

HMPPS - Co-Financing Organisation:

Investigating the effectiveness of The Discretionary Access Fund

Lydia Sudworth, BSocSc Sociology

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Co-Financing Organisation (HMPPS CFO) co-ordinates large-scale programmes to support offenders into employment. CFO3 provision is designed to engage and motivate

'hard-to-reach' offenders who require combined support in a number of areas, and consequently are unable to access mainstream employability provision.

Objectives

CFO3 uses a payment by results model and utilises a set pathway for participants to follow. Discretionary Access Fund (DAF) can be used by the programme for spot purchasing of items to support participants into employment. The fund is used to overcome specific barriers into work including travel and childcare for example. The aim of my project was to assess the effectiveness of DAF, and provide recommendations to providers to ensure it is assisting participants.

Number of DAF		No Employment	Gained Employment	Total
0	Count	33,455	827	34,282
	% within Number of DAF	97.6%	2.4%	100%
1	Count	4,662	625	5,287
	% within Number of DAF	88.2%	11.8%	100%
2	Count	1,165	390	1,555
	% within Number of DAF	74.9%	25.1%	100%
3	Count	315	210	525
	% within Number of DAF	60%	40%	100%
4	Count	107	106	213
	% within Number of DAF	50.2%	49.8%	100%
5 and over	Count	48	49	97
	% within Number of DAF	49.5%	50.5%	100%
Total	Count	39,752	2,207	41,959
	% within Number of DAF	94.7%	5.3%	100%

Method

The data used quantitative data obtained from HMPPS CFO's Case Assessment and Tracking System (CATS+) Application. Case Managers use this application to update participant's progress on the programme. The data was cleaned into assigning participants to either 'Claimed DAF' or 'No DAF'. Then using case manager descriptions this was categorised into what DAF was spent on eg Travel or Work Course. Once cleaned, this was recoded into numerical values for purpose of conducting data analysis on SPSS. Each cross-tabulation was ran with Pearson's chi-square test to determine there was statistical significance.

I decided to focus on 3 key research aims:

- To explore how the DAF is distributed by gender, assessing purchases made and whether the purchases are successful in gaining employment.
- Understand whether the number of DAF claims per participant increases employability.
- Assess whether participants with an explicit need are receiving the support they require.



Results and Conclusions

The findings for Key Research Aim 1 determined that males are more likely to use DAF than females. 19.5% of males on CFO3 claimed DAF in comparison to 9.6% of females. The crosstabulation also determined males are more likely to be employed than females.

Key Research Aim 2 attempted to find whether the number of DAF's increases employability. This is seen in the above table. If case workers invest DAF in individuals this proves successful as the participants get the support they need to gain employment. I determined recommendations from this for further research: put DAF claims on a timescale to see at what point in the participants journey DAF has supported the participant. For example, has DAF produced the job or has DAF assisted the participant once employment has already been achieved?

The Key Research Aim 3 determined whether participants needs were being addressed. For example, in the initial assessment, participants state exactly what they need support with. One of the needs I utilised was Travel. I found that the majority of participants claiming financial support for travel, initially stated they had no travel issues. Therefore, it could be the case that DAF is being utilised as an incentive to ensure participants attend job interviews, for example.

Recommendations that I drew from this determined that it is important to look at participants home post-codes to address whether they can use public transport for example, something which the DAF could aid with. If participants live in rural areas, travel DAF would not be appropriate. A further recommendation was to allow case workers to update the online system to ensure participants needs are recognised, if there has been any changes to their situation. Also, another proposal would be to complete another assessment if the participant started their journey in custody and were released, their situation could have changed once in the community.