

Action Plan Guidance

Introduction

1. An Action Plan is a record showing the work focused activities that the customer and Adviser agree to undertake in order to move the customer closer towards employment.
2. The Action Plan charts the progress made and gives the customer a framework to help focus on what they need to do. Each step, building on the one before, enables the progress to be measured.

Overview

3. Action Plans are an effective tool that enable Advisers to chart the customer's personal journey towards work and records the customer's commitment to the actions set down.
4. An Adviser does not need to create a new Action Plan when the customer status changes or the type of benefit they receive.
5. Action Plans summarise the discussions between the Adviser and customer and:
 - highlights progress between interviews;
 - ensures information is not lost so that the customer does not have to answer the same questions again;
 - it is quicker and easier to find relevant information in an Action Plan than it is to search through a list of customer conversations.
6. Ensuring Action Items are Specific, Stretching, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound (SSMART) makes it easier to monitor the customer's progress.
7. The Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) for Advisers can be used to review effective action planning.
8. The plan also needs to be factual and the Adviser needs to conform to the Data Protection Act (DPA). This is imperative as the information may be transferred to third party providers.
9. Customers who feel that they are not ready or able to return to work straight away can also benefit from an effective Action Plan. Setting up an Action Plan can help customers focus on work as a long-term goal.
10. Customers should be encouraged to sign the Action Plan so it becomes 'their own'.
11. Each action or step agreed with the customer should be recorded as an Action Item with a target date for completion.
12. The Action Items are assigned explicitly to the customer or to the Adviser, recording not only what has been agreed but also the type of support offered.
13. Reviews are recorded against specific Action Items. Up to ten reviews can be recorded against each Action Item.
14. Over time, the list of Action Items and their reviews will build into a history of the customer's progress. Information about the customer's job goals, employment history, personal circumstances and qualifications are pulled through from other parts of their Labour Market System (LMS) Client Record where this information is already recorded.
15. Action Plan functionality includes:

- Spell checker – checks the spelling in all free text fields;
 - Printing;
 - When a customer fails to participate (FTP) – Action Plans do not have to be completed in any interviews during which FTP is recorded as a Decision Makers (DMA) question on LMS;
 - Additional Information window captures information about a customer's outgoings and their dependants;
 - Qualifications window – the customer's 'Qualifications and Assessments' window allows Advisers to choose which qualifications are added to the Action Plan.
16. An 'ActnPln' button is included and can be accessed on all LMS Client Records.
17. You should remember the following points:
- Lone Parents who fall under the Lone Parent Work Focused Interview (LP WFI) regime, relevant claimants claiming Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance, Severe Disablement Benefit or Income Support on the grounds of incapacity, **must** have an Action Plan;
 - Other IS claimants are not required to have an Action Plan completed and reviewed at their mandatory WFIs;
 - Action Plans should only be **created** during an interview. However, once an Action Plan has been created it can be updated at any time;
 - Action Plans must be reviewed and updated at all mandatory Work Focused Interviews (WFIs);
 - JSA customers must have a Job Seekers Agreement (JSAg) and require an Action Plan if they are being referred to contracted provision through LMS and PraP;
 - An Action Plan must be completed and printed during WFIs.
18. It is no longer necessary to re-type information already recorded elsewhere on the customer's Client Record. Details from the 'Additional Information' and 'Qualifications and Assessments' windows are pulled through and updated automatically to the Action Plan if changes are made to these screens of the Client Record.
19. There are fields on the 'Additional Information' window for recording:
- whether the customer is paying rent or has a mortgage;
 - whether they are paying council tax; and
 - if they are caring for a dependant.
20. The customer's 'Qualifications and Assessments' window includes a check box for indicating whether a qualification should be added to the Action Plan. A corresponding check box is available in the LMS 'New/Amend' Qualification window.
21. Action Plans are updated automatically if changes are made to the 'Additional Information' or 'Qualifications and Assessments' windows. Therefore, a screen message is displayed when an Action Plan is opened if automatic changes have been made since the last time it was viewed.
22. The Action Plan can:
- hold up to 100 Action Items, each with their own text box;
 - record target date for completion of Action Item and date when closed;
 - record reviews against specific Action Item;

- allow customer information recorded on LMS to be pulled through to Action Plan, to ensure that it is up to date and alleviates double input.

The Customer's role in the Action Plan process

23. The customer's role is to:

- identify what job goals they are aiming for;
- match their capability to their job goals; and
- plan how to achieve these goals.

24. The steps they identify and the support they require to help them achieve those steps to work should be summarised in their Action Plan.

25. An effective Action Plan will show a set of clearly defined steps the customer has identified as necessary to reach their job goal.

The Adviser's role in the Action Plan process

26. It is your responsibility to ensure that each interview you conduct is work focused, however far away from work the customer may be. You should use the skills you have learned to gain the customer's commitment to return to work.

27. The key behaviours required are:

- use good listening and communication skill;
- ask questions that make the customer think;
- allow the customer time to respond;
- don't dominate the interview – balance the talking between customer and adviser;
- when customer speaks make a point of responding and reflect the information back to the customer in some way;
- summarise regularly what has been said by the customer;
- take positive parts and summaries from what the customer has said and bring them together;
- regularly seek the customers suggestions and ideas;
- take what the customer has said as a start point and build on it in some useful way;
- make suggestions that are aimed at meeting a need or concern expressed by the customer;
- ensure the action plan is progress based;
- produce an action plan that is heavily based on what the customer said;
- base the action plan on the customer's aspirations and concerns.

28. You should help the customer to identify their job goal, options and next steps before completing the Action Plan.

29. For those closer to the labour market Action Plans will have a clear work focus with specific steps set out towards gaining employment.

30. For those further away, Action Plans may be pitched at a lower level. In this case the process is very much about sowing the seeds and giving the customer something constructive to think about and work towards. There should still be a job goal albeit not so clearly defined.

31. The content for the Action Plan will naturally fall out of the discussion with the customer. If the customer does not participate in the interview and not agree to an Action Plan you will need to consider applying a sanction.

The Action Planning Model

32. You should work with a customer to:

- identify a specific job or jobs that the individual has the capability to perform either now or in the future;
- identify the employers locally who have those jobs available;
- identify how to approach those employers to find vacancies;
- identify how best to present the customer's evidence to show they can actually do the job's tasks and activity;
- identify how to make sure they have the ability to accept and keep any jobs offered.

33. The Action Planning process **must be customer led** and clearly state the actions the customer will take to reach their job goal. Evidence confirms that if we want the customer to be committed to these actions they have to think this through for themselves and they have to explain to you the advantages and outcomes that these actions will produce. This means the steps in the Action Plan will be self generated. You may need to help the customer to do this, perhaps over a period of time.

34. It should also contain actions the Adviser can take to help the customer. The Action Plan is a living document and progress should be reviewed and recorded at each subsequent interview. Changes should be made when appropriate.

35. The Action Plan must be realistic and achievable within the individual customer's skills, experience and capabilities. The customer will have identified the steps in the Action Plan and they feel that by taking these steps they will return to work. For some, this return to work is a long journey and the Action Plan provides a good route map for that journey.

36. There will be some customers for whom work is a long-term goal, i.e. those recovering from long-term illness, drug or alcohol dependency or those with caring responsibilities. They may have personal circumstances that impact on working which need to be addressed before they can consider a return to work. Their Action Plan needs to reflect this.

37. The Action Planning model is linked to the 5 challenges to sustained employment.

38. Personal circumstances have to be taken into account because they are relevant and can hinder the customer's return to employment. However, your aim is to tackle the real challenges to employment. The 5 challenges will always prevent someone from finding and keeping a job when they are present.

39. The customer's history and personal circumstances may fuel the 5 challenges but it is the 5 challenges that have to be overcome if that person is to find and keep a job. One way of doing that is to help them manage their individual circumstances and lifestyle.

The 5 Challenges

40. Anything from mental illness, to alcohol problems to childcare, to travel restrictions can be described as a barrier to work.

41. Personal circumstances such as these can, in most cases, be overcome. We need to be aware that all customers have personal circumstances which may cause varying degrees of difficulty in the course of finding a job. We

need to ensure we take the appropriate steps to find the most suitable means of managing these difficulties as an integral part of helping each customer to find and keep a job.

42. There are lots of people with mental health difficulties who successfully hold down a job. There are lots of people with childcare difficulties, alcohol or other dependencies, or travel difficulties who have jobs.

43. Addressing these personal circumstances does not necessarily change a jobseeker's behaviour. It is the jobseeker's behaviour that gets them in front of the right employer and giving them the right evidence to get the job.

44. The 5 Challenges are:

- **Basic belief** – “ I can't / I'll never work”;
- **Local Labour Market Knowledge** – “There are no jobs I can do around here”;
- **Jobsearch Skills** – “ I never find someone who'll employ me”;
- **Presenting my case effectively** – “ They'll take one look at me/my CV/my application and say “ No”;
- **Keeping the job** – “Even if I got a job I'd never be able to keep it on with my problems”.

45. Your task is to help the customer remove those challenges, changing them to:

- I can work and I know what I want to do;
- there are the right jobs for me around here;
- I know how to find them;
- I can present myself persuasively to an employer;
- I can keep the job when I get it.

SSMART Action items

46. Other activity is also needed if the five challenges are to be overcome.

47. To help that process it is necessary to have the steps in the Action Plan clearly defined and are Specific, Stretching, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound (SSMART).

Advantages of an Action Plan

48. The Action Plan ensures that both the customer and the Adviser know what has been agreed to help the customer move towards work.

49. The Action Plan helps to focus the customer's efforts to find work and give them ownership of their actions.

50. By discussing and agreeing with the customer the activities and steps needed for them to get a job and then reflecting those points in the Action plan, you are most likely to secure the customer's commitment to completing the activities.

51. The Action Plan provides an ongoing record and can help you prepare for future interviews.

52. The Action Plan will help other Advisers pick up where you left off.

LMS functionality for Action Plans

53. The Labour Market System (LMS) Action Plan window, example below, is divided into two:

View Action Plan - <client name>

File Edit Function Page Help

Detail NActltn Spell Print Save Close

Action Item:

This is an Example Action Item. The text will be displayed in the Action Item table as well as the free text box and any amendments will be made in the box.

Date Created	Created By	Ass	Target Date	Date Closed	Action Item
07/11/2005	A Smout	C	12/06/2005		This is an Example Act
10/03/2005	J Bradshaw	P	06/10/2005	08/10/2005	2nd example for action

Aims EHist PCirc Quals Info

Job Pref 1: Butcher SOC: 1111 Preferred Hours: **Either Full/Part Time**

Job Pref 2: Baker SOC: 1234

Job Pref 3: Candlestick Maker SOC: 1342

This box is for any additional information that has relevance to the job preferences and related data recorded. It can be amended by the user and will be saved as it appears. No other data will overwrite this and so changes are related to those made by the user rather than being overwritten by other data. Once this page is saved, it will remain as static data for the Action Plan.

Row 1 of 2

- the top half of the window is used to document and review the activities (or Action Items) and is always visible. Each time the Action Plan is updated, a new Action Item must be added before it can be saved;
- the bottom half of the window holds information pulled from other parts of the customer's Client Record. There are separate sub-windows for Aims, Employment History (EHist), Personal Circumstances(PCirc), Qualifications (Quals) and Other Information (Info). These different areas can be opened by selecting the appropriate tab.

54. Most of the information comes from the 'Additional Information (More)' window.

55. The information on the Qualifications tab is drawn from the 'Qualifications and Assessments' window. Details drawn from 'Aims', 'EHist', 'PCirc' and 'Quals' tabs cannot be amended directly on the Action Plan. Any changes must be made through the 'Additional Information' or 'Qualifications and Assessments' windows.

56. Some of the tabs on the Action Plan include text boxes that can be used to record extra information.

Action Items

57. Note: When filling in any free text fields within the Action Plan **do not use** double quotation marks "". This will corrupt the information contained within them on the client details, when transferred to providers' systems.

58. To open the full details for a given Action Item, and update or add a review, highlight it in the list and select the '**Detail**' button.

View Action Plan - <client name>

File Edit Function Page Help

Detail Nactltm Spell Print Save Close

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Row 1 of 2

59. The full details of the selected Action Item replace the list of Action Items in the top half of the window. The reviews associated with the Action Item are listed below the details.

60. Action Items are:

- recorded individually;
- assigned to either the customer (C) or the personal adviser (P);
- given a target date by which the action should be completed;
- an Action Item must be recorded whenever an Action Plan is updated;
- a new Action Item can be added by selecting the 'Nactltm' button;
- up to 100 Action Items can be recorded against each Action Plan;
- closed Action Items are purged from the system 18 months after the date they were closed.

61. Previous Action Items are listed on the Action Plan. For each item the list gives:

- the date the Action Item was created;
- the name of the Adviser who created it;
- who it was assigned to;
- the target date for its completion (this determines the order of the list, with the oldest Target Date at the top);
- the date it was closed (if appropriate);
- the first few words of the Action Item.

62. Selecting the 'History' button will return to the list of all Action Items.

63. A Non JSA Customer must enter into an Action Plan, and information to populate this should be gathered from the interview participation questions.

64. Advisers should arrange a follow up interview with the customer to discuss activities undertaken or meetings with providers or employers in order to plan the next steps. In these cases the date for the action to be completed by should be set as the follow up interview date.

65. It is good practice to review the Action Item and contact the customer when the target date matures. An LMS workflow can be set to check progress

against the Action Item and the customer contacted and offered further help or an interview.

66. The table below gives examples of Action Items within various scenarios, including target dates and who the Action Item has been assigned to.

Scenario	Action Item Examples
Lone Parent on caseload (attends WFI 15 April 2011)	<p>Identify suitable childcare provision available locally and costs by next appointment on 2 May. By 29 April 2011 – assigned to customer</p> <p>Attend meeting with training provider on 26 April 2011 to discuss suitability of training for NVQ level 2 Painting & Decorating. By 30 April 2011 – assigned to customer</p>
Lone Parent in WFI process (customer feels that they are not in an immediate position to look for/to accept employment) (attends WFI 15 April 2011)	<p>Monitor work available with local employers over the next 6 months and consider whether you would need training or updating your skills in order to prepare for employment in the future. By 15 October 2011 – assigned to customer</p> <p>(customer has said that she would be worse off financially if she returned to work)</p> <p>Customer will identify job vacancy (consider anything over 16+ hours per week) for reception work, which she is interested in returning to in the future. She will attend on 14 May, with details of her housing costs; so that the adviser can conduct a BOC to illustrate what her income could be if she returned to work. By 14 May 2011 – assigned to customer</p>
Lone Parent in WFI process (attends WFI 3 December 2011)	<p>Adviser will contact customer after Christmas to arrange for her to attend for a chat in January to discuss participation in NDLP. By 4 January 2012 – assigned to adviser</p>
Partner in WFI process (attends WFI 15 April 2011)	<p>Customer will contact local colleges to identify courses available for September 11 enrolment in order to brush up computer skills. In particular ECDL qualification and/or Microsoft Office applications. By 29 August 2011 – assigned to customer</p>
ESA recipient on caseload (attends WFI 16 April 2011)	<p>Identify local distribution companies through the internet/recruitment agencies/local contacts. Contact speculatively with CV and covering letter that are tailored to highlight your knowledge of goods in/out, stock control and supervisory experience. By 21 April 2011 – assigned to</p>

	customer
ESA recipient in WFI process (attends WFI 16 April 2011) (customer continues to receive medication for long term depression and immediate submission to vacancies would not be appropriate at this time)	<p>Investigate local public transport available in order to identify costs and areas that would be realistic to travel to for work. By 16 October 2011 – assigned to customer</p> <p>Meet with mentoring co-ordinator at Jobcentre (a private room will be arranged) on 25 April 2011 to discuss what this means and what benefits may be gained by committing to it. By 25 April 2011 – assigned to customer (adviser will follow this up with a telephone call to customer in order to close action)</p>

67. The '**Amnd**' button unlocks details of the Action Item so they can be amended.

68. There are a number of restrictions:

- the date closed field cannot be completed until at least one review has been recorded against the Action Item;
- if a closure date is recorded it must be today or no more than six months in the past;
- closure dates in the future are not allowed;
- the Action Item can only be closed within an interview. **Under no circumstances should an interview be opened just to close an Action Item**, as this will corrupt Management Information and have a negative impact on Adviser's personal performance. If an Adviser wants to close an Action Item outside of an interview, make a note in Conversations and take clearance action at the next interview.

69. An Action Item cannot be amended if the date closed has been saved.

70. Selecting the '**NRev**' button will create a new review for the Action Item. Review comments are added in a text box below the details of the Action Item. Previous reviews are also listed below the details of the Action Item.

71. The '**Drev**' button is used to delete a review. Reviews can only be deleted during the interview in which the review took place (or in the next one if the review text was not added during an interview).

72. The '**Spell**' button checks the spelling in all the free-text fields. It is only available when a new Action Item or review is being created or an existing one is being amended.

73. The '**Print**' button opens the Print Options window and will always print an Action Plan. For further information on the print options see 'Printing Action Plans'.

74. When the '**Save**' button is selected, LMS runs a series of checks to ensure that all mandatory information has been provided and that any dates are appropriate. A screen message is displayed if any mandatory information has not been provided. This message lists the fields that must be completed before the Action Plan can be saved.

Aims

75. An example of the Labour Market System (LMS) 'Aims' screen is below.

Create Action Plan - <client name>

File Edit Function Page Help

Detail NActitm Spell Print Save Close

Action Item:

Created by: J Bingham Date Created: 17/01/2006

Assigned To: Client Target Date: < > Date Closed: < >

Aims EHist PCirc Quals Info

Job Pref 1: Butcher SOC: 1111 Preferred Hours: Either Full/Part Time

Job Pref 2: Baker SOC: 1234

Job Pref 3: Candlestick Maker SOC: 1342

76. The Aims tab lists the customer's Job Preferences and the corresponding Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes. It also indicates the customer's preference for full or part-time work.

77. This information is drawn from the Additional Information window onto the Action Plan. These details cannot be amended directly within the Action Plan. Any changes must be made through the Additional Information window.

78. The Action Plan is updated as soon as the Additional Information is saved. However, the new details are only added to the Action Plan permanently when the Action Plan is saved.

79. If the customer is not job-ready and is not on mandatory New Deal, they may not have identified any job preferences. The field will therefore be left blank and a free text box is available to record any information about other aims that will help the customer progress towards employment.

80. For a Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) customer the Job Preferences on the Additional Information window are themselves pulled though from the customer's Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg). Therefore, any changes must be made through the JSAg.

Employment History (EHist)

81. An example of the Labour Market System (LMS) 'EHist' screen is below.

View Action Plan - <client name>

File Edit Function Pages Help

History Amnd NRev DRev Spell Print Save Close

Action Item:

This is an Example Action Item. The text will be displayed in the Action Item table as well as the free text box and any amendments will be made in the box.

Created by: A Smout Date Created: 07/11/2005

Assigned To: Client Target Date: 06/12/2005

Date Closed:

Review:

Date Created	Created By	Review
10/11/2005	J Bradshaw	This is the full review text and any amendments th.
09/11/2005	C Brown	2nd review text data that will be displayed in the te

This is the full review text and any amendments that are made to a review will be recorded in this box.

Aims EHist PCirc Quals Info

Last Job 1: Plumber

From: 12/08/2002 To: 15/10/2002

Last Job 2: Accountant

From: 09/09/2001 To: 19/12/2001

This box is for any additional information that has relevance to the employment history and related data recorded. Once this page is saved, it will remain as static data for the Action Plan and will only pull in changes from the 'More' box when the Amend button is selected.

Review 1 of 2

82. The Employment History (EHist) tab shows the customer's last two jobs, and the dates of employment.

83. This information is drawn from the 'Additional Information' window onto the Action Plan. These details cannot be amended directly within the Action Plan. Any changes must be made through the 'Additional Information' window.

84. The Action Plan is updated as soon as the 'Additional Information' is saved. However, the new details are only added to the Action Plan permanently when the Action Plan is saved.

85. The text box is used to add extra information relevant to the customer's employment history. It holds up to 750 characters (about 100 - 120 words).

86. If the customer does not have any employment history the field will be left blank and the free text box is available to record any information regarding employment experience.

Personal Circumstances (PCirc)

87. An example of the Labour Market System (LMS) 'PCirc' screen is below.

View Action Plan - JOE BLOGGS

File Edit Function TabPage Help

History Amnd NRev DRev Spell Print Save Close

Action Item:

Created by: B JOHNS Date Created: 16/04/2012

Assigned To: Client Target Date: < 16/04/2012 >

Date Closed: < >

Review:

Date Created	Created By	Review

Aims EHist PCirc **Quals** Info

Paying Rent: N/K Mortgage: N/K Council Tax: N/K DP: No

Driving Licence: Car Owner: No Endorsement: No

Child age's: (0-2) 0 (3-4) 0 (5-7) 0 (8-11) 0 (12-14) 0 (15-16) 0 (17-18) 0 Dependant: N/K

IWBC: IWBC Notes:

IWBC Date:

88. Information on the Personal Circumstances tab is drawn from different places on the customer's Client Record. The 'Additional Information' window provides information on rent, mortgage and council tax payments, any dependants and details about their driving licence, if they have one.

89. The Disabled Person (DP) field is filled in according to the value of the DP marker on their Client Record. Details of In Work Benefit Calculations (IWBC) are added through interview actions.

90. If the customer has children and their ages are included in Childcare Barriers to Work (CBW) window, the children's ages will be pulled directly through to the Action Plan.

91. These details cannot be added or changed directly through the Action Plan, the window where the information was taken from must be updated first. However, the new details are only added to the Action Plan permanently when the Action Plan is saved.

Qualifications (Quals)

92. An example of the Labour Market System (LMS) 'Qual' screen is below.

View Action Plan - <client name>

File Edit Function TabPage Help

Detail NActltn Spell Print Save Close

Action Item:

This is an Example Action Item. The text will be displayed in the Action Item table as well as the free text box and any amendments will be made in the box.

Date Created	Created By	Ass	Target Date	Date Closed	Action Item
07/11/2005	A Smout	CL	12/06/2005		This is an Example Act
10/03/2005	J Bradshaw	PA	06/10/2005	08/10/2005	2nd example for action

Aims EHist PCirc **Quals** Info

Level	Subject	Outcome	Date Completed
A level	English	Pass	
A level	Maths	Pass	04/10/2005
A level	Shorthand	Fail	03/09/2005

Row 1 of 2

93. The Qualifications (Qual) tab lists the qualifications recorded originally on the customer's 'Qualifications and Assessments' window (opened by selecting the 'Quals' hotspot on the Client Record).

94. From LMS Release 24 all of the qualifications listed on this window - except Basic Skills Assessments - are pushed through to the Action Plan.

95. A new option has been added to the list that lets Advisers choose which of the qualifications are listed on the Action Plan. A tick in the 'AP' check box at the end of each row indicates that the qualification will also be shown on the Action Plan.

96. These details cannot be changed directly through the Action Plan. A qualification can be removed from the Action Plan by amending the 'Qualifications and Assessments' window and removing the tick in the relevant check box. However, the new details are only added to the Action Plan permanently when the Action Plan is saved.

97. The text box on the Info tab is used to record any other information that is relevant to the customer's Action Plan. It can hold up to 2,000 characters (about 275 words). This text box is also used to store the Agreed Actions and Review Progress from Action Plans created before LMS Release 24.

98. If the customer does not have any qualifications the field will be left blank and a free text box is available to record any relevant information.

Creating a New Action Plan

99. An Action Plan should only be created during an interview. However, once it has been created it can be updated by the Adviser during or outside of an

interview. This can be done by selecting the 'ActnPln' button on the customer's Client Record.

100. Ideally this should be completed with customer involvement and ownership during the interview. On some occasions however it may be necessary to complete it outside of an interview or without the customer present, e.g. following a telephone conversation.

101. During certain types of interview an Action Plan must be created (or updated if one already exists) and then printed. In these cases:

- the Action Plan window opens automatically at the start of the interview; and
- the interview cannot be ended until the new or updated Action Plan has been saved and printed.

102. In some interviews, completion of an Action Plan is advised but not enforced. Similar screen messages appear at the start and end of these interviews, but the interview can be ended without creating, updating or then printing, an Action Plan.

Action Plans: Reviewing Progress

103. Action Plans are not static documents. They must be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

104. Action Items must be reviewed, updated if necessary, and eventually closed. This can be done by the Adviser during or outside an interview.

However, you cannot record a 'date closed' outside of an interview.

105. The Aims, Employment History, Personal Circumstances and Qualifications on an Action Plan are updated as and when the relevant parts of the customer's Client Record are updated. This can be done at the same time as the Action Plan is being reviewed.

Changes to Additional Information window

106. Labour Market System (LMS) Release 24 adds extra options to the 'Additional Information' window on the Client Record:

- the 'Rent / Mortgage' field indicates if the customer's regular outgoings include rent or mortgage payments. The options are 'Not Known' (the default setting), 'Rent' or 'Mortgage';
- the 'Council Tax' field records if the customer is paying Council Tax. The options are 'Not Known' (default), 'Yes' or 'No';
- the 'Dependants' field shows whether the customer is claiming benefit on behalf of someone else (eg. Their husband / wife or partner). The options are 'Not Known' (default), 'Yes' or 'No'; and

107. The information from these three fields is pushed through to the 'Personal Circumstances (Pcirc)' tab on the Action Plan. However, the details can only be updated through the 'Additional Information' window.

108. Use the Action Item text box to describe the action agreed with the customer. If still relevant, details of the last action agreed with the customer before LMS Release 24 can be found on the Info tab:

- select either 'Client' or 'PA', as appropriate, from the 'Assigned to' drop-down list;
- add a target date that is not in the past or more than six months in the future.

Checking spelling on Action Plans

109. A spell checker is included in the Labour Market System (LMS) functionality. It is used to check the spelling of Action Items, reviews, and the notes in the text boxes.

110. LMS uses the same spell checker as Microsoft Word:

- the spell checker runs automatically when an Action Plan is saved and before LMS carries out all other validation checks;
- a 'Spell' button can be used to run the spell checker at any time to check the spelling in a particular field;
- the spell checker includes a dictionary that can be updated to include words, abbreviations and acronyms that are used regularly. This will enable the spell check to be conducted more quickly;
- closing programmes and documents that aren't required can help improve the speed of the spell checker.

111. The spell checker in LMS defaults to UK spelling. This cannot be changed. It only checks spelling, not grammar. The 'Spelling' window opens every time the spell checker finds a word it does not recognise. Words that are not recognised are shown in the 'Not in Dictionary' field. The full sentence is given and the unrecognised word is highlighted. The unrecognised word can be:

- corrected;
- ignored; or
- added to the dictionary .

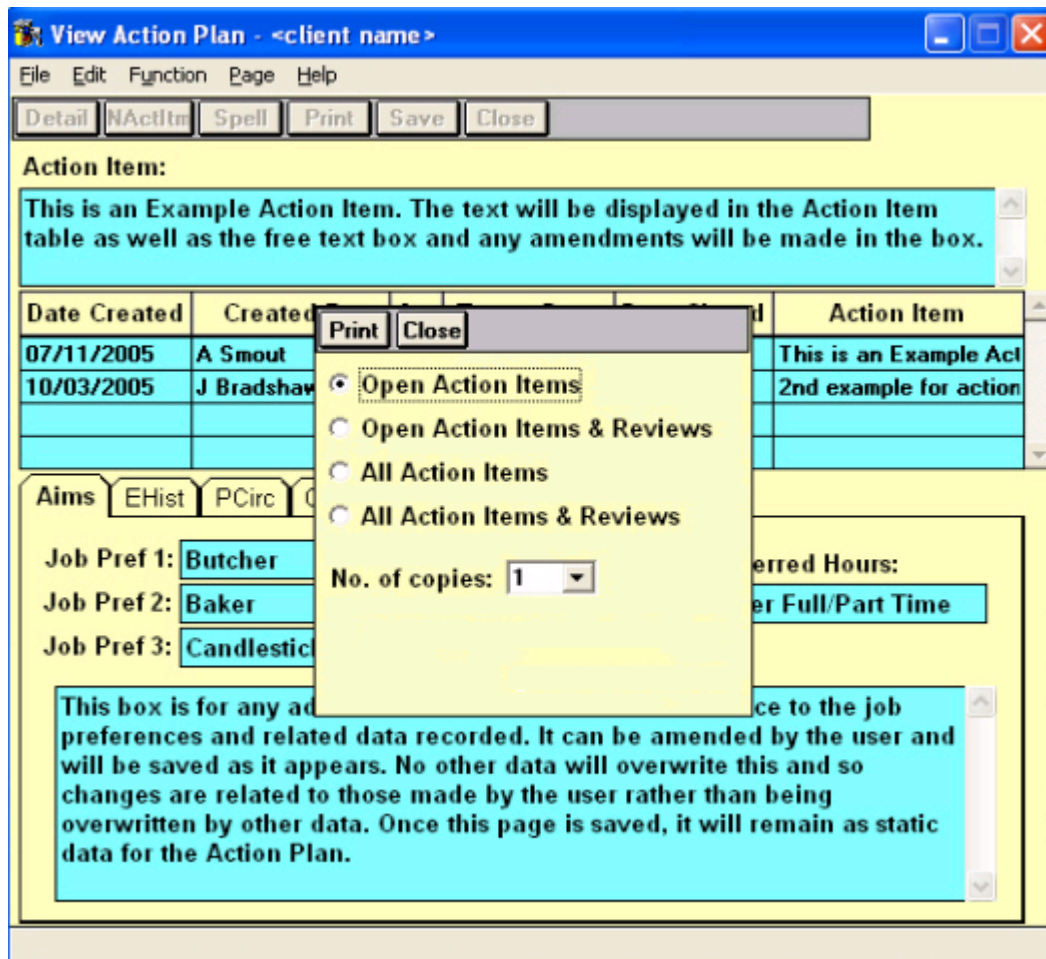
112. The spell checker works through each unrecognised word in turn. When all the unrecognised words have been corrected, ignored or added to the dictionary, the spell checker closes and the Action Plan is saved.

113. The spell checker can also be used to check words before the 'Save' button is selected:

- to check a specific word: highlight it and then select the 'Spell' button;
- to check all the words in a particular field: place the cursor in that field and then select the 'Spell' button.

Printing Action Plans

114. There are four print options available, see example of Labour Market System (LMS) screen below:



- **Open Action Items**
Prints all of the customer information from the Action Plan and the open Action Items;
 - **Open Action Items & Reviews**
Prints the open Action Items and the reviews associated with them;
 - **All Action Items**
Prints all of the customer information from the Action Plan and all of the Action Items (open and closed);
 - **All Action Items & Reviews**
Prints all of the Action Items (open and closed) and their associated reviews.
115. The print screen also includes options for selecting the number of copies and choosing between **Standard** or **New Deal** prints.
116. All printouts include a header containing the customer's name and National Insurance Number.
117. Action Plans are printed same printer on plain paper headed with the Jobcentre Plus logo (Tray 1 of the default printer).
118. Blank sections do not show up on the printed Action Plan as this uses less paper.

Updating Action Plans in Failure to Participate cases

119. If the customer fails to participate, record a Fail to Participate (FTP) doubt as a Decision Makers (DMA) question on the Labour Market System (LMS) during the interview. You must do this before selecting the 'End' button.

120. When a FTP doubt is recorded LMS changes what happens when the 'End' button is selected:

- if nothing has been done with the Action Plan, the interview is ended without further prompting;
- if changes have been made to the Action Plan but it has not been saved, the changes are discarded. The screen message explains that: 'You have recorded FTP. The Action Plan will now close without saving changes';
- if the Action Plan has been changed and saved, the interview can be ended as normal. The changes are not discarded.

121. Customers who FTP in completing an Action Plan have failed to complete a Work Focused Interview (WFI) and a sanction should be considered.

Clerical Action Plans

122. Clerical Action Plans must be completed when you cannot access the Labour Market System (LMS).

123. JCP12 is the clerical action plan form. This carbonised form is completed with the appropriate information from the discussion with the customer.

124. The customer must be given pages 1 and 3.

125. Pages 2 and 4 should be retained by the Adviser, and **must** be used to update LMS when it becomes available.

Other sources of information

126. Your Advisory Services Manager (ASM) will use the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to regularly check the Action Plans you construct with your customer. The QAF helps to make sure advisory services are effective, efficient and of consistently high quality. It is a framework for reviewing adviser functions (including Action Plans) and highlights good performance and areas where improvements may be necessary. [Click here to access guidance.](#)

127. The ASM will check seven key areas:

- contact is primarily customer led with major customer contribution;
- contact is work-focused;
- customer contact discussion time is maximised;
- customer identifies for themselves realistic and achievable job goals;
- customer reviews job search skills and identifies relevant support;
- progress is made towards work;
- progress reviewed and amended as needed.

Training products

128. To support Advisers please see the PA Learning Centre on Learning and You which gives information on training products available to Advisers.

129. There are 2 e-learning courses for Action Plans, which are accessed via Resource Management (RM):

- Customer Action Plans – OLM JCP0551;
- Action Plan Workbook – OLM JCP0393.