



# PACE Customer Journeys: Research Report

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Commissioned by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the PACE Partnership  
By George Street Research

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Skills  
Development  
Scotland



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

George Street Research was commissioned by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to administer a programme of qualitative research assessing the ‘customer journey’ when undergoing the process of redundancy. The research was designed to feed into the continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), the Scottish Government’s national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations.

The research specifically sought to:

- Explore the journey when going through redundancy and identify specific stages in the journey, together with what types of support would be valued at each stage;
- Explore the extent to which PACE or private sector support meets the needs of those undergoing redundancy;
- Identify any gaps in the PACE service offering and how these can be met;
- Provide recommendations for a programme of improvement on PACE.

## Method and Sample

Forty in-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out, split between four specific groups – PACE Advisers (10 interviews), PACE users (14), private sector service users (7) and non service users (9). A spread of gender, age, urban/rural classification and SEGs were represented in the sample to ensure a variety of experiences and needs.

All interviews were carried out between 31st January and 23rd February, 2011; those who had undergone redundancy were given a £20 incentive for participation, whilst PACE Advisers were given no incentive. Ten interviews with redundant respondents were administered face to face and the remaining 20 were carried out by telephone.

## The PACE Partnership

Overall, awareness of the PACE Partnership was low – even amongst those who were classified as ‘PACE users’. Those aware appeared confused or unsure about the nature of the Partnership itself in terms of who was involved or what the specific roles and responsibilities of each were. For PACE users, PACE was most commonly associated with the advisers dealt with, rather than the Partnership per se.

Nevertheless, there was a widespread openness from respondents to the services being offered.

Many respondents – especially non service users – commented about a strong degree of frustration with Job Centre Plus when consulted in isolation. Those who had sought support from the Job Centre – most commonly for benefits information, careers advice and job searching – were highly frustrated with the service leaving them feeling like ‘a number’. This was caused by short consultations, being encouraged to apply for unsuitable jobs and an apparent ‘target-driven’ focus by Job Centre staff. This is an especially important finding when considered in the context of the potential emotional fragility of respondents.

Throughout the interviews it was clear that a high proportion of respondents felt victimised and emotional throughout the process and into redundancy. Even those who had taken voluntary redundancy tended to have these feelings – most feeling that if they didn’t take the opportunity, they would be ‘forced out’ soon anyway.

Those who experienced the services of PACE tended to be less negative about the Job Centre than those who had no alternative support. The key implication is that the emotional context under which individuals enter redundancy highlights the need for some level of direct, personal and tailored support. Arguably, the PACE Partnership provides the opportunity to provide support, allowing the Job Centre to provide a more limited service.

Support needs to be provided with an appropriate balance of both practical and ‘emotional’ support, tailored to the individual.

## The Customer Journey

From very early on in the research, it was obvious that there was no single, 'typical' journey into redundancy – each had its own specific intricacies or idiosyncrasies which differed from others, even within one individual institution. Personal circumstances had a profound impact on each respondent's reaction to the redundancy and indeed approach to the journey back to work. The most critical factors which impacted each redundancy situation were:

- Family circumstances
- Financial commitments
- Years with employer
- Size of severance package
- Previous experience with redundancy
- Skill set, previous experience and adaptability to other roles
- Motivation/ambition
- Confidence/self esteem.

Irrespective of circumstance, the customer journey is highly likely to require a balance of emotional support and practical guidance – the weight of balance itself is specific to the individual.

Throughout the journey into redundancy there appears to be different needs at different times. The earlier stages point towards a need for more emotional support and encouragement, whilst mid and later points in the journey require more practical support. Once into unemployment, the need for emotional support returns as frustration grows and a belief in finding another job diminishes.

Although perhaps overly simplistic, the following table summarises this need along with some potential stages in the journey.

Stage	Emotional Support	Practical Support
Initial consultation	√√	
During consultation period	√	
When redundancy has been confirmed	√	√
1-2 weeks after confirmation	√	√√
Weeks running up to leaving		√√
Weeks after leaving		√
Months after leaving (if still unemployed)	√√	√

A number of potential challenges stand in the way of a typical customer journey however, namely:

- The process can happen very quickly – many respondents only found out they were definitely being made redundant a day or less before leaving;
- Some simply do not believe that they will go despite being in a consultation period;
- Many are not interested in putting themselves forward to receive support due to, for example, pride, a lack of expected benefit or need.

## Valued Services and the PACE Experience

Only a small number of respondents were able to comment definitively on the services offered by PACE due to the lack of awareness overall. Many, when interviewed commented on support received but were unable to comment definitively on whether this was provided by PACE or not. Overall, there were a small number of positive experiences mentioned including:

- Consultation and support from Business Gateway which led to one individual setting up his own business;
- One respondent being granted access to funding for an important training course;
- A small number of respondents having their CVs transformed positively.

Respondents tended to be very positive specifically about PACE Advisers in terms of their openness and availability and the help they provided.

There was acknowledgement that a careers adviser or advice service cannot acquire a new job for each person who has been made redundant. The role of the adviser was seen very much as indirect provision of hope, through advice, encouragement and direction. Overall, the key need for respondents is to be 'pointed in the right direction'; that is to be guided into next steps. This involves information on training courses, assistance with CV writing and interview technique; additionally it includes introductions to other organisations who can help with their specific needs – e.g. Business Gateway when looking to set up a new business.

It was interesting how infrequently respondents felt they would benefit from further training. Many felt that their experience alone should be sufficient to provide them with alternative employment, whilst others felt that training was more for a career change.

Additionally, those who were interested saw training as a minefield of courses whereby it is incredibly difficult to choose an appropriate and legitimate course. This highlighted the need for advisers to point respondents in the direction of relevant training courses. To do this, it is important that advisers are able to get to know clients in terms of experience and ambition, in order to assist in directing them towards further training.

## PACE vs Alternatives

Respondents were rarely able to comment about PACE in a comparative context as only a small number received PACE support in addition to other private sector support. Furthermore in these examples, PACE appeared to play a secondary role to the other provider, Penna. The key, notable difference from the interviews was that PACE offers follow-up support, whilst others do not appear to. That is, those using the PACE service are able to keep in touch with advisers and use the services long into redundancy, whilst these are available for a finite time with alternative providers.

Advisers were able to comment on some additional differences, most notably:

- As a Scottish partnership, PACE has local knowledge – that is an understanding of the circumstances in the locality including community issues and potential career opportunities;
- PACE Advisers are qualified careers advisers;
- PACE is able to provide more guidance on available funding for individuals.

## Key Challenges

The research revealed three key challenges for PACE which must be considered to ensure maximised potential and effectiveness.

Partnership working can be highly effective, but to reach maximum potential, it is important that this is administered with clear and effective leadership. This would include the need for a project manager for each employer, and a single source of contact for each individual client.

It is important that PACE engages more effectively with employers. Awareness of the PACE brand is very low and this makes the sales process difficult. It is important that the brand is more widely recognised and that PACE is shown to be a good value service; as one which is free, there is the potential for it to be viewed as lower value. PACE branding and communications appears to be very inconsistent and not overtly about PACE, leading to low awareness and consequently, low understanding of what is to be expected.

Finally, advisers spoke of a need to ensure some form of easily navigated tool which provides a useful knowledge share source for advisers to obtain a more national perspective.

## Recommendations

PACE has the potential to be a highly effective vehicle for redundancy support. The research would suggest the need for a small series of possible developments to ensure it effectively meets this potential.

It may be worth considering the feasibility of advisers approaching companies and “splitting” clients by possible skill set. This, in effect, would limit the potentially vast options to be investigated by advisers as there are likely to be a high level of shared ambitions and needs between these types of employees.

The limits currently on the impact and reach of PACE are unequivocally due, at least in part, to a lack of brand awareness and a lack of understanding in terms of what services are on offer; it is essential that businesses in Scotland are aware of the service and of the benefits of using it.

It is important however that the PACE Partnership ensures its offering is always relevant to the potential clients it serves within specific institutions. This means knowledge of relevant training courses and opportunities, access to funding and specific job opportunities. This can only be improved by a greater degree of knowledge share between advisers and an improved portal for sharing this information.

The development of a PACE brand which is widely recognised by the business community, coupled with services which are in some way tailored to the individual's personal circumstances and ambitions, could build an already influential service into one which can be influential on a much wider scale.

# BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

## Unemployment and Redundancy in Scotland

In September 2010, there were around 229,000 unemployed people in Scotland – reflecting 8.5% of the adult population (aged 16 or over)<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the events of the global financial crisis in recent years have had a significant impact on Scotland’s labour market. A recent Scottish Government review predicted 60,000 job losses in the public sector alone by 2014-15. This, coupled with the extent of anticipated job losses in the private sector across Scotland, point to an increased need for some level of guidance, support and advice for those facing redundancy.

## PACE

Initiated in March 2000, PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) is the Scottish Government’s national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. The initiative exists for public and private sector organisations with a view to ensuring they are suitably equipped to respond to potential and proposed redundancies in an effective and efficient manner. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) co-ordinates PACE at a national level and facilitates local level response teams providing tailored help and support for individuals at risk of, or experiencing, redundancy.

Whilst the response to each redundancy situation is tailored to meet individual needs and local circumstances, the services offered will generally include:

- Full Jobcentre Plus services
- One-to-one counselling and advice on career development and opportunities
- Access to training
- Seminars on skills; e.g. CV-writing and starting up a business
- Access to IT facilities

In June 2009, the Scottish Government established the “PACE Partnership”, a national strategic group, chaired by the Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning. This collaboration brought 18 partner organisations together with the Scottish Government to oversee a continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE. The Partnership established six workstreams to take forward the continuous improvement work: PACE Offer, PACE Delivery, PACE Marketing and Promotion, PACE Data Capture and Evaluation, PACE Early Intervention and PACE Staff Development. These have been replaced by a National PACE Partnership Operational Group which will take forward any outstanding work from the six workstreams and new projects to enhance the operation of PACE.

These workstreams have led to the development of a series of recent improvements, including the following:

- increased accessibility to PACE support for all individuals and employers, including a new national helpline and updated website;
- developed PACE offering to include financial management, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing support;
- an audit of current delivery which will inform a new delivery model;
- the development and implementation of a new marketing strategy;
- the introduction of a new system for recording PACE interventions;
- a new staff development programme;
- ongoing work to explore early intervention issues.

<sup>1</sup> Based on Monthly Unemployment Report, November 2010, Skills Development Scotland.



## The Customer Experience

In 2009, as part of the development programme, Skills Development Scotland commissioned a quantitative research exercise to explore the client experience in the new, refocused PACE service offering. The results were overwhelmingly positive, revealing that almost two-thirds of PACE service users who had left their redundant jobs had found new roles, or had undertaken some form of training or development.

The research was carried out with individuals who had received PACE services through their employer, therefore excluding those who had been made redundant but did not have access to services or who opted out of using the service. As such, SDS felt that, to ensure effective refinement of the service, there was a need to consult a wider audience including service users, non users and those who have accessed or used alternative services.

In light of this, George Street Research was commissioned by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to explore the journey undertaken by those going through redundancy, assessing needs at various stages of the process and what specific interventions and assistance could be provided. More specifically, the objectives of this research were to:

- Explore the customer journey taken by those who have recently been made redundant;
- Identify the needs of individuals at different stages of the customer journey;
- Explore what the key influences are in terms of how they progress, and how these influences affect outputs;

- Identify where in that journey PACE support/private sector redundancy support currently fits and whether this comes at the right point of time in their journey;
- Gain an understanding as to why some individuals have decided against accessing redundancy support;
- Determine how well current PACE support/private sector redundancy support meets the needs of those who have recently been made redundant;
- Determine how well PACE support met their expectations;
- Identify any gaps in current PACE support provision;
- Identify what PACE could learn from private sector redundancy provision (what do the private sector do well?);
- Provide recommendations on how to develop current PACE support in order to improve the service provided and increase its appeal/relevance to more people.

The following outlines the process undertaken by George Street Research to meet these aims and objectives, together with the key findings emerging from the research.



# METHOD AND SAMPLE

## Qualitative Interviews

Due to the nature of the research and the objectives, a qualitative method was undertaken – specifically, the use of in-depth, qualitative interviews. In total, 40 interviews were carried out; 30 with individuals who had recently been made redundant (i.e. within the last 6 months) and 10 with PACE Advisers. All interviews lasted on average between 30 and 45 minutes and were audio recorded for analysis. Interviews were moderated by Neil Costley (Research Manager), Ruth Bryan (Research Manager) and Sue Granville (Director), all of whom followed a loosely structured topic guide, tailored to the specific interviewee “type” – the four different topic guides used are appended to this report.

All interviews were carried out between 31st January and 23rd February, 2011. Those who had undergone redundancy were given £20 for participation in the research; PACE Advisers were given no incentive.

Redundant respondents were given the option for their interview to be carried out over the telephone or face to face; the latter were carried out in respondents’ homes and in cafes, again at the preference of the respondents themselves. Ten of these interviews were carried out face to face and 20 were carried out by telephone.

## Sample Structure

To ensure a broad range of skills, ages and experience, there were a small number of minimum quotas set on the recruitment criteria. Furthermore, respondents were categorised into one of four groups, as outlined below:

- **PACE Advisers** – SDS employed, careers advisers;
- **‘PACE Users’** – individuals made redundant within the 6 months or so preceding interview who had made use of PACE services;
- **‘Alternative Service Users’** – individuals made redundant in the 6 months or so preceding interview, who had made use of some form of private sector redundancy support services – e.g. Penna, Right Management and Careers Associates;
- **‘Non Service Users’** – individuals made redundant in the 6 months or so preceding interview, who had no access to support services.

The following table shows the relative distribution of the 30 redundant respondents surveyed.

Respondent Type	No
PACE User	14
Alternative Service Users	7
Non Service Users	9
Age	
18-29	6
30-54	16
55+	8
Urban/Rural Classification	
City	13
Urban	14
Rural	3
Gender	
Male	14
Female	16
SEG <sup>2</sup> (Pre-Redundancy)	
AB	8
C1C2	15
DE	7
Total	30

Respondents were also asked in what sectors their former employers operate(d); the following shows the distribution of sectors represented:

- Charity (1)
- Construction/Trades (8)
- Education (1)
- Financial Services (3)
- Housing (1)
- Media, marketing, publishing (7)
- Other professional services (1)
- Retail (2)
- Service sector (3)
- Tourism (1)
- Transport (2)

PACE Advisers and PACE users were recruited by George Street Research's in-house telephone team, from a sample provided by Skills Development Scotland. Alternative and Non Service Users were recruited using a face-to-face, free-find method.

### Methodological Issues

Whilst there are no specific challenges to the validity of the findings as such, there was one specific issue arising from the study which should be highlighted.

The sample only has representation from three respondents who live in rural areas. The intention at recruitment was to ensure a minimum of five rural based respondents. Indeed five were recruited however two were unable to honour the appointments on the day and therefore were replaced. The available sample for these respondents was limited and therefore, we feel this has not altered the quality of the data.

<sup>2</sup> An individual's socioeconomic grouping (SEG) is determined by their job role, level of seniority and – to a lesser extent – income. For example, 'A' denotes very professional people and top level civil servants (about 3% of the UK population); 'B' would denote middle management executives etc. (c. 14% of the UK population); 'C1' denotes junior management and all other non-manual positions (c.26% of the UK population). 'C2' denotes skilled manual workers (c. 25%), 'D' denotes semi-skilled and unskilled workers (c. 19%) and 'E' represents those more dependent on the state and without regular income (c. 13%).

# MAIN FINDINGS

This section of the report outlines the main findings arising from the 40 interviews undertaken with the four specific groups of individuals interviewed. It is important to note that all interviews were very different and the issues surrounding respondents' redundancies, their needs and their concerns were very much unique to each specific individual. Indeed, when considering this report, it would be conceivable that 40 separate case studies could have been produced. The findings highlighted in this report have been set out as a summary of some of the key issues emerging, together with implications for certain 'types' of respondent.

# OVERARCHING ISSUES

Before discussing some of the specific aspects of the services used and indeed required, it is important to discuss some of the emergent themes encountered throughout the interviews. These “overarching issues” have a significant impact on perceptions of the services received and perceptions of the services required.

## Views on and Understanding of the PACE Partnership

One of the key issues arising from the research was that awareness of PACE was relatively low. None of the alternative or non service users were aware of the initiative, whilst there was a large degree of confusion evident, even amongst those who had used the service. For this latter group, most were unsure of the full extent of PACE services available, whilst others were unsure of who exactly was involved in the PACE Partnership and what the relative, specific roles of each were.

*I don't know, because I don't know enough about PACE. We weren't... it was never explained by HR what PACE actually were... got to say... we didn't know what to expect from them.*  
(PACE User, Female, 50+, C1C2, Housing)

Indeed for three PACE users, there was even a lack of awareness of PACE.

*I had no contact with PACE at all... I am not even aware of what PACE do... whether they were involved in that behind the scenes I don't know.*  
(PACE User, Male, 30-49, AB, Media, Marketing, Publishing)

Others were confused about who they had actually received support from – whether the Job Centre, Business Gateway, PACE or Careers Scotland. Whilst in some respects, none was actually ‘wrong’, the issue about branding and brand awareness needs to be considered.

Overall, it appears likely that awareness, understanding and perceptions of PACE are based more on the adviser dealt with, rather than the partnership itself. This means that PACE users see “PACE” as the adviser, rather than as a partnership with other organisations.

*The Job Centre came in with PACE and the guy I dealt with from PACE... he was very, very good, very specific, he had time for you.*  
(PACE User, Female, 18-29, C1C2, Construction/Trades)

Only a small number of respondents were aware of the partnership and were able to list more than one involved partner. When other partners were mentioned, in addition to Skills Development Scotland, this was most notably the Job Centre Plus, on the basis that someone from the Job Centre was involved in the initial PACE presentation.

One thing revealed in the discussions with both redundant respondents and with PACE Advisers, was the need for clearly defined roles between the organisations and an evident and logical “project manager”; i.e. someone coordinating the various partners and assigning clients to advisers and other partners, based on their needs and circumstances. As one PACE Adviser said:

*You know, Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus, HMRC... these people are very good at what they do... But their agenda will differ altogether. And I think we've got to try – I try very hard to put myself in their shoes and try to understand what they're trying to achieve... and I certainly hope they understand what we're trying to do... Because I think at the end of the day, for this to work we have got to all work together!*

(PACE Adviser)

*PACE were very good, very professional. The main guy who dealt with us on the day we were made redundant was the guy throughout, who ran the workshops... and he was very, very good, very specific.*

(PACE User, Female, 18-29, C1C2, Construction/Trades)

The key issues highlighted by the comment above is that partnership working can be highly effective, but to reach maximum potential, it is important that this is administered with clear and effective leadership.

*I think it's important in a place... that you have one identifiable, contactable person.*

(PACE Adviser)

### **Victimisation and Emotional Needs**

Throughout the interviews, it was clear – as might be expected – that a high proportion of respondents were harbouring feelings of ‘victimisation’; a feeling that they have been unfairly singled out and that measures could have been taken at a higher level to ensure that they were able to keep their job. At least five respondents spoke of how their employer had been looking to “get rid” of them for a while or that there was some level of unfair circumstances which contributed to their departure. Indeed – rightly or wrongly – no respondent felt that they were ultimately in any way responsible for the redundancy, irrespective of the circumstances. As such, whilst a small number simply acknowledged that economic circumstances were stacked against them, there was a tendency to externalise blame, that is to search for a scapegoat. This was most commonly in the form of a manager, human resources, directors or even other colleagues.

*Well, I was really close with the general manager and he was being laid off, so I knew that it was coming – it seemed odd to me though ‘cos there was folks who’d been there a lot longer than me and others who’d only just started and they all stayed... so I think it was just because I was friends with the manager.*

(Non Service User, Male, 30-54, DE, Construction)

*I knew something was up, they had just turned down [£X million] of work – why would anyone do that; I think they were just trying to push me out. Then I got invited into a meeting which I thought was to talk about sales figures and got told to hand over my phone, car keys and laptop... I couldn't believe it.*

(Non Service User, Male, 55+, AB, Construction)

The key implication is that if individuals have been put out of work and feel they are not to blame, they will be in a highly emotional state – this is exacerbated further if an individual scapegoat can be identified. One PACE Adviser described the emotions of their clients as similar to that of a bereavement:

*In many ways it's kind of like going through grief after a death – there's a tremendous sense of loss, but there's also denial, anger, frustration, blame and then the feeling ‘I'm worthless... I've been standing behind a machine for 20 years, what can I do now’ – and that's where we need to help.*

(PACE Adviser)

Furthermore, in larger institutions where more widespread redundancies were being issued, there appears to be ‘strength in numbers’ effect whereby those who are being put out of work unite in their anger towards management.

*They thought they were so fantastic in the employee support, but when it came to a process like that, we were just numbers. They didn't care.*

(Alternative Service User, Female, 18-29, C1C2, Charity)

It is with all this in mind that the research has revealed a need first and foremost to address the emotional needs of those who are being made redundant. Indeed it could be argued that it is the individual's emotional reaction to their situation which can determine their next steps and ultimate success in re-entering the job market. As one respondent put it:

*I went to a seminar for people looking for support getting a new job and everyone was just sitting round looking miserable and everyone was so defeatist... They were talking about a new factory opening up and these guys are just saying: “what’s the point, I’ll not get it”... I thought: “I’m not going to become like that”.*

(Non Service User, Male, 55+, AB, Construction)

The above quotation highlights the risks of simply ruling oneself out of possible re-employment due to feelings of defeat and emotional distress. Feelings of victimisation, hopelessness and rejection can have a significant impact on the individual’s likelihood even to apply for other future positions.

It is important to note that whilst a feeling of victimisation can occur immediately, these emotions are manifest in different ways at different times. Many respondents commented that at the beginning of the process, they felt they would be able to acquire alternative employment relatively quickly; however, after a series of weeks and months, respondents talked of hope “fading”, suggesting the need for some form of intervention or support mechanism.

The emotional circumstances of the individual need to be considered at all stages of the journey from redundancy consultation through to re-employment. The extent of emotional support required depends heavily on the individual, their personal circumstances and their own emotional response – this emotional support can range from a simple; “you will be fine”, through to full scale counselling.

## Job Centre Plus

For a large proportion of individuals undergoing the process of redundancy, there can be little doubt of the value of specific, clear benefits guidance. This is perhaps of slightly less importance for ‘higher level’ employees; these more skilled individuals who are also likely to receive larger payouts appear less likely to ever “sign on”, certainly in the short term.

For the majority however, benefits advice is of great value. Many respondents spoke of a lack of knowledge in terms of what specific benefits they were entitled to, and frustration at often being unable to get a straight answer – working tax credit was of particular interest and confusion for those with a partner still in employment.

*... you don’t know how to fill out the [benefits] papers, you don’t know what benefits you’re entitled to. They hide everything from you, make it difficult for you to get anything, anything you’re entitled to. I found out after... the first time round, I found out I was entitled to working tax credit because my husband was working... I found out I could have had amounts given for my children – child tax benefits which I didn’t know about! The Job Centre don’t give you any practical advice...*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1, Transport)

There was a marked difference between those who had accessed Job Centre Plus through PACE and those who had done so independently. Those accessing the Job Centre through PACE were more likely to be satisfied with the information and support received, mainly relating to benefits advice.



On the other hand, respondents who accessed the Job Centre independently were markedly more animated in their frustration with the service they received. There were a number of underlying reasons for this level of dissatisfaction which all must be considered within the context of vulnerability and victimisation, mentioned in the paragraphs above. Firstly, those respondents who are not used to going to the Job Centre (most generally those in SEGs A, B, C1 and C2), very often approach it with a degree of trepidation and feelings of worthlessness and that they are somehow being judged. There is also a very strong sense of “us and them” – whereby these individuals see themselves as “above” others in the Job Centre; i.e. habitual job seekers and long term benefits claimants. There is, with this, a sense that “someone who actually wants to get a job” will be treated in a different way to other individuals. When said treatment is not received, such individuals’ emotional condition, which is already likely to be fragile, is compounded with anger and frustration in the face of apparent lack of assistance.

There was widespread criticism of the Job Centre Plus services when sourced independently of PACE. Respondents commented on how the experience of signing-on was “demeaning” and how they were “treated like numbers”. This was borne of consultations lasting four minutes and a feeling that the Job Centre consultant simply wanted to tick a series of boxes before moving on to the next client. Further, respondents frequently recounted incidences whereby they were instructed to apply for jobs they neither want, nor are likely to get.

*I just found it so demeaning... I mean I always went dressed as I would for an interview... And there were people turning up in tracksuit bottoms or whatever. And I'm thinking, 'I'm not one of them! I'm seriously trying' I used to fill out their forms about how many jobs I'd applied ... and sometimes it was double-sided... in the end, I just decided it's not worth signing on and having to go through that, so I'm not actually claiming any more.*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1, Service Sector)

The above quotation is not an anomaly and is indicative of a number of respondents’ attitudes and experiences. Whilst this view was shared across the range of respondents interviewed, it seemed to be women whose partners were still working who seemed to more frequently stop/avoid signing on and men with a higher end, white collar skill set.

*When I go to the Job Centre, it's on a busy main road, I just keeping hoping nobody sees me there - I know it sounds snobby, but...*

(PACE User, Female, 50+, C1C2, Housing)

The key implication arising from frustration with Job Centre Plus, is that there is an opportunity afforded, through the PACE partnership, for the Job Centre to play its role in terms of ensuring individuals are ticking the correct boxes to receive the correct types – and amounts – of benefits, whilst PACE Advisers and other members of the partnership, e.g. Business Gateway, can focus on more personal issues, such as emotional counselling, CV preparation and careers guidance.

*I really would have liked to have been told what benefits I was entitled to, cos, you know, I've not been out of work for 11 years; I only found out about this stuff through my sister... [but the PACE Adviser] was able to look at my CV, which I'd never had to do, and that was useful.*

(PACE User, Female, 30-49, C1C2, Construction/Trades)

One PACE Adviser summed up the need for this partnership working and the opportunities for clearly defined roles between the Job Centre and other PACE partners:



*I very rarely get positive feedback about the Job Centre and because it is a completely different service, they have targets to get people back to work, that is their key sort of thing, to get them back to work, get them off the books basically, so they don't have the same sort of understanding of getting someone the right opportunity... The SDS approach is much more looking at the individual, what would they want, what are they going to succeed at, what are they going to do well at, what are they going to stick at, you know what is right for them. So our approach is completely different. In terms of the partnership... they have got to meet these targets and when they deliver the presentation with me it is a much more kind of, they do it in a nice way, you know it is much more user friendly if you like, but what goes on beyond that when a client actually goes to sign on, is kind of out of our control... I mean at the presentation it is very clear... what our services are and what the job centre services are, so people catch on pretty quickly to the fact that if they are looking for help with their career, employability skills, career plan, they are going to come to us, and if they have to sign on, they have to sign on and they go to the job centre.*

(PACE Adviser)

The issues raised relating to this attitude to the Job Centre highlight the extent to which individuals who have been made redundant have a need to be treated as individuals – to be provided with a service which is bespoke to their needs, opportunities specific to their skill set and advice specific to their own circumstances and priorities. On prompting, respondents were able to accept that – in the current economic climate – the Job Centre is likely to be overburdened and struggling to cope with the demands of unemployment in the UK; but there is a perception that something else needs to be in place to help cope with these demands.

# THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Two of the principal objectives of this research were to explore the ‘customer journey’ taken by those who have recently been made redundant and to identify the needs of individuals at different stages of the customer journey. One thing which became apparent very early on this process, as alluded to above, is that there is no “customer journey” as such. Indeed there are some common themes and challenges encountered, together with shared frustrations; however the actual journey undertaken very much differed from one individual to another, so too the ‘stages’ and specific support required at each of these stages. When considering this journey, the following key issues emerged.

## There is no “One Size Fits All”

Due to the nature of the jobs market, together with individuals’ own commitments and priorities, there can be no set strategy which suits everyone undergoing the process of redundancy – even within one institution, there will be multiple unique cases with individual issues to be addressed. The following factors appear to have a significant impact on the journey:

- Family circumstance
- Financial commitments
- Years with employer
- Size of severance package
- Previous experience with redundancy
- Skill set, previous experience and adaptability to other roles
- Motivation/ambition
- Confidence/self esteem

This means that an experienced, highly motivated client services manager within a financial services institution, in his mid 40s who has worked there for 20 years is likely to require altogether different services and advice compared with someone of the same age who has worked as a semi-skilled construction worker and been employed for a year or less. The daily challenges of each, post-redundancy, and the opportunities and decisions to be made will vary greatly between the two. Whilst one struggles to make ends meet and to pay immediate bills, the other will inevitably have more opportunity, potentially less financial pressure and be under less of a time pressure to acquire alternative employment.

*There was such a broad spectrum of people: three hundred and fifty people... highly skilled electronic engineers, right down to cleaners for example.*

(PACE User, Male, 18-29, C1C2, Media, Marketing, Publishing)

These two short examples show some of the extent of challenge facing PACE Advisers and the PACE Partnership as a whole, but also highlight the need for such a service.

*PACE needs to be a really flexible service in terms of no one redundancy situation is the same, there is no quick kind of set model in terms of delivery...*

(PACE Adviser)

Irrespective of circumstance, the customer journey is highly likely to require a balance of emotional support and practical guidance – the weight of balance itself is specific to the individual.

## Initial Stage (Consultation – Confirmation)

The initial stages of the redundancy process – company consultation, when cuts are announced up to when confirmation of redundancy is received – are ridden with stress, anxiety and uncertainty. This highlights the need for some form of intervention, encouragement and guidance as early as possible. At this stage, some level of emotional support is likely to be the most valuable. Whilst this emotional support can plant a seed of hope, it is important that some intervention is added to ensure that this hope is able to grow. For example, reassurance about credentials and ability is highly important; a transformed CV can provide some level of evidence of skills and some tangible example of progress.

*Everybody's different with their circumstances... But to be in this situation – the way it works out is really really bad. I mean it used to be you got your redundancy money and that was it. I mean, it took me something like... I think it was four months? To see a penny of my redundancy money. by the time it came! It's just... it's really really really hard, that... Anything, anything at that time – any advice that anyone gives is helpful.... just something to give you hope, you know?*

(PACE User, Male, 30-49, D, Manufacturing)

The above quotation highlights the need for some level of emotional support; the frequent use of the word “really” goes some way to conveying the extent to which this individual was in distress and needing “hope”. Additionally, there is a clear need for “advice”, for some level of assistance that steers him onto a path whereby re-employment is possible. It is interesting to see that the respondent is not looking for someone simply to give them a job, but rather, is simply looking for some help.

Uncertainty about the future, together with the likely emotional response to the situation, would suggest that at this initial stage, the most valuable types of support and advice are some level of emotional support and advice about benefits to which the individual is entitled. It is therefore important that any professional support service, such as PACE, has access to employees as soon as possible once the consultation is underway and certainly once redundancies are starting to be issued.

The initial PACE presentation, coupled with the Positive Steps booklet, provides a good opportunity to provide surface level support. It is important to note that it was not always clear in the interviews whether respondents were talking about the PACE Pack or the Positive Steps booklet as often they appeared interchangeable and both were referred to in other ways, e.g. “the information from PACE”; therefore it is relatively difficult to comment on each individually as physical prompts were not provided.

If this can be followed up quickly with a one-to-one consultation with a PACE Adviser, this is likely to be widely welcomed.

*I did find that when I went down to the Job Centre, and I imagine they have to put up with so many argumentative, irate people, but I found that they could have been a lot more helpful, or more sort of building a profile about me and my individual need, because I got the impression that it was a more generalisation précis of me, they could see that I had been working, I was not trying to claim any benefits other than what I thought I was entitled to after being made redundant. It was not my choice, I did not want to be there. I feel they could have assisted me in a better way. And I think that would have helped my opinion of them, sort of a bit more coaching to other people to go there.*

(Non Service User, Male, 18-29, D, Retail)

## Second Stage (Confirmation – Redundancy)

Following the initial consultation stage, the second most common stage in the redundancy process appears to be within a few weeks, once redundancy has been confirmed and when employees are on the approach to leaving their work. Generally, by this stage, the reality has set in that they are leaving and, whilst the hurt and the frustration are still there, there is an acceptance of the situation.

*Well, the last few weeks were tough because I knew I was going, but I still had to do the job. I also had to get in touch with my clients and tell them that I wouldn't be managing their account any more. But I was told not to tell them it was because I'd been made redundant, I suppose it's not good for the company. The thing was I'd been dealing with them for years and it didn't feel right... [My employer] had told us Careers Associates would be in touch but I never heard from them and actually it wasn't until I had left [My employer] that I finally got in touch with them!*

(Alternative Service User, Male, 30-49, AB, Financial Services)

At this stage, there is a real need for practical advice and direct action plans. Whilst respondents had accepted that they were moving on – and indeed, some were pleased to be doing so – the focus shifted from introspective frustration to a more 'next step' focus, highlighting the need for more proactivity.

It is around this stage that there is a need to have a vision for what the next stage might look like, whether alternative employment, training courses and career development, or even simply an awareness of what benefits are likely to be awarded. The key implication of this is that actions and tangible changes/activity at this stage in the process, can boost confidence and maintain energy.

*There was a lot of doubt about whether I was doing the right thing or not, [taking voluntary redundancy] but the way it had been going there, reading between the lines and the unofficial gossip, the writing was on the wall and if you don't leave now, then in five years time the place might shut and you will only get half of the package that is on the table now, so yes, it was a gamble... I was pretty confident I could get a job... and the consultant from Penna was really good... they knew what I was after and gave me some good tips for getting there.*

(PACE User, Male, 30-49, AB, Media, Marketing, Publishing)

*I was really left to my own devices to find a job; I went to the Job Centre and signed on. Had a terrible experience. Absolutely diabolical... When they signed me on... it was a case of 'just sign here'. Send you on your way. There was no help. Nobody would show me how to use the Job Search or anything, you know?!*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1, Transport)

The two quotes above highlight the need for some level of practical support and assistance on the approach to, and immediately after a redundancy situation – where one respondent had support, whether impactful or not, another had no perceived support and the extent to which each had a positive outlook were diametrically opposed to one another. One PACE Adviser summed up this need for a positive outlook at this stage, which can have a significant impact on the approach to the journey back into work:

*There's a sense of family: I get that quite strongly. And they're coming in and often they're saying to me – and your point's a good one - 'what can I do?' I've stood behind a machine for twenty years and what we always try to do is always be very positive... I do, personally, anyway. Let's look at the skills, let's look at not only the skills of what you've done; even the skills of getting into a routine and coming to work at the right time... What you're trying to instil in them is optimism.*

(PACE Adviser)

## Tertiary Stage (Unemployment)

Whilst the preceding two stages are fundamental in terms of motivation together with practical assistance in terms of providing tangible outputs (e.g. CV writing etc), arguably the most important stage, is the “tertiary stage”, where often there appears to be the lowest levels of support. Whilst a proportion of respondents were able to find alternative employment relatively quickly, at least half were unable to and had been unemployed for periods of 4–6 months.

*To start with [after my previous redundancy], I wasn't that concerned about finding other work, because I thought I can just go and temp.... And I did get temp work up until I got another full-time job. But then obviously being made redundant again...! And now it's been six months with no work whatsoever, and that is so demoralising... I haven't signed on again... I can't, you know-! I'll never go back to the Job Centre again.*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1, Service Sector)

*I subsequently went back to the Job Centre and said 'look, I know you can put me through training...'; I had to wait thirteen weeks before anyone was even playing games with me. All it was was 'sign the paper'. 'Well I want to start my own business and need help; how can you help me?' They wouldn't give me anything, and finally I kicked up such a stink one day, demanding to meet with someone who knew something about developing my skills. They offered me a class - well, not a class - they offered me a one to one with somebody to help me with my CV... and my CV is perfect, they even told me that.*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1, Transport)

Respondents commented on how being out of work for a certain amount of time is the most demoralising aspect of the journey and is a critical stage because of the need for motivation and direction.

Those who had had access to advice, whether from PACE or alternatives, mentioned that after a small number of sessions, there was little or no follow-up contact. From most, there was an acknowledgement that, after a certain time, little real impact could be made or little more help provided. There was some level of agreement though that follow-up contact would have been valued.

*I was really impressed that you could still speak to PACE even after the job was finished... it was nice to know there was always someone there.*

(PACE User, Female, 50+, D, Media, Marketing, Publishing)

*When PACE was explained to me there's a thirteen week period, and within that thirteen week period we didn't find anything, I think that's it, anything else had to be done through the Job Centre... That's what I was told...*

(PACE User, Male, 30-49, D, Manufacture)

Respondents agreed that there needed to be some level of follow-up support, whether information about upcoming career opportunities, news on job availability, training opportunities, or even just a 'nudge of encouragement'. One respondent even felt this should happen every two weeks during the time in unemployment.

It is important to note that some were aware that the support is continuous and can be accessed at any time.

*I would pick up the phone and give them a wee call if I am stuck or if I don't understand anything in the book, they really sort of pressed that on us, you know like if there is anything that we can help you with, give us a call or pop in.*

(PACE User, Female, 50+, C1C2, Housing)



### Summary of Stages and Support

Although there can be no set structure, the following table summarises – at a more conceptual level – the stages where support is required and specific types of support which would be considered beneficial. The specific types of support which are valued will be addressed in the next section of this report.

Stage	Emotional Support	Practical Support
Initial consultation	√√	
During consultation period	√	
When redundancy has been confirmed	√	√
1-2 weeks after confirmation	√	√√
Weeks running up to leaving		√√
Weeks after leaving		√
Months after leaving (if still unemployed)	√√	√

### Challenges to the ‘Journey’

The above is perhaps an overly simplistic version of the redundancy journey – it assumes that there is a notice period of several weeks and that respondents have at least some motivation to return to the workplace as soon as possible and are open to counselling and advice – conditions which are not necessarily all met. There are a number of factors which can affect the aforementioned journey.

A key challenge for the PACE customer journey is when the process happens very quickly and there is simply not enough time to provide the service. This can happen for a variety of reasons including: a company going out of business, inappropriate practices, redundancies over holiday periods and individuals not finding out they are leaving until the day they actually leave.

*But what happened, I don't know, but PACE came in. It shut down on a Friday, and PACE and that came in on Thursday and they spoke to the majority of the factory. And that was it, that's all we got... someone mucked it up, so! It's a horrible position to be in. That's the way it was.*

(PACE User, Male, 30-49, D, Manufacture)

A significant number of respondents described not finding out they were being made redundant until the day they were leaving. One spoke of coming into the office after being on holiday and only the company directors being present who had to inform her that everyone had been “let go”. Others spoke of knowing redundancies were being made but not finding out they were selected until that day. This presents a significant challenge to PACE in terms of the attitudes of those who feel more secure or uncertain – in the case of the former, this will affect their attitudes to the situation and in the case of the latter, this places an increased potential element of distress.

*That is the sticky point. I found out... whenever the Friday was, and I found out on the Thursday that I was going to go on the Friday... And that is how that company operates... It just summed just what I thought about the place... And that was not a one off, there were dozens of people that would tell you the same story.*

(PACE User, Male, 30-49, AB, Media, Marketing, Publishing)

A further challenge to the customer journey, is the fact that some people simply will not want to come forward for help and support from an organisation like PACE. One thing which was apparent from the interviews was that – with exception perhaps of manual workers – most respondents felt they would be able to acquire alternative employment very quickly. For some, there was an apparent complacency in terms of skill set, sector of operation and ability which led to a lack of perceived need to seek immediate support.

The challenge for PACE is how to encourage access to individuals who refuse the service and would benefit from it. This ties in to some extent with the challenge relating to when people find out they are leaving the company. It is therefore vitally important that people are made aware that the PACE service is continuously available.

# VALUED SERVICES

Whilst the ‘customer journey’ is an arguably artificial construct, there were consistent trends in the extent to which respondents valued certain, relevant services. Again, the extent to which each were deemed necessary depended very much on the personal circumstances, skills and experiences of the individual.

## The Value of Advice

At the outset of this chapter, it is important to note that respondents acknowledged that it is not the responsibility of a careers adviser or advice service to acquire a new job for each person who has been made redundant. However, the role of the adviser, at a more conceptual level, is the indirect provision of hope, through advice, encouragement and direction. In the context of the victimisation felt by respondents (as mentioned earlier in this report), this is a vital role for many.

*You're just looking for anything, anything at that time – any advice that anyone gives is helpful.*

(Non Service User, Male, 30-49, Construction/Trades)

Overall, the key need for respondents is to be ‘pointed in the right direction’. This can be very different for each and every individual and highlights the need for an effective initial fact finding consultation to ensure the needs of the individual are addressed. For example, one respondent had very little contact with a PACE Adviser because he was referred onto someone at Business Gateway who was able to assist him in setting up his own business. In this circumstance, the PACE Adviser’s role was simply to make that initial introduction and this was greatly valued. In another interview however, a respondent spoke of the need for a very wide range of assistance, including: constructing a CV from scratch, interview practice and preparation and finding out about training courses and qualifications. In the former example, the individual was highly skilled and experienced

with little perceived need for interview or CV assistance. In the latter, the respondent also had a lot of experience, but this was limited to one role where she had been for around 20 years’ and as such, she had never required a CV and had not been to an interview in that time.

As highlighted by these two examples, the role of the adviser or the support service can be extensive or minimal; irrespective of the extent of input, it can certainly be significant.

One respondent spoke of his need to be educated about some of the opportunities which he was now faced with. Although highly qualified and educated, the emotional consequences of the redundancy situation appeared to have led to difficulties in focus.

*I guess I needed to be told that this could really actually lead to something good; I got a decent package, so I do have options. But I guess I don't know where to start and looking at my CV is ok, but what will I do? Just go and work for [a competitor] doing the same thing and be here again in two years? There are definite opportunities; I thought I might go and work for a while in America, where my dad is, or maybe even think about starting up on my own... but then I don't know exactly what I would do.*

(Alternative Service User, Male, 30-49, AB, Financial Services)



This quote shows an example of an individual with opportunity, but perhaps a lack of focus. On the other end of the scale, and generally witnessed with more semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, was a degree of focus, but a lack of opportunity. Other respondents spoke of the sheer lack of work available and that certain qualifications or ‘tickets’ were required for certain roles that they had experience for, but no certification. For these individuals, finance is also a significant issue and there is an awareness that funding is likely to be available, but experiences with Job Centre Plus consultations negate the ability to find direct information about these.

*Well there was a site just down the road from where I got laid off and I had all the skills, cos I do drainage and it's quite specific – but I don't have the ticket, so they won't even look at me... but what can I do? I asked the Job Centre, but they were no help and then I just had to apply for some cleaning jobs that I'll never even get...*

(Non Service User, Male, 30-49, Construction/Trades)

Similarly, other respondents in the building trade and manufacturing sector spoke of their inability to find suitable training courses and being told to find out for themselves. Often, these respondents are also those with less internet and computer experience, thus exacerbating the issue. In the case of the manufacturing sector, one respondent felt it was time for a change in career because he had simply been passed from one factory to the next for 15 years and been made redundant from them all. At this stage, in addition to there being no opportunities for work, he felt the need to move to something more secure – thus requiring advice and assistance.

## Pragmatic Needs and Valued Services

As shown in the appended topic guides, respondents were prompted with a series of possible forms of support and advice from services such as PACE and asked to indicate how useful these services would be and why.

Overall, respondents recognised the value in all the prompted services, though not always for themselves. An analysis of the services which were valued by respondents suggests that there is some correlation between the type of work they did and the services they would value. For the purposes of simplicity, we have categorised respondents into two distinct groups – white collar and blue collar. In essence, the former refers to more office based personnel; those for whom IT is of more importance in fulfilling daily work tasks. Blue collar refers more to manual workers and those for whom IT plays a lower role in the workplace. Blue collar workers – for the purposes of this study – are more likely to be lower paid overall (though this is not exclusively the case). The following table summarises the extent to which specific services were valued and by whom:

Aspect	“White collar”	“Blue collar”
PACE presentation	√	√
Benefits advice	√	√√
Job search assistance		√
Training	√	√√
CV support	√√	√√
Interview technique support	√	√
Setting up new business	√√	√
Other workshops, e.g. getting back to work	√	√√
Financial information		√

The main services associated with PACE tended to be: CVs, interview training and workshops. The main services valued appeared to be those which were provided on a one-to-one basis. Some respondents only attended the initial presentation and were relatively positive about this – and the Positive Steps booklet – but appear to have got little else out of the process. On the other hand, a small number of respondents really embraced the services available from PACE and utilised the availability of their PACE Adviser. This involved one to one meetings and occasional phone calls (sometimes initiated by the PACE Adviser to inform, for example, of upcoming job opportunities).

All respondents who had accessed services relating to their CV from PACE had been satisfied with the service they received and agreed that it had been improved through this. Many agreed that they were not expecting much from the experience, but that they had been surprised to see some of the improvements which had come back.

Those attending seminars and workshops were also positive, though occasionally, there were concerns about relevance.

*I went to the seminars that I thought would be specific to me, there was like all sorts of levels of staff and I was probably somewhere sort of middleish but senior management, and one of the days I felt there was just me and a lot of managers and I didn't know if I should be at that...*

(PACE User, Female, 50+, C1C2, Housing)

Services tend to be valued particularly when PACE Advisers appear to be experts in the field. This is particularly beneficial because it instils confidence in the client at a time when confidence is particularly low. An evident finding emerging from the project was that respondents were most satisfied when they went from meetings and seminars with clear actions and an idea of the appropriate next steps. This ensures focus is established and / or maintained and the journey is in some way 'trackable' – thus tying in with the finding already mentioned for the need for a balance between tangible progress and emotional encouragement.

## Training and Career Development

Job training and opportunity for career development made for an interesting discussion point in the project. It was interesting to note the proportions of respondents who felt they do not require any additional job training or qualifications. Indeed, occasionally this appears to be borne of a cynicism that training courses can be a waste of money and that employers are only interested in experience. For others, this aligns with a complacency that their experience is enough to get them a job within the same skill set. For others still, there is simply no conceivable way of finding relevant training courses.

One PACE user spoke of how impressed he was that he was able to acquire funding for a training course relating to electrician work in hazardous environments. When brought up, his PACE Adviser was able to arrange funding for the course. In the end, he acquired another job and did not need to do the course, but a former colleague did access the funding for this qualification.

One PACE Adviser recounted an anecdote of when a client had approached him with a course to become a plumber in two weeks for a cost of about £6,000. In this instance, the adviser was able to steer the client away from this course as it would not lead to qualifications or ultimately a career.

*I always say to people, you know, there's funding there, please don't - you know, spend money! I had a guy in, promised a course in plumbing – 'become a plumber in three weeks or something like that'. Nonsense – for about £6,000 or something! I actually directed him to their lead body. 'Check out with the lead body if you don't believe me!' And he did and came in and thanked me that I'd saved him so much money!*

(PACE Adviser)

The above anecdotes are interesting because they reflect cases where an individual knew the specific course they wanted to do and – with relative perceived ease – the adviser was able to arrange funding and get him registered on the course or advise avoidance. Examples like this however were relatively sparse. Four respondents – speaking of PACE or other services – mentioned asking their adviser about training courses either in their line of work or in alternative areas and being told: ‘that’s something you would have to go and find out for yourself’. Whilst there is a recognition that advisers cannot know all the courses available in every sector throughout Scotland, respondents felt that if time is taken to get to know them, both should be able to go and research possible options. The expertise in these circumstances appears to be more consultative than advisory.

*What really frustrated me was when I spoke to an adviser and I’m told ‘well, that’s something you’d have to go and find out for yourself’. I was being directed to google...*

(Alternative Service user, Female, 30-49, C1C2, Retail)

To ensure training courses are sought and attended, it is important to ensure:

- Advisers make themselves aware of clients’ ambitions;
- Advisers are aware of some potential relevant courses which fit those ambitions, or which are simply relevant to individuals in certain roles;
- Advisers are aware of possible funding sources;
- Clients are provided with some direction for where appropriate courses can be found.

### When is advice/support not useful

For a small number of respondents, there was a perception that advice and support from an external agency was simply of little value. This was the case for two respondents in this project who felt that their skill set was so specific that an adviser would be unable to provide any meaningful advice which could alter the course of their career development, unless looking to set up their own business.

Nevertheless, even in such circumstances, the emotional support which is so essential to the majority of people who have been made redundant would still be valued together with some level of pragmatic assistance, for example in affirming CVs and equipping individuals for ensuing job interview situations.

One respondent spoke of attending a seminar on ‘setting up your own business’, run by Penna. Whilst the seminar showed some promise, unfortunately it ‘degenerated’ into individuals discussing what business type they were considering establishing and as such, there was little in the way of practical help or assistance and the client went away feeling like he had wasted his time.

### Importance of early intervention

There were some evident differences in opinion and experience between those who received support and advice from a very early stage and those who were only offered help as they were leaving their employer. Those offered support right from the beginning were much more proactive and open to receiving help and attending seminars etc. On the other hand those unaware of support services until very late in the day tended to be bigger rejecters or were unaware of many of the potential types of help or advice available. This highlights the importance of ensuring PACE has access to exiting employees as soon as possible to encourage take-up of their services.

# PACE vs ALTERNATIVES

## Public Sector vs Private Sector

It was difficult for respondents to compare private sector support services with PACE support directly as the vast majority had not been exposed to both. Three PACE users - based at large institutions - had been at companies whereby both PACE and Penna were present. In these circumstances, respondents only recalled receiving services from Penna.

Based on our analysis of the services received from both private sector companies and PACE, there appear to be few tangible differences in terms of the services offered. The one major, apparent difference between the two, and a unique selling point for PACE, is that follow-up support does not appear to be available amongst private sector agencies. One respondent commented that he was told he was entitled to four separate one-to-one sessions with an adviser from a private sector firm; further, since leaving the company, it was becoming increasingly difficult to arrange the remaining appointments. The fact that PACE support is ongoing, even into unemployment, was seen as a benefit by respondents.

*As far as I'm aware, once I've had my four sessions, that's it. But as I say I had my first one, now I've been away from [the company] for a month and I haven't managed to get another meeting.*

(Alternative Service User, Male, 30-49, AB, Financial Services)

*The individuals get the opportunity to make follow up appointments..., so basically I would say from one person to you know how many hundreds, they would still get the same type of service.*

(PACE Adviser)

One commented on the frustration of seeing a private company coming in and providing these services when people were being laid off. Although the services were, at times, valuable and appreciated, there was still a concern over how much it was actually costing when people were losing their jobs. The key implication is that there is a potential for PACE to be viewed more positively by redundant individuals because the service is free. On balance though, most were unaware PACE is free and many will probably simply not be that interested as there are more pressing concerns.

## Local Knowledge

The only interviewees able to comment with authority in a comparative context, were PACE Advisers who have been exposed to PACE clients, other providers' clients and those exposed to a multi-provider service. For one adviser, one of the key benefits of the PACE offering above other providers, was the extent of their local knowledge, when compared with a private company - especially ones not based in Scotland.

*I think a lot of companies looked at replacement companies that deliver this sort of work as well, but I think if you look at us versus an out placement company, we have much more local knowledge*

(PACE Adviser)

## Careers Advice

During the interviews with advisers, a number of PACE staff commented on the fact that PACE is able to offer clients specific careers advice, which stands in contrast to private sector companies. Private sector groups appear to be limited to job search assistance, CV skills, interview techniques etc, all of which are also offered by PACE. In addition to this careers advice, the PACE offering differs from alternatives in that it is a continuous service which does not end after a certain number of sessions, or after the individual leaves a company.

*I am a qualified guidance worker and careers adviser, so I am qualified in two areas. Also the service isn't an in and out service, you don't go in, do the work and then disappear and never be seen again. It is very much an ongoing service, clients can ask us for services as long as they need them, there is no time limit on it all, so I think that is a really big plus for the client, the continuity of service.*

(PACE Adviser)

## Technology

One area where PACE seems to be slightly behind alternative, private providers, is in terms of technology – again this was the view of some advisers, not of service users. One adviser spoke of using dongles for internet access which can be quite temperamental and difficult to use in areas where 3G access is limited.

## Redundancy Support

Those who had no access to support services in general were able to comment objectively at a more conceptual level about support services. Most however, were unable to stipulate exactly what they would expect to see or what types of support they would require. In line with what has already been reported, the specific needs and expectations depend heavily on the individual.

*I had been thinking about setting up a business, but I need direction...I know they've got Business Gateway, which is great... I've been down, having a chat and stuff, but I still need somebody to go 'this is where you need to go now'. Because it's all new.*

(Non Service User, Female, 30-49, C1C2, Service Sector)

This highlights a potential interesting implication in terms of the extent to which individuals will reject support services – for indeed proportions of those who have been made redundant will reject services offered. The research interviews would suggest that this is often the case because these people will simply not see the immediate, tangible benefits of accepting the services. For example,

one respondent commented on being offered assistance (from a private sector support service) in editing and amending her CV and interview technique; these were rejected because the respondent felt that her CV was already very strong and she had a wealth of experience in interviews and was 'very confident', so 'it felt like a waste of time'. On the other hand, the same respondent had come to the decision that she would like to set up her own business and wanted help (from the Job Centre) in learning how to do this. To her frustration, she was told that any help with this would be unobtainable until she had been unemployed for 13 weeks. For this respondent, if assistance / advice in setting up a business had been offered by the private sector support service, she would have been more likely to accept the help.

This would suggest that – just as the relevant services depend heavily on the individuals' personal circumstances – so too does their likelihood to accept or reject the services offered.

## Perceived Quality

In one of the discussions with PACE Advisers, the point was raised that PACE has the potential to be perceived by employers – and less so by employees – as lower value than other, private sector, support services. Because it is a free service, there was the perception that some companies place more value on services which cost. A key implication from this is that if employers place less value on the service offered, there is the potential to convey this lack of enthusiasm on to employees.

The perception of PACE Advisers in a comparative context, is that PACE undoubtedly meets the quality of other private providers and – in light of some of the aforementioned factors of local knowledge and careers advice – actually surpasses it.

*It is almost as if because you are paying for it, it must be better, and I do think companies do think that maybe, however I think once we have worked with them, they don't think that any more.*

(PACE Adviser)



# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

None of those interviewed who had been made redundant, were aware of the PACE advertising materials or had accessed the PACE website. The majority of PACE users were able to recall the “Positive Steps” booklet – though not necessarily by that name.

## PACE Leaflet

Respondents were prompted with the two sided leaflet below and a similar poster and asked to comment on it in terms of design and level of detail.

**Are you an employer worried about making redundancies?**

Phone the PACE national redundancy helpline on **0808 100 1855** for free and impartial advice and support

Or visit the PACE website  
[www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/redundancy](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/redundancy)

**PACE can help your business to:**

- identify alternatives to redundancy
- maintain and improve industrial relations
  - access local support services
  - secure positive media coverage
- support employees with tailored programmes to help them access jobs and training.

PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) is central to the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Programme, in particular the commitment to provide support to businesses and employees facing redundancy situations. Led by Skills Development Scotland, PACE aims to minimise the time people affected by redundancy are out of work through providing skills development and employability support. PACE has recently been enhanced and is undergoing a continuous improvement programme to meet the demands of the current economic climate.






**Are you facing redundancy?**

**Have you been made redundant?**

Phone the PACE national redundancy helpline on **0808 100 1855** for free and impartial advice and support

Or visit the PACE website  
[www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/redundancy](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/redundancy)

**PACE can help you to:**

- find your way back to work, check what benefits you may be entitled to and help with job seeking
  - access job vacancy information
- construct powerful CVs and application forms and prepare effectively for interviews
- identify future career and training options and the steps needed to achieve them
- access a wide range of Government funded training in colleges, higher education institutions and training providers to improve your skills and increase your chances of finding work
  - find out how to start up your own business.

PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) is central to the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Programme, in particular the commitment to provide support to businesses and employees facing redundancy situations. Led by Skills Development Scotland, PACE aims to minimise the time people affected by redundancy are out of work through providing skills development and employability support. PACE has recently been enhanced and is undergoing a continuous improvement programme to meet the demands of the current economic climate.






In general, respondents were very positive about the leaflets – though none had seen them previously. Three respondents, who were interviewed face to face, asked for the leaflet to be left behind with them so that they could consider getting in touch with PACE. The leaflet tested positively in terms of being eye catching for someone in a redundancy situation – most agreed that if they had seen the leaflet when they were going through redundancy, then they would have considered taking it and getting in touch.

*Yeah, it's quite good, it's quite informative, you can see how to get in touch and that bit at the top means you know who it's for. Aye if I'd seen that, I might have given them a call, aye.*

(Alternative Service User, Female, 30-49, Education)

Respondents were probed on whether or not it seemed strange to have one leaflet designed to appeal to both those being made redundant and employers making staff redundant. No respondents felt this was a draw back. One commented that if it was displayed the wrong way, then the relevant audience might not see it.

When asked on where these leaflets should be displayed, most said the Job Centre and anywhere people would be looking for jobs.

### PACE Branding

When considering marketing and communications in the context of PACE awareness it is interesting to note the lack of PACE branding on the leaflet. Whilst the name 'PACE' is mentioned several times, branding almost appears to disappear when juxtaposed with the other logos – possibly due to the instant recognition of more widely known brands such as the Job Centre and the Scottish Government.

Whilst branding may not be considered to be of the utmost importance, it needs to be considered. This is especially important for employers who can provide arguably the widest access to redundant individuals.

*When our team leader phones up, says I am phoning from PACE... she has to explain every single time that she phones. Very few people seem to know who it is or... don't even recognise the name... I think maybe some people are frightened to contact, especially an employer, a small employer, trying to contact something in case you have to pay for it or they don't quite know what it is so I think from that point of view it could be made a wee bit clearer, at some central point, maybe branding is not quite all it should be.*

(PACE Adviser)

*The information is good... it's just that a lot of people might not necessarily know about our website in the first place!... How we would reach the people that we're not necessarily getting to see-! You know, those made redundant, you know?*

(PACE Adviser)

### Positive Steps

For those able to comment, the Positive Steps book tested well amongst respondents. Whilst some commented on having an abundance of information within the pack, there was agreement that the information was thorough and well considered.

*I think Positive Steps is absolutely brilliant and we get a lot of feedback about that.*

(PACE Adviser)

Thinking back to the beginning of this report in terms of the information which respondents want, need and value when facing redundancy, there is a need to ensure the pack contains:

- Benefits advice
- Suggested next steps
- CV information
- Training course information resources
- New business information.



One respondent commented on being able to make a significant difference to her CV simply by consulting the book.

*We got a good book with us. I sat and did a CV the other day and I referred to the book, while I was doing it and it actually was not as bad as I thought it was going to be.*

(PACE User, Female, 50+, C1C2, Housing)

### **PACE Website**

As mentioned, awareness of the website was low and it could be argued that more attention needs to be drawn towards it. One of the key issues however, is the purpose of the website. Again, to be most effective, it appears that the purpose of the website should tie in with what should be included in the Positive Steps book.

As an online resource, respondents would also potentially value a little more in terms of identifying specific opportunities to them, i.e. jobs and training courses.

*One single source of information for all the training courses I could do would be useful*

(Alternative Service User, Male, 30-49, Financial Services)

# KEY CHALLENGES

The findings of this report have shown some positive results and implications on behalf of the service offered through the PACE Partnership and have shown how the Partnership has the potential to make a real impact on individuals in Scotland who are facing or have been made redundant. This section outlines a series of the key challenges which face the Partnership in maximising this potential.

## No One Size Fits All

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, there can be no one size approach to the PACE offering; and this presents the most significant challenge. Each individual's commitments, circumstances and aspirations will be different and advisers are faced with the insurmountable challenge of needing to fashion a career path for each individual.

*There can be no one way to do this, the ideal is where we provide an open forum where we get partner organisations in from places like job centre plus, various training providers, colleges, business gateway, people like that, volunteer centres, and basically just present an open market where people can come in and get information and then beyond that we make one to one guidance appointments with a careers adviser or any other agencies that are there.*

(PACE Adviser)

Furthermore, the economic climate means that there is arguably a broader range of sectors requiring the service (e.g. demise of construction industry) than in previous years and a more skilled and diverse skills bank competing for a smaller bank of jobs, thus providing an enormous challenge for advisers.

## Lack of Awareness and Understanding

The lack of awareness of PACE presents a challenge for both employees facing redundancy and employers looking to make redundancies.

In the case of the former, around half of the interviews we administered with 'PACE users' were either unaware of PACE with exception to the name, or did not access PACE services, with exception to the presentation at the beginning. The majority of those remaining received CV support and little else. Furthermore, some were able to comment on large numbers of former colleagues who rejected available services.

Too many people said PACE were only there for a day, or was just a presentation and CV. Those attending seminars and using the full panoply of services were resoundingly positive which would suggest a need to raise awareness and the benefits of the service better. One adviser commented on the need to raise awareness and to append appropriate case studies to this which highlight the services available and the inherent benefits.

## Getting Jobs in Certain Industries

The changing landscape of the jobs market in recent years presents a challenge for those undergoing redundancy and consequently for the PACE service offering. Those interviewed from the construction and manufacturing industry who would be classed as "semi-skilled", commented on how they acquire jobs has changed dramatically. When construction was booming, jobs were widespread and varied. If an individual was made redundant from one company, building site or factory, the likelihood was that they could get a job somewhere similar very quickly through word of mouth.

Now, in an increasingly competitive and less prosperous landscape, the job application process appears to be more “official”, i.e. proper application process and very often “through recruitment agencies who don’t have any jobs and just want you on their books”. The other challenge aligned with this is that specific qualifications and certification is now required, where previously experience may have been enough.

The key challenge then is that these individuals, who tend to be less IT literate/engaged, are required to devise CVs and to find appropriate courses – and the money to pay for them.

### **Engagement with Employers**

One key challenge which underpins all of the above, is the need for PACE to engage better with employers. This means:

- Increased brand awareness
- Increased knowledge of the services available and
- Acknowledgement that a free service is not ‘lower value’

If the marketplace can become more aware of PACE, the ‘sales’ process should be considerably easier and consequently, access to redundant individuals should naturally increase. Furthermore, the research revealed the need to ensure that PACE gets into companies as soon as possible to encourage take-up of the services available; if awareness is increased, then the likelihood is that examples where PACE come in the day before staff are made redundant should decrease.

### **Knowledge Share and a National Perspective**

A number of respondents commented on the need for a more collaborative approach between advisers within the PACE Partnership at a national level. This was borne of the fact that many in one part of Scotland are not aware of what others in another part of Scotland are doing in terms of best practice, areas for improvement and ensuring satisfaction of clients’ needs. In addition, there were calls for a more effective, central knowledge bank – perhaps an online portal for sharing this information and for accessing information about training courses, career development etc.

One adviser spoke of the difficulty in issues surrounding funding for training and how the guidelines for this are not clear-cut, whilst another commented on the difficulty of acquiring relevant and reliable information on training courses in general. Both felt that the development of an online knowledge bank would greatly improve the issues surrounding this.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the interviews administered, it is impossible to say what the direct and tangible impacts of PACE have been in Scotland. However, the implications arising from the project suggest some of what the potential impacts *could* be.

## Conclusions

It can be argued that anyone going through a redundancy situation can benefit from advice, guidance and support such as that provided by PACE. What that specific support required is, is unique to the individual. There can be little question that emotional support is a requirement for all – even when voluntary redundancy has been taken. The uncertainty of what lies ahead, coupled with the resultant hurt and anger in the face of rejection from one’s previous employer, puts the individual in a vulnerable position. It could be argued that the right balance of emotional support can have a significant impact on the attitude and dedication displayed in their approach to returning to the jobs market.

In addition to initial emotional support, there is also a need for appropriately balanced and tailored guidance in terms of what next steps should be taken. This ranges from benefits advice and support through to recommendations for training courses, CV transformation and helping someone to set up their own business.

The extent of services available and needs to be met, present a huge challenge to the PACE Partnership and in particular, the advisers who are an appropriate source of contact and project management. The challenge faced in meeting clients’ needs can only be addressed through careful fact finding and a conceivable shared responsibility between client and adviser. This means that rather than simply sending clients off to do their own research, options are provided with guidelines on specific action points for the time of next meeting.

CV support, seminars and interview training are always going to be useful to a large proportion of prospective clients, but there is a need for motivation and further specific guidance to be most effective. This is one area where PACE, through its use of qualified and experienced careers advisers, can market itself as markedly different to other private sector agencies.

Partnership working can be highly effective, but to reach maximum potential, it is important that this is administered with clear and effective leadership.

## Recommendations

At the moment, advisers can be faced with an impossible challenge when approaching a company making redundancies. The sheer variety of skills and experience, even from within a single institution, make recommendations and an ideal service provision impossible for all employees. This leads us to one of our potential recommendations for the PACE Partnership – the use of a segmented strategy.

Within one institution there is likely to be a split between blue and white collar workers, administrative staff and professional staff, management and executive level individuals. It may be worth considering the feasibility of advisers approaching companies and “splitting” clients by possible skill set. This, in effect, would limit the potentially vast options to be investigated by advisers as there are likely to be a high level of shared ambitions and needs between these types of employees. Naturally, this approach would only be possible within a large scale institution. However, ‘specialist’ advisers for small companies would be equally effective, as would specialist advisers within specific industries/sectors.

Our second main recommendation is based on the need for an improved marketing and branding strategy. The limits currently on the impact and reach of PACE are unequivocally due, at least in part, to a lack of brand awareness and a lack of understanding in terms of what services are on offer. This is shared equally between employers and employees. In the case of the former, it is essential that businesses in Scotland are aware of the service and of the benefits of using it. This will inevitably, in turn, lead to increased employee awareness. Furthermore, when companies become aware of the benefits, they are more likely to recommend the service to employees who are being made redundant.

In terms of the PACE service, the interviews provided a strong degree of affirmation for the quality of advice being handed out, when accepted. Respondents were positive about CV improvements and interview preparation. It is important however that the PACE Partnership ensures its offering is always relevant to the potential clients it serves within specific institutions. This means knowledge of relevant training courses and opportunities, access to funding and specific job opportunities. This can only be improved by a greater degree of knowledge share between advisers – and an improved portal for sharing this information.

Equally however, it is essential that there is the opportunity to share this information with clients, which again comes down to branding and marketing.

Whilst the potential options in terms of a brand development strategy are vast, one potential route would be through ‘championing’ the PACE brand – this could be done in the short time by the PACE partners. For example, the Job Centre Plus has exposure to a wide range of individuals who have been put out of work and – for certain individuals – could this be considered an appropriate avenue for ‘championing’ the service with potential users. A wider issue for discussion could be acquiring the support of key players from the business community in Scotland to ‘champion’ the service – through networking events and other business activity.

The development of a PACE brand which is widely recognised by the business community, coupled with services which are in some way tailored to the individual’s personal circumstances and ambitions, could build an already influential service into one which can be influential on a much wider scale.

# APPENDIX: TOPIC GUIDES

## 6578 SDS Recently Unemployed Journeys

### PACE USERS Topic Guide

*The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All relevant topic areas should be discussed and covered at some stage during the one-to-one discussion, but should be addressed in such a way that facilitates a relaxed and natural flow of conversation.*

#### Introduction

- Explain to respondent the purpose of the study, i.e. we are conducting the research on behalf of Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to review the services currently needed by and available to individuals who are made redundant;
- Remind respondent of MRS Code of Conduct and confidentiality; ensure recording is appropriate;
- When were you made redundant and from which company; for how long had you worked there; was this the first time you were made redundant; if no, tell me about any other times.

#### Initial Redundancy

- How were you told that you were going to be made redundant; what information was given to you in terms of why and timescales; and how did this make you feel;
- To what extent had you been expecting the news and did this make it any easier or any more difficult to take;

What were your immediate thoughts when you were told; Probe in terms of short term, e.g. paying bills, redundancy pay out; medium term, e.g. paying bills and finding a new job; and long term concerns, e.g. work, bills, living, support;

- What, overall were your main worries: if “getting another job”, probe for why this was such a worry; what was it about the job search that was so unsettling: Probe for
  - Qualifications/skillset issues
  - CV writing/job interview technique
  - No potential employers in the area
  - Embarrassment/emotional issues
  - Age
  - Anything else
- Where did you initially go/look for information, advice or guidance? E.g. Careers Centre, Job Centre Plus, Online, Recruitment Agency, etc. Probe how happy they are at finding information for themselves online (PACE would like to move more of its service provision online)
- Did you find what you were looking for?
- What support services, if any, were you offered by the company you worked for; e.g. internal support, external support etc. and what were your immediate reactions to the various support you were offered.

## PACE

- Have you heard of PACE? (may not be aware that PACE provided the support as the marketing campaign, leaflet, etc. led on 'Scottish redundancy helpline and website' - may have to explain that this was delivered through PACE')
- What were your initial reactions to PACE; was this something you had heard of before, what were your initial expectations and why;
- For what reasons did you decide to accept the services offered by PACE; how was it "sold" to you; what did you expect to get out of it;
- What specific support services did you accept / access / use from PACE; what specifically did this involve; how useful was each specific service and why;
  - Benefits advice
  - Job search
  - Advice on career development/opportunities
  - Training (specify)
  - CV support
  - Interview technique support
  - Application form and cover letter support
  - Setting up a new business training
  - Financial information
- What were the most valuable aspects of the services you received and why; which were the least valuable and why; how could these be improved;
- What were the most important stages of the redundancy process for you to receive support or assistance and which specific support was most useful at each stage: Probe for:
  - When news was received;
  - Soon after news was received (i.e. in the ensuing days);
  - In the run up to leaving the company;
  - When leaving;
  - After leaving.
- If you were put in charge of PACE what would you change, based on the experience you have gone through; what would have been the ideal service mix from PACE;
- What would you definitely change and what would you definitely keep the same and why;
- If relevant, why were certain services rejected; how do you feel now about turning these down; what, if anything, would have encouraged take up and why;
- How well did PACE support meet your needs overall and why.



### Support Materials and Services

- What other sources of support did you have access to in addition to PACE; how did PACE match up with these services and why; how did this impact your views on PACE and what have you learned that could improve PACE;

*PACE currently produces a leaflet which is available in Careers Centres, Job Centre Plus, Doctors' surgeries and various other locations.*

- What is your reaction to the leaflet; to what extent does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant and why; to what extent would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Where do you think these leaflets should be placed; if you were looking for printed information and advice, where would you be looking and why;

*PACE has also used press adverts to raise awareness of its services.*

- What is your reaction to this advert; to what extent does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant; would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Have you accessed the PACE website?
- If so, how useful was this; did it contain the type of information you were looking for; how could it be improved; what information in general would you expect to find on the PACE website and why;
- If not, is this somewhere you would have considered visiting if you'd known about it; why/why not; what would you expect to find on the PACE website; what would you want to find (if different).

### Conclusions and Redundancy Support

- What actions, if any, did you take/have you taken in the search for another job – is this attributable in any way to the support services you received;
- Where are you now on your journey to finding new employment? How easy/hard has that journey been? How has the support you have received facilitated that journey? (I know this is similar to the question above, but goes a bit further)
- What do you feel are the most important stages in the redundancy process to have some level of support / intervention and why;
- What in your experience is the most important type of support and why; this can be support you received or did not receive;
- Any other comments?

If appropriate, ask respondent if they are willing to be used as a Case Study – this will involve use of their name, but they can be reassured that we will retract any information they are uncomfortable about us using, e.g. company name.

## 6578 SDS Recently Unemployed Journeys

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### NON SERVICE USERS Topic Guide

*The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All relevant topic areas should be discussed and covered at some stage during the one-to-one discussion, but should be addressed in such a way that facilitates a relaxed and natural flow of conversation.*

#### Introduction

- Explain to respondent the purpose of the study, i.e. we are conducting the research on behalf of Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to review the services currently needed by and available to individuals who are made redundant;
- Remind respondent of MRS Code of Conduct and confidentiality; ensure recording is appropriate;
- When were you made redundant and from which company; for how long had you worked there; was this the first time you were made redundant; tell me about any other times.

#### Initial Redundancy

- How were you told that you were going to be made redundant; what information was given to you in terms of why and timescales; and how did this make you feel;
- To what extent had you been expecting the news and did this make it any easier or any more difficult to take;
- What were your immediate thoughts when you were told; Probe in terms of short term, e.g. paying bills, redundancy pay out; medium term, e.g. paying bills and finding a new job; and long term concerns, e.g. work, bills, living, support?

- What, overall were your main worries: if “getting another job”, probe for why this was such a worry; what was it about the job search that was so unsettling: Probe for
  - Qualifications/skillset issues
  - CV writing/job interview technique
  - No potential employers in the area
  - Embarrassment/emotional issues
  - Age
  - Anything else
- Where did you initially go/look for information, advice or guidance? E.g. Careers Centre, Job Centre Plus, Online, Recruitment Agency, etc. Probe how happy they are at finding information for themselves online (PACE would like to move more of its service provision online)
- Did you find what you were looking for?
- What support services, if any, were you offered by the company you worked for; e.g. internal support, external support etc. and what were your immediate reactions to the various support you were offered;
- If offered service and rejected them, why.

## Redundancy Support Services

- This evaluation relates specifically to the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), which is a government-led initiative to provide support for anyone who has been made redundant. Have you heard of PACE before; if yes, what do you know about it, if not, what would you expect to receive from something like this;
- If yes, did they consider accessing support through PACE? Why did they decide against it?
- What sorts of support/training/advice do you think would be valuable for anyone undergoing a process of redundancy and why;
- When you were going through the process, what were your biggest “needs” in terms of thinking about getting another job; what resources did you have access to or did you wish you had access to:
  - Benefits advice
  - Job search
  - Advice on career development/opportunities
  - Training (specify)
  - CV support
  - Interview technique support
  - Application form and cover letter support
  - Setting up a new business training
  - Financial information
- What actions, if any, did you take/have you taken in the search for another job and why;
- If you were put in charge of a redundancy support service like PACE, what would you include based on the experience you have gone through; what would be the ideal service mix from PACE and why;

- What are the most important stages of the redundancy process for you to receive support or assistance: Probe for the following and the type(s) of support required:
  - When news is received;
  - Soon after news is received (i.e. in the ensuing days);
  - In the run up to leaving the company;
  - When leaving;
  - After leaving.

## Support Materials and Services

*PACE currently produces a leaflet which is available in Careers Centres, Job Centre Plus, Doctors’ surgeries and various other locations.*

- What is your reaction to the leaflet? Does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant? Would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Where do you think these leaflets should be placed? Where would you be looking?

*PACE has also used press adverts to raise awareness of its services.*

- What is your reaction to the advert? Does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant? Would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Have you accessed the PACE website?
- If so, how useful was this? Did it contain the type of information you were looking for? How could it be improved?
- If not, is this somewhere you would have considered visiting if you’d known about it? Why/why not? What would you expect to find on the PACE website? What would you want to find?

## Conclusions and Redundancy Support

- What actions, if any, did you take/have you taken in the search for another job;
- Where are you now on your journey to finding new employment? How easy/hard has that journey been? How has the support you have received facilitated that journey? (I know this is similar to the question above, but goes a bit further)
- What do you feel are the most important stages in the redundancy process to have some level of support/intervention and why;
- What in your experience is the most important type of support and why; this can be support you received or did not receive;
- Any other comments?

If appropriate, ask respondent if they are willing to be used as a Case Study - this will involve use of their name, but they can ensure we redact any information they are uncomfortable about us using, e.g. company name.

## 6578 SDS Recently Unemployed Journeys

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### PACE ADVISERS Topic Guide

*The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All relevant topic areas should be discussed and covered at some stage during the one-to-one discussion, but should be addressed in such a way that facilitates a relaxed and natural flow of conversation.*

#### Introduction

- Explain to respondent the purpose of the study, i.e. we are conducting the research on behalf of Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to review the services currently needed by and available to individuals who are made redundant;
- Remind respondent of MRS Code of Conduct and confidentiality; ensure recording is appropriate;
- Please could you outline your role as a PACE Adviser; what does this involve and how has the role developed in your time doing this. , what proportion of your time do you spend doing this job as opposed to your day job (if applicable)?
- What kind of involvement/experience have you had in large vs. small scale redundancies?

#### Involvement in PACE

- What encouraged you to get involved in PACE; when the initiative was in its infancy/when you started, what were your expectations and why;
- How has the current economic climate affected your ability to effectively carry out your role effectively; what opportunities has this presented, if any,
- In your time in your role, what would you say have been the highlights and why;
- What if any, have been the most challenging aspects of your job;

### Redundancy Support Services

- What specific PACE support services are most useful and effective to your clients and why; Probe for:
  - Benefits advice
  - Job search
  - Advice on career development/opportunities
  - Training (specify)
  - CV support
  - Interview technique support
  - Application form and cover letter support
  - Setting up a new business training
  - Financial information
- Which are the least valuable to your clients and why; how could these be improved;
- What are the most important stages of the redundancy process for support or assistance and which specific support do you feel is most useful at each stage: Probe for:
  - When redundancy news is received;
  - Soon after news is received (i.e. in the ensuing days);
  - In the run up to leaving the company;
  - When leaving;
  - After leaving.
- If you were put in charge of PACE what would you change, based on your experiences with clients; what would be the be ideal service mix from PACE;
- What would you definitely change and what would you definitely keep the same and why;

### **PACE Materials**

- What are your views on the current PACE marketing materials?:
  - Leaflet
  - Pack
  - Website
  - Advertising
- What could SDS do to improve these for customers?

### **Expected Outcomes from the Research**

- Please could you give me a good example of a PACE success from your own experiences or from something you have heard; what are the main learning outcomes from this example;
- Please could you provide an example of less successful case study; what are the main learning outcomes from this example and why;
- What is the value of a service like PACE in light of the current economic climate and why;
- How does PACE compare to other similar offerings, i.e. private sector support services? What could PACE learn from these?

### **Conclusion**

Is there anything you would like to see/request that would help assist you further in your role as a PACE Adviser?



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### ALTERNATIVE SERVICE USERS Topic Guide

*The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All relevant topic areas should be discussed and covered at some stage during the one-to-one discussion, but should be addressed in such a way that facilitates a relaxed and natural flow of conversation.*

#### Introduction

- Explain to respondent the purpose of the study, i.e. we are conducting the research on behalf of Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to review the services currently needed by and available to individuals who are made redundant;
- Remind respondent of MRS Code of Conduct and confidentiality; ensure recording is appropriate;
- When were you made redundant and from which company; for how long had you worked there; was this the first time you were made redundant; if no, tell me about any other times.

#### Initial Redundancy

- How were you told that you were going to be made redundant; what information was given to you in terms of why and timescales; and how did this make you feel;
- To what extent had you been expecting the news and did this make it any easier or any more difficult to take;

- What were your immediate thoughts when you were told; Probe in terms of short term, e.g. paying bills, redundancy pay out; medium term, e.g. paying bills and finding a new job; and long term concerns, e.g. work, bills, living, support;
- What, overall were your main worries: if “getting another job”, probe for why this was such a worry; what was it about the job search that was so unsettling: Probe for:
  - Qualifications/skillset issues
  - CV writing/job interview technique
  - No potential employers in the area
  - Embarrassment/emotional issues
  - Age
  - Anything else
- Where did you initially go/look for information, advice or guidance? E.g. Careers Centre, Job Centre Plus, Online, Recruitment Agency, etc. Probe how happy they are at finding information for themselves online (PACE would like to move more of its service provision online)
- Did you find what you were looking for;
- What support services, if any, were you offered by the company you worked for; e.g. internal support, external support etc. and what were your immediate reactions to the various support you were offered;

### Redundancy Support Services

- What were your initial reactions to NAME OF COMPANY PROVIDING REDUNDANCY SUPPORT; was this something you had heard of before, what were your initial expectations and why;
- For what reasons did you decide to accept the services offered; how was it “sold” to you; what did you expect to get out of it;
- How long were you able to use this service for? Was it open ended or time limited? If time limited, how long/how many visits?
- What specific support services did you accept/access/use; what specifically did this involve; how useful was each specific service and why;
  - Benefits advice
  - Job search
  - Advice on career development/opportunities
  - Training (specify)
  - CV support
  - Interview technique support
  - Application form and cover letter support
  - Setting up a new business training
  - Financial information
- What were the most valuable aspects of the services you received and why; which were the least valuable and why; how could these be improved;
- What were the most important stages of the redundancy process for you to receive support or assistance and which specific support was most useful at each stage: Probe for:
  - When news was received;
  - Soon after news was received (i.e. in the ensuing days);
  - In the run up to leaving the company;
  - When leaving;
  - After leaving.
- If you were put in charge of ‘NAME OF COMPANY PROVIDING SUPPORT’ what would you change, based on the experience you have gone through; what would have been the be ideal service mix;
- What would you definitely change and what would you definitely keep the same and why;
- If relevant, why were certain services rejected; how do you feel now about turning these down; what, if anything, would have encouraged take up and why;
- How well did the support meet your needs overall and why.

## Support Materials and Services

### *Give intro to PACE*

*PACE currently produces a leaflet which is available in Careers Centres, Job Centre Plus, Doctors' surgeries and various other locations.*

- What is your reaction to the leaflet? Does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant? Would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Where do you think these leaflets should be placed? Where would you be looking?

*PACE has also used press adverts to raise awareness of its services.*

- What is your reaction to the advert? Does it contain the type of information you were looking for when you were initially made redundant? Would it encourage you to contact PACE?
- Have you accessed the PACE website?
- If so, how useful was this? Did it contain the type of information you were looking for? How could it be improved?
- If not, is this somewhere you would have considered visiting if you'd known about it? Why/why not? What would you expect to find on the PACE website? What would you want to find?

## Conclusions and Redundancy Support

- What actions, if any, did you take/have you taken in the search for another job – is this attributable in any way to the support services you received;
- Where are you now on your journey to finding new employment? How easy/hard has that journey been? How has the support you have received facilitated that journey? (I know this is similar to the question above, but goes a bit further)
- What do you feel are the most important stages in the redundancy process to have some level of support/intervention and why;
- What in your experience is the most important type of support and why; this can be support you received or did not receive;
- Any other comments?
- If appropriate, ask respondent if they are willing to be used as a Case Study – this will involve use of their name, but they can ensure we redact any information they are uncomfortable about us using, e.g. company name.