Assessing the Department for Work and Pensions’ recent Employment Programmes: A discussion of methodology, findings and impact on policy

Over the last 12 months the DWP has applied quasi-experimental methods, previously rarely used by DWP analysts, in order to assess the impact of its latest employment programmes. This paper explains how they were applied in a practical environment and identifies the key methodological issues faced. The paper will discuss the merits of using Propensity Score Matching in order to construct a counterfactual group using non-eligible participants as the comparison pool and will highlight issues faced when working with Governmental administrative data. Lastly, the findings from the evaluations of several recent employment programmes will be discussed along with their impact upon current welfare policy.