



PACE Customer Journey 2019

Commissioned by the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland
on behalf of the PACE Partnership

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September 2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and objectives

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's strategic national partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) leads on the delivery of PACE on behalf of the Scottish Government, in conjunction with a number of key partners including the Department for Work and Pensions. The Ministerial PACE Partnership brings 22 organisations together with the Scottish Government to oversee a continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE.

Hall Aitken were commissioned by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to deliver a qualitative research study looking at the customer experience of individuals who have recently been made redundant. This covers both those who have received support through PACE and those who have not received any PACE support. The aims and objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the customer journey taken by PACE customers and non-PACE customers;
- Identify the needs of the individuals at different stages of the customer journey;
- Gain an understanding as to why some individuals have decided against accessing support;
- Explore what the key influencers are on how they progress, and how these influencers affect outputs;
- Identify where in that journey PACE support/private sector support currently fits, and whether this comes at the right time in their journey;
- Determine how well the current PACE/private sector support meets the needs of those who have recently been made redundant;
- Determine how well PACE support met customer expectations and identify any gaps in current provision;

- Identify what private sector service does well and what PACE could learn from them; and
- Make recommendations on how to develop PACE support to improve service and increase its relevance.

This is a qualitative study gathering insights around the issues surrounding redundancy in Scotland. It is based on qualitative interviews carried out with individuals across Scotland who had been made redundant since April 2018. A total of 23 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted across three groups:

- Those who have recently been made redundant and used PACE (7);
- Those who have recently been made redundant and used an alternative redundancy service (4); and
- Those who have recently been made redundant and not used any service at all (12).

We also interviewed six representatives from local PACE Partners, including SDS PACE Advisers and staff from DWP Jobcentres to gather insights from their perspective as to how customers navigate the redundancy process.

Customer Journey

Our research shows that there are common “touchpoints” along the customer journey. These are:

- Finding out about the redundancy;
- Identifying support needs;
- Accessing support;
- Looking for a job;
- Leaving employment; and
- Getting another job or starting a business.

In a “typical” customer journey, an individual may travel through the touchpoints in a linear fashion. But each customer navigates around them in different ways, often repeating certain touchpoints, or bypassing some. Customers’ needs change as they progress through the redundancy process and will be influenced by a range of personal and external factors.

The first stage of the journey is when a person is first informed about their redundancy. This is an important stage, and how this is handled by the employer has a big impact on subsequent support needs and emotional wellbeing. Notification periods vary depending on length of employment and circumstances. However, if a company goes into administration and ceases trading, there is sometimes very little notice given. Following notification, the first response is often shock followed by anger. People also experience a sense of shame or worthlessness alongside confusion and frequently face a lack of information. The most commonly identified immediate support needs following the notification are:

- Information on redundancy, the process and what they are entitled to;
- What it means for them financially (redundancy payments and benefits implications); and
- Emotional support – having someone to talk to and reassurance.

The PACE presentation is generally the first stage of contact that customers will have with PACE services and normally takes place in the workplace. It is the most frequently accessed element of the PACE services. The presentation provides much of the basic practical information that customers need, but importantly provides an opportunity for customers to consider what further employability, training or personal support they might require. It also provides opportunities for individuals to discuss their needs through one-to-one sessions with an adviser and signposting to other services such as Business Gateway. Often the initial presentation and guidance is enough to provide customers with the support, direction and motivation they need to look for another job.

There is a wide variation in the approach to providing emotional and mental wellbeing support through PACE, ranging from basic signposting to statutory services or local third sector provision; through to direct referral to a provider. The amount of support needed varies from person to person, and at different stages, but overall customers spoke of needing this type of support at some stage in their redundancy journey; even if only as a safety net that provides reassurance that there is someone to turn to.

Many individuals feel initially daunted by the prospect of looking for work; particularly those who have been in their present job for a considerable length of time. Older workers will be unfamiliar with the current jobs market and wary about online approaches to job search and applying for jobs. Others will need help to write or update their CVs or to develop interview skills. PACE provides initial group sessions on CVs and job search, these will involve SDS and employability services coordinated by local authorities. Most customers value this opportunity to update their CVs and job search skills.

One-to-one sessions with an Adviser are offered in all cases following on from the PACE presentation. Some customers will take time to request one-to-one support on careers options and may wish to pursue other options first. From our interviews there are several different reasons for this:

- Taking time to reflect and think through what they really want;
- Not knowing what they want to do;
- Underestimating the difficulties of getting a job; or
- Overestimating their own employability.

The ultimate goal of PACE support is to move customers into a new job or another positive outcome as quickly as possible. However, the move into a new job does not necessarily mean that the support need ends. This stage of the journey can be stressful, with individuals worried about whether the job they access is right for them or doubting whether they can sustain their new job.

Private sector outplacement services

Some employers do not engage with PACE services and choose to bring in private sector redundancy support from one of a number of outplacement services. These tend to be larger, multinational companies or employers who are headquartered outwith Scotland. While private outplacement services have the same objectives as PACE in terms of ensuring employees transition to new jobs as smoothly as possible, they also have the overarching goal of reputational and brand protection on behalf of the employer. Employers will generally buy in packages that include varying levels of support which is usually time-limited, with a clear end date for employees. In some instances, PACE teams do work alongside these outplacement services to provide a more locally tailored and comprehensive service and, where this is coordinated effectively, it can work well. Essentially the core elements of the service delivered by outplacement services are the same as through PACE; although they use different tools and approaches for some elements.

Those not using any support

During the research, several participants were interviewed who had not received external redundancy support of any kind. These individuals faced several issues when trying to navigate the redundancy process. Employer attitude is important for those not getting support and they were more likely to identify issues around inconsistent information, lack of clarity and a feeling that their employer did not know what to do. They relied on friends, family and existing networks for support, or had to find information through self-directed searches on the internet. Most individuals who had not accessed any redundancy support services highlighted that if emotional support had been made available they would have taken it. Those ending up at the Jobcentre have generally not found it helpful in getting them the support they need to find appropriate job opportunities.

How well PACE services meet needs

Overall, PACE customers reported that the presentation was a useful starting point and the information provided in the Positive Steps booklet was valuable. Customers welcomed the initial information session which addressed some of their immediate needs around employability issues, job search tips and benefits advice. Customers were also reassured that further support was available and that they could access it when they felt ready. Group sessions around CVs and job search were also popular. For many PACE customers, help with their CV was all the support they wanted, as they felt more confident following this in progressing along the journey.

PACE customers generally rated the one-to-one support and advice as the most valuable element of the PACE service. The value attached to it relates to the personalised nature of the support, and the feeling of being listened to, that helps build confidence and addresses the worry and stress of the situation. While, in most cases, direct support for mental wellbeing is not part of the PACE provision, the offer of one-to-one sessions with an adviser can help in this respect. PACE customers were more likely to have reported positive experiences of engaging with advisers, and that the encouragement and tailored support provided made a difference to their confidence and motivation. It seems that feeling that they are being supported through the process and being given some agency and options helps to build resilience that supports a more positive outlook.

The PACE customers we interviewed had mixed experiences of using Jobcentres. Several had pre-existing poor perceptions of the Jobcentre which meant that they were reluctant to use the services. More senior employees felt that the services offered would not help them secure the right kind of job opportunity. However, some customers found the support and advice of the Jobcentre to be helpful in moving towards a new job.

One of our interviewees had started a business after struggling to find work following her redundancy. She attributed this decision directly to the advice and guidance she received through PACE. PACE support provided her with both the confidence to consider new options and the practical guidance needed to make the first steps.

How well private sector services meet needs

Customers who had accessed support through a private outplacement service had very mixed experiences of the service. One key aspect that differentiates this service is its time-limited nature, and this adds an additional pressure to those having to deal with redundancy. The employability materials and support were considered to be high quality by some customers, while others found them to be inappropriate and condescending. However, the main issue with private service customers (identified by those who had both a positive and negative experience) was the quality of the support available from the advisers. One felt that they were being 'treated like a number' and that the adviser was just going through the motions rather than making any genuine effort to move them into work.

Influences on engagement

Through the dialogue with both customer groups, we have identified several factors which influence whether an individual accesses support, and the level of support an individual decides they need. The research shows that the key influencing factors when it comes to accessing support are:

- Employer attitude and support;
- Awareness about what support is available;
- Confidence and resilience;
- Availability and capacity of services; and
- Geographical access.

The employer attitude in engaging with or responding to local PACE teams is important in getting support in quickly, agreeing what is needed, and enabling employees to access it. While most employers are happy to engage, we came across several instances where employers have either not engaged, or not fully cooperated in allowing employees to take time off to attend PACE sessions. This can delay or hamper service delivery and can, in some circumstances, mean those who need support are not getting it.

Participants not using any kind of support service cited that they did not know what was available to them. Partly because their employer did not offer them any support and partly because they didn't think to look for anything. Most people will not know about PACE services before they are faced with redundancy, and it is a challenge for partners to make sure that they make people aware when they need to. The majority of non-PACE customers highlighted that had they known about PACE it is likely they would have accessed the services; to varying extents.

Confidence was a key theme running through the interviews across all customer groups. The most commonly identified factor for not accessing support was that they were confident in their own skills and abilities and so they didn't see support as necessary. This was the main issue that differentiated them from those who did access services. However, there were several people who had initially felt confident in their ability to access a job, but who later recognised that they would have benefited from help. This reinforces the need to have an 'open door' approach rather than time-limited support.

Timing and availability are also important. The research highlighted several instances where individuals needed support and were unable to access it. For example, one participant spoke of being unable to access PACE support because the redundancy date was moved forward, and PACE were brought in two days after she had left her job. Geographical proximity of services is a particular issue in more rural parts of Scotland, where location is more critical because of the time and cost of travelling to access services further afield.

Factors that influence progress

The ability of those facing redundancy to navigate through the process and get back into work or self-employment depends on several inter-related factors. These include personal factors such as:

- Confidence levels;
- Emotional wellbeing;
- Relevance and transferability of skills; and
- Financial security.

Confidence is a key factor that helps people to engage and progress with PACE services. But customers also report that getting support through PACE increases their self-confidence, making further progress more achievable.

Linked to confidence is the level of emotional wellbeing experienced by individuals. Customer mental wellbeing is a key influencer along the journey and can make the difference between a positive and negative outcome, as well as how quickly someone progresses into new employment. Having the necessary support or signposting in place to promote good emotional wellbeing is viewed as a core necessity for redundancy services.

How relevant the skills and experience of an individual are in the current labour market is another factor that influences both their journey and their outcome. This appears to be more of an issue among older workers aged 45 and over, who appear to struggle more during redundancy.

Having a financial buffer, or not having immediate financial concerns around redundancy, can provide a bit of breathing space for individuals facing redundancy. Not having to be forced into making snap decisions, or pursuing the first opportunity they come across, reduced the stress felt by individuals and gives them time to take stock.

But outcomes are also influenced by the quality and range of support networks and services, including:

- Employer support;
- Quality of the support provided;
- Services that are delivered in a personalised way; and
- Access to wider support networks.

In addition to support provided through their employer and through personal support networks, employees can often support each other. This can be through emotional support and by sharing practical information and advice on job opportunities. The key elements of external redundancy support (whether through PACE or private services) are good quality guidance and advice, alongside

personalised support tailored to individual needs. The open-ended nature of PACE support is also a factor that supports progress.

These practical elements of support can serve to strengthen and build the personal elements to enable customers to navigate through the redundancy process effectively.

Key findings

Employer awareness and engagement

Where PACE Partnerships are aware of redundancies taking place, they have effective approaches for engaging with employers and working with them to deliver effective support. However, there are still many instances where PACE Partnerships are not aware of redundancies taking place. These are mostly smaller scale redundancies with under 20 employees affected. In other instances, employers are aware of PACE but choose not to engage with the services.

Among our interviewees, several of those made redundant without recourse to PACE support worked for large voluntary sector organisations. The scale of redundancies is unlikely to be large enough to require an HR1 notification, which may mean that PACE teams are not made aware of them. The lack of engagement with PACE among these organisations is perhaps surprising, given that many of them will work closely with the public sector and will receive public funding to some extent.

Early engagement

The first few weeks after someone finds out about redundancy are the hardest for them to deal with. The shock and emotional impact come alongside the need to consider the immediate practical impacts on finances, family and relationships. The earlier that PACE teams can engage with employers to support this process, the more likely it is that emotional impacts can be minimised, and positive outcomes maximised. One of the positive elements of the private sector offer is that they can provide support to the employer even before redundancies are announced. While this can also happen with PACE, it is not usually the case.

Individual awareness

Take-up of PACE support among individuals is limited by lack of awareness of the service generally. Where employers are not engaging directly with PACE services, individuals are less likely to find out about what services they are entitled to. Many people who did not engage with services feel they could have benefited from some of the support available. Awareness and referrals, even among other PACE Partner organisations such as DWP Jobcentres appear to be inconsistent.

A vague brand

Awareness of PACE is hampered by having a weak brand identity. The PACE identity comes across most strongly through the workplace presentation, but this is not the case for the other linked services. Many individuals we interviewed said they were not aware of PACE; even some who had accessed support. Even among individuals who had found out about PACE through their own self-directed searches, their recollection and awareness of the service and PACE brand was limited. This lack of clear identity is perhaps exacerbated by the partnership nature of the services, where individuals can access component services without any knowledge of PACE.

The Value of PACE Advisers

PACE customers tended to have a more positive experience, with all those we interviewed rating the support they received highly and feeling more confident after engaging with the service. It is clear that the real benefit from engaging with PACE was the positive change in confidence and mental wellbeing. This was achieved to some extent through the practical support offered, but where PACE really adds value is the interaction between customers and advisers. In comparison, those who used an alternative service did not feel the support they received was tailored to their needs or empathetic. And those who received no support from their employer would have appreciated and benefited from having someone they could speak to, during the redundancy process.

Time to reflect

The open-ended nature of PACE support has been highlighted as a positive feature that reduces the pressure on customers to make quick decisions. Those facing redundancy need time to come to terms with the news, deal with the immediate practical and financial concerns and reflect on their longer-term options. The knowledge that support will still be there for them once they have taken time to consider their needs is a significant reassurance.

Reality checking

One important role of SDS PACE Advisers is to provide customers with advice that reflects the current realities of the labour market. This research has identified that those in senior roles facing redundancy are sometimes over-confident and unrealistic about how easy it will be to get a job. So, having guidance and advice through PACE has benefited individuals who would not have sought support if it had not been delivered to them at their workplace.

A more joined up service

PACE is a partnership approach to coordinating services, and not a service in itself; and this confuses individuals who might be accessing the services. For example, some individuals will access component services (Jobcentre, SDS, local authority employability) without necessarily associating this with PACE. This may be partly linked to the lack of awareness of PACE, and the weakness of the 'brand'. But there is also a need for the individual services involved to recognise the added value of PACE as an overarching coordinating structure.

Mixed reputation of the jobcentre

It appears from this research that people are not fully aware of the support services potentially available through the Jobcentre and are also wary of using it. As a PACE Partner, the DWP Jobcentre should be an important route into the PACE service; particularly for individuals involved in smaller-scale redundancies who do not receive workplace PACE support. This negative perception of Jobcentres and a reluctance to use their services among certain groups suggests that there could be many potential PACE clients falling through the cracks.

Peer support networks

The customer experience of redundancy is a turbulent one that can see an individual experience a whole range of emotions in a very short space of time. People spoke of a need to share stories and information, to talk to someone about their concerns, and also of a need to support other colleagues who are going through the same thing. These support networks provide additional (or in some cases alternative) support that gives the customer confidence to progress along the journey more quickly.

A clear offer on emotional wellbeing

While there is generally no 'badged' mental wellbeing offer provided through PACE, there is information and signposting to potential sources of support. It is clear from our interviews that having access to one-to-one sessions with SDS PACE Advisers provides a degree of emotional support that is highly valued by customers. Notwithstanding this positive role in emotional wellbeing, sometimes individuals do require more support with mental health issues as they go through the redundancy process.

Follow-up and aftercare

It is important that customers feel they have support as they transition into a new job and that they can come back for further support if they need it. Customers have identified the importance of the 'open door' approach, and this is a clear advantage which PACE has over private sector services.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government and SDS PACE Team should consider how to improve awareness and publicise the positive benefits of PACE to employers (particularly SMEs). There may be a need to promote PACE specifically to the Voluntary sector through umbrella organisations such as SCVO.

There are also common misunderstandings that PACE support can only be delivered through employers and that the support is only available for larger scale redundancy scenarios. These need to be addressed through providing clear and consistent information to partners, and through wider marketing.

Making sure that the PACE Partners are clear about the overall PACE offer will enable them to provide a more coherent service to customers. In particular, DWP Jobcentre should review how it deals with those coming through redundancy and ensure a more standardised approach linked to PACE.

The Scottish Government and SDS PACE Team should consider the overall branding of the service. Having a clearer brand and marketing message (alongside strengthening partnership links) would help to ensure that people knew about what PACE does and associate this brand identity to the service offer.

Most customers report that the open-ended nature of support is communicated clearly to them by SDS PACE Advisers. However, there is still some confusion as to the ability to access support after they have left employment which could be addressed through marketing and partner communication.

PACE Partnerships should recognise and encourage the role of peer-led support as part of the broader offer. This is particularly important for larger-scale redundancies. Tailoring some training and support materials to enable this will help to expand support being offered.

Having a more clear and consistent approach to providing access to mental health support would ensure that individuals were able to make progress. Signposting people to mental health services isn't always enough, as individuals are often unwilling or unable to make the necessary call. The Scottish Government and PACE National team should explore ways of strengthening mental health support.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's strategic national partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) leads on the delivery of PACE on behalf of the Scottish Government, in conjunction with a number of key partners including the Department for Work and Pensions. The Ministerial PACE Partnership brings 22 organisations together with the Scottish Government to oversee a continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE.

PACE is delivered primarily through 18 local PACE Partnerships each operating with a high level of local flexibility and independence. SDS coordinates and chairs each local partnership; although membership varies across different areas depending on the local organisational and delivery context. Through its partners, PACE delivers a wide range of support to employers and employees going through the process of redundancy including:

- Employment rights;
- Financial and pensions advice;
- Benefits advice;
- Careers Information;
- Advice and Guidance;
- CV and job search support;
- Employability and vocational training support; and
- Support to manage stress.

Recent research¹ among PACE clients suggests that positive employment outcomes are at an all-time high. Eight out of ten PACE customers had found a job or become self-employed following redundancy; most within six months. Overall satisfaction continues to be high, with customers finding individual services relevant to their

needs. However, timeliness of the PACE services is an ongoing issue, with a quarter of customers feeling that the support from PACE is being delivered too late to meet their needs.

Research objectives

Hall Aitken were commissioned by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to deliver a qualitative research study looking at the customer experience of individuals who have recently been made redundant. This covers both those who have received support through PACE and those who have not received any PACE support.

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the customer journey taken by PACE customers and non-PACE customers;
- Identify the needs of the individuals at different stages of the customer journey;
- Gain an understanding as to why some individuals have decided against accessing support;
- Explore what the key influences are on how they progress, and how these influences affect outputs.;
- Identify where in that journey PACE support/private sector support currently fits and whether this comes at the right time in their journey;
- Determine how well the current PACE/private sector support meets the needs of those who have recently been made redundant;
- Determine how well PACE support met customer expectations and identify any gaps in current PACE provision;
- Identify what private sector service does well and what PACE could learn from them; and
- Make recommendations on how to develop PACE support to improve service and increase its appeal and relevance.

¹ SDS and Scottish Government (2018) PACE Client Experience Survey 2018; IFF Research [online] available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2018/12/pace-client-experience-survey-2018/documents/00543798-pdf/00543798-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543798.pdf>

This research aims to build on the insights drawn out in the bi-annual PACE Client Experience Survey and provide a more in-depth understanding of how individuals experience redundancy to help shape and inform future services.

However, many individuals who have been made redundant do not engage with PACE. This is either because they use a private provider funded by their employer, or they may decide not to access support of any kind. A key objective of this study was to engage with non-PACE customers as a way of increasing the knowledge base on how best to support people who have been made redundant.

Method

This is a qualitative research study which aims to gather an in-depth and rich narrative about the issues surrounding redundancy. It is based mainly on qualitative interviews carried out with individuals across Scotland who had been made redundant since April 2018. A total of 23 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted across three target groups:

- Those who have recently been made redundant and used PACE (7)
- Those who have recently been made redundant and used an alternative redundancy service (4)
- Those who have recently been made redundant and not used any service at all (12)

In addition, six representatives from local PACE Partners were interviewed, including SDS PACE advisers and staff from DWP Jobcentres to gather insights from their perspective as to how customers navigate the redundancy process.

Participants were recruited using the following methods:

- PACE clients were recruited using information provided by Skills Development Scotland.
- Non-PACE clients were recruited using an advertisement shared across social media channels (Twitter and LinkedIn).
- PACE Partner representatives were identified by Skills Development Scotland.

One requirement of this research was to engage with a broad range of individuals across age, gender, geographical location, skill level, sector and company size. While the sample achieved a broad cross-section of interviewees, none were aged under 25 and there was an over-representation of those in higher level occupations. Factors which may have influenced this include using Twitter and LinkedIn to recruit non-PACE participants, the reach of the social media advert, and the self-selecting nature of the research which may have attracted participants who have an interest in taking part. More information around the demographics of the participants involved in the research is included in Appendix A.

The report includes quotes from participants to bring the customer experience to life, and more detailed case study examples are in Appendix B. Names and other personal details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the individuals.

After the interviews were completed some participants mentioned that they enjoyed the interview and being given an opportunity to speak about their experience, indicating that it was quite a cathartic experience for them. This highlights the importance of giving people an opportunity to speak about their situation as a way of coming to terms with it and gaining a more positive outlook.

Report Structure

Following this introductory section, the remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Exploring the customer journey:** looks at the stages of the customer journey and the needs that those made redundant experience at each stage.
- **How well services meet needs:** looks at the extent to which services accessed through PACE and private sector provision meet identified needs.
- **Key influencers of outcomes:** looks at the main factors that determine what customers need, how they access services, and whether they are able to get the support they need to get back into employment.
- **Key findings and recommendations:** highlights the key strengths of the different elements of PACE and private sector provision, identifies gaps, and where services could be strengthened.

EXPLORING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

This section explores the different stages in the customer journey facing those experiencing redundancy. It identifies the support needs at each stage and highlights how support is provided through PACE and alternative private sector support providers.

Stages of the customer journey

Our research shows that there are common stages or “touchpoints” along the customer journey. These are:

- Finding out about the redundancy/consultation
- Identifying support needs
- Accessing support
- Looking for a job
- Leaving employment
- Getting another job or starting a business

In a “typical” customer journey an individual may travel through the touchpoints in a linear fashion. But the reality is that each customer navigates around the touchpoints in lots of different ways, often repeating certain touchpoints, or bypassing some. For example, some individuals will start to look for work immediately, before they have been made redundant, others will wait and weigh up their options.

Customers’ needs change as they progress through the redundancy process and will be influenced by a range of personal and external factors (theses are explored further in a subsequent chapter). They will also be influenced by their experiences and interactions with the service they get through PACE. It is also important to note that different stages can be repeated, and that even once they have found a job, individuals still may need further support. Some of the typical thoughts and feelings identified by PACE customers as they move through the redundancy process and access PACE support are summarised in Figure 1. The stages of the customer journey are described in more detail in the following section.

Figure 1 PACE Customers’ feelings and thoughts at different stages

Consultation	Identifying need	Accessing services	Leaving work	Entering a new job
What does redundancy mean?	I need help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My CV 	I feel more confident.	Will I find a new job?	Is this the right job for me?
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview skills • Money advice 	I want to start my own business.	What if I run out of money?	I took the first job that I was offered.
What am I entitled to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling 	This is not the end.	Do I need support?	What if it doesn't work out?
Will I find a new job?	I want to consider career options.	I'll survive this.	What else can I do?	
What will I do for money?				
How will I support my family?				

Consultation/finding out about the redundancy

The initial stage of the process is when a person is first informed about the redundancy. This is an important stage, and how this is handled by the employer has a big impact on the subsequent support needs and the emotional wellbeing of the employee concerned. The statutory requirement is that employers must give at least one week’s notification of redundancy for staff employed under two years and an additional week’s notice for every year employed beyond that (up to 12 years). However, if a company goes into administration and ceases trading, there is sometimes very little notice given to staff.

There are a wide range of different approaches that employers take to consulting on, or announcing, redundancies. Some staff are given notification of potential redundancy without knowing whether they will be made redundant. In other scenarios, an entire workplace is

informed that they will all be getting laid off. Sometimes staff are sent home but in many cases, they are required to work on, making accessing support more difficult. However, some employers are supportive and allow staff time to deal with the redundancy.

“After the consultation period my employer carried out information sessions with the Board. And they gave us time to go for interviews and access other support ... but my role in finance meant that I didn’t have the time to do this because it was full on after the redundancy news trying to sort things out. I wasn’t able to benefit from the support compared to other people.” PACE customer, aged 35-44

One individual was informed privately of a redundancy scenario but was not allowed to discuss it with other employees. This secrecy and lack of transparency adds further anxiety to what is already a stressful situation. It also makes accessing support much more difficult.

“I was sworn to secrecy so that other employees wouldn’t find out about the redundancies. It was hard to stay motivated knowing I couldn’t talk to anyone about what was happening; and I still had a job to do.” Non-PACE customer, aged 35-44

In most instances, PACE teams are not involved in the process until after redundancies are announced and staff informed. This often means that employees given notice cannot access any immediate external support, aside from colleagues, family and friends and Trade Unions (where relevant). However, where employers are buying in support from an out-placement service, these services are sometimes involved from the initial announcement stage. This potentially provides access to more immediate support and a more joined up service.

Following a notification of redundancy or potential redundancy, the first response is often shock followed by anger. People also experience a sense of shame or worthlessness alongside confusion and often face a lack of information.

“I felt ashamed. I was playing things back over the last few months trying to work out what I did wrong. This was the first time I’d been unemployed since I was 16. I thought what do I do? I had no one to turn to.” Non-PACE customer, aged 55-64

Once the redundancy notice has been issued and the employee has come to terms with the initial shock, they will need to consider what their options are, what they need to do, and what support they might require. Through conversations with individuals it is clear that customers experience very similar initial fears and questions: financial concerns, worries about supporting their family and finding a new job. The most commonly identified immediate support needs are:

- Information on redundancy, the process and what they are entitled to.
- What it means for them financially (redundancy payments and benefits implications).
- Emotional support – having someone to talk to and reassurance.

Basic information on redundancy and rights

The first thing that people want to know tends to be what redundancy means for them in practical terms, what the process is, and what are their rights and entitlements. Particularly if this is their first redundancy experience. They are largely reliant on their employer’s HR staff or Trade Union representative (where relevant) for this information.

Benefits and finance

After finding out about redundancy, many individuals will have immediate concerns about the financial impact on them and their families. They will want to know what redundancy payment they will get, their benefit entitlements and how to register with the Jobcentre.

Emotional support

Our research suggests that people will initially seek support from their close family and friends and use any existing support networks they have. Those with more limited networks, or whose partners are also going through the redundancy are more likely to struggle with accessing immediate emotional support. The research also found that some in managerial positions found it challenging to support colleagues while also trying to navigate redundancy themselves. Individuals will need signposting to emotional support that they can access quickly and confidentially. Where there has been a long lead-in time and engagement with the employer, partners are able to provide more support, for example in the Michelin redundancy scenario, the long lead-in time has enabled the NHS to provide support on-site.

Identifying support needs: PACE customers

PACE Presentation

The vast majority of employers are fully cooperative and supportive of PACE teams and recognise the value that this service provides to their employees. The PACE presentation is generally the first stage of contact that customers will have with PACE services and normally takes place in the workplace, where this is practical. However, where there has been a sudden closure, PACE teams will arrange to hold presentations in other community-based venues. PACE customers stated that they received the presentation about two weeks after they received their notice.

From the PACE Client Experience Survey, we know that the PACE presentation is the most frequently used aspect of the PACE service, with three quarters of customers attending one. However, by the time that the customer attends the PACE presentation, there are already considerable information and support needs arising from the redundancy notification (as outlined above). The presentation provides much of the basic practical information that customers need, but importantly provides an opportunity for customers to consider what further employability, training or personal support they might require. It also provides opportunities for individuals to discuss their needs through one-to-one sessions with an adviser and signposting to other services such as Business Gateway. The PACE presentation is viewed positively by those who attended it, as one customer highlighted:

“I went to the PACE presentation and they gave us a big workbook and talked us through what was in it. All the one-to-one support looked really good and promising, so I signed up for the lot.”

PACE customer, aged 35-44

For around a tenth of PACE customers the presentation is the only service they will use (9%)¹. Dialogue with customers highlighted that often the PACE presentation is enough to provide customers with the support, direction and motivation they need to look for another

job. Those who are more confident and have up-to-date skillsets may only require some basic information and signposting which the presentation will provide.

Accessing PACE support

The way that support is provided will depend on the specific redundancy scenario, the timescales and the supportiveness of the employer. The longer the lead-in time and notification given to the PACE team, the more planning and tailoring of services can be undertaken to meet the specific needs of the workforce. The Chair of the PACE Partnership will ideally discuss the arrangements with the employee representatives and agree on the most suitable package and timing of services. However, where there has been a sudden closure there will be no time for consultation and potentially a significant need for immediate support. Rapid closures of workplaces through insolvency can also lead to capacity issues and narrow timescales which can lead to customers missing out on getting the support they need. However, advisers report good relationships between PACE and Insolvency Practitioners that enables access for customers in these scenarios

Time to reflect

The basic information requirements around welfare, personal financial impact and the redundancy process are delivered through the presentation and guidance. However, there is still an ongoing need for customers to absorb this information and work out what it means for them. Advisers report that customers will generally address these fundamental elements and then ‘stop and reflect’ before considering what to do next. Where there is a reasonable amount of lead-in time there will be an opportunity for customers to think through their options and discuss these with their family. As one Adviser commented:

“If they’ve just had an announcement they’ll want to deal with the immediacy of their loss. We don’t want to force their hand ... But we don’t disappear: the door stays open.”

¹ SDS and Scottish Government (2018) PACE Client Experience Survey 2018; IFF Research [online] available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2018/12/pace-client-experience-survey-2018/documents/00543798-pdf/00543798-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543798.pdf>

Emotional support

The research suggests that the first few weeks of a redundancy are a crucial time for people in terms of psychological impact, which in turn impacts on the rest of their journey. One customer compared the redundancy to “breaking up with your partner and you don’t want it to end” while others said it was “like going to a funeral”. Feelings of grief, loss, stress, anxiety and lack of motivation were all common among participants.

There is a wide variation in the approach to providing emotional and mental wellbeing support through PACE, which ranges from basic signposting to statutory services or local third sector provision; through to direct referral to a provider. The amount of support needed varies from person to person, and at different stages of the journey, but overall customers spoke of needing this type of support at some stage in their journey; even if only as a safety net that provides reassurance that there is someone to turn to.

Employability support

Many individuals feel initially daunted by the prospect of looking for work. This is particularly difficult for those who have been in their present job for a considerable length of time. Older workers will be unfamiliar with the current jobs market and wary about online approaches to job search and applying for jobs. Others will need help to write or update their CVs or to develop interview skills as highlighted by one PACE customer:

“The prospect of having to get a CV together and put myself out there, particularly with LinkedIn and social media and things to consider was daunting. As much as we use those channels in a working situation there’s much more focus on “self-promotion” which is not a thing that I find easy to do.” PACE customer, aged 45-54

PACE provides initial group sessions on CVs and job search. These will involve SDS and local employability services coordinated by local authorities. Individuals may also feel that they don’t need much help but are generally grateful for the guidance and advice they receive. Group sessions were viewed positively by some participants as highlighted below:

“Having group sessions was really useful because it gives everyone access to the information regardless of their personal situation. It’s more supportive doing it as a collective, then if people want to explore certain avenues in more detail they can have a one-to-one session.” PACE customer, aged 45-54

One-to-one support

One-to-one sessions with an Adviser are offered in all cases following on from the PACE presentation. Some customers will take time to request one-to-one support on careers options and may wish to pursue other options first. From our interviews there are several different reasons for this:

- Taking time to reflect and think through what they really want;
- Not knowing what they want to do;
- Underestimating the difficulties of getting a job; or
- Overestimating their own employability.

These sessions are usually with an SDS PACE Adviser and focus on employability, careers guidance and advice. However, Advisers are often asked in these sessions about redundancy legislation, rights and tax issues and will need to signpost customers to where they can find the relevant information.

Leaving work

As outlined earlier, the individual's experience at the point of leaving work will depend on the amount of notice, employer attitude and specific circumstances of the redundancy. But the reality of physically leaving the workplace can lead to negative emotions and feelings of worthlessness. Individuals spoke of:

- Dealing with being unemployed for the first time;
- Loss of pride and self-esteem;
- Feelings of grief and loss; and
- Increased stress and anxiety due to money concerns and finding a new job.

This stage can be particularly traumatic for individuals who have yet to secure employment. One customer commented that “there was no doubt I felt the impact of the redundancy, I felt like I'd lost my self-worth.” While another spoke of financial concerns and having to cash in pensions to support her family. It is important that PACE clients are aware that the support doesn't end when they leave employment.

Entering a new job

The ultimate goal of PACE support is to move customers into a new job or another positive outcome as quickly as possible. However, the move into a new job does not necessarily mean that the support need ends. This stage of the journey can be stressful, with individuals worried about whether the job is right for them or doubting whether they can sustain their new job. As highlighted by one PACE customer:

“I probably accepted it because I was panicking and took the job and thought I'll take it and see ... Now I'm more aware of PACE and its resources I feel more confident about accessing support and looking for information about qualifications and where my skills could transfer to other roles. If the job I'm in now doesn't work out, I'll know where to go for help.” PACE customer, aged 45-54

Private redundancy services

Some employers do not engage with PACE services and choose to bring in private sector redundancy support from outplacement services. There are several such providers including Connor, LHH Penna, Renovo and Right Management. Often employers who are headquartered outwith Scotland use these outplacement services as this is part of their corporate policy when dealing with redundancy and transition. Use of private sector outplacement services is more common in certain sectors such as Financial Services and in large, multinational companies. One PACE Adviser has suggested that some employers feel they are likely to get a better service because they are paying for it.

While private outplacement services have the same objectives as PACE in terms of ensuring employees transition to new jobs as smoothly as possible, they also have the overarching goal of reputational and brand protection on behalf of the employer. One interviewee who received support from a private service requested additional support through PACE, a request which the employer refused. This particular company is a national organisation with a Head Office based in England and so this may in part explain the decision to use a private sector service over PACE.

However, in some instances, PACE teams do work alongside these outplacement services to provide a more locally tailored and comprehensive service, for example in Michelin Tyres in Dundee. Michelin had used the same outplacement company for a plant closure in Northern Ireland; so they brought with them sectoral expertise. Where joint support delivery is coordinated effectively, Advisers report that it can work well. Essentially the core elements of the service delivered by outplacement services are the same as through PACE; although they use different tools and approaches for some elements (for example psychometric testing).

Employers will generally buy in packages that include varying levels of support with, for example, additional specialist support being available for executives. The support is also usually time-limited, with a clear end date for when the support will end.

These services cover a wide range of offers to employees that can be tailored to specific circumstances, ranging from specialist leadership, coaching and career development to more generic employability support including CV writing, skills and confidence-building. Much of the generic support is delivered online.

Figure 2 summarises the different approaches to providing services between PACE Partnerships and private sector provision. This table is indicative only as both PACE and private sector support services will vary depending on the local PACE partnership, and what type and level of private sector service the employer has bought in.

Figure 2 Summary of Services provided through PACE and Private Outplacement services

Type of support	PACE	Private outplacement service
Engagement	SDS PACE Chair contacts the employer after notification usually through HR1	Employer HR department engages the service.
Informing/consulting employees	Often this will have taken place before PACE involvement.	Private service can do this on behalf of the employer.
Identifying employers' needs	PACE Chair meets the employer HR representative to discuss and plan support.	Employer will specify what support is required based on the service offered through the outplacement provider.
Presentation on services	Comprehensive PACE presentation covering basic information on redundancy, and an outline of services (benefits advice, careers guidance, employability, training opportunities).	This can be delivered within the workplace or at an alternative venue. Group teleconferences available.
Hard copy guides and documents	A handbook entitled 'Positive Steps to your Future'. A local directory of PACE services. PACE Facing Redundancy Guide.	Workbooks e.g. finance Documents available to download from the online portal.

Type of support	PACE	Private outplacement service
Initial personal support	Money advice Benefits information and advice Tax advice Pensions advice CV writing skills	Money advice Pensions advice Benefits information and advice Redundancy process
Help to cope with stress/wellbeing	Varies from referral to counselling to signposting to external services.	Will vary, but may involve access to a 24 hour helpline. Webinar on resilience. Online articles via the portal.
Online support	SDS services through www.myworldofwork.com	Online portal offering online "courses" and articles. E.g. job searching, CV writing skills, how to cope with the redundancy process.
Employability/transition support	Literacy and numeracy support Employability support (CV/ applications/interviews/ job search). Career management and employability workshops. Information on training and funding sources.	Will vary, but may involve access to a 24 hour helpline. Webinar on resilience. Online articles via the portal.
One-to-one support	One-to-one Careers Guidance interview.	One-to-one sessions available with advisers on CV writing skills, setting up a LinkedIn profile. Interview coaching.
Business start-up	Advice on business start-up from Business Gateway.	LinkedIn training on business start-up.
Follow-up	Various in-work services can be accessed including Careers Advice and training (where the person is eligible).	This can form part of the outplacement service but it will depend what level of service the employer has contracted. There is no follow-up once the allotted time period is up.

Those not using any support

During the research several participants were interviewed who had not received external redundancy support of any kind. These conversations highlighted some of the issues they faced when trying to navigate the redundancy process. These include issues around:

- Lack of information and direction;
- Accessing emotional support through family and friends;
- Accessing self-directed support; and
- Lack of confidence in the Jobcentre.

Lack of information and direction

For those working for employers who have not engaged with PACE, or where the local PACE team has not been made aware of the redundancies, the route to support was less clear. The attitude of the employer, and what support they provide when making people aware of a redundancy is a key factor at this stage. Individuals may get some basic support and signposting from their employer or Trade Union representative (where they are present). However, often they feel they must deal with it themselves and pursue self-directed support.

“I knew the redundancy was coming, it wasn’t a total surprise. They were going through a restructure. I was offered another job, but it wasn’t suitable. It was a very difficult period. I was having problems with family, working overtime; I felt really undervalued. I didn’t get much support from my employer other than my redundancy package.” Non-PACE customer, aged 25-34

However, those not getting support through PACE were more likely to identify issues around inconsistent information, lack of clarity and a feeling that their employer did not know what to do. Individuals spoke of feeling let down and disappointed by the lack of support from their employer, some of whom are well-known organisations. As one participant described:

“The whole process was shocking. The only conversation I had with the management team was that I was told on the Monday I’d lost my job. Apart from that, I’ve had no contact with management about the redundancy. Nobody did anything for me.” Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

Customers spoke of increased stress and anxiety caused by the uncertainties and inconsistencies in the information they received from their employer. The experience of one customer who was made redundant while on maternity leave highlights challenges she faced with a large organisation:

“It shouldn’t be for me to pick up on these errors by HR. And you just think come on, you’re a massive organisation, how difficult can this be! It made me feel really vulnerable, and that I had to double check everything. I felt it was on me to deal with it myself.” Non-PACE customer, aged 35-44

Employer support

While these individuals did not access any support through PACE or a private sector outplacement service, some were provided with limited support through their employer. One participant identified that his employer had provided support in the form of motivational coaching during the process of consultation and having to re-interview for a revised job. This was perceived as useful as it helped motivate him to look for work and move on.

Another individual identified that his employer had referred staff to a helpline. However, this person identified negative perceptions around using employee helplines for emotional support. He said that:

“The helpline had a stigma attached to it because of the way they put it over. They made it sound like if you’re having a breakdown, phone this number. So that wasn’t great, I don’t think that was sensitively handled.” Non-service user, age 25-34

Another person was referred to the HR department based in another city, where only phone-based contact was possible. They had no answers to any of the questions anyone had. This added to the stress he was under as he felt unsupported. He explained his personal situation with his young family to his boss and was told the company could not help him. His employer offered “group sessions” for people to chat through their problems with a representative. However, he felt this wasn’t appropriate as people have personal issues they may not want to talk about in front of others. He felt that this should have been offered as one-to-one. There was no formal emotional support offered to help with stress.

Emotional support through friends and family

Dialogue with this group suggests that emotional support directly through an employer is limited, and often non-existent. People who received limited or no support from their employer also spoke of a need to speak to someone about their situation, especially if they were the only person being made redundant. They spoke of feeling “isolated and ostracised.” People turn to friends, partners, family or colleagues, some of whom may also be trying to deal with their own redundancy. Most individuals who had not accessed any redundancy support services highlighted that if emotional support had been made available, they would have taken it, as highlighted by one interviewee:

“Emotional support would have been useful. I couldn’t go to my Line Manager (as she was part of the problem). I didn’t have access to any proper support from my employer. I was using Mindfulness apps to get through it.” Non-PACE customer, aged 25-34

Self-directed support

A lack of clear information led several people to source their own information online. One stakeholder highlighted that often people google ‘redundancy’ or ‘redundancy support’ to find out what it means for them and what help they can get. This highlights the importance of PACE having a strong online presence. PACE seems to have a high profile when carrying out online searches around redundancy support with ACAS, SDS and Scottish Government websites linking to PACE all featuring prominently. One interviewee used internet searches to find out what information was available, having had only limited support from his employer, as described below:

“I looked online for information and came across PACE. But I didn’t access it, I was too focused on finding a new job rather than looking for support.” Non-PACE customer, age 35-44

The UK Government website was also mentioned frequently as a good source of information, particularly the redundancy calculators. One interviewee had looked online for advice on the redundancy process and what he was entitled to. He found the calculator tool useful, and using it made him realise he hadn’t quite completed three years’ service and was only entitled to two years. This led him to have conversations with his boss and to fight for the extra year’s payment which he eventually received.

People also spoke of downloading information from the SDS ‘My World of Work’ website. One individual commented that information from the SDS website gave her the confidence and the knowledge to carry out her role as an employee representative. This suggests that there is a wider reach of PACE services than is formally acknowledged.

Lack of confidence in Jobcentres

There is a clear negative perception of Jobcentres among the interviewees and a strong feeling that the Jobcentre wouldn't be able to provide the support they needed. This was particularly the case for those aged over 45 and those in senior roles. People spoke of feeling "terrified" and "frightened" to go to a Jobcentre, while another said their local jobcentre was "intimidating" and a "total waste of time".

Others who didn't see the Jobcentre as a viable source of support said this was due to negative past experiences and through conversations with others who had had negative experiences. There's also a perception of the Jobcentre as the place you go to sign on, a box ticking exercise to get benefits.

Role of the Jobcentre

Where individuals do register with a Jobcentre, this should provide them with a route to accessing wider PACE services and getting the additional support and signposting that they need. However, this does not seem to be happening universally. Several interviewees who had experience of attending the Jobcentre had received only the standard service. The focus of the Jobcentre is to get individuals back into work as quickly as possible, and this does not necessarily provide customers facing redundancy with what they are looking for as described by one individual:

"I signed on a week or so after I left my job. I was offered an appointment with Routes to Work. I didn't take this up because I had a few irons in the fire at this stage. The Jobcentre was trying to point me towards jobs, but they weren't what I was looking for." Non-PACE customer, aged 25-34

An older participant (aged 55-64) commented that on a visit to the Jobcentre he was told that "I've got far too much knowledge and experience and there wasn't much she could help me with." This interviewee also felt that the Jobcentre could provide more follow-up and support and suggests that:

"Once you're registered at the Jobcentre it would be good for someone to follow-up with you, or mentor you. Especially with males who may feel they don't need help or don't want to ask."

HOW WELL SERVICES MEET NEEDS

This section identifies how effectively PACE and other redundancy support services met the needs of those going through the redundancy process.

PACE Customers

Initial information/needs assessment

As outlined in the previous chapter, for most PACE customers, the PACE presentation is their first encounter with the PACE services. Most customers considered that the timing of PACE engagement was appropriate. It allowed employees to “calm down and accept the situation” and they were then ready to hear what PACE had to say. According to one individual PACE came in at the “perfect time”. However, another customer said they would like to see PACE come in earlier as it “helps to prevent self-sabotage and help people create an action plan.”

Overall, PACE customers reported that the presentation was a useful starting point and the information provided in the Positive Steps booklet was said to be “valuable” and “really useful”. As one customer highlighted:

“It was good to get advice on the basic stuff, understanding how to sign on. Because the bills still need to be paid so (it told us) what we need to do.” PACE customer, aged 35-44

Another PACE customer welcomed the support from the initial information session which covered some of the basic employability issues, job search tips and benefits advice. Although she didn’t know what she wanted at the time, she welcomed the fact that the support was still available. Her adviser told her:

“When you’re ready this is where you would find the information, and you can come back if you need to.” PACE customer, aged 45-54

Employability support

The most commonly identified concern of customers centred around finding a new job. Customers frequently spoke of needing help with their CV, both in terms of writing one and using social media to promote themselves. The level of support varied across the range of customers from wanting someone to sit down with them and help them write a CV, to needing someone to review a CV they currently had. PACE clients who engaged with the CV support said that it was useful to have someone review their CV, and that it was reassuring to know they were on the right track. For one customer this resulted in increased confidence:

“After the CV workshop I felt more confident about applying for jobs. It was good to have someone look over my CV as they pointed out a couple of things to change. My CV’s better for it now and this is learning I can take forward.” PACE customer, aged 35-44

For many of the PACE customers, help with their CV was all the support they felt they needed, as they felt more confident following this which helped them progress quickly along the journey.

While overall the support met their needs customers highlighted issues around the timing of group sessions and CV workshops, with one customer highlighting that they weren’t able to access it because it was being delivered at set times, and that “this didn’t work so well for people on shifts or people who were off that day.” Another customer also noted an issue with the timing of the CV workshop and the Jobs Fair. He took part in the CV workshop the day before the Jobs Fair so didn’t have enough time to amend his CV in time for the Fair.

One-to-one support

PACE customers generally rated the one-to-one support and advice as the most valuable element of the PACE service. The value attached to it relates to the personalised nature of the support, and the feeling of

being listened to, that helps build confidence and address the worry and stress of the situation. As described below:

“It’s always good to know there’s support out there ... It helped me realise there were other possibilities. Just knowing what my options are is really helpful; for example, funding for re-training, sectors I could transfer skills to, and opportunities for business start-up.”
PACE Customer, aged 25-34

“Building confidence was a big thing for me, knowing where to look for support and resources especially as it had been a long time since I’d applied for a job. The one-to-one session was really useful, reassured me that I was on the right track, gave me useful pointers and explored some possible funding for qualifications. It was very useful. The ladies we met were very helpful, and had things not gone the way they did I would have accessed more support.”
PACE Customer, aged 45-54

Emotional support

All interviewees spoke of the emotional toll redundancy had taken on their professional and personal lives. And, as outlined earlier, emotional impacts start early in the redundancy process. This implies a need for this type of support from the outset. Customers feel that support for emotional wellbeing should be easy to access, as one customer summarised:

“When people are low they don’t always want to go looking for support.” **PACE customer, aged 25-34**

While, in most cases, direct support for mental wellbeing is not part of the PACE provision, the offer of one-to-one sessions with an Adviser can help in this respect. PACE customers were more likely to have reported positive experiences of engaging with Advisers, and that the encouragement and tailored support provided made a difference to their confidence and motivation. It seems that feeling that they are being supported through the process and being given some agency and options helps to build resilience that supports a more positive outlook.

Jobcentre

As with other interviewees, there was a perception issue with accessing support through Jobcentres among some PACE customers. One PACE customer viewed it as a last resort, commenting that he hadn’t approached the Jobcentre through a sense of pride, and he would “feel like a failure if he had to go to the Jobcentre.” However, another PACE customer had registered the day after the redundancy notification and had found the Jobcentre to be extremely helpful.

“The Jobcentre’s been absolutely brilliant. They’ve been really encouraging. The work coach I had has been great. She’s just encouraged me through everything. Recommended jobs, emailed me every day about jobs.” **PACE customer, age 25-34**

Entering work

One interviewee reported that her new job opportunity came through a friend of a friend. Through her discussions with her SDS PACE Adviser, they told her that jobs can come through this way, and this gave her the confidence to approach people and make enquiries.

Starting a business

One of our interviewees had started a business after struggling to find work following her redundancy. She attributed this decision to the advice and guidance she received through PACE.

“It was actually PACE that gave me the idea about starting my own business. They did a lot of meetings with us to say you can do different things, don’t feel stuck. So, it was them that put the idea into my head about doing something on my own.” **PACE customer, age 25-34**

Users of private redundancy support

Initial engagement

Customers who had accessed support through a private outplacement service had very mixed experiences of the service. One key aspect that differentiates this service is its time-limited nature, and this adds an additional pressure to those having to deal with redundancy. In one instance the support was only for four weeks, which provided a very limited window of opportunity to access support. Other interviewees were offered support for up to three months but did not take up this level of support. For example, one customer was left feeling unsatisfied with the quality of the support received and so decided not to take it further.

Employability materials

Customers of private sector redundancy services identified a similar need around employability support and CV skills to those getting support through PACE. However, there were mixed perceptions about the quality of the support received from their provider in this regard. From the four private service customers we interviewed, two had positive experiences and two had negative experiences. Some individuals found the quality of the materials on offer were very good, particularly the sessions on LinkedIn and Starting a Business which one customer said was “extremely useful and I got a lot out of this”. One customer commented that the Starting a Business session “gave me the confidence and self-belief I needed to become self-employed.”

Some customers really liked the format of the online materials. They liked the way it was packaged up, the website, and branding. Others found it condescending:

“It was so condescending. A little girl on the screen saying “tell me what kind of work you’re looking for. I’ll go and find the jobs”. I was then emailed a barrage of jobs which weren’t right for me, like engineering roles. It was so frustrating.” Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

Quality of Advisers

The main issue with private service customers (identified by those who had both a positive and negative experience) was the quality of the support available from the advisers. One felt that they were being ‘treated like a number’ and that the adviser was just going through the motions rather than making any genuine effort to move them into work:

“She told me that she’d reached her 10% target, and I thought I really don’t want to hear that. I just felt what’s the point in me sitting here trying to get this lady to understand and get her to help me.”

Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

Another individual spoke of his disappointment as he didn’t receive the quality of support he had expected, particularly as this was paid support. This individual is still currently looking for work and believes if he had had the support he needed at the time his situation would be different:

“They let me down, so I didn’t take anything further from them. All I wanted was help with my CV, I could sell myself at an interview. I’ve got the confidence, I’ve got the ability. I know there’s people out there who’ve been made redundant who lack confidence, that’s not me. I just needed help with my CV, and they fell at the first hurdle.”

Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

The same customer spoke about a time previously when he found himself unemployed for the first time. He went to SDS and an adviser sat with him, asked him questions there and then and together they developed a CV. Because of his previous positive experience with SDS, he had expected a similar service from the private sector provider:

“They (SDS Adviser) typed it out in front of me and I left with a beautiful, perfect CV. If the guy had done that there’s no doubt I would have gone further with them. But I thought I’m not wasting my time with that. I’d been let down right away.”

There is a common thread throughout the interviews about the poor quality of the advisers which impacted on their engagement and their perceptions of the support. It should be noted that these experiences were shared by individuals in more senior roles who previously worked in client facing roles and so may have different expectations about quality and customer care.

Emotional support

One private service customer spoke of online articles that were available through the portal, which outlined what to expect from redundancy. This was useful as it helped her to understand that what she was experiencing was perfectly normal. However, the issues with the quality of the personal support appear to undermine some of the other positive aspects. For example, one customer highlighted the impact the perceived lack of empathy from her adviser had had on her experience:

“I don’t know that if I had had a better experience with them, that my situation would be different now but it may have made me feel better emotionally. Someone to talk to who understood what I was going through. But this wasn’t available to me.” Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

Impact on outcomes

Interestingly, both private sector customers who had a negative experience declined further support and are still currently looking for employment (as at the time of interview). These outcomes were influenced by a lack of appropriate support, poor physical and mental health, and a lack of senior positions in the jobs market.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

This section looks at some of the key factors that influence engagement with redundancy support and positive outcomes for those going through redundancy.

Influences on engagement

Through the dialogue with both customer groups we have identified several factors which influence whether an individual accesses support, and the level of support an individual decides they need. The research shows that the key influencing factors when it comes to accessing support are:

- Employer attitude and support;
- Awareness about what support is available;
- Confidence and resilience;
- Availability and capacity of services; and
- Geographical access.

Employer attitude

The employer attitude in engaging with or responding to local PACE teams is important in getting support in quickly, agreeing what is needed, and enabling employees to access it. As outlined previously, most employers are more than happy to engage with PACE and are willing to let their workers attend sessions. As described below:

“PACE actually approached my work. They had heard about it so they approached the management and asked if they could come in and the management was more than happy to give us time off work to speak to PACE which was good.” PACE customer, aged 25-34

However, we have come across several instances where employers have either not engaged, or not fully cooperated in allowing employees to take time off to attend PACE sessions. This can delay or hamper service delivery and can, in some circumstances, mean those who need support are not getting it.

Awareness

Participants not using any kind of support service cited that they did not know what was available to them. Partly because their employer did not offer them any support and partly because they didn't think to look for anything. Through conversations with non-PACE customers, it became clear that there is a lack of awareness about PACE, as highlighted by one individual who asked “Is it new? I've never heard of it.”

Most people will not know about PACE services before they are faced with redundancy, and it is a challenge for partners to make sure that they make people aware when they need to. Interviewees have highlighted that people tend not to pay attention to marketing unless they are actively looking for help. The majority of non-PACE customers highlighted that had they known about PACE it is likely they would have accessed the services; to varying extents.

“Looking back on it, it would have been useful to have more information from my employer upfront at an earlier date. It would have been good to know what my options were and what support was out there. I might have looked into it had I known about it.” Non-PACE customer, aged 25-34

There was also a sense among interviewees, that they were not aware they could access PACE services at any time, and this didn't need to be through their employer. For example, one customer was offered PACE by her employer but it came too late for her to access it. She wasn't aware that she could self-refer to PACE following the redundancy.

Confidence and resilience

Confidence was a key theme running through the interviews across all customer groups. The most commonly identified factor for not accessing support among the people we spoke to was that they were confident in their own skills and abilities and so they didn't see support as necessary. This was the main issue that differentiated them from those who did access services. As described by one individual who didn't access support:

“I started looking for work straight away, I was confident in my skills so applied for a few jobs and got to the interview stage.” Non-PACE customer, aged 35-44

This applied more to younger people (under 45) across both customer groups, and particularly to those in higher level occupations and with greater skill levels. Participants either felt that they needed no help whatsoever, or that they needed limited support and so did not access what was fully available to them. For example, one PACE customer identified that he had already begun to look for jobs and so didn't need a lot of support from PACE. He had “already accepted it and started to move on in a sense.”

However, there were several people who had initially felt confident in their ability to access a job, but who later recognised that they would have benefited from help. This issue has also been highlighted by Advisers, who talk about giving customers a ‘reality check’ as to their prospects and abilities. This is particularly the case for those who have not had to look for work for some time, as experienced by one of our interviewees:

“I just thought I'll go out and get a new job. I applied for more than 200 jobs and got nowhere. I thought to myself I'm just going to have to deal with this on my own.” Non-PACE customer, aged 55-64

This reinforces the need to have an ‘open door’ approach rather than time-limited support.

Timing and availability of services

The research highlighted several instances where individuals needed support and were unable to access it. For example, one participant spoke of being unable to access PACE support because the redundancy date was moved forward, and PACE were brought in two days after she had left her job. While the PACE support was made available to her, she declined it because she did not want to come back into her workplace after her last day.

In another instance, where a large-scale redundancy was brought forward, the local PACE Partners struggled to provide the scale of support that the workforce needed. One PACE customer described challenges he faced accessing one-to-one support:

“There was no one-to-one support for CVs at this point but we were told this would come later on. Then our employer moved the redundancies forward ... nearly 200 people all going within the month. We were told PACE wouldn't be able to support everyone in that short a timescale. They were only able to do more CV support and a basic workshop on LinkedIn. I've not had any of the one-to-one support I signed up for.” PACE customer, aged 25-34

These examples align with data from the PACE Client Experience survey which suggests that timing of support is an issue for some people. It also highlights issues around the lack of awareness that individuals can access PACE services outside of what is offered through their employer.

Geographical barriers

One interviewee spoke of an occasion where she tried to access mentoring support that was offered by her employer but because of her location it was unavailable to her. This is a particular issue in more rural parts of Scotland, where location of support is critical because of the time and cost of travelling to access services further afield. Another example was cited by a PACE Adviser who had identified specific needs in rural Perthshire where those being made redundant were unable to travel to Perth to access training. The Adviser had arranged for support to be provided at their location, but this was not the training that they would ideally have liked.

What influences positive outcomes?

The ability of those facing redundancy to navigate through the process and get back into work or self-employment depends on several inter-related factors. These include personal factors and characteristics such as:

- Confidence levels
- Emotional wellbeing
- Relevance and transferability of skills
- Financial security

Figure 3 personal and practical influencers of positive progress



But outcomes are also influenced by the quality and range of support networks and services that are there to help people cope with redundancy, including:

- Employer support
- Quality of the support provided
- Services that are delivered in a personalised way
- Access to wider support networks

These practical elements of support can serve to strengthen and build the personal elements to enable customers to navigate through the redundancy process.

Support boosts confidence

Confidence is a key factor that helps people to engage and progress with PACE services. But customers also report that getting support through PACE increases their self-confidence. For example, one PACE customer identified that she had been out of the job market for some time, and the CV support she received from PACE:

“Helped build up my confidence, not just with my CV but about knowing where to look for support and other resources.”
PACE customer, aged 35-44

Another individual spoke of how distressed she was at the news of her redundancy but that engaging with PACE had helped change her outlook:

“I remember feeling really positive after speaking to PACE, it made me realise it’s not the end.” PACE Customer, aged 25-34

Emotional wellbeing is critical to making progress

Linked to confidence is the level of emotional wellbeing experienced by individuals. Customer mental wellbeing is a key influencer along the journey and can make the difference between a positive and negative outcome, as well as how quickly someone progresses into new employment. Redundancy can damage wellbeing and exacerbate issues of stress, anxiety and poor mental health. One individual highlighted that her poor mental health resulting from the redundancy had prevented her from engaging effectively with any support, as she was too overwhelmed to know what she wanted or needed.

Having the necessary support or signposting in place to promote good emotional wellbeing is viewed as a core necessity for redundancy services.

Relevance of skills to the labour market

How relevant the skills and experience of an individual are in the current labour market is another factor that influences both their journey and their outcome. This appears to be more of an issue among older workers aged 45 and over, who appear to struggle more during redundancy. Older employees are less likely to have recent experience of the jobs market and may lack some of the core skills that employers will look for such as ICT skills. One SDS PACE Adviser described seeing people 'visibly crumbling' when she spoke about the digital skills needed for job search. Many workers have limited digital skills beyond using a smartphone and find some of the information overwhelming. There was also a perception from several older interviewees that they were being treated differently in the labour market because of their age:

“I was mindful of my age as well, because although officially ageism doesn't exist, let me tell you it's real.” Non-PACE customer, aged 55-64

And even among senior employees who have skills and qualifications, their expectations of salary and seniority might limit their opportunities for getting a new job quickly:

“Ageism is a barrier whether people want to admit it or not it does exist. People do discriminate. I've been to interviews for lower level jobs but not getting anywhere because I'm too experienced. There needs to be better support for people in senior roles.” Non-PACE customer, aged 45-54

However, one PACE customer highlighted how her Adviser had helped her to think about how to promote herself, despite a lack of formal qualifications.

“The job I was doing was one that had grown through my experience rather than with formal qualifications so it was daunting to believe that I had the capability to do the job, although I'd been doing it all those years.” PACE customer, aged 45- 54

Financial stability

Having a financial buffer, or not having immediate financial concerns around redundancy, can provide a bit of breathing space for individuals facing redundancy. Not having to be forced into making snap decisions, or pursuing the first opportunity they come across, reduced the stress felt by individuals and gives them time to take stock. They are more likely to be in a position to identify the type of support, guidance and training that will be best for them.

Access to wider support

In addition to the services provided through employers, PACE and private providers, the ability to access wider support networks is also important in helping individuals to progress towards a positive outcome. While having friends or family to talk to about the situation is clearly one important factor, one interviewee highlighted that peer networks of colleagues were a key source of support, encouragement and information on potential jobs and opportunities. This finding was echoed by one of the Advisers we interviewed who had identified good staff networks and relationships influencing outcomes.

“One or two find opportunities and pass them on to others.”

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section looks at some of the key findings around the different approaches to redundancy support, it highlights the key influencing factors and what areas could be strengthened to improve support going forward.

Employer awareness and engagement

Where PACE Partnerships are aware of redundancies taking place, they have effective approaches for engaging with employers and working with them to deliver effective support. However, there are still many instances where PACE Partnerships are not aware of redundancies taking place. These are mostly smaller scale redundancies with under 20 employees affected. In other instances, employers are aware of PACE but choose not to engage with the services.

Voluntary sector awareness

Among our interviewees, several of those made redundant without recourse to PACE support worked for large voluntary sector organisations. The scale of redundancies is unlikely to be large enough to require an HR1 notification, which may mean that PACE teams are not made aware of them. However, the nature of funding and reliance on time-limited delivery contracts will mean that redundancies are an intrinsic part of the voluntary sector landscape. The lack of engagement with PACE among these organisations is perhaps surprising, given that many of them will work closely with the public sector and will receive public funding to some extent.

Early engagement

The first few weeks after someone finds out about redundancy are the hardest for them to deal with. The shock and emotional impact come alongside the need to consider the immediate practical impacts on finances, family and relationships. The earlier that PACE teams can engage with employers to support this process, the more likely it is that emotional impacts can be minimised, and positive outcomes maximised.

One of the positive elements of the private sector offer is that they can provide support to the employer even before redundancies are announced. While this can also happen with PACE, it is not usually the case. Providing the offer of earlier involvement to employers would help to improve support planning and lead to a better take-up of services. While it is recognised that provision of HR advice to employers falls outwith the scope of PACE, PACE teams should seek to engage as early as possible with employers.

Individual awareness

Take-up of PACE support among individuals is limited by lack of awareness of the service generally. Where employers are not engaging directly with PACE services, individuals are less likely to find out about what services they are entitled to. Many people who did not engage with services feel they could have benefited from some of the support available. Awareness and referrals, even among other PACE Partner organisations such as DWP Jobcentres appear to be inconsistent.

There are also common misunderstandings that PACE support can only be delivered through employers and that the support is only available for larger scale redundancy scenarios.

A vague brand

Awareness of PACE is hampered by having a weak brand identity. The PACE identity comes across most strongly through the workplace presentation, but this is not the case for the other linked services. Many individuals we interviewed said they were not aware of PACE; even some who had accessed support. Even among individuals who had found out about PACE through their own self-directed searches, their recollection and awareness of the service and PACE brand was limited. This lack of clear identity is perhaps exacerbated by the partnership nature of the services, where individuals can access component services without any knowledge of PACE.

The Value of Advisers

Comparing the emotional experiences of PACE customers, Private sector customers and those not using any service, PACE customers tended to have a more positive experience. All PACE customers rated the support they received highly and felt more confident after engaging with the service. Through conversations with PACE customers, it is clear that the real benefit from engaging with PACE was the positive change in confidence and mental wellbeing. This was achieved to some extent through the practical support offered, but where PACE really adds value is the interaction between customers and advisers. Customers spoke of advisers who showed “empathy and a human kindness” and through interacting with advisers, they were more hopeful and positive about the future.

In comparison, those who used an alternative service did not feel the support they received was tailored to their needs or empathetic. And those who received no support from their employer would have appreciated and benefited from having someone they could speak to, during the redundancy process.

Time to reflect

The open-ended nature of PACE support has been highlighted as a positive feature that reduces the pressure on customers to make quick decisions. Those facing redundancy need time to come to terms with the news, deal with the immediate practical and financial concerns and reflect on their longer-term options. The knowledge that support will still be there for them once they have taken time to consider their needs is a significant reassurance. Most customers report that this approach is communicated clearly to them by Advisers; although there is still some confusion as to the ability to access support after they have left employment.

The ‘open door’ approach to support is one of the key differentiating features between PACE support and much of the private sector support encountered which is time-limited.

Reality checking

One important role of SDS PACE Advisers is to provide customers with advice that reflects the current realities of the labour market. This research has identified that those in senior roles facing redundancy are sometimes over-confident and unrealistic about how easy it will be to get a job. So, having guidance and advice through PACE has benefited individuals who would not have sought support if it had not been delivered to them at their workplace.

A more joined up service

PACE is a partnership approach to coordinating services, and not a service in itself; and this confuses individuals who might be accessing the services. For example, some individuals will access component services (Jobcentre, SDS, local authority employability) without necessarily associating this with PACE. This may be partly linked to the lack of awareness of PACE, and the weakness of the ‘brand’. But there is also a need for the individual services involved to recognise the added value of PACE as an overarching coordinating structure.

Peer support networks

The customer experience of redundancy is a turbulent one that can see an individual experience a whole range of emotions in a very short space of time. Throughout the research, people spoke of a need to share stories and information, to talk to someone about their concerns, and also of a need to support other colleagues who are going through the same thing. We came across several instances where informal peer support among colleagues had helped individuals identify and share information about training and job opportunities.

Mixed reputation of the Jobcentre

It appears from this research that people are not fully aware of the support services potentially available through the Jobcentre and are also wary of using it. As a PACE Partner, the DWP Jobcentre should be an important route into the PACE service; particularly for individuals

involved in smaller-scale redundancies who do not receive workplace PACE support. This negative perception of Jobcentres and a reluctance to use their services among certain groups suggests that there could be many potential PACE clients falling through the cracks.

A clear offer on emotional wellbeing

While there is generally no 'badged' mental wellbeing offer provided through PACE, there is information and signposting to potential sources of support. It is clear from our interviews that having access to one-to-one sessions with SDS PACE Advisers provides a degree of emotional support that is highly valued by customers. People appreciate being able to talk to someone who can provide them with practical help, giving them options and agency, which boosts their wellbeing. Knowing that they can draw on this support is also a boon to those who might otherwise feel stuck.

Notwithstanding this positive role in emotional wellbeing, sometimes individuals do require more support with mental health issues as they go through the redundancy process. Poor mental health can stop people from effectively engaging with support and impact on their longer-term prospects.

Follow-up and aftercare

It is important that customers feel they have support as they transition into a new job and that they can come back for further support if they need it. Customers have identified the importance of the 'open door' approach, and this is a clear advantage which PACE has over private sector services.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government and SDS PACE Team should consider how to improve awareness and publicise the positive benefits of PACE to employers (particularly SMEs). There may be a need to promote PACE specifically to the Voluntary sector through umbrella organisations such as SCVO.

There are also common misunderstandings that PACE support can only be delivered through employers and that the support is only available for larger scale redundancy scenarios. These need to be addressed through providing clear and consistent information to partners, and through wider marketing.

Making sure that the PACE Partners are clear about the overall PACE offer will enable them to provide a more coherent service to customers. In particular, DWP Jobcentre should review how it deals with those coming through redundancy and ensure a more standardised approach linked to PACE.

The Scottish Government and SDS PACE Team should consider the overall branding of the service. Having a clearer brand and marketing message (alongside strengthening partnership links) would help to ensure that people knew about what PACE does and associate this brand identity to the service offer.

Most customers report that the open-ended nature of support is communicated clearly to them by SDS PACE Advisers. However, there is still some confusion as to the ability to access support after they have left employment which could be addressed through marketing and partner communication.

PACE Partnerships should recognise and encourage the role of peer-led support as part of the broader offer. This is particularly important for larger-scale redundancies. Tailoring some training and support materials to enable this will help to expand support being offered.

Having a more clear and consistent approach to providing access to mental health support would ensure that individuals were able to make progress. Signposting people to mental health services isn't always enough, as individuals are often unwilling or unable to make the necessary call. The Scottish Government and PACE National team should explore ways of strengthening mental health support.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWEES

Table 1 Demographics of research participants

Criteria	Number of participants
Gender	
Male	10
Female	13
Age	
16-24	0
25-34	7
35-44	5
45-54	7
55-64	4
Urban/rural classification	
Large urban area	7
Other Urban area	12
Rural	4
SOC classification	
SOC1 - Directors, Managers and Senior Officials	5
SOC2 - Professional Occupations	6
SOC3 - Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	7
SOC4 - Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	4
SOC8 - Process Plant and Machine operatives	1

Participants were employed in small, medium and large companies, and worked in the following sectors (pre-redundancy):

- Creative industries
- Education
- Energy/oil and gas
- Engineering and construction
- Finance and banking
- Food and drink
- IT and technology
- Manufacturing
- Public sector
- Retail and consumer
- Telecommunications
- Third sector

APPENDIX B: CUSTOMER JOURNEY EXAMPLES

Kelly: PACE customer

Kelly, 29, worked in a factory and had been with her employer for four years when she was made redundant. She got involved with the Scottish Government's PACE service through her employer. The support she received from PACE gave her the confidence to start her own business. She is now self-employed and feeling positive about the future.



“ We went in to work one day and they gathered everybody round and told us we were being made redundant. I was shocked and angry. My partner and I both worked there. I didn't know how we'd pay our mortgage. I had no idea what I was going to do.

“They told us at the beginning of our shift and then we were just expected to work on as if nothing had happened. I made a lot of mistakes that night. You're working heavy machinery, it was quite dangerous really. It was a horrible, horrible week to be there.

“I'd been applying for jobs and hearing nothing back. I knew that it was going to be hard to find a job with the way things were going.

“It was actually PACE that gave me the idea about starting my own business. They did a lot of meetings with us to say you can do different things, don't feel stuck. So, it was them that put the idea into my head about doing something on my own.

“I remember feeling really positive after speaking to PACE, it made me realise it's not the end.”

“They gave me lots of advice about starting my own business. It was really useful for me. Even them just being there and giving you ideas of stuff that you can do. Cos, in your head you think that's it! What am I going to do? And somebody's there to say well you

can do this and you can do that. You can start up your own business, you can do what you want!

“I'm now running my own domestic household service and am hoping to expand into offering other services in the future.

“PACE really helped me mentally. Like getting my head round the redundancy and that it's possible to move on. It opened my eyes to the fact that there was more.”

Michael: PACE customer

Michael, 30, was a marketing manager and had been with his employer for three years when he was made redundant. PACE was brought in by his employer to support him through his redundancy. But when redundancies were moved forward, Michael couldn't access the support he needed.



“ I loved my job. I worked hard to make a career there. Losing this and not knowing what I could do next put a huge personal strain on my relationship. My whole life was on hold.

“I went to the PACE presentation and they gave us a big workbook and talked us through what was in it. All the one-to-one support looked really good and promising, so I signed up for the lot. CV support, LinkedIn, even pensions. I thought this looks like really valuable support.

“I got booked up for the CV workshop, it was helpful. And I felt more confident about applying for jobs after it. There was no one-to-one support for CVs at this point

but we were told this would come later on. Then the redundancies were brought forward - nearly 200 people all going within the month. We were told PACE wouldn't be able to support everyone in that short a timescale.

“I don't know how to access the support I've signed up for.”

“They weren't able to come in and do the workshops they were meant to do. They were only able to do more CV support and a basic workshop on LinkedIn. But this was on my day off so I couldn't go. I've not had any of the one-to-one support I signed up for.

“I was recently offered a new job in a similar role and I've got interviews lined up for other roles.

“I don't know if I can use PACE once I've left this job. I would prefer it if PACE could speak to the employee directly rather than through the employer. There should be more information on how to follow-up PACE, especially as the redundancies were brought forward and we're losing out.”

Angela: Private customer

Angela, 53, was a Human Resources manager and had been with her employer for 15 years when she was made redundant. She received redundancy support from her employer through a private outplacement service. Here she shares her experience.



“ I’ve been made redundant twice, and both experiences haven’t been great. I was told I would get a months’ notice, but I was given a week. My employer offered me help through a private company. I was given four weeks support, that was it.

“It took a while for the adviser to get around to me. She told me that she had already reached her target, and I thought I really don’t want to hear that. I just felt what’s the point in me sitting here trying to get this lady to understand and really get her to help me.

“The support available to me was too junior, and I couldn’t access the help I wanted to do because the courses started after my four weeks ended. It was so frustrating and

condescending. The advisor didn’t give me any pointers or direct me towards any organisations; she didn’t do any research on me prior to meeting me. I didn’t get anything at all from her.

“I feel demotivated and de-skilled. I’m really not sure where I fit in at this point in time.”

“I asked my employer to bring in PACE, as I had heard about them through a previous redundancy. But they refused. They would rather use a private organisation. I think PACE are under-utilised; they could work alongside other providers.

“I’m looking for work at the moment but it’s been challenging. Ageism is a barrier and whether people want to admit it or not it does exist. People do discriminate. I’ve been to interviews for lower level jobs but not getting anywhere because I’m too experienced. It’s really frustrating.

“I would like to see more tailored support for people at my level. There needs to be better support for people in senior roles.”

Kevin: Non-service user

Kevin, 35, was a Human Resources manager when he was made redundant. He had been with his employer for five years. Here he talks about his experience of redundancy.



“ I noticed something was going on, clues were coming out there might be redundancies. And then we were told there was going to be a re-structure. It was then I thought my job might be at risk. I found out I was being made redundant shortly after that. I’ve got a mortgage and two children; and it was leading up to Christmas so finance was a real concern. I started looking for work straight away.

“My employer didn’t really offer any information on the redundancy, so I was going in blind as this was my first time in this situation. I was given a policy to read and that was as far as it went.

“I was sworn to secrecy so that other employees wouldn’t find out about the redundancies. It was hard to stay motivated knowing I couldn’t talk to anyone about what was happening; and I still had a job to do.

“It would have been useful to have been able to talk to someone and not have to hide what was happening from my colleagues.”

“My employer offered me a coach before we went into consultation. This was helpful. I had three sessions with the coach and this motivated me to look for work and move on.

“I looked online for information and came across PACE. But I didn’t access it, I was too focused on finding a new job rather than

looking for support. I knew what I wanted to do and was confident in doing it. So didn’t feel I needed much help.

“I was confident in my skills so applied for a few jobs and got to the interview stage. I was lucky enough to be offered a position in a similar field which I gladly accepted. That was two days before Christmas! So that really put me at ease as I knew what was happening.

“It would have been good to have more information about the redundancy process from the beginning. And it would have been good to have been able to talk to someone and to have someone accompany me to meetings.

”

Allan: Non-service user

Allan, 25, worked as a manager in the hospitality sector. He was recently made redundant after two years with his employer. Here he shares his experience of redundancy.



“ I knew the redundancy was coming, it wasn't a total surprise. The company was going through a restructure. I was offered another job within the company, but it wasn't suitable.

“It was a very difficult period. I was having problems with family, working overtime; I felt really undervalued. I didn't get much support from my employer other than my redundancy package.

“After I left my job I was unemployed for about a month. I didn't feel like I needed support. I'd been getting interviews and the CVs I'd submitted had received good feedback. I felt confident that I'd get another

job. I also had some money behind me, so the redundancy wasn't a huge concern for me at the time.

“I signed on a week or so after I left my job. The Jobcentre was trying to point me towards jobs, but they weren't what I was looking for. I was offered an appointment with Routes to Work. I didn't take this up because I had a few irons in the fire at this stage.

“I found a new job but after a few months I realised it wasn't for me. So I left and am looking for work. I went back to the Jobcentre and spoke to them about training opportunities and they were really helpful. I took up the Routes for Work appointment this time as well.

“I'm now considering doing a training course that will allow me to transfer my skills into another sector.”

“Looking back on it, it would have been useful to have more information from my employer upfront at an earlier date. It would have been good to know what my options were and what support was out there. I might have looked into it had I known about it.



Jim: Non-service user

Jim, 57, was a senior manager when he was made redundant. He found it challenging to secure employment and so he decided to become self-employed. Here he talks about his experience.



“ I’d been there for 20 years. I was called into a meeting with the boss and was told they were reshaping the business and I wasn’t part of what they were doing.

“I felt ashamed. I was playing things back over the last few months trying to work out what I did wrong. This was the first time I’d been unemployed since I was 16. I thought what do I do? I had no one to turn to.

“I was worried about finding a new job. People talk about when you’re older that you’ve got experience and skills. But employers also need to keep salaries down. So, they’re maybe not employing people my age.

“I didn’t think I needed support. I just wanted my CV looked at. I didn’t think I needed

anything else. But that was probably because of a lack of awareness on my part. I just thought I’ll go out and get a new job. I applied for more than 200 jobs and got nowhere. Although officially ageism doesn’t exist, let me tell you it’s real. I thought to myself I’m just going to have to deal with this on my own.

“There was no doubt I felt the impact of the redundancy, I felt like I’d lost my self-worth.”

“I was told by someone at the Jobcentre that I’ve got far too much knowledge and experience and there wasn’t much she could help me with. They tend to help the younger folk get their first job. I liked her honesty!

“I decided to try the self-employed route after that. I’m now doing a consultancy role in the same field of work as before. I’m enjoying it, it’s going well.

“Once you’re registered at the Jobcentre it would be good for someone to follow-up with you, or mentor you. Especially with males who may feel they don’t need help or don’t want to ask.”



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This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83960-062-3 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, September 2019

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS620290 (09/19)

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