ED 391 086   CE 070 701

AUTHOR   Atkinson, John
TITLE   Getting Unemployed Adults into Jobs. Does Jobsearch
                Training Add Value to "Training for Work"? Report
                273.
INSTITUTION   Sussex Univ., Brighton (England). Inst. of Manpower
                Studies.
SPONS AGENCY   Employment Dept., London (England).
REPORT NO   ISBN-1-85184-198-9
PUB DATE   94
NOTE   100p.
AVAILABLE FROM BEBC Distribution, 15 Albion Close, Parkstone, Poole
                BH12 3LL, England, United Kingdom (35 British
                pounds).
PUB TYPE   Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Adult Education; *Adult Programs; Educational Policy;
                *Education Work Relationship; *Employment Services;
                Foreign Countries; *Job Search Methods; Outcomes of
                Education; Participant Characteristics; *Program
                Effectiveness; Tables (Data); Training;
                *Unemployment
IDENTIFIERS   *United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
        The effectiveness of Training for Work, which is the
United Kingdom's main public program for helping long-term unemployed
adults find jobs, was examined through interviews with training
managers in 8 training and enterprise councils (TECs), 53 training
providers, and 374 individuals who had joined Training for Work in
spring/summer 1993 and left to seek work. It was discovered that,
although the TECs recognized the importance of job search training in
achieving positive job outcomes after Training for Work, they
generally left decisions regarding the nature and scope of job search
training to local providers. According to the training providers,
participants received an average of 9 days of job search training
(approximately 9% of the available training days), with 3 days
centered on self-preservation skills. However, of every 10
participants, only 4 received job search training and 3 did not want
it. Approximately half of job search training recipients credited it
with improving their confidence and having a marked effect on the
intensity and scope of their job search. The job search success rate
after leaving Training for Work averaged 32% for those who had
received job search training versus 26% for all leavers. (Includes 49
tables/figures.) (MN)

I M S

GETTING
UNEMPLOYED ADULTS
INTO JOBS

J Atkinson

GETTING UNEMPLOYED ADULTS INTO JOBS

Other titles from IMS:

Jobsearch: Modelling Behaviour and Improving Practice,
J Atkinson. IMS Report 260, 1994. ISBN 1-85184-184-9

Changing Policies Towards Young Workers,
M Thompson, J Atkinson, C Simkin. IMS Report 243, 1993.
ISBN 1-85184-171-7

The Costs of Getting a Job, J Atkinson, J Hillage.
IMS Report 236, 1993. ISBN 1-85184-159-8

GETTING UNEMPLOYED ADULTS INTO JOBS

Does Jobsearch Training add Value to 'Training for Work'?

John Atkinson

The Institute of Manpower Studies

The Institute of Manpower Studies is an independent, international centre of research and consultancy in human resource issues. It has close working contacts with employers in the manufacturing, service and public sectors, government departments, agencies, professional and employee bodies, and foundations. Since it was established over 20 years ago the Institute has been a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets and human resource planning and development. IMS is a not-for-profit organisation which has a multidisciplinary staff of over 50. IMS expertise is available to all organisations through research, consultancy, training and publications.

IMS aims to help bring about sustainable improvements in employment policy and human resource management. IMS achieves this by increasing the understanding and improving the practice of key decision makers in policy bodies and employing organisations.

In Autumn 1994 the Institute changes its name to *The Institute for Employment Studies* (IES), this name better reflecting the full range of the Institute's activities and involvement.

Contents

Executive Summary

TECs recognised the importance of jobsearch training in achieving positive job outcomes after Training for Work, but it had not generally been a critical priority in introducing Training for Work. All the TECs adopted a 'hands off' approach to jobsearch training: they required training providers to supply it, but did not specify how much or what kind of training should be supplied, or who should get it. In any case, the better performing TEC, placed greater emphasis on establishing routes for the direct transfer of individuals off Training for Work into employment, rather than the open external labour market.

Although arrangements for referral to Training for Work through the Employment Service were working well, TECs had not assimilated much of the Employment Service's Jobclub experience in jobsearch training.

Providers had generally been left to their own devices in determining what provision to offer and to whom. They claimed that a very high proportion of participants had access to jobsearch training, and that about 85 per cent of participants actually received it. Reluctance among participants was cited as the main reason for non-receipt. Only a third of them recognised any strong demand for jobsearch training among the participants, but almost all thought that it improved the chances of getting a job.

The average volume of jobsearch training they claimed to give was nine days per trainee, or about nine per cent of the available training days, and the main element (three days) centred on self-presentation skills.

Past Training for Work participants tell a different story. We estimate that for every ten of our Training for Work participants, four received jobsearch training, three did not want it (or would probably not have gained much from having been offered it), and the other three would have liked to have received it, and would have benefited from it, but were not given the chance. In addition, recipients remember getting rather less jobsearch training than the providers suggest: nearly two out of every five had had less than a week.

Recipients confirm the emphasis on presentation skills and on formal methods of vacancy hunting, but their former jobsearch efforts suggest that vacancy finding, and application of informal routes to jobs were their most prevalent weaknesses. Nevertheless, about half of those receiving it said that their training had made them more confident in looking for work. Further, the jobsearch training they

received had a marked effect on the intensity and scope of their jobsearch.

The average success rate[1] of people leaving Training for Work to look for work was 26 per cent. Among those who had received jobsearch training, it was 32 per cent. However, this effect is relatively small in comparison with other fixed variables, such as age, duration of unemployment before Training for Work, and external labour market conditions. There is some evidence to suggest that arrangements intended to promote direct entry into a job from Training for Work may have a more marked effect on positive outcomes than an external labour market route.

Four proposals are suggested: (1) that a prospectus of good practice in jobsearch training is prepared, to enable TECs to guide their providers more actively and effectively; (2) providers should be required formally to offer jobsearch training to every participant, as part of their IPP, or to justify why they have chosen not to. Outcomes should be recorded on the TFW2 as a means of expanding take-up. In our view, this would lead to better job outcomes among those currently not getting jobsearch training. (3) TECs should be encouraged to explore how direct entry to employment through Training for Work might usefully supplement their jobsearch provision; and, (4) moves towards a more powerful form of output-related funding for providers, ought not to encourage TECs to take less interest in the machinery of provision in areas, like jobsearch training, where provider discretion is high, and specialism low.

---

[1] This is not necessarily indicative of the success rate of the programme as a whole. Our sample excluded some groups altogether. The figure shown (26 per cent) is the proportion of our sample who were looking for, and found, work at any time after finishing Training or Work.

1. Introduction and Summary

Training for Work is the main public programme in the UK to help long-term unemployed adults to find jobs. Although it caters for other groups with specific needs, and despite the fact that it recognises other (non-job) outcomes, its essential purpose is simple and clear: to provide the means through which people who have been pushed to the margins of the labour market can find their way back in.

One of the many ways in which Training for Work seeks to achieve this is through improving the job seeking skills of its participants. For many of them, Training for Work will significantly improve their work-related skills, and will thereby make them a more attractive proposition to a putative employer. Jobsearch training works at the other end of this equation; it helps them in finding the sort of employer who is likely to want those skills, and it promotes their self-confidence and self-presentation skills in approaching such an employer. Although the programmes which Training for Work replaced contained similar elements, it is the sharper focus on jobsearch training which represents one of the key distinguishing features between Training for Work and its predecessors.

Jobsearch training is widely recognised[1] as having the potential to improve the job prospects of unemployed people, but it is equally well known that many other factors are involved in determining the distribution of unemployment. Training for Work was introduced in April 1993, and so there has been little time to ascertain to what extent this sharper focus has led to high quality jobsearch training, and how far this in turn might have contributed to high job outcomes from the programme.

1.1 Research aims and objectives

These questions constitute the main concerns of this research. It aims to:

1. investigate the nature, content and quality of jobsearch training provided under Training for Work; and

---

[1]   See for example, Atkinson, Dolan, Pettigrew and Hyndley, *Jobsearch: Modelling Behaviour and Improving Practice* , IMS Report No. 260, Institute of Manpower Studies, 1994.

2. **assess the impact of the type of jobsearch training provided on** participants' jobsearch behaviour and labour market fortunes.

By combining this review of implementation, from the point of view of the providers, with an evaluation of effectiveness, from the point of view of the participants, the research will provide an objective basis for assessing the most successful ways of delivering such jobsearch training, for identifying best practice in the content of such provision, and for improving this element in Training for Work in the future.

1.2 Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology is outlined in detail in a separate technical report. However, we outline the main elements here for the benefit of the general reader.

In order to throw some light on these questions, we required a research approach which would embrace the main actors involved in jobsearch training under Training for Work: the TECs who manage Training for Work locally, their training providers who deliver it, and the participants who would be receiving jobsearch training, and hopefully acting on it. As a result, the research comprises three linked elements:

● an analysis of how TECs perceive, organise and prioritise Training for Work in general, and jobsearch training within it, in particular

— we conducted interviews in eight TECs, selected to provide a range of different labour market and operational contexts. The results are discussed in Chapter 2.

● an analysis of how key Training for Work providers deliver Training for Work training in general, and jobsearch training in particular

— we conducted interviews with 53 training providers within these TEC areas. The results are discussed in Chapter 3.

● an exploration of the experiences and perceptions of participants in Training for Work, focusing in particular on their perceptions of jobsearch training, their subsequent jobsearch experiences, and the relationship between them

— in early 1994, we conducted interviews with 374 individuals who had joined Training for Work in the spring and summer of 1993, and who had left to seek work. The jobsearch training they received is discussed in Chapter 4. Their subsequent labour market experiences are discussed in Chapter 5.

1.3 Summary of main findings

The main findings of the research are summarised below, by chapter.

Chapter 2: The TECs

We conducted interviews with training managers in eight TECs in England, selected to provide a variety of labour market contexts, and positive job outcomes under Training for Work.

● TECs were still finding their way forward with Training for Work. Many of the features of Employment Training continued to influence the programme, and it was only gradually that the distinct features of Training for Work were beginning to show through.

● None of the TECs saw jobsearch training as the critical priority; they saw it as an important, but essentially second order issue within Training for Work, and had addressed their time, priorities and attention accordingly.

● TECs had varying strategic priorities for Training for Work, and the emphasis placed on jobsearch training within Training for Work appeared to be very much influenced by the importance placed by the TEC on immediate amelioration of unemployment.

● TECs had adopted a 'hands off' approach to managing Training for Work. Their *ex ante* contribution was to make clear to providers what outcomes were valued and would be rewarded. *Ex post*, through review and audit, they hoped to guide providers towards achieving the outcomes required of them. In between, our TECs had not always proved to be very proactive in determining exactly how providers were to achieve them.

● This hands-off approach was universally applied to jobsearch training. The TECs required that jobsearch training be provided, but did not specify what kind, to whom, how it should be delivered or in what quantities. Nor did any pay for it separately. Rather they left it to the providers to state what jobsearch training they would do, essentially on the grounds that the providers know best what will work for their clients.

● Although the Employment Service acted as the main referral point to Training for Work, relatively little had been done in some areas to co-ordinate TEC and Employment Service programmes.

● In particular, the TECs had rejected the Jobclub model of jobsearch training, on grounds of its 'classroom' style, and its 'formulaic' approach. Furthermore, there appeared to be little co-ordination between the jobsearch resources available through the Jobclubs, and those being created by the TECs.

● Jobsearch training was not the main vehicle used by the TECs with the best job outcomes. Rather than risk the competitive and uncertain route of the external labour market, they had placed more emphasis on placing Training for Work participants directly with employers during their time on the programme.

Chapter 3: The training providers

Within the eight TEC areas, our 53 providers expected to deliver a quarter of a million trainee weeks between them during a full year. On average, this would give each trainee 20 weeks on Training for Work. In reality, there is again a considerable spread around this average, with the longest training duration at 52 weeks, and the shortest at five.

- Providers claim that a very high proportion of participants have access to jobsearch training. Nine out of ten providers claimed that all participants had access to jobsearch training.

- Providers estimate that about 85 per cent of participants actually receive it. The important determinant of whether individuals actually receive jobsearch training is the likelihood that they would benefit from it.

- The average volume of jobsearch training given amounted to nine days per trainee, or about nine per cent of the available training days.

- The most common arrangement for delivering jobsearch training is to schedule it regularly during the course of the Training for Work programme (45 per cent), but nearly as many providers undertake jobsearch training as 'exit training' during the final weeks of the programme (39 per cent).

- Providers confirm that TEC specification is very rare, although about one in five providers is influenced by TEC recommendation(s). Many providers (43 per cent in all) were guided solely by their own experience, and by no other factor.

- There is a demand among a majority of providers for greater advice and guidance about the sort of jobsearch training that they ought to be providing. Over half of our providers would value more; virtually nobody wanted less.

- Providers tended to combine teaching and implementation of jobsearch; about half of them formally coached trainees as they implemented their jobsearch techniques.

- Nine out of ten providers helped participants develop their awareness about their labour market circumstances and opportunities. On average, this did not constitute much more than two days out of the nine allocated to jobsearch training.

- On average, participants would be spending a further 2.5 days on vacancy-hunting techniques. Much of this training was angled towards formal avenues of jobsearch.

- Virtually all our providers provided training in all the elements of self-presentation training which we identified, and on average, participants spent about three days in doing so.

- Almost all providers say that they provide some access to the tangible resources required for effective jobsearch, although the proportion falls slightly where the marginal cost is likely to be high (stamps, paper, envelopes, telephone).

- Some services are also provided; large proportions will refer participants to local Jobcentres, nine out of ten providers also

claim to provide direct vacancy notification to individual participants, and half referred participants on to private employment agencies.

● About three in four providers (71 per cent) passed on their participants to Jobclubs.

● Providers thought that jobsearch training was a very important and useful element in the training programmes they delivered. Four out of five of them thought that it was a very useful part of Training for Work.

● However, the providers were less sanguine about participants' views on the helpfulness or otherwise of jobsearch training. About 15 per cent of them held that participants did not find it of much use, or worse. Only a third recognised any strong demand among the participants.

● Most providers believe that jobsearch training will help in securing a job after Training for Work, but the variation in their estimates is enormous, from a handful who perceive no additional effect, to another handful who reckon that jobsearch training doubles positive outcome.

● However, the more a provider thinks job outcomes are influenced by jobsearch training, the more likely he/she is to provide more of it.

Chapter 4: Individual participation in Training for Work

The target sample was all those who joined Training for Work in the eight TEC areas in the spring of 1993, who stayed on it for more than a fortnight, who were not of 'employed status' (ie had not already secured a job), and for whom we had accurate records. This amounted to 1,768 individuals, of whom we conducted interviews with 374.

● Before they joined Training for Work, the job-finding experience of these Training for Work participants was markedly restricted, and perhaps as a result, about half of them were not confident that they knew how to find work when they had last needed to look for it.

● Sixty per cent of those who had been looking for work before joining Training for Work had never received any training or guidance about how to find a job.

● In the main, the skill they most lacked was simply finding vacancies for which they correctly felt they were suitable.

● A surprisingly low proportion of our participants (38 per cent) actually received any jobsearch training while on Training for Work. Nearly two thirds did not get (or cannot recall getting) any.

● In exploring the reasons for this, we have considered several methodological issues and concluded that they cannot account for such a low rate. We have identified reluctance on the part of the individual Training for Work participant as an important factor, but even on the most sympathetic assumptions, this only accounts

for about half (54 per cent) of the non-receipt. The other half (46 per cent) is attributed to lack of provision.

● In short, for every ten of our Training for Work participants, four received jobsearch training, three did not want it (or would probably not have gained much from having been offered it), and the other three would have liked to have received it, and would have benefited from it, but were not given the chance.

● The offer of jobsearch training bore no evident relationship to either the personal characteristics of the participants or their previous labour market experiences.

● In addition, recipients actually got rather less jobsearch training than our providers' estimates would lead us to believe. Close on two thirds of the recipients had received less than two weeks jobsearch training, and nearly two out of every five had had less than a week.

● Jobsearch training was not simply classroom training given in abstract. More than half of our recipients (56 per cent) were encouraged to implement jobsearch training continually during their stay on Training for Work.

● Only half of these recipients were given any advice about the type of employer likely to have job vacancies in their area.

● Fully a quarter of them cannot recall being taught any of the methods of searching for vacancies. Those who did receive this help report a relatively low weighting attached to the use of informal networks of friends, contacts, relatives, and other people in work.

● Only a quarter of recipients were successfully introduced to new methods of vacancy-hunting which they had not previously known about, and only just over a third were encouraged to extend their vacancy-hunting repertoire to embrace methods they had not used before.

● By contrast, very high proportions of our recipients were given self-presentation training. Eight in ten of them found it helpful, and about four in ten very helpful; only very small fractions found it wholly without benefit.

● Summing up, about a quarter of those who received any jobsearch training said that they felt it had made them a lot more confident about looking for a job. A further third said that their training had made them a little more confident. Thus, even if the jobsearch training had little inherent benefit, its motivational effects must be acknowledged.

● The aspect of jobsearch training most commonly cited as the most helpful, was mixing with other people in the same position as themselves.

Chapter 5: Getting a job after Training for Work

We interviewed our 374 Training for Work participants about their subsequent experiences. We measured their successful entry into any job, however brief or at any time, after leaving Training for Work.

- Positive job outcomes after Training for Work were well represented. Three quarters of our participants were economically active on leaving Training for Work, and of them, just about a third had found work (34 per cent) at some point.

- But more than half of them already had a job when they left Training for Work; they had in fact left Training for Work to take it up. Of the remainder who were looking for a job on the external labour market after they left, 26 per cent had found one, and 74 per cent had not. Again, it is important to emphasise that this is not a representative sample of Training for Work participants.

- Jobsearch training may have made a significant contribution to positive job outcomes for this group. Whereas their success rate as a whole was 26 per cent, among those who had received jobsearch training, it was 32 per cent.

- The jobsearch training they received had a marked effect on the behaviour of many jobseekers. About a third of them who received it looked for work more often than previously, and a third used informal networks to pursue job leads. More than a quarter used more ways than they had previously to identify vacancies, and just under a quarter had become increasingly proactive in approaching employers.

- Despite this, Training for Work participants who received jobsearch training were generally modest in their attribution of help to jobsearch training; only 45 per cent of those receiving it agreed that it had improved their chances of getting a job, although five per cent among them thought it had been vital.

- Although jobsearch training is shown to have some positive effects on individuals' labour market chances, these are relatively small. There is some evidence to suggest that arrangements intended to promote direct entry into a job from Training for Work may have a more marked effect on positive outcomes.

2. The TECs

In this chapter we briefly outline the characteristics of the TECs, within which the research was conducted. We begin by considering their labour market and other aspects, before moving on to discuss how they organised Training for Work, and what they thought about the role of jobsearch training within it. It should be noted that our sample of TECs was relatively small, and our discussions with them relatively brief. Our main aim in going to them was to brief ourselves on, and to set up, the principal stages of the fieldwork with providers and Training for Work participants. Nevertheless, we have set out below our conclusions on these discussions, as they form a useful backdrop to these main elements in the research.

2.1 Characteristics of the TECs

The study focused on eight TEC areas. They were chosen from a list provided by the Employment Department to reflect a range of different labour market and Training for Work contexts. In particular, we sought TECs who had relatively high positive job outcomes from Training for Work, as well as some with low ones, and we wanted some with relatively more difficult labour market conditions than others. We also sought a reasonable regional spread, and a range of urban and rural conditions (for which we simply took the resident population and physical boundaries of the TEC to produce a population density per square hectare). The characteristics of our eight TECs are shown in Table 2.1.

We conducted interviews in each TEC with the manager(s) responsible for Training for Work in the TEC area. These individuals sometimes also called in one of their development managers or operations managers to talk about specific issues. In addition to establishing how Training for Work was run in general, and how jobsearch training fitted in, in particular, we also used these interviews to identify and secure access to the providers (discussed in Chapter 3), and to clarify any local peculiarities about the client group, whom we would be sampling. The open ended discussion guide used to prompt these discussions is presented in the technical report.

The variety which we observed between these eight TECs perhaps resulted from our choice of sample, but it seemed to go beyond this. With greater or lesser degrees of overtness, each had used Training for Work to suit its own circumstances and local priorities, and had developed local procedures and preferences which increasingly reflected their own situations. However, we should note that behind

this variety, there were some common structural factors, which repeatedly occurred, and which seemed to us to influence the manner in which jobsearch training was undertaken. We discuss two of these.

Table 2.1 TEC characteristics

	Population (000s)	Population density	UV ratio	Participants	Providers
TEC1	410	5.2	12.80	58	7
TEC2	454	2.4	10.15	46	7
TEC3	226	21.0	17.82	64	7
TEC4	543	12.1	11.20	46	7
TEC5	395	4.2	3.87	49	6
TEC6	533	2.4	16.00	50	7
TEC7	457	50.2	20.27	23	6
TEC8	353	46.6	18.50	38	6
				374	53

Source: IMS Survey

Each of the TECs delivered Training for Work through a group of 20 to 30 training providers. Although these varied significantly in size, sophistication, constitution, *etc.*, we observed that the number of providers was falling and, as a result, their experience and calibre was reported to be rising. One of our TEC respondents cited three reasons for this:

> 'Firstly, there is natural selection; the funding regime has got a lot tougher, and we have pressed them harder over time. Some have gone to the wall as a result. Secondly, we have not stood in the way of this because we want to ensure quality provision, and with a limited number of staff at our end, it is easier to police them, to encourage them and to assess them for quality if there are fewer of them. Quite frankly, unless they are specialist (we have an Asian Women's Centre and a managers and supervisors specialist provider) it isn't really cost effective to keep the small ones on, so we favour fewer and larger. Finally, some of the providers have clung together for warmth, and amalgamated, getting the benefits of shared overheads and resources. Put these three factors together, and you will find it pretty common for there to be fewer providers now than there have been in the past.'

Most of our TEC respondents had a similar experience, and it was generally agreed that this provided a better basis for undertaking jobsearch training, firstly, because it brought more participants together to provide a demand for the training and secondly, it helped providers become more effective at delivering it through shared resources, growing experience, *etc.*

Secondly, the TECs too were finding their way forward with Training for Work through experience. Many of the features of Employment Training had continued to influence the programme, and it was only gradually that the distinct features of Training for Work were beginning to show through. Thus, experimentation, pragmatism and developmental thinking were very pronounced among our TEC respondents. None of them regarded what they did today as definitive; all regarded Training for Work as being in the process of development and refinement. While this is undoubtedly positive, it had an unfortunate effect on the subject matter of this research, jobsearch training. None of the TECs involved saw jobsearch training as a particularly critical priority; they saw it as an important, but essentially second order issue within Training for Work, and had addressed their time, priorities and attention accordingly. Thus, without being unfair, it seems to us true to say that these TECs had not fully developed jobsearch training within Training for Work because they did not perceive it to be high on their priorities to do so. This should not be taken to suggest that they had ignored it, or acted cavalierly towards it, but rather that, in developing a viable programme, this element did not come high on their lists, and had not yet received the attention which it might, and which in due course it undoubtedly will.

2.2 Strategic aims of Training for Work

In part because of their diversity as labour markets, but also because of their varying corporate priorities and perspectives, our TECs had varying strategic priorities for Training for Work. TECs had variously juggled issues of strategic focus, long and short term aims, and practical considerations, and the most common outcome was for there to be multiple aims within Training for Work in each TEC. One respondent described the local aims of Training for Work as follows, firstly at the level of the Board philosophy:

> 'We have always taken the view that Training for Work is about getting people into a job . . . this was so even when it was Employment Training. I'm not absolutely sure that the national Employment Department philosophy was actually that . . . however, we've always taken the view that it is much more important to get people into a job than it is for instance to keep them on the programme, and to get them NVQs.'

Then, at the level of practical implementation

> 'There is also a firm belief here that we have to cover as many trainees as possible with the money we are given, so we have a policy of encouraging providers to move people through the programme and out the other end as quickly as possible . . . our average stay is about 18 weeks.'

Meeting client needs was also an important consideration

> 'We do a customer satisfaction questionnaire . . . have done for several years now . . . one of the questions is why have you come on to Training for Work . . . it is always a job . . . quite a few want an

NVQ, but this is almost always as a stepping stone to a job, so we have to make the job outcomes paramount too.'

Finally, there is also a longer term competitiveness effect to be achieved

> 'It's about the pull through effect of employers being competitive in this area. To be competitive they've got to have people with the skills that are needed; the whole area becomes more competitive and through that means, you get the unemployed off the register into jobs even if they've never heard of Training for Work.'

Jobsearch training can contribute to some of these ends and not to others. Accordingly, the emphasis placed on this training within Training for Work appeared to be very much influenced by the importance placed by the TEC on immediate job entry, and their capacity to infuse the providers with this orientation too.

2.3 Managing the delivery of jobsearch training

Our TECs did not directly deliver Training for Work. Their role was to enable and guide providers to do so, in such a way as they met the strategic aims of the programme. In so doing they had adopted a 'hands off' approach to managing Training for Work. They looked to a funding and appraisal regime for Training for Work which would allow them to influence what providers did. At the outset their contribution was to make clear what outcomes were valued (high job and NVQ outcomes). This was bolstered by linking funding in part towards the attainment of these outcomes. Subsequently, by systematic retrospective review and audit, they hoped to guide providers towards achieving the outcomes required of them. In between, our TECs had not always proved to be very proactive in determining exactly how providers were to achieve them.

The fine tuning of delivery, and the precise mix of ingredients, was universally seen as a matter for the providers and several reasons were given for this. Firstly, variety of providers was said to preclude too prescriptive approach; some providers were involved with long term NVQ-based skill training, others in special needs training, others with sectoral or occupational specialisms. Such variety was best managed by establishing clear goals and making rewards explicitly contingent on achieving these goals. Secondly, clients too demonstrated great variety, in both what they presented to the provider and what they sought from the provider. This too, it was suggested, inhibited too prescriptive an approach. Thirdly, provider expertise in their own areas was often acknowledged as an important reason for not prescribing how they should effect the desired goals.

This hands-off approach was universally applied to jobsearch training. None of our TECs specified what jobsearch training should be provided, to whom, how it should be delivered or in what quantities. Nor did any pay for it separately. Rather, the providers were (almost universally) contractually required to provide it, but given quite a free hand in asserting what they would provide. Thus,

ERIC

22

the pro forma contracts used in the annual contracting round say that jobsearch training is to be provided but ask the provider to specify and detail what they propose to deliver.

In the Training for Work provider contracts which we were shown, the volume of jobsearch training was not specified; no criteria about who should get it were laid down; no minimum requirements were set down about the content of such training, timetabling, teaching methods, *etc*. This does not necessarily mean that such questions are not discussed between TEC and provider. Indeed, our TEC respondents insisted that considerable dialogue would ensue about such questions. The point is that these TECs did not specify what jobsearch training they require to be provided. They did not propose a model of best practice. They provided very few ground rules about standards, quality or delivery. Rather they left it to the providers to state what they would do, essentially on the grounds that the providers know best what will work for them. Subsequently, through periodic audit and review, TECs would discuss jobsearch provision with individual providers, but their performance would not be assessed against any immediate TEC-derived criterion, but against (a) the provider's initial contracting statement, and (b) an implicit belief that jobsearch training would contribute in some way to positive job outcomes.

We will consider in Chapter 3 how their providers actually responded to this and, in Chapters 4 and 5, whether the participants found this satisfactory. It should be said that our TEC respondents did not wholly regard it as such. Their criticisms however related not so much to the basic model, as described above (providers prescribe, TECs monitor), but rather to shortcomings in the means of influencing provider behaviour. In particular, it was widely seen as an imperfect approach because the funding regime did not place sufficient emphasis on the achievement of outcomes. Thus, on the one hand, TECs did not really enjoy sufficiently powerful contractual levers (because they did not wish to be over-prescriptive about what should be provided and how), nor could they rely on sufficiently attractive funding carrots (because the bulk of provider income wა accounted for through training weeks). TECS of course have a f. ːe hand to introduce any funding system they like with their providers; there is no constraint to concentrate on training weeks, and indeed, some had been adjusting their procedures to reflect the most effective funding regime.

One TEC respondent described the situation as follows

> 'There is still a comfort factor in the fee income; we used to have a number of providers who saw the fee income as their bread and butter . . . and although they could have greatly increased their income by achieving better positive job outcomes, they saw this as risky . . . firstly, they had to invest in providing jobsearch training, secondly, their trainees faced quite stiff competition in the job market and there was a strong likelihood that they wouldn't get a job; and thirdly, they still had to be in that job on a certain day when they were followed up, otherwise it didn't count. There ʲas also a drop out of people moving their address or not respondinꞏ, and so on. So you can see the risks look a bit steep from their point of view ... we have countered this by decreasing the fee income in

relation to the positive outcome income . . . 75/25 last year, 72/28 this; we are looking at 60/40 next year, unless the start/outcome system comes in, in which case it will probably be 25/75 . . .. Now we have come down hard on these providers, but they have switched to NVQs as the soft option. Achieving an NVQ is more difficult than just living off fee incomes for training weeks, but it is more predictable than a job outcome, and a bit more susceptible to provider effort.'

The TECs are clearly committed to, and see advantages in, this approach, in which it is outcomes which count, and in which the means to those outcomes are left in large part to the discretion of the provider. Thus,

'In their proposals they have to indicate what training they will offer. We do not prescribe, mainly because of the range of different programmes, from high technology training to job tasters, within Training for Work. It is up to the provider to decide what they think best suits their client group in general and, within that, this specific individual in particular. It has to be pitched at the right level, and we are not about dictating what they should do.'

'What we do, is a quarterly review with every provider, detailing the use of the training weeks, the outcomes achieved, by particular client groups, and a review of general arrangements . . . on this statistical basis, we talk to them about various issues (one of which might be jobsearch, and then go on to agree actions and targets with them . . . we do not collect any information specifically on jobsearch training, but we might look at that if, say, their job outcomes were low, in which case we might send in our development officer . . . but it might be one of a wide range of issues.'

2.4 Best practice in jobsearch

One of the weaknesses inherent in such a hands-off approach is that recognition of best practice becomes difficult, and thus the encouragement of all providers to meet the standards of the best is made more difficult. As the quotation above makes clear, very little data is collected on exactly how much jobsearch training is delivered, so the TECs are not in a strong position to assess what might work and what might not. Certainly, among the TECs involved in this study, there was little clear idea of what constituted best practice in terms of jobsearch training. Few of our discussants had a clear idea of what such a jobsearch curriculum should look like. In so far as they gave guidance to providers, they relied on a rather eclectic and haphazard set of briefing documents and papers about jobsearch. One TEC had recently circulated a paper on best practice in jobsearch, and described it as follows

'Yes, we do guide them. We have recently undertaken a review of what our providers do. We have put out good practice guidelines, saying these are all the things that providers can undertake, any of which we will be happy to talk to you about if you can see an idea in there that naturally suits you it up.'

The entrenched reluctance to be prescriptive can be discerned even here, and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that it is precisely the lack of any coherent model of what exactly good practice in jobsearch should look like, that underpins this reluctance.

2.5 Relations with the Employment Service

All our TECs saw the Employment Service as the main referral point to Training for Work, either as direct referrals or individuals who had seen material about Training for Work at the Jobcentre; about sixty per cent of the individuals covered in our participant survey (Chapter 4) had been referred by the Employment Service. However, there were large differences between the eight TECs in the proportion of referrals coming this way (from 50 to 80 per cent). In part this reflected the marketing strength of the providers and their ability to project Training for Work places into the labour market independently of the Jobcentre but, in addition, it reflects the strategic focus of Training for Work in the different TEC areas. Victims of redundancy were the main category of entrant to Training for Work, which varied between TEC areas, as might be expected. Returners to the labour market, lone parents and those seeking high tech skills were the others.

Relatively little had been done in some areas to co-ordinate TEC and Employment Service programmes. This was not of central interest to our study and we were only hearing one side of the story. It is not, therefore, an issue which we pursued, save in one respect: the Jobclub model of jobsearch activity was one which had been widely and successfully used by the Employment Service, for the main client group of Training for Work; why had the TECs not adopted it? We received no compelling answer to this. The main reason for the rejection of the Jobclub model appears to be its 'classroom' style, and its 'formulaic' approach. Neither of these suited the flexible format acclaimed by the TECs.

Furthermore, there appeared to be little co-ordination between the jobsearch resources available through the Jobclubs, and those being created by the TECs. Nominally, Training for Work participants should have access to Jobclub facilities to help in their jobsearch, through an associate membership arrangement. Although three in four of the providers whom we interviewed said that they referred Training for Work participants on to Jobclubs, our TEC respondents indicated that this was used by relatively few participants in practice (our survey findings confirmed this), and that it did not loom large in their thinking about jobsearch training.

In view of the wealth of experience and resources developed through Jobclubs, and the acknowledged lack of a positive TEC/Training for Work model of jobsearch, this lack of co-ordination is remarkable.

2.6 Alternatives to open market jobsearch

We have already noted the considerable differences between the positive job outcome rates of our eight TECs. Further, we have suggested that different local labour market conditions and different strategic thrusts within Training for Work account for much of this variety. In discussing these differences with our high-performing TECs, it became clear that they had placed much more stress on the employed status and/or customised training variants within Training for Work than had the relatively low performing TECs. Even when the contract in question was neither of these, the high performing TECs believed that some of the lessons about how to get Training for Work participants safely into jobs had rubbed off on providers; rather than risk the competitive and uncertain route of the external labour market, they had placed more emphasis on providing Training for Work participants directly to employers during their time on the programme. As one TEC respondent put it:

> 'Our providers are well placed to pick up places with a whole range of good quality companies anyway . . . we have a telesales activity to help this, and it is due to pull in 300 placements with employers this year . . . and the programme is starting to shift around now to employer placements rather than workshop placements, and that's important when you are looking at people getting jobs . . . 21 per cent are employed, you could call it customised, or employed status, they join Training for Work as unemployed and are taken on by an employer as part of a deal struck between that employer and the training provider . . . it is important in getting good job outcomes . . . about 75 per cent of them will be positive job outcomes.'

Looking at the three TECs in our sample with the highest positive job outcomes (ie those with the highest proportion of Training for Work participants in work 13 weeks after completion), all three emphasised this route, one through formal employed status, and the others through less formal, but no less direct means. Thus, although all our TEC respondents testified to the very high value which they placed on good quality jobsearch training, this was not the vehicle through which the most successful of them were actually achieving much of their success. Using Training for Work as a means of providing employers directly with suitably trained and screened Training for Work leavers — who, ideally, had been placed with that employer for a period on work placement — represented for them the most productive and most secure route into employment for their clients. Such participants would not leave Training for Work onto the external labour market, and so might have much less need for jobsearch skills. It seems that jobsearch training remains a relatively low priority, for some of the better performing TECs, because it is not perceived as the best means of securing high job outcomes.

2.7 Summary

TECs recognised the importance of jobsearch training in achieving positive job outcomes after Training for Work, but it had not generally been a critical priority in introducing Training for Work. All

the TECs adopted a 'hands off' approach to jobsearch training, requiring training providers to supply it, but not specifying how much or what kind of training should be supplied, or who should get it. In any case, the better performing TECs placed greater emphasis on establishing routes for the direct transfer of individuals off Training for Work into employment, rather than the external labour market.

Although arrangements for referral to Training for Work through the Employment Service were working well, TECs had not assimilated much of the Employment Service's Jobclub experience in jobsearch training.

27

3. The Training Providers

In this chapter, we discuss the results from our survey of providers. Fifty three providers were interviewed, about the extent and nature of the jobsearch training they provided. The chapter is broken into five sections. In Section 2, we look at the accessibility of jobsearch training provision to Training for Work participants, essentially asking how many get it? Section 3 examines how much jobsearch training they get; Section 4 is concerned with what they get, and looks in turn at labour market information/orientation, vacancy-hunting techniques, self-presentation skills, and tangible resources and services provided for participants. Section 5 rounds off the chapter by presenting information about providers' general attitudes towards and beliefs about, the jobsearch training they provide. However, we begin by looking at the characteristics of the providers themselves.

3.1 Characteristics of the providers

It was our intention, in selecting the sample, to make a compromise between the need to cover as large a slice of Training for Work provision as possible in the eight TEC areas, and the need to include a variety of different types and sizes of provider. We did not have a free hand in determining the sample, as access was provided through the TECs, and was then subject to the readiness and ability of the providers themselves to take part in the research. That said, the TECs were very accommodating in providing access, and in some cases actively recommending us to their providers, and the providers themselves were generally more than willing to take part. As a result, we have achieved a reasonably balanced spread of providers, and covered a significant proportion of their trainees.

Interviews were conducted with 64 providers, but some of these were unsatisfactory, with the representatives of the provider unable or unwilling to answer the questions about jobsearch training, giving inconsistent answers, or being unable to spare the time to complete the interview. For these reasons the useable sample of providers is 53.

Between them, our 53 providers trained around 12,000 Training for Work trainees in a full year. This represents close to two thirds of the estimated throughput of trainees in total across all eight TECs, and we feel that this represents reasonably good numerical coverage of Training for Work provision as a whole in these TECs. There was quite a wide variation around the average size of 230 trainees a year, ranging from the largest with 780 trainees (engaged across a wide portfolio of activities, including clerical/secretarial, typing/WP,

computing, electronics, fork lift truck operation, catering, DTP/graphics, retail skills and horse care training) to the smallest with only 30 business skills trainees a year. Nevertheless, it is evident that we are mainly dealing here with larger providers; only seven were expecting 50 or fewer trainees in a full year, and 22 were expecting 200 or more.

Fifty five percent of these providers were commercial companies. A fifth were trusts, charities or community-oriented. A further eight per cent claimed an intermediate status (part trust/part commercial), and the remaining 18 per cent were public sector organisations. Fully half our providers were local organisations, which is to say that they operated only in the location responding to our survey. A further 22 per cent were regional organisations, operating in several other locations, and the remaining 28 per cent were national, operating in many locations nationwide. Interestingly, the local organisations tended to be larger in terms of trainee volumes for the TEC in question than did the regional or national organisations. Similarly, the trust/charity/community providers tended to handle more trainees on average than did the commercial and public sector providers.

Our 53 providers expected to deliver a quarter of a million trainee weeks between them during a full year. On average, this would give each trainee 20 weeks on Training for Work. In reality, there is again a considerable spread around this average, with the longest training duration at 52 weeks, and the shortest at five. We have not been able to discern any obvious relationship between the characteristics of the provider (size, ownership, etc.) and the duration of training. It is likely that training durations are determined by the nature of the training itself (eg the occupation/skill being trained for) and the needs of the target recipient (ie foundation training, work experience, skill training, etc.) rather than the characteristics of the provider. We did not collect information on these aspects of Training for Work.

A further important aspect of Training for Work provision however is the extent to which trainees enjoy employed status on entry to Training for Work. Our analysis of the Training for Work leavers database, which formed the basis of our sample of individual trainees, suggests that about one in ten Training for Work leavers had entered the programme on employed status. Among our sample of providers, 20 had no trainees of employed status, and the proportion of employed status trainees among the sample as a whole was around seven per cent. This suggests that our providers sample has a slightly lower than average component of employed status trainees, but is not dramatically unrepresentative in this respect. As a result, we can expect that at least nine out of every ten of the 12,234 trainees who would pass through these providers this year would be potentially searching for a job. Some might find it before completing the course, some might not be looking immediately on completion, but almost all of them would be looking for it at some time, and therefore would expect to benefit from jobsearch training.

29

3.2 Access to jobsearch training

Our providers claim that a very high proportion of trainees have access to jobsearch training. Nine out of ten providers claimed that all of their trainees had access to jobsearch training during their Training for Work course. Only seven of the 53 did not provide such access for all their trainees.

These seven providers accounted for over half of the employed status trainees, and their penetration by employed status trainees was 22 per cent (in contrast to seven for the sample as a whole). It seems reasonable to conclude from this that employed status is an important variable in determining access to jobsearch training. There are no other evident sources of this distinction; the seven providers offering partial access to jobsearch were no smaller on average than the others, although none of them was part of a national organisation; the average duration of Training for Work courses was slightl' longer than average for this sub-set.

But if employed status is the key determinant of access to jobsearch training, there is a further slippage involving those with access but who, for one reason or another, do not take it up. The providers were asked how many of their trainees actually received jobsearch training in a full year. Their responses show that of the 12,234 trainees passing through during the course of a year, only some 9,674 (or 79 per cent) would actually be expected to receive jobsearch training. On the assumption that our 882 employed status trainees would not need to search for a job they already had, then the proportion of eligibles actually receiving jobsearch training rises to 85 per cent.

This 15 per cent slippage occurs in a restricted number of providers. Well over half (31) claimed that all their trainees actually received jobsearch training. Among the remainder, the important determinant of whether individuals actually receive jobsearch training, appears to be the likelihood that they would benefit from it. This might be a completely unilateral decision, determined by the individual voting with their feet, or by the provider deciding that they would not benefit, but mainly it seems to be a decision taken by the provider, on the basis of discussion and assessment with individual trainees, and reflecting their preferences.

Looking at trainee equivocation, a quarter of our providers said that only those trainees who wanted jobsearch training received it. Several also suggested that trainees were always liable simply not to turn up for parts of the programme which they felt were not valuable, and argued that this reinforced the need to take individual preferences into account in determining jobsearch training.

As Table 3.1 shows, most providers try to assess these needs more than once during Training for Work.

Table 3.1 Timing of identification of jobsearch training needs

	N	%
On entry (IPP, ITP, PTP)	34	64
Work preparation	7	13
During regular reviews	31	58
Towards end of training	20	37
Other	2	4

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

Jobsearch training needs were identified at the outset of Training for Work training (on entry, as part of the individual participation plan, or during work preparation training) by three quarters of these providers. Just over half relied on information gained during the regular reviews of individuals' progress through Training for Work, and just over a third inquired towards the end of the programme.

It is clear that providers have ample opportunity for dialogue with trainees in order to determine the extent and nature of any jobsearch training which might benefit them. The criteria which might then be applied to that decision appear to be quite diverse, as Table 3.2 shows.

Table 3.2 Criteria used by providers to select for jobsearch training

	N	%
Trainee request	19	36
Job/industry change	1	2
Inexperience in LM	7	13
Motivational needs	8	15
Good job chances	4	7
Poor job chances	5	9
Everybody gets it	25	48
Others	3	6

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

Relatively few providers had any clear and systematic criteria for deciding who would receive what in terms of jobsearch training. Most relied strongly on the experience of their instructors and/or counsellors, who would know from experience what skills were

31

needed to undertake jobsearch, and would assess (through observation, through discussion and through questioning) whether individuals were deficient in some way. If they were, for whatever reason, and provided they were agreeable, then they would be given jobsearch training.

While providers place considerable emphasis on the individualised, bespoke nature of their provision, it is important to note that among 58 per cent of our sample of providers, every trainee received jobsearch training, and in half of them all (51 per cent), every trainee receiving jobsearch training gets the same package. We will review these assessments later (in Chapter 4 and 5) and show that participants in Training for Work report a very different picture. For the moment, we will continue to discuss what the providers reported.

3.3 Jobsearch training provision

The average volume of jobsearch training given amounted to nine days per trainee, or about nine per cent of the available training days. At the extremes of the spectrum, the number of days given over to jobsearch training varies slightly according to the overall duration of Training for Work; where Training for Work is very short, jobsearch training is slightly more than the average, perhaps because short duration Training for Work courses tend to focus on work preparation training in which jobsearch is a more substantive element. By contrast, where the overall duration is long, the number of days given to jobsearch training is also somewhat higher than average, perhaps because there is more scope to fit it in to a more extended training timetable, but this second effect is not very marked, with the result that as the average duration of Training for Work rises, so the proportion of it given over to jobsearch training falls. This is shown clearly in Chart 3.1. Here we have arranged the providers in ascending order according to the average duration of Training for Work which they provide. This is plotted in the dark line rising to the right. Against this we show a scatter plot of the proportion of those Training for Work weeks which are given over to jobsearch training.

It is evident that there is marked and sometimes extreme variation in the proportion of Training for Work allocated to jobsearch training, but the underlying relationship is nevertheless quite strong (and is shown by the smoothed curve).

The most common arrangement for delivering jobsearch training is to schedule it regularly during the course of the Training for Work programme (45 per cent), but nearly as many providers undertake jobsearch training as 'exit training' during the final weeks of the programme (39 per cent). The remainder schedule the training on an intermittent basis during Training for Work. Those who leave it to the end tend on average to be undertaking much less jobsearch training (at 5 days and 6 per cent) than do those who schedule it (11.6 days and 12 per cent of the duration), but the causal relationship could work in either way here. That is to say it may be that if a provider intends to do a lot of such training, it may be more easily delivered

and digested in smaller slices during the programme. By contrast, it could be that by leaving it to the end, less time is available and so provision is squeezed. We are unable to say whether scheduling influences amount, or *vice versa*.

Chart 3.1 Jobsearch training and average duration of Training for Work

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

All the providers used their own staff to provide jobsearch training, although in one case, this was supplemented by using a bought-in specialist trainer. Two thirds of the providers used their own regular course tutors to provide jobsearch training in addition to their occupational training area, although about 16 per cent also supplemented this using a jobsearch specialist trainer for some aspects of their provision. Such specialists were altogether used by 43 per cent of providers, and a further 15 per cent used other resources.

Most of the providers used several methods of actually delivering the training. Three quarters used one-to-one counselling and a similar proportion used group discussions, just over half used formal classroom teaching and lectures, but only about a third used open learning methods.

3.4 Characteristics of jobsearch training

Our interviews with the TECs suggested that providers were left pretty much to their own devices in deciding both how much jobsearch training to provide, and what should be provided. Although TECs would offer advice about provision (especially to the smaller providers), and would certainly audit retrospectively to ensure that providers actually delivered what they had contracted to deliver, the TECs did not specify what should be provided, and

certainly did not lay down a curriculum or model to be adopted. For this reason, we asked the providers how they had decided what to offer. As Table 3.3 confirms, TEC specification is very rare, although about one in five providers is influenced by TEC recommendation(s).

Table 3.3 Determinants of provider decisions about jobsearch curriculum

Jobsearch training is devised in light of	N	%
Own experience	45	85
TEC specification	2	4
TEC recommendation	11	21
Jobclub model	16	30
Other model	10	19

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

Most providers were guided by their own experience, although this was frequently tempered by advice or emulation from another source. What the table does not show is that many of our providers (43 per cent in all) were guided *solely* by their own experience, and by no other factor. In general, the larger providers were guided solely by their own experience, whereas the smaller ones tended to be additionally influenced from other directions. The emulation of a Jobclub model of jobsearch training was the most frequently cited of these other sources, although it was cited by only 30 per cent of our respondents. This is surprising, in view of the Jobclubs' nationwide coverage, their relatively high profile, and the consistency of the training curriculum to which they work.

We have already shown that half of these providers operated only in the one location in which we interviewed them. This suggests that many providers may have a relatively limited breadth of experience of their own on which they can call to inform their decisions about the type of jobsearch training they ought to be providing. We might expect this to be more prominent among the smaller providers, and among the newer ones. Certainly, our results indicate that there is a demand among a majority of providers for greater advice and guidance about the sort of jobsearch training that they ought to be providing.

Table 3.4 shows that over half of our providers would value more, and we should remember that our sample is somewhat biased towards the larger providers. It is worth noting that virtually nobody wants less; indeed, it would be hard to imagine how they might get less. Even the two providers who were influenced by TEC specification, claimed that they would welcome more guidance and advice. However, and by contrast, over a third are content with the

current situation, although again, this view is more common among the larger providers.

Table 3.4 Providers' wishes for guidance and advice about jobsearch training

	N	%
Would value more guidance	30	57
About right	20	38
Would value freer hand	2	4
Don't know	1	2

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

Despite the extent to which providers claim to be relying on their own experience, there is a considerable uniformity about the main elements of jobsearch training which they undertake. We sought information about what they provided under four main categories, as follows:

Labour market orientation: *ie* helping the jobseeker to assess what jobs are available locally, their chances of getting one, the skills they might need to acquire in order to get it, and the likely terms and conditions they might expect to find in such a job, *etc.*

Vacancy-hunting: *ie* training the jobseeker in how he/she should go about looking for vacancies, where to look, who to ask, the various sources of help and advice which they could call on in implementing jobsearch, *etc.*

Self-presentation: *ie* advice to the jobseeker about the importance of presenting themselves to advantage to potential employers, the steps they might take to improve self-presentation, and how to look good to an employer, on paper, on the telephone, at interview, *etc.*

Practical assistance: *ie* the direct provision to the jobseeker of tangible help, in the shape of access to resources (telephones, employer directories, employment agencies), *etc.*

Provision under each of these four headings is discussed separately below. However, we should note that at this level of generality, virtually every provider provided all four forms of help, as Table 3.5 shows.

If there is any variety at this level, then there is a slight tendency towards the more procedural/mechanical aspects of jobsearch, and a corresponding inclination away from teaching jobseekers to understand how the labour market works and might be made to work for them, but the variation is not strongly marked, and we should recall that the sample size is very small.

Table 3.5 Main elements of jobsearch training provided

	N	%
Labour market orientation	50	94
Vacancy hunting	51	96
Self presentation	52	98
Practical assistance	52	98

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

3.4.1 Labour market orientation

One of the critical components of successful jobsearch is having a realistic focus about the sort of job being sought. The most successful jobseekers are those who engage in jobsearch with moderate intensity and a precise and attainable job goal, rather than implementing a frenzied hunt for 'anything going'. Realism in this respect embraces both the likelihood that the jobseeker's existing attributes, as well as the ones probably being developed by the skill training element of Training for Work, are within a reasonable distance of employers' recruitment criteria for the job being sought. By simultaneously reviewing and bringing into alignment these attributes and those required by particular jobs, jobseekers are encouraged to develop a focused jobsearch. This enables them to develop appropriate methods of vacancy-hunting and self-presentation, according to the advertising, recruitment and selection conventions surrounding access to their desired job.

In order to achieve some degree of focus, jobseekers may need help in 1) identifying appropriate types of job, in relation to their personal attributes; 2) identifying local employers (or types of employer) who are likely to have vacancies in these types of job; and 3) ensuring that the jobseeker has a reasonably accurate appreciation of the broad conditions of work likely to be experienced in such a job. Most of our sample of providers did undertake this sort of training, although for most it did not constitute a substantial part of their curriculum. Table 3.6 shows that close on nine out of ten providers undertook one or other of these components of jobsearch training. Three quarters of them undertook all three. However, on average, this did not constitute much more than two days out of the nine allocated to jobsearch training.

Table 3.6 Provision of training in labour market orientation

	N = Yes	% = Yes	Average time (hours)
Identifying appropriate jobs, accessible to the trainees' skills and experience	45	85	5.0
Identifying local employers likely to have vacancies	46	87	7.0
Alerting jobseeker to terms and conditions likely to apply to such jobs	47	89	2.6

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

As the table shows, relatively few of our providers did not undertake at least some training in this area. Where they did not, it was primarily because they did not think it useful, or because they did not think it necessary. In the main, this was because they had already undertaken reviews of this kind during the preparation of the individual participation plan, to which several providers allocated a number of days, often including this sort of iteration between skills, training, job goal and labour market conditions as part of it.

3.4.2 Vacancy-hunting

There is considerable literature[1] testifying to the complexity and diversity of the means used by employers to announce, recruit for and select to their vacancies, and it is unnecessary to repeat it here. What it shows is that most employers use more than one method of announcing their vacancies, and the methods favoured vary according to occupation, employer type and the state of the labour market. At the same time, there is a tendency among jobseekers to narrow their jobsearch as their duration of unemployment rises, their motivation slackens, and their expectations about the usefulness of some of the methods decline. Dawes[2], for example, suggests that direct approaches to employers (both guided by recommendation and speculative) are used regularly or as the main method of jobsearch by relatively few of his long term unemployed respondents. Manwaring[3] argues that 'under conditions of high unemployment of long duration,

---

[1]   For a summary, see *Jobsearch: Modelling Behaviour and Improving Practice* , Atkinson *et al.*, Institute of Manpower Studies, Report No. 260, 1994, or *Employers' Recruitment Practices: A Review of the Literature* . Ahmad and Hardcastle, Employment Service, 1992.

[2]   Dawes L, *Long Term Unemployment and Labour Market Flexibility* , Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester, August 1993.

[3]   Manwaring T, 'The Extended Internal Labour Market', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 8, No.2, pp. 161-187.

the number of those making direct application falls dramatically' (pp. 163).

The model of jobsearch developed by IMS for the Employment Service[4] distinguishes between three principal avenues towards the identification of (1) formally advertised vacancies, using various press and other media, recruitment agencies, Jobcentres, etc.; (2) forthcoming vacancies, using personal conta ts among friends, family etc., as a means of securing early advice about them and a personal recommendation to the recruiter; and (3) new vacancies, identified through speculative approaches to appropriate employers, with the aim of coinciding with a new vacancy or getting onto a waiting list for forthcoming ones. It is suggested that establishing and maintaining three such strands within the jobseeker's activities should maximise the receptivity of the jobseeker to vacancy information, and minimise the likelihood that they might miss out on a whole tranche of the labour market, simply through listening in the wrong places, or not listening in some at all. Jobsearch training ought therefore to direct jobseekers to each of these three avenues, and teach them how to make the most of each.

It is also suggested in the Employment Service model that jobseekers should prepare a log of their vacancy hunting activities, essentially for three reasons. Firstly, there may be considerable cross-fertilisation between the three avenues, each acting to reinforce the others, as well as possessing its own legitimacy; for example, diligent tracking of formal advertising can produce a target list of employers who are known to employ people in the desired job, because they have previously advertised for them, and so who should be targeted for speculative application, or whose workforce should be reviewed to elicit any contacts which might be exploitable. Secondly, jobseekers should be encouraged to maintain an active file of waiting lists they are on, vacancies they have applied for but have not heard about, prospects they have identified, etc., in order that they do not let any potential leads and openings drop. Thirdly, jobseekers ought to be encouraged to fine tune their efforts by evaluating how well or badly they are doing, and a record of what they have done will serve as a good basis for such a periodic review.

Thus with these four aspects of vacancy-hunting in mind (formal avenues, informal avenues, speculative approaches, and maintaining a log), we asked our providers what training they provided in this area. Table 3.7 shows their responses.

We can see that very high proportions of providers offered training in all three avenues of vacancy-hunting, although rather fewer taught jobseekers to maintain a log, and to review their jobsearch occasionally. The somewhat lower incidence of training in speculative approaches is explained by the occupational specialisation of some of the providers, in occupations where cold-calling was not felt to be an accepted and legitimate method of approach to employers.

---

[4]   Atkinson *et al.*, 1994, *op. cit.*

Table 3.7 Provision of vacancy-hunting training

	N = Yes	% = Yes	Average time (hours)
Identification & pursuit of formal channels	50	94	7.0
Identification & pursuit of informal channels	49	92	3.3
Identification & pursuit of speculative channels	46	87	4.5
Drawing up & maintaining a log of jobsearch activities	37	70	3.0

Source: *IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response*

On average, trainees would be spending 2.5 days on this sort of training. However, it is evident that they would be spending almost as much time on formal avenues of jobsearch, as they would on informal and speculative approaches put together. This may be explicable by the fact that teaching in the former might be somewhat more 'hands-on' than the other two, and might involve actually going through a selection of newspapers, periodicals, *etc*. Against this, it should be said that conducting effective informal and speculative jobsearch is much more difficult for most people than the former, and generally requires of them much subtlety, sensitivity and imagination. It is reasonable to suggest that it ought to take much longer to teach and to acquire these skills, since they are much less susceptible to learning by rote than those appropriate to the formal avenue (go to Jobcentre daily, scan newspaper A daily and newspaper B weekly, *etc.*). Moreover, there is considerable evidence to suggest that it is precisely these informal and speculative avenues from which long term unemployed people retreat, as the evidence of their own eyes reveals the existence of some (albeit perhaps few) vacancies at the Jobcentre or in the paper, in contrast to their failure perhaps to elicit any through informal and speculative approaches.

On average, employers fill about half their vacancies through informal avenues; for occupations lower down the labour market, among smaller businesses, and during times of excess labour supply, this proportion increases significantly. It is remarkable that our providers appear to spend so little time helping Training for Work participants to recognise, understand and master the techniques which would probably double the number of vacancies they might address.

3.4.3 Self-presentation training

Attention to the 'nuts and bolts' of jobsearch, such as having a legible and relevant CV, taking time and effort to fill in application forms

properly, making the most of oneself on the telephone or at interview, *etc.*, are undoubtedly prosaic, and may seem relatively obvious. However, in a buyers' labour market they are vital, and shortcomings in this area will undoubtedly cancel out any hard-won improvements to trainees' jobsearch skills in other, preparatory ones. It is likely that such shortcomings are more prevalent among Training for Work participants than they are among jobseekers as a whole. For example, close on ten per cent of the Training for Work trainees from our leavers sample had been identified by their provider as having literacy difficulties, which might be expected to undermine their ability to present themselves effectively on paper.

If the potential benefits of the more informal approaches to vacancy-hunting are not so evident to providers, they are undoubtedly aware of the need for, and undertake training designed to promote, improvements in the ways in which Training for Work participants will present themselves to potential employers. Virtually all our providers provided training in all the elements of self-presentation which we identified, and on average they spent about three days in doing so, as Table 3.8 shows.

Table 3.8 Provision of self-presentation training

	N =Yes	% = Yes	Average time (hours)
Preparation of individual CV	52	98	4.5
Help with application forms	52	98	3.7
Help with letter writing	51	96	4.5
Help with telephone technique	50	94	3.4
Help with interview manner	52	98	4.3
Confidence building	52	98	9.9

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

In addition to the more straightforward aspects of self-presentation shown in the table, we also asked our providers about their efforts to engender improved motivation and confidence-building among Training for Work participants. This proved the least satisfactory aspect to identify separately. Although virtually every provider explicitly tried to build it in to their exit training programme, few could say how much time was spent on this, as distinct from the other elements. Indeed, several maintained that improving self-confidence and motivation was more properly thought of as an output from their training, rather than an input. For this reason, it makes less sense to try to measure how much time is devoted to it, and as relatively few providers were able to cite a figure, it is not one which we present with much self-confidence of our own; however, as the table shows, a further day or more of jobsearch training is devoted to raising the self-confidence of participants about their

chances of securing a job, and thereby raising their motivation to put it in to practice. However, this is rarely a distinct day of the week, rather it is time spent continuously while delivering the other various aspects of jobsearch training.

3.4.4 Access to resources and services

Jobsearch activity can be relatively expensive, particularly for individuals whose financial resources have been run down by an extended period of unemployment. Provision of some access to jobsearch resources, such as telephones, paper, stamps, newspapers, employer directories, *etc.* can assist jobseekers both to refine their skills in the short term, and to implement them in the medium term.

In addition to the direct provision of tangible resources, which individual participants may have difficulty affording from their own pockets, providers are often in a good position to provide, or provide referrals to, other services which can significantly assist jobsearch. Some providers, in addition to providing Training for Work to their local TEC, may also provide a Jobclub activity for the Employment Service locally. Others may well act as private employment agencies themselves. The former would be in an ideal position to enable their Training for Work participants to get access to Jobclub advice, guidance and resources through associate membership. The latter would be well-placed to provide job leads directly to participants. Even the least well-placed provider ought to be able to teach participants about what the Jobcentre can offer them, and how to get the most out of their local Jobcentre. It ought also to have at least some visibility with local employers, perhaps with vacancies in the occupations for which the provider is training.

Any provider ought to be able to add some value to the jobseeker's search for a job, by exploiting their visibility, contacts, and knowledge of the ropes on his or her behalf. Some may be particularly well placed to do this. All of them would help participants to find work by providing cheaper collective access to resources which individuals may find costly to acquire/provide themselves. Of course, how far providers go down this road is largely a matter of their judgement and their pockets. A small number of providers had received lump sum grants from their TEC to build up, for example, libraries of learning materials about jobs, jobsearch and the labour market, but most would have had to fund such provision from income. We were concerned to establish the scale on which such resources and services might be available to Training for Work participants, and Table 3.9 shows which of these resources and services our providers laid on as part of, or as a supplement to, their jobsearch training.

We can see that very high proportions of these providers say that they provide some access to the tangible resources required for effective jobsearch, although the proportion falls slightly where the marginal cost is likely to be high (stamps, paper, envelopes, telephone). It is perhaps surprising that one in ten providers does not provide newspapers for the use of jobseeking Training for Work participants. The cost is relatively low, and their utility to jobseekers is enormously high (as we will show later, our participant survey

32

4 1

found that fully 89 per cent of the participants used local newspapers as part of their jobsearch while on, or after, Training for Work).

Table 3.9 Provision of resources and services for trainees

Resources			Services		
	N = Yes	% = Yes		N = Yes	% = Yes
Telephone directories, Yellow Pages, Thomson's	52	98	Introduction to Employment Agency	29	55
Newspapers/journals	48	90	Jobcentre referral	49	92
Employer directories	46	86	Jobclub membership	38	71
Photocopying/printing	51	96	Direct vacancy notification	50	94
Paper/envelopes/stamps	43	81			
Telephones	47	88			
All	38	71	All	19	36

Source. IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

So far as services are concerned, the picture is slightly different. Very high proportions will refer participants to local Jobcentres. This in itself may not be very useful *per se*, as our participant survey shows that 96 per cent of them had already used the Jobcentre during their jobsearch before they joined Training for Work (see below). Nevertheless, it may be useful if it helps individuals understand better how to use the services the Jobcentre provides. In addition, nine out of ten providers also claim to provide direct vacancy notification to individual participants, presumably acting as a sort of informal labour exchange. The important question here of course turns on volume; how many such vacancies are likely to flow through their books, compared with the number of participants flowing the other way through them? This was beyond the scope of our interview to pursue systematically, and where we did chase it up, the providers were unable to give any reliable estimates of volume.

Only about half our providers referred participants on to private employment agencies, which is perhaps surprising in view of their penetration into the labour market, particularly in some of the occupations most often found in Training for Work, such as clerical and WP jobs. Of those who did not provide such referrals, 41 per cent said this was because they did not believe that such introductions were likely to be useful/helpful to the jobseeker. Of the remainder, only one provider cited cost, and the others either gave no answer (13 per cent) or gave a variety of other reasons (42 per cent).

Only about three in four providers (71 per cent) passed on their participants to Jobclubs. Given that the Employment Service refers most of the entrants to Training for Work to the providers in question, it is surprising that a quarter of them do not routinely

provide access to Jobclub facilities to them in return. These non-referring providers gave a very wide variety of reasons for not doing so, but the most common was that they had themselves already provided jobsearch training, either better or more appropriate to the occupation in question than the Jobclub would provide.

3.4.5 Delivery of jobsearch training

Finally, in addition to the various components of the jobsearch curriculum, we also sought information about how jobsearch training was delivered, and in particular whether it was simply taught, or whether it was implemented under supervision. In only six providers (11 per cent) was it suggested that jobsearch training and jobsearch practice were distinct and respectively the separate responsibility of the provider and the participant. However, only 25 (47 per cent) formally coached trainees as they implemented their jobsearch techniques. The remainder said that their tutors would, and did, offer informal help with implementation, but it would usually be up to the participant to ask, and conditional on the availability of tutors' time.

3.5 Provider general perspectives on jobsearch training

In concluding our interviews with providers we asked them some more general questions about Training for Work and jobsearch training.

3.5.1 Usefulness of jobsearch training

In general, our providers thought that jobsearch training was a very important and useful element in the training programmes they delivered. Table 3.10 shows that four out of five of them thought that it was a very useful part of Training for Work, with almost all the remainder seeing some utility in it.

Table 3.10 Providers' views about usefulness of jobsearch training

Is jobsearch training a useful part of Training for Work?	N	%
Yes, very useful	43	81
Yes, of some use	9	17
Not very useful	1	2
Not at all useful	0	—

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

We asked all of the providers interviewed whether they had any comments on Training for Work in general, or on jobsearch training in particular. Among those ten providers who did not feel that

4 0

jobsearch was very useful, we recorded the following comments, which throw some light on their assessment.

'Jobsearch is not very effective primarily because there are few jobs. Jobsearch would be more usefully done by Jobclub in co-operation with provider.'

'It is very difficult to make a general assessment of Jobsearch as trainees vary a great deal in their motivation, ability etc. Trainees who want to find work will do so anyway, although they will gain some help from provider.'

'Provider is currently operating a review of Jobsearch. They have a pilot programme where they are running Jobsearch more intensively. If it is successful they will expand it.'

'Too much emphasis is placed on the provider to deliver Jobsearch. Believes that more onus should be placed on trainee.'

'Training programmes are constantly being changed and are not allowed to become established and as a result their effectiveness is limited.'

'Jobsearch is predominantly open-learning based. The provider works within a large catchment area which is very rural. Would appreciate more guidance from TECs about what to provide etc.'

At the same time, all our providers thought that jobsearch training would improve the individual trainee's chances in the job market; four out of five said that it would be a major help in jobfinding, the others conceded that it would be of some help, but was unlikely to be critical. None thought that jobsearch training was a waste of time or that it did not add much value.

3.5.2 But what do the participants think of it?

However, the providers were less sanguine about participants' views on the helpfulness or otherwise of jobsearch training. About 15 per cent of them held that participants did not find it of much use, or worse, as Table 3.11 shows. Only a third recognised any strong demand among the participants, although half thought that there was evidence of some demand.

Participants' own views about the usefulness or otherwise of jobsearch training under Training for Work, and their access to it, are discussed in the next chapter; we will show that they have a somewhat different view, that in their experience, non-provision is widespread, and it appears to flow just as much from shortcoming among providers, as it does from participant resistance, disinterest or disutility.

Table 3.11 Providers' views about participants' attitudes to jobsearch training

Is there much demand from participants for jobsearch training?

	N	%
Yes, strong demand	17	32
Yes, some demand	28	53
Not much demand	4	8
No, they don't want it	3	6
No, they actively oppose it	1	2

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

3.5.3 Effectiveness of jobsearch training

Moving on, it is clear that these providers could not have any reliable information about the actual effectiveness of the jobsearch training they provided. Although they would have reasonably accurate information on the level of job outcomes they achieved after Training for Work, they would have little or no basis on which to attribute a part of this outcome to their jobsearch training. Nevertheless, they certainly had some qualitative information to this end, often derived from individual instances of feedback from post Training for Work jobhunters, and in addition, it is reasonable to suppose that in deciding how much to spend 1 jobsearch training, they would have an eye to the likely consequences for positive job outcomes, and so to their future income. While it must be accepted that such estimates are almost always implicit, and rarely based on hard evidence, we nevertheless persuaded our providers to tell us how many of their participants would be likely to be looking for a job after completing Training for Work, and how many would be likely to find one within 13 weeks. We then asked them to say what this figure would be, if they had not provided any jobsearch training. In practice, most balked at this, asserted that they would have no way of making such counter-factual estimates, but we eventually persuaded all of them to give an estimate. Their responses to these questions can be used to inform our ideas about their broad perspectives on jobsearch training and its usefulness.

Our providers estimated that about a third of their Training for Work participants who were looking for a job when they completed their training would have found one within 13 weeks. The providers estimated that about 85 per cent of these would have received jobsearch training (Section 3.2). Their estimates for the proportion of trainees who would have found work had they not received jobsearch training, is 15 per cent. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the providers believe that jobsearch training will greatly improve the labour market chances of their trainees after Training for Work;

roughly speaking, and bearing in mind the 'guesstimate' basis of this calculation, the providers reckon that jobsearch training more than doubles the positive job outcomes achieved after Training for Work. Chart 3.2 shows the relationship between providers' estimates of the positive job outcomes which they achieved at the 13 week horizon, and the proportion of participants' time on Training for Work which was devoted to jobsearch training. This can provide us with a view about the positive effects of placing more emphasis on jobsearch training within Training for Work.

Chart 3.2 Time spent on jobsearch training and estimated job outcomes

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

In this chart we have arranged the 53 providers from left to right in ascending order of the emphasis they place on jobsearch training, measured according to the proportion of Training for Work time devoted to jobsearch training, and shown by the bold line. Against this, we show a scatter plot of positive job outcome rates, as estimated by the provider. As this plot is extremely variable, we have smoothed it, and the trend line is also shown. Chart 3.2 shows that the more emphasis that providers place on jobsearch training, the more likely they are on average to achieve better positive outcomes. However, we must note that there is great variation around this average, and the slope of the trend line is not particularly steep. Still, it is encouragingly in the right direction.

On this basis, we can move to consider how far that trend line relies on jobsearch training. As stated above, we required providers to estimate what would have happened had no jobsearch training been provided. Using the difference between this estimate and the actual outcome, and expressing it as a proportion of the actual, we have calculated a jobsearch training effect, and this is shown in Chart 3.3.

Chart 3.3 Time spent on jobsearch training and estimated contribution to job outcomes

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

This chart is organised on the same basis as Chart 3.2, and we can again observe the rising emphasis placed on jobsearch training from left to right (bold line again). Plotted against it, (again, as a scatter plot, and trend line), we have the providers' estimates for the percentage increase in positive outcomes they believe jobsearch training has given them. Once again the variation is enormous, from a handful who perceive no additional effect, to another handful who reckon that jobsearch training doubles positive outcome. However, once again the trend line rises weakly to the right, showing that the more a provider thinks job outcomes are influenced by jobsearch training, the more likely he/she is to provide more of it. If their estimates are right, then the results show that increased emphasis on jobsearch training does give rise to improvements in positive job outcome rates.

3.5.4 Costs of jobsearch training

Our results were inconclusive on the costs of jobsearch training. Time constraints did not allow us to pursue this issue in any detail, and so we simply asked whether the jobsearch element of Training for Work constituted a particularly costly one to provide, compared with the other parts, on a week-by-week basis. Table 3.12 shows the response; it is evident that most providers think that jobsearch training costs about the same to provide as other elements. There are nearly as many who think it less costly, as there are those who think it more so.

47

Table 3.12 Providers' views about cost of jobsearch training

	N	%
More expensive	12	23
About the same	28	53
Less expensive	11	21
Don't know	2	4

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53

3.5.5 Future developments in jobsearch

We asked our respondents how they would seek to develop jobsearch training if they had a free hand. As Table 3.13 shows, about a third of them would make no great changes. For the remainder, the most frequently cited development would be to do more of it (in the sense of doing it more thoroughly, in greater depth); just over half the sample would wish to go in this direction.

Table 3.13 Developments in jobsearch training (with free hand)

	N	%
More of it/longer training	28	53
Less of it/shorter training	2	4
More clients get it	2	4
Fewer clients get it	1	2
Different forms of delivery	5	10
No change	18	34

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

There were only a few other suggestions; six per cent of the sample would attend to the proportion of trainees receiving it, with four per cent in favour of more participants getting it, and two per cent, fewer. One in ten would explore more effective means of delivering or teaching jobsearch skills.

Cost is seen as the single most important constraint on making these developments, as Table 3.14 shows.

Table 3.14 Constraints on developing jobsearch training

	N	%
Cost	28	52
Specialist resources needed	9	17
Timetabling within Training for Work	19	36
TEC rules	4	8
Other	7	13

Source: IMS Providers Survey. N = 53, multiple response

However, about one in three providers would find it difficult to reconcile any expansion or change in delivery of jobsearch training with the timetabling of other elements within the programme. Certainly, this training is most cost-effectively delivered to groups of individuals, rather than one-to-one, and their simultaneous availability, free of college days, work placement, and other aspects of Training for Work, was ready widely cited by providers as a headache.

One in ten was prevented from expanding Training for Work by the lack of specialist resources, in some cases physical, in other cases, tutors. Most felt that this was simply a sub-set of cost however. As we might expect in view of what is said above, relatively few providers felt unduly constrained by TEC rules and regulations.

3.6 Summary

Providers had generally been left to their own devices in determining what provision to offer and to whom. They claimed that a very high proportion of participants had access to jobsearch training, and that about 85 per cent of participants actually received it. Reluctance among participants was cited as the main reason for non receipt. Only a third of them recognised any strong demand for jobsearch training among the participants, but almost all thought that it improved the chances of getting a job.

The average volume of jobsearch training given was nine days per trainee, or about nine per cent of the available training days, and the main element (three days) centred on self-presentation skills.

4. Individual Participants in Training for Work

In this chapter we will be concerned with the recipients of jobsearch training, and drawing on the third element in the research, our survey of 374 individuals taking part in Training for Work in the eight TEC areas concerned between April and December 1993. We will be looking at their needs for jobsearch training (Section 4.2), the extent to which they received it (Section 4.3), what they received and what they thought of it (Section 4.4). Our assessment of whether or not it contributed to their finding work on leaving Training for Work follows in Chapter 5. But we begin this chapter by looking at the characteristics of the sample of individuals.

4.1 Participant sample characteristics

The sample of Training for Work participants was drawn from the central database of Training for Work leavers held for the Employment Department by SIA Ltd. This arrangement was found to be more practical than our original intention of collecting a leavers database directly from the TFW2 records held by individual TECs, on account of the considerable variety between TECs in the completeness of these data, and the different ways and locations in which it is held. Our initial review of the 'raw' TEC records led us to the view that the data would be more reliable and more consistent if drawn from a single source. The other considerable advantage of this approach was that it provided a larger leavers database from which we could sample on a scientific basis.

The base sample was the complete leavers records for all eight participating TECs. When we drew the sample in January 1994, it contained some 4,108 records. Because there is some variation in the speed with which TECs submit their records to this central database, and because the TECs themselves are of different sizes, the size and currency of this sample varied somewhat between the eight, ranging from 126 to over 500 records. We therefore used the following sampling criteria to produce the target sample.

Duration of Training for Work. A considerable number of Training for Work participants are either on relatively short work preparation courses or withdraw early from their course. It did not seem sensible to include such short service trainees in the database, for we can assume that they would have picked up relatively little in the way of jobsearch skills in their short stay on Training for Work. We thus excluded some 567 leavers from the sample on grounds that they had only been on Training for Work for less than two weeks.

Employed status. Where Training for Work is used to train workers who are already in employment, we might expect that the jobsearch element of that training would be peripheral, or that such workers would be unlikely to need to use their jobsearch skills, being already in work. Thus we also excluded a further 433 trainees on this basis.

Incomplete or inconsistent records. Errors in data entry, or inconsistencies in a number of records led us to exclude a further 38 records.

Entry date. The biggest variation within the database related to the distribution of leaving dates. In part this was due to inter-TEC differences in the speed with which they submitted their records to the database, but it was also due to the customised nature of Training for Work training and the consequent variation between individuals in their planned stay on Training for Work. As a result, we decided against using the leaving date as a sampling criterion. While this would have produced a neat means of contrasting different experiences after Training for Work on a consistent time period, it would also have disastrously unbalanced the sample between the eight TECs. As a result we used start date as a principal sampling criterion. In five of the TECs, we sampled all leavers who joined Training for Work in the two months between 1 April, when it began, and the end of May. In two TECs we extended this time frame to the beginning of June in order to get a large enough sample, and in the third, we were obliged to use all the records available, whenever they had joined Training for Work.

Thus, the target sample was all those who joined Training for Work in the spring of 1993, who stayed on it for more than a fortnight, who were not of 'employed status', and for whom we had accurate records. This amounted to 1,768 individuals, of whom we sought interviews with 350.

Some 374 interviews were conducted; a relatively low response rate, but we had deliberately over-sampled our target sample, as we had little reliable information about attrition or willingness to participate. A surprisingly large number of participants were no longer to be found at the address provided from the TFW2. However, relatively few declined to take part in the research.

The participant interviews were conducted by RSL. Each of the target sample participants was contacted by letter, asking for their agreement to take part in the study. Those wishing to do so were interviewed at home, or in some cases at work.

Table 4.1 shows the characteristics of the 374 Training for Work participants who were interviewed. Two thirds of them were male, about half had been out of work for more than a year, a quarter of them had qualified for Training for Work for reasons other than unemployment, and their age distribution was biased somewhat towards younger people. On the whole, they had not stayed on

51

Training for Work for long, with a third staying for less than 8 weeks, and half staying for between 8 and 16 weeks[1].

Table 4.1 Target and achieved sample of training for work participants

		Target sample	Achieved sample
	Male	69	69
	Female	31	31
Duration of Unemployment	Under 12 months	56	53
	One to two years	21	22
	More than two years	19	21
Eligibility	Six months + u/e	74	74
	Other	24	24
Age	Under 20	5	5
	20 to 29	42	41
	30 to 39	24	25
	40 to 49	18	19
	50 +	11	10
Duration of Training for Work	Under eight weeks	47	36
	Eight to 16 weeks	37	51
	17 to 24 weeks	15	13
	25 weeks +	1	1
		N = 1,768	N = 374

Source: IMS Participants Survey

Table 4.1 shows that despite the relatively low participation rate, the achieved sample nevertheless closely mirrors the target sample in the main characteristics with which we will be concerned. To the extent that there is bias, it works to our advantage in that it offsets

---

[1]   We should note that the target sample is even more strongly biased towards those with relatively short stays on Training for Work. This is explained by the timing of the study; the sample was composed of people who had joined Training for Work after March 1993, who had left it, and had had a reasonable period of jobsearch following it. This necessarily precluded people who had remained on Training for Work for a long period.

somewhat the domination of the target sample by low duration participants, and thus the achieved sample might be more widely representative of Training for Work leavers today than it was of our target group.

As Table 4.2 shows, four out of five had been unemployed when they entered Training for Work, with the rest scattered quite widely across a number of other activities, at college, engaged in domestic or care activities, otherwise economically inactive, *etc*. Those claiming to be working when they entered appear to represent a small number of employed status trainees, who were not excluded from our sample owing to deficiencies in their Training for Work 2 records. Between joining Training for Work and the time of our survey, on average 8 months, about 22 per cent had moved into work (and stayed in), the proportion unemployed had fallen from 83 to 57 per cent, and the scatter of other activities remained largely unchanged.

Table 4.2 Status of Training for Work trainees on entry and in February 1994

	On entry to Training for Work		February 1994	
	N	%	N	%
Working full-time	11	3	56	15
Working part-time	5	1	24	6
Self employed	2	1	23	6
Unemployed (benefit)	294	79	196	52
Unemployed (no benefit)	15	4	20	5
At college	11	3	20	5
Government scheme	7	2	7	2
Domestic	15	4	14	4
Sick	9	2	13	3
Other	5	1	1	—

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 374

4.2 Do Training for Work participants need jobsearch training?

One of the important criteria which both the TECs and the Training Providers cited in determining who should receive jobsearch training, was an assessment of the need for such training. This was variously defined in practice, and was variously elicited from the participants. Nevertheless, some assessment of need played an important part in selection for this part of Training for Work. Our results provide an independent assessment of this need.
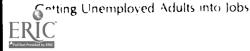
4.2.1 Work experience before Training for Work

Before they joined Training for Work, the job-finding experience of these Training for Work participants was markedly restricted and, perhaps as a result, about half of them were not confident that they knew how to find work when they had last needed to look for it. Of those who were not working when they entered Training for Work, one in ten had never had a job of any kind. Of those who had worked, just over a third (36 per cent) had had only one job, a quarter had had two, and a fifth had had three. In short, only sixteen per cent of the entire sample had had more than three jobs in their life. It is hardly surprising therefore that 19 per cent of them described their state of confidence about finding a job before Training for Work as 'not at all confident/didn't really know where to start'. A further 29 per cent said that they did not feel very confident as things had changed a lot since they had last needed to find a job. Just over a third though were quite confident, because they 'knew the ropes and had found jobs easily in the past'.

Past experience of job hunting might well be of rather less help to those envisaging a change of occupation, or indeed without any specific job in mind. We found that a substantial proportion of respondents fell into this group; those who had been looking for a job, without perhaps a very clear picture of what it might entail. Twenty nine per cent of those who had been looking for work before joining Training for Work had no clear idea of the type of job they wanted to do. Of the remainder, who did have such a clear idea of the type of job they were looking for, 45 per cent had not done that job before.

If their experiences before joining Training for Work did not offer a very sound foundation on which to build an effective and informed search for a job, neither did their previous access to jobsearch advice and guidance; sixty per cent of those who had been looking for work before joining Training for Work had never received any training or guidance about how to find a job. This was particularly marked among older jobseekers (71 per cent of those over 50 had enjoyed no such training), but correspondingly less evident among the longer term unemployed. Surprisingly few people (five per cent) cited friends, family or workmates as sources of advice about jobsearch methods, and the principal sources were formal; 11 per cent cited the Jobcentre, 12 per cent a Jobclub, and eight per cent some other Employment Service programme. As we might expect, the Careers Service was more often cited among the younger participants.

Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the jobsearch skills of this Training for Work cohort were not well developed. Their prior experience of job-hunting was restricted; their perceived confidence in their jobsearching was relatively weak, and at worst, very low; their propensity to stick with the (occupational) parts of the labour market with which they were fa·   ar was restricted; and as a group, they had received precious littie jobsearch training or advice and guidance elsewhere.

4.2.2 Jobsearch before Training for Work

Despite this apparently poor showing, our respondents attested to having had a fairly comprehensive portfolio of vacancy-hunting methods at their disposal before they had joined Training for Work. Ninety per cent of our participants had looked for work before joining Training for Work, and Table 4.3 shows how they claimed they had done so.

It must be emphasised that there are issues of recollection and retrospection involved here; our participants were being asked about where and how they had looked for vacancies about a year ago, and had all taken part in a programme intended to help them in this direction during that period. The data shows the dominance of formal methods of jobsearch, with more than 90 per cent using the Jobcentre and local newspapers. Nevertheless, about two thirds had also used informal networks of family and friends to identify opportunities, and almost as many had tried direct, speculative approaches to potential employers. As the duration of unemployment lengthened, so the use of formal methods increased slightly, the use of speculative approaches declined, and the use of informal networks increased. However, none of these variations was very marked.

Table 4.3 Jobsearch methods used before joining Training for Work

	Vacancy search before Training For Work. All jobseekers	
	N	%
Local newspapers	318	95
National newspapers	123	37
Trade press	72	21
TV, radio, teletext	6	2
Private employment agencies	84	25
Jobcentre	322	96
Careers Service	75	22
Noticeboards, etc.	145	43
Speculative contact	198	59
Through friends, relatives, etc.	214	64
Other	2	1

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 336

Table 4.4 shows that our respondents also claimed to have undertaken a fairly intense jobsearch prior to joining Training for Work.

Table 4.4 Frequency of jobsearch before joining Training for Work

	N	% looking for a job
Every day	129	38
Several times a week	173	51
Weekly	27	8
Less often	6	2

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 336

Despite their evident lack of confidence in their jobseeking abilities, our respondents do not demonstrate any evident lack of effort. We observe no systematic variation in the intensity of jobsearch according to age or duration of unemployment among these respondents.

Despite the claimed spread of jobsearch methods and the intensity of the search, our respondents had had, by definition, relatively little success in implementing it. However, we sought to throw some light on the possible deficiencies in their jobsearch activities by asking them how they would describe their experiences of looking for work before they had joined Training for Work. Table 4.5 shows their responses, and we can see that the most common failing was at the first hurdle; two in five of our entrants to Training for Work who had been looking for work said that they had found no, or few, vacancies to apply for. Thus, despite the claimed breadth and intensity of their jobsearch, it was obviously not working at even the most basic level for a significant minority of them. A further third found that they were most likely to fall at the shortlisting hurdle; for them, an effective search for vacancies which they thought suitable was undermined because they did not have, or did not sufficiently well present, the required attributes sought by the recruiter. A further quarter were successful in finding suitable vacancies, and appear to have possessed the right attributes, but they were pipped at the post by apparently stronger candidates.

What these data suggest is that for the majority of these jobseekers, the skill they most lacked was simply finding vacancies for which they correctly felt they were suitable. Of course, by virtue of their falling at this relatively early hurdle, these jobseekers had not had much exposure to the later ones (such as presentation and interview skills), and they might well have fallen at them too. This implies that an important priority for jobsearch training ought to be on the basics of jobsearch: getting individuals to a realistic appreciation of what jobs they might get, and teaching them how to find such jobs. It is only on this basis that the presentational elements are likely to have much effectiveness for positive job outcomes.

Table 4.5 Dominant experiences of jobsearch before Training for Work

	N	% of those looking for work found
Few/no vacancies	134	40
Some vacancies but too low paid	106	32
Vacancies filled by time applied	49	15
Didn't get shortlisted/interviewed	36	36
Got interviewed, but not selected	86	26
None of these	8	2

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 336, multiple response

4.3 Provision of jobsearch training during Training for Work

Our discussions with TEC managers highlighted the contractual requirement placed on providers to offer jobsearch training, and the importance placed by the TEC on such training as a means of securing positive job outcomes on completion. Furthermore, our interviews with the providers showed that the providers generally shared this view; they claimed that a very high proportion of their trainees have access to jobsearch training. Nine out of ten provide·s claimed that all of their trainees had access to jobsearch training during their Training for Work course. Furthermore, the providers generally attributed a significant positive influence to jobsearch training as an aid to securing positive job outcomes. We have already noted that the TECs relied heavily on this belief in a link between jobsearch provision and value-added in terms of positive job outcomes as a strong incentive on providers to provide the necessary jobsearch training in both the necessary quantity and quality.

4.3.1 What jobsearch training opportunities were offered?

With these findings in mind, it is therefore very surprising to find that at best only about half of our sample (52 per cent) enjoyed the effective provision of jobsearch training.

The effective accessibility of jobsearch training turns on the existence of such training, the participants' knowledge about it, and what they might have been offered. Table 4.6 shows our findings on the effective provision of jobsearch training to individuals, taking into account participants' recollection of what was offered to them, their knowledge of what was available, and the option we gave them to reconsider. Where there might be an element of doubt, it assumes that participants did have effective access. It therefore represents our most favourable estimate of the effective provision, and shows that at best

only 52 per cent of the sample were provided with jobsearch training opportunities.

The first part of Table 4.6 shows that fully 55 per cent say that jobsearch training was not offered to them. It is tempting to turn immediately to the provider results and explain this finding by reference to the providers' assertion that they discriminate in providing jobsearch training by concentrating the offer on those who they judge would benefit from it. However, in view of what we have said about the participants' level of confidence in their jobsearch skills, their restricted experience, training, and record of success as jobseekers, this does not seem a particularly compelling explanation.

Table 4.6 Jobsearch training offered/available to Training for Work participants

	N	%		Total to whom jobsearch accessible	
				N	%
Whole sample (N = 374)	N	%		N	%
Yes, jobsearch training was offered	162	43	→	162	43
No, jobsearch training not offered	207	55			
Don't know/NA/other	5	1			
Of those not offered and not certain (N = 212)					
Yes, jobsearch was available	21	10	→	21	6
No, jobsearch not available	161	76			
Don't know	29	14			
Of those claiming not available and not certain (N = 190)					
Confirms, not available and not offered	178	94			
Changes mind. Something was offered	12	6	→	12	3
Total participants to whom jobsearch training was effectively provided				195	52

Source: IMS Participants Survey

We have analysed the data to try to discern some relationship between the offer (or not) of jobsearch training, and the characteristics of the individual participants. We have reviewed both their personal characteristics and their previous labour market experience. The offer of jobsearch does not vary greatly according to either. Among the former, we looked at age, sex, their eligibility for Training For Work, and length of stay on it; only age showed any relationship, with the oldest participants slightly more likely to be offered jobsearch training. Among the latter, we looked at duration of unemployment prior to joining, the number of jobs previously held, the intensity of

jobsearch, and their expressed confidence to the offer of jobsearch training.

We conclude that positive discrimination by training providers does not explain the low level of provision. Providers may well be discriminating about who is offered jobsearch training or not, but this bears no evident relationship to the observed characteristics of the participants.

We have already indicated the bias in our participant sample towards those on Training for Work for relatively short periods. It is possible that jobsearch training may be offered more often or more overtly to those on longer stays, and our data does show that this is partly true. However, this is not a sufficiently powerful explanation; even for those participants on Training for Work for 17 to 24 weeks, 53 per cent claim that they were not offered any jobsearch training.

It could be argued that although these 374 participants took part in Training for Work in the same TEC areas as the providers whom we interviewed, they actually spent their time at other, different providers who did not provide jobsearch training so widely or overtly. However, this is hardly a convincing explanation for although we cannot prove a one to one link between provider and participant, the providers interviewed provided close to two thirds of the Training for Work places in these areas, and the participants represent a random sample of a 100 per cent census of Training for Work leavers, who joined the programme in Spring 1993. There is a slight possibility of some mismatch, but it is unlikely to account for such a gross disparity in results as the one obtained.

A further possibility is that our participants went through Training for Work quite early, and that things had improved by the time we interviewed the providers. These interviews took place during October and November 1993, while over half our Training for Work participants had left by August. While it is conceivable that some kind of improvement took place during the autumn, it is hardly likely. Certainly we found no evidence of one, and the TECs' preferred approach to quality assurance (through audit) would by its na' re provide only gradual improvements. We do not feel that the time discrepancy can explain so large a gap between claimed and experienced provision.

Another explanation is that the providers did actually offer jobsearch training, but that Training for Work trainees overlooked, spurned or otherwise rejected their offer. After all, the providers were at some pains to point out that participants' receptivity to jobsearch training was a factor in deciding who actually received it. But this is to overlook two further findings; firstly, we have already observed that over half our providers claimed that *all* their trainees actually received jobsearch training, and secondly, three quarters of the participants who claim that they were not offered jobsearch training also claim that it was not available.

This is shown in the second part of Table 4.6. We can see that among the 212 respondents who were either not offered jobsearch training or were not certain, only 21 thought that it had been available. The

remaining 190 said that it was not available or they did not know. Our assumption is that these 21 had access to jobsearch training, even though they claimed not to have been actually offered it.

The final possibilit, is that jobsearch training was available and was offered, but our participants did not know what jobsearch training really means, did not recognise it when they saw it, or had forgotten about it being offered at all. We guarded against this in the questionnaire design by ensuring that all respondents were sure exactly what was meant by jobsearch training before asking them whether it had been offered and/or was available. Furthermore, all the 190 who had said that it was either not offered or not available, were specifically asked to confirm this to the interviewer[2]. This last check turned up a further 12 individuals, who on re-consideration changed their minds and confirmed that they had been offered something like jobsearch training. We have included these also in the total number for whom jobsearch training was effectively provided. It sums to 195 individuals, or 52 per cent of the whole sample.

4.3.2 Take-up of jobsearch training under Training for Work

It takes two to tango. The effective delivery of jobsearch training requires not only that the provider provides it, but also that the participant takes up the provision. There are many reasons why they might not. We have already seen that a substantial minority of our respondents had a fairly bullish attitude towards jobsearch; when they had been looking for work prior to joining Training for Work, just over a third said that they were quite confident, because they 'knew the ropes and had found jobs easily in the past'. Other studies have pointed to the potentially demeaning aspect of jobsearch training in the eyes of those who might need it, but who remain unwilling to be taught to suck eggs. There is also the possible contrasts between the 'hands on' aspects of work experience/ placement and Training for Work skill training, and the (possibly) more classroom-based aspects of some parts of jobsearch training.

We found that at best 52 per cent of our participants were effectively provided with an opportunity for jobsearch training. In Table 4.7, our results show that three quarters of them took it up.

Nevertheless, to the extent that individuals do decline to take up such opportunities, it is instructive to find out why. We asked the 42 who did so what lay behind their decision, and their responses are shown in Table 4.8. It goes without saying that the numbers here are too small to make any definitive statements, but they are still indicative. We can see that prospective self-confidence about jobsearch is by far the most common reason; this may take either a benign form (didn't think I needed it: 26 per cent) or the more negative (waste of time/boring/insulting: 21 per cent). Together, they account for nearly half of those turning down their opportunity. But personal, family

---

[2]   See questionnaire, question 25: 'Can I just ask you to confirm this? Can you recall if at any time you were offered any help at all with looking for jobs?'

and other reasons are together also quite important, and this testifies to the sensitivity of Training for Work participation to a possibly wide range of influences altogether outside the labour market. For an important minority, their lack of need for jobsearch training was more tangible: they already had a job. Interestingly, very few cited timetable clashes within Training for Work, which the providers and some of the TECs were wont to cite as important features influencing their provision. It suggests perhaps that they were largely successful in mitigating them.

Table 4.7 Take-up of jobsearch training

	N	% of whole sample	% of those with opportunity
Yes, took it up	144	38	74
No, didn't take it up	42	11	22
Left Training for Work before course completed	8	2	4
Don't know/NA	1	—	—

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 374

Table 4.8 Reasons for declining jobsearch training

	N	%
Didn't think I needed it/knew how to get a job	11	26
Had a job lined up already	6	14
Waste of time/boring/insulting	9	21
Personal/family reasons	1	2
Clashed with other parts of Training for Work	2	5
Waiting to go to college, not job	1	2
Other	8	19
Don't know	5	12

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 42, those offered and declining jobsearch

But what about the individuals who were not provided with an opportunity for jobsearch training? Our conclusion on the utility of jobsearch in the participants' eyes should not just rest on the perceptions of those who were given it. Perhaps those who claim that no such training was offered were adjudged by their providers as not wantin; it, or unlikely to take it if it was provided for them. This possibility would provide a telling and positive explanation of the

Institute of Manpower Studies

apparent failure of providers to provide. Our sample contains 178 individuals who were not offered jobsearch, believed that it was not available, and confirmed this belief when re-examined; we asked them whether they would have found it useful if they had been offered it. Table 4.9 shows that about three in five would have found some value, and 29 per cent would have found it very useful. Only one in ten reckoned that jobsearch training would have been without value to them, although over a quarter might be expected to be sceptical about its value to them.

Table 4.9 Putative usefulness of jobsearch training among those not offered it

	N	%
Very useful	51	29
Fairly useful	54	30
Not very useful	32	18
Not at all useful	18	10
Don't know	23	13

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 178

We have shown above that only just over a third of our sample actually got any jobsearch training while they were on Training for Work. We need to ask why, and our data provides us with some insight into the reasons for this relatively low level of take up. We have identified two sets of reasons: non-provision by the provider, and non-take up by individual participants. The former only partly disadvantages participants, because they would not all have taken advantage of provision anyway. The latter too may have been misguided, but we have no data to evaluate this. Table 4.10 shows how the attribution of this 61 per cent fall out rate may be fairly divided between providers and individuals.

We observe that 230 Training for Work participants received no jobsearch training. Fifty one of these had access to it, and did not choose to take it. A further 179 were not offered it, but not all of them would (on their own estimate) have benefited from it. On fairly conservative assumptions, *if* the providers had correctly assessed all these individuals' judgements about the value of jobsearch training to them personally, and *if* the individuals were right about its putative usefulness to them, then up to 40 per cent of those not offered it might anyway not have valued, taken or benefited from it.

It must be recognised that this calculation errs on the side of generosity towards the providers, but it still shows that more than half of the non-take up may be attributed to the providers. Slightly less than half may be attributable to individual choice, whether actively expressed or imputed by the provider.

To summarise, we have found that a surprisingly low proportion of our participants (38 per cent) actually received any jobsearch training. Nearly two thirds did not get (or cannot recall getting) any. In

exploring the reasons for this we have considered several methodological issues and concluded that they cannot account for such a low rate.

We have identified reluctance on the part of the individual Training for Work participant as an important factor, but even on the most sympathetic assumptions, this only accounts for about half (54 per cent) of the non-receipt. The other half (46 per cent) is attributed to the providers. In short, for every ten of our Training for Work participants, four received jobsearch training, three did not want it (or would probably not have gained much from having been offered it), and the other three would have liked to have received it, and would have benefited from it, but were not given the chance.

Table 4.10 Sources of fall-out from jobsearch training attribution to individuals and providers

| | N | | Locus of responsibility | |
			Individual N	Provider N
Received jobsearch training	144			
Did not receive jobsearch training	230			
Of non-recipients	↓			
Individual declined	51	→	51	
Provider did not provide	179			
Of non-provision				
Individual perceived as useful. Likely to have taken if offered	106	→		106
Individual did not perceive as useful. Might not have taken	73	→	73	
Total			124	106
% of overall fall out			54%	46%

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 374

4.4 What jobsearch training was received?

Of our 374 Training for Work participants, 144 said that they received some jobsearch training. These form the base sample with which we will be concerned in this section, and they will be referred to as *'the recipients'*. This is an altogether smaller number of participants than we had expected or hoped for, and as a result the level of analysis which we apply to the recipients cohort will necessarily reflect its

 Institute of Manpower Studies

small size; readers will also need to bear in mind the small base from which the percentage data below are drawn.

4.4.1 How much jobsearch training?

It was shown above, from our survey of providers, that the average volume of jobsearch training which providers claimed to provide amounted to nine days per trainee, or about nine per cent of the available training days. It will be remembered that there was great variation about this average, and it will further be remembered that our sample of participants tended to have much shorter stays on Training for Work than the average durations cited by the providers. Thus, it would not be surprising if the duration of jobsearch training cited by our recipients was somewhat lower.

Table 4.11 Duration of jobsearch training received

	N	%
Less than a week	56	39
A week or more, but less than two	30	21
Two weeks or more	40	28
Don't know	18	13

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144

Table 4.11 suggests that recipients did in fact receive rather less jobsearch training than our providers' estimates would lead us to believe. We did not think it reasonable to ask the recipients to give an actual number of days of jobsearch training which had been provided for them, partly out of consideration of the reliability of such retrospective assessments, but mainly because we expected that many of them would have received this training in dribs and drabs during Training for Work, rather than at a single sitting (see next section). For this reason, we are unable to quote an average comparable with the providers', but it is evident that only 28 per cent of them had had ten days or more of jobsearch training. Furthermore, of those who had been on Training for Work for between 17 and 24 weeks, the proportion with ten or more days was similar to this (25 per cent). Close on two thirds of the recipients had received less than two weeks jobsearch training, and nearly two out of every five had had less than a week.

4.4.2 What kind of jobsearch training?

It is clear from our results that jobsearch training was not simply classroom training given in abstract. More than half of our recipients (56 per cent) were encouraged to implement jobsearch training *continually during their stay on Training for Work*. Thus for them, being helped to improve their jobseeking skills was part and parcel of an

ongoing search for work and not an abstract classroom exercise. For others though it may have had more of this flavour; one in five were only encouraged to put their jobsearch skills into practice towards the end of Training for Work, and for nine per cent, they were not encouraged to hunt for jobs until they had completed Training for Work. For those who were encouraged to look for jobs during their time on Training for Work, three quarters said that time was made available for them to do this during their training programmes, and nearly half (48 per cent) had been given one-to-one help from a tutor in so doing. Thus, it appears that most of those who do receive jobsearch training are given the skills in a way which blends fairly easily with their continuing implementation, through an active (and in many cases, assisted) jobsearch activity, running in parallel to their skill training and/or work experience.

If jobsearch training then tends to be well integrated into Training for Work, we need to ask what elements of jobsearch skills are covered. In Chapter 3 (about the training providers), we sought information about the kind of jobsearch training they provided under four main categories, as below, and we followed the same format for the recipients.

Labour market orientation: *ie* helping the jobseeker to assess what jobs are available locally, their chances of getting one, the skills they might need to acquire in order to get it, and the likely terms and conditions they might expect to find in such a job, *etc*.

Vacancy-hunting: *ie* training the jobseeker in how he/she should go about looking for vacancies, where to look, who to ask, the various sources of help and advice which they could call on in implementing jobsearch, *etc*.

Self-presentation: *ie* advice to the jobseeker about the importance of presenting themselves to advantage to potential employers, the steps they might take to improve self-presentation, and how to look good to an employer, on paper, on the telephone, at interview, *etc*.

Practical assistance: *ie* the direct provision to the jobseeker of tangible help, in the shape of access to resources (telephones, employer directories, employment agencies) *etc*.

Each of these elements is now discussed in turn.

Training in labour market orientation

We have already shown that the level of labour market experience among our sample of Training for Work participants was relatively low: of those who were not working when they entered Training for Work, one in ten had never had a job of any kind. Only 16 per cent of the entire sample had had more than three jobs in their life. Moreover, nearly a third of those who had been looking for work before joining Training for Work had no clear idea of the type of job they wanted to do, and of those who did, 45 per cent had not done that job before. It seems, *prima facie*, that these individuals stood a

strong chance of being pretty much at sea in quite hostile and difficult labour market conditions.

Helping them find their feet involves both having them come to terms with the skills and competencies they possessed (or would acquire through Training for Work), as well as forming a realistic assessment of the type of jobs which might be available in their area, in general but to themselves in particular. In practice, this undoubtedly forms a complicated iteration, juggling skills, aptitudes and preferences against possibilities in the job market, but for our purposes we have distinguished between the *individual appraisal* and the *labour market awareness* aspects. We look at them in this order.

Table 4.12 Advice and guidance about individual orientation in the labour market

While you were on Training for Work, did anybody talk to you about...?	N	%
The sort of job you wanted	94	65
The skills & qualifications you already had	85	59
New skills you might learn	82	57
Qualifications you might work towards	77	53
Your personal preferences and goals	81	56
The wage level you wanted	56	39
None of these	26	18

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

It is perhaps surprising that no more than two in three of these recipients claimed to have been offered advice or guidance in the most common aspect of coming to terms with their job aspirations. More worrying, nearly a fifth claim that they did not receive any of them at all. Of course, it may be that such issues were discussed with them, but they did not recognise this as part of any specifically *jobsearch* training; it is hard to imagine that these issues could have been avoided in drawing up an individual participation plan, for example. Furthermore, considerations of memory and recall may be involved; if these discussions were held on entry to Training for Work, as seems probable, then these recipients were being asked about events at least seven months previously.

To the extent that these data provide an accurate picture, then 80 per cent of our recipients enjoyed some advice about their individual circumstances and prospects, but this advice was sometimes spread rather thinly with many aspects only covered with about half of them. In view of the relatively low level at which many of these recipients might expect to enter the labour market, it is disturbing that so few received any guidance about the sort of pay prospects which might await them. The possibilities for sensitive jobsearch training to mitigate the demoralising effects of the poverty trap, and the

prospects for in-work benefits to alleviate it, appears to have been missed for most of these people.

Table 4.13 Effects of advice and guidance about individual orientation in the labour market

What phrase best describes what you got out of this...?	N	%
Made me realise that I needed better skills/qualifications to get the sort of job I wanted	66	56
Made me realise that I was unlikely to get the pay/conditions I had hoped for in this job	20	17
Made no difference to my ideas about the sort of job I wanted	27	23
Something else	2	2
None of these	3	3

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 118, all those receiving individual counselling

Patchy or not, such individual counselling seems to have had a memorable effect on these recipients, as Table 4.13 shows. Two thirds of the 118 people who recalled getting this sort of counselling maintained that it had most helped them towards skill training in some form. About a fifth found themselves forewarned about the likely pay and conditions associated with the job they wanted, although we are unable to say what effect it had on them. The job focus of about a quarter remained impervious to this counselling.

Table 4.14 Helpfulness of advice and guidance about individual orientation in the labour market

	N	%
Very helpful	33	28
Fairly helpful	61	52
Not very helpful	17	14
Not helpful at all	6	5
Don't know	1	1

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 118, all those receiving individual counselling

We asked those who had received this sort of counselling about the types of jobs they might consider, how useful they had found it. As Table 4.14 shows, eight in every ten found it helpful, three of them very helpful.

Institute of Manpower Studies

Moving on to consider the help these people were offered in understanding the local labour market, we find that rather fewer remember getting *labour market awareness* counselling than that centred on their *individual prospects* just discussed; a third of them claimed that they had not received it, as Table 4.15 shows.

Table 4.15 Advice and guidance about local labour market conditions

While you were on Training for Work, did anybody talk to you about...?	N	%
The sort of jobs likely to be available locally	65	45
The sort of jobs you ought to be looking for	58	60
Locations in which you ought to be looking for them	56	39
None of these	45	31
Don't know	9	6

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

Moreover, although most of them (60 per cent) had been advised about the sort of job they should be looking for, and we may presume that this would be founded on reasonable local knowledge, less than half had received any advice about the sort of jobs that the local labour market had on offer. It is possible, in view of our findings above on the relatively unfocused job orientations of many of these participants, that short-circuiting the process by simply advising recipients to go for job A or job B, was a wise move. Arguably, swamping them with information about job generation in the neighbourhood may well have further confused and dissipated specific job goals. Nevertheless, it could equally well say much about the pace at which participants are pushed through Training for Work, and that rather than being taught to come to grips with a complex and fluid labour market, they are simply fed an overt and fixed job goal. This may of course help toward high positive job outcomes, but it is also likely to stand recipients in less good stead in time to come, as they move on through the labour market, beyond that given job goal.

Only half of these recipients were given any advice about the type of employer likely to have job vacancies in their area, and it must be remembered that these recipients only account for 38 per cent of all the Training for Work participants. It is tempting to conclude that the emphasis placed by providers on giving labour market intelligence to allow participants to arrive at informed decisions is deficient. Fully 86 per cent of providers say that they help participants in identifying local employers likely to have vacancies in their areas, and they say they spend seven hours on it. One could be forgiven for expecting that it would have registered more forcefully with the participants, and this conclusion is reinforced by the consequent finding that two thirds of those who enjoyed this counselling in external labour market conditions found it helpful, 22 per cent saying it was very helpful.

Training in vacancy-hunting skills

This element of jobsearch training is intended to help jobseekers improve how they go about looking for vacancies, where to look, who to ask, the various sources of help and advice which they could call on in implementing jobsearch, *etc*. It should be designed to encourage breadth across the different formal, informal and speculative avenues available to jobseekers, and to provide insight into how to make them work effectively. Our providers placed considerable emphasis on teaching these essentially procedural aspects of jobsearch; on average, trainees would be spending two and a half days on this sort of training.

Table 4.16 Jobsearch methods taught during Training for Work

	N	%
Local newspapers	86	60
National newspapers	45	31
Trade press	37	26
Private employment agencies	35	24
Jobcentre	74	51
Jobclub	52	36
Speculative contact	63	44
Through friends, relatives, etc.	42	29
None of these	36	25
Encouraged to keep a log/record?		
Yes	64	44
No	67	47
Dc.,'t know	13	9

Source: IMS Participants Survey, N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

Table 4.16 shows the proportion of recipients who were advised to use, or shown how to use, the method indicated; the question was multiple response. It is surprising that so many recipients claim that they did not receive tuition in any of these methods; fully a quarter of them cannot recall being taught any of them. In previous analyses we have been able to explain some of the apparently low incidences reported by participants as perhaps due to their memories. Here there is less scope for mitigation; the period of job hunting on completion of Training for Work may be long, and/or subsequent periods of job tenure may be interrupted; in either case, jobsearch skills need to be lasting ones. Their aim is not simply to ensure that a high proportion are employed at the 13 week stage (thereby ensuring the provider's income), but to equip them with durable skills for what might be quite a turbulent post-Training for Work labour market experience.

The table also shows relatively low weighting attached to the informal networks of friends, contacts, relatives, and other people in work, who can constitute an invaluable source of intelligence about opportunities and openings before they ever surface as formal vacancies. Finally, only 44 per cent can recall being encouraged to keep a log or active record of job leads, *etc*. Since it is unlikely that those who cannot remember whether or not they were encouraged to do this, will in any case be doing so, we may conclude that more than half of those receiving jobsearch training are unlikely to have learnt to keep a record and active file to assist their implementation.

With such low levels of tuition, it would be surprising if this element of jobsearch training had had much of an impact on the practices and perceptions of our jobhunters. Table 4.17 shows that this is undoubtedly the case. The recipients of jobsearch training were all asked whether they had been shown new ways of searching for vacancies which they had not known about before, and ones that they might nave known about, but had not used before. We can see that training in vacancy-hunting had had a distressingly low impact on the recipients, particularly in respect of methods previously unknown.

Table 4.17 New methods of jobsearch taught during Training for Work

Were you shown new methods of jobsearch which were...?	Not previously known		Not previously used	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	33	23	55	38
No	104	72	82	57
Don't know	7	5	7	5

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training

Only a quarter of recipients were successfully introduced to new methods of vacancy-hunting which they had not previously known about (although this was not a very experienced cohort of jobseekers), and only just over a third were encouraged to extend their vacancy-hunting repertoire to embrace methods they had not used before. In fairness it should be said that among the minority who had been helped in either of these ways, most found the help valuable; 90 per cent of them (35 per cent of all recipients) claimed that in this respect their jobsearch training had been either very or fairly helpful.

Training in self-presentation

In a competitive labour market, many jobseekers, especially the relatively inexperienced ones like those in our sample, and the young, do not realise the catastrophic effects which relatively minor deficiencies in their presentation can have. In a labour market where applicants greatly outnumber vacancies, such deficiencies can have

disproportionate effects on jobseekers' chances of being shortlisted and/or getting selected. In addition, at times of high unemployment, as better qualified/more experienced people filter downwards in the labour market to compete for jobs they might not have previously considered, it becomes more important for those faced with such enhanced competition to make the most of their attributes. Thus, advice to the jobseeker about the importance of presenting themselves to advantage to potential employers, the steps they might take to improve self-presentation, and how to look good to an employer, on paper, on the telephone, at interview, are all widely recognised as important elements of good jobsearch training. It is no doubt in recognition of this that virtually all our providers provided training in all the elements of self-presentation training which we identified. On average they spent about three days in doing so, and this often constituted the most substantial element in their programmes.

Table 4.18 Elements of self-presentation training received

While on TFW, were you helped with...?	N	%
Preparing a CV	116	81
Application letter	103	72
Application form	99	69
Interview/presentation skills	95	66
Making telephone enquiries	81	56
Cold calling on prospective employers	63	44
None of these	10	7
Don't know	3	2

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

Table 4.18 shows that very high proportions of our recipients were given self-presentation training in each of these elements, and only seven per cent received none of them. Perhaps surprisingly cold-calling on employers is the least widely recalled, and it is quite clear that this is consistent with the emphasis on formal methods of vacancy hunting; only 44 per cent of recipients were encouraged to use such speculative approaches to employers (Table 4.16) and a similar proportion were given instruction in how to present themselves well in doing so.

It is clear that those participants who receive these sorts of training were likely to value them greatly. About eight in ten of them found it helpful, and about four in ten very helpful; only very small fractions found them wholly without benefit. Interestingly, help in mastering the techniques involved in cold-calling on employers was less widely valued, as well as being less widely received; it is difficult to disentangle what this means. On the one hand, such approaches to employers are undoubtedly difficult to do well, and particularly so

Institute of Manpower Studies

71

if they are not backed up by an effective informal network of contacts, ensuring that they are in fact directed at likely prospects, rather than at any employer in the telephone book. On the other hand, they are also quite difficult to teach well, compared with the fairly routine aspects of some of the other elements. Lower recipient satisfaction here may therefore reflect the providers' standards of teaching, the intrinsic difficulty of teaching it, or problems involved in implementation. Even with this element however, only one in ten recipients had found no value in it at all.

Table 4.19 Relative helpfulness of self-presentation training received

How helpful did you find the training you received on...?	N	Very helpful %	Fairly helpful %	Not very helpful %	Not at all helpful %
Preparing a CV	116	46	41	9	3
Application letter	103	40	40	17	3
Application form	99	41	41	15	2
Interview skills	95	45	37	17	1
Making telephone enquiries	81	41	37	17	5
Cold calling on prospective employers	63	33	37	13	11

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

We invited respondents to assess how useful this training had been overall. A third of the participants who received advice and training on self-presentation found that it helped them a lot in making applications to employers, and close to half (46 per cent) said that it had helped them a little. Only a fifth denied that it had helped them at all.

Access to resources and services

We have already discussed the particular usefulness of direct access to potentially expensive resources to the long term unemployed, and the providers have reported high levels of commitment to the direct provision of tangible help to jobseekers, in the shape of access to resources (telephones, employer directories, employment agencies etc.).

Table 4.20 shows the extent to which our recipients were given access to, or provided with various tangible resources and jobfinding services. It is immediately evident that tangible resources are more prominent than services; fully 58 per cent of our recipients were given none of the jobfinding services on which we sought information, while only 19 per cent had no access to some resource or other. Most often, such resources were production and copying facilities for CVs etc., with telephone directories and telephone access provided to about half in order to follow up job leads. Again newspapers and

other media are curiously under-represented, with fewer than half our recipients being provided with them.

Table 4.20 Provision of resources and services to jobseekers on Training for Work

While you were on TFW, were any of the following provided...?	N	%
Telephone directories	77	53
Newspapers, journals, etc.	64	44
Employer directories	42	29
Photocopying, printing	95	66
Paper, envelopes, stamps	61	42
Access to telephone	67	47
None of these	27	19
Referral to private employment agency	11	8
Provided directly with job leads	49	34
Jobclub membership	12	8
None of these	84	58

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

The pattern of service provision is even more curious; only eight per cent of our recipients were provided with access to Jobclubs, yet this would seem to be one of the cheaper and more readily available sources of further jobsearch advice and assistance. We observed above that about a third of our recipients had been shown how to access and use Jobclubs, but only eight per cent had been offered membership or associate membership. This also contrasts with the providers' claim that three in four of them (71 per cent) passed on their participants to Jobclubs. The useful role of providers as direct, rather than indirect, conduits in the labour market is testified by the relatively high proportion of recipients who were actually provided with job leads by or through their provider. This ties in with the view expressed by several of our TEC respondents that providers were ideally well placed, through their links with employers, to operate either as formal employment agencies, which some do, or more often as well-placed intermediaries, binding together, skill training, work experience placements, and familiarity with both employers' needs and individual trainees' attributes, into an informal, job-broking service.

73

4.5 What do jobsearch training recipients think about it?

In addition to asking our 144 recipients what elements of jobsearch training they had received, and whether they had valued it, we also asked them how useful it had been as a whole, and which elements they had found most helpful in their efforts to find work.

About a quarter of those who received any jobsearch training said that they felt it had made them a lot more confident about looking for a job. It is widely recognised that prom ting an individual's confidence in him/herself, and in the ultir ite purpose of their jobsearch activities, is an important contribu on to maintaining a high level of effort and commitment in implementing their search for a job. A further third said that their training had made them a little more confident. Thus, even if the jobsearch training had little inherent benefit, its motivational effects must be acknowledged. However, for another third (31 per cent), their jobsearch training had not made them more confident about finding a job, and a further six per cent didn't know/couldn't answer, so the motivational effects are not universal.

Table 4.21 Reasons for feeling more confident about jobsearch

	N	%
Knew I had the right skills/qualifications for the job I was looking for	59	69
Confident that vacancies would come up for this job	59	69
Knew how to find them when they did come up	69	81
Knew how to present myself well to an employer ON PAPER	66	78
Knew how to present myself well to an employer AT INTERVIEW	71	84

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 85, all those more confident about jobsearch after TFW, multiple response

We asked those who felt more confident about their jobsearch, why this was, and the results are shown in Table 4.21. Attention should be drawn to the low base on which these data are founded, and to the relatively low variation between the responses for different categories, however they suggest that self-presentation and vacancy-hunting skills have a slightly more positive effect on self-confidence (and hence on motivation) than do the others.

In contrast to this rather unvaried response, we also asked recipients which aspects of their jobsearch training they had found *most* useful, and we did not allow for multiple response, thus sharpening any distinctions within the programme. Table 4.22 shows the results.

Table 4.22 Most useful elements of jobsearch training

	N	%
Advice on type of job to seek	13	9
Advice on type of training needed	29	20
Access to paper/stamps/phone etc.	9	6
Advice on self-presentation	18	13
Advice on where & how to look for vacancies	6	4
Mixing with others in same boat	37	26
Someone to listen to problems finding a job	9	6
Don't know/None	23	16

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all those receiving jobsearch training, multiple response

It is interesting, but perhaps not wholly surprising given the isolation which unemployment thrusts people into, that the aspect of jobsearch training most commonly cited as the most helpful was mixing with other people in the same position as themselves. It seems likely that the group dynamics involved in having a number of people facing similarly difficult challenges finding work are both memorable and strongly positive. Clearly, they made rather more of a mark on these recipients than did any of the formal aspects of the tuition. Beyond that, getting advice on the sort of training needed to qualify for the sort of job aspired to, was cited by one in five as the most useful output of the jobsearch training; again, strictly speaking this is a peripheral aspect of jobsearch, but it does form part of the process of orienting the individual realistically and positively in the labour market, so that they are better placed to pursue the job they seek. If we add to this the nine per cent who found advice on the type of job to look for the most useful aspect of jobsearch training, then clearly recipients valued these orientation aspects highly. The acquisition of self-presentation skills was most highly valued by 13 per cent of recipients. Vacancy-hunting training, and access to physical resources, were relatively less well valued.

4.6 Summary

Past Training for Work participants tell a different story from the providers. Most critically, they claim a much lower rate of provision than the providers. We estimate that for every ten of our Training for Work participants, four received jobsearch training, three did not want it (or would probably not have gained much from having been offered it), and the other three would have liked to have received it, and would have benefited from it, but were not given the chance. In addition, recipients remember getting rather less jobsearch training

than the providers suggest; nearly two out of every five had had less than a week.

Recipients confirm the emphasis on presentation skills and on formal methods of vacancy-hunting. But their former jobsearch efforts suggest that vacancy-finding, and application of informal routes to jobs were their most prevalent weaknesses.

5. Getting a Job after Training for Work

In this chapter we will be looking at the experiences of our 374 participants after they left Training for Work, and assessing to what extent they were helped in finding a job by the jobsearch training they received during their stay.

We begin by categorising their post Training for Work experiences. In Section 5.2, we go on to look at the extent to which, and the ways in which, jobsearch training contributed to their subsequent success in the labour market. In Section 5.3, we look at the relative effect of jobsearch training compared with the many other factors which influence positive job outcomes.

5.1 What happened after Training for Work?

Although Training for Work is mainly intended to help unemployed adults back into work, this is not its sole rationale. Indeed our TEC respondents testified to the diversity of Training for Work aims even within a single TEC area, according to the strategic priorities of the TEC in question, and the needs and preferences of the individuals taking part in it. But it is clear that job-getting is the principal goal, and it is the extent to which Training for Work secures this goal which will undoubtedly determine its future, to a far greater degree than any of its other aims.

However, because multiple aims exist, it would be wrong to assume that all those who leave Training for Work and do not immediately enter the jobs market represent failures. They may have perfectly valid reasons for so doing, which themselves constitute a positive outcome of Training for Work, albeit not a short term job outcome. For this reason, it is important to reorganise our participant sample into different groups, according to their post Training for Work trajectories. To facilitate this, we asked all 374 participants what they were doing immediately on leaving. This provides very different information from that used to estimate positive job outcomes for control purposes under Training for Work. We are concerned to measure job-getting ability; we are less interested in duration of tenure or the timing of the job.

The results are shown in Table 5.1. Three quarters of our participants were economically active on leaving Training for Work. One in five of them left Training for Work to take a job; almost all of these left earlier than they had planned, and it seems fair to conclude that they

7̈

left because they had successfully found work, rather than the distant possibility that they left and simultaneously found a job.

Table 5.1 Immediate post Training for Work activities

	N	%
Left to take a job	70	19
Left to look for a job	217	57
Left to go to college	20	5
Not looking for a job Housework/caring	17	5
Not looking for a job Sick/ill/disability	28	7
Transferred to another programme	9	2
Other	12	3
Don't know/NA	1	—

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 374, all participants

Seven per cent left Training for Work to continue their training elsewhere, mainly at college (five per cent), although in a few cases through some other public programme.

Of the remaining 72 per cent, some were not immediately looking for a job because their personal circumstances or preferences precluded it; five per cent were committed to domestic or caring responsibilities, and seven per cent were prevented by health or disability from entering the labour market. A further 13 individuals were doing other things, so diverse we have not been able to classify them. We have assumed that they were not looking for work. This leaves us with 217 participants (57 per cent) who left Training for Work to look for a job.

In the period between their departure from Training for Work and the time of our interviews, about five months on average, 160 of them did not find one (see Table 5.2). Here we can see that of those who were economically active after Training for Work, just about a third (34 per cent) had found work at some point. But, of these, more than half already had a job when they left Training for Work; they had, in fact, left Training for Work to take it up. Of those who were looking for a job on the external labour market after they left, 26 per cent had found one, and 74 per cent had not. Again, we stress that these rates are calculated differently from TEC and Employment Department positive outcome data.

We should note that these successful job-entrants may have subsequently lost it or left it, they may not have remained in it for long, and they may have held more than one job, but there is no ambiguity about the others, during that time none of them had held any job.

Table 5.2 Post Training for Work jobseeking experience

	N	% Total	% Active	% ELM
Left TFW into job	70	19	24	—
Found a job post TFW	57	15	20	26
Failed to find a job post TFW	160	43	56	74
Inactive post TFW*	87	23	—	—

* includes 'at college'

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 374, all participants

5.2 Jobsearch training and jobfinding

Disentangling the separate and distinct contribution of jobsearch training to these participants' ability to find work on completion of Training for Work is made extremely difficult by several factors. The real world permits no control group, sharing the same characteristics and environment as the recipients of jobsearch training, against whom we can measure a shortfall in successfully finding work, and attribute it definitively to their lack of jobsearch training. Secondly, any retrospective comparison of the success of recipients and non-recipients is hindered by the fact that their receipt or otherwise of jobsearch training is not an exogenous variable; in many cases, it directly flows from their own estimate of their need for it, or their provider's judgement about whether they needed it or not. Thirdly, whether or not jobsearch was needed or received is likely to be only one among many different characteristics distinguishing those who succeeded from those who did not: age, skill, training, experience, labour market conditions, previous experience, duration of unemployment, gender, ethnicity, etc.; the list of relevant variables is undoubtedly a long one. Furthermore it is one which is only imperfectly understood; why one person might land a job when another fails, is not something which can satisfactorily be explained even with far better data than we have been able to amass here. Finally, although we have evidence about many of these other variables, we have too few observations to conduct a reliable multivariate analysis, which would pull out and assess the significance of the single jobsearch training variable in which we are interested.

For these reasons, it must be understood that the analysis which follows is imperfect and must only be taken as indicative of the likely effects of jobsearch training on Training for Work participants' chances in the labour market. We have considered three different indicators of the effects of jobsearch training on participants' subsequent experiences, as follows.

Institute of Manpower Studies

Labour market indicators: to what extent were job outcomes secured? The acid test of the effectiveness of jobsearch training is whether it is associated with success in finding work. There may be numerous intervening and mediating variables of course, but ultimately there ought to be some observable differences between the subsequent job outcomes of those receiving jobsearch training and those not.

Subjective indicators: what did participants think about the usefulness of the jobsearch training they received? This is important in two senses; firstly it provides an interpretation of the objective impact of jobsearch training by those most closely involved in it, and upon whose receptivity to such training a lot must surely turn. Secondly, to the extent that this training made them feel positive and confident about their chances, then it should sustain a more committed and determined jobsearch effort than before.

Behavioural indicators: to what extent did the post Training for Work jobsearch activities mark a change on those carried out before? All other things being equal, the likelihood of finding work ought logically to depend on the quality and intensity of jobsearch effort. Thus those with improved jobsearch practices will stand a better chance in the labour market. Even if extremely adverse labour market conditions have prevented an individual from finding work so far, their improved jobsearch techniques ought to stand them in better stead than otherwise.

Of course, these outcomes and indicators are not independent but, for convenience, we will deal with them separately and in this order below.

5.2.1 Labour market indicators

Our results indicate that the receipt of jobsearch training is associated with a higher than average positive job outcome, and that its receipt may improve such outcomes by about six per cent among those leaving Training for Work to look for work.

We have shown that the receipt of jobsearch training is not necessarily straightforward, turning as it does on availability, an effective offer to the participant, and their willingness to take it up. In order to capture these possibilities, and isolate any positive effects, we have divided our sample of participants into four groups, according to their receipt of jobsearch training, as follows.

● *Received.* These individuals said that they had received some jobsearch training during their stay on Training for Work.

● *Declined.* These individuals had been offered jobsearch training and chosen not to accept it. For this group, their views seem to have been at variance with their providers'; the providers thought that they would benefit from receiving jobsearch training, but the individuals themselves evidently did not.

● *Implicit decline.* These individuals were not offered any jobsearch training, but would probably not have accepted it if they had been, because they maintained that it would not have been useful to them.

● *Deprived*. These individuals were not offered any jobsearch training, but say that they would have found it useful had they received such an offer. These are the mirror image of the 'declined' grouping. Their views also diverged from their providers', but here it was the provider who did not offer jobsearch training, although the individuals themselves would have found it useful.

This deals with the input side of the equation, but the output side is also quite complex. We have discounted for the moment those who remained economically inactive on leaving Training for Work. It is arguable that their participation rate might be raised through good jobsearch training, and a sense of imminent possibilities in the labour market gained thereby, but this remains outwith our current interest. Thus, in addition to the three groups described above in terms of their receipt of jobsearch training, we also have three groups distinguished by their job experiences after Training for Work, as follows.

● *Direct entry*. Those who left Training for Work in order to take up a job they already had. We know that for most people, if they got any jobsearch training, they may well have got it during and not at the end of their Training for Work stay. We also know that most of them were encouraged to look for work during their stay and not just at the end of it. Thus, it is possible that these individuals, leaving Training for Work early and moving straight in to a job, could still have benefited significantly from jobsearch training.

● *Jobfinders*. These people left Training for Work without a job, but were looking for one. They may have been looking during Training for Work, but had not found one when they left. As with the direct entrants, we are not here concerned with the number of jobs held, or the duration of tenure, or their current position. We are concerned with their success in putting their jobsearch skills into practice, and succeeding.

◖ *Jobfailures*. This group are defined in the same way as the jobfinders, with the salient exception that they had not, at the time of our interview, held any job since they left Training for Work. It is of course quite possible that they found one, were offered it and refused it. But since we have defined jobsearch skills as embracing the conjuncture of individual ambition with the realities afforded them by the labour market, we must still classify this outcome as a failure.

Table 5.3 shows how these categories are cross-tabulated, distinguishing between the direct entrants and the two post Training for Work external labour market groups.

Looking first at those who left Training for Work without a job, we can see that only 26 per cent of them had found one, but among those who had received jobsearch training this rate goes up to 32 per cent. Those who were offered, and declined, jobsearch training were equally successful; about a third of them also got a job. In part, it seems likely that they had some good reason for believing that they did not need it. For the 'deprived' grouping, those who were not

given any jobsearch training, although they would have valued it, the success rate is close to the average for the group, at 26 per cent, and these data suggest that it might have been six percentage points higher had they been given the jobsearch training they needed. However, it is among those where both participant and jobseeker shared the implicit decision not to undertake jobsearch training that the poorest success rate is found; for them, only one in ten subsequently found a job.

Table 5.3 Positive job outcomes by jobsearch received

| | Direct entry | | Jobfinders | | Jobfailures | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Received	19	27	29	32	62	68
Declined	12	17	8	32	17	68
Implicit decline	20	29	4	10	36	90
Deprived	19	27	16	26	45	74
Total	70	100	57	26	160	74

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 287, all economically active post Training for Work

We conclude that, for this group leaving Training for Work to go onto the open labour market, jobsearch training may have made a significant contribution to positive job outcomes. Failure on the part of providers to give jobsearch training to some individuals who would have valued it, is associated with a lower success rate.

However, participant disinterest in jobsearch training, when colluded with by providers, seems to be associated with a markedly lower success rate.

It is among the 'implicit decline' group (those who were not offered jobsearch training, but who might well have turned it down anyway) that we observe the lowest job success rate; only one in ten of them found work, yet they account for nearly a fifth of our participants. It would seem that this is the group who would most likely to benefit from receipt, but of course they would also be the most difficult group to deliver jobsearch training to. Ensuring that they get jobsearch training would need to overcome both their own apparent reluctance/disinterest, as well as the disinclination of providers to provide for them.

Looking at the direct entrants, their success rate is 100 per cent by definition, but we can observe that about half of them declined, or if offered would probably have declined, jobsearch training. This may be because they were confident of their existing jobsearch skills, or because they were already safely on their way before the opportunity for jobsearch training arose. There is no compelling evidence here that jobsearch training significantly helped this group; the number who

received it and then found a job, is exactly the same as the number who received none, though they would have liked some, and yet still found a job.

Thus, it would seem that the labour market indicators suggest that jobsearch training provides a modest but positive contribution to jobseekers' chances after Training for Work, raising their success rate by about six per cent.

If we compare this result with that secured from the providers, and discussed in Chapter 3, we will recall that they estimated a very similar positive job outcome after TFW; they believed that 33 per cent of participants who were subsequently looking for a job would have found one within 13 weeks. However, in this, they attributed a much more substantial contribution to jobsearch training that participants demonstrated. Providers estimated (albeit roughly) that without jobsearch training, only about 15 per cent would have found jobs, whereas our comparable figure is 28 per cent (*ie* the average success rate of the three non-recipient groups in Table 5.3). We would be unwise to place too much weight on the precise variation here, in view of the differences in the ways in which the data were gathered and the exact questions asked. Nevertheless, they do suggest that providers have much more optimistic perceptions about the likely effects of jobsearch training on job-getting than is actually the case.

5.2.2 Subjective indicators

Those 144 of our 374 participants who received any jobsearch training were questioned about their responses to it. We have already discussed some of these in the preceding chapter, when discussing the individual components of jobsearch training and recipients' responses to them. To summarise, and leaving aside the considerable variation in the receipt of the different elements:

● eight in ten of those receiving it found counselling about the types of jobs they might consider helpful, three of them very helpful

● two thirds of those who enjoyed counselling about external labour market conditions found it helpful, 22 per cent saying it was very helpful

● although only a minority had received it, advice about different methods of searching for vacancies was also found valuable; 90 per cent (35 per cent of all recipients) claimed that in this respect their jobsearch training had been either very or fairly helpful

● a third of the participants who received advice and training on self-presentation found that it helped them a lot in making applications to employers, and close to half (46 per cent) said that it had helped them a little. Only a fifth denied that it had helped them at all.

● six per cent of all those receiving jobsearch training found that access to tangible resources, in the shape of paper, stamps, telephone, photocopying, *etc.*, was the most useful part of their jobsearch training.

Thus, among recipients there seems to be a marked and positive sense of helpfulness about their tuition, although we might expect this, as the recipients are by definition those who opted in.

In addition to these separate evaluations, we asked those who had received jobsearch training how they felt about the utility of that training in general. The categories of response, and the results are shown in Table 5.4. Looking first of all at those who received jobsearch training (ie the first two columns), we observe that 45 per cent said that they believed it had improved their chances of getting a job, and five per cent among them thought it had been vital.

However, against this we must set two other findings. Firstly, the majority of recipients did not believe it had made much difference to their chances, with about half of these believing it had made no contribution at all. Secondly, if we select just those recipients who expressed a lack of confidence in their jobseeking skills before they went on Training for Work, then the distribution of responses is about the same (columns on right). On the face of it this is rather disappointing; if close on half those who were not confident that they knew how to find a job before JST did not think that jobsearch training had helped them much in this respect, then one could be forgiven for doubting the attitudinal and confidence-boosting effects of this training.

Table 5.4 General assessments of helpfulness of jobsearch training

| | All recipients | | Poor jobsearchers | |
	N	%	N	%
Vital, wouldn't be likely to find work without it	7	5	4	5
Very helpful, would stand less of a chance without it	57	40	30	39
Not very helpful, hasn't improved my chances much	38	26	20	26
Not helpful, hasn't improved my chances at all	34	24	16	21
Not looking for work	6	4	6	8
Don't know	2	1	1	1

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all receiving jobsearch training

This broad conclusion is echoed in the responses to a further 'summing up' question put to recipients: did they believe that jobsearch training they had received had made any difference to the effectiveness of their jobseeking activities? We applied this question to everyone who received jobsearch training, irrespective of whether or not they had found a job during or after Training for Work, and whether or not they were active in the labour market immediately on leaving Training for Work. The results for the whole sample are shown in the first column of Table 5.5, and for those who were economically active after Training for Work in the second column.

Table 5.5 Overall perceptions about effect of jobsearch training

Did the Jobsearch training you received make any difference to the effectiveness of your Jobsearch activities?	All recipients		Econ. active recipients	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	59	41	49	45
No	68	47	53	48
Don't know	17	12	8	7

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all receiving jobsearch training

We observe that those agreeing that jobsearch training had improved their jobseeking performance remain a substantial minority: 45 per cent of those economically active on leaving Training for Work said that jobsearch training had helped them become more effective in looking for work.

It may be that perceived improvements in effectiveness reflect a balance between positive and negative aspects of Training for Work in general, and jobsearch training in particular. We went on to ask those who said that it had, or had not improved their effectiveness as jobseekers, why they said this. This question was open-ended, and has been coded retrospectively, as shown in Table 5.6, distinguishing between positive (top) and negative (bottom) comments, and between those who said they had been helped (left) and those who had not or didn't know (right). It should be noted that the numbers of respondents answering this question is relatively small, and the weight attached to their responses should reflect this. However, it would appear that most of those who say they were helped point to subjective considerations of self-confidence, backed up by an objective ability to project this self-confidence, either in person at interview, or on paper, through written applications. Those who deny any net improvement in their effectiveness, conceded some areas of improvement, but the reasons given for off-setting this were extremely heterogenous.

Thus, on subjective indicators, the jury remains out, and the interpretation of this result depends largely on whether one sees the glass as half full (nearly half thought it helpful) or half empty (slightly more did not). Considering from these results that over half of the recipients in these tables had not found a job since leaving Training for Work, they might be forgiven some scepticism.

5.2.3 Behavioural indicators

Even if an individual has a poor assessment of the value of an event in their lives, it might nevertheless have effected their behaviour in a positive way. It is evident from Table 5.7 that jobsearch training did have an effect on the behaviour of many jobseekers.

Institute of Manpower Studies

Table 5.6 Overall perceptions about effect of jobsearch training

	Yes, made more effective N=59		No & don't know, made no more effective N=85	
	N	%	N	%
Felt more confident	21	36	—	—
Improved my personal presentation	15	24	1	1
It helped (NS)	5	9	1	1
Improved letter/application form skills	1	17	3	4
New skills/qualifications	9	15	4	5
Other (+ve)	13	22	2	2
Found a job (so must have helped)	3	5	—	—
Left to own devices/trainers too busy	—	—	2	2
Attitude of trainers	—	—	2	2
Still lack confidence	—	—	3	4
Other (− ve)	1	2	11	13

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all receiving jobsearch training

Looking at those who left Training for Work after having received jobsearch training, and without a job to go to, we can see that about a third of them looked for work more often than previously, and a third used informal networks to pursue job leads. More than a quarter used more ways than they had previously to identify vacancies, and just under a quarter had become increasingly proactive in approaching employers.

Table 5.7 Effect of jobsearch training on jobsearch activity

Since leaving TFW, have you . . .? (multiple response)	All recipients		Recipients leaving TFW without a job	
	N	%	N	%
Looked for work more often	43	30	42	34
Used more ways finding vacancies	39	27	36	29
More proactive in approaching employers	31	22	29	23
Used friends and contacts to i/d prospects	44	31	40	32
Other	7	5	7	6
Not looking for work	9	6	6	5

Source: IMS Participants Survey. N = 144, all receiving jobsearch training

5.3 Jobsearch training in context

In the previous section, we have shown that those receiving jobsearch training were more likely to secure a job after Training for Work than the average for participants. However, we have also shown that some groups of participant, in particular those who were fairly confident about their jobseeking skills and who turned down the offer of jobsearch training were just as likely to find work. We conclude that jobsearch training can have a positive effect, but that its usefulness is likely to vary according to individual circumstances. So far in this chapter, we have considered these differences according to the quite narrow criteria of their attitudes towards jobsearch training. But we have seen in the preceding chapters that there are very strong contextual differences between TECs (Chapter 2), some diversity between individual providers (Chapter 3), and considerable variation between the characteristics of the individual participants (Chapter 4). We need to ask how powerful an agent of job getting is jobsearch training, compared with all these other contextual, institutional and individual factors.

The statistical technique used to explore this is logistical regression (logit). As this is a somewhat complex procedure, it will be useful to describe it in lay terms for the general reader. Logit allows us to establish a reference individual with certain characteristics (or independent variables) and then observe the separate effect on his or her job outcome (the dependent variable) of changing each of these characteristics in turn (for example, moving him/her from one TEC area to another, keeping him/her on Training for Work for longer, and crucially for us, giving him/her jobsearch training). The advantage that this technique offers is that when we make such a change in one of the independent variables, all the others are kept the same, and we can see the separate effect of the variable we are interested in.

In Tables 5.8 and 5.9, the independent variables and the reference individual associated with them, are as follows:

Gender	a man
Age	aged over 50
Duration u/e	unemployed for more than two years before going on Training for Work
Duration Training for Work	on Training for Work for more than 16 weeks
NVQ	but not getting an NVQ on completion
TEC	in the TEC with the lowest positive job outcome performance
and	
JST	not having received jobsearch training despite his/her feeling that it would be beneficial.

For such an individual, the coefficients for each of its characteristics are set to 1.0. As each of these characteristics changes in turn, its separate effect on the dependant variable (whether or not they got a job after Training for Work) is shown by the value of the resulting coefficient relative to 1.0. Thus, for example, an age coefficient greater than 1.0 shows that, irrespective of any other factor, an older individual will be more likely to find a job. Conversely, a coefficient of less than 1.0, shows that likelihood would fall as the age increased . . . *with every other characteristic held constant*. The size of the coefficient shows the strength of the effect: if it is 2.0, then individuals with this characteristic are twice as likely to get a job than if they had the reference characteristic . . . *again with every other characteristic held constant*.

Table 5.8 Logit analysis: factors influencing job entry: includes direct entrants

Variable	Coefficient	Sig.
Gender (ref = Male)		
female	1.8184	0.0803
Age (ref = 50 +)		0.8790
Under 25	1.1212	0.8562
25 to 50	1.2678	0.6913
Duration of Unemployment (ref = 2 years +)		0.0012
Under 6 months	4.4977	0.0021
6 to 12 months	3.3581	0.0027
12 to 23 months	1.1736	0.7313
Duration on TFW (ref = 16 weeks +)		
Under 4 weeks		0.0061
4 to 8 weeks	1.3829	0.4247
8 to 12 weeks	0.5829	0.2117
12 to 16 weeks	3.8737	0.0112
	1.6602	0.3507
NVQ (ref = No)		
Gained NVQ	0.8900	0.7722
TEC (ref = TEC8)		0.0005
TEC(1)	5.6509	0.0085
TEC(2)	1.7738	0.4191
TEC(3)	1.7201	0.4189
TEC(4)	2.2332	0.2435
TEC(5)	12.6930	0.0004
TEC(6)	0.9448	0.9387
TEC(7)	3.1977	0.1220
Jobsearch Training (ref = Denied)		0.6274
Received	1.3496	0.4117
Declined	1.6346	0.2968
Imp. Decline	0.9795	0.9603
Constant		0.0037

88

Table 5.9 Logit analysis: factors influencing job entry: excludes direct entrants

Variable	Coefficient	Sig.
Gender (ref = Male)		
female	1.5669	0.3322
Age (ref = 50 +)		0.7505
Under 25	1.9680	0.4512
25 to 50	1.8551	0.4807
Duration of Unemployment (ref = 2 years +)		0.0048
	4.5383	0.0110
Under 6 months	2.2647	0.1068
6 to 12 months	0.5218	0.3310
12 to 23 months		
Duration on TFW (ref = 16 weeks +)		
Under 4 weeks		0.0062
4 to 8 weeks	1.4473	0.4884
8 to 12 weeks	0.5443	0.2925
12 to 16 weeks	6.9867	0.0061
	1.1118	0.8952
NVQ (ref = No)		
Gained NVQ	0.6444	0.4460
TEC (ref = TEC8)		0.1616
TEC(1)	3.1215	0.1409
TEC(2)	1.4094	0.6906
TEC(3)	0.9746	0.9753
TEC(4)	1.0814	0.9258
TEC(5)	3.9852	0.1095
TEC(6)	0.3531	0.3087
TEC(7)	2.1347	0.4123
Jobsearch Training (ref = Denied)		0.0891
Received	1.5360	0.3509
Declined	1.4056	0.5879
Imp. Decline	0.2873	0.0663
Constant		0.0199

With logit analyses, the usual problem is ensuring that the independent variables selected really are the ones that influence the outcome. We have run the logit analysis many times with different independent variables in order to satisfy ourselves that these really are the ones on which people's job chances after Training for Work depend. This analysis has however thrown up an unusual problem in that we have an ambiguity over the *dependent* variable; whether or not the individual got a job or not. The difficulty centres on whether the individual left Training for Work early to get a job, or not; if they did, then they might not have received any jobsearch training, (because they did not need it; because they had already gone, *etc.*). For this reason we have run the logit analysis twice; both runs only include people who were economically active on leaving Training for Work,

but the first (Table 5.8) includes all those who got a job (ie during or after Training for Work), while the second (Table 5.9) only includes those who left Training for Work to look for work (ie it excludes those who left to go straight into a job).

For both tables, the independent variables are shown in the first column, the coefficient relative to 1 (ie relative to the reference category) for that variable are shown in the second column and the statistical significance of the result in the third. *It should be noted that the level of statistical significance of many of these results is low*, and therefore in interpreting them their reliability must be kept in mind. Looking in turn at our independent variables, we observe:

Gender

Women who leave Training for Work are more likely to find work than men. In view of the current growth of employment opportunities in the UK (sectorally, occupationally, and in working time regimes) this is not particularly surprising. We should also note that there may well be implicit links to other variables here (for example, there are relatively few women among the very long term unemployed), and for this reason we cannot be certain that this finding is not simply a reflection of the different employment structures of the male and female samples.

Age

The age data from the TFW2 groups individuals into two small, and one large (25 to 50) categories. Nevertheless we observe that both these groups do better than the over 50 reference category. This is particularly so for those seeking jobs on the open market after Training for Work. Here we may see the influence of employers' recruitment and selection prejudices. They are always inclined against the oldest age group, but this disinclination is weaker when the individual may have found their job during Training for Work (perhaps as part of a work experience placement) when employer appreciation of their individual characteristics may have offset the disadvantage of the colour of their hair.

Duration of unemployment on joining Training for Work

These results have a more reliable statistical basis, and it is clear from the tables that the shorter an individual's duration of unemployment before they joined Training for Work, the more chance they will have of finding work after it — in some cases much more. Thus, for example, those leaving Training for Work without a job are four times more likely to find it if they were previously out of work for under six months, than if they had been on the register for more than two years. Again, this is not particularly surprising in view of what we know about employers' selection criteria, though it might be thought disappointing that the disadvantage persists through and beyond a programme expressly designed to provide priority help for the long term unemployed.

90

Duration Training for Work

There is an oddly variable pattern to these results. It is evident that those with relatively short stays on Training for Work are more likely to get a job after leaving than those with the longest duration. This probably reflects the different client groups going through Training for Work, with the short duration participants less involved in skill training, and more involved in work preparation courses. However, it is those on Training for Work for two to three months who seem to have the best chances. This might reflect the different outcomes sought by providers and TECs for different client groups. Those on Training for Work for longest might be those involved in more profound skill training, with possibly a stronger emphasis placed on NVQ outcomes rather than immediate labour market outcomes.

NVQ outcomes

We observe the unexpected result that those gaining an NVQ appear less likely to find work than those not attaining one. It is possible that this is simply a statistical quirk (Sig. = 0.4), but it may also reflect the argument above, that NVQ outcomes are to a degree, separate from job outcomes; attracting a different cohort within Training for Work, and placing them on a different trajectory. In this perspective, and it is one which some of the TECs had ventured (see Chapter 2), job ready participants are more strongly guided towards the labour market by their provider, while for those with a more serious skill deficiency, going for an NVQ is given more emphasis, and finding a job correspondingly less.

TEC

TEC is a proxy both for local labour market conditions, and the different local priorities and procedures adopted by different TECs. We can see from Table 5.9, which excludes all Training for Work leavers who went straight into a job, that the TEC area in which they were looking for work was an important influence on their chances of getting one. This is hardly surprising since these leavers were seeking work in an open labour market, and much of the variety must reflect external labour market circumstances, which differ between TECs. We note that for none of the TECs is the variation statistically significant however, and so we may also conclude that this variety is simply random and may be caused purely by chance. However, there is a clear and positive relationship between the U/V ratio in each TEC area, and the size of the coefficient in column 2.

In addition to diverse local labour market conditions, the variation in the coefficient may also reflect the manner in which Training for Work is directed in the different areas, the different strategic emphases placed on Training for Work locally, and differing short term procedures and protocols. When we come to look at Table 5.8, which includes both open market jobseekers *and* those who went straight from Training for Work into a job, then we can see that the variation between TECs in the chances of participants finding work is much more marked, and that in the TECs with the highest positive job outcome performance, it is statistically significant. This confirms the hypothesis discussed in Chapter 2 that the way in which TECs

encourage providers to relate to potential employers (*ie* directly, rather than through the medium of an uncertain and competitive labour market) can profoundly influence the likelihood of participants getting work after Training for Work, even in the face of a hostile external labour market.

Jobsearch training

Both tables show that jobsearch training has a positive effect (with every other variable held constant), although the statistical significance of the result is not strong. With this proviso, we observe that those people leaving Training for Work to look for a job (Table 5.8) are half as likely again to find it if they receive jobsearch training, than if they want it and are not offered it. Those who turn it down because they do not feel they need it, are similarly more likely to find work. Those who are not offered it, and would probably not have wanted it, are considerably less likely to get work, and among the leavers onto the external labour market this result is close to significant at the five per cent level. That said, we should note that the positive effect is relatively low, in contrast to those registered by the duration of unemployment and TEC variables.

5.4 Summary

Our results show that positive job outcomes after Training for Work were well represented. Three quarters of our participants were economically active on leaving Training for Work, and of them, just about a third had found work (34 per cent) at some point. But, of these, more than half already had a job when they left Training for Work; they had in fact left Training for Work to take it up. Of the remainder, who were looking for a job on the external labour market after they left, 26 per cent had found one, and 74 per cent had not.

Of this group, going onto the open labour market after Training for Work, jobsearch training may have made a significant contribution to positive job outcomes. Whereas their success rate as a whole was 26 per cent, among those who had received jobsearch training, it was 32 per cent.

The jobsearch training they received had a marked effect on the behaviour of many jobseekers. About a third of them who received it looked for work more often than previously, and a third used informal networks to pursue job leads. More than a quarter used more ways than they had previously to identify vacancies, and just under a quarter had become increasingly proactive in approaching employers Despite this, Training for Work participants who received jobsearch training were generally modest in their attribution of help to jobsearch training; only 45 per cent of those receiving it agreed that it had improved their chances of getting a job, although five per cent among them thought it had been vital. Similarly, 45 per cent of those economically active on leaving Training for Work said that jobsearch training had helped them become more effective in looking for work.

Finally, although jobsearch training is shown to have some positive effects on individuals' labour market chances, these are relatively small in comparison with the strength of some of the fixed elements, such as age, duration of unemployment before Training for Work, and external labour market conditions. There is some evidence to suggest that arrangements intended to promote direct entry into a job from Training for Work may have a more marked effect on positive outcomes than an external labour market route, however well that route is paved with jobsearch skills.

6. Policy Implications

In this chapter we discuss the implications of our findings, and in particular what they suggest for the organisation and delivery of Training for Work in general and jobsearch training in particular. Previous chapters have concentrated on outlining and interpreting the empirical evidence which we have gathered, in as objective a manner as is consistent with readability. Although this chapter is based on that same empirical evidence, what it offers is the researcher's opinions and judgements about the implications. These may differ from those of other parties, and it should not be assumed that they are shared by the Employment Department, who commissioned the research, or by any of the TECs and providers who contributed to it.

6.1 A blueprint for effective jobsearch training

We have demonstrated that there are two clear areas of agreement between most of the interested parties involved in Training for Work. Having decided that job-getting is the main (if not the sole) outcome sought from Training for Work for the unemployed adults to whom it is directed, the Employment Department and the TECs believe that the provision of jobsearch training to participants is likely to help them attain that end. The results from this research show that this appears to be the case; despite the enormous variety within Training for Work, participants receiving jobsearch training were on average about six percentage points more likely to get a job after it than those who did not.

The providers appear to share this view; their (admittedly back of the envelope) estimates about the effects on positive job outcomes of not providing jobsearch training show that they too believe that jobsearch training makes a positive contribution to this end. They have some anecdotal evidence to back up this belief, and many were able to cite particular instances where individuals had been both fired up and well prepared by their jobsearch training to such an extent that they successfully overcame the debilitating effect of many previous months of failure in the job market.

The participants are less enthused, but their scepticism must be seen in the context of the failure by two thirds of them to get a job. If they accept now that the jobsearch training they received did improve their chances in the labour market significantly, and they still failed to land a job, then this would be tantamount to an admission of the hopelessness of their situation. We would therefore expect some *ex*

post cynicism on their part, but despite this, 45 per cent of those receiving jobsearch training agreed that it had improved their chances of getting a job.

The second area of broad agreement, certainly between the Employment Department, TECs and providers, is the importance of 'horses for courses'. All are agreed that because Training for Work is designed to be more flexible to local needs and priorities than old-style Employment Department programmes, its content should not reflect an off-the-shelf stereotype. All are agreed that not everybody will benefit from jobsearch training, and so it should be offered only where appropriate; most agree that some participants need this, and others that, and so provision ought again to reflect individual circumstances. Everybody recognises that the best way of getting one kind of job might be a recipe for complete disaster in a different occupational labour market, and so jobsearch training should be occupationally focused.

The bright glow thrown off by these two broad areas of consensus should not blind us to the unfortunate fact that there is no consistent agreement about the exact form, content and mode of delivery of *quality* jobsearch training, except that any of it is good, and all of it should be flexible. We have observed in Chapter 2 that our TECs required jobsearch training to be provided; but rarely specified, and still less often required, how much should be given, what should be taught, what elements were compulsory and which discretionary, what source materials should be used, *etc*. In short, the TECs have not felt able to specify what they wish to be provided. When pursued on this point, our TEC respondents have pointed to the providers' greater experience in the detail of delivery; they have cited the rapidity of the contracting round; they have fallen back on the primacy of flexibility; but what they have not done is to provide a basic blueprint of jobsearch training, as a starting point from which providers can flex.

It could be argued that our survey of providers shows that just about everybody is doing just about everything anyway; certainly it showed that very high proportions of providers said that they provided every element of jobsearch training which we asked about. Against this must be set the rather more sombre record of our participant survey, which suggested a much more scattered and uneven pattern of provision. Although nine out of ten providers claimed that all of their trainees had access to jobsearch training during their Training for Work course, only about half of our sample (52 per cent) enjoyed the effective provision of jobsearch training; only a fifth of them had received any training in labour market awareness; only about a quarter received any training in vacancy-hunting techniques; and so on. Even if we allow for the lapse of participant memories, even if we allow for a considerable reluctance on their part to be taught to suck eggs, and even if we allow for the early drop-outs who left Training for Work straight into work without the need for any jobsearch training, there remains a worrying gap between the blanket assurances of the providers and the arguably threadbare reports of the participants.

95

This suggests that TECs ought to be more prescriptive in asserting how much jobsearch training should be done, what elements of these skills it should cover, and who should receive it. Certainly our results suggest that the TECs would be knocking on an open door here; some 56 per cent of our providers said that they would welcome more advice and guidance from their TEC about what they should be providing under jobsearch training. It should be remembered that these are the largest providers, whom one might imagine to be the most self-sufficient and most experienced in this respect. Only four per cent wanted a freer hand.

We only spoke with eight TECs, and admittedly this does not constitute much of a cross-section, but none of them believed that they had a positive and appropriate model of jobsearch training to be prescriptive about. For the most part they relied on the expertise of the provider in asserting what jobsearch training they proposed to provide, backed up in some cases by rather heterogenous briefing materials of varied provenance. The one clear model available to them, the Jobclub model, was almost universally rejected as too formulaic, offering too little flexibility, and not particularly attractive to potential recipients. This seems to confuse the manner in which the Jobclub model is implemented (*ie* through replication) with the essential advantages of a core model, providing both guidelines, touchstone and aide memoire, as well as a basis from which to adapt and adopt, according to local needs.

Proposal 1

A prospectus of good practice in jobsearch training provision should be devised and made available to TEC training managers and providers to help them draw up more helpful guidelines in contracting for such training.

6.2 Selection criteria for jobsearch training

Only half our Training for Work participants were offered any jobsearch training. They did not all take it, but over a quarter of them claim that they would have valued jobsearch training, but were not given any. Their subsequent success in the jobs market was lower than those who had received it. This contrasts with our providers' response that nine out of ten of them provide jobsearch training for all their participants, and their estimate that close on 80 per cent actually received it. Clearly, accessibility to jobsearch training looms rather less large for the participants than the providers would wish. This may be a question of language and comprehension, although if participants' willingness to accept jobsearch training is a relevant factor in influencing their take up, it would be wise to ensure that they know that it is available to them, and that it will probably do them some good.

Our results clearly confirm that a significant proportion of Training for Work participants are not very enthusiastic about jobsearch training. In retrospect, for some of them, their disinterest proved to

be soundly based; they were offered jobsearch training, turned it down, and were just as successful in finding work as those who accepted it. But these results also suggest that others were equally (perhaps more) dismissive of the value of jobsearch training with the result that their providers did not offer it to them. To be sure, some of them were bound for a job before leaving Training for Work, but those who were not, and who left Training for Work to look for work, did very badly in the labour market, even when controlling for other important characteristics. It may be that the providers simply assessed them as 'low-hopers', who would do badly anyway, and on whom jobsearch training would be wasted (42 per cent of them had been out of work for one to three years, compared with 33 per cent of the rest); or it may be that they were short-stay Training for Work participants, on whom jobsearch training was thought excessive (a third of them were on Training for Work for less than a month compared with 20 per cent of the rest).

Whatever the reason, a fifth of our participants fell into this group. Had they achieved even the average level of positive job outcomes, then the success rate among Training for Work leavers would have risen by three percentage points to 29 per cent. We did not know, until we asked them, that they had not received any jobsearch training, and neither did the TECs who had funded their participation. There is an evident need for greater clarity and transparency about provision, and the criteria underpinning decisions about it.

Proposal 2

Training for Work participants should be made aware that jobsearch training is available for them. The most obvious time for this is on entry to Training for Work; providers should be required to offer jobsearch training to each entrant as part of the process of completing their individual participation plan. In cases where none is to be given, there should be a requirement on providers to justify why this is so, and the reluctance or disinterest of the individual ought not to be considered a sufficient reason. Providers should also be required to record on the TFW2 whether or not jobsearch training was requested, whether it was given, and if not, why not.

6.3 The high road to job entry

The high road to positive job outcomes from Training for Work appears to be through direct entry, rather than through effective external labour market jobseeking. Those TECs with the highest rates of positive job outcomes were the ones with the highest proportion of participants who left Training for Work to go straight into a job. They were also the ones who had deliberately fostered a job placement axis within Training for Work. Using a variety of organisational forms, from employed status, through customised training, to placement through work experience, they had successfully sought to get access to employers' vacancies for their participants without going through the external labour market. These

arrangements had (1) established employer confidence in the relevance and quality of the skill training provided through Training for Work; (2) reassured employers that providers recognised their selection criteria and would screen Training for Work participants with them in mind; and (3) given employers the opportunity to test out the individuals concerned for a period on work experience. From the employers' point of view, they provided suitable and suitably trained recruits, with little need for advertising and selection costs, induction or immediate skill training, and little risk. From the TEC/provider point of view access to job opportunities was secured for Training for Work participants without the risk associated with a competitive and unpredictable external labour market.

Jobsearch training is not much needed for the high road of dire·t entry. Although some providers encouraged their participants to use their jobsearch skills to find themselves an employer placement for work experience, the best developed, direct entry, high roads relied on a close understanding and confidence between employer and provider, outwith the ambit of any individual participant. Seen in this light, individual jobsearch skills are mainly relevant to the low road. That is not to say that they are irrelevant; a fifth of our participants who had looked for work had found it down the low road of individual jobsearch on the external labour market. But it is rather to see them in their proper context.
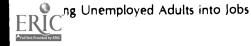
The focus of this study has not been 'the best way of achieving positive Training for Work job outcomes'. Had it been, we would have undoubtedly have had more to say about the direct entry high road, and the strategic considerations which TECs need to put into place to access it. As it is, our study has centred on the role of jobsearch training. We have shown that jobsearch training can and does unlock some of the doors back into the labour market. This should not prevent us from concluding that they do not seem to be the most important doors to unlock.

Proposal 3

The extent of different forms of direct entry into employment from Training for Work should be explored. TECs should be encouraged to pursue the most promising approaches to securing positive job outcomes. Some of them appear to need guidance about what these are; still more how to achieve them. Discovering good practice in this respect, and empowering other TECs to emulate it would significantly improve the success of Training for Work.

6.4 Contractual sticks and funding carrots

We have described in Chapter 2 how our TECs adopted a 'hands off' approach to managing Training for Work; by making clear what outcomes were valued (high job and NVQ outcomes), by specifying what ingredients should be used in achieving them, and by systematic *post hoc* review and audit, they hoped to guide providers towards achieving the outcomes required of them. The fine tuning of

delivery, and the precise mix of ingredients, was universally seen as a matter for the providers.

However, this was equally widely seen as an imperfect approach because the funding regime did not place sufficient emphasis on the achievement of outcomes. Thus, on the one hand, TECs did not really enjoy sufficiently powerful contractual levers (because they did not wish to be over-prescriptive about what should be provided and how), nor could they rely on sufficiently attractive funding carrots (because the bulk of provider income was accounted for through training weeks). The conventional solution which they espoused was a shift towards a 'start and outcome' funding regime, whereby a much more significant proportion of provider funding would rely on the achievement of the NVQ and/or job outcomes sought. We are aware of the volume of developmental work already taking place towards devising such a regime, and it is not our purpose to add to this.

However, it should be recognised that a shift to this sort of regime will intensify the already-strong 'hands off' perspective of the TECs, and may leave providers even more in the dark about what jobsearch training should be given, how much and to whom. That it will intensify their efforts to secure positive job outcomes is certain; that it will thereby produce high quality and appropriate jobsearch training is doubtful.
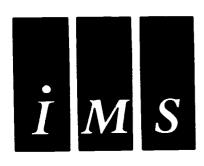
Proposal 4

Any shift towards a 'start and outcome' funding regime should be accompanied by greater TEC efforts to advise and guide providers in the question of jobsearch training, and indeed in other areas of Training for Work. In view of the current gap between what providers say they provide, and what participants say they receive, TECs should not be encouraged by changes in the funding regime to take less interest in providers' capacity, competence and commitment to delivering such training.

Training for Work is the main public programme in the UK to help long-term unemployed adults to find jobs. One of the ways in which it seeks to achieve this is through improving the job seeking skills of its participants. Jobsearch training is widely recognised as having the potential to improve the job prospects of unemployed people, but it is equally well known that many other factors are involved in determining the distribution of unemployment. This report considers how effective Training for Work is in practice.

i M S