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1 **Abstract**

2 Purpose: To explore the behavioural determinants of work-related welfare claimants' training
3 behaviours and to suggest ways to improve claimants' compliance with training referrals.

4 Design: Qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 Jobcentre Plus staff and training
5 providers, and 60 claimants. Claimants were sampled based on whether or not they had been
6 mandated to training and whether or not they subsequently participated. Along with general
7 findings, differences between these groups are highlighted.

8 Findings: Claimants' behaviours are affected by their capabilities, opportunities, and
9 motivations in interrelated ways. Training programmes should appreciate this to better ensure
10 claimants' completion of training programmes.

11 Originality: Whilst past papers have largely examined a limited number of factors that affect
12 claimants' training behaviours, this report offers a synchronised evaluation of all the
13 behavioural factors that affect claimants' training behaviours.

14 Keywords: Human Capital, Training, Employment, Behavioural Economics

15

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21 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627689/BI_and_training_-_Final_report.pdf
22

23

24 **Behavioural insights into benefits claimants' training.**

25 Skills Conditionality in Great Britain's benefits system aims to reinforce the responsibilities
26 of work-related benefits claimants (Oakley, 2014). This present research explores the barriers
27 and facilitators that affect whether claimants' attend the training programmes to which they
28 are referred. To offer a new perspective on this we use a behavioural framework called COM-
29 B (described further in the 'Theoretical Approach' section). The present research suggests
30 that while mandation may help some claimants complete training, other factors may need to
31 be considered. Indeed, to help more claimants complete training, a complex inter-play of their
32 capabilities, opportunities, and motivations must be holistically understood. To help job
33 advisors do this, nine trigger points that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of training
34 referrals are provided.

35

36 **Why skills training?**

37 The present research has a practical purpose; the value of referring benefits claimants
38 to training can only be realised if those claimants attend that training. Thus governments
39 should ensure that claimants are likely to attend the training to which they are referred.
40 Human capital theory supports such training (Becker, 1964; Kluve *et al.*, 2006). According to
41 this theory, unemployment may indicate that people's skills do not match those sought by
42 employers. Training that helps people gain desired skills raises their human capital and so
43 makes them more attractive to employers (Fugate *et al.*, 2004). Other more recent research
44 agrees that human capital is positively associated with people's job-search behaviour and re-
45 employment chances (McArdle *et al.*, 2007; Koen *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, implementing
46 training programmes for benefit claimants can be challenging, and their success is affected by
47 people's capabilities, opportunities, and motivations to engage (de Koning, 2005). Therefore,

48 in order to improve training programmes requires a more nuanced understanding of what
49 drives claimants to attend training.

50

51 **Theoretical approach**

52 This paper expands upon the existing literature on the barriers unemployed people
53 face in re-entering the labour market (cf. McQuaid and Lindsay, 2002, 2005; Lindsay, 2005;
54 McArdle et al, 2007; Koen et al, 2013). The present study's theoretical approach is guided by
55 the COM-B framework (Michie *et al.*, 2011; Tversky *et al.*, 1974; Thaler *et al.*, 2008). The
56 COM-B framework recognises that behaviour is part of an interacting system involving three
57 components: capability, opportunity, and motivation. Capability is defined as individuals'
58 psychological and physical abilities to engage in the target behaviour. Opportunity is defined
59 as the social and physical factors that lie outside the individual that make the target behaviour
60 possible or more probable. Motivation is defined as the brain processes that energise and
61 direct the target behaviour through automatic or reflective mechanisms (Michie *et al.*, 2011).
62 Once benefits claimants' capabilities, opportunities and motivations to attend training are
63 better understood, the government will be in a better position to enhance their attendance. In
64 this paper, however, we do not prescribe any interventions because selecting the appropriate
65 intervention requires one to consider the environment within which an intervention can be
66 successfully implemented. This task lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

67 The COM-B framework was used as a guiding theoretical approach because it unifies
68 a range of relevant factors posited by past research. For example, Fugate *et al.*'s (2004)
69 concepts of 'adaptability' and 'career identity' can be subsumed, respectively, under COM-
70 B's categories of capability and motivation. As another example, the barriers identified by
71 McQuaid and Lindsay (2002) can be mapped onto the COM-B framework, e.g., 'lack of basic
72 skills' maps onto capability, 'lack of transport' maps onto opportunity, and 'desires to take up

73 employment' maps onto motivation. Thus, the COM-B framework allows us to
74 simultaneously understand many behavioural factors affecting claimants' training behaviours.

75

76 Skills training and mandation in Great Britain.

77 The research took place in Great Britain where the current systems of benefit
78 conditionality have developed following a series of reforms carried out since the mid-1980s,
79 and recently the Jobseeker's (Back to Work Schemes) Act 2013 (Oakley, 2014). Skills
80 Conditionality was introduced in 2011 and as a result claimants can be mandated to
81 participate in training. Conditionality in the benefits system aims to serve as a means to
82 reinforce the responsibilities of benefit claimants to seek work and to participate in relevant
83 support. The sanctions system can apply financial penalties to claimants who do not meet
84 their obligations.

85 To receive work-related benefits claimants are required to meet with advisers in public
86 employment services, called Jobcentre Plus. Advisers use this meeting to construct
87 personalised 'Claimant Commitment' forms. The Claimant Commitment explicitly states the
88 actions a claimant must carryout in order to look for work and therefore to receive benefits.
89 The conditions on the form can be enforced via a system of sanctions, whereby benefits can
90 be restricted or withheld if agreed actions are not carried out. As part of this contract,
91 claimants can be mandated to skills training (Department of Work and Pensions, 2011). This
92 training ranges from courses teaching basic numeracy and literacy, employability skills,
93 courses to gain licenses such as forklift driving, to those to achieve Level 2 qualifications
94 (ISCED Level 2). These are the kind of human-capital enhancing activities that are referred
95 to generically as 'training' in the context of this paper.

96 The present research is concerned with the effectiveness of skills training referrals, both
97 when the referral is voluntary and when it is mandated and forms part of the claimant

98 commitment. In 2013, mandation to training was becoming increasingly common. In 2013,
99 advisers made 322,740 mandated referrals to skills training, although the number of referrals
100 has since fallen (Department for Work and Pensions, 2014). An analysis of Jobseeker's
101 Allowance sanctions data showed that sanctions for failure to participate in training or
102 employment programmes (including the Work Programme) were 226,000 in the year to June
103 2013, with around 10 per cent of sanctions related to failure to participate in a training
104 scheme or employment programme other than the Work Programme (Webster, 2014).
105 Sanctions tend to disproportionality effect vulnerable groups, such as non-native English
106 speakers or people with learning disabilities (Schram *et al.*, 2009; Oakley, 2014), and some
107 research suggests negatively affect claimants' future job entry and earnings (Mead, 2011).

108 Research examining whether mandation is effective is mixed. Some research suggests
109 that mandation can improve claimants' attendance at training, when it is used as a
110 clarification of expectations (Newton *et al.*, 2012; Oakley *et al.*, 2013). Other research is less
111 optimistic, suggesting that mandation has little effect on claimants' intentions and training
112 behaviours (Griggs and Evans, 2010; Dorsett *et al.*, 2011; Rolfe, 2012; Newton *et al.*, 2012;
113 Oakley *et al.*, 2013). Two studies found that mandation has no effect on training participation
114 rates (Dorsett *et al.*, 2011; Oakley *et al.*, 2013). This could be because mandation crowds out
115 any internal motivations claimants' have to develop skills (O'Grady, 2008; Hasluck and
116 Green, 2007; Malmberg-Heimonen and Vuori, 2005; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2010). Indeed,
117 the most successful training regimes are bolstered by matching individuals' internal
118 motivations with the training provisions available, not through the use of sanctions (Devin *et*
119 *al.*, 2011).

120 The issue of motivation is further highlighted by Johnson *et al.* (2008). They find that
121 financial incentives for young people are often less effective when they have access to
122 financial support from their families. Motivating young people to train often requires non-

123 financial incentives, such as the opportunity to meet new people or gain a skill that already
124 interests them. Similarly, claimants with independent incomes are also less sensitive to the
125 possibility of sanctions (Newton *et al.*, 2012). In summary, as mandation has proved
126 insufficient to ensure claimants' training, there is a good reason to look for other
127 mechanisms.

128 **Focus of the present research**

129 While the research described above has increased our understanding of many unique
130 factors that affect claimants' training behaviours, a comprehensive understanding of all the
131 factors affecting training behaviour is lacking. The present research fills this gap by offering
132 a holistic overview of all the behavioural determinants affecting claimants' training
133 behaviours. In addition, this work brings to light nine trigger moments that advisers can use
134 to increase claimants' training (Table 1). These nine triggers are surely not the only useful
135 moments, but rather represent a sizable group of tangible moments advisers can readily use to
136 increase claimants' attendance at training.

137

138 Table 1-----

139

140 **Methods and Materials**

141 Interviews about skills training were conducted with 20 Jobcentre Plus staff and
142 training providers, and 60 Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support
143 Allowance (ESA) claimants. Claimants were sampled based on whether or not they had been
144 mandated to training (i.e., mandated vs voluntary) and whether or not they subsequently
145 participated (i.e., trainer vs non-trainer). The data were analysed for differences between
146 these groups, and where differences emerged they are noted. The findings are organised using

147 the COM-B framework that was briefly described in the introduction of this paper (Michie *et*
148 *al.*, 2011).

149

150 **Results**

151 Our findings highlight that capability, opportunity and motivation all influenced
152 claimants' training behaviours. There is no suggestion that one component is more important
153 than another, nor is there any indication that any component is foundational. The findings
154 indicate that the most effective training programmes will simultaneously consider all these
155 factors. Each of these components are discussed in turn.

156

157 **Capability to train.**

158 Evidence suggests that recognising and enhancing claimants' capability will require
159 tailored responses from advisers. Three significant triggers related to capability are given in
160 Table 1. How claimants' training behaviours are affected by psychological and physical
161 capabilities are reviewed now.

162

163 Psychological capability.

164 Psychological capability factors identified by claimants are discussed below. Specific
165 attention is given to English, IT and job search skills.

166 *Qualifications, skills and experience.* Claimants had varied levels of qualifications,
167 skills, and experience. The chance to obtain qualifications was recognised as a trigger for
168 training (Table 1, Trigger 1). The majority of claimants had low or no qualifications and only
169 nine reported having qualifications at Level 3 or above. A few claimants held occupational
170 licences in sectors such as construction, transport, or security. Claimants had gained these
171 qualifications at school, college or university, while making a benefits claim, and through

172 previous paid or voluntary work experience. An example of a claimant who wanted
173 qualifications is provided below:

174 I wanted to basically grow with my education because obviously it wasn't that
175 good... I decided it was now or never basically to go and do the course.

176 (Julie, 25-49, Voluntary trainer)

177 Claimants who reported having a high level of skills did not necessarily have relevant
178 qualifications. For example, claimants with long work histories felt they had high levels of
179 skills, but were unable to demonstrate or signal them to potential employers because they did
180 not have a related "tangible qualification", but tended to see themselves as ready to take a
181 course to gain relevant qualifications.

182 Conversely some young claimants felt they had relevant qualifications, but not the
183 required experience to find work. These perceptions were shared by women returning to the
184 workforce after bringing up a family who had long gaps in their employment history. Overall,
185 these claimants tended to be confident in their ability to learn, but less so in how they could
186 apply this capability to find work.

187 Claimants' capability to conceptualise and discuss their qualifications, skills and
188 experiences varied. While some claimants were quite articulate, others struggled. An example
189 of a claimant who struggled is provided below:

190 if people say what skills have you got, I never know what to say and I don't
191 know what to say, you know, it's like... but like I can do maths and stuff, but I
192 never know whether to say that as a skill.

193 (Louise, 19-24, Voluntary non-trainer)

194 *English, maths, IT and job search skills.* When claimants lacked an identifiable job skill
195 there was commonly a desire to overcome it (Trigger 2). Generally, claimants felt that their
196 English and maths skills were sufficient for them to effectively job search, work, and learn.

197 Only three claimants perceived that they lacked basic English skills. One recalled having a
198 test of his English and maths skills during a previous period claiming benefits, which
199 highlighted their skills deficits in these areas, but was not offered any training at the time.
200 Another recalled their lack of English skills being a major barrier to their ability to participate
201 in an IT course:

202 I can't read the computers so and I was spending my day sitting on a computer
203 looking for jobs that I couldn't read anyway and there wasn't anybody there to
204 help.

(Annie, 25-49, Voluntary non-trainer)

206 Several claimants expressed deficiencies in IT skills. Some older claimants were unable
207 to turn on a computer, use the internet, or send an email. This deficiency severely limited the
208 effectiveness of their job search. Some described overcoming this barrier with the help from
209 friends, family, or the National Careers Service to create a CV or complete an online
210 application.

211

212 Physical capability.

213 Some claimants reported having a health condition or physical/learning disability that
214 limited the kind of work they could do. The most common way that health influenced
215 claimants' training behaviour was as a positive trigger for retraining (Trigger 3). Several
216 claimants had lost their most recent job due to ill-health, including a driver who had a stroke,
217 a manual worker who developed a heart condition, and a hairdresser who developed a
218 musculoskeletal condition. These health issues now meant that doing their previous job was
219 no longer possible, and they were often eager to train for new work. For example:

220 I had to retrain in something that wasn't going to be a physical job... While the
221 last three years I was self-employed I basically did the majority of my accounts

222 myself anyway. My accountant was hardly charging me anything because she
223 basically said to me you're doing most of the work yourself and because I was
224 doing that I thought I'm going to try and do this as a full time career.

225 (Dean, 25-49, Voluntary trainer)

226 Only a small number of claimants thought their health condition would affect their
227 capability to learn and training providers sometimes adjusted provisions to ensure
228 accessibility. For example, one training provider had enabled a claimant to work flexibly
229 towards the qualification, by splitting her learning time between the provider's office and her
230 home.

231

232 **Opportunity to train.**

233 Opportunity affects claimants' training behaviours. Three significant triggers related
234 to opportunity are given in Table 1. Unquestionably there is a balance to be struck between
235 being able to meet all claimants' training requirements, course availability, and the funding
236 availability. Doing this is no simple matter. How claimants' training behaviours are affected
237 by social and physical opportunities are reviewed below.

238

239 Social opportunities.

240 Two social opportunities that affected training behaviour were identified; the support
241 provided by family and peers and claimants' awareness of training opportunities.

242 *Sources of support.* Claimants' training behaviours were largely affected by their
243 family, friends, and the welfare system. Where family and friends were supportive, such
244 could be used by advisors to support claimants' training (Trigger 4). Family and friends often
245 played a positive role in claimants' training decisions by providing emotional support and
246 encouragement.

247 Claimant views of the welfare system were mixed. On the positive side, one claimant
248 felt the transactional nature of their benefits claim meant that it was perfectly reasonable that
249 they should be expected they work for their benefits. This claimant said that:

250 It's like if you want wages you have to work... I treated the course the exact same way.
251 It was a necessary part of the system.

252 (Kevin, 50+, Level 3 and above, Mandated trainer)

253 Other claimants were less positive. One of these claimants had over 40 years of work
254 experience alongside a Master's degree. He stated that staff focused on offering support to
255 their largest demographic, which he saw as individuals with low-skill sets and/or a lack of
256 work experience who staff were able to offer beneficial training and support to and thereby,
257 "get a good return on" their investment.

258 *Awareness.* Understanding of training opportunities varied between claimants because
259 they used different methods to find information. The following text describes staff and
260 training providers' approaches to raising claimants' awareness of training opportunities and
261 then claimants' awareness.

262 Jobcentre Plus staff reported that their main way of informing claimants about training
263 opportunities was through job adviser interviews. They believed that claimants who had a
264 good relationship with their advisers were more receptive and attentive to this information.
265 This belief is supported by the below claimant's comment:

266 Well [the training course] kind of came up in conversations you know. Because
267 you take your CV in and they kind of look it over sort of thing and sort of ask you

268 if you are happy with it and, well, if I can do anything to help and look for
269 courses that way.

270 (Neil, 19-24, Mandated trainer)

271 Some training providers undertook regular visits to local Jobcentre Plus offices to talk
272 to claimants and distribute brochures to generate awareness and interest in the courses they
273 offered. In some districts, training providers offered ‘taster’ sessions for particular courses.

274 Claimants’ awareness of training opportunities had been acquired through formal and
275 informal sources. In agreement with staff and training providers, several claimants discussed
276 becoming aware of training opportunities through discussions with them or at taster sessions.
277 Claimants found these discussions most helpful when staff were engaging and explicitly
278 stated the connection between the training opportunity and their goals (Trigger 5). Claimants
279 found such discussions less effective when staff members were simply checking whether the
280 claimants were fulfilling requirements for benefits. Some claimants stated that the only time
281 their adviser discussed training was to inform them that they were being referred to a
282 particular course. These claimants felt that they were being mandated to training without
283 considering their interests or needs.

284 The main difference between how voluntary and mandated trainers developed their
285 awareness of training opportunities was that voluntary trainers actively sought out and asked
286 staff for advice. Several of the voluntary trainers commented that they had searched for
287 suitable courses on the internet, or heard about courses from their family and friends.
288 Mandated trainers were more passive, depending on their adviser or information distributed
289 by the training providers to make them aware of training opportunities. One of the mandated
290 non-trainers comments are below:

291 I didn't know what training there were [...] I wasn't given nothing to say you've
292 got all these training options that you can go for, if you want to learn this or that

293 skill. It was just what they put to me when I went in. I wasn't given no document
294 to say here look through these, see if any of these skills that you'd be interested
295 in.

296 (Jared, 25-49, Mandated non-trainer)

297 Physical opportunities.

298 Two main types of physical opportunities affected training behaviour: the nature of the
299 learning provision and the supporting infrastructure.

300 *Nature of the learning provision.* Jobcentre Plus advisers made clear they are not
301 primarily concerned with matching training opportunities to claimants' long-term career
302 goals. Rather, training referrals are made on the basis of which courses will move the
303 claimant closer to viable employment. One member of staff stated that advisers now
304 concentrate on educating claimants "*about what's actually out there and what opportunities*
305 *they can take advantage of*".

306 Staff cited four factors that affect advisers' training referrals. (1) An adviser's
307 knowledge of courses that will address claimants' skill requirements. (2) How soon courses
308 start, as sooner start dates avoid prolonged periods of inactivity. (3) Whether the training
309 provisions already have an agreement with the centre, as such provisions make for an easier
310 referral process. (4) Whether upcoming courses have a sufficient number of attendees, to
311 ensure class sizes are sufficiently large to make the delivery of training cost effective.

312 Staff thought their centres offered a good variety of courses, typically short in duration
313 and available year-round. Courses were available in the areas of English, maths, and IT.
314 Additionally, vocational training available included courses in healthcare, social care,
315 construction, warehousing, logistics, forklift driving, hospitality and catering. Employability
316 courses provided advice on CV writing, interviewing skills, searching for jobs online, and
317 developing soft-skills, e.g., confidence, team-building and self-organisation.

318 Jobcentre Plus districts undertook formal gap analyses of learning provision each year.
319 ESOL courses were in high demand, but such courses were limited in number with irregular
320 start dates. This created a backlog of claimants waiting to begin ESOL training. Another gap
321 commonly identified was a lack of intensive, long-term English and maths training. These
322 courses were often seen as being too short in duration.

323 Some claimants felt that their Jobcentre Plus had a limited range of training provisions.
324 One claimant expressed that this lack of provision could explain why an IT training course
325 was overbooked (25 learners but only 15 computers at the first session). Another claimant
326 expressed being unable to undertake a desired security training because there were no
327 upcoming start dates for such courses.

328 While some claimants referred to training had a positive view of their course, negative
329 views were more common. Some claimants expressed frustrations with course durations,
330 which was sometimes too long or too short. Other claimants felt that the course level was not
331 appropriate. This is a problem where those who attend training are not building their human
332 capital to become more employable. One claimant's dissatisfaction with the course level is
333 given below:

334 On Jobseeker's you don't get the opportunity to do things other than what I call
335 basic stuff - maths, English and computers - which for someone like myself it's
336 ok but it's not really very beneficial for anything that I could move onto. It's
337 pointless really actually for me.

338 (Yvonne, 25-49, Voluntary trainer)

339 Other physical barriers to training included access. Some claimants had concerns
340 regarding their need to travel on busy public transport and to arrive at the training provider at
341 a specified time, usually early in the morning. Childcare responsibilities added greatly to this
342 pressure, and women whose children were entering school tended to be more willing to take

343 up training (Trigger 6). Training providers with on-site childcare facilities were helpful in
344 enabling claimants with younger children to participate in training. The location of the
345 training was also important for some claimants who stated that they would not be able to
346 afford any travel costs associated with training.

347 *Supporting infrastructure.* Staff were asked to detail the funding arrangements
348 available to support claimants referred to training. Limited Flexible Support Funds exist for
349 Jobcentre Plus to help fund the costs of claimants' training. The Flexible Support Fund
350 claims are assessed and approved on an individual bases by a senior manager. This manager
351 identifies the most cost-effective option and advises claimants of the support they are willing
352 to fund. This typically involves paying for any associated travel expenses and sometimes
353 childcare costs.

354 Most claimants expressed satisfaction with the funding arrangements in place.
355 However, a few claimants found the reimbursement process difficult. In some cases,
356 claimants had to pay upfront costs and subsequently provide proof of purchase to their
357 adviser before being reimbursed. One claimant had waited two weeks to have the bus fares
358 reimbursed and so feared being unable to afford to continue training.

359

360 **Motivation to train.**

361 Motivation affects claimants' training behaviours. Three triggers related to motivation
362 are given in Table 1. Generally, claimants were particularly motivated when they self-
363 referred to training; but, training suggested by advisors was more likely to be complied with
364 when it is accompanied with open discussion and flexible policies. How claimants' training
365 behaviours are affected by automatic and reflective motivations are reviewed below.

366

367 Automatic motivations.

368 As automatic mechanisms are largely unconscious, they are difficult for interviewees
369 to report. To help researchers recognise their interviewees' automatic motivations,
370 interviewees' responses can be coded using the constructs in MINDSPACE (Dolan *et al.*,
371 2010). MINDSPACE is a comprehensive framework that focuses on how automatic
372 motivations can be applied to public policy. MINDSPACE itself is an acronym where in each
373 letter represents a construct related to automatic motivation, the letters stand for: Messenger,
374 Incentives, Norms, Default, Salience, Priming, Affect, Commitment, and Ego.

375 *Messenger.* Messenger describes that valued sources of information are more likely to
376 influence behaviours than less-valued sources. Voluntary trainers reported that their family
377 and friends were the most important messengers, in contrast, the majority of mandated
378 trainers found their adviser to be the most important messenger.

379 *Incentives.* An incentive is an internal or external gain and loss that motivates action
380 from a reference point. Sanctions are a type of disincentive. Threats of sanctions sometimes
381 put a shadow over training that was viewed as positive. Some claimants reported not asking
382 for training because they were concerned about of the sanctions they might incur if they were
383 unable to attend or complete it.

384 The reference points from which claimants assessed the value of the training seemed to
385 affect their perceptions. Those who knew the training would be quite expensive to them if
386 they were not claiming benefits saw training as a good deal. One claimant commented:

387 if you were working and you went to do an IT course, you'd be paying £300 to do
388 an Excel course, or something like that. So for me, I just thought, I'll get as much
389 training as I can, you know, because it's beneficial for me and it's free.

390 (Bridget, 25-49, Mandated non-trainer)

391 *Norms/Defaults.* People are strongly influenced by what they perceive others to be
392 doing (i.e. social norms). Claimants generally viewed the threat of sanctions on other

393 people's training behaviour as negative, because their use instilled a negative attitude towards
394 training, even among people who were principally positively inclined. There was therefore a
395 norm understood that claimants may not want to attend mandated training. The concept of
396 norms is closely related to defaults, selecting a default option often maintains the status quo.
397 Many claimants did just that when they complied with what their advisers' first training
398 referrals (i.e., defaults). They spoke of doing this without question because of the threat of
399 sanctions, even when the course was not relevant to their goals. One mandated trainer
400 recounted that her adviser said she had to go to training or "I wouldn't get the money. So I
401 had to go".

402 *Saliency.* Saliency describes that people's attention is drawn to what is novel or seems
403 most relevant. By far the most salient factor that made a course appealing was the relevance
404 of the course to the claimant's goals. The prospect of gaining a qualification or certificate that
405 would demonstrate the skills gained was highly valued. Claimants would not consider a
406 course if they thought it was too basic or non-essential to obtain their goals.

407 *Priming.* Priming describe that people's actions are often influenced by sub-conscious
408 cues. Whether priming affected training behaviour is not clear. It is possible that family
409 expectations may have this type of influence. For example, compliance with expectations was
410 shown in general decision making about training in some cases, for instance going to
411 university after A-levels because "that's what you did".

412 *Affect.* Affect describes that people's emotional associations can powerfully shape their
413 actions. Looking at the influence of affect, many respondents reported positive experiences of
414 past learning. Closely connected to this was the feeling of achievement. Gaining
415 qualifications improved several claimants' confidence. Conversely, there were several
416 examples from claimants with negative learning experiences that might have caused them to
417 avoid training. A young mother had attempted to go back to school to finish her education but

418 found it too difficult to attend due to her childcare responsibilities. This experience negatively
419 affected her attitude towards education.

420 *Commitment.* Commitment notes that people seek to be consistent with their public
421 promises. The Claimant Commitment form is a type of commitment used to increase
422 claimants' training compliance and may be a good moment to suggest a particular training
423 course (Trigger 7). Claimants who had chosen the training they were referred to expressed
424 greater commitment than those who did not. Having a good training experience also
425 increased claimants' commitment and in some cases claimants tried to increase the hours they
426 trained because they enjoyed it so much.

427 *Ego.* Ego describes that people act in ways that make them feel better about themselves.
428 Claimants who had been out of education for a long time expressed some anxiety, because
429 they were uncertain whether they would cope with course content or fit in a particular
430 learning environment. How one claimant initially felt about training is given below:

431 Nervous. Exactly how I felt when I went to like college and that, because obviously,
432 you don't know what they expect. Obviously, but when I went, I felt relaxed because it
433 was other people in the same situation as me, that have got children and have been out
434 of education for a while and all of that. So it was nice and the tutors made me feel
435 relaxed as well. So that was even nicer.

436 (Julie, 25-49, Voluntary trainer)

437

438 Reflective motivations.

439 The findings suggest several reflective motivations that affect training behaviour,
440 including claimants' perception of their ability to learn, evaluations of training and
441 experiences with mandation.

442 *Claimant's perception of their ability to learn.* Claimants' previous learning
443 experience tended to instil a belief in their capability to learn. For example, one claimant said,
444 "you can never stop learning". Other claimants remained doubtful about their capability to
445 learn, questioning whether they would receive sufficient support and whether their health
446 would be good enough. One claimant said that:

447 I had difficulty with it... so at the time when I had a problem I just didn't do it; I
448 think I'd gloss over it and move onto something else.

449 (Kirk, 25-49, Mandated trainer)

450 *Evaluations of training.* Claimants' previous experiences in training affected their
451 motivations to continue or receive additional training. Claimants who had more positive
452 experiences said their advisers had engaged them in conversation assessing their employment
453 history, skills gaps, support needs, and goals before suggesting a training course to them.
454 Such claimants were generally more excited about future training opportunities (Trigger 8).
455 Other claimants reported negative experiences. Some had been referred to a course without
456 expressing interest in it or without staff providing an adequate explanation about how the
457 programme was relevant to their goals. These claimants commonly thought advisers were
458 simply concerned more with sanctioning claimants than with whether they found quality
459 work. Another view was that staff only made referrals to training in order to hit internal
460 targets filling training courses.

461 *Mandation.* Staff and claimants' reflections on mandation are discussed in turn.
462 Jobcentre Plus staff reported reasons why advisers mandated claimants to training. The main
463 reason was that a clear skills gap had been identified that needed to be resolved. Lastly, staff
464 reported being more likely to mandate claimants to training when claimants did not appear
465 committed, and mandation was particularly likely when claimants had a history of failing to
466 attend training (Trigger 9).

467 Staff reported that many claimants were compliant and committed to training regardless
468 of mandation while others reacted negatively. Claimants' reactions to mandation were felt to
469 be affected by at least four factors. First, the clarity with which staff explained their
470 expectations of the claimant. Second, whether advisers explained why the course would be
471 valuable to the claimant. Third, whether the claimant recognised that training was valuable.
472 Fourth, individual differences meaning that some claimants were more naturally defensive
473 and dismissive about mandating than others. One member of staff stated that, "some
474 customers don't like the idea of attending training if it is compulsory".

475 Claimants were generally aware that mandation existed. They expressed no concerns
476 with being mandated so long as the training was relevant to their goals. In fact, some
477 claimants equated training with work and appreciated the money that was spent on them to
478 improve their skills. Other claimants expressed worry, fear, anxiety and stress in connection
479 with mandation. Training to which claimants were mandated became associated with the
480 possibility of losing money. Claimants with no experience of sanctions frequently expressed
481 concern they were doing something wrong. Among claimants who had experienced sanctions
482 as a result of not attending training, some expressed bewilderment because these
483 repercussions had not been made clear to them and they did not understand why their benefits
484 had been affected.

485 Some claimants perceived that training providers used sanctioning as a threat and
486 where this was the case felt that this undermined a provider's credibility and cast
487 doubts over the quality of their course. One claimant expressed that:

488 [the trainer] said it every couple of minutes... 'if you mess about here, we'll
489 phone up the Jobcentre and we'll stop your money.' [the trainer] was always
490 claiming to phone the Jobcentre.

491 (Annie, 25-40, Voluntary non-trainer)

516 opportunity, and motivation all influenced claimants' decision making and training
517 behaviour, see Figure 1. It is important to remember that these components are interrelated.
518 For instance, understanding claimants' capability was central to determining an appropriate
519 training opportunity, and having an appropriate training opportunity was critical to increasing
520 motivation.

521 Figure 1-----

522 The three components affecting behaviour are multifaceted and different aspects of
523 the same dimension may influence claimant decision-making either positively or negatively.
524 For example, examining the dimension of opportunity, an advisors' training referral may be
525 received positively if the claimant perceived that the training opportunity as a relevant match
526 to their employment goals, and was at an appropriate level. However, the same referral could
527 be negatively received if a claimant is reluctant to travel across the city to attend the training.
528 Further, some elements of a dimension may override others in decision-making. In the
529 example above, the claimant could either decide that the negative of a long journey is
530 outweighed by the potential benefits of the opportunity to further their employment goals, or
531 this negative could undermine the other positive factors and create a barrier, meaning they do
532 not attend the training. Equally, the strength of some dimensions may override any perceived
533 negative aspects of others.

534 Mandation is a dimension of motivation. Mandation may not positively affect training
535 behaviour where other influences affect training more negatively; for instance, when
536 transportation or childcare services are unavailable. Thus, where mandation is used an adviser
537 should be sure that the training opportunity is a good match to the individual; otherwise
538 mandation to training can create a sense of disillusionment with training. This corroborates
539 previous research that emphasises how mandation in itself is insufficient, if the kind of

540 training provision available is not of sufficient quality or able to match with the jobseekers'
541 inclinations and long-term goals (e.g. Dorsett *et al.*, 2011; Devin *et al.*, 2011).

542 The balance between capability, opportunity and motivation is delicate and will
543 depend on each claimant's circumstances. A change in the factors affecting one dimension
544 can influence another, and ultimately change behaviour. For example, increasing a claimant's
545 awareness and understanding of the support available in training courses, could increase
546 confidence in their capability and in turn increase the likelihood they will attend training.

547 The paper has clarified and illustrated some connections between the COM-B
548 components and human capital theory. Most directly human capital theory is about people's
549 capability to perform a job (Kluver, 2006). An employer often has no desire to hire an
550 employee who will cost them more money to train than that employee can produce (in
551 output). Training can provide unemployed people with the opportunity to gain the skills
552 employers need. When the labour supply is large, employers are less willing to invest in
553 general job training and so people may depend on the state to provide them with the
554 opportunity to train (Becker, 1965). Human capital theory, consistently with the papers'
555 findings highlighted through the COM-B framework, shows that for training to engage its
556 target group of participants, it needs to align very clearly with individual career goals to
557 ensure that the principle of motivation is fulfilled. This can be difficult to achieve in a climate
558 of constrained government spending and in tension with employment policy priorities of the
559 'work first' to tackling unemployment.

560 Our findings also expand upon the findings of previous research on drivers and barriers
561 to the employability of unemployed individuals (McQuaid and Lindsey 2002; McArdle *et al.*
562 2007; Koen *et al.* 2013) by showing the complex interplay between subjective and objective
563 factors in determining claimants' behaviour and hence the effectiveness of activation
564 interventions.

565 Matching claimants to appropriate training opportunities and generating motivation
566 requires an in-depth understanding of each claimant's skills, experiences and goals, as well as
567 an understanding of the local labour market. This process takes time. Some claimants were
568 able to analyse this by themselves and self-refer to training. Others will lack an understanding
569 of one or more of the dimensions above which may prevent them from training. In these
570 circumstances, claimant decision-making about training will likely require more support from
571 Jobcentre Plus staff. Overall, the findings of this paper suggest that mandation to training
572 cannot by itself increase compliance with training or facilitate the acquisition of human
573 capital on part of claimants, if the complex barriers and factors that shape claimants' training
574 behaviour are also not taken into consideration.

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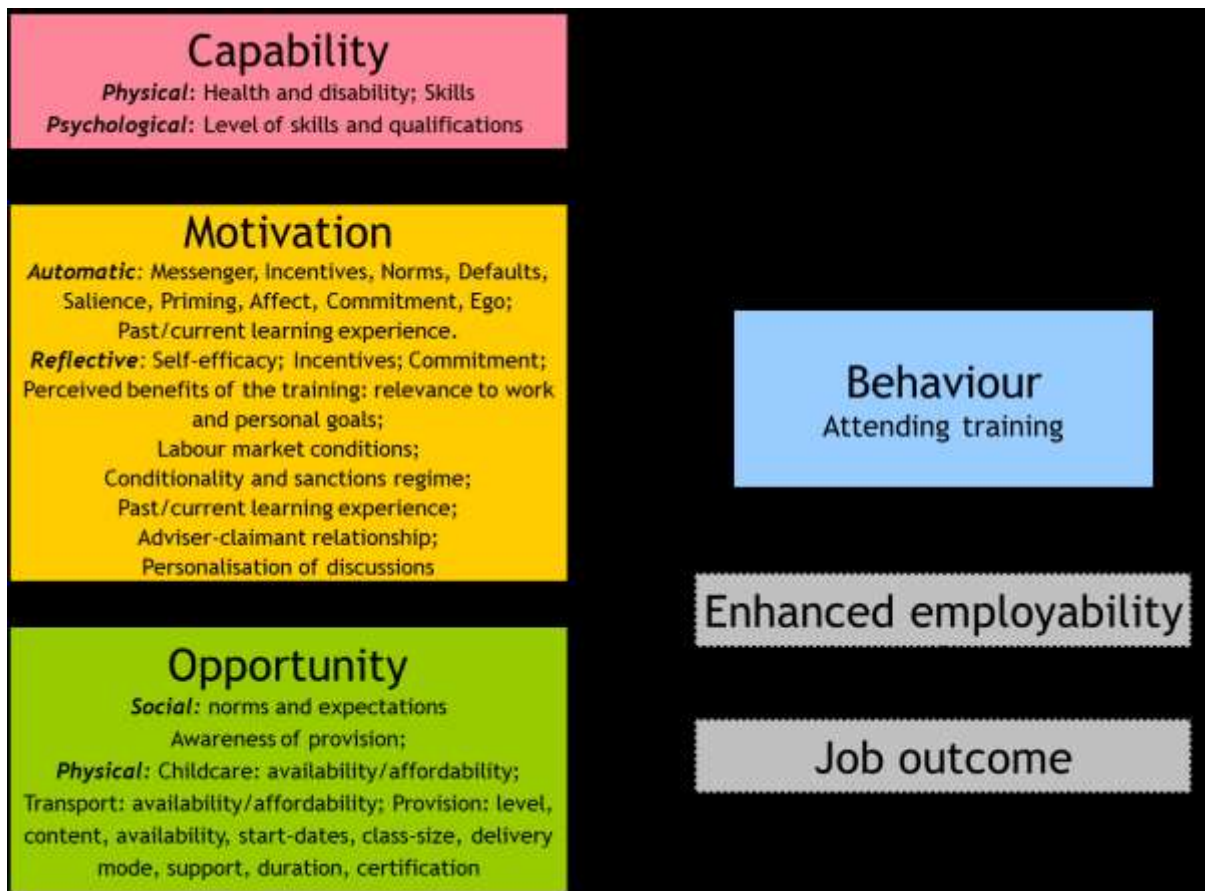
698 Table 1.

699 *Triggers for training related to each COM-B component.*

COM-B Component	Triggers arising from this research that suggest claimants will be most receptive to training referrals.
Capability	<p data-bbox="523 456 608 488">When:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 495 1374 566">1. claimants lack a relevant qualification, selecting a course to help them gain that qualification may encourage their training. <li data-bbox="523 602 1358 710">2. claimants lack a basic identified skill (e.g., English or IT), selecting a course to help them gain that skill may encourage their training <li data-bbox="523 745 1358 891">3. claimants experience a change in their circumstance that no longer allows them to work in their former career, selecting a course to help them gain qualification to assist this transition may encourage their training.
Opportunity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 936 1382 1003">4. family and friends are optimistic about the claimant training, pointing out their optimism may encourage claimants' training <li data-bbox="523 1039 1358 1146">5. claimants state their career goals, making claimants aware of training opportunities that are match their goal(s) may encourage their training <li data-bbox="523 1182 1382 1294">6. claimants experienced a change in their personal circumstances that make training easier (e.g., a child entering school), this may be a fruitful time to suggest training.
Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 1339 1366 1485">7. creating the Claimant Commitment form, engaging claimants in a high quality discussion about what training courses are relevant to their goals and why training is necessary may encourage their training <li data-bbox="523 1520 1366 1628">8. claimants have a positive training experience, they may be eager to experience more training and so this is a fruitful time to present another training opportunity <li data-bbox="523 1664 1286 1774">9. claimants commitment levels are not high or they have previously failed to comply with training referrals, then mandating training may be effective

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701 Figure 1: Factors affecting benefit claimants’ training behaviour (source: Gloster et al, 2017
 702 adopted from Michie, 2011)



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