

January 2005



Evaluation of the Childcare Taster Pilot
and Extended Schools
Childcare Pilot Programmes:
Qualitative Research into Initial Implementation

SureStart



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Evaluation of the Childcare Taster Pilot and Extended Schools Childcare Pilot Programmes:

Qualitative Research into Initial Implementation

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

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Acknowledgements

This research was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills. In particular, the authors would like to thank Ganka Mueller, Rebecca Goldman and Prity Sharma of the Department for Education and Skills for their support and guidance in this research. Debra Dance of Sure Start has also provided invaluable assistance and co-operation. We would like to give special thanks to all of the respondents for the generosity with which they gave their time and expertise during the course of this research.

Glossary of Abbreviations

BA	Benefits Agency
CIS	Children's Information Service
CPM	Childcare Partnership Manager
CTP	Childcare Taster Pilot
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EZ	Employment Zones
ESCP	Extended Schools Childcare Pilot
IS	Income Support. Income Support is a noncontributory, income-assessed benefit available to people who are not required to work.
Jobcentre Plus	References to Jobcentre Plus should be taken also to refer to the Employment Service, which operated until 31 March 2002. Initially, there were 56 Jobcentre Plus pathfinder offices offering fully integrated work and benefit services, but a further 225 fully integrated Jobcentre Plus offices were planned to open between October 2002 and April 2003. Full integration of all ES and BA local offices will take several years, during which time services will continue to be provided in social security offices and Jobcentres as was the case during this research.
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LA	Local Authority
NDLP	New Deal for Lone Parents
NDP	New Deal for Partners
WFI	Work Focused Interviews

Executive Summary

1 Background and Aims

This report presents the findings of the initial stage of the evaluation of the Extended Schools Childcare and Childcare Taster pilots. The pilots will be running from 1 April 2004 until 31 March 2006 in three local authorities. Additional pilots will run from October 2004 in other areas in England and in Scotland and Wales.

The pilots will explore the assertion that a lack of affordable, accessible childcare is a significant barrier to work for lone parents on Income Support. This will be done by providing enough affordable childcare for lone parents, to enable them to enter employment. Therefore, this will enable examination of whether the childcare barrier is real or perceived and whether, if it is removed, other barriers then come to the fore as being the main obstacles stopping lone parents working. Lone parents are the principal target group for the pilots, but partners of benefit recipients who have childcare responsibilities are also a key client group.

The initial stage aimed to explore the arrangements which had been put in place so far in the areas in which the pilots had begun. In addition, the research examined a range of stakeholders' views about the goals and content of the pilots and drew out the experience and ideas which could be helpful for both the existing and new pilots.

The research was undertaken in June and July 2004, approximately three months after the pilots started. Thirty-six qualitative interviews were carried out with stakeholders across the areas. The research included staff from the local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, Children's Information Service, schools and childcare providers.

2 Findings

There were four main areas covered by this research: the level of awareness of the aims of the pilots, progress made so far in each area, issues affecting the pilots and lessons which could be drawn for the future.

There appeared to be a good understanding of the aims of the pilots in all the areas. However, each pilot had interpreted this aim in a different way and there was a desire from stakeholders in each area for reassurance that they were correctly enacting the policy initiative.

There were eight main areas in which the pilots' progress was examined: establishing relationships; recruiting and training staff; mapping need and provision of childcare; establishing processes for lone parents within the pilots; monitoring systems; marketing; engaging schools and childcare providers; and delivering the services involved in the pilots. It should be remembered that this report reflects the situation in June and July 2004, and since that time more development is likely to have been made. Good progress had been made in establishing relationships, recruiting staff and agreeing the processes for the progression of parents through the pilots. Likewise, the marketing of the pilots and engaging schools and childcare providers had begun. The establishment of monitoring systems seemed to be the area in which most uncertainty remained.

The delivery of services was in a very early stage in all areas three months after pilot initiation. However, it was expected that the delivery of services would move faster from

September 2004 as all staff were expected to be in place and the start of the academic year would bring more interest from parents.

There were four main issues which were raised as affecting progress in the pilots. The first was timescales. It was felt that the original plan for the pilot development had not been realistic, because of the length of time needed to recruit and train staff and to establish relationships with schools and other stakeholders. Secondly, there was a desire for more discussion with DfES/DWP and more support from them. There was also a consensus that there needed to be greater clarity as to the goals of the pilots, definition of success and in relation to the issue of sharing data. Finally, the impact of the pilots on staff workloads was often raised, particularly in relation to Jobcentre Plus staff.

The main suggestions which stakeholders made for the improvement of their own pilots and for the new pilots centred on understanding the nature of the tasks involved, working with partner organisations and planning and using resources effectively.

There have been some weaknesses in the management of the pilots. Implementation and administrative problems prevented efficient and effective performance by the pilots and introduced considerable inconsistencies regarding monitoring. While stakeholders needed a degree of flexibility in order to establish useful local implementations of the pilots, they would benefit from clear guidelines and effective management structures provided by the Departments administering the pilots. In the absence of such structures, pilots are less likely to achieve their targets.

1 Introduction

The Sure Start Unit¹, an interdepartmental unit of the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions, has developed two closely related pilot programmes to help lone parents to move into work:

- the Childcare Taster Pilot (CTP); and
- the Extended Schools Childcare Pilot (ESCP).

These pilots were developed to address particular issues related to childcare for lone parents and workless couples.

These pilots were developed to address particular issues related to childcare for lone parents and workless couples. The pilots will explore the assertion that a lack of affordable, accessible childcare is a significant barrier to work for lone parents on Income Support (IS). This will be done by providing enough affordable childcare for lone parents, to enable them to enter employment. Therefore, this will enable examination of whether the childcare barrier is real or perceived and whether, if it is removed, other barriers then come to the fore as being the main obstacles stopping lone parents working. Lone parents are the principal target group for the pilots, but partners of benefit recipients who have childcare responsibilities are also a key client group.

Past research has found that non working lone parents cite a lack of affordable, accessible childcare as a significant barrier to work². Many express preferences for informal care which suggests that insufficient trust in formal providers may also be at work. It is hoped that these two pilots will show whether more lone parents on IS will take up employment opportunities if suitable formal childcare is available to them.

The first pilots will be running from 1 April 2004 until 31 March 2006 in Bradford, Haringey and Lewisham local authorities. There are approximately 25,000 lone parents with 45,000 children who are in receipt of IS living in these three local authorities. The pilots were extended to further local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland in October 2004³. They will be managed by the local authorities strategically and operationally in ways which best reflect local needs and circumstances, working in close co-operation with Jobcentre Plus, schools and other stakeholders. This will inevitably mean that there will be considerable variation between locations.

Additionally, since April 2004, the lone parent advisory services in Haringey have been contracted out to three 'Employment Zone Providers' (companies offering advice and training). See Appendix Three for more information about Employment Zones. This means that clients are randomly assigned between providers in Haringey, and that the processes for clients differ from those in standard Jobcentre Plus offices.

¹ More information about the Sure Start Programme can be found in Appendix 3.

² Ford (1996), Marsh et al.(1993), Marsh et al (2004).

³ These are Greenwich, Leicester, Leicestershire, Sandwell, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Rochdale for CTP and Greenwich, Leicester, Leicestershire and Sandwell for ESCP.

1.1 Background

In Great Britain there are almost 1 million lone parents who are on out-of-work benefits, with most claiming Income Support. Almost 71% of partnered mothers are in employment compared with about 54% of lone mothers. *Work Works*, the report of the National Employment Panel's Steering Group on Lone Parents published in April 2003 reported that a lack of affordable, accessible childcare was the single most important barrier to work for lone parents on IS. In addition, it highlighted shortages in many local childcare markets in deprived wards, as well as a reluctance of lone parents to use childcare and make the transition from informal to formal care. It was suggested that the use of formal childcare should be encouraged. Its recommendations form the basis of a range of measures the Government is now taking to help lone parents back to work. 40% of out of work lone parents live in the six metropolitan areas covering London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds/Bradford and Glasgow.

Work plays an important part in raising aspirations and confidence and can help to create pathways out of poverty for children and their families and a strong local economy. The Government's targets relating to these areas are:

- to halve child poverty by 2010;
- to raise the proportion of lone parents in work to 70% by 2010;
- over the three years from Spring 2003 to increase significantly the employment rate of lone parents and reduce the gap between the overall employment rate and the lone parent employment rate;
- to reduce by 12% the number of young children living in workless households by 2006;
- to close the childcare gap in disadvantaged areas (that is, to raise the amount of childcare in disadvantaged areas to the level in the rest of the country).

1.1.1 Lone parents, work and childcare

Surveys have shown that between a quarter and a third of lone parents on IS say they are deterred from entering work by the potential cost of childcare and typically another one in ten say they doubt any of sufficient quality and convenience could be found locally⁴. The remainder tend to divide between those who say they believe they are better placed at home with their children, for various reasons, and those whose children are in poor health or who are themselves sick or disabled. Lone parents also show greater resistance to formal childcare provision than other parents, preferring informal childcare whenever it is practical. This is especially true of some ethnic minority families who doubt that their dietary needs, for example, would be catered for properly.

Yet, early research and more recent subsequent research has shown that childcare concerns were rarely their only concerns⁵. They were one among many other barriers to work that often had more to do with their fears about the quality of their working lives, and the balance of rewards for themselves and for their children, rather than with any real perception of what childcare might be available or what it might cost. In many cases, in-depth interviews showed that lone parents maintained their doubts about childcare where they faced poor or weak employment prospects. But some brushed them aside when a job only marginally better than their expectations was described to them.

⁴ The most recent picture is provided by the Families and Children Study, see for example Kasparova et al. (2002).

⁵ Ford, R. (1996), Kasparova et al. (2002).

Lack of childcare is a barrier to work. But it is potentially the last barrier of a row of hurdles that lone parents have to cross on their way from Income Support to full time work. Often they have to recover from a painful break-up, recover their self confidence, adjust to new accommodation, become more confident that their children can accept what amounts to a further reduction in time spent with their parents, modernise their skills or qualifications, improve their health, actually find a job whose hours and location suits them and their children, and then address themselves to the issue of childcare. Some research seems to suggest that many lone parents voice concerns about the cost and availability of childcare as a short-hand emphasis over deeper concerns about their capacity to work and combine this with sole responsibility for their children⁶.

1.1.3 Workless households

Partners of benefit recipients in workless households also play a role in contributing to the number of children in workless households, and increasing employment for this group contributes to government goals set out in objective 1: Ensure the best start for all children and end child poverty by 2020⁷.

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in the UK in Spring 2003 there were 10.3 million couples where one or both partners was in work and 700,000 couples where neither partner works (Arrowsmith, 2004). Forty three per cent of workless couples had dependent children and for couples with dependent children, the woman is much more likely to never have worked than for couples without children (*ibid*). Partners' transitions from worklessness to work are not independent – the likelihood of one partner finding work increases when the other partner finds work (*ibid*). In the 2001 Families and Children Study (FACS), amongst workless couples with dependent children, 49 per cent of partners say that they have caring responsibilities for children. This compares to 61 per cent of workless lone parents who say that they have caring responsibilities for children (Marsh et al. 2001). As such, the issue of childcare is important to this group, but the scale is smaller than for lone parents.

1.2 Extended Schools Childcare Pilot (ESCP)

The Extended Schools Childcare Pilot (ESCP) is a pilot initiative. It is separate from Extended Schools⁸, which is a broader DfES initiative, for which pathfinders have been running since 2002-3. The aim of Extended Schools is to encourage schools to offer a whole range of extended services, of which childcare may be one. 'Extended schools' are schools which provide services for their pupils and the local community beyond the school day. ESCP is a pilot to improve the availability and accessibility of childcare for local parents, to enable them to enter employment. The aim is for any new childcare provision to be based on networks centred on schools, but not necessarily be located in schools.

ESCP has the chief aim of providing enough affordable childcare for lone parents, most of whom will be on IS and have school age children, to enable them to enter employment. This will enable examination of issues about the childcare availability barrier and whether, if it is removed, other barriers then come to the fore as being the main obstacles preventing lone parents working.

It is expected that this pilot will help parents of school-age children (which in this context means children aged 5 to 14, or 16 for children with special needs), but could also provide childcare for younger or older children if that would help lone parents to go to work.

⁶ Finlayson et al. (2000).

⁷ For more information on these government objectives and the DWP see http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2004/autumnreport/aims/summ_perf.asp.

⁸ For more information on Extended Schools, see <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport/impact/extendedschools/>

The pilot aims to improve the capacity of the local Children's Information Service (CIS) to manage childcare vacancies, so that places are filled and existing providers can become more viable and sustainable. It is expected that additional childcare will need to be created to meet demand.

It is envisaged that any new childcare provision will be based on networks centred on secondary schools, which will work together with their feeder primaries or other group. The schools in this pilot could either provide the childcare themselves or work with other local providers, such as out of school clubs, childminders, nurseries and playgroups. New childcare should be responsive to local needs, but in most cases should be available throughout the year, and cover full daytime working hours (e.g. 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday). The childcare will be accessible for all local families in the relevant areas, not just lone parents. Lone parents are the chief aim of the policy provision, but they should not be singled out and instead all parents are eligible for ESCP. Childcare for those working shifts, at night or at weekends can be provided where there is demand and capacity. Take-up of places is voluntary. The working assumption in the design was that the pilot would potentially create 1,200 new childcare places in the three early pilot areas but with the proviso that new places were only created where needed.

1.3 Childcare Taster Pilot (CTP)

These provide an opportunity for parents to talk over childcare issues in depth (termed Childcare Chats), visit childcare providers and, crucially, have a free experience of formal childcare (Childcare Taster). Pilots have been running in Bradford, Lewisham and Haringey local authorities from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2006. Additional pilots have been running since October 2004 (see Appendix 2 for details).

The overall aim of this pilot is to help parents to build trust and confidence in using formal childcare.

By providing parents with this service the aim is to achieve the following objectives:

- raise the parents' awareness of the quality of formal childcare;
- address their concerns regarding using formal childcare by providing information and giving a short experience of what childcare can be like;
- help them with making choices about suitable childcare through clarifying the types available in the area and issues to be considered;
- help them to feel more comfortable with the thought of leaving their child(ren) with a childcare provider through the above and, where desired, to provide an opportunity for them to leave the child(ren) in the care of the provider for a short time.

Childcare Chats are open to all parents in the relevant areas who are eligible for New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) (which is open to all lone parents out of work or working less than 16 hours a week) or New Deal for Partners (NDP) (which is available to all partners of benefit recipients), but Childcare Tasters are subject to parents being on NDLP or NDP. Take-up of places is voluntary.

1.4 Links Between CTP/ESCP and other initiatives

The pilots have closest links to NDLP and NDP. Those who wish to experience a free session of childcare via the Childcare Tasters must be participants on NDLP or NDP but in depth childcare discussions or Chats will be available to all parents whether or not they are job-

ready. The Extended Schools Childcare Pilot is aimed at helping lone parents who are ready to move into employment. Lone parents can take part in either scheme or in both, but there is no obligation for them to participate.

The design of the pilots had the aim that locally in each of the pilot areas the pilots should link with other relevant initiatives aiming:

- to create employment opportunities and a strong local economy (e.g. regeneration projects);
- to help lone parents to prepare for, go to work and stay in work;
- to develop childcare and other services for parents (such as extended schools and children's centres).

1.5 Other lone parent pilot initiatives

There are essentially five related types of additional provision being tested over the next two years or so, including the ESCP and CTP. The other initiatives are:

- In Work Credit pilot (IWC);
- Work Search Premium pilot (WSP);
- Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFI).

These were announced at different times, and have various start dates. The five different services being piloted can be expected to have significant interactions. Appendix 2 details the eligibility and timing of these 5 pilots.

1.5.1 In Work Credit

Lone parents on IS, who have been on IS for 12 months or more, are participants in NDLP and who move into work, will be eligible in the IWC pilots for an additional payment of £40 per week, for the first year. This payment does not get included in tax or other benefit calculations.

It has been decided to operate both WSP and IWC in most English Jobcentre Plus districts in which there is an ESCP. Whereas the ESC pilots are on the basis of local authority areas, the IWC (and WSP) pilots operate throughout the relevant Jobcentre Plus district. In some cases this may be identical, but in others the Jobcentre Plus district will be larger. In addition, IWC is available alone in four Jobcentre Plus districts: Central London; Leeds; North London; and Staffordshire. It is also available in a further eight districts in conjunction with the WSP (see below). In addition, IWC will be rolled out to all parents in London from Spring 2005.

1.5.2 Work Search Premium (WSP)

Lone parents who have been on IS for 12 months or more, and who are willing to engage voluntarily in job search activity, are eligible to claim a WSP of £20 per week for a maximum of 6 months. The WSP will be payable to lone parents who are participants on NDLP and who agree an action plan with their Personal Adviser (PA). The payments are not tied into specific job search activities but rather their receipt of the WSP will be at the discretion of their PA with whom they will discuss job search on a fortnightly basis. This payment does not get included in tax or other benefit calculations.

WSP operates in eight areas in tandem with the IWC (Bradford; Cardiff and Vale; Dudley and Sandwell; Lancashire West; Leicestershire; London South East; London West; and Edinburgh), and in most additional areas where there is an ESCP – See Table A2 Appendix 2.

1.5.3 Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs)

There is an established pattern of mandatory Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) for lone parents claiming IS. All lone parents claiming IS are now expected to take part in a series of mandatory WFIs as follows:

- For new / repeat claims; initial interview, review at 6 months, further review at 12 months, then annual WFIs;
- For existing IS recipients; initial interview followed by annual WFIs. WFIs were extended to lone parents in receipt of IS via a phased rollout (based on the age of the lone parent's youngest child). The final group (those with a youngest child aged 0-5) have been included from 5 April 2004. However, given the volumes involved, an eighteen month period was allowed for the completion of rollout to these lone parents (i.e. to September 2005).

It was announced in the 2004 Budget that QWFIs would be introduced for all lone parents whose youngest child is aged 14 or over, nationally from October 2005. In all local authority districts in which an ESCP is operating, there will be mandatory WFIs at quarterly intervals, for lone parents whose youngest child is aged 12 or above, and who have been on IS for 12 months or more. These are to enable Jobcentre Plus staff to regularly engage with lone parents in the ESCP areas, ensuring that the opportunities being provided in these areas are drawn to the attention of lone parents and are utilised to the fullest possible extent. QWFIs will begin in October 2004. Because they are linked to the ESC pilots, they will cease at the end of the ESCP.

Partners of benefit claimants in Jobcentre Plus offices were offered WFIs from April 2004, together with access to an enhanced NDP. In areas where the ESCP is taking place, there is an extension to partners of quarterly WFIs for those who have children aged 12 or over to ensure that this initiative is extended to all workless households, but these are voluntary.

1.6 Qualitative Research Design

This project consisted of 36 qualitative interviews with stakeholders across the three areas in which the Childcare Pilots were first introduced: Haringey, Lewisham and Bradford. The fieldwork took place during June and July 2004.

The objectives of this stage of the research were to:

- Explore stakeholders' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the pilots at an early stage;
- Understand the arrangements which have been put in place or are planned for the development of the pilots. This included examining planning, staffing, communication between stakeholders and with lone parents, and relationships between key partners;
- Identify any lessons which could be drawn from the early set up of the pilots in terms of good practice, challenges faced, changes to the actions originally planned and potential problems.

The stakeholders interviewed were as follows:

- local authority staff
The local authority staff included the project managers for the pilots; and staff who were to establish links with schools and childcare providers, develop new childcare provision where necessary, and conduct outreach work to encourage parents to take up the pilot services;
- Jobcentre Plus staff

The key member of staff in Jobcentre Plus was the Childcare Partnership Manager⁹, who acted as a bridge between the local authority and Jobcentre Plus. NDLP and NDP advisors and managers were also involved in the pilots as they were to introduce lone parents to the pilots and refer them to the relevant services;

- Children's Information Service¹⁰ (CIS)
This is part of the local authority and provides childcare advice to parents as well as working with childcare providers. Staff within the CIS were to manage vacancies and match them to lone parents' needs, and were a key source of information about need and provision of childcare in the area;
- Schools and childcare providers
The pilots were to include both secondary and primary schools and a range of childcare providers, from nurseries to childminders.

A full breakdown of the numbers and types of respondents interviewed in each area can be found in Appendix 1.

This report represents research evaluating the progress in the initial stage of the pilots, in the early roll-out stage, and effectively covers the first three months since the start of the pilots. More evaluation research is being commissioned by DfES and DWP to cover the main stage of the pilots, including the additional areas starting in October 2004. The evaluation will include further qualitative research with stakeholders, and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research with lone parents, and an econometric evaluation of the impacts of the pilots on movement into work. This research will be reported in a series of interim and final findings throughout the course of the pilots. Due to significant interactions between them, the impact evaluation will cover all five initiatives referred to in Section 1.5. Final findings on impacts will be available after the end of the pilots.

1.7 Report structure

The report draws together the main themes which emerged from the research and highlights the lessons which can be drawn from it, but does not refer to any individual area in order to preserve anonymity. Concluding remarks follow. Appendices contain details of the qualitative research design, as well as the eligibility and timing for lone parent pilot initiatives.

⁹ Childcare Partnership Managers (CPMs) were introduced in April 2003 to identify and help Jobcentre Plus customers to overcome childcare issues; to improve access to, and co-ordination of childcare information for out of work parents; and keep Jobcentre Plus front line staff up to date on childcare issues and initiatives. CPMs also contribute to developing the childcare workforce and childcare capacity through their work with local authorities and providers. In order to achieve this, CPMs work alongside Jobcentre Plus colleagues, local authorities, Childcare Partnerships (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships in England, Childcare Partnerships in Scotland, Children and Young People's Partnerships in Wales), Children's Information Services (CIS) and other local childcare organisations and providers.

¹⁰ For more information about CIS, please see Appendix 3.

2 Initial Implementation of the Pilots

This chapter provides a summary of the situation in the pilot areas at the time of the research (June and July 2004). It then outlines some of the key issues facing the pilots and impacting on their progress. Finally, there is a discussion of the suggestions which the stakeholders made of ways in which their own pilots and the later areas could be improved in the future.

2.1 Summary of situation in the pilot areas

2.1.2 Awareness of the aims of the pilot

Stakeholders in all three areas understood that the core of the pilots was to help lone parents back into work by addressing barriers relating to childcare. However, each area took a slightly different approach to this and seemed to have a different view as to what this meant they should be achieving in practice. The approaches which had been adopted included:

- A strong focus on creating 400 new childcare places and filling them with 400 lone parents who were moving into work;
- Viewing the pilots as part of a wider social agenda. Their approach was based on the idea that lone parents faced a number of barriers and needed an individual and tailored approach to assist them back into work. The pilots were therefore seen alongside other work in the area, as a way of providing this type of service;
- Focusing on managing childcare places more efficiently to match them with lone parents, increasing sustainability of the childcare, raising awareness and encouraging schools without any linked childcare to move in this direction.

Each area was aware that they had developed a slightly different approach to others. There was a desire for reassurance that they were moving in the right direction. This was linked to a perception of a lack of clarity from DfES/DWP as to the objectives of the pilot and, crucially, how success should be defined.

Stakeholders understood that the focus of the pilots was lone parents but they pointed out that, in order to market them effectively and conduct outreach work, it was necessary not to restrict the information they provided to lone parents. They were aware that the pilots were to address barriers for all parents, rather than just lone parents. However they viewed the main focus as being lone parents. They viewed the benefits gained by all parents as worthwhile, helping them into work or into a better job as a result of the information they received as part of the pilot outreach work. It was also consistently argued that childcare was one among several barriers, and was not always the most important. It was viewed as worth tackling, but not in isolation.

2.2.2 Progress so far

The reports of progress in setting up the pilots are based on information gained from interviews conducted in June and July 2004. It should be remembered that more progress is likely to have been made since this time. The key areas which were examined included the following:

- Establishing relationships between main partner organisations;
- Putting staff in place;

-
- Mapping need and provision of childcare;
 - Having clarity about the processes which lone parents would use to enter and progress through the pilots;
 - Setting up monitoring systems;
 - Marketing;
 - Engaging schools and childcare providers;
 - Delivering the pilot services.

2.2.2.1 Relationships

Good relationships had been established between Jobcentre Plus and the local authority (LA) in each area. They tended to be very positive and supportive of one another. There were some frustrations in Jobcentre Plus about the time which local authorities needed to carry out some tasks (such as recruitment of new staff) but this did not seem to be souring the relationship.

2.2.2.2 Staff

In one area, the key staff were in place, especially for the ESCP. Five staff were still to be recruited at the LA, one as a replacement for an existing member of staff and the others to support staff already in place. In another area, all of the staff were in place. There were plans to recruit another member of staff later in the pilot. In the final area, the key staff were in place but two were still to be recruited at the LA to work on the CTP.

It was clear that the time required for recruiting staff had extended the timescales for setting up the pilots and becoming operational.

2.2.2.3 Mapping need and provision

In all three areas, the mapping of where childcare for lone parents might be needed was done for the pilot proposals or very early on in the pilots. Detailed mapping of the current provision of childcare had either been done formally early on, or the local authority reported having good information already and planned to update and expand it as part of the vacancy management and outreach process.

2.2.2.4 Processes for lone parents to enter and progress through the pilots

The processes for lone parents within the ESCP seemed to be very clear within all the areas. In relation to the Childcare Taster Pilot, the process seemed fairly clear in two areas but was less detailed in one of them.

There were a number of ways in which lone parents could come into contact with the pilots. Firstly, NDLP advisors told them about the pilots where it was appropriate during a New Deal interview or WFI. If the parent was interested in the Extended Schools Childcare (and their child went to a school which was involved in the pilot) or the Childcare Chats and Tasters, the NDLP advisors would contact the LA development workers or CIS (depending on the area) to find out about vacancies. The lone parent would then usually be referred to the local authority worker. Because of the difficulty in sharing data between the local authority and Jobcentre Plus, this referral had to be made either by telephoning the relevant worker while the parent was with the advisor and arranging an interview, or by giving the parent the details of the worker and leaving them to make an appointment. The development worker, or other local authority worker, would usually arrange for the parent to take up a childcare place or experience a Taster. The lone parent would return to Jobcentre Plus to move off benefits if they got a job. However, Jobcentre Plus could not directly inform the local authority of this because of data protection issues. The local authority workers encouraged lone parents to return to a Jobcentre Plus advisor after their meeting with them, but could not be sure if this happened.

It was also possible for the lone parent to encounter the pilots through meeting a development worker or other pilot outreach staff at a school, community group or other outreach event, by seeing publicity materials, or through contacting the CIS. If the parent was first in contact with an outreach worker they would discuss their childcare needs, and any other issues, and give them advice and information. If appropriate they would refer them to Jobcentre Plus and the NDLP advisors. The process would then continue as is described above.

The local authorities involved in the pilots had all decided to appoint development workers to assist in their implementation. The roles of the development workers varied between areas but included the following activities:

- Identifying provision requirements and working closely with schools to maximise the use of current provision, create new provision and ensure that it was sustainable;
- Working in schools (either based there or through outreach events held there) to promote childcare places, engage parents and work with Jobcentre Plus advisers;
- Organising, or supporting the organisation of, events in other locations where parents could access the development workers for advice and gain access to the pilot services;
- Making connections with community organisations and other professionals who have established links with parents.

2.2.2.5 Monitoring systems

All of the areas had a system of monitoring activity and outcomes within the pilots. Jobcentre Plus staff recorded their activity on their LMS system and local authorities had developed some systems of recording and monitoring. However, none of the areas were completely happy with the monitoring systems at the time of the research. They reported that they had not had clear guidance as to what could be recorded as a success and that sharing data between organisations had been a serious issue. Their concerns reflected worries about the Data Protection Act and administrative matters. The use of tailored referral forms seemed to be addressing the problem of data sharing in some areas but there was still said to be a need for a resolution from DfES/DWP.

2.2.2.6 Marketing

The pilots were being branded locally as a single service in all three areas. This was felt to be logical as the staff and services were linked and it would be less confusing for customers. All Jobcentre Plus offices were planning to introduce the pilots to lone parents when carrying out NDLP meetings or WFIs.

In one area, publicity material had been produced and a local launch had taken place. Other meetings at schools with staff and parents had been carried out by Jobcentre Plus and LA staff and more were planned. Elsewhere, leaflets and booklets for stakeholders and lone parents were being produced. Visits to schools to meet staff and parents had been carried out by LA development workers; and NDLP advisers and other marketing opportunities had been identified.

In the final area there had been uncertainty as to whether they should be using a centrally determined name or could use a local name. This had held up the production of publicity materials, although some had been produced in the interim. Meetings with head teachers had been taking place and presentations to childcare providers were planned during the summer. Local authority development workers had been attending school events to meet parents; and more outreach events to involve parents were planned for September 2004.

2.2.2.7 Engaging schools and childcare providers

In one area, workers had focused on junior and infant schools to start with. They began with schools already running some form of childcare or which had funding from New Deal for Communities or New Opportunities Fund (as it then was). Contact had been made with schools by letter and followed up by personal visits. Staff had received a mixed response from schools. Playcentres were being used to provide childcare where schools were reluctant to do so at the end of day. Some contact had also been made with childcare providers. There were plans for more contact to be made once more staff were in place at the LA. This was to include making contact with secondary schools.

Another area had involved both primary and secondary schools. Meetings had been held with head teachers before the pilots began. Development workers had then written to schools and, with NDLP advisers, visited them and set up stalls giving information to parents.

Elsewhere, stakeholders were also focusing on primary rather than secondary schools to begin with, but planned to involve secondary schools at a later stage. There were already two secondary schools engaged in the pilots. Jobcentre Plus and LA staff had presented the aims of the pilots to all the schools in the relevant areas. The extended schools co-ordinator (the local authority project manager for that pilot) had met with head teachers but were finding some harder to contact. Of the schools already contacted, the development workers had found difficulties in engaging some of them. Community centres were being explored as alternative venues where necessary. Work with childcare providers was yet to start but was planned to take place during the summer.

2.2.2.8 Delivering pilot services

In one area, lone parents were being told about the ESCP and referred to relevant staff. 48 child care places were created with 130 more to come on stream in September. This expansion of childcare had also led to more places being available for other parents. One lone parent had entered work through the pilot and 30 more parents had signed up to find out more about it. The Childcare Chats and Tasters were not yet operational as this pilot had been launched later than the ESCP, but were to be set up once the remaining staff were in place at the local authority.

Elsewhere, a number of Childcare Chats had taken place and the Tasters were being promoted, although none had taken place yet and not many lone parents had heard about them yet. ESCP referrals had not yet started, because the summer period was a time when interest in returning to work was usually lower. However, contact had been made with schools, promotion of the pilots had started and advisers and development workers were ready to work with lone parents. Through the outreach work being done for the pilots, development workers and NDLP advisers had come into contact with more lone parents and been able to advise them about issues such as training. As a result of this some lone parents had gone on to do training and move into work, although they had not accessed the childcare services. No new childcare places had been created, as this was not seen as a goal in itself but rather something which it was planned to do when parents needed a place and provision could not be found or adapted suitably.

In the final area, a number of Childcare Chats had taken place but the Tasters were not planned to start until the relevant staff were in place. The delivery of ESCP services had been delayed due to the recruitment of development workers taking longer than expected, but work had taken place to establish the links which would enable these services to be delivered. No ESCP referrals had yet taken place. No new childcare places had been created. Again, in this area, this was not viewed as being a goal in itself for the pilots.

2.2 Key issues affecting the pilots

Each area faced a range of issues which affected the way in which the pilots were set up and delivered and the progress they had made. The key factors which were raised in all areas were timescales, clarity from DfES/DWP, defining success and sharing data, and workloads and resources.

The question of realistic *timescales* for the pilots was raised by stakeholders in all types of organisation. The main point that was made was that it was necessary to allow sufficient time to set up the pilots and carry out the groundwork which would enable them to succeed. Recruiting staff had often taken considerable time, in part due to the systems in place in local authorities. However, more fundamentally, stakeholders with experience in working with schools and parents emphasised that it took time to engage schools and develop them to the point at which they could become properly involved in extended childcare. In addition to this, stakeholders highlighted the complexity of the work which had to be done with each lone parent to help them to move past multiple barriers to find work and to develop a childcare package which would suit their individual circumstances. These experiences led stakeholders to caution new pilots to ensure that they developed realistic timescales for themselves, and DfES/DWP against expecting results too early.

A major issue discussed in each area was the desire for more *discussion with DfES/DWP* and for increased clarity about the aims and success criteria for the pilots. Stakeholders in each area wanted differing levels of support and guidance but all felt that more would be beneficial. In addition, there was a desire for greater clarity about the monitoring information required by DfES/DWP.

Monitoring was one of the areas where the greatest uncertainty seemed to remain in the pilots. There was confusion about what outcomes could be defined as success, and therefore what should be monitored and incorporated into systems. There had also been great difficulties in relation to sharing data between Jobcentre Plus and local authorities due to the requirements of data protection.

The impact of the pilots on staff *workloads* was also raised by some stakeholders. In particular, there was a demand for resources to be made available to Jobcentre Plus as well as the local authority. There were specific concerns about the role of the Childcare Partnership Managers and their ability to support the pilots in addition to their other duties. The recent evaluation of the CPM also indicated that there are a number of key issues affecting delivery of the CPM role (Barker et al. 2004). In particular, these included limited resources, difficulties with time constraints, additional roles or duties, large geographical districts and the problems of working with several childcare partnerships. An additional barrier to their role was that some found it difficult to convince Jobcentre Plus colleagues of the importance of the role and of childcare issues.

2.3 Lessons for the future

2.3.1 Suggestions for new pilots

The stakeholders in each area made suggestions which new pilots might want to take into account. The key themes are outlined below.

Understanding the task

- It is important to start by gaining an in depth understanding of the need and provision of childcare and the other initiatives taking place in the area;
- When approaching schools, remember that their involvement is voluntary. It is necessary to try to influence them, not try to control them. A personal approach is important – it is necessary to ‘sell’ the pilot to them, which takes time;

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- Staff need clear (and accurate) guidance about their role and time commitment to the pilots;
 - Ensure that the pilots are clearly linked to other initiatives in the area, particularly those focused on lone parents;

Working with partner organisations

- It is vital that the local authority and Jobcentre Plus really understand each other's systems and that time is allowed for staff to get to know each other's business before going into schools or doing other outreach work;
- There needs to be understanding between Jobcentre Plus and LA about how long some tasks will take, to reduce frustration and misunderstanding;
- Work with other pilots to share knowledge and ideas;

Planning and resources

- Setting up steering groups to oversee the pilots and link them to other work in the area is crucial. Involving partner organisations early is very helpful;
- Timescales should be clear and realistic;
- Ensure that enough time is allowed for planning and for recruiting and training staff;
- Allocate funds to Jobcentre Plus as well as the LA. Support for the Childcare Partnership Manager is crucial;
- It is important to have staff working on the ground, in communities and in schools to make contact with schools, childcare providers and lone parents;
- Make sure there is clarity about what outcomes can be counted as a success and about data sharing and monitoring;
- All stakeholders suggested that new pilots work with more experienced ones that were involved in the early roll-out to share best practice. In practice, this might mean that the processes and experiences of all three early roll-out areas be documented and provided for general consideration to the new pilot areas, with DfES/DWP providing guidance on what aspects they considered successful.

2.3.2 Suggestions for DfES/DWP

There were also a number of suggestions for ways in which DfES/DWP could provide more support to the pilots. These included the following:

- Provide more clarity about the aims of the pilot and reassurance as to whether pilots are interpreting these correctly;
- Ensure that the issues around data sharing between local authorities and Jobcentre Plus are resolved speedily;
- Provide clear definitions of success to be monitored;
- Be clear about what reporting is required and what form of monitoring should take place and, where this changes, allow time to incorporate the extra work;
- One pilot suggested involving the Inland Revenue in the project as they felt that they were an important link in the process that lone parents often had to go through, particularly in relation to tax credits.

There was also enthusiasm for the idea of holding intermittent meetings during the pilot period so that stakeholders in pilot areas could share ideas and experiences.

3 Conclusions

It is clear that advancement in setting up and implementing the pilots had been slower than had been anticipated when the pilots were originally conceived. Considerable developments had been made in recruiting and training staff, building relationships between partner organisations, and making contact with schools and establishing systems. However there was still work to be done before the pilots would be completely operational.

3.1 Positive progress

In spite of this, stakeholders felt that the pilots had already led to some positive benefits and that they had made a number of achievements. These successes lay in the relationships which had been built, advances in working practices, and impacts on parents who had been in contact with the pilot staff.

Jobcentre Plus and local authorities felt that they were able to offer improved advice and information to parents as a result of the pilots, because of the links which had been created between different stakeholders. In some local authorities, the pilots were felt to have engendered a new way of working with lone parents within the LA. They had led to a realisation that it was essential to focus not just on one need but on several, and to respond with a package of support, tailored to those needs.

Schools and childcare providers were becoming engaged in the pilots, and it was also commented that lone parent advisers were more welcome in some schools because of the pilots. Progress had been made in raising awareness among local parents and other organisations of the pilots and of the help on offer. In addition, across the areas a number of Childcare Chats had taken place, new childcare places had been created and one lone parent had entered work. Other lone parents had also 'signed up' to find out more about the pilots.

As a result of the outreach work carried out as part of the pilots' implementation, local authority and Jobcentre Plus staff had come into contact with a wider range of parents. They had been able to help some move into training, into work or to better jobs. These successes were not recorded as pilot outcomes as they did not involve the childcare places, Tasters or advice offered under the pilots. However, they were felt to have brought real benefits to the families involved and to have advanced the wider agenda of helping parents back into work.

3.2 Areas for further development

The main areas in which progress had been slower than hoped were the setting up of monitoring systems and the engagement of schools. Several factors seemed to have contributed to this. Firstly, it appeared that the process of recruiting staff had taken some time, and was still on-going in some areas, in part because of the requirements of local authority recruitment rules. The work of engaging schools and lone parents had begun fairly early but could not be pursued fully until key staff were in place. In addition to this, there were more fundamental worries about judging what exactly enabled a lone parent to return to work. The fact that there were several initiatives running concurrently which all addressed the issues for lone parents returning to work meant that the task of judging what had affected each lone parent was even more difficult.

Those respondents who were experienced in working with schools and lone parents were keen to emphasise that quick results should not be expected. They argued that it took time to build

up relationships and work through barriers in order to reach the point where considerable tangible results could be seen.

The fact that the pilots did not really become ready to operate until the summer of 2004 was also seen as a reason for the lack of throughput of lone parents. Alongside this, advisors explained that they would usually expect a drop in parents looking for work during the summer. There was a general expectation that the pilots would progress faster from September 2004. Seasonality in schooling and parent employment and job-search patterns should be noted in further evaluation. Also, their impact on roll-out of services should be considered. However, it seems likely that the delay in clients throughput cannot be separated from the late start to operation. Additionally, in some areas, the pilots were not likely to be fully operational until some time in the future when staffing and all other issues are resolved.

Finally, it was clear that stakeholders felt that DfES/DWP could provide more support and guidance to them. Some of the issues which were hampering them were perceived to depend on receiving clearer guidance from the Departments. There was also a desire among some for greater discussion and reassurance from the Departments about the approach each pilot had taken and the ways in which they had interpreted the pilots' goals.

The pilot stakeholders signalled a requirement for closer management, in order to better implement flexibility successfully. Clearly, allowing a high degree of discretion over how to implement local area provision can enable local decisions over the most appropriate form to be selected to fit local needs. More flexibility, variation and local innovation can then tailor provision towards more specific local circumstances. Mostly, the different areas exercised the majority of flexibility in staffing and resources, with some variation in engaging schools and childcare providers, and the outreach to parents. However, such flexibility comes at the cost of certainty as to whether the approach selected matches the policy aims. With less guidance on the 'correct', there are created greater information needs, requiring more regular monitoring. Local management evaluation and feedback on delivery needs to be undertaken in order to redress the uncertainty, pass on lessons on useful innovations and the problems they address, and reinforce good practice. Once the monitoring regime was in place, this information would need to be regularly examined and feedback to areas maintained in order to address this weakness in management of the pilots. In the absence of such structures, pilots are less likely to achieve their targets.

The role of Jobcentre Plus and local authorities lacked general direction in key areas. Clear documentation of this role, and about what other initiatives are important to link to, and monitoring requirements and their implementation, seems necessary to improve this. There were clear differences in the areas' perceptions of the links to other initiatives, including the limitations on the range of initiatives they considered. It would be useful for the desired relationship between core functions and pilot activities to be more clearly defined by DfES/DWP.

The aims of the pilots appeared to have been well conveyed and clearly understood within all areas. There was strong support among stakeholders for the attempt, through the pilots, to address the problems faced by lone parents in accessing suitable childcare to help them return to work. It was agreed that childcare was a major problem for some lone parents and the pilots were expected to assist in improving this. However, there was also emphasis placed on the need to pragmatically view lone parents as individuals with a range of barriers and issues to deal with and to provide a service which tackled all of these.

In doing this qualitative research, a more holistic evaluation of early progress has been identified than can be obtained through statistical information on outcome figures. Much valuable and innovative work was done with the pilot funding, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders in collaborative work toward the pilot childcare provision aims. At this early

stage it is too soon to assess the pilots' capacity to achieve the aims of ensuring the local supply of places in affordable, accessible childcare and broader dissemination of childcare information. However, it seems likely that developing contact with lone parents, and other parents, in non-threatening and user-friendly venues such as schools would enable childcare information to reach clients who would not have otherwise been reached by Jobcentre Plus and may overcome a key barrier to access. An important limitation to means of contacting lone parents in schools was identification. Indirect targeting was useful, pointing out additional information for lone parents beyond that for others. Stakeholders adopted a range of general outreach approaches and this seems a key tool of good practice. Effective marketing and advertising tools, developed and delivered earlier, would enhance outreach to the parents.

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Appendix 1 Detail of method

Design

Between 12 and 14 interviews were carried out in each area. The individuals interviewed depended on the arrangements in place in the LA. However, there was considerable consistency across the areas regarding the types of job roles held by interviewees. The range of job titles of those stakeholders interviewed is provided below.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus	Childcare Partnership Manager
	District manager
	Team Leader
	NDLP and NDP advisor
	NDP and NDLP manager
Employment Zone	Lone parent adviser

Local Authority

Local authority	Strategic officer
	Lead officer
	Deputy Project Manager
	Manager of extended schools pilot
	Out of School childcare manager
	Extended childcare project co-ordinator
	Childcare adviser
	Ofsted link officer and lead on childcare taster
	Development worker
	Development officer

Children's Information Service

CIS	CIS Manager
	Marketing and CIS Manager
	Children's information link manager

Schools and Childcare providers

Secondary School	Head Teacher
	Deputy Head Teacher
	Co-ordinator of extended schools service
Primary School	Head Teacher
Childcare provider	Area Manager
After School Club	No title
Day Nursery	No title

Topic coverage

Researchers used a topic guide which highlighted the areas which should be covered in the research but did not specify detailed questions for each area of type of stakeholder. The researchers tailored the issues discussed in each interview according to the briefing material they had received, the learning from previous interviews and the issues highlighted by respondents as being particularly relevant. The general topic guide is provided below.

Childcare Pilots – Initial Research: Topic guide

This list of topics should be used as a guide to areas to be covered, not as an exhaustive list of questions: each interview will be different. It should be used in conjunction with other briefing material provided and discussions with the project manager and other researchers.

Before you start the interviews you will need to go through the proposal for your area and make your own list of issues to follow up in the early interviews. As you carry out interviews you may also need to make a list of points to check with other respondents.

Throughout the interviews please ensure that you distinguish feedback about the extended schools childcare and childcare taster pilots – even where not specified ensure that both are discussed.

Key areas to discuss

1. Background and initial summary of views and involvement in the extended schools and childcare taster pilots

- Explore their own background and work
- When did they first hear about the extended schools childcare and childcare taster pilots
 - where did they hear about from
 - form of communication
 - their initial thoughts
- Summarise their own involvement in each pilot
- How would they describe the aims of each pilot
- Who do they think is eligible to participate in the pilot
- Broadly, what is each pilot supposed to involve
- What do they hope it will achieve in their area
 - how likely do they think it is that this will actually happen
 - factors which could assist it
 - factors which could hinder it

2. Progress on each pilot so far

Extended schools and Childcare Taster pilots

- What has happened in their area in relation to each pilot so far
 - planning: financial, staff, provision, making contacts with relevant organisations etc

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- mapping need and gaps in provision
 - o looking at how existing vacancies can be managed more effectively
 - o planning for the number of childcare places that will be needed and when and where they will be required
 - o if are not doing this then explore why, if are then explore in some depth what they are doing and why
 - setting targets for what will happen and what needs to be achieved (if are not doing this then explore why, if are then explore in some depth what they are doing and why)
 - recruiting staff
 - communicating with and involving different organisations
 - o Local authority (who is involved)
 - o Jobcentre Plus (who is involved)
 - o Children's Information Service
 - o Schools (what kind and how many are involved)
 - o Childcare providers (what kind and how many are involved)
 - o Lone parents
 - Have they started trying to communicate with them yet, if so explore how, if not explore why not and what their plans are
 - o Anyone else
 - How does this compare to what was planned
 - explore reasons for any differences or changes in what they are doing
 - How are things developing in relation to the timetable they originally envisaged
 - explore reasons for any differences in the timetable

3. Activity in their organisation

- Discuss their organisation in more depth (*involvement in both extended schools and childcare taster pilots*)
 - what is their role
 - who did they think should be involved
 - who has actually become involved
 - explore reasons for any differences in people or type of involvement
 - what role do different staff members play in the pilots
 - how have these pilots affected their work and the work of the organisation
 - what opportunities could these pilots give them
 - what challenges do they bring
- For local authorities only: what management information are they collecting
 - eg are they monitoring the number of lone parents taking up a childcare place and the number of lone parents going to work as a result of the pilot
 - is any record kept of individuals and their children who participate (if so, what information is collected about them)
 - how is this information being collected and recorded
 - what are the reasons for collecting/not collecting this information
- For Jobcentre Plus staff only: how are Personal Advisors marketing information about the pilots
 - How are they using work-focused interviews, review meetings, New Deal for Lone Parents to deliver it

-
- How far is information about the pilots used to help persuade lone parents to engage in the NDLP/work focused interviews process
 - What effect are childcare tasters having on take up of NDLP and on adviser workloads and pressures
 - Do personal advisors target particular lone parents with information about the pilots

4. Relationships between organisations

Extended schools and Childcare Taster pilots

- What do they see as the role of each of the organisations involved
 - Local authority
 - Jobcentre Plus
 - Children's Information Service
 - Schools
 - Childcare providers
 - DfES
 - DWP
 - Anyone else?
- What attitude do they think each organisation has to the two pilots
- Are there any differences in how different Jobcentre Plus offices have reacted or become involved in the pilots
- How would they describe the relationships between the different organisations – what impact have the pilots had on these relationships
- In local authorities in particular: how much authority do the staff involved in the pilots seem to have to push it forward (or feel that they have if interviewing them)
 - what is the attitude / involvement of people at a senior level in the local authority

5. Views of the impact and future of the pilots

Extended schools and Childcare Taster pilots

- What is their view of how important access to childcare is as a barrier to lone parents and partners with children entering employment
 - how effective do they think these pilots will be in addressing this barrier
 - what other barriers are likely to remain and how could these be tackled
- What effect do they think the pilots will have on the area
- What effect will they have on the employment of lone parents and partners with children
- What factors will help or hinder their success
- What risks are there for the success of the pilots

6. Lessons for the new pilots

Extended schools and Childcare Taster pilots

- What would they say are the main strengths and weaknesses of the pilots at the moment
- What are the key issues that new pilots need to consider
- What lessons could new pilots take from their experience so far
- Is there anything that new pilots could do differently
- Is there anything that DfES/DWP could do differently to increase the success of the pilots

Appendix 2 Detail of pilot initiatives

Table A1 Timing of pilot initiatives

	CTP¹¹	ESCP¹²	QWFIs¹³	WSP¹⁴	IWC
1 April 2004- 31 March 2006	Bradford, Haringey Lewisham	Bradford, Haringey Lewisham		Bradford SE London	Bradford SE London N London
October 2004- 31 March 2006	Greenwich Leicester Leicestershire Sandwell Birmingham Leeds Liverpool Rochdale	Greenwich Leicester Leicestershire Sandwell	Bradford, Haringey Lewisham Greenwich Leicester Leicestershire Sandwell		
October 2004- October 2006				Cardiff & Vale Dudley & Sandwell Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Lancashire W Leicestershire Leeds Staffordshire C London W London	Cardiff & Vale Dudley & Sandwell Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Lancashire W Leicestershire Leeds Staffordshire C London W London
April 2005- October 2006					Rest of London, excluding NE London (City and E London; S London; Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon; Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth)

¹¹ The CTP will be available from date of implementation.

¹² The ESCP will be available from date of implementation. However, provision is unlikely to be comprehensive.

¹³ Guidance will be available in September – it is not yet clear whether QWFIs will start on implementation date or three months after.

¹⁴ WSP and IWC will be payable from date of implementation.

Table A2 Eligible groups for pilot initiatives

	CTP	ESCP	QWFIs	WSP	IWC
LA/Jobcentre Plus	LA areas	LA areas	LA areas	Jobcentre Plus areas	Jobcentre Plus areas
Client group	Lone Parents and Partners on eligible New Deals (for Tasters)	All local families. Lone Parents are targeted but not singled out	Lone Parents aged 18-60 years, with youngest child aged 12 years+	Lone Parents eligible for NDLP	Lone Parents eligible for NDLP
New Deal	On NDLP or NDP (for Tasters)			On NDLP	On NDLP ¹⁵
Benefit			On IS for 52+ consecutive weeks	On IS or JSA or combination as Lone Parent or Partner for 52+ consecutive weeks	On IS or JSA or combination as Lone Parent or Partner for 52+ consecutive weeks
Age of child		Children aged 5-14 years	Youngest child aged 12-15 years ¹⁶		
Hours of work				Prepared to work 16+ hours per week	In work of 16+ hours per week

¹⁵ This condition only applies until April 2005 (it will be removed across all pilots once the additional London pilots have been introduced).

¹⁶ QWFIs will be introduced nationally in October 2005 for Lone Parents with youngest child aged 14+.

Appendix 3 Background

Children's Information Service

The Children's Information Service is part of the Government's National Childcare Strategy. Children's Information Services (CIS) have been developed throughout the country through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships. One of the Partnership aims is to ensure that good quality, affordable, accessible childcare is available to those requiring it. Children's Information Services play a key role in this by helping to bridge the gap between parents, providers and up to date childcare information.

The CIS provides a single point of contact where information can be accessed easily, quickly and at no charge to the user. Using a computerised database, the CIS is able to provide free information to individuals seeking up to date details of places for children with local childminders, nurseries, playgroups, nursery schools and out of school childcare. It also holds information on other children's services including play facilities, leisure activities, health services, youth projects and national and local support groups. The CIS aims to help enquirers choose services by offering guidance on what to look for when selecting childcare, in addition, being able to offer further help or guidance about wider childcare issues.

The CIS aims to provide good quality, impartial information and guidance on childcare, early education and other children's services within an LA. The CIS holds information on registered provision available e.g. day nurseries, out of school clubs, pre-school playgroups and childminders, as well as unregistered provision such as parent and toddler groups, along with a variety of general information such as Working Tax Credit and funding for three and four year olds. As well as providing support and guidance to parents and carers, the CIS is on hand to offer advice to people wishing to work in the childcare sector, childcare providers, employers and other professionals. The CIS provides wide ranging information and advice on local childcare and early years education facilities and a wide range of additional material and advice on all of the following:- nurseries, pre-schools, crèches, childminders, parent and toddler groups, after school care and play schemes, how to get help with childcare costs, how to choose childcare, childcare training and job vacancies, registering as a new childminder, registering and setting up a new childcare facility, OFSTED registration and inspection, support for businesses setting up family friendly policies, funding for those undertaking childcare training courses.

National Childcare Strategy

The National Childcare Strategy was set out in the Green Paper 'Meeting the Childcare Challenge', a historical document that was published in 1998. This was followed by 'Delivering Childcare for children and families, the inter-departmental childcare review - November 2002'. Each these set out policy to address the childcare context in Britain. The aim of the National Childcare Strategy is to ensure good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0 to 14 in every neighbourhood, including both formal childcare and support for informal arrangements, by raising the quality of care, making childcare more affordable, making childcare more accessible by increasing places, and improving information. The Sure Start Programme developed from this strategy.

Sure Start

The Sure Start Unit is an integral part of the Government's newly formed Children, Young People and Families Directorate. The Sure Start Unit works with local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local communities and voluntary and private sector organisations. It aims to ensure delivery of free early education for all three and four year olds, affordable, quality childcare and after school activities in every area, and children's centres and health and family support in disadvantaged areas where they are most needed. It works with parents to build aspirations for employment and for their children's education.

The policies and the work of the Unit apply in England only. Responsibility for early education and childcare in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland rests with the devolved administrations.

Sure Start is a Government initiative which aims to achieve better outcomes for children, parents and communities by increasing the availability of childcare for all children, improving health, education and emotional development for young children, and supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment. This aim is to achieve this by helping services development in disadvantaged areas alongside financial help for parents to afford childcare, and rolling out the principles driving the Sure Start approach to all services for children and parents.

Sure Start has several policy objectives - to provide free part-time early education for three and four year olds, help children learn through the Foundation Stage - the part of the National Curriculum which supports the development of children aged three up to six, and provide more improved childcare resources by adding at least 250,000 new childcare places by March 2006. These childcare places are designed to be a mix of new full or part-time childcare places with start-up grants for childminders, nurseries and after school activities. To help increase childcare quality, Sure Start works with Ofsted to inspect and approve early education and childcare, and also recruit and train people to work with children. To help make childcare more affordable, help is given to working parents with their childcare costs through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Assistance is provided to parents find available childcare through the local CIS, and a national information service for parents. In addition, there is the goal to link employment advice at children's centres to information on childcare.

Employment Zones

Employment Zones were introduced in April 2000 to 15 areas with consistently high levels of long term unemployment. They pooled funds for training, Jobcentre Plus support and the equivalent of benefit to maximise flexibility and give individuals more say in the choices which affect them. They were designed to help long term unemployed people to find sustainable employment. Participants were guaranteed an income equivalent to their net weekly benefit entitlement for as long as they remain unemployed.

Employment Zones were a mandatory programme for participants, aged 25 or over, receiving Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance who have been unemployed for 12 or 18 months (depending on the Zone). Although the programme was initially introduced for long term unemployed people aged 25 or over, the Employment Zone approach has recently been extended to two further client groups: young people aged 18-24 years, who have already participated on New Deal for Young People, and lone parents. There are also a number of groups who may be considered for early entry to Employment Zones.

New contracts have subsequently been awarded to run Employment Zones until 2009. In the new contracts, lone parents and people who would otherwise be returning to New Deal for

Young People will also benefit from the Employment Zone approach. There are now 2 types of contract. The first type are single provider Employment Zones that started on 27 October 2003. In these Zones one contractor has been chosen to deliver the Employment Zone service. The second type are multiple provider Employment Zones that started on 26 April 2004. In these areas, more than one contractor will deliver the Employment Zone service. In these areas, to make sure each contractor gets a fair share of the work, jobseekers are to be randomly selected for each contractor. Multiple provider arrangements should test whether competition between providers, when dealing with the same client group in the same labour market, will produce better performance. The contractors also provide services to lone parents.

For more information about Employment Zone processes, see <http://www.employmentzones.gov.uk>.

Please quote reference: SSU/2005/FR/010

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ISBN 1 84478 407 X