

## **Appendix A – Discussion Guides**

Appendix A: *Not Interested/ Interested* Pilot group discussion guide

## HMRC/DfE

Families' experiences and behaviour in the Childcare Affordability Pilots  
(CAP09)

## Discussion Guide – Final (13/10/10)

100% COSTS PILOT – *Interested and Not Interested* groups**Objectives:**

The overarching objective of this research is to understand the reasons for customers choosing not to, or not being able to take part in the Childcare Affordability Programme. This study is important and will help HM Revenue & Customs and the Department for Education better understand the needs and experiences of customers.

This discussion guide is for use with those who were part of the pilot group and were offered up to 100% of their childcare costs if they were in work for 16 hours or more.

***Specific objectives are as follows:***

- To explore why after receiving notification of assistance with their childcare costs, some families chose not to or were unable to move into work and childcare,
- To explore why they were unable to find work and whether the offer caused them to increase their job search intensity?
- To explore why they were unable to find suitable childcare; why did they consider childcare to be unsuitable? And to what extent this was a factor in them not taking up the offer?
- For families who registered an interest in the offer, but did not move into work and/or childcare:
  - To explore the reasons why they were interested in the pilot;
  - To explore the barriers which prevented them from moving into work and/or formal childcare; and,
- To explore the reasons why some families told the helpline that they were not interested in the offer;
- To explore why some customers did not contact the helpline, or whom the helpline was unable to contact, was this a conscious decision not to express an interest, or did they not hear about or understand the offer?

**Note to moderator**

The respondents in this research should all recall receiving a copy of the letter outlining the details of the pilot scheme, which entitled them to 100% of their childcare costs if they were in full time work of 16 hours or more a week per partner. The respondents will then fall into two separate groups, as detailed below<sup>1</sup>:

Group 3 – Those who have been in contact with the helpline and said they did not want to register an interest.

Group 4 – Those who contacted the helpline, registered an interest, but subsequently did not re-contact the helpline and so did not take part in the pilot.

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<sup>1</sup> The CAP09 pilots and evaluation were scaled back following the 2010 election and some components of the evaluation were removed, for example, research with some groups of families.

This discussion guide will be used to interview both groups 3 and 4 in the Pilot Group

50 interviews will be conducted with groups 3 and 4 in total, **35 with those who received the pilot offer** and 15 who received the control.

### Group 3

- These families have been in contact with the helpline and said they did not want to register an interest.
- With this group we will be particularly interested in finding out their reasons for not being interested in the pilot, their view of the helpline, and their view of the offer.

### Group 4

- These families have been in contact with the helpline, and registered an interest but were subsequently unable to find work and childcare
- This group will potentially have a lot to say about the impact of the pilot on their search for work and suitable childcare in the area, as well as the barriers they faced in looking for suitable work and childcare.

Please keep the group you are interviewing in mind while you are conducting the interview and probe and challenge accordingly.

### Outline of the research programme:

- **35 in-depth interviews** with customers who have decided not to take up the offer allowing them to receive 100% of their costs covered (up to £215 per week for one child and £350 per week for two or more children).
- **15 in-depth interviews** with customers from the control group, who have decided not to take up the offer of a system of help being offered by the Government whereby up to 80% of the childcare costs (up to £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children) they pay will be covered if they are already in work or move into work for at least 16 hours per week. This is the support which is offered within the current tax credits system.
- We will conduct paired-depth interviews with couples where appropriate.
- All interviews will be held in London in the five pilot boroughs between 20<sup>th</sup> September and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010
- Each interview/depth to last approximately between one hour and ninety minutes.

Notes	Guide Sections	Guide Timings
<b>1. Introductions and background</b>	Sets the scene, reassures participants about the interview, confidentiality. Discusses the general work and life circumstances of the participant.	5 minutes
<b>2. Transition into employment</b>	This section explores how the participant made the transition into employment in the past. It looks at the triggers and barriers to employment, and their childcare arrangements if they had any. This section will also explore how they went about gaining employment and what barriers existed to them doing so.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>3. Journey to when they received the letter</b>	This section explores the respondents situation when they received the letter and how this may have influenced their decision not to take up the offer. We are also looking to gauge any lifestyle factors, such as their general levels of organisation and their general attitudes to mail.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>4. Barriers to Childcare</b>	This section looks into the extent to which finding suitable childcare was the main factor in the respondent not taking up the offer of the pilot	Up to 20 minutes
<b>5. Barriers to work</b>	This section examines what are the main barriers to them finding work and to what extent is finding work the main barrier to them not taking up the pilot offer.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>6. Conclusion</b>	Summing up and concluding remarks	5 minutes
<b>Total</b>		1 hour 30 minutes

**Using this guide**

We use several conventions to explain to you how this guide will be used. These are described below:

Timings	Questions	Notes and Prompts
5 mins	<p><u>Underlined</u> = <b>Title</b>: This provides a heading for a sub-section</p> <p><b>Bold</b> = <b>Question or read out statement</b>: Questions that will be asked to the participant if relevant. Not all questions are asked during fieldwork based on the moderator’s view of progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Bullet</b> = prompt: Prompts are not questions – they are there to provide guidance to the moderator if required.</li> </ul>	This area is used to summarise what we are discussing, provides informative notes, and some key prompts for the moderator
How long it takes	Typically, the researcher will ask <b>questions</b> and use the prompts to guide where necessary. Not all questions or prompts will necessarily be used in an interview	

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
5 mins	<p><b>1. Welcome and introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank participant for taking part</li> <li>• Introduce self, Ipsos MORI</li> <li>• Emphasise that we will be talking about their experiences and barriers to finding work and childcare</li> <li>• Confidentiality: reassure all responses anonymous and that information about individuals will not be passed on to anyone, including back to HMRC or any other Government Department</li> <li>• Explain outline of the research</li> <li>• Role of Ipsos MORI – independent research organisation (i.e. independent of GOVERNMENT), gather all opinions: all opinions valid</li> <li>• Get permission to digitally record – transcribe for quotes, no detailed attribution</li> </ul> <p>PILOT RECRUITMENT CHECK:  <b>I believe you received a letter or phone call between May and October 2009 informing you of the Childcare Affordability Programme, this was a special system of help being offered by the Government whereby 100% of the childcare costs you pay would be covered if you chose to move into work for at least 16 hours per week per parent. Do you remember the letter or the call?</b></p> <p><b>And, just to confirm, you did not take up this offer?</b>  <i>Mention that we will go into the reasons why in more detail later in the interview.</i></p> <p><b>Personal Background</b>  <b>I'd like to start by learning a little about you.</b></p> <p><b>Can you tell me a bit about your household?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Can I just check how many children do you have and how old are they?</b></li> <li>- <b>Does anyone else live with you?</b> PROBE: Partner, another family member, friends.</li> </ul> <p><b>And can I ask, are you currently employed?</b></p> <p>IF YES:</p>	<p><b>Welcome:</b> orientates participant, gets them prepared to take part in the interview.</p> <p><i>Outlines the 'rules' of the interview (including those we are required to tell them about under MRS and Data Protection Act guidelines).</i></p> <p>NOTE: Use the introduction to gauge the register that should be used in the interviews. What is written here is a <i>guide</i> only – but the information provided here should set the tone for the rest of the interviews and indicate how the questions should be phrased (i.e. <b>whether they are currently in or out of work</b>). Try to avoid the use of technical language – unless the participant uses it themselves – and explain terms clearly.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: Fine to mention HMRC at this stage. However, please do not mention the alternative level of payment to participants – the control (who receive 80% of costs) groups.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: The pilot group may have had the standard help towards childcare costs in the past, through the tax credits system, or may have moved into it since April. Please clarify that we are talking about the more recent offer of help – covering 100% of their childcare costs.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: As well as acting as a lead in to the rest of the interview to make the participant(s) comfortable, this section allows us to begin to</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What job do you do?</b></li> <li>- <b>How many hours a week do you work? Full time or part time?</b></li> <li>- <b>How long have you been doing that job?</b></li> <li>- <b>What did you do before this job?</b></li> <li>- <b>How are you finding your work?</b></li> <li>- NOTE TO MODERATOR: –IT IS LIKELY THAT THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS WILL NOT CURRENTLY BE IN WORK, WE WILL EXPLORE THE REASONS FOR THIS LATER IN THE GUIDE.</li> </ul> <p>If APPLICABLE: <b>What about other people in your household, can you tell me about any work that they do?</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: ONLY PARTNER DETAILS ARE RELEVANT HERE</p> <p><b>What benefits or tax credits, if any, do you currently receive? And what other benefits have you received in the past? IF COUPLE: And what benefits does your partner currently receive?</b></p> <p>USE <b>SHOWCARD</b> AND PROBE ON: Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Jobseeker’s Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance etc.</p> <p><b>And how long have you been receiving this benefit/tax credit? MODERATOR TO PROBE ON EACH BENEFIT/TAX CREDIT MENTIONED</b></p>	<p>understand the outlook of the participant(s).</p> <p>If a paired depth, ask these questions to both participants.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please note that for the purposes of the pilot, working less than 16 hours a week will count as being unemployed, Please be aware that participants working less than 16 hours a week are likely to consider themselves employed.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: We expect the majority not to be in work as the group was originally selected because they were out of work. However, others may be in work but not childcare.</p> <p>As with Project one, we are primarily interested in their partner, but if others in the household contribute in some way financially that is also of some, but limited interest.</p>
<p>Up to 20 mins</p>	<p><b><u>2. Transition into employment and use of childcare:</u></b></p> <p>IF PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED OR RECENTLY EMPLOYED.  <b>I’d like to start by looking at the work that you have done in the past. I’ve got a diary here to help us map out what you have done over the years?</b></p> <p>MODERATOR TO USE THE DIARY IN APPENDICES.</p> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: If conducting a paired depth, complete diary for both participants. However, please focus on the detailed experiences of the partner who has most recently made the transition to employment.</p>	<p>Try and get as much detail as possible – it may be that people have worked and arranged childcare in the past, in which case we will want to know what has changed to make them refuse the latest offer of help.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Bear in mind that the</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>Starting from January last year, please tell me about any work that you have undertaken since then, up until the present day?</b></p> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: IF PARTICIPANT HAS NOT WORKED SINCE JANUARY 2009 THEN ASK THEM TO TALK ABOUT WORK THEY HAVE DONE IN THE PAST GOING BACK TO JANUARY 2008.</p> <p>Try to go chronologically, by month, probing with the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Was this work permanent, temporary or casual?</b></li> <li>2. <b>What kind of work were you doing?</b> PROBE: Role, skill level, sector and location (in relation to proximity to the home).</li> <li>3. <b>What were your working hours? Did you have regular working hours, or did your working hours change regularly?</b></li> <li>4. IF MOVED JOB/LEFT EMPLOYMENT: <b>Why was this?</b> PROBE FULLY TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDCARE WAS A FACTOR.</li> <li>5. ASK IF APPLICABLE (DEPENDING ON HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, AGE OF CHILDREN). <b>How did you manage to balance working with looking after your children? Who looked after your children when you were in work?</b> PROBE FULLY FOR ALL SOURCES OF CHILDCARE – FORMAL (such as nurseries or childminders) AND INFORMAL (such as family or friends).</li> <li>6. <b>What formal childcare provider(s) did you use? By formal childcare providers I mean those who are registered with Ofsted and have an official Ofsted number (i.e. the providers that you are required to use to qualify for the assistance provided by HMRC) and nannies.</b></li> <li>7. MODERATOR TO GIVE SHOWCARD OF REGISTERED CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO PARTICIPANT. <b>When do you use them?</b> PROBE: Ascertain all the different sources used, when they used them. MAP ON DIARY.</li> <li>8. <b>And what informal childcare provider(s) did you use? By informal, I mean any of types of childcare that are not registered with Ofsted.</b> MODERATOR TO MAP OUT CHILDCARE USAGE ON THE DIARY</li> <li>9. <b>Did you have to pay for this care? How much did you have to pay and over what period did the payments cover? How easy or difficult was it to find the money to cover these costs?</b></li> <li>10. <b>[Did your use of childcare vary throughout the year? What prompted this?</b> PROBE: Look at whether they had seasonal variations in childcare costs – this will</li> </ol>	<p>majority of people interviewed are likely to currently be out of work, so we are interested in their work history, or a time when they have worked previously.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE – need to unpick the barriers to employment so we can work out the extent to which the offer may have helped to overcome these and pick it up later when asking why they didn't take up the pilot.</p> <p><u>Issue of BALANCE is key – probe a lot around this.</u></p> <p>Use the prompt card here, as with Project 1, for the next few questions.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: May need to probe here, many parents may not regard family and friends as “childcare”, but basically any care which is not provided by the parents should be counted</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>be particularly relevant where there are children of school age in the household.</p> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: Most participants will not have been in employment prior to accepting HMRC’s offer of help towards their childcare costs. If they had not undertaken employment in 2009, ask about employment history in general, looking at when they were last in sustainable employment (if applicable), what work they have undertaken in the past and the reasons why they were not in employment.</p> <p>MODERATOR TO RECAP WORK HISTORY AND CHILDCARE HISTORY WITH PARTICIPANT TO CLARIFY DETAILS: <i>So, as I understand it...</i></p> <p>OUTLINE THEIR CURRENT WORK/CHILDCARE SITUATION, <i>Between May and October 2009 you should have received a letter informing you that you were eligible for 100% of your childcare costs if you were in paid employment for 16 hours or more per week.</i></p> <p><b>What were the reasons for you deciding, or not being able to take up this offer?</b></p> <p>IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED 16 HOURS OR MORE: <b>What factors contributed to you deciding not to take up the offer of 100% of your childcare being paid for?</b></p> <p><b>PROBE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don’t remember receiving letter,</li> <li>▪ Decided wasn’t interested,</li> <li>▪ forgot about it,</li> <li>▪ couldn’t find childcare/childcare not available,</li> <li>▪ child too young to be left,</li> <li>▪ no work available,</li> <li>▪ childcare still too expensive</li> <li>▪ childcare too poor quality,</li> <li>▪ Suitability of childcare in the area/government accredited childcare providers,</li> </ul>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Initial reaction of why they didn’t take up the offer, this will be examined in more detail later in the guide.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: For those that ARE currently employed but not partaking in the offer, try to press them on the reasons for this here. Especially if they had used childcare while working in the past.</p> <p>GROUP 4 – If interviewing group4, point out that they initially expressed an interest in the offer but were subsequently unable or unwilling to take this up, probe for the reasons for this.</p>



Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ forgot about the offer,</li> <li>▪ didn't have time or found out too late.</li> </ul> <p><b>FOR ALL RESPONSES ASK WHY?</b>  <b>PROBE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prefer to be a full-time parent,</li> <li>▪ Not ready to go back to work,</li> <li>▪ couldn't find work,</li> <li>▪ lack of confidence to go back to work,</li> <li>▪ lacked the skills to go back to work,</li> <li>▪ decided wasn't interested,</li> <li>▪ forgot about it,</li> <li>▪ couldn't find childcare, child too young to be left, childcare still too expensive, childcare too poor quality or another reason.</li> </ul> <p>READ TO PARTICIPANT: <i>In the following sections we will discuss further, the various factors that persuaded you not to take up the offer including, receiving the letter informing you about the offer and subsequently not taking this up, barriers to finding work, and barriers to finding suitable childcare arrangements.</i></p> <p><b>Were you aware that the government provided help or support with childcare? IF YES: What do you think was available? PROBE FOR DETAILS</b>  <b>Have you received any help with childcare costs before? IF YES PROBE ON:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understanding of eligibility requirements</li> <li>- satisfaction with payments – i.e. happy to have them included with other benefits or separated out</li> <li>- any problems with variable costs? (i.e. during summer months etc)</li> <li>- views on the annualised system, how far they understand it</li> <li>- what they think of the childcare limits? (too low, too high, or ok?)</li> </ul>	

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b>3. <u>Journey to when they received the letter</u></b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: REFER BACK TO WORK DIARY HERE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE RESPONDENT WAS IN EMPLOYMENT AT THE TIME THEY RECEIVED THE LETTER</b>  <b>When you initially received the letter/heard about the offer you were/weren't in employment?</b>  <b>IF YES: And you were employed as?</b>            MODERATOR NOTE: This may have been recorded in the diary during the previous section, if so please confirm with them.            IF NOT WORKING: <b>Can you describe the reasons why you chose not to, or could not work at the time?</b> (IF NOT DISCUSSED EARLIER)            GENERAL ATTITUDE TO MAIL            MODERATOR NOTE: TEST PARTICIPANTS REACTION TO THE LETTER  <b>Here is a copy of the letter you received notifying you of the offer...(Show respondent a copy of the letter)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What did you do when you received this letter? Did you read it straight away? Why/Why not?</b></li> <li>• <b>Do you feel you receive a lot of mail? How much?</b></li> <li>• <b>Do you receive a lot of mail from the government, or other government agencies?</b></li> <li>• <b>Who from? What are these letters usually about?</b></li> <li>• <b>What do you normally do when you receive mail? Do you read it straight away? Or do you file it away? Is there any mail you wouldn't read at all?</b></li> <li>• <b>What do you normally do when you receive mail from the government, or government agencies?</b></li> <li>• <b>Do you deal with it any differently to other mail? If YES – any particular reason for this?</b></li> <li>• <b>IF NO: What do you do with it? Why?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW RESPONDENT A COPY OF THE LETTER:</b>  <b>Can you remember roughly when you received it?</b>  <b>What did you think of it? What was the main message you took from it (if any at all)?</b>  <b>Did you trust that the letter was from the then DCSF (NOW DfE)?</b></p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: In this section we are looking to find out the respondents situation when they received the letter and how this may have influenced their decision not to take up the offer. We are also looking to gauge any lifestyle factors, such as their general levels of organisation and their general attitudes to mail.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Do they pay much attention to things they get through the post? Do they get a lot of junk mail that reduces the importance of correspondence they receive by letter? Also note the degree of confidence with which they answer these questions – this will inform how later responses are interpreted.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Are respondents understanding the letter? Did they believe that they would receive 100% of their costs? Please make it clear that the offer closed in April.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><i>Cognitive testing of letter – do they understand it? Tone? Trust issue?</i></p> <p><b>Did you know that support was available for receiving help with childcare costs before receiving this letter? What did you think was available? And what do you think of this level of support?</b></p> <p><b>The letter you received was from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now known as the Department for Education).. Had you heard of them before?</b></p> <p>IF YES: – Where did you hear of them? And what were your attitudes towards them?</p> <p>IF NO: <b>What do you think of the sender? What do you think they might be responsible for?</b></p> <p><b>Can you please describe in your own words what you think the letter is trying to tell you?</b> MODERATOR TO PROBE ON KEY CONCEPTS LIKE FORMAL CHILDCARE.</p> <p>PROBE: Did you know it was about tax credits? And what do you understand about the tax credit system? What did you think you would have to do in order to be eligible for this support? And if you took up this offer, did you think it would cost you anything? What issues in the letter were you unsure about? If so, did you find out any more information about these issues? Who from? Did you show or discuss the letter with anyone? If so, what did they make of it?</p> <p><b>To what extent do you trust the content of the letter – do you believe that if you took up work and childcare you would get up to 100% of your childcare costs paid?</b></p> <p>IF NOT: <b>Why not?</b></p> <p><b>Overall, what did you think of the letter when you first received it?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Tone, clarity, language, length and the factors that stand out and those that don't</p> <p><b><u>Did you have any doubts about your eligibility for support? Why do you say this? Where does this perception come from?</u></b></p> <p><u>COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:</u></p> <p><b>Thinking back to when you received this letter, did you call the helpline number on the letter or did you receive a call from the helpline?</b></p> <p>IF RECEIVED CALL, BUT DID NOT MAKE CALL – <b>Why did you not make the call after receiving the letter? Did anything stop you?</b></p> <p><b>Did you register your interest in the scheme when you called/were called?</b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: ALL GROUP 3 RESPONDENTS WILL HAVE SAID THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO REGISTER AN INTEREST. ALL GROUP 4 RESPONDENTS WILL HAVE REGISTERED AN INTEREST.</b></p> <p><b>What factors did you consider when deciding whether to register your interest? Why did/didn't you register your interest at this point?</b></p> <p>PROBE:</p> <p>Group 3 – Did you feel that you needed more information? What kind of information did you need? Why do you say this? Did you trust/believe the offer? Why/why not? Did you have other</p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Are respondents using the helpline? What do they think of the service, or are there any barriers to them calling the helpline for more information.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>considerations at the time? What were these? And were there any other factors which stopped you from registering at this point? Why do you say this?</p> <p>Group 4 – Did you want help with your childcare costs? Did you want help in finding work? Did you feel that you needed more information? What kind of information did you need? Why do you say this? Did you trust/believe the offer? Why/why not? Did you have other considerations at the time? What were these? And were there any other factors which encourages you to register at this point? Why do you say this?</p> <p><b>What do you remember about this call? What was discussed? What did you think of the advice and information you received from the helpline?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: To what extent was the information helpful? Did you get all the information you needed? What else would it have been helpful for you to know?</p> <p><b>Was there any information they asked of you that you could not immediately provide? What was this? Why were you not able to provide it?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Personal details? Childcare details? Employment details? Other?</p> <p><b>How could the phone contact you had with the helpline have been improved? What difference would this have made?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: What other information would it have been useful for you to have? Why do you say this? Are there any changes you can think of in how this information is delivered that would be useful to you or people like you? What are these? Was it difficult to register your interest?</p> <p><b>What bearing did your phone conversation have on your decision to either register, or not register your interest to take up the offer of childcare? Why do you say this?</b></p>	
Up to 15 mins	<p><b>4. Barriers to Childcare</b>  <b>I'm now going to talk a little bit more about the sorts of childcare you have used in the</b></p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: This section looks into the</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>past, how you feel about different types of childcare providers, and how easy or difficult it is to find providers in your area.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR: RECAP ON THEIR PAST USE OF CHILDCARE PROVIDERS, if any</p> <p><b>So generally then, do you feel your childcare arrangements are best placed for your current situation?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Why do you say this? How do you feel about the childcare that you use? What do you like/dislike about it? If they used a different provider in the past, ask which they prefer and why?</p> <p>How do you feel about the quality of the childcare? How important is this for you when deciding on childcare? What does quality childcare look like to you?</p> <p><b>How do you feel about the idea of a formal provider – such as a nursery or childminder – taking care of your child(ren) for you?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Why do you say this? How does it compare to how you feel about your family or your friends looking after you children? Why do you say this, on balance, which do you prefer? Why?</p> <p>IF HAPPY WITH FORMAL CHILDCARE: <b>Why do you say that? Are there particular childcare providers you are happy with, and others you are not so happy with? Which are these? Why do you say this? Do you think that formal childcare is good for your child/children? Why? What are the benefits?</b></p> <p>IF NOT HAPPY WITH FORMAL CHILDCARE: <b>Why do you say that? Are there particular types of childcare providers you are unhappy with?</b> (If necessary PROBE: lack of trust with childcare providers, cost, bad past experience, prefer family, prefer themselves,</p> <p>IF SAY THEY FEEL THEY SHOULD BE LOOKING AFTER THEIR CHILD:</p> <p><b>Why do you say that?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Would this be all the time or only part of the time? Do you think the age of your child/ren will have a bearing on how you feel about this issue? When do you think things</p>	<p>extent to which finding suitable childcare was the main factor in the respondent not taking up the offer of the pilot. Use the diary filled in earlier to assist in this section, and pick up on any inconsistencies if necessary.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: General attitudes to childcare, do they think that it is best for the child if they stay at home to look after them?</p> <p>If participants have no experience of using childcare then get them to think hypothetically.</p> <p>We are trying to get a feel for whether their arrangements are out of choice or more out of necessity. Whether there are any barriers to their</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>might be different? How do you feel about informal childcare? (i.e. having relatives, friends, neighbours looking after your child – would this be preferable to formal care?)</p> <p>ALL</p> <p><b>What, if any, have your experiences of using formal childcare providers been like in the past?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: How easy was it to arrange? How did you find paying for this kind of childcare? How accessible was the childcare provider to your home? And to your place of work (if applicable)? Were you able to fit childcare flexibly around work, or work around childcare? (if applicable) What did you think of the quality of care offered? Why do you say this? Were you using the childcare while you were at work, or was their another reason?</p> <p>PROBE: Education, disability, etc.</p> <p><b>Have you faced any difficulties in the past with finding suitable childcare for your child/ren?</b></p> <p>PROMPT Can you talk me through these? How did they affect you?</p> <p><b>How affordable do you think the childcare providers in your area are? To what extent has this been a barrier to you using them to look after your child?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Why do you say this? When has this been a problem? Have you looked for childcare and found it too expensive? What kind of childcare was this? Can you remember how much they asked you to pay? Have friends and family told you it is too expensive? (PROBE ON THIS IF SO).</p> <p><b>To what extent do you think that childcare is generally affordable? Why do you say this?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Do you see the cost of formal childcare as a deterrent? If yes, did you think the offer would help to eliminate this barrier? How much money do you think is affordable for you to pay? Why do you say this? What kind of provider would charge these rates do you think? Would you consider using them? Why/why not?</p>	<p>preferred method of childcare. Please approach this sensitively</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: To what extent is cost the main barrier to child care? If cost is a key factor, bring this up later when asking why they didn't take up the offer.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>Is the cost unaffordable at all times during the year, or only in certain months? Why is this the case?</b></p> <p>PROBE: during the summer holidays, Christmas period, seasonal work etc.</p> <p><b>And what about your experiences of finding childcare providers in your local area?</b></p> <p>PROMPT IF DIFFICULT: When has it been difficult? Is it all the time, or during a certain period in the past? What made it difficult?</p> <p>PROMPT IF EASY: When has it been easy? Is it all the time, or during a certain period in the past? What made it easy?</p> <p><b>Do you think there are enough places available in childcare providers in your local area?</b></p> <p>PROMPT IF NO: Has this caused problems in finding a childcare provider? Why/why not?</p> <p><b>What do you consider to be a reasonable distance to travel? Is this how far you currently travel to reach your childcare provider?</b></p> <p><b>How do you find out about childcare providers in the area?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: Do you feel like you know what is available? How have you found this out?</p> <p><b>Are there any other factors which have made it difficult for you to find suitable childcare?</b></p> <p>PROBE: What were these? Why were they important?</p> <p><b>GROUP 3 ONLY:</b></p> <p><b>To what extent were barriers to finding suitable childcare the main factor in you deciding not to take up the offer of help with your childcare?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Not ready to go back to work, couldn't find work, lack of confidence to go back to work, lacked the skills to go back to work, decided wasn't interested, couldn't find childcare, child too young to be left, childcare still too expensive or another reason.</p> <p><b>GROUP 4 ONLY:</b></p>	

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>After registering your interest with the helpline, to what extent were barriers to finding suitable childcare the main reason behind you deciding not to/or being unable to take up the offer?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Why do you say this? What other factors were important in your decision? Which of these was the most important?</p>	
<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b>5. Barriers to finding work:</b> ASK ONLY THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY OUT OF WORK, OTHERS GO TO BUDGETTING EXERCISE</p> <p><b>Can I ask, are you currently looking for work? Why is this?</b></p> <p>IF YES PROBE: What kind of work are you looking for?</p> <p>Can you tell me about the last job you applied for? PROBE: When was this? Type of job? how many hours? Which location? Where did they find this job? Was this job in line with their skills/experience? Stop-gap job or ideal job?</p> <p><b>How many hours would you like to work?</b></p> <p><b>How easy or difficult are you finding it to find a job like this? Why do you say that?</b></p> <p>ASK ALL: <b>Do you think that working would have any impact on you personally?</b> PROBE: Financially, emotionally, socially, learning new skills etc (NB: be very sensitive here, use discretion when probing). Why do you say that?</p> <p>IF WORKED PREVIOUSLY: <b>Did you experience any changes to you personally when you worked before? Why do you say that?</b></p> <p><b>And what about your family? Do you think there would be any impact on them if you were to take up work?</b></p> <p>PROBE: financial, emotional, social etc (NB: be sensitive when asking this). Why do you say this?</p> <p>IF WORKED PREVIOUSLY AFTER HAVING CHILDREN: <b>Did you see any changes in your child(ren) when you used to work? Why/Why not? What sort of changes did you see?</b></p> <p><b>So taking in everything we've just talked about, would you take up work if you were given the opportunity? Why/why not?</b></p> <p><b>IF YES: What kind of work do you think would be suitable to your needs?</b></p> <p>PROBE: <b>Full time or part time? How many hours? What kind of work?</b></p> <p><b>How would this fit around looking after your child? What arrangements would you make?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Would you look for employers that could help you with your childcare arrangements?</p> <p>ASK ABOUT: flexible working hours, crèche facilities etc.</p> <p><b>How would you go about arranging for your child(ren) to be looked after once you had found work?</b> PROBE: Whether they would find work or childcare first, where they would go to find childcare etc. draw on discussions from previous section.</p> <p><b>IF NOT INTERESTED IN LOOKING FOR WORK: Why do you say you would not want to be in work?</b></p>	<p><u>PLEASE NOTE THAT FAMILIES MAY CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE IN WORK BUT IF LESS THAN 16 HOURS A WEEK TAX CREDITS DON'T. IF WORK LESS THAN 16 HOURS A WEEK THIS SECTION SHOULD BE ASKED BUT Q'S WILL NEED TO BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.</u></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: To what extent is finding work the main barrier to them refusing the offer. We also want to look into whether the letter had any impact in their pursuit of work and what types of barriers exist for them in the pursuit of paid employment over 16 hours.</p> <p>If participants have no experience of work then get them to think hypothetically.</p>



Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>PROBE: Issues related to their own upbringing, lack of employment opportunities, lack of childcare provision, not ready to go back to work, lack confidence/skills to return to work, think children are too young to be left, childcare still too expensive or other reasons.</p> <p><b>GROUP 4 ONLY:</b></p> <p><b>After registering your interest with the helpline, to what extent were barriers to finding suitable work the main reason behind you deciding not to/or being unable to take up the offer?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Why do you say this? What other factors were important in your decision? Which of these was the most important?</p> <p><b>ASK ALL:</b></p> <p><b>BUDGETING EXERCISE:</b>  <i>Use the sheet in the appendices to map out the participants current weekly/monthly incomings and outgoings and try to determine whether the respondent thinks that it would make financial sense for them to go back to work. If it's difficult for them to recall the specifics, then just try to get a general sense of what they're like at money management, and to what extent they think they'll be better off in work.</i></p> <p><b>How hard do you find it to budget? Why is this?</b></p> <p><b>Do you think there are any financial benefits to being in work for you / your family? In what way?</b></p> <p>PROBE: What would you need to earn to make it worthwhile? Why do you say this?</p> <p><b>Thinking back to the letter we were discussing, when you first heard about the offer did this encourage you to start to look for work? Why? Why not?</b></p> <p>IF YES:</p> <p><b>What about the offer made you look for work?</b></p> <p><b>What sort of work did you look for?</b></p> <p><b>Where did you look?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Jobcentre, Recruitment agencies, previous employers, increasing hours with current employer? Friends and family or other sources.</p> <p><b>Was this any different to how you have looked for work previously? Why was this?</b></p> <p>IF NO:</p> <p><b>What would need to have changed about the offer to have made you more likely to look for work?</b> PROBE: Would your circumstances need to be different? Would the offer</p>	<p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: EXPLORE REASONS FOR NOT WANTING TO WORK THOROUGHLY, HOWEVER IF THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN COVERED WITH RELATION TO ALL OF THE RELEVANT PROBES, THEN CONFIRM THEIR REASONS FOR NOT WISHING TO WORK AND MOVE ON.</p> <p>Participants may have mentioned this in the earlier section. But if not, explore fully to what extent finding work is the main barrier.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Do budget setting exercise to determine whether they think they would be better off if they went to work and to what extent this cost factor is important for them when considering going back to work, or are other factors like being busy, or building a better life a bigger consideration.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>itself need to be different? Would childcare need to be different? (ask in what way for all of these) How would this help?</p> <p>ASK ALL</p> <p><b>To what extent was finding work more of a barrier to taking up the offer than finding suitable childcare?</b></p> <p>PROBE: Was it a combination of both? Were there other factors involved? Which was the most important?</p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: To what extent did hearing about the letter change their behaviour in their pursuit for work?</p>
5 mins	<p><u>Conclusion and Thanks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Just thinking about all the things we have discussed today, what do you think was the main reason for you deciding against taking up the pilot offer?</b></li> <li>• Is there anything else you think is relevant and wish to discuss?</li> <li>• Thank participants; explain the next steps (e.g. what HMRC will do with the findings). THANK AND CLOSE. Reassure about confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<p>This section will draw out the key messages and brings the interview to a close.</p>

**Appendix A – Financial Diary**

Use this to help participants plan their incomings and outgoings:

Weekly income and outgoings

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

**Appendix B – Diary**

Monthly income and outgoings

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1							
2							
3							
4							

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

**Appendix B – Customer journey**

Start

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APPENDIX A: *Take-up* group first interview discussion guide

## HMRC/DCSF

**Families' experiences and behaviour in the Childcare Affordability Pilots (CAP09)****Discussion Guide – Final Draft (26/01/10)****100% COSTS PILOT: STAGE 1 – *Take-up* group****Objectives:**

The overarching objective of this research is to understand the importance of the affordability of childcare, relative to other factors, in parents' decisions about whether to move into, and remain in, work and childcare.

Project 1 also evaluates the 100% Costs pilot. This pilot aims to test whether providing childcare support of up to 100% rather than 80% of costs for low income families, with costs paid up to higher limits than under the current system (£215 per week for one child and £350 per week for two or more children) increases the number of parents entering sustainable employment and taking up childcare.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- To explore customers' reasons for interest in the pilot;
- To explore their experiences of moving into work and childcare and the importance of the 100% offer in their decision to do so;
- To explore their experiences and behaviour during the pilot in terms of changes to their working status and hours, and changes in their use of childcare;
- To explore their experiences and behaviour when they leave the pilot and return to the main tax credits system, where they only receive support of up to 80% of their childcare costs; and,
- To explore other triggers to moving into employment and taking up childcare which are not associated with affordability.

**Outline of the research programme:**

- *45 in-depth interviews with customers who have taken up the offer of a special package of help towards childcare costs, allowing them receive 100% of their costs covered (up to £215 per week for one child and £350 per week for two or more children).*
- *25 in-depth interviews with customers from the control group, who have taken up the offer of a system of help being offered by the Government whereby up to 80% of the childcare costs they pay will be covered if they are already in work or move into work for at least 16 hours per week. This is the support which is offered within the current tax credits system.*
- *We will conduct paired-depth interviews with couples where appropriate;*
- *All interviews will be held in London in the five pilot boroughs between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2010*
- *Each interview/depth to last between an hour and an hour and a half*

Notes	Guide Sections	Guide Timings
<b>1. Introductions and background</b>	<b>Sets the scene, reassures participants about the interview, confidentiality. Discusses the general work and life circumstances of the participant</b>	5 mins
<b>2. Transition into employment</b>	This section explores how the participant made the transition into employment. It looks at the triggers and barriers to employment, as well as the difference made by the offer. This section will also explore how they went about looking for work and whether they had all the help and support they needed at this stage.	Up to 30 minutes
<b>3. Using and paying for childcare</b>	This section examines the sources of childcare now used and how this differs from what was used in the past. It looks at their attitudes to formal childcare and how they chose a form of childcare which suited their needs and met the conditions of the offer. Also, through the use of budgeting exercises, we will look at how they pay for childcare and the difference that the offer has made in this regard.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>4. Interest in the offer</b>	This section of the guide will look at their reactions to the initial letter, and what it was that attracted them to the offer. It will also examine the steps they took as a result of receiving the letter and how they found dealing with the Childcare Affordability Pilot Helpline (which is run by <i>Spoken For.</i> ).	Up to 15 minutes
<b>5. Making a claim</b>	This section examines their experiences from the moment their case was transferred from <i>Spoken For</i> to TCO (even though they may not be aware of this themselves). We will discuss how they found making a claim for childcare support, and how easy it was for them to provide HMRC with the information they needed. We will also look at what others sources of help and support they need at this stage.	Up to 15 minutes
<b>6. Conclusion and Thanks</b>	A summary of the conversation. It also secures provisional agreement for the next wave of interviews.	5 mins

### Using this guide

We use several conventions to explain to you how this guide will be used. These are described below:

Timings	Questions	Notes and Prompts
5 mins	<p><u>Underlined</u> = <u>Title</u>: This provides a heading for a sub-section</p> <p><b>Bold</b> = <b>Question or read out statement</b>: Questions that will be asked to the participant if relevant. Not all questions are asked during fieldwork based on the moderator's view of progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Bullet</b> = <b>prompt</b>: Prompts are not questions – they are there to provide guidance to the moderator if required.</li> </ul>	This area is used to summarise what we are discussing, provides informative notes, and some key prompts from the moderator
How long it takes	<b>Typically, the researcher will ask questions and use the prompts to guide where necessary. Not all questions or prompts will necessarily be used in an interview</b>	

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
<p>5 mins</p>	<p><u>1. Welcome and introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank participant for taking part</li> <li>• Introduce self, Ipsos MORI</li> <li>• Emphasise that we will be talking about their experiences of finding work and childcare</li> <li>• Confidentiality: reassure all responses anonymous and that information about individuals will not be passed on to anyone, including back to HMRC or any other Government Department</li> <li>• Explain outline of the research</li> <li>• Role of Ipsos MORI – independent research organisation (i.e. independent of GOVERNMENT), gather all opinions: all opinions valid</li> <li>• Get permission to digitally record – transcribe for quotes, no detailed attribution</li> </ul> <p>PILOT RECRUITMENT CHECK:  <b>I believe you have recently taken up the offer of help towards childcare costs, which allows you to claim up to 100% of your childcare costs. Is this correct?</b></p> <p>CONTROL RECRUITMENT CHECK:  <b>I believe you have recently taken up the offer of help towards childcare costs, which allows you to claim up to 80% of your childcare costs. Is this correct?</b></p> <p><u>Personal Background</u>  <b>I'd like to start by learning a little about you.</b></p> <p><b>Can you tell me a bit about your household?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can I just check how many children do you have and how old are they?</li> <li>- Does anyone else live with you? PROBE: Partner, another family member, friends.</li> </ul> <p><b>And can you describe the work that you do at the moment?</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome:</b> orientates participant, gets them prepared to take part in the interview.</p> <p>Outlines the 'rules' of the interview (including those we are required to tell them about under MRS and Data Protection Act guidelines).</p> <p>NOTE: Use the introduction to gauge the register that should be used in the interviews. What is written here is a <i>guide</i> only – but the information provided here should set the tone for the rest of the interviews and indicate how the questions should be phrased (i.e. whether they are currently in or out of work). Try to avoid the use of technical language – unless the participant uses it themselves – and explain terms clearly.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: Fine to mention HMRC at this stage. However, please do not mention the alternative level of payment to participants from either the pilot (who receive 100% of costs) or control (who receive 80% of costs) groups.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: The pilot group may have had the standard help towards childcare costs in the past, through the tax credits system. Please clarify that we are talking about the more recent offer of help – covering 100% of their childcare costs.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: As well as acting as a lead in to the rest of the interview to make the participant(s) comfortable, this section allows us to begin to understand the outlook of the participant(s).</p>



Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How long have you been doing that job? What did you do before this job?</li> <li>- How are you finding your work?</li> <li>- NOTE TO MODERATOR: JUST GET TOP LEVEL VIEWS HERE – THE TRANSITION INTO EMPLOYMENT WILL BE EXPLORED IN MORE DETAIL LATER IN THE GUIDE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NOT ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL CURRENTLY BE IN WORK, HAVING LEFT EMPLOYMENT SINCE JOINING THE SCHEME. WE WILL EXPLORE THE REASONS FOR THIS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION.</li> </ul> <p>If APPLICABLE: <b>What about other people in your household, can you tell me any work that they do?</b></p> <p><b>And apart from Working Tax Credit, what other benefits, if any, do you currently receive? And what other benefits have you received in the past?</b> IF COUPLE: And what benefits does your partner currently receive?</p> <p>USE SHOWCARD A IF NECESSARY to check if the list of benefits mentioned is the full list, or if anything has been omitted.</p>	<p>If a paired depth, ask these questions to both participants.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please note that for the purposes of the pilot, working less than 15 hours a week will count as being unemployed, Please be aware that participants working less than 15 hours a week are likely to consider themselves employed.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: PROBE FULLY – We need to find out whether this is a comprehensive list or a rough guess. If necessary, prompt participants with a showcard.</p>
<p>Up to 30 mins</p>	<p><b><u>2. Transition into employment</u></b>  <b>I'd like to start by looking at the work that you have done since January 2009. I've got a diary here to help us map out what you did over the year?</b></p> <p>MODERATOR TO USE THE DIARY IN APPENDICES.</p> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: If conducting a paired depth, complete diary for both participants. However, please focus on the detailed experiences of the partner who has most recently made the transition to employment.</p> <p><b>Starting from January last year, please tell me about any work that you have undertaken since then, up until the present day?</b></p> <p>Try to go chronologically, by month, probing with the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>11. Was this work permanent, temporary or casual?</b></li> <li><b>12. What kind of work were you doing?</b> PROBE: Role, skill level, sector and location (in relation to proximity to the home).</li> <li><b>13. What were your working hours? Did you have regular working hours, or did your working hours change regularly?</b></li> </ol>	<p>Try and get as much detail as possible – it may be that people move in and out of work and we need to capture these variations along with the reasons for them.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Bear in mind that the majority of people interviewed are likely to have been out-of-work until they joined the pilot. Recall that letters were sent to families where at least one partner was out-of-work.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: a few interviewees may have taken up work but since ceased. For these, it is the job that they took up that made them eligible for the pilot that we are most interested in. If they ceased that job and have taken up another</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>14. IF MOVED JOB/LEFT EMPLOYMENT: Why was this? PROBE FULLY TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDCARE WAS A FACTOR.</b></p> <p><b>Was the age of your children at all related to you leaving your job? PROBE FULLY ON THE AGE OF THE CHILD/ CHILDREN AND WHY THIS WAS SIGNIFICANT</b></p> <p><b>15. ASK IF APPLICABLE (DEPENDING ON HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, AGE OF CHILDREN). How did you manage to balance working with looking after your children? Who looked after your children when you were in work? PROBE FULLY FOR ALL SOURCES OF CHILDCARE – FORMAL AND INFORMAL.</b></p> <p><b>16. What formal childcare provider(s) did you use? By formal childcare providers I mean those who are registered with Ofsted and have an official Ofsted number (i.e. the providers that you are required to use to qualify for the assistance provided by HMRC) and nannies.</b></p> <p><b>17. MODERATOR TO GIVE SHOWCARD OF REGISTERED CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO PARTICIPANT. When do you use them? PROBE: Ascertain all the different sources used, when they used them. MAP ON DIARY.</b></p> <p><b>18. And what informal childcare provider(s) did you use? By informal, I mean any of types of childcare that are not registered with Ofsted. MODERATOR TO MAP OUT CHILDCARE USAGE ON THE DIARY</b></p> <p><b>19. Did you have to pay for this care? How much did you have to pay and over what period did the payments cover? How easy or difficult was it to find the money to cover these costs?</b></p> <p><b>20. [Did your use of childcare vary throughout the year? What prompted this? PROBE: Look at whether they had seasonal variations in childcare costs – this will be particularly relevant where there are children of school age in the household.</b></p> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: Most participants will not have been in employment prior to accepting HMRC’s offer of help towards their childcare costs. If they had not undertaken employment in 2009, ask about employment history in general, looking at when they were last in sustainable employment (if applicable), what work they have undertaken in the past and the reasons why they were not in employment.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR TO RECAP WORK HISTORY WITH PARTICIPANT TO CLARIFY DETAILS: So, as I understand it, you have recently taken up a position of paid employment for 16 hours or more per week. What made you decide to look for this work/increase the hours that you worked? PROBE: Moderator to discuss the various factors that persuaded the participant to look for work including receiving the letter informing them about the offer and</b></p>	<p>by the time of interview, it would be useful to pick this up as well - expect it will be as the diary is completed.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE – need to unpick the barriers to employment so we can work out the extent to which the offer has helped to overcome these.</p> <p>Look at seasonal variations in childcare costs – this will be useful contextual information.</p> <p>Moderator note – we really need to get a lot of detail on the triggers for their move into employment and whether childcare affordability was a priority.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>subsequently taking this up, wanting to work more generally, job opportunities in the local area, thought would be better off in work, wanted to meet other people, develop skills and so on.</p> <p><b>Was the age of your child/ children a factor in going back to work?</b> PROBE: Try to uncover how old the participant's child/ children were when they felt comfortable leaving them in formal childcare and going to back to work.</p> <p>IF MENTION THE OFFER: <b>And was this the main factor in your decision to look for work, or were other factors more important? Why was this?</b> PROBE: See how important this was in relation to other factors which drove them to look for work.</p> <p>IF DID NOT MENTION THE OFFER: <b>And how far did the offer of the financial support that you have recently taken up affect your decision?</b> PROBE: See how important this was in relation to other factors which drove them to look for work.</p> <p>ASK ALL:  <b>I'd like you to talk to me through in a bit more detail about how you found your most recent job. I'm just going to map it down on this piece of paper so we can keep track of the steps you took.</b> Moderator to write all the following information down as a customer journey taking care to note specific dates, occurrences, different organisations involved and emotional impact.</p> <p>IF ALREADY WORKING PRIOR TO HMRC'S OFFER: And when did you decide to increase your hours? Why did you decide to increase your hours then?</p> <p>IF UNEMPLOYED PRIOR TO HMRC'S OFFER: <b>When did you start looking for work?</b> PROBE: Why did you start looking then?</p> <p>SHOW THE LETTER: <b>Do you remember receiving this? Did you start looking for work before/after you received this letter?</b> PROBE: Why was this?</p> <p><b>Did you also receive a telephone call about the offer?</b> IF YES: Who was this from? Did you start looking for work before/after you received this call? PROBE: Why was this?<b>ASK ALL</b></p> <p><b>What kind of work were you originally looking for? Why was this?</b> PROBE: Determine whether they had experience in this kind of role, were interested in this type of work, or whether they thought that jobs of this nature would fit with childcare responsibilities.</p> <p>ALSO PROBE: If applicable, depending on their job search start date ask whether the kind of work or the number of hours they were looking for changed on receiving the offer of help.</p> <p><b>How did you go about looking for work, what kind of places did you look for information?</b> PROBE: Explore all the different sources used including Jobcentre Plus, local newspapers, internet and jobsearch sites, informal contacts, recruitment agencies. For each look at how useful they were.</p> <p><b>To what extent did you find all the information you needed when looking for work? What kind of information was most helpful to you?</b> PROBE: Why do you say this? What difference did this information make to your job search? <b>And what other information would you have liked?</b> PROBE: Why do you say this? What difference would this have made to</p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Participants may have been working for less than 16 hours per week, prior to joining the scheme. Therefore, they may simply have increased their hours to become eligible for assistance. Where this is the case, please probe fully on reasons behind their decision to increase their hours and how they went about doing so.</p> <p>Moderator note – the sources of help they use may well vary depending on the household composition so do bear this in mind. For instance, lone parents may well turn to Lone Parent Advisors. BME groups may also use community groups to access help if</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>you? <b>Was word-of-mouth a factor?</b> How?</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: In the questions on information, try and pull out whether they had access to information on issues related to their jobsearch e.g. childcare providers, costs of childcare, up/re-skilling and so on.</p> <p><b>How long did it take you to find work?</b> PROBE: Ask about the number of positions applied for, how easy it was for them to find suitable vacancies, whether they turned down any successful applications, and why? Was it related to childcare?</p> <p><b>And how did you feel about going into employment?</b> PROBE: Ask sensitively about the emotional impact of their transition into employment, whether they felt nervous, lacked confidence, worried about childcare and so on.</p> <p><b>What difference has being in work made to you? And to your family?</b> PROBE: Explore this issue fully – examine the impact it has had on them financially, emotionally, socially, the amount of time they spend together as a family, what they do in that time, how it might affect their children’s aspirations etc. Please also identify what, if any, immediate impact there has been on their children.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> It may be that we speak with people who are on the pilot but move in and out of employment. If the participant is <i>out of work</i> at the time of the interview ask the following:</p> <p><b>What are the reasons why you are not working at the moment?</b> PROBE FULLY - IF NOT MENTIONED: To what extent was your decision to not work related to issues to do with childcare? <b>Do you think you will go back into work in the near future?</b> PROBE: Why do you say this? What will be the factors that will support this move?</p>	<p>their first language is not English in particular.</p> <p>Moderator note – ask sensitively, as we will be looking at personal values/beliefs here about family involvement, the importance of work versus childcare etc.</p> <p>Moderator note: Remember that when talking about the impact of work, the participant may discuss negative affects – allow space for this.</p> <p>Moderator note: people may move in and out of employment – phrase the questions according to status.</p>
<p>Up to 20 mins</p>	<p><b><u>3. Using and paying for childcare</u></b></p> <p><b>And what did this move into work mean for your childcare arrangements? What childcare providers do/did you use? When do/did you use them?</b> PROBE: Ascertain all the different sources used, when they use them, if frequency changed.</p> <p><b>What was it that made you choose the childcare provider that you did?</b> To what extent was cost a consideration? How many providers did you consider before choosing one?</p> <p><b>And how do/did you feel about these source/s?</b> PROBE: Other research has shown that there can be a lack of trust around more formal providers – see if this is an issue, as well as looking at more logistical and practical issues such as whether the help offered suits their work.</p> <p><b>I'd like to talk about the different childcare providers that you currently use.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR TO GIVE SHOWCARD B OF CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO PARTICIPANT</p>	<p>Moderator note – refer back to the diary as much as possible so we can get a detailed picture of how their use of childcare has changed and the extent to which the offer was a driver of this.</p> <p>If participant has subsequently left employment, please amend the tense of the questions accordingly.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: IF 100% costs are paid, the parent may be less inclined to seek competitively priced childcare. Please examine their reasons for choosing their childcare carefully.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>Which of the different kinds of childcare provider(s) shown on this card do you use now? When do you use them?</b> PROBE: Ascertain all the different sources used, when they use them.            MODERATOR NOTE: If the participant has used a family member as childcare, please probe to find out which family member: the child's grandparent(s); the child's older brother/sister; another relative</p> <p><b>Which of the childcare providers you have described do you claim financial assistance from HMRC for? PROBE FULLY. And of these providers, can you tell me a bit about how you found out about them?</b> PROBE: Examine where they got the information from and the importance of each of the sources.</p> <p><b>I would now just like to get a sense of how all your childcare and work arrangements fit together, so I can understand better how you manage them. I'd like to try and draw a map of where you work and where the childcare you use is.</b></p> <p>ASK PARTICIPANT FOR STREETNAMES AND/OR POSTCODES OF THEIR WORKPLACE AND ALL TYPES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHILDCARE USED. Note: details of these locations may have been described earlier in the interview. If this is the case, check to confirm.</p> <p>PROBE: <b>How easy do you find it to get to your workplace and the places where you use childcare? What kind of transport do you use?</b></p> <p><b>And overall, how easy or difficult do/did you find it to balance work and childcare?</b>            PROBE: Why do you say this? What are the challenges you face when doing this? How do you meet these? PROBE: Ascertain whether they have informal systems of support in place they can rely on when needed.</p> <p><b>How did you find the formal childcare that you use(d)?</b> PROBE: Examine where they got the information from and the importance of each of the sources. <b>What was it that made you choose the childcare providers that you do?</b> How do you pay for your formal childcare?            PROBE FOR CASH, CHEQUE, DIRECT DEBIT ETC.</p> <p><b>Did you need to pay a deposit or upfront payment for childcare? How did you support this payment?</b> Do you pay on a weekly, per term, monthly or quarterly basis? PROBE FULLY – Particularly if the participant uses a variety of childcare providers, we need to see if they pay different providers on a different basis, MODERATOR NOTE: When discussing the issues above, refer back to the diary the participant produced earlier about how their use of childcare changes over the course of the year. If necessary ask: <b>Why do/did you use different childcare providers when you moved into work/increased your working hours? How do/did you feel about this? What difference has this made to you/your family?</b>  <b>I'd now like to just talk through with you how you pay(ed) for your childcare. To help us</b></p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE; Participants may have different arrangements for different children – please record for all, and why they are different.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please look at the issue above carefully, particularly if the participant has irregular working hours.</p> <p>Moderator note – ask about personal finances sensitively, but please do try to get as much information as possible.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: One of the areas this pilot may highlight is if 100% of costs are paid, the parent may be less inclined to seek competitively priced childcare. Please note any relevant responses.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>do this, can you describe your weekly or monthly income and outgoings?</b>            MODERATOR TO USE BUDGETTING TABLES IN THE APPENDICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What different sources of income do you rely on? How much do these amount to per week/month?</b> PROBE: Look at all income sources used including salary, benefits and credits, loans, informal help from friends/family, credit cards and so on.</li> <li>- FOR EACH SOURCE OF INCOME: <b>What do you use this for?</b> MODERATOR TO EXPLORE WHETHER PARTICIPANTS “RING FENCE” CERTAIN INCOME TO SPECIFIC PURPOSES,</li> <li>- <b>And what other outgoings do you have each week/month?</b> PROBE: Look at all the different outgoings including rent/mortgage, food, utilities, travel, childcare.</li> <li>- <b>How easy is it for you to cover these? Which of these outgoings are priorities? Why do you say this? And which of these outgoings can you do without if needed? How do you pay for each of these outgoings?</b> PROBE: look at whether certain payments are covered by loans, credit etc.</li> <li>- <b>To what extent do this incomings and outgoings vary each week/month?</b></li> <li>- MODERATOR NOTE: If not mentioned childcare costs in their outgoings please probe: IF OUT OF WORK: Do you currently have any childcare costs? IF IN WORK: What childcare costs do you have? How much are these? PROBE – Do you pay for different sources? Which ones? How much are these?</li> <li>- Have you always had these childcare costs? How did you used to pay for them?</li> <li>- IF EVER USED CHILDCARE IN THE PAST: How easy or difficult do/did you find it to keep track of your childcare costs?</li> <li>- To what extent did you childcare costs vary each week/month? And to what extent do you expect your childcare costs to vary in the coming year?</li> <li>- <b>What difference has being in work made to how easily you are able to budget?</b> Why do you say this?</li> </ul> <p><b>Can you describe how you monitor your incomings and outgoings?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What do you do to keep track of your income and manage your finances?</b> PROMPTS COULD INCLUDE: keeping records of weekly/ monthly costs, keeping bills, keeping a budget sheet.</li> <li>- Who in the household keeps a track on spending? Who is responsible for different transactions? PROBE FULLY TO ASCERTAIN WHO IN THE HOUSEHOLD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHILDCARE PAYMENTS AND WHO DOES THE TAX CREDITS PAPERWORK.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> Please take care to observe the contribution of the childcare element in the household budget. Does it allow the participant to spend more money on other things? Do they use the money for purposes other than childcare?</p> <p>This section will be very interesting in a paired depth – please note the dynamics.</p> <p>Please also take note of how the participants approach managing their budget – how financially competent and confident are they?</p> <p>Moderator note – probe fully here so we can see whether there is a split between formal and informal costs e.g. they may get a neighbour to look after their children for a couple of hours and pay for this – though it would still be informal.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How easy or difficult do you find it to know what your incomings/outgoings are?</li> <li>- How do you know about all these amounts? How do you keep tabs on your income? How do you record these amounts?</li> <li>- Do you keep any money for certain things separate, or for special purposes? What about money from Tax Credits?</li> <li>- How do you keep track of your wages? PROBE: Do you keep your wage slips? What about P45 or p60 forms?</li> </ul> <p><b>Do you have any credit cards, hire purchase agreements or other forms of credit payments that need to be paid back?</b> Where do they fit into the budgeting tables? How long are these payments for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>How would you describe your approach to your finances?</b> How would others describe them, do you think?</li> <li>- <b>Can you describe to me a time when you realised that you had spent more money than you had?</b> How did this situation arise? What did you do as a result? What items did you have to cut back on in order to pay off the extra you spent? Did you get any support to help you? Do you know where to go to get help?</li> </ul>	<p>These questions explore the participants' level of adeptness in financial management.</p> <p>These questions explore the participants' experience of debt, and also their level of aversion to debt.</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: <a href="#">these questions about debt are background context, rather than the main focus of the discussion.</a></p>
<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b>4. Interest in the offer</b>  <b>I'd now like to talk a bit more about your decision to take up the offer of assistance towards the cost of childcare.</b></p> <p><b>Just to confirm, did you hear about the offer of assistance through a letter, or thorough any other means?</b> IF APPROPRIATE, PROMPT: telephone call from SpokenFor (although note that the participant will not know this agency by name).</p> <p><b>Prior to receiving the offer letter, were you aware that you could get help towards the cost of childcare as part of Working Tax Credit?</b></p> <p>IF YES: How did you know about this? PROBE: Explore the importance of formal and informal networks in their information gathering.</p> <p>Why had you not applied for this assistance in the past</p>	<p>This section looks at the importance of the offer in their decision to move into work and take up childcare.</p> <p>Moderator note: the original letter was not from HMRC, it was from DCSF, as were the reminder letters. Would be better just to show them to letter we are talking about each time for this section.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>Were you aware of any other kinds of help and support available to you with regard to childcare? PROBE: Look at whether they whether aware of Sure Start, Lone Parent Advisors (if applicable) and so on.</p> <p>SHOW INITIAL INVITATION LETTER FROM DCSF</p> <p><b>What did you do with this letter when you received it?</b> PROBE: Did you read it straight away or put it to one side to read at a later date? Did you show it to anyone else, or talk about it with someone? IF YES: Who did you show it to / discuss it with? IF COUPLE: Did you mention the letter to your partner? Did you discuss the letter with them?</p> <p><b>Could you tell me in your own words what you understood this letter/ telephone call was trying to tell you?</b> PROBE FULLY TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH CUSTOMERS UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE PACKAGE OF HELP BEING OFFERED TO THEM WOULD WAS and how this differs from the current tax credits system (in the case of the pilot group).</p> <p>PROBE: (Where appropriate): <b>Did anyone else help you read or understand the letter?</b> Who?</p> <p><b>Did you change anything about the way you looked for a job after receiving the letter from DCSF? Or after speaking with the helpline?</b> PROBE: See if the participant did anything to find a job more quickly, or if they made different decisions about what kind of work they would be happy to do after receiving the information about the pilot.</p> <p><b>To what extent did you understand how much you would be able to claim?</b> PROBE: How did you feel about this? Did you think it would be enough to cover your childcare costs? Why did you think this?</p> <p><b>Was there anything in particular in this letter/ the telephone call that prompted you to respond?</b> Why do you say that?</p> <p><b>What were your main reasons for expressing an interest in the offer?</b> PROBE FULLY: Not previously aware of assistance available, keen to return/remain in employment, new system will make it easier to cover childcare costs on an ongoing basis (PILOT ONLY).</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Try to get a sense of whether or not the participant was already searching for or moving into work anyway. Was it the offer of assistance that prompted them to look for work or were there other, more important, factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Had you considered returning to work/increasing your working hours prior to receiving this letter? IF YES: Had you taken any steps towards finding work/increasing your hours? IF NO: Why not? PROBE: Cost of childcare, lack of suitable childcare, concern about leaving children with someone else.</li> <li>- To what extent did the cost of childcare affect your decision to take up employment/increase your working hours?</li> </ul>	



Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>And did you have any reservations about doing so?</b> PROBE FULLY: Lack of suitable childcare, not all costs are covered, payment not taking account of seasonal differences in childcare?</p> <p><b>Do you think you would have moved into work and started using formal childcare without this offer of support?</b></p>	
<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b>5. Making a claim</b>  <b>I'd now like to talk about your experiences from the point when you decided to take up the offer.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: continue to track this on the customer journey so we can see how their experience developed over time.</p> <p>ALL WHO CALLED THE HELPLINE:</p> <p><b>RECAP: You said that for these reasons [mention as appropriate] you decided to call the helpline number on the letter.</b></p> <p><b>How did you find calling the helpline?</b> PROBE: Was it easy to get through? What time did you call? Were the helpline hours convenient?</p> <p><b>And how did you find the people you spoke to?</b> PROBE: How far were they able to help you with your queries? Did they give you all the information you needed? What else would it have been helpful to know?</p> <p><b>Did you receive a reminder call from the telephone helpline?</b></p> <p>IF YES:</p> <p><b>When was this?</b> How much time passed between you receiving the letter and the reminder call?</p> <p><b>How did you find the person who called you in relation to this offer?</b> PROBE: Did you speak to them directly, or did they leave a message? IF SPOKE TO THEM DIRECTLY: How far were they able to help you with your queries? Did they give you all the information you needed? What else would it have been helpful to know? IF LEFT A MESSAGE: Did you call them back? Why / why not?</p> <p><b>Did you receive any further calls about the Childcare Affordability Pilot?</b></p> <p><b>PROBE:</b> Were there any follow-up calls to keep in touch with you?</p> <p>IF YES:</p> <p><b>When was this?</b> How much time passed between you receiving the letter or the initial call</p>	<p>This section explores their experiences of making a claim. Though we will be pressed for time, please try and get as much detail – especially over their awareness of their responsibilities to HMKRC over reporting a change in circumstances for example.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: The participant's initial contact will be with the Childcare Affordability Pilot Helpline. This is run by SpokenFor – though participants are unlikely to know it by this name. Once they have been recruited onto the pilot/control scheme, they are passed to the Tax Credits Office. However, they may not be aware of the distinction between the two helplines – it may just appear as one office they talk to about tax credits. It is not necessary to explore participants' understanding of this distinction but please keep it in mind as it is possible that participants will mention the change of helpline or refer to the TCO when we are asking about the SpokenFor helpline.</p> <p>Please also note that there are <b>two types of calls made to claimants</b> (as opposed to claimants calling in). One is the <b>'outbound'</b> call, asking them if they want to participate, and the second type is a <b>'kit' (keep in touch) call</b> which is made at intervals.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>and the keep in touch call?</p> <p><b>How did you find the person who called you in relation to this offer? ?</b> PROBE: Did you speak to them directly, or did they leave a message? IF SPOKE TO THEM DIRECTLY: How far were they able to help you with your queries? Did they give you all the information you needed? What else would it have been helpful to know? IF LEFT A MESSAGE: Did you call them back? Why / why not?</p> <p><b>Was there anything in this call that prompted you to accept the offer of assistance towards childcare costs?</b> PROBE FOR ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REACTIONS TO THE INITIAL LETTER AND THE REMINDER CALL. DID PARTICIPANTS RESPOND BETTER TO THIS TYPE OF INTERACTION?</p> <p><b>Did you express an interest in the scheme during this call, or did you call back at a later date?</b> IF CALLED BACK: Ask how they found that call (how easy it was to get through, whether they asked any further queries, how helpful the staff were etc).</p> <p><b>Did you receive a reminder letter?</b></p> <p>IF YES:</p> <p><b>When was this?</b> How much time passed between you receiving the reminder call and the reminder letter? PROBE:</p> <p><b>Can you tell me what information the letter contained?</b> And how was this different to the initial letter you received?</p> <p><b>Was there anything in this letter in particular that prompted you to accept the offer of assistance towards childcare costs?</b> IF YES: What was this?</p> <p>ASK ALL</p> <p><b>And to what extent did the people you called support you in your jobsearch/increasing your working hours? Did they keep in touch with you throughout this process?</b> PROBE: How did they do this? How often were they in touch with you? How did you find this – too infrequent/too often? What else would've been helpful?</p> <p><b>When you found work, what steps did you then take?</b> PROBE: were you called as part of the 'Childcare Affordability Helpline' efforts to keep in touch with you or did you call them?</p> <p><b>Did you have to speak to anyone else at this stage?</b> PROBE: How did you feel about having your query transferred to the TCO? Did you understand why this was done? Was</p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Participants are transferred to the TCO when they have found work and eligible childcare</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: There may be duplication here with the questions above – please use your judgement and adjust the questions accordingly.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE– please get as much detail as possible, particularly if the participant uses multiple formal sources of childcare. <b>These final questions are of particular interest to HMRC.</b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: Please note that the participant may not realise that their call was transferred to TCO.</b></p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>there any impact on you? Was there any difference in the level of service you received?</p> <p><b>And how did you find making the claim for this special package of help?</b> PROBE FULLY HERE.</p> <p><b>What kind of information did you need to provide? How easy was it to find this?</b> PROBE: Did they know the OFSTED registration numbers of their childcare providers for example?</p> <p><b>Have you recieved your first payment?</b> IF YES PROBE: Was the amount what you expected? Why do you say this? How far do you understand how the amount was calculated? Does this matter? To what extent does this payment cover your childcare costs?</p> <p>IF THEY HAVE NOT RECEIVED THEIR FIRST PAYMENT PROBE: Do you know when you might receive this? How are you coping financially in the meantime? Do you know how much the payment might be?</p> <p><b>Just to confirm, did you receive your payment as a cash cheque? How did you feel about this?</b> What were the advantages and disadvantages of receiving the money in this way? Would you prefer to receive the money in any other way? PROMPT IF NECESSARY: BACS PAYMENT/ CASH. Would you use the money differently if you received it in a different way? Why do you say this?</p> <p><b>And to what extent is it clear to you what you need to do to manage your claim in the coming months?</b> PROBE: For instance, are there any circumstances under which you would need to contact HMRC? Why do you say this?</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: See whether the participant is aware about the need to report a change in circumstances, renewals and so on.</p>	<p>Given participants on the pilot (not the control group) can claim 100% most should have their costs covered – please probe though.</p>
<p>5 mins</p>	<p><u>Conclusion and Thanks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Just thinking about all the things we have discussed today, what do you think was the main trigger for you finding work?</b> Why do you say this?</li> <li>● Is there anything else you think is relevant and wish to discuss?</li> <li>● Thank participants; explain the next steps (e.g. what HMRC will do with the findings). THANK AND CLOSE. Reassure about confidentiality.</li> <li>● Would you be happy for us to contact you again to see how you're getting on in a few</li> </ul>	<p>This section will draw out the key messages and brings the interview to a close.</p> <p>It also secures agreement for the future waves of the research.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>months' time? Explain plans for next wave and gain provisional agreement from participant for waves 2 and 3.</p>	

**Appendix A – Financial Diary**

Use this to help participants plan their incomings and outgoings:

Weekly income and outgoings

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

Monthly income and outgoings

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1							
2							
3							
4							

Appendix B – Diaries for transition to work/ childcare costs

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

**Appendix C – Customer journey**

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Start

Finish

APPENDIX A: *Take-up* group second interview discussion guide

## HMRC/ DfE

**Families' experiences and behaviour in the Childcare Affordability Pilots (CAP09)****Discussion Guide – Final Draft (10/11/10)****100% COSTS: STAGE 2 – *Take-up* group****Objectives:**

The overarching objective of this research is to understand the importance of the affordability of childcare, relative to other factors, in parents' decisions about whether to move into, and remain in, work and childcare.

Project 1 also evaluates the 100% Costs pilot. This pilot aims to test whether providing childcare support of up to 100% rather than 80% of costs for low income families, with costs paid up to higher limits than under the current system (£215 per week for one child and £350 per week for two or more children) increases the number of parents entering sustainable employment and taking up childcare.

Now the pilot has ended we want to examine to what extent the cost of childcare is a barrier to remaining in employment for participants by exploring parents' experiences of work and childcare during and after the pilot.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- To explore customers' reasons for taking up WTC and how they feel about it having experienced the system;
- To explore their experiences of communications with HMRC and Spoken For;
- To explore their experiences and behaviour during the pilot in terms of changes to their working status and hours, changes in their use of childcare, and the role of the 100% offer in their decisions;
- To explore their experiences and behaviour having left the pilot and return to the main tax credits system, where they only receive support of up to 80% of their childcare costs;
- To explore attitudes to formal childcare regarding quality, location, availability and cost and
- To explore other triggers and barriers to moving into employment and taking up childcare which are not associated with affordability;

**Outline of the research programme:**

- **12 follow-up in-depth interviews** with customers who took up the offer of a special package of help towards childcare costs, allowing them to receive 100% of their costs covered (up to £215 per week for one child and £350 per week for two or more children).
- **8 follow-up in-depth interviews** with customers from the control group, who took up the offer of a system of help being offered by the Government whereby up to 80% of the childcare costs they paid were covered if they were already in work or moved into work for at least 16 hours per week. This is the support which is offered within the current tax credits system.



- We will conduct paired-depth interviews with couples where appropriate;
- All interviews will be held in London in the five pilot boroughs in November 2010 (dates t.b.c.).
- Each interview/depth to last between an hour and an hour and a half

Notes	Guide Sections	Guide Timings
<b>1. Introductions and background</b>	<b>Sets the scene, reassures participants about the interview, confidentiality. Discusses the general work and life circumstances of the participant</b>	5 mins
<b>2. Employment history</b>	This section will briefly look at the current work status of customers, including the transition into employment of those who had been unemployed prior to taking up HMRC's offer of help towards the cost of childcare. It will explore in detail any changes since the initial interview was conducted and why these happened. This section will also explore the steps they took when the offer ended and any changes they made to their employment circumstances as a result.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>3. Using and paying for childcare</b>	This section examines the sources of childcare now used and how this differs from what was used since the initial interviews were conducted. It looks at their views and experiences of using formal childcare, how well it suited their needs, and whether maintaining employment and childcare was sustainable once the pilot ended. It will explore any steps they took when the offer ended and any changes they made to formal childcare provision as a result. Also, through the use of budgeting exercises, we will look at how they pay for childcare and the difference that the offer has made in this regard, at the same time exploring variations in childcare usage over the year.	Up to 20 minutes
<b>4. Attitudes to childcare</b>	This section will explore in more depth the reasons behind the choice of childcare, exploring the mix of formal and informal care used by the participant. It will explore views of formal childcare in detail, exploring issues such as quality, location and availability. It will also examine the balance of informal and formal childcare they use and how satisfied they are with this.	Up to 15 minutes
<b>5. Making and managing the claim</b>	This section of the guide will look at their reactions to communications with HMRC and Childcare Affordability Pilot Helpline (run by Spoken For), and any new views on the offer which have emerged since the initial interview. It will also explore their experiences of making a WTC claim and moving from the pilot to the normal WTC system – especially on awareness of their responsibilities to HMRC over reporting a change in circumstances for example.	Up to 15 minutes
<b>6. The end of the pilot</b>	This section will explore customers' experiences of the end of the pilot and, for those in the pilot group, their responses to moving to claiming reduced childcare costs.	Up to 15 minutes
<b>7. Conclusion and Thanks</b>	A summary of the conversation.	5 mins

**Using this guide**

We use several conventions to explain to you how this guide will be used. These are described below:

Timings	Questions	Notes and Prompts
5 mins	<p><u>Underlined</u> = <u>Title</u>: This provides a heading for a sub-section</p> <p><b>Bold = Question or read out statement:</b> Questions that will be asked to the participant if relevant. Not all questions are asked during fieldwork based on the moderator's view of progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Bullet = prompt:</b> Prompts are not questions – they are there to provide guidance to the moderator if required.</li> </ul>	This area is used to summarise what we are discussing, provides informative notes, and some key prompts fro the moderator
How long it takes	<p><b>Typically, the researcher will ask questions and use the prompts to guide where necessary. Not all questions or prompts will necessarily be used in an interview</b></p>	

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
5 mins	<p><u>1. Welcome and introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank participant for taking part</li> <li>• Introduce self, Ipsos MORI</li> <li>• Emphasise that we will be talking about their experiences of finding work and childcare</li> <li>• Confidentiality: reassure all responses anonymous and that information about individuals will not be passed on to anyone, including back to HMRC or any other Government Department</li> <li>• Explain outline of the research</li> <li>• Role of Ipsos MORI – independent research organisation (i.e. independent of GOVERNMENT), gather all opinions: all opinions valid</li> <li>• Get permission to digitally record – transcribe for quotes, no detailed attribution</li> </ul> <p>PILOT RECRUITMENT CHECK:  <b>I believe you took up the offer of help towards childcare costs earlier this year, which allows you to claim up to 100% of your childcare costs. Is this correct?</b></p> <p><b>I understand you were interviewed in [INSERT MONTH] 2009/2010? Do you remember this interview?</b></p> <p>CONTROL RECRUITMENT CHECK:  <b>I believe you took up the offer the offer of help towards childcare costs earlier this year, which allows you to claim up to 80% of your childcare costs. Is this correct?</b></p> <p><b>I understand you were interviewed in [INSERT MONTH] 2009/2010? Do you remember this interview?</b></p> <p><u>Personal Background</u>  <b>I'd like to start by confirming some of the details we talked about when we first met earlier this year.</b></p> <p><b>Can you tell me a bit about your household?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can I just check how many children do you have and how old are they?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Welcome:</b> orientates participant, gets them prepared to take part in the interview.</p> <p>Outlines the 'rules' of the interview (including those we are required to tell them about under MRS and Data Protection Act guidelines).</p> <p>NOTE: Use the introduction to gauge the register that should be used in the interviews. What is written here is a <i>guide</i> only – but the information provided here should set the tone for the rest of the interviews and indicate how the questions should be phrased (i.e. whether they are currently in or out of work). Try to avoid the use of technical language – unless the participant uses it themselves – and explain terms clearly.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: Fine to mention HMRC at this stage. However, please do not mention the alternative level of payment to participants from either the pilot (who receive 100% of costs) or control (who receive 80% of costs) groups.</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: The pilot group may have had the standard help towards childcare costs in the past, through the tax credits system. Please clarify that we are talking about the more recent offer of help – covering 100% of their childcare costs.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: As well as acting as a lead in to the rest of the interview to make the participant(s) comfortable, this section allows us to begin to</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does anyone else live with you? PROBE: Partner, another family member, friends.</li> </ul> <p><b>Have there been any changes in your household since we last interviewed you in [INSERT MONTH] 2009/2010?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has anyone moved in or out of your household, e.g, partner, relatives?</li> <li>- Have any of your children started school since we last interviewed you?</li> </ul> <p>PROBE for any changes, including people who may have moved in and out again since we last interviewed, have they had anymore children, are their children now of school-age?</p> <p><b>And apart from Working Tax Credit, what other benefits, if any, do you currently receive? And what other benefits have you received in the past?</b> IF COUPLE: And what benefits does your partner currently receive?</p> <p><b>Have the benefits you receive changed since the last time we interviewed you in [INSERT MONTH] 2009/2010?</b></p> <p><b>How? Why was this?</b> NOTE TO MODERATOR: TRY AND GET A SENSE OF HOW CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED</p> <p>USE SHOWCARD A IF NECESSARY to check if the list of benefits mentioned is the full list, or if anything has been omitted.</p>	<p>understand the outlook of the participant(s).</p> <p>If a paired depth, ask these questions to both participants.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please note that for the purposes of the pilot, working less than 15 hours a week will count as being unemployed, Please be aware that participants working less than 15 hours a week are likely to consider themselves employed.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: PROBE FULLY – We need to find out whether this is a comprehensive list or a rough guess. If necessary, prompt participants with a showcard.</p>
<p>Up to 20 mins</p>	<p><b>2. Moving into and maintaining employment</b></p> <p><b>Firstly, can you describe any work that you do at the moment? IF APPLICABLE: And what work is your partner currently doing?</b></p> <p><b>Has yours or your partner’s working status changed at all since the last time we interviewed you?</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: If conducting a paired depth, check current work status of both participants. Also, ask about nature of partner’s work, how long they have been in that role, skill level, sector, location, temporary/permanent etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Have you moved into or out of work?</b></li> <li>- <b>Have you increased or decreased your hours?</b></li> <li>- <b>Have you changed jobs?</b></li> </ul> <p><u>IF WORKING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What kind of work are you currently doing?</b> PROBE: Role, skill level, sector and</li> </ul>	<p>This section will briefly look at the current work status of customers, including the transition into employment of those who had been unemployed prior to taking up HMRC’s offer of help towards the cost of childcare. It will explore in detail any changes since the initial interview was conducted and why these happened. This section will also explore the steps they took when the offer ended and any changes they made to their employment circumstances as a result.</p> <p>Try and get as much detail as possible – it may be that people move in and out of work and we need to capture these variations along with the reasons for them.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>location (in relation to proximity to the home).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>How long have you been doing that job?</b> PROBE FULLY TO CONFIRM WHETHER OR NOT PARTICIPANT WAS WORKING PRIOR TO ACCEPTING HMRC'S OFFER OF ASSISTANCE TOWARDS CHILDCARE COSTS.</li> <li>- <b>Was this the job you were doing when you started receiving assistance towards your childcare costs?</b> IF NO: What were you doing before this? Why did you change job? PROBE FULLY ON DETAILS OF PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT.</li> <li>- <b>Is this job permanent, temporary or casual?</b> IF TEMPORARY OR CASUAL: How long do you expect to be doing this job? What do you expect to do after that? PROBE FULLY – TO GET AT WHETHER THERE IS A SENSE OF STABILITY/ PERMANENCE ABOUT THEIR WORK.</li> <li>- <b>What are your working hours?</b> Do you have regular working hours, or do your working hours change regularly?</li> </ul> <p><b>I'd like to talk about the experience you've had of working since we last spoke. What difference has being in work made to you?</b> What has been good about it? Has anything been less positive? What impact would you say it has had on your life? PROBE SENSITIVELY FOR ANY PERSONAL IMPACTS, SUCH AS INCREASED CONFIDENCE/ SKILLS/ SOCIAL NETWORKS OR PERHAPS INCREASED STRESS</p> <p><b>And what about on your household more generally? And to your family?</b> PROBE: Explore this issue fully – examine the impact it has had on them financially, emotionally, socially, the amount of time they spend together as a family, what they do in that time, how it might have affected their children's aspirations etc. Please also identify what, if any, immediate impact there has been on their children.</p> <p><u>IF, IN ADDITION, WORKING STATUS HAS CHANGED:</u></p> <p><b>I'd like you talk me through the changes to your employment since we last interviewed you. I'm just going to map it down on this piece of paper so we can keep track of the steps you took.</b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> PLEASE MAP CHANGES ON THE DIARY PROVIDED IN APPENDIX A, AND USE DIARY AS A STIMULUS TO HELP PARTICIPANT IF NECESSARY. NOTE DOWN DATES OF CHANGES, DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED, NEW LOCATIONS AND ANY EMOTIONAL IMPACT.</p> <p><u>IF HAVE MOVED JOBS:</u></p>	<p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NOT ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL CURRENTLY BE IN WORK, HAVING LEFT EMPLOYMENT SINCE JOINING THE SCHEME. WE WILL EXPLORE THE REASONS FOR THIS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>I'd like to talk about when you left your last job and how you moved into your current job.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When did you leave your last job?</li> <li>- What were your reasons for leaving?</li> <li>- How did you find your current job?</li> <li>- What made you choose this current job?</li> </ul> <p>PROBE to explore whether CHILDCARE was a factor in deciding to leave their last job or move into their current role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was your childcare involved in leaving your job? Why? PROBE: LOCATION OF PROVIDER, HOURS, COST OF CARE, QUALITY OF CARE?</li> </ul> <p><u>IF HAVE INCREASED OR DECREASED THEIR HOURS:</u>  <b>Why did you decide to increase / decrease your hours?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When did you increase / decrease your working hours?</li> <li>- What did you have to do to make sure you were able to increase or decrease your hours?</li> <li>- How satisfied are you with your current working arrangements?</li> </ul> <p>PROBE to explore whether CHILDCARE was a factor in deciding to change working hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was your childcare involved in changing working hours? Why? PROBE: LOCATION OF PROVIDER, HOURS, COST OF CARE, QUALITY OF CARE?</li> </ul> <p><u>IF NO LONGER WORKING/ NOW WORKING FEWER THAN 16 HOURS PER WEEK:</u>  <b>I'd like to talk about why you left your last job. When were you last in paid employment for more than 16 hours per week?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Was this the job you were doing when you accepted HMRC's offer of assistance towards the cost of childcare?</b> IF NO: Probe fully on recent employment history.</li> <li>- <b>How long was this job for?</b> When did you leave?</li> <li>- <b>What were your reasons for leaving/ reducing your hours?</b></li> </ul>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Participants may have been working for less than 16 hours per week, prior to joining the scheme. Therefore, they may simply have increased their hours to become eligible for assistance. Where this is the case, please probe fully on reasons behind their decision to increase/ reduce their hours and how they went about doing so.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: EXPLORE REASONS FOR LEAVING EMPLOYMENT FULLY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What are the main reasons why you are not working at the moment?</b></li> <li>- <b>Was your childcare involved in leaving your job? Why? PROBE: LOCATION OF PROVIDER, HOURS, COST OF CARE, QUALITY OF CARE?</b></li> <li>- <b>Do you think you will go back into work in the near future? PROBE: Why do you say this? What will be the factors that will support this move?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>I'd like to talk about the experience you've had of working in the time since we last spoke. What difference did being in work made to you, if at all? Was there anything good about it? Was anything been less positive? What impact would you say it has had on your life? PROBE SENSITIVELY FOR ANY PERSONAL IMPACTS, SUCH AS INCREASED CONFIDENCE/ SKILLS/ SOCIAL NETWORKS OR PERHAPS INCREASED STRESS</b></p> <p><b>And what about on your household more generally? And to your family? PROBE:</b> Explore this issue fully – examine the impact it has had on them financially, emotionally, socially, the amount of time they spend together as a family, what they do in that time, how it might have affected their children's aspirations etc. Please also identify what, if any, immediate impact there has been on their children.</p> <p><u>TO THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY MOVED INTO WORK OR HAVE FOUND NEW EMPLOYMENT</u> (LESS RELEVANT TO THOSE IN LONGER TERM/MORE STABLE POSITIONS):</p> <p><b>I'd like you to briefly talk to me through how you found your most recent job. I'm just going to map it down on this piece of paper so we can keep track of the steps you took.</b> Moderator to write all the following information down as a customer journey taking care to note specific dates, occurrences, different organisations involved and emotional impact.</p> <p><b>When did you start looking for work/thinking about increasing your hours? PROBE: Why did you start looking then?</b></p> <p><b>Was the age of your child/ children a factor in going back to work? PROBE: Try to uncover how old the child/ children were when they felt comfortable leaving them in formal childcare and going to back to work.</b></p> <p><b>How long did it take you to find work/increase your hours? PROBE: Ask about the number of positions applied for, how easy it was for them to find suitable vacancies, was word-of-mouth a factor, whether they turned down any successful applications, and why (especially was it because it couldn't fit with the childcare they could arrange?).</b></p> <p>ASK ALL:</p> <p><b>I'd now like to talk about what you did when the Childcare Affordability Pilot ended in</b></p>	<p>Moderator note – ask sensitively, as we will be looking at personal values/beliefs here about family involvement, the importance of work versus childcare etc.</p> <p>Moderator note: Remember that when talking about the impact of work, the participant may discuss negative affects – allow space for this.</p> <p>Moderator note: people may move in and out of employment – phrase the questions according to status.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>September 2010.</b></p> <p><b>Did you know that the pilot was going to end?</b> How? Had you made any plans for when it ended?</p> <p><b>What steps did you take when the offer ended?</b> PROBE FULLY TO EXPLORE IMPACT OF THE END OF THE OFFER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Did you understand what would happen next?</b></li> <li>- <b>Were you at all concerned about how your household finances would be affected? If so, why?</b> PROBE FULLY TO EXPLORE THE PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE END OF THE PILOT</li> </ul> <p><i>TO THOSE IN THE PILOT GROUP (I.E. PREVIOUSLY IN RECEIPT OF 100% COSTS):</i></p> <p><b>Did the end of the pilot lead to any changes in your arrangements regarding work and childcare?</b> How? Can you describe the changes that happened? PROBE FULLY ON FINANCIAL IMPACTS: INCREASED PAID WORK, REDUCED FORMAL CHILDCARE, INCREASED USE OF INFORMAL CARE</p> <p><b>Can you describe what the impact was of starting to pay 20% of your childcare costs yourself?</b> PLEASE PROMPT IF NECESSARY, PROBING ON ALL THE FOLLOWING AREAS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to your household financially?</b> If so, how did you feel about this?</li> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to decisions about your working life?</b> (AS APPROPRIATE: Did you think about working longer hours? Or changing your job to a better paid one? Or reducing your hours? Why?)</li> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to your choice of childcare provider?</b> (AS APPROPRIATE: Did you think about reducing the childcare you used? Or changing your provider to a cheaper one? Or increasing the childcare you used? Or using more 'informal' providers? Why?)</li> </ul> <p>NOTE TO MODERATOR: IF HELPFUL, MARK CHANGES ON DIARY</p> <p><b>How did you feel about these changes?</b></p> <p><b>Until the pilot ended, how far was the offer of the financial support with your childcare</b></p>	<p><b>MODERATOR NOTE: This section is crucial to the research question. Please probe carefully and return to themes raised here throughout the rest of the interview to ensure they are explored fully</b></p>



Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p><b>from tax credits the main factor in your decision to stay in work? Or were other factors more important? Has this changed now?</b> PROBE: See how important this was in relation to other factors which drove them to look for work.</p> <p><i>TO THOSE IN THE CONTROL GROUP (I.E. PREVIOUSLY IN RECEIPT OF 80% COSTS):</i></p> <p><b>Did the end of the pilot lead to any changes in your arrangements regarding work and childcare? Why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to your household financially?</b> If so, how did you feel about this?</li> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to decisions about your working life?</b> (AS APPROPRIATE: Did you think about working longer hours? Or changing your job to a better paid one? Or reducing your hours? Why?)</li> <li>- <b>Did it make any difference to your choice of childcare provider?</b> (AS APPROPRIATE: Did you think about reducing the childcare you used? Or changing your provider to a cheaper one? Or increasing the childcare you used? Or using more 'informal' providers? Why?)</li> </ul> <p><b>How did you feel about these changes?</b></p> <p><b>Until the pilot ended, how far was the offer of the financial support the main factor in your decision to stay in work? Or were other factors more important? Has this changed now?</b> PROBE: See how important this was in relation to other factors which drove them to look for work.</p>	
<p>Up to 20 mins</p>	<p><b>3. Using and paying for childcare</b>  <b>I'd like to talk about the different childcare providers that you currently use.</b></p> <p><b>Is your child still in formal (paid) childcare?</b>  <i>IF NO (PARTICIPANT MAY ALSO NO LONGER BE CLAIMING WTC):</i>  <b>When did you stop using formal childcare?</b> MODERATOR TO NOTE ON DIARY  <b>Can you tell me why you no longer use formal childcare?</b> PROBE FULLY exploring cost, affordability, trust in provider, flexibility, quality of care, location, hours, increased availability of informal care, needs of child.  <i>IF YES:</i>  <b>Which of the different kinds of childcare provider(s) shown on this card do you use now? When do you use them?</b></p>	<p>This section examines the sources of childcare now used and how this differs from what was used since the initial interviews was conducted. It looks at their views and experiences of using formal childcare, how well it suited their needs, and whether this was sustainable when the terms of the offer changed.</p> <p>It will explore the steps they took when the offer ended and any changes they made to formal childcare provision as a result.</p> <p>Also, we will look at how they pay for childcare and the difference that the offer has made in this regard,</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>MODERATOR TO GIVE <b>SHOWCARD B</b> OF CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO PARTICIPANT. ASCERTAIN ALL THE SOURCE OF CHILDCARE USED AND MAP THE USAGE ON THE COSTS DIARY PROVIDED IN APPENDIX B</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: IF THE PARTICIPANT HAS USED A FAMILY MEMBER AS CHILDCARE, PLEASE PROBE TO FIND OUT WHICH FAMILY MEMBER: THE CHILD'S GRANDPARENT(S); THE CHILD'S OLDER BROTHER/SISTER; ANOTHER RELATIVE</p> <p><b>Have the childcare providers you use changed since the last time we interviewed you in [INSERT MONTH] 2009/2010?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What were your reasons for changing childcare provider?</li> <li>- If problems with previous provider: What problems did you have?</li> </ul> <p>PROBE to examine key factors behind the decision, for example, children moving into school, relatives moving away, problems with previous childcare providers.</p> <p><b>Have you used different providers at different times of the year?</b> What about during the Easter holidays, the summer holidays and half term? Do you have any plans on how you will manage childcare over Christmas?</p> <p>MODERATOR: MAP ALL SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN CHILDCARE USAGE <b>FOR ALL CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD</b> ON THE DIARY. This will be particularly relevant where there are children of school age in the household. <b>PLEASE NOTE ANY DIFFERENCES FOR CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES IN THE HOUSEHOLD.</b></p> <p><b>Do you use formal childcare for any reasons other than to allow you to work?</b> PROMPT WHERE APPROPRIATE: To allow you to study? To have some time to yourself? To allow your child to learn new skills/ socialise with other children? To meet other parents?</p> <p><b>And which of these childcare providers do you claim financial assistance from HMRC for? PROBE FULLY. And of these providers, can you tell me a bit about how you found out about them?</b> PROBE: Examine where they got the information from and the importance of each of the sources.</p> <p>TO THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN CHILDCARE USAGE SINCE THE LAST INTERVIEW:</p> <p><b>I would now just like to get a sense of how all your new childcare and work arrangements fit together, so I can understand better how you manage them. I'd like to try and draw a map of where you work and where the childcare you use is.</b></p>	<p>at the same time exploring variations in childcare usage over the year.</p> <p>Moderator note – refer back to the diary as much as possible so we can get a detailed picture of how their use of childcare has changed and the extent to which the offer was a driver of this.</p> <p>If participant has subsequently left employment, please amend the tense of the questions accordingly.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE; Participants may have different arrangements for different children – please record for all, and why they are different.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please look at this carefully, particularly if the participant has irregular working hours.</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>ASK PARTICIPANT FOR STREETNAMES AND/ OR POSTCODES OF THEIR WORKPLACE AND <b>ALL TYPES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHILDCARE USED</b>. Note: details of these locations may have been described earlier in the interview. If this is the case, check to confirm. <b>PROBE: How easy do you find it to get to your workplace and the places where you use childcare? What kind of transport do you use?</b></p> <p><u>TO ALL</u></p> <p><b>Overall, how easy or difficult have you/ did you find it to balance work and childcare?</b>            PROBE: Why do you say this? What are the challenges you face when doing this? How do you meet these? PROBE: Does your current childcare provision have enough flexibility (e.g. for times when you work fewer or more? Ascertain whether they have informal systems of support in place they can rely on when needed.            MODERATOR NOTE: Please look at the issue above carefully, particularly if the participant has irregular working hours.</p> <p><b>How easy have you found it/ did you find it to manage paying for formal childcare?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you pay on a <b>weekly, monthly or quarterly basis?</b> PROBE FULLY – Particularly if the participant uses a variety of childcare providers, we need to see if they pay different providers on a different basis,</li> <li>- In what way do you pay for your formal childcare? PROBE FOR CASH, CHEQUE, DIRECT DEBIT ETC.</li> <li>- How does this differ from how you receive the financial assistance from HMRC to pay for your formal childcare? PROBE <i>WHERE APPROPRIATE</i>: Do you remember that the payment changed from a cheque to a direct (BACS) payment to your bank account <b>in April?</b> Which did you prefer – the cheque or the direct payment? Why?            MODERATOR NOTE: SEE HOW EASY/DIFFICULT IT IS FOR THEM TO MAKE A PAYMENT TO THEIR FORMAL PROVIDER</li> <li>- How, if at all, do you currently manage these costs? PROBE: Do you have a separate pot of money from which you pay for your childcare costs (e.g. one partner's income, a certain benefit) or do these get paid alongside the rest of the household bills?</li> </ul> <p>Has the way you budget for childcare changed since you starting claiming childcare assistance from HMRC? If so, how? Did you manage and pay for your childcare costs? <b>Did it help to know exactly how much you were receiving?</b> PROBE</p>	<p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> Please take care to observe the contribution of the childcare element in the household budget. Does it allow the participant to spend more money on other things? Do they use the money for purposes other than childcare?</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> Participants who joined the pilot before April will have moved from a cash cheque to a BACS payment</p>

Timings	Key Questions	Notes and Prompts
	<p>FULLY ON WHETHER RECEIVING THE PAYMENTS AS A CHEQUE MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THE WAY THEY PAID THEIR PROVIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you pay for informal childcare (from family and friends) at all? How does the way you pay for formal childcare compare with paying for informal care?</li> </ul> <p><i>IF CHILDCARE PROVIDER HAS CHANGED</i></p> <p><b>Did you need to pay a deposit or upfront payment for childcare? How did you support this payment?</b> Do you pay on a weekly, per term, monthly or quarterly basis? PROBE FULLY – Particularly if the participant uses a variety of childcare providers, we need to see if they pay different providers on a different basis.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: WHEN DISCUSSING THE ISSUES ABOVE, REFER BACK TO THE DIARY THE PARTICIPANT PRODUCED EARLIER ABOUT HOW THEIR USE OF CHILDCARE CHANGES OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR. If necessary ask: <b>Why do/did you use different childcare providers when you moved into work/increased your working hours? How do/did you feel about this? What difference has this made to you/your family?</b></p> <p><i>IF STOPPED THEN STARTED FORMAL CHILDCARE AGAIN DUE TO MOVING IN AND OUT OF WORK</i></p> <p><b>How easy was it to find a suitable childcare when you went back to work?</b> Were there any problems doing so? Why? PROBE ON TIME OF YEAR/ COST/ TRUST IN PROVIDER/ LOCATION/ AVAILABILITY OF PLACES Did you use any friends/ family to help you overcome these problems?</p>	<p>Please also take note of how the participants approach managing childcare costs as part of their budget – <b>how financially competent and confident are they?</b></p> <p>Probe fully here so <b>we can see whether there is a split between formal and informal costs</b> e.g. they may get a neighbour to look after their children for a couple of hours and pay for this – though it would still be informal.</p> <p>Please try and get an idea of whether the payment being a separate amount helped them to budget, or influenced budgeting behaviour? With the childcare amount being absorbed into the general TC payment for normal system families, HMRC interested in whether transparency over amounts families are given for different things is useful.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please use these questions to investigate any difficulties participants may have restarting formal childcare</p>

<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b>4. Attitudes to childcare</b>  <b>I'd now like to talk a bit more about your views on formal (paid) childcare.</b></p> <p><b>What was it that made you choose the childcare provider(s) that you did?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent was cost a consideration in choosing a childcare provider?</li> <li>- And how important was flexibility (for example, the availability of childcare over school holidays, the requirement to continue paying for childcare over school holidays (when it might not be needed) and/or the availability of extra childcare, possibly at short notice?</li> <li>- And location?</li> <li>- What factors would you say were most important when choosing a childcare provider? For example, cost, trust.</li> <li>- <b>How have you found your current formal childcare provider(s)?</b> What do you like about them? Is there anything you were less impressed with? <b>MODERATOR NOTE: PLEASE NOTE VIEWS FOR ALL PROVIDERS USED, AND FOR ALL CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD</b></li> <li>- How happy are you with your choice of childcare provider? Is there anything you would change?</li> <li>- How do you rate the quality of your childcare provider? What makes you think this? What do you think makes a 'high quality' childcare provider?</li> </ul> <p><b>And how happy are you/ were you with the balance of paid and unpaid childcare you have used?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would you rather use more formal childcare? Would you prefer to use more informal childcare, for example rely on relatives more?</li> <li>- Which form of childcare do you prefer? Why is this?</li> </ul> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: Probe to establish what issues customers have using either form of childcare and why they are happy or unhappy with their childcare balance.</p>	<p>This section will explore in more depth the reasons behind the choice of childcare, exploring the mix of formal and informal care used by the participant. It will explore views of formal childcare in detail, exploring issues such as quality, location and availability. It will also examine the balance of informal and formal childcare they use and how satisfied they are with this.</p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: IF 100% costs are paid, the parent may be less inclined to seek competitively priced childcare. Please examine their reasons for choosing their childcare carefully.</p>
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	<p><b>To what extent do you think that formal childcare is generally affordable? Why do you say this?</b></p> <p>PROMPT: How much money do you think is affordable for you to pay? Why do you say this? What kind of provider would charge these rates do you think? Would you consider using them? Why/why not?</p> <p><b>Did the cost of childcare make any difference to your original choice of provider? Why?</b></p> <p><i>TO PILOT GROUP ONLY</i></p> <p><b>Did this change when the help you received from the government reduced when the pilot ended? How? Did you find it hard to afford the extra 20% of costs? If so, how did you manage to pay it?</b></p> <p><b>Did you make any changes to your childcare as a result? PROBE AS APPROPRIATE:</b> Did you think about reducing the childcare you used? Or changing your provider to a cheaper one? Or increasing the childcare you used? Or using more 'informal' providers? Why?</p> <p><b>Has this experience made you think differently about how affordable formal childcare is? Why?</b></p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please make careful note of whether costs were more challenging for participants to meet when the pilot ended, and what effect this had on their views of formal childcare.</p>
<p>Up to 15 mins</p>	<p><b><u>5. Making and managing the claim</u></b>  <b>I'd now like to talk about your experiences with claiming your childcare costs over the last year</b></p> <p>MODERATOR NOTE: TRACK THIS ON THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY SO WE CAN SEE HOW THEIR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPED OVER TIME.</p> <p><b>Just to confirm, did you originally hear about the offer of assistance through a letter, or thorough any other means? IF APPROPRIATE, PROMPT:</b> telephone call from SpokenFor (although note that the participant will not know this agency by name).</p>	<p>This section of the guide will look at their reactions to communications with HMRC and Childcare Affordability Pilot Helpline (run by Spoken For), and any new views on the offer which have emerged since the initial interview.</p> <p>It will also explore their experiences of making a claim. Though we will be pressed for time, please try and get as much detail – especially over their awareness of their responsibilities to HMRC over reporting a change in circumstances for example.</p>

**How much contact have you had with HMRC since making your initial claim?** PROBE FULLY FOR ALL CONTACT PARTICIPANT HAS HAD – LETTERS, TELEPHONE CALLS, RENEWAL LETTERS - AND RECORD ON THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY.

How did you find **telephone calls** to HMRC? Were they straightforward? Were staff helpful?

What about **letters** and other correspondence with HMRC? Did you understand the information you received?

**Did you understand what you needed to do manage your claim?** PROBE: For instance, are there any circumstances under which you would need to contact HMRC? Do you know when you needed to tell HMRC about these changes? Why do you say this? Do you know when you need to contact HMRC to ensure your claim continues?

MODERATOR NOTE: PROBE ON KNOWLEDGE ON REPORTING CHANGES OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND RENEWALS

**When you last contacted HMRC to report your childcare costs, what did you tell them? Why did you need to contact them?** PROBE TO FIND OUT IF THEY REPORTED ANY CHANGES OF CIRCUMSTANCES

- How easy or difficult has it been for you to update HMRC with the childcare costs you have incurred?

**I'd now like to talk about the payments you received from HMRC whilst you were on the pilot.**

**Was the amount you were paid to assist you with your childcare costs what you were expecting?** Why do you say this? How have you found receiving money in arrears? Why do you say this?

**Just to confirm, did you receive your payment initially as a cash cheque? How did you feel about this?** What were the advantages and disadvantages of receiving the money in this way?

Do you prefer the BACS payment/ direct transfer to your bank account you now receive? Why? PROBE ON WHETHER THE MONEY IS USED DIFFERENTLY WHEN PROVIDED AS A CHEQUE/ BACS TRANSFER?

IF STILL RECEIVING WTC:

**How do you receive the money now?** Is this preferable? Why?

NOTE ON RENEWALS AND CHANGES OF CIRCUMSTANCES TO FOLLOW

MODERATOR NOTE: Participants who joined the pilot before April will have moved from a cash cheque to a BACS payment

	<p><b>How have you found reporting your childcare costs to HMRC? How do you keep them informed of your costs and any changes?</b> Have you experienced any problems doing so? PROBE: Do you understand that they pay you 80% of an average of your annual childcare costs? Have you tried to calculate this yourself? What happened?</p> <p><i>ASK ALL</i></p> <p><b>Did you renew your tax credit claim in April? Can you talk me through the process you went through to do this?</b></p> <p>How did you feel about this process? Was there anything that you found difficult? How accurate do you feel your renewal was? Did you have any concerns about renewing your claim?</p> <p>What is your understanding of why it is necessary to renew your tax credit claim every year?</p> <p><i>IF DID NOT RENEW:</i></p> <p><b>Could you explain why you did not renew your claim to me?</b> PROBE ON UNDERSTANDING OF PROCESS, ANY DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED, ANY DESIRE TO STOP CLAIMING AND WHY</p>	<p>MODERATOR NOTE: Please use these questions to investigate to what extent participants understand they need to predict costs, and to what extent they find it difficult to do so.</p> <p><b>MODERATOR NOTE:</b> Tax credits claims are dependent on people renewing on time and keeping the information HMRC hold up to date. For some people who's claims are high value HMRC will call to help them through the renewal process. This is to help minimise the risk of error that could lead to overpayments in tax credits. Please note that not all families would have received a call.</p>
	<p><u>6. The end of the pilot</u></p> <p><b>I'd now like to talk about your experience now the pilot has ended.</b></p> <p><b>When did you first hear that the pilot was going to end? How did you hear about it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did you feel about the pilot coming to an end earlier than planned?</li> <li>- Did you have any concerns? What did you do about these? PROBE to explore whether they called HMRC for more information, talked with friends.</li> <li>- How did you decide whether to continue claiming WTC? What did you do to end the claim/ ensure that the claim continued?</li> </ul> <p><b>Now the pilot has ended, have you continued to claim assistance with your childcare costs?</b></p> <p><i>IF YES</i></p> <p><b>Can you tell me why you are continuing to keep your child in formal childcare?</b> What are the advantages, on balance? Are there any disadvantages?</p>	<p>This section will explore customers' experiences of the end of the pilot and, for those in the pilot group, their responses to moving to claiming reduced childcare costs.</p>



IF YES AND IN THE PILOT GROUP

**What difference, if any, has the reduced payment you are now receiving made to your household?** PROBE ON FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, CHANGES IN WORK AND CHILDCARE AS A RESULT

IF NO

- How did you decide whether to continue claiming WTC? What did you do to end the claim? Why did you stop claiming? (for example, they may have moved out of work, changed their childcare arrangements).

NOTE TO MODERATOR: ONLY ASK IF THIS HAS NOT AS YET BEEN CONVERED

- Did you have any reservations around continuing to claim? What could HMRC do to reassure you?

PROBE to understand why it is they have not continued to claim, are their reservations linked to their experience. What could be done to alleviate this? Are there any fears surrounding using a different system to calculate their childcare costs?

ASK ALL

**Thinking back to when you first received the offer of help from HMRC. If you were to receive a similar offer of assistance now from HMRC, what do you think your reaction would be? Would you call for more information?** PROBE: Would you ignore it? What information would you like to receive?

- Why do you say that?
- What would make you more or less likely to take up a similar offer of assistance if you were to receive another offer?

Do you think you would have moved into work and started using formal childcare without this offer of support? **Can you explain why?**

<p>5 mins</p>	<p><u>Conclusion and Thanks</u></p> <p><b>Just thinking about all the things we have discussed today, how much of a difference has involvement in this pilot made to your life? Why do you say this?</b></p> <p><u>TO THOSE IN THE PILOT GROUP</u>  <b>And would you say that moving from 100% childcare costs to 80% costs has made any difference to you? Why?</b></p> <p><u>TO ALL</u></p> <p>Is there anything else you think is relevant and wish to discuss?          Thank participants; explain the next steps (e.g. what HMRC will do with the findings). THANK AND CLOSE. Reassure about confidentiality.</p>	<p>This section will draw out the key messages and brings the interview to a close.</p>
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**Appendix A – Diaries for work/ use of childcare**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

**Appendix B – Childcare costs diary**

Use this to help map weekly and monthly childcare costs

Weekly costs

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

Monthly costs

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1							
2							
3							
4							

## Appendix B – Initial Offer Letters

## APPENDIX B: Initial Pilot offer letter

**0800 0855 041**

Helpline open 09:00 – 17:00 Mon - Fri  
[www.direct.gov.uk/childcarepilot](http://www.direct.gov.uk/childcarepilot)

Date: 5 October 2009

Ref number: XXXXXX

Miss XX

Address

### Get all your childcare costs paid for a year – new help from the Government

Do you or your partner want to go back to work, but aren't sure if you can afford the childcare costs? We can help you pay for them. As part of a special package, the Government, in partnership with the London Development Agency, is offering 500 families in selected boroughs of London the chance to get **all** their childcare costs repaid, if they choose to move into work for at least 16 hours per week per parent.

You can get up to 100% of the childcare costs you pay. There is a limit which means the most you can get is:

- **£215 a week** for one child or
- **£350 a week** for two or more children

Continued support for your childcare costs is available at the end of the pilot, provided you stay in work.

So don't delay. To register your interest and find out more about this extra help you need to **call our FREE dedicated helpline on 0800 0855 041** (please give the reference number at the top of this letter when you call). You don't need to start work immediately to register your interest.

When you call our helpline, you'll be given all the help you need to;

- get tailored advice about moving into work
- find and take up approved childcare
- get further information on this package

If English is not your first language we can provide a translation service and if you are hearing impaired we can offer this service via Typetalk.

By the way, if you're already receiving help to find or prepare for work from a Jobcentre Plus advisor, please show them this letter when you next see them. They can explain more about the offer, and how you could be better off if you're working.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Howarth, Assistant Director – Childcare

Any personal information you provide us with will be used for research purposes and may also be used to update related information. Further details are available from the Helpline.

If you don't want us to contact you about this offer, or if you do not wish to be contacted to take part in any research relating to this offer, please let us know by calling **0800 0855 041**

## APPENDIX B: Initial Control offer letter

**0800 0855 041**

Helplines open 09:00 – 17:00 Mon - Fri  
[www.direct.gov.uk/childcarepilot](http://www.direct.gov.uk/childcarepilot)

Date: 23 November 2009  
Ref number: XXXXX

Miss XXX

Address

### Help with childcare costs to get you back to work

Do you want to use childcare, but aren't sure if you can afford the costs? We can help you pay for them. If you are already in work, or choose to move into work of at least 16 hours per week per partner, we can help you cover the costs of childcare.

You can get up to 80% of the childcare costs you pay. There is a limit which means the most you can get is:

- **£140 a week** for one child
- **£240 a week** for two or more children

So don't delay. **Call our FREE special helpline on 0800 0855 041** (please give the reference number at the top of this letter when you call).

When you call our helpline, you'll be given all the help you need to:

- get tailored advice about moving into work
- find and take up approved childcare
- get further information on this package

If English is not your first language we can provide a translation service and if you are hearing impaired we can offer this service via Typetalk.

You don't need to start work immediately to register your interest.

By the way, if you're already receiving help to find or prepare for work from a Jobcentre Plus advisor please show them this letter when you next see them. They can explain more about the offer, and how you could be better off if you're working.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Howarth, Assistant Director – Childcare

Any personal information you provide us with will be used for research purposes and may also be used to update related information. Further details are available from the Helpline.

If you don't want us to contact you about this offer, or if you do not wish to be contacted to take part in any research relating to this offer, please let us know by calling **0800 0855 041**

## **Appendix C – Example of a Cost Breakdown Letter**





**HM Revenue  
& Customs**

**Child Benefit Office  
Benefits & Credits**  
Waterview Park  
District 15  
Mandarin Way  
Washington  
NE38 8QG

**Phone** 0800 0855 041

[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Mrs Jane Doe  
1 Street  
Town  
City  
AA1 2BB

**Date** 28 May 2010  
**Our ref** XXXXXXXX  
**NI number** AB112233C

Dear Mrs Doe

We have worked out your payment for childcare costs for the period 5 May 2010 to 1 June 2010. We will make a payment of £58.80 into your bank account within 5 working days.

This is the extra amount you are getting for taking part in this scheme.

#### **How your payment has been worked out**

Average weekly childcare costs	£73.50
Weekly childcare costs paid with your tax credits award	£58.80
Additional weekly childcare payment due	£14.70
<b>Total payment</b>	<b>£73.50</b>

#### **Other information**

Please tell us straight away if your circumstances change. If you don't, you may not be getting all the money you are entitled to, or you could be getting more than you should meaning that you will have to pay it back.

If you have any questions about your payments or want to tell us about a change, please phone us on the above number.

Yours sincerely