Measuring the impact of Smart Works

Final report

Peter Babudu, Elliot Trevithick and Rahel Späth

March 2016
CONTENTS

Executive summary .................................................................................................................. 2

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 4
    This report ......................................................................................................................... 4
    The Social Innovation Partnership .................................................................................. 4
    The Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund ............................................................... 4
    Smart Works ..................................................................................................................... 4

Methodology ......................................................................................................................... 7
    Research questions .......................................................................................................... 7
    Key principles of approach ............................................................................................. 7
    Research design .............................................................................................................. 7
    Limitations of the research .............................................................................................. 10

Results .................................................................................................................................... 11
    Does Smart Works increase its clients’ chances of gaining employment? ...................... 11
    What is the clients’ experience of the service? ................................................................. 13
    How could the experience and/or impact of the service be improved? ......................... 14
    Client background data .................................................................................................. 15

Discussion ............................................................................................................................ 17
    Interpreting the results ...................................................................................................... 17
    Recommendations ............................................................................................................ 20

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 23

Appendices .......................................................................................................................... 24
    Appendix A: Breakdown of the research questions, outcomes/indicators and tools .......... 24
    Appendix B: The Smart Works survey ............................................................................. 26
    Appendix C: Full limitations of the research .................................................................. 32
    Appendix D: Breakdown of follow-up responses ............................................................ 34
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report assesses how effective the Smart Works service is at helping unemployed women get back into work. Here we provide a two-page summary of the findings.

The beneficiaries

- **Number**: 278 clients (i.e. service users) from Smart Works’ London offices took part in the evaluation.

- **Demographics**: All clients are female and come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. At the time, the youngest was 16 and oldest was 62, with an average age of 37.1 years. Almost half were single mothers.

- **Employment history**: Just under half of clients had been unemployed for more than a year, and 18% had been out of work for more than five years. Nearly two thirds of clients had applied for more than twenty jobs in their most recent period of unemployment, and nearly half had attended three or more interviews.

The service they received

- **Referral**: Smart Works’ clients are referred when they have a confirmed job interview. Smart Works has over 150 different referral partners, the largest being Job Centre Plus and Work Programme providers.

- **Delivery**: Smart Works provides its clients with interview clothing, styling advice and one-to-one interview training during short two-hour sessions. The organisation’s Theory of Change (Figure 1) shows the outcomes that the service aims to achieve through these activities.

Figure 1: The Smart Works Theory of Change
The impact of the service

- 46% of contacted Smart Works clients secured a job within a month of receiving the service. Of those, 78% said Smart Works had increased their chances of getting that job a lot (18% a little).
- Of those contacted clients who had not yet got a job, 58% said that Smart Works had increased their chances a lot (28% a little).
- 95% of clients felt the service had a positive impact on their confidence and interview skills.
- 97% of clients strongly agreed that they felt listened to, were treated with respect and received an outfit that was suitable.
- Qualitative data from 87% of clients further supports that they had a very positive experience of the service overall. The following quote represents a typical client comment:

> ‘An amazing service that I’m sure will have a great positive impact on all the ladies who come in. To be treated in such a respectful way is so empowering, especially when being unemployed can really lower self-esteem. So impressed.’

The robustness of the results

- **Strengths:** This evaluation triangulates a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data, all of which paints a positive picture of the Smart Works service and its impact. The sample size was 278, response rates for the survey were close to 100%, and the response rate at follow-up was 78% - which means we can be very confident that the data is representative of Smart Works’ London clients.

- **Limitations:** It was agreed early on that a comparison group was inappropriate for this stage in Smart Works’ evidence journey and therefore outside the scope of this evaluation.

Conclusion

- The evaluation gives a strong indication that the Smart Works service effectively increases its clients’ chances of getting a job. Approximately 46% of clients succeed in interview within a month of receiving the service, which compares favourably to somewhat comparable data from the government’s Work Programme (albeit with heavy caveats), and which most clients attribute to the Smart Works service to some degree. We can be confident that these findings are representative of all clients who come to Smart Works London, thanks to the impressive improvement in Smart Works’ follow-up response rate due to their successful implementation of a new text message system. Most clients also report their experience of the service to be a very positive one, in line with Smart Works’ aim to give them the confidence and self-belief they need to secure employment. A more robust evaluation design would be needed to confirm Smart Works’ impact with more certainty and accuracy; but, given its size and stage of development, the organisation is making very good progress along its evidence journey. We recommend that Smart Works’ immediate focus should be on plans to successfully roll out the same evaluation process across licensee sites outside of London, and on using that data to maintain and potentially even increase its impact on all clients.
INTRODUCTION
This report details The Social Innovation Partnership's (TSIP) evaluation of the Smart Works service.

THIS REPORT
This report is the final output of work carried out by The Social Innovation Partnership (TSIP) for Smart Works in 2015/2016. It was funded by the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund (CSAIF). The primary purpose of the report is to provide an accurate picture of Smart Works’ impact on its clients – as far as is possible.

The report starts by introducing TSIP, the CSAIF and the Smart Works service. It then describes the methodology used to measure Smart Works’ impact, before presenting and discussing the results of the research, making recommendations and offering a brief conclusion.

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP
The Social Innovation Partnership (TSIP) is a trusted advisor to public, private and social sector organisations seeking to maximise their social impact. We believe that a strong and dynamic society will take shape when evidence and innovation sit at the heart of efforts to tackle our most persistent social challenges; when evidence is used to better understand what brings about social change, and innovation is used to find and test new solutions.

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ACTION INNOVATION FUND
In October 2014, the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund awarded funding to Smart Works to support the organisation’s growth and this evaluation. Launched in April 2013 and operating for three years, the fund was a £14 million partnership between Nesta and the Cabinet Office set up to support the growth of innovations that mobilise people’s energy and talents to help each other, working alongside public services.

SMART WORKS
Smart Works is a UK charity that helps unemployed women back into the workplace by providing high-quality interview clothes, styling advice and interview training. Smart Works aims to give women the confidence and the tools they need to succeed at interview and achieve their employment goals.

Smart Works’ clients
Women come to Smart Works when they have a confirmed job interview. They are referred by one of over 150 referral partners from across Greater London. The largest single group of referral partners are Job Centre Plus and Work Programme providers. A significant number of clients are referred in small numbers from a wide range of charities supporting women back into work.
Smart Works’ clients come from a range of backgrounds. Some of the most vulnerable have been homeless, are ex-offenders or have mental health issues. Others have been recently made unemployed, or are returning from a break spent caring for children or relatives. Smart Works believes that all of its clients are tied together by the need for a shot of confidence and self-belief. The service is designed to give them just that.

Smart Works’ service

See Smart Works’ Theory of Change in Figure 2.

At the heart of the Smart Works model is a two-hour dressing and interview preparation service, which typically takes place a day or so before the client’s job interview.

Firstly, in the one-hour dressing session, with the advice and expertise of volunteer stylists, each client is offered a selection of high-quality clothing to wear for their interview. The stylists aim to ensure that clients feel truly comfortable in the clothes they have chosen, and that they have everything they need – from a winter coat to a pair of tights.

Following the dressing session, skilled volunteer interview coaches work one-on-one with each client in a compassionate and supportive way, giving them the chance to practise both asking and answering questions, some of which they may have found difficult in previous interview scenarios. This support is tailored specifically to the client’s upcoming interview.

The client then completes a short questionnaire and leaves.

If a Smart Works client gets the job, they are offered a second dressing appointment for more clothing, to see them through to their first pay cheque. Once the client re-enters the workplace, they can join the Smart Works Network, meeting every month to network and further their professional and personal development.

The Smart Works service in London is delivered by over 80 trained and high-calibre volunteers. They are largely professional specialists, and tend to volunteer regularly and over long periods of time. The clothing stock is donated from other women or comes direct from retailers.
Smart Works’ scale

Smart Works was founded in London in 2000.¹ Today its mission is to take the service to other cities in the UK using a licensing model, while maintaining the standards of service and impact it has achieved in London. The organisation has two offices in North and West London, and in 2015 it saw over 1500 women from every borough in the capital. It has recently opened licensee sites in Edinburgh, Manchester and Reading. Smart Works Birmingham and Smart Works Belfast are planned for 2016.

¹ The organisation was originally called ‘Dress for Success’, but the name was changed in 2013.
METHODOLOGY

Smart Works collected a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to better understand its clients' experience of the service and whether it helps them to gain employment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This evaluation aims to answer three questions:

1. Does Smart Works increase its clients’ chances of gaining employment?
2. What is the clients’ experience of the service?
3. How could the experience and/or impact of the service be improved?

KEY PRINCIPLES OF APPROACH

In trying to answer these research questions, the work was driven by four key principles:

• **Robustness:** The primary aim was to support Smart Works to answer these questions more robustly than it has been able to in the past, through improvements to its methodology and measurement tools.

• **Proportionality:** It was important that the robustness of the evaluation was proportionate to the organisation’s size and stage of development, and the short length of the intervention. It was therefore decided early on that the evaluation would not include a formal comparison group, and would instead aim to reach Level 2 on Nesta’s Standards of Evidence.²

• **Sustainability:** The evaluation needed to be sustainable, so that it: a) was and could continue to be delivered by Smart Works staff and volunteers; b) would build on Smart Works’ existing methodology and tools; c) would ideally be less labour-intensive than the previous methodology and tools; and d) could also be adopted by Smart Works’ licensee sites (which may have less resources available to collect and analyse data).

• **Usefulness:** Finally, every bit of data collected had to have a clear use or purpose – either to help Smart Works: a) better prove its impact, particularly to external audiences; or b) improve its service and therefore increase impact, by making changes internally.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer these questions, the research took the form of an impact evaluation (primarily covering research question 1), with elements of a process evaluation (primarily covering research questions 2 and 3).³

---

² Level 2 involves capturing robust data that shows positive change over time, without necessarily confirming this was caused by the service being evaluated. See the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund website for more details.

³ A process evaluation aims to understand how a service has been delivered in practice, and an impact evaluation aims to understand what impact the service has had on its desired outcomes. For more detail please see the Treasury’s Magenta Book.
The evaluation included both **quantitative** data (retrospective and quasi-pre-post questions) and **qualitative** data (open survey questions). See the following sub-sections for more detail.

**Measurement tools**

All impact and process data was collected via two measurement tools: a **survey** that was administered to clients immediately after receiving the service, and a **follow-up** text message or phone call that was administered approximately four weeks later. All tools are bespoke to Smart Works, and all questions were co-developed by TSIP and Smart Works with input from Nesta.

The **survey** collected impact and process data via questions on:

- **Demographics**: E.g. age, ethnicity.
- **Employment history**: E.g. length of unemployment, number of job interviews since last employment.
- **Clients’ experience of the service**: Quantitative questions (e.g. to what extent did the client feel listened to?) and open qualitative questions (e.g. does the client have any suggestions for improving the service?). These questions comprised the process evaluation, and aimed to support the impact findings by showing to what extent the Smart Works service was delivered to the desired quality.
- **Intermediate outcomes**: Retrospective quantitative questions, asking clients whether they were feeling any different right now to how they had generally been feeling in the last couple of weeks. These questions covered the outcomes below, taken directly from the Theory of Change. They aimed to add depth to the follow-up findings, by identifying to what extent clients achieved the various outcomes that are thought to contribute to them succeeding in their interviews.
  - Women feel fabulous (i.e. women feel valued/have improved self-esteem)
  - Women have improved knowledge on how to answer [interview] questions effectively
  - Women have an increased awareness of their own strengths
  - Women have a better understanding of what is expected of them at interview
  - Women believe they can get the job

The **follow-up** text message or phone call collected data on just two questions:

1. Has the client got a job?
2. How has coming to Smart Works affected their chances of getting a job?

These two follow-up questions measure Smart Works’ **ultimate goal**: ‘To help more women in need back into the workplace by succeeding at job interview’.

We know that none of Smart Works’ clients have a job when they first come to the service, so the first **follow-up question** acts as a quasi-post test – if zero clients had a job at baseline, how many clients have a job at follow-up?

However, it is probable that many clients are on some positive trajectory towards getting a job, and so the **second follow-up question** aims to give an indication of how much the clients themselves attribute getting a job to the Smart Works service, rather than to other factors.
Please see Appendix A for a full breakdown of the research questions, outcomes/indicators and measurement tools; and Appendix B for a copy of the full survey.

**Data collection process**

Figure 3 gives an overview of how the data was collected in practice, and the text below describes that process in more detail.

**Figure 3: The data collection process**

Survey: The survey is given to the client upon arrival and explained by a member of staff. The client is left in the reception area to fill in their personal details, employment history and equal opportunities monitoring form. The client keeps their survey with them during the service, and once they finish the service they return to the reception area to fill in the remainder of the survey alone. The client is told they can speak to a member of staff if they have any questions, and that they should return the survey to a member of staff when they are finished. The survey data is then entered into the Smart Works database in regular batches by a member of staff.

Follow-up: There are three different ways of collecting the same follow-up data:

- **Second dressing:** Some clients call Smart Works to tell them they have got a job (thus automatically answering follow-up question 1), and to ask for a ‘second dressing’ (where they come back to receive a second outfit for their new job). When these clients come in for their second dressing, they fill in a separate ‘second dressing form’. This includes the second follow-up question (‘how has coming to Smart Works affected their chances of getting a job?’)

- **Text message:** A follow-up text message is automatically sent out to all other clients, in regular batches approximately four weeks after they receive the service, using the software MessageBird. If clients do not respond, they are sent a reminder text message a couple of days later.

- **Phone call:** For those clients that still do not respond, a Smart Works member of staff tries to call them by phone a couple of days later. They ask them the first question (on whether or not they have got the job) as a natural part of their conversation. The Smart Works member of staff is instructed to ask the second question using the same wording as the text message and second dressing form (whereby the client is asked to choose a number from one to five that corresponds to their answer).

**Data analysis**

All survey and follow-up data is collected, collated and entered into the Smart Works database by a member of staff. It is then exported into Excel, and copied and pasted into an automated bespoke data analysis tool developed by TSIP, also in Excel.

**Quantitative:** The analysis tool automatically runs the required quantitative analyses. The analyses are all descriptive – frequencies, percentages and means – and are presented as figures, tables and
graphs. There are no statistical significance analyses, as there is no formal pre-post data or comparison group data.

**Qualitative data:** The data analysis tool simply collates all qualitative responses from the survey and puts them in alphabetical order. For this report, an informal thematic analysis was carried out.

**Participants**

278 participants took part in the evaluation. This number represents all Smart Works clients who had a first interview dressing at the North London or West London offices between 1st December 2015 and 12th February 2016. Other Smart Works offices were not involved in the evaluation for purely practical reasons – primarily that these relatively new licensee sites did not yet have the capacity to collect the required data. All participants gave their informed consent to take part in the evaluation. See the results section for response rates to the survey and follow-up text/calls, and for a breakdown of demographic background and employment history.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The four main limitations of the research are outlined below in approximate order of importance. For a full exploration of the limitations and how we tried to mitigate them, please see Appendix C.

- **With no comparison group,** we cannot be sure that any positive change we see is because of the service itself (as opposed to other factors). This is particularly problematic when measuring job outcomes, as all clients begin the service unemployed and so there would likely be some improvement in outcome even in the absence of the service.
- **Follow-up data was only collected at four weeks.** This is less than the industry standard, which generally measures whether a job has been kept for three to six months, to show that it is sustainable.
- **The change in intermediate outcomes was measured retrospectively** rather than pre-post, which can sometimes mean participants respond overly positively (social desirability bias) or inaccurately (recall bias).
- **The measurement tools have not been validated** as they are bespoke to this project. They have not, therefore, been subject to the same rigorous testing for validity and reliability as validated tools.

---

4 Having now effectively piloted this evaluation approach successfully, Smart Works plan to roll it out to their licensee sites in the near future as and when capacity allows.
RESULTS

Almost half of Smart Works clients secured a job within a month of receiving the service. Quantitative and qualitative data suggest that clients had a very positive experience of the service overall.

Key results:

- 46% of Smart Works clients secured a job within a month of receiving the service.
- 90% of clients felt the service had increased their chances of getting a job (a lot or a little).
- 95% of clients felt the service had some positive impact on their confidence and interview skills (i.e. the average scores of all the intermediate outcomes).
- 97% of clients strongly agreed that they felt listened to, were treated with respect and received an outfit that was suitable. The qualitative data further supports that they had a very positive experience of the service overall.
- All clients were female, came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and were 37.1 years old on average. Almost half were single mothers, and almost half had been unemployed for more than one year.

The remainder of this section presents the results in full detail, with a separate sub-section for each research question, plus a fourth on client background data.

1. DOES SMART WORKS INCREASE ITS CLIENTS’ CHANCES OF GAINING EMPLOYMENT?

Ultimate goal: more women in the workplace

Follow-up question 1: ‘Since you came to Smart Works, have you got a job?’

Smart Works gathered data from 216 clients (78% of all clients). Of these, 100 (46%) had secured a job within a month.

Follow-up question 2: ‘How, if at all, do you think coming to Smart Works affected your chances of getting a job?’

Smart Works gathered data from 129 clients (47%). Of those, 66% felt the service increased their chances a lot, 24% felt it increased their chances a little, 10% felt it didn’t affect their chances and none felt it decreased their chances. As shown by Figure 5, clients who had already successfully got a job were more likely to think the service had had a positive impact on their chances.
Intermediate outcomes

Survey questions 9 to 13: Please see Appendix B for the full wording of the questions.

‘How did coming to Smart Works affect clients immediately after receiving the service?’

Figure 6: Change in client intermediate outcomes

Smart Works gathered data from 265 clients (95%). On average, approximately 60% of clients felt much more confident, able and clear in relation to getting a job immediately after receiving the Smart Works service. A further 35% of clients felt these outcomes had improved a bit. Only around 5% of clients felt the service did not improve these outcomes, and less than 1% felt it had adverse effects.
2. WHAT IS THE CLIENTS’ EXPERIENCE OF THE SERVICE?

Quantitative data

Survey questions 14 to 16: Please see Appendix B for the full wording of the questions.

‘To what extent did clients feel they were treated with respect, feel listened to, and think that they received a suitable outfit for their interview?’

Figure 7: Clients’ experience of the service

Almost all Smart Works clients were very positive about their experience of the service. Of the 262 (94%) clients who responded, 99% strongly agreed they were treated with respect, 97% strongly agreed they were listened to, and 96% strongly agreed that they received a suitable outfit for their interview(s).

Qualitative data

Survey question 18: ‘Do you have any comments about your experience today?’

Clients were given the option to provide any additional comments about their experience of the service, and 243 clients (87%) responded. Virtually no clients had any negative comments. The key themes across the comments were:

• Gratefulness at being listened to
• Pleased and, in some cases, positively surprised at the kindness of the staff and volunteers
• Satisfaction with their new outfit
• Interview tips perceived as high quality and helpful
• Perceived boost in confidence and optimism

The following quotes are representative of the most positive comments, which comprise the large majority of responses:

‘It is the most amazing experience. I felt really confident and feel very grateful for the entire session. The clothes fitted well. The interview techniques were out of this world. Excellent!’
I was nervous to begin with but was made to feel comfortable and at ease. A lovely, calm, friendly and relaxed environment and I felt like Cinderella.’

‘An amazing service that I’m sure will have a great positive impact on all the ladies who come in. To be really treated in such a respectful way is so empowering, especially when being unemployed can really lower your self-esteem. So impressed.’

The following quotes are representative of the remaining responses, which are less detailed and/or effusive but still positive:

The ladies are polite, helpful and motivating.’

The service was quick and helpful and friendly.’

3. HOW COULD THE EXPERIENCE AND/OR IMPACT OF THE SERVICE BE IMPROVED?

Survey question 19: ‘Do you have any suggestions on how Smart Works could improve its service?’

Clients were also given the option to provide more specific comments on how the service could be improved. 155 clients (56%) responded. Most of these responses (approximately 76% of them) stated that the service needed no improvement by simply responding ‘no’ or, for example:

‘Nothing comes to mind, I think you are already giving an excellent service.’

The 24% of respondents (i.e. 13% of all clients) who did suggest improvements focused on the following themes:

- The service should be advertised more widely to widen access/raise awareness at referral partners (e.g. Job Centre Plus)
- Better inform clients about the service before they come in so they know what to expect
- Extra time for boosting interview skills, immediately or after their interview as follow-up
- Provide better signage or directions to help clients find Smart Works

‘More advertising/leaflets as I’ve never heard about such a wonderful charity as this. If it was not for my employability officer I would have still felt very insecure, so thank you!’

‘Train the advisors at the Job Centre Plus so they are more knowledgeable about the service and can explain it to those they refer.’

‘Would be helpful to provide an information pack explaining the service they can offer as I wasn’t really informed.’

‘If we don’t get the job, have a follow-up appointment so we can try to work out what we did wrong. Also if we get any feedback we can let you know - if there are
any challenging questions, for example, we could let you know so you can use it to prepare other people.’

Survey question 17: ‘Was there any type of clothing or accessory that you didn’t receive, that you think you needed?’

135 clients (49%) responded to this question. Most of these responses (74%) stated they were given the clothes they needed, by simply responding ‘no’ or similar. The remaining 26% (i.e. 13% of all clients) made suggestions along the following themes:

- Asking for more detail from clients at or in advance of the appointment about what clothes they want
- Better availability of relevant clothing sizes
- Better availability of coats, bags, shoes, make-up and earrings

More sizes and options, and maybe to include the clients more in their clothing choices, especially if they are eager to have a say in the outfit. Interview part maybe a little longer – I didn’t want to leave. Very helpful.’

‘I would have liked a coat also, but I’m happy with what I’ve received.’

CLIENT BACKGROUND DATA

Client background information was gathered via survey from 278 clients (100%).

Demographic data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mean 37.1 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard deviation 11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range 16 to 62 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>100% female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>26.9% White British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.8% Black Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.6% Black African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2% Any Other White Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.1% Various Other (smaller than 5.0% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3% Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>84.8% had no disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.6% had a disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.6% preferred not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parenthood</td>
<td>45.8% were lone parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>Mean 1.1 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard deviation 1.2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range 0 to 4 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Client employment history

In addition to demographic data, Smart Works gathered information about clients’ length of current unemployment, and the number of jobs applied for and number of interviews attended within that period.

The graphs demonstrate that nearly half of Smart Works clients had been unemployed for more than a year, with 18% having been unemployed for more than five years. Nearly two thirds of clients had applied for more than twenty jobs in that period of unemployment, and nearly half had attended three or more interviews before coming to Smart Works.
DISCUSSION

The results indicate that Smart Works is delivering a quality service that is having a positive impact on its clients. Smart Works should maintain this quality as it scales, and eventually confirm these findings using a more robust evaluation design.

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

This evaluation tried to answer three questions, which are discussed in turn below.

1. Does Smart Works increase its clients’ chances of gaining employment?

Quick answer: This evaluation gives a strong indication that Smart Works increases its clients’ chances of gaining employment, even if we cannot be sure at this stage precisely by how much.

Of the 78% of clients that Smart Works was able to follow up with, 46% had secured a job within a month. This 78% response rate is impressively high given that the clients spent only two hours with Smart Works and had no significant contact in the intervening month, and it means that we can be very confident in the representativeness of the success rate. (While it is very likely that the 46% figure is positively skewed by the many successful clients who proactively call Smart Works to tell them that they have got a job, this skewing effect is unlikely to be large. If we assume that the remaining 22% of clients who did not respond had a similar success rate to those who responded by Smart Works calling them, the success rate across 100% of clients would still be 43%. See Appendix D for a breakdown and explanation of response rates and success rates by type of follow-up.)

However, without any formal comparison group, we cannot be sure that the 46% of clients who did get a job would not have done so anyway without Smart Works’ support. As explained in Appendix C, this evaluation does three things to give an indication of how much these clients’ success can be attributed to Smart Works:

- Asking the clients directly
- Comparing the Smart Works success rate to others found in the literature
- Collecting data on the intermediate outcomes that predict success rate

**Asking the clients directly:** When clients who got the job were asked directly how much coming to Smart Works affected their chances of getting that job, 78% responded that it increased their chances a lot and 18% responded that it did so a little. There is always a risk of social desirability bias with this kind of data – that the clients simply responded favourably to Smart Works out of politeness and gratitude, given that Smart Works had spent time trying to help and support them. This may be especially true for those clients who were planning to come back and see Smart Works for a second dressing. The extent of that risk may be mitigated to a degree by two factors:

- **Text message:** Firstly, 80% of the responses to this question were received by automated text message, which may have given clients a sense of detachment and confidentiality that allowed them to be more honest. The risk of bias is still extremely high for those that were asked the question by a member of staff over the phone, but this group only represents 9% of responses.
• **Nature of referral:** Secondly, the clients do not choose to come to Smart Works – they have essentially been instructed to attend by their referral partners – and so they may not necessarily be ‘bought into’ the service to begin with, and might be less likely to respond positively out of pure obligation and politeness. This might be particularly true for those clients who have not yet got a job and who might understandably be feeling deflated and frustrated. Even so, 86% still stated that Smart Works had increased their chances (58% a lot and 28% a little). On the other hand, data shows that the vast majority of clients do have a positive experience of the service itself, and so even those who have not yet had success may still respond positively primarily out of gratitude.

Overall, Smart Works’ clients themselves seem to believe that their current and future success can be attributed to Smart Works to some degree.

**Comparison data:** A full literature review, to identify large amounts of comparison data, was outside the scope of this evaluation. However, when comparing the 46% success rate of Smart Works to data from one of the most well-known employment interventions in the UK, the government’s Work Programme, it seems to compare favourably. For example, the latest national statistics released by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) show that approximately 17% of Work Programme participants are in work for at least six months after a year of being in the programme. The DWP expects that this rate would be approximately 11% in the absence of the Work Programme.

However, making this kind of comparison requires two strong caveats:

• **Length of follow-up:** Firstly, the Work Programme data requires that the person be in work for at least six months, whereas the Smart Works data only requires that they be in work for less than a month. However, following up at only one month also means Smart Works clients have less time to get the job in the first place, so on balance the 46% figure could feasibly increase if follow-up was later than month.

• **Comparability of populations:** Secondly, we cannot be sure that the two populations have similar employment prospects. Indeed, it seems likely that Smart Works participants have better prospects on average than Work Programme participants, though we cannot say this for sure, nor by exactly how much. We know, for example, that Work Programme participants are more likely to be male, white, and to have been out of work for longer. Interestingly, the success rate of Smart Works’ clients who have been unemployed for less than six months is almost identical to those who have been unemployed for more than five years (52.4% versus 51.4%, respectively), which suggests that prior length of unemployment may not be a significant factor in the Smart Works success rate being higher. However, we must interpret these figures with caution, as we cannot be sure that this similarity is not driven by other factors, or by randomness due to a small sample size (see the recommendations sub-section for suggestions on how to address this). It is also interesting to note that the Work Programme is in fact one of Smart Works’ biggest referrers, and the success rate for just that sub-sample of Smart Works clients is 52% - slightly higher than the average success rate of 46%, and much higher than the average Work Programme success rate of 17%. But again this comparison must be treated with caution: the 52% figure is based on a relatively small sample size and, more importantly, we know that by definition all Smart Works’ clients have already

---


secured an interview, which means they are already some distance along the journey to securing work.

On balance, there are strong caveats when directly comparing the Smart Works data with overall Work Programme data, not least that all Smart Works clients already have an interview secured. However, the Work Programme success rate can be useful as a more general benchmark, especially given that it is one of the main Smart Works referrers.

**Intermediate outcomes:** Finally, the data on intermediate outcomes generally paints a positive picture of Smart Works’ impact, which suggests that the service does make them more likely to succeed in interview. Smart Works’ Theory of Change argues that women will succeed in their interview if they: a) make a good first impression; b) maintain their confidence throughout the interview; and c) answer questions effectively. It was outside the scope of this evaluation to measure the clients’ interview performance directly; instead the evaluation measured clients’ own assessment of the outcomes that Smart Works believe will lead to these three outcomes: knowing how to answer questions effectively, being aware of their own strengths, having a better understanding of expectations of interview procedure and etiquette, feeling more valued and confident thanks to their new outfit, and ultimately believing that they can get the job. As per Appendix C, this retrospective quantitative data is not necessarily perfectly robust, but the **consistently positive responses do still give an indication that the Smart Works service prepared clients to perform better in their upcoming interview**, and that some of their subsequent success may therefore be attributable to the service rather than to other factors.

2. What is the clients’ experience of the service?

**Quick answer:** Clients have an extremely positive experience of the service overall, driven by their treatment by Smart Works staff and volunteers.

Data on clients’ experience of the service generally paints a very positive picture. As in the section above, the retrospective quantitative data is not necessarily the most robust, but it still gives an indication that **clients were generally very satisfied with how they were treated** (i.e. they felt respected and listened to, and were satisfied with their outfit). The qualitative data brings this to life in more detail, with a large number of responses to the open survey questions effusive in their praise of the Smart Works service and how it made them feel. This is particularly notable given that clients were simply asked if they had ‘**any comments about their experience**’ and were not prompted to focus on the positive. Furthermore, when they were prompted to focus specifically on the negative, they tended to still focus on the positive.

243 clients (87%) responded to the first open question about their experience, which means **we can be very confident that the responses are representative of the vast majority of Smart Works’ clients**. The fact that so many chose to respond to an optional question is an indication, in and of itself, that clients feel quite strongly overall about the service.

Still, it is important to be clear that having a positive experience of a service does not necessarily mean that the service will have achieved its desired outcomes – user satisfaction and impact are two different things. However, it is an explicit part of Smart Works’ Theory of Change that women feeling ‘fabulous’ gives them the shot of energy and confidence they need to get over the line in their upcoming interview and into employment. **This qualitative data actually provides very powerful evidence that the service does achieve the former**, which gives a good indication that it also contributes to the latter.
3. How could the experience and/or impact of the service be improved?

Quick answer: While the majority of clients say that the service does not need to be improved, tweaks could potentially be made to clothing options, interview sessions, and Smart Works’ approach to raising awareness of the service.

As per the results section, only 13% of clients (36) gave suggestions for improving the service (24% of the 56% who responded to question 19 on the survey). Similarly, only 13% mentioned not receiving an item of clothing or accessory they would have liked (26% of the 51% who responded to question 17 on the survey). This suggests that the majority of Smart Works’ clients do not think there are significant improvements to be made to the service. However, we can see some common themes among the 13% of clients who did make suggestions, and though a more detailed, face-to-face exploration was outside the scope of this evaluation, they have led us to make a few broad recommendations that are worth considering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A full process evaluation was outside the scope of this evaluation, which means that specific recommendations on service delivery are also beyond remit. However, based on the qualitative data that Smart Works collected as part of this evaluation, we can make some broad recommendations to review specific areas of service delivery, and maintain elements of the delivery about which clients were most positive.

In addition, based on working with the Smart Works team for five months to strengthen and build on their previous approach to evaluation, we can make a number of more specific recommendations about how to maintain and further enhance the organisation’s evaluation capability.

Recommendations for service delivery

According to client feedback, there are no significant improvements to be made to the service. However, there are some particular strengths to maintain, and a few areas that may be worth reviewing in more detail:

• **Maintain attitude of staff and volunteers:** Ensure that all new staff and volunteers exhibit the same welcoming, supportive, respectful and genuine attitude that so many clients mentioned in their feedback.

• **Maintain quality of clothing:** Take steps to ensure that the quality of clothing remains high even as you scale and therefore increase your demand for clothing.

• **Review service reach:** Review minority of client comments on service reach, and decide whether any corresponding changes to the service would be justified and beneficial (e.g. raising awareness about the availability of the service to more employment services, potentially extending awareness-raising to wider public advertisement of the service).

• **Review service information:** Review minority of client comments on the information they receive in advance of the service, and decide whether any corresponding changes would be justified and beneficial (e.g. providing clients with more detail on what to expect and how to locate the service on the day).

• **Review clothing options:** Review minority of client comments on clothing options, and decide whether any corresponding changes would be justified and beneficial (e.g. improving the
availability of different clothing sizes and items, asking clients about their clothing needs and size in advance of attending).

- **Offer additional interview skills support:** Review minority of client comments on offering additional time for extra support on improving their interview skills – either on the day, or as a follow-up to their interview, to provide feedback on what went well and what they should improve further.

**Recommendations for evaluation**

Smart Works has made good progress along its evidence journey during the course of this evaluation, not least thanks to their positive energy, commitment and willingness to learn. We encourage them to continue in this positive direction, in line with our key recommendations below (in approximate order of suggested sequencing):

- **Maintain survey use:** Continue to use the newly developed survey, and maintain its existing response rate by keeping all staff informed and engaged with the process.

- **Maintain follow-up text messages:** Continue to use the newly developed text message system to collect follow-up data for all clients. Consider switching to a different provider that can integrate with your database, to make further savings on labour costs.

- **Maintain follow-up calls:** Continue to try and phone those clients who do not respond to your texts, to maximize your response rate.

- **Increase response rate to follow-up question 2:** Ensure that follow-up question 2 is always being asked in follow-up calls and filled in on second dressing forms. Explain the importance of responding to both follow-up questions when saying goodbye to your clients in person. Continue to monitor the response rate to check that it is increasing accordingly.

- **Complete migration to new database:** Complete the data migration to the new database, transforming all past and future data into the correct format for the data analysis tool to work automatically.

- **Keep staff and volunteers engaged:** Share the findings of the analysis tool with the whole team regularly, to keep staff and volunteers engaged in the data collection process.

- **Review qualitative data:** Continue to review the wealth of qualitative data on a quarterly basis at least, to identify further potential improvements to the service, and to see if improvements that have been made have been met positively.

- **Support licensees to adopt evaluation:** Support your licensee sites to adopt the same tools and processes for collecting and analysing data, through face-to-face workshops, written guidance and ongoing remote support. Develop processes for remotely sharing data between sites, and discussing implications of data as a group.

- **Carry out literature review:** Perhaps with external support, carry out a more in-depth literature review to: a) identify learning from other services and evaluations that may inform and enhance the Smart Works Theory of Change and delivery; and b) identify more comparable secondary data on success rates for similar populations to Smart Works clients.

- **Carry out process evaluation:** Perhaps with external support, carry out a more in-depth process evaluation, with face-to-face interviews and/or focus groups with clients, to really refine the model and further improve its implementation. This would be particularly useful in ensuring that the service is faithfully replicated in the new licensee sites.
• **Acquire a suitable counterfactual:** With external support, perhaps from the Department for Work and Pensions and/or Job Centre Plus amongst others, carry out an evaluation that includes a comparison group (e.g. via randomisation or ‘propensity score matching’). This will give you stronger evidence that your clients’ positive outcomes are caused by Smart Works rather than other services or factors, and should increase your chances of attracting further funding to develop and scale.

• **Carry out regression analysis:** With external support, develop a regression model that can identify the key factors that increase your clients’ chances of getting a job, and that may influence your service delivery and/or the clients you target. Coupled with the larger sample size that you will naturally achieve over time, this would help to give a very accurate picture of how your clients’ success depends, for example, on their previous length of unemployment.
CONCLUSION

Overall, this evaluation gives a strong indication that the Smart Works service effectively increases its clients’ chances of getting a job. Approximately 46% of clients succeed in interview within a month of receiving the service, which compares favourably to somewhat comparable data from the government’s Work Programme (albeit with heavy caveats), and which most clients attribute to the Smart Works service to some degree.

We can be confident that these findings are representative of all clients who come to Smart Works London, owing to a follow-up response rate of 78%, which represents an impressive improvement from Smart Works thanks to their successful implementation of a new text message system. Most clients also report that their experience of the service is a very positive one, in line with Smart Works’ aim to give them the confidence and self-belief they need to secure employment.

A more robust evaluation design would be needed to confirm Smart Works’ impact with more certainty and accuracy, but the organisation is making very good progress along its evidence journey, especially given its size and stage of development. We recommend that Smart Works’ immediate focus should be on plans to successfully roll out the same evaluation process across licensee sites outside of London, and on using all of that data to maintain and potentially even increase its impact on all clients.
### APPENDIX A: BREAKDOWN OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, OUTCOMES/INDICATORS AND TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Indicator OR outcome (paraphrased from Theory of Change)</th>
<th>Measurement tool</th>
<th>Time of administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client background data</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Client survey (bespoke questions)</td>
<td>Immediately after receiving service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of jobs applied for since last employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of interviews since last employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the clients’ experience of the service?</td>
<td>Did client feel treated with respect?</td>
<td>Client survey (bespoke questions)</td>
<td>Immediately after receiving service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did client feel listened to?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did client receive suitable outfit?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Open question - qualitative]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research question</td>
<td>Indicator OR outcome (paraphrased from Theory of Change)</td>
<td>Measurement tool</td>
<td>Time of administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could the experience and/or impact of the service be improved?</td>
<td>[Open question - qualitative]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the impact of the Smart Works service on its clients?</td>
<td>Clients feel more confident due to new outfit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients are able to answer interview questions more effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients feel clearer about their strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients feel clearer about expectations at interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients feel more confident that they can get a job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients are more likely to get a job</td>
<td>Follow-up text message/phone call (bespoke questions)</td>
<td>Approximately four weeks after receiving service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: THE SMART WORKS SURVEY

Date: …………………

CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE – PART I

All the monitoring information collected by Smart Works is treated in confidence in line with the 1998 Data Protection Act.

Thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire. We are committed to providing the best service that we can, and the information from these questionnaires is so important in helping us to do that.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions – please just answer as honestly and accurately as you can.

If you have any queries whilst you are filling in the questionnaire, please just ask a member of staff.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: ………………………………………………………………………………………… Age: …………………

Post code: ……………………………………………… Borough: ………………………………………

Email: ……………………………………………… *Phone Number: …………………………………

*You may receive a text message or phonecall from us in 1 month, asking whether or not you got the job. We’d be extremely grateful if you are able to respond – it should take less than 60 seconds, will be vital in helping us to grow and improve the service, and will be followed up with further information on Smart Works and other useful services.

SECTION B: WORK INFORMATION

1. How long have you been unemployed? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)
   0-6 months □ 6 months - 1 year □ 1-3 years □ 3-5 years □ 5+ Years □

2. How many jobs have you applied for since you were last employed? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)
   0-10 □ 11-20 □ 21-50 □ 51-99 □ 100+ □

3. How many interviews have you had since you were last employed? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)
   0 □ 1-2 □ 3-5 □ 6-10 □ 10+ □
SECTION C: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

Smart Works is committed to equal opportunities. Part of this commitment involves ensuring our service reaches every section of the community. The information gathered in this form will be used for statistical purposes only and no individual will be identifiable from the information collected.

4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)

Yes ☐  No ☐  Prefer not to answer ☐

5. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
<th>Chinese or other ethnic group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>Black Caribbean</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>Other ethnic group (Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Other White</td>
<td>Any Other Black Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Prefer not to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Black Caribbean</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Black African</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Asian</td>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Other Mixed</td>
<td>Any Other Asian Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Are you a lone parent? (Please ✓ appropriate box below)

Yes ☐  No ☐  Prefer not to answer ☐

If you ticked ‘yes’, please respond to questions 17 and 18 below. Otherwise, please leave them blank.

7. Are your children living at home with you?

Yes ☐  No ☐  Prefer not to answer ☐

8. Number of children: ......................
Please fill in this part of the questionnaire after you have finished both of your sessions (dressing and interview).

**SECTION D: FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS**

*When answering the questions in this section, please think about how you are feeling right now, and whether or not that is different to how you have generally been feeling in the last couple of weeks. There is no right or wrong answer – please just respond as honestly as you can, by circling the appropriate answer.*

9. How confident does your new outfit make you feel?

| Much less confident than usual | A bit less confident than usual | About the same as usual | A bit more confident than usual | Much more confident than usual |

10. How well do you think you can answer interview questions?

| Much worse than usual | A bit worse than usual | About the same as usual | A bit better than usual | Much better than usual |

11. How clear do you feel about your own strengths, in terms of your skills and experience?

| Much less clear than usual | A bit less clear than usual | About the same as usual | A bit more clear than usual | Much more clear than usual |

12. How clear do you feel about what is expected of you at interview?

| Much less clear than usual | A bit less clear than usual | About the same as usual | A bit more clear than usual | Much more clear than usual |

13. How confident do you feel that you’ll succeed at your next interview?

| Much less confident than usual | A bit less confident than usual | About the same as usual | A bit more confident than usual | Much more confident than usual |
SECTION E: FEEDBACK ON SERVICE

Thinking about your experience today, please indicate (by circling the appropriate answer) to what extent you agree or disagree with the following three statements:

14. I was treated with respect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. I was listened to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. I received an outfit that is suitable for my interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. Was there any type of clothing or accessory that you didn’t receive, that you think you needed?

.................................................................................................................................................................................................
SECTION F: FINAL COMMENTS

18. Do you have any comments about your experience today?

19. Do you have any suggestions on how Smart Works could improve its service?
SECTION G: CONSENT

By completing this form, you will be providing your personal information to Smart Works, a registered UK charity. Unless otherwise specified, we will use your information anonymously for research, marketing or general administrative purposes. The choice to opt out of any use of your information is reserved. We will apply suitable measures to keep your information secure and confidential. By providing us with your information and signing this form, you are consenting to our use of your information in connection with the above purposes.

Signature: .................................................... Date: ......................................

Thank you very much for completing the Client Questionnaire.

We wish you the very best of luck with your interview.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY – TO BE FILLED IN BY INTERVIEW VOLUNTEER

Name: ............................................................ Company: ............................................................

Which areas did you work on with the client during the interview session? (Please ✓ all that apply)

☐ Answering interview questions effectively
☐ Identifying strengths, in terms of skills and experience
☐ Understanding what is expected at interview
APPENDIX C: FULL LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This appendix gives a more full exploration of the four limitations of the research, including steps taken to mitigate them.

No comparison group

No formal comparison group was used in the evaluation, and so we cannot be certain that any positive change in clients’ employment status can be attributed to Smart Works. The lack of comparison group is arguably particularly problematic when measuring this outcome, as the general assumption of pre-post designs (that the outcome would not have changed without the intervention) is particularly flawed. This is because unless a client is going to be unemployed for the rest of their lives, they are all on some positive trajectory towards getting a job through the passage of time alone – with Smart Works or without them. Therefore, the counterfactual for this particular outcome is always likely to be some positive change.

However, the evaluation has taken a number of steps to try and mitigate this limitation:

- **Direct attribution:** As part of the follow-up, clients are asked directly how coming to Smart Works affected their chances of getting the job. Though answers to this question are at risk of social desirability bias – clients responding nicely to someone because they have tried to help them – this risk is mitigated to some degree by two main factors: a) the question is often asked by automated text message, rather than face-to-face; b) the question is asked on a five-point scale, with as many negative choices as positive ones; and c) the clients may be less predisposed than normal towards responding positively out of obligation or politeness (see discussion section for more details).

- **Informal comparison data:** Although this evaluation does not include a formal comparison group, we have reviewed the literature to identify secondary data on success rates for populations that are as similar as possible to Smart Works’ client group. This data cannot be as robust as a formal comparison group, but it does provide some indication of what the counterfactual for Smart Works clients might be.

- **Triangulation with additional primary data:** Though not directly relating to attribution or the counterfactual, the Smart Works survey collected a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data on clients’ experience of the service and the impact on various intermediate outcomes. This data provides a thorough picture of the overall experience and impact of the service, which informally contributes to our best assessment of how much any change in outcome might be attributable to Smart Works.

Four-week follow-up data

Follow-up data was only collected at four weeks, and so says nothing about whether the job outcome was sustainable or whether the client was satisfied with the job. However, it was agreed early on in the evaluation that a four-week follow-up was the most appropriate approach for Smart Works, because job satisfaction and sustainability is outside the scope of Smart Works’ responsibilities to its clients. The service is explicitly designed to be a short, intense intervention that helps women to succeed in their upcoming interview(s). Smart Works has no control over what interviews the clients are going to, and the service is not designed to help clients think about their career path, so it would simply be inaccurate and inappropriate for the evaluation to measure anything more than whether or not the clients succeeded in their immediate upcoming interview(s).
Retrospective intermediate outcome data

A limitation of the intermediate outcome data is that it is not pre-post. All questions were asked at the end of the service, and are therefore subject to the limitations of: a) recall bias (can clients accurately recall how they felt before the service?); and b) social desirability bias. The first limitation is arguably mitigated by the fact that the intervention is only a few hours long. The second limitation is mitigated in a similar way to the second follow-up question, whereby questions are asked with a balanced five-point scale, and clients may not necessarily be predisposed towards social desirability bias. We also tried to mitigate this bias further by not referencing ‘Smart Works’ in the questions (see Appendix B for full copies of the tools). And while social desirability bias is still a meaningful limitation of this data, measuring the outcomes using pre-post questions ultimately did not seem appropriate given that: a) the intervention is so short, which would make pre-post questions feel somewhat artificial; and b) it is likely that clients are frustrated with endlessly filling in the paperwork associated with seeking employment, and the additional up front paperwork associated with baselining these outcomes may have made their experience of the Smart Works service less positive.

Measurement tools not validated

None of the measurement tools used in this evaluation were validated. All questions in the survey and at follow-up were developed bespoke for this project, which means they have not gone through the same rigorous testing for validity and reliability as validated tools. As alluded to above, the reason for not using validated tools for the intermediate outcomes is that pre-post questions were deemed to be inappropriate in the Smart Works context, and most validated tools are designed for pre-post collection. TSIP peer-reviewed all bespoke questions internally, and discussed them with Smart Works to try and maximise validity – i.e. to ensure that the questions measure the precise outcomes that Smart Works are trying to achieve. Smart Works also carried out a live pilot of the bespoke survey, and found that clients generally reported finding the questions clear and easy to understand. The most important question in the evaluation was the first follow-up question, on job outcome, which is arguably less likely to suffer from low validity or reliability, as whether or not someone got the job they were interviewing for is generally a straightforward concept that has little room for ambiguity.
APPENDIX D: BREAKDOWN OF FOLLOW-UP RESPONSES

The table below shows how many clients responded to follow-up question 1, as a percentage of total clients, broken down by type of follow-up (response rate). The second column shows the percentage of those clients who got the job (success rate).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow-up type</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
<th>Success rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Works calling client</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client calling Smart Works</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bottom row has a success rate of 94% because clients generally only call Smart Works to tell them they successfully got the job.

The response rate for follow-up question 2 was as follows (we have not broken this down by follow-up type):

- **Response rate (of clients who responded to question 1):** 60%

Of the 78% of clients who responded to follow-up question 2, only 60% of them then responded to question 2 (i.e. 47% of all clients). This was caused largely by teething problems with implementing a new follow-up data collection system during the evaluation. Some earlier clients who responded by phone were not asked the question at all, as the question had not been developed at that early stage in the evaluation. And some of the earlier text message follow-ups used wording that has since been found to be less effective at getting responses. These issues are being mitigated going forward, and while they may have skewed the data, there is not necessarily any reason to think that they would have done so in a significantly positive way. If anything, they may have skewed the data negatively, as the response rate was higher for clients who had not yet got a job.