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# **New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation**

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**Prepared for the Department for Work and Pensions**

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The views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Work and Pensions.

<b>Contents</b>	
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>1) The New Deal for Lone Parents</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Policy aims	1
1.2 Objectives	2
1.3 NDLP policy history	2
1.4 Complementary policies internal and external to NDLP	7
1.5 NDLP Evaluation strategy	11
1.6 Outline methodology of review	13
1.7 Summary	14
<b>2) Lone Parents in Work and on Benefit</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 Lone parents in Britain	17
2.2 Lone parents and employment	18
2.3 Financial position of lone parents and their children	20
2.4 Lone parents claiming Income Support	21
2.5 Tax and Benefit reform and lone parents' gain from work	25
2.6 Summary	26
<b>3) Participation in New Deal for Lone Parents</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Measuring participation	29
3.2 Improving participation	31
3.3 The characteristics of lone parents participating in NDLP	33
3.4 Explaining participation	40
3.5 Summary	45
<b>4) Outcomes and Impact of NDLP</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1 Work preparation	47
4.2 Education and training	50
4.3 Employment	53
4.4 Quality of jobs and sustainability	59
4.5 Childcare	61
4.6 NDLP outcomes	63
4.7 Lone parent sub-groups	64
4.8 Summary	70
<b>5) Programme Management and Delivery</b>	<b>71</b>
5.1 Management	71
5.2 PA delivery	73
5.3 Critical factors for success	76
5.4 Summary	77
<b>6) Related Welfare to Work Programmes and Policies</b>	<b>79</b>
6.1 ONE Service	79
6.2 New Deal for Young People	86
6.3 Working Families' Tax Credit	87
6.4 Summary	92
<b>7) Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>105</b>



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## List of Tables

Table 2 1	Lone parenthood in Britain 1984-2001 . . . . .	17
Table 2 2	The effect of reforms on the financial gain to work for lone parents. . . . .	26
Table 3.1	Participating in NDLP . . . . .	30
Table 4 1	NDLP Participants: Interest in support or advice. . . . .	48
Table 4.2	Factors that may limit the amount or type of work or training lone parents undertake . . . . .	57
Table 4.3	NDLP Outcomes by Ethnic Minority Group .. . . .	67
Table 5.1	Relative merits of District and Jobcentre programme management. . . . .	73
Table 5 2	Perceived attributes of an effective PA. . . . .	75
Table 6 1	Lone Parents' Outcome evidence from quantitative surveys ..	86
Table 7 1	Summary of evaluation evidence . . . . .	96
Table A1	Details of NDLP Innovative Pilots and Innovation Fund programmes. . . . .	101



## List of Figures

Figure 1.1	Welfare to Work Time Line .....	3
Figure 1.2	Standard model of NDLP provision .....	6
Figure 2.1	Trends in employment among mothers in Britain by marital status 1984 -1997 .....	19
Figure 2.2	Trends in employment among fathers in Britain by marital status 1984 -1997 .....	19
Figure 2.3	Income Support claimants February 1997 – August 2001 .....	22
Figure 2.4	Quarterly inflows and outflows: lone parents on IS – 1997-2001 .....	22
Figure 2.5	Geographical distribution of lone parents on IS in August 2001 .....	23
Figure 2.6	Composition of lone parents on IS by gender and age .....	24
Figure 2.7	Composition of lone parents on IS by age of youngest child – 1993-2001 .....	25
Figure 3.1	Inflows to NDLP – November 1998 to September 2001 .....	34
Figure 3.2	Age of lone parent – lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001 .....	35
Figure 3.3	Age of youngest child – lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001 .....	36
Figure 3.4	Number of children – lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001 .....	37
Figure 3.5	Length of IS claim prior to joining NDLP - lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001 .....	39
Figure 3.6	Number of previous New Deal spells - lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001 .....	40
Figure 3.7	Barriers to work NDLP participants .....	42
Figure 4.1	NDLP Participation in supported education in November 2001 .....	53
Figure 4.2	Regional differences in participation in supported education in November 2001 .....	54
Figure 4.3	Percentage of NDLP leavers to employment .....	54
Figure 4.4	NDLP leavers into employment by region cumulative totals to August 2001 .....	55
Figure 4.5	Provision of PA in-work support for NDLP participants .....	61
Figure 4.6	Proportion of NDLP leavers who go into employment by age of participant .....	65
Figure 4.7	Proportions of NDLP leavers entering employment by gender January 1999 to June 2001 .....	69
Figure 6.1	Claimants of Family Credit and WFTC 1988-2001 .....	88
Figure 6.2	Childcare sources used by lone parents claiming WFTC, and using Childcare 2000 .....	90
Figure 6.3	The percentage of lone parent claimants on FC and WFTC receiving assistance with childcare costs 1995-2001 .....	91





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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Benefits Agency
BAVO	Benefits Agency Visiting Officer
CAB	Citizen's Advice Bureau
CT	Council Tax
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ES	Employment Service
HB	Housing Benefit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IF	Innovation Fund
IP	Innovative Pilots
IS	Income Support
IT	Information Technology
IWTG	In-Work Training Grant
JC	Jobcentre
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
KI	Key Indicators
LA	Local Authority
NCOPF	National Council for One Parent Families
NDLP	New Deal for Lone Parents
ND	New Deal
NDPA	New Deal Personal Adviser
NDYP	New Deal for Young People
NDLTU	New Deal for Long Term Unemployed
Next Step Measures	Enhancements and improvements to New Deals announced by Chancellor in the November 1999 pre-budget report
NMW	National Minimum Wage
NDED	New Deal Evaluation Database
PA	Personal Advisers
Phase One	The Prototype NDLP programme in eight locations between July 1997 and October 1998
Phase Two	National roll-out of NDLP for new and repeat claimants from April 1998
Phase Three	The full national programme of NDLP in operation from October 1998
SFR	Statistical First Release
PVS	Private/Voluntary sector
WFI	Work Focused Interview
WFTC	Working Families' Tax Credit



## ***Executive Summary***

This report reviews evidence produced between 1999 and 2001 relating to the evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents. Published evaluation reports, academic research and internal Employment Service reports are considered together with published statistics and new analysis of the evaluation database. The review also looks at lone parents in relation to ONE, Working Families' Tax Credit and the New Deal for Young People.

### ***Participation in NDLP***

Measuring participation in NDLP is difficult, as participants have changed over time. For instance, there are now higher proportions of older and long-term benefit claimants. Participation has increased following the introduction of compulsory Personal Adviser (PA) Meetings. Prior to their introduction, approximately 5-10 percent of lone parents on Income Support participated in the programme. Since the introduction of PA meetings, approximately 20 percent of the lone parents attending such a meeting have gone on to join the NDLP caseload.

Explaining why some lone parents participate in NDLP and others do not, is not straightforward. Studies have found that participants and non-participants have similar personal characteristics. In addition, both out-of-work and working lone parents report similar barriers that limit the amount or type of work or training they can do. This indicates the importance of individual motivation and attitude to NDLP participation and subsequent job outcomes.

### ***The Outcomes and Impacts of NDLP***

There is a wealth of evidence available so far from a number of qualitative studies, administrative statistics (published in the Statistical First Release) and the New Deal Evaluation database that explores outcomes from NDLP. None of these provide a clear assessment of the net impact of NDLP. This will only be available once the results from the NDLP Quantitative Survey of Lone Parents are published in Spring 2003.

The evaluation evidence available to date shows that participants placed great value on PAs, confirming earlier findings on their popularity and effectiveness. PAs not only assist in progress towards work but also build confidence and break isolation. Most participants wanted direct work-related assistance and provision of such services has grown over time. "Better off" calculations proved effective in establishing and clarifying motivation to work.

There are several areas where evidence is lacking or points to the need for further explanation. For instance, there is considerable regional variation in outcomes, with especially low performance in the London region.

Education and training provision has expanded in the national programme but there is little evidence yet on take-up or subsequent work outcomes.

Summary data show that 6-7 per cent of participants receive help from NDLP with education and training but this is probably an underestimate

Evidence on provision of work-experience is mixed. Many participants valued it below other more direct assistance with job search and job entry. However, evidence from Innovative Pilot programmes that provided it showed it to be popular when it was well targeted and structured. Little positive evidence was found to support mentoring (other than from PAs), although this was based on small-scale pilots.

Overall, around 54 percent of participants who leave NDLP leave for work. Rates of success are lower for harder to help groups, such as ethnic minority lone parents and those with a disability.

Teenagers tended to have high expectations, in particular with childcare, and had concerns about low skills and poor work experience; only 39 percent left NDLP for work.

Older lone parents tended to have spent long periods out of the labour market and suffered from low self-esteem, 45 percent left NDLP for work.

Lone parents with poor health, or who care for a child with poor health, are a larger group than was expected, accounting for 22 percent of all participants. For lone fathers, this proportion rises to 35 percent. Forty-three percent of such lone parents leave NDLP for work.

Black Afro-Caribbean lone parents seem to have similar or slightly better outcomes than white lone parents. However, Bangladeshi and Pakistani lone parents have lower than average participation rates and much lower rates of leaving NDLP for work. A mixture of linguistic and cultural reasons, along with family size and composition, can partly explain these differences.

Lone fathers had been identified as a sub-group of concern by policy makers and by previous evaluations. While they suffer isolation due to their minority status within lone parent support groups, there is evidence that factors such as age, disability and reasons for entering lone parenthood explain their lower rates of job exit from the programme.

Evidence on destinations is limited, but jobs entered tend to be low-paid and low-skilled. Provisional evidence from the NDLP In Work Training Grant pilots suggests some success in assisting in this area. In-work support by PAs continues for some lone parents but its effectiveness is difficult to assess because of measurement difficulties.

Childcare remains an important constraint on work entry and work patterns, principally because of limits in supply and parents' preference for informal rather than formal carers.

Evidence from the Innovative Pilots which tried to integrate childcare into their programmes reinforces the view that it is difficult to provide sufficient flexibility in the timing and level of provision to meet the needs of those with the highest childcare barriers

### *Management and Delivery*

Overall, NDLP appears to have been effectively managed and delivered. NDLP provision uses a mixture of models, and there has been a movement from specialised provision at the District level to incorporation at the Jobcentre-level of business. This does not appear to have altered effectiveness.

PAs were well-motivated and reported high job satisfaction. This was attributed to the voluntary nature of NDLP. The PA role and approach appeared to be affected by the intensity of client contact, the nature of any follow-up strategy, and the pace and goals of agreed action.

Good communications between NDLP and other agencies increased referral rates, smoothed benefit administration and improved delivery of the programme. There appeared to be a need to improve local inter-agency working with NDLP.

### *Related Initiatives*

The benefits of the ONE service for lone parents have been lessened by implementation problems. Early evidence of increased flows into work by lone parents has not held up over time (interim evidence suggested that it marginally increased transitions into work).

Lone parents who participate in NDYP have below average flows into work.

WFTC has benefited lone parents in low paid work, becoming an essential part of household income. Take-up is estimated at 78 percent overall, but 90 percent for those working 16-29 hours. The coverage of 'eligible' childcare costs by WFTC, which tend to be formal, registered services, does not reflect lone parents' preference for informal care.

### *Future Prospects for Lone Parents*

There is still a long way to go to meet the target of 70 percent of lone parents being in work by 2010. Employment among lone parents increased to 50 percent in 2000, up from around 40 percent in the mid 1990s. NDLP has an important potential contribution to make if this challenging target is to be met.





## **1) The New Deal for Lone Parents**

This review synthesises evidence from the national evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) in order to answer the question, "What do we know about NDLP?" The main focus is on findings from the national evaluation and evidence on the programme that has come to light since the end of 1999 up to the end of 2001. This report therefore updates the previous synthesis report (Hasluck 2000), which gave a detailed description of NDLP from prototype to the end of the first year of national roll-out. A further synthesis report will be prepared in 2003 to report final results from the evaluation

The majority of new findings arise from qualitative data: interviews with lone parents (NDLP participants and non-participants), employers, Personal Advisers (PAs), other Employment Service employees and private and voluntary sector providers. Quantitative evidence also exists, from administrative databases and from the first wave of a survey of lone parents claiming Income Support (IS) commissioned specifically to measure participation in and the impact of NDLP (Lessof et al. 2001). Outcomes cannot be *causally* linked to participation in a robust way at this point in the evaluation, and current evidence on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its overall objectives is limited. Robust conclusions of this type will emerge in early 2003 from the final report of a large-scale quantitative survey of lone parents that aims to assess the impact of NDLP

This chapter provides a history of NDLP, its programme objectives and content and its links with other policy developments.

### **1.1 Policy aims**

NDLP was introduced in prototype form in July 1997 and nationally in October 1998. It is one component of a large range of "Welfare to Work" programmes designed to assist specific groups to take-up or increase paid work<sup>1</sup>. Improving participation in work forms part of the Government's attempt to address social and economic exclusion and to eliminate child poverty. The Department for Work and Pensions has a target to have 70 percent of lone parents in employment by 2010.

The NDLP programme takes forward the belief that lone parents can improve their own and also their children's welfare through paid work. It operates alongside other policies that have increased the financial gains from part-time and low paid work and that have tried to improve availability of childcare and related services.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to lone parents, other groups targeted by Welfare to Work programmes include the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed of all ages, partners of the unemployed, older claimants of out of work benefits (50+) and people with disabilities.

NDLP's history and relationship to other related policies is presented through a summary timeline of policy in Figure 1.1 below.

## **1.2 Objectives**

NDLP is a voluntary programme whose main objectives were originally set out as follows<sup>2</sup>:

1. To help and encourage lone parents on Income Support to improve their prospects and living standards by taking up or increasing hours of paid work; and
2. To improve the job readiness of lone parents on Income Support to increase their employment opportunities<sup>3</sup>

The design and implementation of NDLP recognises that lone parents have distinct needs, being singularly responsible for the care of children. The voluntary nature of NDLP reflects the difficulty in reconciling pressures to meet both caring and financial responsibilities. In many cases the reasons for lone parenthood, for both males and females, can be unplanned, occur suddenly and/or be emotionally traumatic. Balancing these responsibilities is often left to the mother and it is for her to determine the best interests of her child(ren) despite the change in societal attitudes to combining employment with motherhood (Millar and Ridge 2001)

## **1.3 NDLP policy history**

NDLP marked a sea change in active labour market programmes in the UK. It was the first of the New Deal programmes to be introduced (in prototype form in July/August 1997), pioneered the use of Personal Advisers (PAs), and was the first such programme to tackle problems of joblessness among benefit claimants whose claim was not conditional on actively searching for work. It was the first programme that had to deal explicitly with the additional problems (mainly) women face managing family responsibilities and working lives. Previous programmes were largely targeted at unemployment benefit claimants, who are predominantly male. It is therefore not surprising that NDLP has evolved since 1997 as both clients and providers have learnt from each other.

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<sup>2</sup> Since its original introduction, NDLP has been extended to lone parents not on IS (see section 1.3.2 below)

<sup>3</sup> These objectives are set out in Hasluck (2000) page 1

Figure 1 1 NDLP Time Line

<u>DATE</u>	<u>STAGE</u>	<u>DETAILS</u>
July 1997 –	Phase One - Prototype	<i>Eight separate locations ES &amp; BA responsible for four locations each. Part of “Welfare to Work” agenda introduced to encourage work amongst groups perceived as having some disadvantage in the labour market. Voluntary, with the aim of improving their job readiness and increasing their ability to take up paid work. Target Group: those who claim IS &amp; youngest child is aged more than five yrs &amp; three months.</i>
April 1998 –	Phase Two	<i>Coordinated at regional level. National roll-out of programme to new and repeat claimants whose youngest child is five yrs, three months and over and who have been claiming IS for eight weeks.</i>
October 1998	Phase Three	<i>Full-national roll-out of programme to all lone parents on IS. Inviting existing claimants for interview on gradual basis. [Process of inviting existing clients completed by April 99]. Target group: lone parents with youngest child more than five years and three months old. Delivered by ES, supported by BA.</i>
1998	National childcare strategy	<i>Government Programme to improve child care provision.</i>
January 1999	NDLP	<i>Major national advertising campaign run.</i>
April 1999 –	National Minimum Wage	
	NDLP	<i>Eight/nine ES Regions devolved management of NDLP to district level.</i>
June 1999 –	ONE	<i>12 pilot areas – single point entry into benefit system for working age claimants. Requiring them to attend work-focused interview. Three models introduced; basic model, private/voluntary sector model and a call centre model. Participation voluntary for non-JSA clients until April 2000. Objective: increase labour market participation by benefit recipient sand raise sustainable levels of employment.</i>
October 1999	WFTC	<i>Working Family Tax Credit (replacing Family Credit). In-work benefit, including 100% maintenance disregard &amp; childcare tax credit towards registered childcare.</i>
October 1999	Benefit Run-On	<i>Claiming JSA or IS for over six mths, claim two weeks benefit if working +16 hrs/wk in job for at least five weeks.</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Half 1999	Innovative Pilots	<i>Ten established across the country with each pilot running approx. 12 months. Objectives: increase participation in NDLP; improve lone parents prospects within the labour market.</i>

cont

Figure 1 1 NDLP Time Line cont

<u>DATE</u>	<u>STAGE</u>	<u>DETAILS</u>
May 2000	In-work Training Grant Pilots	Commence in 40 selected ES district and run for 12 months. Aim to increase the number of lone parents in sustainable work and increase the longevity of work. Lone parents who start work could claim £750 training grant for training not usually provided by employer.
April 2000	ONE	Compulsory attendance by non-JSA clients at first meeting with PA, as condition of receiving benefit.
2000/01	"Next Steps"	Increase the proportion lone parents from the target population who take up programme. Improve range of provision available. Extend target group of lone parents sent initial NDLP invitation letters to lone parents with youngest child aged over three/four years. PAs undertake telephone 'follow-ups' to initial letter to encourage participation. BA tailor invitation letter to lone parents with youngest child 14-15 yrs old, to encourage take-up before entitlement ends at y.c. 16 yrs. BA staff in two pathfinder areas to undertake home visits to lone parents whose youngest child age 14-15 yrs. Introduction of Innovation Fund.
	Job Finder's Grant	A £200 grant made available to NDLP participants to remove obstacles to job search.
October 2000	PA meetings	PA meetings introduced as conditional for IS for new and repeat claimants with youngest child aged over five yrs, 3mths in three pathfinder areas.
March – April 2001	Innovation Fund	Explore innovative ways of helping and encouraging take-up or improve job readiness. 10 projects running for an initial 12 month period.
April 2001	PA meetings NDLP	PA meetings compulsory, nationally for new and repeat claimants and stock claimants with youngest child 13-15 years Basic Skills screening at initial NDLP interview, extension of Work based learning for Adults to lone parents aged 18-24
October 2001	Jobcentre Plus	Piloted in 56 pathfinder areas. Similar to the existing ONE conditionality regime, provide a single gateway to the welfare system based around PAs.
April 2002	PA meetings	Compulsory PA meetings for stock of lone parent IS claimants with youngest child 8-12 yrs *
April 2003	PA meetings	Compulsory PA meeting for stock of lone parents IS claimants with youngest 5-7 yrs *

\* Tentative dates



### 1 3.1 The Programme

The programme core has changed little since its national introduction in October 1998. Lone parents who agree to join the programme attend an interview with a PA. During this interview, as appropriate, the lone parent is offered a range of services including:

- Support and guidance on job search activities,
- Development of a back to work plan,
- Information on Employment Service (now Jobcentre Plus) programmes;
- Assistance with education and training programmes and information on funding;
- Information and assistance with in-work benefits and tax credits,
- Demonstration of how much better-off they could be in work using a range of realistic examples,
- Information on the provision of local childcare and assisted funding;
- Offer of in-work support (up to eight weeks).
- Financial support for courses/interviews etc

After the initial interview, typically lasting 1-1½ hours, the lone parent may attend subsequent PA interviews or may maintain contact through telephone calls and correspondence<sup>4</sup>. Contact with the PA may even continue after the lone parent has found work. NDLP effectively acts as a source of information, assistance and support for lone parents, and participation in NDLP is thus a passport to a range of services and financial assistance. Figure 1.2 shows the standard model for NDLP provision.

### 1 3.2 Client group

While PA services have remained fairly constant, there have been a number of changes in the eligible/target group for NDLP. These changes have come from two sources:

- a) changes in policy; and
- b) the maturation of the programme and other factors affecting the demographic profile of lone parents claiming IS

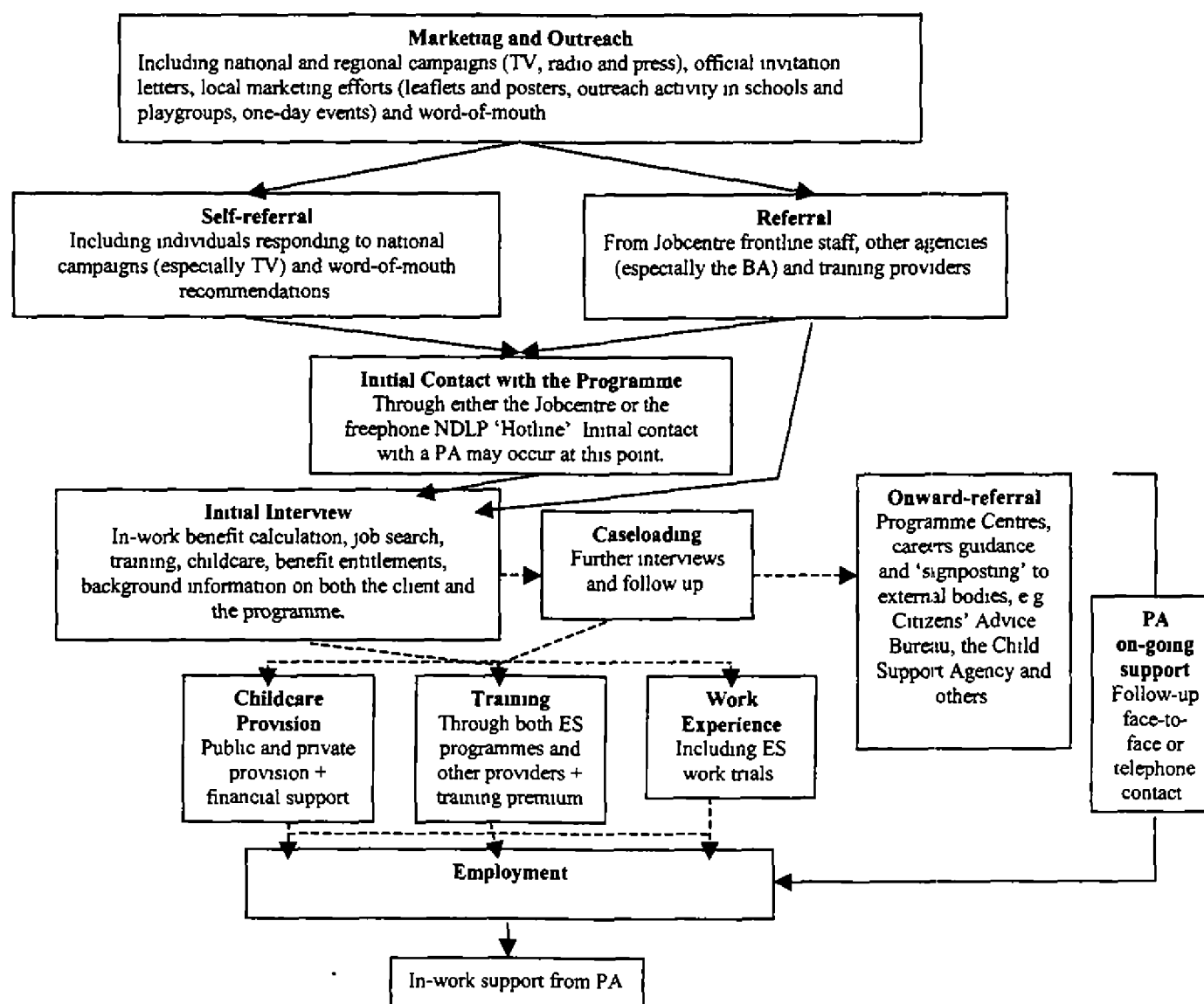
All lone parents claiming IS are eligible to participate in, and benefit from, NDLP (the '*eligible group*') and this has not changed since the prototype programme (Phase One). In Phase One and the early stages of Phase Three the '*target group*', i.e. those actively invited to participate, comprised lone parents on IS whose youngest child was aged five years and three months or older (the age at which the first term at school is completed). Significant numbers of lone parents with younger aged children came forward to join

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<sup>4</sup> Increased use of telephone follow-up in PA work was announced as one of the 1999 Next Step measures in the Pre-Budget Report (H M Treasury 1999)

NDLP and this led to an extension of the target group from May 2000 to those whose youngest child is three years or older.

Figure 1.2 Standard model of NDLP provision



Source (GHK 2001), page 25 adapted by Authors

Changes to recruitment methods have also affected the NDLP client group. Recruitment used to rely on a letter sent out eight weeks after the start of their claim, inviting lone parents to attend an initial interview to learn about and consider joining the programme. Many participants also joined after learning about the programme in other ways, such as word of mouth, advertisements etc. In the prototype programme these letters were sent to claimants in the target group who had been jobless for eight weeks or more. Since April 1998 all new and repeat claimants (*claimant inflows*) in the target group have been invited to participate. A rolling programme of inviting the stock of claimants to participate was also put in place in October 1998, and was completed by April 1999.

The introduction of compulsory work-focused interviews with a Personal Adviser (PA meetings) has also affected recruitment for those with a child aged over five years and three months. PA meetings are a condition of making a claim for benefit, and during these lone parents will be told about NDLP and encouraged, where appropriate, to attend an NDLP initial interview. PA meetings began in October 2000 in pathfinder areas and from April 2001 nationally for new and repeat claimants. The programme is being phased in for stock lone parents claiming IS. Since April 2001 PA meetings have been compulsory for lone parents with a youngest child aged 13-15 and since April 2002 for those with a youngest child aged 8-12. From April 2003 they will become compulsory for stock claimants with a youngest child aged five to seven years.

Policy changed again in November 2001 to extend availability of NDLP to all lone parents out of work or working less than 16 hours a week, including lone parents receipt benefits other than of IS. A separate evaluation of this extension is being set up and will feed into the second synthesis report to be published in 2003.

Some of these policy changes are too recent to be included in current evaluation evidence. Nevertheless it is clear that PA meetings have increased participation in NDLP and will change the composition of participants. Section 3.3 gives early evidence of how participation has been affected by these changes.

The profile of NDLP participants over the past three years has changed for other reasons. The cumulative effects of NDLP itself may have altered the composition of the stock of claimants who have not participated, perhaps increasing their tendency to be the 'hardest to help'. However, it is probable that long-term stocks of claimants will have a better understanding of NDLP and employment options in the future after PA meetings have been fully implemented. Additionally, more recent cohorts claiming IS tend to be younger lone parents and more educated and better trained than their older counterparts in the stock group.

The change in the composition of NDLP participants over time should be borne in mind throughout the remainder of this report, as evaluation evidence from early in the programme may not represent the same population as in later evidence.

#### **1.4 Complementary policies internal and external to NDLP**

A number of variations and enhancements have been made to NDLP. Some have been *internal or directly related to NDLP* while others were part of the larger welfare to work policy agenda that have an associated impact on NDLP.



#### 1.4.1 NDLP and IS

Phase Three of NDLP greatly enhanced assistance with training, education and work experience, with increased referral to *Work Based Learning for Adults* and short work experience placements through *Work Trial* programmes. Assistance with training course fees can be provided, if the course cannot be funded from other sources, along with help with associated childcare and travel costs in some cases. Lone parents participating in NDLP also receive an extra £15 a week while training for work, limited to a 12-month period, since April 2001

The interval between coming off benefit and receiving income from work is a key concern for welfare claimants looking for a job. Several initiatives have been introduced to ease this transition. *Lone Parent's Benefit Run-On* continues payment of IS for the first two weeks at work and was introduced in April 2001 for those who find work of 16 hours a week or more.

*Mortgage Interest Run-On* was introduced in April 2001, alongside existing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit run-ons. These continue help for lone parents who have claimed IS for six months for four weeks after they start working 16 or more hours a week. Additionally, coverage of IS mortgage payments was assured if the lone parent returned to IS within 12 months.

For those entering employment for less than 16 hours a week, in April 2001 the *earnings disregard*<sup>5</sup> was increased from £15 to £20 for lone parents working and claiming IS. Simultaneously, *help towards registered childcare costs* for such work was introduced, for a maximum of 12 months duration

*Child Maintenance Bonus* was introduced to reward lone parents who receive child maintenance while claiming IS. It is a lump-sum payment made to lone parents leaving IS to work 16 hours a week or more. The bonus is calculated to reflect the amount of maintenance received while claiming IS, and can be as much as £1,000

Several more discretionary schemes have been introduced. Programme-centre tailored provision from July 2000 and an *Advisers' Discretion Fund* (ADF) from April 2001 have been set up. An evaluation of the ADF is underway

NDLP *Innovative Pilots* (IPs) were established in 1999-2000 to test innovative ways of helping lone parents enter work and to enhance the national programme<sup>6</sup>. Their main objectives were to improve lone parents' prospects within the labour market and to increase participation in NDLP. The projects ran for 12-15 months and evaluation evidence from them is integrated into this

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<sup>5</sup> The earnings disregard is the amount a lone parent can earn each week without altering their benefit entitlement. Any earnings above this amount leads to a direct reduction, pound-for-pound, in benefit entitlement

<sup>6</sup> The pilots had an initial lifetime of 12 months, with the possibility of additional funding for a further six months

report. IPs were small scale and most had significant start-up problems making policy lessons sometimes difficult to identify.

The NDLP *Innovation Fund* was established to develop innovative ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of NDLP and other New Deal programmes. ES districts ran projects (either alone or in partnership with external organisations) or alternatively, private, voluntary or public sector organisations can participate. Twelve projects have been supported and ran for approximately one year between 2001 and 2002. Evaluation of these programmes is in progress and will be available for inclusion in the 2003 synthesis report. Summary details of Innovative Pilots and Innovation Fund programmes are given in Table A1 in the Appendix.

*Benefits Agency (BA) Visiting Officer Pilots (BAVO)* were set up under the "Next Steps" programme announced in the November 1999 Pre-Budget Report. BA set up a one-off pilot project in two ES districts, which built on existing visiting officer services. Income Support clients whose youngest dependent child was 14 or 15 years old were visited by an officer informing them of the NDLP programme and the fact that they would transfer to Jobseekers Allowance (or another benefit) when their child reached 16 years. Evidence from this evaluation is included in this report.

NDLP *In-Work Training Grant Pilots (IWTG)* were implemented in May 2000 in 40 districts. Their purpose was to increase the number of lone parents entering and remaining in sustainable work and to improve lone parents' long-term employment prospects. Early evidence from the evaluation, which will be published in 2002, shows that lone parents have welcomed the opportunity to train and consider that training would improve longer-term job prospects. However, the take-up of these grants was lower than had been anticipated.

Evaluation evidence from these programmes is included in this report and is in three forms: first, evidence on lone parent profiles; second, evidence on programme content and response and, where available, impact; and last, evidence on delivery and implementation issues. The impact assessment has involved very complex research as NDLP is a national, voluntary programme, making it difficult to estimate the counterfactual, that is what would have happened if the programme had not existed. The impact assessment of NDLP will be published in early 2003 and will be discussed in the second synthesis report.

### **1.4.2 Initiatives external to NDLP**

The ONE service pilots brought together the roles of the ES, BA and Local Authorities to provide a single point of contact for working age claimants, creating an integrated service aimed at delivering social security benefits within a work-focused approach. It has operated in twelve pathfinder areas since 1999<sup>7</sup>. PA meetings were voluntary for non-JSA clients until April 2000, but since then such claimants, including lone parents, have been required to attend a PA meeting as a condition of receiving benefit. Evaluation evidence of the experience of lone parents in ONE is reviewed in Chapter Six.

*Jobcentre Plus* builds on the ONE experience and was launched in selected areas in October 2001. Under *Jobcentre Plus*, all working age benefit claimants, including lone parents claiming IS, are required to attend a Work Focused Interview (WFI) with a PA at the beginning of their claim for benefit. This meeting is mandatory and the claim for benefit is conditional on participation in it. The WFI aims to ensure that every claimant can consider their realistic prospects of work together with obstacles to work. New claimants will also see a Financial Assessor who will discuss their benefit claim, gather the correct information to ensure prompt and accurate payment of benefit and can advise on in-work benefits. The *Jobcentre Plus* approach promotes job search activity in all subsequent contacts with the claimant and can provide continuing PA support and guidance for those who want it. This voluntary assistance is in addition to NDLP provision, to which lone parents can also be referred. Lone parent claimants can also be required to attend yearly, mandatory WFI with a PA. *Jobcentre Plus* was operating in 56 areas by December 2001 and will be introduced nationally over the next four years.

Other New Deals are relevant for small numbers of lone parents. For instance the *New Deal for Young People (NDYP)* invites lone parents aged 18-24 receiving JSA for early entry into the programme and provides them with the complete NDYP Gateway and Option provisions. Such lone parents have become unemployed after working and have sufficient National Insurance contributions for contributory JSA (chapter six considers the small amount of evidence from NDYP on lone parents and explains NDYP in greater detail). Few lone parents participate in the *New Deal for Long Term Unemployed (NDLTU)* because longer-term unemployed lone parents tend to claim IS. However, older lone parents whose youngest child is aged 16 or over transfer onto JSA and may fall into this programme.

The *National Minimum Wage (NMW)* was introduced in April 1999 across the UK. The adult rate of the NMW was set at £3.60 per hour and increased to £4.10 per hour in October 2001 (and will increase to £4.20 in October 2002). Lone parents are one of the key groups to be affected by increases in low wages through the NMW. Increasing wages is likely to improve work incentives for many lone parents, although the interaction with the benefit and tax systems may lessen its impact.

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<sup>7</sup> The first four areas operated from June 1999

*Working Families' Tax Credit* (WFTC) is payable to low paid workers with children and replaced *Family Credit* (FC) in October 1999. WFTC takes the form of an income top-up, which is, as a tax credit, payable with earnings. For those who use registered child care services, the *Childcare Tax Credit* (within WFTC) offers further support. Chapter Two explains how WFTC has improved incentives to work for lone parents and Chapter Six provides an overview of early evaluation evidence on WFTC.

Financial incentives and welfare to work programmes for lone parents depend on provision of childcare and recent policy developments have sought to increase the supply of childcare places across the country through the *National Childcare Strategy*. The Strategy seeks to tackle shortfalls in good quality, affordable and accessible childcare for children aged up to 14 years, including after-school and out-of-school provision. The Strategy is co-ordinated by local authorities through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP). Between April 1997 and June 2001 over 770,000 children have been assisted by new places provided through the initiative (H.M. Treasury 2001). Places for the under 5s in schools are extending coverage from all four-year olds to all three-year olds in the medium term. The Strategy also provides time-limited, supply-side grants to counter market failure – particularly where demand may be weak due to concentrations of low-income families in poor disadvantaged areas. The Government has an ambition to offer a childcare place to every lone parent entering employment in the most disadvantaged areas through the Neighbourhood Childcare Initiative.

The *Sure Start* programme also operates in deprived areas. This programme focuses on improving a wider set of services for families with young children. This means family support, advice, improved health service provision and early learning services. *Sure Start* aims to work with parents to ensure their children are healthy, confident and ready to learn when they reach school. These measures also aim to address the mismatch between working hours and the length of the school day. Lone parents are likely to be one of the main beneficiaries from improved local childcare provision.

## **1.5 NDLP Evaluation strategy**

There is a large-scale on-going evaluation programme that has been in place since the start of the NDLP prototype in 1997. This involves a continual assessment of the performance and development of the programme. The research strategy for NDLP as a national programme aimed fully to address the following major questions.

- What effect is NDLP having on individual lone parents?
- What are the training needs of lone parents?
- To what extent is there a differential impact on target and non-target groups?

- What is the impact of NDLP on lone parents' participation in the labour market?
- What is the effect of NDLP on the Employment Service, related labour market programmes or New Deal providers?
- What is the effect of NDLP on the population receiving out of work benefits and in-work benefits?
- How is NDLP interacting with the wider labour market?
- How cost effective is NDLP?

These questions are however constantly evolving and new work set underway to reflect changes in the policy agenda and in programme delivery. For example, with the widening of eligibility for NDLP, the research has moved on from considering the impact on target/non-target groups to exploring differences between different sub-groups of lone parents (e.g. based on age of youngest child, ethnicity etc).

A large volume of research into lone parents has been carried out since the beginning of NDLP, with evaluations being commissioned by both the ES and other agencies and on-going data summaries being produced on a regular basis. The evaluation evidence explored in this report comes from four main sources of information

- 1) Large scale quantitative survey: *Quantitative Survey of lone parents*  
The survey is in two stages and is designed to measure the impact of the NDLP programme. The first stage involved a postal survey designed to collect information from a sample of eligible lone parents claiming IS who had not yet participated in NDLP. A total of 42,000 responses were achieved. The second stage involved face to face interviews with a closely matched sample of 2,500 NDLP participants and non-participants who had responded to the postal survey to compare outcomes between them and estimate the programme's effect. The results from the postal survey have already been published (Lessoft et al 2001) and provide a very rich source of data on lone parents claiming IS.
- 2) Qualitative Surveys: *Qualitative Interviews with Lone Parents* -- interviews with specific groups of lone parents including NDLP participants and non-participants. *Client Satisfaction Survey* -- face-to-face interviews with lone parent participants and non-participants. *Qualitative interviews with employers and a literature review* -- a review of UK and international literature relating to lone parent employment practices and employer perceptions.
- 3) Case Studies: *Case Studies on Delivery* in-depth case studies covering NDLP delivery. In-depth case studies of each of the *Innovative Pilots*,

drawing on qualitative interviews with providers and lone parent participants.

- 4) **Administrative Data:** The New Deal Evaluation Database (NDED) underlies most statistical data produced by DWP on NDLP. It brings together data from benefit administration systems with former ES data on client activity under NDLP. *Monthly Statistical First Releases* are summary published data providing activity and destinations for NDLP drawn from NDED. *Macro-evaluation* – undertaken by the DWP Analytical Services Division. It is updated every six months and outlines trends in NDLP eligible and target populations and changes over time.

## 1.6 Outline methodology of review

This report updates a previous Summary Report published in 2000, by bringing together a wide variety of evaluation evidence on the national NDLP programme to provide a review of issues and policy lessons (including lessons already learnt from the evaluation of the Prototype NDLP). While this report covers a range of evidence since 1997, it focuses on evidence produced between the publication of the Summary Report and December 2001. In addition to published evaluation evidence, it also explores DWP in-house data analysis, the authors' own analysis of the NDED and wider academic literature on lone parent issues

There are two main difficulties faced in undertaking this synthesis

- 1) The comparability of evidence over time given programme developments and the changing characteristics of participants and eligible populations
- 2) The fact that the national evaluation is still on-going and the evidence to date is mainly qualitative

It has already been outlined how the programme has changed and we have discussed how the profiles of eligible and participating populations have been affected. These issues are kept in mind in Chapters three and four when examining evidence on participation and the experience of lone parents in the programme.

The second issue, of having to rely on qualitative evidence because results from the main quantitative survey are not yet available, is shared with the earlier review by (Hasluck 2000). Qualitative evidence provides good information about the existence and nature of issues but does not provide information on their prevalence - indeed some surveys purposefully over-sample sub-groups of particular interest. Evidence from qualitative studies can be extremely useful in highlighting areas in need of policy review and in gauging how a programme is being received. The difference in timing of

qualitative and quantitative evidence means that comparing and integrating these types of evidence must be done with great care.

This report proceeds as follows. Chapter Two updates and reviews the position of lone parents in relation to the labour market, their incomes, how populations claiming IS have changed, and how the tax and benefit systems have changed to improve the financial gains from work. Chapter Three focuses on participation in the programme. Chapter Four overviews the main evidence produced by evaluation reports on NDLP outcomes and impacts and outlines how such evidence varies between sub-groups of participants. Chapter Five considers how management and implementation of the programme has affected NDLP. Chapter Six considers evidence from other welfare to work initiatives – ONE, NDYP and WFTC in particular to consider their impact on lone parents and provide a wider context for understanding NDLP. Chapter Seven then summarises and draws lessons for evaluation and policy.

A final introductory point: the creation of the new Department for Work and Pensions from July 2001, and the incorporation of the Employment Service now Jobcentre Plus agency within DWP, means that the organisation of the main policy actors for NDLP have been reformed and renamed. This report uses the names that are appropriate to the time the evidence became available, so that references to the Employment Service remain despite the fact that from April 2002 their work will be part of Jobcentre Plus.

## **1.7 Summary**

- The main focus is on evidence produced between the end of 1999 and the end of 2001
- The synthesis considers several forms of evidence:
  - published evaluation reports,
  - internal Employment Service reports,
  - published summary statistics,
  - academic research, and
  - the authors' own analysis of the New Deal Evaluation Database
- It also examines the experience of lone parents in relation to other policy initiatives, principally the ONE service, Working Families' Tax Credit and the New Deal for Young People
- The majority of evaluation evidence relates to the period of the national operation of NDLP (Phase Three) and the first months of the operation of compulsory Personal Adviser meetings for lone parents.
- The changing policy environment, together with the changing composition of the lone parent target group, are identified as factors that make consistent comparison of evidence over time difficult

- Earlier evidence from the period has been overtaken by changes in design and implementation, often in response to perceived weaknesses brought to light by evaluation





## 2) Lone Parents in Work and on Benefit

This chapter provides some contextual information on lone parents, their employment patterns and their financial position, highlighting changes in the composition of lone parents receiving Income Support. The final section assesses how recent reforms to the tax and benefit system have improved the financial incentive for lone parents to gain work.

### 2.1 Lone parents in Britain

The increase in lone parenthood is one of the most significant shifts in family structure that occurred in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Britain. Two main routes into lone parenthood affected this trend: greater rates of marital breakdown and the birth of children outside wedlock (either in a cohabiting union – characterised by higher separation rates – or to a single parent). Table 2.1 outlines the trends in lone parenthood between 1984 and 2001. These trends are fairly dramatic showing the percentage of all families headed by a lone parent nearly doubling between 1984 and 1997. In 1997 nearly one-in-four families was headed by a lone parent. By 2001 according to the latest statistics there were 1.5 million lone parent families in Britain. Lone fathers account for around ten percent of all lone parents and although the number of lone fathers has increased over this time period the largest increases, in absolute and percentage terms, are found among lone mothers.

Table 2.1 Lone parenthood in Britain 1984-2001

	Lone parents as a percentage of all families	Lone mothers (000s)	Lone fathers (000s)
1984	13.0	809	142
1985	13.0	825	130
1986	12.8	811	128
1987	13.3	824	145
1988	13.8	841	172
1989	16.1	1,027	103
1990	16.2	1,038	108
1991	16.2	1,028	117
1992	18.7	1,061	125
1993	19.2	1,106	125
1994	21.1	1,203	137
1995	22.6	1,298	150
1996	23.6	1,361	184
1997	23.7	1,344	152
1998	-	1,431	161
1999	-	1,439	166
2000	-	1,403	153
2001	-	1,420	170

Source (Holtermann et al. 1999), table 3.2.1 (Labour Force Surveys). Numbers in italics are separately sourced from LFS 1992-2001 ES.

Lone mothers tend to be younger than married mothers although older than cohabiting mothers. The average age of children of lone parents falls between those of married mothers, who have the eldest, and cohabiting mothers, who have the youngest. In contrast, lone fathers fall into the oldest group of fathers and their children are similarly older than children living with married or cohabiting fathers. Married mothers tend to have more children than cohabiting mothers and lone parents (a similar pattern exists for lone fathers) (Holtermann et al. 1999).

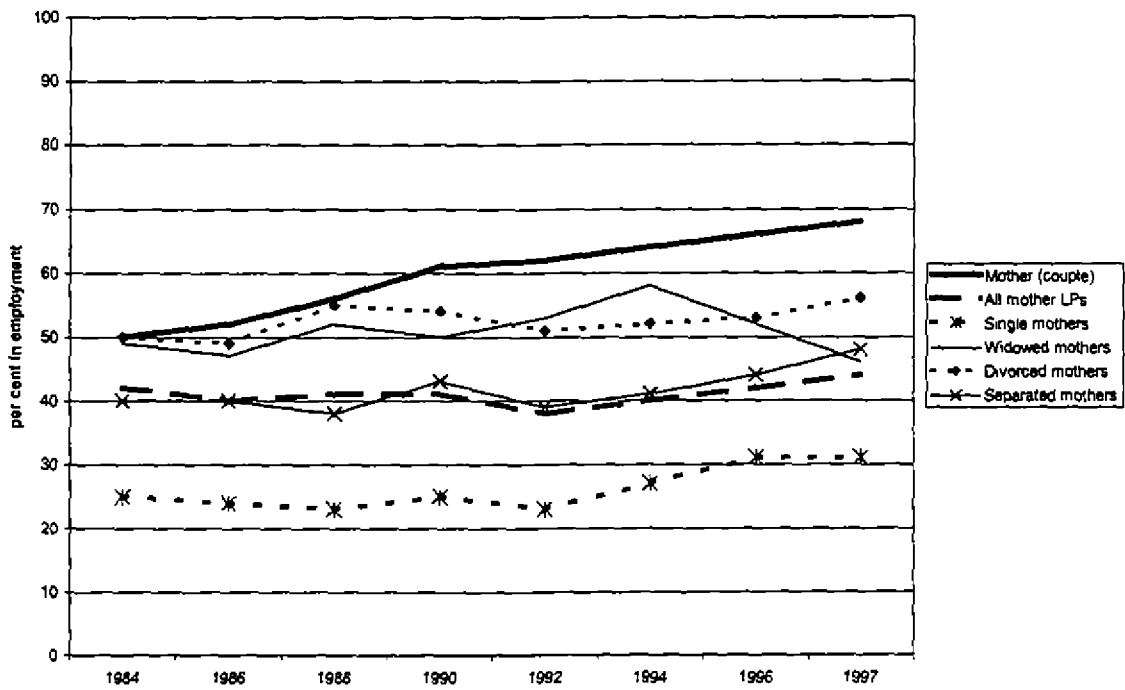
Lone mothers have lower educational qualifications than married mothers and fathers, with single (never married) mothers having the lowest levels of education among all lone mothers. The extent of lone parenthood varies across ethnic groups. An investigation of lone parenthood among ethnic groups in 1997 showed that lone mothers make up around 66 percent of Black Caribbean mothers, 20 percent of White mothers, 15 percent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi mothers, ten percent of mothers from Indian origin and 33 percent of mothers from Other ethnic groups (Holtermann et al. 1999).

## **2.2 Lone parents and employment**

Figure 2.1 shows trends in employment of mothers in Britain between 1984 and 1997 according to marital status. The first point to note is the much higher rates of employment among couple mothers compared to single (never married) mothers. Although divorced mothers and couple mothers had similar employment rates at the beginning of the period, they diverge after 1988. Employment among couple mothers has steadily increased from 1992 onwards, though the overall trend for all lone parents has been fairly flat (lone parent employment was as high as 50 percent by 2000 (Brewer and Gregg 2001)). The lowest employment rates are found among single (never married) mothers, which, although they increased after 1992, were as low as 30 percent in 1997. The high levels of worklessness in lone parent households contributes to high relative poverty rates (see Section 2.3 below). In response, the Government has set a tough target of increasing employment rates among all lone parents to 70 percent by 2010.

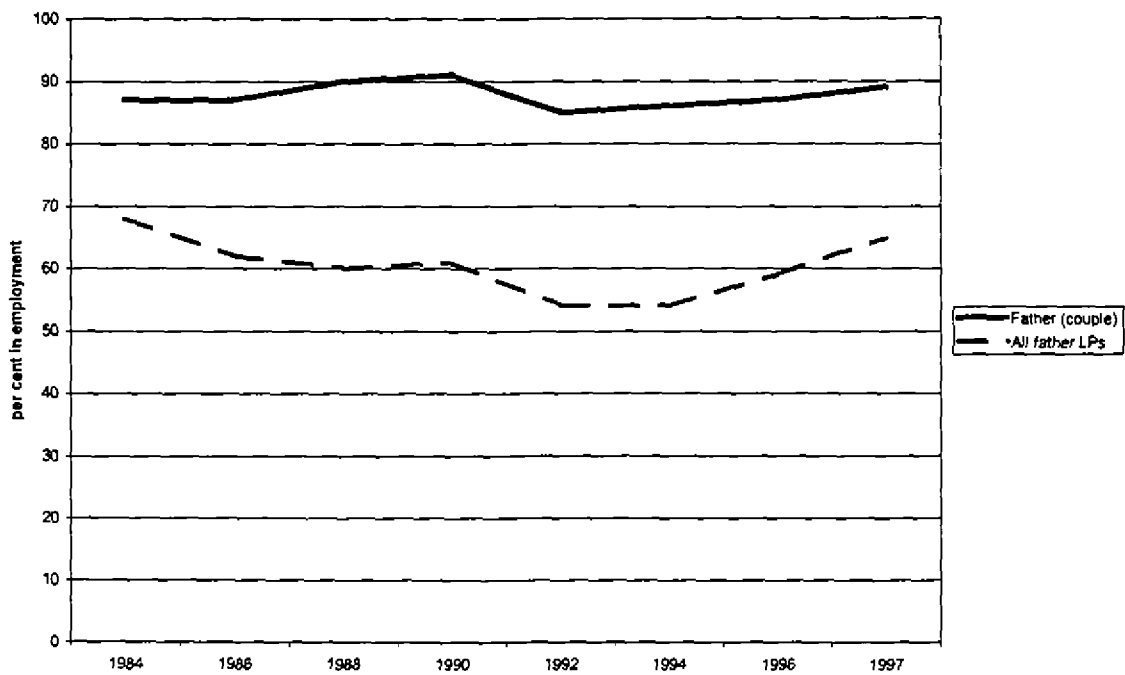
Lone fathers have much higher employment rates than lone mothers but considerably lower employment rates than couple fathers (Figure 2.2). In 1997 the employment rate among lone fathers was around 25 percentage points lower than for couple fathers. Some caution should be applied to the employment rate figure for lone fathers due to the small sample size. Even so, the overall pattern shows similar trends in employment among couple and single fathers with the exception of a more significant upturn in the employment rates of lone fathers from 1992.

Figure 2 1 Trends in employment among mothers in Britain by marital status 1984 -1997



Source (Holtermann et al 1999), table 4 2a (Labour Force Survey)

Figure 2.2 Trends in employment among fathers in Britain by marital status 1984 -1997



Source (Holtermann et al 1999), table 4 2a (Labour Force Survey)

Differences in employment rates between lone and couple parents can be due to a range of factors. Some of the difference can be explained by compositional differences in terms of employability (human and social capital), where they live (which may limit their employment opportunities), the age and number of their children. All of these factors may affect employment prospects of lone parents but the mere fact of being a lone parent can also have an impact. Entry into lone parenthood can be a traumatic time. It can also rule out the possibility of balancing the new sole childcare responsibility with work, although over time this balance may become easier to achieve. The sole responsibility for caring for children clearly puts greater time constraints on lone parents and limits the type of work they can do. It is also much harder for a single earner to find paid work sufficient to lift the family income above that which is available through benefits (see Section 2.5).

Statistical analysis carried out using the Labour Force Survey (Holtermann et al. 1999) shows that differences in the personal and demographic characteristics (which separately influence employment prospects) between lone mothers and couple mothers account for some, but not all, of the observed differences in employment rates. This implies that being a lone parent in itself reduces the probability of a mother being in work. They also show that the widening gap in employment rates between couple and lone mothers from 1990 to 1997 can be attributed to changes in the composition of these two groups rather than changes in work propensities. This suggests that compared with couple mothers, lone mothers now comprise a more labour market disadvantaged group than in the past.

The average working hours of lone mothers is very similar to couple mothers (28 hours per week in 1997) but lone fathers tend to work shorter hours than couple fathers (nearly four hours less a week) although lone fathers work considerably longer hours than lone mothers (15 hours more a week) (Holtermann et al. 1999). Lone mothers tend to work in lower status occupations than couple mothers, partly reflecting differences in educational qualifications between the two groups.

### **2.3 Financial position of lone parents and their children**

The reliance of lone parents on social security benefits, and more recently tax-credits, both in and out of work, places them and their children at the lower end of the income distribution. Increases in earnings and income inequality have meant that the relative income of many lone parents is now considerably lower than in the past. Lone parents, on average, are more likely to live in poverty than other family types (singles, couples with and without children, single pensioners and couple pensioners). Given the fact that more children now live in lone parent households than in the past and the recent diverging trends in employment among couple and single mothers, it is not surprising that the share of children living in relative poverty increased dramatically in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1968 ten percent of children lived in households managing on less than half mean income, by 1996 one-third of children were living in similarly poor households (Gregg, Harkness and

Machin 1999) Poverty rates among lone parent households are even higher. In 1979 19 percent of lone parent families were living in relative poverty (less than half mean income, after housing costs), increasing dramatically to 50 percent in 1988/89 and further to 57 percent in 1999/2000 (DSS 1997), (DSS 1999, DSS 2000a)

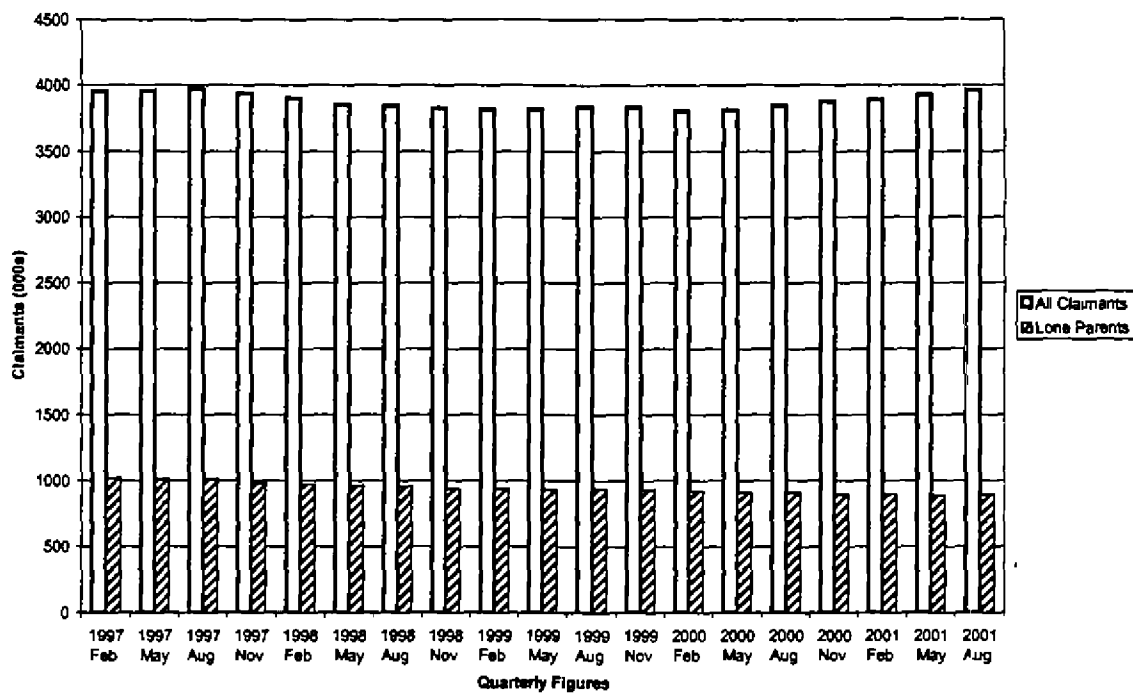
The Labour Government has formally made a commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and halve it by 2010 and, as mentioned earlier, it has also set tough targets for increasing lone parent employment rates to 70 percent by 2010. Assisting lone parents to leave Income Support and enter work, and improving their financial position through the tax and benefit system both have a key role to play if these targets are to be met. The next sections of this chapter provide information on lone parents claiming Income Support, and how reforms to the tax and benefit system have increased the financial incentive for lone parents to gain work.

## 2.4 Lone parents claiming Income Support

Figure 2.3 shows recent changes in the number of all individuals claiming Income Support between February 1997 and August 2001. In each quarter around four million individuals are claiming IS. The number of IS claimants falls in the middle of the period, by about 150,000, but rises again to the February 1997 level by August 2001. In August 2001, just under one-quarter of IS claimants are lone parents (23 percent) with the rest made up of disabled people (26 percent), pensioners (44 percent) and others (eight percent). The number of lone parents claiming IS falls over this period from just over one million in February 1997 to 893,000 in August 2001. This is not due to a decline in the prevalence of lone parenthood (see section 2.1 above) but a result of higher employment rates among lone parents aided by a buoyant labour market.

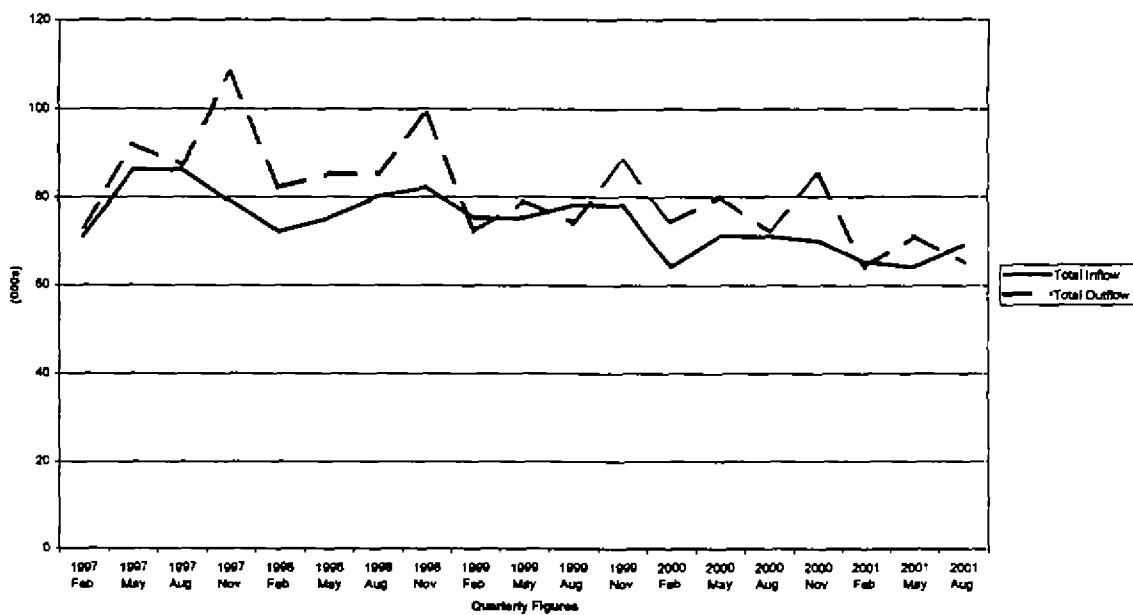
The size of the stock of lone parents claiming Income Support is determined by the inflow of lone parents onto IS, the outflow and the length of time lone parents remain claiming IS. Figure 2.4 shows the quarterly inflows and outflows. There is a clear seasonal pattern to inflows and outflows – outflows peak in the November-January quarter and inflows are lowest in the February to April quarter. Greater outflows than inflows have contributed to the decline in the stock of lone parents claiming IS, as shown in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.3 Income Support claimants February 1997 – August 2001



Source DWP Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry August 2001

Figure 2.4 Quarterly inflows and outflows: lone parents on IS – 1997-2001

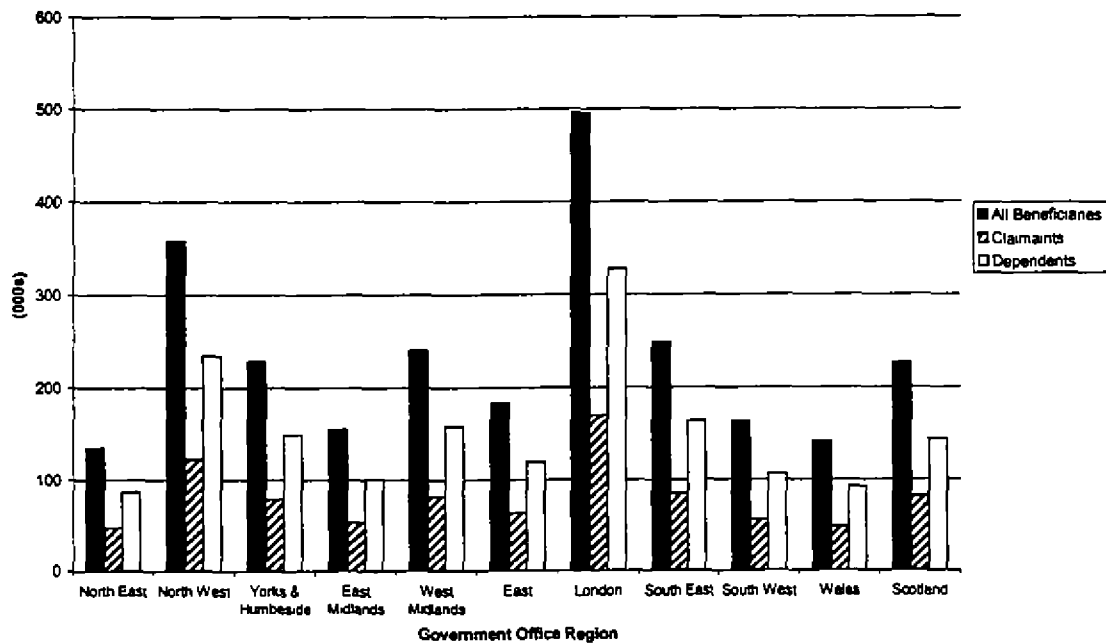


Source DWP Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry August 2001

Figure 2 5 shows the geographical distribution of lone parents and their dependents who are beneficiaries of Income Support. The largest populations of lone parents claiming IS are found in London and the North West of England (Figure 2 5) reflecting the larger than average lone parent populations in these areas (Holtermann et al 1999). Lone parents claiming IS are, on average, caring for just under two dependants (1.88). There is very

little regional variation around this average with the highest average number of dependants found among lone parents living in London and the West Midlands (1.93) and the lowest in Scotland (1.76). Larger families are more common among ethnic minorities and the higher number of dependents for lone parents in London and the West Midlands is likely to be a reflection of the ethnic composition of the population in these regions.

Figure 2.5 Geographical distribution of lone parents on IS in August 2001

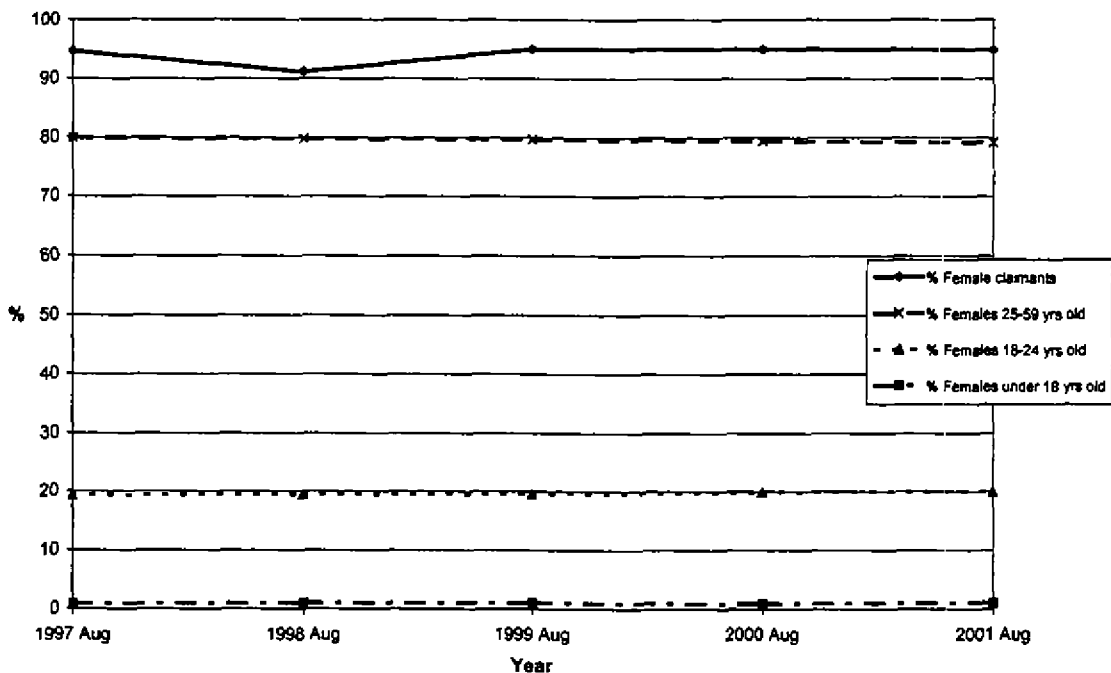


Source DWP Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry August 2001

Figure 2.6 shows the breakdown of the composition of lone parent IS claimants by gender and age. The vast majority of lone parents on IS are women (around 95 percent) but this is higher than the proportion found in the population of lone parents (approximately 90 percent). The lower share of lone fathers among IS claimants reflects the higher rates of employment among lone fathers compared with lone mothers. Most female lone parents on IS are aged 25-59 (around three-quarters) with only a small fraction aged less than 18 years.



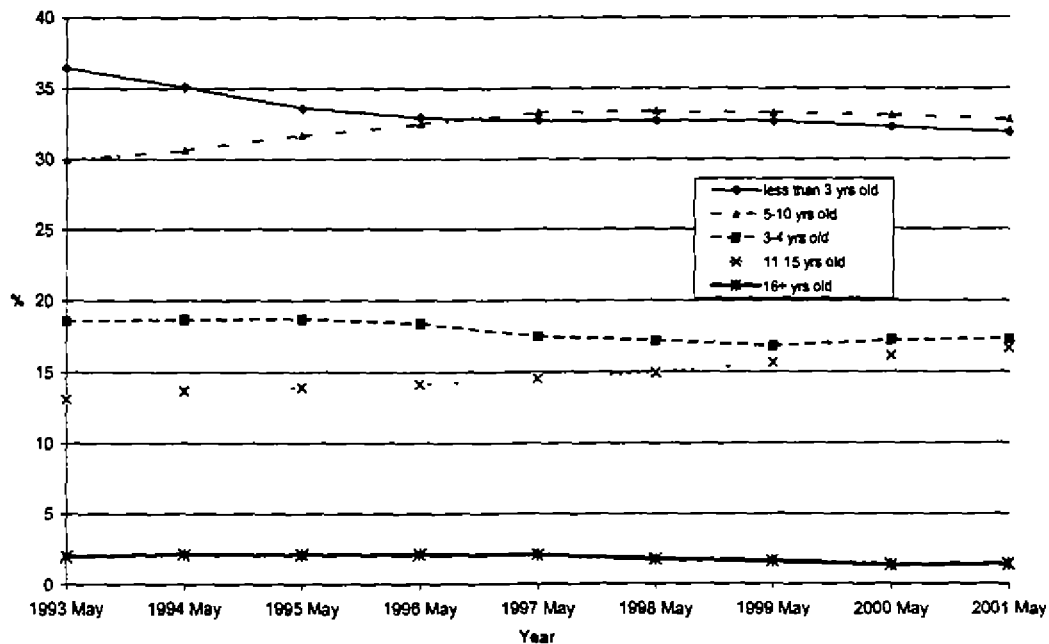
Figure 2 6 Composition of lone parents on IS by gender and age



Source DWP Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry August 1997 – August 2001

Figure 2 7, covering the period May 1993 to May 2001, charts changes in the composition of lone parents on IS according to the age of their youngest child. At the start of the period the largest share of lone parents on IS had a youngest child under the age of three followed by lone parents with a youngest child between the age of five and ten years. By the end of the period the ranking had changed so that the largest share of lone parents had a youngest child aged five to ten years. There was also a fall in the share of lone parents with a youngest child aged three to four years and an increase in those with a youngest child aged 11-15 years. Overall this implies an increase in the average age of lone parents' youngest child for lone parents claiming IS. The extent to which age of the youngest child affects lone parents' employment prospects will affect the average work prospects of lone parents on IS.

Figure 2.7 Composition of lone parents on IS by age of youngest child – 1993-2001



Source DWP National Statistics based on Quarterly Statistical Enquiry (special tabulation)

## 2.5 Tax and Benefit reform and lone parents' gain from work

Since 1997 there has been a myriad of changes to the tax and benefit system designed to improve financial incentives to work. This has included increases in the generosity of the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC), the introduction of the Childcare Tax Credit and the Children's Tax Credit, changes to the lower end of the National Insurance schedule, the introduction of a ten pence band for Personal Income Tax, and the introduction of a national minimum wage. These changes have all contributed towards increasing the returns from work for low paid workers living in low income households. However, large increases in Income Support for families with children and Child Benefit – i.e. benefits available to non-working parents – offset some of these gains to work.

Table 2.2 reproduces estimates made by (Brewer and Gregg 2001) of the financial gain to work for a lone parent working 16 or 35 hours per week at £4.20 per hour with two children under 11 years old. Using this example it is clear that there have been very small gains to work arising from the sum total of these reforms for lone parents working 16 hours per week, with the exception of the case that includes childcare at £50 per week. There are, however, greater gains to work from working 35 hours per week (lower in absolute terms but a higher percentage increase for those receiving Housing Benefit, since WFTC is counted as income in the assessment of HB). The greater incentive to take full-time work is mainly due to the lower withdrawal rate of WFTC, compared to Family Credit, as income increases.

A further financial gain from work for lone parents in receipt of child maintenance who enter work with WFTC is that they are able to retain all child support payments, i.e. child support is not counted as income for assessment of WFTC but is for Income Support.

**Table 2 2** The effect of reforms on the financial gain to work for lone parents

	Gain to work (£ p/wk)			
	16 hours		35 hours	
	1997	2001	1997	2001
No Housing Benefit	57	60	96	115
With Housing Benefit	31	32	51	68
With childcare £50/wk	15	48	81	100

*Notes.* Gains to work are calculated as the difference between zero-earnings benefit income and income after taxes and benefits in work. Lone parent has two children under 11 and takes-up all entitled benefits and works for £4.20 per hour. Tax and benefit systems have been indexed to 2000 prices.

*Source* (Brewer and Gregg 2001) calculations based on TAXBEN model

Since 1993 the employment rate among lone parent households has risen from a low of around 40 percent. The Office for National Statistics estimate that worklessness among lone parent households fell by 1.3 percent annually between 1996 and 1999 but by as much as 3 percent between 1999 and 2000. (Brewer and Gregg 2001) estimate that at least part of the increase in employment is due to the economic cycle and characteristics of lone parents but conclude that WFTC may<sup>8</sup> have raised employment of lone parents by 25,000 in its first nine months. Although there is no discussion of NDLP in Brewer and Gregg's work, at least part of the observed increase in employment among lone parents could be due to the impact of NDLP. It is also realistic to expect that there would be an interaction effect as these two policies complement each other and thereby multiply the overall impact on employment. The effect of WFTC on lone parents' employment rate is likely to be increased through NDLP meetings with PAs where WFTC entitlement can be explained and help is available with WFTC application. Analogously, the availability of WFTC is likely to increase the impact of NDLP because it improves the returns to work and thereby the incentive to find work.

## 2.6 Summary

- Lone parenthood increased substantially over the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1997 around one-quarter of all families were headed by lone parents
- Low employment rates among lone parents have contributed towards the high rates of poverty among children living in lone parent households. Lower employment rates among lone parents compared to couple parents are partly due to lower human capital and greater barriers to work as a result of sole childcare responsibilities

<sup>8</sup> This estimate is on the borders of statistical significance

- In recent years employment rates among lone parents have increased and the government has set a target of 70 percent employment by 2010.
- Increasing employment rates have been matched by falling numbers of lone parents claiming Income Support. However, as the most work ready lone parents leave IS the remainder comprise a more disadvantaged group and are by definition harder to help.
- Changes to financial support for lone parents in and out of work has improved the work incentive for lone parents since 1997. For some lone parents the gains from work remain small and the costs (financial and emotional) continue to outweigh the benefits.



### **3) Participation in New Deal for Lone Parents**

This chapter reports on the main findings that have emerged so far from the evaluation of NDLP covering lone parents' participation in the programme. The majority of the evidence collected so far is qualitative in nature, which provides a wealth of information on lone parents' and personal advisers' views but findings can vary depending on the composition of the sample. This qualitative evidence provides information on the existence and nature of issues, but not their prevalence. Further evidence from the quantitative survey will be published in 2003 and this will provide statistical evidence on participation. Published evaluation evidence is supplemented with the authors' own descriptive analysis of micro data contained in the New Deal Evaluation Database. Evaluation evidence from compulsory PA meetings is incorporated in this chapter because of the synergy between PA meetings and NDLP.

#### **3.1 Measuring participation**

The standard measure of participation involves counting the number of lone parents who agree to participate in NDLP following the initial NDLP interview. To compute a participation rate it is necessary to define which group of lone parents is of interest. Policy changes that have affected the definition of the target group, and the introduction of new procedures for NDLP, were outlined in Section 1.3. All of these changes will have affected participation rates.

Lone parents were initially invited to join NDLP by means of an invitation letter sent a number of weeks into their IS claim. There were also advertising campaigns to increase awareness of NDLP more generally. There has been a move from inviting new or repeat claimants by letter to the use of compulsory PA meetings during which, *inter alia*, participation in NDLP is discussed and an invitation to attend the initial interview is extended. For stock claimants invitation letters are still sent, as they are gradually being required to attend regular PA meetings on a rolling basis according to the age of the youngest child (See Chapter One for details).

Lone parents may additionally approach NDLP through referrals from voluntary sector organisations (e.g. Gingerbread, NCOPF, etc) or may hear of NDLP through the media or family and friends and volunteer to participate in NDLP. Furthermore, outreach services have been tried out in various Innovative Pilots, and a national service is being introduced from April 2002.

There are a number of stages of contact between lone parents and NDLP and as a consequence a number of participation rates can be computed. A range of different methods and statistics are used in official figures and evaluation reports. To avoid confusion different rates are defined as follows:

**Attendance rate**

Refers to the percentage of lone parents attending a compulsory PA meeting, of those required to attend

**Translation rate**

Is used to describe the percentage of lone parents who attend an NDLP initial interview following a PA meeting

**Conversion rate**

Relates to the percentage of lone parents joining NDLP following a PA meeting and an initial NDLP interview

**Participation rate**

The percentage of all lone parents on IS who choose to join NDLP

These rates can be computed for different populations of lone parents such as NDLP eligible and target groups. Table 3.1 shows the latest statistics on NDLP participation for eligible lone parents in the stock and flow groups

**Table 3.1 Participating in NDLP**

	June 2001	August 2001	October 2001	December 2001
<b>Stock</b>				
Attendance rate	78%	75%	77%	72%
Translation rate	35%	31%	26%	25%
Conversion rate	28%	24%	19%	16%
<b>Flow</b>				
Attendance rate	86%	83%	83%	83%
Translation rate	38%	38%	34%	38%
Conversion rate	26%	24%	21%	24%

*Notes* the translation rate statistics are for the percentage of lone parents who agreed to attend an NDLP initial interview Rates for stock claimants for December 2001 are slightly lower than expected because there is a lag time between invitation to attend and attendance that is reflected in the more recent data

*Source* ES Internal evaluation of PA meetings

The figures in Table 3.1 show that lone parents have high but not full attendance rates These PA interviews are compulsory and non-attendance should only be due to an interview being deferred or waived in exceptional circumstances or if no claim is pursued. The attendance rates are higher for the flow than for the stock group and part of this can be explained by a higher proportion of deferred or waived cases among the stock (eight percent compared with six percent respectively) Lone parents making a new or repeat claim who do not attend an interview and whose interview was not deferred or waived, will not have their claim for IS approved For lone parents in the stock group a benefit sanction (an approx £10 a week reduction in Income Support until attendance at a PA meeting) should be imposed. Early evidence suggests that the number of sanctions has been low and this is being explored and monitored It should be noted that there is a lengthy process to impose a sanction on a stock claimant. The translation rate is also higher for

lone parents making new or repeat claims and there is some evidence that the translation rate for lone parents in the stock group has fallen between June 2001 and December 2001. A lower translation rate could be due to a greater proportion of the stock group comprising less 'work-ready' lone parents, increased time pressure on PAs or a lag between invitation and attendance that shows up in the data for the more recent months. Around one-quarter of lone parents making new or repeat claims for Income Support, join the NDLP caseload after attending a PA meeting. After August 2001 the conversion rate is lower for the stock group than for the Flow group and this is likely to be driven by the lower translation rate. It should be noted that the data series is currently too short to determine if seasonal factors are behind the trend.

### 3.2 Improving participation

The overall participation rate increased with the introduction of PA meetings (from around 6 percent to around 20 percent) but could still be considered to be below an optimum rate. Various initiatives have attempted to increase this rate. Early evidence from the prototype programme evaluation and the national programme evaluation - before the introduction of compulsory PA meetings - showed that lone parents often felt that some form of contact following the initial invitation letter may have helped them to come forward (Hales et al. 2000). This follow-up contact could also help in the cases where lone parents reported that they did not recall receiving the invitation letter even though records showed that they had been sent. As a result initial invitation letters are now routinely followed-up with a telephone call.

Evaluation evidence suggests that there are mixed views on the effectiveness of the invitation letter which was one of the main methods used to encourage participation in NDLP. Some lone parents found the letter too formal and did not respond. Others are reported to have either ignored or torn up the letters, finding them ambiguous or patronising. Some misunderstood the invitation thinking it was a threat to withdraw benefits if a job was not found (GHK 2001). PAs suggested a more personal letter of introduction that could dispel some fears and preconceptions (GHK 2001). However, evidence of how the letter was received by lone parents differs between the *Client Satisfaction Survey*, which reports 91 percent positive response to its use and tone, and the *Case Studies on Delivery* research where just under half of lone parents (for whom the letter was the first form of contact with NDLP) felt the letter had a friendly tone (Hamblin 2000a). In the *Client Satisfaction Survey* most lone parents who received the invitation letter reported that it was easy to read and sounded like an invitation not an order. Nevertheless this study also revealed that only around 20 percent of lone parent participants interviewed (which included lone parents in target and non-target groups) had first heard of NDLP via the formal letter. The majority of NDLP participants had first heard of the programme through other means. It is, of course, difficult to get a good response from a standard mail-shot which can easily get lost in the volume of daily post. It is also not surprising to find differing views and interpretation from qualitative surveys trying to assess customer satisfaction, which can differ in terms of the composition of the sample.



What effect have PA meetings had on participation? PA meetings for new and repeat claimants were in part introduced for lone parents to increase awareness of NDLP and thereby improve participation rates. However because a more diverse section of the lone parent population now attend initial NDLP interviews the conversion rate onto NDLP is likely to be lower than before. Overall, it seems clear that this strategy is paying off in terms of increasing participation rates on NDLP by bringing the programme to the attention of lone parents.

Referrals from BA offices and from other Jobcentre staff are highly variable across Jobcentres, and are dependent on a wider knowledge of NDLP among Jobcentre and BA staff and the cultivation of good relationships with NDLP PAs (GHK 2001). A variety of other means are used to increase lone parents awareness of NDLP such as national advertising campaigns, leaflets and posters in public places where lone parents are likely to visit. Telephone help lines have been set up to encourage lone parents to make contact with the programme (GHK 2001). These are found to raise awareness of the programme, but a "word of mouth" recommendation from family or friends remains the best form of publicity.

Evidence from the NDLP Innovative Pilots (IPs) showed that better liaison with local community-based organisations for lone parents could improve knowledge of the programme and increase participation. Greater awareness of NDLP was also found among well-established organisations that enjoyed trust among their lone parent clients and were able to recommend NDLP. On the other hand, IP providers not fully aware of what NDLP had to offer, and who had not established good relations with the local PA staff, had little impact on improving referrals to NDLP.

The evidence on what form of liaison worked best showed that personal contact established between IP providers and PAs was important, but also that reliance on individuals to initiate and maintain contact between NDLP and IPs was unsatisfactory. For instance, the IP Children's Links initially had good contacts with the NDLP programme, but this broke down with the departure of a particular PA and in the end Children's Links had a limited impact on NDLP caseload (Pearson and Yeandle 2001a). Methods that worked best involved NDLP PAs attending sessions at the organisation, for instance SCOOP, Gingerbread's Advice Line (Stiell and Yeandle 2001b) and Positive Options (Pearson and Yeandle 2001d). Such attendance promoted the development of trust and built confidence. It also provided the PA with the opportunity to emphasise the financial benefits and support available from NDLP.

There is also some evidence from the IP evaluation that outreach activity could attract the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged lone parents. These include those who had been out of the workplace for a long time. Some of the IPs were designed to raise the profile of NDLP through supplementary marketing – Rainbow Road Show and Gingerbread's Advice Line proved successful in attracting the 'hard to reach' lone parents (Pearson and Yeandle 2001e). However, most of the IPs were hampered by start-up problems and

due to their small scale the numbers of participants were too few to test for significant effects on NDLP participation.

Another type of outreach work was the BA Visiting Officer (BAVO) Pilots. These involved home visits for lone parents with a youngest child aged 14-15 years old, and who would soon leave Income Support to join Job Seeker's Allowance or another benefit, in an attempt to introduce them to the NDLP programme and help them to start considering work. The pilot took place in Grimsby and Salford, two economically depressed areas with high levels of unemployment. The results were very positive in terms of recruiting lone parents to attend a PA meeting to discuss work opportunities and in terms of getting lone parents to think about their future. The convenience of home visits was appreciated by this group of lone parents (Hamblin 2000b)<sup>9</sup>

### **3.3 The characteristics of lone parents participating in NDLP**

In this section information is drawn from the New Deal Evaluation Database (NDED) and published figures from the *Statistical First Release*. The statistics cover the period November 1998 to September 2001. This section covers the characteristics of lone parents who participate in NDLP and how the demographic composition of NDLP participants has changed over time. The NDED contains information collected for administrative purposes and there is limited information on the characteristics of lone parents. Information is also available from the first round of the quantitative survey on approximately 2,000 lone parents who participated in NDLP. More detailed information will be available in early 2003 with the publication of the second round of the quantitative survey of lone parents.

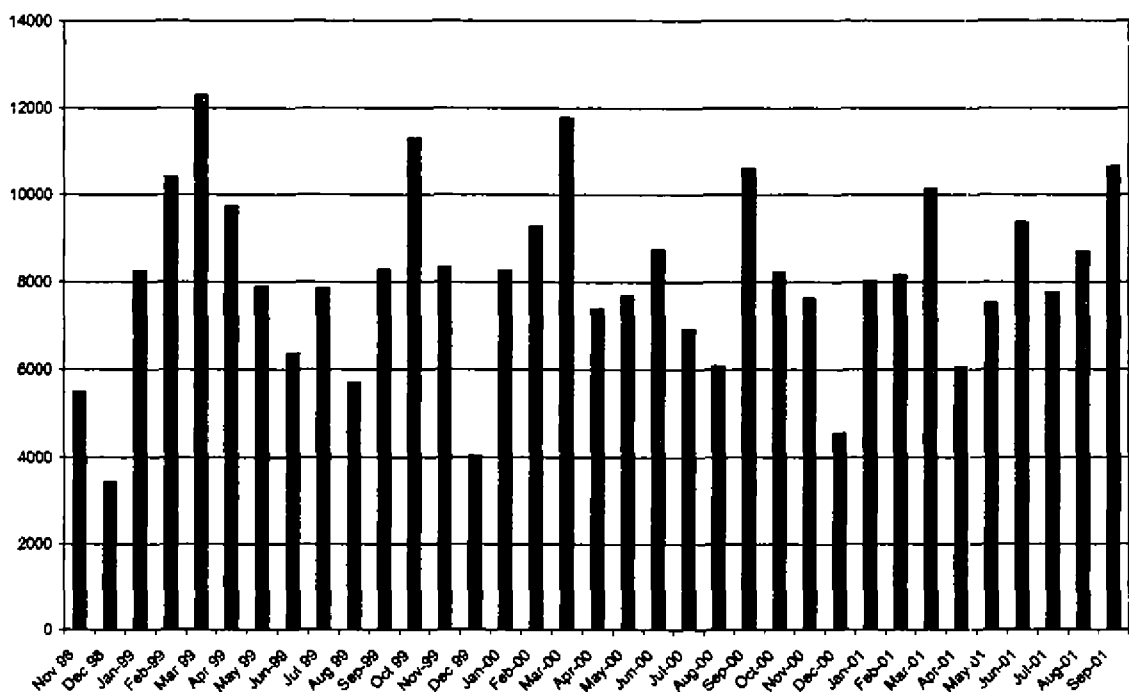
#### **3.3.1 The composition of NDLP participants**

Before turning to the composition of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload (i.e. lone parents classified as participating in the programme) the monthly inflows of lone parents onto NDLP are examined (Figure 3.1). The smallest flows onto NDLP are found in December and August of each year. These months are particularly problematic for lone parents with regards to childcare as school age children will be at home. It is therefore likely that lone parents are deferring NDLP interviews until their children return to school. The highest inflows are found in September/October and March. The average monthly inflow between November 1998 and September 2001 is 8,300 lone parents.

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<sup>9</sup> See discussion in Section 4.7.2 below

Figure 3.1 Inflows to NDLP – November 1998 to September 2001

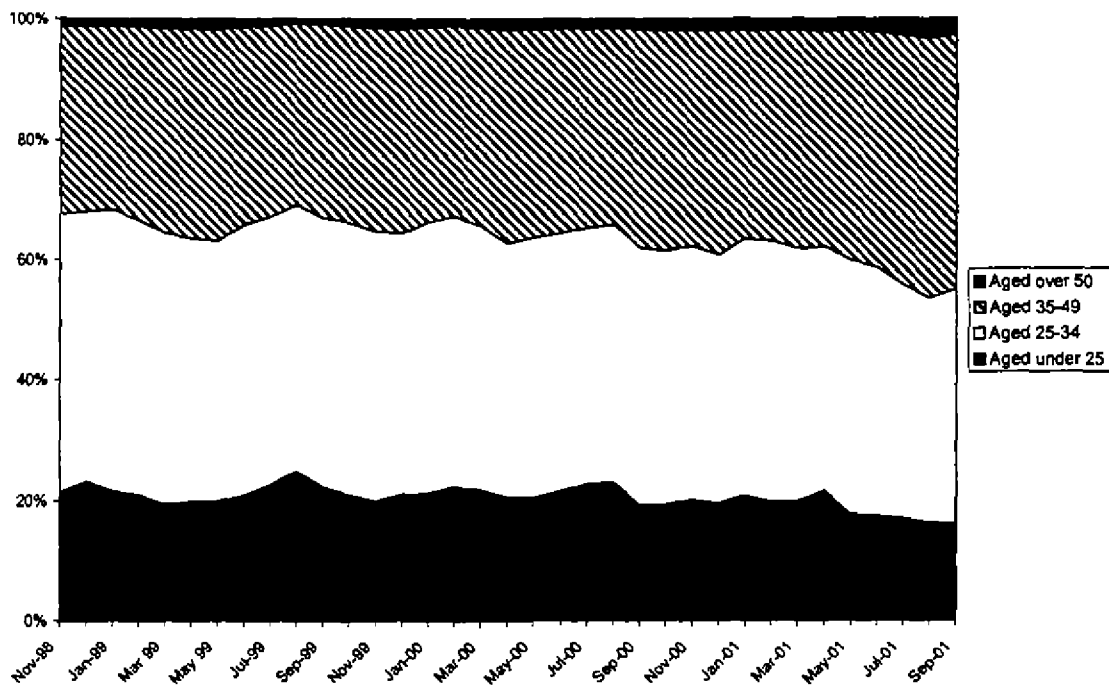


Source New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

The majority of NDLP participants are lone mothers (approximately 90-94 percent) and their share is equivalent to the share of lone mothers among lone parent IS claimants. Lone mothers are no more or less likely than lone fathers to participate in NDLP. There has been no noticeable change in the share of lone fathers among NDLP participants in the first three years of NDLP.

Figure 3.2 shows the age distribution of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload in each month between November 1998 and September 2001. The age composition of lone parents joining NDLP has changed over time. At the beginning of NDLP Phase Three the largest share of lone parents joining NDLP were aged 25-34 years (around 45 percent). However, by September 2001 lone parents joining NDLP were more likely to be aged 35-49 years (approximately 42 percent). This implies that overall lone parents joining NDLP are on average older than they were when NDLP was first introduced. As Figure 2.6 showed this is not driven by an increase in the average age of lone parents claiming Income Support. However, the statistics cover the stock of all IS claimants and there may have been a change in the average age of lone parents joining IS.

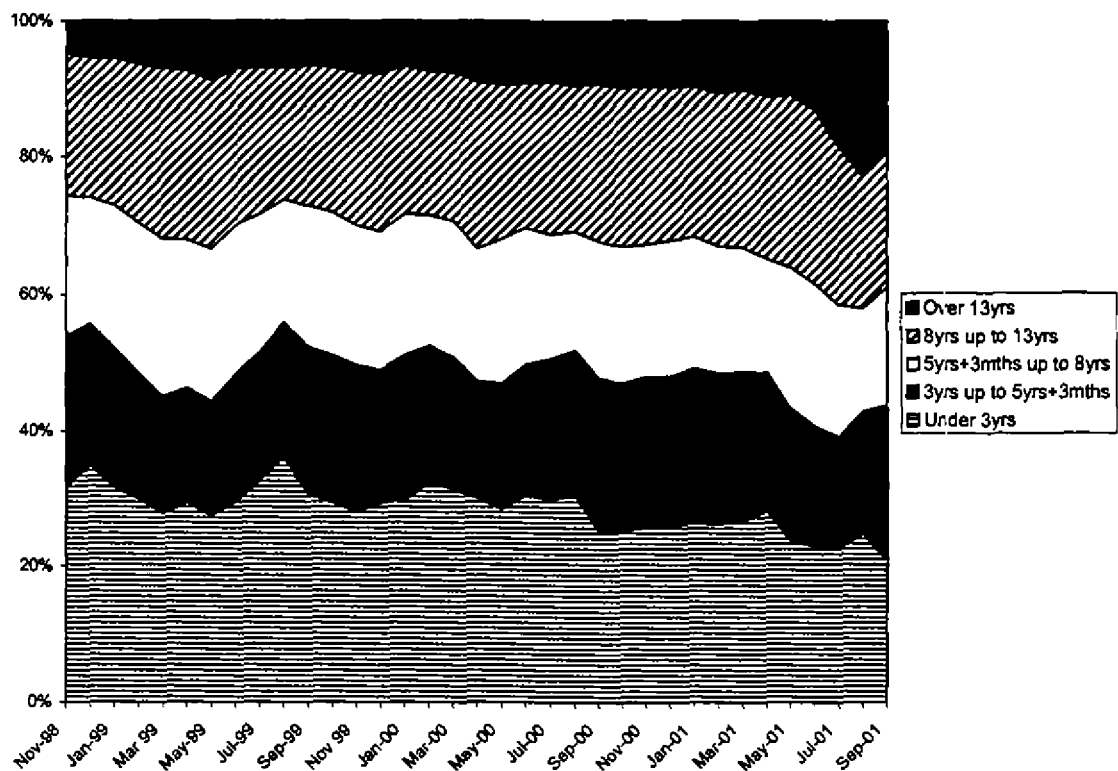
**Figure 3 2** Age of lone parent – lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001



Source New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

The composition of lone parents joining NDLP can be described in terms of the age of the youngest child (Figure 3.3). At the start of this time period, the largest share of lone parents had a youngest child under the age of three (around one-third). When NDLP was first introduced on a national basis it was targeted at lone parents with a youngest child of at least school age (five years and three months). It is clear from this chart that lone parents who had children out of the target age range formed a large proportion of lone parents joining NDLP at the start of the programme. Due to the popularity of the programme among lone parents with younger aged children, invitations were extended to lone parents with a youngest child aged three years and over from June 2000. From the descriptive aggregate statistics presented here, the extension of invitations to lone parents with younger children does not appear to have increased their share among NDLP joiners. However, the introduction of compulsory PA meetings for lone parents whose youngest child is aged 13-15 does appear to have increased participation among these lone parents. Although, some of the change is likely to be related to the fact that the average age of the youngest child among lone parents claiming IS has increased over this time period (see Figure 2 7 above).

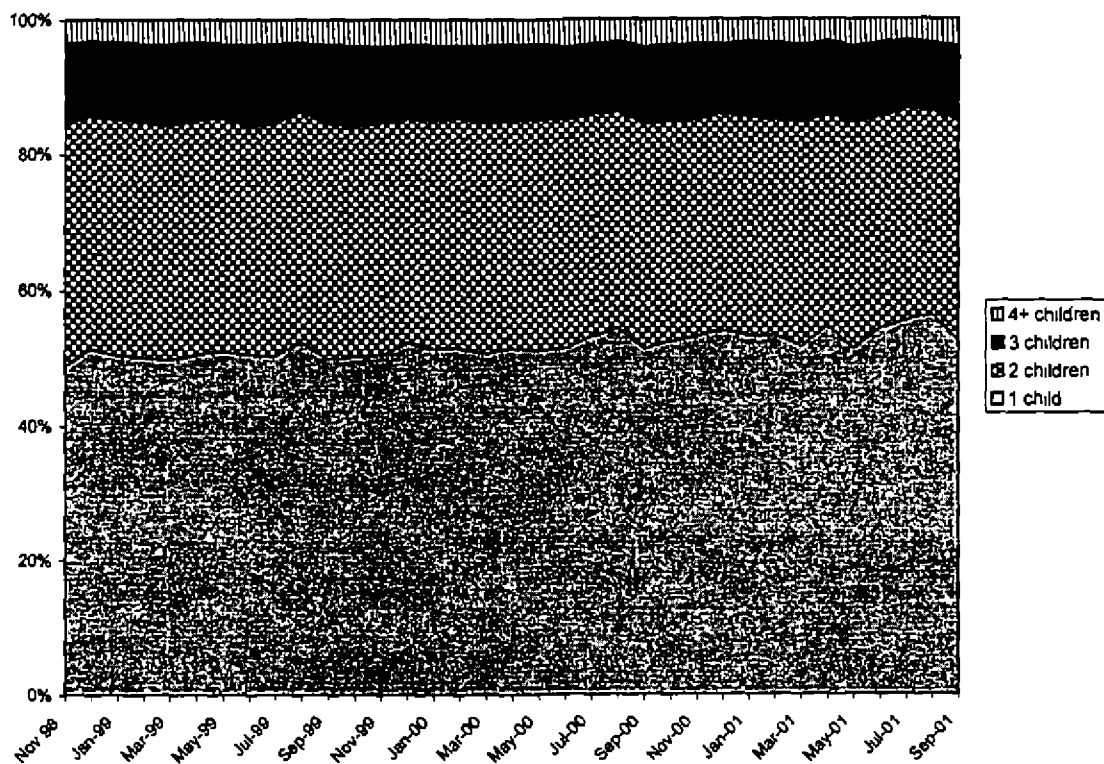
Figure 3.3 Age of youngest child – lone parents joining NDLP  
November 1998 to September 2001



Source New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

Around 50 percent of lone parents participating in NDLP only have one child (Figure 3.4). Participating lone parents with larger families tend to have two children (about 33 percent) although a significant minority of participating lone parents have three or more children (around 14 percent). Lone parents with three or more children are likely to face some of the greatest barriers to work due to the costs and logistical problems involved with arranging childcare. This is not helped by the fact that WFTC provides no additional financial support for childcare costs (childcare tax credit) for families with more than two children. Figure 3.4 shows that there have not been great changes in the size of lone parent families among joiners to NDLP although the proportion of lone parents with only one child rises slightly at the end of the period.

**Figure 3.4** Number of children – lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001



Source: New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

The majority of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload are White (around 85 percent), approximately ten percent are from an ethnic minority and five percent prefer not to report their ethnic origin. There exists a slightly higher proportion of ethnic minorities in the lone parent population than in a similar age group in the general population (nine percent compared with six percent) (Marsh 2001) and this is reflected in the NDLP caseload. Figures from the quantitative survey suggest that, with the exception of Black lone parents, lone parents from ethnic minority groups have lower participation rates (1.0-6.0 percent) than White lone parents (6.6 percent). However, it is not possible to detect from the quantitative survey whether participation rates vary within the broad ethnic groups identified, e.g. Asian ethnic minority groups include all Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi lone parents. This means that cultural differences within ethnic groups, which may affect attitudes towards employment and therefore participation in NDLP, are not captured. The variation in participation rates by ethnic group could also be a reflection of differences in personal characteristics such as age and number of children, which are known to affect both participation rates and employment.

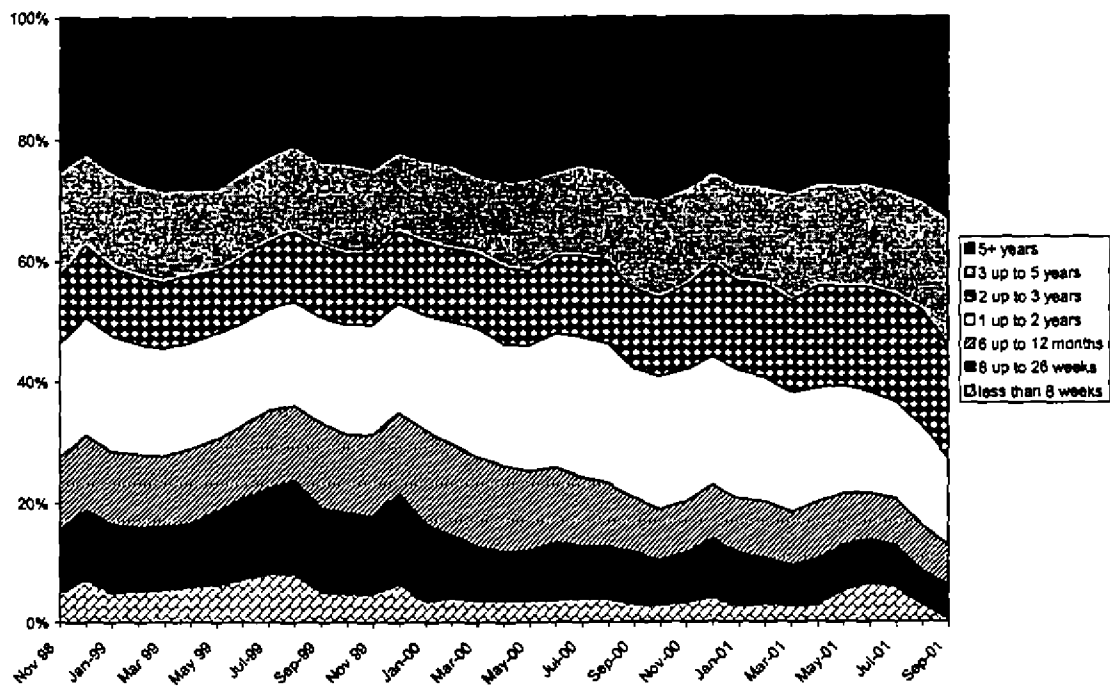
A very small proportion of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload report that they are disabled, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act definition, (three to four percent). This is considerably lower than the share of DDA disabled people in the working age population (around 16 percent in Spring 1999) and among the wider lone parent population where 18 percent of all lone parents are, according to the Spring 2001 LFS, either DDA disabled or have a work limiting illness. This participation rate undoubtedly reflects the additional barriers to work that are faced by disabled lone parents<sup>10</sup>. It is also likely to reflect the fact that many disabled lone parents will be claiming Incapacity benefit and not yet eligible to participate in NDLP.

Over one-fifth of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload have been claiming Income Support for five years or longer. This group clearly has had little work experience in the recent past, although some may have worked less than 16 hours per week and within the IS earnings disregard limit. Around one-third of lone parents had been claiming IS for less than one year when they joined the NDLP caseload. Figure 3.5 shows that by September 2001 the composition of lone parents joining the NDLP caseload had shifted towards lone parents with longer IS claims, with declines in the share of lone parents claiming IS for less than two years prior to joining NDLP. This may suggest that the most recent inflows onto NDLP consist of harder to help lone parents lacking recent work experience. This is consistent with the finding that more recent NDLP cohorts have older children than at the start of the programme and is also consistent with the introduction of PA meetings in May 2001, which have targeted lone parents with older children.

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<sup>10</sup> Disabled lone parents also qualify for the New Deal for Disabled People, which has been available nationally only since July 2001

Figure 3.5 Length of IS claim prior to joining NDLP - lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001

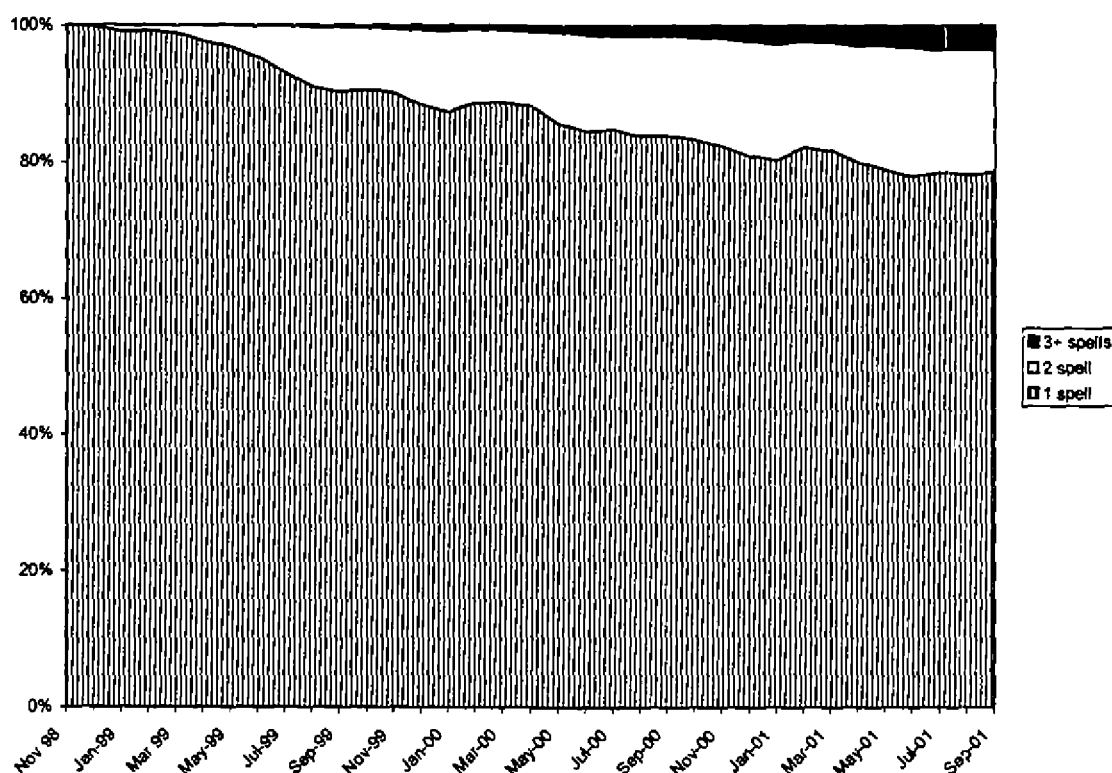


Source New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

As the length of time NDLP has been in place increases, there is likely to be an increase in the share of lone parents who participate in NDLP on more than one occasion. Lone parents who joined the programme but found that they were unable to start work or training at that time may return to NDLP in the future. Lone parents successfully finding work may return to Income Support for a number of different reasons and rejoin NDLP some time later. Figure 3.6 shows the growth in multiple experiences of NDLP since its introduction in 1998. Lone parents voluntarily join NDLP and are classified as participants until they leave either on their own accord (as a result of a change in circumstance such as finding work, re-partnering or because they no longer require assistance) or sufficient time elapses with no contact with the PA for the PA to deem that the lone parent is no longer actively participating in the programme. By September 2001 around one-in-five lone parents joining the caseload had previously participated in NDLP.



**Figure 3.6** Number of previous New Deal spells - lone parents joining NDLP November 1998 to September 2001



Source: New Deal Evaluation Database (microdata) October 2001

### 3.4 Explaining participation

Why are participation rates in NDLP, even after the introduction of PA meetings only in the region of around one-in-five lone parents with school-age children? There are various reasons for this. The answer lies in the profile of lone parents, their barriers to work and the design as well as the implementation of the NDLP programme and the rewards from returning to work. This section turns to evidence that looks at how the claimant profile and barriers to work faced by lone parents are connected to participation.

It is still too early to report on statistical participation profiles from the national evaluation but there are interim findings from the first round of interviews from the *Quantitative Survey*. These confirm that the barriers to work associated with lone parents' age, human capital, their children's age, and the local environment are also barriers to participation. Participation is higher where the youngest child is over five years and higher among better-qualified lone parents. Younger lone parents were also found to be more enthusiastic. Lone parents living in social housing, who lack access to a telephone and are reliant on public transport, were found to have low participation rates. Similarly those more likely to contact other services and get advice from others are more likely to participate (Lessof et al 2001). This evidence confirms that NDLP participants are those who are, not surprisingly given the focus of the programme, more likely to be ready to seek work.

A strong predictor of participation in NDLP found in the quantitative survey was a lone parent's own assessment of when he or she hopes to start work. Fifty-six percent of lone parents participating in NDLP hoped to start work within the next 12 months, while only 27 percent of non-participants hoped to find work over a similar time period. Nearly 40 percent of non-participants stressed that work was not an option in the next three years.

Qualitative evidence looking at participants' initial expectations and motivations at the point of joining the NDLP programme was used to identify four main types of joiners (Lewis et al. 2000):

- The curious who saw nothing to lose but who had no clear work motivation;
- Those that needed guidance, often described themselves as "thinking about it" or "in two minds" but who had no very clear work motivation;
- Those who wanted to find specific help to assist them and who had a clearer work motivation,
- Those who wrongly presumed that participation was compulsory

This clearly indicates that participation is not always directly linked to motivation to work, and qualitative studies suggest that barriers to work and barriers to participation cannot be exactly equated. There are lone parents with no or few barriers to work that do not participate and vice-versa. Non-participants tended to fall into two groups;

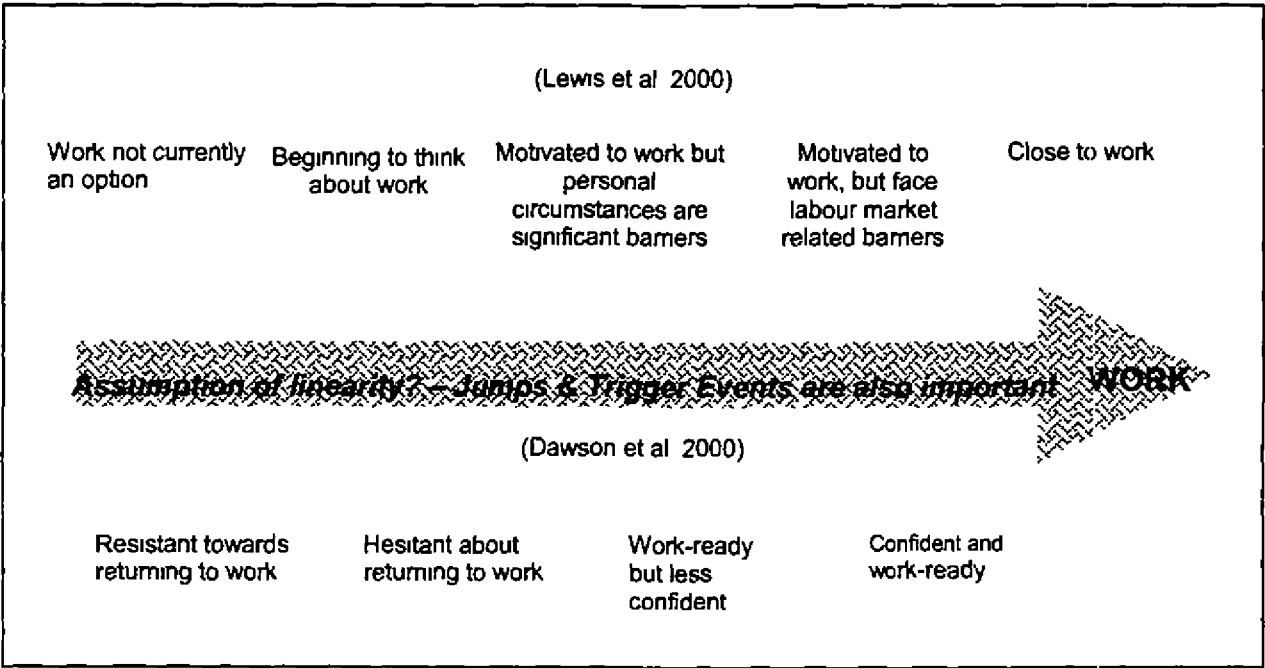
- 1) those who can cope on their own, who were very confident, tend to be highly qualified or with a lot of recent work experience, or
- 2) those who felt they had too many barriers to overcome, both physical and emotional and where such barriers were longer-standing or perceived as permanent

In addition to these two groups of non-participants there is another group of non-participants who are unaware of NDLP and what it can offer them.

Figure 3.7 gives a summary of two typologies produced from evaluation evidence to explain barriers and attitudes to work among participants ((Lewis et al. 2000) and (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000)). The typology of participants in *Lone Parents and Personal Advisers Roles and Relationships* (Lewis et al. 2000) uses underlying demographic and life-circumstances alongside attitudinal evidence. The authors see participants for whom work is not currently an option as being primarily constrained by a variety of reasons, largely full-time caring, child health difficulties, low qualifications and limited work experience and lone parents who were adverse to utilising formal childcare. A second type comprises those beginning to think about work. These lone parents may job search informally, have limited or no

qualifications and/or four years or less work experience in unskilled/semi-skilled jobs. A further group are motivated to work but have significant barriers to work such as; their own or child's ill health/disability, children's behavioural problems, depression, lack of confidence, isolation, stress, homelessness and debt; no advanced level education, and or no qualifications at all. This group had varied work experience, some had never worked. A fourth group were motivated to work, actively seeking work but had perceived barriers such as lack of suitable and affordable childcare, finding suitable remuneratively rewarding work and poor confidence. They tended to have a range of qualification levels and varied work-experience. The last group were close to work and had academic and vocational qualifications, were active in formal and informal job search and had longer work histories and more recent work experience.

Figure 3.7 Barriers to work. NDLP participants



Comparing this typology to the more attitudinal one developed by the authors of *New Deal for Lone Parents. Report on Qualitative Studies with Individuals* (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000, ESR55) "Resistant to work" groups were those for whom training and work were not found to be feasible or desirable. The group that was "hesitant towards returning to work" faced current barriers but wanted to work in the future. The "Work-ready but less confident" group were described as motivated but with barriers such as low confidence, while the "Confident work-ready" group saw few significant barriers and tended to be better educated.

Both typologies identify a group of participants who have large and significant barriers to work – both attitudinal and circumstantial. However, there is no evidence yet to establish why such lone parents participate while others with similar characteristics do not. Evidence shows that similar limiting 'barriers' exist for lone parents in and out of work (Lessof et al 2001). Both typologies

also accept an underlying assumption of linearity – of distance from work – without reference to what may be termed “trigger events” or “jumps” in motivation and attitude that often precede a return to work (Millar and Ridge 2001). The decision to participate, nevertheless has been linked to the following factors:

*Trigger events:* such as a child starting school or nursery, health improvements, caring responsibilities ending/easing. Participants often talked of a “right time” (Lewis et al. 2001) and this idea of a correct time has been confirmed in long-standing survey evidence of lone parents over the 1990s ((Marsh et al. 2001) - see discussion in Chapter Four)

*Underlying situation:* personal and family circumstances meant that lone parents were already thinking about work

*Programme Perception:* views and opinions about the objectives of the programme or about whether the programme could actually do “anything to help” (Lewis et al. 2000).

Evidence on motivation from other qualitative studies supports the point on programme perception. *Case Studies on Delivery* and the *Client Satisfaction Survey* evidence suggests that motivation for joining NDLP was high when linked to the perceived opportunity to gain information and advice regarding benefit entitlement and work prospects ((GHK 2001) and (Hamblin 2000a)). Obtaining advice and assistance with job search was found to be important for many lone parents who had already started looking for work but who needed help with filling in job application forms, producing CVs and with interview techniques. Only a minority of participants interviewed had joined the programme to undertake training courses or gain qualifications to improve or update their skills, or to facilitate a career change ((GHK 2001) and (Hamblin 2000a))

While not necessary for participation, motivation to work was nevertheless a common reason for participation. Given the voluntary nature of the programme and its primary focus on assisting lone parents in their search for work, it is not surprising that participants were keen to return to paid employment. This is confirmed by PA evidence, which reported that the voluntary nature of the programme meant that those who participated in NDLP were highly motivated. PAs felt that lone parents were eager to return to work but often lacked confidence and tended to undersell their skills (GHK 2001).

The main motivation for returning to work was financial and to improve their situation in the medium to long-term. Many have missed purely the social contact with others and felt isolated, and others reported the desire to come off benefits. The majority of lone parents interviewed for the *Case Studies on Delivery* project were interested in part-time employment. Parents with school age children wanted to find work that fitted around the school day (GHK 2001). In the quantitative survey, amongst non-working lone parents hoping to start work within the next three years and who had a preference for the number of hours they wished to work, 63 percent hoped to work between 16-

29 hours a week, while equal shares preferred to work either less than 16 hours, or more than 30 hours a week. A significant number of lone parents had no particular working-hours preference, reporting instead that it would depend on the job or that they had not yet decided

Demographic characteristics are not unequivocal indicators of participation. There was little observable difference between participants and non-participants who had attended an initial interview. Although non-participants are more likely to be disabled, have no academic qualifications and for their youngest child to be aged 5-11 years, the first round of the quantitative survey of 42,000 lone parents found no single explanation for non-participation (Lessof et al. 2001). Interviews with 150 lone parents who had attended an initial NDLP interview found that unfavourable better-off calculations appeared to be the biggest determining factor for their non-participation in the programme. Concerns about childcare (particularly during school holidays and after school) and a feeling that advisers were poorly informed were also found to be of concern among those who chose not to participate (Hamblin 2000a)

Non-participation did not seem to stem from negative pre-conceptions about NDLP. Brief accounts of the nature and coverage of NDLP generally met with favourable responses from non-participating respondents. However, lone parents who decided against joining NDLP after an initial interview were more likely to be disappointed about the adequacy of information regarding work, benefits and childcare and about the overall helpfulness of the PA (Hamblin 2000a). Motivation to find work and come off benefits (IS and HB) for some was tempered by concerns about the risks involved. These concerns revolved around expectations of minimal financial gains from work and the difficulties of reclaiming IS and particularly HB if things did not work out. Several lone parents were confused about the voluntary nature of NDLP believing their benefits might be stopped before, or unless, they found a job or that they had to accept an offered job vacancy

Transport can also be a problem, particularly in rural areas. Working lone parents without access to a car often have to rely on public transport for work and for childcare. There is no additional help with transport in the NDLP programme apart from discretionary funds that allow PAs to compensate lone parents for transport expenses to attend NDLP interviews and job interviews. Some Innovative Pilots tried to tackle transport issues, such as the City College Norwich pilot which provided free transport (and childcare) and this was seen as positive to participation (Stiell and Yeandle 2001a). Some of the Innovative Pilots addressed transportation problems through local provision of services. Community based programmes were important to enable lone parents living in remote areas to meet others in a similar situation (Stiell and Yeandle 2001b). Children's Links, was a rural community based organisation that helped lone parents meet together, thus reducing their feelings of isolation (Pearson and Yeandle 2001a).

Lastly, non-participation may be linked to the dynamics of lone parenthood. Relationship breakdown is an event that can have an overwhelming impact on

people's lives and may require significant adjustments that prevent participation. Traumatic separation may require additional support and emotional presence for children involved for a significant period. Lone parents who lack confidence were often found to be coming to terms with personal situations and felt that they were not ready for work in the near future. This group are unlikely to participate until they have come to terms with their circumstances or their circumstances have changed, e.g. adjusting to single parenthood, or finding housing (Pittigrew, Garland and Irving 2001)

### 3.5 Summary

- Participation rates up to the introduction of compulsory PA meetings were low, which may perhaps have been the single most important factor limiting the success of the programme. Although rates have increased significantly with the introduction of PA meetings, the majority of lone parents still do not participate.
- Lessons have been learnt and evaluation evidence has been used in an attempt to improve participation rates. This has involved improving the contact with lone parents through extra telephone follow-up, an introduction of an outreach service, the NDLP Innovation Fund and PA meetings.
- Participation rates among disabled lone parents are very low. Lone parents with disabilities have access to other support services such as the New Deal for Disabled People and initiatives are being introduced to improve access and participation in work assistance programmes.
- The introduction of compulsory PA meetings has changed the entry route into NDLP for many lone parents. It would appear that bringing NDLP to the attention of lone parents at the point of claiming Income Support has improved participation rates. Periodic PA meetings among the stock of lone parents claiming IS will continue to remind lone parents of NDLP and what it can offer them.



## **4) Outcomes and Impact of NDLP**

In this section we review the evidence on the impact of NDLP. The first section provides summary outputs from the programme and then looks at different aspects of NDLP's provision and evidence of its impact. Second, these issues are considered separately for sub-groups of lone parents including teenage lone parents, older lone parents, ethnic minority lone parents, lone fathers and lone parents with poor health

NDLP affects lone parents' outputs and outcomes in a number of ways and three key areas are explored in this chapter.

- The degree to which NDLP assists lone parents in their preparation for work,
- The extent to which NDLP helps lone parents find work;
- The sustainability of employment among lone parents who participated in NDLP

### **4.1 Work preparation**

Several components to NDLP are designed to help lone parents prepare for work. PAs can assist lone parents to prepare a 'Back to Work Plan' that brings together short and medium term activities that will assist them with finding and securing a job. Lone parents are also offered help with completing job application forms, producing CVs and with interview techniques

Most lone parent participants expressed that they wanted direct work related assistance. However pushing a work focus on those who are less firm in their aspirations was found to be counter-productive, and these lone parents felt they should be given the chance to review all salient aspects of their positions, rather than focusing solely on employment (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). Too narrow a focus could result in failure and put off participants from future contact.

Early findings from the quantitative survey suggest that NDLP participants expressed an interest in a range of advice and support services, shown in Table 4.1. Of those who expressed an interest in support or advice, over 50 percent wanted direct work-related advice and support linked to their job of eventual choice. There was less interest in work placements (34 percent). However, it is important to note that 63 percent of participants were either not interested in any of these services, or did not answer the question. Qualitative evidence suggested that many participants could think of no improvements to the programme (Hamblin 2000).



Table 4.1 NDLP Participants: Interest in support or advice.

<i>Types of Support/Advice</i>	<i>%</i>
Find or apply for training	43
Thinking about getting ready for work	53
Find or get paid work	55
Try out a job (e.g. two week job placement)	34
Stay in work once you had a job	43
Work out better/worse off in work	53
Claim in-work benefits	55
Not interested in any of these	63

Source (Lessof et al 2001) Table 8 3 6

#### 4.1.1 Job search

PAs discuss various sources of job vacancies such as local and national newspapers, help wanted advertisements in newsagents, vacancy notices in establishments (such as supermarkets, cafes, etc.) and through 'word of mouth'. Those with no or little recent contact with the labour market may be less familiar with the services on offer at the Jobcentre – traditional vacancy display boards, Employment Service Direct, Internet and touch screen technology (ES Job Bank) – employment agencies, and employment opportunities posted on the Internet. PAs may also search for vacancies on behalf of the lone parent during an interview, in preparation for an interview or at other times.

According to early evidence (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000), there was scope for improving assistance with job search. Lone parents tended to ask for greater advisory involvement in identifying vacancies, and more help with applications. Such evidence echoes similar findings in early ONE evaluation evidence – see Chapter Six below. The development of specific Programme Centre modules for lone parents has been part of this response to this. The results of an evaluation in progress should establish how far this problem has been solved.

#### 4.1.2 Better off calculations and help with benefit/tax credit claims

The better off calculation is another component of the NDLP programme designed to prepare lone parents for work. PAs, with the assistance of a computer package, calculate the difference between participants' current income on benefits and their potential income in work – using a known wage rate or a range of realistic examples – taking into account changes in entitlement across the full range of benefits and tax credits. Participants are also warned about other potential changes to their disposable income such as eligibility for free school meals and costs associated with working (e.g. travel costs). These calculations can sharpen aspirations to work and transform perceptions about the value of work. Early evidence confirms that they are highly valued by participants, but also showed that they were not always offered (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). PAs consider the in-work benefit

calculation to be one of the most important services they can offer, and often offer it at the start of the interview to provide reassurance and a foundation for the rest of the interview (GHK 2001). Although the calculations are not compulsory, they are a standard part of the PA 'toolkit' and are nearly always offered to the lone parent.

#### 4.1.3 Work experience, guidance and mentoring

Only one-quarter of eligible lone parents in the *Quantitative Survey* reported an interest in work experience, guidance and mentoring. Respondents showed the least interest in trying out a short-term work placement. Low levels of interest are likely to reflect the fact that only around one-third of non-working lone parents interviewed were hoping to find work during the next 12-month period. Lone parents hoping to find work in the next 12 months were more likely to express an interest in these services (36 percent) than lone parents who reported that work was not an option in the next three years (16 percent) (Lessof et al. 2001).

The potential impact of interventions that help improve confidence in the work place should be considerable as many participants have not worked and others worked many years ago. Some of the Innovative Pilot projects (IPs) offered work experience and, while these projects were local, small-scale interventions, the overall evidence is that such schemes tended to be very popular and provide a good opportunity for those lone parents who were ready to experience working life ((Pearson and Yeandle 2001a), and (Stiell and Yeandle 2001a)). Some participants felt that placements were too short, particularly in a six-week programme of one day a week placements (Stiell and Yeandle 2001a) and in two weeks IT related work placements (Pearson and Yeandle 2001b). Additional mentoring was not necessarily popular with all participants. Some appreciated the support, but some felt they were inappropriately matched, or that mentoring could not help them, and preferred to discuss issues with the staff at the IP project (Pearson and Yeandle 2001c).

IPs also offered soft-skill development through one-to-one support and personal development programmes. Appropriate matching of courses to participants appeared to be a problem, particularly among heterogeneous groups of participants. Better-qualified participants, preferred to have more initial focus on employment, rather than building soft skills. Group-based learning also was problematic, with many lone parents preferring confidential individual support from staff rather than 'baring all' in front of others. However, the social contact of group-based programmes had positive effects in IPs operating in remote areas. Individual level, one-to-one support, is time consuming and staff intensive and one IP, NEWTEC, had to reconsider the cost-effectiveness of such provision. All who completed the programme were found to have enhanced their prospects in some way, whether through gained vocational skills and qualifications and gained "soft skills" such as communication, team working or time keeping (Pearson and Yeandle 2001b).

One IP, Children's Links, also provided "style counselling" for those lone parents wishing to return to work. This was highly popular, particularly since

lone parents were given the opportunity to spend up to £100 on clothes for interviews and work, boosting lone parents' confidence and morale (Pearson and Yeandle 2001a)

## **4.2 Education and training**

Evidence on education and training issues is based on early experience and a fuller account of the changes in provision of these services must await the results of the second stage of the quantitative survey. However, the access and quality of education and training options offered to lone parents on NDLP has changed over the duration of the national programme in response to findings from the Prototype evaluation

Based on current evidence, lone mothers were found to have lower educational qualifications than couple mothers and fathers. Parenthood for lone mothers under 25 was found to be associated with some form of disruption of education, sometimes resulting in a premature exit from education and a failure to obtain any qualification. Overall, one-third of participants in the NDLP Prototype held no qualifications, and this group was more likely to opt out of the programme and be non-participants, thus increasing the proportion of participants with qualifications. Those with few skills or qualifications often saw education and training as a way forward. This was also the case for those who felt they needed a change of direction, especially where health reasons no longer allowed them to work in a field where they had previous experience.

Recent evidence confirms that lone parents themselves felt that a lack of qualifications or work experience were barriers to employment; 51 percent of non-working lone parents in the *Quantitative Survey* reported that they felt that their lack of skills or work experience created a barrier to work. Older lone parents often felt their qualifications and experience had become out of date so that they could not compete with younger people. In contrast there is a small minority of teenage lone parents who have little or no experience of work and hence may not be able to make informed judgements about advantages of paid work. One quarter of lone parents on IS wanted help with education and training and this was highest in the under 25s (31 percent) and lowest in the 45-64 age group (16 percent) (Lessof et al 2001)

Qualitative interviews with lone parent participants who had undertaken a wide range of courses, including pre-vocational, work preparation, personal development courses, NVQs and City and Guilds qualifications, found that the majority of participants expressed the training to have been beneficial (Lewis et al 2001). Courses tended to be short – weeks or a few months. For the small minority of lone parents who reported a negative experience, this was often found to be the result of poor referral – where the course was below a participant's ability and had led to diminished confidence (Lewis et al 2001)

Many lone parents have been away from education and training for a long time and hence need to have appropriately designed courses. However, if, after putting in a lot of time and effort, participants find that their newly

acquired skills are not able to financially enhance their situation, it may reverse any confidence building achieved, and deter them from further training. If training and skills are to boost confidence, it is essential that lone parents are aware of the nature of the training and the full potential or limitations to the training (Pearson and Yeandle 2001d). Early evidence from the national programme confirmed the shortcomings in the restrictions on the range and level of training offered for which financial support is available (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). Current evaluation should establish how far these shortcomings have been overcome.

Participation in training was found to vary for a number of reasons: PA discretion in determining the appropriate options, availability and flexibility of local provision, as well as the PAs' knowledge of, and relationship with, local providers. Geographical differences can also be caused by underlying economic factors, particularly in rural areas or in areas with long-standing unemployment problems. Where employment was more available, lone parents often felt less interested in undertaking further training, preferring to take up employment. PA attitudes can also influence rates of activity, some actively encourage training whilst others are more reactive to client request for it. Some PAs held the view that training was a "long, drawn out process" and tended not to promote it (GHK 2001). NDLP guidance to PAs discourages the promotion of training and education and encourages PAs to steer lone parents towards work options in the first instance.

A number of IP programmes explored training issues, and due to the nature of the programmes it is difficult to evaluate how cost effective they were or their net impact on longer-term outcomes. Specifically designed training offered for local employment opportunities (such as Call Centres), included introductory ICT skills with only preliminary stages of the City and Guilds qualification. Participants often found these courses pressurised and intense (some of this was due to staffing problems) and, while Call Centre work provided flexible hours of work, many lone parents found it too tedious and unrewarding. Despite the training, larger Call Centres required applicants to have recognised and accredited Call Centre training. Lone parents who wanted to pursue this occupation would still have to undertake further training (Bennett and Yeandle 2001). In another IP, Call Centre training was supplemented by help with transport and childcare support and an 'incentive' payment on completion of the course. The eight-week course was formed in partnership with several organisations that were able to offer work placements and was popular since it was not too long and able to sustain participants' interest. For those who wanted further training, the organisation was able to refer the lone parent on to training elsewhere (Pearson and Yeandle 2001d).

IPs also tried combined employment experience and training in childcare as play workers. However, delays in getting police clearance for childcare resulted in reduced training time. In addition the level of training itself did not provide qualification to NVQ level two, necessary for subsequent work, and was perceived as inadequate (Pearson and Yeandle 2001a).

NEWTEC provided training through a modular course in word processing, IT training or education support services, work experience and job search. Participants on the IT pathway experienced work placements of two weeks duration and reported that longer work experience placements would have given them a better balance between classroom based vocational training and "soft skills" for the workplace. The training programme was intensive, with classes five days a week from 10am-4pm, with an optional one hour extra until 5pm. The course also required work to be done at home and encouraged participants to write to employers asking for work. Lone parents who completed the course obtained an NVQ2 qualification in approximately half the normal time. Some participants appreciated that the work place would require similar commitment in terms of attendance and effort (Pearson and Yeandle 2001b).

An IP in Oxford offered driving lessons, which was found to be very popular and subsequently was oversubscribed. Problems encountered while setting up the IP at the start of the project meant most participants were unable to finish the course and had to pay for the remaining lessons themselves in order to obtain their licences, which most could not afford (Pearson and Yeandle 2001c). The popularity of driving lessons is also emerging from recent evidence from the In Work Training Grant.

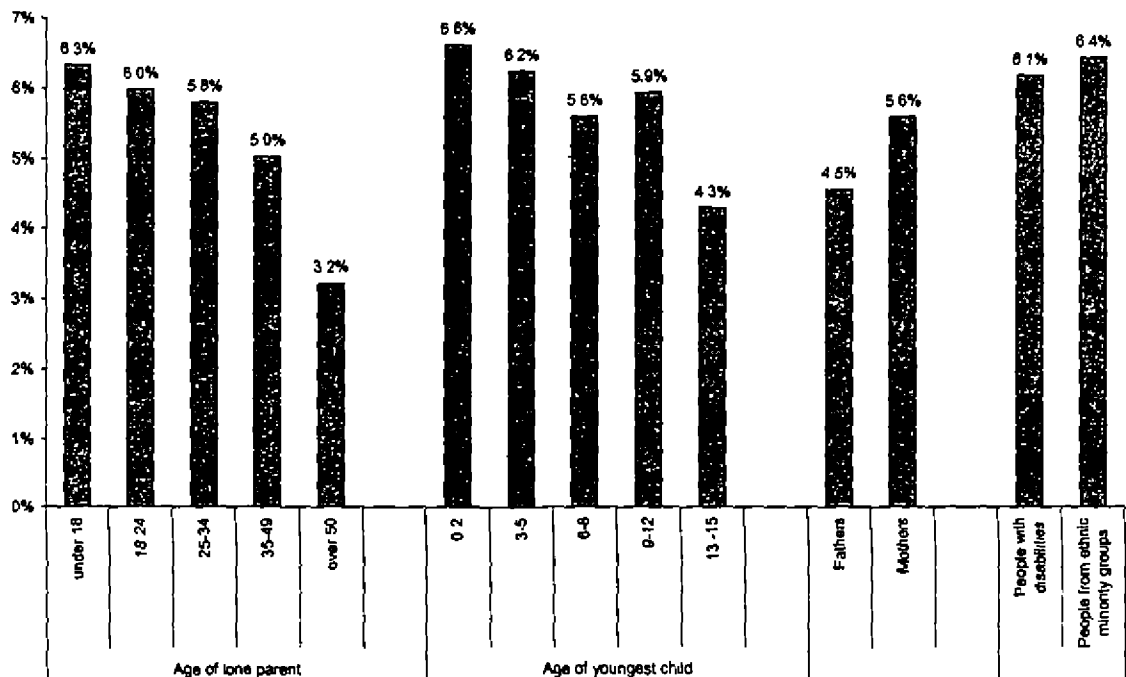
A further education college set up a range of taster courses adapted to individual needs and linked to work placements. The holistic approach took into account personal, social, geographical, educational and financial needs. Some participants felt the programme did not sufficiently focus on work and career progression. For instance, they cited preference for an earlier discussion of their CV and less emphasis on identifying goals. Work placements increased self-confidence, skills recognition and acquisition but many expressed a desire for longer-term career goals rather than employment in short-term lower paid jobs. The programme was found to have encouraged participants to continue education and training to improve long-term prospects. Problems centred on insufficient flexibility in content and delays in matching participants with employers (Stiell and Yeandle 2001a).

These examples from the IPs highlight difficulties in the provision of appropriate training; in terms of content, intensity and flexibility. Flexibility of course provision was problematic because matching childcare commitments and other family responsibilities was difficult to reconcile with maintaining good time keeping. However soft-skills of punctuality and absence were seen to improve as lone parents appreciated that such discipline would be needed in the workplace (Bennett and Yeandle 2001).

Evidence from the Statistical First Release (SFR) shows the number of participants who obtain support from NDLP through the training premium, childcare contributions or course fees but understates total participation in education and training. Published data for August and November 2001 show 7.2 percent and 5.5 percent of participants received such assistance with education and training from NDLP respectively. Figure 4.1 shows the rate of assistance with education and training in November 2001 is lower in general

for older lone parents and for those with older children and higher than average for ethnic minority and disabled participants. However, there is considerable difference in the patterns of participation between August and November 2001 and the evidence that fathers have lower rates of assistance than mothers in that month is not supported by August's data. Caution should be taken in reporting and interpreting these data and a longer time-series that can consider the fluctuation between time points as well as overall trends should be considered for future analysis

Figure 4.1 NDLP Participation in supported education in November 2001



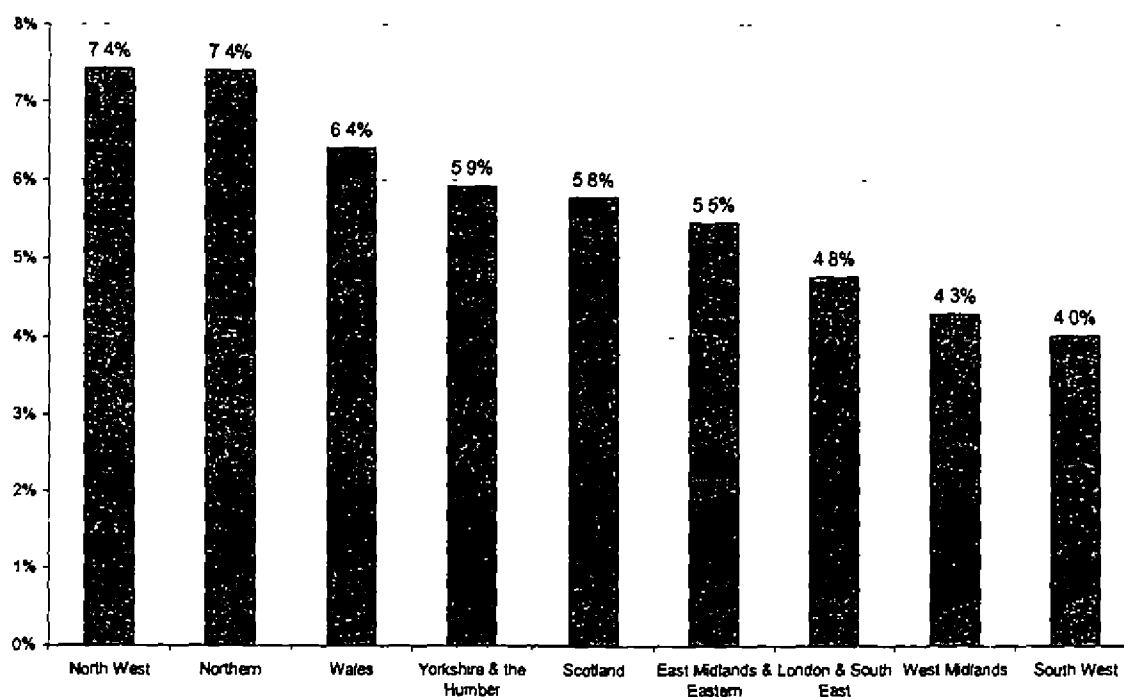
Source: Department for Work and Pensions, New Deal for Lone Parents – Statistics up to November 2001 (Statistical First Release)

Figure 4.2 expands the earlier point of geographical differences in education participation rates, across regions. There is considerable variation between the North and North West regions with seven percent and four percent engaging in education in the South West and West Midlands. An explanation of this difference warrants exploration.

4.3 Employment

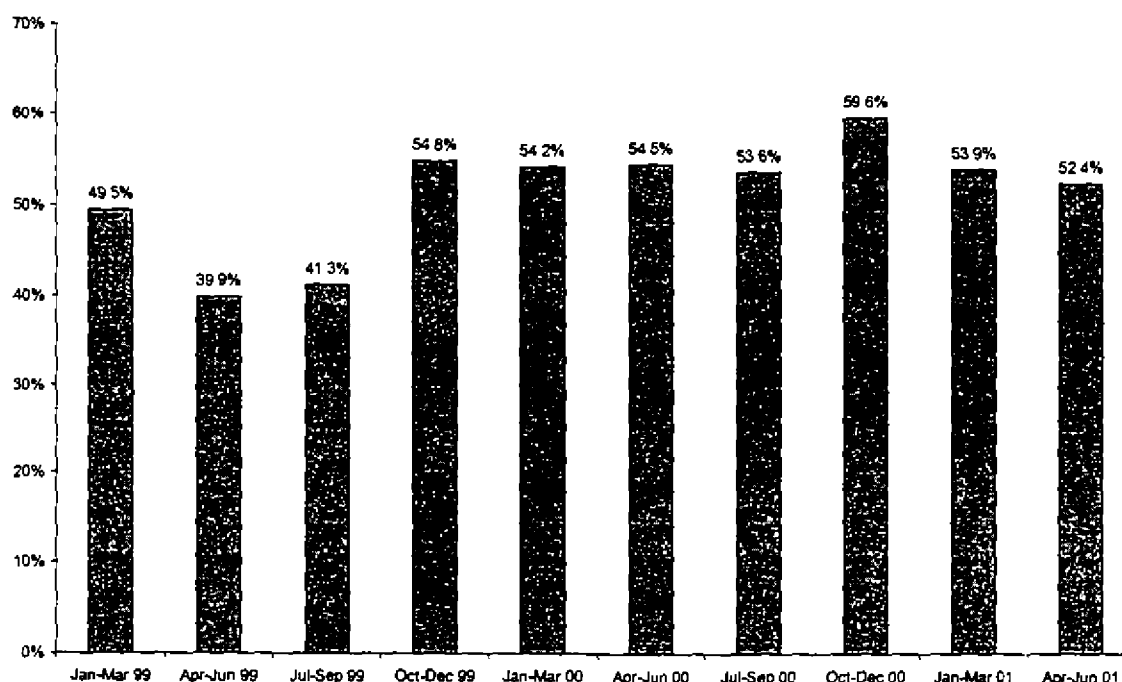
Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of those who leave NDLP and go into employment for each quarter between January 1999 and June 2001 using information from the Statistical First Release.

Figure 4.2 Regional differences in participation in supported education in November 2001



Source Department for Work and Pensions, New Deal for Lone Parents – Statistics up to November 2001 (Statistical First Release)

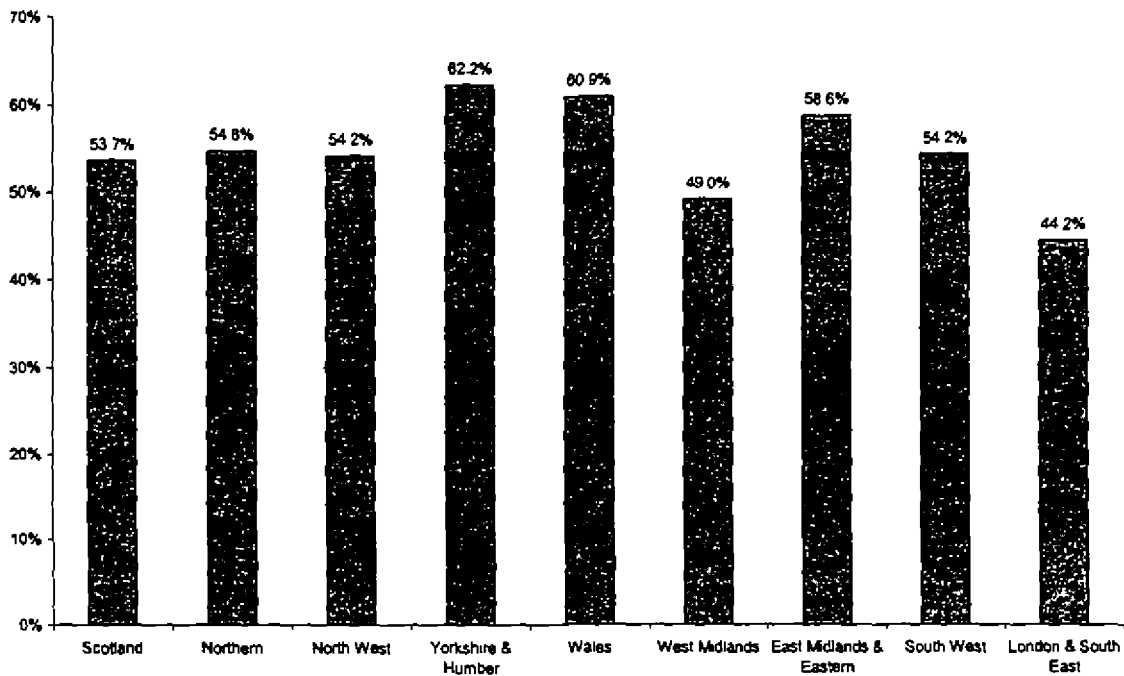
Figure 4.3 Percentage of NDLP leavers to employment



Source Department for Work and Pensions, New Deal for Lone Parents – Statistics up to November 2001 (First Release) Table 5a

Figure 4 3 shows that from the last quarter of 1999 the percentage of leavers who go into jobs has been around 54 percent; higher in the last quarter of 2000 and slightly lower in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2001. Figure 4.4 shows that there is considerable variation in regional profiles of employment outcomes. London and the South East Region (LASER) have much lower aggregate cumulative outcomes than other regions up to August 2001 while Wales and Yorkshire and the Humber have higher employment outcomes.

Figure 4.4 NDLP leavers into employment by region: cumulative totals to August 2001



Source Department for Work and Pensions, New Deal for Lone Parents – Statistics up to August 2001 (Statistical First Release) Table 5b

The differences in outcomes may be due to underlying differences in composition of participants over time and between regions alongside programme and labour market effects. Evidence of how NDLP has contributed to such trends on lone parents leaving IS awaits results from the *Quantitative Survey* in 2003. However, the regional evidence concerning London, and low rates of lone parents leaving IS, does match other evidence of trends in IS benefit populations (Noble et al. 2000) and (Evans et al. 2002). Explaining London's poor relative performance has generated research by DWP that will emerge in the near future and is important because of its large proportion of all lone parents claiming IS and its resulting influence on overall national performance.

Evidence on the level of job outcomes from qualitative evidence is difficult to interpret<sup>11</sup> but such evidence suggests high levels of satisfaction with NDLP

<sup>11</sup> For instance, Martin Hamblin reports that around one-third of participant respondents had found employment in the Satisfaction Survey in 1999



Almost two-thirds of lone parents interviewed in the *Client Satisfaction Survey* who had participated in NDLP thought that their chances of finding work had improved by at least 'a little'. Twelve percent claimed to have found work as a result of NDLP (three to five months after the initial interview) (Hamblin 2000a). However, one must be cautious of quantifying outcomes using qualitative evidence. Job outcomes reflect participants' job preferences and these show that the majority initially sought part-time work to fit in with children's schooling (GHK 2001). PAs reported that it typically took between one and four months for participant lone parents to find a job (if they had not entered an education or training programme) but there was a significant amount of variation around this average (GHK 2001).

A further limitation in the current state of evidence is the absence of any impact analysis of phase three of NDLP. The *Quantitative Survey* will not only provide richer data on job outcomes and destinations but will also allow an assessment of the *counterfactual* – i.e. what would have happened without NDLP and thus the net effect of the programme or its *additionality*.

Detailed cross-section data of lone parents claiming IS in the first *Quantitative Survey* found that only around one-third of non-working lone parents on IS were hoping to start work sometime during the next year. An additional 40 percent reported that work was not an option in the next three years (Lessof et al. 2001). Overall, the recent body of evidence complements and reinforces that gained from earlier evaluations that found the desire to obtain paid work is greatest where lone parents feel they face low barriers and have good opportunities and high motivation. Interestingly, the profiles of participants and non-participants are very similar, especially in their perceived barriers that limit the amount or type of work or training they can undertake. This is partly because the move to work is one that relates to perceptions of it being "the right time" and thus there is a mix of skills, ages and circumstances both sides of this decision enter employment. However, another finding of interest from the *Quantitative Survey* is that respondents who were working also reported limitations. The perceived limitations, shown in Table 4.2, tended to be reported at lower levels by non-working lone parents compared with working lone parents, though these differences were often not large.

**Table 4.2** Factors that may limit the amount or type of work or training lone parents undertake

Perceived limitations	Currently working %	Currently not working/worked in past %
Lack of suitable childcare in area	45	52
Don't want to leave my child with anyone else	44	53
I have a health condition or disability	10	22
I would be worse off financially in a job or studying	39	52
There aren't enough jobs around here	30	36
There aren't enough training opportunities around here	24	24
I haven't got skills or experience to find the right job	40	48
My confidence about work and study is low	34	43
Employers won't employ me because of my childcare responsibilities	31	45
I care for someone who has a health or behaviour problem	12	16
Weighted base	3,459	27,397

Source: Lessof et al Table 6.1.3

Those who intended to go back to work in the near future were interested in advice on improving job search. This group tends to be better qualified and have more work experience and hence were more confident about entering the job market. These lone parents are most likely to have found work without NDLP. Lone parents with previous experience of relatively high earnings or a dislike of 'life on benefits' were more likely to be actively searching for work. Where children were older, or childcare was readily available or not needed, the desire for work was similarly high. Where lone parents had skills that were relevant and in demand in the local labour market and recent work experience, this was also associated with a greater orientation towards obtaining work.

#### *4.3.1 What external barriers existed for participants wanting to work?*

Lone parents often perceived employers' attitudes as a barrier to work, believing that employers are inflexible towards working hours, particularly around childcare or the school day (GHK 2001) and that employers have negative attitudes about lone parents. Around one quarter of lone parents surveyed during the prototype phase cited employers' attitudes as a barrier to obtaining a job. Lone fathers were stronger holders of such beliefs. However, hours and flexibility as limiting factors and the type of work lone parents can enter are generally associated. The scope for flexibility was often limited by the product or service being made/supplied (shift patterns, opening hours, etc.). Nearly half of non-working lone parents in the first round *Quantitative Survey* felt that employers would not employ them due to their childcare responsibilities (Lessof et al 2001).

Interviews with employers showed that lone parents were not necessarily seen as a distinctive group, reducing the likelihood of systematic discrimination against lone parents. Employers more usually classified lone parents with all parents, although often acknowledging that achieving a decent work-life balance was harder for lone parents due to their sole responsibility for childcare and family income. Increased levels of employment among women and improved awareness of the benefits of family-friendly working arrangements have led to some improvements in childcare provision. Most employers responding to the survey offered some form of family-friendly working arrangement but both the range and access to them were highly variable. Flexibility of working conditions tended to be related to seniority and depended on the discretion of the person immediately in charge. This meant that new recruits (or potential recruits) did not necessarily know about possible family-friendly arrangements or were not offered them (Lewis et al. 2001)

Interviews with employers showed that in some areas of employment it was difficult for jobs to be constructed in such a way as to accommodate parents wanting to work fixed hours (such as to fit around the school day or only during term time). Nevertheless there appears to be a general willingness on the part of employers to be flexible in this respect (Lewis et al. 2001).

Some PAs, fearing discrimination against lone parents, have made a conscious decision not to make employers aware that potential candidates referred to them are lone parents (GHK 2001). Interviews with employers suggest that on the whole employers are not aware of NDLP ((Lewis et al. 2001) and (GHK 2001)). This is hardly surprising given that the need for employer involvement in NDLP is extremely limited. Current Innovation Fund (IF) projects and past IPs have sought to increase employers' awareness and involvement in NDLP – particularly in the provision of work-placements and in programmes that reflect local skill-shortages and/or employment opportunities. Employers' attitude to and knowledge of childcare remains an important task, irrespective of their direct involvement with NDLP. The current IF evaluation will provide evidence that can assess how employer involvement can be optimised and will be a useful comparison with the previous IP involvement

PAs have reported employers advertising for vacancies below 16 hours to avoid WFTC<sup>12</sup> and that some employers had laid-off employees before WFTC had to be reassessed. This is thought to be a response, particularly in smaller companies, to the problems, real or perceived, associated with employer payment of WFTC through the payroll and this may have thus resulted in an indirect barrier to work<sup>13</sup>. This is an important qualification to the

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<sup>12</sup> Clients working less than 16 hours a week are not eligible for WFTC, and so every pound earned over £15/week is deducted from their benefit entitlement. Some employers reported transitional problems with benefits (WFTC and Housing Benefit) for lone parents entering work, although problems of administration of HB predate NDLP, see (Lewis et al. 2001)

<sup>13</sup> WFTC is covered in Chapter Six and has its own Inland Revenue led evaluation programme

improvements of in-work benefits designed to free lone parents from the unemployment trap<sup>14</sup>.

#### 4.3.2 Jobfinders Grant

This was a one-off payment of £200 designed to meet some of the costs of starting work – such as new clothes and travel costs. The Grant was administered through Jobcentres and originally covered unemployed claimants on JSA for over two years. Entitlement was extended to lone parents participating in NDLP in 1998. To qualify for Jobfinders Grant (JFG), a job had to pay less than £5 an hour and be for a minimum of six-months expected duration. Evaluation of NDLP participants' use of these grants showed that they were used to cover a range of expenses – often four or more items. Expenditure on work related costs was not obligatory and some household bills or normal living costs were also paid with money from the grant. Approximately 75 percent of lone parents spent some of their grant on direct work-related costs but only around 13 percent spent the grant wholly on work-related costs. Travel (43 percent) and clothes (55 percent) were high on the list of work-related spending alongside childcare (28 percent) – although higher proportions of lone parents with children under five (55 percent) spent some of the grant on childcare. The grant covered spending that would otherwise have been very difficult in around 66 percent of cases and in a further 26 percent of cases such spending would have been fairly difficult without it. While the grant eased transitions into work, it was most often not an essential element of making the change – only 15 percent of lone parents said they would not have taken the job without it. Poor timing of many of the payments was found to be a problem and 40 percent of recipients were found to have received the payment later than they actually needed it. These late payments sometimes lost their direct association with work-related expenses and were identified with general household spending (BRMB Social Research 2001).

The Advisers' Discretionary Fund (ADF) has replaced Job-finders Grant and provides flexible funds of up to £300 that can assist with any work related need once a job has been offered. Evaluation of the ADF is currently underway.

#### 4.4 Quality of jobs and sustainability

Lone parents tended to enter low-paid low-skilled occupations that are generally dominated by women: occupations in catering, cleaning, care, retail, clerical, hair and beauty therapy. Lone parents also found work in call centres and factories depending on local opportunities. These jobs usually paid around the minimum wage level (£4.10 in October 2001). A small percentage

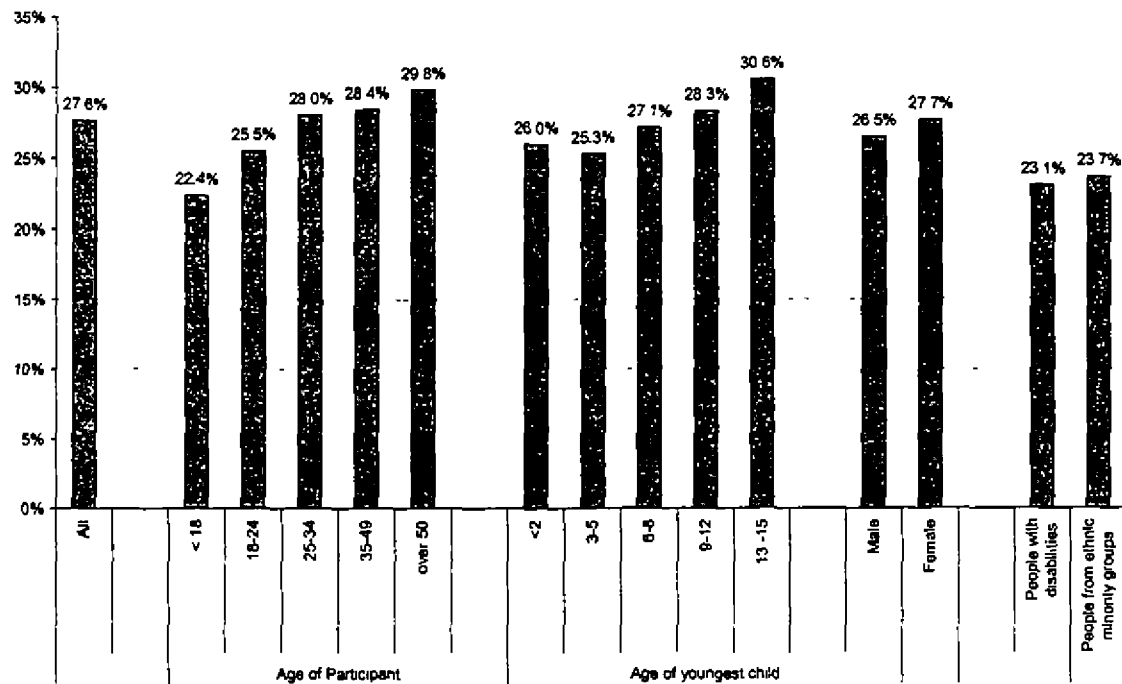
<sup>14</sup> The unemployment trap is used to describe the situation where an individual is financially better off or just as well off, out of work and living on benefit income than in work. WFTC addresses this problem by topping up the income of individuals in receipt of low wages or who can only work restricted hours due to childcare commitments. However, improving financial benefits from work can sometimes not compensate for loss of time with family and other non-financial costs.

of lone parents became self-employed, benefiting from the Test Trading programme

The low quality of the majority of jobs secured highlights lone parents' problems in achieving financial independence. This is due to several factors, including restricted labour market opportunities for those who require flexibility in working hours or who restrict location to fit around their childcare responsibilities. A more fundamental problem relates to lone parents' low levels of human capital. Many of the occupations they enter are precarious and are associated with high turnover and little opportunity for progression and in-work training. Improving lone parents' prospects in the longer-term will require ways of moving lone parents off the bottom rung of the job ladder. Initiatives such as the IWTGs have attempted to address this need and other wider lifelong learning and training programmes can be expected to improve lone parents' longer-term prospects.

Currently, one avenue for assisting lone parents is the continuation of PA assistance when the lone parent has found work. This provides support in both the transition into work and longer-term problems. Data on the numbers continuing to receive in-work support are problematic as it relies on a good definition of when a person "leaves the programme" – some may be in work and have little or no contact with the PA but still be recorded as on NDLP. Bearing this in mind, Figure 4.5 suggests that receipt of in-work support is associated positively with lone parents' age and age of youngest child and is taken up less by men, participants with disabilities and participants from ethnic minorities. However, it is unclear what form such in-work support takes and data may include those who receive no concrete support.

Figure 4.5 Provision of PA in-work support for NDLP participants



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, New Deal for Lone Parents – Statistics up to August 2001 (Statistical First Release) Table 4

## 4.5 Childcare

Childcare remains a significant barrier for many participants who are motivated to work or engage in training. NDLP provides practical and flexible support to identify suitable childcare and can pay for childcare associated with attending NDLP interviews and training programmes<sup>15</sup>

Some lone parents had been given up-to-date accurate information on availability of local childcare and the part played by child related credits in WFTC. Evidence from interviews found not all were offered the entire list of local providers as participants expected (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000) PAs were often unable to solve problems associated with childcare and reported that participants often had too high an expectation of what NDLP could do. Childcare was the barrier most commonly reported by lone parents in the first round *Quantitative Survey*. While 55 percent of non-working lone parents reported a reluctance to leave their children with anyone else, 52 percent mentioned the lack of affordable childcare as a significant barrier to work (Lessof et al 2001)

<sup>15</sup>However, the larger more structural problems with childcare provision and coverage fall under other policy initiatives such as the National Childcare Strategy, the whole issue is under consideration by the Performance and Innovation Unit in the Cabinet Office at the time of writing this report

The *Case Studies of Delivery* interviews with PAs and lone parents found the following childcare issues (GHK 2001):

- *Waiting lists* – particularly long for nursery places and early application while pregnant necessary for some places
- *Flexibility* – part-time and full-time mix between nurseries, pre-school education and childminding produces real constraints. Short-term provision problematic and often does not offer the flexibility for those working or training part-time
- *Deposits* – often of £100-£200 requested up front (may now be covered by ADF)
- *Reduction in public sector provision* – local authority-run nurseries and crèche provision reduced in some areas
- *Children of school age* – scarcity of pre- and after-school clubs and holiday clubs
- *Non-registered childcare* – current policy was that NDLP and WFTC only cover claims from registered childminders and not informal, unregistered family and friends. It was felt this did not acknowledge the importance of family support and would also ease the demand on nursery places. Policy makers are keeping financial support for informal childcare under review but this extension is hard to regulate and has cost and safety implications.

Lengthy procedures in registering as a childminder have been common and have dampened supply. Such delays have also made it difficult for family and friends, used on an informal basis, to be recognised and hence be incorporated in the scheme (GHK 2001). The perceived appropriateness of childcare was a barrier alongside cost. Many lone parents did not want others to look after their child preferring instead informal childcare<sup>16</sup> Evidence also found that other lone parents preferred nurseries, but availability of this type of provision is limited (GHK 2001).

Job-ready lone parents tended to place less emphasis on childcare problems than those who did not wish to work immediately

Interviews with employers revealed a general reluctance to provide childcare at the workplace but strong awareness (sometime coupled with personal experience) of the difficulties employees with children face in finding and arranging adequate childcare. This was an area employers identified as an important form of support the NDLP could provide in the form of access (improved provision) and funding (Lewis et al 2001).

A number of IP programmes sought to address childcare problems and evidence from their evaluation illustrates the difficulties of integrating childcare into programmes. Provision was easiest where there were direct links to childcare provision – for instance from partner organisations or in-house facilities (Pearson and Yeandle 2001a). Co-ordination was improved when a specific childcare officer was appointed to organise childcare. Parents were

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<sup>16</sup> See evidence in Chapter Six for WFTC lone parent claimants

reluctant to use childminders, preferring to place children in crèches or day nursery facilities as many preferred communal childcare provision to enable the child to have interaction with other children. These preferences of participants led to difficulties as places were limited and not always available on a part-time or short-term basis. Children's Links found childcare difficult to arrange during summer periods, on a part-time or short-term basis (Pearson and Yeandle 2001b). Childcare provision was expensive, even from partner organisations, because lone parents wanted flexible arrangements and showed patchy attendance (Bennett and Yeandle 2001).

Costs of childcare are often a problem (GHK 2001), particularly for parents with two or more children. In some long standing projects childcare provision was difficult as places were already taken up or offered on a commercial basis. Lone parents with children under two years old or over 11 have particular problems in terms of both costs and availability, as do lone parents with specific cultural or religious needs.

#### **4.6 Other NDLP outcomes**

NDLP participant lone parents interviewed in the *Case Studies on Delivery* reported high levels of satisfaction with NDLP with most of the praise directed towards the PA. NDLP had helped lone parents find work, change their working arrangements, find a place in an education or training programme or set up a business. The majority of employed lone parents in this study reported increases in their weekly income of between £30 and £100 after subtracting childcare costs (GHK 2001). These tangible outcomes were often combined with less tangible improvements such as improved confidence in relation to ability and skills and increased motivation.

The *Qualitative Study of Individuals* suggests that the degree to which NDLP has been of help varied. At one extreme the most job-ready respondents seem to have sorted out work or training for themselves, without NDLP being given any credit, despite the fact that they had presumably joined with expectations of being helped. Among the others, some felt that NDLP had made a perceptible difference to the outcome by virtue of providing specific help with securing paid work, training or voluntary work, together with more general encouragement and information (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

Most of the remaining participants felt they had gained in some way or another from NDLP. The confidence boosting aspect of PAs was particularly valued as were the concrete demonstrations of how work can pay. Such help was valued not only for the information given but for the approach of discussion and individual focus, which helped to build confidence and to move many lone parents into work – both directly and indirectly. One problem of identifying and measuring this effect is that much of it is less tangible than getting a job. The balance between motivations and barriers seems to have shifted in favour of the former, but not yet to the point of resolution. Other respondents felt they had gained little or nothing from NDLP. This was felt to be due to a variety of reasons such as: high personal barriers to working,



unrealistic expectations of NDLP, and also apparent shortfalls in NDLP delivery (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). Overall, the overwhelming evidence across the prototype and national programmes is of high satisfaction with PAs and with the services and support they provide.

## **4.7 Lone parent sub-groups**

How has this general experience differed for sub-groups of lone parent participants?

### *4.7.1 Teenage lone parents*

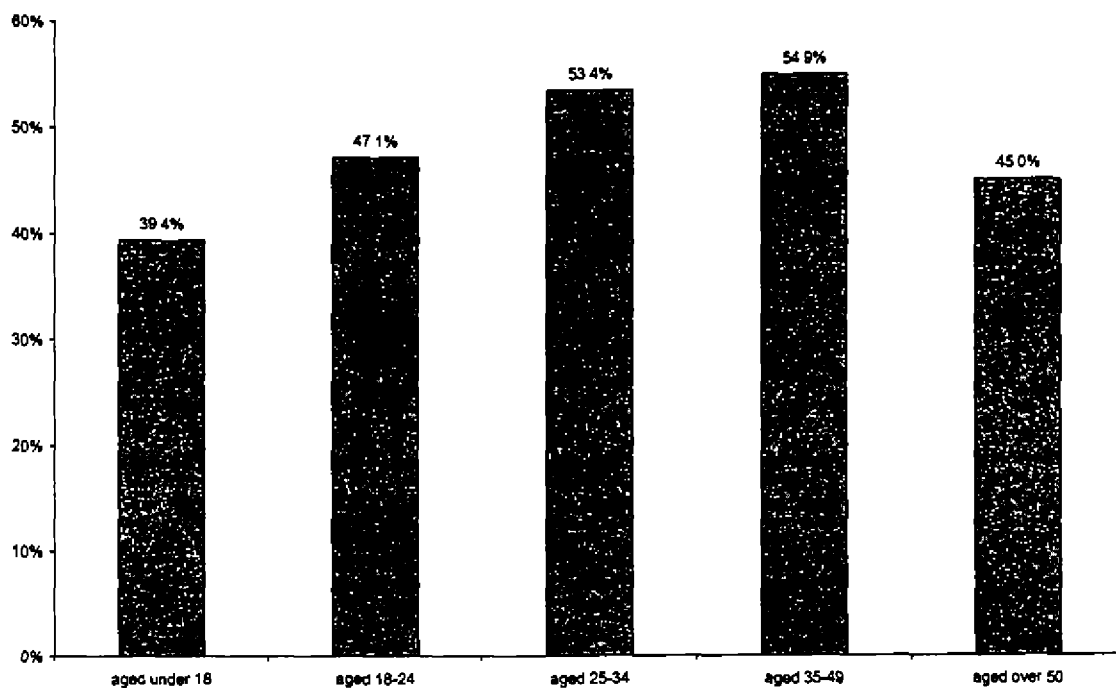
Teenage lone parents, usually women, face particular problems. Not only do they have young children but also their formal education is often curtailed by their pregnancy and they often have to deal with their own problems in relation to transition from childhood to adulthood. They face negative social stereotypes, and as many other studies have revealed, women from the least advantaged backgrounds are the most likely to become teenage parents. Teenagers probably have a greater need than most for encouragement about their abilities and it is important that they have coherent information about the various opportunities open to them.

Findings from the qualitative research reveal that teenagers tended to be keen to progress, although degrees of motivation to work were mixed. Boredom, confinement and lack of social contact were reported motivations for joining NDLP. Their concerns centred on their lack of skills due to low levels of qualifications and limited work experience, but they often entered the programme with an optimistic frame of mind and with high expectations of what the programme could do for them. Disappointment with the extent of help received resulted where high expectations had been formed from naive optimism and through publicity of the programme (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

Outcomes for teenagers varied – reflecting in part their range of attitudes to work and the chaotic circumstances of many for whom pregnancy was unplanned. Some were determined to challenge the stereotype of them and to escape benefits, others were dominated more by the barriers of interrupted and inadequate training and education and of childcare for their young children. Of those seeking work most found their PA had boosted their confidence and self-esteem and broadened horizons for work and training options. However, some were disappointed by the level of support available, particularly for childcare (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

Figure 4.6 shows the aggregate data from NDLP Statistical First Release on the proportion of leavers from NDLP that go into jobs broken down by the age of participant. Teenage participants have a job outflow rate of 39 percent, the lowest of the age-banded categories of participants.

**Figure 4.6** Proportion of NDLP leavers who go into employment by age of participant



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, *New Deal for Lone Parents* – cumulative data up to August 2001 (Statistical First Release) Table 5a

#### 4.7.2 Older lone parents

Low participation rates for older lone parents were found to be associated with limited recent experience in the labour market. Older lone parent participants were more likely to have felt satisfied with the explanation of NDLP than non-participants. Unsatisfied non-participants felt that PAs did not explain the programme well or lacked knowledge and they felt the scheme was too complicated. A good proportion of older participants who did not have a positive outcome were still complimentary about NDLP for leaving them feeling more work-ready (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

The Benefits Agency Visiting Officer (BAVO) pilot project was aimed at an older selection of lone parents, with children aged 13 or over, and provided home visits to explain NDLP and encourage participation over a three month period in Grimsby and Salford in Spring 2000. Some among this older group of lone parents were already working or thinking about work, and several were also involved in training courses. The minority with recent work experience were found not to need the help of NDLP in finding work. Overall older lone parents were found to have considerable barriers to work with a higher incidence of poor health and caring responsibilities. Also many older lone parents lived a considerable distance from the Jobcentre and found follow-up interviews difficult due to transport problems. BAVO appeared to increase participation in NDLP but had no impact on off-flows from IS<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> These figures are from internal ES analysis

Older lone parents were also found to suffer from low self-esteem and hence it was suggested that confidence building be integrated into the courses on offer (Hamblin 2000a, Hamblin 2000b). Those who had been out of the labour force for longer were found to have a positive impression of PA meetings. Figure 4.6 shows that aggregate outflows from NDLP into employment are lower for those aged over 50, 45 percent move into jobs, compared to 53-55 percent for the 25 to 49 age bands. Older lone parents have a stronger association with ill health and there are overlapping effects of age and health.

#### *4.7 3 Lone parents with poor health and/or caring for someone with a health problem*

Qualitative Research found that health issues were rather more widespread than data from the administrative records suggest. Only a small minority of this sample of lone parents with health problems received health-related benefits. As much as between one-third and one-half of some research samples of lone parents reported some kind of health problem for themselves or for their children (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). There was a wide range of health problems with an emphasis on emotional problems and depression, which were thought by the respondents to be linked to the circumstances around lone parenthood and unemployment. Health problems presented some sort of barrier to work. Some had lost employment due to ill health and felt they would not be able to return to their former occupation. Additionally, ill health restricted the range of employment available to them, and there was a feeling that employers were prejudiced against them (particularly if they suffered from mental health or emotional problems). Some restricted their employment opportunities by looking for flexible employment around their caring responsibilities. Children's health problems tended to diminish with age, especially behavioural problems and as children became more able to cope with their ailment themselves.

The Quantitative Survey found that 22 percent of lone parents claiming IS said they had a health condition or disability and was higher, 35 percent, for fathers (Lessof et al 2001). Fathers also had higher rates of looking after someone who had health or behaviour problems – 19 percent compared to 16 percent for lone mothers (Lewis et al. 2001). This survey confirmed that the incidence of health problems of the lone parent increased with their age and increased with length of claim. Aggregate data from SFR tables suggest that around 43 percent of NDLP leavers who have recorded a health problem or disability go into jobs (i.e. below the average figure of 54 percent for all lone parents).

#### *4.7 4 Ethnic groups*

The overall link between ethnicity and deprivation is not simple. Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities tend to be poorest, while Indian and Chinese communities have incomes, earnings and employment rates close to the white majority (Modood et al 1997). Within the lone parent population, African-Caribbean lone parents have similar work participation rates to the white majority. Again, Asian – particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi – ethnic minorities have a lower probability of participation. This is due to a

combination of cultural reasons and language problems and this group often feel they cannot benefit from the programme. For those whose culture places more emphasis on caring for children, many are not interested in a programme geared to returning to work. Although this group is very small in some areas, in others (London and the South East Region) it is quite significant. Ethnic groups tend to have differing concerns regarding social networks, community links, particularly in Asian communities where lone parenthood is not well thought of (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000). The most important aspects for those where English is not a first language are overcoming language problems. The language barrier meant that employment outside of their own community was unlikely, irrespective of their level of qualifications.

Some lone parents from ethnic minorities felt they did not have the support network from close families in the UK, and others reported the negative family reactions to their pregnancy in terms of their cultural norms. A further problem was the frequency of large families among this group, which meant childcare had to be found for numerous children, and this was often very expensive when available.

Information contained within the New Deal Evaluation Database provides some information on outcomes of NDLP participants by ethnic origin. Table 4.3 shows that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African lone parents are characterised by poorer rates of job starts than white participants. However, no allowance has been made for compositional differences between ethnic groups, e.g. family size, age of children or age of participant, nor for the fact that ethnic minorities live disproportionately in high unemployment areas. The results should be treated with some caution as ethnic origin is not recorded for 22 percent of participants in the New Deal Evaluation Database.

**Table 4 3 NDLP Outcomes by Ethnic Minority Group**

	NDLP caseload to job start (%)*	Parity with White Participants (%)
White	49	100
Black Afro-Caribbean	39	80
Black African	33	68
Black Other	37	75
Indian	39	79
Pakistani	35	71
Bangladeshi	34	70
Not Stated/Preferred not to say	48	98

Note \* This outcome figure is calculated differently to that used in Figures 4 3 and 4 4 and is based on the proportion of the cumulative NDLP caseload who get a job  
Source Internal analysis of NDED data by DWP Working Age Evaluation Division

#### 4.7.5 Lone fathers

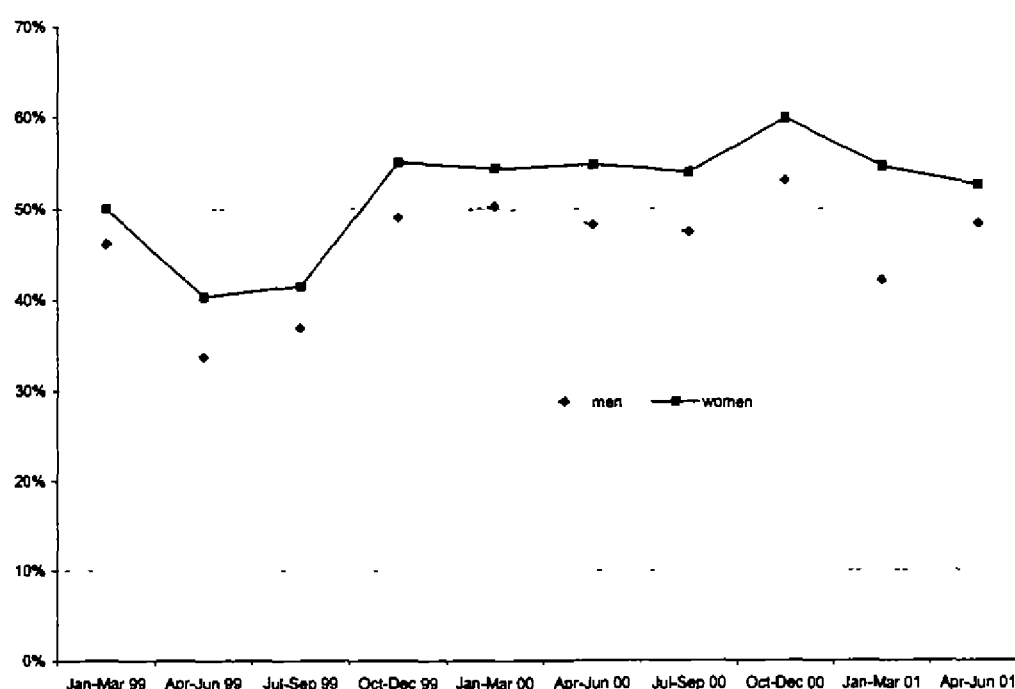
Lone fathers make up a small but significant minority of all lone parents and from a policy perspective they appear to differ in a number of important ways from lone mothers (Hasluck 2000). Lone fathers are less likely to claim IS than lone mothers; around ten percent of lone parents are fathers but only around five to seven percent of lone parents claiming IS are fathers. In Spring 1997, 65 percent of working age lone fathers were employed compared with 42 percent of lone mothers (Holtermann et al. 1999). Their greater propensity to work may be less to do with differences in motivation and more to do with other characteristics of this group. Information drawn from the internal ES Review of Evidence on Lone Fathers<sup>18</sup> and the Quantitative Survey (Lessof et al. 2001) shows that lone fathers typically have different routes into lone parenthood than lone mothers. They are much more likely to enter lone parenthood as a result of bereavement or divorce. As a result, lone fathers are typically older than lone mothers and their children tend to be older. This means that lone fathers tend to have more work experience, improving their current work prospects, and that their childcare needs are different. Older children are more likely to need after-school childcare and their parents tend to be happier about leaving them with non-relatives. Their age, and the age of their children, may explain why lone fathers are more likely to work full-time than lone mothers. This may also be to do with stereotypical differences between men and women in terms of their employment and the construction of 'men's jobs' versus 'women's jobs'.

Lone fathers in the *Qualitative Research* were more likely to report traumatic circumstances leading to lone parenthood than lone mothers. Many of the fathers had given up work upon becoming a lone father and had found this adjustment difficult. A greater tendency to having work experience generally meant that re-entering work was less daunting for lone fathers. Yet some lone fathers reported problems of social isolation due to their minority status among lone parents and felt that employers were less sympathetic about their need to combine working with childcare responsibilities than they were towards lone mothers (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

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<sup>18</sup> Unpublished ES in-house report

**Figure 4.7** Proportions of NDLP leavers entering employment: by gender January 1999 to June 2001



Source: Statistical First Release August 2001 Table 5a

Aggregate data from DWP Statistical First Release series tends to show lone fathers having a lower rate of leaving into jobs (Figure 4.7). However, this crude leaving rate – the proportion of leavers who get work – is not adjusted to show the effects of age, increased likelihood of disability or other associated factors. Firm conclusions cannot be drawn from these aggregate data about relative differences in outcomes due to gender. Being a minority group *may* put lone fathers in a less advantageous position in terms of the appropriateness of the type and range of services offered through NDLP. However, it is not clear that lone fathers require special treatment solely because they are men. Gender seems to play a role in terms of informal and formal networks available to the lone parent – i.e. lone fathers may feel excluded from support groups that are dominated by lone mothers. Societal norms may create additional pressures on lone fathers but it is hard to see how NDLP should be modified to cope with this. The real strength of NDLP is the personalised service it offers to all lone parents, being aware of the differences between lone fathers and lone mothers can help inform PAs about the likely needs of lone fathers entering the programme.

## **4.8 Summary**

- Participants placed great value on Personal Advisers – confirming findings in the earlier evaluation studies of the popularity and effectiveness of PAs. PAs were found to assist in tangible progress towards work and also to build confidence and break isolation. Particular elements of PA provision such as “better off” calculations proved effective in establishing and clarifying motivation to work.
- Phase Three of NDLP significantly enhanced provision of education and training. Summary data show six to seven percent of participants received help from NDLP with training activity but this is probably an underestimate. There is considerable regional variation in education and training provision that requires explanation.
- Overall around 54 percent of participants leaving NDLP find a job but jobs gained by lone parents tend to be low paid and low skilled. Regional variation, especially lower rates moving into work in the booming London and South East Region, requires explanation. More detailed information on destinations will be available in 2003.
- Childcare remains an important constraint on work and on transitions to work, both because of supply failure and from lone parents reluctance to use carers that are unknown to them. Evidence of integrating childcare into programmes from the Innovative Pilots reinforced how difficult it is to reconcile flexible and high level childcare needs.
- Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani lone parents had lower rates of NDLP participation and were less likely to leave NDLP for work. This may be due to a mixture of linguistic and cultural reasons along with demographic and regional characteristics.
- Lone fathers have been identified as a sub-group of concern by policy makers and in previous evaluations. There is insufficient analysis of how other demographic factors, such as age and disability, explain the lower rates of job exits from NDLP for lone fathers to currently justify making any programme innovations to meet their specific needs.

## **5) Programme Management and Delivery**

Previous chapters have considered evaluation evidence based on individual experience (both staff and lone parents) of the NDLP programme. This chapter considers issues that relate to the delivery and management of the programme.

### **5.1 Management**

Jobcentre Plus now undertakes management and delivery of the national NDLP programme, but the Employment Service was responsible for the period covered by the evidence considered in this review. This single agency operation contrasted with the NDLP Prototypes where ES and BA sites operated differently to explore a number of ways of implementing NDLP. The main source of evaluation evidence on delivery is through case-study research (GHK 2001). Other evidence is drawn from interviews with staff and participants and from evaluation of different delivery models tried in the Innovative Pilots.

A defining feature of the early delivery of national NDLP was the assignment of designated resources to the ES staff involved in the delivery of NDLP who were dedicated to the programme rather than having a range of 'competing' responsibilities. There was a feeling that 'freeing-up' staff to focus specifically on NDLP had greatly facilitated the delivery process and the programme's initial success could partly be attributed to this (GHK 2001). This approach still holds but regions are free to deliver NDLP at the local level in a manner that best suits local conditions.

Overall management of NDLP was devolved to District level in some regions and was implemented to reflect the budget, broad ES staffing structures and infrastructure, and local factors. The role of Regional Offices included the following, information collection, strategic development of national policy performance and monitoring to improve performance. Regional meetings are used to discuss emerging good practice and contributed to the "Continuous Improvement Strategy" under which ES New Deal programmes are adapted to reflect lessons from evaluation evidence. Regional Offices are seen as valuable in the delivery of NDLP.

There were different models of district NDLP management, depending on factors such as resource allocation, the nature of management structures for the delivery of other New Deals, the existence of an NDLP subject expert and the size and location of the district (e.g. rural areas are more likely to have peripatetic PAs) (GHK 2001). As NDLP became more integrated into mainstream programmes the need for separate NDLP team leaders was felt no longer necessary and programme management evolved into a model where all ND programmes were in one team. Initially over half the districts had a designated NDLP Manager/Coordinator or Adviser Manager (line manager for PAs) who has overall responsibility for the co-ordination of the



programme. Line management for NDLP was undertaken by specific NDLP Adviser Managers in nearly half the district offices, and by Business Managers<sup>19</sup> in nearly a third of District offices. Recent restructuring has altered this pattern and further evidence will be required of its comparative effectiveness. Evidence suggested there was a gradual shift from District office towards Jobcentre management but the overall national picture still reflects the perceived need for separate NDLP team leaders

District level autonomy was seen to lead to closer and more effective management of PAs. Management models at the District level tend to split between Jobcentre-based and District-based line management of PAs. Although the Jobcentre Management model is seen by many to be the most efficient in terms of the deployment of resources, this model did not appear to result in better performance in terms of lone parent placing and neither model could be termed 'best' practice in terms of the delivery of NDLP (GHK 2001). However, early interviews with PAs found great concern about the possible dilution of critical factors for successful NDLP delivery in the wider ES business undertaken in Jobcentres (Lewis et al 2001).

District level models are found to provide much more coordination and cooperation between PAs, and allow for greater feedback and discussions. Jobcentre level models are found to improve understanding of local labour market conditions and hence improving job placements and to lead to a wider commitment to the programme as NDLP contributed to local targets. PA feedback suggests very different patterns of information dissemination between the two. Under the Jobcentre model PAs can feel isolated from what is going on in other areas, with little feedback and discussion among PAs, and staff can be less informed about policy developments. There were also found to be cases of conflict of demands between the freedom Jobcentre management gave to PAs and what was required by the district level NDLP team.

Good practice could be incorporated into either model of delivery. Having a 'subject expert' available to consult at the district level allowed core management staff to focus on other aspects of their work. A centralised system that handles all the district's telephone enquires on NDLP and PAs diaries was found efficient and effective.

For ES management purposes, Key Indicators (KIs) have been developed to monitor performance at the District level. Three KIs are employed:

- (1) job outcomes as a percentage of leavers of the programme, which vary from 27 to 79 percent;
- ~~(4)~~(2) conversion rate – the proportion of entrants that join the NDLP caseload
- ~~(4)~~(3) ethnic minority job outcome rate – defined as the proportion of the white participants' job outcome rate.

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<sup>19</sup> Jobcentre level managers who oversee a range of ES services

## 5.2 PA delivery

The number of NDLP dedicated PAs within Jobcentres ranged between 0.5 to 2.5, averaging 1.2, full-time equivalent posts per Jobcentre. However, this evidence predates the introduction of compulsory PA meetings in April 2001 when further recruitment was foreseen. The deployment of PAs was a management concern because underlying demand forms the basis for allocation of PAs and in smaller/rural Jobcentres PAs work in multiple locations. This means that PAs are not always available when clients call, are less able to conduct job search for clients during "down-time", and are restricted in their appointment scheduling.

**Table 5.1** Relative merits of District and Jobcentre programme management

District Management	Jobcentre Management
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Advantages</b>
1 Dedicated team prioritising programme	1 More effective and efficient deployment of management resources
2 Enhanced cooperation and support between PAs	2 PAs were integrated into the overall work of Jobcentres and other staff better informed of programme
3 Line Managers have a better understanding of the client group and the subsequent demands on PAs	3. BMs have a better in-depth understanding of local labour market conditions
4 PAs are free from other pressures of new claimants	4 NDLP had a raised profile rather than appearing isolated
5 Effective use of communication, to discuss good practice amongst PAs	5 Greater commitment on part of BM since programme now part of local office targets
	6. Front line staff have increased awareness of programme resulting in higher internal referrals
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
1 Low levels of integration of NDLP into the Jobcentre business	1 NDLP communication less effective
2 Perception of isolation among some PAs	2 Sole reliance on APA gives little evidence for performance
3 Lack of awareness of programme by BMs	3 PAs feel they report to two managers
	4 Problems of caseload coverage for part-time staff

Source (GHK 2001)

The complex role of the PA is multi-faceted and client-orientated in nature and pivotal to the success of the programme. PAs' duties can be broadly classified into three categories: client support, networking and marketing (to both prospective clients and employers) (GHK 2001). PAs operate by building up a group of clients, thereby providing continuity and a personalised service to each of them. This 'caseloading' approach will lead to a varied group of participants in terms of needs and workload – some of whom are in regular

contact, others not. There is no evidence on optimal size and nature of caseloads. PAs are increasingly acting as a gateway to services and programmes available through participation in NDLP.

Interviews with PAs show high levels of job satisfaction, motivation and enthusiasm. These factors seemed to be linked to the fact that most PAs volunteered to work on NDLP. The voluntary nature of the programme meant that clients were motivated, enthusiastic and appreciative of PA's efforts. Many PAs had experience of working on less rewarding compulsory programmes with poorer working relationships. PAs thus had concerns regarding the introduction of compulsory PA meetings in April 2001 fearing a change in the client group and less job-readiness, motivation, willingness to work and less reliability in keeping appointments; all with perceived effects on job satisfaction. They saw problems with the expected three-day<sup>20</sup> turn-around for initial interviews, and foresaw difficulties in maintaining quality of service to both current and future clients (GHK 2001). Even so, PA meetings were generally seen in a positive light because they enable more lone parents to benefit from NDLP by raising their awareness of it.

The training of PAs has differed over time. National roll-out began with intensive training packages, taking approximately six weeks to complete and typically comprising three components: a two week *BA* overview of the benefits system and entitlement course; three to four weeks of block courses on *ES provision* covering areas such as interviewing skills, presentations and CVs; and *Other provision* – for instance, a one-day event run by NCOPF.

The ES component has been shortened in some regions and discontinued in others and a significant degree of variability in training existed across regions. New models of training have been introduced involving shadowing and open learning (GHK 2001). PAs found ES provision often less adequate than the BA on topics such as, caseload management, collaboration and networking, business case preparation and action planning. Residential training was seen as a good method of networking and of building both professional and social friendships, but were very time consuming, and not convenient for part-time PAs. Since March 2001 PA training has been a centrally run national scheme.

The strongly defined PA role, developed under the Prototype programme, was further developed to ensure effective support and guidance. The wide nature of skills and attributes seen as needed by PAs is summarised in Table 5.2. In general, further evidence on what PA characteristics proved successful matched those found in the Prototype evaluation and is not repeated here.

In depth study of PA roles has shown how NDLP participation falls off if the needs of the client are not understood. Three approaches were identified: intensive work activity, limited work focused activity and holistic activity. None of these approaches are necessarily more effective than the other since they depend on client-based concerns. Indeed, any move to focus on "immediate" problems or barriers often missed underlying constraints that would impede

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<sup>20</sup>Changed to four days in 2002

effective resolution. Too heavy a focus on work, or highly directive questions about circumstances and barriers were not always successful (Lewis et al. 2001). PAs' style and approach differed significantly. The main elements that emerged from interviews with participants and PAs were

- Intensity of contact – numbers and length of face-to-face contacts
- The breadth and depth of discussion
- Whether PAs or participants were responsible for follow-up action
- Pace and goal of work
- Emphasis on participants' personal underlying issues.

Table 5.2 Perceived attributes of an effective PA

NDLP Clients	Jobcentre and District Level Line Managers	Personal Advisers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approachable</li> <li>• Someone you can relate to</li> <li>• A good listener</li> <li>• Supportive (both practically and emotionally)</li> <li>• Having time for people</li> <li>• Caring</li> <li>• Interested</li> <li>• Non-judgemental</li> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client-focused</li> <li>• Professional</li> <li>• Caseload management skills</li> <li>• Proactive</li> <li>• Resourceful</li> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences</li> <li>• Experienced</li> <li>• Committed to the client group</li> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Accountable</li> <li>• Good team player</li> <li>• Committed to partnership work</li> <li>• Courage to 'push the rules' and sway Business Managers for the client group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open</li> <li>• Willing to learn and listen</li> <li>• Client-led</li> <li>• Good labour market knowledge</li> <li>• Non-judgemental</li> <li>• Empowering</li> <li>• Interested in the client group (and their children)</li> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Not target driven</li> <li>• Good communicator</li> <li>• Friendly and personable</li> <li>• Empathetic</li> <li>• Approachable and down-to-earth</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Practical</li> <li>• Sense of humour</li> <li>• Diplomatic</li> </ul>

Source (GHK 2001)

Many PAs had difficulties in keeping a role that empowered participants and that did not also draw them into the role of counsellor (Lewis et al 2001). There are general operational issues at the face-to-face level around "creating and managing expectations" about what NDLP and the PA can do/offer (Dawson, Dickens and Finer 2000).

### 5.3 Critical factors for success

Effective delivery of NDLP results from the dedicated resources, mostly in terms of staff, being committed at all levels, national, regional, district and local office. Clear lines of command and communication are important to facilitate an inclusive nature to programme management. This approach created a sense of ownership of the programme, as well as being involved in the policy development process (GHK 2001)

However, it is important to remember that NDLP works within a wider policy context alongside a range of other programmes, as well as other support from public, private and voluntary sectors. The supporting infrastructure is necessary for effective programme delivery. These lead to a series of relationships that are crucial to successful NDLP outcomes.

*Information sharing.* Lone parents have specific information needs beyond mainstream ES systems for vacancies. Information on in-work benefits seems well covered and presented throughout evaluation evidence. However, information on the availability of reliable and affordable childcare, and on training and education places has been found problematic in some studies (Lewis et al. 2001)

*Referral.* Problems arose in lone parent participation in ES Programme Centres and revised provision more tailored to the needs of lone parents was implemented in April 2000. There is little evidence of how this revision has improved the situation. There is a wide spectrum of need in lone parents training – from re-skilling, especially for those with health problems that are unable to follow previous employment to basic soft skills and confidence/assertiveness. There has been a greater move towards provision of training and education within/through NDLP, and evaluation of its planning and delivery (or outcomes) is underway

Other areas of referral will become a higher priority as NDLP moves to deal with the harder to serve group and evidence of effective referral strategies should become a higher priority

*Linking administration.* ONE and Jobcentre Plus models should assist in harmonising most benefit and employment administration but long-term structural problems with Housing Benefit administration remain a weakness. Evidence of the effects of this on participants is clear, it is a factor that deters risk adverse lone parents from taking work in the fear that they get into rent debt and have no security of a hassle free return to the benefit safety net (Shaw et al 1996). Evidence of the structural effects of this underlying poor administration on NDLP are less clear

and there is no clear evidence of how benefit run-ons have eased problems of transition.

Evaluation evidence is clearer on the benefits of closer liaison with local lone parent organisations from the Innovative Pilots evaluations. Increased awareness of NDLP was found, particularly where they involved well-established organisations that enjoyed trust among their lone parent clients and were able to recommend NDLP. On the other hand, those IP providers that were not fully aware of what NDLP had to offer, and that had not established good relationship with the local PA staff, had little impact on improving referral to NDLP (Pearson and Yeandle 2001c).

## 5.4 Summary

- NDLP provision had moved from specialised provision at the District level to being incorporated into Jobcentre-level general business in some areas. There was no apparent difference in effectiveness of either model and both models now operate alongside each other.
- PAs were well motivated and had high job satisfaction and identified these as resulting from the voluntary nature of NDLP.
- The PA role and approach appeared to be affected by the following factors: intensity of client contact, breadth and depth of discussion during contacts, agreeing who followed up agreed action; the pace and goals of work and how far the participant's underlying personal issues were emphasised.
- Good communications between NDLP and other agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, increased referral rates, smoothed benefit administration and improved delivery of the programme.



## **6) Related Welfare to Work Programmes and Policies**

This chapter reviews evidence from the operation and evaluation of other initiatives designed to assist lone parents into work. The main question of interest is "What evidence from these programmes is helpful and relevant to the evaluation of NDLP and to future policy development for lone parents?" The following three initiatives were identified since, for various reasons given below, they had the potential to greatly influence lone parents and their participation in NDLP.

The ONE Service<sup>21</sup> provided a work-focused entry point to the benefit system for all working age claimants.

New Deal for Young People – a programme of advice and training and employment experience for under 25 year old JSA claimants, of whom a small proportion of participants are "lone parents or people with caring responsibilities".

Working Families' Tax Credit – in-work income top-ups for those with children who work 16 or more hours a week.

### **6.1 ONE Service**

The ONE service was introduced between June and November 1999 in 12 pilot areas. It provides a single point of entry to the benefits system for people of working age by bringing together the separate agencies of the Benefits Agency (BA), the Employment Service (ES), and Local Authorities (who administer housing benefits). ONE aimed to provide an integrated service that was more focused on employment and entering/returning to work. ONE's work focus was based on an interview with a PA about the prospects of work as an additional element to claims for benefit. Before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000 such interviews were voluntary except for those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, but subsequently all claimants in the ONE areas had them as a mandatory element of their claim – so called "full participation"<sup>21</sup>. The terms "voluntary" and "mandatory" are used to describe the different versions of ONE.

Three different organisational/management versions of ONE were tested: these are the Basic Model run through BA and ES offices, a Private/Voluntary sector (PVS) alternative and a non-office based alternative run through Call Centres. Evaluation evidence from the ONE pilots is in several forms. Quantitative evidence is primarily provided through a longitudinal survey of both participants and matched control areas. This longitudinal survey has sampled both voluntary participants – called Cohort One, and mandatory participants – Cohort Two. Each cohort of participants is followed over time in

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<sup>21</sup> The official term for the mandatory phase of ONE.



different waves of interviews. Currently there is evidence from two waves of voluntary and one wave of mandatory operation of ONE. In addition, smaller qualitative studies of both voluntary and compulsory participants have been undertaken. Case studies of implementation have looked at operational issues. Lastly, the employment effects of ONE have also been estimated using multivariate models based on administrative and Labour Force Survey data.

The ONE evaluation evidence considered below is not yet a full picture of the outcomes and effectiveness of the pilots. Only evidence published up to the end of 2001 and only evidence that pertains to lone parents is considered. This means that current evidence over-emphasises the voluntary phase of ONE and relates to periods where implementation problems were at their highest. No final conclusions can be drawn until publication of all evaluations in late 2002.

There are several distinct features of the ONE service to bear in mind:

- a) ONE is a programme aimed at new and repeat claimants rather than the "stock" of claimants. Clients in ONE areas participate in ONE from the time they make their first claim for benefit.
- b) ONE also covers *all* lone parents – inside and outside the NDLP target group – irrespective of their children's age. The composition of lone parents in the ONE pilots were found to be younger, more likely to be single and less likely to be divorced and to be better qualified than those in NDLP (see Green et al. 2000, p 31).
- c) Lone parents claiming IS are just one group among others. The other groups are *unemployed* claimants (claiming JSA), *sick or disabled claimants* who may claim Incapacity Benefit and/or IS together with other disability benefits, *carers* and *widows*.
- d) Lone parents are not the sole focus of the programme and their needs are met alongside competing demands – especially from JSA claimants.
- e) Lone parents' participation in the first ONE interview since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2000 is mandatory, while subsequent caseloading interviews are voluntary. Since April 2001 lone parents in ONE pilot areas making new and repeat claims will also have to attend work focused interviews every 12 months while they remain on benefits.<sup>22</sup> There is thus growing similarity between mandatory ONE and evolving practice that combines PA meetings and NDLP (see point b below).

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<sup>22</sup> The client survey (Cohort Two) was extended to include another wave in order to evaluate the effects of the first annual meeting.

### 6 1.2 What does ONE offer lone parents?

The ONE service offers two initial interviews – a *start up interview* that collects basic information about the circumstances pertinent to the claim for benefits and may also provide brief work information, then, within four days (previously three days), a *Personal Adviser meeting*. This initial meeting with the PA is used to discuss work focussed aspects, such as job prospects and help with job search where relevant, identify employment barriers and how these barriers can be overcome, as well as help with benefit claims. Further meetings with the PA could then follow if this is arranged and agreed and a voluntary action plan drawn up. PA meetings can cover similar ground to those in NDLP and lone parents can be referred to NDLP during ONE PA interviews.

There are thus several close similarities to, and overlaps with, NDLP

- a) In its voluntary stage ONE resembles the voluntary NDLP programme but aimed at new or repeat claimants.
- b) In its mandatory stage ONE is thus similar in target group and potential effect to the Lone Parent PA meeting Pathfinder and to the national roll-out of compulsory PA meetings for new and repeat lone parent claimants of IS, and the combination with NDLP.

### 6 1.3 Implementing ONE

Only interim findings from the case-studies of the implementation of ONE have so far been published (Kelleher et al 2001). From these findings, several themes have arisen as important for lone parents and NDLP

First, the ideas behind ONE seem accepted across the board. Staff and lone parents alike almost universally shared the vision of a better more client-focused service

Second, there are significant structural and organisational problems in implementing ONE including integrating different organisational cultures, salary structures, and on setting up good working conditions (Kelleher et al 2001). Partnerships with local authorities did not seem to assist in harmonising Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit administration and relationships between the different organisational cultures were not always optimal. Such problems reinforce the "benefit hassle" for lone parents starting work

Third, staff training was reported as inadequate in its quality and quantity in the case studies (Kelleher et al 2001) and from qualitative studies (Johnson and Fielding 2000, p 140). Furthermore, with the large-scale inflow of non-JSA claimants at the mandatory stage of ONE, staff felt they required greater training in helping a more "difficult to serve" group of participants (Kelleher et al 2001, p. 28–29)

Fourth, staff perceived that a lack of resources in the ONE pilots prevented the full vision of ONE being achieved. Such concerns about resources were about staff levels, poor equipment and premises, and insufficient time in Start-up and Initial PA meetings (Kelleher et al. 2001). It is unclear how far non-JSA claimants' needs were 'crowded out' by resource and inflow pressures across the claimant profile. Pressures of work and time constraints meant that the quality of relationships between PAs and claimants was not as good as envisaged. Caseloads tended not to occur because of the pressure from new and repeat claimants (Kelleher et al. 2001 p.83). Delays of 6-8 days in processing benefit claims were not uncommon. Most recent evidence from mandatory ONE evaluation also points to longer waits for benefit in the ONE areas (Green, Marsh and Connolly 2001). Furthermore, across all ONE pilots PA interviews were shorter and less frequent than intended. Implementation of mandatory work-focused interviews has not apparently ensured comprehensive and consistent discussion of work opportunities for lone parents. However, while some claimants experienced " *that their meeting with a PA often lasted less than 10 or 15 minutes, and they perceived PAs to be 'very busy' whilst other people queued for booked appointments*" (Davies and Johnson 2001, p. 51) others gained a better insight into the potential success of the ONE approach " *Where PA meetings were more in-depth, some participants were pleasantly surprised that their PA offered work-related advice and guidance as well as help with claiming*" (Davies and Johnson 2001, p. 52)

It is now widely perceived that there " *Exists an 'implementation gap' between the aspirations of policy makers and delivery on the ground*" (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee 2002, p.43) but also that there is much evidence of good practice and of successful interventions with claimants within the overall picture of ONE on evidence to date. Changes and improvements to the service may thus close the currently perceived implementation gap.

#### 6.1.4 Lone Parents' experience of ONE

##### a) Voluntary phase

There was no evidence that ONE deterred lone parents from claiming welfare benefits in the voluntary phase. Only 30 percent of lone parents opted to participate in a PA work-focused interview (Green et al. 2000, p. 44). Lone parents were among those that found the Call Centre-based model (i.e. not face to face) of less value (Johnson and Fielding 2000, p. 152-153). Twenty-five percent of participants thought attendance at a meeting with a personal adviser was mandatory – echoing findings from Phase One of NDLP<sup>23</sup>. The main reasons for non-participation were similar to those found in NDLP evaluation. 40 percent stated that their child caring responsibilities stopped them from seeking work, 30 percent said they were not ready to consider work and 16 percent said that they preferred to look for work without such assistance (Green et al. 2000, p. 44)

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<sup>23</sup> Half of NDLP Phase one participants wrongly believed that the scheme was compulsory (Hales et al. 2000, p. 70)

Lone parents, like almost all non-JSA claimants said making a claim and receiving support was their main focus. Swift resolution of claims actually increased participants' confidence in ONE and complicated claims often meant claimants had no subsequent recall of work-related discussion. Discussion of work was seen as popular by those lone parents who felt they were in a position to explore options to work. The underlying problem of insufficient time with the PA discussed above is borne out in many lone parents' experience of ONE.

When voluntary participation in ONE with evidence from NDLP prototypes was compared, there appeared to be similar outcomes from PA meetings in discussing and looking at work opportunities. There appeared to be higher proportions of lone parents receiving better-off calculations and discussing childcare in NDLP than in voluntary ONE - a factor that may be explained by the differences in age of the youngest children between the two participating groups of lone parents (Green et al. 2000, p 72)

Few lone parents reported receiving follow-up interviews in ONE and few reported awareness of their availability (Kelleher et al. 2001). Referral to external agencies was uncommon. Overall lone parents were largely in favour of the vision of voluntary ONE but their experience of ONE rarely matched their expectations (Johnson and Fielding 2000).

#### b) Mandatory phase

Mandatory ONE provision led to increases in contacts with benefit offices and a greater proportion of lone parents in the ONE pilots had discussions in ways of finding work or training, but the content and nature of such discussions did not include much active job brokering (Green, Marsh and Connolly 2001, p 60). Subsequent evidence of "staff contacts" for the second wave of interviews (four to five months after the survey cohort entered the system) suggests there was a higher rate of contact *outside* the ONE pilots irrespective of the type or purpose of such contact (Green, Marsh and Connolly 2001).

Evidence from qualitative surveys suggests that lone parents were positive about their experience of ONE. For those already in part-time work, ONE was merely processing claim information. For those who saw work as an immediate priority, i.e. mainly JSA claimants, ONE was able to make a direct impact for those who lacked a clear, or comprehensive, job search strategy and this impact was optimised where the PA was familiar with participants' circumstances and goals. ONE was seen to have most impact on job-ready lone parents and carers<sup>24</sup>. Lone parents identified as "work ready" were more likely to report having established a work-focused job search strategy early in their claim (Davies and Johnson 2001). Subsequent contact with PAs after the initial interview was often claimant initiated and lone parents benefited from building up an individual relationship with a PA ((Davies and Johnson 2001) and (Davies, Sirett and Taylor 2001)). However, a greater tension between

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<sup>24</sup> JSA claimants reported little difference in ONE from their previous experience of Jobcentres and BA offices

reconciling the priorities of benefit entitlement and a work focus emerges in more recent qualitative evidence. The needs and expectations of claimants and the PA's requirement to deliver a work-focused interview appear to require careful balancing (Davies and Johnson 2001, p 70-71) Pushing a work focus too hard or too soon for some claimants appears to alienate them (echoing evidence from NDLP prototype evidence of PA and claimant relationships in Lewis et al 2000)

Participants who had recently lost a partner seemed to benefit from ONE, and this has potential importance for lone parents. Their experience of ONE was primarily focused on claiming benefit and on ensuring financial security in response to a crisis and work was not really discussed. However, PAs gained their confidence and ensured future support in finding work (Davies and Johnson 2001, p 61) When these cases were followed up in a second wave of qualitative interviews such participants were seen as more actively considering work (Davies, Sirett and Taylor 2001, p 26) It will therefore be interesting to note whether such participants are seen as having increased work participation in longer-term analysis of ONE's outcomes.

#### *6.1.5 Effects to-date on work orientation and participation*

Evidence of attitudinal change from ONE is found mostly in the early qualitative evidence, and suggested potentially large effects. Johnson and Fielding in their early study of voluntary participants found that ONE had helped non-JSA claimants to change their attitudes to work, being strongest among those who wanted to work but had previously not considered work an option This is confirmed elsewhere (Davies, Sirett and Taylor 2001) where such changes were most prominent in those who were not immediately seeking work but who wanted to work in the future and where ONE sustained and built confidence and motivation through contact with PAs

ONE had little effect on those who did not regard work as an option and this evidence appears consistent across the voluntary and compulsory versions of ONE and over time Indeed, in contrast to the experience of recently widowed and separated lone parents, participants in general reported strong feelings of resentment and grievance if PAs put discussions of work prior to sorting out the claim. The longer-term impact of these negative feelings on future contact with PAs and of outcomes from ONE is an area of interest for future evaluation.

Early quantitative evidence from voluntary ONE found a significant difference between lone parent work participation in the ONE pilot areas and the control areas (16 percent compared to 12 percent were working 16 or more hours a week) Controlling for other factors lone parents in the ONE pilots were 1.4 times as likely to be in employment than in the control areas (Green et al 2001, p 96). Additionally, there was also a higher proportion of out of work lone parents who were looking for work in the ONE areas (Green et al 2001, p. 30) Subsequent evidence found these significant differences in work participation rate had disappeared However, there was still a significant difference in the proportion taking up training and education and in the

proportion using ONE offices/Jobcentres to look for vacancies and in those expecting to gain financially from work. One suggested reason for this result was the combination of the newly introduced WFTC that coincided with the early days of ONE, so that its PAs had something new and encouraging to present to participants (Green et al. 2001). Once this effect passed, and WFTC became more widely known, the differences reduced. Another interpretation is that ONE accelerated returns to work without affecting the overall proportion that would make such a move – pushing all the impact into the first four months (see below).

There is currently no evidence to suggest that mandatory ONE increases lone parents' movement into work. Multivariate modelling confirmed that the main determinants of lone parents entering work were based on their human capital and demographic characteristics, with no significant effect found for participating in ONE (Green, Marsh and Connolly 2001).

Table 6.1 shows a summary of evidence for lone parents from the quantitative surveys of ONE showing what significant results have been found for different waves of surveys in both voluntary and mandatory ONE pilots. The summary suggests that ONE increases contact with the benefit offices but with little overall effect. Attitudinal change has only been found among participants in the voluntary phase and only in the short-term. Increases in job-search behaviour and training have also been found among volunteers over short and medium term, but not in the short term for mandatory participants. When it comes to increasing participation in work, the only evidence of an effect is in the short-term for voluntary participants.

One explanation lies in the design and target group of ONE. The perception that most effort has been directed at serving the needs of those closest to work has also been suggested, *"...this is simply how ONE works for lone parents – that it hastens into work those already inclined to work among those already inclined to look"* (Green et al. 2001, p. 8). The absence of a longer-term effect also matches reported poor levels of follow-up and caseloading interviews with PAs. Results thus suggest ONE outcomes are driven by a step-change rather than a cumulative cultural effect. A second explanation lies in the different types of evidence that are being assessed: that qualitative evidence from voluntary participants tended to overstate changes in the short term. Such evidence is less apparent in the sample surveys that are less open to selective response bias and which were designed to capture significant labour market outcomes.

This second conclusion is given more weight by early and interim analysis of administrative data that ONE appeared to have a positive effect on the probability of lone parents leaving benefit (no similar effect was found for unemployed and sick or disabled claimants) – but such an effect was only found in the Basic Model. Even where an employment effect has been found it seems commonly agreed that any effect for lone parents is small (Kirby and Riley 2001).

Table 6.1 Lone Parents Outcome evidence from quantitative surveys

	Significant differences found for lone parents in pilots vs lone parents in control areas		
	Voluntary		Mandatory
	Wave One	Wave Two	Wave One
	Contact with Benefit Office		
	(At Wave One)	(Since Wave One)	
Report receiving help and advice – general	Yes	Yes	Yes
Discussed benefits	Yes	No	Yes
Discussed finding work and training	Yes	Yes	Yes
Discussed childcare	Yes	Yes	Yes
Received “better off” calculation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Treated as an individual	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Change in Attitudes		
Attitudes to working	Yes	No	No
Self esteem	No	No	No
	Change in Behaviour – out of work		
Job search	Yes	Yes	No
Participation in training/education	n.a	Yes	No
	Change in Employment		
Working 16 + hours	Yes	No	No

Sources (Green et al 2000), (Green et al 2001) and (Green, Marsh and Connolly 2001)

6.2 New Deal for Young People

The New Deal for Young People (NDYP) is a national programme for JSA claimants aged 18 to 24 that began in 1998. It is a mandatory programme for all this age group of JSA claimants after six continuous months of unemployment. However, certain groups can enter NDYP earlier on a voluntary basis if they are seen to have special needs. One such group is lone parents and others who have caring responsibilities, who once they opt to enter early are compulsory participants.

NDYP consists of a period of intensive advice and job search with the assistance of a PA. This “Gateway” period is then followed by a choice of four (now five) options for those who complete the Gateway period and still have not found work. The original four options were 1) a six-month waged placement in work with an employer who receives a subsidy, 2) a six month

work placement in a voluntary organisation remaining on benefits, 3) up to 12 months relevant training or education or 4) six months work in a project run as Environmental Task Force remaining on benefits. The fifth option, introduced later, is assistance with self-employment in the form of six months Test Trading. After the completion of the Option there is a further period of intensive PA involvement called the Follow-through.

Early research established that three percent of JSA claimants unemployed for over six months were lone parents (Walker et al. 1999). This is a small proportion of NDYP participants, but with 674,000 total participants in NDYP by August 2001<sup>25</sup> the volume of lone parents to have entered the programme can be estimated at around 20,000. In the National Survey of participants the researchers report two percent of respondents as lone parents (Bryson, Knight and White 2000).

Published evaluations of NDYP rarely contain direct reference to lone parents as a sub-group of 18-24 year old participants. In the qualitative studies of the NDYP evaluation there is mention of lone parents in discussion of reasons for leaving the programme or for poor outcomes. Lone pregnancy and lone parenthood are one example of dominant personal issues that tended to overshadow employment aims and successful participation in NDYP (O'Conner, Bruce and Richie 1999).

Lone parenthood was also identified as a reason for returning to benefits after completion of NDYP or of leaving to "other destinations" ((O'Conner, Bruce and Richie 1999) and (Woodfield, Turner and Richie 1999)). Among the very small sample of lone parents in these qualitative studies there was knowledge and recognition of future usefulness of NDLP.

In the quantitative analysis undertaken as part of the National Survey of participants the employment rate of lone parent participants was low. The proportion of lone parents that went into some form of work was six percent - three percent of which was full-time employment. In contrast, the employment rate for all participants of NDYP was 55 percent, showing how poorly lone parents did when compared to others. An explanation of this poor performance in terms of job outcomes for lone parents is that 44 percent of lone parent leavers from the programme reported that looking after children was their main activity. This compares with 25 percent of other leavers with children reporting that they left the programme to look after children (Bryson, Knight and White 2000).

### **6.3 Working Families' Tax Credit**

Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) is a form of in-work financial support available to families with children who work 16 or more hours a week and who are on low to moderate incomes. WFTC replaced Family Credit (FC) in October 1999 and is a more generous scheme. WFTC was additionally made

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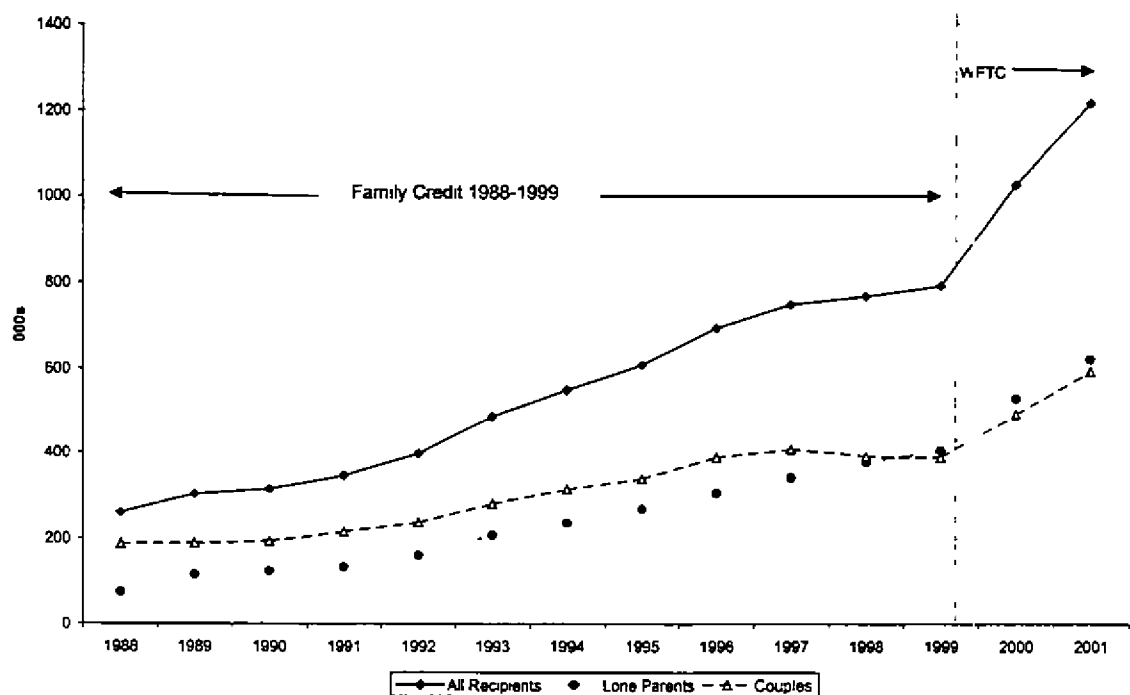
<sup>25</sup> DWP New Deal for Young People and Long-term Unemployed People aged 25+ - Statistics to end of August 2001 (Statistical First Release)



more generous to assist in the costs of childcare payments for eligible childcare, which generally covers formal, registered provision. WFTC plays an important part in the “better off” calculations that PAs make when advising NDLP participants. The potential “pull factor” of WFTC to encourage more lone parents into work has been estimated at just over two percent - around 34,000 additional lone parent workers (Blundell et al. 2000)<sup>26</sup>. WFTC has its own programme of evaluation evidence and the Inland Revenue contributes significantly to DWP’s Families and Children Survey. A full literature review and analysis of policy and evaluation issues has also been produced (Blundell and Walker 2001).

The greater generosity of WFTC means both that awards are potentially larger and the range of people entitled to benefit increases – pulling more potential recipients in from higher up the income distribution. Actual numbers of claimants of WFTC grew at the point of introduction in October 1999 and subsequently and Figure 6.1<sup>27</sup> shows the trends in claimant numbers for FC and WFTC. FC claims grew from 261,000 in 1988 to 791,000 in 1999, a growth of 203 percent. Lone parent recipients of FC increased from 28 percent (74,000) in 1988 to 51 percent (404,000) in 1999. The change in 1992 that lowered weekly hours of eligibility to 16 was especially favourable to lone parents. WFTC claims have risen considerably in the first 18 months of operation since October 1999. In August 2001 there were 1.2 million WFTC claimants, 52 percent of whom were lone parents.

Figure 6.1 Claimants of Family Credit and WFTC 1988-2001



Source Table 1.1 of (Inland Revenue 2002)

<sup>26</sup> These estimates assumed a 100 percent take up of WFTC and actual take up is less – see below

<sup>27</sup> Figure 6.1 is based on figures for May of each year and for Great Britain only

There is evidence of the experience of WFTC in the Family and Children Survey (FACS) that interviewed low and moderate-income families in 1999 and 2000. McKay shows that awareness of WFTC (among those not claiming) is highest among part-time workers and lowest among those who are not in paid work – where only 29 percent have heard of WFTC. It is unclear how this knowledge corresponds exactly to lone parents on IS – a sub-group of these out of work respondents – but this suggests that NDLP and PA interviews could improve knowledge of WFTC among this group. Lone parents had a better understanding of the 16 hours entitlement rule, but there was little knowledge of the fact that WFTC ignores maintenance payments and lone parents under-estimated how high earnings could be and still qualify for WFTC. There was understandable confusion about the effects of WFTC on eligibility for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. One quarter of WFTC/FC recipients mentioned that benefit recalculations in the past had left them with rent arrears – a situation that should improve with expansion of benefit run-ons at the point of leaving benefit and starting work.

Eighty percent of recipients considered their award of WFTC as much or more than they had hoped for. When entitlement to WFTC was compared to hypothetical entitlement to FC, it was found that weekly gains were on average 160 percent of FC entitlement (£76 versus £47) for lone parents. Restricting such estimates of gain to those lone parents who would previously have qualified for FC, the gain was 151 percent (£89 versus £59). Only 11 percent of WFTC claimants who previously received FC considered it better than WFTC.

WFTC has become a large and essential element of the household budget: 62 percent of all claimants said they would not be able to manage without it. However, payment by the employer through wages was not popular – 89 percent of claimants and 84 percent of partners preferred order books or payments into the bank. Lone parents reported more concerns with payment via the employer and missed the flexible and weekly nature of payment when compared to Family Credit.

Family Credit experienced take-up rates of 78-84 percent of caseload for lone parents in 1998/1999<sup>28</sup>. Take-up rates for couples were lower – in part due to the combination of the propensity for take-up to decline with amount of eligible award and the fact that fewer couple earners work part-time and thus tend to have lower eligible benefit levels. This is confirmed by take-up by expenditure figures (the percentage of all potential spending), which were 84-91 percent for lone parents (compared to 61 percent to 70 percent for couples) in 1998/99. An evaluation of take-up of FC among eligible claimants in 1999 showed that being a tenant, a lone parent and previously claiming IS, were all positive and statistically significant factors (Marsh et al 2001).

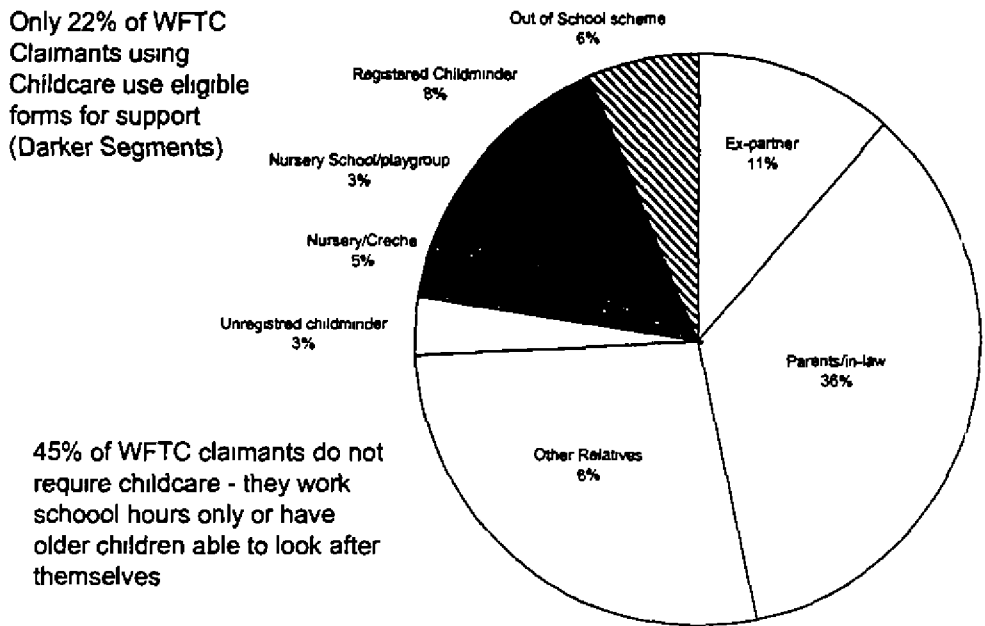
No “official” take-up figures for WFTC have yet been produced by the Inland Revenue or DWP for 1999/2000 at the time of writing, but calculations from the FACS survey suggest a 62 percent caseload and 76 percent expenditure

<sup>28</sup> Table 5.1 in (DSS 2000b)

take up overall. Lone parents had a 78 percent caseload figure rising to 90 percent for those lone parents who worked 16-29 hours. No evidence was found to suggest that the new more generous treatment of maintenance and childcare had any effect on take-up. Lone parents who received higher levels of maintenance had lower take-up rates.

WFTC only subsidises 'eligible' childcare (childminders nurseries, playgroup, crèche etc). However, many low-income lone parents use informal sources of childcare. In 2000, 17 percent of low-income lone parents limit their working hours to school hours and a further 26 percent have children that are considered "old enough to look after themselves". The majority of other lone parents who require and use childcare use informal sources, mostly friends and relatives, are ineligible for WFTC payments. Figure 6.2 shows that eligible childcare (shown in the darker segments) represented only 22 percent of all childcare used by lone parents on WFTC. It should be remembered though, that WFTC was never intended to subsidise every form of childcare

Figure 6.2 Childcare sources used by lone parents claiming WFTC, and using Childcare 2000



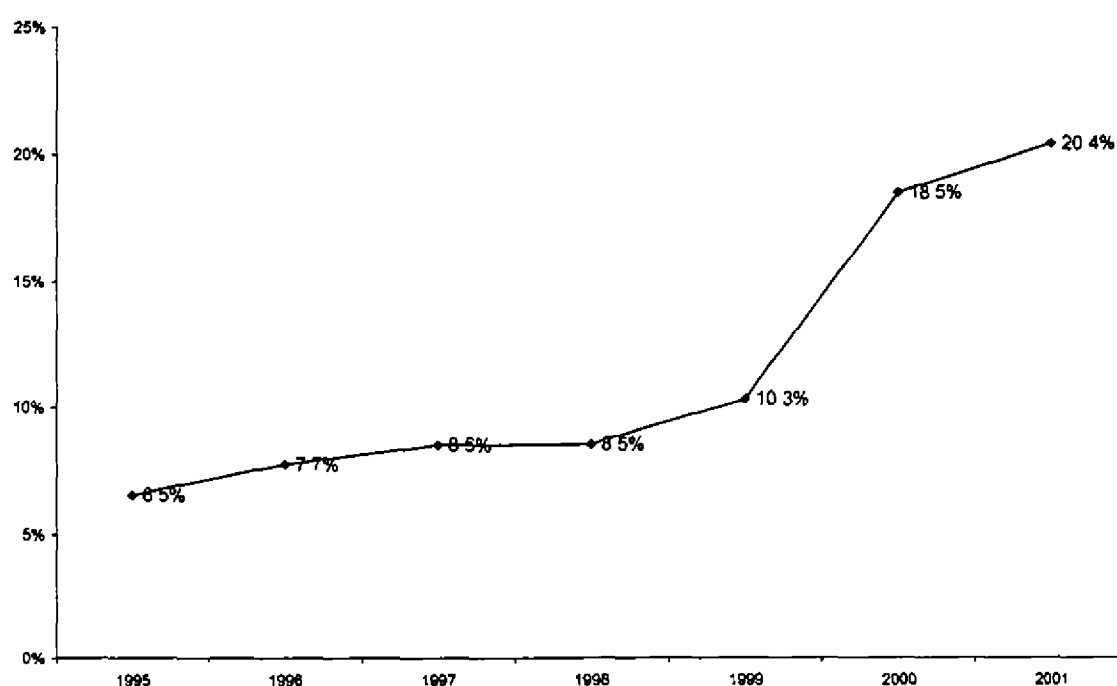
Source Table 4.1 in (McKay 2001)  
Note Multiple responses

WFTC's more generous treatment of the costs of childcare appears to have led to a large increase in the number and proportion of lone parent claimants receiving help with childcare costs. Figure 6.3<sup>29</sup> shows the proportion of lone parent claimants of FC and WFTC who have received help towards childcare costs in May of each year since 1995 (when such help in FC began). Under

<sup>29</sup> Figure 6.3 shows data for May of each year for all UK claimants

the FC scheme the take up was small with the proportion receiving assistance rising from 6.5 percent in 1995 to 10.3 percent in 1999. WFTC figures for 2000 and 2001 show that proportion climbing to 18.5 percent and 20.4 percent respectively

**Figure 6.3** The percentage of lone parent claimants on FC and WFTC receiving assistance with childcare costs 1995-2001



Source Table 1.3 of (Inland Revenue 2002)

There is confusion in the mind of claimants about how childcare fits into the calculation and award of WFTC. It was found that a higher proportion of WFTC claimants in 2000, 26 percent of lone parents, believed they were receiving help with childcare costs, pointing to considerable levels of uncertainty about whether WFTC awards included such sums (McKay 2001). This may reflect the fact that, in part, claimants may be using ineligible childcare and paying it from more generous WFTC.

Has WFTC increased the use of eligible childcare? Little increase was found in the proportion of WFTC claiming lone parents using eligible childcare between 1999 and 2000 (a slight increase from 17 percent-18 percent) (McKay 2001), though a large increase in those receiving assistance was found (Figure 6.3). However, for lone parents not claiming WFTC the proportions using eligible forms of childcare fell over the same period (from 15 percent to 11 percent). This suggests that WFTC may be assisting in maintaining levels of provision. This small effect is borne out by the proportions of lone parent claimants who reported that WFTC had affected their choice of type of childcare used (23 percent), and/or had affected their hours of childcare (15 percent) and/or hours of work (13 percent). The linking of eligible childcare to work opportunities is an important part of NDLP's

activity and there appears to be a need for greater clarity of what is available and its coverage by costs between the operation of NDLP and WFTC.

## **6.4 Summary**

- Implementation problems with ONE appear to have reduced the impact for lone parents, with evidence suggesting that ONE focused more on the requirements of JSA claimants. However, ONE referrals may substitute for NDLP, which could reduce the need for lone parents to participate in NDLP.
- Early strong evidence of an increased flow into work for lone parents has not held up over time and the only evidence of impact for ONE is interim evidence that it has marginally increased lone parents move into work
- Evidence from lone parents in the New Deal for Young People shows that they are a small part of the caseload and have much worse outcomes than the majority in the programme
- Working Families' Tax Credit has greatly benefited lone parents in low paid work becoming an essential part of household budgets. Eighty percent of recipients say the benefit is more generous than they expected.
- WFTC take-up is estimated at 78 percent for lone parents overall, but 90 percent for those working 16-29 hours. The coverage of 'eligible' childcare costs by WFTC, which tend to be formal, registered services, does not reflect lone parents' preference for informal care

## 7) Concluding Remarks

There is a wealth of evidence on NDLP available so far from a number of qualitative studies, the postal survey of lone parents on IS, information published in the Statistical First Release and the New Deal Evaluation Database. This allows us to draw together some key messages about the programme, although firm conclusions, particularly its net impact, must await some of the main evidence, which is still to come.

A challenge lies in making sense of evaluation findings within the context of an ever-changing policy environment. NDLP has evolved since its inception and other policies that impinge on NDLP have altered both entry routes into NDLP and likely outcomes for participating lone parents. In addition, lone parents participating now are, for a number of reasons, likely to be more disadvantaged than in the past. This means that comparisons over time that do not take account of changes in the profile of participants should be treated with caution.

Four main areas form the basis of this review.

Firstly, entry routes into NDLP.

Lone parents cannot benefit from NDLP unless they participate in the programme. NDLP is a voluntary programme and therefore making lone parents aware of NDLP and what it can offer is crucial to the programme's success. In terms of participation it has been found that.

- Participation rates up to the introduction of compulsory PA meetings were low (approx five-ten percent of the eligible population), which may perhaps have been the single most important factor limiting the success of the programme. Although numbers participating have increased with the introduction of compulsory PA meetings, the majority of lone parents still do not participate.
- Explaining why some lone parents participate in NDLP has so far proved problematic. All types of lone parents participate and both non-participants and participants have very similar characteristics and report similar factors that limit the amount or type of work that they can do. However non-working lone parents are more likely to report such barriers than are working lone parents.
- The introduction of compulsory PA meetings has changed the entry route into NDLP for many lone parents. It would appear that bringing NDLP to the attention of lone parents at the point of claiming Income Support has improved participation rates. Periodic PA meetings among the stock of lone parents claiming IS will continue to remind lone parents of NDLP and what it can offer them.

## Secondly, programme outcomes

The content of the programme is not rigidly defined NDLP offers a personalised service to lone parents that is responsive to individual lone parent's circumstances and needs It provides lone parents with work related assistance and help with benefit and tax credit claims. It is an information resource, a type of mentoring service and a problem resolution centre. The evaluation evidence to date finds that:

- Around half of all lone parents who leave NDLP enter work (approx. 54 percent) Statistical analysis of the quantitative survey in 2003 should provide evidence on how much of this is additional.
- Lone parent participants hold NDLP PAs in very high regard and are generally positive about their experiences of the programme.
- The 'better off calculation' is a mainstay to the PA service. Changes to taxes and benefits for lone parents entering work are likely to increase the importance of this service
- A number of the early qualitative studies highlighted a weakness in assistance with searching for job vacancies
- Childcare remains a major issue and one of the greatest barriers to work Lone parents and employers feel that NDLP could do more
- Education and training are now given a higher profile within NDLP (in response to evaluation evidence) It is still too early to tell what impact this has had.

## Thirdly, management and delivery of NDLP

Although there are variations in the way NDLP is managed and delivered, there has been a gradual shift towards devolving autonomy to the Jobcentre level.

- Business Managers' responsibility for NDLP seems to result in a more efficient use of resources and better local knowledge. NDLP targets that are incorporated into the Jobcentre performance agreements enable NDLP PAs to be part of a larger team, as well as preventing conflicting demands from different managers.
- It is important that PAs are able to interact with each other at the district and regional level in order to exchange ideas and experiences This is good for developing policy strategy as well as maintaining morale among staff, particularly given the pivotal role of PAs in the success of NDLP.
- Strong regional and district level links should be established as information conduits This provides a greater flow of knowledge amongst staff and also permits Jobcentre staff to use higher organisational levels as "subject experts"

Finally, other major programmes and policies that affect lone parents' labour market participation

This report has focused on three initiatives: the Working Families' Tax Credit, the ONE pilots and the New Deal for Young People. Evaluation evidence from these initiatives showed that:

- WFTC has improved work incentives for some lone parents. However, interactions with other taxes and benefits mean that the financial gains to work are limited to lone parents taking up work of over 30 hours a week, or lone parents taking advantage of the childcare tax credit. Early predictions suggested that WFTC would increase the labour market participation of around 30,000 lone parents.
- Early quantitative evidence from the ONE pilots (voluntary phase) found a small significant increase in lone parents' work participation. This positive effect was not significant in the results from later quantitative surveys but was found in the analysis of administrative data. It may have been linked to the introduction of WFTC.
- There is very little evidence on how well lone parents fare in NDYP. Lone parents' participation in NDYP is voluntary and therefore it is difficult to compare lone parents with other participants. Lone parents appear to do badly in comparison with other NDYP participants but this is likely to be driven by other factors.

This synthesis report has reviewed the evidence available to date from the national NDLP programme, from its implementation in October 1998 until December 2001. A second synthesis report will follow on from where this report has left off. Some significant evaluation evidence has yet to be published, in particular the findings from the second round of interviews from the quantitative survey. Major policy developments continue to impact on lone parents and their prospects for work, for example Jobcentre Plus and compulsory PA meetings have changed the main entry route into NDLP for many lone parents. Evidence of the impact of these initiatives will need to be assessed alongside evidence of the impact of NDLP.

Evaluation evidence available at this stage uncovers a number of outstanding issues. The second synthesis report, reviewing the findings from on-going analyses of lone parents' experience of NDLP, could shed light on the following:

- The impact of lone parents' place of residence on NDLP outcomes, taking into account differences in ethnic composition and local labour conditions.
- The needs of lone parents with multiple experience of the New Deal
- Evidence of differences between lone mothers and lone fathers in their NDLP needs (after all other factors are taken into account)
- How links between NDLP and other private/voluntary sector organisations could assist lone parents in ways NDLP cannot.
- Understanding the variety of needs throughout lone parenthood when parents may require differing support



Studies of NDLP and related policies go some way in addressing the Evaluation Strategy questions, but there are currently large gaps in available information. The table below highlights the extent to which inferences can be drawn with present information.

Table 7 1 Summary of evaluation evidence

<i>Evaluation Strategy's Questions</i>	<i>Evidence from this report</i>
What effect is NDLP having on individual lone parents?	Confirms Hasluck's findings that NDLP attracted substantial numbers of participants, was positively assessed by them and met many of their needs in whole or in part  Confirms and expands concerns about ethnicity – particularly relating to uptake by Pakistani and Bangladeshi lone parents
What are the training needs of lone parents?	Attitudes to and perceptions of the programme are still very positive More comprehensive information on basic skills and qualification needs is required – currently being undertaken
To what extent is there a differential impact on target and non-target groups?	No additional evidence available Analysis has moved on to consider the impact on different sub-groups of lone parents
What is the impact of NDLP on lone parents participation in the labour market?	Qualitative survey identifies income impacts and increased confidence  Most impacts are with job-ready lone parents
What is the effect of NDLP on the Employment Service, related labour market programmes or New Deal providers?	Great satisfaction with client group but evidence is that this is due to their voluntary participation
What is the effect of NDLP on the population receiving out of work benefits and in-work benefits?	Evidence of growing proportion of claimants with older children Some evidence of residualisation – non conclusive
How is NDLP interacting with the wider labour market?	No macro-evidence available for this report Qualitative survey of employers suggests low profile of NDLP
How cost effective is NDLP?	No additional evidence available (available Summer 2002)

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## Appendix

**Table A1** Details of NDLP Innovative Pilots and Innovation Fund programmes

Innovative Pilots	Innovative Fund
<b>Pilot (start date)</b> <b>Summary of Activities</b>	<b>Pilot</b> <b>Summary of Activities</b>
<b>City College Norwich</b> (Nov 99) The project provided both six-hour and six-week taster courses which included aspects covering New Opportunities for Women, IT and basic English. Work placements and mentoring were also available. Help with childcare was provided.	<b>Empower</b> This programme focused on confidence building issues for victims of domestic violence. This involved action planning and an induction course over four weeks, a personal development programme over six weeks, further assessment over two weeks and issues related to the transition to work. Work placements, work shadowing and mentoring were also available over a ten-week period.
<b>Gingerbread</b> (Sept 99) This pilot was based on an existing telephone advice line, through which a marketing and publicity campaign for NDLP was pursued. Advice was also provided through a website.	<b>GWINTO</b> This programme involved training in the installation and maintenance of gas central heating. The selection process was undertaken by Reed Employment agency. Training at NVQ2 level was provided through a 42-week sandwich course. The course was provided through a college and placement opportunities were available.
<b>Children Club [formerly Lincolnshire Kids' Clubs]</b> (Nov 99) Pre-employment training was provided which focused on personal development and confidence building skills. A course designed for training in the childcare industry was offered, called the Take Ten for Play course, as well as the opportunity of work experience through a childcare placement. Training also covered food hygiene, IT and health and safety issues. Style counselling and the opportunity to shop for interview/work clothes were provided. Childcare support was also available.	<b>Portsmouth Foyer</b> This programme focused on the needs of long term IS claimants. There were three courses, each involving ten lone parents, providing a 16-week programme. The courses involved aspects of team building and group workshops through which individuals could select courses suitable to their specific needs. Work tasters or work shadowing was also available.

<p><b>NEWTEC</b> (Nov 99) A 24-week vocational training package, covering induction and assessment, word processing module, pathways in IT or Education Support Services. Advice and guidance on job searching was also provided.</p>	<p><b>NEWTEC</b> IT training was provided over six weeks, focusing on the needs of blue chip city firms. Two four-week work placements were offered covering aspects of soft skills training. Assessments were carried by out Drake, Bream Morin (DBM) over four weeks with the opportunity for paid internships over 16 weeks. Style counselling was also available through "Dress for Success".</p>
<p><b>One Plus</b> (Aug 99) This was an eight-week pre-employment training course, including aspects of Personal development and confidence building. Community based training in ICT and call centre skills was also available along with opportunities for work shadowing. External speakers were also organized. An incentive payment on the completion of the course was offered. Help with childcare was provided.</p>	<p><b>One Plus</b> This project provided opportunities for personal development and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) training over seven weeks. Work placements, ECDL and support with job searches were available for between eight-26 weeks. Provision was through the John Wheatley College/Axiom Training Partners. The programme was run across three intakes of 15 lone parents in three sites.</p>
<p><b>Orient Regeneration</b> (Nov 99) This pilot provided a course, after an induction course and initial assessment, offering a menu of options including, one-to-one support, Taster courses and a Motivational Programme. An Employer Links Programme and Job Search Programme were also available.</p>	<p><b>ES North Devon</b> This was a large-scale project involving 325 lone parents through community PAs in rural areas. Assessment and advice sessions took place over nine weeks, with work shadowing and work experience offered over a 14-week period. The programme placed a great emphasis on job-matching.</p>
<p><b>Oxford Lone Parent Project</b> (Nov 99) This pilot offered a flexible package including outreach and development work, employer liaison and work experience, accredited training, mentoring, childcare support, skills pilot programme, driving skills training and job search support.</p>	<p><b>ES Cornwall</b> This project included lone parents and a 'friend or relative' of lone parents. It involved help with childminder registration for the friend or relative and double interview procedures. Both the lone parent and friend received NDLP support during the registration process, which lasted 20 weeks. In-work incentives were available for both parties including links to the Early Years service.</p>

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**Rainbow Roadshow**

(NCOPF)

(Nov 99)

Advice and support to lone parents through ten roadshows offering information on work preparation, mentoring, work experience, opportunity for an interview with a PA and information on childcare support. A telephone helpline was also available.

**ES Bristol**

This project involved a BTEC Foundation course in childcare/early learning training. There was a special focus on recruitment among ethnic minorities. Four ten-week courses were provided for 10-15 lone parents on each course. The level of training was for employment or self-employment in the childcare sector, with the aim of improving childcare provision and cultural choice.

**Scoop Aid**

(May 99)

This pilot offered several courses including a Personal Development Programme, an employment focused course "Return Course" and one-to-one support and guidance.

**Margaret Bardsley**

This pilot involved aspects of training and personal development over four weeks. Training covered call handling, care and retail. Catering placements were available for eight cohorts of 100 lone parents.

**One Parent Families Scotland**

This project was part of an established provision. Through a single intake, training was provided over an eight to ten week period. The training included ECDL in three to seven units and job searches. Opportunities for work experience were available over an eight-week period. A six-week summer drop-in provision was also available.

**Routeways Plymouth**

This project focused on the 'job ready', providing an average of ten weeks training through in-house trainers, mentors and matched placements.

**South Lanarkshire**

Two sets of cohorts of 12 lone parents were selected for IT and personal development training, provided over four weeks. Work placements, usually in Council Departments, were available for eight weeks with a follow through over 13 weeks.

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## Index

Advisers' Discretionary Fund (ADF).....	59
Benefits Agency Visiting Officer (BAVO).....	9, 65
Better-off calculations .....	48
Caseloading .....	73
Child Maintenance Bonus .....	8
Childcare.....	11, 61, 90, 91
Education and Training .....	50, 54, 87
Employment.....	53
Ethnicity .....	37, 66
Health problems .....	38, 66
Innovative Fund .....	9, 101
Innovative Pilot .....	8, 101
In-Work Training Grant Pilots (IWTG) .....	9
Job Finders Grant .....	59
Jobcentre Plus .....	71
Lone Fathers.....	68
Mortgage Interest Run-On .....	8
National Minimum Wage (NMW) .....	10
New Deal Evaluation Database (NDED) .....	13
New Deal for Long Term Unemployed (NDLTU) .....	10
New Deal for Young People (NDYP) .....	10, 86
Older lone parents .....	65
ONE .....	10, 79
Personal Advisers, PA Meeting. ....	5, 7, 61, 73, 75, 83
Statistical First Release (SFR) .....	13
Sure Start .....	11
Target group .....	5
Teenage lone parents .....	64
Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) .....	11, 87

The New Deal for Lone Parents is a voluntary welfare to work programme to help and encourage lone parents to increase participation in paid work and to improve their job readiness and employment opportunities. NDLP was introduced in prototype form in July 1997 and nationally in October 1998 and has a large-scale on-going evaluation programme associated with it. Researchers at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics were commissioned to review and synthesise evaluation evidence produced up to the end of 2001.

This report updates the previous NDLP summary report and reviews evidence on NDLP and lone parents from a wide variety of sources. It examines the position of lone parents in relation to the labour market, their incomes, how populations claiming Income Support have changed, and how the tax and benefit systems have changed to improve the financial gains from work. Participation in the programme is discussed and analysed in detail along with programme outcomes and impacts. The evidence on how participation and impacts vary between sub-groups of participants is also discussed. In addition, the report looks at how management and implementation of the programme has affected NDLP and there is also discussion of how other welfare to work initiatives including, ONE, New Deal for Young People and Working Families' Tax Credit, have been experienced by lone parents

**All reports and their summaries are available from**

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