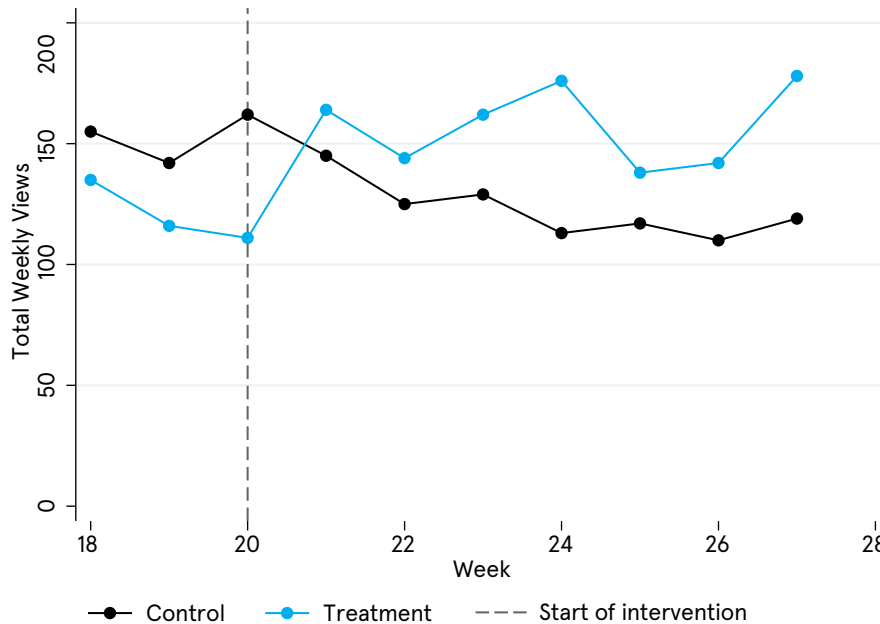


Figure 1: Increases in views of Summary Care Records by pharmacists



### The Health and Work Conversation

Health is affected by a broad range of factors. For example, there is strong evidence that employment has considerable positive impacts on physical and mental health, while spells of unemployment put people at risk of developing ill-health<sup>5</sup>. With this in mind, by collaborating with employment services, we developed initiatives which specifically support those out of work. In 2017, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) began to roll out the Health and Work Conversation (HWC) – an intervention that we designed with the DWP to increase motivation and goal-setting among unemployed people with health conditions. Recently, we trained 100 DWP staff to deliver face-to-face training to work coaches across the country. The training gives work coaches the skills and tools to have effective and supportive first conversations with new claimants.

The DWP is now offering the training to all work coaches, including Universal Credit staff, meaning that 16,000 people will be trained to deliver the HWC. In total, around 300,000 people will participate in the HWC in 2017/18. Early reactions during the roll-out have been positive, with staff describing the HWC as a ‘powerful engagement tool’ and more claimants asking for follow-up sessions than expected.

### Looking ahead

We will continue to find new ways of improving NHS and welfare services at low cost, explore new ways of reducing childhood obesity in Lambeth and Southwark with the Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity, and work with the Wellcome Trust on how behavioural insights can be applied to medical science funding.

## Early years, education and skills

**A successful education system is one in which everyone is helped to reach their potential. We worked to understand and tackle the barriers that people of all ages face, regardless of the route they choose to pursue.**

The increased emphasis on technical qualifications and apprenticeships means that the routes offered through our education system are increasingly diverse, but take-up of these routes is still relatively low and strongly related to an individual's background. Through our work with the Department for Education (DfE), this year we sought to understand the barriers to technical and apprenticeship routes, and ran trials to increase employer engagement with the incoming changes in this area.

This sat alongside a continued emphasis on improving core school provision, where we particularly focused on encouraging collaboration between schools and supporting teacher recruitment efforts. Given the importance of early education, we also undertook a project to better understand how parents make decisions surrounding childcare.

Choice and opportunity should not expire after a person leaves formal education. Supporting on the UK Government's lifelong learning agenda, we conducted research using our online experimental platform – Predictiv – to identify key moments when adults are most likely to engage with retraining opportunities.

The course that a person chooses, and the content and implementation of that course, is only part of the picture. Factors outside the school or college can play an even greater role in an individual's chance of success. Our work over the past year has continued to develop interventions to mobilise social support to help learners succeed.

### **Increasing post-16 English and maths pass rates through mobilising social support**

Since August 2014, 16–19-year-olds in the UK who have not already achieved a GCSE grade A\*–C (grades 9–4 in the reformed system) in maths and/or English have been required to study these subjects as part of their study programme. In 2015, this became a condition of funding, with many 16–19-year-old learners flowing into further education (FE) colleges. In the 2016 exams, following the tightening of the rules, the pass rates (A\*–C) for those resitting their GCSEs were just 27 per cent in English and 30 per cent in maths.

The FE college learners we interviewed identified 'not knowing who to turn to' as a key barrier to their academic engagement. This chimes with the literature, which consistently finds strong social support to be predictive of better academic outcomes, including higher aspirations, persistence and attainment. As part of the Behavioural Research Centre for Adult Skills and Knowledge (ASK), run as a partnership between us and the DfE, we collaborated with Professor Todd Rogers at Harvard University to design an intervention which would encourage those around the learner to provide support throughout their course.