



Results of the Autumn 2012 DrugScope Work Programme Survey

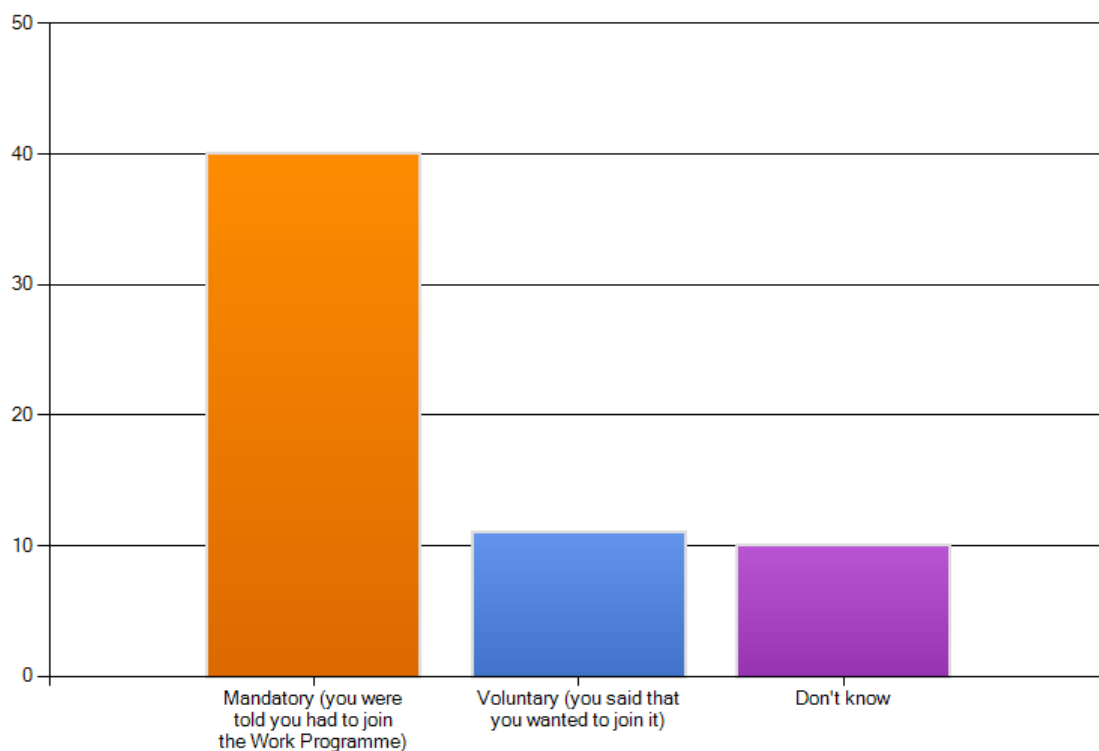
The Work Programme is the cornerstone of the government's efforts to support the long-term unemployed into sustainable, paid work. Research suggests that around 80% of users of heroin and crack cocaine are not in paid employment, whilst users of other substances and those in recovery also face significant barriers in the job market: DrugScope recognises the benefits gained by greater personal and financial independence and consequently has a particular interest in the performance of the Work Programme for its member agencies' clients, including the impact and scale of welfare benefit sanctions.

The Work Programme is being delivered by 18 prime contractors, who have supply chains comprised of hundreds of providers drawn from the private, public and voluntary sector, including several specialist drug and / or alcohol providers. The contracts have been awarded for 5 years plus an additional 2 years of support, meaning that the last referrals are due to join the Work Programme in 2016 and will be due to leave it in 2018.

We have used the results of this survey, alongside on-going and regular discussions with service providers and clients to inform DrugScope's submission of evidence to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee, which is holding an inquiry into the performance of the Work Programme for different customer groups. This submission can be found here:

<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/Resources/DrugScope/Documents/PDF/Policy/WorkProgrammeInquiryDrugScopeHomelessLink.pdf>

Was your referral to the Work Programme...?



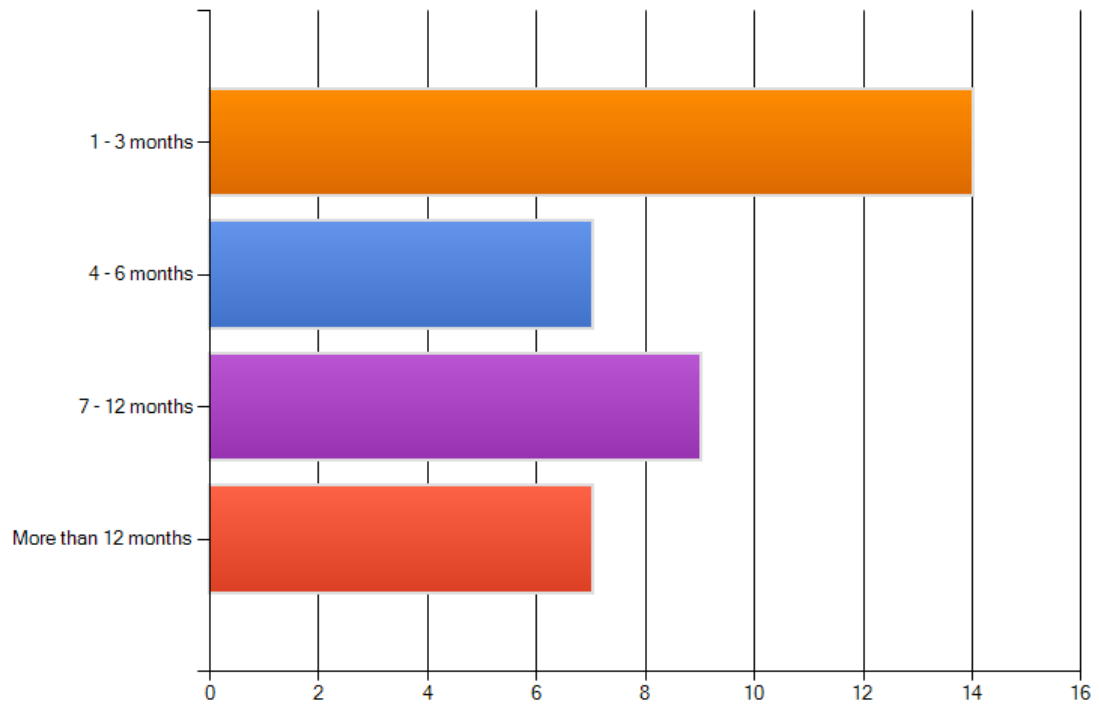
“I was made redundant February 2011, and have found it difficult to find employment within Health & Social Care Field.”

“I was in no fit state to consider this and it brought a lot of stress on me.”

“By disability support advisor”

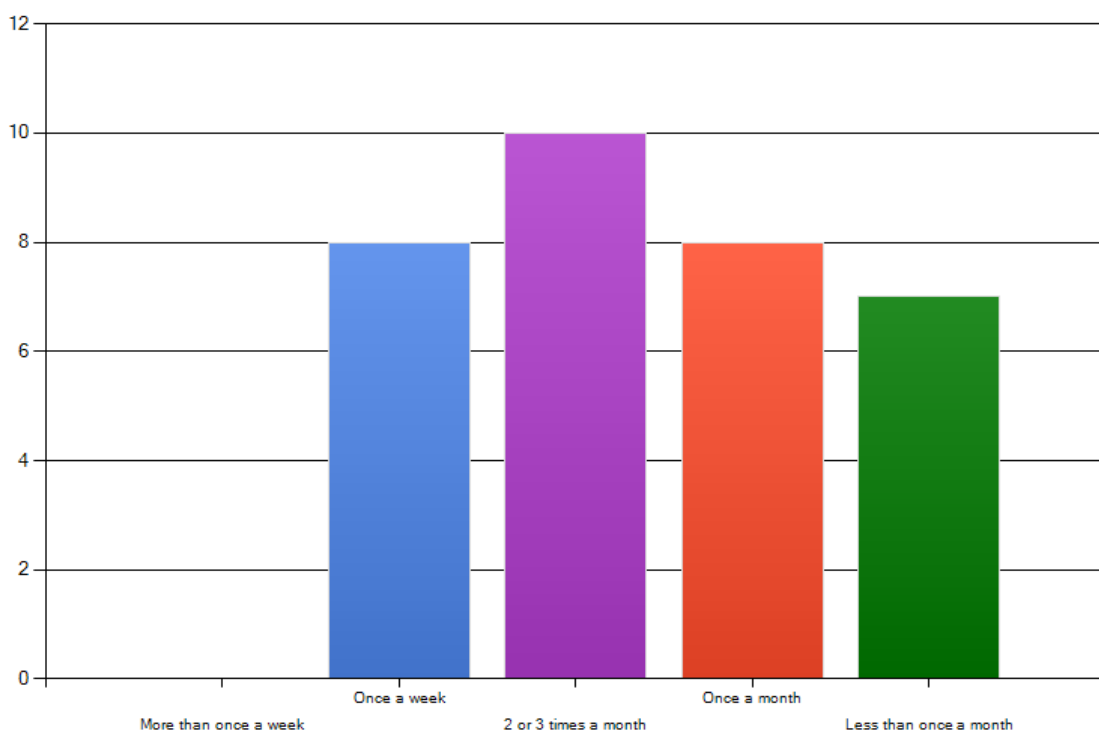
“I was told it was mandatory and I had to sign a contract with the supplier.”

For how many months have you been on the Work Programme? Note to the key worker: if the client has a Work Programme Start Notification letter, use the date provided on that letter to identify the number of months.



“Waste of time and YOUR money”

How frequently do you meet with your Work Programme advisor or case manager?



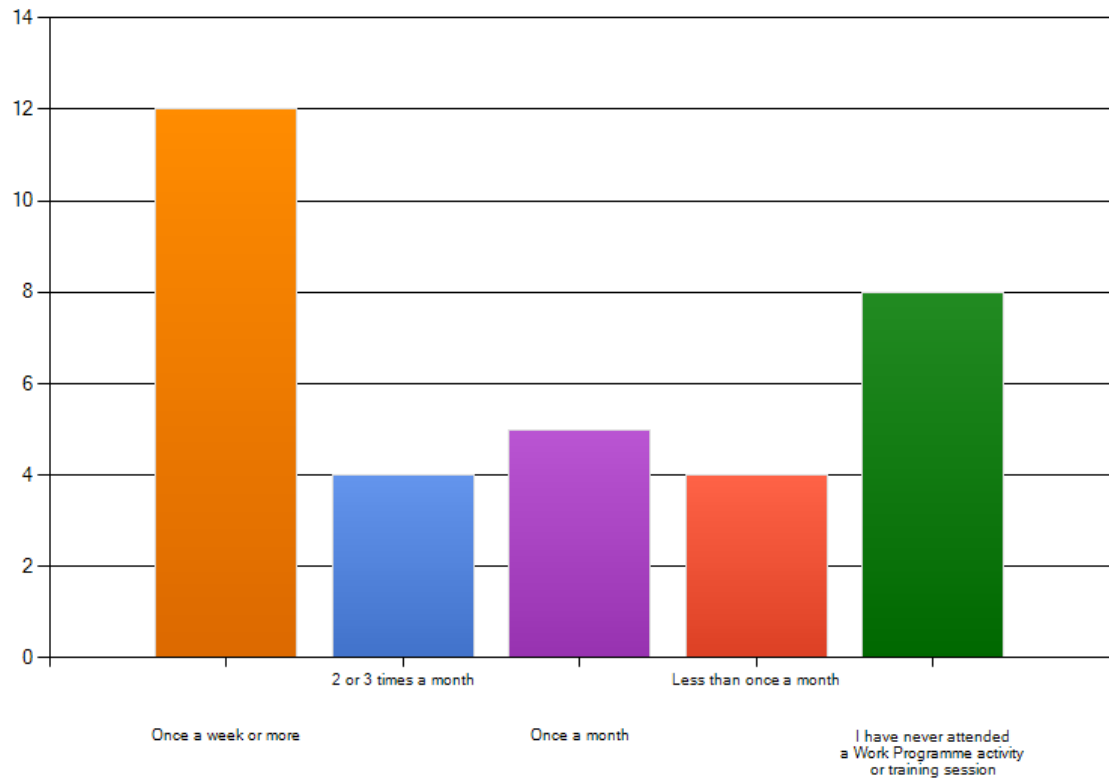
“I attend a job search 3 times a week, but I meet with my advisor only if she has something to discuss with me - usually for disciplinaries”

“Due to volunteering for a local charity and the chance of being employed, I was put on fortnightly phone calls 2 months ago, my worker has not phoned me yet.”

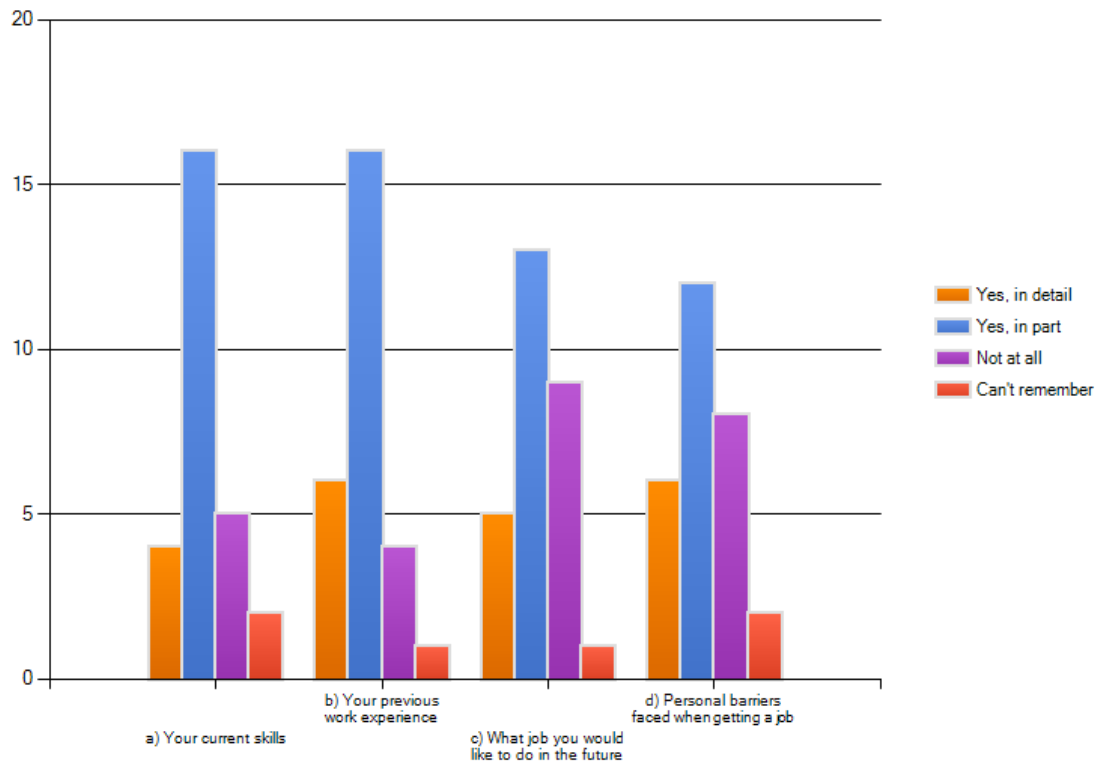
“Initially every two weeks. Then they stopped offering business start up support. I wrote a letter of complaint and have heard nothing for 3 months.”

“Once every two weeks”

How frequently do you attend Work Programme activities or training sessions?



When you first met your Work Programme provider, did they talk to you about:

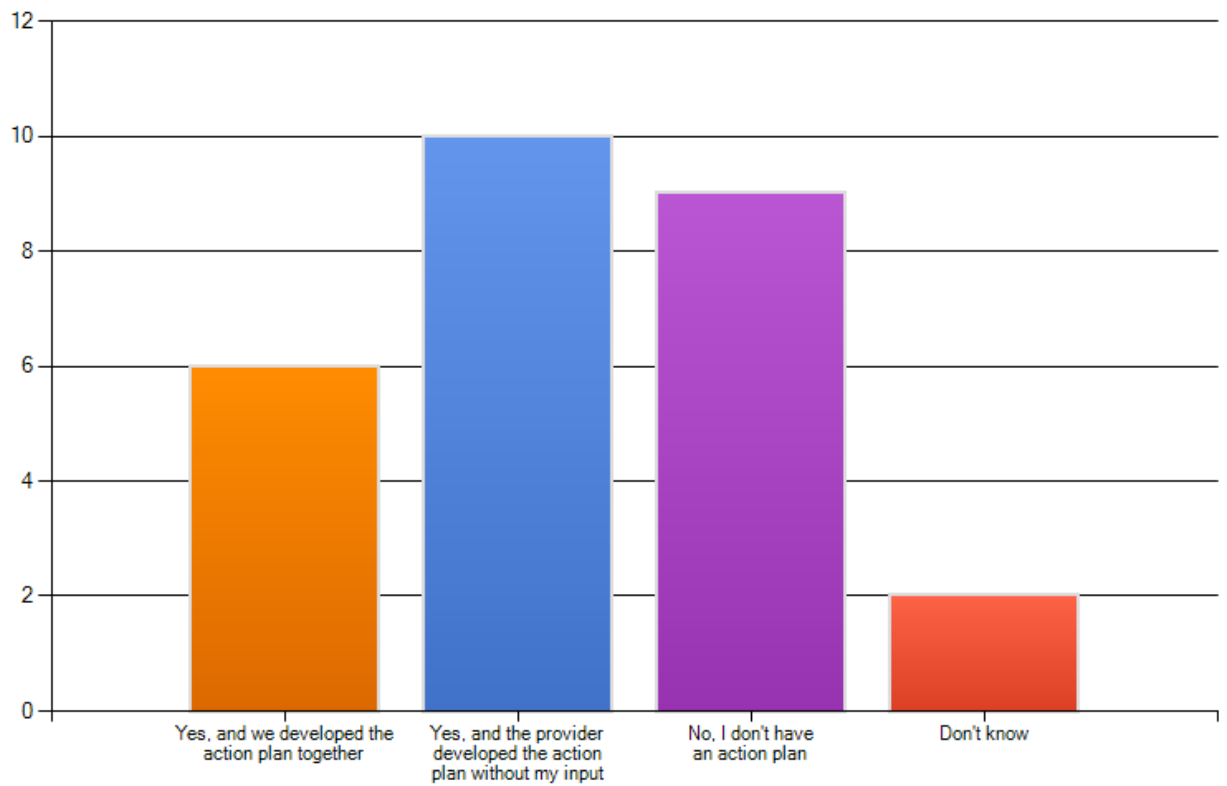


”Felt rushed”

“I was told that I had to go back to work and give up any courses or voluntary work I might be doing.”

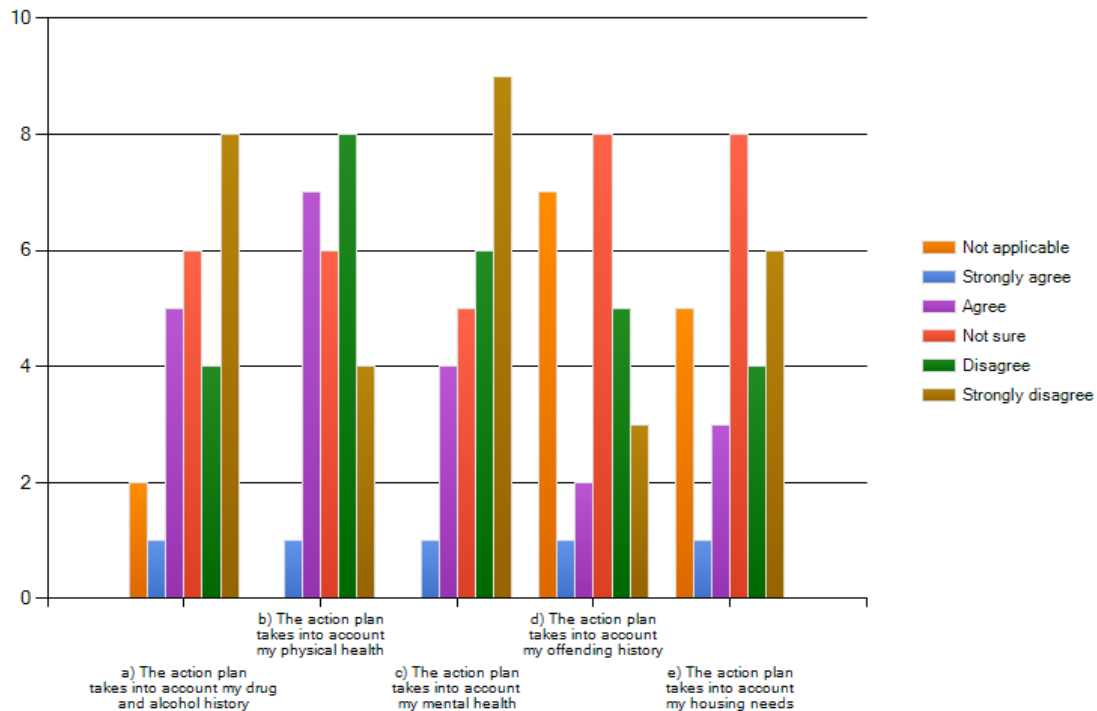
“I was referred having spent 2 years developing a social enterprise in the field of addiction therapy. The [Work Programme provider] were not aware of the social enterprise ethos. I had to fight for business support which I then received following three months of support and the development of a business plan the [Work Programme provider] decided to close down this area and no longer offer business support. They claimed there was too little take up by clients.”

An action plan is an agreement made between you and your adviser about the steps you need to take and the things you need to do to help you get closer to a paid job - this is normally something in writing that you are given to take away. When you first met with your Work Programme provider, did they develop an action plan to get you into employment?



“I had to battle to obtain business development support for an emerging social enterprise”

Where they are relevant to you, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?



“I have to get daily dispensing of methadone, have severe depression and long criminal record”

“It doesn't take into account that I was actively in my addiction and would struggle to even be given the interview or opportunity and have sometimes due to higher use than others would not remember the date etc I feel that more help and resources needs to be input for recovery and to stabilise clients situations prior to the pressures being put on them for work as this leads to stress and anxiety which in turn increases using of substance to control feelings and emotions. On point of offending it is not taken into account how limiting the job market is due to the employers view and actions they say it is treated with the rehabilitation act 1974 but saying and doing is very different things also I feel there is more judgement than any understanding or recognition that people have worked hard to change what was bad on society and now they are trying to do their best gets unrecognised and they still penalised for something that may have happened in their life twenty years ago as there is so much choice for employers and if they have two candidates that are suitable with one job the person without any offending will always win no matter how long ago that offence so where is rehabilitation and the opportunity to change and move forward with this?”

“My drug and alcohol history has a powerful influence on my prospects for employment. I am attempting to use my 12 step experience to help others through a social enterprise. I have been fortunate to be given some £16,000 of capital grant. I lack a source of revenue and a secure cash flow. The Work Programme advisors are not trained to identify and understand addiction. I felt that all I had done to achieve and maintain recovery was of little interest or of no importance. I was told that I should just secure any kind of employment so that I would be

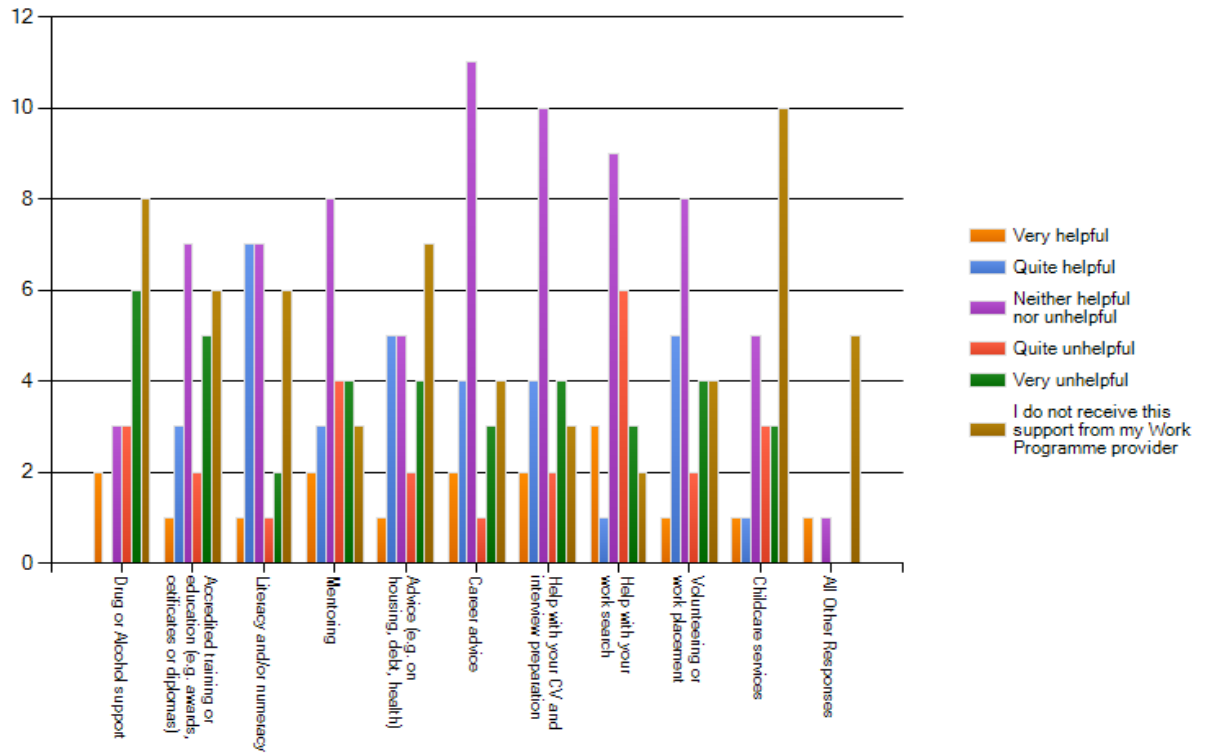
better off financially. Having battled and been granted business support I developed a business plan which went for Level 2 funding from [funder], some £20,000 which would cover revenue for 2 years. The application wasn't rejected but more information was asked to be provided. It was at this point that [Work Programme provider] pulled all the business support and left me to carry the full weight of the project alone. I felt that the rug had been pulled from under me, they are not interested in developing the individual merely reaching their own targets.”

“Any issues identified by the customer such as criminal records and health issues are dismissed as they must be fit for work that’s why the job centre have referred them so the customer felt none of the issues were taken into account.”

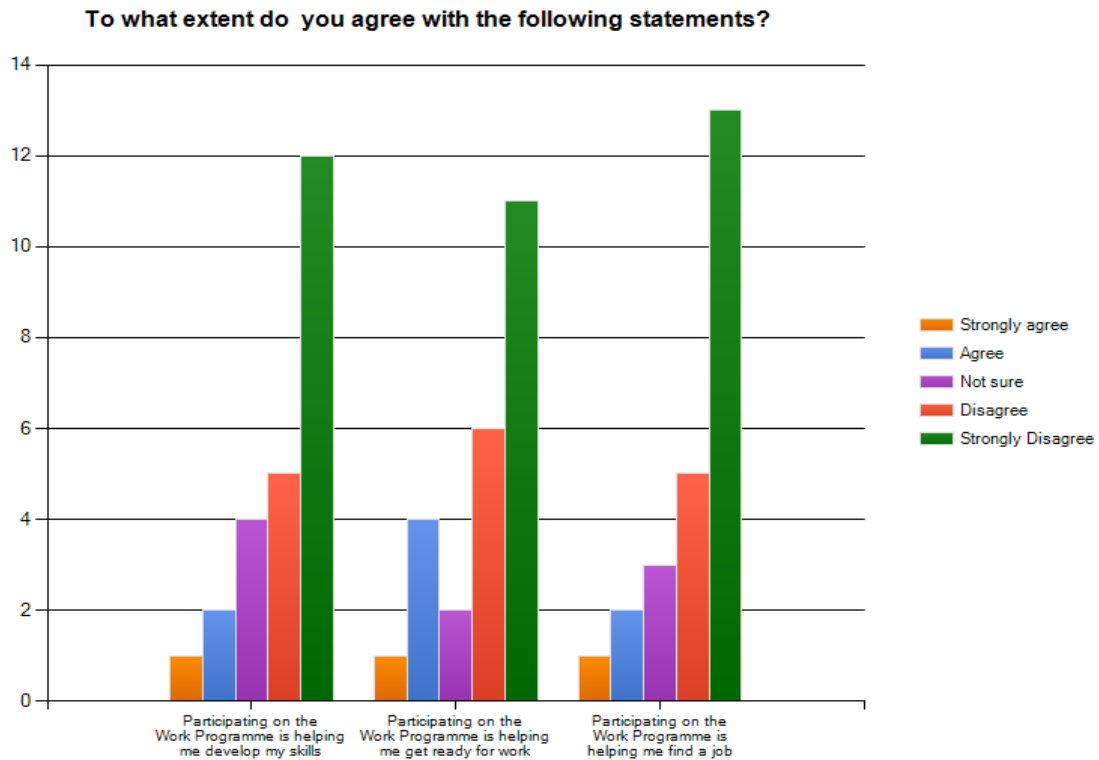
“My drugs worker wrote a letter about the things I was interested in and said I was on a course to be a drugs worker and they said it was irrelevant and made me go on a catering course instead as I said I liked cooking in my spare time.”

“The advisor did not want to listen to my problems”

How helpful do you find the following support from the Work Programme provider?



“Mentoring in Business Support - but then withdrawn.”



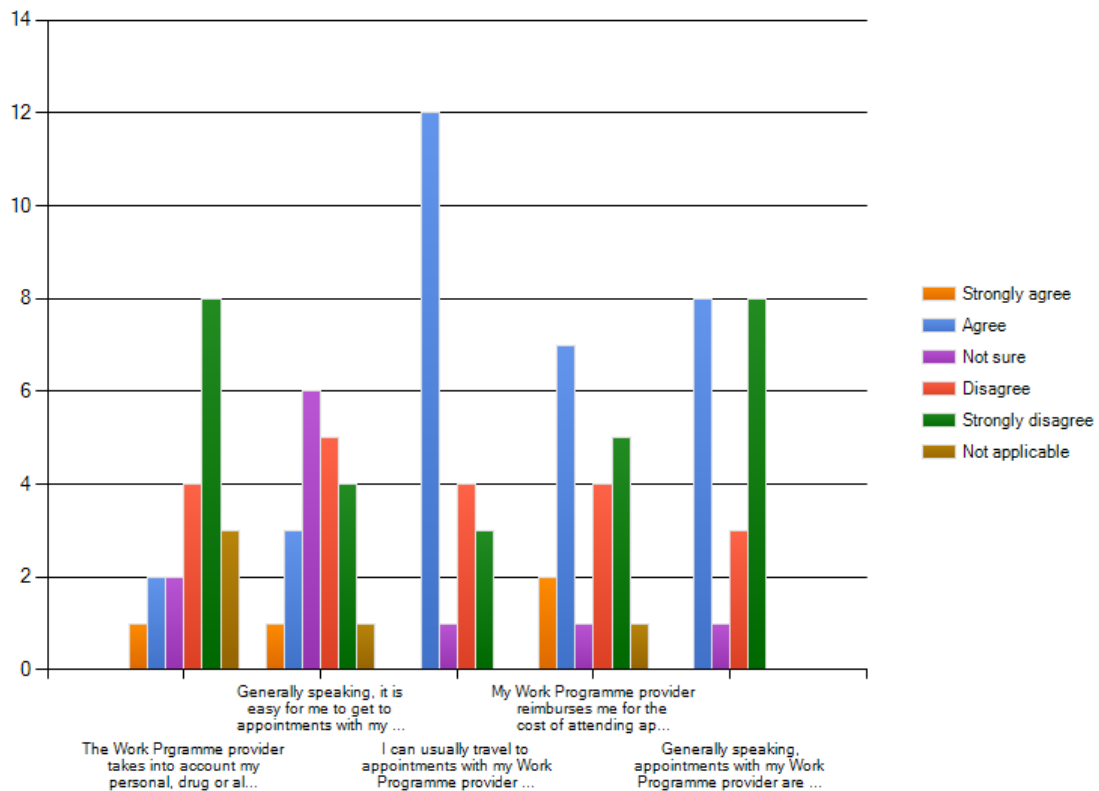
“I wanted to Level 2 Counselling after completing level 1, would not fund the course. I am work ready, but the jobs are few and far between in the [redacted] area. I get 90 mins a fortnight at a computer at my provider.”

“It doesn't take into account my alcohol and drug problem and my offending history”

“Lack of communication and not reliable”

“I should never have been placed on this programme. I was told initially that the business support would be available and then it was withdrawn completely.”

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



“They don’t reimburse me for my travel expenses and my appointments are as and when they can fit me in.”

“Appointments are with my provider on days I sign on so they don’t have to pay transport costs. They tell me when I have to attend meetings. They were very reluctant to provide bus fares to attend an 8 week course 1 day 1/2 day a week, that they wanted us to attend and forced the provider to make it a 4 week course.”

“I live in [London borough] but have to go to [another London borough], they only pay max of £2.10 despite it costs me nearly double, they only provide fares between 11 and 12 and often the fares office is shut without warning and I have to walk home and they expect me to travel again to collect fares for previous day but won’t pay fares for me to come back next day.”

“I feel that they pretend to take into account my alcohol and drug problem but still apply the same regulations as everyone and do not have an understanding how alcohol and drugs will impact on me and any future employer. they are uninformed how this will stop my choices in getting opportunities to work or even being able to work as I am not always fit for work due to health issues associated with my using of substances needed for me to function on a day to day and there is little help in getting any help to either to enter the recovery journey or support and understanding available.”

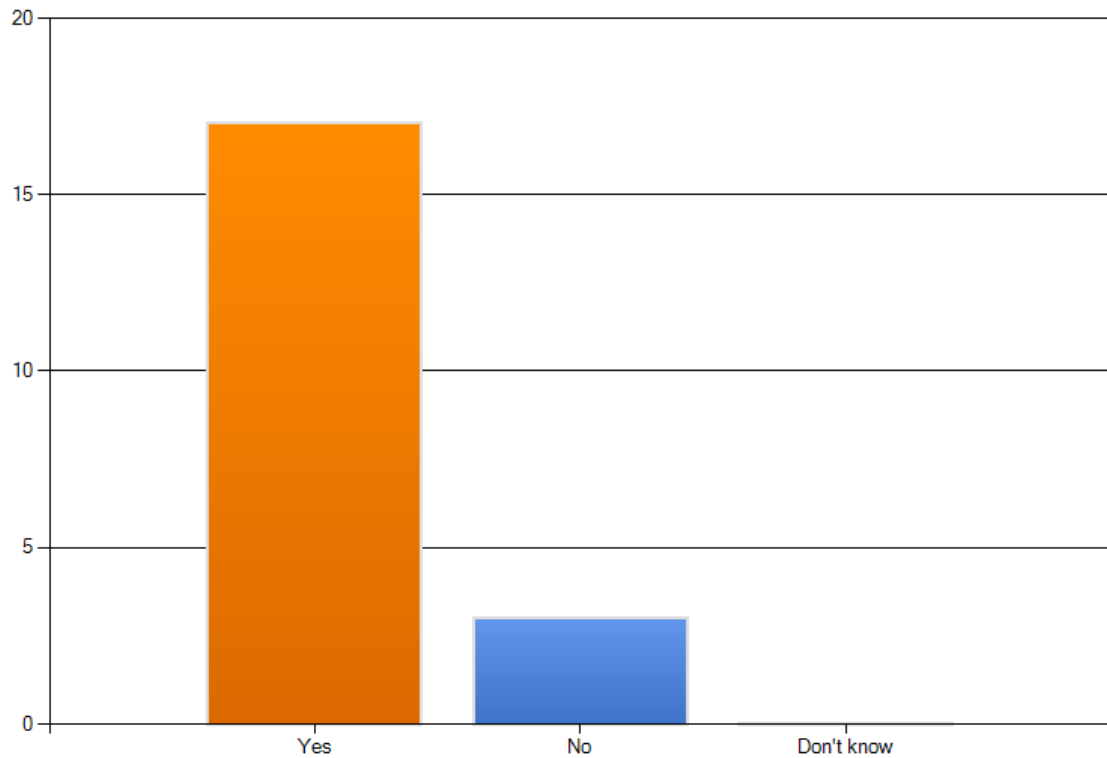
“The help I accessed was withdrawn.”

“I think they have too many people on the programme to worry about my issues.”

“I told them I looked after my father full time and they said it was irrelevant.”

“They don’t care that I have to pick up my script or see my key worker at set times.”

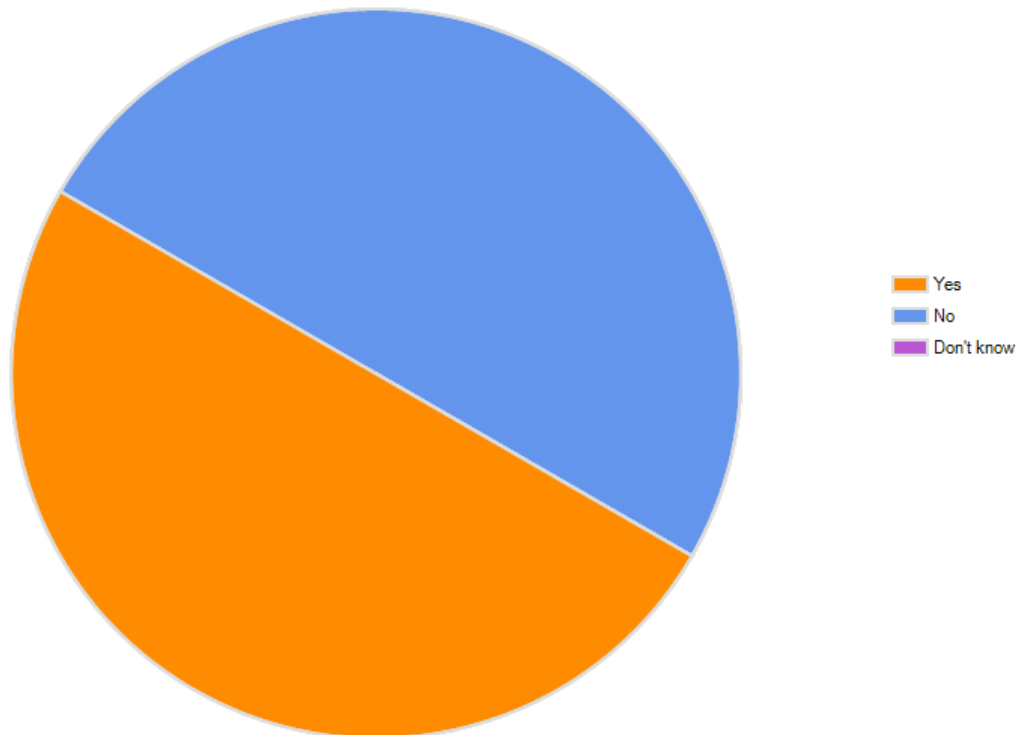
Have you been informed that you could lose some or all of your benefits if you fail to keep appointments or meet other commitments on the Work Programme (known as 'sanctioning')?



“I want a job, I want to work. I find it humiliating having to sign on. Being threatened by the provider and government to attend mandatory course is extremely aggravating. DO NOT TAR EVERYONE AS WORK SHY WHO IS ON THE WORK PROGRAMME, THERE ARE LESS AND LESS JOBS OUT THERE!!!”

“I have but it has been explained in a matter of fact without any understanding for others individual circumstances being taken into account.”

Whilst you have been on the Work Programme, have you ever lost some or all of your benefits because you failed to keep appointments or meet other commitments on the Work Programme (i.e. been 'sanctioned')?



"As of the [redacted date] I am losing all my benefits for missing one appointment to attend a training scheme that I arranged myself."

"For missing an appointment that I wasn't informed about."

"I have again, my alcohol and drugs history and active use was not taken into account and again my offending history and experiences not taken on board."

"Customer was sanctioned for an appointment although it was their mistake as they cancelled the app but didn't update their system correctly and he was marked as did not attend and although they admitted fault would not help rectify but told to appeal at the JCP."

If you have any other comments or wish to tell us anything else about your experience of the Work Programme, please use the space provided below:

"The government have labelled myself and all on the Work Programme as lazy, work shy scroungers. It is due to the government's policies that I was made redundant in the first place. Funding changes meant the charity I worked for would not be able to sustain itself before being paid on outcomes. Ironically the charity specialised in helping people with substance and alcohol misuse, ex offenders etc. back into work, education or training. 90 workers lost their jobs due to funding being withdrawn. Getting back into this type of employment is made harder due to being up against people with degrees, in H&SC, rather than life experience and never had an addiction issue themselves."

"It's poorly put together, ignores my needs and works on a one-size-fit all approach to people. The advisers know nothing about drugs and do not liaise with my treatment provider. I am treated with no respect."

"I was taken off ESA, but feel I can't hold a job ad still using drugs. People are being punished for being unemployed."

"More understanding needs to be given to alcohol and drug addiction and the benefits system where the older benefits had understanding and was allowed to address the current and new system sees it as self inflicting and they can just stop their using where in practice that is not possible. I feel more help and money needs to go into helping people get into recovery journey are needed and then with all people working together we can progress with these issues."

"Case loads are far too high and people like me that need a lot of help are mostly ignored!"

"Programme is just a 3rd rate employment agency that is costing UK taxpayer £5 billion."

"When I went for the induction I was told of the bad people who the Work Programme had to deal with, the 'junkies', the people who turned up on methadone programmes. There seemed to be an air of them and us. I asked what training the Work Programme staff had to assess clients with dependency problems and was told 'none'. I think the system is not empathic but apports blame on the unemployed individual for being placed on the programme. I overheard an advisor ask a client - 'What's wrong with you, you're nineteen and you've never worked. Unless you tell me what's wrong with you I cannot help you.' This is the position taken by advisors. They begin by psychologically belittling the individual until they submit to whatever is required just to be relieved of the mental torture, quite often individuals have complex needs but the Work programme advisors have no ability to assess these or refer clients on to those who might. I have found the whole experience extremely disheartening as a human being when I am subjected to such a degree of callous disregard for my strengths and character."

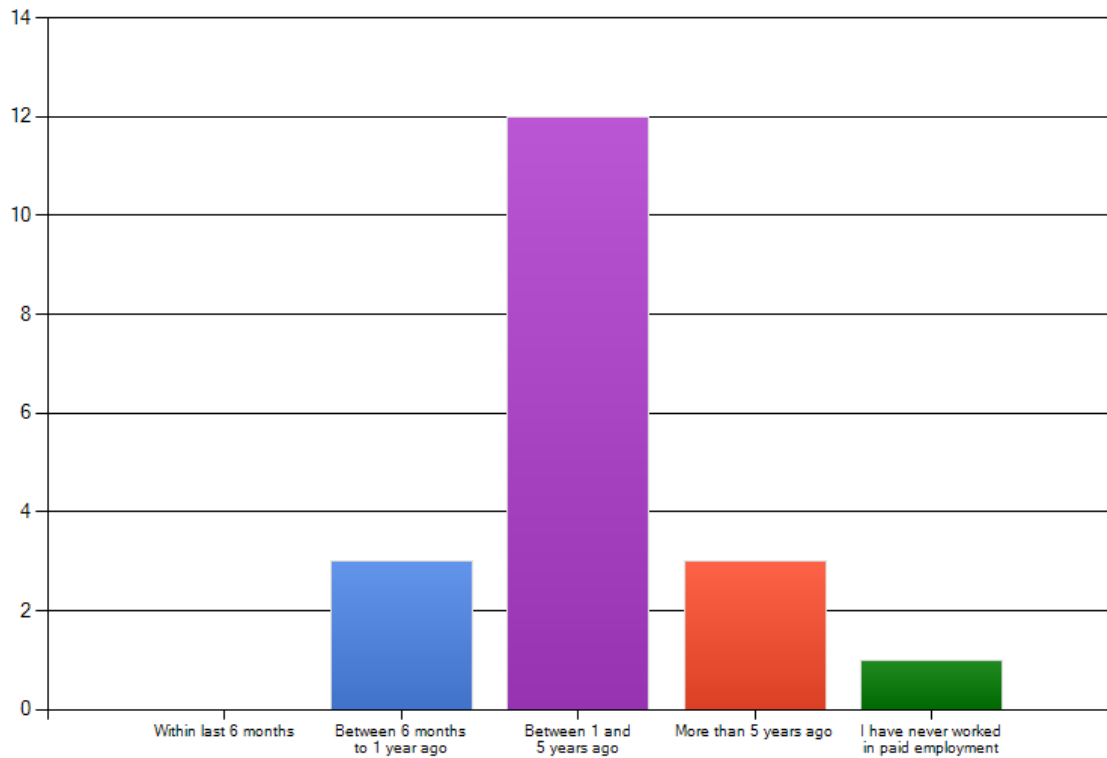
"I recognise that I need support but not sure that the WP is helping as it concentrate on very low level, such as people who have no education."

"As the workers must have such high targets it is felt customers with additional barriers such as substance misuse, mental health and criminal records are not supported fairly as they are seen as not producing the worker a job outcome so they are left behind and not offered all training as its deemed a waste of time."

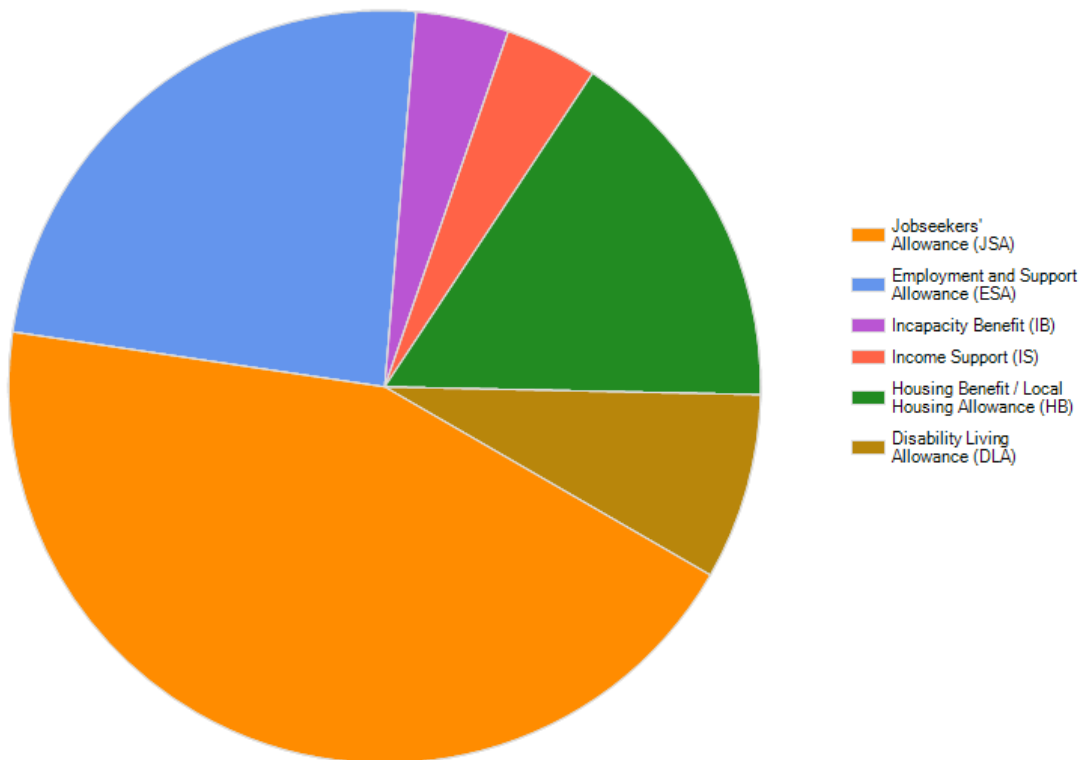
"I was forced to go on JSA as my ESA claim was stopped I went to appeal and I won so I am not on JSA anymore."

"They are miles apart. They have no idea of what drug effects are. They must read them from text books that are written by non drug users, so don't understand the drug at all!!!!!!"

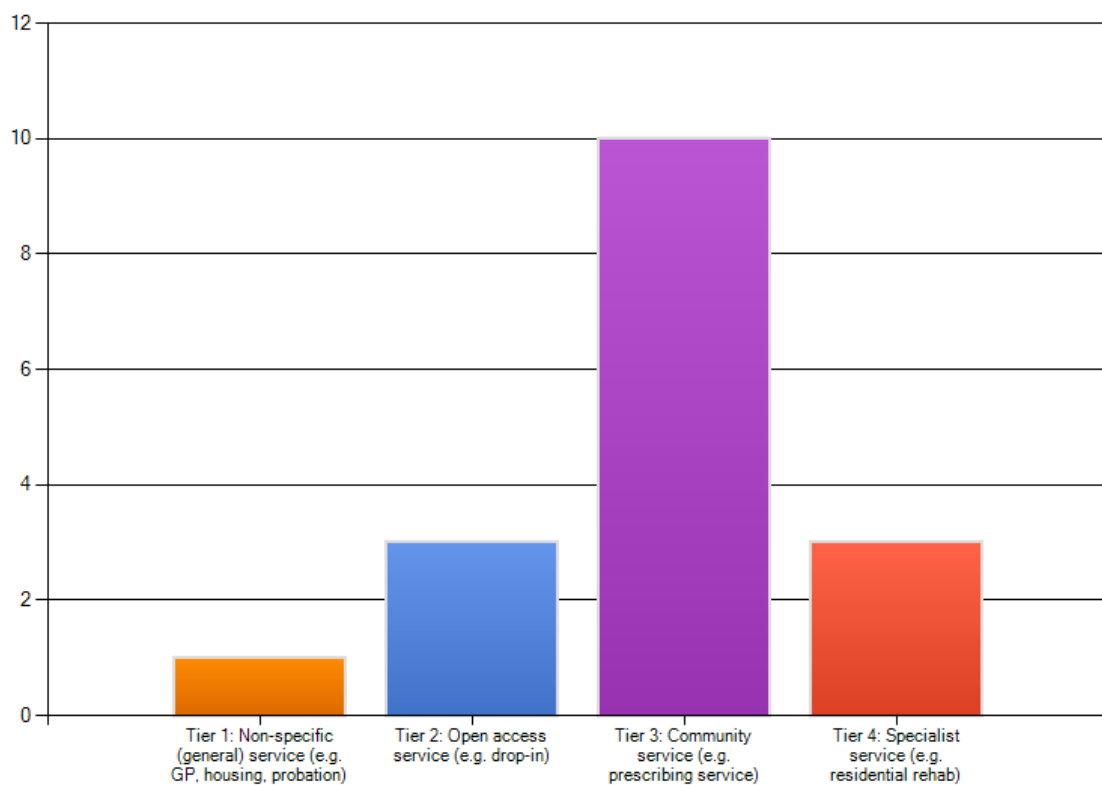
When did you last work in any type of paid employment, for any length of time? (please select one option only)



Which benefits were you getting when you joined the Work Programme?(please select all options which apply)



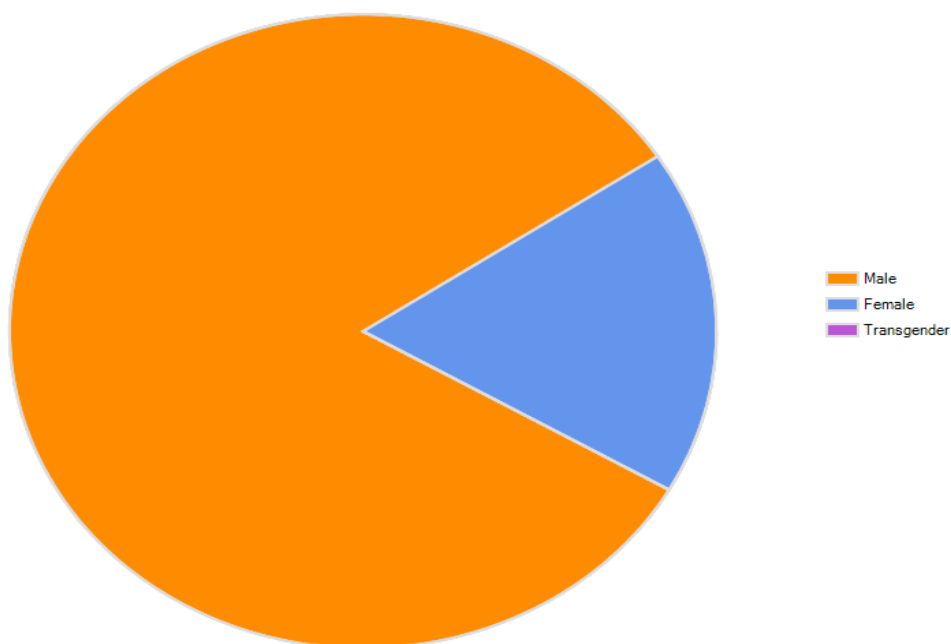
In which tier of treatment are you currently?



"I am not in treatment. I volunteer in a therapeutic community and give time as a board member of a community rehabilitation programme. I am involved in recovery through my emerging social enterprise."

"Supported substance misuse housing in the community I get tested once a week."

What is your gender?



What is your ethnic group?

