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# Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)

## Process and Outputs Evaluation Report

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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## Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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## Glossary

<b>Acronym/Key word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
BME	Black and Ethnic Minority
BOCs	Better Off Calculations
CAMH	Child and Adolescent Mental Health
CCLD	Children's Care, Learning and Development
CfW	Communities for Work
CfW+	Communities for Work Plus
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CVCs	County Voluntary Councils
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EILA	Early Implementer Local Authority
ESF	European Social Fund
EW	East Wales
FF	Families First
FIS	Family Information Service
FS	Flying Start
FSF	Flexible Support Fund
ICC	Integrated Children Centres
JCP	Job Centre Plus
LA	Local Authority
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NHS	National Health Service
PaCE	Parents Childcare and Employment
P1	Priority 1
P3	Priority 3
STLA	Supporting Teaching and Learning Assistant
TOC	Theory of Change
UC	Universal Credit
WWV	West Wales and the Valleys

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2018, the Welsh Government appointed OB3, Dateb and People and Work to undertake an evaluation of its Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) programme, an active labour market intervention supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).
- 1.2 PaCE was launched in 2015 and an [initial Process Evaluation report](#) was published in December 2016. That report set out the context for the programme, the Theory of Change underpinning PaCE and also discussed early stage findings surrounding programme processes and participants' experiences of PaCE. This current study builds upon that early stage evaluation.
- 1.3 The aims of this evaluation can be summarised as follows<sup>1</sup>:
  - to consider whether the programme is being implemented as expected
  - to assess the programme's effectiveness in helping participants achieve sustainable outcomes
  - to assess the veracity of the Theory of Change underpinning the programme.
- 1.4 A specific objective for this evaluation is to provide an in-depth understanding of the journey and distance travelled by participants.
- 1.5 This evaluation is being undertaken in two stages between March 2018 and January 2020. This first report considers whether the programme is being delivered as intended, the characteristics of participants and the nature of support delivered as well as the programme's performance to date. A further report (to be produced in January 2020) will explore the effects of the programme and consider the value for money which PaCE represents.

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<sup>1</sup> The aims set out in the specification were expressed as follows:

- to investigate PaCE's current implementation against the theory of change and logic model underpinning the programme
- to assess the differences between Priority 1 and Priority 3 operations considering how the programme has been set up, how it is being operated and how the recorded outcomes compare with those anticipated
- to assess the programme's effectiveness in (i) helping parents aged over 25 achieve sustainable outcomes and in (ii) reducing the number of young parents aged 16 to 24 who are not engaged in education, training or employment.

## Method

1.6 This phase of the evaluation programme (which was undertaken between March and September 2018) encompassed seven main elements of work:

- element one: desk research to understand the policy context within which PaCE operates
- element two: analysing the database of programme participants
- element three: conducting face-to-face interviews with Welsh Government and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) officials involved in the design and management of the programme. In all, 10 Welsh Government and DWP representatives were interviewed.
- element four: undertaking face to face interviews with eight DWP delivery managers responsible for the implementation of PaCE across Wales
- element five: undertaking a package of light touch fieldwork in 11 local authority areas. This included:
  - telephone interviews with 15 PaCE advisers working in 11 local authority areas
  - telephone interviews with 17 individuals involved in the management and/or delivery of family services (e.g. Early Years and Childcare Services, Family Information Services, Families First, Flying Start staff) across 11 local authority areas
- element six: undertaking a package of more detailed qualitative fieldwork in 11 other local authority areas. These local authority areas were selected according to the point from which PaCE was launched, apparent performance in terms of engagements and outcomes, geography and linguistic characteristics. The sample cannot capture the full diversity of programme delivery across Wales but provides an important indication of the programme's implementation across different parts of Wales. Across the 11 areas, the fieldwork undertaken included:
  - group or individual interviews with 24 PaCE advisers to discuss the programme's implementation in particular areas

- interviews with 12 individuals involved in the management and/or delivery of family services (e.g. Early Years and Childcare Services, Family Information Services, Families First, Flying Start staff) across 11 local authority areas
  - one-to-one interviews with 83 programme participants. A random sample of participants who had joined the programme between March and December 2017 was invited by the research team to contribute to the study. PaCE advisers also contacted relevant individuals to encourage them to engage with the research team
  - reviewing a sample of 33 participant portfolios<sup>2</sup>
  - drafting internal 'participant papers' which triangulated the evidence gathered from the various sources
  - synthesising the findings of the fieldwork undertaken
  - coding data gathered during participant interviews and inputting onto a database of participants interviewed
- element seven: preparing and peer reviewing this Process and Outputs Evaluation report.

### **Structure of this report**

1.7 This report is presented in nine chapters as follows:

- chapter one: this introduction to the report
- chapter two: an introduction to PaCE: the programme's aims, intended delivery model, staffing structures, targets and budgets
- chapter three: a review of policy developments affecting PaCE
- chapter four: an assessment of how PaCE aligns with wider family support and employability interventions
- chapter five: the progress made thus far in implementing the PaCE programme in terms of the numbers and characteristics of participants enrolled

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<sup>2</sup> These related to individuals still participating

- chapter six: a discussion of the barriers to work faced by PaCE participants and the factors motivating them to engage with the programme
- chapter seven: a review of the services provided to participants as they engage with PaCE
- chapter eight: an assessment of emerging outcomes
- chapter nine: our conclusions and recommendations at this interim stage.

## **2. Introduction to PaCE**

### **Introduction**

2.1 In this chapter, we provide an introduction to PaCE and set out the way in which the programme operates. The chapter is presented in five sections as follows:

- the agencies involved in funding and delivery
- PaCE target participants
- underpinning theory of change and intended delivery model
- programme targets and budgets
- performance to date.

### **The agencies involved in funding and delivery**

2.2 PaCE is a Welsh Government sponsored labour market intervention designed to tackle poverty through sustainable employment. PaCE is funded under the 2014-20 European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes for East Wales (EW) and West Wales and the Valleys (WWV), under two separate priorities:

- Priority Axis 1: ‘tackling poverty through sustainable employment’. More precisely, PaCE seeks to address Specific Objective 1.1 within the East Wales Programme and Specific Objective 1.2 within the West Wales and the Valleys Programme, both of which aim ‘to increase the employability of economically inactive and long term unemployed people aged 25 and over who have complex barriers to employment’
- Priority 3: ‘youth employment’ in the East Wales Programme and ‘youth employment and attainment’ in the West Wales and the Valleys Programme. More specifically, PaCE seeks to address Specific Objective 3.1 in both programmes, which aims ‘to reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)’.

2.3 The Welsh Government is the ‘lead beneficiary’ for PaCE whilst the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is a joint beneficiary. PaCE currently operates alongside other provision targeted at those who are not in

employment, including the DWP's Work and Health Programme<sup>3</sup>. PaCE is delivered across Wales, with the exception of those areas where the Communities for Work (CfW) programme is available. PaCE is thus expected to work alongside, but not to overlap or compete with CfW.

2.4 PaCE is also expected to complement local authority led programmes such as Families First and Flying Start in order to provide a seamless, integrated service to potential clients. It should be noted, however, that Flying Start primarily operates in former Communities First<sup>4</sup> areas, which are served by CfW rather than PaCE.

2.5 Whilst local authorities are not expected to make any financial contribution to PaCE, a standard Service Level Agreement (SLA) issued by the Welsh Government notes that they are required to provide 'assistance' in terms of:

- providing suitable desk space in community settings, ideally alongside Flying Start<sup>5</sup> or Families First staff
- promoting PaCE, with Flying Start, Families First and Family Information Service staff seen as 'key referral sources'
- helping PaCE advisers identify and understand local childcare provision
- meeting with Welsh Government and DWP staff to review delivery and shape provision
- complying with data protection legislation<sup>6</sup>.

2.6 It is intended that 'close working arrangements' with local family support teams will lead to PaCE advisers being 'seen by parent's [sic] as part of the community team' and referrals into PaCE becoming 'part of the integrated family support service'<sup>7</sup>.

2.7 PaCE was first launched in three local authority areas before being rolled out incrementally across Wales. The programme is not run in two local authority

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<sup>3</sup> The Work and Health Programme is a voluntary intervention designed to help long-term unemployed people as well as those with a disability or health condition find and sustain employment. The Work and Health Programme was launched in December 2017

<sup>4</sup> Communities First was the Welsh Government's flagship tackling poverty programme between 2001 and March 2018. It focused on the 52 most deprived areas in Wales (according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation)

<sup>5</sup> Flying Start is mainly focused in CfW areas and is probably a less important source of referrals than originally anticipated

<sup>6</sup> Standard Memorandum of Understanding

<sup>7</sup> WWVP1 Business Plan, Annex 4: PaCE Participant Journey, p.2

areas, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil, because most wards in those areas are already served by CfW. Individuals living outside CfW wards in those local authority areas are able to capitalise upon PaCE services delivered by advisers working in neighbouring local authority areas.

- 2.8 A total of 43 PaCE advisers are employed by DWP and assigned specifically to the programme, with a maximum of three full time equivalent advisers in each local authority area<sup>8</sup>. The number of advisers to be allocated to each area was determined by taking account of a combination of factors such as economic inactivity rates locally, the numbers of lone parents residing in areas, geography and distances to be travelled (determined by the size of the patch to be covered).
- 2.9 PaCE advisers report to eight (or four and a half full time equivalent) delivery managers, also employed by DWP. The programme's day to day implementation is overseen by a team of three Welsh Government account managers and one Welsh Government senior operations manager. The programme's implementation is supported by senior managers as well as administrative and finance functions within both DWP and the Welsh Government.

### **PaCE target participants**

- 2.10 PaCE aims to provide individual support to out of work parents who consider childcare to be their main barrier to accessing employment and training opportunities. More specifically, PaCE is targeted at economically inactive parents aged over 25 and young parents aged 16 to 24 who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 2.11 It was anticipated that around 70 per cent of PaCE participants will be lone parents, 20 per cent will be a parent in a couple household where both parents are workless (and where one parent is unable to care for the children) and 10 per cent from a couple household with one parent working, with PaCE helping the partner who is not working<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Operational Guidance, (2016) p.5

<sup>9</sup> Research specification, p.10

2.12 The eligibility criteria for PaCE were clarified in anticipation of the roll-out of the Universal Credit<sup>10</sup> (and possible difficulties which that might entail).

Individuals are deemed eligible for PaCE support if:

1. they have childcare as the main barrier to accessing employment, education or training opportunities (suitability)
2. they are not engaged in any education, training or employment
3. they live outside a Communities for Work postcode area
4. participating in PaCE will not affect any benefit entitlement
5. they are aged 25 or over on the day of enrolment (Priority 1)
6. they are aged between 16 and 24 on the day of enrolment (Priority 3)<sup>11</sup>.

2.13 Annex 4 to the PaCE Priority 1 (P1) Business Plan notes the following additional 'complex barriers' to employment which some participants are expected to have:

- lack of trust in DWP, afraid to engage with them for fear of losing Income related benefits
- no skills or low skills to enter the labour market
- lack of motivation and aspiration
- financial barriers
- potential barriers to sustaining employment e.g. the breakdown of childcare arrangements, transport issues, a lack of financial literacy, employer attitudes and an absence of family friendly policies<sup>12</sup>.

2.14 The intention is that, through intensive support provided by PaCE advisers, parents will receive the help they need to access childcare that will in turn enable them to take-up training and employment options. The Business Plan is clear that the level and duration of support that individual participants will need will vary according to individual circumstances<sup>13</sup>.

2.15 PaCE is also intended to address the ESF cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming; sustainable development; and

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<sup>10</sup> Universal Credit is a welfare benefit to support people out of work and those in work but on low incomes. It replaces six types of welfare benefits previously available

<sup>11</sup> Strategic Board Meeting, February 2018: Agenda Item 6b – PaCE Update, p.4

<sup>12</sup> WWVP1 Business Plan, Annex 4: PaCE Participant Journey, p.1

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.2

tackling poverty and social exclusion. It is intended, for example, that PaCE will:

- work with partners to encourage family friendly working practices for both men and women
- check that employers involved in PaCE have equality and diversity policies
- refer employers without equality and diversity policies for support
- encourage employers to avoid stereotypical assumptions in requirement<sup>14</sup>.

2.16 Interim guidance on PaCE training provision noted that ‘advisers will need to help participants understand the local labour market situation when considering job goals, and positively encourage participants to consider occupations which help address gender imbalances. For example, there are less men working in the childcare sector, and less women working in construction industry’<sup>15</sup>.

### **Underpinning theory of change and intended delivery model**

2.17 It is intended that participants will be referred to PaCE by a variety of organisations or initiatives, such as Families First, Flying Start, local Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices, libraries and third sector/community groups. It is also expected that PaCE advisers will actively seek to promote the programme and engage potential clients<sup>16</sup>.

2.18 Advisers are at the heart of PaCE and they aim to provide a seamless service by:

- being located in community settings, accessible to target participants
- fostering good working relationships with key workers including those within the family support teams, and programmes such as Flying Start and Families First to ensure a smooth referral process is in place
- working with Family Information Services to understand the local childcare landscape and to ensure participants can access advice on childcare

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<sup>14</sup> Research specification, p.10

<sup>15</sup> Operational Guidance (2016) p.34

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.9

- working with participants to ‘diagnose’ their situations, determine how to address needs and barriers to employment and agreeing Individual Action Plans with participants<sup>17</sup>
- scoping and sourcing ‘solutions to overcome childcare barriers according to the individual needs of the parent and their child’<sup>18</sup>
- sourcing and/or providing employment support, including finding work experience, volunteering opportunities, helping with job search skills, updating CVs, helping participants improve their interview techniques and providing ‘employment brokerage’<sup>19</sup>
- providing ‘advice on in and out of work benefits and Universal Credit entitlements through “Better off Calculations”, including entitlements to support for the costs of childcare upon entering employment’<sup>20</sup>
- helping those who are not work ready access relevant training, either from mainstream sources or via the Welsh Government’s procured service
- mentoring participants undertaking work experience or training to ensure they stay on track to achieve the goals agreed.

2.19 As previously noted, PaCE is intended to complement the DWP’s Work and Health Programme by providing those for whom childcare is a significant barrier to work with more in-depth tailored support to help overcome childcare barriers as well as addressing other issues which might hinder progression into work.

2.20 Participants are able to access ‘financial assistance with the cost of childcare for dependent children’ whilst they undertake ‘work related activity to move them closer to the labour market’. They are also able, ‘for a limited period of up to two weeks once they start work (including self-employment)’ to receive help in paying for childcare, ‘where no other sources of funding are available’<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Operational Guidance, (2016) p.6

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

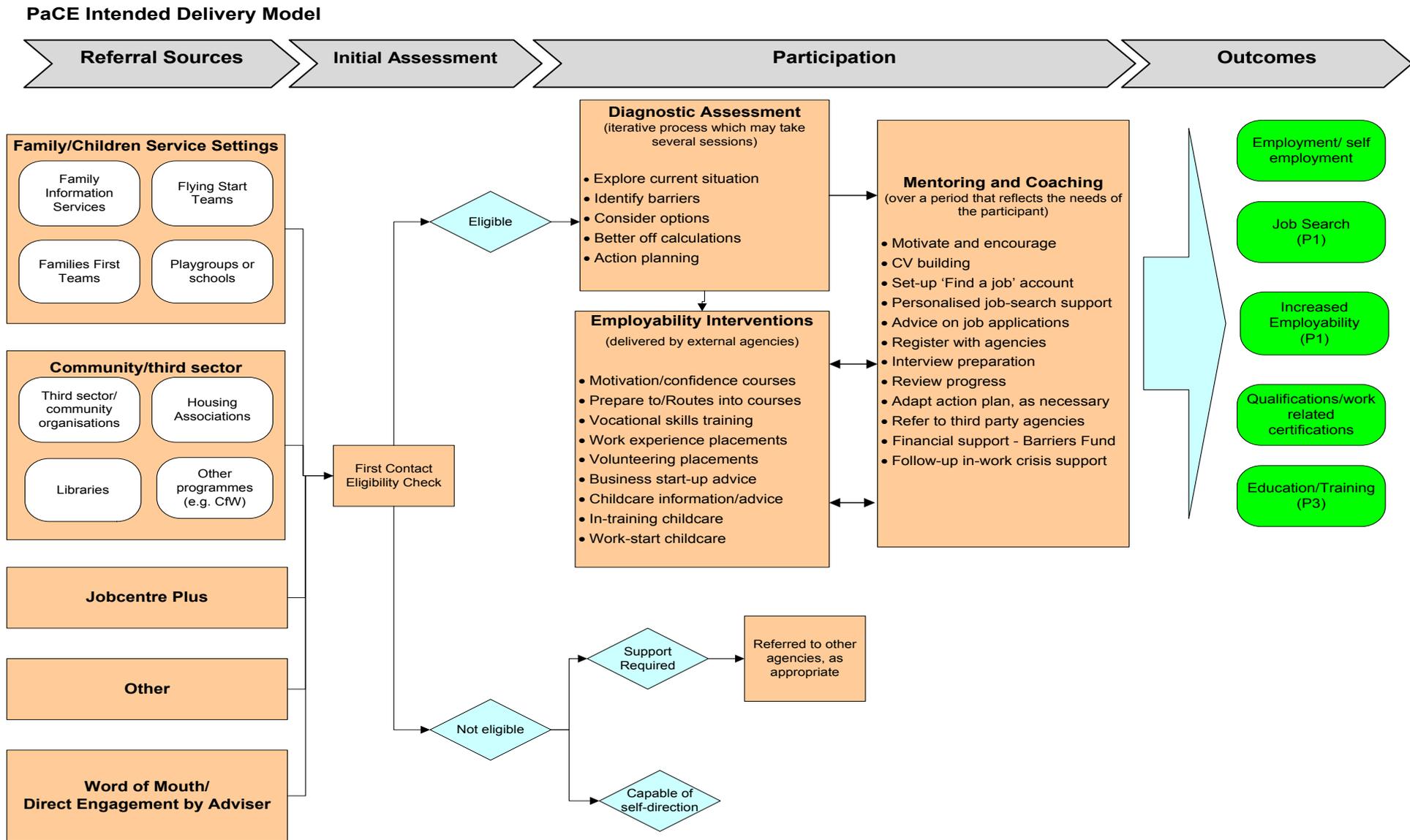
<sup>21</sup> Operational Guidance, p.30

- 2.21 It is not, however, the intention that PaCE advisers should influence participants' childcare choices<sup>22</sup>, though they are able to draw upon their knowledge of local childcare provision to help parents source appropriate provision as well as referring participants, as necessary, to Local Authority Family Information Services for help in doing this.
- 2.22 Participants are able to access existing flexible training programmes delivered locally through mainstream and other sources e.g. local colleges or housing associations. In addition, where nothing appropriate is available through such sources, advisers are able to request procured and centrally managed training programmes delivered by a provider retained by the Welsh Government specifically to deliver training to CfW and PaCE participants.
- 2.23 A barriers fund is available to help participants overcome final barriers to employment by enabling the purchase of, for example, interview clothing or tools to start work, or to meet travel costs or the costs of sitting tests/ acquiring licences where no training is needed. The barriers fund is a source of last resort and can only be accessed after other potential sources have been exhausted e.g. the Jobcentre's Flexible Support Fund (FSF).
- 2.24 A participant completes the programme once they have become employed, have entered full-time education, or decide that they no longer wish to participate. There is also an option for advisers to terminate a participant's programme if, for example, their barriers are considered so great so as to be insurmountable within PaCE support. However, the length of time over which advisers are able to work with participants is not prescribed: rather it is determined by the individual's needs and willingness to engage constructively.
- 2.25 Figure 2.1 seeks to capture the journey into and through PaCE which participants are generally expected to take.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.31

Figure 2.1 PaCE intended delivery model



## Programme targets and budgets

- 2.26 PaCE was launched in July 2015, with the intention that it would run until at least March 2018. Since then, however, the programme has been extended, with services to be delivered until March 2020.
- 2.27 Initially, PaCE was targeted exclusively at participants aged 25 and over (under Priority 1), but from April 2016, the programme was extended to also serve young parents aged 16 to 24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (under Priority 3).
- 2.28 Tables 2.1 and 2.2 summarise the primary outcome targets agreed for Priority 1 and Priority 3 respectively over the programme's five year life period. The original and revised targets are given at Annex 1 for information.

Table 2.1: Revised Priority 1 Primary Outcome Targets 2015-2020

Priority 1 Primary Outcome Targets	East Wales <sup>23</sup>	West Wales and Valleys <sup>24</sup>	All Wales
	2015-20	2015-20	2015-20
<b>Economically Inactive</b> (aged 25 and over), not in education or training for whom childcare is the main barrier to employment.			
1 Participants	2,457	4,309	6,766
2 Outcome: entering employment including self-employment upon leaving	491	862	1,353
3 Outcome: engaged in job search upon leaving	614	1,077	1,691
4 Outcome: gaining a qualification or work relevant certification upon leaving	614	1,077	1,691
5 Outcome: increasing employability through completing work experience placement or volunteering opportunity	737	1,293	2,030

<sup>23</sup> These figures are drawn from the research specification, p.12: However, figures for EW differ slightly from those given in Business Plans – Delivery Projections

<sup>24</sup> These figures are drawn from the research specification, p.12: However, figures for WWV differ slightly from those given in Business Plans – Delivery Projections

Table 2.2: Revised Priority 3 Primary Outcome Targets 2015-20

Priority 3 Primary Outcome Targets	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	All Wales
<b>16-24 year old NEETs</b>			
1 Participants	567	945	1,512
2 Outcome: gaining qualifications upon leaving	142	236	378
3 Outcome: in education or training upon leaving	170	284	454
4 Outcome: entering employment upon leaving	113	189	302

- 2.29 The tables show that 20 per cent of participants aged 25 and over are expected to enter employment or self-employment upon leaving PaCE.
- 2.30 Some 20 per cent of 16-24 year old participants who are NEET are also expected to enter employment upon leaving. In addition, 30 per cent of all 16-24 year old participants who are NEET are expected to progress into education or training.
- 2.31 Tables 2.3 and 2.4 set out the budgets agreed for Priority 1 and Priority 3 respectively over the life of the PaCE programme.

Table 2.3: Revised Priority 1 Costs and Sources of Funds 2015-20

Priority 1	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	All Wales
<b>Costs</b>			
Childcare costs	£759,553	£1,032,159	£1,791,712
Total operation cost	£4,074,421	£6,709,701	£10,784,122
<b>Source of funds</b>			
Welsh Government	£2,037,210	£4,815,280	£6,852,490
ESF	£2,037,210	£1,975,421	£4,012,631
ESF Intervention Rate	50%	29%	37%

Table 2.4: Revised Priority 3 Costs and Sources of Funds 2015-20

Priority 3	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	All Wales
Costs			
Childcare costs	£259,964	£482,800	£742,764
Total operation cost	£950,698	£1,765,582	£2,716,280
Source of funds			
Welsh Government	£475,349	£1,253,564	£1,728,913
ESF	£475,349	£512,018	£987,368
ESF Intervention Rate	50%	29%	36%

- 2.32 It was possible to extend PaCE to 2020 within the original budget because of a significant level of underspend on childcare during the programme's early months.
- 2.33 Whilst PaCE, as currently approved, runs until 2020 the Welsh Government is developing proposals to extend the programme until 2023, which will be subject to Ministerial and WEFO approval.

## **Chapter Summary**

PaCE is a Welsh Government programme designed to tackle poverty through sustainable employment. It is delivered in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and is intended to complement local authority led programmes aimed at families. PaCE is part funded under the European Social Fund.

PaCE aims to provide individual support to out of work parents who consider childcare to be their main barrier to accessing employment and/or training opportunities. The intention is that, through intensive support provided by 43 PaCE advisers across 20 local authority areas, parents will receive the help they need to access childcare that will enable them to take-up training and employment options. PaCE is also intended to address the cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming; sustainable development; and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

It is intended that that participants will be referred to PaCE by a variety of organisations and that advisers' support will integrate seamlessly with wider family and employment support services. Advisers are expected to assess participants' situations, help find solutions to childcare barriers, help those who are not work ready find ways to develop work related skills, provide job search support and advise participants on in work and out of work benefits.

Participants are able to access mainstream training programmes or, where nothing appropriate is available locally, advisers are able to request training programmes delivered by a provider retained by the Welsh Government. PaCE can also cover the costs of childcare whilst participants undertake activities designed to prepare them for work and for participants' first two weeks in work. Exceptionally, it can also cover other costs that might prevent participants from taking the final step into employment or training.

PaCE was launched in July 2015 and will run until March 2020. Over a five-year period, PaCE is expected to support 8,278 individuals and has a total budget of some £13.5 million.

### **3. Policy Developments Affecting PaCE**

#### **Introduction**

3.1 In this chapter we consider research findings and policy developments of relevance to PaCE since the publication of the 2016 Process Evaluation report, which set out the context for the programme and its underpinning Theory of Change. These policy changes have yet to impact upon PaCE but represent important changes to the context within which the programme will be delivered in the future. This chapter is presented in four sections as follows:

- Welsh Government's Employability Plan
- The Childcare Offer
- Review of Childcare Capacity in Wales
- Review of the Childcare Sector in Wales

#### **Welsh Government's Employability Plan (2018)**

3.2 In April 2018 the Welsh Government published its Employability Plan with a vision 'to make Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy'. The plan is described as a priority for the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and sets out a ten year implementation plan that 'offers a national framework which sets a direction and standards' with 'a series of stretching and ambitious targets relating to unemployment, economic inactivity and skills levels'.

3.3 The Plan recognises that although the employment rate in Wales is high, and that previous employability programmes have been a success in terms of what they set out to achieve, there are still geographical variations that affect the opportunities available, particularly in the valleys and rural communities. Similarly, some groups, including women, ethnic groups and disabled people continue to have poorer labour market outcomes and a significant gender pay gap remains an issue<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Welsh Government (2018), Employability Plan, p.9

- 3.4 A key challenge that the Employability Plan seeks to address is in-work poverty that is often the result of underemployment or short-term, insecure and low paid jobs. The plan recognises that ‘Wales needs to increase the quality of work and ensure an opportunity for in work progression’<sup>26</sup>. The plan defines ‘employability’ as ‘an individual’s personal capacity or suitability to work’ and highlights the need to ensure that individual circumstances and barriers to work are considered, including the availability of good quality child care<sup>27</sup>.
- 3.5 The Employability Plan is structured around four key themes:
- providing an individualised approach to employability support
  - underlying the responsibility of employers to up-skill their workers and provide fair work
  - responding to current and projected skills gaps
  - preparing for a radical shift in the world of work<sup>28</sup>.
- 3.6 The first theme in particular is of direct relevance to the PaCE programme and includes a commitment to develop bespoke solutions of varying intensity for those in greatest need<sup>29</sup>. This section of the Employability Plan discusses how the Welsh Government wishes to support people who are not working ‘with a particular emphasis on those who are economically inactive and less likely to be in contact with mainstream employment support’<sup>30</sup>.
- 3.7 The Welsh Government commits to creating an Employment Advice Gateway that will be able to provide employment-related advice and guidance to people in Wales. The Gateway will act as an ‘independent broker’ for the different interventions and services on offer. It is expected that the Gateway will be launched in February 2019<sup>31</sup>.
- 3.8 The Welsh Government’s new employability support, ‘Working Wales’ is due to start in April 2019 and will aim to support the unemployed, economically

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.9

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.10

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.13

<sup>31</sup> [Statement by the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning: Progress Report on the Employability Plan](#) - [accessed 19 September 2018]

inactive and individuals aged 16 or over not in education, employment or training ‘to enter sustained employment, an apprenticeship or self-employment’. The Employability Plan highlights the importance of Working Wales’ contribution to the goal of ‘eliminating the gap in unemployment and economic inactivity rates between Wales and the UK average within 10 years’<sup>32</sup>. The Employability Plan also outlines the intention to ‘further develop and enhance’ the approach to ‘tailored, community outreach supporting those furthest from the labour market’<sup>33</sup>. PaCE is mentioned in the document as a key programme within this new support structure, working alongside the childcare offer. The plan describes this ‘continuing commitment to support working families with childcare’ as a way of making it ‘easier for parents to enter sustainable jobs, increasing their employment options’.

- 3.9 The plan also outlines the Welsh Government’s intention to undertake an equalities review of Working Wales, PaCE and CfW to ensure that they are adequately responsive to the needs of people with protected characteristics.
- 3.10 The Employability Plan recognises the positive benefits that result from the co-location of services, which is very much in keeping with the intended ethos of the PaCE programme, and outlines how the Welsh Government will encourage the co-location of local services to simplify access to employability support and stimulate more efficient cross referral of customers across Careers Wales, Business Wales and Job Centre Plus<sup>34</sup>. Similarly, the plan identifies the benefits of co-locating with a range of local health services in order to better promote employment as a positive clinical outcome. In this respect the plan aims to promote the co-location of community and primary care services where facilities are ‘fit for purpose and appropriate to local need’<sup>35</sup>.
- 3.11 It also outlines plans to provide local and regional employability support in a more holistic way, by coordinating and monitoring the activity of various delivery partners in any given area, so that ‘actions to tackle economic

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.17

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.17

inactivity and unemployment ... minimise duplication and ... learn from best practice<sup>36</sup>.

### **The Childcare Offer**

- 3.12 In its five year strategic plan for 2016-21, *Taking Wales Forward*, the Welsh Government committed to providing 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare provision for parents of three and four year olds for up to 48 weeks of the year. It is estimated that around 40,000 children will be eligible for the offer across Wales each year. This is known as the Childcare Offer. This offer will build on the current universal entitlement to a minimum of 10 hours of early education per week during term time for 39 weeks of the year for all three and four year olds as part of the Foundation Phase.
- 3.13 In September 2017 seven local authorities<sup>37</sup>, referred to as Early Implementer Local Authorities (EILAs)<sup>38</sup> started piloting the Childcare Offer, with an overall fund of £10m. Further roll-out across an additional seven local authorities took place in September 2018<sup>39</sup>, with further expansion planned throughout 2019<sup>40</sup>. To support the expansion, the Welsh Government budget includes £25m for 2018-19 and £40m for 2019-20. The Welsh Government, in partnership with local authorities, childcare providers and other stakeholders are aiming towards 2020 for full roll-out of the Childcare Offer.
- 3.14 In addition to the continued roll-out of the Childcare Offer, the Welsh Government has also recently announced a parallel £60m capital grant programme over the next three years. This grant programme will enable the Welsh Government, in close partnership with local authorities, 'to support the co-location of existing Foundation Phase provision with the new Childcare Offer provision on a single site, where possible'<sup>41</sup> so that sufficient childcare is

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4

<sup>37</sup> The seven local authorities include: Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council, Caerphilly CBC, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Flintshire County Council and selected wards within Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Swansea Council.

<sup>38</sup> This study entailed in-depth fieldwork within three of these local authority areas: Gwynedd, Flintshire and Rhondda Cynon Taf

<sup>39</sup> Selected wards in Cardiff Council, Newport Council, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Conwy CBC, Wrexham Council and the remaining wards within Swansea Council.

<sup>40</sup> Further information on the roll-out plans for 2019 is available in the [Ministerial Written Statement:](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Written Statement - The Childcare Offer – One year on and Increasing the pace of roll out](#) [accessed 29 October 2018]

available in the right areas. The capital grant programme will also support the development of new provision in those areas currently lacking in adequate childcare services, with a particular focus on rural and disadvantaged areas.

- 3.15 To date the EILAs have received over 6,900 applications for the childcare element of the Offer, with over 4,100 children receiving funded childcare. It is recognised that demand led programmes such as this take time to establish, and there are no specific targets for take-up and not all eligible parents are expected to apply.
- 3.16 An independent evaluation of the early implementation of the Childcare Offer has been commissioned and will report in November 2018. The evaluation considers how effectively the offer is being delivered, the impact that the offer is having on parental employability, wellbeing and disposable income and the impact of the childcare intervention on the childcare sector itself.

#### **Review of Childcare Capacity in Wales (2017)**

- 3.17 The Childcare Capacity in Wales report maps the current supply of childcare in Wales against estimated potential future demand, taking into account the impact of the new Childcare Offer in particular.
- 3.18 The report notes the difficulties of estimating childcare demand and suggests that there may be a number of factors contributing to areas of lower availability of childcare provision and that further research is required to understand parental behaviours to gain a clearer understanding of actual demand for formal childcare. Notwithstanding this, the report currently estimates that there are just under 80,000 childcare places available in Wales, of which 45,000 are full day places, but there are around 175,000 children under the age of four living in Wales<sup>42</sup>. As such the report questions whether there are currently sufficient places available to adequately provide the Childcare Offer.
- 3.19 In its recommendations it notes that the childcare sector has been given priority sector status as part of the Workforce Plan for Wales and suggests that areas with limited childcare capacity currently should be targeted for an employability and business support package. At the end of 2017 the Welsh

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.2

Government published its 10 year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan which responded to this recommendation and provided financial support<sup>43</sup> to providers within the EILA areas of the Childcare Offer pilot and to providers who were looking to start or expand a current business in order to respond to the Childcare Offer<sup>44</sup>.

### **Review of the Childcare Sector in Wales (2018)**

- 3.20 In January 2018 the Welsh Government published a review of the childcare sector in Wales, which was commissioned to provide evidence to inform the proposed Childcare Offer for three to four year olds in Wales. The report provides an overview of the childcare sector in Wales and attempts to consider how developments in the future might impact upon it.
- 3.21 Looking at the most recently available data on the sector, the review stated that there were 4,012 registered childcare providers in Wales. It also estimates that the childcare sector employs over 17,000 people in Wales, and that there has been growth in recent years with the potential to expand even further. However, childcare providers highlighted a number of ‘obstacles and risks to expansion’, particularly as the low profit margins of childcare providers make them ‘vulnerable to abrupt changes to regulation and funding’<sup>45</sup>.
- 3.22 The review also alludes to the importance and wider ‘value’ of the childcare sector in supporting economic growth and poverty reduction in Wales due to its ability to enable large numbers of parents to work. Collectively, the report estimates that these parents generate £1.2 billion in income per year.
- 3.23 Nonetheless, the report also estimates that around 61,000 parents of dependent children in Wales (approximately 20 per cent of all parents) feel that they are unable to work due to caring responsibilities – whether it is because formal childcare is not available for the required number of hours or whether it is unaffordable for them to access the required amount of childcare needed<sup>46</sup>. Nine out of 10 of those affected are thought to be women<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> £100,000 covering the 2017/18; 2018/19 and 2019/20 periods.

<sup>44</sup> [Written Statement - Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan](#) [accessed 18 September 2018]

<sup>45</sup> Welsh Government, Review of the Childcare Sector in Wales, p.7

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.46

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.46

3.24 Although the Review of the Childcare Sector in Wales provides a robust overview of the current situation, it recommends that further research is required to fully understand how some upcoming policy changes (such as the increases to the National Living Wage and tax and welfare reforms) and regulatory changes might affect the decisions of childcare providers. It also states that more research is required to better understand the number of people who are currently prevented from working due to an inability to access sufficient childcare<sup>48</sup>.

### **Chapter Summary**

Several research reports and policy developments have been published since the PaCE Process Evaluation. Although many of the policy changes are yet to be fully implemented, they will potentially change the delivery context for the PaCE programme in future.

The Welsh Government's Employability Plan sets out a ten year vision with ambitious targets set in relation to reducing unemployment and economic inactivity and increasing skills levels. A key theme in the Plan includes 'providing an individualised approach to employability support' with a commitment to developing bespoke solutions for those in greatest need.

The Employability Plan includes a commitment to set up an Employment Advice Gateway that will act as a brokerage for the various employment-related interventions and services available. Welsh Government's new employability programme, 'Working Wales' is also due to start in April 2019 with the aim of supporting unemployed, economically inactive and NEET individuals aged 16 or over to enter employment, with PaCE mentioned as a key programme within this new support structure.

The Welsh Government's flagship commitment to provide 30 hours of funded early education and childcare provision for three to four year olds (known as the Childcare Offer) is also currently being rolled-out, aiming for full delivery by 2020. Alongside

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.107

the Childcare Offer a recently announced £60m capital grant programme will also support the process of co-locating existing Foundation Phase provision with the new Childcare Offer on a single site, and will help the development of new childcare services particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas that currently lack adequate provision.

The development of the Childcare Offer is underpinned by a recent review of childcare capacity in Wales which recommended that the childcare sector be provided with an employability and business support package to help ensure that sufficient childcare places will be available to adequately provide the Childcare Offer across Wales. A review of the childcare sector in Wales also alluded to the importance and value of the childcare sector in enabling parents to return to work thus supporting economic growth and poverty reduction.

## 4. Programme Structure

### Introduction

4.1 This chapter draws upon the theory of change and considers whether the ‘architecture’ surrounding PaCE is structured as intended. The chapter is presented in three sections as follows:

- Alignment of services with wider family support and employability provision
- Promotion of PaCE
- Location of PaCE advisers.

### **Alignment of services with wider family support and employability provision**

#### *Alignment with family support arrangements*

4.2 The theory of change pointed to ‘the importance of outreach provision in target communities for both the engagement of target groups and for understanding their needs’. It referred to ‘the need for advisers to work closely with key partnerships, Local Authority Family Information Services and other key organisations within their respective communities to ensure the effective integration of service provision and to promote referrals to and from PaCE’<sup>49</sup>.

4.3 In the programme’s early days, PaCE managers sought to engage at a strategic level with family service teams, thus building potential partners’ understanding of the programme’s aims and how it would complement the local family service landscape. Service level agreements were drawn up setting out the roles and responsibilities of key partners (particularly local authorities) involved in the delivery of PaCE. Since then, however contact between PaCE programme managers and local authority partners has been limited and some individuals called for periodic feedback on PaCE’s performance in their areas. The 2016 process evaluation indicated that relationships between PaCE advisers and Families First teams, Family Information Services (FIS) and other providers were ‘strengthening in most

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<sup>49</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p.31

areas<sup>50</sup>. PaCE teams have continued efforts to cultivate their relationships with wider family support infrastructures within their areas. For example, a number of advisers attend local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (or similar) and Families First/Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings in order to promote PaCE and to establish rapport with relevant partners. Indeed, it was argued that 'you always have to keep plugging' the programme to keep it on partners' radars.

- 4.4 However, the depth of the relationships forged vary markedly from one local authority area to another and the degree of interaction also varies across different elements of the family support infrastructure within particular local authority areas. PaCE advisers typically working more closely with FIS teams and less so with Families First or Flying Start, reflecting in part the fact that PaCE mostly operates outside Flying Start areas, where family support services tend to be focused. Nevertheless, it remains that the degree to which PaCE has become integrated into wider family support arrangements was not as great as had been expected in many areas.
- 4.5 At a more specific level, PaCE teams were said to work well with FIS teams in many areas, with for example, FIS and PaCE staff organising or attending events together, FIS teams promoting the PaCE programme or FIS staff providing PaCE advisers with information about potential childcare options, sometimes 'customised' to clients' particular situations and often addressing complex childcare needs. In other areas, interaction was more limited, though FIS remained an important source of information about childcare options.
- 4.6 Where the relationship works well, there is also an element of reciprocation, with PaCE advisers referring individuals to FIS, whether via web-sites or telephone and informing FIS staff of gaps that they come across in childcare provision.
- 4.7 In some places, FIS teams had contracted over the last couple of years in the face of local authority funding pressures. This generally led to the loss of

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<sup>50</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p.43

outreach staff and a focusing of the service upon the provision of information about childcare on-line, including via the Dewis Cymru web-site<sup>51</sup>.

#### *Alignment with employability programmes*

- 4.8 PaCE's focus on areas not served by CfW means that the two programmes work in parallel without overlapping or competing for clients. In many areas PaCE and CfW advisers work together and, in some, PaCE advisers are involved in triage processes alongside CfW/CfW+ colleagues, thus allowing the referral of potential clients to the most appropriate form of support. The recently launched CfW+ programme was seen by those advisers who had experience of it as somewhere to refer former PaCE participants who had progressed into work but may, for whatever reason, need to re-engage with support.
- 4.9 Some contributors believed that having one DWP delivery manager in charge of both PaCE and CfW/CfW+ is helpful in that it allows them to have an holistic oversight and to better integrate the two programmes. Others perceived that it was better for delivery managers to focus exclusively on one programme or the other because it allows them to become more invested in the operation for which they are responsible and that it can be difficult to manage both programmes.
- 4.10 PaCE also operates alongside a number of other employability projects, for example ADTRAK<sup>52</sup>, Opus<sup>53</sup> and Workways<sup>54</sup>. In some cases, these were seen as 'partner' projects which could be used alongside PaCE to support clients, whereas in others, they were seen as competition. It was said that it is difficult for JCP work coaches and others potentially referring clients to keep abreast of what is available and to remember to refer to PaCE, given the plethora of programmes on offer. Some contributors thought that the CfW triage process should be extended to cover/involve all ESF funded employability

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<sup>51</sup> [Dewis Cymru](#)

<sup>52</sup> An ESF project sponsored by Coleg Menai and targeted at 16-24 year olds who are NEET living outside CF areas. ADTRACK offers the support of Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) workers to address the high levels of depression and anxiety among young people

<sup>53</sup> An ESF funded project sponsored by the North Wales Economic Ambitions Board and targeted at long term unemployed and economically inactive people aged 25+

<sup>54</sup> An ESF project sponsored by a partnership of five local authorities in south west Wales to offer training and paid work experience opportunities to long-term unemployed people

interventions running in a given area, with individuals speaking of the need to 'hide the wiring' and to make it easy for clients to access the form of support most appropriate to them.

- 4.11 There was a broad perception that what sets PaCE apart from these other employability interventions, however, is its focus on childcare and its ability to pay for childcare - 'no-one else has got this money behind them'.
- 4.12 PaCE was developed to complement the DWP's Work and Health Programme<sup>55</sup>, with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) work coaches expected to refer relevant clients to PaCE. PaCE advisers have sought to develop relationships with work coaches and to ensure that the programme remains in work coaches' minds when working with clients. Some advisers make a concerted effort to feedback to work coaches upon progress made and share 'good news stories' about clients referred.

#### **Promotion of PaCE**

- 4.13 The theory of change envisaged that a marketing strategy would be put in place and that this would help direct activities designed to promote PaCE. However, the process evaluation report noted that 'the low-key launch' of the programme and 'limited marketing' had resulted in 'low levels of awareness and some misunderstanding' of PaCE among key partners. The report went on to recommend a step-up in efforts to promote PaCE.
- 4.14 It is still the case that only fairly limited information is made available about PaCE via the Welsh Government's web-site<sup>56</sup> as well as a generic PaCE leaflet<sup>57</sup>. Similarly, limited information about PaCE is accessible via partner organisations' websites e.g. those of the Association of Voluntary Organisations Wales (AVOW), Family Point Cymru, Dewis Cymru and via various local sources.
- 4.15 PaCE advisers have access to pop-up stands for use at events such as family fun days and PaCE posters and leaflets for display in places which parents and children frequent e.g. schools, Flying Start centres, community hubs,

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<sup>55</sup> Which was launched since PaCE came into being

<sup>56</sup> [Parents Childcare and Employment \(PaCE\)](#)

<sup>57</sup> [PaCE: Are childcare costs preventing you from training or working?](#)

partner organisations' premises etc. Advisers are also able to produce their own tailored promotional materials, subject to design guidelines, though there is no specific budget provided for this.

- 4.16 In reality, however, the promotion of PaCE has remained fairly low key and has relied as much on human contact with partners and potential clients as much as it has the use of materials and media. A number of contributors thought that PaCE is insufficiently visible, with several saying that it needs to be better promoted and that more detailed information needs to be made available surrounding who PaCE is targeted at and the services which it offers. In particular, advisers and participants commented that the programme's on-line presence could be strengthened with one adviser capturing the mood of many by commenting that 'people have to know about us to find us ... we're not available on-line so we don't come up in any searches'. Some advisers also called for greater autonomy over local marketing.

#### Case Study: Angharad<sup>58</sup>

Angharad is a mother of three who, prior to having her third child, had worked as a supply teacher. Having experienced a prolonged period away from work as a result of illness, Angharad had lost her confidence and found it difficult to return to work. Angharad was eager to undertake training on becoming self-employed.

Angharad first heard about PaCE via a friend's comment on a local community centre's Facebook page. This led her to 'Google' PaCE but with little success in finding details of services that she might be able to access or who she might contact for further information. She also called her local authority, but staff there were unable to tell her anything about the programme.

Angharad finally managed to find an adviser's contact details by trawling

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<sup>58</sup> Pseudonyms have been used throughout the case studies presented in this report

back through her Facebook updates and contacting the community centre where the adviser was sometimes based. She would not have done this had she not been eager to find some means of funding a course that she was interested in pursuing.

### **Location of PaCE Advisers**

- 4.17 The 2016 process evaluation report pointed to advisers working from a range of locations such as Families First services, Flying Start centres and 'libraries, schools, play groups, or within voluntary service settings'<sup>59</sup>. The report noted, however, that such settings did not provide advisers with access to potential participants in the numbers envisaged at the programme design stage. There were two main reasons for this:
- Flying Start centres tend to be located in communities served by CfW rather than PaCE and people using these facilities, therefore, tend not to be eligible for PaCE
  - the tendency for family centres to be used by 'a relatively static group of parents'<sup>60</sup> and not, therefore, providing access to a flow of potential new clients.
- 4.18 Advisers continue to make use of an array of settings to meet clients, most commonly libraries, community/leisure/learning centres, integrated service centres/hubs, nurseries/play groups and housing associations. Where public facilities of this kind do not exist, advisers also make use of cafes and coffee shops to meet clients, including cafes at community or leisure centres. This sometimes involves advisers buying beverages for clients during meetings, thus putting them out of pocket in order to do their jobs.
- 4.19 Some advisers undertake home visits, with this seen as a practical solution to the logistical challenges of meeting individuals with very young children or those living in more outlying areas where publicly accessible meeting places are few. Almost a fifth (15) of the participants we interviewed said that they

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<sup>59</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p.40

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

had met their advisers in their homes (as well as other places) and individuals commented that this 'made life easier' in that small children could be entertained more easily and that they felt 'more relaxed' and able to engage more fully with advisers. Meeting clients at home was also said to afford advisers a better sense of how their clients live and 'where they are' in terms of their readiness for work. It was argued that gaining this kind of insight early on can save a lot of time and help advisers tailor the support provided to individuals' needs.

- 4.20 Whilst advisers in some areas have a presence at integrated centres/hubs, there was a sense of frustration on the part of PaCE staff and local authority representatives that greater use is not made of such facilities. In part, this was attributed to such centres/hubs being located in areas served by CfW rather than PaCE but was also put down to adviser access being obstructed or delayed by the need to organise a financial contribution towards the cost of 'desk space' at such facilities. Some advisers felt that this had hampered their ability to interact with partners and to integrate PaCE within local family service landscape.
- 4.21 The 2016 process evaluation report referred to 'a deliberate move to avoid locating PaCE Advisers within Jobcentres to emphasise that the PaCE offer is distinct from mainstream welfare provision'<sup>61</sup>. It was clear, however, that advisers continue to make significant use of JCP premises, with a number regarding JCP as their 'bases' or locations for regular diary slots, albeit that they also work from other locations. Over a third (28) of the participants we interviewed said that they met their advisers in JCP premises and generally found these locations convenient, often because JCP offices have/are near parking facilities or because they are within walking distance of participants' homes or their children's schools. Those not claiming Income Support, as well as individuals who had worked in higher level jobs in the past, found JCP offices a less appealing place to meet advisers, with one participant commenting that JCP 'feels awful ... I'm not that person who goes into the

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<sup>61</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p.37

Jobcentre ... I felt uncomfortable going in there ... it's like you're labelled as an unemployed person who needs help'.

- 4.22 There are other advantages to advisers spending time in JCP premises. For example, they are able to access DWP databases and IT facilities to perform administrative tasks more easily, are able to interact with and promote PaCE to work coaches and are also immediately available to be introduced by work coaches to prospective clients visiting JCP offices. Nevertheless, advisers' continued utilisation of JCP premises as their 'bases' was thought by a number of local authority contributors to be preventing them from integrating as fully as they might into local family support networks and, as a consequence, some contributors felt that PaCE is insufficiently visible to partner organisations and to potential clients. It was also thought that advisers may be missing the opportunity to engage with parents not claiming welfare benefits, who are more likely to visit family centres/hubs than they are JCP premises.
- 4.23 Whilst advisers rely more heavily upon JCP premises than was envisaged when the programme was developed, they continue to explore new locations for and approaches to outreach working. Examples include accompanying a library van making scheduled visits to outlying communities, offering a benefits advice service in target communities, working with general practitioners' surgeries and targeting schools in September in order to reach out to parents at a time of change in their, as well as their children's lives.

## **Chapter Summary**

It was intended that PaCE staff would work closely with local authority Family Information Services and other key organisations to promote PaCE and to reach target participants. PaCE managers and advisers have sought to cultivate relationships with family support infrastructures within their areas, though the strength and those relationships and degree of interaction varies from one local authority area to another.

PaCE operates in parallel with CfW and advisers in many areas work closely with CfW colleagues. PaCE also operates alongside a number of regional employability projects and it can be difficult for referral agencies to keep abreast of the different programmes available. PaCE stands alone among employability programmes, however, in that it is the only one focused primarily on childcare.

PaCE was launched in a fairly low-key way and marketing has been limited since then, relying primarily upon adviser contact with partners and potential clients.

PaCE advisers work from a range of community settings, though access to facilities such as Families First or integrated service centres has not been as great as anticipated, leading to a sense of frustration among some that PaCE has not become as well integrated into the local family support landscape as had been expected. They do, nevertheless, continue to explore new locations for and approaches to outreach working.

Advisers make significant use of JCP premises. There are advantages to this in that JCP premises represent convenient locations for some clients, provide advisers with easy access to DWP databases, allow advisers to interact with and promote PaCE to work coaches and to be immediately available to prospective clients visiting JCP offices. However, an over-reliance on JCP premises may also be preventing advisers from integrating as fully as they might into local family support networks and from reaching parents who do not visit JCP.

## 5. Profile of Participants Engaged

### Introduction

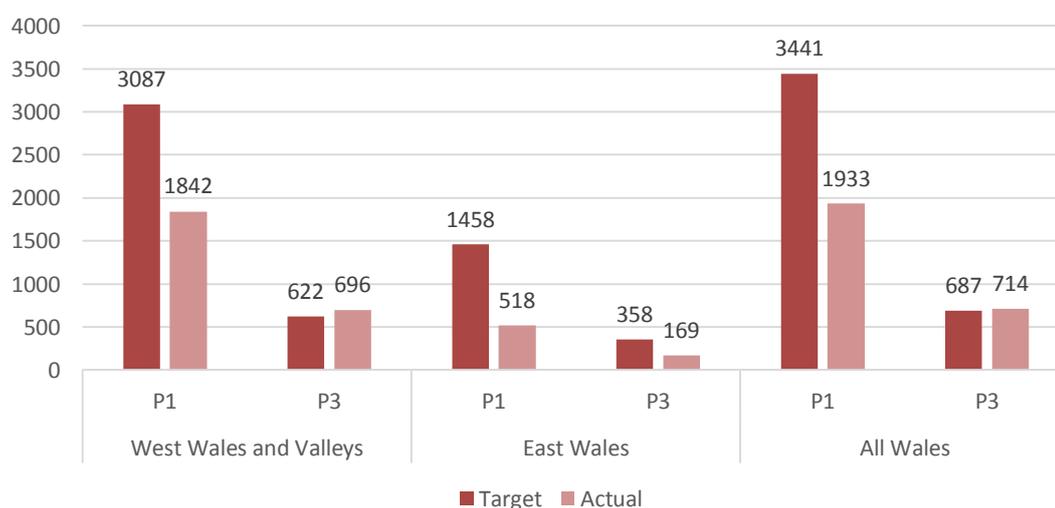
5.1 In this chapter we consider the extent to which PaCE has engaged the participants intended and discuss performance in relation to particular participant groups. This chapter is presented in three sections as follows:

- performance against headline engagement targets
- engagements by area
- engagements by target participant groups/protected characteristics.

### Performance against headline engagement targets

5.2 Figure 5.1 shows the numbers of Priority 1 and Priority 3 participants engaging in PaCE since the programme's inception. Across Wales as a whole, engagements for Priority 1 participants has been somewhat below target, at 56 per cent of the level profiled to July 2018. Priority 1 engagements have been a little stronger in West Wales and the Valleys than in East Wales, at 60 per cent of the level profiled, compared to 36 per cent.

Figure 5.1: Performance to date: engagements



Source: Management Information Summary of PaCE Engagements July 18

5.3 Priority 3 engagements have been more encouraging at 104 per cent of the targets set across the whole of Wales. Again, performance in West Wales and

the Valleys (at 112 per cent of the level profiled) has been stronger than that in East Wales (at 47 per cent of the level profiled).

### **Engagements by local authority area**

- 5.4 The numbers of participants engaged varies considerably from one local authority area to another, reflecting to some extent differences in the points at which the programme was launched and advisers were appointed in different parts of Wales. However, even when allowance is made for the length of time for which advisers have been in post in each area, there are still marked differences in engagement levels between one area and another. Across the whole of Wales, the average number of engagements per adviser month amounted to 2.2 but the average number of engagements per adviser month<sup>62</sup> in West Wales and the Valleys stood at some 2.8 compared to 1.2 in East Wales.
- 5.5 Our fieldwork was not able to establish definitively why these differences exist, but they are likely to be attributable to a number of factors, such as:
- **the quality of the relationships which advisers develop with JCP work coaches.** It was argued in this context that it is easier for advisers (and PaCE) to become known by work coaches at smaller JCP offices and, thus, to pick up more referrals. At the same time, however, smaller JCP offices (e.g. in small towns) typically deal with fewer benefits claimants making it more difficult to gain access to large numbers of candidates suitable for PaCE.
  - **the degree of PaCE's integration with wider family support infrastructures and the quality of advisers' relationships with partner organisations.** Access to appropriate outreach facilitates and contact with colleagues from key partner organisations can be helpful in generating referrals, though generally in smaller numbers than via JCP.
  - **the balance between the time spent by advisers in JCP offices and in outreach locations.** The requirement for benefits claimants to meet with

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<sup>62</sup> Calculated using the date each adviser took up post and the date which individual participants left their posts or the 31 March 2018 (the census date used for the participant database) for those still in posts

work coaches periodically means that advisers are generally able to tap into an ongoing flow of prospective participants via JCP, whereas it can be more difficult to reach similar numbers of eligible individuals via outreach locations where the ‘footfall’ of eligible individuals tends to be lower. Whilst outreach working might afford advisers access to different groups of prospective participants (non-benefits claimants, for example), the time and effort needed to reach individuals in this way is often greater.

- **staff turnover and the consequent discontinuity of relationships with referral agencies.** It was estimated that it takes some three to six months for newly appointed advisers to get to grips with their role and to become established within the communities they serve, even where they take-over from a predecessor. Indeed, it was noted in the minutes of the February 2018 Strategic Board meeting that ‘performance in East Wales has been affected by a period of staff changes’.

5.6 Whilst these factors go some way to explaining variations in the numbers of engagements delivered across different areas, there was also a strong suggestion that differences owe something to the way in which individual advisers work and their ability to ‘connect’ with partners and prospective participants. This element of the study did not explore the approach taken to client engagement by individual advisers in sufficient detail to allow further comment, but this would seem an area that merits further consideration.

### **Engagements by target participant group**

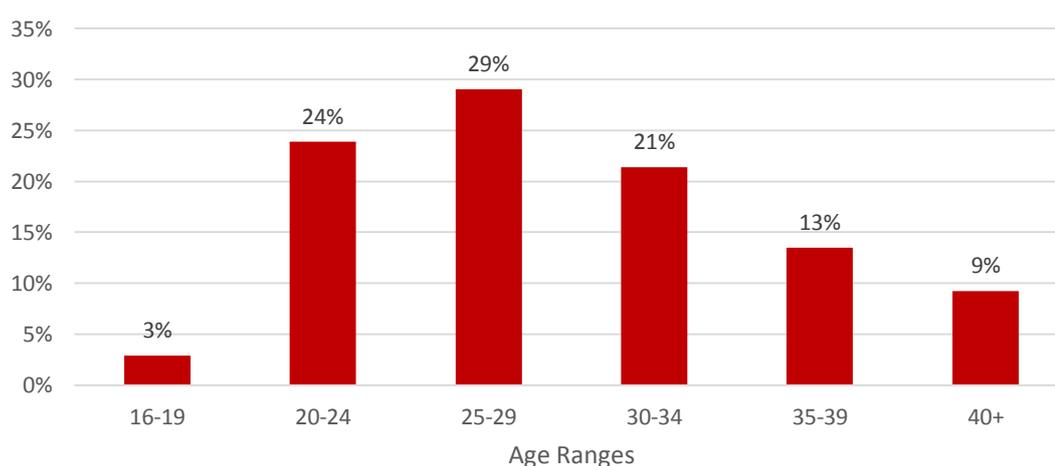
5.7 Beyond the two main groups that PaCE aims to support (people aged 25 and over who are economically inactive or long term unemployed and young people who are NEET), no specific engagement targets were set for particular sub-groups of individuals disadvantaged in the labour market. Whilst we provide a commentary on participation by key demographic groups below, it should be noted that the profile of participants differs somewhat from the population at large in terms of gender and age.

5.8 Almost 96 per cent of participants in PaCE have been female, with women making up almost 95 per cent of Priority 1 and 98 per cent of Priority 3 participants. Women make up a slightly higher proportion of participants in

East Wales, at 97 per cent (or 572) than in West Wales and the Valleys, at 95 per cent (or 2,196). Men aged 25 and over (Priority 1) represented a slightly higher proportion of participants in a handful of areas, but even in these areas their numbers remained modest.

5.9 Figure 5.2 shows the distribution of PaCE participants across different age ranges. Priority 1 participants in West Wales and the Valleys had a slightly younger age profile than their counterparts in East Wales, though the difference was minimal. In contrast, Priority 3 participants in East Wales had a slightly younger age profile than those in West Wales and the Valleys. The majority of participants have been aged 20-34, with an overwhelming majority of Priority 3 participants in both West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales falling into the 20-24 age group.

Figure 5.2: Age distribution of participants



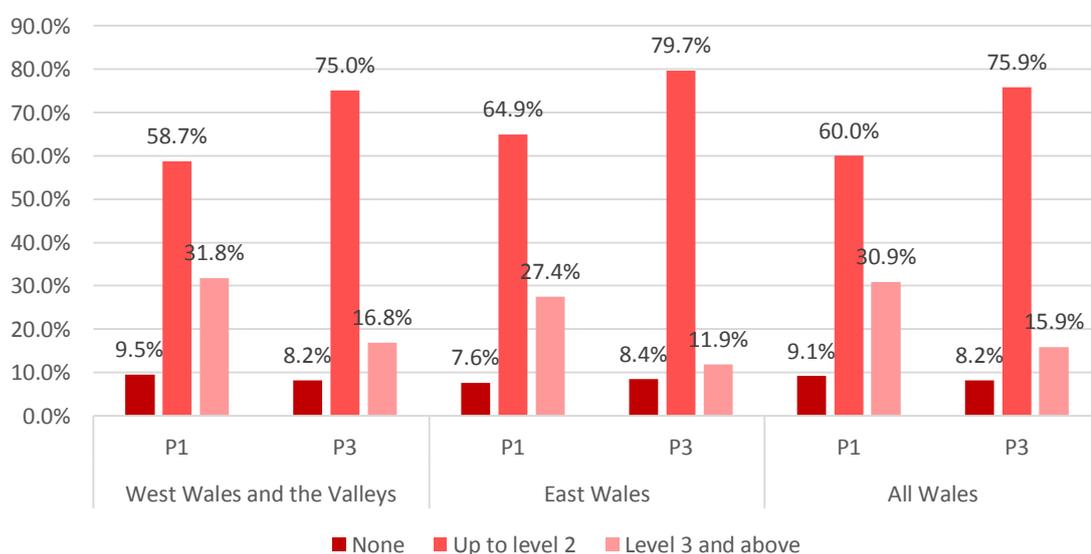
Source: Database of participants to 31 March 2018

5.10 Overall, two per cent of participants were drawn from black and ethnic minority (BME) groups, which is somewhat lower than the five per cent of the Welsh population from a non-white background<sup>63</sup>. The proportion of participants from BME backgrounds was higher in East Wales (at five per cent) than in West Wales and the Valleys (at two per cent), though even in East Wales, the proportion of BME participants was lower than the 8 per cent which make up the region's population as a whole.

<sup>63</sup> Stats Wales, Local Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey: Ethnicity by Welsh local authority, September 2018

- 5.11 A large majority (85 per cent) of participants have been drawn from single adult households, though the proportion falling into this category has been slightly higher across both priorities in East Wales than in West Wales and the Valleys.
- 5.12 Overall, some 12 percent of participants had work limiting health conditions upon joining PaCE, though this proportion was slightly higher among Priority 1 participants (at 14 per cent) than among Priority 3 participants (at 8 per cent). The proportion of participants with work limiting health conditions is higher in both regions than it is across the general population (at 3.4 per cent<sup>64</sup>).
- 5.13 Figure 5.3 below shows the proportion of Priority 1 and Priority 3 participants holding qualifications above and up to level 2<sup>65</sup> upon entry onto PaCE. It shows that 69 per cent of Priority 1 participants and 84 per cent of Priority 3 participants held no qualifications above level 2 and would, therefore, be deemed to have low skills according to the definition adopted for PaCE<sup>66</sup>. Across both priorities, a slightly greater proportion of participants in East Wales than in West Wales and the Valleys fell into this category.

Figure 5.3: Participants by highest level of qualification held upon entry



Source: Database of participants to 31 March 2018

<sup>64</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, Numbers of people with disabilities, using 'work limiting disabled only'

<sup>65</sup> Level 2 qualifications are equivalent to four or five GCSEs at grades A\*-C

<sup>66</sup> The Operational Guidance states that 'a person with low skills would not have a qualification over Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW) level 2', p.19

5.14 Overall, 17 per cent of participants engaging with PaCE speak Welsh, though this proportion ranges from 20 per cent across West Wales and the Valleys to seven per cent in East Wales. At a more local level, the proportion of participants who speak Welsh rises as high as 76 per cent in Gwynedd and 68 per cent in the Isle of Anglesey and drops to two per cent in Torfaen and zero in Newport.

### **Chapter Summary**

Fewer individuals aged 25 and over than had been expected have engaged with PaCE, though slightly more individuals aged 16-24 have done so.

Engagements across both age groups have been a little stronger in West Wales and the Valleys than in East Wales.

The numbers of participants engaged varies considerably from one local authority area to another. Our fieldwork would suggest that this is attributable to a number of factors such as: the quality of advisers' relationships with JCP work coaches; PaCE's integration with wider family support infrastructures; the balance between the time spent by advisers in JCP offices and outreach locations, staff turnover; and the way in which individual advisers work and their ability to connect with partners and prospective participants.

Whilst no engagement targets were set beyond those for people aged 25 and over and those aged 16-24 it is notable that:

- the overwhelming majority of participants have been women
- the majority of participants have been aged 20-34
- a disproportionately low number of participants have been drawn from black and ethnic minority groups
- a large majority of participants have been drawn from single adult households
- a higher proportion of participants than the general population have had work limiting health conditions
- the overwhelming majority of participants hold no qualifications above level 2
- Welsh speakers represent a greater proportion of participants in some areas than others.

## 6. Participant Barriers and Motivations

### Introduction

6.1 In this chapter we consider the factors that hold parents back from entering employment as well as things that motivate individuals to engage with PaCE and seek to move closer to work. This chapter is intended to set the scene for our discussion of the support provided to participants in chapter seven. It is presented in two sections as follows:

- barriers faced by participants
- participant motivation.

### Barriers faced by participants

6.2 The theory of change identifies a number of contextual or structural factors that may influence parents' engagement with the labour market.

#### *Childcare*

6.3 Key among these was a lack of good quality, affordable childcare within communities<sup>67</sup> and the PaCE programme was designed specifically to 'provide individual support to out of work parents who consider childcare to be their main barrier to accessing employment and training opportunities'<sup>68</sup>.

6.4 On this basis, the programme design assumes that all PaCE participants face some challenges in finding and using childcare that will allow them to work or undertake training. However, our fieldwork would suggest that the nature and magnitude of childcare related challenges differ from one individual to another.

6.5 For some, finding childcare that meets their needs can be difficult. Whilst advisers and local authority representatives thought that childcare is available and accessible in most parts of Wales, it was acknowledged that provision is sparser in some areas than others, with less populous, rural areas tending to be less well served. This very much chimes with the findings of the Welsh Government's 2017 review Childcare Capacity in Wales. Even within more

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<sup>67</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p. 27

<sup>68</sup> Operational Guidance, p.5

populous areas gaps exist, however, most commonly in terms of extended hours provision, which is particularly important for parents looking to work in sectors such as care and retail which often entail evening or weekend working. Contributors also spoke of gaps in Welsh medium childcare provision and in provision during school holiday periods, in sessional care (which can be important for participants wishing to undertake training at fairly short notice) and in care for children with additional needs. Participants interviewed who were reliant on public transport also spoke of difficulties in finding childcare within reach of their homes that also offered the hours of care necessary to allow them to travel to and from work by bus or train.

- 6.6 It is not necessarily the availability of childcare (or lack of it) that makes it difficult for parents to use childcare, however, but a lack of awareness and understanding of what childcare provision is available, what it is like, what it entails or how to go about finding out about childcare options. Parents are confounded by the logistical complexities of finding out about and arranging, for example, wraparound care for children at nursery or school. These logistical difficulties are compounded when trying to arrange care for more than one child (particularly children of different ages), for children with additional needs or childcare outside normal office hours.
- 6.7 The affordability of childcare was highlighted as an issue by some, particularly where care is required for more than one child. As one participant put it when referring to a previous job, 'the day nursery was too expensive for the two of them ... after the top-up I had to pay myself, I ended up working for an extra £20 a week'. The affordability issue was compounded in some areas by providers asking for the 'up-front' payment of fees for as many as six weeks or a term.

### Case study: Becky

Becky is a 32 year old married mother of two children, one of whom has ADHD and the other of whom has long-term health issues that require ongoing treatment. Becky has a post-graduate qualification and has worked most of her adult life until being made redundant some six months before becoming involved with PaCE.

Following a period out of work, Becky found a post that offered the prospect of professional progression over time. To allow her to work, she planned to use an afterschool club to look after her older child and found a nursery which could accommodate her younger child despite his health issues.

However, the nursery required payment of the first month's fees in advance. Becky simply did not have the money to meet these costs before she started to earn a wage and this would have prevented her from taking the job had PaCE support not been available.

- 6.8 However, several advisers said that it is individuals' perceptions that formal childcare is expensive and unaffordable (rather than the reality of the situation) that prevents many parents from using such services. It was argued that childcare is far more affordable than parents imagine, given support on offer via PaCE and the Childcare Offer, as well as the Child Tax Credit. As one adviser put it, parents 'don't realise the costs involved ... don't know that they can get help ... the main problem is they don't know where to start'.
- 6.9 Given these complexities, it is not surprising that many parents are 'overwhelmed' by the prospect of finding childcare to allow them to look for work.
- 6.10 Alongside the availability or affordability of childcare, the theory of change identified 'individual-level constraints' relating to the use of formal childcare. It recognised that some parents make a conscious choice to focus on caregiving responsibilities, with the decision to stay at home accepted as part and parcel

of being a good parent. The theory of change highlighted that stay at home parents' attitudes towards work were often positive, with individuals perceiving that it is important to work because of the personal benefits it provides and the positive example it sets to children<sup>69</sup>. In such cases it was argued that the key decision for parents is 'when, rather than if' it is appropriate to return to work<sup>70</sup>.

- 6.11 Indeed, some 45 per cent of the participants (36) we interviewed said that at the time of joining PaCE, they had been considering looking for work, but were not actively doing so. A number of the participants we interviewed were candid that they wanted 'to be a full-time mum', at least until their youngest child started school or got to a particular age/level of self-reliance.

#### Case study: Clarice

Clarice is a single mother of two. She has a degree and has worked in associate professional roles in the past.

Clarice decided to become a 'stay at home mum' when her first child was born. She felt that this was the right thing to do and was able to make this choice as her husband earned 'just about enough' to keep the family afloat.

Clarice had always envisaged that she would return to work once her children were settled into school and were 'a bit more independent'. She saw herself as 'someone who worked' and who would, at the appropriate time, contribute to the household budget. She also believed that it is important to instil a strong work ethic into her children, leading by example.

- 6.12 A small number of parents were mistrusting of formal childcare, with advisers referring to individuals having 'separation issues' or being reluctant to leave their children in the care of others, though there was no suggestion that these parents were unwilling for their children to start school when the time came.

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<sup>69</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, p. 26

<sup>70</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project, citing Bashir et al. (2011) *Families and work: Revisiting barriers to employment*, Department for Work and Pensions.

6.13 However, our fieldwork would suggest that childcare related issues are rarely the only barriers to work faced by PaCE participants. The theory of change pointed to other ‘individual led’ factors which our fieldwork confirmed as key barriers to employment, including a lack of qualifications, skills or work experience.

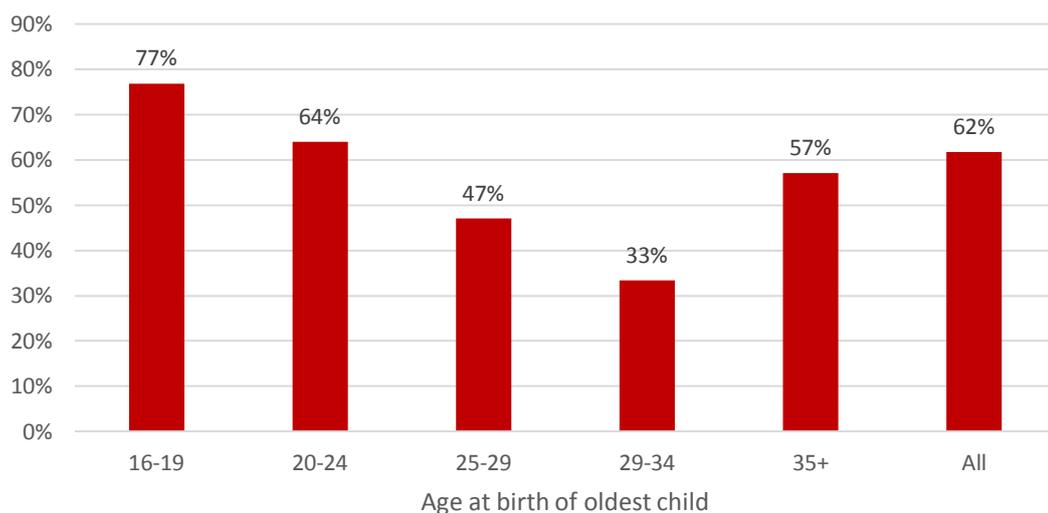
*Qualifications and skills*

6.14 As previously noted, 73 per cent of all PaCE participants held no qualifications above level 2 upon joining the programme. As shown in Figure 6.1, some 62 per cent (50) of the participants we interviewed fell into this category, with those who had their children at a younger age even less likely to hold qualifications above level 2 upon joining PaCE.

6.15 Even where participants held qualifications above level 2, these were sometimes out of date or unrelated to fields in which participants now wished to work.

6.16 A number of the participants we interviewed aspired to ‘change direction’, often in order to fit work around their children’s needs, to increase their earnings potential or to fulfil ambitions not previously realised.

Figure 6.1: % participants interviewed with no qualifications above level 2 by age at birth of first child



Source: Database of participants interviewed

- 6.17 A lack of basic or work related skills (rather than qualifications per se) was also seen as a barrier for many, as was a lack of job-search and interview skills.
- 6.18 Allied to this, many of the participants we interviewed lacked recent work experience and had weak or non-existent curricula vitae as a result. Some 68 per cent of those interviewed (55) had not worked in the last two years and 33 per cent (27) had not done so in the last five years. Only four of the participants we interviewed had never worked, but several others had only held weekend or seasonal jobs whilst in full time education prior to becoming parents. This suggests that PaCE is reaching those furthest from the labour market.
- 6.19 The majority of the participants interviewed had previously undertaken fairly elementary jobs, with 37 per cent (30) having worked in caring, leisure and other service occupations and 32 per cent (26) in sales and customer service occupations. Only 12 per cent (10) had worked in professional or in skilled trades occupations or as managers, directors or senior officials.
- 6.20 A lack of qualifications, skills and work experience were often interrelated and were also often linked to a lack of self-confidence and self-belief.

#### Case Study – Delyth

Delyth is a 30 year old mother of one. She left school early with no qualifications and worked as a domestic/kitchen assistant for a short time as a teenager. Since then she has done some casual bar work but has mostly been inactive.

Delyth struggles with anxiety and has occasional panic attacks. She also has 'confidence issues in large groups' and, therefore, saw the prospect of attending college to gain some qualifications as something utterly daunting, even though she recognised that she would need qualifications to move on in life.

- 6.21 Advisers pointed to the prevalence of low-level mental health issues affecting participants' motivation and ability to work. Several of the participants we interviewed also spoke of struggling with 'anxiety' and 'depression'. In some cases, mental health issues were said to be associated with a history of abusive relationships and an absence of a supportive family or social network.
- 6.22 A source of anxiety for several participants was the fear of losing out financially as a result of coming off benefits. This was particularly the case for single parents who have sole responsibility for providing for their children. A number of the participants to whom we spoke said that they struggled to understand in-work benefits and how they can transition between out-of-work and in-work benefits without compromising their families' financial stability. As one participant put it, 'I've got a small person at home ... I know where I am on Income Support ... it feels safe'.

*Other factors*

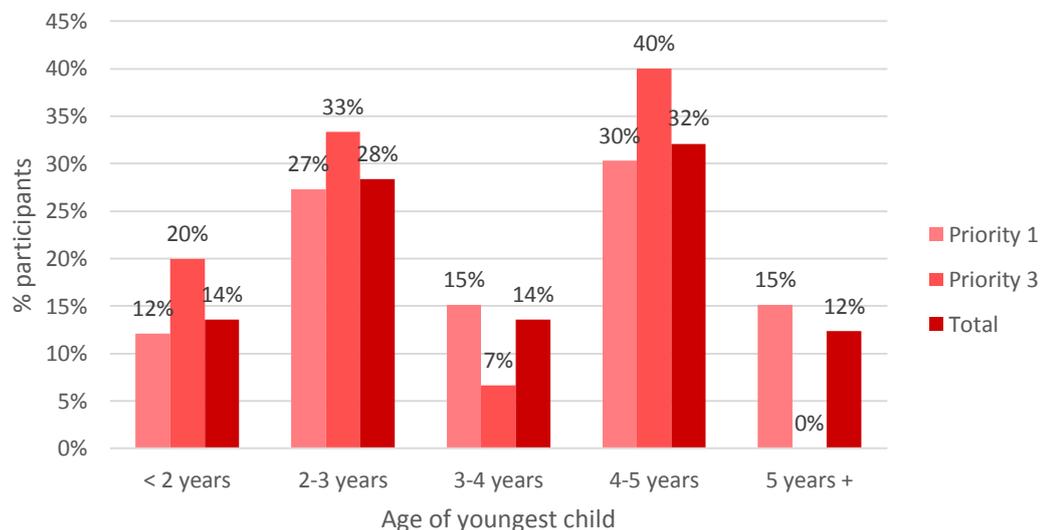
- 6.23 The theory of change pointed to broader contextual or structural factors that can affect individuals' engagement with the labour market. Again, these were echoed during our fieldwork. For example, advisers spoke of a lack of reasonably paid job opportunities in some areas and argued that this discourages people from thinking about moving into work. They also pointed to travel difficulties, especially in rural areas where public transport is limited. It was also argued that the cost of travelling to and from work, via a childcare setting, needs to be off-set against any increase in income as a result of moving into work.
- 6.24 Thus, accessing affordable childcare was undoubtedly seen as a barrier by the participants interviewed but it was rarely the only factor standing in the way of individuals moving into employment. Many participants faced a number of often interrelated issues, which conspired to overwhelm individuals' ambitions.

## **Participant motivation**

- 6.25 It was clear from our discussions with advisers and participants alike that each individual's motivation for participating in PaCE differed, but many have a genuine desire to find work, driven by a number of factors, some of which were also identified in the theory of change:
- to be a good example or role model for their children
  - to be better off financially
  - to gain a greater sense of purpose and self-worth
  - to get out of the house and do something other than looking after children.
- 6.26 Advisers regarded the point at which Income Support claimants' youngest child turns five as a catalyst for their thinking about looking for work for two main reasons:
- As previously discussed, but worth repeating here nevertheless, the DWP seeks to move parents claiming Income Support onto Jobseeker's Allowance when their youngest child turns five. Advisers perceived that many parents 'jump before they're pushed', with some contacting advisers when changes to their benefits are imminent and they reach 'panic stations'. A few advisers also said that the roll-out of the Universal Credit in their areas had led to an increase in parents looking for help.
  - Individuals seeing their youngest child moving into full time education as an opportunity to do something positive themselves. The logistical challenges of working were regarded as being fewer once their children were in school, thus making work a more realistic proposition. In this context, several advisers noted that September can be a good time to target parents.
- 6.27 Advisers also spoke of the parents of younger children looking to train or re-train before their children reach school age so that they are equipped with the skills and/or qualifications needed to secure work once their children start school. It was noted that a number of parents join PaCE wishing to become teaching assistants, perceiving this as a job that they can fit in around their children.

6.28 Figure 6.2 shows that the time at which their youngest child is aged four to five is the point at which the highest percentage of participants we interviewed became involved with PaCE, though an almost equal proportion became involved when their youngest child was aged two to three. This would seem to confirm advisers' belief that the prospect of being moved onto Jobseeker's Allowance spurs some parents into looking for work, but also possibly suggests that children qualifying for 10 hours Foundation Phase entitlement<sup>71</sup> at two years of age might motivate some Income Support claimants to think about employment.

Figure 6.2: Age of youngest child when participants interviewed became involved with PaCE



Source: Database of participants interviewed

6.29 Rather more negatively, advisers felt that some individuals become involved with PaCE in order 'to keep work coaches happy'. Such individuals typically engaged in a half-hearted way, failing to turn up for meetings and failing to respond to communications before being exited from the programme by their advisers. Advisers felt that they had become more adept at recognising individuals who are not serious about moving into work, but such individuals do still sometimes find their way onto PaCE, only to disengage after a short time

<sup>71</sup> Which forms part of the Childcare Offer

6.30 It was thought that participants are attracted to PaCE by the level of support on offer to them and particularly to the level of support available to meet childcare costs.

## Chapter Summary

A number of contextual or structural factors influence parents' engagement with the labour market. These fall into three main categories: childcare; qualifications and skills; and factors such as a lack of reasonably paid job opportunities within reasonable travel distances.

Childcare related barriers include:

- difficulty in sourcing appropriate childcare:
- childcare is not uniformly available across Wales
- it can be difficult to find childcare outside standard working hours (e.g. in the evenings or at weekends)
- it can be difficult to find Welsh medium childcare
- it can be difficult to find care for children with additional needs
- poor awareness and understanding of childcare options
- the logistical challenges of arranging childcare to tie in with work commitments, particularly for more than one child or for children with additional needs
- a perception that that childcare is expensive and a lack of awareness of the support available
- individuals' choice to be stay at home parents even though they believe that it will be important that they return to work once their children reach a certain point.

Qualifications/skills related barriers include:

- a lack of qualifications or of relevant recent qualifications
- a lack of work-related skills
- a lack of recent work experience/a track record of working.

Participants' motivation for engaging with PaCE differ from one individual to another, but many have a genuine desire to find work. The points at which individuals' youngest child turns three and five appear to be catalysts for some joining PaCE, either to prepare for or to start looking for work.

## 7. Participant Journey

### Introduction

7.1 In this chapter we explore participants' experiences of participating in PaCE, including the way in which they come into contact with the programme and the different forms of support they receive. In presenting this chapter, we touch upon activities and outputs aspects of the theory of change. The chapter is presented in three main sections as follows:

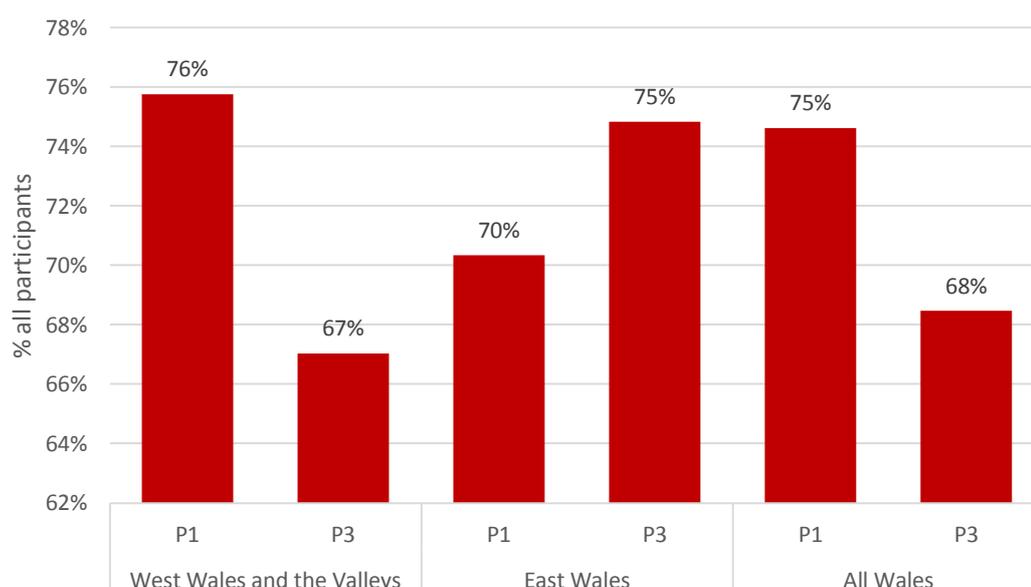
- Referral sources
- Adviser support:
  - Diagnostic assessment
  - Action planning
  - Better off calculations
  - Mentoring and coaching
  - In-work support
- Employability interventions:
  - Training
  - Volunteering and work experience
  - Barriers fund
  - Childcare support

### Referral sources

7.2 Figure 7.1 shows the routes by which participants came to be involved in PaCE. A majority of participants (73 per cent) were referred to PaCE by JCP, though this proportion varied from 75 per cent among Priority 1 to 68 per cent among Priority 3 participants. The profiles of referrals also differed across West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales, with JCP appearing to play a more important role in referring Priority 1 participants in West Wales and the Valleys and a greater role in referring Priority 3 participants in East Wales.

7.3 A slightly lower proportion of the participants interviewed during our fieldwork had been referred by JCP (at 70 per cent). The remaining 30 per cent of participants either referred themselves or were referred by a range of sources such as family centres, Flying Start, Integrated Children's Centres (ICCs), health visitors and, FIS teams and a range of other organisations.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of participants engaged referred by JCP



Source: Database of participants to 31 March 2018

- 7.4 Our fieldwork suggests that participants referred by JCP were generally referred by their work coaches or less commonly, through participation in group sessions organised at JCP offices for parents. Some advisers also actively trawl DWP databases to identify parents coming up for Income Support reviews and leave notes for work coaches to inform their clients about PaCE. As already noted, advisers put some effort into maintaining good relationships with work coaches and reminding them of PaCE as an option to support their clients.
- 7.5 In this context, it was noted by several advisers that they will not have access to Universal Credit claimant records in the way they have hitherto been able to access records for Income Support claimants. This will clearly have implications for advisers' ability to identify prospective participants.
- 7.6 Some 91 per cent (43) of the participants interviewed who had children aged four to five years upon joining PaCE were referred to the programme by JCP. This would seem to reinforce advisers' argument that the point at which the DWP generally seeks to move single parent Income Support claimants onto Jobseeker's Allowance represents an important watershed for individuals and a point at which they are more susceptible to interventions such as PaCE.

- 7.7 A number of advisers felt that over time, other sources of referral have become more prominent, albeit that the majority of engagements still originate from JCP<sup>72</sup>. A wide range of alternative sources were identified, including Flying Start, family centres/hubs, health visitors, domestic violence teams, housing associations and various third sector organisations. Referrals from such sources were associated with advisers having a regular presence in specific locations, thus building the programme's visibility in the community: the words 'momentum', 'presence' and 'embeddedness' were used by contributors in this regard.
- 7.8 Analysis of the programme participant database would suggest that a greater proportion of individuals living in single adult households (generally Income Support claimants) than those living in households with two or more adults had been referred to PaCE by JCP. Again, this ties in with JCP work coaches referring participants to PaCE when they attended periodic reviews. By the same token, a greater proportion of those living in households of two or more adults (who are less likely to be benefits claimants and to come into contact with JCP) had been referred by other sources or had referred themselves. It is arguable that this group is more difficult for PaCE to reach by virtue of not being on JCP's radar. Indeed, one adviser noted that individuals not in receipt of benefits tend not to realise that they are eligible for support.
- 7.9 Not all of those referred by JCP or other agencies engage with PaCE. For some individuals, it is simply not the right time to start thinking about work, though some who fail to engage when they first come into contact with advisers do so some months later 'when they've had time to think about it'.

### **Adviser support**

- 7.10 It was clear from our discussions with delivery managers, advisers and participants that no two advisers work in exactly the same way. The approach taken by each adviser depends on their own personal experience and preferences as well as the needs and motivations of clients. There were even differences in the ways individual advisers serving the same local authority area and line managed by the same delivery manager operated.

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<sup>72</sup> Though the PaCE participant database would suggest little change in the proportion of participants being referred from JCP or other sources quarter on quarter since the programme's launch

7.11 Having said this, however, the differences lie in the emphasis put upon separate aspects of the PaCE service rather than anything more fundamental. In the paragraphs that follow, we discuss the way in which different elements of the adviser service is delivered.

*Diagnostic assessment*

7.12 Advisers' initial meeting with clients generally involve checking individuals' eligibility and suitability for PaCE, explaining to them what PaCE is about and how the programme works. A small number of advisers refer to DWP databases to 'pre-screen' clients before meeting them in order to ensure that they are eligible for PaCE and to forearm themselves with key information about participants' benefits status and income levels.

7.13 During the initial meeting, advisers start the on-going process of getting to know participants, understanding their circumstances and ambitions and getting a sense of the things that hold them back from working. There is a strong emphasis during the early stages of engagement upon developing a positive relationship with participants and upon building trust. This is a process which continues throughout individual clients' journeys through PaCE, with previously undeclared barriers to work sometimes surfacing after a period of working with an adviser, as clients' trust in advisers grows.

7.14 It was clear from our fieldwork that advisers are careful to emphasise the voluntary nature of PaCE and to put choice and control firmly in the hands of participants, starting discussions with questions such as 'what do you want to do?' The overwhelming majority of the participants we interviewed were clear that PaCE is a voluntary programme and that they were under no compulsion to participate, albeit that some may not have been entirely clear when they were first referred to PaCE.

7.15 That is not to say that advisers do not challenge participants, however. Advisers emphasised the importance of managing participants' expectations during the early stages of engagement and tempering sometimes unrealistic ambitions 'without completely bursting their bubbles'. At the same time, it was clear that advisers had inspired some of the participants interviewed to be

more ambitious, to think beyond their immediate futures and to engage in training that they would not have considered for themselves.

- 7.16 Advisers spoke of the need to be honest with clients that managing childcare responsibilities alongside work commitments can be hard, especially for single parents. At the same time, advisers pointed to the importance of ‘selling the benefits of work’, both to participants themselves and to their children.

#### *Action planning*

- 7.17 The PaCE Business plan states that ‘an action plan with agreed timescales for activities would be agreed, according to the individual needs and circumstances of each parent’<sup>73</sup> and the Operational Guidance refers to ‘agree[ing] Individual Personalised action plans: to provide direction and structure’<sup>74</sup>. The Operational Guidance also refers to using ‘the Participant Portfolio to record discussions and agreed actions with the participant’<sup>75</sup>. In reality, however, the process of exploring and agreeing a way forward between advisers and participants happens in a far more emergent and incremental way than the term ‘action planning’ might suggest. Whilst participants’ longer-term goals might be discussed, it is generally small steps that are agreed from one meeting to the next and portfolios are more a record of an evolving dialogue rather than ‘action plans’ setting out a start and finish point and steps to be taken along the way.
- 7.18 Not all participants interviewed were conscious of having developed an action plan with their adviser and it was clear that some individuals’ goals only emerged after working for some time with advisers or after taking part in activities suggested by advisers. Whilst the idea of an action plan meant nothing to many interviewees, a number felt clearer about where they were going as a result of working with their advisers. As one individual put it, ‘it’s good to have someone there to help ... to be able to say it our loud ... to plan together ... [adviser] was someone to talk to ... to sit down with and discuss next steps ... seeing it written down gave me something to hold on to’.
- Another said, ‘since I became involved with PaCE I feel as though I have a

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<sup>73</sup> See for example, PaCE WWV P1 Business Plan, p.40

<sup>74</sup> PaCE Operational Guidance V2, May 2016, p.6

<sup>75</sup> PaCE Operational Guidance V2, May 2016, p.15

plan ... I see that now and I want to do something with my life'. Other individuals spoke of advisers helping them to 'break down' the journeys they might take into workable steps, thus 'taking the edge off' their worries and allowing them to see a way forward.

- 7.19 At a rather more functional level, one individual commented that she would have found it useful to have been given a written list of things to do after each meeting so that she could be clear about the tasks she needed to undertake. It was suggested that such a list could usefully be e-mailed to participants immediately following meetings with advisers.
- 7.20 As previously noted, some advisers seek to update JCP work coaches on the activities being undertaken/progress being made by their mutual clients. However, this was not universally the case and a few participants had been surprised at how little interaction there was between their advisers and work coaches, with one noting that she had to explain to her work coach what she had been doing with her adviser.
- 7.21 Having to write up notes of discussions with participants manually in paper portfolios was a source of frustration to many advisers, though it was generally understood that this requirement emanated from PaCE being partly funded by ESF. Several called for the introduction of e-portfolios and it would seem that this might also make communicating with both participants and JCP work coaches easier.

#### *Better off Calculations*

- 7.22 The Better off Calculation (BOC) represent an important weapon in advisers' armoury, though individual advisers undertake BOCs at different points along clients' journeys through PaCE. Some prepare preliminary personalised BOCs before they meet clients in order to get the message across when they first meet that the individuals concerned are likely to be better off in work. Other advisers share illustrative BOCs with participants showing them estimates of how much better off they might be working say, 16, 24 or 32 hours a week on the national minimum wage. Advisers noted that some clients are 'stunned' at how much better off they could be and it was argued that doing BOCs early on

in participants' journeys can be quite persuasive and impact positively upon their level of engagement with the programme.

#### Case Study – Ellie

Ellie is a single mother with a two year old child. She had worked in the hospitality sector in the past.

Ellie wanted to go back to work but was 'worried about how the money would work ... I was thinking, when I go back to work everything would stop ... all benefits would stop ... I was really panicking about it'. The adviser undertook a BOC with Ellie and that provided her with the reassurance she needed to start looking in earnest for work – '[adviser] went through that with me... that was good ... so I know that I would be better off'.

- 7.23 BOCs are possibly less persuasive in the case of participants not in receipt of benefits. Indeed, BOCs had shown some participants that they would be no better off in work having paid childcare costs.
- 7.24 Whilst BOCs tend to be a feature of early stage meetings between most advisers and their clients, this is not universally the case, with some BOCs being undertaken later in participants' journeys. Even where personalised BOCs are not undertaken during the first few sessions, financial aspects of participants' lives feature prominently in discussions between advisers and participants, with individuals keen to ensure that they do nothing that will compromise their financial security and that of their children. In some cases, advisers find themselves helping clients to deal with benefits related or other financial issues before individuals are able to engage meaningfully with PaCE.

#### Case study - Ffion

Ffion is a single mother of a two year old child. Beyond undertaking a couple of work placements shortly after leaving school, she had never worked. Ffion struggles with depression and anxiety and had little belief in her own ability to find work. The support and encouragement received from her adviser was

important in giving Ffion the confidence to take steps towards work.

When Ffion found a job, her adviser talked her through the process of applying for Working Tax Credit in place of Income Support. Ffion herself knew nothing about tax credits before that and had been worried about how she could meet the costs of childcare. Her adviser had also guided her through the process of transitioning her Housing Benefit entitlement as she moved into work.

This help, along with other support provided by the adviser, had moved Ffion to a position where she could move into work with confidence.

- 7.25 Some advisers gather information about their finances from participants and take it away to run BOCs 'off-line' before returning to the client with the completed calculations. This seemed to happen for two reasons: first, internet connections are poor in some areas which means that the on-line BOC tool cannot easily be used and, second, some advisers did not feel entirely confident in giving clients information worked out there and then, without having time to consider and check things. Some advisers also liaise with DWP colleagues to ensure that the information they give on working tax credits is correct. To some extent, this reflects individual advisers' experience and knowledge of the benefits system and of using BOC tools.
- 7.26 Advisers saw BOCs as a big help in showing clients how childcare costs will be more than offset by the funded Childcare Offer and the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. This is key in reassuring participants that it is 'safe' to make the transition into work and that they will indeed be better off financially as a result of doing so. As one adviser put it, 'I tell them what's going to happen ... that they'll be ok when they start work'.

#### *Mentoring and coaching*

- 7.27 The process of getting to know individuals and of starting the journey towards work often starts with advisers helping participants to create new or refine existing curricula vitae (CVs). Many participants turn up with old CVs but have little ownership of the content. Focusing on developing CVs enables advisers

to find out more about clients' experience, skills, work histories and qualifications and this provides the basis for discussing possibilities for the future. Providing participants with reassurance that they can find and hold down a job forms an important aspect of the on-going dialogue involved in developing or refining CVs.

- 7.28 Practices differ between advisers and between the clients with whom individual advisers are working. Some ask participants to complete a CV template for the adviser to review, whilst others essentially come up with draft CVs (based on conversations held) for clients to edit. This seemed to reflect individual advisers' styles of working as well as client need. Whilst the situation differs from one client to the next, advisers noted that it can take several sessions to come up with a CV with which the individual feels comfortable.
- 7.29 Developing participants' CVs is often undertaken alongside looking and applying for job opportunities. Again, practices vary, but this usually involves introducing participants to job search sites, helping them set up a 'Find a job'<sup>76</sup> account, encouraging them to use Jobclubs, helping participants to draft covering letters and preparing participants for interviews. Participants valued the 'hands-on' practical support received from advisers in this regard rather than simply being told about job search sites or told to apply for jobs.

#### Case study – Gwyneth

Gwyneth is a mother of two. She previously worked in the care and retail sectors but had not worked since the birth of her second child some five years ago. She had been thinking about returning to work when she first met the PaCE adviser but had not been actively looking for work.

Gwyneth and her adviser discussed Gwyneth's work history and the kinds of jobs in which she might be interested. The adviser then helped Gwyneth to pull together a CV and to get registered with job-search sites. Gwyneth said 'she went out of her way to help me ... like I don't know how to do a CV ... I'm like 35 and I

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<sup>76</sup> The 'Find a job' has replaced Universal Jobmatch since PaCE was launched

don't know how to do my CV and she helped me from start to finish ... she logged me onto like job sites and everything like that ... she was really quite helpful ... she phoned every week, to see how I was getting on'. Gwyneth went on to say that the support received from the adviser was 'a million times better than I was getting from the Job Centre ... when it was just that, no one ever phoned me ... it was just "you've got an appointment" ... a quick five minute appointment, then out of the door'.

- 7.30 Indeed, like Gwyneth, a number of participants contrasted their experience of working with PaCE advisers to that of working with JCP work coaches. The time that advisers have to spend with participants and the voluntary nature of participation were seen as key strengths of PaCE in that it allows more open and equal relationships to develop between participants and advisers than exist between work coaches and their clients. Several participants said that they felt more comfortable talking to advisers about a range of issues and not simply things to do with finding work, and this enables advisers to develop a deeper understanding of participants' situations and to provide a more personalised level of support than JCP work coaches are able to offer.
- 7.31 A number of participants commented that they were given time to develop at a pace that suited them rather than being forced into anything before they were ready. Nevertheless, advisers noted that some participants 'go to ground' whilst they deal with 'life events' or 'think about things'. Some re-engage with the programme after a few weeks or months, in a better position to move forward by then, having had time to reflect upon their options. For this reason, advisers are sometimes reluctant to exit participants who appear to have disengaged from the process.

#### Case Study – Helen

Helen is a mother of four, including five year old twins. Prior to the birth of her twins, Helen had worked in an 'associate professional' role for several years. Following the birth of the twins (one of whom has on-going health problems), Helen suffered from post-natal depression and subsequently separated from the children's father. She got into debt, 'lost [her] house, car,

everything ... it all went tits up’.

Helen joined PaCE at the suggestion of a JCP work coach but had no clear idea of moving into work at that point. She was aware, however, that she would be moved from Income Support onto JSA when the twins turned five and realised that she needed to do something.

Having discussed her previous experience and what she might like to do in the future with the adviser, Helen applied for a job in a field closely related to the work she had previously done. Given her previous experience, she had thought that she would be a shoo-in for the job and was, therefore, ‘devastated’ when she failed even to be invited for an interview. At this point, Helen withdrew into her shell and stopped engaging with her adviser. Although the adviser sought to contact her via text and phone several times Helen was candid that she had ‘been a difficult one ... I switched off to it all ... I couldn’t cope with the thought of going back to work ... my mind was all higgledy piggeldy’.

The adviser continued to try to make contact and Helen eventually decided to re-engage. She found it remarkable that the adviser ‘doesn’t give up on you ... she really tries to help’. The adviser remained uncertain whether Helen was really ready to engage fully with PaCE even at that point, however.

- 7.32 The level and intensity of mentoring support received by the participants interviewed varied, depending upon each individual’s needs and ability to engage. For some, PaCE represented a fairly short intervention that gave them the ‘leg up’ they needed to move on. Others received higher levels of mentoring support (information, guidance, reassurance and encouragement) over a longer period. Some participants spoke of ‘becoming more confident’ and feeling ‘stronger’ and needing less help from advisers as time went on whilst others became demoralised when job applications were unsuccessful and looked to their advisers for reassurance and on-going encouragement.

- 7.33 The frequency of meetings with advisers also varied from one participant to another. Very often, however, meetings between advisers and participants had to be rearranged at short notice, sometimes because participants or their children were unwell, sometimes because participants were overtaken by events and sometimes because participants simply 'forgot'. This was clearly a source of frustration and of some redundant time for advisers, though some booked more appointments in a day than they could realistically handle in the knowledge that not every participant would turn up.
- 7.34 Some advisers sent text messages to clients either the day before or on the day to remind them of appointments. Messaging by text, e-mail and phone was also key to maintain contact with participants between meetings, both in terms of sending information to participants and of checking how participants were getting on and reminding them that support was available should they need it.
- 7.35 Advisers in one area organised 'parent groups', bringing PaCE participants together. As well as giving participants the opportunity to meet and chat to people in the same boat as themselves, representatives of family services teams or local schools attended some meetings, thus allowing parents to find out more about the kind of support available and options open to them. Participants valued the chance to interact with other parents in a similar position and also enjoyed seeing their children play with other children.
- 7.36 Participants were overwhelmingly complimentary about their advisers, with the following comments capturing the wider sentiment:
- 'I know she's here to help'
  - 'the support I received was excellent ... it was good that [adviser] was helping me look at all my options and deciding which career path was right for me'
  - 'just going to speak to someone who knows more, who offers help, who can check things for you ... having someone to support me was fab'
  - 'she's very calming and allowed me to talk. She is definitely the right person for the job'.

- 7.37 A handful of participants noted that they had experienced difficulties in contacting their advisers, though very often, it seems that the fault lay as much with participants as advisers.
- 7.38 The participant database would suggest that two per cent of participants prefer to communicate in Welsh, albeit that 17 per cent can speak the language. Our fieldwork would suggest that Welsh speaking advisers use a mixture of Welsh and English in dealing with Welsh speaking participants, depending upon individual participants' preferences. Our fieldwork did not highlight any instances of participants not being able to use Welsh as they wanted to.

*In work support*

- 7.39 As previously noted, where participants secure employment, advisers often help them to complete paperwork relating to tax credits and, thus, to ensure that they receive the financial support needed during the transition period.
- 7.40 A number of contributors and participants suggested that PaCE should encompass a formal element of in-work support in order to allow advisers to support participants through the sometimes turbulent process of transitioning into employment. As one participant put it, 'it's a pity now that I've got a job it's bye bye ... I have a whole new set of worries ... [but] my situation will still be the same in relation to childcare'. However, it was clear that contact between advisers and their clients often extends beyond participants' progression into jobs, with individuals now in work noting that they felt able to go back to their adviser should the need arise.
- 7.41 Some suggested that in-work support might also include funding for on-going training in order to increase the sustainability of job outcomes and aid progression in the workplace.
- 7.42 Advisers also argued for greater recognition of the work done to help those who progress into employment but fail to sustain those jobs. It was a source of irritation that subsequent job outcomes are not recognised once an initial job outcome has been reported.

## **Employability interventions**

### *Training*

- 7.43 In working with participants, advisers consider whether it would be beneficial for the individual concerned to undertake training in order to develop their skills, attain qualifications and to have something recent to add to their CVs. The type, level and intensity of training undertaken varies significantly, ranging from short, generic or unaccredited courses to vocational courses of longer duration, leading to recognised qualifications.
- 7.44 Short vocational courses such as basic food hygiene/food safety, first aid, health and safety and safeguarding were seen by advisers as a good starting point for individuals who lack qualifications and/or have been out of work or education for a number of years. Such courses are put on under the auspices of programmes such as Flying Start, Families First and CfW<sup>77</sup> and generally take place during school hours at locations such as ICCs, community hubs or third sector organisations' premises, which makes them more easily accessible to parents.
- 7.45 Courses designed to develop participants' employability skills were also undertaken. Such courses were delivered by providers contracted by JCP (DWP) as well as by the provider retained by the Welsh Government to deliver training for PaCE and CfW participants specifically. In some areas, training relating to particular vocational routes was offered by employers looking to recruit. Participants taking part in such courses were often guaranteed interviews upon the conclusion of training.
- 7.46 A range of more substantial training programmes were undertaken by participants aiming to achieve vocational qualifications in disciplines such as childcare, supporting teaching and learning, beauty, business and construction related fields. Such provision tended to be delivered either by Further Education colleges or by the provider retained by the Welsh Government.

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<sup>77</sup> Or previously the Employability Support Grant and Communities First

- 7.47 Our fieldwork with participants would suggest that, by and large, participants thought that the training they had undertaken had been of good quality and was relevant to their work ambitions.
- 7.48 However, some participants had been frustrated by not being able to access the kind of training they wanted because suitable training was not available locally and it was unrealistic for participants to travel to locations where courses were being held. Other participants were irritated by what they perceived to be their advisers' reluctance to support them to undertake a package of interlinked courses.
- 7.49 Some participants were also frustrated by not being able to access training above level 2 from the provider retained by the Welsh Government. However, the PaCE Training Guidance is clear that in the case of courses delivered by the Welsh Government's retained provider, 'training referrals for level 3 will be considered on a case by case basis but this would be the exception and approval from Welsh Government would be required in order to progress'<sup>78</sup>. A couple of participants argued that they needed higher level qualifications in order to secure 'worthwhile' jobs and 'keep [them] off benefits' and it is arguable that the policy set out in the Training Guidance is somewhat contradictory when considered in the context of the definition given in the Operational Guidance of 'a person with low skills' as an individual without qualifications 'exceeding Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) level 2'<sup>79</sup>
- 7.50 Advisers were also exasperated by gaps in training provision and some were reticent about referring clients to the provider retained by the Welsh Government for a number of reasons:
- They did not believe that the retained provider would deliver courses requested in their localities. This was particularly true in rural areas where it is difficult for the retained provider to assemble sufficiently large groups of participants to render courses viable.

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<sup>78</sup> Communities for Work and PaCE Training Guidance V2.0, April 2018 p.6

<sup>79</sup> PaCE Operational Guidance (2016) p.19

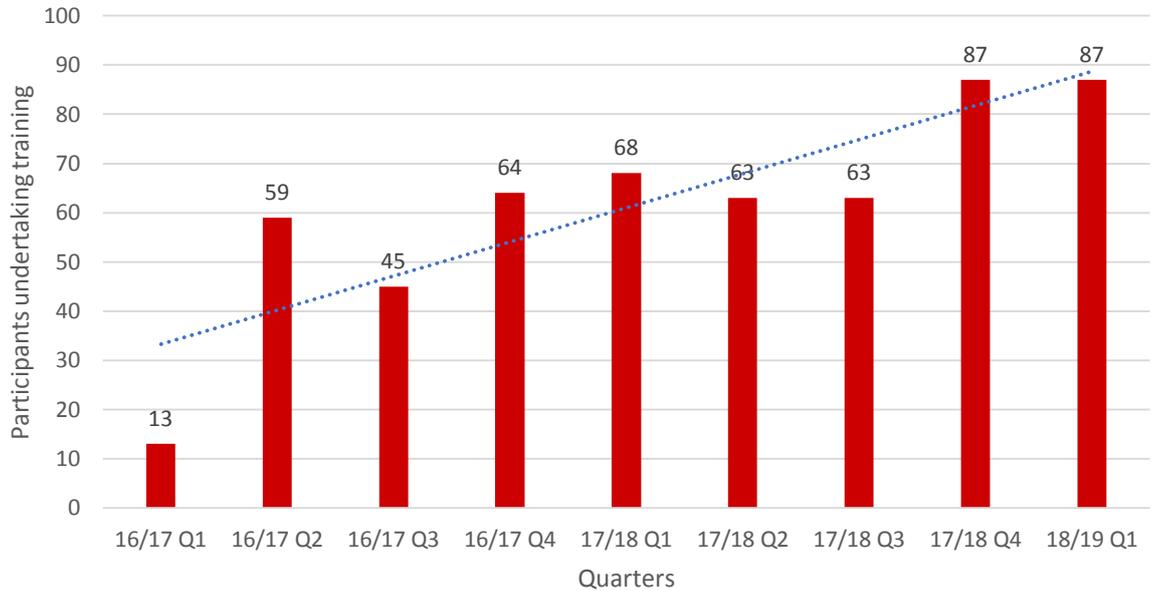
- The Welsh Government’s retained provider does not sub-contract local providers in all areas, which means that PaCE participants do not always have the opportunity to in-fill on existing paid-for provision. It was suggested that mainstream providers in some areas are reluctant to act as sub-contractors to the retained provider.
- Arrangements for courses (timing and location) have been subject to change at short notice by the retained provider, thus undermining advisers’ confidence in the organisation.
- Many courses are delivered in the retained provider’s training centre. This is in an inconvenient and inaccessible location for many participants, given the need to make both childcare and travel arrangements in order to attend. Indeed, it was clear that some participants who had been very eager to pursue particular courses had found the challenge of getting their children to childcare settings and travelling to distant training centres too much in practice.
- The process of having requests approved and setting-up training can be long winded and participants move-on before training can be organised.

7.51 Figure 7.2 shows that there has been a steady growth in the take-up of courses offered by the provider retained by the Welsh Government since its appointment in April 2016, reflecting in part the expansion of titles offered, as well as the increase in participant numbers. By March 2018, PaCE participants had taken part in 549 learning episodes<sup>80</sup> across 244 courses delivered by the retained provider.

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<sup>80</sup> It is possible for individual participants to take part in more than one course.

Figure 7.2: Take up of training offered by provider retained by Welsh Government by quarter<sup>81</sup>



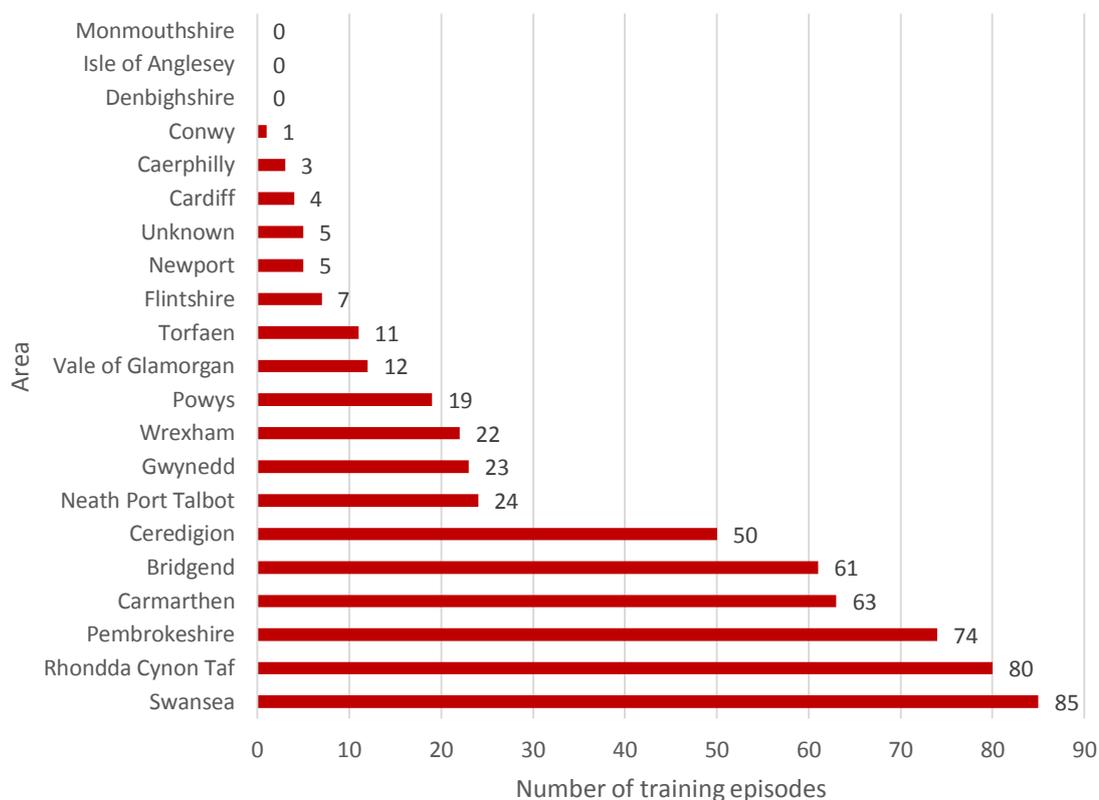
Source: Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of training provided

7.52 However, take-up varies considerably across areas, with some making little use of retained provision as yet. As shown in figure 7.3, areas in the south west have made most use of retained provision, whilst those in the north have made much less use of it. Use has also been markedly lower in east Wales than in the south western parts of Wales. To some extent, this reflects the location of the retained provider’s main training centre, which is more accessible to individuals living in the south and western parts of Wales. The retained provider has also experienced difficulties in finding sub-contractors to deliver training in parts of north and east Wales, which led to PaCE delivery managers organising ‘meet the providers’ events in an attempt to stimulate local providers’ interest<sup>82</sup>. Advisers in some areas have also pulled together groups of participants so that courses could be run locally, in one case working with CfW colleagues. More provision is now offered away from the provider’s main training centre, though take-up remains comparatively low.

<sup>81</sup> Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of training provided

<sup>82</sup> Strategic Board Meeting, October 2017: Agenda Item 7d and 7e – ACT Training and Innovation Update, p.2

Figure 7.3: Take up of training offered by provider retained by Welsh Government by area<sup>83</sup>



Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of training provided

7.53 The PaCE participant database does not record training undertaken and it is not, therefore, possible to determine the numbers of participants undertaking training other than that delivered by the Welsh Government’s retained provider. However, our fieldwork with participants would suggest that greater use has been made of local providers in some of the areas where take-up of courses offered by the retained provider has been lower. Our fieldwork would also suggest that a number of current participants are planning to embark upon training from September, once their children have started/returned to school. However, given the modest size of our participant sample, this finding should be treated with a degree of caution.

7.54 Table 7.1 shows expenditure on training under the PaCE programme as at March 2018.

Table 7.1: Profiled and actual expenditure on PaCE training

<sup>83</sup> Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of training provided

<b>PaCE</b>	<b>WW&amp;V P1</b>	<b>WW&amp;V P3</b>	<b>EW P1</b>	<b>EW P3</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Total Budget to 2020	£450,000	£117,509	£274,350	£65,770	£907,629
Profile to Mar18	£175,100	£46,600	£101,300	£24,300	£347,300
Expenditure to Mar18	£281,422	£88,657	£62,572	£14,842	£447,493
Participant numbers	199	88	60	21	368
Cost per participant	£1,414	£1,007	£1,043	£707	£1,216

Source: Welsh Government

7.55 The figures given above relate to the training delivered by the provider retained by the Welsh Government along with a small amount of 'bespoke' provision funded in the programme's early days. This does not, however, represent the total cost of training undertaken by PaCE participants. As already noted, some participants undertake training delivered under the auspices of programmes such as Flying Start and Families First as well as courses put on by JCP and Further Education colleges. Furthermore, financial support is available for training that relates directly to benefits claimants' realistic work ambitions via the DWP's Financial Support Fund. Some advisers were candid that they look to this source to fund training because it is straightforward to access via the DWP's low value procurement process and that where support is required for a package of inter-related training courses, the application process is far simpler than that employed by the Welsh Government's retained provider, which only allows advisers to request one course at a time.

7.56 Given the complexities surrounding the various providers of training, the distribution of provision across Wales and the methods by which training is paid for, it was argued by some that the Welsh Government should trust advisers' judgement and afford them the discretion to pay for local training provision that cannot be accessed free of charge, cannot be funded via the FSF or is not available locally via the provider retained by the Welsh Government.

*Work experience or volunteering*

7.57 Advisers encourage participants to consider undertaking work related placements in order to gain experience of particular kinds of work, develop confidence, have something to put on their CVs and to secure recent

references. As well as being a means of developing or honing work related skills, work placements were seen as a means of allowing participants to try out fields in which they may have never worked and to trial the use of formal childcare whilst they work or volunteer.

- 7.58 The Operational Guidance distinguishes between two different categories of work related placements: work experience, defined as ‘a paid placement of short or fixed duration spent in a workplace with the aim of improving employability’; and volunteering, defined as ‘an unpaid placement or activity whereby a participant works for an organisation without being paid, both helping that organisation and improving employability’<sup>84</sup>.
- 7.59 The participant database would suggest that no participants have completed paid ‘work experience’ placements and that only three per cent of participants have completed ‘volunteering’ placements. Our fieldwork would suggest a rather more positive picture, however, with 20 per cent of the participants interviewed (16) saying that they had done some work related volunteering and 15 per cent (12) saying that they had done so for more than 50 hours in total. Whilst paid work experience placements are rare, unpaid work related volunteering is a more prevalent feature of the programme than analysis of the database would suggest, reflecting in part advisers’ reluctance to record volunteering placements until participants have exited the programme.
- 7.60 Advisers were instrumental in organising some work related volunteering placements. In finding and arranging volunteering opportunities, advisers tend to work closely with JCP employment advisers and with County Voluntary Councils (CVCs).
- 7.61 Some of those who engaged in work related volunteering had also received training into the bargain, for example as part of a NHS ‘talent pool’ scheme or a local ‘volunteering for wellbeing project’. For others, volunteering placements formed an integral part of training being pursued by participants working towards particular qualifications e.g. Children’s Care, Learning and

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<sup>84</sup> PaCE Operational Guidance, p.22

Development (CCLD) or Supporting Teaching and Learning Assistant (STLA) qualifications.

- 7.62 Those participants who had undertaken work related volunteering placements were overwhelmingly positive about the experience, with a small number being offered jobs by the organisations with which they were placed as a result.

#### Case study: India

India is a mother of three who had not worked since 2011. As her youngest child approached school age, India had started to look for work but was 'getting nowhere'. Having been out of the workplace for more than six years, she realised that she 'needed support and help' to come up with a CV – 'I didn't know where to start' – and undertake job search activities.

Having drafted a CV for India on the basis of a conversation about her work history and what she hoped to do in the future, the adviser contacted a number of employers asking if they would be willing to offer India a 'work trial'. One of these employers offered India a one-week work placement. During this week, the adviser texted India each day to check how she was getting on and to offer any support should she need it. After a successful first week's placement, India was offered a second.

At the end of the second week India was invited to apply for a job and was successful in securing a permanent post with the employer. According to India, 80 people had applied for the job, but because the employer had seen her work, 'it gave [her] the edge'.

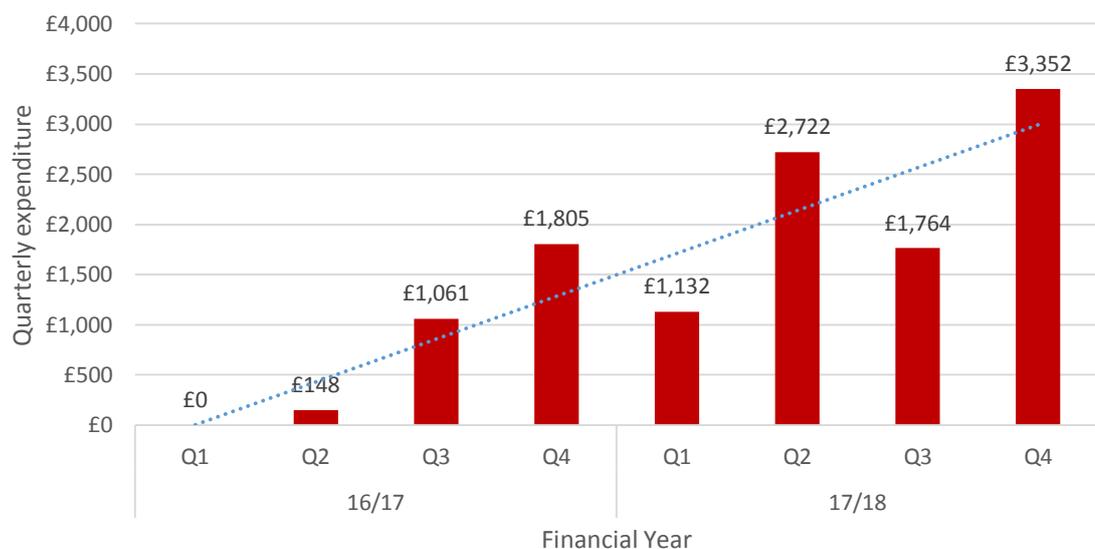
- 7.63 Other participants spoke of work related volunteering placements giving them 'confidence' that they could hold down a job and providing them with the reassurance that the work in question is 'definitely something [they] want to go into ... that it's alright'.
- 7.64 A key strength of the PaCE programme was thought to be the scope it allows participants to volunteer for a few hours a week in the first instance and then

to build up to 16 hours (the DWP minimum) or more as they learn, develop a routine, gain confidence and become assured that childcare arrangements put in place are working.

*Barriers fund*

- 7.65 Limited use is made of the PaCE barriers fund, quite simply because most costs can be met through the DWP’s FSF. The barriers fund is seen by advisers (as intended) very much as a fund of last resort and is generally accessed to meet costs that cannot be met via the FSF, for example the costs of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, costs in excess of the FSF’s £300 limit and costs relating to non-benefits claimants.
- 7.66 A minority of advisers avoided using the barriers fund because they found the application process lengthy and complex and others spoke of difficulties arising out of the policy of reimbursing participants for costs incurred, albeit that the facility for same day reimbursement was acknowledged.
- 7.67 By 31 March 2018, total barriers fund expenditure amounted to £11,983. Figure 7.4 shows that there has been a steady growth in barriers fund expenditure since PaCE was launched, though take up of barriers fund support has been lower than expected at some 16 percent of the profile to March 2018.

Figure 7.4: Value of barriers fund payments made by quarter



Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of payments made from barriers fund

### *Childcare*

- 7.68 Wherever possible, advisers seek to organise meetings with participants during nursery or school hours, thus allowing them to talk to their clients undisturbed. Indeed, this impacts somewhat upon advisers' working day in that a good proportion of their client facing work is done during school hours. As previously noted, advisers also undertake a number of home visits, though our fieldwork would suggest that the use of home visits varies significantly from one area to another. Home visits were thought to be particularly useful where participants' children have not yet started at nursery or school. Both advisers and participants said that home visits make it easier to cope with children 'because they can be plonked in front of the TV or play with their own toys', which makes things less stressful for all concerned.
- 7.69 Where advisers see participants outside the home, they generally seek to meet at JCP offices or at places with play areas such as Flying Start centres, community hubs and libraries. Some advisers also make a point of carrying toys, paper, crayons and fruit with them in order to entertain children whilst they speak to their parents. Such resources are often paid for out of advisers' own pockets.
- 7.70 Limited use is made of sessional childcare whilst advisers meet with participants. Where sessional care is used, it is generally done once it is clear that parents are engaging purposefully with the programme (in-line with programme guidance) and advisers and participants need to have in-depth conversations without the distraction that children can cause. Some advisers encourage participants to visit a number of childcare providers early on, with a view to organising 'taster sessions' with individual providers to allow the parent to work with the adviser undistracted and to become confident enough to use a particular provider once they embark on training, volunteering or enter work.
- 7.71 Slightly more use is made of childcare to allow participants to undertake training, work/volunteering placements or to attend interviews, though such activities are often arranged to fit in with school or nursery hours, thus negating the need to arrange childcare to specifically accommodate them.

Advisers also noted that family and friends often step in to look after children to allow parents to attend one-off events.

- 7.72 Where participants engage in extended training courses or volunteer on a regular basis, there is more call for support with childcare, whether to cover the whole of the time participants spend in training or part of it, with friends and family often also helping out. Indeed, whilst childcare responsibilities had prevented a number of the participants we interviewed from undertaking training or work related activities in the past, participation in PaCE seemed to be a catalyst for their exploring and arriving at informal childcare solutions that they had not previously considered.
- 7.73 Many participants have experience of using formal childcare by the time they engage with PaCE but where they do not, advisers either provide participants with a list of local childcare providers (acquired from the FIS) or refer clients to FIS for information. Advisers sometimes find it necessary to outline the advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of provision, whilst being careful to allow participants to make their own decisions about providers. Whilst advisers generally encourage parents to 'do the leg work' in terms of finding childcare provision, some accompany participants to childcare settings to provide them with reassurance and to ensure that they are comfortable with the choices they make.
- 7.74 Visiting childcare providers alongside participants also allows advisers to promote PaCE, to explain how PaCE funding works, to organise paperwork and to get a sense of what particular settings are like. Some advisers also help providers to complete paperwork in order to avoid hold-ups with payments on the basis that delays can have a detrimental effect upon providers' view of and willingness to engage with PaCE. This was driven in part by experience of childcare providers submitting incomplete claims (estimated at around 50 per cent in June 2017<sup>85</sup>), resulting in further contact having to be made with providers before claims could be settled and putting financial strain upon some small providers. Other advisers have no direct

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<sup>85</sup> Strategic Board Meeting, June 2017: Minutes, Item 3.6, p.4

dealings with childcare providers and rely entirely on FIS teams to provide participants with the support needed in finding appropriate childcare.

- 7.75 PaCE affords access to funding to meet childcare costs for the two-week period running up to the point where participants start work and for their first two weeks in work. The intention is that this should allow for children to be settled into childcare settings and to insulate participants against the potentially prohibitive effects of up-front childcare costs when they first start earning.

#### Case Study – Kerry

Kerry is the single mother of one child. Following a period of two years caring for her child, Kerry decided that she wanted to return to work.

Kerry saw a poster for PaCE and contacted her adviser. Whilst she was confident that she could find a job herself, Kerry 'didn't know how to make it happen' in terms of managing the financial implications of transitioning from Income Support. She was concerned that she could not afford to pay for childcare during the first month in work, before she was paid but after her benefits were stopped – 'I'd have had to save money to pay for childcare ... I pay £1,000 a month ... I get 80 per cent back, so I actually pay £200 ... that would still have been hard'.

Kerry found her ideal job two weeks later and was eager to take it up. The adviser told her that PaCE could help with the first two weeks' childcare costs and suggested that she visited two or three childcare settings. Once Kerry had selected a nursery, the adviser visited the nursery to explain that PaCE would be paying the initial costs and how the nursery should go about claiming fees from the Welsh Government.

The adviser also undertook a BOC with Kerry and in the process advised her to apply for a continuation of her housing benefit for her first month in work. They also discussed the process of transitioning from Income Support to working tax credits.

Whilst Kerry thought that she would have returned to work at some point, she did not think that she would have been in a position to do so as soon as she did without the advice and financial help received from PaCE. She felt that the help she had received had smoothed her move into employment.

7.76 In reality, however, there has been less call for childcare funding to support participants making the transition into work than anticipated, with a number of factors contributing to this:

- participants take jobs that fit around 'school hours', thus negating the need for childcare
- those working outside school hours access wrap around provision, with some capitalising on the Childcare Offer to help pay for this
- few need to settle children into childcare settings as parents usually continue with childcare arrangements already in place. This means that there is little take-up of funding for the two week period running into participants starting work
- participants arrange childcare with family and friends. This is particularly the case for those working evenings or weekends when it is more difficult to find formal childcare.

#### Case Study – Linda

Linda is a single mother of two. She held level 3 qualifications and had extensive work experience in the hair and beauty sector. She had not enjoyed this kind of work and was keen to re-train to become a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) driver.

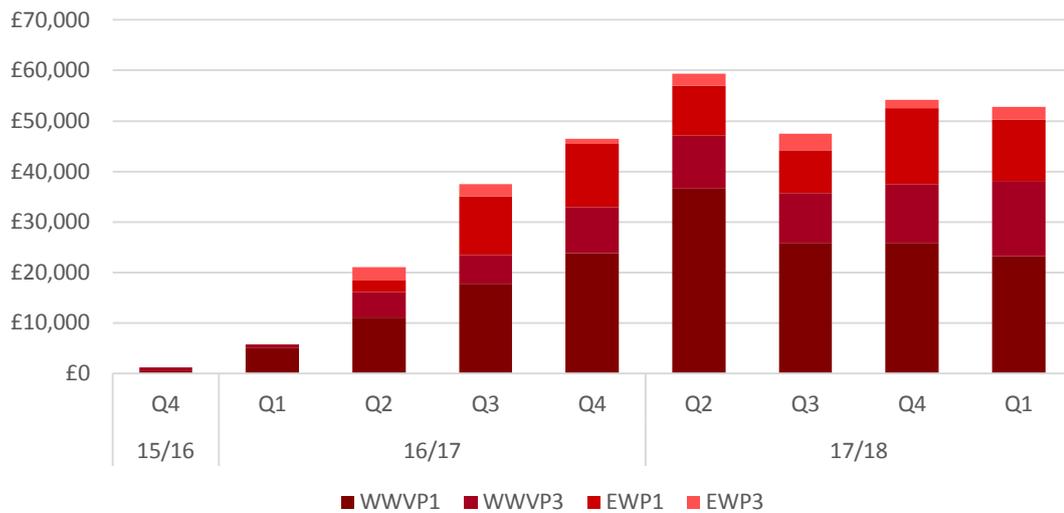
Having undertaken training through PaCE, Linda attained Class 1 and 2 HGV driving licence. She then set about finding work.

Linda was offered work as a self-employed truck driver but the work would involve long shifts starting at 1am. This made finding childcare impossible. On this basis, Linda's mother had agreed to stay at Linda's house on nights

when she is required to start work early. Her mother will take the children to school and nursery.

- 7.77 Whilst advisers encourage participants to think about using family and friends to care for their children whilst they are at work, they also challenge participants whose expectations of family might be unrealistic or unsustainable. In such cases, advisers might suggest to participants that they use a blend of paid for childcare and family or friends. Indeed, a number of the participants interviewed, and particularly those with more than one child, use a combination of nursery/school, formal wrap around provision and family and friends to manage childcare responsibilities.
- 7.78 The DWP's FSF is generally the first port of call for advisers in accessing financial support to meet childcare costs, both whilst individuals participate in PaCE and as they move into work. PaCE funding is sought where participants are ineligible for DWP support (because they are not benefits claimants) or where DWP support is not available (e.g. where participants undertake volunteering placements of less than 16 hours a week).
- 7.79 By 31 March 2018, total PaCE expenditure on childcare costs amounted to £276,063. This represents roughly a third of the profiled budget to that point in the programme's life and 18% of the overall programme budget.
- 7.80 Figure 6.4 shows the value of payments made in respect of childcare costs in each quarter. Overall, it suggests an increase in the take-up of support, though this is partly attributable to an increase in the number of participants over time and partly attributable to an increase in the numbers of participants making use of paid-for childcare. In reality, however, the numbers accessing financial support for childcare via PaCE has been fairly modest at some 12 per cent of all participants, with the average value of awards amounting to some £791.

Figure 7.5: Value of childcare payments made by quarter<sup>86</sup>



Source: Welsh Government, breakdown of payments made for childcare

- 7.81 The chart suggests that the take up of childcare support may be subject to some seasonal variation and it is interesting to note that costs in 2017/18 were at their highest during the second quarter (which encompasses the school summer holiday period) and declined slightly in the third quarter (which is when the school year starts).
- 7.82 Several advisers noted that childcare is seen by participants as a big issue when they first become involved in PaCE but this often reflects a lack of knowledge of the support that is available to parents. Individuals are unable to ‘see the wood for the trees’ and ‘panic’ at the prospect of trying to simultaneously hold down a job, manage financially and look after their children. On top of that, it is difficult to get to grips with precisely what kind of childcare is needed in the abstract, without first being clear about when a parent might be expected to work. It is not surprising, therefore, that many parents are ‘overwhelmed’ by the prospect of finding childcare solutions to allow them to look for work.
- 7.83 Whilst there are undoubtedly gaps in provision in some parts of Wales, our discussions with advisers and participants would suggest strongly that the way in which ‘childcare’ acts as a barrier to employment is more complex than simply the availability or affordability of formal childcare. In order for

<sup>86</sup> Own of payments made for childcare

individuals to feel able to use formal childcare (in any of the myriad ways it is used), they first need to understand what is available, how it works, how much it costs, what help can be accessed to meet those costs and how to go about sorting things out with childcare providers.

- 7.84 Even where participants choose not to capitalise upon formal childcare, whether whilst participating or having progressed into work, talking through childcare options with PaCE advisers was seen as something useful in itself by a number of the participants interviewed. As discussed above, participants often arrive at solutions which do not involve formal childcare or entail a blend of formal and informal childcare, with PaCE providing the intelligence, support and confidence needed to put in place arrangements which suit individual participants and their children.

### **Chapter Summary**

A majority of participants were referred to PaCE by JCP with the point at which JCP seeks to move single parent Income Support claimants onto Jobseeker's Allowance representing an important watershed.

Advisers each work in a slightly different way, though the core elements of the service provided by every adviser include:

- Diagnostic assessment: which involves advisers checking individual's eligibility and getting to know participants and understanding their circumstances, their ambitions and the factors holding them back from working.
- Action planning: which involves incrementally exploring and agreeing a way forward with participants.
- Better off calculations: which involves advisers showing participants how much better off financially they would be in work, taking account of their likely incomes, the effects upon benefits received and costs that will be incurred e.g. of childcare.
- Mentoring and coaching: which involves working with participants to create CVs and look for jobs. It also involves encouraging and reassuring participants in ways tailored to each individuals' needs.

- In-work support: which involves advisers helping participants deal with the bureaucracy and emotional challenges of making the transition into work

Employability interventions facilitated via PaCE include:

- Training: ranging from short courses to provision leading to recognised qualifications. Whilst participants were generally satisfied with the training they received, it is clear that provision is not equally accessible in all parts of Wales and some participants were not able to access the kind or level of training they wanted.
- Work related placements: a minority of participants have undertaken work related placements in order to gain experience and have something to put on their CVs. Those who had were overwhelmingly positive about the experience.
- Barriers Fund: limited use has been made of the barriers fund to help overcome final cost related barriers to work.
- Childcare support: less use than anticipated has also been made of support to meet childcare costs, primarily because parents have been able to rely on other sources of support or to fit PaCE activities around school/nursery hours.

## **8. Emerging Outcomes**

### **Introduction**

8.1 In this chapter we consider the extent to which PaCE has delivered the outcomes sought thus far. This chapter is presented in five sections as follows:

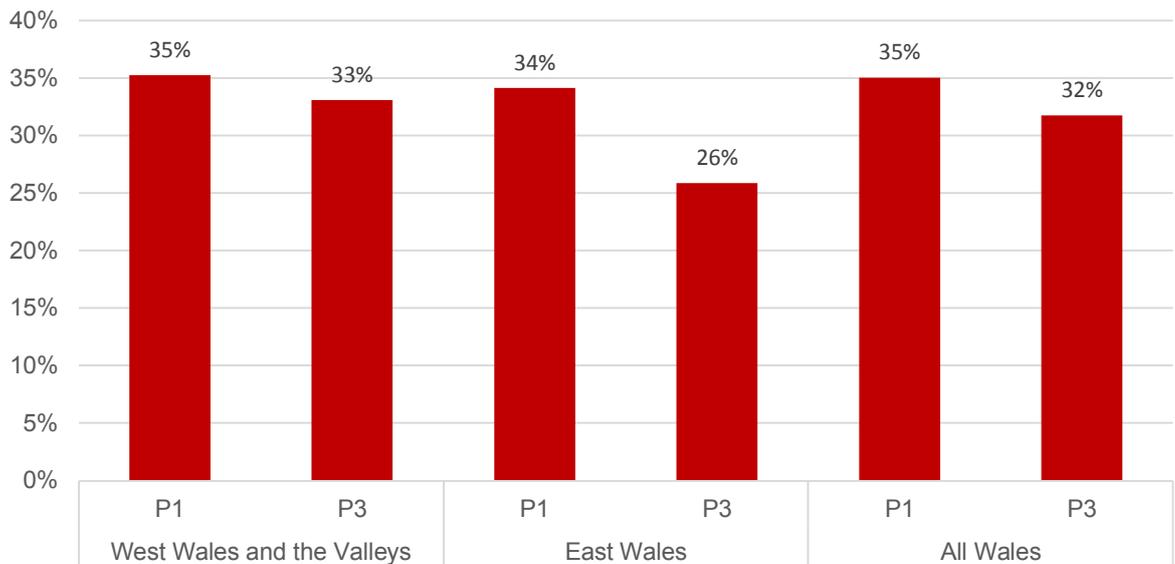
- progression into employment or self-employment
- qualifications outcomes
- work experience/volunteering outcomes
- progression into education or training
- the wider effects of PaCE.

### **Progression into employment or self-employment**

8.2 By March 2018, a total of 989 PaCE participants had progressed into work, comprising 741 in West Wales and the Valleys and 248 in East Wales. This equates to 34 per cent of all participants and is substantially higher than the job outcome benchmark of 20 per cent implicit in the PaCE business plans. Only in two areas did job outcome performance fall short of the benchmark figure.

8.3 Figure 8.1 shows that job outcome performance was slightly stronger in relation to participants aged 25 and over (Priority 1) than those aged 16-24 (Priority 3). Performance in relation to Priority 3 in East Wales was also rather weaker than in West Wales and the Valleys. Overall, a similar proportion of the participants we interviewed had progressed into employment or self-employment, but a slightly higher proportion of Priority 3 than Priority 1 participants had done so.

Figure 8.1: Proportion of participants achieving job outcomes by priority



Source: Database of participants to 31 March 2018

8.4 There are differences in the proportion of participants progressing into jobs from one area to the other. To some extent, this may owe something to the point at which the programme was launched in different parts of Wales and the length of time which advisers have, therefore, had to work with participants and help them progress into jobs. However, this does not account for the whole difference, with the numbers of job outcomes generated per adviser month<sup>87</sup> ranging from almost 1.5 in one area to less than 0.5 in several others. Furthermore, our fieldwork would suggest that there are differences in the extent to which advisers in the same area succeed in generating job outcomes.

8.5 In some areas, there were marked differences between the proportion of participants who were recorded as having exited the programme progressing into jobs and the proportion of all participants progressing into jobs. This could have the following possible explanations:

- That participant numbers are being built up and a comparatively small proportion of all participants have been on the programme long enough to have achieved jobs. Over time, one might expect the two metrics to converge.

<sup>87</sup> Calculated using the date each adviser took up post and the date which individual advisers left their posts or the 31 March 2018 (the census date used for the participant database) for those still in post

- That advisers have become more adept at identifying and referring individuals who are unlikely to progress into employment with help from PaCE (e.g. because they are not genuinely committed to finding work or because their needs are too complex) onto other, more suitable interventions.
- That advisers are inconsistent in terms of exiting participants who are unlikely to progress into jobs or who are not actively engaging in the programme.
- That advisers are sometimes reluctant to exit participants who discontinue engaging with the programme, but who advisers believe might well re-engage after a period.

8.6 In it perhaps notable in the context of these final two points that some 43 per cent of apparently 'live' participants as at March 2018 had been involved with PaCE for more than 12 months and 15 per cent had been on the programme for more than two years.

8.7 Whilst recognising that individuals' journeys through PaCE might be interrupted by life events, inconsistency in the way that advisers deal with exiting 'dormant' clients means that some advisers in some areas appear to have larger caseloads than others, On average, advisers' caseloads appear to be some 22 clients, but information derived from the database of participants would suggest that caseloads range from 57 in one local authority area to a little over 10 in another. Action might be taken to ensure that advisers adhere consistently to the guidance given in relation to existing clients with whom they are not in regular contact<sup>88</sup>, thus allowing programme managers to get a more complete understanding of advisers' active caseloads.

8.8 It is not surprising, perhaps that most advisers thought that their areas were doing reasonably well in terms of job outcomes, though some spoke of a quiet start or of peaks and troughs. Advisers were largely unconcerned about job outcome targets and bought into the mantra emanating from programme managers that the focus should be on 'doing the right thing for the clients' and the 'outcomes will follow'.

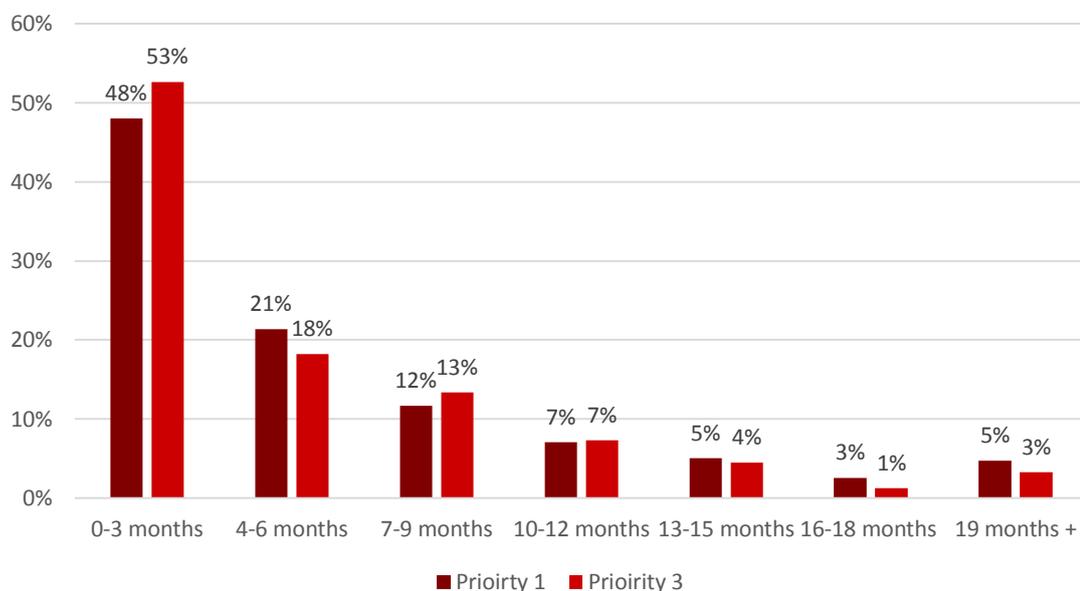
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<sup>88</sup> Operational Guidance, p.38

8.9 There is a degree of correlation between the engagements achieved per adviser month and the outcomes per adviser month delivered, though the rate at which engagements are converted into job outcomes differs from one area to another. Our fieldwork was not able to establish definitively why these differences exist, but there was a strong suggestion that individual advisers' performance, both in terms of engagements and job outcomes, can have a marked effect on performance at a local authority level.

8.10 Almost half (49 per cent) of all 989 participants progressing into jobs did so having been involved with PaCE for three months or less. A further 21 per cent progressed into jobs having been involved with PaCE for between three and six months. Figure 8.2 shows the proportion of participants achieving job outcomes within three month time windows. Whilst there is little difference between the proportion of West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales participants achieving job outcomes within the first three months of involvement with PaCE, Priority 3 participants were slightly more likely than Priority 1 participants to progress into jobs within the first three months.

Figure 8.2: Proportion of participants achieving job outcomes within specific timeframes (n=989)



Source: Database of participants to 31 March 2018

8.11 Analysis of the participant database would suggest that participants in the 16-19 age group and those aged 50 and over were rather less likely to progress into work than other age groups.

8.12 Advisers struggled to identify particular characteristics attributable to participants who progress into work rather than those who do not. However, the following were thought possible contributors to job outcome success, borne out by the findings of our fieldwork with participants:

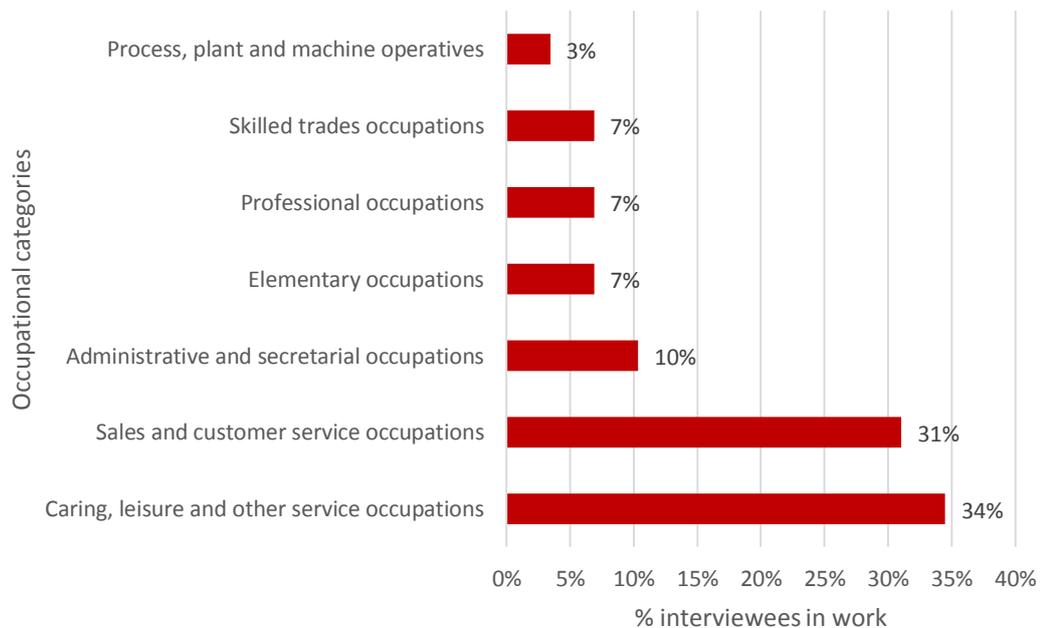
- being genuinely motivated to find work
- being clear about the type of jobs wanted
- having realistic job ambitions
- engaging actively with the programme e.g. keeping appointments etc.
- undertaking training. However, 54 per cent of the participants interviewed (44) had progressed into work without undertaking any training as part of their involvement in PaCE, compared to 41 per cent of all those interviewed
- having previously held down a job.

8.13 Advisers found it easier to identify characteristics of participants who are less likely to progress into work, at least within the foreseeable future:

- never having worked, though analysis of participant interview data does not suggest that the number of years since individuals last worked (if ever) makes a discernible difference to their progression into employment
- poor educational attainment though analysis of participant interview data does not suggest much difference in the proportion of those with qualifications above level 2 and all participants interviewed progressing into jobs
- multiple children though again, analysis of interview data does not suggest any material difference
- drug or alcohol issues
- mental health issues, including depression and anxiety
- having violent ex-partners
- family histories of joblessness.

- 8.14 PaCE advisers are not necessarily best placed to help individuals address some of these factors that essentially represent barriers to work. In such cases, advisers may choose to refer clients to specialist agencies e.g. for support in tackling drug or alcohol misuse problems.
- 8.15 Our fieldwork would suggest that it is more often than not a combination of factors that prevent participants from moving into employment or, indeed, from benefiting in other ways from PaCE. Whilst childcare was a factor making it difficult for individuals we interviewed to work, it was clear that other barriers played a part, often as big or bigger than childcare, in preventing them from finding employment.
- 8.16 Figure 8.3 shows the proportion of the participants interviewed progressing into work in particular occupational categories. The majority (19) were employed in two sectors, generally progressing into entry level jobs requiring limited experience, skills or qualifications. Most participants took local jobs, in part because of the additional travel and childcare costs which travelling further afield would entail.

Figure 8.3: Proportion of participants interviewed progressing into work by occupational categories (n=29)

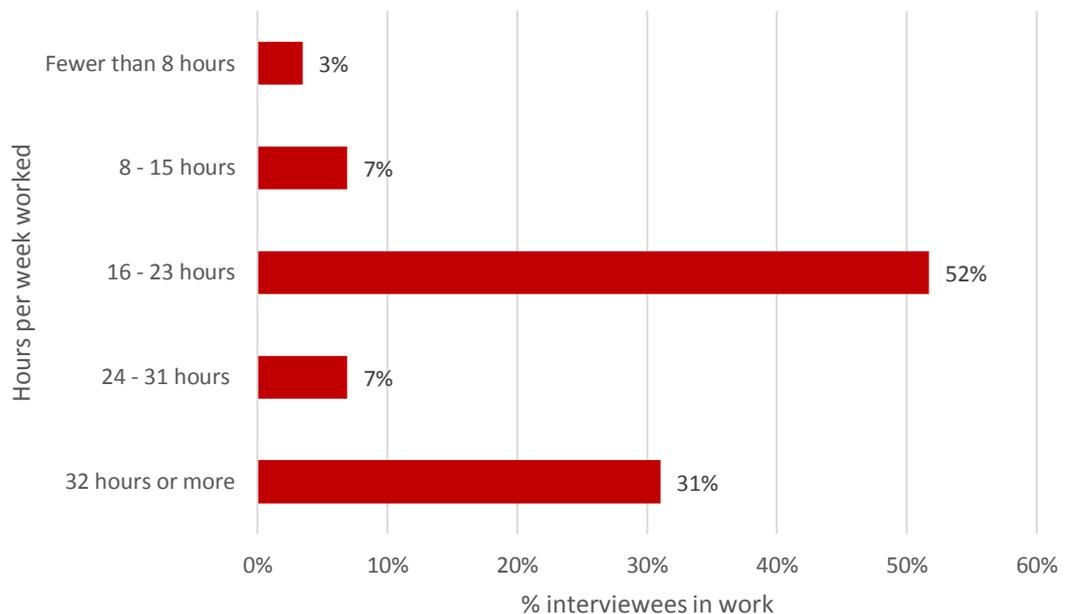


Source: Analysis of participant interview data

8.17 Two of the participants interviewed had progressed into self-employment with two others planning to take that step in the future. Advisers noted in this regard that some participants, particularly those in rural areas, became self-employed both because of a lack of employment opportunities locally and because of the flexibility it afforded them to work around their children's needs.

8.18 The majority (79 per cent or 23) of the participants interviewed progressing into work secured permanent employment contracts, whilst the remaining 21 per cent (6) secured temporary contracts, some fixed term and others open ended. Figure 8.4 shows that 52 per cent (15) of interviewees in employment worked between 16 and 23 hours a week, though in reality, most worked around the 16 hours a week mark. A further 31 per cent (9) worked 32 hours or more.

Figure 8.4 Proportion of participants interviewed progressing into work by the number of hours worked each week (n=29)



Source: Analysis of participant interview data

8.19 Many interviewees took part time jobs because working 16 hours a week or so strikes a balance between earning more, managing childcare arrangements (particularly outside school hours) and having time to spend with their children. One adviser argued that the financial gain of working full time is

marginal and the price in terms of time spent with their children is too great for many. The participants interviewed were generally content with their earnings, with one capturing the wider mood by saying, 'it's better than Income Support'. Some had hopes of progressing, either within their existing roles or into more demanding jobs, and of increasing their earnings over time. A handful of participants interviewed saw their current jobs very much as a stop-gap which suited their current circumstances, but which would not satisfy their longer term ambitions. As one participant put it, 'I don't want to do this forever, but at the moment it gives me time in the daytime to be with my child and to do other things'.

- 8.20 There was some frustration that PaCE does not recognise as job outcomes progression into work for fewer than 16 hours a week. It was argued that some participants start working fewer hours with the intention of building their hours up as they grow into their jobs or their children grow older. A handful of the participants we interviewed fell into this category, with some feeling their way back into work.

### **Qualifications outcomes**

- 8.21 All in all, 77 PaCE participants (or just under three per cent) had achieved qualifications upon leaving PaCE, mostly at level 2. A further 124 individuals (or just over four per cent) had attained work relevant certifications not recognised under the Credit and Qualification Framework Wales (CQFW). A slightly higher proportion of participants from West Wales and the Valleys than East Wales achieved qualifications, though numbers were low in both areas. There was very little difference in the proportion of Priority 1 and Priority 3 participants achieving qualifications or work relevant certifications.
- 8.22 Given the proportion of participants for whom a lack of qualifications was a significant barrier to employment, it would seem surprising that so few would choose to pursue some form of certification. This may be attributable in part to there being gaps in the training provision available and accessible locally, but there was also a suggestion that some advisers may do more than others to encourage participants to consider training, with some advisers seeming to have a better grasp than others of provision available locally.

### **Work experience/volunteering outcomes**

- 8.23 As previously noted, the participant database would suggest that just over three percent of participants (90) completed work or volunteering placements, with minimal difference across West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales or across priorities. A rather larger proportion (at 20 per cent or 16) of the participants interviewed had or were currently undertaking volunteering placements.
- 8.24 Undertaking volunteering opportunities seemed to have made a real impression on a number of the participants we interviewed, with individuals speaking of developing skills, growing in confidence, developing professional contacts, broadening their horizons and experiencing an improvement in mental health as a result.
- 8.25 Some participants were already volunteering prior to getting involved with PaCE, but the programme was able to help some step-up their volunteering activity and, thus, develop skills and confidence more rapidly.

### **Education or training outcomes**

- 8.26 It was intended that some 30 per cent of participants aged 16-24 (Priority 3) would progress into education or training upon leaving PaCE. Thus far, however, only 17 (two per cent) Priority 3 participants have entered education or training, with a similar proportion of Priority 1 participants also doing so, though no target has been set in this regard.

### **Other discernible effects of PaCE**

- 8.27 Our fieldwork would suggest that PaCE has wider effects upon participants and their families beyond enabling them to progress into work, education or training or to gain qualifications. This was particularly the case where participants had found jobs or entered further learning. These wider effects included:
- Increased confidence: with individual participants saying, for example, that they:
    - feel that they can 'take control ... and do something with my life'

- 'feel that I'm not just someone's mother now. I'm much more confident'.
- Feeling a greater sense of purpose and fulfilment, with participants perceiving that they had become 'calmer', 'more relaxed' or 'less grumpy' as a result of engaging with PaCE. Some also spoke of improvements to their mental health as a consequence of feeling that they were 'moving forward' in their lives. This was seen as something 'good for the whole family'.
- Thinking longer term and optimism about the future, with individuals commenting that the support they had received had given them direction and 'confidence that you've a bright future.'
- Developing a social life and reducing the sense of isolation, with individual participants noting that they:
  - felt that working 'enhanced my life' as a result of being part of a 'good team'
  - 'have a laugh at work and I've made some really good friends there'
  - enjoyed 'a bit of adult time after being with two kids going on about dinosaurs ... a bit of adult conversation'.
- Having more money once in work and, therefore worrying less about financial issues. This impacted positively on family life. Individual participants spoke of:
  - her husband being able to reduce his working hours because of the contribution the participant was able to make to the household coffers. This had led to her husband becoming less stressed and impacting positively on the family - 'basically our family life has improved'.
  - being able to afford more and their children 'having a few more treats'.
- Being a good role model for their children and helping to ingrain a strong work ethic. Individual participants said that:
  - 'I'm setting a good example for the kids and they tell me that I'm happier now that I'm in work'
  - their children are 'proud of mum'.

8.28 A couple of participants noted that they regretted having less time with their children as a result of moving into work, but they also felt that working was the

right thing to do and that the benefits to their children and themselves outweighed the down-sides. One adviser captured the mood by saying that 'in all the years I've been doing this kind of work, I haven't had anyone come back to me saying that they regret going into work or that it was the wrong thing to do'.

8.29 Participants also spoke of the benefits to children of their parents participating in PaCE, including:

- preparing children for school where they had no or limited experience of being away from their parent(s)
- experiencing formal childcare allowing children to blossom, with individuals talking of children's personalities starting to shine through
- children's linguistic skills improving as a result of participating in formal childcare
- children becoming more confident and independent as a result of engaging with others of the same age and with people outside their immediate circle
- older children being given opportunity to have a bit of independence and take some responsibility e.g. teenagers caring for family pets whilst their parent works
- older children doing better at school, either as a result of having more structure to their lives or from seeing their parents engaging in learning.

## **Chapter Summary**

Over a third of all participants have progressed into work, substantially more than the 20 per cent that were expected to do so.

There are differences in the proportion of participants progressing into jobs from one area to the other, reflecting the point at which the programme was launched in different parts of Wales and variances in the job outcomes generated by individual advisers.

Almost half of participants progressing into jobs did so having been involved with PaCE for three months or less and a fifth progressed into jobs having been involved with PaCE for between three and six months.

Those progressing into work tend to go into entry level jobs in two occupational categories: 'sales and customer service'; and caring, leisure and other services'.

Those progressing into work tend to secure permanent contracts, with most working around the 16 hours a week mark.

Few participants have achieved qualifications upon leaving PaCE.

Similarly, few have progressed into education or training upon leaving PaCE.

Our fieldwork would suggest that PaCE has wider effects upon participants and their families beyond enabling them to progress into work, education or training or to gain qualifications.

## 9. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Introduction

9.1 In this chapter we return to the aims of the evaluation and present our conclusions and recommendations in relation to:

- programme implementation to date
- early signs in relation to outcomes
- the veracity of the theory of change.

9.2 The initial Process Evaluation report<sup>89</sup> discussed the launch of PaCE and highlighted issues to arise during the programme's early days. It is not our intention to revisit those issues here.

### Programme implementation to date

9.3 To a very large extent, PaCE has been implemented as intended. In the two years since the initial Process Evaluation report was published, PaCE has sustained momentum and management and administrative systems supporting the programme have been refined and, by now, generally seem to work well, albeit that there remains some scope for improving processes.

### Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government should continue to work with DWP colleagues, PaCE advisers and delivery managers to continuously improve and 'LEAN'<sup>90</sup> PaCE processes.

9.4 Although the model adopted for delivering PaCE is consistent across Wales, implementation at the coal face differs slightly from one area to another. These differences reflect variations in the local family and employability support infrastructure from one area to the next as well as PaCE advisers' previous experience and personal styles of working.

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<sup>89</sup> Wavehill (2016) Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project

<sup>90</sup> Using manufacturing terminology to refer to improving process efficiency and minimising waste.

- 9.5 Previous chapters have discussed in detail various aspects of programme delivery. Our intention here is to focus on aspects of programme implementation which merit further consideration and to make recommendations where we perceive improvements might be made.
- 9.6 Efforts have been made to align PaCE with the wider family support architecture across Wales in order to provide parents with an integrated and seamless service. In some areas, PaCE advisers work closely with local authority FIS teams and with other family service professionals such as health visitors. Overall, however, integration has proved more challenging than expected and the degree of alignment varies from one area to the next. This is attributable in part to the focus of family support services upon more deprived communities which are served by CfW rather than PaCE. Another factor which has made it more difficult than expected for PaCE to become part of the local family support landscape has been the restructuring or contraction of family support service teams in some areas.
- 9.7 Nevertheless, family support services represent an important source of referrals to PaCE, particularly in terms of individuals not in receipt of unemployment benefits.
- 9.8 There is scope to strengthen links with local family support services and by so doing, increase PaCE's visibility with family support teams. However, this cannot be done at the local level alone and will require input from programme managers and administrators as well as front line delivery staff.

#### Recommendation 2

Half yearly performance updates should be produced for each local authority area, in keeping with the approach outlined in the Employability Plan to improve the monitoring and coordination of local delivery. These should provide headline information about engagements and outcomes (produced centrally), as well as qualitative feedback on, for example, difficulties experienced in finding childcare, childcare providers used and an account of how information provided by FIS has been used (produced by delivery managers and advisers).

### Recommendation 3

Welsh Government account managers, alongside DWP delivery managers and PaCE advisers, should aim to meet with local authority family services teams on an annual basis to discuss the programme's implementation and to explore what might be done to ensure the better integration of PaCE into the local family services landscape.

- 9.9 The fact that PaCE is not as closely aligned with some wider family support services as had been intended means that advisers make less use of family support service locations such as Flying Start centres and Integrated Childcare Centres than had been envisaged to meet and work with clients. Rather, more use is made of JCP premises than had been intended and this has served to perpetuate a view among local authority representatives of PaCE as a 'welfare' programme rather than part of the family support mix.
- 9.10 There are advantages to advisers working from JCP premises and our fieldwork would suggest that participants accustomed to visiting periodically generally (though not always) found JCP offices convenient locations to meet. Others, particularly non-Income Support claimants, were reluctant to visit JCP premises. Whilst several advisers make extensive use of community locations such as libraries and community hubs to meet clients, some seem more comfortable working primarily from JCP premises.
- 9.11 Given the clear intention set out in the Welsh Government's Employability Plan to 'support those who are economically inactive but want to work'<sup>91</sup> as well as people who are unemployed, there is a strong argument for extending the amount of 'outreach' done in some areas. However, advisers should also continue to make use of JCP offices (to meet clients, to promote PaCE to work coaches and in order to access DWP databases and ICT facilities) as part of a blended approach, weighted slightly more towards outreach than it currently is.

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<sup>91</sup> Welsh Government (2018) Employability Plan, p.13

#### Recommendation 4

DWP delivery managers should review local engagement plans for the areas over which they have oversight and consider whether there might be scope to capitalise more fully on outreach opportunities in order to reach economically inactive individuals who do not typically come into contact with JCP.

- 9.12 Some advisers have made good use of DWP claimant databases to identify prospective clients. Indeed, access to DWP records is arguably a key strength of the PaCE programme, setting it apart from other ESF interventions. There is, therefore, legitimate concern among advisers that they will cease to have access to DWP records as the Universal Credit is rolled out in place of Income Support and other benefits.

#### Recommendation 5

The DWP should ensure that advisers' access to the records of individuals who are out of work and who might benefit from participating in PaCE is not compromised by the roll-out of the Universal Credit.

- 9.13 Advisers sometimes meet participants in cafes as they provide accessible and informal neutral locations where clients feel comfortable 'having a chat over a cup of tea'. This can lead to advisers being out of pocket as a result of buying beverages for those participants and this would seem wholly inappropriate.

#### Recommendation 6

Advisers should be given an allowance to buy beverages where they meet clients in cafes. The bureaucracy surrounding submitting claims for reimbursement of such expenses should be kept to a minimum.

- 9.14 At a Wales wide level, PaCE seems to fit well with other employability programmes such as the DWP's Work and Health Programme and CfW. There was also evidence of PaCE working alongside other ESF projects in some areas. It was perceived, nevertheless, that a confusing array of

employability programmes exist and that this can make it difficult for partner agencies to refer clients to the most appropriate place for support.

- 9.15 The Welsh Government's new Employability Plan points to the closer alignment of employability support programmes as well as cross referral between interventions where that is appropriate. The introduction of the Employment Advice Gateway will be an important development for PaCE and it is essential that programme managers are actively engaged in putting working arrangements in place.

#### Recommendation 7

PaCE managers need to work closely with those involved in the implementation of the Welsh Government's Employability Plan and engage with colleagues responsible for the roll out of the Employment Advice Gateway to ensure that PaCE is understood by those delivering the service and that the process of referring clients to PaCE is made as simple as possible.

PaCE managers should also take on board the findings and recommendations of the equalities review to be undertaken by the Welsh Government, as outlined in the Employability Plan.

- 9.16 A rather low-key approach has been taken to the promotion of PaCE with the result that the programme continues to have limited visibility among potential clients and partner organisations. This undoubtedly impacts upon the programme's ability to reach prospective participants and is reflected in lower than intended engagement figures across all but Priority 3 participants in East Wales.
- 9.17 If the programme is to close the gap that exists between target and actual engagement figures, more people, including economically inactive parents, need to be aware of PaCE's existence and what the programme does.

#### Recommendation 8

The Welsh Government should update its communication/marketing

strategy. The strategy should, inter alia:

- identify parent 'segments' according to the age of their youngest child and their reasons for not working (e.g. choice, lack of skills/work history)
- identify key messages to be targeted at different parent segments at different times. Messages should make clear the financial and non-financial benefits of parents working
- set out a programme for the transmission of key messages.

The Welsh Government should also launch a stand-alone web-site for PaCE. The website should set out clearly the nature of the support available and provide 'case study' examples of people who have participated in PaCE in order to bring promotional messages to life. The web-site should also make it clear how to go about contacting local PaCE teams.

Alongside this, the Welsh Government should provide a feed of promotional messages and 'case study' materials to partner organisations to be identified by local teams. These should be made available in a format that would allow partner organisations to load them onto community social media platforms (web-sites, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds etc).

- 9.18 As noted above, participant engagements have fallen some way short of expectations, though programme staff are not unduly concerned about this because job outcome performance has exceeded expectations by some margin. However, there are marked differences in the numbers of participants engaging from one area to the next and these differences cannot be wholly explained by differences in the length of time for which PaCE has been running or upon the socio-economic profile of individual areas. It is possible that these differences are down to individual advisers' success or otherwise in making connections with JCP work coaches (given that JCP still represents the primary source of referrals to PaCE) and in convincing potential clients of the merits of participation.

### Recommendation 9

The Welsh Government should consider undertaking a 'deep-dive' review of practices in high performing areas and low performing ones in terms of client engagements. Such a review should focus on the way in which individual advisers work with partner organisations and with clients. The findings of the deep-dive review should be used as the basis of good practice materials and guidance refined to reflect the lessons learnt.

- 9.19 Parents with children aged four to five and those with children aged two to three represent the majority of participants engaged. It is likely that this is attributable to Income Support claimants facing the prospect of being transferred onto JSA when their youngest child turns five, and to parents' ability to access the 10 hour Foundation Phase entitlement when their child turns three. Whatever their motivations, it would seem that parents are more susceptible to engaging with interventions such as PaCE at particular stages in their children's lives and efforts should be made to target parents in those 'sweet spots'.

### Recommendation 10

It has already been suggested that the Welsh Government should identify parent 'segments' and we further recommend that use is made of the DWP's databases to identify Income Support claimants with children approaching three and five<sup>92</sup>.

The individuals identified should then be targeted with messages tailored to their specific situations. A systematic approach should be taken to doing this, with the DWP taking the lead and liaising with the delivery managers responsible for each area to ensure that advisers are not overwhelmed.

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<sup>92</sup> As is already done by some advisers

- 9.20 Expenditure on childcare has been lower than anticipated. This reflects in part the lower than anticipated level of engagements, but also owes something to individuals managing to tie-in participation or work with school or nursery hours, or to capitalise upon the help of family and friends (informal childcare). Whilst there has been a small growth in the take-up of childcare support over time, it seems unlikely that the budget set for childcare will be needed in its entirety. Indeed, the rollout of the 30 hour Childcare Offer could further limit the need for PaCE to meet participants' childcare costs.
- 9.21 PaCE is fundamentally intended to facilitate parents' return to work by increasing the use made of childcare. It is predicated upon the assumption that a failure to access childcare or difficulties in accessing childcare that meets their needs and expectations prevents parents who are out of work from moving into employment.
- 9.22 Our fieldwork would suggest that PaCE is facilitating parents' return to work by increasing the use made of formal and informal childcare. In doing this, PaCE supports participants in getting to grips with the complexity and challenges of organising and managing childcare in terms of understanding:
- what (formal and informal) childcare options are available and accessible to them
  - how different types of childcare work
  - how much it costs, what financial help might be available and whether one will be better off financially in work having paid for childcare.
- 9.23 This complexity is compounded where individuals are unclear about the hours that they might be required to work, which most inevitably are when they embark on their job-search journeys. This means that a key component of advisers' work is to help participants consider their childcare options, inform them of the support available, explain the financial implications of transitioning into work and to navigate the practicalities of finding suitable childcare and making the transition into employment.
- 9.24 Our fieldwork also makes it clear that whilst access to childcare (when children reach three years of age) and expectations to work (when children

reach five years of age) act as the main triggers for being referred to and engaging with PACE, childcare is rarely the only or even main barrier preventing those engaging with PaCE from entering work.

- 9.25 Other key barriers to work for PaCE participants is the lack of qualifications, skills and relevant recent work experience. A range of training provision has been undertaken by those taking part in PaCE and participants generally thought the training they had received had been of good quality and relevant to their work ambitions. However, there was considerable variation in the take-up of training across Wales. Most of the training undertaken was unaccredited or led to qualifications at or below level 2, reflecting in part the Welsh Government's guidance in relation to training delivered by its retained provider. It is also clear that the overall number of participants undertaking training has not been as great as it might be, particularly above level 2, the benchmark adopted for being skilled. In part, this was attributable to challenges faced by the provider retained by the Welsh Government in putting on viable provision for small groups, particularly away from south west Wales.

#### Recommendation 11

Advisers should stay abreast of learning provision available locally and liaise proactively with local providers to help participants find suitable courses.

Where particular types of provision is not available locally, advisers should redouble their efforts to pull together groups of participants with similar training needs to allow the Welsh Government's retained provider to put on provision. In doing this, advisers should work with CfW colleagues and with PaCE advisers in neighbouring areas.

- 9.26 The consequence of the Welsh Government's decision to restrict its support for training at level 3 and above is that PaCE may not be helping people develop the skills that are needed to find and sustain work to the extent it might. The Welsh Government's policy in this regard would seem at odds with the idea of upskilling people and moving them into sustainable employment,

given that the definition adopted for 'a person with low skills' is an individual without qualifications 'exceeding Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) level 2'<sup>93</sup>.

#### Recommendation 12

The Welsh Government should consider reallocating some of the budget set aside to meet childcare costs (which seems likely to be underutilised) in order to fund more training, including at level 3 and above. In paying for higher level provision, however, advisers should make a case showing why higher level training is needed to secure more sustainable employment.

#### Recommendation 13

The Welsh Government should consider the possibility of allocating local training budgets to PaCE delivery managers to allow the participants to access mainstream courses where such training is not available free of charge and the training cannot be delivered by the provider retained by the Welsh Government.

In doing this, the Welsh Government should employ simplified procurement processes.

- 9.27 Work experience and volunteering placements make a marked impression on participants who undertook them and clearly played a part in helping some secure employment. However, the participant database would appear to under-report volunteering placements undertaken. This means that the level of volunteering taking place may not be accurately reported to WEFO and, equally importantly, that it is not possible to use the database to get a sense of the relationship between volunteering and job outcomes.

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<sup>93</sup> PaCE Operational Guidance (2016) p.19

#### Recommendation 14

Advisers should ensure that volunteering placements undertaken are recorded accurately in the participant database. This should be done for Priority 3 participants (where the completion of work experience or volunteering placements are not a programme outcome) as well as for Priority 1 participants (where they are).

#### **Outcome performance to date**

- 9.28 Thus far, PaCE job outcome performance has exceeded profiles despite engagement levels falling below expectations. Indeed, strong job outcome performance has meant that programme staff have been less concerned about engagement levels than they might be. Recommendations have already been made surrounding the better promotion of PaCE and the targeting of particular groups of parents in order to increase engagement levels.
- 9.29 There are marked variations in engagement to job outcome conversion rates across different areas. It is likely that this is partly attributable to advisers being inconsistent in the way that they deal with existing participants who are unlikely to progress into jobs or who are not actively engaging in the programme. However, neither this, nor advisers' longevity in post explain the difference in performance between areas in its entirety.

#### Recommendation 15

PaCE delivery managers should ensure that advisers in their areas are consistent in their approach to exiting participants. This could involve advisers looking to refer participants who are unlikely to progress into employment with PaCE support to other organisations better placed to help them.

#### Recommendation 16

Welsh Government account managers should work with delivery managers and advisers to better understand the reasons for differences in the job outcome conversion rates in those areas which appear to be performing

most and least strongly. Where differences in practice is seen to be affecting job outcome performance, lessons learnt should be shared and guidance refined to reflect those lessons.

- 9.30 The chances of participants progressing into jobs as a result of engaging with PaCE beyond a certain time diminish substantially. Whilst some participants do achieve job outcomes after being involved with PaCE for more than a year, their numbers are few in reality. It would appear, therefore, that investment in participants beyond a year may not be as cost effective<sup>94</sup> and better use might be made of adviser time. Having said this, it is acknowledged that some participants have more complex needs and may take longer to progress into employment than others.

#### Recommendation 17

Advisers should be asked to review the likelihood of participants with whom they have worked for 12 months or more progressing into employment or training/education. In doing so, advisers should be asked to consider whether participants' needs might be better served by other organisations.

Where it is concluded that PaCE is unlikely to help particular participants to progress, arrangements for onward referral and exit should be discussed with the participants concerned.

- 9.31 It was suggested that PaCE could usefully encompass a formal element of in-work support to allow advisers to support participants through the process of transitioning into employment and, thus help increase the sustainability of employment outcomes. Previous research has been inconclusive about the effectiveness of in-work support<sup>95</sup>, however, and there may be an argument for piloting in-work support for PaCE participants in selected areas.

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<sup>94</sup> Though this will be explored further during the next phase of this evaluation

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Department for Work and Pensions (2014), *The Work Programme Evaluation: the participant experience report*

#### Recommendation 18

Consideration should be given to piloting an element of time limited in-work support in four local authority areas which have been performing relatively strongly in terms of job outcomes.

The in-work support offered should involve advisers contacting participants who have progressed into employment by text or e-mail two weeks and one month after their starting work to ask how they are getting on and whether they need any further help. Where participants request further help, the adviser should explore what support they need and whether they, or another services (e.g. CfW+) would be best placed to provide it. Any in-work support should be time limited and tapered.

The Welsh Government should monitor the take-up of in-work support in the pilot areas over a twelve month period and explore whether it makes any difference to participants' ability to sustain work or to progress in work.

- 9.32 Fewer participants than expected have achieved qualifications as a result of participating in PaCE. Given that a lack of qualifications is known to be a barrier to employment and that a majority of PaCE participants do not hold qualifications above level 2, this is disappointing. Recommendations have already been made in relation to increasing the numbers of participants undertaking training, but it seems unlikely at this stage that qualifications targets will be met.
- 9.33 Very few participants have progressed into education or training and it seems unlikely that Priority 3 targets in this regard will be met.

#### **Veracity of the Theory of Change**

- 9.34 The theory of change set out in the 2016 Process Evaluation report outlined the assumptions that informed the design of PaCE. These are set out in Table 9.1 along with an assessment of the extent to which each assumption has been borne out in light of experience.

Table 9.1: Assessment of veracity of Theory of Change assumptions

Assumptions	Veracity
<b>Input to Activity Assumptions</b>	
1. Intended beneficiaries exist and can be located/contacted	<p>Engagements have been markedly below expectations which might suggest that potential participants numbers were overestimated. However, PaCE has not been systematically promoted beyond JCP and some family support services and PaCE remains largely invisible to some partner organisations and the public at large.</p> <p>Whilst the individuals for which PaCE was intended probably do exist, it is questionable whether they can be reached in the numbers anticipated without focusing more closely on engagements and upon extending advisers' outreach activities.</p>
2. Premises, IT equipment and locations are suitable for service delivery	<p>PaCE has not been rolled out into family/community settings to the extent expected both because they tend to be located in Flying Start areas and because relationships with local authorities have not developed to the degree intended.</p> <p>Whilst IT equipment used by advisers generally works well, it is not always possible to use the equipment to its full potential when working from outreach locations. This is due to poor internet connections, and security restrictions preventing remote access to DWP systems. This limits advisers' ability to work in 'real time' with clients.</p>
3. Monitoring systems adequately capture beneficiary details	<p>Monitoring systems are designed to capture data to satisfy WEFO's needs rather than to manage the programme. Some additional data, beyond those required by WEFO are collected, however.</p> <p>Data about volunteering outcomes seem not to be fully captured on the database</p> <p>Better use could be made of 'good news stories'/case study material compiled by</p>

	advisers in order to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants' journeys through PaCE.
4. DWP staff can be recruited, trained, and undergo security checks	A full staff contingent is now in place and the PaCE workforce seems reasonably stable.
5. Staff training sufficient	Induction and on-going training provides staff with the knowledge and skill needed to do the job.
6. Beneficiaries aren't prevented from accessing the services	There is little evidence of potential clients being prevented from accessing the service, although awareness of PaCE is not as high as it should be.
7. Provision is equally accessible across Wales	Adviser services are available equally across the areas where the programme has been implemented, but areas in south west Wales are better served than other parts of Wales in terms of training provision.
<b>Activity to Output Assumptions</b>	
8. DWP staff have sufficient knowledge and expertise	Advisers come from a variety of different professional backgrounds and bring different levels of knowledge of welfare benefits and the benefits system to PaCE. By now, however, most advisers have sufficient knowledge and expertise to support participants.
9. Family Information Services and local authority support is beneficial and accessible	Advisers generally make good use of FIS, though the depth and quality of relationships between PaCE and wider family support service teams varies from one area to another. FIS teams have contracted in some areas of late and it remains to be seen what impact this will have on PaCE

<p>10. Links can be made with employers</p> <p>a. Existing routes through DWP available</p> <p>b. PaCE creates no extra burden on employers</p>	<p>Advisers make links with employers, either directly or via JCP Employer Advisers. There was no evidence that advisers add to the burden of employers.</p>
<p>11. Beneficiaries engage with advisory service</p>	<p>The support offered by advisers represents the kernel of the PaCE service. Participants' willingness and ability to engage can be affected by a range of personal issues and some engage more fully than others.</p>
<p>12. Parents are keen to secure employment and willing to voluntarily engage with PaCE</p>	<p>Those engaging in PaCE are generally interested in finding work, though their ability to engage with the programme can be affected by personal and external factors</p>
<p>13. Parents want their children in childcare</p>	<p>Few object to their children experiencing childcare, though participants tend to use formal paid-for childcare to a lesser extent than anticipated. In practice, participants use a blend of nursery/school, family/friends and formal childcare to enable them to participate in PaCE and enter employment. Informal childcare features more prominently than had been anticipated, though advisers often play a key role in helping participants arrive at informal childcare arrangements.</p>

14. Promotion leads to increased awareness of and engagement with PaCE	At a national level, promotion of PaCE has been minimal and it is likely that this has impacted on the numbers engaging. At a local level, the promotional work done by individual advisers seems to generate engagements, but this is insufficient on its own.
<b>Output to Outcome Assumptions</b>	
15. Funding sufficient to cover costs	Programme funding has been sufficient with the possible exception of the funding for training.
16. Employability barriers can be overcome	<p>The availability and affordability of childcare of themselves are not generally the only barriers. The difficulty of understanding the childcare 'market' as well as pinning down their precise childcare needs also hinder parents. Advisers are key to overcoming the challenges of navigating childcare arrangements for many participants.</p> <p>Other barriers to employment can also be overcome, for example through training to gain qualifications or by undertaking volunteering placements to gain work experience.</p> <p>Individual led constraints such as a lack of confidence or financial worries can also be overcome with support from PaCE.</p>
17. Employment action plans effective	The term 'employment action plan' is a bit of a misnomer in that participants rarely recognise that such plans exist. The participant portfolios are more a record of conversations than 'action plans' per se.
18. Connections with employers prove useful	Advisers' interaction with employers is limited, with DWP employment advisers more often acting as intermediaries. These connections are, however, useful in

	setting up volunteering and work opportunities.
19. DWP advice promotes employability	JCP represents a key source of referrals to PaCE.
20. Childcare available and accessible or solutions can be found to provide access	Childcare is generally available and accessible, with only a few exceptions encountered to date
21. Local authorities respond to advice	PaCE rarely offers 'advice' to local authorities.
22. Training and work experience opportunities available and accessible	<p>Training opportunities are not equally available or accessible across Wales, though the situation has improved since the programme's launch.</p> <p>Whilst the participant database would suggest that the take-up of work experience and volunteering opportunities has been limited, our fieldwork would suggest that around a fifth of participants have undertaken at least some unpaid work placement/volunteering activity.</p>
23. Childcare providers provide flexible and useful support	Childcare provision is generally flexible, though there are gaps in terms of evening and weekend provision
24. Opportunities to enter sustainable/secure employment exist	Job opportunities exist in most areas

9.33. In conclusion, the theory of change underpinning PaCE is basically sound. With a few exceptions, most notably integration with local authority family support services and promotional work, PaCE has been implemented as planned and the programme is facilitating parents' return to work by increasing the use made of childcare. However, this phase of the evaluation also illustrates the complexity of childcare issues which PaCE is addressing, and the greater reliance upon informal childcare solutions than was originally envisaged. Moreover, while highlighting childcare related catalysts for parents engaging with PaCE (mainly access to the Childcare Offer and children starting school), the evaluation suggest that childcare is seldom the only, or even the main barrier to returning to work that parents face.

### **Cross-Cutting Themes**

9.34. As an ESF-funded operation, PACE is expected to contribute to the three cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, sustainable development and tackling poverty and social exclusion. PaCE essentially exists to address the (often interrelated) first and third cross-cutting themes in that it aims specifically to support people who are economically inactive or long term unemployed and at young people who are NEET to engage with the labour market and, thus, move out of poverty. Given PaCE's fundamental purpose, this report has considered in some detail the progress made towards addressing aspects of these cross-cutting themes.

9.35. Encouragingly, the report has highlighted that PaCE is reaching the intended groups (though not necessarily in the numbers envisaged) and providing them with relevant forms of support. For example:

- The overwhelming majority of PaCE participants have been female.
- A majority of participants have been drawn from single adult households, with most reliant on Income Support and other welfare benefits.
- A disproportionate number of PaCE participants have work limiting health conditions.
- A majority of participants have low skills and are, therefore at greater risk of poverty.

- A third of all participants (mainly women) have progressed into employment.
- PaCE has provided the financial support needed by some to bridge the gap between their first day at work and their first pay-cheque, but take-up of this support has been lower than expected.

9.36. Rather less positively, perhaps, the report has also noted that:

- Individuals from BME groups represent a disproportionately low number of participants, suggesting that PaCE may not be reaching individuals from some ethnic groups.
- Whilst there have been examples of female participants progressing into jobs in non-traditional occupations, most of those entering employment have gone into jobs in occupations which are associated with female employment ('caring, leisure and other services', 'sales and customer services' and 'administrative and secretarial'), possibly suggesting that PaCE's effects in terms of gender mainstreaming are limited.
- PaCE has had limited success in helping those with low skills to achieve qualifications above level 2 and, thus, increase their chances of securing and progressing in employment.

**Annex 1: Original and Revised Business Plan Engagement and Outcome Targets<sup>96</sup>**

<b>PaCE Total (P1 and P3)</b>	<b>Original Business Plan July 2015</b>	<b>Revised Business Plan October 2016</b>
Engagements	7884	8278
Job entry	1577	1655
Job search (P1 only)	1611	1691
Qualification/certificate	1971	2069
work experience completed (P1 only)	1933	2030
into education/training (P3 only)	432	454

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<sup>96</sup> Minutes of the Strategic Board Meeting, April 2017, Item 6. p.3