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## Networking and referrals



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Effective networking and referral routes are particularly important in supporting 50+ customers because they can provide:

- good sources of empathy, understanding and peer support
- sources of skills training
- access to self-help groups such as job clubs
- access to specialist services
- specialist advice on financial management and pensions
- access to the government's psychological therapies programme.

The most important thing is to build sustainable contacts with all your referrers and those you refer to. Networking gives positive outcomes for all involved but needs to be worked at. Having a named contact takes out all the guesswork when you contact an organisation.

Working with 50+ customers can seem daunting as they may have multiple barriers that

need to be addressed. But in fact it is not as difficult as it may first appear. You just need to research your local area and find the specialists who offer extra services for this group in case you need to refer on. This research will give you a wealth of relevant provision opportunities.

People may come to you as a mandatory or a voluntary referral (ie they have been sent by Jobcentre Plus or they have chosen to join your service). Remember that mandatory referrals may need extra support – they may feel that they have been forced into attending so as not to lose their benefits. Voluntary referrals are often more open to moving forward as they have made the decision themselves to work with you. See the section on [Attraction](#) for information on how to promote your service to this group of people.

#### Disclaimer

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