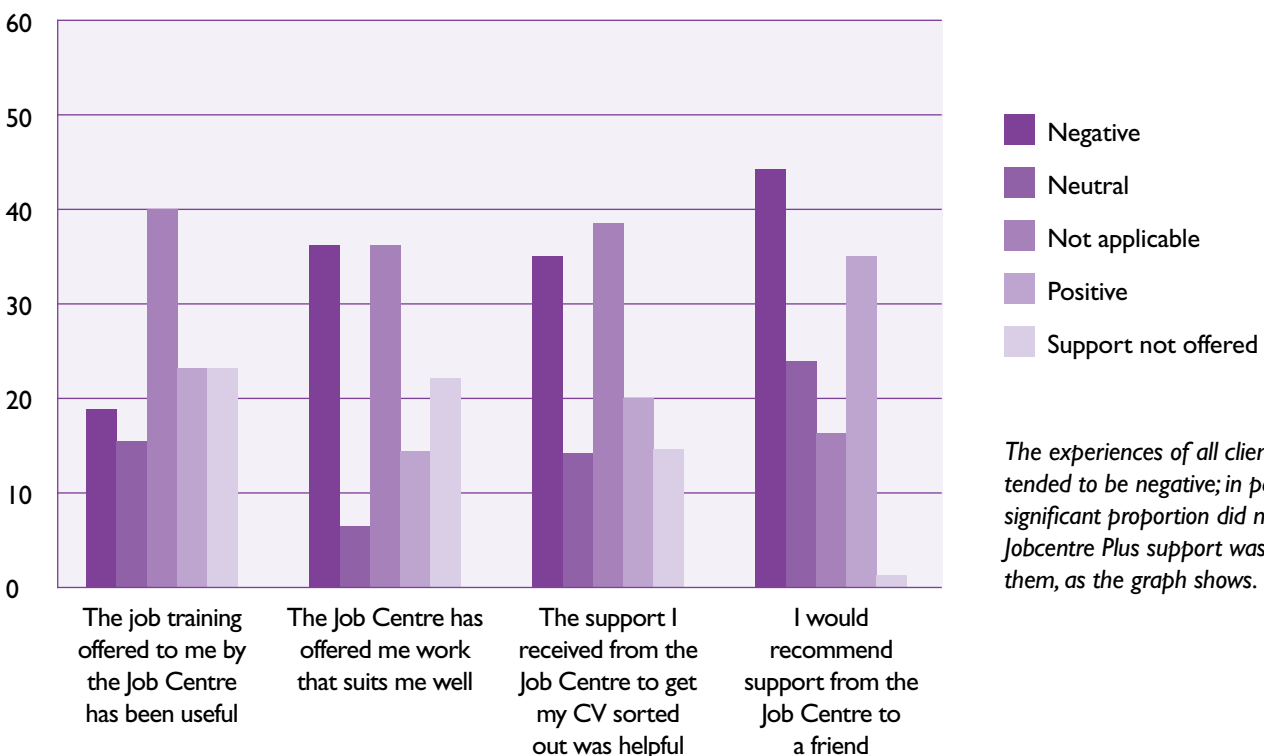
- less than a quarter (22%) agreed they would recommend support from the Job Centre to a friend.

In comparison, the majority (78%) said they found St Mungo's support with activities, training and work useful.

For those clients receiving Employment Support Allowance, perceptions of the support offered from Jobcentre Plus were even more pessimistic, particularly regarding work opportunities:

- less than a fifth (17%) agreed with the statement: 'the job training offered to me by the Job Centre has been useful';
- only 6% of clients on ESA agreed with the statement: 'The Job Centre has offered me work that suits me well';
- less than a quarter (22%) thought the support they had received with their CV had been helpful;
- less than a third (28%) would recommend Jobcentre Plus services to a friend.

However, 72% of this group agreed with the statement: 'the support I received from my St Mungo's keyworker around activities, training and work has been useful'.³²





Through the qualitative peer research undertaken by St Mungo's clients we were able to gain a greater insight into people's experiences with Jobcentre Plus:

"Jobcentre Plus have offered me painting and decorating in the past, but nothing ever came out of it – no follow ups. It's disappointing... lost hope on many things."

The peer research found that training opportunities offered by Jobcentre Plus were varied, ranging from IT skills to learning a trade to literacy development. The majority of clients who were offered training did consider it useful to gaining employment. However, several respondents were discontented at not having been offered any such opportunities.

"They have not offered any training. I think if they worked hard, they can help me."

"At the moment they are building my CV, increasing my self confidence and hopefully I'll start mentoring on March 15th. It has been useful."

"I think that JSA is maybe needed with some sort of training as in work skills. I have done scaffolding and I am going on a brick laying course with Mungo's very soon."³³

Experiences of how Jobcentre Plus staff understood clients' needs were mixed. Among the clients surveyed:

- less than a third 28% agreed with the statement: 'the Job Centre understands my housing circumstances';
- 6% said they had not been asked or offered support around their housing circumstances;³⁴
- 41% felt unsupported around their health needs.

Those interviewed through peer research added:

“The staff are very polite – they do go out of their way to help you. They are very good, very efficient at all times. I’ve never had any problems.”

“I don’t think they have the best interest of my needs, they are not talking from the heart of experience. They are just doing their jobs.”

“Due to being street homeless, had no ID or proof letters, so they took no action to help with my benefit claim.”

“Don’t care if you are street homeless, still insist you look for work. Housing not taken into account.”

One client even felt that Jobcentre Plus was discriminatory because they lived in a hostel:

“Feel that because I’m living in a hostel, they tend to not consider me for the work I can do.”

Those interviewed for the peer research also did not feel their health issues were taken into account and responses were largely negative. Either Jobcentre Plus staff had not asked about health issues, or, if they were aware, there was little or no help available. Only one respondent had a positive experience:

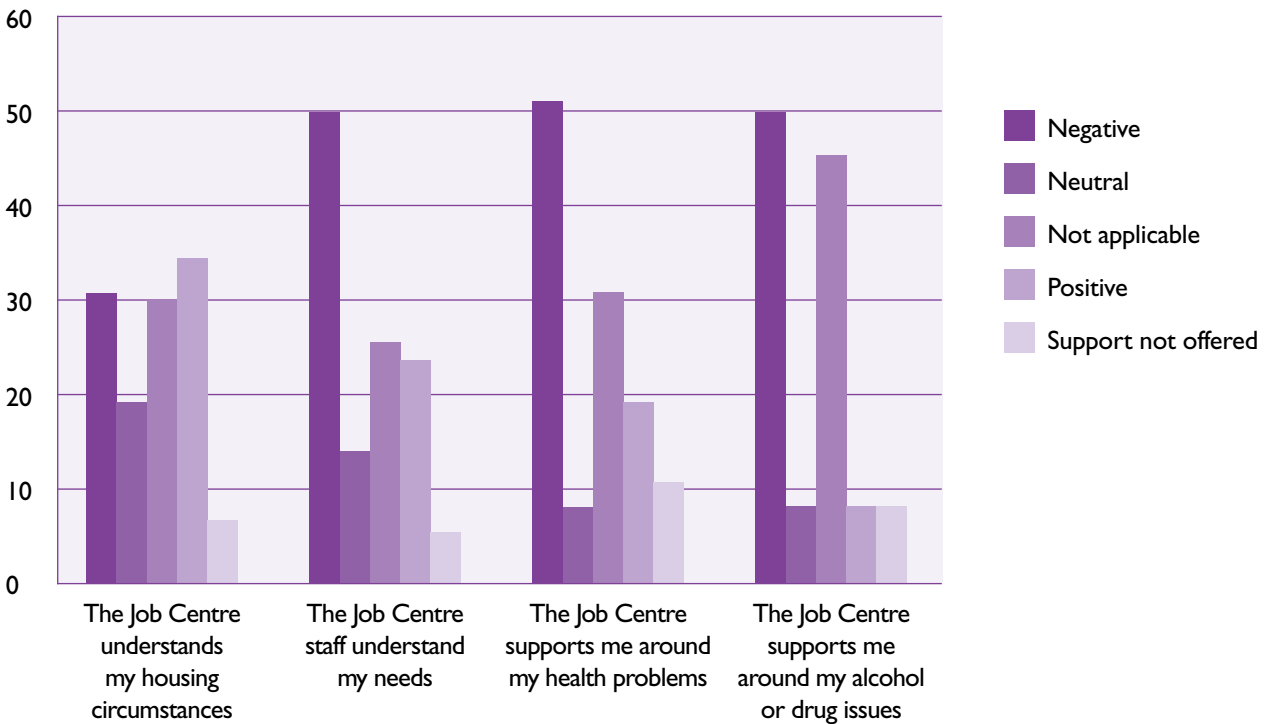
“Did suffer severe depression a year ago, but they’ve been fine as doctors notes were supplied.”

The responses below are examples of the majority negative perceptions.

“No help here, in fact have withheld money due to my being unable to attend, because of medical problems.”

“JCP do not understand. They never offered any support. JCP don’t understand my mental health issues - it takes a long time.”³⁵

These experiences were also reflected in clients' responses to the quantitative survey.

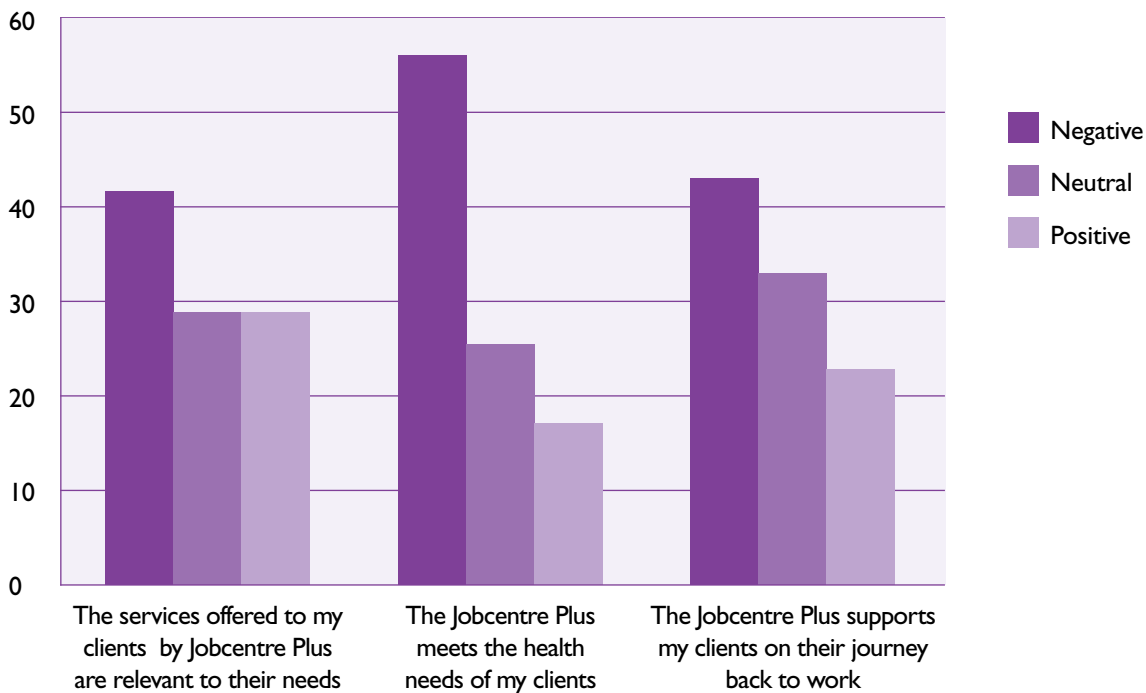


We also took a brief snap shot of the views of frontline staff:

- More than half (56%) did not believe Jobcentre Plus met clients' health needs (as opposed to 17% who did)
- Almost half (48%) did not believe Jobcentre Plus supported clients with literacy and numeracy (26%).
- 42% did not believe that Jobcentre Plus offered services that supported the needs of their clients (29% did)
- Overall, 43% of staff surveyed did not perceive Jobcentre Plus to support clients on their journey back to work, while less than a quarter (23%) did.

Mainstream services struggle to support clients who may be seen as 'difficult' or 'complex' and that many clients feel unsupported by Jobcentre Plus. St Mungo's staff identified that the overwhelming problem was in the lack of Job Centre staff time and skills to support our client group.

- Lack of staff skills to assess, communicate and support those with complex needs 31%
- Delays, Bureaucracy and poor record keeping 14%
- Staff displaying rude or discriminatory attitudes 12%
- Benefits stopped/ not getting money on time 8%
- Inappropriate work offers or appropriate jobs 8%



“For those who are ready to return to or seek employment the JCP can be a valuable resource, provided they are realistically employable and receive the correct support, in the correct manner etc. indeed so many factors can come into play, it is sometimes simply a matter of timing.”

“It varies between the centres. But on the whole little support is offered, in particular to clients considered difficult.”

- Services not sufficiently personalised or relevant 8%
- Poor access to staff 6%
- Literacy/ language problems 5%
- Clients don't want to engage with the system 4%
- Having no formal identification 1%
- Can't help clients with a criminal record 1%

“When clients attend jobcentre Plus in person, they face labelling due to personal hygiene, homelessness and substance use.”

“A lack of understanding of clients' past and how this impacts their ability to return to employment.”³⁶

2. Commissioning – making Flexible New Deal fit for purpose

If a person is on Job Seekers Allowance for over a year they are now referred into a more intensive programme of support provided by a third party provider. This Flexible New Deal represents a radical departure from the previous system. Its two main features are:

- Outcomes-based, payment by results system. Private and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) contractors are paid according to how many clients they successfully support back into work with few stipulations about process: it is a 'black box system'.³⁷
- Having only a few large scale prime contractors who sub contract to smaller specialist providers to serve specific groups.³⁸

There are some concerns about the effectiveness of this system in providing services for those furthest from the labour market. In the Work Matters report Demos found that:

- **Parking** – Concerns have been widely expressed that the flat-rate incentive system will incentivise providers to support those who are most easily supported back into work at the expense of those most in need. The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee have repeatedly criticised this feature of the FND³⁹ and have pointed to evidence of 'parking'. These concerns have been widely echoed by the voluntary and community sector.^{40 41}
- **The 12-month time limit** – The contract limit on getting clients into work is 12 months. For those furthest from the labour market this is unrealistic. There are fears, therefore that after one year many of those who remain without work will simply be 'pushed off'.⁴²



- **Prime contractors and sub contractors: an uneasy partnership?** – Prime contractors are too powerful in relation to smaller subcontractors⁴³. The current system for contracting bidding appears to be weighted heavily against the interests of subcontractors and VCS providers. A few prime contractors have excessive buying power and leave smaller providers in a 'take it or leave it' position. They are also able to pass on all the risk of more complex clients to smaller providers.

There is evidence that this system is putting voluntary and community sector organisations at a distinct disadvantage:

- The process can be 'prohibitively' resource-heavy – one which often requires the hiring of extra contract managers in order to secure small contracts.⁴⁴
- For those subcontractors that do manage to secure contracts, it can become difficult for smaller providers to negotiate rights with larger contractors⁴⁵ and risk can get transferred down the supply chain.⁴⁶

What are the benefits of getting homeless people into work?

Personal benefits

Homeless people want to work, 80% of St Mungo's clients surveyed said it was one of their goals.

The value of work for physical and mental health is well documented and helping homeless people back into work, or towards work through activities, training and education, can make a significant difference to recovery from homelessness and people's resilience against it in the future.

*"I was happier when I was working. I had money in my pocket. My bills were getting paid."*⁴⁷

*"I'm alcoholic, but I'd like to get back to work. I love working myself."*⁴⁸

Economic benefits

There are long-term benefits to the economy of investing upfront in the skills and capabilities of homeless people.

- In 2007 ORC International conducted some research on behalf of St Mungo's on the costs and benefits of supporting people back into work. Their research showed that helping 125 homeless people into proper and stable employment each year can save the economy as much as £5.6 million, or £45,000 per client. In the last financial year St Mungo's supported 120 clients into work.
- More recently, Crisis commissioned Oxford Economics to evaluate the return on investment of their employment programmes. They estimated society's monetary gains across a range of outcomes. Above right is their estimated savings per person for 2008/09:

Training/ learning activity	£67
Gain at least one qualification	£871
Into employment	£16,540
Into education	£2,388
Into volunteering	£6,781
Progression coordinator support	£323
Achieve stability in their housing situation	£24,275
Better health	£137
Less crime	£179

- Another illustration comes from Lord Freud's 2007 paper on the options for the future of the welfare system. Lord Freud estimates that supporting someone on Incapacity Benefit into work saves the state £62,000.⁴⁹

There are significant costs attached to leaving someone without hope of employment so what might it cost to fund a programme to support them back to work?

Based on St Mungo's Pathway's to Employment programme, there are a range of costs depending on the length of time a person has been unemployed.

- For those out of work for more than five years the cost of getting them back to work is between £12,000 - £14,000.
- For those who have been out of work for less than two years it would cost between £4,000 - £6,000.

This is a reasonable investment to make to prevent the vast costs described above.



Conclusions and recommendations

The current system is not delivering for those a long way from the labour market. Systematic changes are needed to improve the support available for homeless people and others with multiple needs who face long term unemployment. We make three recommendations:

- 1) Introduce a two stage welfare system
- 2) Ensure specialist providers are involved by reforming Flexible New Deal
- 3) Reform the tax-benefit system to make the benefits of working clear and real

1) Introduce a two stage welfare system

Homeless people are being let down at the first hurdle because their basic needs are not being addressed by the welfare-to-work system. Waiting to access specialist support for 12 months is unacceptable. People should have immediate support to address problems with literacy, numeracy, self-confidence and other problems in their lives such as substance use and mental health problems.

A new welfare to work system focused on delivering a platform of basic capabilities for all could look like this:

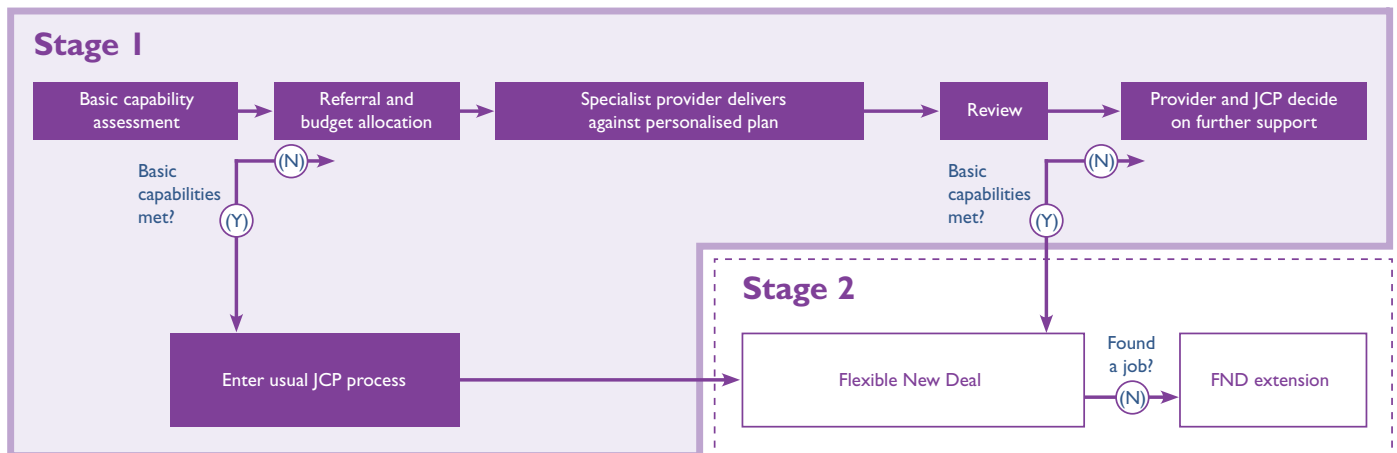
First stage:

- A 'basic capability test' carried out at job centres
- A package of support for individuals to reach a basic 'work-ready' platform
- Services commissioned from specialist providers on an individual budget model
- Outcomes set against supporting people to have a platform of capabilities

Second stage:

- Once they have these capabilities, supporting the move into work with more-specific skills training, work experience, and support with job-search and transitions

An example of what a two stage welfare to work process might look like is shown below:





This table further illustrates the need to improve the integration of support for people. Using time out of work as a proxy measure for job readiness, it shows the type of support that people need and where the funding should come as a result:

Time elapsed since last worked	Predicted Outcome Star score*	Job readiness	Welfare to work stage	Funding Source	Snapshot of St Mungo's clients at this stage
Within last year	10	Work ready	Engaged in mainstream programme	Department for Work and Pensions	(85) 7%
1-2 years ago	8-9	Pre-employment	Engaged in mainstream programme	Department for Work and Pensions	(80) 6%
2-5 years ago	6-7	Intensive Employability	Intensive support to achieve basic capability	Department for Business, Skills and Industry/ Department for Work and Pensions	(253) 19%
5- 10 years ago	4-5	Employability Starts	Intensive support to achieve basic capability	Department for Business, Skills and Industry	(336) 26%
> 10 years ago	2-3	Low level engagement	Out of scope of the labour market due to health	Supporting People/ Department of Health	(358) 27%
Never Worked	0-1	Not in scope of lab. market	Out of scope of the labour market due to health	Supporting People/ Department of Health	(192) 15%

*The St Mungo's Outcomes Star is a measurement tool to record 'soft outcomes' for people. You can read more about how it works at www.mungos.org/effectiveness/

2) Ensure specialist providers are involved by reforming Flexible New Deal

The existing commissioning environment for welfare to work programme 'Flexible New Deal' is letting down vulnerable people. The system needs to be reformed to ensure specialists can be commissioned to support those who need it.

Together with Demos, we recommend:

- An escalator model of payment by results, with prime contractors being paid more for each additional client they support back into work, rather than per client. This should eliminate the incentives for parking.
- Flexible New Deal 12-month time period be extended so that clients can receive support for the length of time they need it.
- There be more regulation of the prime-subcontractor relationship and contracts to ensure that a diversity of organisations providing services are involved in delivering the Flexible New Deal.

3) Reform the tax-benefit system to make the benefits of working clear and real

Benefits are a barrier to work. In order to have a benefits system that promotes working it is recommended that:

- The earnings disregards (the amount you can earn before your benefits are stopped) are increased to around £60 per week to enable people on benefits to get experience of short-term, part-time employment as part of the back-to-work journey without risking loss of benefits.
- Claimants benefits are "frozen" when they move into work for the initial six months, so that they can move into temporary, part-time or full-time work and move back onto benefits should the move into work be unsuccessful for whatever reason.
- Tax and benefits systems are rebalanced to ensure people are better off in work, permanently.

And finally...

Whilst the above proposals for systematic change may take time, St Mungo's would like the Government to immediately:

- **Take responsibility for homeless people's poor employment record** and commission a cross-Departmental Government strategy to tackle worklessness among the most vulnerable in society.
- **Re-route money** from large contractors to the voluntary and community sector and other specialist organisations which have the skills and a track record in supporting homeless and vulnerable people into work.
- **Target support to address basic skills among long term unemployed people.** Without the first step of basic levels of skills, no amount of sanctions or conditionality are going to get people into work.

- ¹ St Mungo's Client Needs Survey (St Mungo's 2009)
- ² St Mungo's Essential Skills Survey January to March 2010 (St Mungo's, 2010)
- ³ St Mungo's Just the Job Client Survey (St Mungo's 2010)
- ⁴ St Mungo's Down and Out: the final report of St Mungo's Call 4 Evidence – mental health and street homelessness (St Mungo's, December 2009); St Mungo's Happiness Matters: homeless people's views about breaking the link between homelessness and mental ill health (St Mungo's, July 2009)
- ⁵ St Mungo's Just the Job Client Survey (St Mungo's 2010)
- ⁶ St Mungo's Essential Skills Survey January to March 2010 (St Mungo's, 2010)
- ⁷ St Mungo's Essential Skills Survey January to March 2010 (St Mungo's, 2010)
- ⁸ St Mungo's Just the Job Client Survey (St Mungo's 2010)
- ⁹ St Mungo's Client Need Survey (St Mungo's 2010)
- ¹⁰ Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion Access to mainstream public services for homeless people: a literature review (Crisis, 2005); Lownsbrough, H Include Me In: how life skills help homeless people back into work (Demos, 2005)
- ¹¹ New Economics Foundation Work It Out: barriers to employment for homeless people (NEF, 2008)
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St Mungo's opens doors for homeless people. Mainly based in London and the South, we provide over 100 accommodation and support projects day in, day out.

We run **emergency** services – including street outreach and emergency shelters. We support homeless people in their **recovery** – opening the door to health care, and getting more homeless people into lasting new homes and training and work than any other charity. And we **prevent** homelessness through our high support housing and support teams for people at real risk.

By opening our doors, and our support services, we enable thousands of homeless and vulnerable people change their lives for good every year.

Cover image: Alex Griffiths (www.alexgriffiths.co.uk)

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