

RESTART 

Social Impact Report

2019

ALLEN & OVERY

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Introduction

This report has been produced to demonstrate the difference that the ReStart programme made to the lives of those who participated in it. By outlining the purposes of ReStart, who took part, the way it worked and the results it achieved, the report demonstrates ReStart's social impact.

What is ReStart?

ReStart is an employability programme launched in 2017 by international legal practice Allen & Overy (A&O) and MyKindaFuture (MKF).

Now in its third year, ReStart targets over-50s living in London who have been unemployed for a period between six months and a year. The programme extends A&O's long-standing work on social mobility through Smart Start, which has provided high-quality work experience to over 1,450 young people from non-privileged backgrounds since it began in 2009.

The challenge

ReStart was set up to tackle an issue of growing concern in the UK: long-term unemployment in the over-50s.

According to a Business in the Community (BITC) report *The Missing Million*, there are around one million people in the UK aged 50 to 64 who have been made “involuntarily jobless” through redundancy, ill health or early retirement.

For some of these people, particularly those on low incomes, it is extremely difficult to get back into work once they are out of it. This is illustrated by the fact that over a third of unemployed over-50s have been out of work for more than a year.

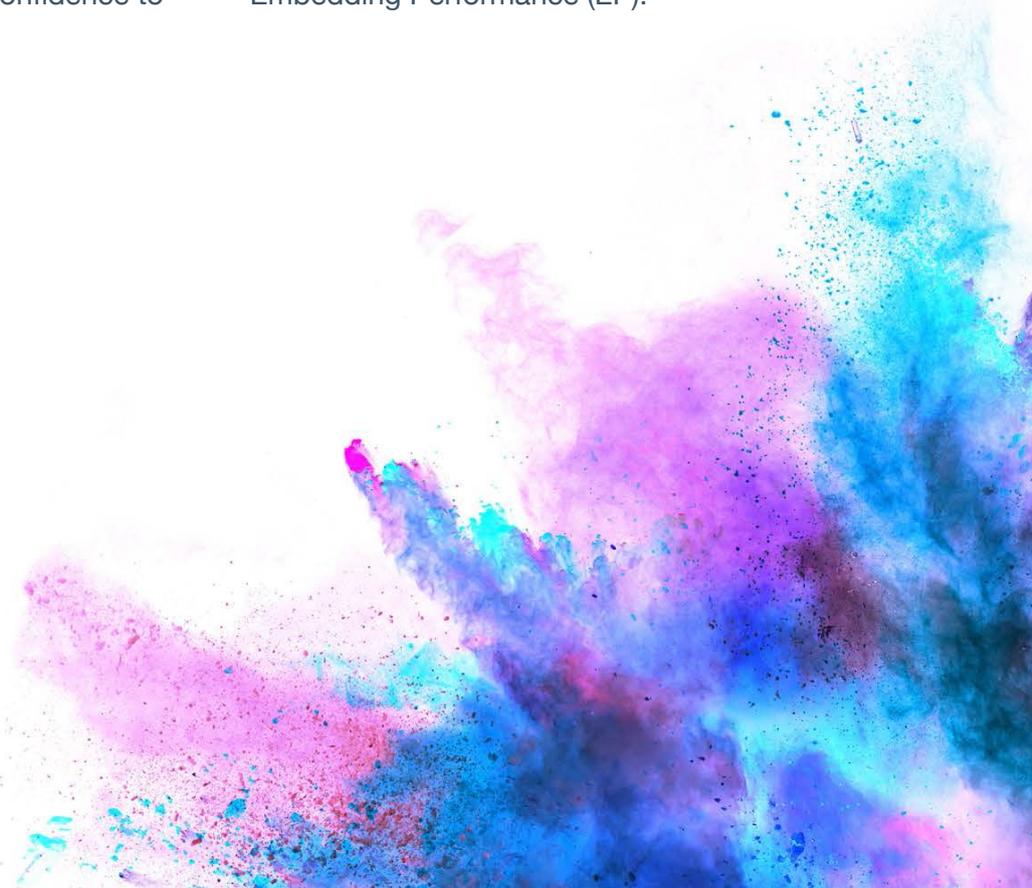
The Centre for Ageing Better states that employment support is failing this age group. Figures from SkilledPeople.com reveal that 65% of unemployed over-50s would work for free and 75.5% are willing to accept a lower salary in order to secure employment; while 80% state that they are victims of age discrimination.

According to BITC, one in three workers will be over 50 by 2020, and half of all UK adults will be over 50 by 2030. “Understanding the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population”, the organisation states, “is vital.” A&O and MKF created ReStart to tackle these challenges, and to embrace these opportunities.

Designing the programme

ReStart is designed to help over-50s think through their next steps following a period of unemployment. It aims to equip participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence to re-enter the job market.

The programme content was developed by A&O, MKF, the Executive Coaching Consultancy (ECC)’s Good Business Initiative (GBI), and Embedding Performance (EP).





Who was involved?

Executive Coaching Consultancy (ECC) have been in the business of providing executive coaching since 1994, working with a huge range of clients, often as an extension of their own internal resource. They provide executive coaching, leadership development and coach training programmes. They work to help businesses develop their talent pool and improve retention, develop diversity strategies and support female talent.

The Good Business Initiative (GBI) works with organisations to help them unlock their potential and improve their positive impact on society. Many businesses understand that they have a critical role to play in solving a range of social and environmental issues and we are turning that understanding into action.

They are a not for profit organisation launched by the Executive Coaching Consultancy (ECC). They have been part of helping organisations connect their practices to help address broader social issues and they passionately believe in the positive role for business in society.

Embedding Performance (EP) have been delivering training, coaching and consulting with global clients across a number of sectors for many years. As their name suggests, they are committed to designing and delivering development interventions that stick and enhance organisational performance.

They have a wealth of experience, working with professional service firms, building skills and confidence in essential capabilities including project management, internal consulting, influencing, facilitation and presentations skills.

The theory of change

The government paper *Fuller Working Lives* suggests that, when it comes to employment, those in later life should be encouraged to “rethink, refresh and reinvent”. When designing ReStart, we put this theory of change at the heart of the programme:

Rethink: reframe outlook and search strategy

Refresh: build knowledge and improve capabilities, e.g. using digital tools and interview techniques

Reinvent: address barriers to progress and build a plan of action

Methods of delivery

With this theory of change as the driving principle, we created a varied programme designed around diverse methods of delivery:

- ✓ Face-to-face workshops hosted at A&O’s London offices
- ✓ 1:1 coaching from accredited coaches at ECC
- ✓ Mentoring from A&O business volunteers
- ✓ E-learning via the connectr platform (hosted by MKF)
- ✓ Peer support
- ✓ Free access to Career Innovation’s online learning platform, CiZone.

Growth and evolution: **The first two years**

ReStart launched in 2017, welcoming 38 participants in its first year. In 2018, A&O and MKF sought to evolve the programme rather than simply grow the number of participants, focusing on creating a well-rounded scheme that maintained a high level of personal support from coaches, mentors and facilitators.

Participants were selected following an online application process and a telephone interview. All those who took part were aged 50 or over, had been unemployed for a period between 27 and 52 weeks and were living in London, with no access to outplacement services.

The following data provides a snapshot of the programme's first two years, including details from interviews conducted in March 2019 with previous participants.

2017 participants

38 people took part

The impact data from the first ReStart programme is as follows:

Of the 13 participants we later interviewed, in March 2019:

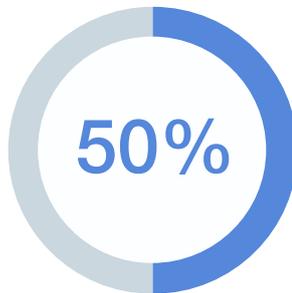
In full-time work
54%

Employed part-time
31%

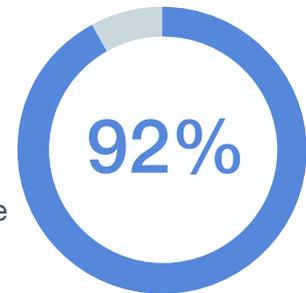
Unemployed
15%



Of those interviewed in March 2019 that have worked, 50% attribute their employment success in some part to the ReStart programme



92% of those interviewed in March 2019 would recommend the ReStart programme



Employment examples

Here are some examples of the types of jobs secured by 2017 participants:

“I just started a new role with a fine foods company selling caviar and chocolate. In addition to this, last year I consulted on a three-year music project, and this year I am managing a minimal techno artist from Berlin.”

“I retired from the legal profession and retrained as a pharmacy dispensary assistant. I train and work at the same time.”

“I’m a global mobility manager for Tata.”

The planning for this role happened six months before ReStart but the programme gave me confidence when interviewing with the MD of the company.”

Testimonials about ReStart

The overwhelming majority of participants had a positive experience in 2017, as these testimonials show:

“The confidence boost that I saw it give other people wherever they are is its biggest success. I think it’s a fabulous initiative. There is nothing else out there like it. Long may it continue; people really do need help!”

“The sessions were well organised, valuable and helpful, as they help motivate you. When you don’t have a job, you’re not in the right zone and life is bleak, you need that. After the talks

we had I felt inspired and encouraged.”

“I found it uplifting to know that I wasn’t alone and that others have the same problems.”

2018 participants

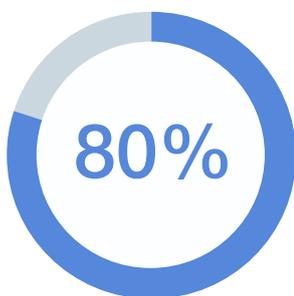
27 people took part

The impact data for 2018 is as follows:

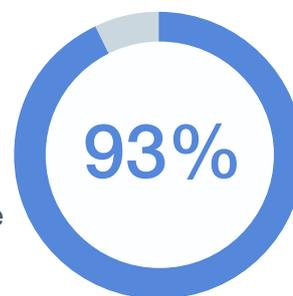
Of the 15 participants we later interviewed, in March 2019:



Of those interviewed in March 2019 that have worked, 80% attribute their employment success in some part to the ReStart programme



93% of those interviewed in March 2019 would recommend the ReStart programme



Employment examples

Many participants in 2018 found employment after the programme, as they describe in their own words:

“Straight after the programme I was offered a work placement with Currys in customer services. It obviously went well as I was offered a full-time position in sales. I have progressed well and apparently am being considered as a potential team leader.”

“Although ReStart gave me the tools to find a position, it came across in interviews that I was keen but my heart wasn’t in it. After some deep soul searching and research, I came across this emerging industry, blockchain. I used to be an IT analyst and now I have trained to become a blockchain consultant for cyber currency.”

“I’m working as a practice manager for a chartered accountant. It is similar to what I have done before but in a new specialism. This programme made me realise I was capable of doing something else other than exactly what I had done before.”

Testimonials about ReStart

Once again, 2018 participants were full of praise for the impact that ReStart had upon them:

“It gave me good interview skills, clarified my career options and boosted my confidence. I now do a lot of ReStart programmes for women so I use what I learnt to help and upskill them. The

support of the team is like nothing I have felt before.”

“I am more confident when presenting myself in person and on paper. It gave me a greater sense of clarity.”

“I think it’s invaluable for people looking for a permanent job because it gives you information, inspiration, confidence and contacts.”

Spotlight on 2019: How it worked

ReStart entered into its third year in 2019. The next sections will look at 2019 in depth, outlining how it worked and assessing the results and inspiring stories it achieved.

Participants

The first step in constructing the 2019 programme was to attract participants. To do this, information about ReStart was posted on online employment hubs SkilledPeople.com and Reed.co.uk, as well as being emailed to 22,000 of Reed's registered candidates. The programme was also advertised through 20 London Job Centres.

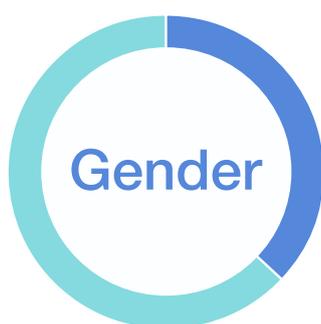
Key details about 2019 cohort

Number that started the course: **30**

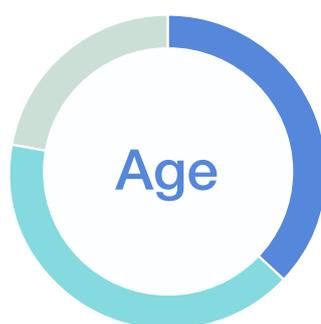
Number that attended three out of the four workshops: **27**

Withdrew from programme due to gaining employment: **1**

Withdrew from programme due to illness/personal circumstances: **2**



37% female
63% male



37% aged 50-55
41% aged 56-60
22% aged 61-65



56% white
7% black/African/Caribbean/black British
15% Asian/Asian British
7% mixed/multiple ethnic groups
15% prefer not to say

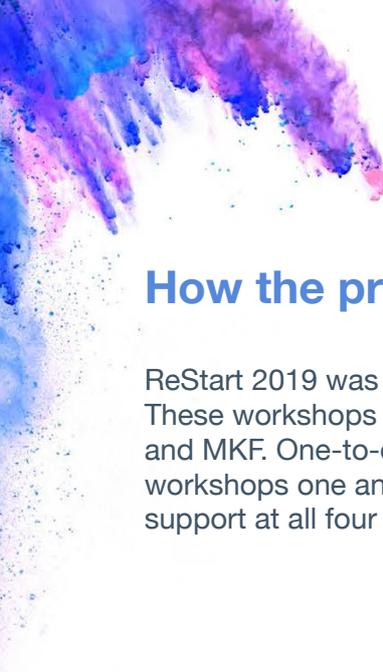
Previous industries in which 2019 participants had worked included:

Civil Service/Insurance/Librarian/Broadcasting/
Sales/Marketing/IT/Financial Sectors/
Administration/Personal Training/Accountancy/
Publishing/Event Management/Coaching/
Music/Business Consultancy

Quoted 2019 participation objectives:

inspiration in a change of career/greater
awareness of myself/have a mentor/network
with like-minded people/feel more confident
in interviews/help with CV/upskilling on
application process/reignite positivity and
motivation/learn how to overcome age
discrimination/identify key transferable skills/
improve self-confidence/rediscover hope and
confidence/improve technical capabilities/
action planning for job search/to feel
supported/develop the right mindset





How the programme was delivered

ReStart 2019 was delivered across four face-to-face workshops, from January through to March. These workshops were made up of various sessions delivered by facilitators from the GBI, EP and MKF. One-to-one coaching sessions with accredited coaches from the ECC were held in workshops one and two, and also took place between those workshops. A&O volunteers provided support at all four workshops, acting as mentors and conducting 1:1 mock interviews.

Workshop one: Starting again

- Programme overview & objectives
- Icebreaker introductions
- The challenges of finding work
- Making the most of the programme
- Speed networking with mentors
- Coaching vs. mentoring
- Deepening your self-awareness
- 1:1 session with coaches from ECC

Workshop two: Taking action

- Working style principles
- Personal brand
- Growing your network
- Networking in action
- Session with both coach and mentor
- Creating a sustainable action plan

Workshop three: Recruitment in today's world

- CV review
- Guest speaker from LinkedIn
- Digital applications & aptitude tests
- Modern recruitment trends
- Session with mentor
- Communication & interview skills
- 1:1 mock interviews

Workshop four: Sustaining your search

- Making a change
- Dealing with setbacks
- Revisiting action plan
- Session with mentor
- Resilience
- Panel discussion
- Final reflections



E-learning modules

In addition to being used for recruitment for the programme, MKF's online platform, connectr, was utilised to deliver e-learning modules before, during and after the four workshops. This served to prepare participants for the various sessions, as well as facilitating follow-up tasks and allowing feedback to be collated.

What changed in 2019?

Between 2017 and 2018, significant changes were made to the programme, producing positive results. The sessions in the 2019 programme, therefore, remained largely unchanged from the previous year. However, the volume of content delivered within each session was reduced to allow greater time and focus on a smaller number of exercises and discussions. This also accommodated longer 1:1 sessions with coaches and mentors, and allowed more time for mock interviews.

Based upon previous feedback, the learning was structured differently throughout the four workshops in order to balance the delivery of practical tips versus reflective/analytical tasks throughout the course of the programme. This was to avoid each workshop focusing too heavily on a single developmental methodology.

Spotlight on 2019: Results

Building on the positive results of previous years, ReStart 2019 produced another set of encouraging outcomes for its participants – both in terms of its transformation of outlooks and the catalyst it provided for real change in participants’ employment status.

Post-programme employment

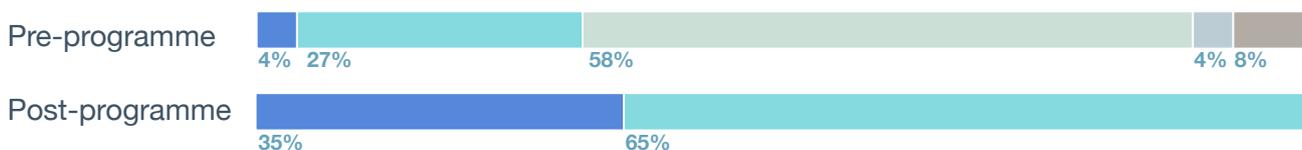
The headline result of ReStart 2019 is that 11 out of the 30 participants that attended at least one session of the course have been, or are currently, in employment just three months after the programme ended. This includes participants who are in temporary, part-time, full-time, contractual or self-employed work. Some participants have returned to industries in which they previously worked, while others have decided to pursue new avenues.

Participant feedback

As well as facilitating changes in employment status, ReStart had a transformative effect on participants’ key skills and mindset.

Questionnaires, which were completed both pre- and post-programme by a total of 27 participants, asked those who took part to indicate how much they agreed with certain key statements about themselves. The results, shown below, reveal the impact that ReStart 2019 had on those involved.

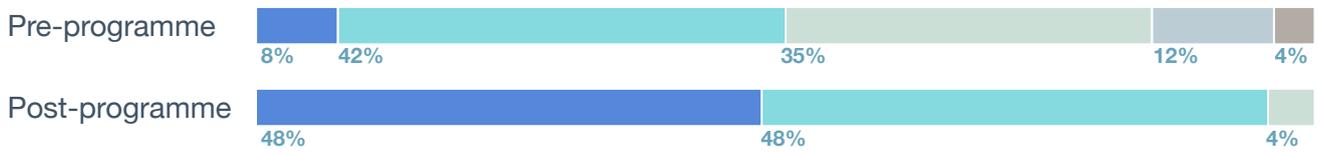
I know how to tackle my personal barriers to work



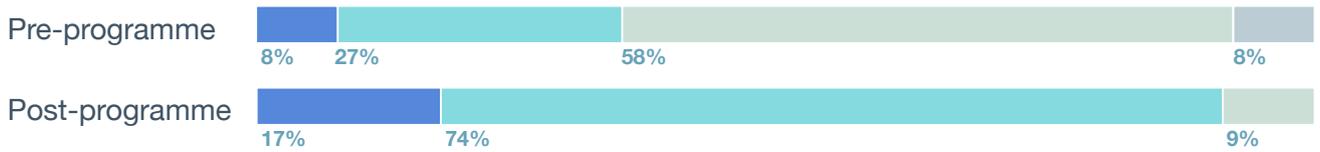
Key:



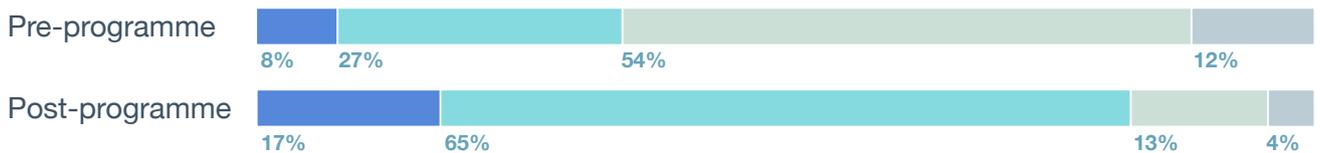
I understand how to improve my CV



I know how to present myself to future employers



I have good interview technique



I know what my future career possibilities are



I know what my strengths are



How do you currently feel about your job search?



Key:



Words participants used to describe ReStart



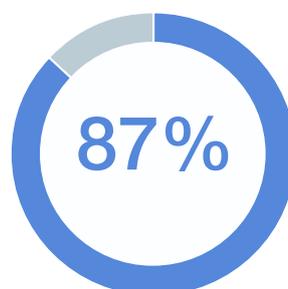
Workshop feedback

ReStart 2019 participants also gave detailed feedback on each of the four workshops they took part in. A snapshot of the results is presented below. It demonstrates how participants gained in confidence and improved their skillsets as they progressed through the course.

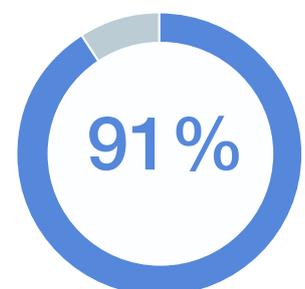
How did we measure success of workshops? The desired key ReStart outcome was for these workshops to make attendees feel more confident about their careers.

Workshop one: Starting again

“Looking for a job has been lonely and this session has been a positive experience just by being in the room with everyone today.”



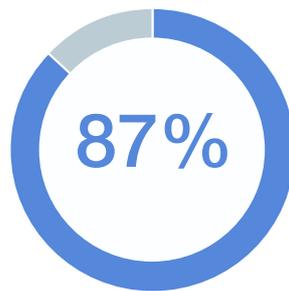
rated the workshop 'excellent' or 'very good'



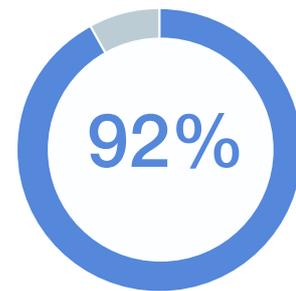
measured 'Strongly agree' or 'agree' against key ReStart outcome after workshop one

Workshop two: Taking action

“The mentoring and coaching made me think on things. I knew what I didn’t want to do, I know what I am good at and today I’m starting to articulate what I do want to do.”



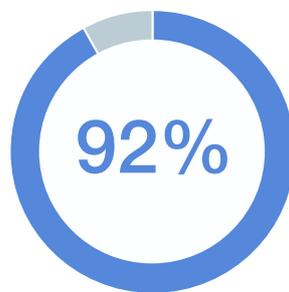
rated the workshop 'excellent' or 'very good'



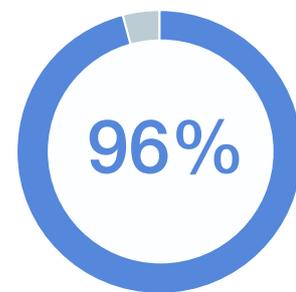
measured 'Strongly agree' or 'agree' against key ReStart outcome after workshop two

Workshop three: Recruitment in today’s world

“My mentor is a great listener and her input is considered and useful. I like that she makes sure I have actions set before our next meeting.”



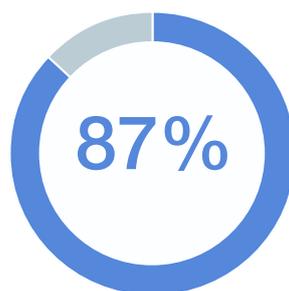
rated the workshop 'excellent' or 'very good'



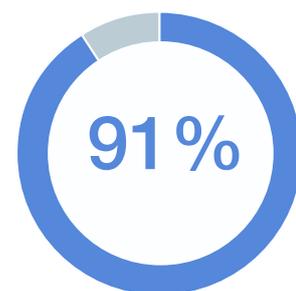
measured 'Strongly agree' or 'agree' against key ReStart outcome after workshop three

Workshop four: Sustaining your search

“I can’t believe it was free. I would have happily paid several thousand pounds for it.”



rated the workshop 'excellent' or 'very good'



measured 'Strongly agree' or 'agree' against key ReStart outcome after workshop four

'Bin or bank'

The final workshop concluded with participants reflecting on what they will 'bin' from previous attitudes and approaches to their job search, and what they will 'bank' from the programme moving forwards. Here's what the participants came up with:



Bin

- Searching jobs boards
- Negative thoughts about interviews
- Spiralling after knockbacks
- Procrastination
- Avoiding elevator pitch
- Tendency to catastrophise everything
- Making speculative applications
- Holding myself back
- Negativity and inaction
- My inner critic



Bank

- Circle of concern
- Increased LinkedIn score
- Sphere of influence
- Visualising the future
- LinkedIn profile
- Encouragement from my buddy
- Mentor relationship
- Tailor each application
- Increasing my network
- Focused approach to my job search
- Sector-specific recruiters
- Create my own job

Spotlight on 2019: Mentors

As in previous years, each ReStart participant in 2019 was matched with a volunteer mentor – a current employee at A&O.

Matches were based on the industries in which participants and mentors had worked, both in the past and currently, as well as both parties' participation objectives or expectations.

Why take part?

Many of the mentors had worked on the programme in previous years, or signed up following recommendations from colleagues.

Mentors were motivated to participate by a number of factors, including personal experience, as the following testimonials show:

“I think it is important to be involved in and support these initiatives of the firm. It also provides us as mentors a great valuable experience.”

“My own personal experience in finding my preferred job after moving from Nigeria was challenging. I felt my learnings from that experience would be useful as a ReStart mentor.”

“My sister has been out of work for a long time and I'm conscious that I could easily be the person looking for help.”

Mentor role and feedback

How mentors helped

In each of the four workshops, mentors held meetings with their mentees. Within these meetings, advice was offered across a number of key areas:

- ✓ Discussing mentee's transferable skills
- ✓ Identifying potential job roles and/or sectors
- ✓ Improving mentee's CV
- ✓ Supporting mentee with interview practice and skills
- ✓ Being a sounding board and listening to mentee's concerns
- ✓ Helping mentee to understand their strengths using a strengths profile questionnaire

Mentor feedback

Mentors gave feedback after the programme on the various aspects of their role, and the impact they felt they had had. The results were positive:

I feel my advice and support was helpful to



By the end of the programme I think my mentee had made positive steps towards employment



I believe it's important for A&O to provide volunteering opportunities for staff



Being a mentor was fulfilling and makes me proud to work for my firm



I would volunteer to be a ReStart mentor again



I would recommend being a ReStart mentor to a colleague



Key:

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Didn't answer

Mentors were also asked what the best part of their role was. Here's what they had to say:

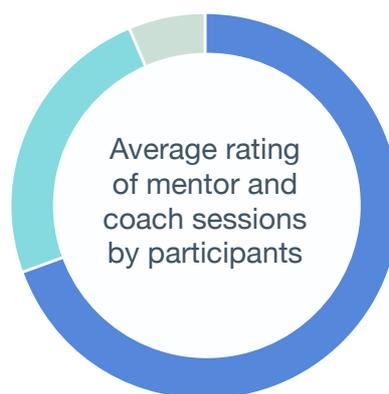
“The opportunity that it provides to participants and the feeling that you can, in a small way, contribute to someone else’s future.”

“Having a mentee who starts with low self-esteem and confidence and shines bright at the end of the programme – it makes you both feel good.”

“Getting to know people and helping them through a life-changing period.”

Participant feedback on mentors and coaches

Not only did the mentors have a great experience in volunteering for ReStart, the participants themselves found their relationship with their mentors invaluable. Participants also valued the input of the accredited Executive Coaching Consultancy coaches involved in the programme:



Key:

■ Excellent
 ■ Very good
 ■ Satisfactory

Mentees on mentors – in quotes:

“My mentor has really helped with her knowledge and skills. Her willingness to share is admirable and really appreciated.”

“Accessible, dedicated, personable and enthusiastic. A thoroughly nice bloke

with great ideas on how to improve things.”

“My mentor is a great listener and her input is considered and useful. I like that she makes sure I have actions set before our next meeting.”

“The mentorship was the most important part of the programme for me. I’m still in touch with my mentor, Kevin. We speak every four weeks and we’re due to speak again at the end of this month.”

Mentees on coaches – in quotes:

“My coach gave me great feedback and made me aware of things I do that I hadn’t even noticed.”

“She was empathetic but also made me think about the reasons why I might

respond negatively to situations and how I might change this in constructive ways.”

“The coach was thoughtful, perceptive and a good listener.”

“I applied for my job following advice from my coach to reach out to an old colleague, which I had never considered in the past. Her coaching has really changed my negative mindset.”



Spotlight on 2019: Success stories

While the stats go a long way to showing how successful ReStart 2019 was, participants' testimonials and stories really highlight just how positive an experience it was for them.

Inspiring participant testimonials about a number of aspects of the programme were received – a selection of their thoughts is included here.

Job search

Participants were asked about how ReStart has helped them with their job search strategies:

“It has given me a different outlook. Before, I had tunnel vision, where all I could see was my lack of experience. I couldn't see how to use my skills and strengths and how to adapt them to new challenges. Before I came here I had virtually given up but now I know I am not the only one and that I do have various skills that I can bring to the table. I have the

bigger picture and overall I have a much more positive attitude.” – Janice Williams

“There is no doubt that being on the ReStart programme has boosted my confidence greatly. I was lost initially before the programme but the course content put me back in the driving seat. I am glad I attended.” – Kevin Makinde

“Before ReStart I was feeling old and that my age was counting against me in my job search. Now I feel much more positive in everything. The course helped me rethink my approach and my attitude. It was rather like CBT, I needed a change of mindset to alter my negative perceptions.” – Fionnuala McCarthy

Anders

“I felt exasperated and deflated before the course. I had applied for a lot of jobs with little success and I felt something needed to change. I could carry on applying for more and more jobs but I felt I would not actually accomplish anything unless I changed my strategy; I just wasn't sure what changes I needed to make.

“The course gave me the tools I needed for my job search: self-awareness and a good CV. Being more aware of my motivation and strengths has really helped to make my action plans more focused and also made me more resilient; I try to remember the achievements and successes I have had in the past. Now I am more proactive, seeking out opportunities that are more specifically suitable for me.

“The mentorship was the most important part of the programme for me. I'm still in touch with my mentor, Kevin. We speak every four weeks and we're due to speak again at the end of this month.

“I have a meeting with a recruitment agency tomorrow with regard to a job I previously wouldn't have gone for, but being on the ReStart programme has given me the courage to go for it. The programme has given me the confidence to focus on my strengths rather than worry too much about my weaknesses. Before I wouldn't have gone for this opportunity but now I think I might as well give it a try; the worst that can happen is that I don't get it.”

Janey

“I've been in my job now for three months and it's going well. It's really busy but we're making progress, I'm getting to grips with things and the people are really lovely. I like being in this department because it's fast-paced and it's so of the moment. Once you're in the Civil Service there are always other opportunities if this comes to an end so I'm not worried about work in the future.

I felt very lucky to have the mentor I had. He was incredibly encouraging and enthusiastic. My mentor really fired me up and made me believe that things are possible that previously weren't possible. I had found out I got my job before I first met my mentor, but he immediately changed tact and helped me to think about how to integrate back into the workplace. I had a senior role before and was going back into a junior role, and the best advice my mentor gave me was: show them, don't tell them. There are

800 people in my department and the average age is 29, and roughly 700 of them are under 40, so I'm working with a young workforce. Being older and in a junior role you want your colleagues to know how capable you are, but it falls on deaf ears. It's no good telling them, just do it!

I kept in touch with my mentor. I had a bit of a tricky situation when I started my job so I did check in with my mentor and he gave me some tips on that. And I've kept in touch with one of the participants.

Being on the ReStart programme makes you realise that it's not just you that's over 50 and looking for a job. You see those that are stuck in their ways and it shows you not to be like them. The professionalism, the chance to meet the Allen & Overy people and the other facilitators, it was fantastic.”



Recommending ReStart

The overwhelming majority of those who took part said they would recommend ReStart to others. Here are some of the reasons why, in the participants' own words:

“The course is brilliant and I’ve recommended it to a number of people. It was great from a motivation point of view and being focused.”

“Thank you all; the time given and the help received are all greatly appreciated. It was like being brought in to a warm, comfortable and friendly environment, after being left stranded alone on an ice shelf.”

“I would definitely recommend it. Engage with it and go with an open mind. You’ll be surprised by the extent of resources at your disposal. It’s not generic, it’s not the same programme rolled out every year. It seems to be constantly changing and targeting the particular needs of the attendee age group. I really cannot advocate it enough.”

“It gives you a broad overview of all of the possible options out there to try and get work.”

It shows you the problems that you have to overcome being an older job seeker and how to overcome them, particularly with regard to using technology such as LinkedIn.”

“I found the programme immensely helpful. I have had great advice and now I feel more confident about gaining employment. All of my uncertainties and questions have been answered.”

“I found the whole programme too fabulous for words. By that I mean the well-thought out structure, the people organising the programme, the thoughtfulness and kindness of the individuals teaching and caring for us, and the constant attention shown to everyone on the programme. People left with smiles on their faces and a jaunt in their step. To be invited to be part of the programme was a true honour, it has been invaluable and I am truly grateful. Thank you.”

Summary:

Looking to the future

It's clear from all the stories, feedback and data that 2019 has been another great year for ReStart. The programme has continued to build upon the successes of previous years, with positive results for both participants and mentors.

For those who took part, the programme acted as a clear catalyst for change: not only did it enable 37% of attendees to secure employment within three months of finishing, but 91% of participants felt more confident about their future career goals and next steps after completing the programme.

Feedback for the future

Looking ahead to 2020, we will use the feedback provided by participants and mentors to continue to evolve the ReStart programme.

Next year, we will:

- ✓ Allow more time for specific tasks and activities
- ✓ Increase the number of face-to-face workshops
- ✓ Create a modular system with a choice of topics to study
- ✓ Partner with a Returner programme
- ✓ Conclude the programme with a recruitment fair

In particular, it is felt that widening partner support in the programme would be highly beneficial in providing accessible links back into the workplace, and in offering support to those who would require assistance reintegrating back into a work environment. Introducing a modular system, it is thought, would create more time spent on a particular area of focus; but at the same time, this would pose the risk of valuable content being overlooked.

These recommendations, along with the others, will be considered for integration into future programmes.