

2014

**BLANCHARDSTOWN
AREA
PARTNERSHIP**

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blanchardstown
area partnership

supporting communities across Dublin 15

[2014 LCDP / LES CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY]

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2014 Blanchardstown Area Partnership, Local Community and Local Development Survey and Local Employment Service/JOBLINK Client Satisfaction Survey

1. Background

Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP) administered its fourth survey of individuals who received labour market supports via LES/JOBLINK. Individual beneficiaries of the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) and Tús participants were also sampled to obtain feedback from jobseekers seeking supports across all programmes managed by the Board of the Partnershipⁱ. The evaluation framework of the LCDP is premised on a limited set of prescribed outcomes and performance indicators with different star rating across the four goalsⁱⁱ. The survey questionnaire was distributed to the reception centres of BAP's six LES and LCDP outreach offices in June 2014. This provided jobseekers who were randomly visiting each office with an opportunity to complete it. LES Mediators alerted jobseekers at the end of a one-to-one session that they could participate. An e-mail was also sent by the Employment Unit of the LES to its registered users within a newsletter that made reference to the survey with an embedded portal link so people could complete it online through the Partnership's website. Finally individuals who were attending an LES JOBLINK Network were also provided with the opportunity to complete the survey.

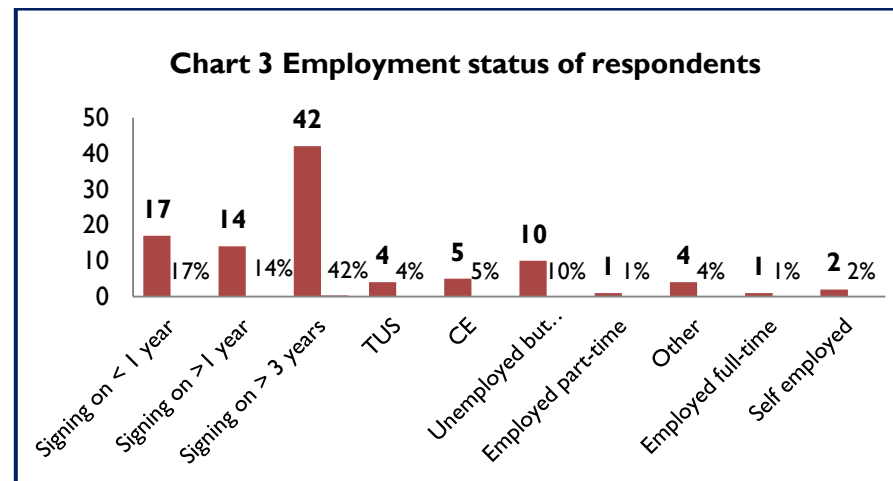
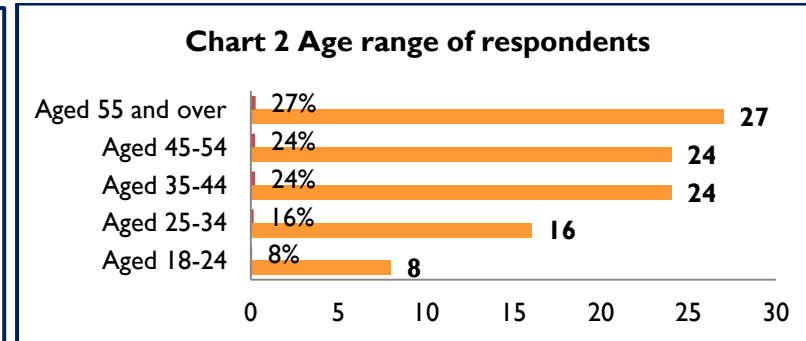
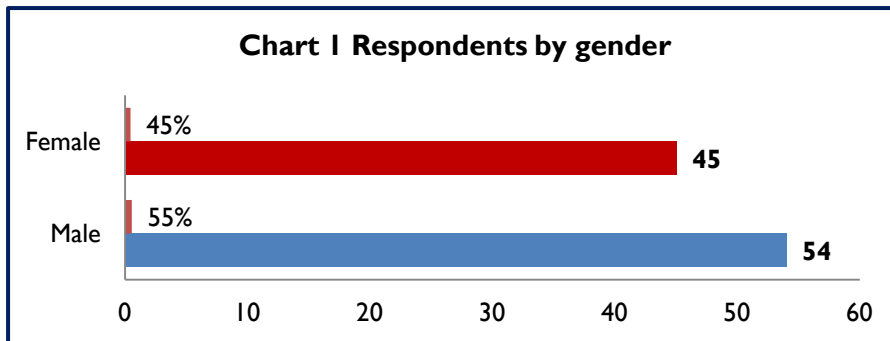
2. Introduction

The results from the 2014 LCDP and LES/JOBLINK survey are generally very positive based on the returned questionnaires. A series of charts is included which visually portray a more detailed breakdown of respondents' feedback to each of the set questions. The main findings are presented thematically although not necessarily in sequence with the design of the questionnaire. As the sample frame is essentially unknown it is not possible to calculate whether the 99 responses to the survey is representative. It was possible to ascertain through GroupSurveys that 23 persons completed it online, and the remainder were individuals who were visiting an LES mediator for an appointment or attending the weekly JOBLINK Networkⁱⁱⁱ.

2.1 Findings

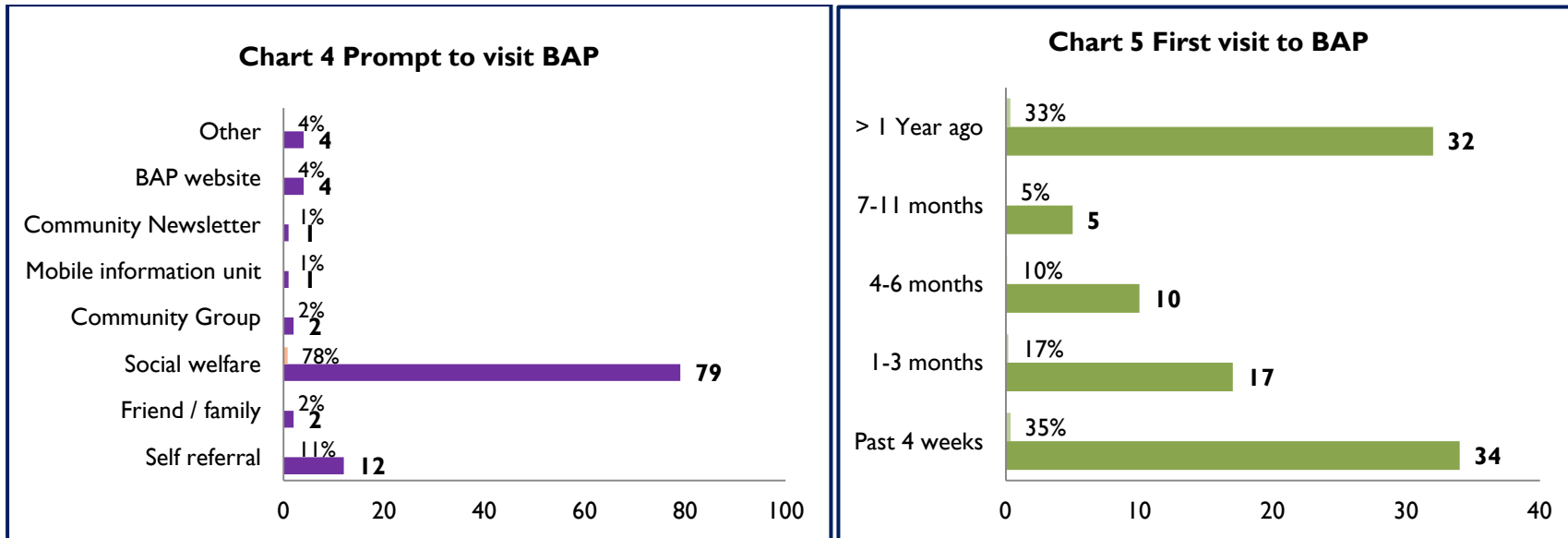
2.2 Profile of survey respondents by gender, age, and employment status

99 individuals responded to the LCDP / LES 2014 survey, which is a decrease over the 2013 total of 124. A slightly higher percentage of the respondents were male (55%) and almost half were aged between 35–54 years of age. With regard to the employment status of respondents 56% indicated that they had been ‘signing on longer than one year’, 5% were on Tús and another 5% were on a Community Employment Scheme. Just 2% suggested they were working full or part time. As such the profile of those who actually responded is very similar to the caseload of individuals tracked under the performance monitoring systems of LCDP and the LES Ryan, C (2013).



2.3 Prompts to visit the Local Employment Service/JOBLINK

78% of respondents paid a visit to the BAP/LES offices as a direct consequence of either a verbal referral from an officer at the local Department of Social Protection (DSP) office or on foot of receiving an official letter from the DSP advising them to do so under the activation process. This is almost double the percentage of clients who indicated in last year's survey that they were referred by the DSP and perhaps is indicative of the changing role of the LES^{iv}. 11% were self-referrals and a further 2.% had been recommended to approach the organisation by a family member or a friend or were referred on by a local Community Group. In terms of when persons initially approached the BAP/LES JOBLINK, one third indicated they had first done so more than one year ago and a further 5% between seven months and just less than one year. This suggests that greater numbers of short-term unemployed clients are receiving labour market interventions from the LES than in previous years.

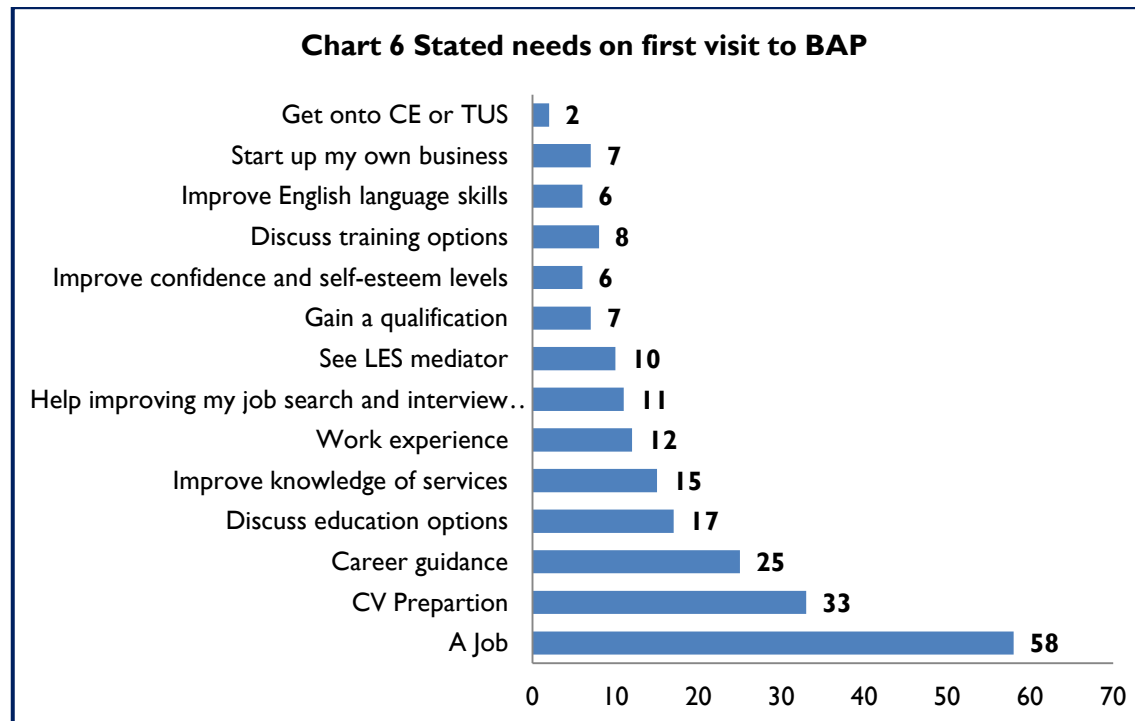


“Referred from Job Fair in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre”

“Was referred but had also discovered website so probably would have been self referred”

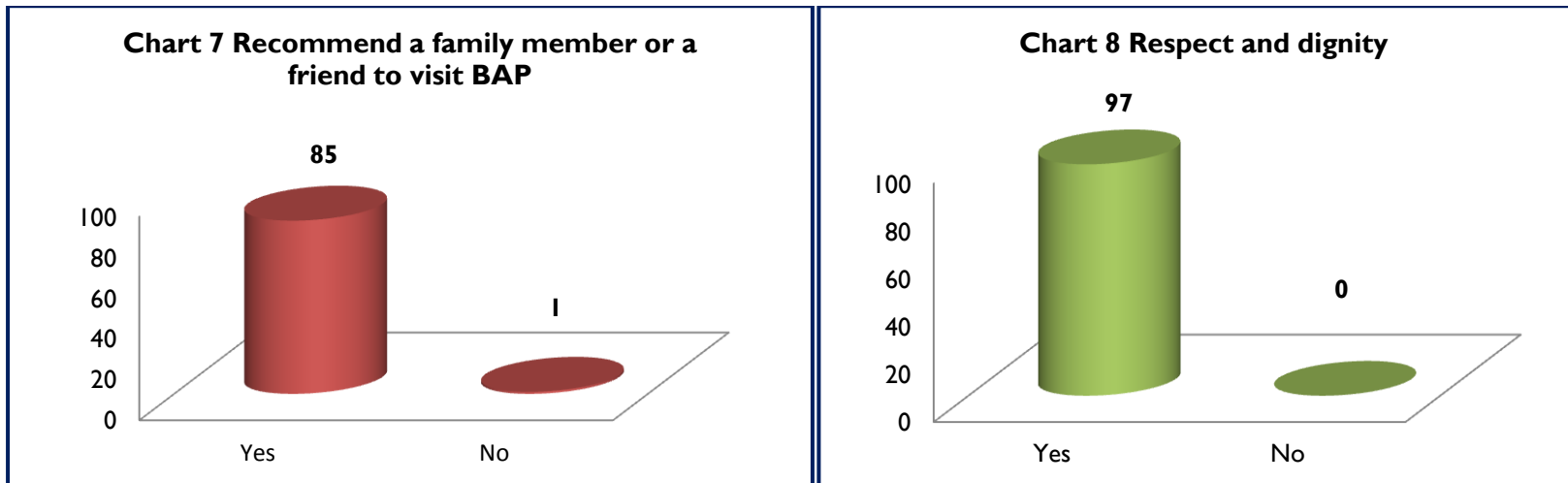
2.4 Motivation for approaching BAP / LES JOBLINK

People's motivation for approaching the Blanchardstown Area Partnership was primarily influenced by the desire to obtain 'a job' (58) based on the feedback data. This was followed by the intention to 'improve their CV' (33) along with 'career guidance' support (25). The fourth most highly rated reason why persons approached the service was the desire to discuss their 'education options' (17). Given that over a third of all respondents were non-Irish nationals it is somewhat surprising that just 6 respondents choose 'improve English language skills' as one of the reasons for approaching BAP.



2.5 Satisfaction levels with BAP /LES Network

99% of all survey respondents stated that they would ‘*recommend a family member of a friend to visit BAP*’. This finding alone is an overwhelming endorsement of the work carried out by the staff of the Blanchardstown Area Partnership/ LES Network. It is also in keeping with the findings of the previous surveys administered. 82% of all visitors to the various premises of the BAP/LES JOBLINK were of the opinion that they were either excellent or very good and just 3% thought they were fair. All clients bar none stated that they had been treated with ‘*respect and dignity*’ by staff members when they initially approached the organisation and throughout the period of time they remained registered with the service. A selection of the comments people made are highlighted in indigo italics.



“Since coming to BAP my confidence had grown enormously”

“Very happy, cause I got good help with my CV and since that time I’ve been attending interviews”

“Lovely people”

“1st class”

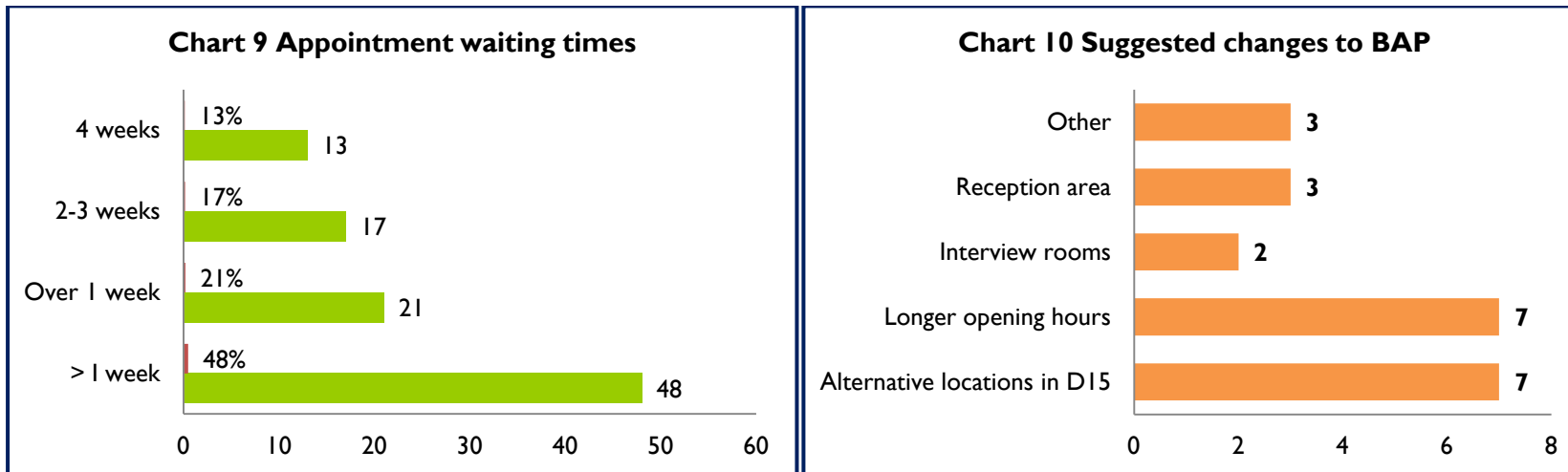
“Absolutely brilliant”

“Very helpful and encouraging”

“Very helpful”

2.6 Waiting periods and suggested improvements to the BAP/LES Network

Based on the responses to the survey questionnaire the majority of individuals managed to secure an appointment with a staff member in a reasonably short period of time. 48% did so in less than one week and another 21% within a fortnight. 13% indicated it took them over a month to do so. 7 persons suggested that they would like to see BAP/LES Network located in alternative locations across Dublin 15 and a similar number expressed a preference for the opening hours of the offices to be extended than at present. The reception area was singled out by 3 persons in need of attention along with other factors such as air-conditioning.



“All fine”
“Fans noisy-air conditioning could be better”
“Shorter time for an appointment”
“Not sure about access for people with disabilities”¹

¹ There is a lift in Dillon House

3. Soft outcomes and core competencies

Soft outcomes may be characterised as intangible, subjective and intermediate but nevertheless there is much evidence to demonstrate their importance². Core competencies / non-academic outcomes or soft outcomes as they are more commonly referred to include factors such as:

- self-confidence
- independence
- attitude change
- relationship and community building

Ideally a researcher would want to establish a baseline from which an individual progression path can be measured. The types of collection methods could include course participants maintaining a personal journal or a diary, recorded observations of groups or individual activities, tests, individual actions planning and goal setting, pre and post course reflection. The short term nature of courses that individuals registered with the LES and LCDP attend sometimes makes it more challenging to collate meaningful feedback data in comparison to an accredited course lasting up to 5 months. Several questions within BAP's annual client satisfaction survey were inserted to continue capturing soft outcomes as occurred in 2013.

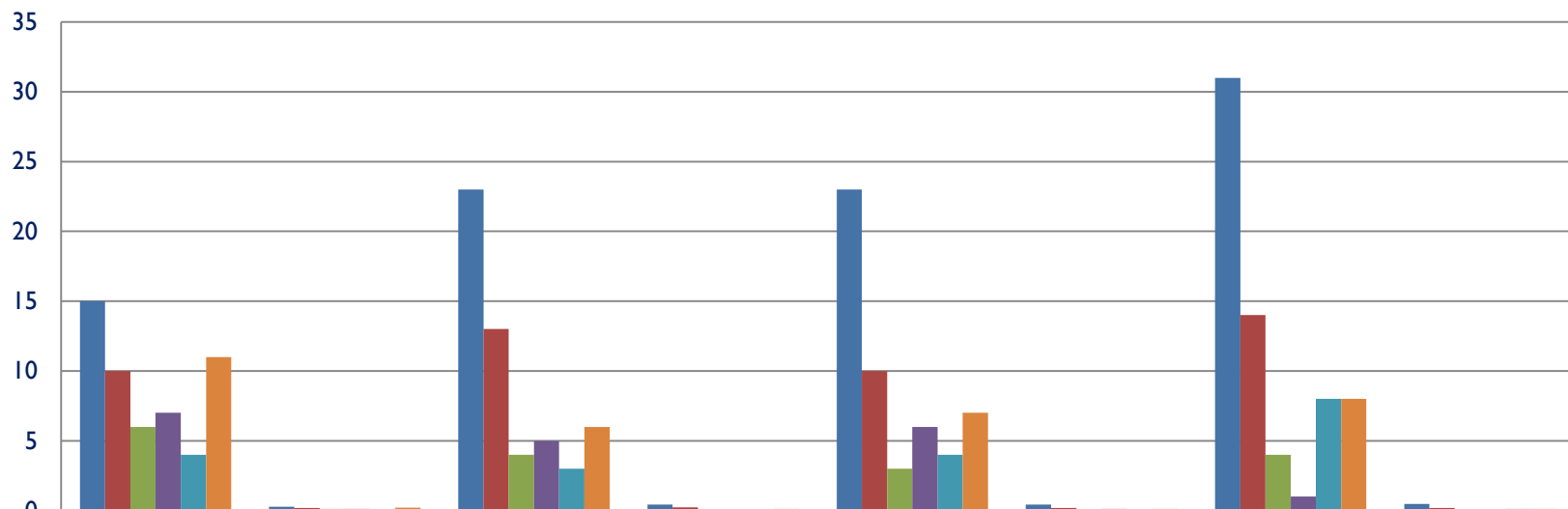
Question 10 a) sought feedback in connection with CV, interview, communication, job search, English language skills, help in accessing courses. Several bar charts are depicted that visually present the collated feedback of respondents. The bullet points overleaf represent a synopsis of that information, which are best read in conjunction with charts 11, 12 and 13, and the qualitative comments.

² The Institute for Employment Studies in the UK in 2000 released a guide for organisations on measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled. They point out that core outcomes can be grouped in many different ways and that some core indicators and outcomes are applicable to most target groups. They may be classified as key work skills, attitudinal skills, personal skills and practical skills. There is no one fixed way to measure and capture soft outcomes and distance travelled despite the obvious attraction (Douglass et al 2012). Westell notes (2005, p3/4) that 'researchers are challenged by the difficulty of isolating variables in adult learning and showing casual relationships between education programs and non-academic progress... life is complex with many different self-evolving systems interacting'. Schuller et al also looked at this in their report Modelling and Measuring The Wider Benefits of Learning: An Initial Synthesis.

- 43% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ that the *interview skills* supports they received had been very helpful, 24% ‘agreed’, 7% were ‘neutral’. 21% disagreed or ‘strongly disagreed’, however which is an increase on previous surveys administered.
- 43% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ that the *communication skills* supports they received were very helpful and 19% ‘agreed’. 19% either ‘disagreed or strongly disagreed’, which is also an increase on previous surveys administered.
- 47% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ that their *CV supports* they received were very helpful and a further 18% ‘agreed’. 14% ‘disagreed or strongly disagreed’
- 28% indicated that their *job search skills* were very helpful and 19% agreed whereas 21% ‘disagreed or strongly disagreed’ and 11.0% were undecided
- 49% suggested that the interventions they received from the organisation had been very helpful in helping them *register for external courses* and 11% ‘agreed’. 13% strongly disagreed.
- 30% indicated that they strongly agreed that they support they’d received along the way had helped them *gain a qualification* and 9% also agreed. 36% indicated this was not appropriate to them.
- 47% of respondents put forward that the information and advice they received had been very helpful in enabling them *access other services* and a further 10% somewhat with 12% strongly disagreeing
- 27% of respondents suggested that interventions been very helpful in improving their *English language skills* and a further 24% ‘agreed’. None of those surveyed were participants on the Failte Isteach or English language courses funded via Goal 2 of the LCDP.
- 21% indicated that their *understanding of Irish culture* had improved while 11% agreed. 45% indicated this was not applicable to them
- 15% strongly agreed that they were *better able to help their children with homework* and a further 10% agreed. 48% indicated this was not applicable to them.³

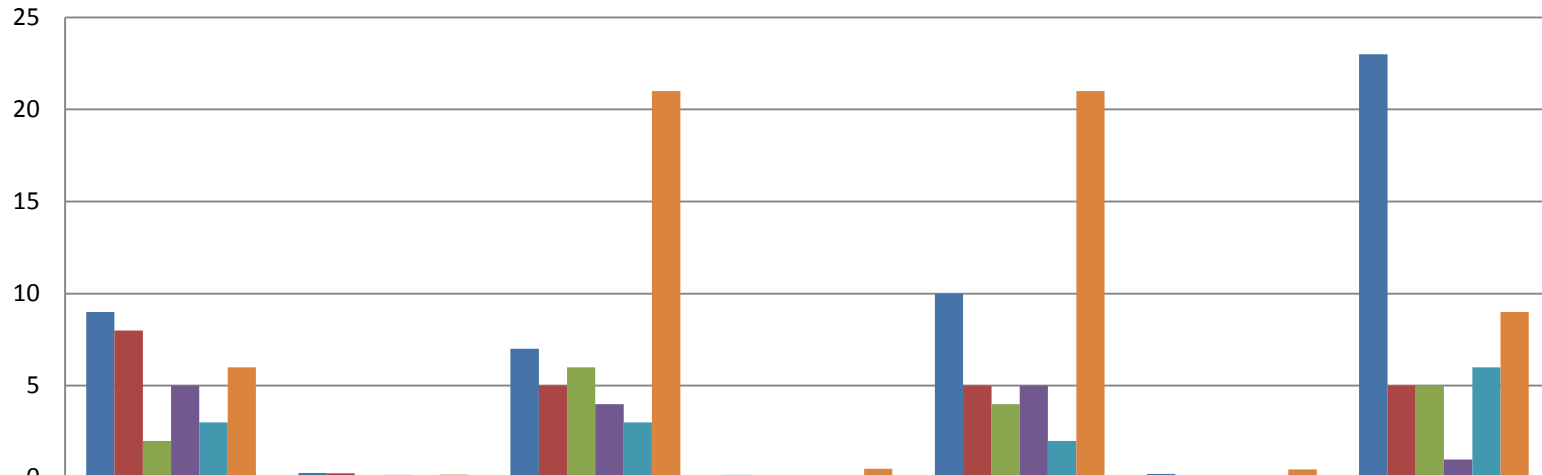
³ Excluding ‘not stated’ 75.% of respondents to the questionnaire were Irish nationals

Chart II Soft outcomes I



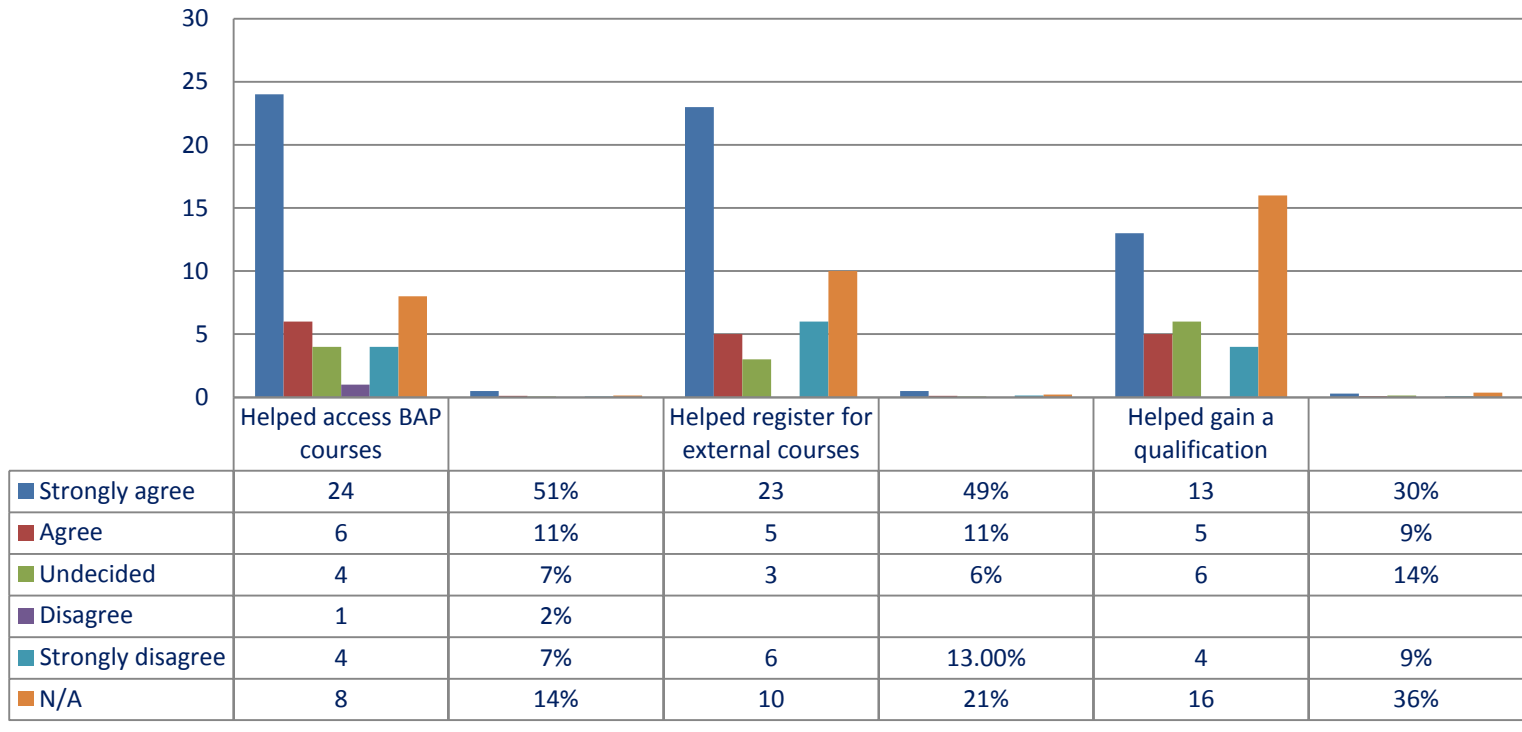
	Improved job search skills		Improved interview skills		Improved communication skills		Improved CV	
■ Strongly agree	15	28%	23	43%	23	43%	31	47%
■ Agree	10	19%	13	24%	10	19%	14	18%
■ Undecided	6	11%	4	7%	3	6%	4	6%
■ Disagree	7	13%	5	9%	6	11%	1	2%
■ Strongly disagree	4	8%	3	6%	4	8%	8	12%
■ N/A	11	21%	6	11%	7	13%	8	12%

Chart 12 Soft outcomes 2



	Improved English language skills		Better able to help children with homework		Improved understanding of Irish culture		Helped access other services
■ Strongly agree	9	27%	7	15%	10	21%	23
■ Agree	8	24%	5	10%	5	11%	5
■ Undecided	2	6%	6	13%	4	9%	5
■ Disagree	5	15%	4	8%	5	11%	1
■ Strongly disagree	3	9%	3	6%	2	4%	6
■ N/A	6	18%	21	48%	21	45%	9

Chart 13 Soft outcomes 3



10a) Selection of qualitative comments from respondents'

- “LES Mediator very helpful and supportive”*
- “Very good to get you going”*
- “Found Bootcamp very useful and good to know they are there to help”*
- “Just an early visit to get a sense of direction”*
- “Understand my learning difficulty very much”*
- “very helpful and hope it continues”*
- “Excellent service”*

Question 10 b) sought feedback in connection with whether the interventions people received from BAP had enabled people secure a part or full time job, a labour market programme, take up work experience, improve their income levels, quality of life and family life. As the majority of individuals sampled are still registered clients of the BAP/ LES Network, and have not disengaged, far fewer respondents gave feedback to these particular variables (charts 14–17).

- Of the 39 respondents who answered 41% claimed that the interventions they'd received had helped them 'very much' in supporting them to gain *work experience* and another 6% somewhat. 28.% suggested 'not really or not at all'.
- 47% (15) persons indicated that the interventions had helped them very much in accessing a *Tús or a Community Employment scheme* and 6% somewhat helpful. 16% were undecided and 19% stated 'not at all'.
- 35% indicated that the interventions had been very helpful in them finding *full-time employment* and 8% stated 'somewhat'. 19% were undecided and the same percentage said 'not at all'.
- 14 persons or 38% of respondents indicated the supports they received had helped them very much in securing a *part-time job* and 5% somewhat. 16% were undecided and 22% stated 'not at all'.
- From the 38 respondents 42% suggested that they very much had a *better quality of life* as a result of visiting BAP and 21% choose 'somewhat'. 8% were undecided and 4% stated 'not really'.
- With respect to income levels 46% (5) of clients stated that their *income levels* were now higher than before they visited BAP/ LES Network. On the other hand 46% indicated that their income levels had 'not improved at all'. This could be indicative of low-paid work these individuals took up.

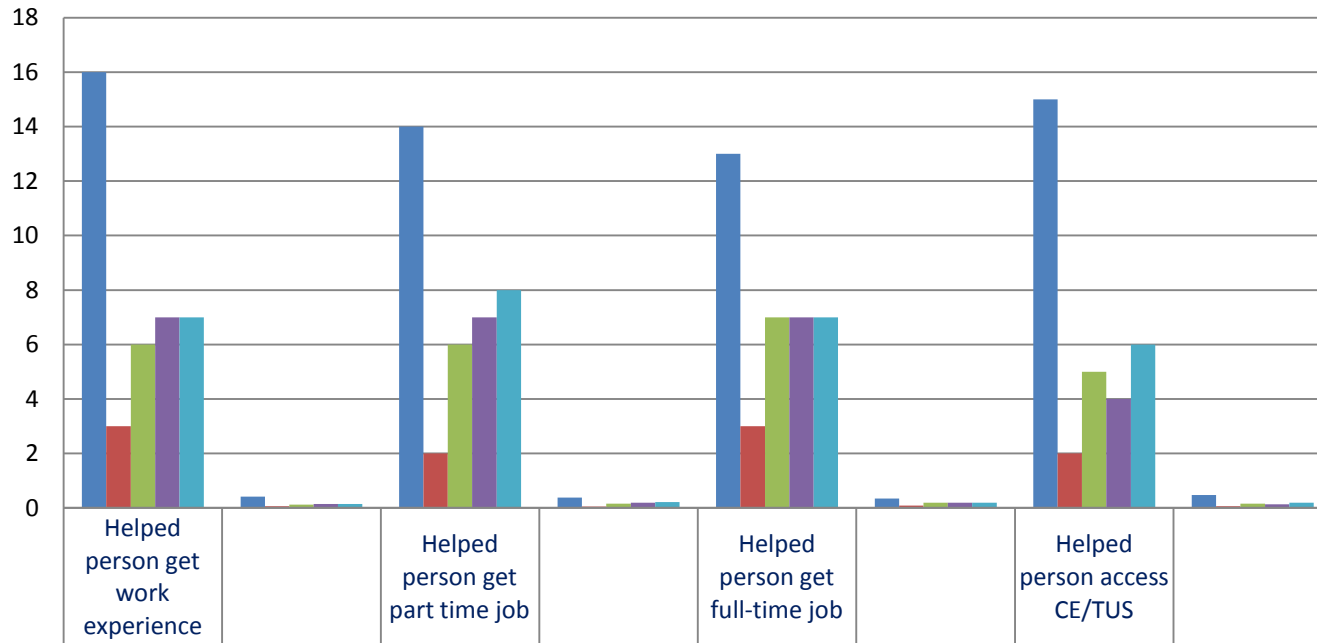
10b) Selection of qualitative comments from respondents'

"The full time job was an internship at the ESB, unfortunately not offered a paid contract"

"I am really glad with the attention given to me"

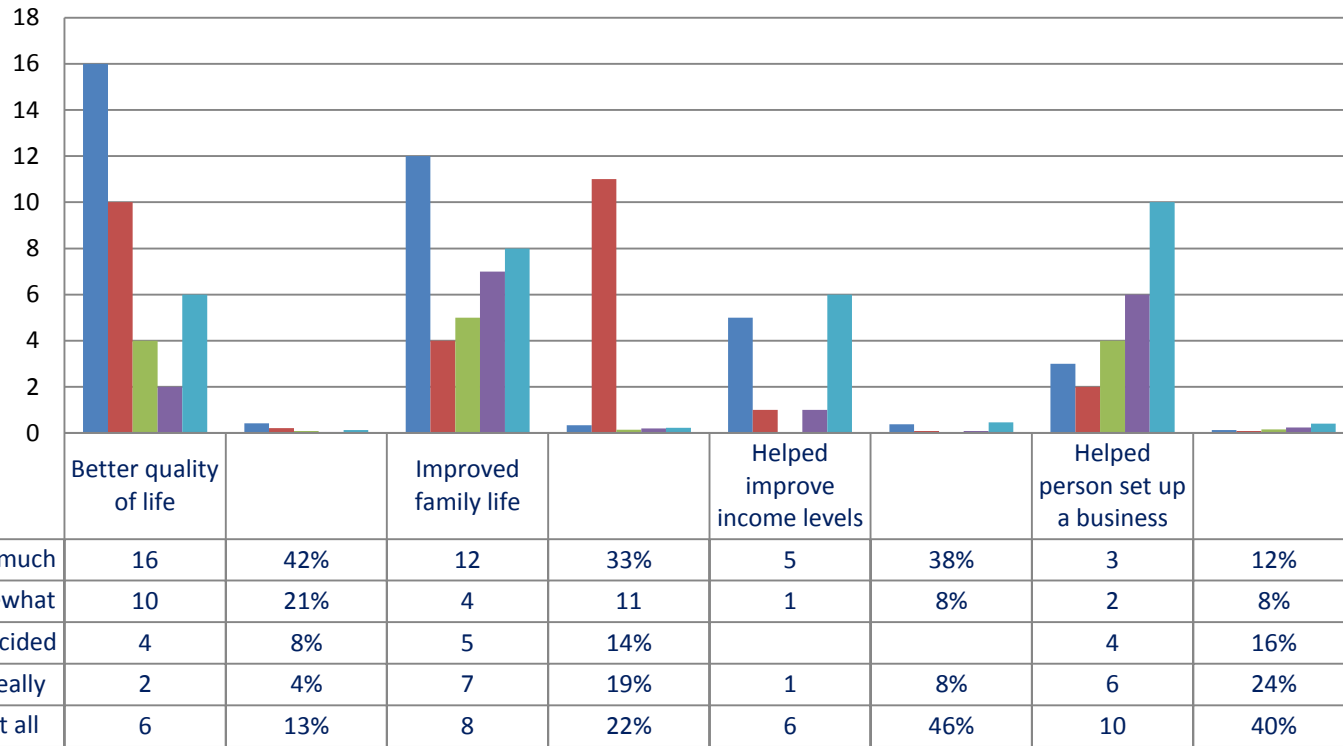
"They try their best, enjoyed the job club and enjoyed the group"

Chart 14 Soft outcomes 4



Very much	16	41%	14	38%	13	35%	15	47%
Somewhat	3	6%	2	5%	3	8.00%	2	6%
Undecided	6	12%	6	16%	7	19%	5	16%
Not really	7	14%	7	19%	7	19%	4	13%
Not at all	7	14%	8	22%	7	19%	6	19%

Chart 15 Soft Outcomes 5



Question 10c) was constructed to build upon information obtained from the previous two questions. Given their previous answers respondents were asked to indicate to what extent the supports they had received may have improved their motivation, self-esteem and confidence levels, their aspirations, sense of isolation, improved their knowledge of other services available and finally helped them identify their skills and provide them with a career path plan. More people responded to these core competencies and soft outcomes than compared with question 10b).

- 37 persons or 56% indicated that the supports they received had been improved their *motivation levels* ‘very much’ and 17 (26%) ‘somewhat’, whereas 8% indicated ‘not at all’
- 34 persons or 50% suggested that the supports they received had improved their *confidence levels* ‘very much’ and 15 (22%) somewhat, whereas 7% indicated not at all
- 51% put forward that the advice and supports they received had improved their *aspirations* and 24% somewhat while 8% suggested ‘not really’
- 26 persons or 45% of respondents signified that the advice and supports they received had very much increased their *knowledge of services*, 22 or 38% somewhat and 10% not at all.
- 57 persons or 67% of respondents denoted that that the interventions they received had been very helpful in *identify their skills and providing them with a career path*. 18 persons (21%) said somewhat and 4% not helpful at all.
- 38% indicated that attending the LES/ JOBLINK had *reduced their sense of isolation* very much and 30% somewhat
- 27 persons or 43% expressed the opinion that the various supports they received had been very much *improved their contacts with people and networks* , 25% somewhat and 11% were undecided
- Finally 41% signified that the interventions they had received had very much provided them with a *renewed sense of purpose* and a further 27% somewhat with 22% stating ‘not really’ or ‘not at all’

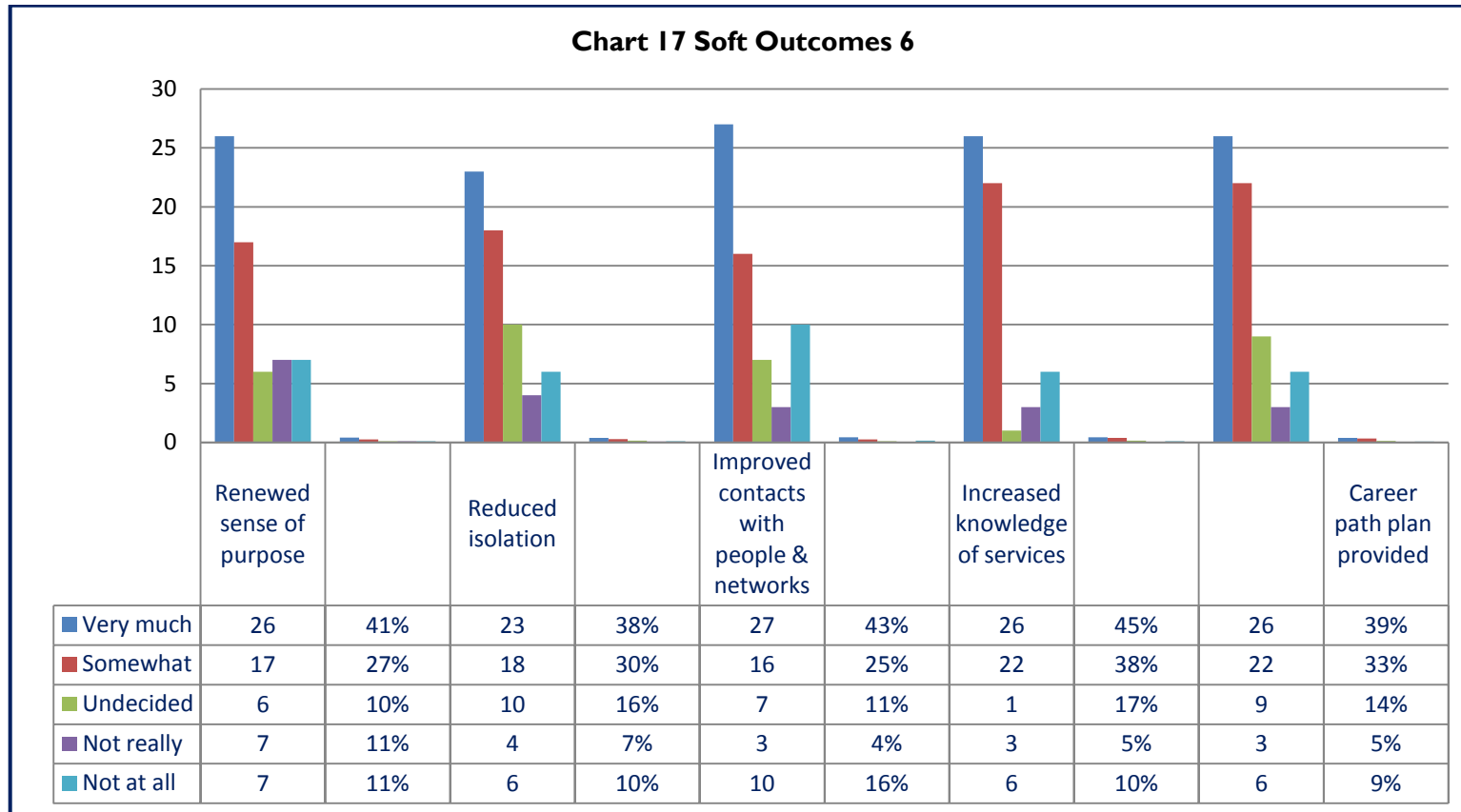
10c) Selection of qualitative comments from respondents’

“They have helped me to keep persevering in my search for work and given me opportunities for training”

“Lots of possibilities for the future”

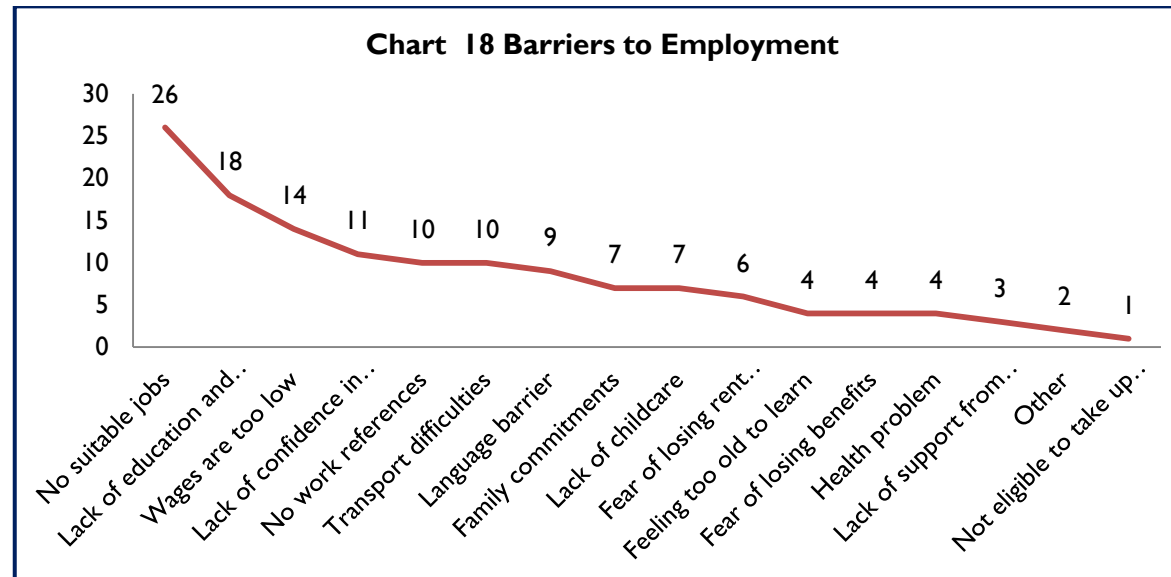
Very approachable people”

“Always very welcome and very helpful”
“Very good at putting people at ease and boosting self confidence”
“Increased optimism”
“Was there to talk about options got a plan”
“Just needed help with my CV”
“Have better experience at many skills”



4. Barriers to employment

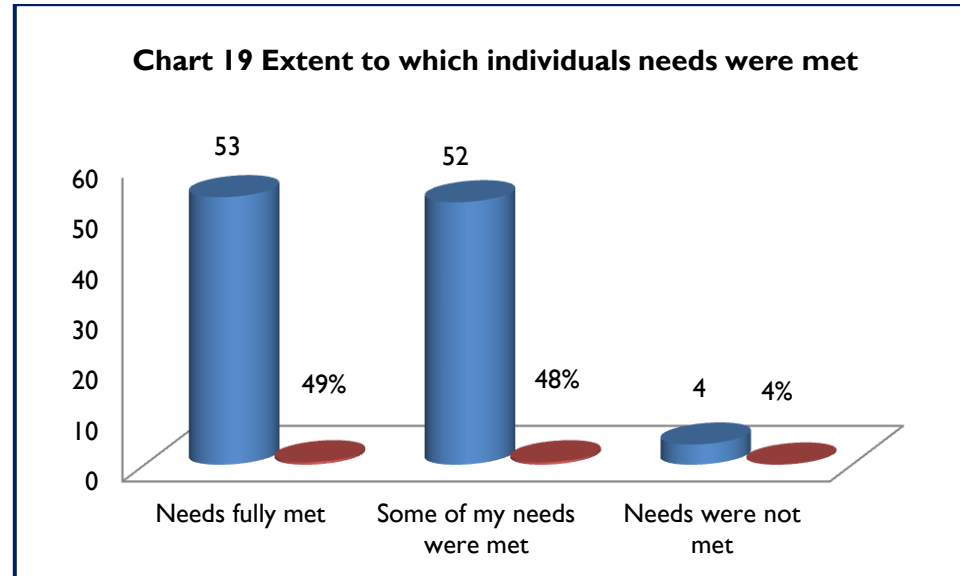
As the majority of those surveyed are still registered with the BAP/ LES JOBLINK it was deemed appropriate to capture data on what the barriers to employment are for these jobseekers. The challenge most frequently cited by individuals, which prevented them from (re)entering the labour market was that there are ‘no suitable jobs’ (26). 18 persons suggested it was down to a ‘lack of education and skills’ and 14 because ‘wages were too low’. Some of the other barriers to employment selected included ‘lack of confidence’ (10) and ‘no work references’ and ‘transport difficulties’ (10). Just 4 individuals indicated ‘fear of losing benefits’.



“Not much jobs on the market”
“Carer for Mam-85 years of age”
“Can’t write in English”

4.1 Individual beneficiary needs

Finally respondents were asked to rate to what extent their needs had been met. 53 or 49% indicated that their needs had been fully met, 52 or 48% that some of their needs had been met and 4% that their needs had not been met.



5. Conclusions

The results from the 2013 LCDP and LES/JOBLINK survey are generally very positive based on the 99 returned questionnaires:

- 99% of all survey respondents stated that they would ‘*recommend a family member of a friend to visit BAP*’ which is endorsement of the work carried out by the staff of the organisation
- All clients stated that they had been treated with ‘*respect and dignity*’ by staff members when they initially approached BAP and throughout the period of time they remained registered with the service.
- 82% were of the opinion that the premises of the BAP/LES JOBLINK they had visited were either excellent or very good
- 49% indicated that their ‘*needs had been fully met*’, 48% that ‘*some of their needs had been met*’ and 4% that their needs had not been met
- Jobseekers suggested that the lack of suitable jobs and a deficit in their skills and education were the two primary factors for them not being able to (re) enter the labour market.

The template overleaf presents a listing of some of the prescribed LCDP outcomes across the 3 goals alongside the performance indicators and the results of the LCDP/ LES survey administered. Based on the feedback of the 99 survey participants it can be stated that these prescribed outcomes⁴ of the LCDP across Goals 1, 2 and 3 are clearly being achieved by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership. Many respondents made reference to how isolating⁵ the experience of unemployment is. 38% indicated that attending the LES/ JOBLINK had *reduced their sense of isolation* very much and 30% somewhat. 43% expressed the opinion that the various supports they received had been very much *improved their contacts with people and networks*, 25% somewhat.

⁴ Most interestingly of all perhaps are that the results, which clearly show that many additional soft outcomes are being achieved in progressing jobseekers towards the labour market that are not reflected in the 2011–2013 LCDP evaluation framework

⁵ A 2011 Institute of Public Health in Ireland released a report *Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men’s Health in Ireland* makes reference to the ‘*vital role played by organisations operating within the community—where a first point of access can be provided for men in a secure environment..and actively support and encourage the establishment of new men’s groups*’. The importance of having LCDP and LES contact points strategically located in local communities where unemployed persons live in higher concentrations is backed up by this recent report and supports to men’s groups. Blanchardstown Area Partnership has also begun to support more proactively such groups in recent years such as the Men’s shed project. Community groups are monitored under Goal 4 of the LCDP and were not examined in the context of this LCDP/ LES survey

Table 1

<p>Goal 1: Promote awareness, knowledge and update of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services</p>	<p>Feedback</p>
<p>Outcomes Increased awareness, knowledge and update of one or more of the following services</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>1.1 Level of LDC clients' awareness of specified service provision *</p> <p>1.2 Level of LCD clients' knowledge of specified service provision *</p> <p>1.3 Level of LDC clients' uptake of specified services ***</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% suggested that they strongly agreed that the interventions they received from the organisation had been very helpful in helping them <i>register for external courses</i> and 11% somewhat helpful. • 45% of respondents signified that the advice and supports they received had been very helpful in increasing their <i>knowledge of services</i>, 38% somewhat • 47% put forward that the information and advice they received had very much helped them in enabling them <i>access other services</i> and a further 10% somewhat
<p>Goal 2 - Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources</p>	<p>Feedback</p>
<p>2. Increased awareness and uptake of formal (to include pre-school, compulsory and post-compulsory accredited education or training) and informal (to include youth work and non-accredited post-compulsory education or training) educational opportunities for children, young people and adults ***</p> <p>2.7 Number and percentage of people supported by LDCs who enrol in non-accredited post-compulsory education or training. **</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% strongly agreed that the supports they had received along the way had been very helpful in enabling them <i>gain a qualification</i> and 9% agreed. 36% stated that this factor was not applicable to them • 27% of respondents strongly agreed that interventions been very helpful in improving their <i>English language skills</i> and a further 24% agreed. 6% were neutral (None of those surveyed were participants on the Failte Isteach or English

	<p>language courses funded via Goal 2 of the LCDP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% indicated that their <i>understanding of Irish culture</i> had improved. 45% stated that this factor was not applicable to them
<p>Goal 3 Increase in people’s work readiness and employment prospects</p>	<p>Feedback</p>
<p>1. Long term unemployed (LTU) *** and the under-employed* are better prepared for the labour market.</p> <p>1.3 Number and proportion of LDC clients reporting being satisfied with the interventions provided. ***</p> <p>1.4 Number and proportion of LDC clients attributing their preparedness to find work to an intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity. ***</p> <p>1.5 Number and proportion of LTU people*** and the underemployed* who participate in labour market activation measures (including training initiatives) following intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity. ***</p> <p>1.6 Number and proportion of LTU people who take up employment following intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity within 6 months of programme completion.***</p> <p>3. Increased levels of self-employment amongst the LTU. *** (prescribed outcome)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% of respondents strongly agreed that the <i>interview skills</i> supports they received had been ‘very helpful’, 24% ‘somewhat helpful’, and 11% ‘not helpful at all’ • 43% of respondents also strongly agreed that the <i>communication skills</i> supports they received were very helpful and 19% agreed • 47% suggested of respondents suggested that their <i>CV supports</i> they received were very helpful and a further 18% somewhat helpful • 28% strongly agreed that their <i>job search skills</i> via social media had improved and 19% somewhat • Of the 39 respondents who answered 41% claimed that the interventions they’d received had helped them ‘very much’ in supporting them to gain <i>work experience</i> and another 6% somewhat. 28% suggested ‘not really or not at all’. • 47% (15) persons indicated that the interventions had helped them very much in accessing a <i>Tús or a Community Employment scheme</i> and 6% somewhat helpful. 16% were undecided and 19% stated ‘not at all’. • 35% indicated that the interventions had been very helpful in

<p>3.1 Number of LTU people who become self employed following intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity. ***</p> <p>3.2. Number and proportion of LTU who set up an enterprise that is operational for 12 months or more following intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity.**</p> <p>3.3 Number and percent of programme participants still in business, 2 years after start.*</p>	<p>them finding <i>full-time employment</i> and 8% stated ‘somewhat’. 19% were undecided and the same percentage said ‘not at all’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 persons or 38% of respondents indicated the supports they received had helped them very much in securing a <i>part-time job</i> and 5% somewhat. 16% were undecided and 22% stated ‘not at all’. • 3 persons suggested that the Partnership’s supports had been very helpful in support them set up their own business and a further 2 somewhat
	<p>Non prescribed outcomes reported by survey respondents</p>
<p>There are no social indicators across the Local and Community Development Programme to capture these core competencies and soft outcomes some of which are short term, medium and long term. (Please refer to the LES Logic Model for more information)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 persons or 56% indicated that the supports they received had been improved their <i>motivation levels</i> ‘very much’ and 17 (26%) ‘somewhat’, whereas 8% indicated ‘not at all’ • 34 persons or 50% suggested that the supports they received had improved their <i>confidence levels</i> ‘very much’ and 15 (22%) somewhat, whereas 7% indicated not at all • 51% put forward that the advice and supports they received had improved their <i>aspirations</i> and 24% somewhat while 8% suggested ‘not really’ • 57 persons or 67% of respondents denoted that that the interventions they received had been very helpful in <i>identify their skills and providing them with a career path</i>. 18 persons (21%) said somewhat and 4% not helpful at all.

- 38% indicated that attending the LES/ JOBLINK had *reduced their sense of isolation* very much and 30% somewhat
- 27 persons or 43% expressed the opinion that the various supports they received had been very much *improved their contacts with people and networks* , 25% somewhat
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Endnotes

ⁱ Unemployed individuals are referred from the LES to the LCDP and back to the LES with the intention of providing the person with the most appropriate supports in their efforts to move closer to the labour market. Attributing an outcome to just the LES or the LCDP can be difficult and somewhat questionable. The focus of the questionnaires was deliberately expanded to previous versions as it sought to obtain information from individuals around the core competencies, soft outcomes and skills they may potentially obtain from receiving interventions across the 'whole organisation'.

ⁱⁱ Goal 1: Promote awareness, knowledge and update of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services; Goals 2: Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources; Goal 3: Increase in people's work readiness and employment prospects; Goal 4: Promote engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1,200 persons receive an LES Newsletter from the Employment Unit. Approximately 25% on average open the newsletter itself. It was not possible to ascertain how many persons who received the Employment Unit newsletter subsequently opened the link to the LCDP / LES survey itself.

^{iv} The number of persons who are requested to visit the Blanchardstown Local Employment Service/ JOBLINK each week under the NEAPs process has increased from 16 to 70. This is in addition to the community clients who voluntary who drop into the LES/ JOBLINK service.