

# **Employment, Retention and Advancement (ERA) Programme**

## **Technical Report of Wave 3 of the Customer Survey**

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Office for National Statistics – 2009/2010**

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Purpose of Technical Report	3
1.2 Background and Aims of the ERA Scheme	3
1.3 Outline of Survey Design	3
<b>2. Sample</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Sample Design	5
<b>3. Questionnaire Design</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Content of Questionnaire	7
<b>4. Fieldwork</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Design	8
4.2 Contact Procedures	8
4.3 Interviewer Training	9
4.4 Fieldwork Dates	9
4.5 Fieldwork Periods	9
4.6 Interviews for the Main Stage	10
4.7 Post Interview Procedures	10
4.8 Proxy Interviews	11
<b>5. Response</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1 Overall Response	12
5.2 Wave 3 Response Rates	12
5.3 Refusal Rates	13
5.4 Non-Contact Rates	13
5.5 Attrition	14
5.6 Steps to Locate Respondents	15
5.7 Steps to Contact Respondents	17
5.8 Steps to Minimise Refusals	18
<b>6. Data Management and Processing</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1 Editing and Checks on Data Quality	19
6.2 Issues	19
6.3 Data Files	19
<b>7. Bibliography</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>8. Appendices</b>	<b>21</b>

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose of Technical Report**

This report covers technical aspects of the sample design, fieldwork, data collection and data management of the Employment, Retention and Advancement (ERA) quantitative customer survey.

The ERA quantitative survey is a longitudinal survey. Three waves of data collection have taken place between 2004 and 2010. The technical aspects of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys have been covered by a previous report (Park, 2007). This report focuses on the Wave 3 survey process, highlighting similarities to and changes from the previous two waves of data collection.

This report is organised into 6 main sections:

Section 1 contains an introduction and background to the ERA quantitative survey and outlines the survey design.

Section 2 outlines the composition of the Wave 3 sample.

Section 3 provides an outline of the design and content of the Wave 3 questionnaire.

Section 4 focuses on the fieldwork procedures used within Wave 3, including information on design, contact procedures, interviewer training, fieldwork dates and periods, interview length, proxy interviews and post interview procedures.

Section 5 presents the response of the ERA Wave 3 quantitative survey by outlining the breakdown of response over the 3 waves of ERA, and highlights differences in response by area and the ERA programme and control group.

Section 6 focuses on the management and processing of the data collected.

## **1.2 Background and Aims of the ERA Scheme**

The quantitative customer survey forms a key component of the Impact study of the ERA evaluation. It was designed to assess the effectiveness of the ERA programme by providing information about the work experiences, outcomes and attitudes of programme members and those of a control group of clients. The survey was managed and undertaken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

## **1.3 Outline of Survey Design**

The ERA survey is compiled of three waves of data collection. The 12-month survey (W1) was completed in early 2006; the 24-month survey (W2) was completed in early 2007; and the 60 month-survey (W3), which is the focus of this report, was completed in early 2010.

The ERA questionnaire measured respondents' experiences since random assignment, their access to ERA, the New Deal, and other services, and their outcomes in terms of labour market participation, earnings, terms and conditions of employment, and domestic circumstances (see Section 3).

At W3, two groups of clients were interviewed:

- lone parents seeking to join the New Deal for Lone Parents
- lone parents working part time and receiving Working Families Tax Credit

At previous waves, interviews were also held with a third group of respondents aged over the age of 25; people entering the New Deal for over 25 year olds. These were dropped from the sample in W3 due to issues of low response at earlier stages (see Section 2).

For all waves, interviews were carried out by the ONS telephone unit (TU) where possible, following up those who could not be contacted (or who were reluctant to participate) with face-to-face interviewers. At W3, 'keep in touch' exercises (KITE) were carried out before the main stage interview, and several attempts were made to update contact information in order to reduce non-contact attrition (see Section 4).

## 2. Sample

### 2.1 Sample Design

At W1 and W2, the survey covered 3 groups eligible for ERA:

1. Unemployed people aged 25 years or over entering the New Deal (ND25+)
2. Lone parents seeking to join the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP)
3. Lone parents working part-time and claiming Working Tax Credit (WTC).

At W2, a boost of WTC cases was also added to the sample (WTC+).

The ND25+ group was dropped from the sample at W3 following advice from the wider ERA consortium.

In W2, response rates were lower than anticipated in the ND25+ sample and seemed likely to fall below 50 per cent in a third Wave. Concerns were expressed that such a low response would have not proved useful for analysis in the Impact study, so it was decided to exclude this group from the W3 sample, concentrating efforts on the other two groups.

At W3, individuals who were refusals or non-contacts at previous waves were included in the sample. This meant that the W3 interview was the first some ERA participants were interviewed. For example, if a non-contact at W1, the W3 interview would be the first point of contact since they signed up to the ERA scheme approximately 5 years previously.

The initial sample contact details were created by collating the most updated details from W1 and W2. Efforts were made to update these contact details through the use of tracking exercises. These will be explained in more detail in Section 4.

The total sample size at W3 was 5,688. The sample was evenly split between programme and control cases, with 49.8 per cent (2,831) of the sample assigned to the ERA programme and 50.2 per cent (2,857) were assigned to the control group. In terms of customer groups, 51.7 per cent (2,939) of the sample were in the NDLP group and 48.3 per cent (2,749) were in the WTC group.

The ERA scheme was piloted in 6 areas in Great Britain. In W3, the sample included cases from each of the pilot regions:

- South East Wales (683 cases),
- Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute (RIAB) (751 cases),
- Manchester (681 cases),
- Derbyshire (2,084 cases),
- North East London (719 cases),
- Gateshead and South Tyneside (770 cases)

**Table 1: Sample Composition of W3**

	<b>Site</b>						
<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Derbyshire</b>	<b>Gateshead</b>	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>NELondon</b>	<b>RIAB</b>	<b>SEWales</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>NDLP Control</b>	251	251	251	251	245	227	1476
<b>NDLP Programme</b>	251	251	251	251	239	220	1463
<b>WTC Control</b>	360	113	25	66	96	102	762
<b>WTC Programme</b>	341	121	26	68	94	98	748
<b>WTC Boost Control</b>	438	17	64	43	38	19	619
<b>WTC Boost Programme</b>	443	17	64	40	39	17	620
<b>Total</b>	2084	770	681	719	751	683	5688

### **3. Questionnaire Design**

#### **3.1 Content of the Questionnaire**

The W3 questionnaire covered the same broad topics as the questionnaire at previous waves, but a number of questions which were judged relevant to the long-term evaluation of ERA, were also added to the instrument. These opinion-based questions related to self-assessed health, use of health services, quality of life, financial hardship and parental stress.

In order to keep the length of the W3 instrument similar to that of previous waves, the decision was made by the consortium to remove several questions that were concerned with the number of contacts with Jobcentre Plus staff as well as the take up of ERA training bonuses and childcare payments. It was ensured that the survey processes (e.g. fieldwork procedures) were as similar to previous waves as possible to ensure the consistency of the longitudinal data.

Appendix A contains a summary of the questionnaire content.

## **4. Fieldwork**

### **4.1 Design**

The W3 interview took place approximately 60 months after respondents had been recruited to the ERA scheme in the jobcentre. The W3 interview for the WTC boost cases, which were added in W2, took place around 48 months after recruitment into the ERA scheme.

The ERA main stage interview was designed as a telephone interview with non-contacts and refusals being re-issued to face-to-face interviewers where appropriate. Telephone interviews are noticeably cheaper to administer than face-to-face interviews, although response rates may be lower. However, previous experience with samples of benefits claimants suggest that some benefit claimants are more willing to be interviewed by telephone than have an interviewer call at their home (Burnt et al 2001). At W3, 40.1 per cent of cases were re-issued to the face-to-face interviewers.

There were approximately 28 telephone interviewers and 110 field interviewers who were fully dedicated to working on W3 of ERA. Of these, approximately 63 per cent had worked on previous waves. This promotes interviewer continuity and may contribute to the achieved response rate

Due to interviewer resource, respondents who moved outside the sample areas to other locations in Britain were contacted only by the TU. No face-to-face interviewers were sent to addresses outside of the ERA survey areas due to cost and resource

Respondents were given a £20 voucher incentive in return for their co-operation at each wave.

### **4.2 Contact Procedures**

#### **4.2.1 Postal KITE**

Between May and June 2008, all W3 sample members were sent a pre-contact letter. The letter included a leaflet setting out the purpose of the survey, a postcard so that sample members could inform ONS of any changes to their contact details, and an ERA/ONS key ring as an unconditional incentive. The letter also informed sample members about the £20 voucher they would receive if they were taking part in the W3 interview.

#### **4.2.2 Telephone Unit KITE**

Each sample member was also contacted for a keep-in-touch interview by the TU around 3 months before their main stage interview. The aim of this short questionnaire was to ask respondents about their most up-to-date contact details, and also inform respondents they were to be contacted in 3 months time for the main stage interview.

#### **4.2.3 Advance letter**



All respondents were sent an advance letter and purpose leaflet 8 days before the main stage fieldwork started in the TU. As in the postal KITE, the letter and leaflet explained that respondents who completed the interview would receive a £20 gift voucher as a token of appreciation. A copy of the advance letter is included in Appendix C.

Both the pre-contact and advance letters were also produced in Welsh for respondents living in Wales.

### **4.3 Interviewers training**

All interviewers were briefed on the ERA scheme and the W3 quantitative survey before the fieldwork periods began.

The telephone interviewers attended a survey specific training day, which was based at the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) unit in Titchfield. This covered both the KITE and the main stage interviews. Face-to-face interviewers who had been working on ERA previously, either at W1 or W2, were issued with home interviewer briefing packs. All other field interviewers who were new to ERA were instead briefed personally by ONS research and field staff in Titchfield.

The briefings covered:

- background to the survey: objectives of the research and sample design,
- how to approach respondents,
- demonstration of the questionnaire,
- the importance of a high response rate to the project.

Interviewers were also given detailed instructions which provided guidance on each question and any likely problems which they may experience when conducting an interview.

All briefing and interviewer materials were developed taking into account the ONS knowledge and experience gained from conducting not only the previous ERA waves, but also other financial based and longitudinal surveys. The materials addressed any potentially problematic or confusing areas of the survey, which were particularly important to those interviewers who were new to the ERA study.

In December 2009, interviewers were also re-briefed about new initiatives on ERA which were designed to increase response. This included guidance to new stationery to be used by interviewers and instructions for use.

### **4.4 Fieldwork Dates**

KITE interviews started in September 2008 and were completed in September 2009. Wave 3 main stage interviews were administered from December 2008 to February 2010.

## **4.5 Fieldwork Periods**

Main stage fieldwork was organised in monthly batches, from December 2008 to December 2009. Each month's fieldwork began with approximately 16 days of telephone interviewing concluding in all non-contacts and suitable refusals being re-issued to face-to-face interviewers. In theory, 4 weeks were allowed for the face-to-face interviewers although in practice, considerably more interviewing time was allowed. For the November and December 2009 batches, a fieldwork extension until the end of February 2010 was given to interviewers to increase response. Non-contacts during the main stage fieldwork were re-issued to field again during three mop-up exercises which took place between July 2009 and the end of February 2010 (see Section 5).

## **4.6 Interviews for the Main Stage**

### **4.6.1 Interview length**

The median interview length at W3 was 37 minutes with 75 per cent interviews taking under 45 minutes to complete.

### **4.6.2 Interview reception**

The majority of feedback received from interviewers about being contacted to complete a third wave of interviewing was positive. A number of respondents reported that they like the fact the government was interested in them and felt like the programme was making a difference to their lives. The promise of a £20 incentive also proved a powerful incentive to participate.

### **4.6.3 Reaction to questions**

#### *Child Outcome Questions*

Some respondents thought questions on their children in relation to their behaviour and attainment at school were not relevant to a survey on employment. After explanation by the interviewers, they were happy to answer the questions.

#### *Employment and Training History*

Some interviewers had received feedback concerning questions asking for employment and training history. Some respondents found it difficult and time consuming to recall all aspects of their history over the past year.

## **4.7 Post Interview Procedures**

At the end of each interview, respondent's contact details were checked and amendments made where necessary. Interviewers coded the occupation and industry information after the interview. The National Statistics-Socio Economic Class (NS-SEC) was then derived from this information.

Each interview was given an outcome code, whether a full interview was achieved or not. A full list of the outcome codes used at W3 can be found in Appendix D

## **4.8 Proxy Interviews**

Proxy interviews consisted of a reduced version of the full interview, focusing on the main factual items, and removing all opinion-based questions. Proxies were only carried out by face-to-face interviewers who were briefed to only accept proxy interviews if there was no chance of obtaining an interview with the sample member. In W3, only 4 interviews were conducted by proxy.

## 5. Response

### 5.1 Overall response

The overall response rate at W1 was 84 per cent and was 76 per cent at W2.

The target response rate for W3 was 71 per cent

The overall response rate achieved at W3 was 67.9 per cent. A number of factors affected response in Wave 3, which are discussed in detail in Section 5.6. The overall refusal rate for W3 was 14.2 per cent, and the non-contact rate was 17.8 per cent.

A detailed breakdown of responses is outlined and examined in Section 5.4. Please note all response rates are calculated excluding ineligible cases from the total sample size.

### 5.2 Wave 3 response rates

#### 5.2.1 Response by site

**Table 5: Response rate by site**

	<b>Gateshead &amp; South Tyneside</b>	<b>Derbyshire</b>	<b>North East London</b>	<b>South East Wales</b>	<b>RIAB</b>	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Responders</b>	75.6%	68.5%	66.6%	58.6%	68.4%	67.3%	67.9%
<b>Non- Contacts</b>	12.4%	18.6%	14.0%	25.0%	17.4%	18.8%	17.8%
<b>Refusals<sup>1</sup></b>	12.0%	12.9%	19.4%	16.4%	14.2%	13.9%	14.2%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b><i>Base</i></b>	<i>759</i>	<i>2029</i>	<i>656</i>	<i>652</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>664</i>	<i>5484</i>
<b><i>Ineligibles</i></b>	<i>11</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>204</i>

Note: <sup>1</sup> Includes other non-response categories (see Appendix D for more information)

As shown in Table 5, the response rate in the majority of areas was above 60 per cent. The highest response rate was in Gateshead and South Tyneside (75.6 per cent). The lowest response rate was in South East Wales which gained a response rate of 58.6 per cent. This is mainly due to the higher non-contact rate (25 per cent) in this area compared to the other regions. Refusal rates are similar across all 6 regions of the sample.

## 5.2.2 Response by sample group eg. WTC

**Table 6: Response rate by Target group (customer and programme group)**

	NDLP		WTC		WTC+		WTC All	
	Programme	Control	Programme	Control	Programme	Control	Programme	Control
<b>Responders</b>	66.6%	63.5%	78.6%	76.5%	64.2%	61.4%	72.1%	69.8%
<b>Non-Contacts</b>	19.0%	21.1%	10.2%	10.3%	20.6%	23.5%	14.9%	16.2%
<b>Refusals</b>	14.5%	15.4%	11.2%	13.2%	15.2%	15.1%	13.0%	14.0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Base</b>	1409	1393	737	742	600	601	1337	1343
<b>Ineligibles</b>	51	83	12	20	20	18	32	52

The overall response rate for respondents in the NDLP group was 65.1 per cent. The overall response rate for all WTC cases was 70.9 per cent. Table 6 breaks down the response rates by customer group and programme group. The group with the highest response in W3 was the original WTC programme group with 78.6 per cent of respondents completing an interview, and 76.5 per cent of the control WTC sample completing an interview. Table 6 also illustrates the combined response of the WTC original and boost cases. All groups had a recorded response of over 60 per cent. The highest rate of refusal was amongst the control members of the NDLP (15.4 per cent), closely followed by the programme WTC boost group (15.2 per cent). The highest rate of non-contact was from the WTC boost control cases (23.5 per cent).

## 5.3 Refusal Rates

Refusals accounted for 14.2 per cent of the sample in W3. Out of these 39.1 per cent of refusals were received from the sample person themselves and 35.1 per cent of refusals were due to broken appointments and no re-contact. On longitudinal surveys, there is a higher burden placed on the respondent to respond wave after wave. This may increase the number of respondents who refuse to interview at subsequent waves. This is evidence of attrition over the 3 waves of research and indicates research fatigue experienced by respondents.

Linked to the issue of obtaining up-to-date contact details for the sample, some respondents hadn't been contacted for their participation in the ERA programme for a number of years. This resulted in fewer correct contacts details being obtained, and also the loss of interest in the study by some respondents.

## 5.4 Non-Contact Rates

Non-contacts were the main type of non-response on ERA W3 and accounted for 17.8 per cent of the sample. As mentioned previously, the non-contact rate was higher in W3 than in previous waves. This is mainly due to the unavailability of up-to-date contact details of respondents, and a result of not being contacted for an extended period of time. Indeed, the Wave 3 bid document estimated that around 30 per cent of the sample was likely to have moved address between Wave 2 and Wave 3.

Although many methods were utilised to gain new contact details, it was difficult to assess which details were correct and should be used, and which details were out-of-date. When attempting to obtain correct contact details, it was also important to abide to rules regarding respondent confidentiality and privacy.

Even after the additional ‘mop-up’ periods had been carried out, of the non-contacts a new address or telephone number wasn’t obtained for 34.5 per cent of respondents. 8.9 per cent of non-contacts had moved and no new details had been obtained, and no one was in when contacted by both the telephone and at their address for 37.6 per cent of the non-contacts.

## 5.5 Attrition

Attrition due to non-response is a major problem in longitudinal studies, and is one of the main causes behind falls in response rates over waves. There are two main types of attrition which were both evident in the W3 stage of ERA; non-contacts and refusals. Respondents were first contacted for the ERA scheme in 2004, and the last W2 interview took place in 2006. As W3 mainly took place in 2009, it has been approximately 5 years since they first joined the scheme, and 3 years since the W2 interview. This caused an expected higher non-contact rate within the sample, and also a higher rate of refusal.

**Table 7: Response, non-contact and refusal rates over the 3 waves of ERA**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
<b>Responders</b>	84%	76%	68%
<b>Non-Contacts</b>	12%	10%	18%
<b>Refusals</b>	4%	3%	14%
<b>W1 Non-Responders</b>	n/a	11%	n/a
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%

As illustrated in Table 7, response over the three waves appears to have gradually decreased and the non-contact and refusal rate to have gradually increased. These results are as expected in a longitudinal survey and highlights attrition which has occurred between waves. Overall 46.6 per cent (2648) individuals were respondents with fully complete interviews at all three waves.

It is difficult to do any direct comparison of response rates and in-depth analysis of the effects of attrition over the three waves of ERA as the sample composition has changed for the 3 waves, for example the WTC boost cases added in W2 and the fact that W3 re-contacted those who were non-responders at W1 whereas this did not occur at W2.

Although attrition was accounted for in the proposed target response rate, the cumulative effect on W3 was higher than anticipated. It was because of this that ONS utilised many methods to minimise non-contacts and reduce refusals.

## 5.6 Steps to Locate Respondents

A number of steps were taken to locate respondents both before the fieldwork period and also throughout the fieldwork period. Due to the length of time between waves, it was important that respondent contact information was accurate and of a high quality. In the first instance, respondent details from either W1 or W2 were used in an attempt to contact respondents. If it was found these details were incorrect, a number of methods were used in order to update these details, both before and throughout the fieldwork period.

### 5.6.1 Pre-fieldwork

#### 5.6.1.1 Change of address postcards

Change of address postcards were delivered to the full sample with the pre-contact letter 6 months before the W3 main stage fieldwork period. Respondents were asked to return the postcards free of charge if their contact information was to change before, and during, the main stage period. ONS received approximately 400 postcards from individuals containing new contact details. 91.9 per cent of these were contacted at the main stage interview, and 85.7 per cent completed a full interview.

#### 5.6.1.2 TU KITE

As noted in Section 4, a short interview was carried out in the TU which took place 3 months before the main stage interview. The aims of these exercises were to keep in touch with respondents, obtain new address details, highlight whether respondents were contactable, enquire about any plans to move, and to remind them about the ERA study.

The TU KITE gained an overall response of 52.1 per cent. Out of those who responded to the KITE, 56.1 per cent updated their contact details, for example their addresses and/or telephone numbers. Of those who were respondents at the TU KITE 85.1 per cent were respondents at the main stage.

### 5.6.2 Mop-up exercises

In order to increase response rates, three stages of additional interviewing by both the TU and the face-to-face interviewers were designed. The first stage of mop-up exercises was carried out solely in the field due to available resource, and the last 2 stages were carried out both in the TU and in the field. All non-contacts and other non-response cases were eligible for reissue to the additional periods of fieldwork. All mop-up exercises used the same questionnaire as the main stage interview.

The mop-up exercises incorporated new contact details which had been identified using a number of tracking procedures. This included details from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), UK Changes and the National Change of Address (NCOA) register, and the electoral register. Any additional details which were found by these methods were used as secondary points of contact after the original ONS sample address was attempted.

The mop-up exercises increased the overall contact rate from 77.7 per cent to 82.2 per cent and the overall response rate from 62.7 per cent to 67.9 per cent.

#### 5.6.2.1 DWP address updates

At two points within the W3 fieldwork, DWP provided ONS with address and telephone updates for respondents. Where an update was available, they were used as either a primary or a secondary address during the mop-up fieldwork.

#### 5.6.2.2 UK changes and NCOA register

New telephone numbers were also attached to sample members using the Consumer Telenumbering service provided by UKChanges. This uses information from the daily updated BT Operator Services Information System, but excludes ex-directory or mobile telephone numbers. Please note that this method of gaining additional contact details was not used in the first stage of the mop-up exercise as it was only carried out in the field using addresses.

The NCOA file is sourced from the Royal Mail Redirection Service. It provides the ability to identify not only the fact that the individual has moved, but also offers details of where that individual has moved to.

#### 5.6.2.3 Electoral Register

Local authority electoral registers were also searched to identify ERA sample members with new addresses. Unfortunately the electoral registers contain limited information on each individual and the matching could only be done using the name and surname of each respondent. Firstly, the latest address held by ONS was searched to check whether the respondent was still living there. If different names were found at the address, then a search by name and surname was performed on the electoral register of the local authority of the latest address. If one match was found, then the new electoral register address was assigned as a second address to the respondent. If more than one match was found or there was no match, no second address was assigned. The matching exercise was carried out only on the local authority register of last residence. A search on the entire collection of registers would have been too resource-intensive and probably not very helpful considering the higher probability of multiple matches. Furthermore as highlighted in Section 4.1, ERA face to face fieldwork did not follow movers out of the areas of previous residence.

#### 5.6.2.4 Overall Success of Additional Address and Telephone Number Details

Overall 886 new addresses were used in the ‘mop-up’ exercises. Analysis on the data has shown that 10.9 per cent (97) addresses were successful and led to a fully complete interview from the respondent.

Overall 430 additional telephone numbers were used in an attempt to contact non-contacts in the ‘mop-up’ periods. Additionally 17.7 (76) of these telephone numbers were correct and led to the respondents completing a W3 interview.



## 5.7 Steps to Contact Respondents

As previously explained in Section 4, a mixed method of contact was used on ERA W3 where all sample members were firstly contacted to complete an interview over the phone. If contact by telephone was not possible or a ‘soft refusal’ was gained by the TU, cases were reissued to a face-to-face interviewer.

### 5.7.1 TU and face-to-face outcomes

**Table 3: Mode of interview by outcome**

	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Face-to-Face</b>
<b>Responders</b>	77.7%	52.0%
<b>Non-Contacts</b>	10.7%	29.4%
<b>Refusals</b>	11.6%	18.6%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%
<i><b>Base</b></i>	<i>3396</i>	<i>2088</i>
<i><b>Ineligibles</b></i>	<i>10</i>	<i>194</i>

Overall, 59.9 per cent of respondents were coded out by the TU and 40.1 per cent of the sample was coded out by the face-to-face interviewers after being re-issued. The number of respondents who were coded out in the field was higher than was initially predicted for W3.

The TU interviewers were instructed to attempt to contact the respondent a maximum of 5 times before coding the case out as a non-contact. The average time a TU interviewer spent on trying to contact a respondent was approximately 5 minutes per contact attempt. This was dependent on whether an appointment had been made, staffing levels within the TU and whether there was any information already available about the accuracy of the contact details for each respondent.

The maximum number of attempts to make contact in the field was 16. The average number of contact attempts was 3 and the median number of calls attempted by the face-to-face interviewers was 2 contact attempts. The percentage of fully completed interviews in the field which were achieved on the first point of contact was 37.8 per cent. The average time spent on a case in the field was 31 minutes, and the median was 23 minutes.

### 5.7.3 Movers outside of the area

At W3, 0.8 per cent of respondents (43) moved outside the site areas in which they were sampled. As mentioned previously, due to interviewer resource, respondents who moved outside the sample areas to other locations in Britain were contacted only by the TU. No face-to-face interviewers were sent to addresses outside of the ERA survey areas due to cost and resource. Overall 1.3 per cent of respondents (76) were reported as having moved abroad and were coded as ineligible cases.

#### 5.7.4 Extended field periods

In order to maximise response, the face-to-face period was extended several times to ensure extra interviews were obtained. This flexibility helped to reduce the number of non-respondents. Also, the November and December 2009 field work periods were extended in order to maximise the number of interviews achieved.

#### 5.7.5 Follow-up letters to non-contact respondents

In the latter stages of the ERA main stage fieldwork, new letters were used as an attempt to contact respondents. The first letter was utilised when a mover was identified by the interviewer through contact with an individual at the address. The letter was left with the person contacted be sent on to the sample member's new address if known. The second letter was for the interviewer to use if they were unable to make contact with anyone at the address. Copies of these letters can be found in Appendix E.

### **5.8 Steps to Minimise Refusals**

#### 5.8.1 Mixed-mode interviews

Previous experience of surveys involving benefit claimants suggested that some were unwilling to have an interviewer call at their home but were happy to be interviewed by telephone. For this reason, ERA adopted mixed mode interviews, as mentioned in Section 4.

#### 5.8.2 Incentives

As in previous waves, on receipt of a fully completed interview, respondents were sent a £20 voucher that they could spend in a variety of high street shops. This results in a total of £60 incentive over the 3 waves for respondents. All sample members were also sent a key ring with the pre-contact letter, 6 months before the fieldwork period. These incentives received positive feedback from respondents.

#### 5.8.3 Refusal Conversion Training

All ONS interviewers are trained in refusal conversion techniques. Interviewers are required to complete this training programme to help them to deal with respondent concerns and refusals at the doorstep. The training is based on what interviewers have reported in the past about the sort of concerns/refusals they hear on the doorstep, and about the responses they give which then lead to cooperation.

## **6. Data Management and Processing**

### **6.1 Editing and checks on data quality**

All range and consistency checks were carried out in the interview as part of the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) programme. Range and consistency checks were carried out during the W3 interview itself, and additional checking and editing of the data was carried out in the ONS office.

After the creation of the data file from the Information Management system, all data was subject to quality assurance and validation checks. Validation checks were carried out on operational aspects of the data, for example to confirm all correct cases were contained within the dataset, and to ensure all rotated data from the previous waves and KITE had been fed into the dataset correctly. The QA checks successfully picked up cases which had recorded cases where net pay was bigger than gross pay.

### **6.2 Issues**

In the March field period, W1 and W2 data was not rotated correctly into the questionnaire. This issue was caused by a corrupted Blaise file and was only uncovered by the research team when quality checks were carried out on the data collected. To address this issue, data was imputed into the cases with missing data and some cases were re-contacted in order to obtain the missing data.

In the April field period, 34 interviews and 18 refusals were interviewed using an incorrect version of the questionnaire. This caused some questions not to be asked to respondents, in particular questions relating to the role of the incentive payments asked to programme members of the sample.

### **6.3 Data files**

The first data delivery to DWP was in the form of a 6 month SPSS dataset. This was sent over the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) alongside documentation of any changes to the questionnaire, any outstanding errors from the quality assurance testing, and the monthly response rate log.

The second and final data delivery to DWP was in the form of a full 12 month dataset. This was again sent over the GSI alongside the following documentation; the log of any changes to the questionnaire, the log of outstanding errors from the quality assurance testing, the monthly response rate log, and the full ERA W3 technical report.

## 7. Bibliography

Burnt, K., Shury, J., Vivian, D., Allard, F. (2001) *Recruiting Benefit Claimants: A Survey of Employers in ONE Pilot Areas*. Research Report No.139. Department of Social Security.

Office for National Statistics (2005). People and Migration: Moves within the UK. Available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1310>

Park, N (2007). *Employment, Retention and Advancement (ERA) Programme. Technical Report of Customer Survey*. Office for National Statistics.

## 8. Appendix A: Summary of Questionnaire Contents

Topics	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
<b>Classification</b>			
Marital status, tenure, number of children and their ages.	Yes	Yes (cut-down version)	Yes
<b>Random assignment</b>			
Whether respondent remembers random assignment, which group they were assigned to, how they felt about being assigned to programme or control group.	Yes	No	No
<b>Current economic status and employment history</b>			
Periods of employment / self-employment, employment status, hours worked, net and gross pay, whether paid fixed hourly rate, receipt of WTC.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Present job (or last job in reference period)</b>			
Industry, occupation, employment pattern, opinions questions on autonomy and stress at work, travel to work.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Contacts with the office</b>			
Number of contacts, method of contact, when respondent contacted office.	Yes	Yes	Yes (cut-down version)
<b>Help or advice received when not working</b>			
Type of advice/help received, services used, receipt of better off calculation.	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Help or advice received when working</b>			
Type and amount of advice/encouragement received regarding getting a better job or improving conditions of work.	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Work-related training and education</b>			
Title of course(s), duration, number of hours per week, whether arranged by jobcentre, if course taken when working.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Incentive payments for full time working (only asked to programme group)</b>			
Awareness, eligibility and receipt, whether bonus worked as an incentive.	Yes	Yes	Yes (cut-down version)
<b>Training bonus (only asked to programme group)</b>			
Awareness, eligibility and receipt, whether bonus worked as an incentive.	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Advancement behaviour</b>			
Types of advancement behaviour respondent took (trying to get longer hours, more pay etc).	Yes	Yes (some changes from wave 1)	Yes (new opinions questions)
<b>Attitudes to advancement</b>			
Likelihood of looking for new job, increasing hours, better pay, advancement attitudes, barriers to advancement, quality of life.	Yes	Yes	Yes

<b>Health questions</b> Opinion questions on health, disabilities, visits to doctors	No	No	Yes
<b>Judgements of ERA/procedures/advisers</b> Help received in overcoming barriers to work, relationship with adviser, adviser's emphasis on advancement and long-term goals.	Yes	Yes	
<b>Childcare arrangements/costs</b> Use, type and cost of childcare (term time and school holidays), convenience of childcare arrangements, advice from jobcentre.	Yes	Yes	Yes (cut-down version)
<b>Benefits</b> Types and amount of each benefit received, partner benefits.	Yes	Yes	Yes (new opinions questions)
<b>Child Outcomes</b> Qualifications and educational achievement child (1 chosen at random), homework habits, child's behaviour (whether bullied, in trouble with police, truancy, drug taking, smoking, drinking).	No	Yes	Yes (extra questions and new opinion questions)

## **Appendix B: Advance Letter for the KITE**

I am writing to ask you once again for your help with the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) study of Jobcentre Services.

The ERA programme was a jobcentre service designed to help people get the job they wanted with an opportunity to progress if they wished. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) want to assess how well this service has worked before deciding whether to introduce it nationally. They have asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to talk to people who were part of the ERA programme about their work situation and how they found jobcentre services.

We would now like to talk to you again about your views on finding work, progressing within work and any Jobcentre services you have used, even if you have not used the ERA programme or not been in contact with Jobcentre recently, we are still interested in your views. As it may be up to 5 years since we first spoke to you, we would like to check we have the correct details for contacting you.

Please look at the postcard enclosed with this letter. If your current address, telephone number or e-mail is different please write any changes on the card and send it back to us. No stamp is required. If however the details on the card are correct, please hold onto the card and only send it to us if you move or change your details in the future. Alternatively the freephone number and e-mail address feature on the free keyring enclosed.

Between September 2008 and August 2009, one of our interviewers will telephone or call at your address to ask you to take part in a short interview. After the interview you will receive a £20 gift voucher as a token of our appreciation for your time.

If you would like any more information about the study please e-mail [era@ons.gov.uk](mailto:era@ons.gov.uk) or call 0800 298 5313 (freephone number).

Thank you for your help.

Yours Sincerely



**Karen Dunnell**  
National Statistician

## Appendix C: Advance Letter for Main Stage Interview

Our ref: PA376

Ref.:

Date: as postmark

Dear

### **£20 gift voucher for your views on Jobcentre services**

I am writing to ask for your continued help with the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Programme of Jobcentre services.

As you may remember, the ERA Programme was a Jobcentre service designed to help people get their required job, or to progress if they so wished. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which set up the service, now want to assess how well the Programme worked before deciding whether to introduce it UK-wide. DWP asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to talk to people who may have taken part in the ERA Programme or used Jobcentre services.

We are interested in your views on finding work, job progression, current work situation, and experiences of Jobcentre services. Even if you have not used the ERA Programme or been in contact with a Jobcentre recently, your views can still be helpful in determining whether the Programme was successful and whether it should be introduced nationally.

In a few weeks time, one of our ONS interviewers will phone or call at your address to ask you to take part in a short interview. When the interview is completed, you will receive a £20 gift voucher as a token of our appreciation.

I hope that you will be able to help, as your views are very important to the success of this study. If you do not wish to take part, it will not affect your rights to benefits or your dealings with Jobcentres.

You can find more information about this study in the enclosed leaflet. If you have recently changed your telephone or mobile number, or if you would like any more information about the study, please email [era@ons.gov.uk](mailto:era@ons.gov.uk) or call our Survey Enquiry Line on 0800 298 5313. Opening times are: Monday to Thursday – 9 am to 9 pm; Friday – 9 am to 8 pm; and Saturday – 9 am to 1 pm.

**Thank you for your help.**

Yours sincerely

Jil Matheson  
National Statistician



## **Appendix D: ERA Outcome Codes**

### **Complete Interview**

- 110 Complete interview by the sampled person
- 130 Complete interview by proxy

### **Partial Interview**

- 210 Partial interview by the sampled person
- 230 Partial interview by proxy

### **Non Contact**

- 310 No contact with anyone at telephone number
- 311 No one picked up
- 312 No telephone number was given
- 313 Incorrect address details
- 314 No one in
- 320 Contact made at address, but not with the sampled person
- 321 Sampled person has not moved but no contact made
- 322 New tel no. tried but still no contact
- 323 New tel no. obtained but not tried
- 324 New address is obtained by TU but not attempted
- 325 Neither a new address nor a new telephone number is obtained

### **Refusal**

- 410 Office refusal to pre-contact or advance letter
- 430 Refusal at introduction / before interview
- 431 Refusal by sampled person
- 432 Refusal by proxy
- 433 Refusal by institution
- 440 Refusal during interview
- 450 Broken appointment, no re-contact

### **Other non response**

- 510 Ill at home during field period
- 511 Ill at home during survey period: notified to HQ
- 512 Ill at home during survey period: notified to interviewer
  
- 520 Away/in hospital throughout field period
- 521 Away/in hospital throughout field period: notified to HQ
- 522 Away/in hospital throughout field period: notified to interviewer
  
- 530 Physically or mentally unable/incompetent
- 531 Physically or mentally unable/incompetent: notified to HQ

- 532 Physically or mentally unable/incompetent: notified to interviewer
- 540 Language difficulties
- 541 Language difficulties: notified to HQ
- 542 Language difficulties: notified to interviewer
- 543 Interviewed discontinued due to language difficulties - sampled member happy to continue later
- 544 Interviewed discontinued due to comprehension difficulties - sampled member happy to continue later
- 545 Interviewed discontinued due to other difficulties - sampled member happy to continue later
- 550 Lost interview
- 560 Other non-response
- 561 Full interview achieved but respondent requested data be deleted
- 562 Partial interview achieved but respondent requested data be deleted
- 563 GFF only - Far Away

**Ineligible**

- 790 Other ineligible
- 792 Deceased
- 793 Inappropriate to interview eg sampled member believes there is a mistake as s/he has never been to jobcentre
- 794 Moved abroad
- 795 Other inaccessible
- 796 Interviewed in process study
- 797 DWP informed ONS not to interview (withdrawn)

## Appendix E: Fieldwork Letters to Minimise Non-Contacts

Our ref: PA376  
Date: as postmark

Serial Number:

Dear

### **£20 gift voucher for your views on Jobcentre services**

I am writing to ask for your continued help with the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Programme of Jobcentre services.

As you may remember, the ERA Programme was a Jobcentre service designed to help people get their required job, or to progress if they so wished. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which set up the service, now want to assess how well the Programme worked before deciding whether to introduce it UK-wide. DWP have asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to talk to people who may have taken part in the ERA Programme or used Jobcentre services.

We are interested in your views on finding work, job progression, your current work situation, and experiences of Jobcentre services. Even if you have not used the ERA Programme or been in contact with a Jobcentre recently, your views can still be helpful in determining whether the Programme was successful and whether it should be introduced nationally. You can find more information about this study in the enclosed leaflet. An interviewer from ONS called today at the address you were living at when you last helped us with this study. The interviewer spoke to the occupier, who did not wish to give your new address without your permission, but did agree to forward this letter on our behalf.

I would be grateful if you would let us have your present address and contact details as soon as possible, wherever you are living now. Please call our Survey Enquiry Line on 0800 298 5313. Opening times are: Monday to Thursday – 9 am to 9 pm; Friday – 9 am to 8 pm; and Saturday – 9 am to 1 pm. Alternatively, you can complete the form on the back of this letter and return it to us in the FREEPOST envelope, or email us at [era@ons.gov.uk](mailto:era@ons.gov.uk).

Giving us your contact details does not commit you to taking part in the study. You can decide this when one of our interviewers contacts you to explain more about the study and asks you to take part. If you are willing to take part, you will receive a £20 gift voucher as a token of our appreciation when the interview is completed.

I can reassure you that the information you supply will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Thank you for your help.**

Yours sincerely,

Jil Matheson  
National Statistician

Our ref: PA376

Date: as postmark

Serial Number:

Dear ...../ Occupier

Subject: ....., resident at the above listed address.

We have been trying to contact the person detailed above by telephone over the past few weeks, regarding an important study being carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Unfortunately we have been unable to make contact. To avoid any unnecessary visits we are trying to establish if the person named above is still resident at this address.

ONS is the government department responsible for collecting information and publishing statistics on almost all aspects of life in the UK. We also carry out the 10-yearly census in England and Wales.

I would be grateful if you would contact the interviewer detailed below providing the relevant information. Alternatively you could contact our Survey Enquiry Line on 0800 298 5313. Opening times are: Monday to Thursday – 9 am to 9 pm; Friday – 9 am to 8 pm; and Saturday – 9 am to 1 pm.

Interviewer name: ..... Authority number: .....

Telephone number: .....

**Thank you for your help.**

Yours sincerely,

Jil Matheson  
National Statistician

## **APPENDIX F: ERA W3 Purpose Leaflet**

### **The Employment Retention and Advancement Programme**

#### **ERA study of Jobcentre Services**

##### **Why your help is important**

This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about taking part in this survey.

##### **Who are we?**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the government's largest producer of statistics.

We compile independent information about the UK's society and economy which provides evidence for policy and decision making, and for directing resources to where they are needed most. The 10-yearly census, measures of inflation, the National Accounts, and population and migration statistics are some of our most high-profile outputs.

##### **What is the ERA study about?**

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programme is a Jobcentre service designed to help people get the jobs they would like with the opportunity to get on and improve their skills if they want to. .

At present, the service is being tested in six areas of Great Britain. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) wants to assess how well this service has worked before deciding whether to introduce it nationally. They have asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to talk to people about their work situation and what they think about the Jobcentre services they have used.

The study will ask you about:

- The type of work you have been doing
- Any work related courses or training you have done
- The support you have received from Jobcentres

##### **Why does this study matter?**

By taking part in this study, you will help DWP decide whether to introduce the ERA programme across Britain. In order to make such a decision, it is vital that they consult people who currently use or have used Jobcentre services and those who may do so in the future. Our sample therefore includes people with different experience of Jobcentres. It comprises:-

- those who have used the services within the ERA programme;
- those who have used other Jobcentre services such as New Deal; and
- those who have had little or no contact with a Jobcentre.

As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a £20 gift voucher for taking part in the interview. The voucher will be posted to you and you should receive it within 4 weeks of your interview. The voucher can be spent in over 13,000 UK stores including Woolworths, WH Smith, Comet and JJB Sports.

**Is the survey confidential?**

Yes, the information you give us will be treated as strictly confidential as directed by the National Statistics Code of Practice. It will be used to produce statistics that will not identify you or anyone in your household. Survey information is also provided to other approved organisations for statistical purposes only. All such statistics produced are subject to the Code and the same standards of protection are applied to your information at all times.

**Contact us**

If you have any queries about taking part in this survey, please call our freephone Survey Enquiry Line on **0800 298 5313**. Opening times are 9am to 9pm on Monday to Thursday, 9am – 8pm on Friday and 9am – 1pm on Saturday.

Alternatively, you can write to:

ERA Field Office  
Room 4100W  
Office for National Statistics  
Segensworth Road  
Titchfield  
Hampshire  
PO15 5RR

Thank you for your help.

To find out more about the Office for National Statistics, visit our website:  
**[www.ons.gov.uk/about](http://www.ons.gov.uk/about)**