



# Chief Executive review

Jobcentre Plus has continued to deliver excellent progress against a very challenging set of objectives. Our contribution to the government's welfare to work agenda has helped employment to increase by a further 200,000 during 2004-05 and produced the lowest unemployment levels for 30 years.

We have recognised that the business cannot stand still if we are to extend employment opportunities to more people than ever before and continue to build on our success in delivering an increasingly secure and responsive benefit system. Equally, we have recognised that we have to deliver our services more efficiently to enable us to focus our resources on those who are harder to help. Over the course of 2004-05, we introduced the Delivering our Vision programme, to ensure that we can meet this challenge. Delivering our Vision is an integrated programme, designed to meet our efficiency challenge, transform our services for customers and deliver policy changes to benefit our priority customers.

Our 2004-05 Business Plan set out our priorities and targets for the year. This Annual Report and Accounts describes the challenges that we faced during 2004-05 and reports our achievements in meeting those challenges and our performance targets. We have started to offer our customers a wider range of ways to contact us, including our new contact centres, while continuing to modernise our office network, business processes and supporting IT.

I am pleased to report that we expect to achieve or exceed 5 of our 6 performance targets for 2004-05 which means we:

- met the job entry target, representing over a million customers helped into work
- gained a **85.5%** satisfaction rating from employers as to how we filled their vacancies against a target of **84%**
- scored **83.2%** success in providing quality customer service against a target of **81%**
- exceeded our overall Business Delivery Target of **89.6%**
- met the benefit processing element but not the totality of the Unit Costs target where we fell short on the labour market element, and
- expect to make further progress against the benefit fraud and error target based on the interim figures currently available.

This achievement for Jobcentre Plus has been accomplished while implementing an ambitious change programme and reducing our headcount by over **5,000** between March 2004 and March 2005. We have also delivered on other key Ministerial priorities like the move to paying customers through Direct Payments and the Pathways to Work pilots for Incapacity Benefit customers.

The Pathways pilots are proving to be successful in helping Incapacity Benefit customers to be more active in the labour market, with over **12,000** entering employment this year. The pilots will be extended to other parts of the country over the coming year.

It is not just the figures that are important; it is what they signal. We are starting to see the value of focusing resources on those who need them most. Results are being realised in the wider labour market position for disadvantaged groups such as lone parents and people with disabilities. The proportion of people with disabilities who are in work has increased by around one percentage point between 2003-04 and 2004-05, to **50%**. The proportion of lone parents who are in work is nearly **56%**, up more than two percentage points over the same period, to the highest ever level.

We have also achieved some other important milestones this year:

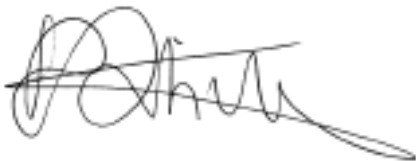
- agreed our new vision for 2008 and set up our Delivering our Vision programme
- continued with the modernisation of the Jobcentre Plus network. There are now over 600 integrated offices in operation providing work-focused interviews with personal advisers in a more welcoming and professional environment
- we are transforming our management and support structures to enable them to service our delivery network more effectively
- closely integrated our planning, performance, resource and staffing levels to ensure that we achieve greater efficiency while maintaining performance and delivering targets
- announced in July 2004 our plans to centralise benefit processing which will deliver key efficiencies and preparing that area of our business for future modernisation



- started transforming our work on programme protection by developing a greater focus on customer compliance and by moving towards a new criminal investigations service, and
- introduced new ways for customers to access our services, such as the Jobs Warehouse, Employer Direct online and the Client Matching System which supports our contact centre network.

These achievements are the result of the combined efforts of our own people and our delivery partners. Looking ahead, we have been set a demanding challenge for 2005-06. We will be delivering our performance targets with a more demanding efficiency challenge and reducing headcount. This report illustrates that we move into the new business year on a solid foundation of success that will enable us to develop and improve Jobcentre Plus services as we move towards our vision for 2008.

Our 2005-06 Business Plan is available at [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)



**Lesley Strathie**  
Chief Executive