

Evaluation of Timewise Foundation's Earnings Progression Trial

**A demonstration trial to support 102 low income
parents to progress in-work**

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Jane Colechin

Lauren Bennett

*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
merged to form the Learning and Work Institute*

Learning and Work Institute

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Trial delivery and model	4
Research scope and evaluation coverage	4
Overall client outcomes achieved	4
Trial learning and key findings	4
Findings for the Department to consider	6
Introduction	8
1. Background	9
1.1 Trial context	9
1.2 Overview of the Universal Credit earnings progression trial	10
2. The earnings progression trial support model	13
2.1 The aims and design of the in-work support model	13
2.2 The structure of the in-work support model	14
2.3 Client engagement	15
2.4 The in-work support model	18
2.5 Client views of the support model	24
2.6 Strategies of employer engagement	28
2.7 Developments for future practice	31
3. Client progression barriers and outcomes from support	32
3.1 Demographic profile of clients	32
3.2 Profile of needs and barriers to progression	32
3.3 Client outcomes from support	37
3.4 Progression outcomes from support	43
3.5 Outcomes at six months post support	48
3.6 Client views on further barriers and accessing support in the future	51
3.7 Overall assessment of the support model	52
4. Employer experiences	54
4.1 Employer views of the in-work support model	54
4.2 The capacity of SME employers to support in-work progression	56

4.3 Employer views on ‘what works’ in promoting in-work progression for low income parents	58
4.4 Key learning points	60
5. Cross cutting themes regarding supporting in-work progression	61
5.1 Key lessons from the trial that have implications for future service design	61
Appendix A – Background to Universal Credit and earnings conditionality	65
A1 Universal Credit.....	65
Appendix B – Overview of the Timewise Foundation Group.....	68
Appendix C: Engagement letter.....	69
Appendix D – Methodology.....	70
D1 Qualitative Research.....	70
D2 Management information analysis and follow up telephone survey	71

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report brings together the findings from the independent evaluation of Timewise Foundation's Universal Credit earnings progression trial which was delivered between January 2014 and April 2015.

TRIAL DELIVERY AND MODEL

The trial supported 102 working parents to progress their earnings, with the overall aim of ensuring that parents could maintain the flexible working practices needed to combine work and care.

Timewise Foundation's support model included one-to-one holistic advice and guidance support from a 'pre-progression' advisor and employer facing support from employer engagement advisors who provided direct job brokerage, structured support to negotiate flexible progression opportunities and access to Timewise Foundation's job alert service.

RESEARCH SCOPE AND EVALUATION COVERAGE

The research findings are based on three waves of qualitative fieldwork, analysis of management information, a follow-up tracking survey conducted in September to November 2015 and three action research learning events with DWP/JCP staff led by Learning and Work Institute and Timewise. A final learning event was held in June 2016.

OVERALL CLIENT OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

At the end of the delivery period, 28 of the 102 clients had achieved a progression outcome – either through a new job, working more hours or negotiating a pay rise (or a combination of these). Timewise achieved a total of 30 job outcomes (with some clients securing more than one job in the support period). 21 clients achieved an earnings progression and 7 achieved a progression but did not increase their income. At six months post support, the majority had maintained their progression outcomes (11 of 17 clients interviewed at six months) with the majority in the same job.

Clients who had not achieved a job outcome at the end of the delivery period were more likely to be in the same job (29 of 47 interviewed) with small proportions (6 of 47) undertaking unpaid training or study or had found a new job (4 of 47).

TRIAL LEARNING AND KEY FINDINGS

While small in scale the research achieved the following findings regarding delivery of in-work earnings progression support.

Client engagement

Timewise found that engaging clients through a welcoming letter was most effective method to engage with a low income group of parents. Less effective approaches were traditional community outreach and engagement directly through employers.

Working parents were found to be more time poor than unemployed clients and therefore less receptive to being engaged with in an impromptu manner, particularly at unexpected times or locations. Clients preferred to be engaged or receive information about support outside working hours. The targeted letter allowed potential clients to consider the offer at a convenient time and follow-up in their preferred mode of communication.

Clients responded well to the positive messaging of the Timewise Foundation letter, which clearly defined the support offer and tangible outcomes that clients could expect to achieve.

Flexibility in first appointments and later providing a range of modes of communication (including email/online, telephone or in/out-of-hours face to face appointments) were valued by working clients.

Customer barriers and support needs

The research found that the working clients engaged had a wide variety of needs and barriers to progressing and that in some cases, clients had additional support needs. Clients with different profiles of need required different levels of support and/or length of time to achieve progression.

Client barriers included: individual motivation and confidence; relevant skills, experience and qualifications. Clients varied in their levels of motivation and commitment to finding a progression opportunity.

Higher level needs included English as a Second Language, literacy and numeracy difficulties or qualifications at level 2 and below. These clients needed additional or specialised support in advance of taking up Timewise Foundation's support model, that could fit around their working hours.

Effective elements of the in-work support model

Providing support that was tailored to the individual's circumstances and needs was associated with better client engagement and progression outcomes. There were particular facets of the support which were found to drive these:

- **Designing support around the needs of the working parent.** Clients responded well to support that recognised their need to balance work and caring responsibilities and that helped them to address this balance.
- **Individual action planning.** Underlying the effectiveness of the model was the use of detailed action planning, one-to-one support and – where clients were ready – interview practice and tailored job brokerage.

- **Advanced careers advice and guidance.** Clients valued support with mapping career pathways and identifying ways to access better paid sectors using their present skills and aptitudes.
- **Flexibility in the mode of support.** The support model needed to adapt to the specific working and caring needs of clients, offering support that could fit around working hours and through a variety of different modes including online, telephone and out-of-office support
- **Accurate advice and guidance on implications of any income changes.** Working clients were often risk-adverse to changing their situation. As such, a key dimension of support was clear and accurate advice on the implications of any change in circumstances/earnings for their benefit and housing payments. In addition, advisers needed to be able to empathise with clients and help them to overcome any fear about moving jobs.

Employer engagement

Timewise found that (working at small scale) individual client support to change jobs and (for higher need clients) individual employer brokerage was the most effective way of achieving progression. In fewer cases, clients were supported to negotiate pay rises with current employers. Timewise found that it was not possible to work at scale to negotiate groups of flexible roles with employers with a caseload of 102 clients.

FINDINGS FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER

Findings suggest a number of key considerations for the Department:

Client support:

- How it ensures that Work Coaches have access to learning and resources on career sectors and progression pathways – for example through an internal knowledge base or by making links through Jobcentre Plus partnership managers or using partnership agreements to access available careers guidance and support.
- How it ensures that services can be offered through mixed channels and out-of-hours – including at evenings and weekends
- How Work Coaches engaging with working claimants can provide clear and accurate information regarding the income increases that claimants will achieve for taking on more and better work,
- Developing partnerships through the Universal Credit Universal Support gateway to provide claimants access to appropriate, flexible ESOL literacy or numeracy support services that could fit around their existing work.

- How progression support is sequenced so as to allow claimants sufficient time to take-up support to address ESOL and literacy barriers

Employer engagement:

- How support is delivered to clients and employers, at the local level, to negotiate more flexible working arrangements or to redesign specific job roles. There is potentially an overlap between the role of individual work coaches and employer engagement teams, as well as the scope for this work to be contracted to specialist agencies like Timewise.
- The scope for testing a more explicitly 'employer facing' model, that seeks to engage local employers in low-paying sectors to offer more flexible employment and improved progression pathways. This would likely require a wider range of partners and again the engagement of specialist recruitment agencies.
- The role of the National Employer Partnership teams to work with larger employers to open up vacancies to part-time or flexible roles.

INTRODUCTION

This report brings together the findings from the independent evaluation of Timewise Foundation's Universal Credit earnings progression trial which ran from January 2014 to April 2015. It incorporates findings from three waves of qualitative fieldwork, analysis of management information, a follow-up tracking survey conducted in September to October 2015 and four learning events with DWP/JCP staff led by Learning and Work Institute and Timewise. A detailed methodology is provided in AppendixD.

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 explains the context and background to the 'Universal Credit Earnings Progression Trial', its aims, purpose and the scope of the evaluation.

Chapter 2 then explores the development of Timewise's support model for the trial, the different strategies that were employed to engage clients and the methods that Timewise found to be most effective when working to support clients to increase their working incomes.

Chapter 3 looks at client outcomes against the range of different barriers to progression that were reported by participants. Using an outcomes map from a theory of change model, it explores how the support model has been operationalised and tracks outcomes immediately following support and six months later.

Chapter 4 considers employer perspectives both on the earnings progression trial and on supporting low income parents to progress in-work, based on qualitative findings from employer interviews. All of the employers represented SME organisations based in London.

Finally, **Chapter 5** sets out key cross-cutting themes from the trial and considers the implications for the future development of support for low income claimants to progress in work.

1. BACKGROUND

This chapter explains the context and background to the ‘Universal Credit Earnings Progression Trial’, its aims, purpose and the scope of the evaluation.

1.1 TRIAL CONTEXT

This earnings progression trial was developed as a small scale trial to generate learning about the future design of interventions to support in-work progression for Universal Credit claimants. Detailed information about Universal Credit and the implications for supporting working claimants are detailed in Appendix A.

1.1.1 Supporting parents to progress their working income

Universal Credit is designed to support claimants to increase their household working income. The framework of conditionality sets out expectations and a number of thresholds intended to focus support where it is most needed. So for claimants who are expected to work they are asked to undertake work related activity up to a threshold of 35 hours per week maximum, with this threshold tailored for those with health conditions or caring responsibilities (including for children).

Work expectations for lead carers vary depending on the age of the child:

- For lead carers with children under one, there are no work related requirements.
- When the youngest child is aged one, lead carers are asked to engage with their coach in periodic Work Focussed Interviews so they can begin to think about their plan for future work.
- When their youngest child reaches age 2 these claimants will be asked to undertake reasonable steps to prepare for work as well as attend work focused interviews.
- When their youngest child is aged 3, they will be required to look for and be available for work that fits with their childcare responsibilities and childcare available, but this is limited to 16 hours per week whilst the youngest child is 3 or 4 because they are caring for a pre-school age.
- Those lead carers of children between the age of 5 and 12 will be expected to be available for work and undertake work search for up to a maximum of 25 hours per week. This can be further tailored to fit around the actual school hours and any additional travel time required to / from school.
- From age thirteen and above, full time work will be expected.

For the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP), these changes lead to a number of key considerations. In particular:

- Universal Credit increases the scope and volume of clients that could be supported through JCP services – moving from principally supporting unemployed claimants into work, to additionally supporting low income working claimants to progress their household incomes;
- Operationally, Universal Credit earnings conditionality means that JCP Work Coaches will need to potentially work with new types of claimants with different kinds of support needs related to barriers to earning progression;
- DWP will need to develop an ‘in-work’ support offer to claimants seeking to increase their working income;
- DWP will require a fuller understanding of effective approaches to support in work claimants’ earnings progression.

Due to the range and scope of these potential changes, the Department were interested in funding pilots which could demonstrate effective practices regarding supporting in-work progression. Timewise Foundation applied for funding and were successful in leading a trial to test earnings progression for low income parents. Further information about Timewise can be found in Appendix B.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE UNIVERSAL CREDIT EARNINGS PROGRESSION TRIAL

1.2.1 Commissioned aims and scope of the trial

Timewise Foundation were funded by DWP to carry out a small scale trial to explore how their holistic client coaching and employer-facing employment support model could be used to work with low income working parents to increase their earnings (while retaining part-time or flexible hours) through securing better paid employment or increasing wages.

In addition, the trial was intended to facilitate learning for DWP and Jobcentre Plus. In order to do this, the Learning and Work Institute were commissioned as evaluation partners and supported Timewise to run three learning events throughout the lifetime of the trial.

1.2.2 Trial delivery

The earnings progression trial ran between January 2014 and March 2015, with client tracking until the end of April 2015 and a follow up survey in October/ November 2015. The trial worked with 102 low income parents, in South London to increase their earnings by obtaining higher quality part time jobs. As discussed more fully in chapter 3, the majority of these parents were female lone parents. In addition, owing to the geographical location of the trial, clients were also more likely to be from an ethnic minority.

In order to be eligible, trial participants needed to additionally be:

- Living within the South London District;
- Earning above £76 per week (£329.33 per month) and below £220.85 (£957 per month) which roughly equated to clients who earned above the 2013 rates of Jobseeker's Allowance (and a small addition for earnings disregards) but below the equivalent of working a full time (35 per week) job at the 2013 national minimum wage.

The trial aimed to support these trial participants to progress their earnings to above the equivalent of working a 35 hour week at the national minimum wage (the Universal Credit earnings conditionality threshold). Timewise expected to achieve a target of 40 participants with an earnings progression above 2013 UC rates. Of these 40 participants, Timewise aimed to sustain 36 of these participants in their earnings progression for 3 months or more.

All of the clients on the trial were working and therefore were not on out-of-work benefits. As the table below shows, nearly four fifths child tax credits and just over 70% of participants claimed working tax credits and housing benefits. It is important to note that no participants were claiming Universal Credit, and so they did not have access to the changed financial incentives and simpler taper structure that will form part of UC.

Table 1.1 Benefits claimed by clients at the point of registration

Benefits claimed	Frequency of clients on trial at point of registration
Claimed child tax credit	79
Claimed working tax credit	72
Claimed housing benefit	74
Support with Council Tax	50
Claimed free school meals	6
Base 102 clients	

While Universal Credit is intended as a household benefit – and assessed as such – to simplify the tracking, trial participants were treated as single individuals and only their own earnings were taken into consideration.

The Department did not specify how earnings increases could or should be achieved, which allowed Timewise to consider a range of different methods to help clients achieve earnings progression in a variety of ways.

1.2.3 Evaluation

The independent evaluation was carried out by Learning and Work Institute. Due to the small scale of the trial and research, the findings reported here are specific to the

trial and the South London District from which clients were drawn. Caution should be used in generalising from these findings. It is intended that the findings will be followed up and tested by the Department on a much larger scale with Jobcentre Plus clients.

The evaluation involved the following research which has been incorporated into the findings:

- Two waves of qualitative in-depth interviews with Timewise staff (December 2014 and May/June 2015)
- Two waves of qualitative in-depth interviews with trial participants (December 2014 and May 2015)
- One wave of employer fieldwork in March 2015.
- Analysis of Timewise's management information on 102 trial participants.
- A structured telephone survey of 70 trial participants, six months post-support (October/November 2015)

From this research, Learning and Work Institute developed a draft theory of change which shows the types of outcomes that trial participants achieved from the different types of support and was updated with reference to the broader structured survey.

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative analysis, Learning and Work Institute and Timewise led three learning events with DWP/JCP staff:

- *Engaging with employers: how to effect behavioural change* in June 2014
- *Supporting the Working Client* in December 2014
- *Employer Experiences and interventions* in April 2015

The learning events considered aspects of the Timewise earnings progression model and – through interactive sessions with event attendees – sought to compare these to the current operation and capacity of existing staff in JCP/DWP. Where relevant, findings from these events and analysis from two learning events have been included in this report.

2. THE EARNINGS PROGRESSION TRIAL SUPPORT MODEL

This chapter explores the development of Timewise's support model for the trial, the different strategies that were employed to engage clients and the methods that Timewise found to be most effective when working to support clients to increase their working incomes.

2.1 THE AIMS AND DESIGN OF THE IN-WORK SUPPORT MODEL

Underlying all of Timewise's employment support is the view that parents should be able to access high quality, flexible part-time jobs that allow them to combine work and care effectively in job roles that meet the needs of businesses.

Research carried out previously for Timewise Foundation¹, suggested that parents will often choose lower paid part time work over their career development and in some cases will take lower paid, lower skill positions if the role has an element of flexibility. As such, the research suggested that working parents may not be utilising their full skills and experience and may be creating 'bottle necks' in the labour market – where others looking for entry or lower level positions cannot access these jobs.

Similarly, other research for Timewise² in 2015 found that only 6.2% of jobs with a salary of £20,000 (FTE) advertised externally mentioned options for flexible or part-time working. Timewise's own practice-based experience found that many employers that they spoke to had not considered opening up their recruitment to part time and flexible roles, however their own research had suggested that nine in ten of employers would consider flexibility for the right candidate³. As such, parents had a further barrier to overcome when looking to progress in their careers.

Based on their practical knowledge and recent research, Timewise envisaged a support model which would have two main strands:

- Personalised one-to-one support to ready clients to move up and on in their careers – delivered by a Timewise adviser
- Employer engagement and job brokerage to allow clients to access suitable job roles – delivered by the Timewise employer engagement advisers

The intention was to recruit participants primarily through community networks (in schools and children's centres) and contacts with previous clients, and to provide

¹ Lane, P et al.,(2013) *Jobs not Careers: a three-year longitudinal study of 80 mothers in London who have been searching for work*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion

² Timewise (2015), *The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index*, Timewise Foundation.

³ The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2016: an annual index of the proportion of UK jobs advertised with flexible working options. Available at http://timewise.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Timewise_Flexible_Index_2016.pdf

support to participants both to progress in work and once in work to sustain that progression.

The overall aim of the trial was to use Timewise's employer first and holistic support system to work with low income parents to increase their earning sufficiently to take them above proposed income thresholds for Universal Credit.

A secondary aim was to demonstrate that the Timewise model is an effective way to increase the earnings of part time workers by focussing help on finding better quality part time roles and not through increasing their hours of work. This approach allowed parents to combine work and caring responsibilities:

'The aims were always to test how effectively you could help low income parents to be able to get better jobs while not having to work loads more hours to do so. Our assumption was that parents are currently under-utilising their skills and getting underpaid for jobs because they have chosen part-time and therefore they have chosen lower paid jobs'

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 2)

The aim of the model would be to empower skilled clients to apply for jobs commensurate with their skills and qualifications and place these in jobs that had been opened up to flexible opportunities:

'The whole idea was to speak to employers, get sensible jobs and work with clients to get them to apply for those jobs'

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 1)

Timewise staff felt that it was likely that the clients would want to progress in wage terms, either within an existing role/organisation or by finding a better paid job with a new employer. An assumption of the model was that clients would not want to work many more additional hours to progress due to seeking to manage work and care.

2.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE IN-WORK SUPPORT MODEL

The support model Timewise delivered was based on the following stages:

- Client engagement
- Preparatory support for clients
- Employer-facing/employment role focused work to secure earnings progression
- Post-progression support to sustain outcomes

The following sections describe how Timewise engaged clients, how they supported them through preparatory, employment focused and post-outcome support, client

views on the model, employer engagement strategies. It also describes Timewise's overall learning from delivering the trial.

2.3 CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

Timewise found that engaging working clients onto the in-work progression trial required a different set of engagement methods than that of seeking to engage unemployed clients. Two main changes to engagement practice were necessary:

- **Offering engagement and support outside of normal working hours.**
Working clients were found to be much more time-bound compared to those currently out of work, which necessitated offering initial engagement services at times outside of main working hours or supporting clients through remote access (for instance through emailing or by telephone).
- **Ensuring that the initial engagement offered clients a tangible support offer with defined outcomes.** Timewise found that working clients were more reticent to engage with them unless they were given a very clear idea of what the offer would entail and some key outcomes that they would be able to quickly achieve. This contrasted with practice with unemployed clients, where the emphasis would be on slowly getting to know the client and finding out their individual needs over time and creating a bespoke action plan to deal with these.

2.3.1 Initial engagement and contact methods

During the course of the trial, Timewise tested three main methods of initial engagement:

- Community outreach, seeking to engage parents in school breakfast clubs, play schemes, children's centres, supermarkets, libraries, food banks
- Engagement via employers and employer contacts
- Direct marketing via a personalised letter to residents receiving Housing Benefit, screened for eligibility in the South London District

Overall, Timewise found that community based engagement was less effective than they had anticipated. They found that it was difficult to engage clients in community outreach as there were fewer working clients spending long periods of time in these locations. Furthermore, Timewise found that parents in these settings were less likely to engage as they were focused on the original purpose of their visit (e.g. shopping or a school visit), potentially feeling rushed.

Client engagement via employers was also found to be difficult, as employers were sensitive to Timewise staff attending to talk to their employees about progression opportunities. It was therefore difficult for staff to get access to employers to recruit clients onto the trial.

The most successful engagement method was direct marketing to a targeted audience. Timewise worked with Lambeth Council to screen potential clients (according to key measures from their Housing Benefit records) and sending these potential clients a personalised letter offering support to progress their incomes. In this way, Timewise could communicate with potential clients without compromising their confidentiality. Roughly half (53) of the clients were recruited this way.

The letter used is at Appendix C. The following features were considered by participants in the qualitative research to be key to its success:

- A short introduction from the adviser asking potential clients if they were working in a low paid part time job and felt that they could get a better one
- A clearly outlined support offer
- Naming the client adviser, providing a mobile phone and a guarantee to get an immediate response

Clients interviewed for the evaluation felt that the letter was appealing in tone and offered help that they would have otherwise not known was available to them. One client interviewed mentioned that the tangible outcomes and offers of support made her feel encouraged by the offer:

'I was extremely happy [to receive the letter]... they will help me to have a better paid job and they would help me... they said they're going to help to find a job, yes, and then like, improve my CV skills, to write a CV and all that, yes that's what it states in the letter... it was really promising'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

A second client decided to engage as they found the letter motivating:

'I'm working more but no motivation, I want to move. Then I got the letter and I said to my colleague, God answered my prayers, I just got a letter they want to help people that are getting a low salary'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

2.3.2 Initial follow up engagement meeting

Timewise found that working clients needed to be able to access the initial engagement appointment quickly, but in a time and a place that would be most convenient to the client.

Over the course of delivery in the first months of the trial, Timewise found that it was essential to do the following at the first client meeting:

- Be flexible in time and place of engagement. Timewise's adviser was happy to make appointments in cafes or other locations close to the client's homes.

Alternatively, if a client was busy or a suitable location could not be found, telephone engagement was an option.

- Present Timewise as akin to a commercial recruitment agency and make a similar 'quick sell' to the client. It was found to be important to present Timewise as an organisation that could 'add value' to what clients could achieve on their own; to present the organisation as having clear expertise in the field in order to encourage clients to sign-up to the support and commit to working with the adviser.
- Ensure that by the end of the first meeting, the client was clear on the support offer and knew that they could expect tangible outcomes in a timely manner. In some cases, advisers needed to ensure that clients had knowledge of the offer, or where immediately signposted to additional areas of support that could help them in advance of the progression support.
- Ensure clients felt confident that they had the potential to improve their working income with support.

2.3.3 Learning about engagement from trial delivery

Overall Timewise were successful at engaging sufficient clients on a voluntary basis onto the trial. During delivery, Timewise found that by having an open engagement approach and actively selling the service they were likely to engage clients with varying levels of commitment and motivation. As such (and as detailed more fully below) one staff member felt that clients who initially stated that they were motivated for a job were not always found to be later on and that Timewise were not as discerning as they could have been about the kinds of clients that they registered for support following the initial engagement meeting:

'We should have been more discerning about the kinds of client that we picked up, you know... [and] we realised is if the client comes to us saying that they want a job they don't necessarily want a job'

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 2)

Based on their delivery experience, Timewise felt that there were two potential changes to the design of their engagement strategy which would have improved their ability to select the right kinds of clients for their services:

- Early client triage that focused on individual levels of commitment and motivation to progress in their careers.
- Ensure that clients – early on – completed activities that demonstrated their commitment to the support offer. For example this could include coming into the Timewise offices or conducting some independent research on opportunities in their career sector.

With these measures, Timewise felt that they would be more able to use their resources intensively with clients who were committed to progressing their careers:

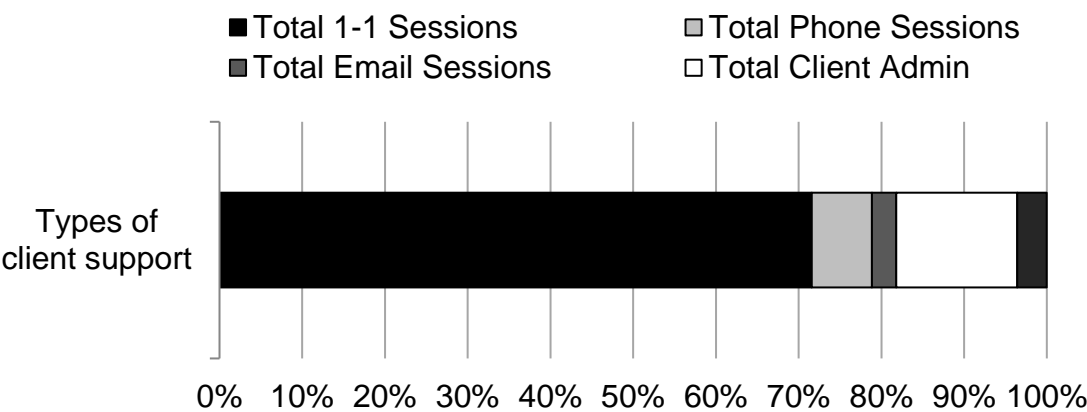
‘We needed a better triage at the beginning to understand who was ready to move into another job, which is always hard to do, because people might say yes and then not be, but I think we could have been cleverer, and now we understand what the traits are of people that move we could probably use those better and therefore focus our energy on people that wanted to’

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 2)

2.4 THE IN-WORK SUPPORT MODEL

This section describes the support that Timewise provided for clients engaged onto the trial. The evaluation found that the client-facing in-work support model was largely based around one-to-one support from Timewise advisers, with (as figure 2.1 shows from management information) 72% of support time conducted face-to-face.

Figure 2.1 Proportions of client support by mode of support



Base 102 clients

Where data was available, on average, clients received 49 minutes of support during their time within the trial⁴. Those who achieved progression outcomes were generally more engaged with the support programme and therefore received more overall support from advisers. Participants who achieved an income progression received an average of 2 and a half hours support, and those that progressed beyond the UC income threshold receiving an average of 3 hours and 9 minutes. Clients that achieved progression outcomes were also more likely to receive more face-to-face rather than remote support.

⁴ This figure is based on Timewise’s management information data, however, not all adviser time spent working on the project could be recorded so it is likely that the total time spent working for clients could be higher.

2.4.1 One-to-one support interventions

The main purpose of the one-to-one support was to overcome identified barriers to progression. Based on existing practical knowledge and on learning through the trial, Timewise advisers designed support interventions around a number of client support needs. These are set out below.

Identifying clients' core aptitudes and (transferable) skills

Clients looking to progress into a new role (whether internally within a company or externally by finding a new job or sector to work within) typically needed support to critically appraise job specifications, to identify the skills that they held, and to describe examples that could be used in job applications or CVs.

Timewise found that a number of clients had good occupational or academic qualifications (typically gained whilst out of the labour market caring for young children) but had taken entry level jobs in other sectors which meant that they did not have the relevant experience to access jobs for which they had qualifications.

For example, one client on the trial study had used her maternity leave to build up accountancy qualifications but only had low-level employment experience in the retail sector. This client felt frustrated that employers wouldn't let her access opportunities that she had trained towards:

'It was really, really frustrating, because even though I'm a qualified person, I couldn't actually get any of these things because I didn't have the experience. Even when you're applying for all these different jobs, it's usually got a little field saying 'have you got experience?' and if you click you haven't got the experience, you don't go through'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Emotional and motivational support

Emotional and motivational support was a key aspect of the model. In many cases, clients had attempted themselves to progress in their careers but had been unsuccessful and given up. In other cases, clients balancing caring and work responsibilities had little energy or motivation to fill out application forms late at night when children were in bed.

Similarly, some clients with long standing careers in the same role and in a single sector lacked belief in their skills and did not feel confident about making a change to a new higher level job role – irrespective of their ability to do so. Put simply, some clients simply would not believe that they should apply for roles above their current grade or pay scale as they did not feel worth the improved salary:

'Clients look at the salary before they even look at the role or the job title, the job description or the, anything, they just look at the money and go, oh, I can't do that...'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 1)

Key to the coaching approach was ensuring clients could recognise, believe and outwardly show that they deserved to progress in their careers and had sufficient skills and aptitudes:

'It's the cheerleading effect, as you can imagine [our adviser] can be good at that, so it makes them believe in themselves and helping them with job applications and CVs, you know, and giving them the confidence to apply for jobs'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

A critical factor behind this approach was the ability of the adviser to build rapport and engage with clients, demonstrating a high level of empathy towards the clients' situations:

'I have parents from all different backgrounds and I have faced similar situations to some of my clients, so, I have an understanding of what they are trying to achieve and how difficult it is for them to get to that...I try and understand where they're coming from... I need to put myself in their position, that's the only way for it to have worked.'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

Creating bespoke CVs or high quality targeted job applications

Linked to clients' lack of ability to isolate core skills and attributes, advisers found that some clients needed support to create high quality CVs, or job applications that pitched accurately to the needs and wants of an employer. In many cases the support adviser needed to show clients how to more effectively sell themselves in their personal statements to prospective employers and/or to develop skills or competency based CVs which were more easily adaptable to the job descriptions of new roles. Timewise staff referred to this approach as helping clients to 're-brand' themselves.

Interview techniques

Clients were often given interview technique sessions to help them sell themselves into a new role. One adviser mentioned that the best way to do this was to get clients to visualise themselves in the potential role:

'The best way to prepare them is, is to get them to see themselves the way an employer potentially could see them, if they can see themselves, if they can

see themselves in that job and they can see themselves going to that office or going to that hospital'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 1)

Career and job search guidance to find higher quality roles

Timewise identified that a number of clients did not have good knowledge of where they could access opportunities in better paid or higher quality employment sectors or employers that could support clients with better pay, training and further progression opportunities. As such, clients needed assistance with effective job search to find high quality opportunities.

'Clients need a good understanding of where they should be looking, that their CV's are good to go and then they can pretty much be left to their own devices.'

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 1)

Here advisers gave detailed guidance to clients looking to switch employers. For instance, explaining the benefits of different sectors (e.g. between public/private, SME/larger organisations) or those with good human resources procedures (particularly larger employers) and who could therefore support further part-time training and progression.

'If you'll do a cleaning job for a company, just any old company, they will pay you about £6.30, £6.40 an hour, but if you go and work for the council, they pay you £8.30 and it's a better paid job and you will get a pension and you will get sick pay and you will get all these other benefits, it's a better job for that person.'

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 1)

Supporting clients to access voluntary work experience placements or work trials to gain experience of a new industry sector

For clients looking to change sectors but who lacked the right sectoral or transferable skills and for clients who had lower than average qualifications and skills, Timewise were able to support clients to access relevant part time work experience placements to allow clients to build up experience to add to their CVs and support future job applications.

In some cases, work trials could serve two purposes: to build up some relevant experience in a new sector but to also allow an employer to see a client's transferable skills in operation without having to commit to a lengthy and expensive recruitment process.

‘One client is happy to do a work trial for a number of weeks. So they can actually try her and test her on the role.’

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 1)

Overall, Timewise found that while useful, it was not always possible to fit work trials around clients existing jobs so they were used less frequently than they would typically use for out-of-work clients.

Part-time apprenticeships

In a few cases, clients who lacked qualifications in the sector that they wanted to access were supported with part-time apprenticeships, so that they could gain qualifications in a new sector.

Intensive support for clients with level low skills and aptitudes

Some clients on the trial with basic skills, language or literacy issues had more significant barriers to progression and therefore required additional support or more time from their adviser.

Support advisers would work intensively with the client to help write CVs, personal statements and job applications that required a high level of academic aptitude (but where the adviser felt that the client would be able to do the job).

In many cases (and detailed below), advisers also needed to work closely with the employer engagement teams to use Timewise’s employer-facing teams as often clients needed some form of job brokerage or other placement with an employer in order to overcome barriers created by generic recruitment or application processes.

Better off in work calculations and benefit advice to reduce fear of benefit changes

Timewise advisers provided advice to clients about the implications of increasing their income and the levels of salary that they would need to achieve in order to overcome benefit cliff-edges.

Timewise staff found that the largest barrier that they needed to overcome with clients was the fear of losing their Housing Benefit, and needed to ensure that they could give accurate information about income/benefit ratios. In particular, they needed to develop tools to guide clients through changes to working hours above 16 hours per week which could affect their access to tax credits. It was also necessary to allay fears for those in social housing that increasing their incomes could lead to them losing their housing entitlement.

Employer negotiation techniques

Linked to the above, advisers gave support to clients to be able to sell their skills to prospective employers. In other cases, clients were supported to negotiate internal

progression opportunities (in terms of role change, wage/hours increases) with their current employer or externally when applying for roles without advertised flexibility. Key to both internal and external negotiation was the knowledge of when clients would be best placed to ask for these progression or flexible working opportunities.

For the advisers looking to progress clients above the UC income threshold, hours increases needed to be sequenced several months after a client had begun a new role:

‘What we’ve learned is that if [the client] ups her hours to 24, which she wants to do, then we can claim her [as progressed above the UC threshold]...we’ve put a note in our system that in two months down the line, we will call the employer and ask if there’s any budget to move this girl up from 21 to 24 hours.’

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 1)

Developing personalised action plans to ensure sustainable progression opportunities

For these clients it was important for the adviser to be aware of the personal and familial motivations for progression; that progression is not simply about securing better wages in the short term but ensuring a better long term future (for the individual and family) or lifestyle which could involve developing support in a number of sequenced stages that could lead to more sustainable outcomes.

‘[The Timewise adviser] really understood me – that is not about the money, the salary, she understood that it’s not about the money but I wanted a job that could secure my future... they really want to help you get you out, get you to where you want to be’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

The qualitative research found that the support adviser role worked to address a variety of different support needs and to develop personalised action plans. In particular they brought an in depth knowledge of:

- How to access variety of quality part-time jobs in different sectors;
- The benefits system;
- Local support offers and services; and
- Job searching for progression opportunities

2.4.2 Other support interventions

Clients receiving support on the trial could also access linked services such as ‘Dress for Success’, providing clothing for interviews and clients were signposted to suitable

local childcare options or access to IT services when clients did not have access to computers. Clients also had access to Timewise's job alert service.

As table 2.1 below describes, clients surveyed six months following support confirmed receiving a variety of support interventions during the course of their support. Most frequently clients in the survey reported receiving CV preparation and career advice.

Table 2.1 Frequency of support interventions

Support interventions	Frequency of participants
CV preparation	52
Career advice	47
Job alerts	39
Advice on better paying employers/sectors	31
Emotional support	26
Advice on how to write job applications	26
Assistance to write job applications	21
Better off in-work calculation	8
Interviews with employers were arranged for me	7
Advice on how to negotiate better pay	6
Childcare options	5
Advice on how to negotiate training/skills development	2
Base 67 survey respondents	

2.5 CLIENT VIEWS OF THE SUPPORT MODEL

Clients overall welcomed the support provided on the trial. In particular, clients welcome the personalised, one-to-one support and the enthusiastic approach of the progression support advisers. As one client described, the support adviser wanted to get to know the client by finding out about her likes, dislikes, long term career plans and the things that she would be comfortable with:

'She wanted to know more about me, my likes, my dislikes, what I'm not comfortable with, the kind of people I'm happy with, what I want to do, what I want to do in the next ten years, stuff like that.'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

In many cases, clients felt that the support was akin to having a mentor:

'I would say that it's your mentor/friend/they want the best for you, that's what I would say'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Clients also felt that they could trust the support they received from Timewise staff as they felt that the organisation had a good reputation for securing employers good candidates:

'Their reputation is good - especially they have the reputation of giving good candidates to the employer, yes, so they will have all the impact for me'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

As the following table shows, clients surveyed were asked to rate the support they had received on a four point scale (with most useful scoring the highest score, 4). As the table shows, clients generally rated the support that they had received highly, with advice on how to negotiate training with employers, pay increases and emotional support were rated as the most useful elements of support.

Table 2.2 Average client rating of support interventions

	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Fairly useful	Very useful	Don't know	Average rating out of 4
Advice on how to negotiate training/skills development				2		4.00
Interviews with employers were arranged for me			1	6		3.86
Advice on how to negotiate better pay			1	5		3.83
Emotional support	1		8	17		3.58
Assistance to write job applications			10	11		3.52
Advice on how to write job applications			13	13		3.50
Childcare options		1	1	3		3.40
Better off in-work calculation			5	3		3.38
CV preparation	2	6	15	29		3.37
Job alerts		2	7	12	1	3.32
Advice on better paying employers/sectors		8	13	10		3.06
Career advice	1	10	17		1	2.48

Base 67 survey respondents

2.5.1 Post progression support

A further element of the support model was telephone based or face-to-face follow-up support for clients to remain in-work. Timewise felt that follow up support would be a good way to ensure that clients could sustain in their progressed jobs.

Clients were welcoming of the follow-up support, as it allowed them to retain confidence that if anything went wrong they could come back to Timewise for follow up support:

'I have more confidence and everything and it also told me if I was working I would always try to go back to work and that's how [support adviser] made me feel and if I wasn't working they would get me back'

(Interview with client, wave 1)

Where clients were asked in the follow up survey in what other kinds of ways the support model could be improved, clients most frequently asked for further additional time for support and for access to additional training opportunities.

2.5.2 Disengagement with support

Clients engaged with support for a variety of lengths of time. Most clients engaged with the support for as long as they wished, were able to or was necessary to secure a progression outcome. When surveyed six months post support – as shown in table 2.3 below - only a small number of clients reported that they had received support for less than a month (9 of 70 clients interviewed).

Table 2.3 reported length of client engagement

Length of engagement	Frequency of participants
Less than one week	3
One to two weeks	1
Two to four weeks	5
One to two months	8
Three to six months	28
Six months to a year	7
Over a year	4
Don't know	13
Prefer not to say	1

Base 70 survey respondents

Of these nine client cases who had disengaged quickly from the support, one reported that they did not require any more support, another felt that the support wasn't right for them and six of the clients reported that they would have wanted support but were not contacted by the adviser. In one case, a client said that they had valued the support but that as their child was in primary school and they had a family friendly employer, the time was not right for them to continue with the support.

2.5.3 Learning from trial delivery

Overall, Timewise felt that the client caseload had more needs than they expected and were therefore less 'job ready'. As such, a greater proportion of clients required

intensive support rather than lighter touch sector specific career advice than anticipated. As the main support adviser was responsible for managing a caseload of up to 100 clients, this led to a need to manage the caseload effectively and often to target support at key transition points.

Timewise support staff reported that they did not fully appreciate the level of preparatory support that a number of the trial participants would require, in advance of in-work support or employer job brokerage being delivered. Timewise recognised that the majority of their clients would be work-focused but many lacked motivation to progress due to being time poor, or focused on caring for their children over and above finding a new job.

As with engagement strategies, Timewise sought to alter their general support model during the course of the trial delivery in order to meet the needs of working clients.

Most clients required a high level of in-depth support to progress them. This was generally delivered through one-to-one support and it was logistically difficult to organise group support workshops for clients working a variety of different work shifts. Timewise staff felt that group workshops could have been a useful way to deliver the level of support that clients needed and to use peer support to enhance support outcomes:

'Normally what we like to do we like to call people into workshops because we believe that peer-to-peer sharing can work, you know, with these contracts sometimes you won't get a job from a meeting but, obviously, on this project we couldn't do that because everyone was working so that's the one thing that didn't work the attendance of workshops'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

The higher and more intensive needs of the cohort brought particular challenges for the two support advisers in managing a full caseload of 102 clients. In the follow-up client survey, clients mentioned that it was often difficult to see the adviser as quickly as they would have liked, in some cases waiting a few weeks to be seen. In many cases, clients reported that their support adviser appeared very busy.

Timewise found that support advisers needed a different skill set to when working with unemployed clients. Client support advisers needed to have a greater working knowledge of the employer-facing work led by the employer engagement team:

'The adviser model had to be slightly changed for this project - we've kind of added a new dimension to the adviser model for all projects and that is that we believe that an adviser who works with in-work people, in-work clients, needs to have some kind of employer facing function... they should be speaking to employers to see if they can make the job flexible so that's an added dimension to the adviser job, you know'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

Given the breadth of expertise needed, some Timewise staff felt that the support role would operate better if the pre-progression elements and client driven employer engagement functions were brought together, or staff worked more closely together. Timewise found that in some where clients with more complex needs were being put forward to work with the employer engagement teams and were subsequently repeatedly unsuccessful at securing roles, the support adviser would be better placed at marketing the client to employers themselves as they had a better idea of the client's skills and attributes.

'At some level there is a disconnect between the employer engagement and the candidate because the candidate works with the adviser and then is passed on to someone else'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

2.6 STRATEGIES OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Employer engagement on the trial was originally intended to operate through a three pronged approach:

- Working with employers at a strategic level to open up vacancies and to improve progression opportunities
- Working with larger employers on an 'agency' basis to secure batches of vacancies that could then be filled by trial participants
- Working with smaller employers on a case-by-case basis to broker trial participants into jobs

The first of these approaches was existing staff. The timescales for the pilots made this challenging however – and during trial delivery it became apparent that one year was not sufficient time to build the necessary strategic relationships.

'Three quarters of the way through was the realisation that we weren't able to do some of the heavy lifting that we wanted with big employers within the capacity that we had on the trial – we just weren't able to make that happen because we were locked into a certain client group, a certain geography'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

Moreover, the capacity parameters of the trial (with a small mixed client caseload, in low paid jobs, and in a small geographical area) further reduced the ability to develop strategic relationships with employers as there was not capacity to work at this level on this scale of project

'At first we talked about low pay and actually that's not attractive to companies, they don't want to talk about their low paid staff, and so we needed to pitch it differently'.

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

Timewise therefore considered that it would be more appropriate to develop this kind of intervention in a separate trial with a larger scale.

The second 'agency' approach sought to secure 10-20 vacancies with larger employers willing to offer high quality and flexible positions. Here clients would be matched with a pool of job roles offered by an employer. However, the small scale of trial meant that Timewise couldn't leverage sufficient candidates with suitable skills at the same time to make this sort of 'agency' model workable in practice. As one staff member reported, the volume of clients on the trial were not sufficient to create a pipeline of suitable matched clients:

'We didn't have enough candidates to leverage group candidate placements... operating in a certain timeframe we couldn't go to employers who would have a pipeline of vacancies coming up necessarily because we weren't guaranteed the volume'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 2)

The most productive approach overall was the third one, of case-by-case job matching and job brokerage, usually with local small and medium enterprises. The key features were as follows:

- **Reverse marketing of candidates to employers**

Once a candidate was considered ready to progress, the employer engagement adviser would work to secure a new role with a suitable employer. A key part of this approach was to engage quickly with an employer and have sufficient knowledge of the client's skills and attributes to market them and to open up the potential for future negotiations about flexible terms.

'We'll actually contact the employer while they are fielding a live vacancy. So we have to be very quick. We have to make sure that you know your candidate very well, that your candidate is primed, ready to go'

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 1)

Key to the success of the approach was to make a personal intervention with the employer, to sell the benefits of the client, and to then introduce a conversation on flexible working:

'Because we were making calls to employers you can start a conversation about 'hey are you interested in flexible working, do you have flexible

opportunities?’ But unless you have a reason – e.g. I’ve got this amazing person would you consider taking them on but they need flexible working? – an employer won’t want to know’

(Interview with Timewise staff, Wave 1)

- **Bypassing formalised application processes**

Given that many clients had wider barriers to progression that may also lead to them being sifted out in more formal application and testing processes, employer engagement advisers emphasised the importance of finding other ways to demonstrate their clients’ aptitude. This included using their relationships with employers to secure interviews, or offering work trials:

‘I have to make contact with the employer and open the door for them that wouldn’t necessarily be open for them in a normal application process’

(Interview with Timewise staff, wave 1)

- **Negotiation with employers on flexibility**

Where clients had a need, employer engagement teams would negotiate with employers on the client’s behalf to open up their roles to flexibility (e.g. through hours, location or other terms) which – where successful – could give a client more confidence to apply and a better chance of securing an interview.

- **Employer workshops**

Finally, the employer engagement team delivered some workshops led by employers on interview skills, based on the employers’ views of what they were looking for from candidates in particular sectors.

2.6.1 Learning from trial delivery

Timewise felt that their employer engagement work generated the most learning about what worked and what did not with clients of varying abilities and skills, as well as the operational capacity and capability needed to make the necessary calls and negotiations with employers to place disadvantaged clients.

There were a number of learning points that Timewise staff reported about delivering employer engagement support (which are considered further in chapter 4, employer experiences):

- Employer engagement work needed to commence at the same time as client-facing support work, so that clients would have enough potential opportunities available once they were ready to move onto their new opportunity

- The model was more effective when the Employer Engagement team worked closely with the support advisers to ensure a joined-up support journey from initial support and careers advice to signposting or brokerage to an appropriate job
- Employers would consider flexibility for candidates with the requisite skills and aptitudes
- Different kinds of employer engagement approaches were needed according to the skills/aptitudes profile of clients. For those with lower skills/experience, adviser brokerage worked well as it bypassed the formal application process.

2.7 DEVELOPMENTS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

Overall, the research findings have highlighted that Timewise developed a novel and intensive support model that has evolved in response to live delivery. The 'support adviser' role was particularly well-developed and sought to address a range of barriers to in-work progression.

The model developed, however, is intensive and where clients displayed multiple barriers to progression, addressing the barriers could take a high level of adviser time (and other interventions) and that clients could take a long time to progress to an earnings progression. This has obvious cost and resource implications.

Building on operational learning, introducing a more in-depth triage for future programmes (seeking to identify which clients may require more in-depth work) could allow Timewise to 'stream' support and so allocate smaller caseloads where there is a greater number of high need clients.

The trial made some links to additional support where clients were found to have additional needs that could not be met by the direct support model. However, building on the learning that has been developed through engaging with the clients on the project, Timewise will be better placed to develop more formalised partnerships with support services such as training providers who could help up-skill clients requiring more formal qualifications and levels to progress in work.

There is clear scope for Timewise to further augment their model of support to utilise local authority training offers compatible with working individuals and embed themselves with local initiatives to support residents to develop their skills.

3. CLIENT PROGRESSION BARRIERS AND OUTCOMES FROM SUPPORT

This chapter looks at client outcomes against the range of different barriers to progression that were reported by participants. Using an outcomes map from a theory of change model, it explores how the support model has been operationalised and tracks outcomes immediately following support and six months later.

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CLIENTS

Clients on the trial were predominantly female (99 out of 102) and predominantly from a Black Ethnic group (73 out of 99) – see table 3.1. Clients had been recruited from the South London DWP district (which has a number of areas in which black ethnic minorities are highly represented).

No clients on the trial reported at the beginning that they had a disability or health condition, although in the six month follow-up survey four clients stated that they had a disability or health condition.

Table 3.1 Ethnic background of clients

Ethnic origin	No. of clients
Asian or Asian British –	
Bangladeshi	1
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1
Black or Black British - African	44
Black or Black British - Caribbean	29
Mixed	4
Other Ethnic group	2
Prefer not to say	3
White – British	9
White – Other	9

Base 102 clients

3.2 PROFILE OF NEEDS AND BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

The depth interviews with clients engaged with support found that clients on the trial were very work focused, however there were a number of needs and challenges. For many, they wanted to secure a job which could provide them with a good future, security and enable them to progress in the future.

‘Even the salary is not my priority but I want somewhere where I can secure myself, because what I’m doing now is not like a secure job’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

There appeared to be a trade-off between the need to secure their future and the needs of the family in the here and now.

'It's emotionally tiring because you're not spending that time with your kid and the whole reason why I'm working so hard in the first place is for him... It makes me feel like I'm not supporting him enough'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1).

However, most clients when asked felt that overall the trade-off of progression was worth it (and indeed by virtue of being on the trial, clients were all focused on developing their future. In particular, some wanted to be able to move up and out of working benefits, in some cases feeling that doing so would provide a good role model for their children:

'I know once my salary increases, I will lose all those working tax credits because my salary is higher but I just want to be preparing for my future – I don't want to be in the working tax credit forever'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

As such, all trial participants interviewed in the qualitative research made clear that they did have a commitment to increasing their income. Most felt that they had significant barriers to achieving this. These barriers divided into skills, behavioural, income and childcare barriers.

3.2.1 Skills/ experience based barriers

Lack of relevant or recent work experience

The most common barrier reported was around relevant and recent work experience to enable participants to move into higher paid work. Most participants reported having either had time out of the labour market which had affected their progression prospects (typically for bringing up children) or that they did not have sufficient relevant work experience for higher paid roles or sectors. For some clients, this was a clear source of frustration.

"I just felt like my talent was wasted, I am stuck in a job that I was using just for when I was studying, so I felt that now that I've graduated, I needed to put my degree into use'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Low qualifications/literacy

Overall the client caseload had high qualifications and levels (indicated by 46 clients with level 3 and above in table 3.1 below), however, having low qualifications was a

barrier. Roughly a fifth of clients had either no or low formal qualifications (at or below NVQ Level 1 or equivalent). A further quarter had NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualifications – which were generally considered the minimum required for most roles. Several survey respondents noted that having no maths or English qualifications had acted as a barrier to finding new jobs and had made it harder to access training courses. See table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Highest qualification of clients

Highest qualification	No. of participants
No formal qualifications	13
NVQ1	9
NVQ2	25
NVQ3	17
NVQ4	5
NVQ5	17
NVQ6	4
NVQ7	2
NVQ8	1
Other	5
Base: 98 clients	

Some clients in the survey reported not being able to read and/ or write very well and therefore could not write application forms, access the internet well or find information about where to apply for new jobs.

English as a second language

Depth interviews revealed that many clients had limited English skills (even if they did not identify it as one their barriers). One client interviewed for the trial considered that a lack of understanding and fluency in English was her key barrier to progressing in work as it affected her ability to communicate effectively in interviews:

‘The things I find challenging are the interview because I always have that lack of understand properly English. I will always have the lack, like I won’t be able to answer the question because... If I apply for a job they will go for someone who has a big chat like the young generation rather than going for someone like me. I’m more reliable than the young generation but how can I prove it to the person in front of me?’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

3.2.2 Individual behavioural barriers

Low confidence

Many clients in the depth interviews reported having low confidence in applying for new jobs and in their ability to find jobs. This was largely related to having been rejected for a number of applications in the past, as well as to skills-based barriers reported above (such as time out of the labour market, poor qualifications or limited work experience).

'I just felt like I wasn't any good because I used to apply for jobs but never got any responses'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Low motivation

In some cases, clients reported that they would be capable of finding more senior or higher paid work, but that they were focused on meeting immediate family needs (especially where they had very young children). Some also reported that the pressures of being in unrewarding, low paid roles was itself de-motivating, and discouraged them from progressing within that sector.

Perception of no time to apply/commit to higher paid job

Finally, some clients reported feeling guilty about not spending enough time with their children in the day and were therefore reluctant both to spend time applying for new jobs if that took them away from caring or family life and/or to feel motivated to apply for higher paid jobs that may require a greater time commitment.

3.2.3 Income-based benefit barriers

For a number of clients, fears about earnings increases affecting their entitlement to benefits acted as a barrier to seeking progression. Often these fears were based on perceptions rather than reality, but they required a greater focus by the support adviser on understanding the benefits system and demonstrating the impact on household incomes of changes in earnings. Two issues in particular were most common:

Concerns about working tax credit thresholds and withdrawal

Many single parents reported that they aimed to work 16 hours per week as this was the threshold for claiming tax credits. Often, these clients were concerned that increasing their hours would lead to a significant fall in income and could leave them worse off overall. At the same time, for others considering new jobs it was essential that these offered at least 16 hours a week so as to maintain their tax credits claim. Even where jobs were a progression, if they did not offer 16 hours a week then they would not be considered.

The changes to work incentives under Universal Credit will address many of these concerns. However within the trial, these issues led to the use of 'Better off in work' calculators to emphasise the returns from work.

Fear of losing social housing

Some clients were concerned that they might lose entitlement to their social housing if their income increased significantly. Remaining in their established local community was considered extremely important to parents who often relied on the support structure from having friends and family living nearby.

3.2.4 Family/ childcare barriers

Balancing work and family life

Some clients reported that prioritising family life over their career goals and aspirations acted as a barrier as they had previously chosen roles or sectors that were convenient, easy to access or were compatible with family circumstances or needs.

Young children

As can be seen in Table 3.3 below, just over a third (35) of clients had pre-school children and a further 44 had children at primary school. Clients reported that having young children was a key barrier to progression, with parents keen to spend more time with their children so as to support their development or simply to care for them

‘Sometimes I wished I could work overtime more than 16 hours but I can’t as I am the only parent for my daughter so I am the one that has to pick her up from school, drop her off at school do you understand so I could work in that criteria and I can support her’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Many clients with young children reported that they relied on informal childcare as these were either free or very low cost, which could also act as a barrier to working flexibly. A further 23 clients had a youngest child aged 11 years and over. – In contrast to clients with younger children, Timewise staff reported that targeting progression support at the transition between primary and secondary school was highly effective as they found clients felt more comfortable about not having to spend as much time caring or picking up children from school and were therefore more receptive to having conversations about increasing their income/hours.

Table 3.3 Ages of youngest children of clients

Age of youngest child	No. of participants
Under six months	4
Under one year	8
1-2 years old	14
3 to 4 years old	9
5-10 years old	44
11-16 years old	15
17-18 years old	7
19 years +	1
Base	102

Childcare costs

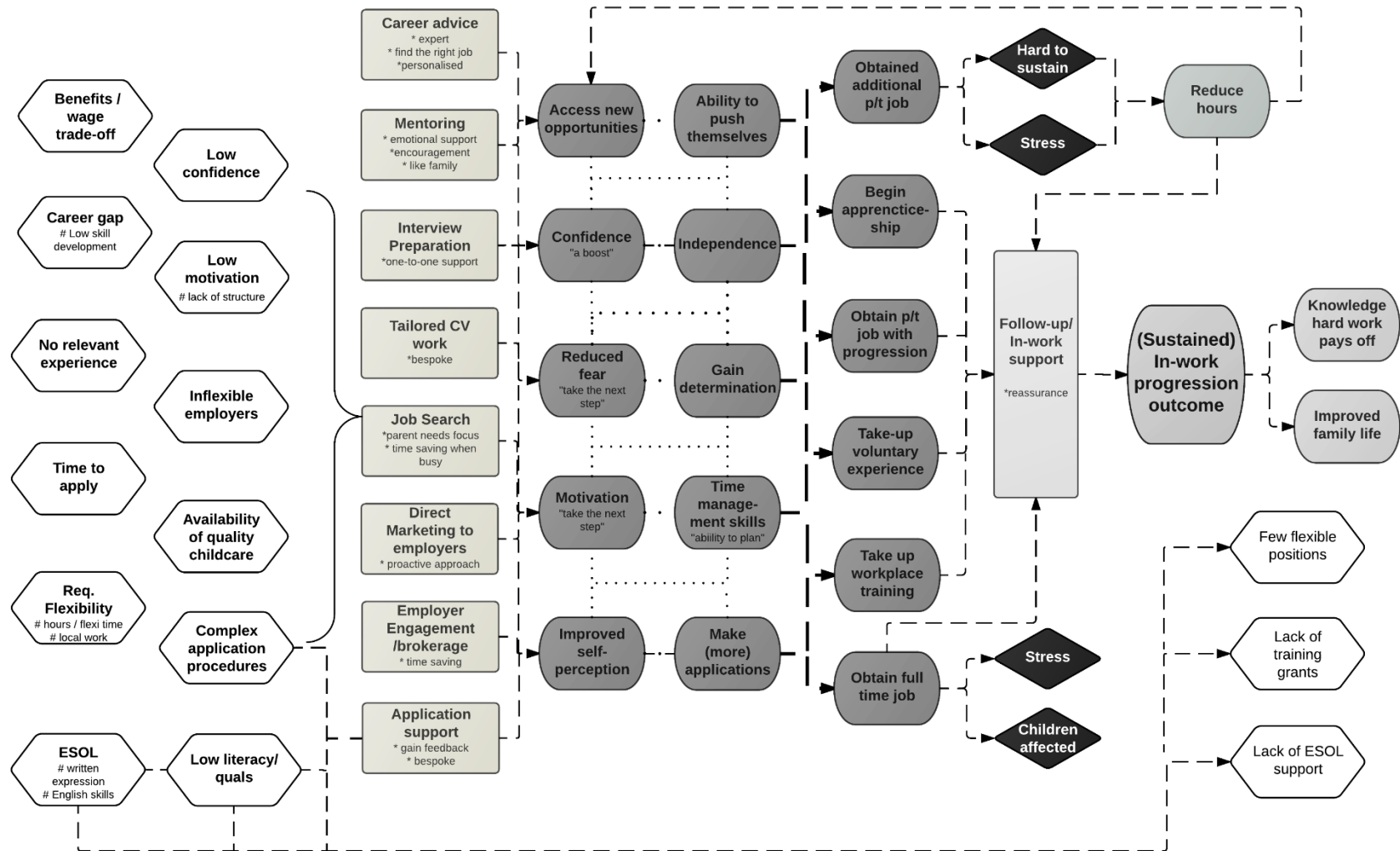
As noted, most clients with young children relied on informal networks for childcare. Formal childcare was not commonly used due to its availability, hours and cost.

3.3 CLIENT OUTCOMES FROM SUPPORT

The research identified a range of client outcomes. These can be summarised in the following outcomes map (figure 3.1) which forms part of the theory of change method of analysing how Timewise support served to address client barriers and achieve outcomes.

As the figure shows, there are a number of direct and immediate (soft) outcomes from the client and employer brokerage support. Of interest is the sequence in which these occurred and how clients changed as a result of the support interventions.

Figure 3.1 Outcomes map from Timewise's in-work support model



3.3.1 Analysis of support outcomes

Feeling understood

One of the first outcomes that clients reported was that someone understood their situation and priorities. The support was often described as family-friendly and this was something that was reported as being missing from other employment support, especially from Jobcentre Plus.

‘She said she will help me to fit in so that I will now have time with my daughter, and she really did...’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

‘She reminds me that, okay, I’m not the only person out there that’s a working mother, that it can be done, but don’t let it take too much out of you, or don’t become overwhelmed...’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

The main effect of the client work increased individual client wellbeing and their attitude towards progression.

Reduced fear of changing jobs

There was evidence that the adviser’s approach reduced clients’ fears about progression because they had someone supporting them that they trusted because they were reliable and friendly.

‘You know, it’s like you’re not scared of everything, you know, you talked to her and it was just like talking to my mum...’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

As a result of this, there were examples of clients progressing into better jobs. For example, one individual attributed this to them subsequently moving from poorly paid agency work to a permanent better paid role, which gave them a better quality of life and the ability to better budget for outgoings such as bills.

Motivation to apply

The qualitative depth findings suggested that Timewise’s proactive approach increased client motivation. Clients reported that in one-to-one sessions (either face-to-face or over the phone) their adviser would push them and encouraging them not to give up, which was important because it inspired them to keep trying to apply for jobs and improve their lives.

‘You just get to the point where you just couldn’t be bothered, but she was so infectious’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Their motivation also increased as a consequence of the adviser supporting their goals and taking them seriously.

'It's made me more determined to be successful...it made me feel more inspired and more motivated, like I found someone that can help me, and that felt like my dreams are not just rubbish...'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

'I think their support motivates me in the way that, if I was on my own, I'd have a really hard time to apply but, when they send me something... I remember... because I know someone is waiting for my reply, I have to do it.'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Ability to become proactive

Where clients reported improved motivation they also explained that they were being more proactive and persistent in terms of job search. They felt more hopeful about finding a better position in the future, if this had not already occurred.

'Well not to give up, I shall keep trying...I'm confident, because I've been doing it for quite long'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

Confidence and self-belief

Another soft skill that clients acquired from the support was greater confidence and self-belief that they could progress and that they were capable of doing so. Furthermore, as the Timewise adviser taught clients how to express their skill set and experience in their applications, they then felt more confident about applying for jobs and submitting their CVs.

'She's really supportive and confident in everything that she's trying to help me with...She helped me fill out the application.'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

The research also suggested that because of this increased confidence clients were now had more general aspiration and were therefore applying for better jobs that would enable them to progress their income.

'I feel like now I'm more confident, and I feel like I can apply for better jobs, and I feel like I can climb that career ladder.'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

In addition, clients reported that they were more confident about applying for the jobs that their Timewise adviser sent them because they trusted them and felt like applying was less of a waste of time. This was because they felt that Timewise's reputation would help their chances of getting their application noticed.

'If I saw that on Londonjobs or one of those websites, I wouldn't apply for it'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 2)

Job searching skills

The research found that clients had learnt about how to better structure their job search, and that they had better time management skills as a result of the support, which made them less stressed and meant that they could devote more time to their family. Another consequence of these increased time-management skills was that clients were completing more applications and more willing to devote time to job search, because they now knew how to do this efficiently.

As a result of this approach and understanding, clients became more aware of flexible work opportunities and reported feeling less overwhelmed and frustrated with their situation. It was apparent that clients became aware of other routes or options they could follow to progress their careers and increase their earnings. For example, clients reported that Timewise contacted them about jobs that they would not have otherwise known about or found, informed them of higher paying sectors and made them realise that it would be possible find work to fit around their family.

'Sometimes things happen that internally you are not aware of that they are in contact with the employer. They may know more...'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

'I needed to find a job that would allow me to see my child. So, they found me a job where I could work in the evenings'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

There were also examples of clients taking on volunteering roles that were relevant to their desired career path or improving their awareness of the skills and qualifications they would need in order to progress. They praised Timewise's expertise of career progression routes and their tailoring of support, which meant that they were able to gain this information and act accordingly.

Providing support with interview techniques was also recognised as a key benefit from support. Clients received interview preparation and guidance, such as advice about body language, and when they were unsuccessful their adviser got feedback as to why, to help them improve in the future.

Finally, receiving support from Timewise also saved clients time, because they spoke to employers on their behalf and sent CVs off for them. This advocacy was particularly beneficial because (as outlined above) a common barrier to progressing was the limited time participants had to enhance their prospects and apply for roles.

‘They can submit my CV straightaway, without me doing anything. It’s also saving my time. They can just talk to the employer on my behalf. So it’s like they have some impact.’

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 1)

3.3.2 Unmet barriers to progression

The support model did not explicitly address barriers related to improving English language skills, nor did it provide direct support to improve literacy or writing skills where these needs existed. Timewise staff thought that this support was out of the scope of this trial’s support model and it is likely that developing literacy skills could take time if accessed through another provider. However, in many cases, during delivery the adviser attempted to overcome these barriers through direct job brokerage or assisting with application writing.

These unaddressed barriers could be affecting the ability of the support model to produce outcomes. For example, one Polish client in the study mentioned that she had been able to modestly increase her income as a cleaner but felt that her lack of English speaking skills and the fact that her Polish qualifications were not recognised were holding her back from progressing out of a low paid profession such as cleaning.

If Timewise were to take the support model forward, the research findings suggest that clients should be screened for English language and literacy needs at an early point and then supported to address these needs (either through referral to other support or as part of the in-work progression offer). It is also likely that those with these needs will take longer to achieve progression and may need to achieve this through a number of stages – e.g. through accessing support to find similar job roles with a more secure or permanent contract, training offers and/or higher wages and moving up more slowly.

While there was plenty of evidence from the qualitative findings regarding the impact of language or literacy barriers on clients ability to progress, as the management information did not record language or literacy barriers directly, it is not possible from this trial to determine whether participants were able to progress without having these needs fully met.

3.4 PROGRESSION OUTCOMES FROM SUPPORT

Overall, at the point of the end of the support in April 2015, 28 clients had achieved a progression outcome in the sense that they obtained a new job, increased their wages or hours and across the project, 30 new jobs for clients were achieved by Timewise staff (two clients achieving two outcomes within the support period).

3.4.1 Earnings progressions

21 participants achieved a progression outcome that increased their income. As table 3.4 shows, the very large majority of those that achieved progression did so by finding a new job (14 out of 17 clients for whom this information was known). The very large majority also increased their hours (18 out of 21), while a majority also increased their hourly wage (15 out of 21) while still retaining flexibility.

A small number of clients reported progressing with a lower hourly wage, which was usually linked to changing their career path or taking a job that was more convenient or had better prospects – typically moving up in hours.

Table 3.4 Earnings outcomes achieved by April 2015

Employer	Increase/ decrease in hourly wages	Increase/Decrease in weekly hours	Income Progression above UC threshold	Income Progression below UC threshold	Total
New employer	Increased hourly wage	Increased weekly hours	7		7
		Fewer weekly hours	2		2
	Lower hourly wage	Increased weekly hours	4	1	5
Current employer	Increased hourly wage	Increased weekly hours	2	1	3
Unknown	Increased hourly wage	Increased weekly hours	2		2
		Fewer weekly hours		1	1
	Lower hourly wage	Increased weekly hours	1		1
Total participants with an outcome			18	3	21

On average, clients with a progression outcome achieved an actual salary increase of £5,770.21 (an average change of £4,023 as full time equivalent). This

represented a proportionate increase in salaries of 75% on average (a 29% increase as a FTE equivalent).

There was no clear difference in earnings between clients who achieved wage progression with a new employer compared to those who secured a higher wage with their current employer; those who went to a new employer increased their wages by an average of £1.94 and those who negotiated with an average of £1.88 per hour. **However given the low numbers of clients and the limitations with a trial of this scale, these findings should be treated with caution.**

Owing to the small scale of the trial (and therefore actual recorded outcomes), it was not possible to assess subgroup outcomes. However, hourly wage gains were larger for those with higher qualifications. This finding is consistent with large scale RCT research looking at earnings progression among lone parents with higher qualifications⁵.

3.4.2 Other progressions

7 clients found new jobs from the support, but did not achieve an earnings progression. In four cases this was because the clients had taken new jobs with higher hourly wages, but working fewer or the same hours.

Table 3.5 Other employment progression outcomes achieved by April 2015

Progression Type	Number of clients
Progression with new employer, the same wage, same hours	1
Progression with new employer, increased hourly wage, fewer/same hours	4
Progression with new employer, lower hourly wage, fewer hours	1
Progression with new employer, lower hourly wage, same hours	1

At six months post support, one of these clients was able to move on to another job with increased wages (in so doing moving sector) and another had been able to increase their hourly wage.

Clients reported that it was important for any progression opportunity to be sustainable. One client reported progressing into a more relevant job that better matched their qualifications and skill set and which would make it easier for them to

⁵ For instance, DWPs Employment Retention and Advancement study. See Hendra et al., (2011) Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) demonstration: Delivery, takeup and outcomes of in-work training support for lone parents, DWP Research report 727.

progress in the future; while another reported having found flexible work which enabled them to finish their Masters degree.

As the results map above showed (figure 3.1), moving to full time work or taking on an additional job in some cases could be associated with additional stress. In one case, a client interviewed in the second wave of research had found that they could not sustain their additional job and had to move back to working part-time hours.

When clients had achieved career progression, there was evidence that this had improved their family life. This was because it often meant that clients could spend more time with their children and felt as if they had set a good example and had been a positive role model for them (also increasing their self-worth).

'I now get to keep my son at home for weekends...he's seen me work hard...So now it's starting to pay off...he can see that working hard does eventually payoff'

(Interview with in-work progression client, wave 2)

3.4.3 Case studies of client journeys through support

The following case studies illustrate the client journey through support and the outcomes achieved.

Case Study – Lisa

Lisa is 28 years old, of mixed race and lives in Council accommodation with her 11 year old daughter. She left school without any qualifications but recently completed a degree in accounting. To support her education, Lisa completed part time jobs.

Lisa was keen to find work in book keeping and accountancy. However finding work quickly in order to support her family was a priority, so she took the jobs that were easiest to come by such as client focused roles.

Lisa worked 16 hours per week, and with tax credits and housing benefit Lisa felt that she had sufficient income, but was just getting by. She also previously experienced difficulties with combining work and care. Lisa left one job as she could not cope with full time hours and caring for her child. She then struggled with combining studying and night shift work – as this prevented her from having a work-life balance as she could not spend time with her daughter and became emotionally drained.

'It's emotionally tiring because you're not spending that time with your kid and the whole reason why I'm working so hard in the first place is for her...but I'm not actually getting to spend time with her... It makes me feel like I'm not supporting her enough.'

Lisa believed that her main barriers to work was her lack of relevant experience in the field that she qualified in, which left her frustrated and feeling useless. She also struggled to access specialist support, which she felt she required to break into her desired field.

'It all comes down to experience. They wouldn't hire you without experience but you couldn't get any experience'

Other barriers preventing her from progressing included the high cost of childcare, which meant she could only take on part time roles and the need for secure work, which meant that she could not do zero-hour contract work. She was also worried about going above 16 hours a week because of the effect this would have on her benefits; a fear exacerbated by previous problems changing her work-status that left her in arrears.

Lisa engaged with Timewise at a workshop they ran in a shopping centre. She was impressed with their enthusiastic approach, and over time she also became impressed with how flexible and personalised the support was.

Lisa received support with tailoring her CV and applying for jobs in accountancy and administration, and her adviser got in touch with employers to feedback any suggestions for improvement. Lisa found the encouragement, which assisted her with overcoming her emotional barriers, particularly her frustration, most useful. She felt that her adviser was good at being able to identify her best qualities and show her how to demonstrate these to employers, giving her confidence.

'From the CV, then talking to me about who to work for, then giving information about who they spoke to and how I was at interviewing and they just pretty much put me completely at ease. Yes, without them I definitely wouldn't have gotten this job'

As a result, Lisa has been able to get her first accountancy role as a finance officer at 21 hours per week earning £10 per hour (£210 per week). Timewise were successful at helping her to overcome her lack of confidence and self-doubt about applying for a role. This progression has had an impact on her family also as she was able to show her daughter that hard work pays off and was now less tired.

Case Study - Sandra

Sandra is a 52 year old White British female who had some health issues relating to an underactive thyroid and high blood pressure. She lives with her 18 year old daughter and her 20 year old daughter came home from University during the holidays. She also had caring responsibilities for her 91 year old father. Sandra had three O Levels, but no other qualifications.

Since she started work in the 1980s, Sandra held numerous admin roles before having children. After this she went back to administrative work occasionally, in part-time roles. She also undertook various volunteering roles to update her skills. Sandra was content with these admin roles, and the level of responsibility they gave her, but she found the demands of looking after young children and working exhausting.

Sandra explained that money has always been quite tight but that she could get by. However, as her youngest daughter is now 18 Sandra has stopped receiving child tax credits, which has had a 'big impact' on the household income.

Sandra currently works 20.5 hours a week in a private clinic, as a part time receptionist, which pays £122 per week. She also volunteers in a hospital to guide and welcome patients. Her current boss is a mum herself, which she felt helped because she understood the pressures of juggling children and work. Although she is happy with her job, she explained that she is now ready to move on:

'I have got a job, and it would be ideal if I could move on, and I want to move on from this job now. It's not just about finances. I'm actually ready to move.'

However, Sandra feels that with time out of the labour market, administration roles have become more complex.

'I am finding it is much more complicated than I thought...so I'd be very wary of taking on a job like that, with that responsibility now'

In addition, Sandra believed that she will not be able to dramatically improve her income because she lacks relevant skills and because her personal circumstances got in the way of her training opportunities. She also lacked confidence and motivation for apply for jobs.

'I do feel that I'm not going to ever earn terribly much, because I have been looking after the children, and I haven't got the skills to go much further than I am now'.

Sandra heard about Timewise after seeing a flyer at her local library and got in touch.

Sandra received one-to-one support to practice application forms and reviewing job specifications. The support motivated her look for new work and she was grateful that they worked at her pace and that it was not too intense.

Sandra is currently seeking a job in the NHS, as they offer good training opportunities and more financial security.

Since receiving support she has been to a couple of interviews, but is struggling with online tests. Although she has not progressed into a new role, she felt that the application support worked, and that the interview technique workshops had taught her important things, such as the need to make eye-contact. Furthermore, Sandra

explained that having someone to highlight suitable job opportunities took the pressure off, making the process easier.

Overall Sandra has gained motivation and confidence from the support she has received from Timewise and now devotes to looking for new work. She spoke highly of the support and appreciated that her adviser understood her multiple commitments. *‘It’s really helped with that motivation and confidence...it has been amazing...It’s just something I wasn’t... couldn’t see how I was going to find the time to do on my own’*

3.5 OUTCOMES AT SIX MONTHS POST SUPPORT

Clients were asked to complete an in-depth telephone survey six months following the end of the support to track their destinations and outcomes.

3.5.1 Destinations of clients achieving a progression outcome

Of the 28 clients who had achieved a progression outcome on the in work progression trial, 22 completed the survey. Of the 21 clients who achieved an income progression outcome at the end of the lifetime of the trial, 17 completed the follow-up survey.

Sustaining in work progression outcomes

Most of the participants in the survey who had achieved an income progression sustained this for over six months. Of the 17 participants surveyed who achieved an income progression at the end of the support, 11 stated that they had maintained or increased their income progression, three stated that they did not sustain their progression, and three preferred not to say.

Of the three clients who stated that they did not sustain their income progression, the reasons given were:

- That they were let go by her employer due to company difficulties
- That they had left their job after being assaulted by a client
- That they had reduced their hours for personal reasons (which were not disclosed further)

Further destinations of progressed clients

Of the 22 progressed clients who undertook the survey, 12 were still employed in the same job and most had the same wage or slight increases (an average of £0.31 additional per hour). On average, clients were working 22 hours per week – broadly similar to the previous average. For 8 clients who had made an income progression

by April 2015 and were still working in the same job, the average weekly hours were 25.

Six of the 22 clients had obtained a further new job (all having previously secured a new job at the end of the support). For the 5 clients for which we have information these clients had increased their incomes by an average of £5,548 (from £18,712 to £24,261). While contained within the average are two clients who changed to a job with broadly similar wages, for two of these clients in the follow-up study there were large increases in their hourly wage rates:

- One client had increased their weekly hours (by 3 hours per week) and their hourly wage by £4.13 per hour, leading to an overall salary of £16,000
- In another case, a client continued to work full time (35 hours) but with an increase of £8.76 per hour for a salary of £41,000

One client had been promoted but did not disclose their salary.

Most clients felt that Timewise had been instrumental in giving them the support or giving them the push to achieve these outcomes themselves. In the limited numbers of those with progression outcomes, it is difficult to infer patterns of outcomes or make judgements about how clients progress in work most effectively or easily. However, it will be necessary for future work or larger scale studies to track the different methods of progression to ascertain which approaches work best.

3.5.2 Destinations of clients who had not achieved progression at the end of the support period

When looking at clients who had not progressed at the end of the support period (April 2015), when surveyed six months later most of these clients continued to remain in the same jobs (shown in table 3.5 below).

However, hourly wages had increased on average by about £1 per hour (with many stating that these increases were due to natural wage increases given by their employer). Most were working similar hours (an average of 21 hours per week). Destinations are set out in table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 Destinations of clients that did not achieve progression outcomes, six months after support

Destinations of clients	Number of clients	Average hrly wage change	Average wkly hour change
I am employed in the same job	29	1.0	-0.8
I am employed in the same job and have taken on an additional job	1	15.0	7.0
I am employed in the same job and I have taken on additional unpaid training/study/voluntary work	6	0.6	3.0
I have obtained a new job with a new employer	4	-1.0	6.5
I have obtained a new job/promotion with the same employer	1	4.9	29.0
Looking for work	4		
Not in work due to illness or disability	1		
Not in work, looking after the home or family	1		
Total	47	1.2	1.0

Six individuals in the follow up survey had undertaken voluntary work or unpaid training to bolster their chances of gaining a progression opportunity. Most felt that the additional time away from their children would be worth it in order to secure their futures.

It was notable that 24 clients in the follow up survey mentioned that they had been able to access training in the six months post support. Typically, these training courses had been provided by the employer and were occupational in focus (e.g. first aid, care qualifications, food hygiene, IT skills). Some were longer training courses such as teaching assistant qualifications or accountancy levels which would take over a year to fully complete. Most felt positive that these courses would assist them in their efforts to progress further in the future.

On average, clients that had not progressed in work had increased their weekly working hours by 2.5 per week (from an average of 20 hours previously).

There were found to be discrepancies in the data on wages reported by a large number of clients in the follow-up survey compared to their original wage data. As such, it was not possible to fully analyse which kinds of progression (either through a new employer or progressing up into a new job) yields the largest income progressions. However, this data would be useful in any future study.

3.6 CLIENT VIEWS ON FURTHER BARRIERS AND ACCESSING SUPPORT IN THE FUTURE

Nearly all clients (59 of the 66 answering the survey question) wanted to progress their incomes further in the future. Of these, only 3 respondents felt that they did not have further barriers to achieving an income progression. Of those who did feel that they had further barriers – and detailed in table 3.7 - there were a range of responses, however, caring responsibilities emerged as theme (whether balancing the cost of childcare or having enough time to balance work and caring roles. For some respondents, they felt that their chosen work sector paid low wages and felt that they had reached the highest available wage. Some respondents felt that they lacked the relevant qualifications or experience to progress into higher paying roles.

Table 3.7 Further barriers to earnings progression (coded responses)

Further barriers reported by clients (coded)	Frequency of participants
Needs to balance work/care	7
Costs of increased childcare	6
Lack of qualifications	5
Working in low paying sector	5
Lack work experience	3
Numerous rejections	3
Fear of leaving secure job	2
Insecure work	2
Low English skills	2
No availability of additional hours	2
Age	1
Age of children	1
CV updating	1
Impact on benefits	1
Lack confidence	1
Lack of basic skills	1
Lack of confidence	1
Lack of experience	1
Lack of in-work progression support	1
Lack of IT	1
Lack of money to train	1
Lack of time to apply	1
Lack of work experience	1
Misc	1
Time out of labour market > change in industry	1
Base 52 survey respondents who had further barriers to progression	

When asked where clients would like to access support in the future (as shown in table 3.8), clients most frequently wanted support from Timewise or other similar support organisations.

Table 3.8 Future support access

Further support agencies	Frequency of responses
Timewise	42
Alternative Employment agency	11
Colleges or training providers	7
Online resources	6
Job Centre Plus	4
Own contacts	2
National Careers Guidance	1
Don't know	9
Prefer not to say	2
Base 67 Survey respondents	

In addition, most participants said that they would like to access support face-to-face and the mode of access preferred by clients indicates that they would most prefer this on a one-to-one basis as only one client in the survey felt that group support would be their preferred mode of support.

Table 3.9 Preferred Mode of support

Preferred support mode	Frequency of clients
Face-to-face	42
Online	10
Telephone	10
Group support	1
Don't know	3
Prefer not to say	3
Base 69 respondents	

3.7 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPORT MODEL

Given the small numbers of clients on the trial, all findings are indicative. However, there appear to be some trends which we consider important to follow up with future trials and further research:

- Income progression is not one-step or linear – there may well be multiple steps to undertake to successfully achieve income progression – and this can take time.

- Many parents will be willing to take on additional hours to progress in-work but must trade this off between their family responsibilities and for those with younger children, the barriers to achieving income progression through additional hours increase
- Parents may attempt to take on additional working, training or voluntary work with a view to increasing their chances of progression, but in some cases these additional hours may not be sustainable. In the few of the case study examples that we have tracked, taking on an additional job was not sustainable for clients due to their care roles.
- Where clients could make a successful and sustained progression, early evidence that further outcomes achieved for individual/family.

The model that Timewise implemented with clients was overall well received by clients who engaged with the trial and had several appointments with the support adviser. The main effect of the support model reported by clients is behavioural – focusing on improving self-motivation and clients' belief in themselves.

It is not clear if the model that Timewise developed can easily deal with clients with complex additional needs such as language and literacy difficulties. Those with very low literacy rates or qualifications not recognised in the UK were particularly difficult to help through the support model trialled. These objective barriers were found to prevent clients from presently moving upwards in their careers and therefore any income progressions were into jobs in slightly better paying sectors. Without clients being able to address these barriers, there appeared to be an upper limit to any income progression through to higher roles.

It may be worth considering whether caseloads should be segmented according to level of need (for instance using a RAG rating system) in order to appropriately account for the levels of needs in low income cohorts due to be affected by Universal Credit income threshold conditionality limits.

4. EMPLOYER EXPERIENCES

This chapter considers employer perspectives both on the earnings progression trial and on supporting low income parents to progress in-work, based on qualitative findings from employer interviews. All of the employers represented SME organisations based in London.

4.1 EMPLOYER VIEWS OF THE IN-WORK SUPPORT MODEL

Employers valued the expertise of Timewise staff and trusted them to forward the right kinds of candidates. This made them more likely to take a 'risk' on a Timewise candidate.

Employers particularly valued Timewise's direct marketing of candidates to them as it saved them time and money.

'[She] understands what we need and she was able to put it out to her advisers—and then they can source from there who's got the relevant experience or who's interested in doing this; who lives closest...It's quicker than advertising, to be honest with you, because she's doing all the legwork for me'.

(Interview with SME Employer, wave 1)

When working with candidates (particularly those with complex or additional needs), employers were receptive to Timewise taking a proactive approach with them, which included:

- Guiding the employer through the benefits of a candidate and gaining feedback where an employer felt that they were not suitable
- Regular but not overburdening contact with them
- Supporting the candidate to make the best of themselves

In several instances, Timewise sent the employer an email at the same time as the candidate's application to advise them to look out for the candidate in question. An employer explained that this was useful because it drew their attention to the application in question, which was important as that person might have been quickly dismissed otherwise, because of their limited experience. However, Timewise were able to highlight reasons why they would be a good employee and what they could offer the organisation, something that immediately caught the attention of the employer in question. They also were able to standardise the CVs that they sent through, making them accessible and clear to employers.

Timewise also contacted employers with live job adverts to suggest Timewise's recruitment service and/or specific candidates. They also discussed the benefits to

the employer of making the role flexible. Employers reported that they valued these inquiries and noted that staff would respond quickly to any queries about the service they might have.

Employers also acknowledged that the candidates they interviewed most likely had been supported with this process as they had been prepared, and it was not obvious that they may have not had an interview for a long period of time. If the employer did not offer a Timewise candidate the role, they rang and got feedback about why that was the case. An employer was impressed with this, as they explained that it was rare for a recruitment agency to be so supportive.

'[It] was quite impressive really that somebody took that much time, you don't normally get that in recruitment, like not so well prepared and the help's not always that intense...'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

Case Study

Timewise placed a candidate with limited experience, but good qualifications, in a financial officer role due to factors including Timewise's proactive approach to marketing candidates, which included screening candidates that they put forward and arranging interviews.

The employer engagement officer encouraged the employer to take a chance and interview the candidate by listing reasons why they would make a good employee.

It was felt that Timewise had an understanding of the organisation in question and their business and recruitment needs, and that they had a pool of skilled candidates with the necessary expertise.

'I knew Timewise were the sort of organisation that would understand what we wanted and may well have specialist people looking for part-time work.'

This theory was proved when the candidate Timewise put forward interpreted the practical tests correctly, demonstrated attention to detail and were perceived to fit well with the organisation.

Although, the employer interviewed explained that the candidate had done 'great' in the role so far, they added that she needed more guidance than expected because she was the only individual with responsibility for finance as it was a small organisation, and as she lacked relevant work experience, this put her under a lot of pressure.

'I love her, I love her in the organisation, I'm really pleased she's with us, I think she might...she would have done better in a slightly bigger organisation where she wasn't the only one dealing with finance and where she could not feel quite so pressurised'

As well as outlining the benefits of Timewise's approach, this case study also highlights the difficulties of placing individuals who have a mismatch of skills and experience into roles with SMEs – where less support is available.

4.2 THE CAPACITY OF SME EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT IN-WORK PROGRESSION

The SME employers interviewed reported several barriers that they have or currently face when providing progression opportunities. Employers reported that being small in size or being from a generally low paid sector meant attracting good candidates and staff retention were key issues but employers also mentioned a number of parental or other external barriers to in-work progression.

4.2.1 Low paying industry/ sectors

Some employers felt that it was challenging to fill their lower-end positions with good candidates as they were 'competing with' other low-paying sectors and the benefits system. For example, one employer argued that the benefits system was paying people more than their salaries could, and another employer in the social care sector explained that most agencies are attempting to recruit staff from the same pool of candidates.

Furthermore, most felt that staff retention difficulties were industry specific or a consequence of not being able to compete on salary terms. Employers interviewed struggled to compete on salary terms with the multinationals and large companies, or with their competitors.

'Where you are basically working at the lower income sector level, you compete with people like Tesco, MacDonald's and all the shops, retail, the beauty shops'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

Few employers interviewed had formal internal progression structures or policies in place. Instead, many offered progression or training opportunities for staff on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.2 Small business size

Many cited being a small employer or start-up as a current barrier to being able to offer formal progression opportunities. For instance, having small offices and limited numbers of employees meant that there was only potential to increase salary against moving up to other positions in the company, and their small size and flat structure

meant that such opportunities were rare. However, employers recognised the ability of their staff and were open minded to progression as they expanded the company.

Providing internal capacity for training and support was also difficult because of limited budgets and time. One employer looked to external NVQ trainer to provide progression opportunities, which worked well and had enabled some staff members to progress through the business.

In order to attract and retain staff, employers were:

- Offering part time positions (particularly 16 hours per week)
- Promoting both informal and formal flexible working
- Offering London Living Wage

Offering part time positions enabled staff to still receive benefits and not always rely on childcare. Therefore, an employer felt that offering roles that were 16 hours per week made them attractive to candidates. Another employer argued that the best thing they could do as a business was to pay their staff *'properly'* and offer the living wage.

4.2.3 Parental barriers to in-work progression

Employers were also asked about their views of the barriers that parents face to progressing in work. Stated barriers included:

- Fear of additional responsibility
- Prioritising care needs of young children
- The lack of available, flexible, high quality child care
- The perceived ability of parents to work additional hours necessary in more senior role
- Financial penalties of increasing hours above benefit thresholds of 16 hours
- The cost of undertaking skills development and training
- The lack of internal and external progression pathways within SME's
- The limited progression pathways to level 2+ jobs

Childcare was seen as an issue that restricted parents employment options because employers thought that it influenced the kind of work that could be done and where parents could work, due to factors such as travel and hours and difficulties in finding high-quality childcare. However, in some companies (particularly dynamic start-ups and growing businesses), in order to progress employees would be expected to be

working very hard and completing numerous tasks that may require additional hours, factors which may be difficult for employees with childcare priorities.

'I think quite certainly in London - the thing to do to get on is probably more hours - certainly in dynamic companies - you're expected to be working hard and giving your all, rather than not giving up. Giving your all to a role, which is very difficult to do when you have priorities at home'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

One employer in the study felt that offering part-time roles for senior supervisor staff grades helped their staff offset childcare costs.

Another employer felt that small companies generally lacked progression pathways as could not always afford to provide training opportunities, meaning that staff would need to move to a different organisation in order to progress their earnings

'A lot of entry-level employment at the moment is SMEs. We all know it is poor quality and in London we've got a hollow labour market, loads and loads of level two-type jobs and then you have the big jump, don't you? So there's not many... I don't think there's many progression pathways'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

4.2.4 Employer commitment to flexible working

Most employers interviewed felt that flexible working was good for both parents in their business because it led to a happier workforce and positive working environment. Examples of informal flexible working included an employer who allowed staff to change shifts when necessary, as long as this did not negatively impact the business. Employers tended to believe that they had a good record on this, but could do more on progression.

Whilst not directly considering how to achieve better progression opportunities (e.g. through working through internal policies to offer more flexible senior roles) Most employers interviewed said that they would like to be able to provide better progression opportunities for their staff. They saw this as a business benefit because staff would gain skills that they could use in the workplace. Where internal progression opportunities were not available, some employers thought that low wage income progression should take place through circulating vacancies and supporting their staff into external jobs.

4.3 EMPLOYER VIEWS ON 'WHAT WORKS' IN PROMOTING IN-WORK PROGRESSION FOR LOW INCOME PARENTS

Employers explained that business need would be prioritised over any government subsidies or other offers or benefits of taking on a candidate. Some employers

cautioned against any attempts by external agencies that were not focused on business benefits, and they explained that any approach from external agencies (such as Timewise) to place candidates needed to focus on the business benefits or suitability of the candidate.

Employers highlighted several factors that they thought worked when supporting low-income parents to achieve sustainable progression, which included:

- In-work support to help candidates sustain their new roles
- Increased access to training grants for skills development
- Extended and joined-up careers guidance with job brokering for new opportunities
- London-wide (or place-based) initiatives (such as subsidies) to provide more 'step two' opportunities for individuals.

For example, in one case an employer suggested a network of professional mentors to support those in new roles in SMEs. They explained that having a professional mentor would help new employees when they were feeling overwhelmed or unsure by passing on their knowledge and expertise, giving them the confidence to perform in their role.

Another employer interview suggested that a body such as the GLA could incentivise employers to pay their employees living wage for the first six months of employment or to create more 'step 2' vacancies, as these were lacking in the labour market. They believed that this would create more opportunities for low paid workers.

'GLA could maybe, for example, come up with some kind of incentive to get people onto the London living wage for the first six months or to create opportunities, because there's no doubt that there's not enough 'step two' opportunities for people'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

Furthermore, an employer emphasised the need for advice and guidance with identifying relevant vacancies and applying for jobs, rather than simply sending them to job brokering organisations and giving them CV training.

'One thing is I think people need is adequate information and advice and guidance for job search support and I think... everyone thinks, yes, bung them through a CV training session and then that's it but I'm talking about helping people to actually apply for jobs; looking at the applications for them; maybe hooking them into, sort of, broker organisations like Timewise'

(Interview with SME employer, wave 1)

4.4 KEY LEARNING POINTS

Although small in number, the SME employers interviewed indicated a number of points which could be explored in future research or trials:

- Employers were receptive to conversations about supporting flexibility and approaches that would support their employees progression – that would fit business needs;
- It was important for any employer intervention to be pitched according to their needs and priorities (as opposed to being pitched according to social or philanthropic needs).
- Employers valued approaches where they felt comfortable that the organisation approaching them had good experience of supporting people to move into and progress in-work.
- As the examples of candidates placed into flexible roles showed, there is potential for employers to be receptive to offering flexible positions if they are suggested to the employer.
- Employers valued dialogue and communication with Timewise staff during and after candidate placement. Employers responded well to Timewise's concerted efforts to gain detailed feedback after client interviews, even when they did not result in a job outcome. It made Timewise stand out from other recruitment organisations as they showed their willingness to help the candidate in question to progress and to ensure that business needs were prioritised.
- The research with employers suggested that ensuring candidates were prepared for interviews was very important for ongoing relationships. Employers felt that Timewise candidates were generally well prepared for application processes and that this gave them confidence in using Timewise again.

5. CROSS CUTTING THEMES REGARDING SUPPORTING IN-WORK PROGRESSION

This chapter sets out key cross-cutting themes from the trial and considers the implications for the future development of support for low income claimants to progress in work.

5.1 KEY LESSONS FROM THE TRIAL THAT HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE SERVICE DESIGN

This trial highlights a number of themes that may be important for the development of in-work progression support, and sets out lessons on how these could be addressed. Given the scale and focus of the trial – and the fact that participants were not Universal Credit claimants – the findings should be treated with some caution. Broadly, the evaluation suggests that there are four key areas that have implications for future services.

5.1.1 Identification, engagement and assessment

Timewise needed to use specific engagement and recruitment strategies in order to enrol sufficient clients onto the pilot. While the context for Universal Credit support will be different – with identification and engagement of working claimants likely to be primarily through Jobcentre Plus systems – there are nonetheless a number of learning points for how engagement and take-up of support can be maximised by Work Coaches.

Engaging clients at the right time and the right place

Timewise had challenges with using outreach based models to engage working clients. Potential participants were time poor and ‘task-focused’ in a way that out-of-work clients were not found to be in other programmes. Clients also often preferred being contacted outside working hours, in evenings and at weekends. In addition, engagement was harder where participants were not prepared or briefed to consider issues around earnings progression. Timewise found that using a targeted letter was more effective as it allowed clients time to absorb information about the offer and contact Timewise advisers at a time convenient for them.

So a key lesson was that engagement strategies for working clients should provide potential participants advance warning to consider any support offer and to arrange any support discussion at a time convenient for the potential client.

Communicating the ‘added value’ of the support offer

Clients generally responded well to the offer of support through a letter as it included a lot of positive messaging. As shown in the Appendix, the letter communicated that

it was possible to access help to increase earnings, the key approaches to do this and a clear offer. Clients reported that they felt encouraged by the tone of the letter and the personalised nature of the offer.

As such, based on the learning from Timewise's delivery model, the Department may usefully consider:

- Communicating any offer of support in positive terms, with clear, tangible outcomes explained as part of the offer;
- Use of a letter, or a phone call with a follow-up letter, to allow sufficient time for claimants to consider the offer and how they might usefully engage with it;
- Providing flexibility in the time of first appointments or needs assessment.

Customer needs assessment

Overall the evaluation research found that clients engaged had a wide variety of needs and barriers to progressing and that in some cases, clients had high level or additional needs. Clients with different profiles of need required different levels of support and/or length of time to achieve progression.

The research found several dimensions of need, including individual motivation and confidence barriers; barriers of skills, experience and qualifications; and indicators of higher or additional needs such English as a Second Language or literacy and numeracy difficulties. Moreover, while generally work-focused, clients could vary significantly in terms of their motivation to commit to taking actions to progress their incomes (particularly where they needed to find alternative employment in order to progress).

Overall, Timewise considered that those needing to significantly upskill or develop language skills would need to achieve this in advance of accessing the main support offered through their model – and therefore may need to receive support in phases over upwards of six months to a year.

Additionally, some clients did not feel that they were able to commit the time and effort required to change jobs at the point when they were engaged – for example due to the age of their children, or specific childcare or health needs at that point in time. Therefore early segmentation or needs assessment of clients could have been a useful way to group clients into levels of 'readiness to progress', so as to time different aspects of the support appropriately.

The Department might usefully therefore consider how early triage or needs assessment could be used to help to target support based on the readiness of clients to engage, and to help to line up additional support needs where those are required. This triage or needs assessment could usefully focus on the parameters identified in

this research – around motivation and confidence; skills and qualifications; and additional needs such as language, literacy and caring..

5.1.2 The in-work support offer

Providing support that was tailored to the individual's circumstances and needs was associated with better client engagement and progression outcomes. There were particular facets of the support which were found to drive these:

- **Designing support around the needs of the working parent.** Clients responded well to support that recognised their need to balance work and caring responsibilities and that helped them to address this balance.
- **Individual action planning.** Underlying the effectiveness of the model was the use of detailed action planning, one-to-one support and – where clients were ready – interview practice and tailored job brokerage.
- **Advanced careers advice and guidance.** Clients valued support with mapping career pathways and identifying ways to access better paid sectors using their present skills and aptitudes.
- **Flexibility in the mode of support.** The support model needed to adapt to the specific working and caring needs of clients, offering support that could fit around working hours and through a variety of different modes including online, telephone and out-of-office support
- **Accurate advice and guidance on implications of any income changes.** Working clients were often risk-adverse to changing their situation. As such, a key dimension of support was clear and accurate advice on the implications of any change in circumstances/earnings for their benefit and housing payments. In addition, advisers needed to be able to understand clients and allay any fears about moving jobs.

In addition, as noted, the model of support provided could not easily address ESOL or significant language, literacy or writing needs. Looking ahead, signposting clients to available support and adjusting their individual action plans to allow time to access this could usefully be considered in future in-work support models.

Drawing this together, the Department could usefully consider:

- How it ensures that Work Coaches have access to learning and resources on career sectors and progression pathways – for example through an internal knowledge base or by making links through Jobcentre Plus partnership managers or using partnership agreements to access available careers guidance and support.

- How it ensures that services can be offered through mixed channels and out-of-hours – including at evenings and weekends
- How Work Coaches engaging with working claimants can provide clear and accurate information regarding the income increases that claimants will achieve for taking on more and better work,
- Developing partnerships through the Universal Credit Universal Support gateway to provide claimants access to relevant ESOL or literacy support services
- How progression support is sequenced so as to allow claimants sufficient time to take-up support to address ESOL and literacy barriers

5.1.3 The employer engagement approach

Timewise trialled a number of employer engagement strategies. The research found evidence that where clients working in a part-time role moved to full time hours, they were not always able to sustain full time work and could therefore find themselves at risk of leaving work.

Timewise found that when working at small scale, individual employer brokerage or support to change jobs was the most effective way of achieving progression, rather than negotiating progression within a current role. Working at the local level, Timewise's own recruitment agency approach provided a variety of different options for clients seeking flexible progression opportunities.

Additionally, Timewise worked with local employers to encourage them to consider offering particular roles on a flexible or part-time basis, and worked with individual clients in contract negotiations where they wanted to work flexibly. At the scale of operation of this pilot, this was done on a case-by-case basis.

Overall then, the Department could usefully consider:

- How support is delivered to clients and employers, at the local level, to negotiate more flexible working arrangements or to redesign specific job roles. There is potentially an overlap between the role of individual work coaches and employer engagement teams, as well as the scope for this work to be contracted to specialist agencies like Timewise.
- The scope for testing a more explicitly 'employer facing' model, that seeks to engage local employers in low-paying sectors to offer more flexible employment and improved progression pathways. This would likely require a wider range of partners and again the engagement of specialist recruitment agencies.
- The role of the National Employer Partnership teams to work with larger employers to open up vacancies to part-time or flexible roles.

APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND EARNINGS CONDITIONALITY

A1 UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit is a new benefit system designed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It seeks to merge the six means tested benefits for working age households. These include, out-of-work benefits (Jobseekers Allowance; Employment and Support Allowance), income support benefits (Income Support; Housing Benefit) along with in-work benefits (Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit). Under the new system, clients make a single claim for Universal Credit instead of applying for and receiving a number of different benefits. Eligibility for Universal Credit depends on household income and is paid monthly via bank transfer.

All Universal Credit claimants are required to accept a Claimant Commitment as a condition of entitlement. Claimants subject to work-related requirements will be required to accept a personalised Claimant Commitment that sets out the actions that they will take to prepare or look for work, or progress in work to the point where they are no longer in need of Universal Credit.

A1.1 Additional responsibilities for working claimants under Universal Credit

At the time of research, working individuals who were on low incomes could claim income support or tax credits to supplement their income. Claimants with children who are in paid employment for more than 16 hours per week could claim tax credits and were not subject to any additional requirements to boost their incomes.

UC is an in work and out of work payment which introduces a number of additional responsibilities for claimants designed to reduce their reliance on income supplements whilst working. Every claimant is allocated to a regime and conditionality group based on individual and household information, characteristics and earnings.

A Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET) has been introduced to determine the requirements placed on individuals who are in work and earning or are in a household with earnings.

The CET is calculated on an individual basis, by multiplying the National Minimum Wage (NMW) by the hours a claimant is expected to spend on work related activity each week – this is tailored to reflect a claimant's circumstances, any health conditions that affect their capability and capacity, and caring responsibilities

The CET for a household UC claim is then the combination of the individual expected CETs for each of the adults in the household claim.

The number of hours a claimant is expected to undertake work-related activities for the purpose of the CET is flexible and will be based on individual circumstances (such as health, caring responsibilities etc), and any safeguarding caps that apply. As a result, a claimant could be required to spend less than the maximum 35 hours that is expected only of those where none of the circumstances apply.

It is a legislative requirement that claimants in each conditionality regime should accept an appropriate, individual Claimant Commitment.

A1.2 Universal Credit earnings conditionality and support policy for parents

Under Universal Credit parents will have different levels of earnings conditionality based on the age of their children:

- Those with children under 1 will have no requirements.
- Those with children aged 1 will be required to attend periodic interviews to discuss plans to return to work.
- Those with children aged 2 will be required to attend interviews to discuss and agree the work preparation activities they will undertake to prepare for work.
- When their youngest child is aged 3, they will be required to look for and be available for work that fits with their childcare responsibilities and childcare available.
- Safeguards continue to apply where the youngest child in the claim is 3 or 4. Their work-related expectations will be limited to 16 hours per week because they are caring for a pre-school age child.
- Those with school aged children will have full conditionality (meaning that they must look for full time/better paid employment) although lead carers with children between five and 12 will only be expected to look for work that is compatible with school hours.

Couples with young children must nominate a lead carer who will be expected to look for work that is compatible with their caring responsibilities. The other partner would be allocated to a regime and conditionality group based on their individual characteristics and subject to the work related requirements of that regime.

During the delivery of the earnings progression trial – Universal Credit was in a ‘test and learn’ phase, whereby a number of local UC pathfinders rolled out Universal Credit with a limited number of claimant cohorts. As such, the Department’s policy on earnings conditionality was subject to review and revision.

At the time of writing, the earnings conditionality and support policy for claimants with children was intended to be led by JCP Work Coaches to discuss and agree with parents how they could progress their hours and/or earnings. In this way, any conditionality was intended as 'light touch' and support measures would be updated in line with learning from UC roll out and learning.

APPENDIX B – OVERVIEW OF THE TIMEWISE FOUNDATION GROUP

The Timewise Foundation (TWF) operates a social enterprise recruitment model that addresses both supply and demand side barriers for low income parents seeking quality part time work. It achieves this through the following activities:

- Women Like Us: provides career coaching and employability provision for parents and carers in low-income households through a grant funded bursary programme. Timewise work with approximately 1000 women a year.
- Timewise Jobs: we operate a jobsite specialising in quality part time and flexible vacancies. Core components of this demand-led approach include employer engagement activities to drive behavioural change by championing practical examples of senior-level part-time working, services on job design and access to a visible candidate pool seeking flexible work. Timewise have over 60,000 job seekers registered with us and 3,000 employer clients.

The Timewise Group



The Timewise Foundation promotes the social and business benefits of flexible working through research, public affairs and initiatives like the Power Part Time List.
0207 633 4559



Events, consultancy and training to help employers bring flexible working to life. We help Partners explore ways to aid career progression and maintain a diverse pipeline of talent.
0207 633 4420



The only UK jobsite exclusively for roles that are part time or open to flexibility. We provide a platform for businesses to position themselves as inclusive employers, reaching a diverse talent pool of candidates.
0330 355 3555



Our recruitment agency will find your business the right candidate from the best talent available – whether you need someone full time, part time or have flexibility to offer.
0207 633 4444

Timewise have extensive experience in supporting working parents to progress into higher quality part-time roles.

APPENDIX C: ENGAGEMENT LETTER



I CAN OFFER YOU FREE SUPPORT TO GET A BETTER PAID JOB

Are you working in a low-paid part time job and feel that with your skills you can get a better one?

I work with Women like Us and we give parents free support to find a better part time job

- We will go to local employers on your behalf
- Improve your CV to help you get interviews
- Improve your interview skills to help you get the job

To qualify for free support:

- You need to be a parent (mum or dad)
- Working between 16-34 hours per week
- Earning £220 per week or less or £11,500 per year for a lone parent; £23,000 for a coupled household
- Live in: Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Southwark or Sutton

Apply today by **calling or texting me, Antoinette, on 07847 823 909** and I will call you straight back.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards,

Antoinette Peters-Adenle

APPENDIX D – METHODOLOGY

The independent evaluation of Timewise Foundation's Universal Credit earnings progression trial was based on the following methodology.

D1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

During the course of the evaluation, the evaluation team conducted four waves of qualitative research:

D1.1 Scoping interviews

The evaluation team undertook a half day scoping meeting with senior members of Timewise and some initial scoping interviews with advisers and data team members, between January and March 2014.

The evaluation team also undertook 7 short scoping interviews with members of the Department for Work and Pensions staff including those working for Group and local JCP District partnership management, local Jobcentre Plus Employer engagement team members, National Employer Sales Team (NEST) staff. The purpose of these interviews was to capture Departmental approaches to supporting claimant progression and employer-facing work to compare to Timewise Foundation's own approach. This information was used in the first learning event.

D1.2 Staff interviews

Timewise project staff (two support advisers, the employer engagement adviser, project manager, and two senior staff) participated in depth interviews, in November 2014 and in May/June 2015. The interviews captured detailed information about the Timewise approach to in-work progression, the support model, the barriers and support needs of their clients and captured views of the outcomes and progressions achieved and overall learning from delivery of the trial.

D1.3 Client interviews

Clients receiving support on the pilot were interviewed in two cross sectional waves (achieving twenty interviews) and a further five interviews were conducted longitudinally. The first wave was conducted in December 2014 and the second wave were conducted in May 2015. The depth interviews were conducted by telephone to minimise the potential burden on client's time and promote engagement of working clients. Interviews were undertaken in evenings and weekends if needed. Interviews were structured around a theory of change approach, capturing detailed experiences of client's known barriers to progression, experiences of the support and immediate outcomes achieved, further changes as a result of the immediate outcomes and a final review of any remaining barriers to progression or unmet support needs.

Longitudinal depth interviews were conducted to capture clients' experiences of progression over a six month time period and captured experiences of changes to their working hours and income, any positive and/or negative changes associated with their change in circumstances. The interviews also captured the experiences of clients who had achieved an outcome and worked independently to find further progression opportunities.

D1.4 Employer interviews

Fifteen employers who had an experience of Timewise Foundation's employer brokerage function were interviewed in March 2015. The interviews captured experiences of client placement within their organisation and captured the employer view of what kinds of support they would need to better support parents to combine work and care and to promote progression opportunities for this group.

D2 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND FOLLOW UP TELEPHONE SURVEY

The evaluation team used Timewise Foundation's management information to report on overall trial performance and cross reference with the qualitative findings on which groups were more or less likely to progress their incomes. The team also conducted a telephone survey in October and November 2015 with 70 of the 102 client participants in order to capture their outcomes at least six months post support. The survey captured detailed information about any further progressions achieved, further training opportunities accessed. The survey captured residual reported barriers and views of how best they could be supported with these.

From this combined research, Learning and Work Institute developed a draft theory of change which shows the types of outcomes that trial participants achieved from the different types of support and was updated with reference to the broader structured survey.

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative analysis, Learning and Work Institute and Timewise led four learning events with DWP/JCP staff:

- *Engaging with employers: how to effect behavioural change* in June 2014
- *Supporting the Working Client* in December 2014
- *Employer Experiences and interventions* in April 2015
- *Final Roundtable* June 2016

The learning events considered aspects of the Timewise earnings progression model and – through interactive sessions with event attendees – sought to compare these to the current operation and capacity of existing staff in JCP/DWP. Where relevant,

findings from these events and analysis from two learning events have been included in this report.

A final event was held in June 2016 which considered all learning across all strands of the research and delivery implications for the Department.