Programme Evaluation

Actes Delivery

2016-2023

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Aims and Limitations of the Evaluation

The main aims of this evaluation are specified as follows:

- To assess the effectiveness and impact of Actes' New Directions delivery.
- To assess Actes' performance against set output and results targets.
- To provide an evidence base of outcomes and achievements that can be utilised to support future funding bids.
- To gain a broader understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by local young NEET people across Middlesbrough and Stockton.
- To gain a better understanding of the geographical areas and demographics the programme had the most and least success working in/with.
- To highlight what worked and what didn't work.
- To identify whether the programme provided value for money.

Limitations of the evaluation/points to note

1: Due to the vast amount of data captured and the time restraints regarding accessing this data, it was not viable to analyse the diagnostic assessments/initial intake assessments of all 1,138 participants who accessed Actes' New Directions programme. However, it was crucial to analyse a sample of this data to better understand the barriers impacting participants accessing the programme as well as gaining insight into their aspirations and attitudes towards employment, education and training.

Therefore, 169 participant diagnostic assessments were sampled at random. Of this 169, 115 were taken from the period of July 2016 – October 2019, with the remaining 54 being taken from the period of November 2019 – July 2023. This is of note as the participant paperwork was stream-lined on 1st November 2019 and the questions within the diagnostic assessments changed. Therefore, for the purpose of this evaluation, we have sectioned the questionnaires into three categories:

- Emotional mindset, confidence and personal development
- Employability skills
- Work and pay

2: Programme referral data (i.e., details relating to referral origin, whether the referred participant was registered onto the programme etc.) wasn't collected during delivery phase one (July 2016 – July 2018), but was collected during delivery phase two (January 2019 – July 2021) and delivery phase three (August 2021 - July 2023). Therefore, any analysis relating to referral data (unless otherwise stated) does not include referrals gained throughout delivery phase one.

3: Although the New Directions programme was delivered across two strands, for the purpose of this evaluation, the programme is treated as a whole, with the exception of evaluating performance against set targets (as targets were strand specific). Due to the complications associated with programme delivery, such as balancing caseloads, staff availability, and participant eligibility for each strand, it wasn't always possible to assign a participant to the strand of the programme most suited to their individual circumstances. In many cases, the severity of barriers would only become apparent at or after the registration appointment, in which case, the participant had already been assigned to a strand.

Therefore, evaluating both strands of the programme as separate entities would provide no real data insight (aside from judging performance against targets) as the rationale for choosing which strand to place a participant on was too often impacted by the above complications.

4: This evaluation utilises the Movement Into Employment Return on Investment (ROI) Tool developed by Optimity Advisors on behalf of Public Health England to help measure the impact of the Actes New Directions programme, and to identify whether or not the programme provided value for money. However, the tool was built to measure financial and health benefits of moving unemployed people into sustainable employment. With regards to YEI programmes, the recording of sustainable outcomes was the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), with the programme guidance stating:

'Data for this indicator (participants in employment six months after leaving) will be gathered via the ESF Leavers Survey (six-month follow up survey) run by the ESF Evaluation Team (DWP).'

Therefore, sustainability checks were not generally carried out by the Actes New Directions programme, however, a small number of caseworkers (across both strands of delivery) were tasked with carrying out a sample of sustainability checks (76 in total) in preparation for a potential evaluation, and to gather data to support future funding bids. Using the Optimity Advisors ROI tool, this evaluation provides a Return on Investment calculation based on the findings from this sample.

5: All data in relation to participants personal information (such as age, length of unemployment, main benefit etc) is taken from the day of their registration. For example, if a 15 year-old participant registered one day before their 16th birthday, they are still counted as being 15 years old.

6: Ward ranking data was only available for Middlesbrough-based wards via the Middlesbrough Council website, and this data is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD 2019). Any ward ranking data within this evaluation relating to non-Middlesbrough wards uses Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD 2015) data.

Introduction to the Youth Employment Initiative

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) formed part of the European Commission's response to high levels of youth unemployment in the wake of the financial crisis of 2007-2008. Designed to complement other national and European Social Fund (ESF) provision, the YEI provided support to those under the age of 25, or 29 in some cases, residing in European Union (EU) regions particularly affected by youth unemployment.

Reflecting this geographical targeting, 90% of YEI funding was channelled to regions where the youth unemployment rate in 2012 was higher than 25%, or where youth unemployment was more than 20 per cent but had increased by more than 30% in 2012.

YEI provision typically included support to access apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements and further education, amongst other employability assistance combined with wrap-around support for participants.

As reflected in the ESF Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020 for England, the overall objective of the YEI was to support the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market, in particular those not in employment, education or training including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities. The specific objectives of the YEI were:

- To support the rise in the participation age by providing additional traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities for 15-29 year old NEETs in YEI areas, with a particular focus on 15-19 year old NEETs.

- To engage marginalised 15-29 year old NEETs in YEI areas and support them to re-engage with education or training, with a particular focus on 15-19 year olds.

- To address the basic skills needs of 15-29 year old NEETs in YEI areas so that they can compete effectively in the labour market.

- To provide additional work experience and pre-employment training opportunities to 15-29 year old NEETs in YEI areas, with a particular focus on those aged over 18.

- To support 15-29 year old lone parents who are NEET in YEI areas to overcome the barriers they face in participating in the labour market (including childcare).

This was achieved in England through the provision of 24 programmes led by various prime organisations, with a focus on employability skills, training, volunteering, apprenticeship support, confidence-building, career guidance, work placements, and job opportunities.

Introduction to New Directions

New Directions was one of the 24 YEI programmess delivered throughout England and one of two YEI programmes delivered in the Tees Valley. New Directions was a YEI partnership programme consisting of five delivery partners – **New College Durham** (lead partner), housing providers **Thirteen**, **Beyond Housing** and **North Star**, and Middlesbrough-based charity **Actes**. New Directions was delivered across two delivery strands – Young Ambition (Strand One) and Defining Futures (Strand Two). Each partner was responsible for delivery across specified areas of the Tees Valley:

New College Durham: Hartlepool and Darlington
Thirteen: Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees
Beyond Housing: Redcar and Cleveland
Actes: Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees
North Star: Darlington

Programme Strands

Young Ambition (Strand One) targeted participants considered 'hard-to-reach' and/or furthest away from the labour market and it was anticipated that support would involve preparing participants to access employability support by focusing on softer skills development, budgeting, building confidence, and mentoring.

Defining Futures (Strand Two) targeted participants considered to be closer to the labour market than 'hard-to-reach' participants and it was anticipated that support would be focused on developing employability skills and accessing work placements, volunteering opportunities, and work-focused training.

Actes' main designated areas of delivery

Middlesbrough: According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Middlesbrough has a 'rank average score' of five, meaning it is the fifth most deprived Local Authority area in England. Six of the 20 wards within Middlesbrough rank within the top 1% most deprived in England and a further two rank within the top 3% most deprived.

Stockton-on-Tees: According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Stockton-on-Tees has a 'rank average score' of 73, meaning it is the 73rd most deprived Local Authority area in England, with affluent areas positioned alongside disadvantaged areas. Nine of the 26 wards within Stockton-on-Tees rank within the top 10% most deprived in England.

Scope of the Programme

Actes' New Directions delivery has been delivered across three phases with an overall contract value of £1,209,483.17.

Delivery phase one – July 2016 – July 2018
Delivery phase two – January 2019 – July 2021
Delivery phase three – August 2021 – July 2023 (Actes' continued to deliver the programme 'at risk' from August 2021 – December 2021 as the extension to the programme was going through the approval process).

Across the entire duration of delivery, Actes New Directions was tasked with supporting 1,230 participants, providing interventional support to 875 participants, and progressing 560 participants into employment, education or accredited training.

During delivery phase one, Actes had staff based in Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees. However, during delivery phases two and three, programme staff were based in Middlesbrough, with the exception of a small number of staff members who worked remotely from home.

Across all three delivery phases, support was provided on a one-to-one basis with each participant being assigned a caseworker, whose role was to work with the participant to gain their trust, build a rapport, and identify barriers and goals before putting robust and SMART action plans in place to support and prepare the participant to access the labour market.

One-to-one support was primarily delivered in an outreach setting at community centres or public venues local to the participant's residence. This was done to remove any barriers to participation such as travel and to maximise comfort and convenience for participants.

Support was also delivered remotely via online video programmes such as Microsoft Teams, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic where all delivery was moved 'online' due to the lockdown measures put in place by the Government.

Post-pandemic, the programme continued to offer a remote service offer for participants who didn't feel comfortable with face-to-face interactions.

Typically, one-to-one support was focused on employability support (CV writing support, interview skills support, application support, career advice etc.) but also extended to advocacy and sign-posting support in relation to non-employability barriers linked to housing, debt and mental health etc.

Delivery Model

Engagement → Assessment → Action Planning → Specialist Support & Review → Progression

Engagement

During delivery phase one, Actes utilised a recruitment officer who was responsible for being the primary generator of referrals. However, as the programme was re-modelled for delivery stages two and three, participant recruitment was primarily overseen by the programme team leader, although caseworkers were still tasked with carrying out their own engagement. Overall, engagement was achieved using a variety of channels such as Job Centre Plus, Facebook, job fair/recruitment events and engagement with external and internal services/programmes etc.

At the point of engagement, a registration appointment was made to be held at a venue convenient to the participant. Typically, registration appointments took place quickly after initial engagement (usually within one week of the initial point of contact). In the lead up to the registration appointment, participants would typically receive a reminder text message confirming that the appointment was going ahead as scheduled and reminding them to attend the appointment with the required eligibility evidence.

Assessment

Any participant who could not evidence that they held at least a Functional Skills Level 2/New GCSE Grade 4/Old GCSE Grade C qualification was asked to complete BKSB English and Maths assessments. This was to determine whether the participant had basic skills needs, however the BKSB assessments were not mandatory, and a participant could refuse to undertake them. In the even that this did happen, the participant's refusal was documented within their file.

As part of the assessment phase, participants also undertook a diagnostic assessment to identify their needs, barriers, skills and aspirations. Information gathered from this assessment was used to shape the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), with barriers being triaged to ensure that the more impactful or urgent barriers were considered and addressed before any employability or soft skill development took place.

Action Planning

The action plan consisted of a series of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based) objectives designed to tackle the barriers highlighted within the diagnostic assessment. For example, if a participant was generally 'work-ready' but their diagnsotic assessment highlighted that they required support with preparing for and performing at job interviews, objectives would primarily be set around tackling this barrier (assuming no other more pressing barriers were highlighted). An example objective in this instance would be for the participant to attend and participate in an interview skills session led by their caseworker.

Specialist Support and Review

Specialist support was carried out to help the participant to complete the specified objectives and therefore overcome the identified barriers. Upon completion of each objective, an action plan review was required to take place, which presented the participant and the caseworker with the opportunity to discuss and review the progress made against the objective.

Progression

Once barriers had been tackled and the participant was ready to focus on progressing into employment, education or training, it was the responsibility of the caseworker to support the participant towards this goal. Typically this would be achieved by supporting the participant to identify and apply for suitable accredited training/education or employment opportunities. However, progressions needed to be evidenced in order to be counted, typically in the form of:

- An offer letter, payslip, or bank statement showing salary, or email confirmation from the employer (employment)
- An offer letter, email confirmation from the training/education provider, or certificate confirming completion of a qualification

The introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) alongside a new Data Protection Act in May 2018 created a new challenge with regard to obtaining progression evidence from employers and training/education providers, with Actes' New Directions staff highlighting how hesitant organisations became about sharing personal information.

Therefore, this created an additional challenge when it came to obtaining progression evidence and in some cases meant that genuine progressions were achieved but were not able to be claimed or counted as sufficient evidence was not obtained.

The Participants

The participants supported by Actes' New Directions programme were NEET (not in employment, education or training) 15-29 year olds, predominantly residing in Middlesbrough or Stockton-on-Tees. In line with the programme guidance, participants were broken down into three specific cohorts:

- **Unemployed (including long-term unemployed)** – any participant aged 18 - 29 in receipt of employment-related benefits
- **Long-Term Unemployed** – any long-term unemployed participant aged 18 - 29 in receipt of employment-related benefits
- **Inactive** – any participant aged 15-17. And/or any participant not in receipt of employment-related benefits and not actively looking for work

Therefore, all eligible participants fitted into one of the three above categories, or in the case of 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants, fell into both the 'Long-Term Unemployed' and 'Unemployed' categories, which was in-line with the programme guidance where it was stated that: - **"An individual who is long-term unemployed must also be employed"**.

Age profile of participants

The mean average age of the 1,138 participants was 21.85 years of age. The most common age was 19 years of age (148 participants), closely followed by 20 years of age (138 participants.

The below graph breaks down the age profiles of all participants upon entry to the programme:
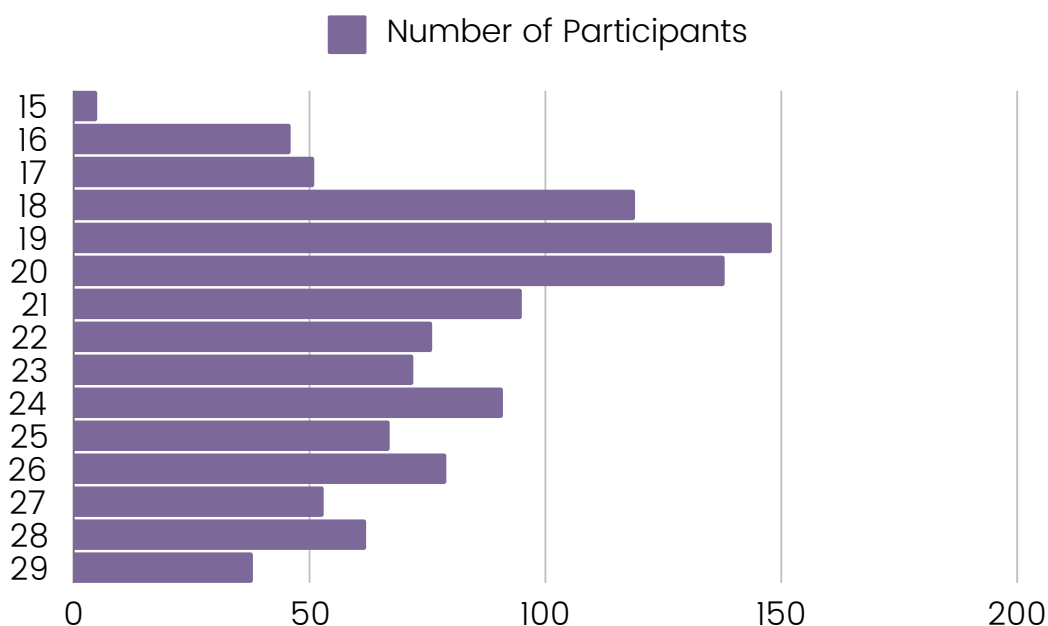
Gender profile of participants

Female
39.5%

450   688

Male
60.5%

Male   Female
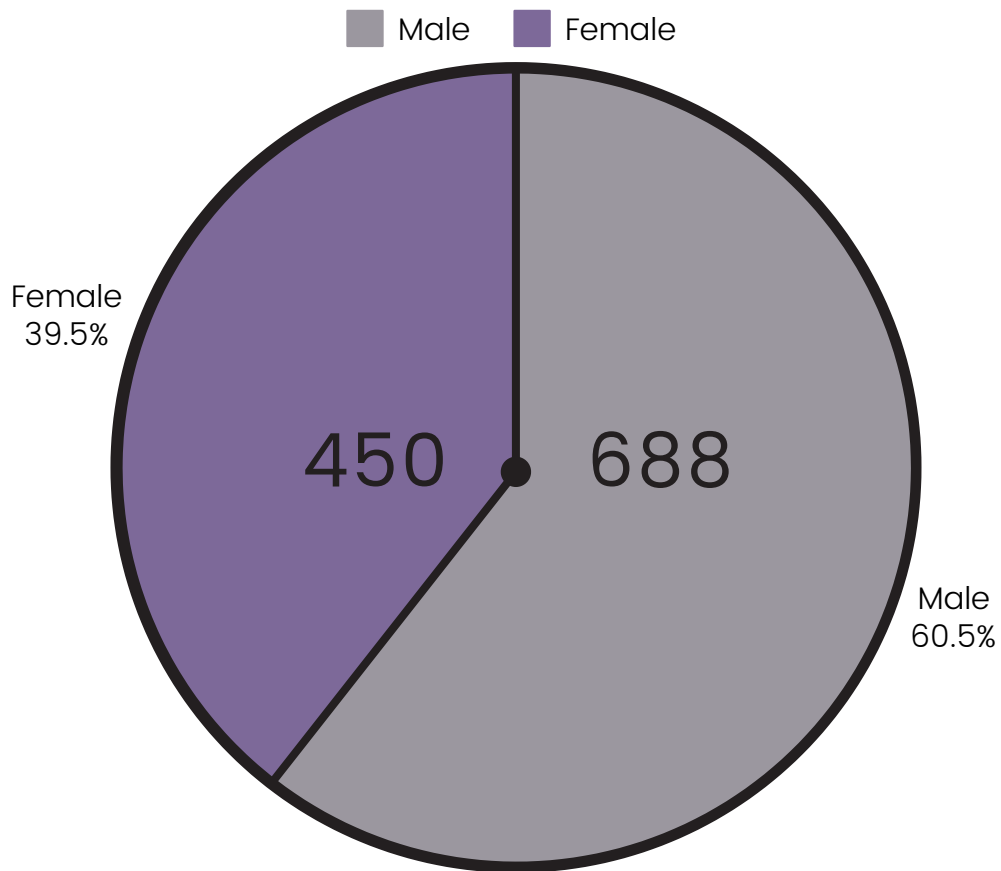
Geographical profile of participants

The vast majority of participants supported resided within Middlesbrough or Stockton-on-Tees, however on occasion, the programme did sporadically work with a small number of young people who lived within other areas of the Tees Valley. The table below provides a full geographical breakdown to show which Tees Valley borough each participant resided in upon joining the programme.

Area	Number of participants
Middlesbrough	688
Stockton-on-Tees	408
Redcar & Cleveland	37
Darlington	4
Hartlepool	1

The programme supported people across 63 different wards within the Tees Valley. Although the vast majority of support was targeted towards Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees residents, wards were not specifically targeted during delivery.

The table below provides a geographical breakdown to show the Tees Valley wards that participants resided in, as well as the number of participants residing in each ward. Wards highlighted in red are ranked within the top 100 (out of approximately 7,000) most deprived nationally.

Ward	Number of participants
Acklam	14
Ayresome	40
Berwick Hills & Pallister	49
Billingham Central	18
Billingham East	28
Billingham North	5
Billingham South	28
Billingham West & Wolviston	5
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	8
Brambles & Thorntree	48
Central	88
Coatham	1
Coulby Newham	26
De Bruce	1
Dormanstown	1
Eaglescliffe East	5
Eaglescliffe West	4
Eston	3
Fairfield	7
Grangefield	6
Grangetown	8
Guisborough	2
Hardwick & Salters Lane	32
Hartburn	9

Ward	Number of participants
Hemlington	37
Ingleby Barwick North	9
Ingleby Barwick South	17
Kader	12
Kirkleatham	2
Ladgate	23
Linthorpe	24
Longbeck	2
Longlands & Beechwood	45
Mandale & Victoria	27
Marton East	7
Marton West	3
Newcomen	3
Newport	135
Newtown	16
Normanby	4
North Ormesby	33
Norton Central	16
Norton North	7
Norton South	12
Ormesby	3
Park	64
Park East	2
Park End & Beckfield	33
Red Hall & Lingfield	1
Ropner	28
Roseworth	23
South Bank	2
Southern Villages	2
Stainsby Hill	34

Ward	Number of participants
Stainton & Thornton	3
Stephenson	1
Stockton Town Centre	39
Teesville	3
Trimdon	4
Village	12
Wheatfields	1
Yarm	11
Zetland	2

The greatest number of participants supported resided in the Newport ward (135). This was followed by the Central (88), Park (64), Berwick Hills & Pallister (49) and Brambles & Thorntree (48) wards.

Of the 1,138 participants supported by Actes' New Directions programme, 478 (42%) lived in wards ranked within the top 100 (out of approximately 7,000)* most deprived nationally.

However, it's important to note that ward ranking data wasn't available for 82 of the 1,138 supported participants, and for non-Middlesbrough-based wards, IMD 2015 overall ward ranking data was used as IMD 2019 ward ranking data was not readily available. As of 2015, both Grangetown (6th most deprived) and Stockton Town Centre (13th most deprived) ranked within the top 100 most deprived wards in England.

Therefore, of the 1,056 supported participants sampled, 478 (45.3%) lived in wards ranked within the top 100 most deprived nationally (out of approximately 7,000).*

As IMD 2019 ward ranking data (the latest available data) was readily available for all Middlesbrough-based wards via the Middlesbrough Council website, it is possible to provide a more in-depth analysis of Middlesbrough-based participants.

Of the 688 Middlesbrough-based participants supported, 431 (62.6%) resided in wards ranked within the top 100 most deprived nationally (out of approximately 7,000)*.

The table overleaf gives a breakdown of this data:

*Please note: The number of wards in England fluctuates periodically.

At the time of writing this evaluation, there are 6,904 wards in England. However, at points during the programme delivery period, the number of wards in England was as high as 7,200.

Ward	Ward ranking (national)	Number of participants
North Ormesby	3rd most deprived ward in England	33
Brambles & Thorntree	5th most deprived ward in England	48
Berwick Hills & Pallister	20th most deprived ward in England	49
Newport	36th most deprived ward in England	135
Park End & Beckfield	69th most deprived ward in England	33
Longlands & Beechwood	70th most deprived ward in England	45
Central	89th most deprived ward in England	88

Deprivation deciles

Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a set of geographies designed for statistical purposes. Typically, LSOAs are smaller geographical areas than wards. Deprivation deciles are determined using the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, which ranks LSOAs in England from most deprived to least deprived, and divides them into 10 equal groups. LSOAs in the first decile are among the most deprived 10% nationally, while LSOAs in the tenth decile are among the least deprived 10%.

Of the 1,138 supported participants, 687 (60.4%) resided in Decile 1 LSOAs (most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally) and only 20 (1.8%) resided in decile 10 LSOAs (least deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally). The table below provides a breakdown of the number of participants living in LSOAs within each decile.

National decile rank	Number of participants
Decile 1 (10% most deprived)	687
Decile 2	103
Decile 3	98
Decile 4	46
Decile 5	32
Decile 6	29
Decile 7	43
Decile 8	43
Decile 9	37
Decile 10 (10% least deprived)	20

Barriers impacting participation

169 participant initial intake assessments (carried out on the day of the participant registration) were sampled at random in an attempt to highlight prevalent barriers impacting on participants' chances of progressing into employment, education or training, as well as drawing attention to strengths and weaknesses with regards to employability skills, soft skills and mindset.

Due to a change in the paperwork in November 2019, the structure and questions within the initial intake assessment changed, therefore, it was not possible to perform a blanket analysis of all 169 assessment results. Instead, it was necessary to separate the assessments into the following two groups:

- Pre-November 2019 – of which accounted for 115 assessments
- Post-November 2019 – of which accounted for 54 assessments

The below tables display the averaged scores from each question within the sampled participant assessments pre November 2019

Emotional mindset

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 strongly agreeing, how do you feel about the following statements?	1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	7.3
I feel that I have control over the things that happen to me	6.9
I am able to do things as well as most people	7.7
I feel I am able to deal with the problems of life well	7.2
I take a positive attitude towards myself	7.2
Setbacks don't discourage me	6.6
I am a hard worker	8.5
I finish what I begin	8.5
On the whole I am satisfied with myself	7.3
I enjoy new experiences and see them as a challenge	8.2
I feel I have much to be proud of	7.4

Confidence

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very confident, how do you feel about the following things even if you have never done them before?	1 = Not all confident 10 = Very confident
Meeting new people	7.9
Having a go at things that are new	7.8
Working with other people in a team	7.9
Being the leader of a team	6.3
Putting forward ideas	7
Getting things done on time	7.6
Explaining ideas clearly	6.9
Working on your own	8.2

Employability skills

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very confident, please rate your level of confidence in:	1 = Not all confident 10 = Very confident
Using internet/social media	8.8
Using your networks (family, friends and other contacts)	8
Using the job centre	6.2
Using private agencies	5.3
Writing a CV	6.1
Writing a cover letter	5.1
Completing an application form	6.7
Job/course interviews	6.2

Work and pay

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
The following statements are about work and pay. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being strongly agree, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:	1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
Having a job is the best way to be an independent person	8.7
Once you have a job it is important to hang on to it even if you don't really like it	7.3
Having a job that leads somewhere is important	8.4
A wage is a more stable source of income than benefits	8.9
You are more likely to earn more in a job than on benefits	8.6
When thinking about an occupation, on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very important, how important is:	1 = Not at all important 10 = Very important
Future job security	8.9
Finding an occupation that leaves you with a lot of time for leisure/family time	7.9
Finding an occupation which interests you	8.8
Having a job with high income	7.8
Finding a job in which you can help others	7.9

The below tables display the averaged scores from each question within the sampled participant assessments post November 2019

Personal development/confidence

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very confident/able/positve/high, where would you place yourself with regards to the following:	1 = Very low 10 = Very high
Confidence levels	6.3
Level of self esteem	6.7
Chances of progressing into training	7.6
Chances of progressing into education	6.6
Chances of progressing into work	8.2
Ability to deal with life issues	7.2
Self belief	6.8
Ability to realise potential	6.8
Attitude to change	7.2
Level of motivation	7.7
Level of interpersonal skills	7.4

Employability skills

Questions	Average score (1-10 scale)
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very confident, please rate your level of confidence in:	1 = Not all confident 10 = Very confident
Understanding of how to apply for a job	5.9
Knowledge of local jobs	6.2
Ability to effectively job search	7
Ability to find suitable job vacancies	6.7
Filling in job applications	6.8
Ability to perform effectively at job interviews	6.1
Obtaining references	6.1
Creating a CV	6.1
Applying for online vacancies	6.9
Ability to fulfil the roles you apply for	6.6

General barriers

Questions	Yes	No	Unsure/not answered
Do you have a bank account?	51	3	0
Do you have a driving licence?	10	43	1
Do you own a car?	10	43	1
Do you have access to transport?	33	21	0
Do you own a PC, laptop or tablet?	38	14	2
Do you have internet access at home?	53	1	0
Do you have internet access on a mobile device?	50	4	0

From the 169 sampled participants, we were able to draw a number of conclusions relating to barriers to employment, education and training, and attitudes towards work and pay. For the purpose of analysis, the pre-November 2019 and post-November 2019 assessments have been combined and the questions have been categorised into the below three themes:

- Emotional mindset, confidence and personal development
- Employability skills
- Attitude towards work and pay

Emotional mindset, confidence and personal development

Within this category of questions, the average score was 7.4, with the highest average scores coming from the below statements/values:

- I am a hard worker (8.5)
- I finish whatever I begin (8.5)
- Working alone (8.2)
- I enjoy new experiences and see them as a challenge (8.2)
- Chances of progressing into work (8.2)

The lowest scores came from the below statements/values:

- Being the leader of a team (6.3)
- Confidence levels (6.3)
- Setbacks don't discourage me (6.6)
- Chances of progressing into education (6.6)
- Self-Esteem (6.7)

From this sample, we can conclude that participants described themselves as hard-working and reliable ("I finish whatever I begin"), primarily enjoyed working on tasks alone, but also enjoyed new experiences and meeting new people.

Additionally, we can conclude that participants felt that they did have a high chance of progressing into work, although this particular question did not reference any timescales in relation to this.

From this sample, we can also conclude that participants described themselves as being somewhat low in general confidence and having a relatively low level of self-esteem (in comparison to the average score of 7.4). They also did not enjoy the idea of leading a team, were relatively impacted by setbacks and didn't feel very confident about progressing into education, however this perhaps could have been impacted by a lack of interest with regards to returning to education for some participants.

<u>Employability skills</u>

Within this category of questions, the average score was 6.5, with the highest scores coming from the below self-assessments:

- Using the internet/social media (8.8)
- Using your networks (8.0)
- Ability to effectively job search (7.0)
- Applying for online vacancies (6.9)
- Filling job applications (6.8)

The lowest scores came from the below self-assessments:

- Writing a cover letter (5.1)
- Using private agencies (5.3)
- Understanding of how to apply for a job (5.9)
- Ability to perform effectively at job interviews (6.1)
- Creating a CV/Writing a CV (6.1)
- Obtaining references (6.1)

From this sample, we can conclude that participants felt extremely confident in their ability to use social media and networks of friends and families to identify and access employment opportunities. Scores relating to both of these statements were particularly high in comparison with the remainder of the scores.

This does suggest that the sampled participants felt more at ease with utilising tools that were perhaps more familiar to them such as social media, and friends and family than they did utilising more orthodox methods of searching and applying for work.

It is possible that there was variance in how the question around 'using the internet/social media' was asked, as some caseworkers may have asked this question on a general basis, whereas others may have asked this question specifically in relation to 'using the internet/social media to search and apply for jobs'.

From this sample, we can also conclude that participants had very low confidence with regards to writing cover letters, had little experience or low confidence with using private agencies and low confidence in their ability to obtain references.

These findings are perhaps not a surprise given that the average age of participants was 21.85 (years of age), suggesting a high number of participants supported were still in the early stages of their career journeys and perhaps hadn't gained much experience in writing cover letters or using private agencies, and perhaps hadn't yet built the working history to be able to call on references to support their future job applications.

Work and pay

Within this category, the average score was 8.3, with the highest average scores coming from the below statements/working conditions:

- A wage is a more stable source of income than benefits (8.9)
- Future Job Security (8.9)
- Finding an occupation which interests you (8.8)
- Having a job is the best way to be an independent person (8.7)
- You are more likely to earn more in a job than on benefits (8.6)

The lowest average scores came from the below statements/working conditions:

- Once you have a job it is important to hang on to it even if you don't really like it (7.3)
- Having a job with a high income (7.8)
- Finding an occupation that leaves you with a lot of time for leisure/family time (7.9)
- Finding an occupation in which you can help others (7.9)
- Having a job that leads somewhere is important (8.4)

From this sample, we can conclude that participants, on the whole, valued job stability, security and the likelihood of career progression more than they valued high income.

We can also include that participants felt finding work was an excellent way of gaining independence, however it was important that the job interests them. The notion that it's important to stay in a job even if it's not enjoyable, was something that was less agreed with, although the average score for this particular statement was still reasonably high at 7.3.

However, this was the lowest score out of all of the work and pay related statements and in combination with the 'finding an occupation which interests you' average score, it's clear to see that job enjoyment/interest is one of the most important factors participants considered when thinking about accessing the labour market.

Participants were also less concerned about having lots of free/leisure time or working within an occupation where they would be helping others.

Other barriers

From the 54 Initial Intake Assessments sampled from November 2019 onwards, we were able to gain insight into some of the barriers that impacted on a participant's ability to gain employment. These results show that:

- 94.4% of participants had a bank account
- 18.5% of participants had a driving licence and owned a car
- 61.1% of participants had access to public transport
- 70.4% of participants owned a PC, laptop or tablet
- 98.1% of participants had access to the internet
- 92.6% of participants had access to the internet on a mobile device

From this relatively small sample, it's clear that transport was a key issue impacting young people across Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees and this potentially reduced the number of employment, education or training opportunities young people could realistically consider or access.

In addition, although 61.1% of participants had access to public transport, the assessment did not capture how reliable or frequent public transport is from the perspective of each participant accessing it.

Although nearly all sampled participants had access to the internet, only 70.4% owned a PC, laptop or tablet, meaning that upon joining the programme, a relatively large proportion of participants may have been using laptop/devices belonging to friends/family, using laptop/devices in public spaces or were using their smartphone as their main way of searching and applying for jobs.

All 3 of these options present their own challenges that can impact on a participant's chances of submitting high-quality job applications, and therefore gaining employment.

How did participants access the programme?

Through Delivery Phase one, referral data was only collected for referrals who were successfully registered for the programme. Through delivery phases two & three, referral data was collected for all referrals to identify the referral sources that were the most successful. For the purposes of this evaluation, referral data from delivery phase one is separated from the data from delivery phases two and three (which are combined).

Why was it not possible to sign up all referred participants?

For a variety of reasons, some participants were not able to be registered for the programme. These reasons included the participant withdrawing consent, the participant not attending the pre-arranged registration, the participant being completely uncontactable, or the participant being ineligible for the programme.

Delivery phase one

Although the overall number of referrals was not captured during delivery phase one, the origin of each successful referral was captured. Therefore, we are able to identify which referral route provided the most successful referrals.
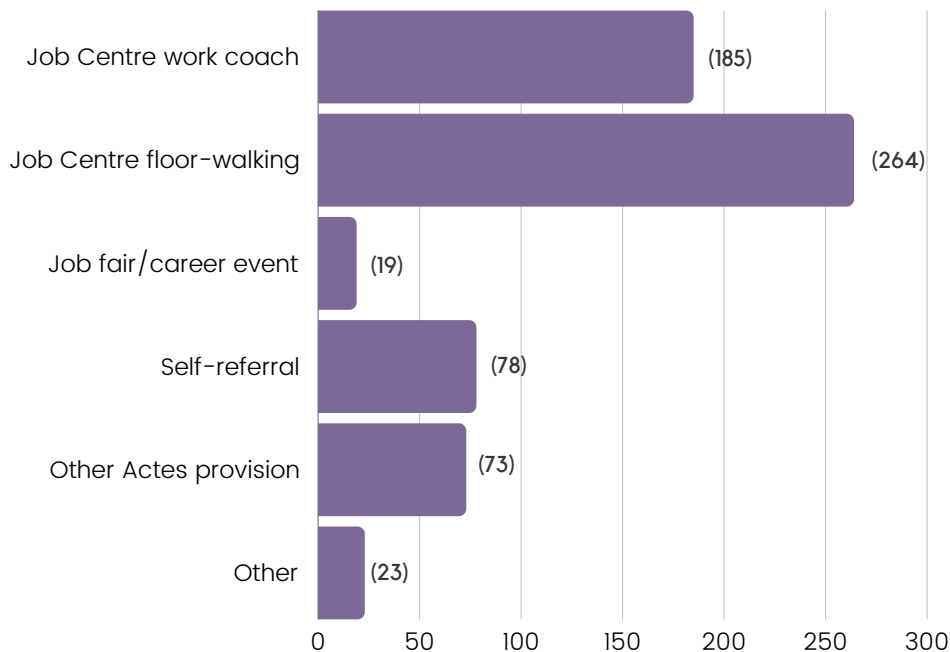
From the 642 total successful referrals, 449 came from the Job Centre, with 185 coming directly from Job Centre Work Coaches and 264 being gained from 'floor-walking' at Job Centre (floor-walking is the process of engaging directly with claimants as they enter or leave the Job Centre).

The next biggest source of successful referrals was 'self-referrals' - classified as participants who referred themselves for support, followed closely by 'referral from other Actes provision', which captured successful referrals who had just completed an alternative Actes provision. The lowest number of successful referrals came from job fairs/career events. The 'other' category captured any referral source that isn't already specified and includes referrals from external organisations such as local support services or charities.

Delivery phases two & three

During delivery phases two and three, every referral was captured. The table below provides a breakdown of all referrals gained during these delivery phases to highlight which referral sources were the most successful and widely used, and which ones were the least successful and less frequently used.

Referral route	Total	% registered	% registered if all participants were eligible
Facebook	166 (29)/432	38.4%	45.1%
Job fair/recruitment events	48 (3)/113	42.5%	45.1%
Job Centre	128 (10)/230	55.7%	60%
Job Centre floor-walking	8 (1)/23	34.8%	39.1%
Other Actes provision	20 (2)/40	50%	55%
Young Ambition (Strand 1)	50/65	77%	77%
Defining Futures (Strand 2)	11/14	78.6%	78.6%
Self-referrals	68 (5)/105	64.8%	69.5%
Other	18 (3)/41	43.9%	51.2%
Total	519 (53)/1,063	48.8%	53.8%

The total column shows the number of successful referrals against the number of overall referrals obtained from each referral source. The number in brackets is the number of additional referrals who initially appeared eligible, cooperated throughout the registration process and wanted to receive support, but who could not be supported due to not being eligible for the programme.

This predominantly included participants who couldn't provide the correct eligibility evidence and participants who had already exhausted, or were currently engaged in YEI support through alternative providers.

Facebook

Facebook provided 40.6% (432/1,063) of all referrals gained throughout delivery phases two and three, and 32% (166/519) of all registered participants during the same period. An additional 29 participants referred via Facebook were initially registered, however, their registrations had to be discarded due to ineligibility. In total, 38.4% of the referrals gained through Facebook were successfully registered. This figure would have jumped to 45.1% if all initially registered participants were eligible for support.

Facebook wasn't utilised at all during delivery phase one and referrals via Facebook were relatively low during the early stages of delivery phase two, with only 26 of the 311 (8.4%) overall referrals gained in 2019 coming via Facebook. However, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic caused a temporary closure of Job Centre and with that, the removal of any conditionality on benefit claims. This meant claimants did not have to actively present in-person at Job Centre, or take steps to actively look for work between 19th March 2020 – 1st July 2020. As a result of these measures, the programme received just 17 overall referrals between 19th March 2020 and 1st July 2020

Due to the uncertainty with regards to conditionality being reapplied to benefit claims, and the uncertainty around lockdown easements, a considered effort was therefore made to establish Facebook as a prominent source of referrals. This was achieved by creating engaging content that promoted the programme, promoted the opportunities the programme linked in to, and provided general employability skill advice. This effort resulted in a sharp increase in referrals and by the end of 2020, the programme had received 370 referrals (59 more than in 2019), of which 211 (57%) were received through Facebook.

Job Centre and Job Centre Floor Walking

Whilst 449 of the 642 successful referrals were gained via the Job Centre during delivery phase one, a combination of factors made it much more difficult for the programme to obtain Job Centre referrals during delivery phases two and three:

Factor one
Although delivery phase one ended in July 2018, DWP didn't officially approve a programme extension until the latter part of 2018, therefore the programme initially ended in July 2018. The programme re-commenced in January 2019 but didn't re-start active delivery, with a new team in place, until March 2019. This large gap in delivery and the loss of individual relationships between Actes New Directions staff and Job Centre work coaches meant that the programme lost presence and visibility within Job Centre and this had a clear impact on the number of incoming referrals.

Factor two
Local Job Centres introduced new rules prohibiting the promotion of YEI programmes within Job Centre buildings. During delivery phase one, Actes had a strong presence within local Job Centres so that engagement with work coaches and claimants could take place. However, as this was not permitted during delivery phases two and three, there was limited scope for re-establishing connections with work coaches. As an alternative, Job Centre advised that the programme could be added to a YEI information page on the District Provision Tool so that work coaches could learn about the programme and refer claimants via this method. However, despite numerous attempts and escalations to DWP management, Actes were unable to get the Actes New Directions programme added to this system.

Factor three
Despite the issues regarding promoting the programme to Job Centre work coaches, the programme did still receive referrals via telephone from a small number of work coaches who had actively been referring claimants to alternative Actes provision. This explains why during delivery phases two and three, the programme did still gain 230 referrals from Job Centre work coaches. However, during delivery phase three, work coaches advised Actes that they were no longer allowed to refer participants to any provision via telephone and instead, could only refer claimants electronically to approved provision that had been added to the District Provision Tool.

Factor four
In response to the impact of Covid-19, the UK Government, in September 2020 launched the Kickstart Scheme to provide funding for employers offering paid work experience roles for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24. The programme was aimed at preventing long-term unemployment amongst young people, however, as both the Kickstart Scheme and the YEI programme received DWP funding, YEI participants were not allowed to be put forward for Kickstart schemes and Kickstart participants were not eligible to receive YEI support. This rule was successfully challenged and subsequently changed, however the programme endured a significant period of time where young participants had to be 'signed-off' the Actes' New Directions programme so that they could be put forward for Kickstart roles, and where young claimants were unable to be referred for YEI support because they had been put forward for a Kickstart role.

<u>Other Actes provision</u>

Referrals from other Actes provision included referrals from any other programme delivered by Actes, however, through delivery phases two and three, the number of alternative Actes provision reduced as programmes such as Talent Match, Know Your Money, One Planet Pioneers, Work IT Out etc. either ended before or during these two delivery phases.

Young Ambition and Defining Futures

From a 'percentage registered' point of view, participants passing between the strands of the programme proved to be the most successful. This was referred to as 're-stranding'. Due to YEI funding rules, participants could only access each strand once, and could not be on both strands at the same time. Generally, the process involved a participant exiting support on Young Ambition (Strand One) and registering for support on Defining Futures (Strand Two), usually after completing accredited vocational training as part of their Young Ambition action plan. In some cases, a participant may have progressed into employment after being supported on Young Ambition, but then re-contacted the programme later, after becoming unemployed.

During delivery phase one, caseworkers were freely able to work across both strands of delivery, which made 're-stranding' more simple than it was during delivery phases two and three.

Self-referrals

This category captured any participant who referred themselves via any means except Facebook. Aside from 're-stranding', self-referrals had the highest success rate in terms of the percentage of participants who registered. This is perhaps unsurprising as a participant who self-refers is presumably doing so because they feel ready to access support. However, the data does also show that assuming every person who puts themselves forward for support was eligible, 30.5% of this group still failed to accept the offer of support, by either failing to attend multiple appointments or repeatedly failing to answer the telephone when a caseworker tried to make contact.

Other

This category captured any referral that came into the programme during delivery phases two and three via alternative means to those already specified. Given the wide spectrum of sources this category could capture, it's difficult to put any context around the data, other than to state that the percentage registered was around 5% below the overall delivery phase two and three average of 48.8%.

Total

In total, the programme received 1,063 referrals during delivery phases two and three, of which 519 (48.8%) were officially registered. Registration paperwork was accomplished for a total of 572 participants (53.8%), however due to issues around verifying eligibility, only 519 participants were deemed eligible for support. Facebook was the biggest source of referrals and registrations, but had the second lowest registration rate. Factors that contribute to this lower rate could be variable but advocates reported that some participants were reluctant to provide copies of ID documents to a programme that they had found via social media.

Performance Against Targets - Outputs

All delivery partners were issued a set of targets by the lead partner (New College Durham) relating to the programme outputs (registrations on to the programme). Although this evaluation focuses on Actes' delivery on the programme as a whole, the New Directions programme consisted of two delivery strands and therefore targets were set for each strand.

The table below shows how Strand One of the programme performed against the set targets:

	Output	Target	Achieved	%
1	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	529	506	95.7%
2	Participants (aged 25-29) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	177	175	98.9%
3	Unemployed (including Long-Term Unemployed)	529	516	97.5%
4	Long-Term Unemployed	177	307	173.4%
5	Inactive	177	165	93.2%
6	Participants who are Ethnic Minorities	57	82	143.9%
7	Participants with Disabilities	84	87	103.6%
8	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	32	50	156.3%

*It's important to note, as is the case with the results indicators, DWP defined anybody who was 'Long-Term Unemployed' as also being 'Unemployed'. This explains why the 'Target' totals from boxes one and two don't add up to the 'Target' totals from boxes three, four and five. Instead, the totals from boxes one and two add up to the totals from boxes three and five

The table below shows how Strand Two of the programme performed against the set targets:

	Output	Target	Achieved	%
1	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	400	333	83.3%
2	Participants (aged 25-29) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	124	124	100%
3	Unemployed (including Long-Term Unemployed)	390	362	92.8%
4	Long-Term Unemployed	134	189	141%
5	Inactive	134	95	70.9%
6	Participants who are Ethnic Minorities	53	66	124.5%
7	Participants with Disabilities	65	58	89.2%
8	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	23	33	143.5%

*As is the case with the results indicators, DWP defined anybody who was 'Long-Term Unemployed' as also being 'Unemployed' .This explains why the 'Target' totals from boxes one and two don't add up to the 'Target' totals from boxes three, four and five. Instead, the totals from boxes one and two add up to the totals from boxes three and five

Strand One and Two combined: Performance against targets - Outputs

Please note: the Actes New Directions programme was not issued with a Strand One and Strand Two combined programme target. The below table is simply to demonstrate the overall programme achieved in comparison to what it was targeted to achieve:

	Output	Target	Achieved	%
1	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	929	839	90.3%
2	Participants (aged 25-29) who are Unemployed or Inactive (NEET)	301	299	99.3%
3	Unemployed (including Long-Term Unemployed)	919	878	95.5%
4	Long-Term Unemployed	311	496	159.5%
5	Inactive	311	260	83.6%
6	Participants who are Ethnic Minorities	110	148	134.5%
7	Participants with Disabilities	149	145	97.3%
8	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	55	83	150.9%

*As is the case with the results indicators, DWP defined anybody who was 'Long-Term Unemployed' as also being 'Unemployed'. This explains why the 'Target' totals from boxes one and two don't add up to the 'Target' totals from boxes three, four and five. Instead, the totals from boxes one and two add up to the totals from boxes three and five

Across the two strands of delivery, Actes were targeted with registering 1,230 participants, of which 929 were required to be under the age of 25 and 301 were required to be aged 25-29. Of this 1,230, 919 participants were required to be 'Unemployed (including 'Long-Term Unemployed)' and 311 were required to be 'Inactive'. Of the 919 "Unemployed' participants, 311 were required to be 'Long-Term Unemployed'.

As evidenced by the performance tables, despite the output targets relating to 'Long-Term Unemployed' and 'Inactive' participants being equal, the programme across both strands, and therefore as a whole, had much more success with engaging with 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants than it did with engaging with 'Inactive' participants, far out-performing the targets set on both strands.

This is perhaps because Job Centre was one of the programme's most prominent referral sources, particularly during delivery phase one, which means that the majority of referrals gained from Job Centre were either 'Unemployed' or 'Long-Term Unemployed'. The Job Centre did ocassionally refer 'Inactive' participants who were classed as 'Inactive' due to being in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support (IS), however this was a relatively small amount in comparison to the number of 'Unemployed' and 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants they referred.

In addition, the largest cohort of 'Inactive' participants were participants who were aged 17 and under, however, most 16 and 17 year olds (83.7% according to the Department for Education) tend to be in some form of education and therefore not eligible for YEI support until they leave school or college. Once an individual left school or college, they were only eligible for the programme if they had not already formally agreed to return to education. These factors severly reduced the pool of eligible 'Inactive' participants.

One key challenge associated with working towards such specific targets was that the programme had no control over the individual characteristics and circumstances of the participants who were referred or who self-referred onto the programme.

The only information captured at the point of referral was information that enabled the programme to assess the participant's eligiblity for support. This information was limited to name, location, age and whether or not the participant was NEET. All additional participant information (including personal information that linked to specific output targets) was captured at the registration session. This was done to keep the referral process as simple as possible.

This challenge was made more difficult by the fact that due to circumstances beyond the programme's control, Facebook became the most prominent and relied upon source of referrals. However, due to META's policies on Discriminatory Practices, it wasn't possible to create content that directly targeted people based on personal attributes or characteristics. In fact, even specifying an eligible age range (15-29 in the case of this programme) within any content resulted in the post being automatically blocked or removed.

The next biggest under-performance came within the 'Participants (below 25 years of age) who are 'Unemployed' or 'Inactive' category. Across both strands of delivery, the programme worked with 839 participants who were under the age of 25. Of this 839,

213 (25.4%) were 'Inactive'. Conversely, just 47 of the 299 (15.7%) participants supported aged 25-29 were 'Inactive', therefore it is clear that an under-performance within the 'Participants (below 25 years of age) who are Unemployed or Inactive' category impacted on the performance within the 'Inactive' category - and vice versa, as both of these categories were more likely to link in to each other. Primarily, this was because any participant under the age of 18 (and therefore below 25 years of age) was by definition 'Inactive'.

Across both strands, from an output point of view, the programme also slightly under-performed with regards to the 'Unemployed (including Long-Term Unemployed)' category and the 'Participants with Disabilities' category.

Performance Against Targets - Results

As a Youth Employment Initiative, the core programme aims were to provide supported interventions to assist participants with overcoming barriers and progress into employment (including apprenticeships), education or training (including traineeships). For a supported intervention to be counted, all agreed objectives within a participant's action plan were required to be signed off as completed by the participant. For a result to be counted, a participant had to progress into the opportunity (employment, education or training) either while actively engaged on the programme or within 28 days of leaving the programme, and suitable proof was required to be obtained to evidence that the participant progressed into the opportunity.

Suitable proof included the following (indicative - not exhasutive)

Employment
- An email from an employer detailing a job offer
- An email from an employer detailing a job start
- A copy of a participant's pay slip
- A copy of a bank statement showing a salary going into the participant's bank account

Education or Training
- An email from a training or education provider detailing an offer of education or accredited training
- An email from a training or education provider detailing that a participant has commenced education or accredited training
- An email from a training or education provider confirming that a participant has completed education or accredited training
- A certificate from an accrediting body evidencing that the participant completed accredited training and gained the subsequent qualification

In line with ESF/DWP programme guidance, three different types of results were claimable for each participant. They were:

- Supported intervention
- Offer of employment, education or training
- Commencement of employment, education or training

Not all participants who recieved an offer of employment, education or training accepted the offer, therefore there is a disparity between the number of participants who gained an offer of employment, education or training and the number of participants who commenced employment, education or training.

For an offer or commencement of employment to be claimed, a supported intervention must have taken place (and subsequently have been claimed). If a participant progressed into a employment, education or training without an intervention taking place, the outcome could not be counted as there would be no evidence that the programme played a role in the participant's progression.

As mentioned, participants were broken down into three specific cohorts, and each cohort had specific results indicators, with each indicator being assigned a specific CR code. These indicators were the same across both strands of the programme:

CR01	Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
CR02	Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
CR03	Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
CR04	Long-Term Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
CR05	Long-Term Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
CR06	Long-Term Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
CR07	Inactive participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
CR08	Inactive participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
CR09	Inactive participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving

*Please note: Upon leaving means within 28 days of exiting the programme

From the table, you can see that CR01, CR02 and CR03 related to 'Unemployed (including Long-Term Unemployed)' participants. CR04, CR05 and CR06 related to 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants and CR07, CR08 and CR09 related to 'Inactive' (Economically Inactive) participants.

Therefore, for reporting purposes, if an 'Inactive' participant received support to achieve an agreed objective, before being offered a job, which they accepted and commenced, (and all of this was evidenced within the participant file) this would trigger the claiming of CR codes CR07, CR08 and CR09.

As was the case with programme outputs, with regards to results, DWP defined anybody who was 'Long-Term Unemployed' as also being 'Unemployed'. There was some confusion around this point with some delivery partners being under the impression that 'Unemployed' specifically related to short-term unemployed participants. However, the ESF/DWP programme guidance states:

"An individual recorded under any of the immediate result indicators on "long term unemployed" should also be recorded under the equivalent indicator on 'unemployed' – for example, individuals recorded under "long term unemployed who complete YEI supported intervention" should also be recorded under 'unemployed who complete YEI supported intervention'.

Therefore, for reporting purposes, if a 'Long-Term Unemployed' participant received support to achieve an agreed objective, before being offered a job, which they accepted and commenced, (and all of this was evidenced within the participant file) this would trigger the claiming of CR codes CR04, CR05 and CR06. However as the 'Long-Term Unemployed' participant was also 'Unemployed', this result would also trigger the claiming of CR Codes CR01, CR02 and CR03.

Due to the initial confusion around this specific element of the reporting, Actes' programme performance was under-reported during delivery phase one, as results relating to 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants were initially only recorded under the indicators that specifically related to 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants (CR04, CR05 and CR06).

However, this point was clarified during delivery phase two and the under-reported results (results where a CR01, CR02 and CR03 should also have been claimed) were claimed during delivery phase two (but back-dated to delivery phase one so that they were reflected within delivery phase one's performance).

The following two tables show Actes' New Directions programme performance against set results targets across both strands of the programme.

Strand One: Performance against targets - Results

	Outcome	Target	Achieved	%
1	CR01 - Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	371	411	110.8%
2	CR02 - Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	256	321	125.4%
3	CR03 - Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	256	301	117.6%
4	CR04 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	106	239	225.5%
5	CR05 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	66	183	277.3%
6	CR06 - Long Term Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	66	174	263.6%
7	CR07- Inactive participants who complete a supported intervention	106	142	134%
8	CR08 - Inactive Participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	57	102	178.9%
9	CR09 - Inactive Participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	57	92	161.4%

Strand Two: Performance against targets - Results

	Outcome	Target	Achieved	%
1	CR01 - Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	297	307	103.4%
2	CR02 - Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	201	252	125.4%
3	CR03 - Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	201	218	108.5%
4	CR04 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	75	148	197.3%
5	CR05 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	53	119	224.5%
6	CR06 - Long Term Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	53	105	198.1%
7	CR07 - Inactive participants who complete a supported intervention	81	86	106.2%
8	CR08 - Inactive Participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	47	60	127.7%
9	CR09 - Inactive Participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	46	55	119.6%

Strand One and Strand Two combined: Performance against targets - Results

Please note: the Actes New Directions YEI programme was not issued with a Strand One and Strand Two combined programme target. The below table is simply to demonstrate what the overall programme achieved in comparison to what it was targeted to achieve.

	Outcome	Target	Achieved	%
1	CR01 - Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	668	718	107.5%
2	CR02 - Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	457	573	125.4%
3	CR03 - Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	457	519	113.6%
4	CR04 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who complete a supported intervention	181	387	213.8%
5	CR05 - Long-Term Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	119	302	253.8%
6	CR06 - Long Term Unemployed participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	119	279	234.5%
7	CR07 - Inactive participants who complete a supported intervention	187	228	121.9%
8	CR08 - Inactive Participants who receive an offer of employment, education or training upon leaving	104	162	155.8%
9	CR09 - Inactive Participants who are in employment, education or training upon leaving	103	147	142.7%

Analysis of Programme Results

By analysing the Actes New Directions programme's results more closely, we are able to gain more insight into the impact of Actes' delivery. The analysis of this data combines both strands of the programme, focusing on the programme as a whole, analysing the employment, education or training outcomes before moving on to provide a sole focus on employment outcomes. In both instances, results are broken down by the below characteristics:

*please note: the programme did not have specific targets in relation to the below.

- Age
- Gender
- Borough
- Ward
- Decile rank
- Length of unemployment
- Main benefit

Results by age

Age	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
15	3	2	66.7%
16	46	27	58.7%
17	51	27	52.9%
18	119	67	56.3%
19	148	87	58.8%
20	138	84	60.9%
21	95	60	63.2%

Age	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
22	76	34	44.7%
23	72	50	69.4%
24	91	50	54.9%
25	67	41	61.2%
26	79	49	62%
27	53	27	50.9%
28	62	35	56.5%
29	38	26	68.4%

Results by gender

Gender	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Male	688	413	60%
Female	450	253	56.2%

Results by borough

A borough is a town, or a district within a large town, which has its own council. Within the Tees Valley there are five boroughs in total.

Borough	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Middlesbrough	688	432	62.8%
Stockton-on-Tees	408	211	51.7%
Darlington	4	4	100%
Hartlepool	1	0	0%
Redcar & Cleveland	37	19	51.4%

Results by ward

Wards are electoral districts at sub-national level represented by one or more councillors. Wards highlighted in red are ranked within top 100 (out of 7,180) most deprived nationally.

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Acklam	14	7	50%
Ayresome	40	29	72.5%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Berwick Hills & Pallister	49	32	65.3%
Billingham Central	18	7	38.9%
Billingham East	28	11	39.3%
Billingham North	5	3	60%
Billingham South	28	12	42.9%
Billingham West & Wolviston	5	5	100%
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	8	2	25%
Brambles & Thorntree	48	32	66.7%
Central	88	55	62.5%
Coatham	1	0	0%
Coulby Newham	26	17	65.4%
De Bruce	1	0	0%
Dormanstown	1	1	100%
Eaglescliffe East	5	3	60%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Eaglescliffe West	4	1	25%
Eston	3	1	33.3%
Fairfield	7	4	57.1%
Grangefield	6	4	66.7%
Grangetown	8	6	75%
Guisborough	2	0	0%
Hardwick & Salters Lane	32	16	50%
Hartburn	9	6	66.7%
Hemlington	37	19	51.4%
Ingleby Barwick North	9	4	44.4%
Ingleby Barwick South	17	13	76.5%
Kader	12	7	58.3%
Kirkleatham	2	2	100%
Ladgate	23	15	65.2%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Linthorpe	24	16	66.7%
Longbeck	2	0	0%
Longlands & Beechwood	45	25	55.6%
Mandale & Victoria	27	15	55.6%
Marton East	7	4	57.1%
Marton West	3	3	100%
Newcomen	3	2	66.7%
Newport	135	78	57.8%
Newtown	16	8	50%
Normanby	4	2	50%
North Ormesby	33	24	72.7%
Norton Central	16	6	37.5%
Norton North	7	4	57.1%
Norton South	12	8	66.7%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Ormesby	3	0	0%
Park	64	43	67.2%
Park East	2	2	100%
Park End & Beckfield	33	24	72.7%
Red Hall & Lingfield	1	1	100%
Ropner	28	14	50%
Roseworth	23	13	56.5%
South Bank	2	2	100%
Southern Villages	2	2	100%
Stainsby Hill	34	19	55.9%
Stainton & Thornton	3	1	33.3%
Stephenson	1	1	100%
Stockton Town Centre	39	16	41%
Teesville	3	2	66.7%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Trimdon	4	1	25%
Village	12	8	66.7%
Wheatfields	1	1	100%
Yarm	11	7	63.6%
Zetland	2	0	0%

Results by decile rank

Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a set of geographies designed for statistical purposes. Typically, LSOAs are smaller geographical areas than wards. Deprivation deciles are determined using the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, which ranks LSOAs in England from most deprived to least deprived, and divides them into 10 equal groups. LSOAs in the first decile are among the most deprived 10% nationally, while LSOAs in the tenth decile are among the least deprived 10%.

Decile Rank	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Decile 1 – 10% most deprived nationally	687	404	58.8%
Decile 2 – 20% most deprived nationally	103	57	55.3%

Decile Rank	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Decile 3 -30% most deprived nationally	98	57	58.2%
Decile 4 - 40% most deprived nationally	46	30	65.2%
Decile 5 - 50% most deprived nationally	32	18	56.3%
Decile 6 - 60% most deprived nationally	29	16	55.2%
Decile 7 - 70% most deprived nationally	43	23	53.5%
Decile 8 - 80% most deprived nationally	43	22	51.2%
Decile 9 - 90% most deprived nationally	37	27	73%
Decile 10- 100% most deprived nationally	20	12	60%

Results by length of unemployment

Length of unemployment	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Less than 6 months	504	310	61.5%
6-11 months	195	123	63.1%
12-23 months	176	95	54%
24-35 months	56	30	53.6%
36 months+	207	108	52.2%

Results by main benefit

Main Benefit	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment, education or training	%
Universal Credit	615	372	60.5%
Job Seekers Allowance	265	147	55.5%
Income Support	32	16	50%
Employment & Support Allowance	29	16	55.2%
None	194	114	58.8%
Other	3	1	33.3%

Results by age - employment outcomes only

Age	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
15	3	1	33.3%
16	46	6	13%
17	51	6	11.8%
18	119	23	19.3%
19	148	45	30.4%
20	138	38	27.5%
21	95	31	32.6%
22	76	16	21.1%
23	72	23	31.9%
24	91	23	25.3%
25	67	15	22.4%
26	79	15	19%
27	53	13	24.5%
28	62	11	17.7%
29	38	9	23.7%

Results by gender – employment outcomes only

Gender	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Male	688	142	20.6%
Female	450	133	29.6%

Results by borough – employment outcomes only

Borough	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Middlesbrough	688	178	25.9%
Stockton-on-Tees	408	90	22.1%
Darlington	4	1	25%
Hartlepool	1	0	0%
Redcar & Cleveland	37	6	16.2%

Results by ward - employment outcomes only

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Acklam	14	3	21.4%
Ayresome	40	15	37.5%
Berwick Hills & Pallister	49	14	28.6%
Billingham Central	18	5	27.8%
Billingham East	28	3	10.7%
Billingham North	5	1	20%
Billingham South	28	3	10.7%
Billingham West & Wolviston	5	4	80%
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	8	2	25%
Brambles & Thorntree	48	15	31.3%
Central	88	21	23.9%
Coatham	1	0	0%
Coulby Newham	26	9	34.6%
De Bruce	1	0	0%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Dormanstown	1	1	100%
Eaglescliffe East	5	3	60%
Eaglescliffe West	4	0	0%
Eston	3	0	0%
Fairfield	7	1	14.3%
Grangefield	6	1	16.7%
Grangetown	8	1	12.5%
Guisborough	2	0	0%
Hardwick & Salters Lane	32	3	9.4%
Hartburn	9	3	33.3%
Hemlington	37	6	16.20%
Ingleby Barwick North	9	2	22.2%
Ingleby Barwick South	17	4	23.5%
Kader	12	5	41.7%
Kirkleatham	2	1	50%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Ladgate	23	6	26.1%
Linthorpe	24	10	41.7%
Longbeck	2	0	0%
Longlands & Beechwood	45	14	31.1%
Mandale & Victoria	27	7	25.9%
Marton East	7	1	14.3%
Marton West	3	0	0%
Newcomen	3	0	0%
Newport	135	33	24.4%
Newtown	16	2	12.5%
Normanby	4	1	25%
North Ormesby	33	5	15.2%
Norton Central	16	2	12.5%
Norton North	7	4	57.1%
Norton South	12	4	33.3%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Ormesby	3	0	0%
Park	64	10	15.6%
Park East	2	0	0%
Park End & Beckfield	33	10	30.3%
Red Hall & Lingfield	1	1	100%
Ropner	28	6	21.4%
Roseworth	23	6	26.1%
South Bank	2	0	0%
Southern Villages	2	1	50%
Stainsby Hill	34	10	29.4%
Stainton & Thornton	3	0	0%
Stephenson	1	0	0%
Stockton Town Centre	39	8	20.5%
Teesville	3	1	33.3%

Ward	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Trimdon	4	1	25%
Village	12	2	16.7%
Wheatfields	1	1	100%
Yarm	11	3	27.3%
Zetland	2	0	0%

Results by decile rank - employment outcomes only

Decile Rank	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Decile 1 - 10% most deprived nationally	687	160	23.3%
Decile 2 - 20% most deprived nationally	103	22	21.4%
Decile 3 -30% most deprived nationally	98	26	26.5%
Decile 4- 40% most deprived nationally	46	6	13%
Decile 5 - 50% most deprived nationally	32	10	31.3%
Decile 6 - 60% most deprived nationally	29	9	31%
Decile 7 - 70% most deprived nationally	43	8	18.6%
Decile 8 - 80% most deprived nationally	43	11	25.6%
Decile 9 - 90% most deprived nationally	37	17	45.9%
Decile 10 - 100% most deprived nationally	20	6	30%

Results by length of unemployment - employment outcomes only

Length of unemployment	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Less than 6 months	504	149	29.6%
6-11 months	195	53	27.2%
12-23 months	176	34	19.3%
24-35 months	56	7	12.5%
36 months+	207	32	15.5%

Results by main benefit - employment outcomes only

Main Benefit	Number of participants	Number of participants who progressed into employment	%
Universal Credit	615	158	25.7%
Job Seekers Allowance	265	50	18.9%
Income Support	32	10	31.3%
Employment Support Allowance	29	6	20.7%
None	194	50	25.8%
Other	3	1	33.3%

Key Programme Takeaways

- The programme supported 1,138 participants in total, progessing 391 (34.4%) participants into education or training and 275 (24.2%) participants into employment. Taken as a whole, 58.5% of all participants progressed into employment, education or training.

- Of the 1,138 supported participants, 945 (83%) benefitted from having at least one barrier to employment, education or training removed.

- The programme fell slightly short in meeting output targets but exceeded expectations in achieving outcome targets.

- From an output point of view, the hardest to reach group proved to be 'Inactive' participants. The easiest to reach group proved to be 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants.

- The programme far exceeded outcome targets with regards to 'Long-Term Unemployed' participants.

- The programme had the most success engaging 18, 19 and 20 year olds, with 405 (35.6%) of the 1,138 participants belonging to this age group.

- The programme had the least amount of success engaging 15 year olds. This was to be expected as almost all 15 year olds are in education and therefore not eligible for the YEI programme.

- The programme found it difficult to engage with 29 year old participants, with only 38 of the 1,138 (3.3%) being this age. However, of this 38, 26 progressed into employment, education or training. This progression percentage of 68.4% was the second highest among all ages.

- The programme had the most success with progressing 23 year old participants into progression outcomes, with 69.44% of 23 year olds progressing into employment, education or training.

- The programme engaged and progressed into employment, education or training considerably more males than females, however the progression percentage was relatively similar (60% of males progressed into employment, education or training, versus 56.2% of females).

- Female participants progressed into employment at a higher percentage than male participants - 29.6% (females) versus 20.6% (males).

- The programme had a greater presence in Middlesbrough, with 58.5% (666) of the 1,138 participants living there, while 35.9% (408) of the participants lived in Stockton-on-Tees. The remaining participants were split across Redcar & Cleveland (3.3%), Darlington (0.4%) and Hartlepool (0.1%).

- The programme progressed 62.8% (432) of Middlesbrough-based participants into employment, education or training, versus 51.7% (211)of Stockton-on-Tees-based participants.

- The programme also progressed 25.9% (178) of Middlesbrough-based participants into employment, versus 22.1% (90) of Stockton-on-Tees-based participants.

- The Newport and Central wards (Middlesbrough) housed the largest number of participants, with 223 (19.6%) of the 1,138 participants residing in these two wards.

- Excluding wards that housed less than 10 participants, the five wards with the highest progression (into employment, education or training) percentages were Ingleby Barwick South (76.5%), North Ormesby (72.7%), Park End & Beckfield (72.7%), Ayresome (72.5%) and Park (67.2%).

- From the nine wards ranked inside the top 100 most deprived nationally, the programme supported 478 participants, progressing 292 (61.1.%) into employment, education or training.

- Of these 478 participants, 121 (25.3%) progressed into employment and 171 (35.8%) progressed into education or training.

- Of the 888 participants supported from 'Decile 1', 'Decile 2', and, 'Decile 3' neighbourhoods (the top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods), 518 (58.3%) progressed into employment, education or training.

- Of these 888 participants, 208 (23.4%) progressed into employment. The progression percentage of participants residing in these neighbourhhoods was very slightly below the programme's average for employment outcomes (24.2%) and employment, education and training outcomes (58.5%).

- Of the 100 participants supported from 'Decile 8', 'Decile 9', and, 'Decile 10' neighbourhoods (the top 30% most affluent neighbourhoods), 61 (61%) progressed into employment, education or training. Of these 61, 34 (34%) progressed into employment. The progression percentage of participants residing in these neighbourhhoods was higher than the programme's average of 24.2% (employment) and 58.5% (employment, education and training).

- Therefore, when considering decile rankings, the programme was slightly better at progressing participants from more affluent areas into employment, education or training. However, the sample size of participants living in 'Deciles 8, 'Decile 9', and, 'Decile 10' neighbourhoods is much smaller than the sample size of participants living 'Decile 1', 'Decile 2', and, 'Decile 3' neighbourhoods.

- However, when using ward data, the programme had greater success working with participants residing in the top 100 most deprived wards, with the progression percentage for employment and education and training outcomes being 2.6% higher than the overall programme's average.

- The results of the programme show that there was correlation between having a longer current length of unemployment and a lower likelihood of progressing into employment. Similarly, the results show that there is also a correlation between having a shorter current length of unemployment and a higher likelihood of progressing into employment.

- However, there is a slight anomaly with participants who were unemployed for over 36 months progressing into employment at a higher percentage than participants who were unemployed for between 24-35 months. This could be caused by the comparitively smaller sample size of participants unemployed for between 24-35 months upon joining the programme.

- Participants in receipt of UC (Universal Credit), progressed into employment at a noticeably higher percentage (25.7%) than participants in receipt of JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) - 18.9%.

- Participants not in receipt of benefits (Inactive) progressed into employment at an almost identical percentage (25.8%) to those in receipt of UC (Universal Credit).

- Aside from the 'other benefit' category (which only accounted for three participants), participants on Income Support progressed into employment at a higher rate (31.3%) than participants claiming other benefits, or participants who were not actively claiming any benefits.

- Participants claiming ESA (Employment Support Allowance) progressed into employment at a higher rate than participants claiming JSA(Job Seekers Allowance).

- However, the sample size of participants claiming Income Support and ESA (Employment Support Allowance) was much smaller than the sample size of participants claiming employment-related benefits such as JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) and UC (Universal Credit).

Participant feedback

Throughout delivery of the programme, feedback was sought from programme participants to help highlight the impact of delivery:

"I just wanted to say thank you for helping me the past 3 years. You rang me at a time where I needed help and when I didn't know where to go and (you) helped me so much. I don't know where I'd be today if you hadn't of [sic] rang me. I just wanted to tell you I appreciate all your help. Thank you"

"I received great support off [sic] Becky, she helped me (to) create a CV and apply for different types of jobs, I recently applied for a job and got the job on the spot. Thank you very much."

"Helped me with a lot of problems and helped me get a job, and actually helped me succeed in what I wanted to do - helps you with jobs and CV's, highly recommend"

"Absolutely brilliant service, I spoke with Carl who helped me improve my CV, gave me brilliant advice and tips, and helped me further my career and personal development! You can clearly tell that staff really do enjoy what they do! Strongly recommended"

"They[sic] were friendly people always there to talk to and I would recommend this programme to anyone"

"I would recommend New Directions as I worked with Davina and she helped me with my interview skills and I came out with a full time job at the end."

"Meeting new mentors on a regular basis and (they) also help you to look for employment opportunities or apprenticeship, really excellent service"

"Very good, helped me gain employment straight away, highly recommend, also very good staff. Davina and Frank were fantastic always kept in touch and helped with every little thing"

"So helpful and friendly staff. Helped me find my job straight away and gave me opportunities to attend training courses helpful for my chosen job. I recommend it for anyone trying to find a good job of their choice quickly. I am very thankful for every staff members help"

"Actes is an amazing organisation with friendly staff that will support you whatever your circumstances! highly recommend New Directions, great courses that gets you work ready"

"I'd give them (New Directions) 10/10 and found me employment quickly and put me through courses to help me find the right job so I would recommend them more if people are struggling"

"I would like to recommend New Directions as a service with a special mention for Frank who has been really supportive to my son who after leaving university had some difficulties finding employment. Frank and his colleagues kept in contact regularly and encouraged my son, by believing in his abilities, that he would find employment. He has now found a really good job that he is interested in and he has the potential to do really well. So I would just like to say a really big thank you for your help and encourage you to keep up the good work because you are helping young people to have a better life"

""From the beginning my caseworker has been great. I left college after four years – although I had a great experience. Once it was finished I felt a bit adrift, but then Actes came along and after a phone consultation with a caseworker. I got organised with Universal Credit. My caseworker worked hard and helped a lot with online calls and how best to access the internet, and she also completely changed my CV and cover letter, so at a click of the button I could send them to employers. As a result, my confidence grew which helped prepare me for interviews and for talking to different people. Then finally I got a job with the Green Team at Groundwork. There was a lot of online work to complete before I could start and my caseworker was fantastic guiding me through it all. Thank you for everything – I know I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for you".

Participant Case Studies

Twenty-four-year-old Hannah from Billingham was the 100th jobseeker that Actes helped into work through New Directions. Hannah had been out of work for six years and was referred to Actes' New Directions by Billingham Job Centre. Actes offered Hannah a range of support through New Directions, including mentoring to overcome anxiety issues, before identifying her strengths and helping her to create a new CV to better reflect her skills and qualities. Hannah, a mum of two, quickly secured a role as a part-time Enabler with health and social care support provider UBU.

Hannah commented: "I was used to supporting my Son and my Mam in my personal life, so I knew I wanted to help people in my work, but I didn't have the confidence or focus to know where to start. My New Directions caseworker Carl helped me to realise what my strengths were and how to use these to help sell myself on my CV. He also helped me to manage my anxiety and build my confidence and I feel much better about going out and speaking to people now.

I feel really proud of myself getting the role at UBU and I'm nervous and excited to get started. When I found out I'd got the job I was really emotional as I know I'll be able to provide a better life for my kids and I would recommend New Directions to other young people who are struggling to get into work and I have already put a friend in touch with the programme."

Twenty-year-old Sheryce Gibson from Middlesbrough secured employment with UBU after signing up to New Directions in February 2018 following a year of being unemployed. Through the programme, Sheryce was supported to improve her CV and cover letter writing skills.

Sheryce, who had previously completed a Level 2 counselling course at college before pursuing a career in retail, had decided she wanted to go back to helping people, so when a job opportunity came up with local care provider UBU, her Actes' New Directions YEI caseworker suggested Sheryce should consider looking at the vacancy.

After supporting Sheryce to complete an application, Sheryce was invited to an interview. In preparation, Sheryce's caseworker supported her with improving her interview skills to give her the best chance of being successful.

Sheryce aced the interview and started her role as an Enabler in May 2018, working 30 hours per week. Sheryce said: "I support a group of adults with learning difficulties with day to day tasks and I really enjoy it. Helping people is something I've always wanted to do so I find it really rewarding to know I make a difference to their lives."

Return on investment

In 2017, Public Health England commissioned Optimity Advisors to build an interactive tool that would allow local decision-makers to understand the health and financial impacts, for their local population, of getting people back into work. The evidence incorporated within the tool was based on a rapid evidence assessment of available research, which enabled the tool to arrive at the below calculations in respect of key financial outcomes:

Key financial outcomes

Optimity Advisors Interactive Tool	Per person returning to work (as of 2017)
Financial benefits to the individual	£3,500
Financial benefit to society	£23,100
Financial benefits to the exchequer (National Government, Local Authority, NHS)	£12,000

The evidence incorporated within the tool found that for every person who returns to work, there was an overall financial value of £38,600.

However, the key financial outcomes outlined by the Optimity Advisors Interactive Tool were based on sustainable employment outcomes and this evaluation does not provide a full and complete analysis on the sustainability of the employment outcomes achieved by the pro

This is because sustainability checks only took place during delivery phase two, primarily because it wasn't the programme's responsibility to record sustainability outcomes (employment outcomes where the employed participant was still employed six months after exiting the programme). Instead, this was the responsibility of DWP.

However, to prepare for a potential evaluation and to gather data to support future fundings bids, during delivery phase two, sustainability checks were carried out on a total of 76 participants who progressed into employment - split across both strands of the programme. Of the 76 participants who were contacted six months after commencing employment, 61 were still employment (80.3%). Applying this

sustainability percentage to the overall programme employment outcomes would see 221 out of 275 employed participants remaining in sustained employment six months after starting work.

Using the Optimity Advisors Interactive Tool, based on the 221 projected sustained employment outcomes above, the programme provided an overall financial benefit of £8,530,600. Set against the programme delivery cost of £1,209,483.17, the Actes New Directions YEI programme provided a cost benefit ratio of 7.05, meaning that for every £1 spent, £7.05 was gained in value.