



Office for
National Statistics

Alex Nolan

Senior Researcher

Topic:

Labour Market questionnaire

User centred design approach:

- Designing with data
- Mental models

Overview

- Background of the Labour Force Survey and early work
- Design principles
- Question design examples
- Some quantitative validation
- Questions

Labour Force Survey: background

- More than 200,000 people a year take part, making the LFS the UK's largest regular survey
- Started in 1973 Telephone in 1984
- Data used by the Bank of England
- 1984 introduction of a boost survey (~60,000 HH), and a quarterly survey – wave structure still used today
- Was almost exclusively about work and looking for work...
- Today, it covers health, qualifications, social-mobility, national well-being, benefit entitlement, and earnings
- It is long! ~ 600 variables & household enumeration
- First cognitive interviews in 2005

	HOH(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FOR PERSONS BORN 1960 OR LATER RING CODE 5 OPPOSITE AND END INTERVIEW.....	5	5	5	5	5
6.What is () USUAL SITUATION as regards employment: Are you/Is ()					
<i>PROMPT</i> AS NECESSARY					
In paid employment, or self employed.....	1	1	1	1	1
Unemployed actively seeking work...	3	3	3	3	3
A full time student.....	4	4	4	4	4
Retired, pensioned (include permanently sick and disabled)....	6	6	6	6	6
A Housewife (IF NONE OF ABOVE)....	7	7	7	7	7
Other?..... (SPECIFY)→	8	8	8	8	8



How the LFS has been put together...



Moving Online

- Government strategy: ‘Digital by default’
 - Timely
 - Cost saving
 - Future plans for mixed-mode collection

Early design work

- Electronic data collection programme 2012-2014
 - Take the survey and put it online unchanged
 - Respondents had a lot of trouble self-completing
 - Essnet recommendations to optimize for mode

Now: Transformation, not translation!

Radical redesign: strip back to the output requirements
and design the online mode first!

What?

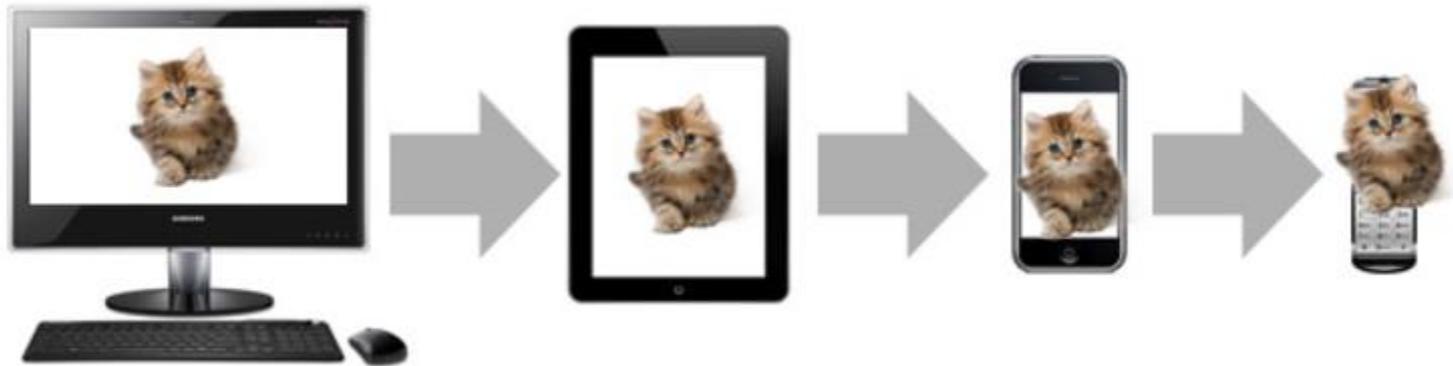
- Changes to survey content (cut down, rationalise)
- Changes to questionnaire flow (more relevant)
- Changes to questions (simplify)

How?

- Design principles
 - Question design mobile focussed
 - Questionnaire design respondent focussed
- Agile and iterative development
- Focus group with interviewers
- Designing from data
- Non-survey data

Design for mobiles!

Graceful Degradation

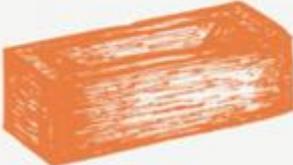


Progressive Enhancement

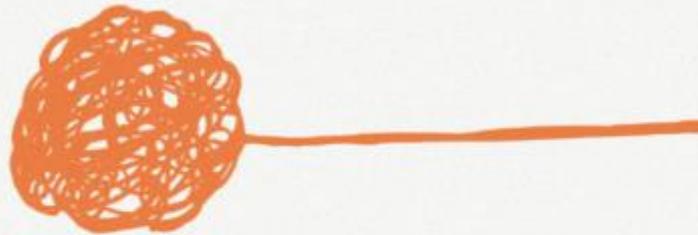


Image credit: [Beacon](#)

GOV.UK – GDS design principles

<p>1</p>  <p>START WITH NEEDS USER NEEDS, NOT GOVERNMENT NEEDS</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>2</p>  <p>DO LESS</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>3</p>  <p>DESIGN WITH DATA</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>4</p>  <p>DO THE HARD WORK TO MAKE IT SIMPLE</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>5</p>  <p>ITERATE. THEN ITERATE AGAIN</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>
<p>6</p>  <p>THIS IS FOR EVERYONE</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>7</p>  <p>UNDERSTAND CONTEXT</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>8</p>  <p>BUILD DIGITAL SERVICES NOT WEBSITES</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>9</p>  <p>BE CONSISTENT NOT UNIFORM</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>	<p>10</p>  <p>MAKE THINGS OPEN IT MAKES THINGS BETTER</p> <p><small>Design principles Government Digital Service</small></p>

4



DO THE HARD WORK TO MAKE IT SIMPLE

Design
principles
Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gov.uk/designprinciples

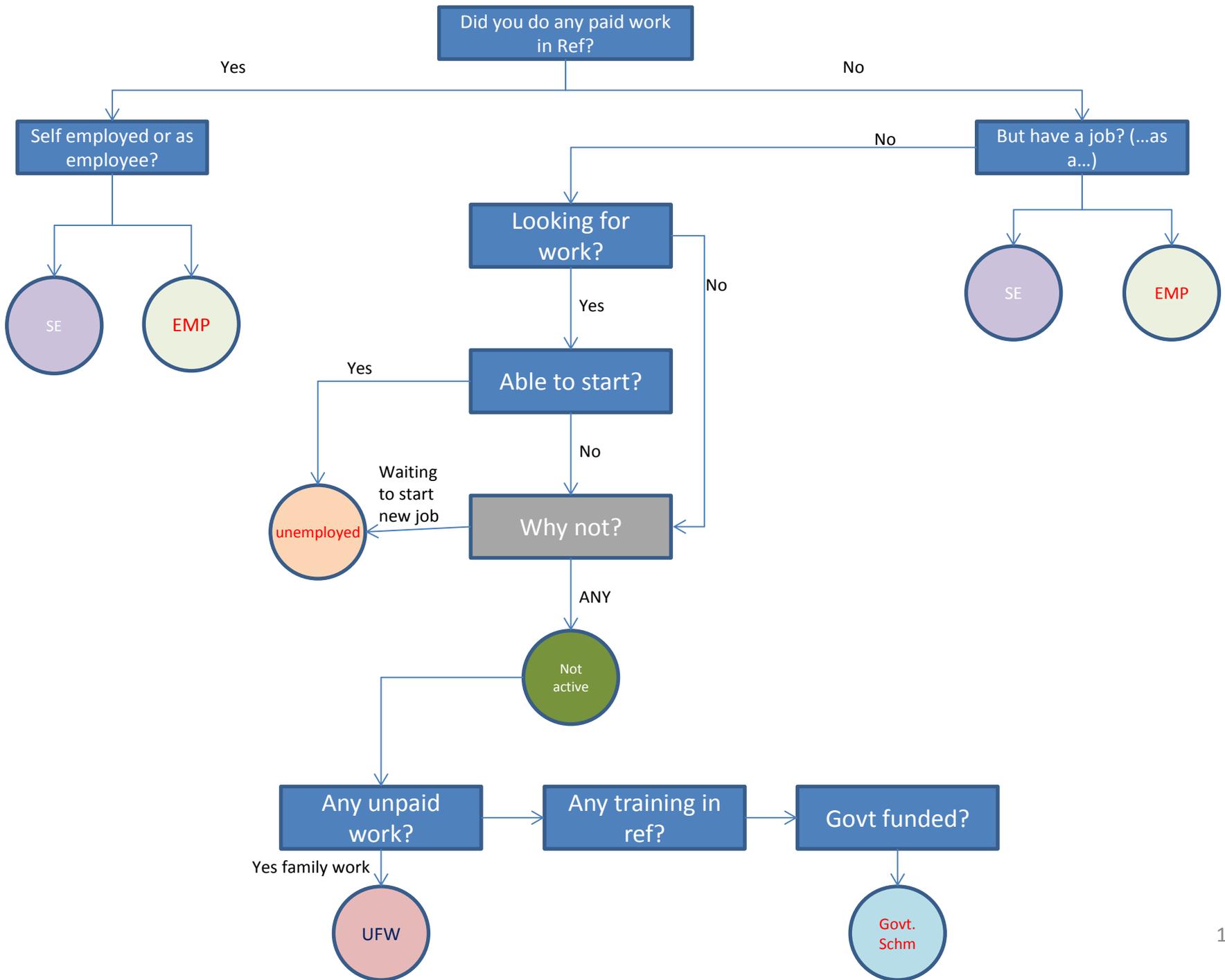
3

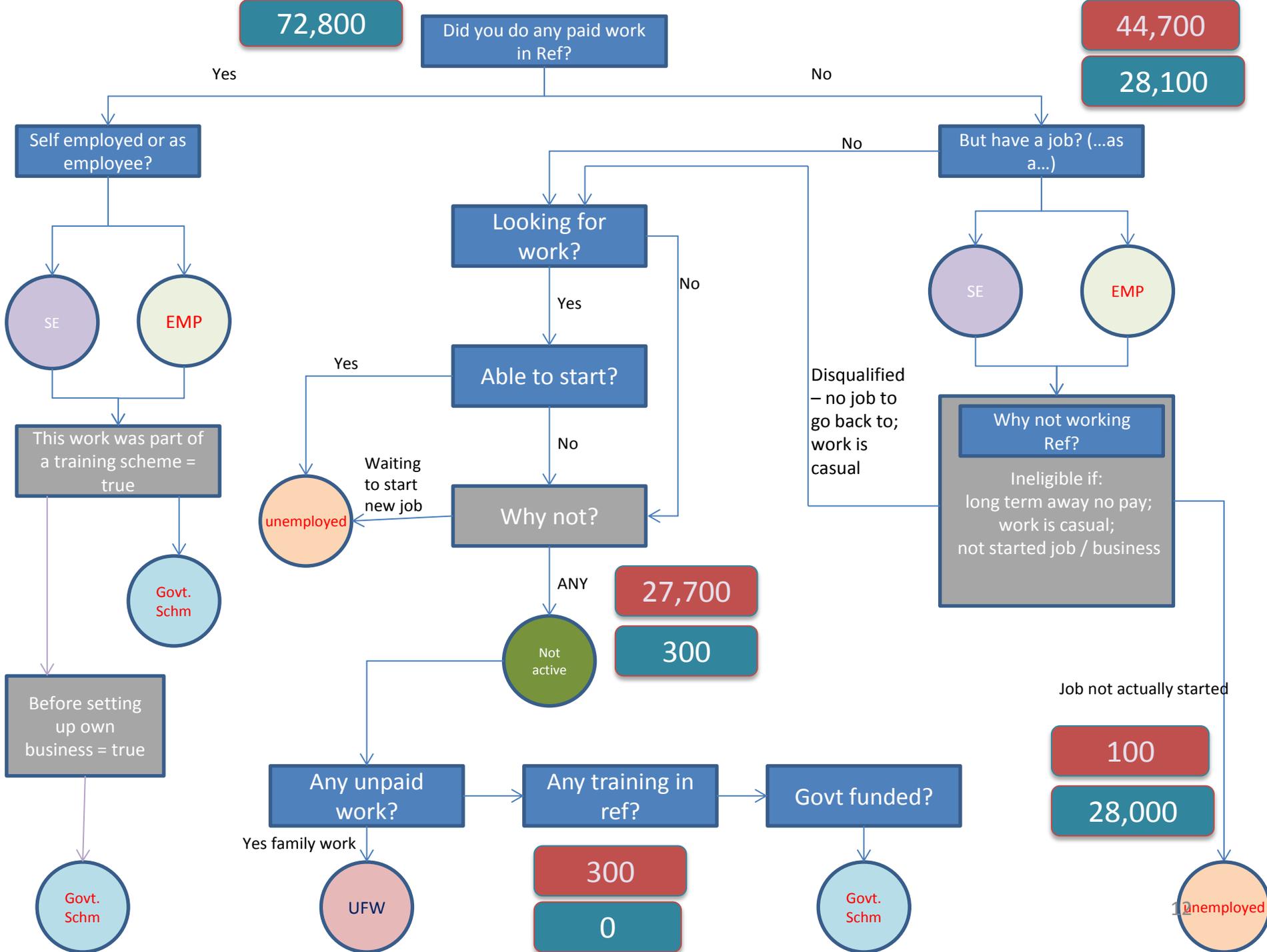


DESIGN WITH DATA

Design
principles
Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gov.uk/designprinciples





72,800

Did you do any paid work in Ref?

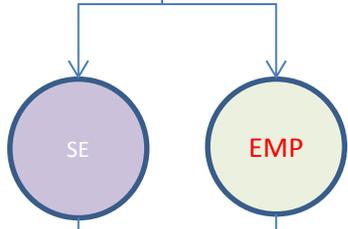
44,700

28,100

Yes

No

Self employed or as employee?



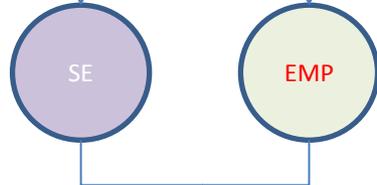
This work was part of a training scheme = true



Before setting up own business = true



But have a job? (...as a...)



Why not working Ref?

Ineligible if:
long term away no pay;
work is casual;
not started job / business

Disqualified – no job to go back to; work is casual

Looking for work?

Yes

Able to start?

Yes



Waiting to start new job

No

Why not?

ANY



27,700

300

Any unpaid work?

Yes family work



Any training in ref?

300

0

Govt funded?



100

28,000

Job not actually started



1



START WITH NEEDS

USER NEEDS, NOT
GOVERNMENT NEEDS

Design
principles

Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gds.uk/designprinciples

7

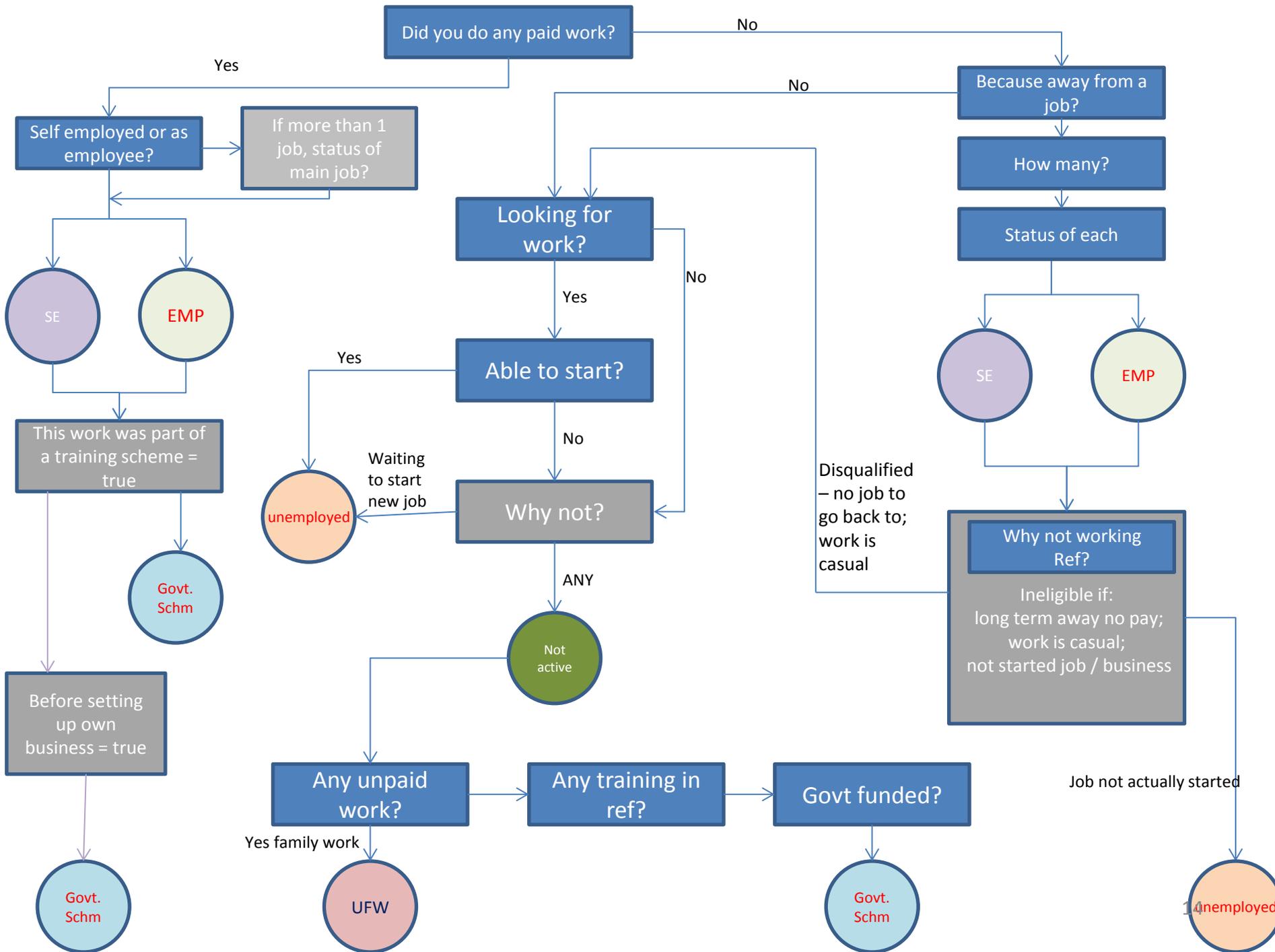


UNDERSTAND CONTEXT

Design
principles

Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gds.uk/designprinciples



Did you do any paid work?

Yes

No

Self employed or as employee?

If more than 1 job, status of main job?

Because away from a job?

How many?

Status of each

Looking for work?

Able to start?

Why not?

SE

EMP

SE

EMP

This work was part of a training scheme = true

Govt. Schm

Before setting up own business = true

Govt. Schm

Disqualified – no job to go back to; work is casual

Why not working Ref?
Ineligible if:
long term away no pay;
work is casual;
not started job / business

unemployed

Yes

Yes

No

No

ANY

Not active

Yes family work

UFW

Any unpaid work?

Any training in ref?

Govt funded?

Govt. Schm

Job not actually started

unemployed

5

ITERATE. THEN ITERATE AGAIN



Design
principles
Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better
www.gds.uk/designprinciples

G.O.O.B

(Get Out Of the Building)

Proto-type

Usability testing
&
Cognitive testing

Focus groups

Pop-up testing

Were you working / employed in ref week?

Original

- Did you do **any paid work** in the week ending Sunday the [date], either as an employee or self-employed?
- ‘Paper work?’ ; “No, just my normal job”

v.1

- Did you do any work **for payment or profit** (including in self-employment) in the week ending Sunday [date], even for as little as one hour?
- National account definition;
- “I would have said yes because they still gets holiday pay”
- “Well I was on holiday so I was paid”

v.2

- Did you have a paid job or **business** in the week Monday [date] to Sunday...?
- Job easy concept; do not have to be present in Ref, or paid in Ref;
- “I was paying myself a wage but nobody was paying the company... the question is are you talking about it as a business or not?” – Sole traders

v.3

- Did you have a paid job, **either as an employee or as self-employed**, in the week Monday [date] to Sunday [date], [year]?
- Better captures different self-employed types;
- “but if it had been ‘self-employed’ that would have been a yes”

Impact on related questions

v.1

- Did you have a paid job or business that you were away from that week?
- If ask about 'work', must establish if 'no' people were away.
- "...I have a paid job the whole year... so I wasn't away from a paid job, even though I'm paid through the holidays" – Teacher, summer holidays

Did you have a paid job, either as an employee or as self-employed, in the week Monday [date] to Sunday [date], [year]?

v.3

- Did you have more than one paid job or business in the week..?
- Tried to keep tone casual
- "Well every job I get paid for is individual so that's lots of jobs, and I have a business, so what – press both!? The simple answer is 'yes'"
- [two pages later, at question about second job status] "[reading aloud] In your second job... confused... where did I say I had a second job? I haven't even suggested I had a second job"

Usual and Actual hours v.1

W7 UsualHrs

xj5xj8.axshare.com/w7_usualhrs.html#DeleteReason=Away&YearFirstArrival=1955&YearRecentArrival=2016&FirstLastYrWHYUK=Last&Title1=Mr&PName1=Joe&PSName1=

Office for National Statistics

Survey Help 0300 1234 931

ID: 023 | Period: 2016-01-01 | Ref: 12346789012A

7 BETA Labour Force Survey

[Previous](#)

The following questions will be about the hours you work in a **usual** week followed by questions about the hours you **actually** worked in the week Monday 12th to Sunday 18th September

How many hours do you **usually** work a week in your main job? If you do shift work then answer for your busiest week. Do not include overtime.

Monday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Tuesday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Wednesday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Thursday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Friday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Saturday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Sunday	<input type="text"/>	hours
Total usual hours in week	<input type="text"/>	hours

[Save and Continue](#)

[Previous](#)



YOU ARE NOT YOUR USER

19

07:57
28/11/2016

Usual and Actual hours v.2

In your **main** job or business, how many hours did you **actually** work in that week, excluding overtime?

Total hours

In your **second** job, how many hours did you **actually** work in that week, excluding overtime?

Total hours

[Save and Continue](#)

[Previous](#)

Usual and Actual Hours v.3

[Previous](#)

How many hours do you usually work in a week in your job? If you do shift work then answer for your busiest week. Do not include overtime.

hours

In the week Monday 29th January to Sunday 4th February 2018, how many hours did you actually work, excluding overtime?

hours

[Save and Continue](#)

[Previous](#)

“so this is just usually what you work in any general week of the year and this one is these specific dates for some reason, they are interested in these dates for some reason and then like how many hours did you work”

9



BE CONSISTENT NOT UNIFORM

Design
principles
Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (user needs, not government needs) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital services, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gds.uk/designprinciples

How to do dates..?

More simple isn't always simpler...

OLD question: **Thinking of the 4 weeks ending Sunday the [date], were you looking for any kind of paid work at any time in those 4 weeks?**

[Previous](#)

Did you look for paid work at any time between Monday 4th July to Sunday 7th August?

Yes

No

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

How to do dates..?

More simple isn't always simpler...

[Previous](#)

In the 4 weeks between Monday 24th October to Sunday 27th November, did you look for any paid work?

Yes

No

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

How to do dates..?

More simple isn't always simpler...

If a job or a place on a government scheme had been available in the week ending Sunday the [date], would you have been able to start within 2 weeks?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

[Previous](#)

If a job had been available in the week Monday 1st to Sunday 7th August, would you have been able to start within two weeks?

Yes

No

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

How to do dates..?

More simple isn't always simpler...

[Previous](#)

If you had been offered a job in the week starting Monday 21st November, would you have been able to start before Monday 5th December?

Yes

No

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

How to do dates..?

More simple isn't always simpler...

[Previous](#)

What was the main reason you did not look for work during this period?

- Retired from paid work
- Studying
- Looking after the family/home
- Childcare is too expensive
- Long-term sick or disabled
- Short-term sick or injured
- Waiting to start a job I have accepted
- Waiting for the results of a job application
- No jobs were available
- Not yet started looking
- Did not need employment
- Other

Using the answers to ask the questions

[Previous](#)

Are you...

An employee, or

Self employed?

And is that job...

Full time, or

Part time?

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

[Previous](#)

Do you ever do work which you would consider as overtime?

I work paid overtime

I work unpaid overtime

I work both paid and unpaid overtime

I do not work overtime

Save and Continue

[Previous](#)

6



THIS IS FOR EVERYONE

Design
principles
Government Digital Service

1 Start with needs (over wants, not government wants) 2 Do less 3 Design with data 4 Do the hard work to make it simple 5 Iterate, then iterate again 6 This is for everyone 7 Understand context 8 Build digital versions, not websites 9 Be consistent, not uniform 10 Make things open 11 Make things better www.gds.uk/designprinciples

Findings from Quantitative tests

3 Online Take up Tests in 2017

Test 1 Purpose: Early indication of uptake; Evidence of the most effective comms strategy

- Mail out to c.37,000 households across Great Britain
- Average interview length – 11 min 33 (actual)

Test 1b Purpose: Early indication of attrition for an online Labour Market Survey

- Mail out to c.5,200 households who completed at Wave 1 and gave an email or phone number for recontact
- Average interview length – 17 min 00 (actual)

Test 2 Purpose: Further evidence of uptake; Establish likely cost effective incentive strategy

- Mail out to c.40,000 households
- Average interview length – 18 min 12 (actual)



Respondent rating of survey experience (Test 2 question)

How easy or difficult did you find this survey?				
1	2	3	4	5
Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult or easy	Easy	Very Easy

Answer	n	%
Very Easy	3,482	48.0
Easy	2,545	35.1
Neither Difficult or Easy	1,074	14.8
Difficult	104	1.4
Very Difficult	45	0.6
Total answering the question	7,250	

Household response rates

Response as a proportion of all accessing the survey	Test 1 (%)	Test 2 (%)
Complete whole households	86.4	85.2
Partially complete households	6.2	7.0
Complete and partially complete households	92.6	92.2
Partial response	3.2	4.9
Accessed but did not complete household grid	3.8	2.9
Accessed but did not answer any questions	0.3	0.2
All accessing survey	100.0	100.0

Summary 1

If you have the time, and the budget, and the appetite from stakeholders...

- Start with the concept, not the existing question
 - Be prepared to change question wording based on respondent mental models
- Design for the respondent
 - 17% access only via smartphone
 - More accurate data in self-complete context
 - Response rates & burden in Voluntary Survey context 33

Summary 2

If you have the time, and the budget, and the appetite from stakeholders...

- Be holistic
 - A Question doesn't work in isolation but impacts other questions
 - The journey and respondent's mental models (expectations) impacts their processing of the question
 - The availability and suitability of response options impacts people's reading behaviour, and in turn the processing of the question (and vice versa)
 - Interacting with the online tool also affects comprehension of the question (so usability and cognitive test together. Ideally, build the 'real' thing)
- Do the testing!(!!!)
 - Even for the tightest budgets, do at least one round.
 - Your best 'at desk' question won't be good enough, trust me!
 - You want to make sure you're measuring what you think you're measuring



Office for
National Statistics

Alex Nolan alex.nolan@ons.gov.uk
Senior Researcher

Topic:

Labour Market questionnaire

Thanks for listening! Any Questions?