From the Chair

9 July 2019

Alok Sharma MP
Minister for Employment
Department for Work and Pensions


Youth Obligation Support Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 20 June 2019 on Youth Obligation Support Programme data. The Committee was pleased to see that the first collection of the census data was published on 1 July.

The data published by the Department does not include breakdowns by demographic (e.g. age, gender, self-declared disability, ethnicity) nor by region or Jobcentre. In her letter dated 23 January 2019, the Secretary of State indicated that such analysis would be possible following the census collection.

1. Please can you confirm if the Department will publish analysis of YOSP participation and outcomes by demographic group, and by region and Jobcentre?
   a. If not, why not?

Overall, 38.6% of YOSP participants secured ‘other’ outcomes — other than employment or referral to provision.

2. Does the Department hold any further breakdown of ‘other’ outcomes?
   a. If not, what are these ‘other’ outcomes likely to include?

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1 [Letter from the Secretary of State to the Chair on Youth Obligation Support Programme data, 23 January 2019](#)
3. If the Department does hold any disaggregated data on demographics, geography, or outcomes but which was not able to be quality-assured in order to be published as official statistics, might you nevertheless please consider sharing it with the Committee on an indicative basis?

In oral evidence to the Committee, the Learning and Work Institute suggested that the Department should be able to track longer term outcomes from the YOSP by matching claimants' HMRC data.²

4. Will the Department collect, analyse, and publish data on the medium- and long-term outcomes of YOSP participants?

The Secretary of State indicated in her letter of 23 January that the Department intends to evaluate the YOSP. I enclose written evidence submitted jointly by the Learning and Work Institute, the Employment Related Services Association, and Impetus PEF on evaluating the YOSP. This outlines that any programme should be evaluated according to its inputs, implementation, outputs, and outcomes, and that this "would best be done by commissioning an external evaluation, as has been done for most previous major programmes. This can help demonstrate the independence of the evaluation, bring in specialisms the DWP may not have and address any capacity constraints the DWP may experience".³

5. Please could you indicate when you intend to evaluate the YOSP, and if you will commission an external evaluation?

Of participants leaving the YOSP as a result of securing work, 56.3% secured work within 2 months of being on the programme. Whilst this is, of course, extremely welcome, such figures suggest that some participants may well have secured work even if they had not taken part in the programme. The former Comptroller and Auditor-General has reflected that evaluation of employment programmes should take place against a robust counterfactual.⁴

6. What work has the Department completed on its assumptions of how many participants would have found work regardless ("deadweight assumption") for the YOSP, or its employment programmes in general?

7. Please could you indicate the cost of the YOSP, in total and per participant?

² Oral evidence taken before the Work and Pensions Select Committee on Wednesday 30 January 2019 (HC 1885), Q66
³ UCY0004
⁴ Letter from the National Audit Office to the Chair on evaluating benefit sanctions and in-work conditionality, 26 February 2019
The Secretary of State indicated in her letter of 23 January 2019 that changes to the Universal Credit system build will allow automated collection of the YOSP census data.

8. When are these changes to the UC build scheduled to take place?

Lastly, the Committee welcomes the Department’s collecting and publishing data on such an important programme. It is, of course, regrettable that there is no data on the YOSP prior to January 2019.

9. Has the Department learned any lessons from this process?

With best wishes, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair