

**Welsh Assembly Government
Department for Children, Education,
Lifelong Learning and Skills**

Evaluation of ReAct

Final Report



Evaluation of ReAct

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7th October 2008

Index

	List of Abbreviations	i
	Executive Summary	ii
1.	Introduction	1
	Introduction	1
	ReAct Programme.....	1
	Evaluation Aims & Objectives	2
	Structure of the Report.....	3
2.	Evaluation Methodology.....	4
	Introduction	4
	Methodology.....	4
	Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodology.....	9
3.	Context.....	11
	Introduction	11
	Welsh Economic Context.....	11
	The ReAct Programme	13
	Aims	13
	ReAct Funding.....	14
	Programme Content.....	14
	Marketing.....	15
	Previous Evaluation	17
	Links with Other Programmes.....	19
	Summary.....	21
4.	ReAct Programme Performance.....	22
	Introduction	22
	ReAct Performance.....	22
	Summary.....	30
5.	Findings: Individual Beneficiaries & Non-Participants	31
	Introduction	31
	Findings.....	31
	Beneficiary Backgrounds.....	31
	Marketing and Awareness.....	33
	Programme Content.....	34
	Programme Delivery.....	36
	Impact & Outcomes.....	37
	Counterfactual	40
	Sustainability	41
	Future Aspirations	42
	Funding Participation.....	44
	Future Delivery	45
6.	Findings: Company Beneficiaries	46

	Introduction	46
	Findings.....	46
	Company Beneficiary Sample Characteristics	46
	Marketing and Awareness.....	47
	Accessing ReAct Information	48
	ReAct Operations	49
	Programme Content	50
	Impacts & Outcomes	52
	Counterfactual	52
	Sustainability	52
	Deadweight & Displacement Effect	53
	Future Delivery	53
	Summary.....	54
7.	Findings: Training Providers	55
	Introduction	55
	Findings.....	55
	Getting Involved with ReAct	55
	ReAct Operations	55
	ReAct Support.....	56
	Impacts and Outcomes	57
	Issues	58
	Duplication.....	59
	Sustainability	59
	Summary.....	60
8.	Findings: Delivery Partners & Key Informants.....	61
	Introduction	61
	Findings.....	61
	ReAct Rationale	61
	ReAct Awareness.....	62
	Marketing Material.....	63
	Partnership Working.....	64
	Programme Delivery.....	65
	Management Arrangements.....	66
	Impact and Effectiveness	66
	Duplication.....	67
	Issues	67
	Future Delivery	68
	Summary.....	69
9.	Conclusions & Recommendations	70
	Introduction	70
	Conclusions.....	70

List of Abbreviations

RAF	Redundancy Action Fund
DCELLS	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EDMS	European Data Management System
ERS	Employer Recruitment Subsidy
ESF	European Social Fund
ETS	Employer Training Subsidy
IMA	Individual Miscellaneous Award (also referred to as 'Extra Support')
IVA	Individual Vocational Award
JCP	Job Centre Plus
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office

Executive Summary

In November 2007, CRG Research Limited were commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) to conduct an evaluation of the ReAct programme. This report summarises the findings of the evaluation up to the end of January 2008: the programme itself continued until June 2008.

The ReAct programme builds on the original Redundancy Action Fund, established by the West Wales Training and Enterprise Council in 1999 to mitigate the effects of the redundancies created at the Lucas factory in Ystradgynlais.

The programme is funded through a combination of European Social Fund (ESF) and Welsh Assembly Government Funding, and is available to individuals who have been made redundant within the previous 6 months, or are at risk of redundancy (having been served notice).

The aim of ReAct is *"to prevent long-term unemployment by providing pathways to employment for those recently or about to become unemployed"*. In order to achieve this, the programme offers financial support to assist individuals through four main funding streams, namely:

- *Individual Discretionary Award (Vocational Training)* - discretionary grant of 100% of the costs of individual vocational training requirements up to a maximum of £2,500;
- *Individual Discretionary Award (Miscellaneous Award/Extra Support)* - up to £1,000 to assist with costs associated with receiving training (e.g. costs of travel, accommodation, childcare or books, etc.);
- *Employer Recruitment Subsidy* - up to £2,080 paid directly to employers as a contribution towards wage costs;
- *Employer Training Subsidy* - up to 70% of the costs of a new recruit's job-related training, up to a maximum of £1,000, paid directly to employers.

The methodology employed during the evaluation included the following discrete elements:

- Inception Meeting;
- Desk Research;
- Fieldwork:
 - *Individual Beneficiary Interviews (260 interviews with individuals benefiting from Individual Vocational Award funding and, possibly, Individual Miscellaneous Award funding);*
 - *Company Beneficiary Interviews (101 interviews with Employers receiving the Employer Recruitment Subsidy and, possibly, the Employer Training Subsidy);*

- Non-Participant Interviews (*8 interviews with individuals applying for a ReAct application pack, but not subsequently applying for funding*);
- Training Provider Interviews (*24 interviews with Training Providers delivering courses to ReAct funded individuals*);
- Delivery Partner and Key Informant Interviews (*20 interviews with individuals from the Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus, integral to the management and delivery of the programme*);
- Analysis & Reporting.

Overall, this methodology gathered data from a wide range of views from beneficiaries, delivery partners and other stakeholders, although it must be noted that difficulties were encountered establishing a robust counterfactual position. Key findings identified during the evaluation include:

- The ReAct programme is generally regarded as highly successful, offering individually and economically relevant support at what is widely seen as a difficult time for individuals;
- Data collated shows a good distribution of beneficiaries in relation to age and location (when accounting for the relative density of businesses across Wales);
- Points made in the previous evaluation of ReAct have largely been addressed: opportunities for further improvement are reflected in the evaluation report recommendations;
- Management and delivery mechanisms have developed over time, offering an effectively co-ordinated and joined-up system of provision;
- Aims and objectives of the programme appear to have been met, and in a changing and uncertain economic environment remain valid for a successor programme;
- There remains a risk that individuals subject to small scale redundancies will 'fall through the net': this remains a challenge for any successor programme;
- Results identified by the evaluation, such as 79% of individual beneficiaries being in employment (at the time of being interviewed for the evaluation¹), appear to support wider Assembly objectives, such as achieving the 'One Wales' target rate of employment of 80%;
- 41% of employers interviewed suggested ReAct beneficiaries had filled 'hard to fill' vacancies and 55% indicated ReAct had resulted in improved business performance;
- Overwhelming support exists from individual beneficiaries, company beneficiaries, providers, delivery partners and key informants for the continuation of the programme;
- The evaluation considers a range of 'hard' and 'soft' impacts from ReAct. There are significant challenges in quantifying the overall position, but the report concludes that 'hard' benefits (e.g. redundant people getting new jobs

¹ This figure is supported by the 6-month 'follow-up' survey conducted internally by the ReAct team

more quickly, or better jobs, because of ReAct) are likely to be broadly in line with cost per beneficiary (around £2,000), with a wide range of 'soft' benefits arising in addition.

The report recommends retaining and building on a number of characteristics of ReAct in any comparable future programme, including:

- **The Structure of Support**
All four strands of the programme have a strong case for their continuation, particularly in light of the widely held perception that the original assumptions behind the programme are still valid. With continuing economic change, the need for large numbers of individuals to re-train in economically relevant skills seems inescapable.
- **Experienced Management Team**
The Welsh Assembly Government management team has developed good reciprocal relationships with providers, effective systems, and a good knowledge base about employers, the employment position across Wales and the strengths and weaknesses of training provision. This resource should be harnessed for any future programme.
- **Working With 3 Key Partners**
Partnership delivery between the Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and JobCentre Plus is a major component in the success of the programme and should be retained and built on for any future provision.
- **Flexible Provision**
Enabling individuals to procure their own training services introduces flexibility and 'customer choice' to the programme, not always seen in other support programmes. This approach has many benefits and should be retained in any future programme.
- **Monitoring and Internal Evaluation**
Following the previous evaluation, the introduction of enhanced internal monitoring and evaluation processes has proved to be an important element in supporting the ongoing development of the programme; this approach should be retained and enhanced.

In addition, the report points to opportunities for further development of the programme in the following areas:

- **Monitoring**
We are aware that the current internal evaluation forms are in the process of being redesigned. Ensuring this information is accessible and reviewed on a regular basis is important for the ongoing development of the programme.

- **New Database**

For any new programme funding application, it is recommended that a new database is created. Incorporating the data into the existing database would compromise the quality of available data, which has not been consistently recorded historically.

In order to assist with a future analysis of the counterfactual position, it is recommended that contact details (e.g. name, address, telephone number) are taken from all individuals requesting a ReAct application pack.

- **Sharing Impact & Outcome Data with Delivery Partners**

Sharing impact and outcome data, and individual success stories with delivery partners and other stakeholders, will serve to reinforce the value of the programme. Particularly in the case of JCP, for whom advisors are 'generalists', showing the difference the programme can make will be a valuable way to ensure it is consistently referred to during discussions with appropriate clients.

- **Marketing**

Most interviewees indicated that the programme is not currently known about by enough people. The difficulties of marketing such a programme – which ideally few individuals will have reason to access – are recognised. Nevertheless ensuring greater awareness of the programme amongst businesses will lead to direct benefits (as trained staff are recruited, often for hard-to-fill posts) and, when redundancies are made, fewer individuals 'fall through the net'.

- **Joining-Up with Other Business Support Services**

In a similar vein, forging closer relationships with other business support services (Business Eye, Flexible Support for Business, etc.) to ensure they have an understanding of the basics of ReAct, should also help encourage referrals.

- **Account Management**

A number of individuals described experiencing difficulties contacting the ReAct team, so an account management approach is suggested, with individual beneficiaries being given a named point of contact for any queries arising.

1. Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2007, CRG Research Ltd were commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) to evaluate the ReAct programme.
- 1.2 In brief, ReAct aims "*to prevent long-term unemployment by providing pathways to employment for those recently or about to become unemployed²*" by helping individuals gain new skills, giving financial support to remove existing and potential barriers to work, and providing incentives to encourage prospective employers to 'take a chance' on employing and re-training individuals who have been made redundant.
- 1.3 This section of the report gives:
- A brief introduction to the ReAct programme;
 - The aims and objectives of the evaluation, as given in the specification dated 5th October 2007; and,
 - An outline structure of the report.

ReAct Programme

- 1.4 The origins of ReAct go back to the 'Redundancy Action Fund' (RAF) pilot programme, developed in 1999 by the West Wales Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) in response to redundancies at the Lucas factory in Ystradgynlais. The original aim of the programme was to deliver a rapid response to mitigate the effects of these redundancies.
- 1.5 The success of the RAF led to the parallel Objective 1 'Rapid Response to Redundancy' and Objective 3 'East Wales Redundancy Action Fund' projects, operating from 2001-04, and subsequently to ReAct. The focus of the current ReAct programme remains offering high levels of support to workers either facing or threatened by redundancy, with the goal of helping them enter new employment quickly and avoid longer-term economic inactivity.
- 1.6 Key elements of the support available through the ReAct programme are:

² ESF Application Forms

- Individual Support:
 - Assistance with the costs of undertaking training;
 - Funding to remove barriers to training (e.g. childcare, travel costs);
- Employer Support:
 - Funding towards wage costs for eligible recruits, paid in four instalments over the first year;
 - Reimbursement of 70% of the cost of any eligible training.

1.7 The programme is financed through a combination of EU (ESF) funding and Welsh Assembly Government match funding.

Evaluation Aims & Objectives

1.8 The aim of the research is to:

“review the impact and effectiveness of the ReAct programme in supporting those individuals at risk of redundancy and its impact upon improving skills and employability levels amongst participating individuals and employers”³.

1.9 To achieve this overarching aim, a number of more specific objectives include to:

1. *“Assess the success of the ReAct programme in terms of appropriate and effective content, approach, delivery and management;*
2. *Explore how the aims and objectives of the programme have been met and whether they are still valid for a successor programme;*
3. *Evaluate the extent that the ReAct programme has responded intelligently to the recommendations from the previous evaluation;*
4. *Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the marketing material and campaigns undertaken;*
5. *Quantify the effectiveness of the programme, through analysis of available monitoring information and customer and stakeholder feedback;*
6. *Assess whether the programme has represented value for money;*
7. *Examine the extent of added value and deadweight (if any) in the programme;*
8. *Establish the impact and outcomes of the programme, and examine the sustainability on deliverers, beneficiaries and the wider economy; and,*

³ ITQ, p2

9. *Provide recommendations as to the future of the programme, drawing on learning and best practice from similar schemes more widely*⁴.

Structure of the Report

1.10 The remaining sections of this report are structured as follows:

- Section 2: Evaluation Methodology
- Section 3: Context
- Section 4: ReAct Programme Performance
- Section 5: Findings: Individual Beneficiaries & Non-Participants
- Section 6: Findings: Company Beneficiaries
- Section 7: Findings: Training Providers
- Section 8: Findings: Delivery Partners & Key Informants
- Section 9: Conclusions & Recommendations

1.11 The research instruments used for the evaluation are given in Appendices.

⁴ *ibid*

2. Evaluation Methodology

Introduction

2.1 This section summarises:

- The 4-stage methodology employed during the evaluation;
- The approach taken to sampling contacts;
- Broad topic areas discussed during interviews; and,
- A brief review of the methodology's strengths and weaknesses.

Methodology

Stage 1: Inception

2.2 An inception meeting was held on 13th November 2007, attended by members of the CRG Research team and the Welsh Assembly Government ReAct Steering Group. The meeting was important in providing an opportunity to:

- Gain a thorough understanding into the background and recent development of the ReAct programme;
- Identify suitable stakeholders to be interviewed;
- Identify relevant literature for use throughout the evaluation; and,
- Agree relevant timescales and lines of reporting.

2.3 An inception report was submitted following the meeting, detailing the agreed methodology and incorporating issues arising from our discussions.

Stage 2: Desk Research

2.4 An initial review of the literature available was undertaken following the inception meeting, to inform the development of data collection tools used during subsequent phases of the project, in consultation with the Steering Group.

2.5 Subsequent Desk Research centred on a thorough review of a wide range of material including:

- Policy and strategic documents, including:
 - Wales: A Vibrant Economy (W:aVE)
 - Wales: A Better Country

- A Winning Wales
- The Learning Country
- Future Skills Wales Report 2005 (FSW)
- Skills and Employment Action Plan 2005 (SEAP)
- The Leitch Review
- ReAct ESF funding applications
- Promotional literature
- Internal monitoring and reporting data
- Identification of similar schemes elsewhere in the UK

Stage 3: Fieldwork

2.6 A mix of telephone and face-to-face interviews were completed with the following categories of individuals:

Individual Beneficiary Interviews

2.7 A total of 250 telephone interviews were completed with a stratified sample of individual beneficiaries, along with a further 10 face-to-face interviews to generate more detailed case-study illustrations for the evaluation (Appendix I gives a specimen Topic Guide). These individuals were identified as having taken up Individual Training Awards specifically; a number had also received Individual Miscellaneous Awards.

2.8 Specific areas for investigation during the interviews included:

- Background to individuals' involvement in the ReAct programme;
- Assessment of marketing literature;
- Views about the effectiveness, and 'joined up' nature, of the various elements of the programme;
- Outcomes from the programme;
- What worked well/not so well; and,
- Lessons for the future.

2.9 Contact details were taken from the EDMS database, with the sample originally drawn stratified to be broadly representative of the wider population across the key variables of location and gender.

2.10 In an effort to maximise response rates, contacts took place throughout the day and early evening⁵, with call back arrangements made where necessary: the greatest success was achieved during the early evening. Difficulties were experienced making any contact with some individuals (see Figure 1); where this occurred, efforts were made to 'top-up' the sample with appropriate alternatives. Results (Section 5) have

⁵ This flexible approach offered the greatest opportunity to speak with a member of the household, from which contact arrangements could be made as necessary.

been re-weighted to be representative of the overall population of individual beneficiaries.

Figure 1: Outcomes of Individual Beneficiary Telephone Contacts

Outcome of Contact	Number of Contacts
No Answer ⁶	695
Completed Interview	250
Contact Busy/Unavailable	199
Not Willing to Participate	33
Incorrect Details	31
Contact Moved	22
Not Involved with Programme	15
Too Early to Comment	3
Other	2
Total	1,250

Company Beneficiary Interviews

- 2.11 A telephone survey was conducted with 95 beneficiary companies (see Appendix II for topic guide), with a further 6 companies participating in face-to-face ‘case study’ interviews. Beneficiary companies had all participated in the Employer Recruitment Subsidy; some had also taken up the Employer Training Subsidy.
- 2.12 The issues covered during interviews with employers included:
- Organisation details;
 - Evaluation of marketing literature/information packs;
 - Views regarding the effectiveness of the various elements of the programme;
 - Details regarding involvement on the programme;
 - Impacts derived from participation;
 - What worked well/not so well; and,
 - Lessons for the future.
- 2.13 Company contacts primarily took place during the day, in order to fit in with normal business hours, although a flexible approach was again taken to accommodate the preferences of respondents.
- 2.14 As with individual beneficiaries, the details of beneficiary companies were drawn from the EDMS database, with the sample originally selected to be representative of all

⁶ A minimum of 3 attempts were made to contact individuals prior to recording an outcome of ‘no answer’

beneficiary companies across the key variables of location and company size. Whilst it was initially envisaged that the sample would be ‘topped-up’ with suitable alternatives in the event of non-participation, this was not possible given the limited population: as a result, contact was made with **all** beneficiary employers for which valid details for a named contact and phone number were held in the database. Once again, our results (Section 6) have been re-weighted to be representative of the overall population of beneficiary companies.

2.15 A summary of company beneficiary contact outcomes is given in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Outcomes of Company Beneficiary Contacts

Outcome of Contact	Number of Companies
No Contact Number	133
Completed Interview	101
No Contact Name	95
No Contact Number or Name	89
Contact Unavailable	55
No Answer	35
Not Willing to Participate	14
Contact Left Company	12
Incorrect Details	12
Company Not Involved	6
Company in Liquidation	4
Too Early To Comment	3
Company Taken Over	1
Total	560

Non-Participant Interviews

2.16 A total of 8 telephone interviews (see Appendix III for Topic Guide) were undertaken with people who had been made redundant but did not access ReAct, to explore the counterfactual position (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of ReAct support).

2.17 Issues addressed with this group of individuals, were:

- How they became aware of the ReAct programme;
- Have they received/are they receiving any other support since being made redundant;
- What they are currently doing (i.e. employment/training, etc.); and,
- Any suggestions for appropriate support for those made redundant.

- 2.18 An initial sample of potential contacts was derived from individuals identified as having requested an information pack from the ReAct team but, when compared with the EDMS database, had not subsequently participated. However, difficulties were experienced with this process: details were not consistent between the databases, limiting the ability to compare contacts, and even where matches could be made, the absence of telephone details limited the opportunity of making successful contacts⁷.
- 2.19 As an alternative, Careers Wales databases were drawn on for details of individuals who had been made redundant and attended an initial guidance interview, but who did not subsequently participate on ReAct. Once again however, some difficulties were experienced as the database contained significant numbers of individuals who accessed the ReAct programme.

Training Provider Interviews

- 2.20 Telephone interviews were completed with 24 Training Providers, the sample taken from the ReAct database and selected to be representative of the wider population across the key variables of location and numbers of beneficiaries trained.
- 2.21 These interviews were used to ascertain providers' views on:
- Background to involvement in the ReAct programme;
 - The type of training provided and method of delivery;
 - Usefulness of Careers Wales Action Plans;
 - Any issues arising during involvement;
 - Benefits arising from the programme;
 - Management arrangements on behalf of DCELLS; and,
 - Suggestions for future programmes.

Delivery Partner & Key Informant Interviews

- 2.22 A total of 20 telephone and face-to-face interviews were completed with delivery partners and 'key informants' from a range of groups identified following the inception meeting, including representatives from:
- Delivery Partners:
 - Welsh Assembly Government – representatives from the ReAct management team;
 - Careers Wales – management and delivery staff;
 - Job Centre Plus;
 - Key Informants:
 - Welsh Assembly Government Policy;

⁷ This approach also precluded those individuals with ex-directory telephone numbers.

- Welsh Assembly Government Business Support Services;
- Private Sector Careers Counsellors;
- Trades Unions; and,
- Job Centre Plus (outside Wales).

2.23 Interviews followed a semi-structured approach, reflecting the diversity of these interviewees, to gather views relating to:

- Awareness and understanding of the ReAct programme;
- Perceptions of the extent to which the programme offers 'joined up' delivery;
- Original, and ongoing, strategic fit and relevance of ReAct;
- Impact and effectiveness;
- Perceptions regarding what would have happened without ReAct; and,
- Future need for the programme, and any areas for development.

Stage 4: Analysis and Reporting

2.24 This section of the methodology entailed preparation of:

- Inception Report;
- Interim Report & Presentation; and,
- Final Report and Presentation.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodology

2.25 Overall, the approach taken to the evaluation gathered a broad range of data: monitoring information held by the ReAct team could be compared with views from a wide range of stakeholders to form what we see as a balanced overall picture of programme performance. Initial contacts generated a number of further contacts, ensuring a wide range of relevant views were gathered.

2.26 Individual and company beneficiary surveys followed a mainly structured approach, although interviews with stakeholders were more flexible – but in all cases a mix of qualitative and quantitative information was gathered for later analysis. Non-contact levels were not ideal, but there is no reason to infer significant sample bias as a result. Direct refusals were low, and overall interviewees contributed information readily and generously about different experiences of, and perceptions about, ReAct.

2.27 Issues did arise with identifying a suitable counterfactual group: these results should be viewed as indicative rather than statistically robust. This exercise also pointed to the continuing minor database inaccuracies, which are addressed in our recommendations in Chapter 9.

2.28 It proved possible to identify a rich pattern of activities, outputs and outcomes from ReAct; quantifying impacts was much less straightforward – but this follows patterns established in many other comparable evaluations. Overall, there was a high degree of unanimity amongst different groups of interviewees. We consider our conclusions and recommendations to be soundly based.

3. Context

Introduction

3.1 This section of the report reviews the rationale underpinning the development of the ReAct programme, focusing on the following areas:

- Welsh economic context;
- The ReAct programme (aims, processes and content);
- Links with other programmes;
- Similar programmes available throughout the UK; and,
- Outcomes from the interim evaluation.

Welsh Economic Context

3.2 Although the past 10-15 years have been regarded as a successful period for many aspects of the Welsh economy, major restructuring processes have been at work, and still continue.

3.3 Declining employment in traditional heavy industries has been a feature of the whole post-War period - even up to recent redundancies at Tower Colliery and Corus. Numerically more of a concern over the past decade has been lost jobs in manufacturing – in many cases seen as the replacement for lost coal and steel jobs – but now facing intense competition from Eastern Europe, the Far East and elsewhere.

3.4 Even the service sector jobs (in contact centres, distribution, retail, etc), often seen as the next ‘wave’ in the restructuring process, have experienced layoffs.

3.5 So, a position where most Welsh workers will have to change careers and learn new skills – not once, but probably several times – is now inescapable. This comes, however, against a backdrop of a serious ‘long tail’ of workers in Wales with few qualifications and strictly limited evidence of transferable skills. People in this position are not well placed to gain good new jobs quickly, even in buoyant labour market conditions.

3.6 Manufacturing and heavy industry jobs have traditionally offered high proportions of well-paid male-dominated occupations. Closures, when they come, tend to affect older men disproportionately and also tend to have a high impact on specific localities, so a series of social and community challenges can appear, compounding the challenges faced by redundant people.

- 3.7 In this environment, Welsh (and UK-wide) policies (e.g. Leitch Review⁸) are pointing to the essential nature of up-skilling the workforce for future competitiveness. The ‘One Wales’ document emphasises how the vision of the coalition government is “*of a Wales where there is a strong and enterprising economy and full employment based on quality jobs*”, and in order to realise this the Assembly Government will “*implement a labour market strategy with a long term goal of full employment at a rate of 80%*”⁹.
- 3.8 The document continues “*we are committed to equipping young people and adults alike with the skills they need to fulfil their potential at work. Good skills also support the development and growth of businesses*”¹⁰.
- 3.9 Prior to this, the W:aVE policy document asserted that “*our key actions for achieving [our] priorities will be:*
- *supporting job creation and helping individuals to tackle barriers to participation in the world of work;*
 - *investing to regenerate communities and stimulate economic growth across Wales;*
 - *helping businesses to grow and to increase value-added per job and earnings by:*
 - *investing in our transport networks and other economic infrastructure;*
 - *attracting more high value-added functions to Wales and supporting businesses and sectors with strong growth potential, notably through the new Knowledge Bank for Business;*
 - *further improving our skills base and using the opportunities created by the mergers to deliver more demand-led training tailored to the needs of businesses*”¹¹.
- 3.10 W:aVE also points out that “*there are areas where Wales’ skills and qualifications profile could be improved further. For example, nearly 20 per cent of working age adults in Wales have no qualifications, a higher proportion than most of England and many other countries in the EU*”¹².
- 3.11 The recently published consultation document ‘Skills That Work for Wales’ notes how “*Wales still has a lower employment rate, and a higher proportion of adults without qualifications, than the UK average*”¹³.
- 3.12 The consultation document also notes that “*across the developed world, including Wales, there is a general trend towards more highly-skilled and knowledge-intensive*

⁸ Prosperity for all in the global economy – World Class Skills, 2006

⁹ One Wales: A progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales (2007), p14

¹⁰ *ibid*, p15

¹¹ Wales: A Vibrant Economy, 2005, p5

¹² *ibid*, p53

¹³ Skills that Work for Wales: A Skills & Employment Strategy, January 2008, Ministerial Foreword

*employment, a trend driven by globalisation and technological change... and the number of people doing routine manual and non-manual jobs has declined*¹⁴.

- 3.13 Furthermore, *“less than half of people with no qualifications are in employment, compared with nearly 9 out of 10 people who hold qualifications at National Qualifications Framework levels 7-8. Employees with qualifications at levels 7-8 earn on average 74% more per week than those qualified to level 3 or below”*¹⁵.
- 3.14 ReAct can play a number of roles in addressing these concerns. Positively, there are appreciable funds to help people get the improved skills **they** want to pursue their careers, and help employers meet specific skills shortages needed to achieve the outputs they desire.
- 3.15 Given in terms of ‘damage limitation’, a case for implementing ReAct can be made from the real danger that people who have not worked for some time lose skills, energy and motivation needed to regain work, and can be at risk of becoming long-term economically inactive.
- 3.16 The design of ReAct allows targeted responses to all of these risks and opportunities – at a particularly difficult time in the lives of most of its beneficiaries.

The ReAct Programme

Aims

- 3.17 The main objective of the ReAct programme is *“to prevent long-term unemployment by providing pathways to employment for those recently or about to become unemployed”*¹⁶. To do this, the programme aims to:
- Help individuals gain new skills relevant to the employment marketplace and therefore improve their employment opportunities;
 - Remove existing and potential barriers to work; and,
 - Convince prospective employers to ‘take a chance’ on employing and re-training individuals who have been made redundant.
- 3.18 Based on the premise that, over time, individuals who are unemployed experience a degradation in the skills required to maintain employment, the ReAct programme aims to ‘strike’ early, assisting individuals with retraining in economically valuable skills. Ideally therefore, short-term ‘frictional’ unemployment should be prevented from becoming long-term structural unemployment.

¹⁴ *ibid*, p7

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ ESF Application Forms

ReAct Funding

- 3.19 The ReAct programme is funded through a combination of European Social Fund (ESF) and Welsh Assembly Government Funding, with the total project budget available for the Objective 1 and 3 areas (as given by the original applications submitted in 2004) originally being £12,021,280 and £5,899,994 respectively. Of the total project budget, ESF funding accounts for 59% in the case of Objective 1 areas (£7,092,555) and 45% in relation to Objective 3 areas (£2,654,997).
- 3.20 Over the course of the programme additional funding has been granted by WEFO (in response to applications for 'significant changes'), resulting in overall funding levels through to June 2008 of £17,384,960 for Objective 1 areas (of which £10,257,126 is ESF funded) and £7,190,148 for Objective 3 areas (of which £3,235,565 is ESF funded).

Programme Content

- 3.21 The ReAct programme is available to individuals living or working¹⁷ in Wales who have been made redundant within the last 6 months - or have been served a formal notice of redundancy - and companies looking to employ (and potentially train) such individuals.
- 3.22 There are four main elements to delivering the programme, including:
- **Individual Discretionary Award (Vocational Training)**
A discretionary grant of 100% of the costs of individual vocational training requirements up to a maximum of £2,500.
 - **Individual Discretionary Award (Miscellaneous Award/Extra Support)**
A discretionary grant of up to £1,000 to assist with costs associated with receiving training, thereby overcoming barriers potentially faced by individuals. Funding can be provided to help meet the costs of travel, accommodation, childcare or books.
 - **Employer Recruitment Subsidy**
An award of up to £2,080 paid directly to employers as a contribution towards wage costs. The subsidy is paid in four instalments over the first year of employment.
 - **Employer Training Subsidy**
An additional incentive to employers to take individuals on who may not have the relevant skills at application stage. Employers can access up to

¹⁷ Individuals working in Wales, but living outside, can still be eligible provided they apply for funding prior to losing their job (i.e. whilst under notice of redundancy).

70% of the costs of a new recruit's job-related training, up to a maximum of £1,000.

Marketing

- 3.23 Although no general marketing of the programme occurs, a coordinated effort across the delivery partners (i.e. Job Centre Plus, Careers Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government ReAct team) aims to ensure all qualifying individuals are aware of the support available, and all possible entry points are covered, thereby avoiding individuals 'falling through the net'.
- 3.24 In the case of large scale redundancies, awareness raising amongst potential beneficiaries should occur normally through a formal on-site presentation from the ReAct team¹⁸, with the team becoming aware of the redundancy situation through the statutory submission of an HR1 form¹⁹, which is discussed with Job Centre Plus and other local delivery partners.
- 3.25 However, with small scale redundancies, there is no such statutory obligation to issue formal notices, giving the possibility of individuals being made redundant from such companies 'falling through the net'. Much therefore depends on the local knowledge of delivery partners, prone to hear of impending redundancies through a variety of routes.

Individuals

- 3.26 Figure 3 gives an illustration of the process by which individuals proceed through the ReAct programme, from initial awareness to completion of their training.
- 3.27 Once an individual has become aware of the ReAct programme, they will initially be referred to Careers Wales for a consultation - assuming they satisfy the following qualifying criteria:
- Redundancy arising within the last 6 months or under current notice of redundancy;
 - Where the individual has already been made redundant they must be currently unemployed and not have been in continuous employment of 6 weeks or more since being made redundant; and,
 - Resident in Wales (although applications will be accepted from individuals living outside Wales provided they are working in Wales and apply to the programme prior to losing their job).
- 3.28 During the Careers Wales consultation a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is completed, which identifies existing skills and areas for development in order to

¹⁸ Potentially delivered by the Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and/or Job Centre Plus

¹⁹ Statutory notification of a situation generating 20 or more redundancies

pursue career goals which meet both individual and local economic need. The resulting individual Career Action Plan provides the basic framework to allow the individual to gain the necessary skills to 'move forward'.

- 3.29 The next stage involves identification of a suitable Training Provider to deliver the training. The responsibility here rests with the individual, although Careers Wales may indicate a number of options to consider. The Training Provider is required to complete a Training Plan, detailing how the proposed training will address the need identified in the Careers Action Plan. Upon completion of this, a formal application is submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government ReAct team for authorisation²⁰.
- 3.30 In a small number of cases, questions about training relevance and/or cost are raised, but assuming no issues arise the funding is authorised with the Training Provider receiving payment following satisfactory completion of the relevant course.

Employers

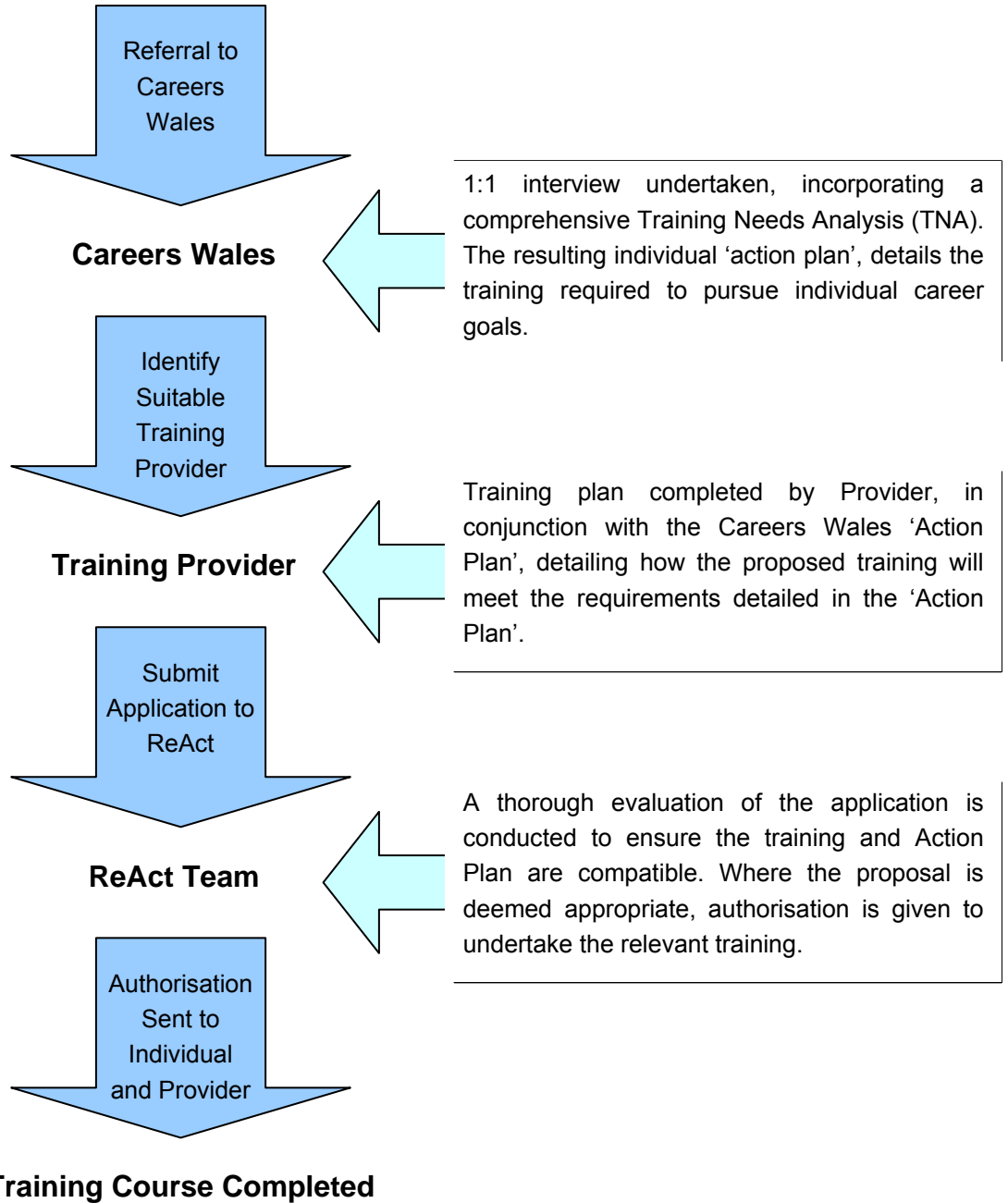
- 3.31 The situation with respect to employers offering a job to a ReAct beneficiary is more straightforward. They simply complete, and submit for authorisation, relevant paperwork for the individual they are recruiting, and possibly training. Crucially however, in addition to the qualifying criteria stated previously for individual beneficiaries, subsidies can only be paid if applications are authorised **before** employment commences.
- 3.32 Awareness of this strand of the programme can arise through a number of sources, including the individual raising the issue during interview – encouraging employers to 'take a chance' in the event of them not having appropriate skills – or word of mouth.

²⁰ The individual may also apply for a grant to overcome barriers to training (e.g. childcare costs, travel and accommodation, etc), which will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Figure 3: ReAct Application Process (Individual Awards)

Individual Awareness Raised

(e.g. JCP, Welsh Assembly Government, Employer, etc.)



Previous Evaluation

3.33 An interim evaluation of ReAct was completed in 2005 by CRG Research, reporting largely positive findings with respect to the management, delivery and impact of the programme. The evaluation involved two phases, with an initial review of the programme incorporating interviews with beneficiaries, training providers, delivery

partners and stakeholders, and a series of follow-up interviews with individual beneficiaries after 6 months.

3.34 Specific findings from the evaluation included:

- Overall, management of the programme was deemed to be highly effective;
- Participants viewed the various stages in the programme as having ‘added value’ although the contribution of Careers Wales was viewed less positively than other elements;
- The programme appeared to perform strongly in helping individuals find employment following participation on ReAct²¹;
- ReAct appeared to have a “*useful positive additional impact*”²², although quantifying this was difficult, particularly due to tight labour market conditions;
- Estimates of deadweight were considered difficult, also due to the tight labour market, as “*you’d expect most redundant people to get a job anyway*”²³. Furthermore, although a counterfactual analysis was completed, participant numbers were limited meaning conclusions should be treated cautiously;
- ReAct was not believed to have raised any issues in relation to Displacement effects;
- Employment gained through participation on ReAct was generally believed to have good levels of sustainability; and,
- The assumptions underpinning ReAct were largely viewed as valid, with suggestions that the programme should definitely be continued.

3.35 In the light of these findings, a number of recommendations for future development of the programme were made, including:

- Introducing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework;
- Quality assuring Training Providers to ensure training proposals are suitably cost-effective;
- Ensuring Careers Wales guidance and Action Plans are more fully integrated into the overall ReAct programme, particularly when forming training plans; and,
- Ensuring all potentially relevant organisations (e.g. Trade Unions, Local Authorities, etc) are fully aware of the programme and its content.

²¹ Reference was however made to the ‘tight’ labour market conditions during the 2001-04 period.

²² ReAct Phase II Evaluation Report, p9

²³ *ibid*, p10

Links with Other Programmes

- 3.36 The ReAct programme appears to have no directly comparable programmes available throughout the UK, in relation to a large-scale 'open access' support service for individuals who are at risk of redundancy or have been made redundant.
- 3.37 In terms of 'widely available', direct assistance to individuals facing, or having gone through a redundancy situation, the Rapid Response Service (RRS) provided by Job Centre Plus offers the closest parallel to ReAct.

Rapid Response Service

- 3.38 In the event of a redundancy situation being classified as **significant** (in terms of employee numbers, impact on labour market, term over which redundancies are made, impact on suppliers, etc.), Job Centre Plus can apply their RRS. In common with the partnership approach of ReAct, a range of parties are brought together to respond to the situation, meeting with employers, offering presentations to affected employees, individual skills assessments and job-focused training (if not available through any other source). Furthermore, they are able to relax some of the qualification criteria for other JCP programmes, giving immediate access to New Deal, etc.
- 3.39 The key difference between the RRS and ReAct is that RRS focuses on the impact of the redundancy situation, offering assistance in situations in which large scale redundancies are likely to affect the local labour market and no other support is available. In comparison, ReAct focuses on the individual, rather than the local labour market²⁴, and as such is accessible in situations in which one redundancy arises as well as when large numbers are created, giving equality of opportunity. RRS is not, therefore, as comprehensive and all-encompassing as ReAct in terms of accessibility.
- 3.40 In terms of more generic assistance to those made redundant, assistance towards gaining new qualifications may be acquired through Individual Learning Accounts. However, both the qualifying criteria and support available are restricted, with the accounts offering up to £200 of support for individuals claiming income related support and with qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 2 or below.
- 3.41 Alternative programmes which could potentially be accessed by individuals in the absence of ReAct require more lengthy 'qualification periods' before being able to access JCP initiatives such as the New Deal and Work Trials - designed to assist long-term unemployed individuals in returning to employment. This extended period reflects the view that most people losing their jobs get a new one within 13 weeks, but run the risk those individuals will lose basic 'working' skills with protracted periods of inactivity.

²⁴ in terms of qualifying criteria

- 3.42 Clearly many individuals access other forms of learning and accreditation. Principal among these are:

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)

Previously restricted to people under 25, now an all-age programme, MAs provide training in the work place and from a local college or training provider. Each MA framework includes the following:

- A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3;
- Key skills appropriate to the sector; and,
- A technical certificate relating to the NVQ.

Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (FMAs)

FMAs lead to NVQ Level 2 and are often used as a stepping stone to a Modern Apprenticeship, offering young people an opportunity to gain the skills and qualifications needed for a successful career. FMA frameworks are available in approximately 80 occupational sectors. Each framework includes the following:

- A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2;
- Key Skills appropriate to the sector; and,
- A technical certificate (where the sector has identified the need).

Modern Skills Diploma

Designed for managers, technicians and others in positions of responsibility within SMEs who have the ability to train to NVQ Level 4.

Skill Build and Skill Build +

Aimed at learners who lack confidence, have poor basic skills and need encouragement to improve their skills.

Step-Up

Sector-specific programmes to improve industry-specific skills and qualifications (e.g. promoting ITQs for IT Users); also a project targeting local adults in full time employment in Ceredigion and South Gwynedd with the chance to get education and training up to NVQ Level 3, or simply to get a taste for learning - part of the Ireland/Wales Step Up Programme a joint initiative between the Welsh Assembly Government and Foras Aiseanna Saothair, the training and employment authority in Ireland, targeting people who work in SMEs in particular.

- 3.43 These programmes do not, however, offer the same learner-led, open access to redundant people, or people under threat of redundancy.

Summary

- 3.44 Largely unique in terms of what it offers, ReAct has a clear strategic fit with wider Welsh Assembly Government and UK policies on a number of levels, including upskilling the workforce and assisting individuals to re-enter the workforce, minimising the risks of entering long-term unemployment.
- 3.45 In terms of the employer subsidies, the programme may be seen as having links to other support services available - such as business support helpline, Business Eye, etc. These services are important 'signposting' mechanisms for businesses within Wales and could, in principle, help relevant individuals and employers become aware of ReAct.
- 3.46 ReAct's involvement with the main organisations within Wales supporting individuals who are at risk of redundancy or have been made redundant, namely Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus, mean that there are good links (but no major overlap) with their core services.

4. ReAct Programme Performance

Introduction

- 4.1 This section of the report assesses the performance of ReAct, analysing internally collated monitoring and performance data across the population of individual and company beneficiaries.
- 4.2 Drawing robust conclusions about project performance against predetermined targets presents challenges, particularly because a number of variables simply cannot be predicted, including (amongst others):
- The number of redundancies created during the period of analysis;
 - The industrial structure of redundancies;
 - Prevailing labour market conditions at the time of the redundancies;
 - Future economic conditions; and,
 - Qualifications held by those made redundant.
- 4.3 Furthermore, whilst the quality of the data records held within the EDMS database has significantly improved in recent years (following recommendations made in the previous evaluation), the impact of incomplete and inconsistent records compiled during the early stages of the programme must be noted.

ReAct Performance

- 4.4 Much performance data is compiled through the monitoring and reporting systems operated by the ReAct team, using follow-up questionnaires that have mixed success rates. Some caveats about overall outcomes, and the characteristics of those who return their questionnaires, do need to be raised, therefore²⁵.
- 4.5 The breakdown of costs incurred, individual beneficiaries engaged and companies engaged throughout the course of the project to February 2008 (NB Figures for funding relate to October 2007 end date), are given in Figure 4 to Figure 6, broken down by category of costs and funding source (i.e. Objective 1 or 3)²⁶.

²⁵ These figures have, until recently, not been recorded in a consistent manner, making any direct analysis inconclusive.

²⁶ These figures have been supplied by the Welsh Assembly Government ReAct management team.

Figure 4: Budgeted v. Actual Funding

	Objective 1		Objective 3	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Staff Costs	£312,463	£376,360	£141,394	£177,635
Beneficiary Costs	£12,118,536	£12,554,634	£5,165,071	£5,117,766
Other Costs	£15,810	£79,960	£7,746	£38,061
Total Costs	£12,446,809	£13,010,954	£5,314,211	£5,333,462

Source: EDMS Database

Figure 5: Target v. Actual Beneficiaries Engaged

	Objective 1		Objective 3	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Early Leavers	196	194	74	89
Completers	4,527	6,321	2,176	2,896
Still On ReAct	1,523	456	835	235
Beneficiaries Engaged	6,246	6,971	3,085	3,220

Source: EDMS Database

Figure 6: Target v. Actual Companies Supported

	Objective 1		Objective 3	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Companies Supported	429	419	174	191

Source: EDMS Database

- 4.6 The programme was originally due to cease in December 2006, although owing to the inherently difficult nature of accurately predicting the number of redundancies likely to arise, the programme had not engaged the number of beneficiaries expected at this point. The programme was subsequently granted an extension through to June 2008.
- 4.7 The figures provided throughout the remainder of this section are drawn from the EDMS database, encompassing the internal monitoring and evaluation data collated by the ReAct team.

4.8 Given the obvious difficulties in predicting the number of redundancies arising in a given period - as discussed previously - and with no similar programmes available to compare 'performance', Figures 7 to 9 can only be seen as offering an insight into the general characteristics of beneficiaries as a background to the evaluation, rather than any direct test of performance.

Figure 7: ReAct Participants by Area & Element of ReAct Accessed

		ERS	ETS	IVA	IMA	Total	%
South East	Blaenau Gwent	44	14	388	227	673	5%
	Bridgend	119	31	941	462	1553	12%
	Caerphilly	143	42	792	286	1263	10%
	Cardiff	38	19	732	289	1078	8%
	Merthyr Tydfil	19	9	127	45	200	2%
	Monmouthshire	16	7	163	99	285	2%
	Newport	21	12	372	179	584	4%
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	161	71	1046	477	1755	14%
	Torfaen	40	5	295	180	520	4%
	Vale of Glamorgan	20	7	553	235	815	6%
Mid	Ceredigion	18	2	47	17	84	1%
	Gwynedd	9	3	52	24	88	1%
	Powys	76	19	151	84	330	3%
North	Conwy	5	2	85	45	137	1%
	Denbighshire	6	3	106	47	162	1%
	Flintshire	21	6	486	115	628	5%
	Isle of Anglesey	39	14	41	16	110	1%
	Wrexham	30	8	286	61	385	3%
South West	Carmarthenshire	33	14	411	173	631	5%
	Neath Port Talbot	52	16	349	123	540	4%
	Pembrokeshire	43	10	143	87	283	2%
	Swansea	33	14	482	160	689	5%
	Outside Wales	1	-	159	45	205	2%
Total		987	328	8207	3476	12998	100%

Source: EDMS Database

4.9 Figures 8 and 9 below give an indication of the characteristics of the population of 'individual' beneficiaries, split by the various programme elements, as taken from the EDMS database. As predicted by the industrial structure of redundancies created over the period, most beneficiaries have been male, well over 80% have been under 50, and good Wales-wide coverage has been achieved, but – again predictably – there is particularly high demand from the traditional industrial areas.

Figure 8: ReAct Participants by Gender & Element of ReAct Accessed

Gender	ERS		ETS		IVA		IMA		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Female	349	35%	104	32%	1,487	18%	499	14%	2,439
Male	638	65%	224	68%	6,720	82%	2,977	86%	10,559
Total	987	100%	328	100%	8,207	100%	3,476	100%	12,998

Source: EDMS Database

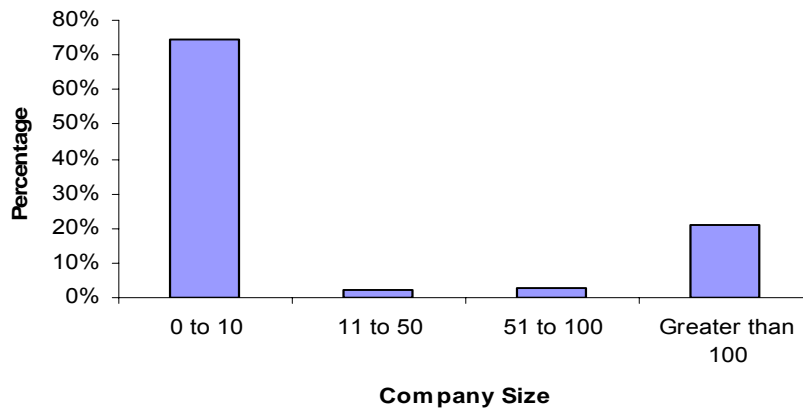
Figure 9: ReAct Participants by Age & Element of ReAct Accessed²⁷

Age	ERS		ETS		IVA		IMA		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<30	170	17%	59	18%	1,708	21%	733	21%	2,670
31-40	316	32%	115	35%	2,712	33%	1,194	34%	4,337
41-50	310	31%	105	32%	2,474	30%	1,011	29%	3,900
51-60	177	18%	46	14%	1,215	15%	494	14%	1,932
61+	14	1%	3	1%	98	1%	44	1%	159
Total	987	100%	328	100%	8,207	100%	3,476	100%	12,998

Source: EDMS Database

4.10 The distribution of company sizes from which individual beneficiaries have been made redundant is also important, because in the case of larger scale redundancy situations the formal HR1 process gives prior notification to the delivery partners, whilst no such parallel exists in the case of smaller companies.

Figure 10: Company Size Generating Redundancies (Individual Training Award Beneficiaries)



Source: EDMS Database

²⁷ Summing the total beneficiaries for each individual element exceeds the total number of ReAct beneficiaries owing to individuals/employers potentially accessing more than one fund (e.g. each individual **could** access IVA and IMA, whilst employers **could** access ERS and ETS).

- 4.11 The distribution above shows that individuals are primarily recruited from micro-sized companies: given the issues identified in 3.24, this is a positive finding, suggesting many individuals can, and do become aware of ReAct in situations other than large scale redundancies.
- 4.12 Alongside this, Figure 11 shows the distribution of Individual Training Award beneficiaries in relation to the industrial sector from which they were made redundant.

Figure 11: Distribution of Previous Employers' Industry for Individual Training Award Beneficiaries

Industry	Beneficiaries
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	1%
Chemicals	1%
Construction	7%
Education	1%
Electricity, gas and water supply	2%
Engineering	8%
Financial intermediation	3%
Fishing	0%
Food, drink and tobacco	1%
Health and social work	1%
Hotels and restaurants	1%
Manufacturing	44%
Metals and minerals	1%
Mining and quarrying	1%
Other	9%
Other community, social and personal service activities	2%
Public administration and defence	3%
Real estate, renting and business activities	0%
Textiles	2%
Transport, storage and communication	7%
Wholesale and retail trade	6%

Source: EDMS Database

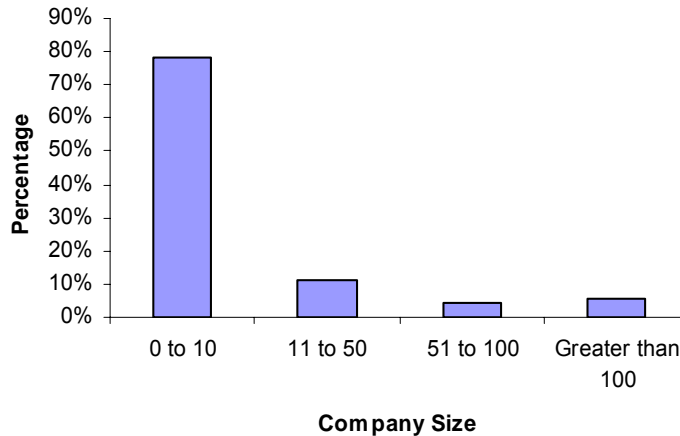
- 4.13 Once again, the changing industrial structure of the Welsh economy appears to be reflected, with by far the largest proportion of beneficiaries having been made redundant from the manufacturing sector. Interestingly however, 37%²⁸ of individuals benefiting from the Employer Recruitment Subsidy were recruited **into** the Manufacturing Sector. As such, rather than seeing it as a declining sector per se, it

²⁸ N=896

may be more accurate to consider it as a ‘changing’ sector, responding to new sources of competition from overseas.

4.14 Figure 12 illustrates the distribution of the size of employer beneficiaries (recruitment subsidy), with number of employees used as a proxy for size.

Figure 12: Employer Recruitment Subsidy Beneficiary Size



Source: EDMS Database

4.15 ReAct has therefore had considerable success in supporting micro-sized businesses in recruiting, relative to larger employers.

4.16 Against this overall picture, we now consider the monitoring data collected by the ReAct team through a series of evaluation questionnaires, although, once again, one important caveat to be considered is the mixed response rates for returned questionnaires.

Individual Training Beneficiaries²⁹

4.17 Figure 13 below gives an overview of individual sources of awareness of the overall ReAct programme.

²⁹ Responses taken from the in-training questionnaire (response rate 42%) and post-training follow-up questionnaire (response rate 28%)

Figure 13: ReAct Individual Training Beneficiary Sources of Awareness

Source	No.	%
Careers adviser	853	48%
Previous employer	388	22%
Word of mouth	256	14%
Job centre	135	8%
Training provider	74	4%
Learn direct	41	2%
Press	11	1%

Source: EDMS Database

- 4.18 Prior to participation, 63% of individuals also suggested that they found it easy accessing information relating to the programme.
- 4.19 The overall application process was also largely considered to be a smooth process, with 95% of respondents believing it to be easy to apply, 98% considering the ReAct team helpful in dealing with the application and 97% suggesting the overall process to be efficient.
- 4.20 In terms of outcomes, following participation on ReAct only 36%³⁰ of individuals indicated they were unemployed immediately after the end of their chosen training course. However, this figure reduces to 19%³¹ within 6 months of completion, which is clearly in keeping with the Government targets of 80% employment.
- 4.21 Of the 773 individuals commenting on whether they felt the training course attended while on ReAct had helped them get a job, 69% felt that it had. Furthermore, only 29% felt they would have been doing the same job now even if it hadn't been for ReAct, suggesting the programme has demonstrated added value for them.
- 4.22 In terms of the direct impact on the individual, only 8% (of 909 responses) felt that ReAct participation had made no impact. Of the remaining respondents, 78% felt that it had, at the very least, made quite a lot of difference.
- 4.23 Specific areas in which it was believed being involved with ReAct had made a difference included gaining a qualification (68%), added value to a C.V. (74%) and increased individual confidence (53%).
- 4.24 Furthermore, in relation to the extent to which participation on ReAct training prepared individuals for their current job, 94% of the 732 responses asserted that it had made them either quite prepared or very prepared.

³⁰ N=1,404

³¹ N=941

Employer Recruitment/Training Beneficiaries – Company Perspective³²

4.25 From the perspective of the employer, sources of awareness in relation to the Employer Training and Recruitment Awards are given in Figure 14:

Figure 14: ReAct Employer Beneficiary Sources of Awareness (n=106)

Source	No.	%
Employee	54	51%
Consultant	28	26%
Jobcentre Plus	13	12%
ELWa/DCELLS staff	6	6%
Business eye	4	4%
Careers adviser	1	1%

Source: EDMS Database

4.26 Whilst the figure above shows the most common source of awareness to be employees during interview, only 2% of employers suggested it to be difficult finding any of the information they required.

4.27 During the process of applying for the funding, as with individual beneficiaries, employers were very satisfied with the ease of applying (96%), assistance with any queries raised (99%), and the process of claiming funds (98%). Reinforcing these views, 92% suggested they would use ReAct again if necessary.

4.28 In relation to the skill levels of recruits, in the context of individual job requirements, only 6% of the 195 respondents suggested individuals did not have any of the skills required for them to do the job. In contrast, 39% felt new recruits to have all of the skills they needed, with the remaining responses relating to recruits being partially skilled.

4.29 Whilst only 43% of beneficiary companies responding to the internal monitoring applied for the recruitment subsidy, approximately half of those not applying felt they would have benefited from claiming ETS, having had to train individuals subsequently.

Employer Recruitment/Training Beneficiaries – Individual Perspective³³

4.30 65% of individuals benefiting from the Employer Recruitment Subsidy believed their recruitment to have been due to the ReAct subsidies. After 6 months of employment, 93% of the 76 beneficiaries responding to the internal monitoring suggested they were still in employment. Of those in employment, 92% were still employed by the ReAct funded company.

³² Response rate 46%

³³ Response rate 32%

- 4.31 In relation to pay levels, of the individuals still in employment, 58% suggested their take-home pay had increased since starting.
- 4.32 Furthermore, in response to questions arising over sustainability of the employment created, 28% believed their employment to be very secure, with a further 64% considering it to be quite secure. Only 8% of respondents saw their current positions as not very secure.
- 4.33 In terms of a counterfactual analysis, Figure 15 gives an insight into individual perceptions regarding what would have happened in the absence of ReAct.

Figure 15: Counterfactual Analysis (n=62)

Counterfactual	No.	%
Find job on own	43	69%
Find other support	5	8%
Return to training	5	8%
Not consider training	4	6%
Don't know	4	6%
Unemployed	1	2%

- 4.34 Figure 15 suggests therefore that individuals largely believe they would have found alternative employment on their own, although the key issue remains whether they would have been in 'any job' rather than a 'better job'.

Summary

- 4.35 The internal monitoring and performance data suggests the ReAct programme is performing well in the view of both individual and company beneficiaries. Furthermore, the summary 'population' data shows a good spread of ages and locations when we consider the patterns of employment throughout Wales.
- 4.36 However, viewing this data in isolation requires a number of caveats, particularly during the early stages of establishing the programme when some inconsistencies arose over data entry. In addition to this, some entries are incomplete, preventing robust conclusions being derived. The figures do however provide indications of good programme performance to date.

5. Findings: Individual Beneficiaries & Non-Participants

Introduction

- 5.1 This section of the report presents the findings from the individual beneficiary survey (250 telephone interviews) and case study interviews (8 face-to-face interviews), as well as the non-participants survey (8 telephone interviews).
- 5.2 Whilst the characteristics of the attained sample are broadly in line with those of the overall population, results have been re-weighted across the primary stratification criteria of gender and location in order to control for any potential bias.

Findings

Beneficiary Backgrounds

- 5.3 Figure 16 and Figure 17 below give an illustration of the characteristics of those individuals successfully contacted, in comparison with those of the broader 'ReAct beneficiaries' population.

Figure 16: ReAct Individual Training Beneficiary Locations (Sample v. Total Beneficiaries) (n=250) (un-weighted)

Location	Sample Contacted	Total Beneficiaries
South East Wales	71%	66%
South West Wales	15%	17%
North Wales	10%	12%
Mid Wales	2%	3%
Outside Wales	2%	2%

Figure 17: ReAct Individual Training Beneficiary Gender (Sample v. Total Beneficiaries) (n=250) (un-weighted)

Gender	Sample Contacted	Total Beneficiaries
Male	80%	82%
Female	20%	18%

- 5.4 As can be seen therefore, across the primary stratification criteria of location and age the sample contacted is broadly representative of the wider ReAct population. Whilst some difficulties were experienced contacting all members of the originally selected sample (as detailed in Section 2), suitable replacements were introduced where necessary.
- 5.5 Figure 18 to Figure 20 shows the distribution of other background criteria for individual beneficiaries participating in the evaluation.

Figure 18: ReAct Individual Training Beneficiary Ages (Sample v. Total Beneficiaries) (n=250) (un-weighted)

Age	Sample Contacted	Total Beneficiaries
< 30	7%	21%
31-40	26%	33%
41-50	38%	30%
51-60	24%	15%
> 60	4%	1%

Figure 19: Distribution of Company Size for Individual Beneficiaries (re-weighted)

Company Size	Original Employer (Company made redundant from)	Subsequent Employer (Following ReAct participation)
Micro (0-9 employees)	6%	26%
Small (10-49 employees)	14%	19%
Medium (50-249 employees)	20%	11%
Large (250+ employees)	57%	43%
Don't Know	3%	1%
Total	250	177

Figure 20: Distribution of Job Type for Individual Beneficiaries (re-weighted)

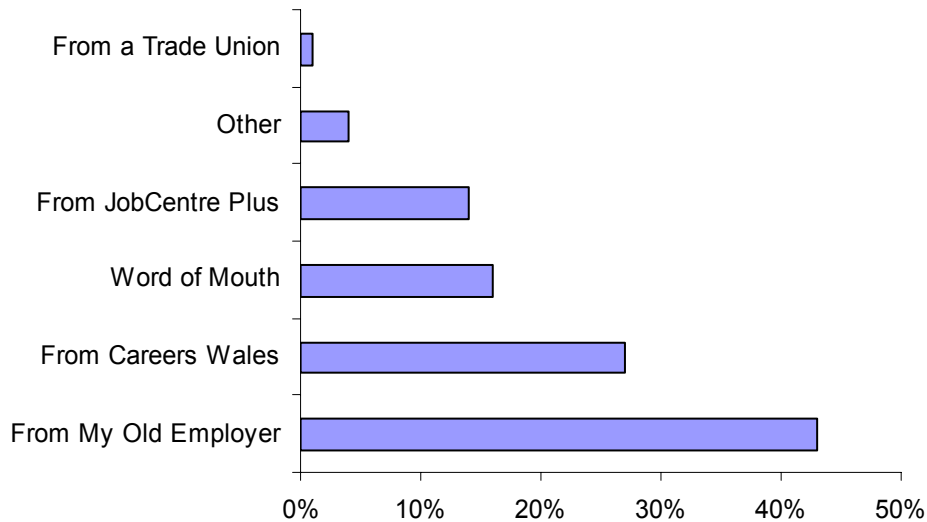
Job Type	Prior to ReAct	Following ReAct
Manual Work	27%	23%
Manager/Professional/Technical	24%	21%
Skilled Trade	23%	25%
Administrative/Secretarial	12%	9%
Other	8%	16%
Sales & Customer Service	6%	5%
Total	250	182

5.6 The information presented above therefore gives an insight into the characteristics of individual interviewees, for consideration throughout the following analysis.

Marketing and Awareness

5.7 In terms of marketing the programme, Figure 21 illustrates the sources of awareness given by individual beneficiaries.

Figure 21: Individual Beneficiary Sources of Awareness (n=250) (re-weighted)



5.8 Clearly the greatest source of awareness was through ex-employers, accounting for 43% of all responses. This figure may reflect the fact that a majority of respondents previously worked for large companies, giving the possibility of prior notification of the redundancy position to the ReAct team, resulting in an on-site presentation.

5.9 In terms of the ReAct team directly ‘recruiting’ individuals, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus together account for 41% of awareness raising, with word of mouth also being important. However, where individuals have identified their old employer as the source of awareness, it must be noted that this was potentially in collaboration with representatives of the ReAct team making on-site presentations: *“Careers Wales came and gave a presentation at my old employer”*.

5.10 Where individuals cited ‘other’ as the source of awareness, Learn Direct were referred to by several interviewees, and in one particular case it was commented how *“my new employer told me about the programme when I didn’t have the right qualification for the job”*. Clearly therefore there is a case for awareness raising with employers as well, particularly if individuals are not aware of ReAct and a lack of qualifications may be a barrier to gaining employment.

5.11 In particular reference to small scale redundancies, with no formal notification process, raising individual awareness of ReAct is crucial to ensure all those facing redundancy have equal opportunity to access the programme. However, in a

significant number of interviews it was suggested that *“the programme needs to be much better promoted”* and *“more advertising is needed – there’s definitely not enough at present”*. Furthermore, in a couple of cases it was independently stated that delivery partners, and in particular Job Centre Plus, had not informed them of the programmes availability: *“JCP do not seem to know much about the programme – they don’t mention it”* and *“the Job Centre didn’t tell me about ReAct when I thought they should have – I found out about it through word of mouth and had to go and tell them”*. Whilst this arose in only a very small number of cases, ideally, such a situation should not be able to arise.

- 5.12 In relation to the information packs available for potential participants, 84% of individuals commented that they had received a pack whilst considering their options. The vast majority of interviewees found it to be very informative (82%), containing all of the information they required: *“the pack contained a lot of information and I found it generally informative”*. A further 16% suggested it was quite informative, although no specific areas for improvement were identified.
- 5.13 However, in 3% of cases individuals suggested the information packs were not very informative, with some of the problems being due to individuals finding *“some of the information a bit confusing”* and *“it was unclear in the pack what you can apply for and how you go about doing it”*.
- 5.14 In the remaining cases where issues arose, these appeared to be largely due to misunderstandings with the programme, suggesting *“it didn’t have much information on where the training was available”*. However, given that the individuals are free to procure their own training services, providing a comprehensive list of all training providers by course type is unrealistic.

Programme Content

Individual Training Award

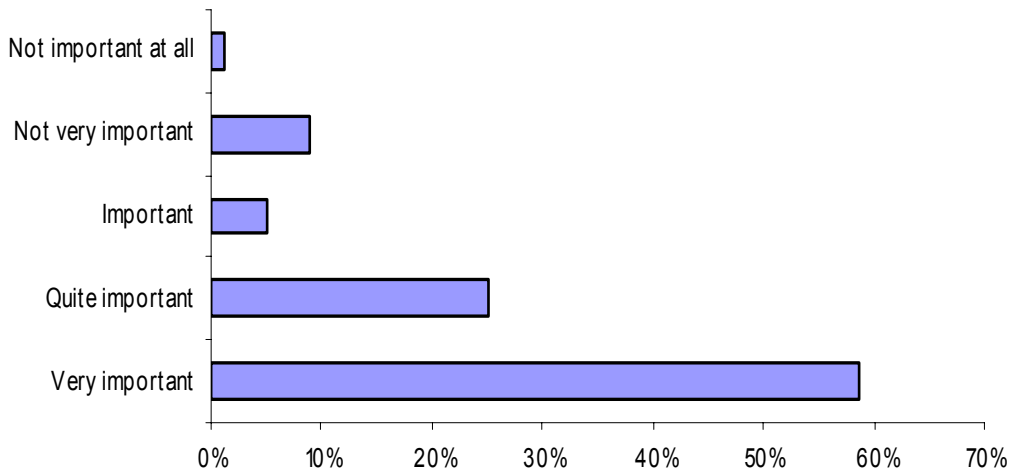
- 5.15 The Individual Training Award allows beneficiaries to procure training provision which meets the needs of their personal career goals, provided this is in keeping with the needs of the economy at the time of applying, and therefore should be considered highly relevant to each participant. This appears to have been achieved in practice, with 91% of interviewees suggesting the overall programme was tailored to their needs.
- 5.16 Of the 3% of cases in which individuals suggested the programme was not tailored to their individual needs, this was primarily due to issues arising with the application and funding process, rather than not being able to access their preferred training.
- 5.17 In a small number of cases individuals have cited problems with their training provider, either due to them being unreliable, or having failed to deliver in accordance with what was agreed at the outset. Individuals have expressed concern that this has

caused problems with them completing their chosen training course, something which is further exacerbated by a perceived inability to change training provider in order to see things through.

Individual Miscellaneous Award

5.18 43% of those interviewed had benefited from funding received through the Individual Miscellaneous Award, which has been designed to remove barriers to individuals accessing training. Figure 22 shows the importance individuals attached to this funding in overcoming barriers.

Figure 22: Importance Attached to Miscellaneous Support in Accessing Training (n=80) (re-weighted)



5.19 This element of the programme therefore appears to have achieved its aim of assisting individuals accessing training which would not have been possible in the absence of this extra support. Comments made by individuals supporting the importance attached to this element included “*money was tight at the time*”, “*I couldn’t have afforded the costs of commuting without it*” and “*being able to get the books for the course made it much more effective*”.

5.20 Where it was stated that the money had not been important at all in helping access training, it was commented that “*the money only contributed a very small amount and didn’t help enough [with the costs faced]*”.

Programme Delivery

- 5.21 Given the number of partners potentially involved in the delivery of the programme for any given individual³⁴, there is scope for issues to arise in the event of provision not being effectively ‘joined up’ (i.e. as though the end-to-end process was delivered by one organisation). However, Figure 23 below shows that in only 4% of cases interviewees did not think the programme had been effectively ‘joined up’. The vast majority of participants therefore had a very good experience of the programme, with beneficiary comments including “*excellent service*”, “*the programme ran very smoothly*” and “*a quick and easy process*”.
- 5.22 In the minority of cases where individuals suggested issues had arisen, these appeared to have been primarily due to delays at various stages in the process, with suggestions that “*the process from application through to completion of the course took too long*”. Given that accessing ReAct has an impact on an individuals ability to claim benefits, any delays were seen as making it very difficult to follow the programme through effectively.

Figure 23: Aspects of ReAct Delivery³⁵ (n=187) (re-weighted)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The different parts of the programme (consultation, advice, training) joined up well	45%	41%	11%	3%	1%
The Careers Wales advisor provided me with enough relevant information	57%	30%	7%	5%	1%
I followed the advice in my Careers Wales Action Plan	51%	38%	6%	3%	2%
The advice I received was of good quality	55%	34%	4%	4%	2%
The training I received was of good quality	60%	27%	8%	2%	2%
It was easy to arrange the training I took part in	54%	37%	5%	4%	1%

³⁴ i.e. signposted by JCP, Action Plan completed with Careers Wales, Training Plan completed with Training Provider, and funding authorised – and financed – by the Welsh Assembly Government.

³⁵ Note: where row totals do not sum to 100, this is due to rounding of figures

- 5.23 Despite some issues having been identified during the previous evaluation with respect to the value attached to the role played by Careers Wales, comments received suggest this has been largely addressed. 87% of interviewees suggested the Careers Wales advisor provided them with enough relevant information, 89% felt the advice they received was of good quality, and 89% followed the advice given in their Action Plan.
- 5.24 As a result of this, a number of favourable comments were received from interviewees regarding the involvement of Careers Wales, including *“I thought Careers Wales were really helpful – spot on”*, *“Careers Wales were very efficient and helpful”* and *“help from advisors on what was available and where to go was very important – they were very helpful and knowledgeable”*.
- 5.25 In a minority of cases however, individuals did not feel they got the support they expected from Careers Wales, with suggestions that there was *“not enough guidance from the Careers Wales advisor – I felt they thought I should know instinctively what I should want to do when made redundant”*. It was also suggested that it *“was hard to get access to a Careers Wales advisor – it took a long time to get the paperwork done and training started”* and in a couple of instances the consultation was believed to be *“rushed”*.
- 5.26 One of the aspects of administering and delivering the programme which was raised (both in a positive and a negative light) by a number of individuals relates to the paperwork involved in applying for participation on ReAct. Whilst mixed opinions were received from interviewees, most of those raising the issue suggested the paperwork was *“a bit long-winded”* and they *“needed help completing the paperwork”*, views supported by members of Careers Wales who commented *“we receive a lot of queries regarding completing applications... it could probably be simplified”*.

Impact & Outcomes

- 5.27 Ultimately, ReAct aims to help individuals train in economically relevant skills, assisting them in re-entering employment. Figure 24 illustrates the employment outcomes of beneficiaries following participation on the programme.

Figure 24: Employment Status of Individual Training Award Beneficiaries
(n=242) (re-weighted)

Employment Status	Percentage
Full time employed	52%
Part time employed	13%
Unemployed	13%
Self employed	12%
In Education/Training	4%
Other	2%
Temporarily sick/unable to work	2%
Caring for someone else	1%
Retired	1%
Volunteering	0%
Permanently sick/unable to work	0%
Total	100%

- 5.28 Following participation on the programme therefore, 79% of beneficiaries have successfully gained new employment³⁶, with a further 4% in full time training/education. Given that Welsh Assembly Government targets for ‘full employment’ are focused on achieving 80% employment, the programme appears highly successful on these figures alone.
- 5.29 Furthermore, 57% of interviewees believed participating on ReAct helped them get a new job, with a further 14% unsure. Comments made by beneficiaries in support of this included: *“although I know I had the relevant skills for employers, I had no proof of it and ReAct helped me address this by getting a recognised qualification”* and *“the training has meant I will always have a qualification and this is extremely valuable – although hopefully I won’t have to use it again”*.
- 5.30 The added value from participating on the programme is arguably delivered through individuals gaining jobs which are, at the very least, as good as the job from which they have been made redundant. Figure 25 presents individual perceptions of their current job in contrast with the one from which they have been made redundant, with 71% believing it to be at least as good as their previous role.

³⁶ This figure includes the ‘other’ category, which incorporates agency, contract and temporary work

Figure 25: Responses Received to “Do You Think Your Current Job Is A Better Job?” (n=182) (re-weighted)

	Percentage
Yes	56%
No	28%
About the same	15%
Total	99%

5.31 The pattern on earnings was more mixed: 33% of respondents seemed to be earning more than before, 42% less – partly explained by patterns of overtime and shift-working; partly by factors such as lower levels of seniority.

Figure 26: Responses Received to “Does Your Current Job Pay More Than Your Old Job?” (n=184) (re-weighted)

	Percentage
A lot more	9%
More	24%
About the same	25%
Less	28%
Much Less	14%
Don't know	1%
Won't say	1%
Total	102%

5.32 It is very difficult to compare like-with-like when looking at other patterns of employment/re-employment but many interviewees made positive comments. One interviewee in particular commented that *“because of my age I found it hard to get offered much work, but because of ReAct I had a new qualification and confidence and had more to offer employers”*.

5.33 As well as aiming to assist individuals with gaining employment following a redundancy situation, ReAct also strives to change individual attitudes to education/training and lifelong learning, illustrated in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Training Status of Individual Training Award Beneficiaries (n=193)
(re-weighted)

Employment Status	Percentage
Not In Education/Training	79%
Part time training	14%
Full time training	4%
Part time education	2%
Full time education	1%
Total	100%

5.34 The table shows that 20% of individuals are currently in some form of training/education, which, key informants regarded positively. 66% of individuals commented that having participated on ReAct they have been encouraged to do more training in future, with a further 21% unsure. At face value, although not a primary aim of the programme, this seems to be amongst the most successful aspects of ReAct operations – making a good contribution to wider targets to promote better attitudes to lifelong learning.

Counterfactual

5.35 An important consideration in evaluating the added value offered by a programme such as ReAct is the counterfactual position of what would have happened in the absence of the programme. We have limited information here, but it does support the contention that ReAct led many beneficiaries to achieve better jobs more quickly than would otherwise have been the case.

5.36 Of those individuals interviewed who did not participate on ReAct, all were aware of the programme, having heard about it from a range of sources including previous employers, Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus, Business Eye and word of mouth.

5.37 The primary reason for non-participation was due to interviewees having already gained some form of employment, therefore affecting their eligibility: all except for one of the interviewees found employment, with the remaining individual being ill and unable to work.

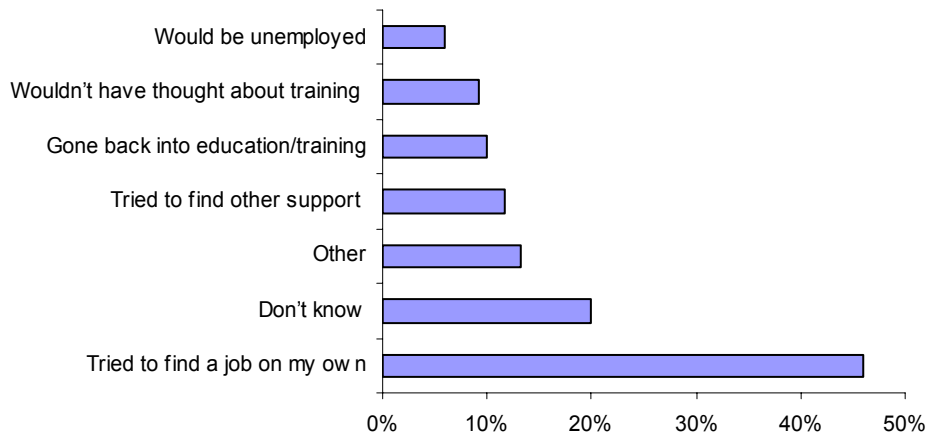
5.38 Interviewees suggested that they largely found it quite easy gaining employment, having primarily responded to job adverts. However, it appears they were able to get 'any job' rather than a job they wanted: when asked if they were in a job they wanted to be doing, only one of the interviewees commented that they were, with one other suggesting they would have done anything at the time, but they quite like it now. Comments received from the remaining interviewees included:

- *“I would have taken any job – I just didn’t want to be in a job centre and looking for work”*;
- *“I was made redundant just before Christmas, and with 5 kids I needed some income”*;
- *“I’m not doing what I would like to do, but it’s better than nothing”*; and,
- *“I’m a qualified locksmith working in a petrol station on the minimum wage”*.

5.39 None of the interviewees claimed to have been given any support in helping them gain employment, and only one commented that they had undertaken any training, which was independently financed.

5.40 In addition to the interviews conducted with non-participants, the ‘what if’ position was investigated with beneficiaries of ReAct, with the findings presented in Figure 28.

Figure 28: Individual Approaches to Redundancy in the Absence of ReAct (n=250) (re-weighted)



5.41 The greatest percentage of participants suggested they would have tried to find a job themselves (46%), with only 6% of interviewees believing they would be unemployed. The responses categorised as ‘other’ included comments made by individuals that *“I’d probably have found another job I didn’t want”*, *“I’d have probably found a less well paid job”* and *“possibly the same kind of work – it’s such a broad area”*. The suggestion therefore is that individuals believe they would still have found some sort of work, although – as discussed earlier – whether they would have been able to find work at least as good as the position from which they were made redundant is questionable.

Sustainability

5.42 Figure 29 and Figure 30 illustrate the extent to which the employment created could be considered sustainable, in terms of whether individuals regard their current employment as the kind of jobs they wanted, and whether they would like to do these jobs long-term.

Figure 29: Responses Received to “Is Your Current Job The Kind of Job You Wanted?” (n=177) (re-weighted)

	Percentage
Yes	72%
No	24%
Don't know	4%
Total	100%

Figure 30: Responses Received to “Is Your Current Job The Kind of Job You Would Like To Do Long Term?” (n=185) (re-weighted)

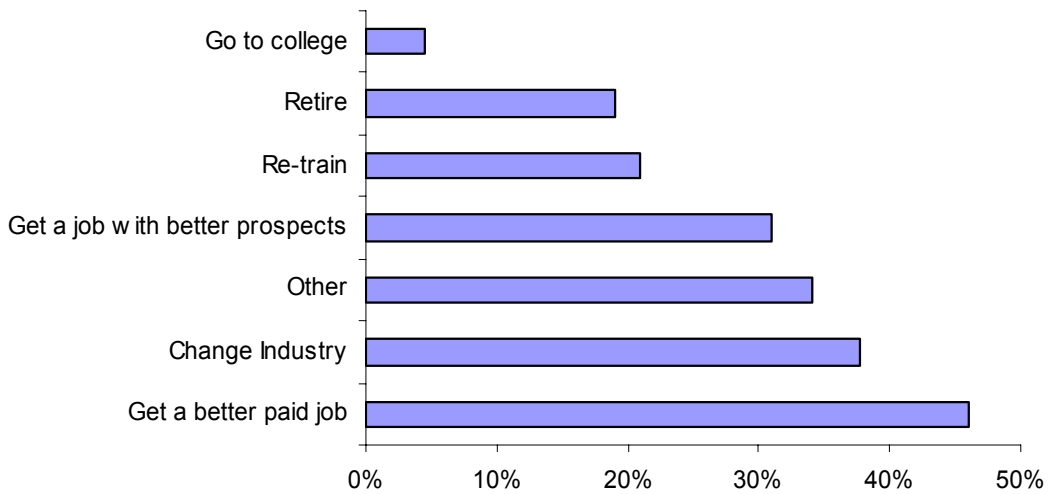
	Percentage
Yes	68%
No	24%
Don't know	8%
Total	100%

5.43 In both cases, approximately a quarter of all interviewees regard their current employment as not being the sort of work they were looking for, and not the sort of job they would like to do long term. For most, however, new jobs are seen positively by ReAct beneficiaries, indicating at least **expectations** of sustainability.

Future Aspirations

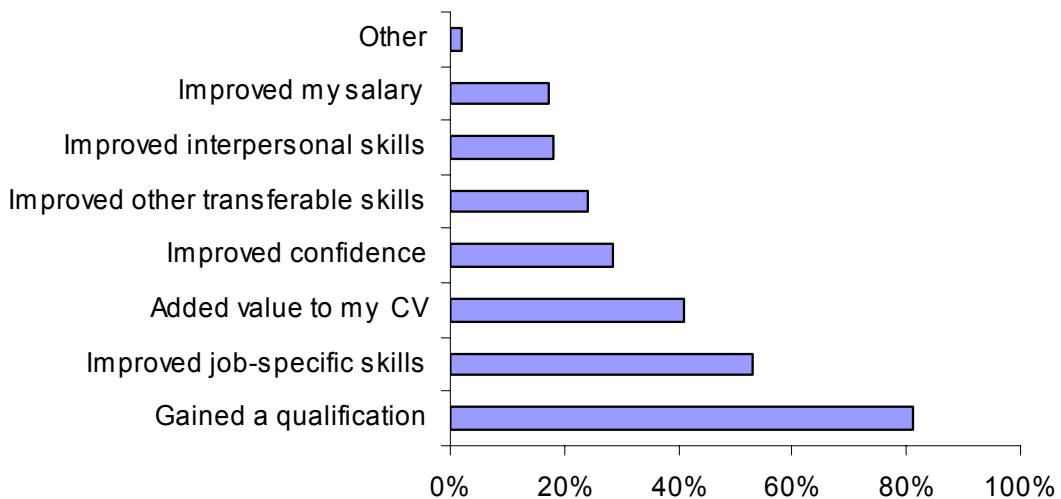
5.44 Where individuals suggested the role they are currently employed in to be one they do not wish to do long-term, future aspirations were explored further, with Figure 31 illustrating the responses collated.

Figure 31: Individual Career Aims Where Current Role Not Seen As Long-Term (n=45) (re-weighted)



- 5.45 Clearly, the highest percentage of interviewees aspired to ‘getting a better paid job’, with ‘changing industry’ also rating highly.
- 5.46 Irrespective of whether individuals saw their current role as long-term or not, 81% of those interviewed believed ReAct to have helped their long-term career prospects, with the specific areas of support given in Figure 32.

Figure 32: Long-Term Benefits Offered By ReAct Participation (n=189) (re-weighted)



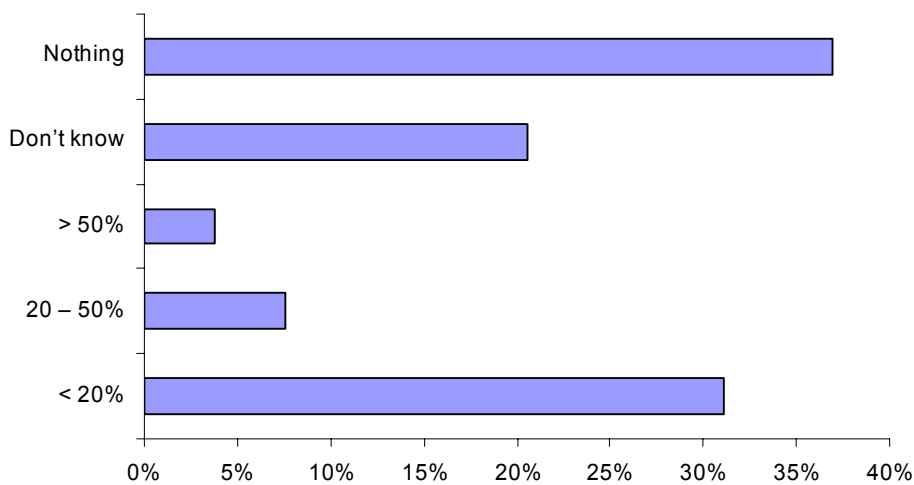
- 5.47 In addition to the obvious impact of the programme in terms of individuals gaining qualifications and skills, the ‘soft’ outcomes such as increased confidence and interpersonal skills cannot be underestimated. For many, redundancy can be a very difficult thing to deal with, particularly for those having been involved in an industry for a number of years. It has been noted by many interviewees however how ReAct “is a very positive experience, giving a feeling of hope and direction after a redundancy”

and “*the programme gives direction and options after redundancy*”. These impacts cannot be underestimated.

Funding Participation

5.48 Given that the programme is fully-funded for participants, the issue of individual contributions to funding the cost of provision was raised, thereby creating the possibility of more individuals benefiting from a fixed amount of funding, with the results given in Figure 33.

Figure 33: Contributions Towards Funding ReAct Participation Given By Individual Beneficiaries (n=238) (re-weighted)



5.49 The results show that a substantial minority of individuals (43%) suggested they would be willing to contribute towards the costs of participating in such a programme, with the vast majority of this group suggesting a contribution of less than 20% would be appropriate - although this in itself would depend on the overall cost of the training to be financed.

5.50 One of the main reasons cited for limited contributions, if any, was that individuals were in a very uncertain period of their life in terms of future employment and hence income, whilst still having to face mortgage and living costs. As such, any money received as part of a redundancy package was likely to be set aside for these contingencies rather than gambling on taking a training course with no guarantees of employment at the end.

Future Delivery

- 5.51 Overwhelming support was received for the continuation of the ReAct programme, with 97% of interviewees stating that it should be continued. Comments made by individual beneficiaries supporting this view included “*ReAct provides a safety net for people in a vulnerable position*” and “*ReAct should continue as people do get made redundant and getting further training and refreshing is vital for further employment*”. One interviewee also added that it is the “*best thing the Welsh Assembly Government has ever done*”.
- 5.52 Only 1% of those interviewed stated that the programme should definitely not be continued, primarily due to bad individual experiences with the training received and advice regarding future options.
- 5.53 One of the areas in which it was almost universally acknowledged there was scope for improvement for the future was in relation to marketing and advertising the programme. In the case of a ‘large scale’ redundancy, which may result in an on-site presentation from the ReAct team, this was considered less important than for situations in which less than 20 employees are made redundant. Quite simply, it was suggested that not enough people are aware of ReAct. Furthermore, although in a very small number of cases, some individuals described not being informed of the programme despite accessing delivery partners for advice, something which needs addressing in conjunction with awareness raising.
- 5.54 Given that some individuals felt the paperwork to be difficult to complete, it was suggested they should be given greater assistance in filling in the relevant forms. If possible, it was felt this could form part of the Careers Wales consultation, or alternatively, once they have had time to consider their futures, it could form part of a follow-up appointment to take things forward.

Summary

- 5.55 Overall, our findings suggest the ReAct programme has been successful in assisting individuals gain new employment, which in many cases is at least as good as the role from which they were made redundant. At such a difficult time for individuals this has been a much valued source of support.

6. Findings: Company Beneficiaries

Introduction

- 6.1 This section of the report presents the findings from interviews completed with companies having received funding in relation to the 'Employer Recruitment Subsidy' and, in some cases, the 'Employer Training Subsidy'. A total of 95 telephone interviews were completed, with a further 6 face-to-face interviews in order to derive more detailed insights into individual experiences.
- 6.2 As with Individual Beneficiaries, results for Company Beneficiaries have been re-weighted to account for differences in the characteristics between the attained sample and the overall population (across the primary stratification criteria of company size and location), thereby controlling for any potential bias. However, care must be taken interpreting results given the small overall sample size.

Findings

Company Beneficiary Sample Characteristics

- 6.3 Paralleling overall levels of employment throughout Wales, most interviewees (58%) were located in the South East, as summarised in Figure 34. The lowest percentage of participants was in Mid Wales (6%).

Figure 34: Location of Employer Beneficiaries Interviewed (n=95)
(un-weighted)

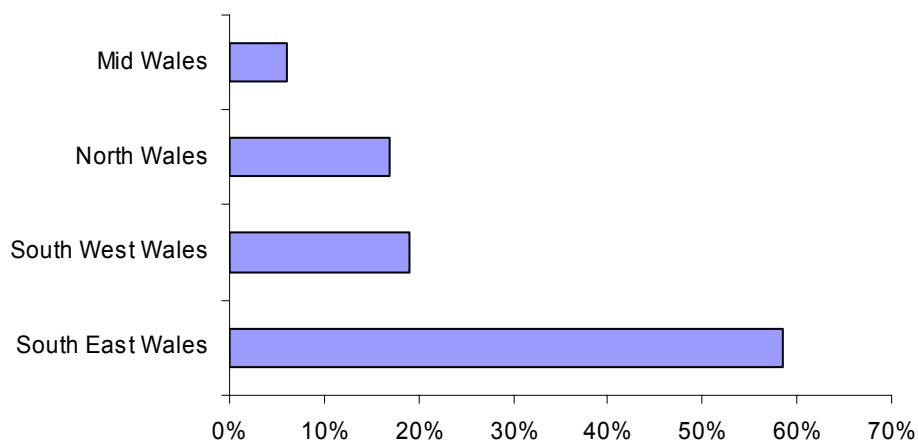
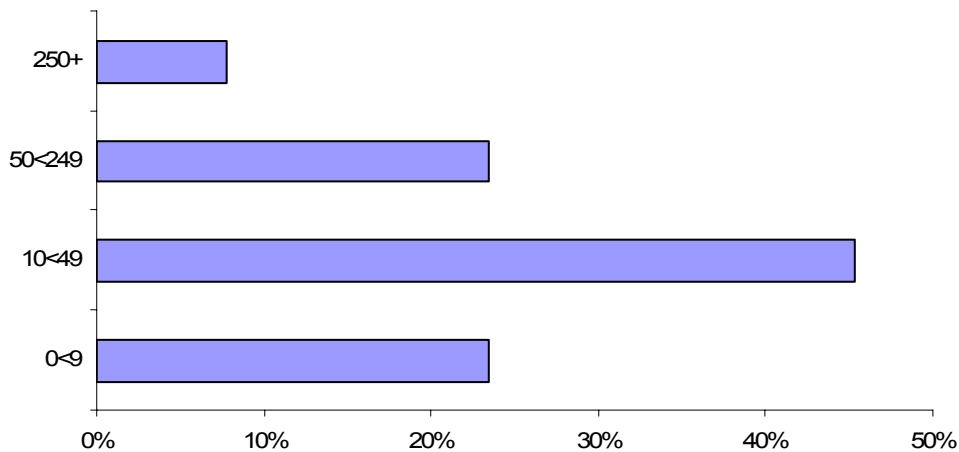


Figure 35: Beneficiary Company Size (by number of employees) (n=95)
(un-weighted)



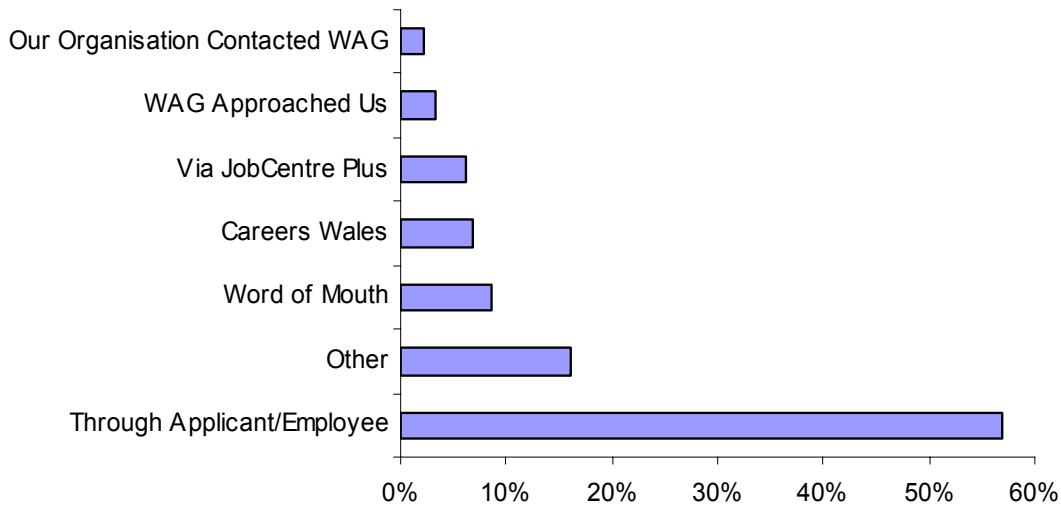
6.4 Figure 35 shows that 45% of companies interviewed were classified as small enterprises with between 10 and 49 employees, with large companies accounting for the smallest percentage at 8%. Micro (less than 10 employees) and medium (between 50 and 249 employees) enterprises each represented 23% of employers interviewed.

6.5 With respect to the performance of companies in recent years, 67% of those interviewed reported their company as having grown, with a further 27% suggesting their performance had been stable. The remaining 6% had experienced deteriorating performance.

6.6 In relation to ReAct, 54% of interviewees came from companies who had received the recruitment subsidy alone, whilst 46% had benefited from both the recruitment and training subsidies.

Marketing and Awareness

6.7 For the majority of businesses (57%), awareness of the programme was raised during the interview process with the potential recruit, as illustrated in Figure 36. Where companies cited 'other' sources of awareness, they included other business support services (e.g. Business Eye), Training Providers (who themselves had previously been involved in the ReAct process), and local government information sources.

Figure 36: Company Beneficiary Sources of Awareness (n=95) (re-weighted)

- 6.8 A number of individuals suggested that awareness raising was a potential area for improvement, with comments including: *“better advertising and general awareness raising is needed – if it hadn’t been for the applicant raising the issue I would never have known about it”* and *“I think few people are aware of the programme – more should be done to promote ReAct”*.
- 6.9 Whilst Figure 36 suggests that in some instances awareness has been raised through proactive efforts to contact employers, one employer commented that *“our organisation was advertising and recruiting heavily at the time, but we were never approached by anyone from the programme”*. Overall, it does seem that the local knowledge of delivery partners needs to be effectively harnessed to ensure maximum awareness.

Accessing ReAct Information

- 6.10 Despite concerns regarding general awareness of ReAct, once aware of the programme, 89% of companies found it easy getting information about programme content, with only 6% believing it to be difficult.
- 6.11 84% of companies acknowledged having received an information pack detailing the various elements of ReAct support available to employers, with a further 10% unable to remember. In terms of the information contained within the packs, 71% of businesses thought it was very informative and contained all of the information required, with the remaining 29% believing it to be quite informative. Of those believing it to be ‘quite informative’, few were able to state exactly what further information would have been useful for them, although in a small number of cases it was suggested *“the information was a bit repetitive”* and *“more information could have been provided regarding the overall process and length of the application”*.

- 6.12 In one instance it was suggested that *“the pack didn’t explain that the recruit couldn’t receive funding if they took up new employment, and her application was refused even though she was unemployed when the application was submitted”*: it must be acknowledged however, that the information packs clearly state the restrictions and eligibility criteria, stating *“whatever you do, don’t start working for your employer before your ReAct application has been confirmed or neither you nor your employer will be eligible for funding³⁷”*. This misunderstanding may therefore link to comments made by another employer: *“I just didn’t have enough time to read through all of the information”*.

ReAct Operations

- 6.13 In 91% of cases, interviewees suggested programme management had been *“very smooth”* and well ‘joined up’, from submitting their applications through to receiving funding: any issues arising were largely thought to have been handled well by the ReAct team who were generally acknowledged to be *“very helpful and informative”*. However, in a minority of cases, problems had been experienced with enquiries made regarding the progress of applications, with frustrations arising with employers getting *“different answers”* when enquiring, and seeming to speak *“to different people every time”*.
- 6.14 Despite this small number of issues, for the majority of employers participation on the programme generated some very positive experiences: *“the speed and ease of the process was great from meeting the programme representative, to allocating the placement, employing the recruit and receiving funding!”*
- 6.15 As a result of the apparent smoothness of the process for the majority of participants, very few commented that they had needed to be involved to any degree with the various programme delivery partners (e.g. Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus, Training Providers and the Welsh Assembly Government).

ReAct Applications

- 6.16 Where issues did arise with the operational aspects of the programme, one area of concern focused on the application stage, with 8% of interviewees claiming difficulties. Employers commented on the *“laborious form filling required”*, which was *“particularly repetitive when completing applications for multiple recruits”*.
- 6.17 Whilst the vast majority of applications were approved within satisfactory timescales – with one employer commenting on a *“superb 7 day turnaround”* – approximately 5% of businesses experienced what they saw as significant delays in the application process, with an impact on both the employer (not being able to fill a post) and the potential employee (losing income during the delay). Where these delays occurred,

³⁷ ReAct promotional literature ‘ReAct: Opportunity Knocks After Redundancy’, p15

employers feared losing recruits to other employers - having invested time interviewing and completing paperwork.

- 6.18 In a couple of instances interviewees stated that forms being returned for minor changes had been a major source of frustration: *“the petty obsession with ‘minor’ issues – such as dates on forms – was a waste of mine and the programmes time and of great financial cost to both, as well as being detrimental to the applicant who had to wait for ‘insignificant clerk issues’ to be resolved”* and *“it seems rather picky to send forms back because the employer had dated them rather than the employee”*. In both cases this impacted on perceptions of the value of the programme.

ReAct Claims & Monitoring

- 6.19 In terms of claiming funds, only 8% of businesses experienced any concerns in this area, with a significant majority of interviewees being largely or wholly satisfied, appreciating the help they received in financing a new employee. The main issues amongst those dissatisfied were *“excessive administration”* and the time taken to receive funding, with 2 employers claiming not to have received any funds despite several attempts to establish the reason. In order to prevent these issues being experienced more widely, it was suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government *“introduce a single touch-point for each employer”*, similar to an account management approach.
- 6.20 As with the other administrative areas of the programme, the vast majority of participants (81%) believed the monitoring requirements to be easily met. Only 1% of those interviewed suggested they had any issues in this area, and this was not in relation to the monitoring arrangements per se, rather the number of *“subsequent evaluations and questionnaires”*.

Programme Content

Employer Recruitment Subsidy

- 6.21 The recruitment subsidy was widely considered to be a major bonus for companies, with 75% of interviewees believing the programme enabled them to recruit good quality employees: *“because of the programme we could hire a good quality recruit with relevant experience”*.
- 6.22 Whilst businesses generally saw the benefits of the programme, its importance to small businesses in particular was commented upon by one individual: *“this sort of support could be the deciding factor for small companies who are short on funds as to whether to recruit or not”*.
- 6.23 Overall, 32% of businesses believed that ReAct funding had made a difference to the number of new recruits they were able to take on.

6.24 Where companies had accessed the Recruitment Subsidy (without the Training Subsidy), 93% of companies believed all of their recruits to have the right skills/backgrounds when they were recruited, which explained the lack of take-up of the Training Subsidy by these companies.

Employer Training Subsidy

6.25 In a similar fashion to the Individual Training Awards, the content of the Employer Training Subsidy is driven by the needs of the recruiting company, ensuring they are able to develop bespoke training plans in accordance with the needs of the individual recruit and the new job.

6.26 Those benefiting from this area of support saw significant advantages for both the individual and the company, with one interviewee commenting that “*[the subsidies] mean you can afford to recruit an unskilled person and then train them to a high standard – which would not be possible without ReAct funding, particularly for small businesses*”.

6.27 Of those receiving the Employer Training Subsidy, 53% believed it had made a difference to the number of people trained by the organisation, and 44% suggested that without ReAct they would have trained fewer people.

6.28 Figure 37 illustrates the areas of training received by recruits for whom the Training Subsidy was awarded.

Figure 37: Areas in Which Training was Provided to New Recruits Using Employer Training Subsidies (n=41) (re-weighted)

Training Provided	Reponses³⁸
Technical Skills	73%
Administration	32%
Customer Handling Skills	29%
Problem Solving Skills	28%
ICT	27%
Management	23%
Team Working	23%
Communications Skills	23%
Other	17%
Don't Know	2%

³⁸ Column sums to greater than 100% owing to multiple responses allowed

Impacts & Outcomes

- 6.29 For the vast majority of employers interviewed, the benefits derived, and hence impact of the programme, were simply stated as financial assistance in recruiting, and in some cases training, a new employee. Whilst these benefits were expected at the outset, many referred to the fact that the programme had enabled them to take on a “good quality employee”.
- 6.30 The support was also asserted to be particularly beneficial in assisting new companies to gain additional employees at a time when they may have limited free cash flow: “as a new company it was a positive contribution to wage and training costs when it was most needed”. In a similar vein, small, growing companies were grateful beneficiaries, able to “employ another member of staff before [they] absolutely needed to” – enabling them to quickly meet increased demand.
- 6.31 Where both ‘strands’ of support had been accessed, the potential impacts appear to have been more pronounced, as businesses were able to “take on unskilled recruits and train them to a high standard, which wouldn’t have been possible without ReAct” and “it allowed the business to invest in training a semi-skilled employee which wouldn’t normally have been possible”.
- 6.32 One of the most powerful impacts emanating from the interviews was the suggestion that, as a result of the programme, 55% of businesses had experienced an increase in their business performance.

Counterfactual

- 6.33 In the absence of the ReAct programme, a majority of employers (74%) stated that they would have had to find alternative ways of filling the vacancies available. However, for at least 41% of companies this would not have been a straightforward process, as they believed the posts filled by ReAct recruits had been ‘hard-to-fill’ vacancies.
- 6.34 Furthermore, 10% of interviewees explicitly stated they would have been unable to recruit without the programme, with this in turn impacting on business performance: “without the support we would have struggled to find the money for wages, despite needing another member of staff at that time” and “a new recruit was needed to keep the business growing”.

Sustainability

- 6.35 In terms of the sustainability of the employment created by the programme, employers often had difficulty recalling whether individuals had left the programme

prior to completion, particularly when discussing individuals recruited 2 or more years previously. It was noted however, in approximately 21% of cases that companies had experienced participants leaving their employment before the end of the ReAct support period.

- 6.36 Of those employers suggesting individuals had left their employment, a wide variety of reasons were cited for this; broadly speaking the responses can be categorised into a general lack of suitability for the position taken (comments included “*the individual was generally unsuitable for the position*” and “*the recruit didn’t like the job they were doing*”) and other external factors (comments included “*the individual was offered ‘better’ job opportunities at another employer*” and in one instance “*the company has had to reduce in size so we had to let the individual go*”).

Deadweight & Displacement Effects

- 6.37 No clear evidence emerged from the Company Beneficiary survey of any displacement effects (i.e. a ReAct funded recruit gaining employment at the expense of an individual receiving no funding) as a result of the Employer Recruitment and Training Subsidies. This links to the assertion that 41% of interviewees considered the vacancies filled through the programme as ‘hard to fill’; in these cases concerns over displacement appear misplaced.
- 6.38 However, 48% of companies indicated that lower levels of ReAct funding would make no difference to the number of individuals their organisation recruited. Furthermore, 32% of companies suggested ReAct has made no difference at all to the number of individuals recruited. Indications of deadweight effects have to be noted, therefore (i.e. employers receiving funding for recruiting an individual they would have taken on in the absence of the subsidy).
- 6.39 Whilst a number of references were made to the help the programme provides in enabling companies to recruit and train individuals, 2 employers stated that the individual would probably have got the job anyway: “*the employee was interviewed and mentioned ReAct funding – there were no other applicants so they would probably have got the job anyway*” and “*although having several applicants for the position, we would probably have taken the recruit on even if there was no subsidy*”. In a programme of this magnitude however, such effects may be inescapable.

Future Delivery

- 6.40 In terms of the future validity of the ReAct programme, 94% of companies believed the programme should be continued, with the underlying assumptions – that individuals who have been made redundant need assistance to re-enter the labour market quickly – still believed to be valid. Several interviewees pointed to the programme’s “*political attractions – Ministers can say ‘help is on its way*

straightaway". Where individuals believed it should be discontinued, this correlated with the **small number** of respondents having had bad individual experiences.

- 6.41 Specific areas for improvement identified by interviewees included introducing specific contact points for each employer, limiting the potential for misunderstandings to arise. In addition to this, streamlining the paperwork, particularly in relation to multiple recruits was also suggested as beneficial.

Summary

- 6.42 Overall, the findings of the beneficiary company survey point to a valued and well-supported programme, which the vast majority of interviewees believe should be continued in future.

7. Findings: Training Providers

Introduction

7.1 This section reports the findings from a series of 24 telephone interviews with Training Providers having provided services to ReAct beneficiaries.

Findings

Getting Involved with ReAct

7.2 In terms of becoming involved with the programme, 63% of the Training providers interviewed suggested they had been approached by individuals looking to address a specific training requirement. In a further 21% of cases, providers were unsure as to how they became introduced to it, due to either having trained ReAct beneficiaries for a long time, and therefore struggling to remember, or alternatively the point of contact within the provider having changed over the course of their involvement.

7.3 The remaining 16% of interviewees commented that they “*had contacted Careers Wales*” or “*had been proactively contacted by the Welsh Assembly Government*”.

7.4 Perhaps owing to the fact that the majority of Training Providers had not proactively sought involvement with the programme, 41% of interviewees were unable to comment on how easy they felt it was to find out about ReAct, having not found it necessary to undertake any research.

7.5 Where interviewees did comment on the marketing of the programme, they largely felt it was, at the very least, quite easy to get hold of the necessary details (62%), with only 38% suggesting it to be difficult. However, where it was suggested to be difficult, the comments made appeared to reflect provider perceptions of potential individual beneficiaries’ awareness, such as “*they need to make more people aware of ReAct*” and “*people are not aware of it – they need more publicity generally*”. Furthermore, it was suggested by one interviewee that “*JCP are not pushing the programme enough*”.

ReAct Operations

7.6 When asked whether they had referred to the Careers Wales Action Plans in formulating a Training Plan, only 22% of Training Providers suggested they had ever

used them. Where they had been used, this was to “*discuss with the individual how the training would meet their needs*”, and was at the request of the individual.

- 7.7 In the vast majority of cases, providers claimed to be unaware what an Action Plan was, and even where providers have had multiple trainees - and therefore should be aware of the existence of the Action Plans - they do not appear to require them for reference purposes: “*we’ve only had access to 2 out of 25 action plans*”. This in itself is not necessarily a concern, as one interviewee commented “*the training courses we provide are standard courses, so it’s not as though we are putting something specific together based on that*”.
- 7.8 Furthermore, in many cases it appears “*the candidate knows what they want*”, and individuals are capable of requesting a specific course from a training provider, which, prior to authorisation by the Welsh Assembly Government, will be cross-referenced with the Action Plan to ensure there is sufficient ‘fit’ between the two documents.
- 7.9 From an operational perspective, some comments were received from providers regarding delays in receiving payment for training services: “*we’ve had issues with the invoicing*” and “*payment took a long time in forthcoming*”. For the most part however, providers were happy with the payment process.
- 7.10 29% of interviewees also suggested that they could have received better direction at the start of their involvement in the programme in terms of what was expected from them. Comments received included “*it would have been good if we had better, more detailed directions*” and “*there was a lot of paperwork*”. However, alongside this it must be considered that the team were largely seen as “*very helpful*” when contacted.
- 7.11 One other suggestion for improving the operational side of the programme was that “*it might be beneficial to have a direct list of contacts at ReAct*”.

ReAct Support

- 7.12 Although approximately half of the providers interviewed had found no reason to contact members of the ReAct team (i.e. Careers Wales, JCP and the Welsh Assembly Government) during their involvement with the programme, where contact had been necessary, interviewees considered the points they raised to have been dealt with well. Only one interviewee commented that their dealings had been anything other than satisfactory, although this appears to have been influenced by the perception that “*JCP are not pushing the programme enough*”, rather than a bad personal experience.

Impacts and Outcomes

7.13 The majority of Training Providers suggested there were benefits accruing from participation on ReAct, not only in relation to their businesses, but also to the individual participants and ultimately employers. The specific nature of the benefits identified during interviews is given below.

Training Provider

7.14 For many it was felt that programmes such as ReAct encourage a cohort of individuals to undertake training which they would not consider in the absence of the support. As such, it gives the providers “*access to a group of individuals they would otherwise not have contact with*”.

7.15 Whilst this has obvious implications in terms of “*raising [providers’] profiles and status and is a good source of income*”, if the trainee has a positive experience it may lead to second round benefits, such as the individual being more inclined to undertake further training in future, or “*they might also recommend them to someone*”.

Individuals

7.16 As the ultimate focus of ReAct, providers recognised the prime beneficiaries to be the individual participants, with the programme enabling them to get a marketable qualification, potentially increasing their ability to get the kind of job they want to be doing. Furthermore, it was also commented how “*you see a big change in people’s confidence*”.

7.17 ReAct was considered to be important in allowing individuals to reassess their career goals, and take the necessary action – whether gaining qualifications to stay within an industry or change direction altogether.

7.18 As well as seeking employment opportunities, undertaking training has also allowed some participants to set up their own businesses, with one provider in particular noting how “*at least 10 of the people that have been through the programme [with them] have set up successful businesses*”.

7.19 Ultimately therefore, the key impact of the programme was suggested to be giving the chance for individuals to “*develop and increase their potential*”.

Employers

7.20 In relation to employers, the main impact believed to accrue to them is in the form of having a potential employee with training completed to an accredited, recognised standard in most cases. As a result, when recruiting they can be more confident in the aptitudes of applicants.

Issues

- 7.21 One contentious issue for some training is the change to ‘payment upon passing’ for driver training courses, in response to the unacceptably high failure rates witnessed previously. Some of the comments made by Training Providers included:
- *“We were told after June that we would only get paid if people pass – we can’t run a business like that as there are no guarantees that they will pass straight away”;*
 - *“Pay on pass is an issue – if people don’t pass then we lose money and payment should come regardless of an individual passing or not”;* and,
 - *“It took a long time to get payment, and as they only pay when you pass it can be a long time if people need a lot of lessons”*
- 7.22 It was felt by some that, whilst Training Providers have to ensure trainees are of sufficient proficiency to take a test, if, for whatever reason, the trainee fails to perform on the day providers are being unfairly punished.
- 7.23 Aside from this, 36% of interviewees suggested some issues had arisen during their involvement with the programme. One of the areas commented on relates to the *“pedantic nature of form filling”*, with several interviewees noting how they have had paperwork returned because of minor issues. In one instance it was suggested the handwriting did not tally between that used to date the form and the remainder of the document, for which the provider found it difficult to understand the problem.
- 7.24 It was suggested by several interviewees that paperwork appears *“somewhat excessive”*, with some of the information required seemingly duplicated. It was also commented that *“the forms are hard to fill in and are very time consuming”*. Other providers were more sympathetic: one training provider commented *“although it can be a bit over burdensome, we know why they want the information”*.
- 7.25 Training providers also suggested that they have experienced problems with individuals not attending courses, which has obvious implications for their income. One interviewee noted how they had *“invested a great deal of time completing the relevant paperwork, only for the individual concerned not to turn up at the training sessions – it was a complete waste of our time”*, whilst another commented that *“one person messed us around – cancelling the appointments they had made at the last minute”*.
- 7.26 One provider, who had previously participated in ReAct suggested that they were no longer willing to accept anyone onto a course that wasn’t paid for up-front and in full owing to bad experiences. *“We have to book trainees and if other people are coming on a course we can’t mess them about because someone who hasn’t paid cancels at the last minute – all people have to pay up front and if they don’t come on the course it can still go ahead without them: it makes people have greater commitment to something”*.

- 7.27 Despite these issues, only one of the interviewees indicated major concerns about programme funding – seemingly owing to a bad individual experience in relation to the introduction of ‘pay as you pass’. It was universally acknowledged that the programme should be continued in the future, with the underlying assumptions – that individuals at risk of redundancy, or already redundant, require assistance to help get them back in the workforce and/or employers need incentives to encourage them to employ these individuals – still valid. Furthermore, the programme received almost unanimous support for the impact it makes on individual abilities to gain employment.

Duplication

- 7.28 When asked if they were aware of any programmes with similar aims and objectives to ReAct, 39% of providers suggested they were, with references commonly made to Individual Learning Accounts and “*programmes available through Job Centre Plus*”. These programmes do however attract considerably less funding than ReAct, have more stringent restrictive qualification criteria, and for the most part are not directly comparable with ReAct.
- 7.29 The remaining interviewees recognised the uniqueness of ReAct, and believed there to be nothing else available like it.

Sustainability

- 7.30 In terms of being able to sustain these courses from a provider perspective, a number of those only having had limited involvement in the programme to date commented that they had plenty of scope to train more beneficiaries. Furthermore, there was also an appetite for more individuals to come through the programme, with suggestions to “*give me more*”, possibly in recognition of the fact that this is a group of individuals who wouldn’t otherwise access their services.
- 7.31 Understandably, almost all interviewees suggested that, in the absence of ReAct they would probably still have the same range of provision available, but it would be contingent upon the individuals’ ability to finance the training themselves to access these services.

Summary

- 7.32 Overall, the Training Providers interviewed have had good experiences of their involvement with ReAct, and suggest, if anything, they would like to see more individuals coming through the programme.
- 7.33 Despite some issues having been raised, most notably in relation to the 'pay as you pass' system, it was universally acknowledged that the programme makes a difference to those participating on it, and should therefore be continued in the future.

8. Findings: Delivery Partners & Key Informants

Introduction

- 8.1 This section of the report presents the findings from the Delivery Partner and Key Informant interviews, incorporating the following groups of interviewees;
- Delivery Partners:
 - Welsh Assembly Government – representatives from the ReAct management team;
 - Careers Wales – management and delivery staff; and,
 - Job Centre Plus.
 - Key Informants:
 - Welsh Assembly Government Policy;
 - Welsh Assembly Government Business Support Services;
 - Private Sector Careers Counsellors;
 - Trade Union; and,
 - Job Centre Plus (outside Wales).

Findings

ReAct Rationale

- 8.2 The underlying rationale for the programme is widely believed to be as valid now as at the inception of the programme: *“the aims and objectives of ReAct are still highly relevant - in a climate where redundancies are still a feature, if ReAct didn’t exist a number of people affected by redundancy would just not know what to do or where to go”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.3 In addition to this, with Welsh Assembly Government aspirations of achieving ‘full employment’, in the event of a redundancy being announced it has been commented that *“[ReAct] makes the transition between redundancy and securing new employment a lot smoother and means that an individuals work ethic is being maintained”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.4 Furthermore, the programme is believed to carry a significant amount of political support: *“in the event of a redundancy it is a very powerful tool to be able to take into a constituency and announce the availability of up to £6,580 per person to retrain them in economically relevant skills”* (Key Informant).

ReAct Awareness

8.5 It was widely commented that the ReAct programme itself is “*still relatively unknown*” (Delivery Partner), with awareness potentially being an issue for those made redundant from smaller companies in particular in which there “*is still a big hole*” (Delivery Partner). However, it was also acknowledged that marketing the programme is not straightforward as “*it’s difficult to know how best to do it and it’s also hard with all the criteria*” (Delivery Partner).

Large Scale Redundancies (20 or more redundancies)

8.6 Overall, interviewees had few concerns about awareness of ReAct in situations where 20 or more redundancies were being created, owing to the statutory (HR1) notification process. Job Centre Plus have a representative located in Companies House, who is immediately informed of an HR1 being submitted, “*which is then cascaded to the district delivery teams*”. Following this initial awareness there are “*internal procedures to follow in terms of who to notify, and members of the ReAct team are fundamental to this*” (Delivery Partner).

8.7 This coordinated effort usually leads to contact being made with the employer in question, followed by a presentation to affected employees, during which ReAct is raised: “*most employers see representatives of the ReAct team coming to their premises as a really good thing as they are generally sympathetic to the needs of their workforce - ReAct offers something real and practical to help, and is a real plus point*” (Delivery Partner).

8.8 Even in situations in which (usually larger) companies have arranged for consultants to visit to discuss career opportunities, JCP may still have an opportunity to make a presentation to employees. This occurred during the LG redundancy situation, and therefore offered an opportunity for promotion of ReAct.

Small Scale Redundancies³⁹ (< 20 redundancies)

8.9 Given that there are no formal trigger points in relation to statutory notifications for small scale redundancies, there is a greater risk of individuals ‘falling through the net’. There is, therefore, a much greater onus on local knowledge of delivery partners as well as requiring a number of potential access points.

8.10 Interviewees generally felt that the ‘Team Wales’ approach, encompassing Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus and the Welsh Assembly Government, maximised the ability to raise awareness. “*Following a redundancy, if someone doesn’t go to the Job Centre, there’s a good chance they’ll go to Careers Wales for advice and vice-versa, so most people who are eligible **should** become aware of it*” (Delivery Partner).

³⁹ Although small scale redundancies refer to less than 20 redundancies in this context, the precise definition also considers the impact on the local economy.

8.11 However, it was also suggested that there are a lot of other potential ‘touch points’ for individuals where staff are not fully informed as to the opportunities presented by the programme. It was therefore suggested that presentations to organisations such as *“local authorities and other Assembly Government departments would help the awareness raising process”* (Delivery Partner).

Company Awareness

8.12 Whilst there is currently no mass-marketing of the programme directed towards companies, the ReAct team maintain awareness of what is going on in the business world through weekly notifications from the ‘UK Activity Report’. These alerts inform subscribers of UK company activity in relation to:

- *“New factories, offices, warehouses, stores, etc;*
- *Expansion of existing sites;*
- *Relocations;*
- *Closures;*
- *Companies creating jobs;*
- *Job losses; and,*
- *Mergers and Acquisitions⁴⁰”.*

8.13 These notifications therefore supplement the local intelligence gathering, and are used to establish suitable companies to whom information brochures are sent. There is therefore, from the company perspective, a good coverage of both formal and informal channels from which to target potential beneficiaries.

8.14 In terms of further developing this information base, it was commented that there is still room for improvement, by ensuring that all business support services - such as GBAS, DE&T (through their role in inward investment) and Business Support Helpline - are aware of what is available. Short presentations illustrating the content and impact of the programme would help raise awareness and reinforce the potential benefits to companies: *“telling a company that they have access to a sum of money like this for taking on redundant individuals is a big attraction, so you need to let as many people know as possible”* (Delivery Partner).

Marketing Material

8.15 Those involved with the delivery of the programme considered the marketing material to be well presented, and generally regarded it as being *“well thought of”* by both employers and individuals (Delivery Partner). The case studies included within the brochures were believed to be a particular strength, enabling individuals to relate to the programme and the benefits they can derive from it.

⁴⁰ <http://www.ukactivityreport.co.uk/detail.htm>

- 8.16 The availability of informative briefing material is also seen as important for supporting presentations at employers who are creating redundancies, as individuals are not always looking towards their next job at that point: *“depending how early you have access to employees will affect their priorities – if you get in very early they may be hoping the redundancy will not come to fruition, or later on they may be worried about paying mortgages and bills. The information available allows them to take something away and refer back to it when they have had more time to come to terms with things”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.17 Of equal importance is the availability of information packs in the offices of Delivery Partners: it was noted by one interviewee that there is a shortage of literature available within the JCP offices, something which should be addressed as *“redundant workers will normally go to Job Centre Plus to sign on”* (Delivery Partner). However, the ReAct team have endeavoured to address this issue, in conjunction with members of JCP, and this should not be an issue moving forward.

Partnership Working

- 8.18 Over time the strength of the partnership approach has grown, ensuring that - although there are no formal protocols to follow in terms of responding to a redundancy - there is a well rehearsed ‘Team Wales’ approach to working with individuals.
- 8.19 Careers Wales and the ReAct team clearly have major roles in the delivery of the programme, whilst JCP occupy more of a signposting role. It has been suggested that following internal reorganisations, *“JCP don’t have the staff to make presentations at employers, and as such if Careers Wales are available they will lead”* (Delivery Partner). However, the value of having JCP in the partnership cannot be understated given their role in notifying other partners of an HR1 situation, as well as providing a ‘complementary entry point’ for those individuals not benefiting from a presentation.
- 8.20 Not formally part of the partnership, the limited data we were able to gather from Private Sector Careers Counsellors indicated that they had a satisfactory or better understanding of the scheme and were glad to use it as *“a valuable extra incentive in the right circumstances”* (Key Informant).
- 8.21 Having developed the operation over several years, the ReAct team are now seen as harnessing *“a strong pool of knowledge and... are very supportive”* (Delivery Partner). The relationships which have developed were largely seen as resulting in a regular reciprocal flow of information between all parties, keeping everyone fully informed of any issues arising: *“if we identify problems with employers or Training Providers we will let the team know and they also let us know of any changes arising as well”* (Delivery Partner).

Programme Delivery

- 8.22 One of the biggest strengths of the programme suggested by interviewees has been the flexibility of delivery, being referred to as an *“exemplar for other programmes”* (Key Informant). Whilst there have been suggestions to introduce Training Provider contracts, this would undermine the flexible, learner-led provision which is a major characteristic of the model; *“allowing individuals to procure their own training services, put them in control”* (Key Informant).
- 8.23 In terms of the day-to-day delivery of the programme, despite issues raised during the previous evaluation, Careers Wales are now acknowledged as fulfilling an important part of the overall process. It was commented by one interviewee that the aims and objectives of ReAct are entirely compatible with the service provided by Careers Wales, who *“are part of the process of giving guidance to individuals – ReAct isn’t something extra, it fits perfectly into what Careers Wales are trying to do”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.24 Through the Careers Wales consultations, individuals are *“constructively challenged”* regarding their future training and employment aspirations: *“we won’t dismiss anyone’s preferred direction, but if they want to get funding they have to be realistic that their preferences need to match the needs of the labour market”* (Delivery Partner). Through this prompting, the programme appears well placed to fulfil Assembly aims for demand-led training.
- 8.25 In terms of quality assuring applications, procedures are in place to ensure all stages of the process are closely scrutinised, making best use of public funds. In relation to the Individual Action Plans, Careers Wales have suggested *“they fulfil the same role as our own ‘moving forward’ document, and are therefore a part of our internal quality assurance processes”* (Delivery Partner). Furthermore, following submission of applications to the ReAct team, *“Training Plans are initially cross-referenced with [Careers Wales] Action Plans by a member of the admin team to ensure no discrepancies exist, before being passed to [another member of the team] for authorisation”* (Delivery Partner). The system therefore has a series of checks and balances built in, with any uncertainty regarding a specific application leading to further enquiries being made.
- 8.26 One area in which it was suggested delivery could be improved related to the Employer Training Subsidy and the requirement to apply for funding prior to employing an individual. *“Requiring employers to compile a training plan which is based on an accurate assessment of the individuals training needs is only possible once they are in situ”* (Delivery Partner): as such the requirement to apply prior to employment was considered *“unnecessary and potentially inappropriate”*, which *“should be relaxed... allowing employers a fixed timescale within which the application must be made following employment commencing”* (Delivery Partner).

Management Arrangements

- 8.27 The day to day management of the programme is largely considered to be very good by those involved in its delivery. As discussed earlier in relation to ‘Partnership Working’, relationships which have developed over several years provide a good working relationship: *“we have queries regarding almost every client we speak to and the Welsh Assembly Government team are always very helpful”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.28 Another area in which the management of ReAct can be seen to have an important effect is in identifying and responding to changing circumstances and experiences arising through the delivery of the programme. The most obvious illustration of this relates to the unacceptably high failure rates witnessed in LGV driving tests (rates which were considerably higher than the national average), which led to a ‘payment when you pass’ system being introduced: although proving to be a contentious issue – and still the subject of much discussion – a number of interviewees pointed to the need for *“something to be done to show value for public money”*.
- 8.29 With the hub of the ReAct programme being administered out of the Swansea offices of DCELLS, it was suggested by Delivery Partners across Wales that it would be useful to arrange face-to-face meetings within local areas. This would help reinforce the value of the programme, recognising the contribution made at a local level, as well as promoting the success stories emanating from those participating.
- 8.30 In addition to this, pulling together representatives of the delivery partners and other stakeholders for ‘review’ meetings would enable issues to be addressed in a consultative manner as and when they arise: *“it’s good that a review takes place to identify what works and what doesn’t, but it would be good if it was part of the ongoing process, rather than just every few years”* (Key Informant).

Impact and Effectiveness

- 8.31 For the most part, key informants and delivery partners alike acknowledged that it is very difficult to identify with any certainty the impacts and outcomes the programme is having: *“without having more feedback data it’s hard to judge the impact it’s having – it does however allow people to retrain and look at different options in such a volatile job market”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.32 Reflecting upon their own experiences of participating in the delivery of the programme, several interviewees commented how important ReAct is in showing individuals that there is help available: *“ReAct is a great tool for people at a time when they can be very vulnerable”* (Delivery Partner). In a number of interviews specific reference was made to the impact of large scale interventions, such as Corus and Burberry.

- 8.33 Another purported impact of the programme results from the “*labour market transition linkage*”, which smoothes the path for individuals in moving between jobs. This was suggested to reduce the potential for “*individuals to become economically inactive, with the spiral of costs this may potentially bring – benefits, housing, health, etc.*” (Key Informant).
- 8.34 Statistics used by JCP do however suggest “*60% of individuals will regain employment without any form of external intervention*” (Delivery Partner), and so resource-intensive advice through JCP does not ‘kick in’ until after 6 months – the point at which ReAct eligibility terminates. Furthermore, one interviewee commented that “*with the number of vacancies available in Wales, anyone looking for a job should be able to get one very easily*” (Delivery Partner). The added value gained from the programme is however considered to be enabling individuals to gain a ‘better job’ rather than just ‘any job’.
- 8.35 The fact that ReAct is open to **all** individuals who have been made redundant, rather than offering it only to those who have been part of a major redundancy, was also suggested by one Key Informant to have made a major impact: “*the fact that it’s open to all prevents situations arising in which those subject to a small scale redundancy get minimal help whereas someone down the road who is part of a major redundancy can get thousands of pounds – that’s inequitable*”.

Duplication

- 8.36 Interviewees were unable to identify any alternative programmes which duplicated, or overlapped with the provision available through ReAct. References were made to Individual Learning Accounts, New Deal and Work-Based Learning, although in terms of funding available and qualifying criteria, the programmes share little common ground.
- 8.37 In extreme cases, where a redundancy was considered to be ‘significant’ in the context of the local economy, JCP can “*relax some of the qualification criteria for programmes at their discretion*” (Delivery Partner), such as Work Trials and Local Employer Partnerships. In these situations, however an individual accessing other support programmes would be ineligible for ReAct funding, thereby avoiding duplicating interventions.
- 8.38 Overall therefore, the majority of interviewees agreed “*there aren’t any similar schemes in England or Wales – ReAct is quite unique*” (Delivery Partner).

Issues

- 8.39 Whilst the ReAct team in Swansea are widely acknowledged as being very helpful overall, it has been suggested that at certain times it can be difficult to get through to

speak with someone, possibly due to the fact that the team is itself very small. It was suggested that *“there should always be someone tending to the phones during opening hours, but this doesn’t always seem to be the case”* (Key Informant).

- 8.40 In terms of procedural aspects of the programme, a concern was raised that individuals accessing ReAct are not always informed that if their course is longer than 2 weeks *“it will affect their benefit entitlement as they are not considered to be available for, and actively seeking, employment”* (Delivery Partner).
- 8.41 Furthermore, it was also suggested that in some instances question marks exist over the validity of the chosen training option, with a query raised over the evidence base used during the individual consultations.
- 8.42 Given the step change which has occurred recently with respect to funding LGV driver training⁴¹, this has been raised as a potential issue during discussions with one Key Informant. It was noted how the change was introduced without any consultation and has led to providers asking for payment up front, which *“discriminates against the poor – if a company goes into liquidation, some people will get no redundancy payment and therefore they may be unable to afford to do the training”*. As a result it was suggested that individuals are being penalised rather than the Training Providers who are *‘playing the system’*: *“what is required is a preferred provider system, which will remove the ability for some to get away with inappropriate practices”*.

Future Delivery

- 8.43 Overwhelmingly, all Delivery Partners and Key Informants believed ReAct should be continued in the future, with suggestions that *“it’s a brilliant scheme – very valuable”* (Delivery Partner) and *“it would be great if the model could be applied to more programmes”* (Key Informant). There were however, several areas in which it was suggested the programme could be developed for future delivery, and these are given below.
- 8.44 Given the fact that small scale redundancies pose the greatest difficulty in ensuring all qualifying individuals are aware of the programme, it was suggested marketing is an important area to address regarding future delivery. As well as ensuring all those potentially encountering beneficiaries (both company and individual) are fully informed of the programme, another consideration was suggested to be *“advertising in the jobs section of local papers”* (Delivery Partner), although it was recognised that this in itself was not foolproof.
- 8.45 Another area for future development of the programme which was commonly cited relates to increased sharing of impact and outcome data with delivery partners. Whilst

⁴¹ Payment changed to a payment for passing system following issues identified with unacceptably high failure rates relative to the national average.

it must be acknowledged that Careers Wales offices currently receive a small amount of data relating to the number of individuals accessing the programme, it was widely felt that “*more Management Information would be very useful*” (Delivery Partner).

- 8.46 In relation to Job Centre Plus however, regional offices stated that they currently receive no feedback data. Despite providing an important entry point into the scheme - particularly for those individuals made redundant from smaller companies and therefore unlikely to receive an on-site presentation at their employers' premises - they appear to have only marginal involvement. It has been stated that “*the advisors in JCP are generalists, and whilst ReAct should be raised during any discussion with an individual that has been made redundant, you can't guarantee that's always the case*”. It was therefore felt that “*feeding back more about outcomes and success stories may help reinforce the programme, illustrating to people what impact it can have*” (Delivery Partner).
- 8.47 Within Wales, issues arising from the rural nature of the economy can be a problem, particularly in precluding certain training activities occurring within the local area. Whilst it was acknowledged that the ReAct team are “*fairly flexible in terms of signing off funding for training*” (Delivery Partner), it was suggested that this continues to require careful consideration for the future.

Summary

- 8.48 In summary, the Key Informants findings indicate that, over time, the ReAct programme has effectively addressed a much-needed area of support in the labour market. The underlying rationale is seen as being as important now as when the programme was initially conceived, potentially more so as we continue to move away from the 'job for life' culture.
- 8.49 Whilst a number of issues have been identified, the basic model, and partnership approach to delivery are seen as significant strengths to build on in any future provision.

9. Conclusions & Recommendations

Introduction

9.1 The overriding aim of the evaluation, as given in Section 1, has been to:

“review the impact and effectiveness of the ReAct programme in supporting those individuals at risk of redundancy and its impact upon improving skills and employability levels amongst participating individuals and employers”.

9.2 This section of the report presents our conclusions within the framework set by the 9 objectives underpinning this aim, including a series of recommendations for the future of the programme.

Conclusions

Objective 1: Assess the success of the ReAct programme in terms of appropriate and effective content, approach, delivery and management

9.3 Overall, the ReAct programme is widely regarded as a highly successful programme, offering individuals who have recently been made redundant, or are at risk of redundancy, support at what is usually a very difficult period for them.

9.4 Findings from the beneficiary surveys point to the content of the programme being driven by the needs of the beneficiary (whether individuals or companies); interviews with delivery partners and key informants also pointed to good attention being given to needs within the local economy, and alignment with wider Welsh Assembly Government policies.

9.5 Placing the individual and economic need at the heart of provision, and empowering participants to procure their own training services, stands in contrast to much ‘supplier-led’ provision; the programme can be seen as something of an exemplar here, and in terms of its capacity to respond flexibly to specific circumstances.

9.6 Delivery in association with a network of partners (i.e. Job Centre Plus, Careers Wales, Welsh Assembly Government and Training Providers) is widely seen as

working well. Over time, a significant knowledge base has developed, and this has been important in ensuring plans are effectively scrutinised and best use made of public funds. Almost all partners and beneficiaries pointed to effective central management of the programme by the Welsh Assembly Government team.

Objective 2: Explore how the aims and objectives of the programme have been met and whether they are still valid for a successor programme

- 9.7 Aims appear to have been met, and are still seen as valid. It is impossible to make realistic projections of future redundancies, but international competition, changing technologies and a range of other factors point to very high chances that Welsh workers will continue to face layoffs for the foreseeable future. When redundancies come, this evaluation indicates that people are more likely to get new (often better) jobs more quickly if they get targeted support, and new employers have an incentive to take them on.

Objective 3: Evaluate the extent to which the ReAct programme has responded intelligently to the recommendations from the previous evaluation

- 9.8 Issues including lack of good quality monitoring data have been addressed through a series of regular follow-up questionnaires to beneficiaries. Response rates are often not high (in common with many comparable exercises): the challenge of accessing figures from the EDMS database on a regular basis means they are not always fully utilised.
- 9.9 Careers Wales Action Plans now form an integral part of the delivery process, ensuring at least some consideration of realistic job prospects by individual beneficiaries.
- 9.10 In several of the areas for development identified in the earlier evaluation (e.g. database consistency and accuracy; keeping partners appropriately informed) there is some evidence that standards are prone to slip unless positive action is taken. There is still scope for partners (e.g. Careers Wales and JCP) to communicate better about changing local economic threats and opportunities.

Objective 4: Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the marketing material and campaigns undertaken

- 9.11 Still perceived to be somewhat ‘under marketed’, there appears to be a risk that small scale redundancies will ‘fall through the net’, with individuals in these positions not getting the benefits of presentations made to those at larger companies. There are inherent challenges: at any one time most companies are, inevitably, not contemplating redundancies, and marketing ReAct to them may not be appropriate. Continuing enhancement of the ‘Team Wales’ approach, along with making recruiting employers aware of the incentives the programme offers, may be the best that can be achieved (It is noted that this issue has already been addressed by an extensive poster and radio marketing campaign).

Objective 5: Quantify the effectiveness of the programme, through analysis of available monitoring information and customer and stakeholder feedback

- 9.12 Overall patterns of feedback are strongly positive. Key figures include:
- 79% of individual beneficiaries were in some form of employment when contacted (this figure is supported by internal monitoring conducted with individuals 6 months after participation on ReAct);
 - 56% of beneficiaries were in a ‘better job’ following ReAct;
 - 72% of individuals indicated they have got the kind of job they wanted;
 - 41% of employers had filled ‘hard to fill’ vacancies; and,
 - 55% of employers felt ReAct had resulted in improved business performance.
- 9.13 Some opportunities for achieving even better performance were pointed to in a minority of cases, which we address in our recommendations.

Objective 6: Assess whether the programme has represented value for money

- 9.14 Figure 38 gives a summary of the kinds of benefits ReAct has delivered to different groups of stakeholders: we also draw on Figure 38 when considering Objectives 7 and 8.

9.15 Outcomes fall into a number of categories which we have summarised as:

- ‘Hard’ benefits which can, at least in principle, be quantified: examples here include income benefits to individuals who gain new jobs quicker than they otherwise would, higher levels of output at firms gaining good-quality recruits for ‘hard-to-fill’ vacancies;
- ‘Hard’ benefits which cannot easily be quantified, for example better long-term job prospects resulting from ReAct training and guidance;
- ‘Soft’ benefits, e.g. to individual self-confidence, local community life; and,
- Disbenefits, for example if a redundant worker is helped to get a job through ReAct at the expense of another job applicant.

Figure 38: Benefits Attributable to Stakeholder Groups Resulting From the ReAct Programme

	Individual Beneficiaries	Other Job Seekers	New Employers	Other Employers	Public Sector (Short term)	Public Sector (Long term)	Communities
Get a new job	QH	DB	QH	DB	QH	QH	SB
Get a job quicker	QH	DB	QH	DB	QH	-	SB
Get a better job	QH	DB	UH	DB	QH	QH	SB
Better job prospects	QH	DB	UH	-	-	UH	SB
Gain qualifications	UH	-	UH	-	UH	UH	SB
Improve hard skills	UH	-	UH	-	UH	UH	SB
Improve soft skills	UH	-	UH	-	UH	UH	SB
Lifelong learning propensity	UH	-	UH	-	UH	UH	SB
Better business performance	-	-	QH	DB	UH	UH	-
Improved capacity	-	-	QH	-	UH	UH	-
Community gain	-	-	-	-	SB	SB	SB
Financial contribution	QH	-	QH	-	DB	-	-

Key: **QH** = Hard Quantifiable Benefits;
UH = Unquantifiable Hard Benefits;
SB = Soft Benefits;
DB = Disbenefits
 – = No Perceived Benefits
Italics = Slight/Immeasurable Benefits/Disbenefits

9.16 Inevitably Figure 38 is a blunt tool; it conceals wide variations in the outputs and outcomes which can be attributed to different individuals; there are dangers in double counting (e.g. over any new job, a better job and a quicker job).

9.17 Overall, based upon data taken from the ESF monitoring returns at the end of October 2007, the costs for the ReAct programme are:

Total Beneficiaries	8,539
Funding Paid	£ 17,761,020
Cost per beneficiary	£ 2,079.98

9.18 There seem to be reasonable indications that ‘hard benefits’ could well lie somewhere around the figures for direct costs for operating ReAct, even before multiplier effects and ‘soft’ benefits are taken into account.

9.19 We must stress the major ‘health warnings’ about assumptions and estimates which must be attached to any figures derived (given the diversity in the potential user base in terms of occupations and levels of seniority – and therefore salary scales), as well as the issues of ‘deadweight’ and ‘additionality’ considered under Objective 7.

Objective 7: Examine the extent of added value and deadweight (if any) in the programme

9.20 Figure 38 above summarises the main areas of added value identified. As for deadweight, there is little doubt that most individual ReAct beneficiaries would have got some form of a job, at some point, after being made redundant. That is why Figure 38 includes elements for ‘better jobs’ and ‘gaining jobs more quickly’.

9.21 Similarly, most employers taking on new recruits through ReAct are likely to have made an appointment of some sort, at some point in the future.

9.22 Our counterfactual exercise encountered problems and could not deliver the robust results we sought. Drawing on evidence from the beneficiaries’ surveys and a number of comparable studies, we think deadweight estimates in the range of 40-60% may be appropriate.

Objective 8: Establish the impact and outcomes of the programme, and examine the sustainability on deliverers, beneficiaries and the wider economy

- 9.23 Impacts and outcomes are summarised in Figure 38, and a number of key points have been made already.
- 9.24 Overall the programme has enabled:
- Individuals to gain employment after they have been made redundant, and in many cases this has been a job they were looking to do; and,
 - Employers to recruit good quality employees – individuals with the motivation to work and who are in a routine, potentially requiring only minor re-skilling (e.g. compare employing someone who has only recently left the workforce with someone who is long term unemployed).
- 9.25 As for sustainability, from individual beneficiaries' points of view, most had stayed in the same job ReAct helped them get, and most said this was the kind of job they wanted, so sustainability of employment seems satisfactory or better.
- 9.26 Sustainability from the perspective of delivery partners encompasses both positive views about what is achieved by ReAct over the medium to long term ("*it's not a quick fix*") and views that significant experience and expertise have now been built up, capable of providing an effective resource to support ReAct, or comparable programmes, for the indefinite future.
- 9.27 In terms of the financial sustainability of the programme, there are clearly a finite number of individuals who can benefit from ReAct in the context of limited funding. At the end of January 2008, this funding had not been exhausted, and whilst concerns exist over the future state of the economy – with implications for redundancies and hence ReAct – no definitive conclusions can be derived in terms of how many individuals will be eligible for the programme, and in turn how many will actually access funding.

Objective 9: Provide recommendations as to the future of the programme, drawing on learning and best practice from similar schemes more widely

- 9.28 As identified in Section 3, the ReAct programme is unique in terms of the support available to individuals and the fact that small scale redundancy situations also fall

within its remit. Furthermore, having now been in operation for several years, and with a core of three primary delivery partners (i.e. Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus), the programme has a comparatively well-rehearsed approach to dealing with redundancy situations. Considering this, identifying best practice examples from 'similar schemes' presents somewhat of a difficulty, although recommendations identified throughout the evaluation are given below.

9.29 Overall, the results of the evaluation point to a strong case for the continuation of the ReAct programme.

9.30 The evaluation suggests that the programme has a number of inherent characteristics which should be retained for future delivery, including:

- **The Structure of Support**

All four strands of the programme have a strong case for their continuation, with widely held perceptions that the underlying assumptions of the programme are still valid. With increasing recognition that a 'job for life' is being replaced by 'employment for life' supporting individuals to re-train in economically relevant skills – whether through financing the employer or the individual – is likely to be important for some time.

- **Experienced Management Team**

The management team has developed good reciprocal relationships with providers, encouraging a two-way flow of ideas and information between partners. The team has a good knowledge base and much experience amongst individual members, which should be harnessed for any future programme.

- **Working With 3 Key Partners**

Partnership delivery is a major component in the success of the programme, particularly in the absence of a widespread marketing campaign. Ensuring the relationship between the 3 key delivery partners continues to develop is vital for any future provision.

- **Flexible Provision**

Enabling individuals to procure their own training services introduces flexibility to the programme which is not widely seen in other support programmes. This flexibility is crucial in ensuring both the needs of the individual and the economy are met in a continually evolving economic climate.

- **Monitoring and Internal Evaluation**

Following on from the previous evaluation, effective internal monitoring and evaluation processes must continue to be an important element in the ongoing development of the programme.

9.31 In addition the evaluation points to opportunities for the continued development of the programme in the following areas:

- **Monitoring**

We are aware the current internal evaluation forms are in the process of being redesigned, owing to limitations being identified in those currently used. Collecting views from all potential users is important, as well as ensuring the data collected is meaningful and accessible, providing a useful tool for ongoing programme development.

- **New Database**

For any new funding application, it is recommended that a new database is created for all programme data. Incorporating new data into the existing database could lead to compromising the accuracy and reliability of the data, because of inconsistencies in previous data entry.

In order to assist with any future analysis of the counterfactual position, it is recommended that comprehensive contact details (e.g. name, address, telephone number) are taken from individuals requesting a ReAct application pack.

- **Sharing Impact & Outcome Data with Delivery Partners**

Sharing impact and outcome data, and individual success stories with delivery partners and other stakeholders, will serve to reinforce the value of the programme. Particularly in the case of JCP, for whom advisors are 'generalists', showing the difference the programme can make will be a valuable way to ensure it is always referred to during discussions.

- **Marketing**

Many interviewees referred to the programme not currently being known about by enough people. Whilst the difficulties of marketing such a programme – which ideally few individuals will have reason to access – are recognised, ensuring all businesses are aware of the programme (whether as potential beneficiaries or creating a redundancy situation) should help avoid individuals 'falling through the net'.

- **Joining-Up with Other Business Support Services**

In a similar vein, forging closer relationships with other business support services (e.g. Business Eye, Flexible Business Support) to ensure they have an understanding of the basics of the programme, should also help encourage referrals.

- **Account Management**

A number of individuals suggested experiencing difficulties contacting the ReAct team, so an account management approach is suggested, with individual beneficiaries being given a specific, named point of contact for any queries.

Appendix I: Individual Beneficiaries Topic Guide

Welsh Assembly Government Evaluation of ReAct

Topic Guide 1: Beneficiaries (Individuals)

Background:

Please refer to the interviewer briefing paper for the background to the ReAct programme.

Details:

Interviewee Name					
Telephone Number					
Male/Female					
Age	<30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60
Interviewer					
Date & Time					

Introduction

My name is from CRG Research based in Cardiff. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the ReAct Programme on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. Our records show that you have received funding from ReAct to assist with training following a redundancy, and I would be very grateful for your views on the programme, either now or at a time convenient for you. The interview should take a maximum of 15 minutes, and all individual replies will be kept confidential; our remit is to report on general trends and areas for improvement only.

CRG Contact Number: 02920 343218

The project manager for CRG is Richard Gaunt

The Project is commissioned by Eleri Lewis of the Welsh Assembly Government (01792 765825)

Call back arrangements

Questions marked with an Asterisk* should be pre entered by the interviewer where possible

People who have only received Careers Wales Guidance should only be asked questions that are shaded.

Would you like the interview to be conducted in English or Welsh?

If English, continue with interview

If Welsh, inform interviewee:

“I will need to arrange for our Welsh interviewer to call you back. When is the best time of day to contact you?”

Day.....

Time.....

Conducted in: Welsh / English (please circle)

Location of residence: (please tick)

South East Wales

- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Newport
- Rhondda Cynon Taff
- Torfaen
- Vale of Glamorgan

Mid Wales

- Ceredigion
- Gwynedd
- Powys

North Wales

- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Isle of Anglesey
- Wrexham

South West Wales

- Carmarthenshire
- Neath Port Talbot
- Pembrokeshire
- Swansea

Background

1a. *Which parts of ReAct have you been involved with?

(Please tick all relevant boxes)

Promotional event/explaining ReAct	
Payments to your new employer to help them to employ you (<i>Employer Recruitment Support</i>)	
Payments to your new employer to assist with your training costs (<i>Employer Training Support</i>)	
Training you wanted to undertake (<i>Individual Discretionary Award – Vocational Training</i>)	
Help for you to get trained – equipment, materials, exceptional travel costs, childcare (<i>Miscellaneous Discretionary Support</i>): please describe.	
Careers Wales Action Plan	
Other:	

If Miscellaneous support accessed, how important was this in enabling you to participate on ReAct?

(Please tick all relevant boxes)

Very important	
Quite important	
Important	
Not very important	
Not important at all	
Comment:	

1b. *Date since application for programme submitted

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-18mths 19-24 mths 25mths+

1c. *How long ago did the training programme start? (applies to training only)

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-18mths 19-24 mths 25mths+

2. How did you hear about the ReAct programme?

(please tick all relevant boxes)

From my old employer	
From a Trade Union	
From Welsh Assembly Government (say how)	
I saw an advertisement in a local paper	
I saw an advertisement in a national paper	
From JobCentre Plus	
From Careers Wales	
Word of mouth	
Other (please specify)	

3. Did you receive an information pack?

Yes	
No	

If yes, how informative was it?

Very informative – it contained all the information I needed	
Quite informative – it contained most of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not very informative – it contained some of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not informative at all (if so, why?)	
Comment:	

Activities

4a. *What courses are you participating in/or did you enrol on? (name and type of qualification)

4b. *Where do you/did you go for the course/ courses? (note: should be 1 planned programme training only, but could have different elements)

Provider Name(s).....

Location(s)

Previous Employment

5a. How long ago were you made redundant?

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-18mths 19-24 mths 25mths+

5b. By whom?

Company name.....

Location (of workplace):.....

5c. What size company was it?

(please tick one box)

Micro Sized company: 0<9 employees	
Small sized Enterprise: 10<49 employees	
Medium sized company: 50<249 employees	
Large size company 250+ employees	
Don't know	
Other (please specify	

5d. What type of job did you have?

(please tick one box)

Manager/professional/technical	
Administrative or secretarial	
Skilled/trade	
Sales and customer service	
Manual work	
Other (please specify)	

The ReAct Programme

6-17. Please could you tell me what you think about the following statements on a scale of 1-5, with:

- 1 strongly agree**
- 2 agree**
- 3 neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 disagree**
- 5 strongly disagree**

	1	2	3	4	5
6. It was important to me that the programme was free					
7. The overall programme was tailored to my needs (includes consultation, advice & training)					
8. The different parts of the programme (consultation, advice & training) joined up well - (if 3-5, why?)					
9. The Careers Wales advisor provided me with enough relevant information					
10. The advice I received was of good quality					
11. I followed the advice in my Careers Wales action plan					
12. The training I received was of good quality					
13. The ReAct programme has encouraged me to do more training in the future					
14. I couldn't get the training I wanted					
15. It was easy to arrange the training I took part in					
16. ReAct helped me get a new job					
17. Completing ReAct paperwork was easy					
Comment					

Current Employment/Training

18. What are you doing now?

a. Employment Status

Full time employed	
Part time employed	
Unemployed	
Self employed	
Temporarily sick/unable to work	
Permanently sick/unable to work	
Caring for someone else	
Volunteering	
In Education/Training	
Retired	
Other (please specify)	

b. Training Status

Full time training	
Part time training	
Full time education	
Part time education	
Not in education/training	

19a. What is the name of your current employer? *

19b. Location (*State location in Wales*).....

19c. What size company is it?

(please tick one box)

Micro Sized company: 0<9 employees	
Small sized Enterprise: 10<49 employees	
Medium sized company: 50<249 employees	
Large size company 250+ employees	
Other (please specify)	

19d. What type of job do you have?*(please tick one box)*

Manager/professional/technical	
Administrative or secretarial	
Skilled/trade	
Sales and customer service	
Manual work	
Other	

19e. Do you think it's a better job?*(please tick one box)*

Yes	
No	
About the same	

19f. Does the job pay more than your old job?*(please tick one box)*

A lot more	
More	
About the same	
Less	
Much Less	
Don't know	
Won't say	

19g. How long have you worked there?

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-18mths 19-24 mths 25mths+

19h. Is it the kind of job you wanted?

Yes, it's what I wanted to do	
No, just had to settle for whatever was going	
Don't know	

19i. Is this the sort of job you would like to do long term?

This is the last question for those who having Careers Wales Guidance Only.

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

If no, what are your career aims?

Retire	
Re-train	
Go to college	
Change Industry	
Get a better paid job	
Get a job with better prospects	
Other	

Impacts/Outcomes

20. Do you think ReAct will help with your longer term job prospects?

Yes	
No	

If yes, how?

(please tick all relevant boxes)

It gave me a qualification	
It helped improve my job-specific skills (e.g. plumbing skills, technical knowledge, etc.)	
It helped improve my skills for working with other people (e.g. communication, group working, etc.)	
It helped improve my other transferable skills (e.g. IT, customer care, etc.)	
It added value to my CV	
It improved my confidence	
It will improve my salary	
Other (please specify)	

21. If you hadn't had taken part in ReAct, what do you think you would be doing now?

(please tick all relevant boxes)

I would have tried to find another source of support (e.g. from job centre)	
I would have looked for and tried to find a job on my own	
I would have gone back into education/training	
I would be unemployed	
I wouldn't have thought about doing training	
I don't know what I would do	
Other (please state)	

22. Would you be prepared to contribute to the cost of training received under the ReAct programme?

Yes – if so, what percentage of costs?	<20%	
	20 – 50%	
	> 50%	
	Don't know	
No		

Future Options

23. Do you think ReAct should be continued?

Yes	
No	
Maybe	
Don't know	

24. If you think it should continue, what – if any – changes should be made?

Please comment

25. Is there anything that has worked particularly well/not so well?

Please comment

26. Have you any other comments at all about your experience of ReAct?

Thank Interviewee and close

Appendix II: Company Beneficiaries Topic Guide

**Welsh Assembly Government
Evaluation of ReAct**

Topic Guide 2: Beneficiaries (Companies)

Background:

Please refer to the interviewer briefing paper for the background to the ReAct programme.

Details:

Interviewee Name	
Telephone Number	
Male/Female	
Interviewer	
Date & Time	

Introduction

My name is from CRG Research based in Cardiff. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the ReAct Programme on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. Our records show that your company has received funding from ReAct to assist with recruiting and/or training people who had been made redundant, and I would be very grateful for your views on the programme, either now or at a time convenient for you. The interview should take a maximum of 15 minutes, and all individual replies will be kept confidential; our remit is to report on general trends and areas for improvement only.

CRG Contact Number: 02920 343218

The project manager for CRG is Richard Gaunt

The Project is commissioned by Eleri Lewis of the Welsh Assembly Government (01792 765825)

Call back arrangements

--

Questions marked with an Asterisk* should be pre entered by the interviewer where possible

Name of Organisation:

Interviewees Position within Organisation:

Would you like the interview to be conducted in English or Welsh?

If English, continue with interview

If Welsh, inform interviewee:

“I will need to arrange for our Welsh interviewer to call you back. When is the best time of day to contact you?”

Day.....

Time.....

Location of Organisation: (please tick)

South East Wales

- 1 Blaenau Gwent
- 2 Bridgend
- 3 Caerphilly
- 4 Cardiff
- 5 Merthyr Tydfil
- 6 Monmouthshire
- 7 Newport
- 8 Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 9 Torfaen
- 10 Vale of Glamorgan

Mid Wales

- 11 Ceredigion
- 12 Gwynedd
- 13 Powys

North Wales

- 14 Conwy
- 15 Denbighshire
- 16 Flintshire
- 17 Isle of Anglesey
- 18 Wrexham

South West Wales

- 19 Carmarthenshire
- 20 Neath Port Talbot
- 21 Pembrokeshire
- 22 Swansea

Organisation Details

1a. *What sector is your organisation in?

(tick one box only)

Agriculture, hunting and forestry		Mining	
Banking and Business Services		Other Manufacturing	
Chemicals		Other Services	
Construction		Professional Services	
Distribution, Hotels and so on		Public Administration and Defence	
Engineering		Textiles and Clothing	
Food, drink or tobacco		Transport and Communications	
Health and Education Services		Utilities (gas, electric and so on)	
Metals and Minerals		Other: (Please state)	

1b. Is your organisation part of a larger organisation?

(tick one box only)

Yes	
No	

Note: If part of larger organisation, subsequent questions refer to the interviewees' workplace

1c. *In which sector does your organisation operate?

(tick one box only)

Public	
Private	
Voluntary	
Charity	
Other (please specify	

1d. *How many employees does your organisation employ?

(tick one box only)

Micro Sized organisation: 0<9 employees	
Small sized Enterprise: 10<49 employees	
Medium sized organisation: 50<249 employees	
Large size organisation: 250+ employees	
Other (please specify	

1e. In terms of staff numbers, over the past 1-2 years has your organisation been:

(tick one box only)

Growing strongly	
Growing a bit	
Neither growing nor shrinking	
Shrinking a bit	
Shrinking a lot	

Getting Involved With ReAct

2. What part of ReAct was your organisation involved with?

(tick one box only)

Contribution to wage costs (<i>Employer Recruitment Subsidy</i>)	
Contribution to training costs (<i>Employer Training Support</i>)	
Both	
Other (please specify)	

3. How did your organisation hear about ReAct?

(tick all that apply)

(tick)

(Date dd/mm/yyyy)

WAG approached us/got in touch with us		
Our organisation contacted WAG		
Via JobCentre Plus		
Careers Wales		
Word of Mouth		
Through applicant/employee		
Other (please specify)		

4a. How easy was it to find out about the ReAct programme?

(tick one box only)

Very easy	
Quite easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Quite difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

4b. Did you receive an information pack?

(tick one box only)

Yes (go to Q 4c)	
No (go to Q 5)	
Don't know (go to Q 5)	

4c. If yes, how informative was it?

Very informative – it contained all the information I needed	
Quite informative – it contained most of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not very informative – it contained some of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not informative at all (if so, why?)	
Comment:	

5a. Could the ReAct marketing material be improved?

(tick one box only)

Yes (go to Q 5b)	
No (go to Q 6)	
Maybe (go to Q 6)	
Don't know (go to Q 6)	

5b. If yes, do you have any suggestions for improvement?

ReAct Operations

- 6a. Were you involved with any of the following organisations in relation to ReAct?
If so how supportive were they?**

(tick all relevant boxes)

	Very supportive	Quite supportive	Neither supportive nor unsupportive	Quite unsupportive	Very unsupportive	Don't know
WAG						
Training Providers						
Careers Wales						
JobCentre Plus						
Other (please specify)						

What worked well/not so well in these areas?

Recruitment And Training

- 7. ONLY ASK Q.7-Q.12 IF EMPLOYER ACCESSED RECRUITMENT SUBSIDY – OTHERWISE GO TO Q.13**

How many people have you recruited using ReAct Recruitment subsidy support?

(tick one box only) (tick) (date)

1 recruit		
2 recruits		
3 - 5 recruits		
6 -10 recruits		
11 -15 recruits		
16 -20 recruits		
Over 20 recruits		
Don't know		

8. How many recruits are still on the programme now?

(tick one box only)

None	
1 recruit	
2 recruits	
3 - 5 recruits	
6 -10 recruits	
11 -15 recruits	
16 -20 recruits	
More than 20 recruits	
Don't know	

9. Have any recruits left the programme?

Yes (if so, why? – probe for all reasons if multiple recruits)	
No	
Comment	

10. What kind of jobs did your ReAct recruits do before being made redundant?

(please fill in an estimated number)

Manager/professional/technical	
Administrative or secretarial	
Skilled/trade	
Sales and customer service	
Manual work	
Other	

11a. Did they have the right kinds of skills / backgrounds when you recruited them?

(please fill in an estimated number)

Yes – all recruits		Go to Q12
Yes – most recruits		
Yes – some recruits		
No		Go to Q11b
Don't know		Go to Q12

11b. If No, did you need to give them significant training support? (i.e. were recruits given training over an above that provided to all new recruits – e.g. induction training)

(please tick one box)

Yes, funded by the company	
Yes, funded by ReAct	
No	
Don't know	

12a. What kind of jobs are they doing now?

(please fill in an estimated number)

Manager/professional/technical	
Administrative or secretarial	
Skilled/trade	
Sales and customer service	
Manual work	
Other	

12b. How many applicants have you been getting for the jobs you filled through ReAct?

0	
1-5	
6-20	
21+	
Comment	

13a. ONLY ASK Q.13a-Q.13c IF EMPLOYER ACCESSED TRAINING SUBSIDY – OTHERWISE GO TO Q.14

How was the training delivered?

(please enter an estimated number for each)

In house, on-the-job	
In house, induction	
External, on-the-job	
External, induction	
Don't know	
None	
Other (please state)	

13b. What area of training did you provide them with?

(please enter an estimated number for each)

Technical skills	
Management	
Problem solving skills	
Customer handling skills	
Team working	
Administration	
ICT	
Communication skills	
Don't know	
Other (please specify)	

13c. ReAct training subsidy covers 70% of costs up to a maximum of £1,000: Did you have to contribute more than the standard 30% contribution?

Yes (If so, how much and why?)	
No	
Comment	

The ReAct Programme

14-24 Please could you tell me what you think about the following statements on a scale of 1-5, with:

- 1 strongly agree**
- 2 agree**
- 3 neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 disagree**
- 5 strongly disagree**

	1	2	3	4	5
14. ReAct helped my organisation recruit good quality employees					
15. ReAct helped my organisation improve business performance					
16. ReAct helped my organisation increase its profit					
17. ReAct helped my organisation increase turnover					
18. People I recruit from ReAct help fill hard to fill vacancies					
19. ReAct enabled people joining our company to gain qualifications in keeping with industry requirements (e.g. funding plumbing to NVQ level 3 as opposed to level 2)					
20. ReAct has made no difference to the number of people this organisation recruits					
21. ReAct has made no difference to the number of people this organisation trains					
22. Lower levels of ReAct support would mean that my organisation would recruit fewer people					
23. All elements of the programme (from requesting information to receiving funds) were effectively joined up (if not agreeing, what issues arose?)					
24. Lower levels of ReAct support would mean that my organisation trained fewer people					
Comment					

Administration/Finance

25a. How easy was it to claim funds?

(tick one box only)

Very easy	
Quite easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Quite difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

25b. How easy was it to meet monitoring requirements?

(tick one box only)

Very easy	
Quite easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Quite difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

Impacts/Outcomes

26. Overall, what benefits did you or your organisation derive from ReAct?

Were these the benefits you expected, or different?

27. What do you think you might have done in relation to recruitment / training without ReAct?

(tick all relevant boxes)

I would have tried to find another source of support (e.g. from Job Centre Plus)	
I would have looked for and tried to recruit on my own	
I would not have been able to recruit (if so, would this have held the business back?)	
I wouldn't have thought about recruiting and training redundant people	
I would have used agencies or subcontract arrangements	
I don't know what I would do	
Other (please state)	

28. A fundamental assumption of the ReAct programme is that individuals who are redundant, or at risk of redundancy, need help to regain employment. Do you think his assumption is still valid?

(tick one box)

Yes	
No	
Maybe	
Don't know	

29. Overall, do you think the ReAct programme represents value for money?

(tick one box only)

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Future Development

30. Should the ReAct programme continue?

(tick one box only)

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

31. Is there anything about the programme which has worked particularly well? If so, what?

32. Should any changes be made? If so, please describe what these changes should be, and why they should be made

Thank Interviewee and close

Appendix III: Non-Participants Topic Guide

**Welsh Assembly Government
Evaluation of ReAct**

Topic Guide 3: Non Participants

Background:

Please refer to the interviewer briefing paper for the background to the ReAct programme.

Details:

Interviewee Name	
Organisation	
Position	
Interviewer	
Date & Time	

Introduction

My name is from CRG Research based in Cardiff. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the ReAct Programme – designed to assist individuals at risk of, or recently having been made, redundant – for the Welsh Assembly Government. I understand you have previously requested an application pack from ReAct but did not subsequently participate on the programme, and I would very much appreciate it if you could take 5 minutes to tell me how you came to apply for a pack and what happened to you subsequently. All individual replies will be kept confidential; our remit is to report on general trends and areas for improvement for the programme only.

CRG Contact Number: 02920 343218

The project manager for CRG is Richard Gaunt

The Project is commissioned by Eleri Lewis of the Welsh Assembly Government (01792 765825)

Call back arrangements

Call back arrangements

Interviewee:

Gender: Male/Female (please circle)

Contact Tel. Number:.....

Date/Time of Successful Interview:

Interviewer:

Conducted in: Welsh / English (please circle)

Location of residence: (please tick)

South East Wales

- 1 Blaenau Gwent
- 2 Bridgend
- 3 Caerphilly
- 4 Cardiff
- 5 Merthyr Tydfil
- 6 Monmouthshire
- 7 Newport
- 8 Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 9 Torfaen
- 10 Vale of Glamorgan

Mid Wales

- 11 Ceredigion
- 12 Gwynedd
- 13 Powys

North Wales

- 14 Conwy
- 15 Denbighshire
- 16 Flintshire
- 17 Isle of Anglesey
- 18 Wrexham

South West Wales

- 19 Carmarthenshire
- 20 Neath Port Talbot
- 21 Pembrokeshire
- 22 Swansea

Background

1a. How did you hear about ReAct?

(please tick all relevant boxes)

From a Careers Advisor	
From Learn Direct	
From a Job Centre	
From your previous employer	
Word of mouth	
A training provider	
Publicity Leaflet	
Press	
Other (please specify)	

1b. Was it easy to get the information you needed?

Yes	
No	

1c. Did you receive an information pack?

Yes (go to 1d)	
No (go to 1e)	

1d. If yes, how informative was it?

Very informative – it contained all the information I needed	
Quite informative – it contained most of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not very informative – it contained some of the information I needed (if so, what was missing?)	
Not informative at all (if so, why?)	
Comment:	

1e. Why didn't you take part in the ReAct programme?

Not eligible	
Already got a job	
Found other training (please specify)	
Retired	
Went self-employed	
Ill-health	
Family reasons	
Moved out of Wales	
Other (please specify)	

2a. Have you received / are you receiving any other support (e.g. from Jobcentre Plus) since being made redundant?

(tick one box only)

Yes (if so, what?)		Go to 2b
No		Go to 3a

2b. From which organisation(s) have you received / are you receiving support?

(please tick all boxes that apply)

Careers Wales	
Jobcentre Plus	
Training provider	
Other (please specify)	

2c. What kind of support have you received / are you receiving? e.g financial

3a. Have you taken part in any training since being made redundant? (paid for by an organisation or not)

Yes – I have enrolled on a programme but not started		Go to 3b
Yes – I have enrolled and started a programme		Go to 3b
Yes – I started a course but didn't finish		Go to 4
Yes – I have finished a course		Go to 3b
No - I did not do any training		Go to 4

3b. Where do you/did you go for the course? (provider name and location)

Provider Name.....

Location (State county in Wales).....

3c. What courses are you participating in / or did you enrol on? (name and type of qualification)

.....

4. How long ago were you made redundant?

Under notice 0-3months 4-6mths 7-9mths 10-12 months more than 1 year ago

5. By whom?

Company name.....

Location:.....

6. What size company was it?

(please tick one box)

Micro Sized company: 0<9 employees	
Small sized Enterprise: 10<49 employees	
Medium sized company: 50<249 employees	
Large size company 250+ employees	
Other (please specify)	

7. What type of job did you have?

(please tick one box)

Manager or senior official	
Professional occupations	
Associate professional or technical	
Administrative or secretarial	
Skilled trade	
Personal service occupations	
Sales and customer service	
Process, plant and machine	
Elementary occupations	

8. Did you have a discussion with a careers advisor?

Yes		Go to 9
No		Go to 10

9. How supportive was your careers advisor? (if applicable)

(please tick one box)

Very supportive	
Quite supportive	
Neither supportive nor unsupportive	
Quite unsupportive	
Very unsupportive	
Don't know because I haven't started yet	

10a. What are you doing now?

Full time employed	
Part time employed	
Unemployed	
Self employed	
Temporarily sick/unable to work	
Permanently sick/unable to work	
Caring for someone else	
Volunteering	
In Education/Training	
Retired	
Other (please specify)	

10b. How long were you unemployed for?

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-24mths 25-36 mths over 36mths N/A

10c. What is the name of your current employer? *.....

10d. Location (State county).....

10e. How long have you worked there?

0-6 mths 7-12 mths 13-24mths 25-36 mths over 36mths N/A

11. How easy was it to gain employment?

(please tick one box)

Very easy	
Easy	
OK	
Hard	
Very hard	

12. Is your current job the kind of job you wanted?

(please tick all boxes that apply)

Yes, it's what I want to do	
No - Its not really what I wanted to do, but its okay	
Don't know	
Other (please specify)	

13. How did you get your new job?

Responded to job advert	
Word of mouth	
Agency	
Job Centre	
Approached by Employer	
Other (please specify)	

14. What are your future aspirations/what would you like to do in the future?

15. What additional support would you have found useful in gaining employment?

Thank Interviewee and close