

# NEATH Port Talbot COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Cabinet

13<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Report of the Head of Support Services and Transformation

#### Matter for Decision

#### Wards Affected:

All Wards

**Report Title:** Youth Engagement Strategy

#### Purpose of the Report:

1. To request that members formally adopt the Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy 2024- 2034

#### Executive Summary:

2. The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy of 2013-2023 required renewing to better align with the new Welsh Governments Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPPF) (Appendix 1).
3. The new Youth Engagement Strategy (Appendix 2) sets out a multi-agency approach to ensuring young people's engagement in education, employment or training (EET) and also to help respond to young people who are at risk of being homeless. Strategic responsibility lies within the Education Directorate and operational responsibility for implementation of the Framework lies with the Youth Service led by the Youth Engagement & Progression Co-ordinator. An easy read version will be provided prior to publication of the Strategy.
4. The new Youth Engagement Strategy sets out systematic mechanisms to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET), who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. The Strategy highlights the processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners.
5. This Youth Engagement Strategy identifies how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.

## **Background:**

6. The Welsh Government Updated the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) in 2022. The amended YEPF now has an additional focus on supporting young people who are at risk of becoming homeless.
7. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners.
8. To reflect the changes within the YEPF and to give a new focus and emphasis on the Youth Engagement work within Neath Port Talbot it was decided that the Youth Engagement Strategy required refreshing and renewing. The current Youth Engagement Strategy had expired, the new YEPF had changed which included a change in the age range with the amended version supporting young people aged 11-18 instead of 11-25. The new YEPF also included supporting young people at risk of youth homelessness.
9. The new Youth Engagement Strategy 2024-2034 (YES) has been developed with key stakeholders and through a range of consultations and workshops. Partnering Regeneration Development Ltd (PRD) were engaged as consultants to help develop the new strategy and were central in the consultation process.

## **Why do we need a Strategy?**

10. Neath Port Talbot is a distinct community, with opportunities and challenges that impact on and shape the lives of young people. It is important that the systematic mechanisms and processes outlined in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework are used in a way that works for our young people, in our community. This Youth Engagement Strategy considers how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.
11. The Strategy will help Neath Port Talbot achieve the vision – ‘All young people in will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them. Working together we will reduce youth unemployment in Neath Port Talbot by positively encouraging and supporting young people to stay in education, employment and training. We will prevent youth homelessness, and ensure young people have the safe and stable homelife they need.’

## Who Is This Strategy For?

12. This Strategy requires a multi-agency approach to ensure young people have the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. It is for all the organisations that work with and empower young people, including Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Careers Wales, and a range of providers and third-sector partners. It is also for the young people who live in Neath Port Talbot so they can understand the choices available to them and the options they have.

## How Was It Developed?

13. The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy builds on The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 and a range of other local, regional and national policies. It uses data and evidence from a range of sources to understand the needs of our young people, and the challenges which impact on their transition into adulthood.
14. Engagement was at the heart of the development of this strategy. This included conversations, through focus groups and one-to-one meetings, with over 100 young people, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGBTQ+ young people and NEET young people. Their lived experiences, ideas and perspectives have informed this strategy.
15. This strategy has also been informed by a workshop session that brought together a range of services and providers to explore how to “work together to identify young people who need support and provide appropriate support to ensure they have positive outcomes.”

## Strategic Objectives

16. The strategy focusses on five strategic objectives. These outcomes, set out below, are interlinked and build on the *better outcomes for young people* diagram taken from the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook.
  - Early Identification. Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are identified as early as possible.
  - Working Collaboratively. Services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The support available to young people is monitored and evaluated to ensure it is meeting their needs.
- **The Right Provision.** The right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.
- **Strategic Oversight and Leadership.**

## **Early Identification**

17. Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people's needs. Not only does this give the best chance of preventing situations such as a young person becoming homeless or disengaging from education, employment or training, it can also increase individuals' engagement, improve attainment, and develop pathways to help them achieve more positive outcomes.
18. Early identification can also, prevent escalating need or risk, and in so doing reduces demand for statutory and/or specialist services.
19. The strategy outlines the following:
  - Working across services to increase the public's awareness, with a focus on support, benefits and entitlements for young people who are or are at risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
  - Evaluating the Upstream Pilot to think about how we can embed the early identification of young people at risk of homelessness. The Upstream Pilot was delivered in 4 schools where young people in years 10 and 11 completed a survey which helped identify young people needing support in a number of areas. The Pilot was run in partnership with the voluntary sector organisation Llamau.
  - Addressing the barriers to data sharing and explore ways to bring together data from a wide range of places to identify young people who would benefit from additional support.
  - Exploring ways to encourage and enable young people to ask for help as soon as they identify an issue.
  - Providing the training and workforce development needed to enable those who work with and engage young people to have the professional judgement that is needed to identify the young people that need support.
  - Increase multi-agency input into early identification by piloting Multi Agency Transition Screening Meetings (MATSM) in schools.

## **Working Collaboratively**

20. We are seeing an increase in demand for support services from young people and it is therefore vital that partners work together to meet this demand, minimise duplication, and enable young people to access the support they need.
21. Young people in engagement expressed concern about having to tell their stories to multiple services and said that a perceived lack of joined-up thinking and poor communication between services can disengage and frustrate them.
22. To ensure that services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people in Neath Port Talbot who need it, the Strategy sets out to:
  - Ensure those in lead worker roles have the understanding, training and continuing professional development needed to enable young people to access support.
  - Maximise the use of tools that enable joint working, for example joint commissioning and the establishment of an alternative providers framework.
  - Refresh and repurpose the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group around the three common principles that are key to multi-agency working: information sharing, joint decision-making and intervention.
  - Map provision available to young people and establish shared cross-partnership pathways.
  - Explore and exploit the opportunities resulting from the Curriculum for Wales to provide person-centred support for young people.
  - Work collaboratively with schools, the third sector and local area coordinators to provide community-based, local support that young people can access.
  - Work with schools to implement school-community partnerships aimed at delivering interventions capable of preventing youth homelessness. The foundation of these interventions should be partnerships between schools, healthcare, mental health support, community-based social services and the third sector.
  - Explore options to provide wellbeing support for young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.

- Continue to improve the links between services for young people aged 16 and 17, known to NEET and housing teams.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

23. Monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring support is meeting individual young people's needs, enabling early identification and person-centred approaches. Evaluation and monitoring are part of a process of reflection and review that can ensure lessons are learnt, and improvements are made, providing young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities.
24. To ensure the support that is available to young people is monitored and evaluated so that it meets their needs, the strategy sets out to:
  - Evolve the role of the Youth Engagement Strategy Group to include a self-evaluation partnership looking at how well systems are working.
  - Give young people a role in evaluating the services that support them.
  - Look at how outcome-driven approaches can be used to evaluate and monitor the impact of the support our young people receive, in order to inform decision-making on a case-by-case and collective basis.
  - Establish a monitoring process to improve the monitoring of the transitions and destinations of our young people.
  - Create a multi-agency pathway for young people who have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
  - Develop an evaluation framework for front-line services to assess their progress towards youth homelessness prevention.

## **The Right Provision**

25. Young people want to be able to choose their employment, skills and/or training pathways, take ownership of their future, and choose what they think is right for them.
26. As well as using the framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment.
27. Working together the strategy aims to make sure the right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them. To do this we will:

- Work with the employability and skills teams to create work ready programmes / work experience.
- Involve young people in service design, enabling them to shape and inform the services that are there to help them.
- Promote the full range of pathways including apprenticeships, degree-apprenticeships and vocational qualifications – and how to access them.
- Ensure equity and quality of advice and support to all young people across Neath Port Talbot.
- Work with schools and education providers to make the most of the opportunities the Curriculum for Wales offers.
- Enable young people to successfully transition to and from the support they need, helping them to transition to further support (should they need it) when they leave youth services.

## **Strategic Oversight and Leadership**

28. For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."
29. To bring partners together to work collaboratively, sharing responsibility and accountability, the Strategy sets out to:
  - Put in place a governance structure that supports and enables partnership working, enabling multi-agency working.
  - Secure buy-in from leadership across the partnership to enable sharing of knowledge, power, decision-making and funding to change services and interventions to meet the needs of our young people.
  - Re-establish the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group, to deliver the aspirations of the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
  - Ensure young people know who is responsible and accountable for the support they receive.

### **Financial Impacts:**

30. There are no financial impacts as a result of this report. However, it is important to note that work involved in addressing the actions within the Youth Engagement Strategy relies on external funding through grants that are due to expire 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Financial decisions will be made after the budget announcements.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

31. A first stage Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has found that the adoption of the strategy will have a positive impact on the protected characteristic of age, as the strategy will focus specifically on young people and their support.
32. No negative impacts have been identified and as such a full Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

33. There is no direct impact on valley communities as result of this report, as young people all across the county borough will be able to benefit from the support outlined in the strategy.

### **Workforce Impacts:**

34. There is no direct impact on the workforce as a result of this report.

### **Legal Impacts:**

35. There are no direct legal impacts identified as a result of this report. However the Youth Engagement Strategy is developed on the principles of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, and recognises the importance of the Welsh Government's Children and Young Peoples Participation Standards (2016), to ensure young people have their voices heard and participate in making decisions that affect them.

### **Risk Management Impacts:**

36. As noted above, work towards addressing the actions within the Youth Engagement Strategy relies on external funding through grants that are due to expire 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Financial decisions will be made after the budget announcements.

Partnership working is vital to ensure the aims of the strategy are met; without commitment from all strategic partners, including external partners, the success and impact of the strategy will be limited.



## **Consultation:**

37. While there is no requirement to undertake formal consultation on the strategy, meaningful engagement and discussion with young people and strategic partners has taken place, to ensure that all have been able to help shape and develop this strategy. Young people's consultation included meeting with young people who were NEET, young people in supported accommodation, Youth Council and young people from vulnerable groups. The Youth Service facilitated consultation with over 80 partners from a wide range of sectors including education, health, housing and homelessness services, post 16 education and training providers, employability services and the voluntary sector.

## **Recommendations:**

38. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment it is recommended that Members formally adopt the Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy 2024-2025.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

39. The decision is necessary to help drive forward the work to support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are already NEET and those young people who are at risk of Homelessness. By adopting the Youth Engagement Strategy this work will be supported at a strategic level, become more accountable and will improve the offer to young people.

## **Implementation of Decision:**

40. The decision is proposed for implementation following the three day call in period.

41. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

Appendix 2 – Youth Engagement Strategy

Appendix 3 – IIA

## **List of Background Papers:**

N/A

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GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

# ● Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook

The development of the Framework Overview and Handbook has been informed by detailed discussions with stakeholders and young people, available data and research findings, as well as related policy developments.

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# Background

## INTRODUCTION

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework ('the Framework') outlines a process for organisations to work together to identify young people who need support and provide appropriate support to ensure they have positive outcomes.

The Framework is there to support:

- young people aged 11 to 18 at risk of not making a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school
- young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- young people aged 11 to 18 at risk of youth homelessness

outcomes we aim to address through the Framework are:

- for more young people to make a positive transition into education, employment or training
- for the prevention of homelessness to happen much earlier, through identifying and supporting young people who may be at risk

Underpinning the delivery of the Framework is the recognition that if young people are to be able to participate in and benefit from learning and have a smoother transition to becoming young adults, including not experiencing homelessness, then good emotional mental health and well-being is crucial.

We want young people to:

- engage in activities that are meaningful to them
- feel a part of their communities
- have a sense of belonging

The Framework was first published in 2013 and is being strengthened as a Programme for Government commitment. The revised Framework applies to those aged 11 to 18, and works in conjunction with the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), which applies to all aged 16 to 24. Together the Framework and the YPG will ensure there is a structure to support young people throughout their school journey until they move into employment or self-employment.

The original Framework was developed with the aim of reducing NEET rates, and this remains a strong focus. However, as outlined above, the Framework now also includes the prevention of youth homelessness. The vulnerability indicators for identifying risk of NEET can overlap with indicators for risk of family breakdown and youth homelessness. This approach means we consider holistically what difficulties young people are experiencing, building up a better understanding of their circumstances, enabling us to offer targeted support.

Strengthening the new Framework involves widening and extending its stakeholder base to empower local partnerships to improve its delivery. This includes the partners delivering the YPG, including Working Wales, and the voluntary youth work sector, whose role in delivering the Framework has been under-developed to date.

There are 6 components to the Framework and the application of each depends on the vulnerability stage and age of the individual. The components are:

1. Early identification
2. Brokerage
3. Monitoring progression
4. Provision
5. Employability and employment opportunities
6. Accountability

Each of these components is covered in more detail in this Handbook. The diagram below shows how the 6 components combine to secure better outcomes for young people.

# Better outcomes for young people diagram



## THE WAY FORWARD

A system-wide, collaborative focus is needed to remove the silos in delivery that have developed since the Framework was first published. Agencies and providers within a local area need to use their collective resources to fully engage with and better support young people.

Strengthening the Framework will involve collective accountability and responsibility for its delivery. **Public bodies** can build on this sense of collective accountability and responsibility as we work together towards achieving **national milestones**, in particular the national milestone for at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training by 2050.

One of our main aims is to embed a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among all partners and stakeholders involved in delivering the Framework. This will involve partners participating in a process of review and reflection to:

- identify, as partnerships what could have been done differently
- learn lessons
- drive improvements
- provide young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities

We want to ensure that as many young people as possible make a successful transition into education, employment and training (EET) when they leave school. Regular engagement with those young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET will improve the probability of them making a successful transition into EET and reduce the likelihood of them becoming 'unknown' at a later stage. 'Unknown' status refers to those not known to Careers Wales, and therefore it is unknown whether they have plans for EET and are therefore at risk of becoming NEET.



Partners involved in delivering the Framework also need to review and reflect on the available data for those aged 16 to 18 whose status is 'unknown' and work in partnership to engage with that group.

Through the Framework and YPG, the Welsh Government will monitor NEET levels in order to determine progress against the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training by 2050.

When organisations set their key performance indicators (KPIs), they should explore how they can collectively offer support and establish KPIs to best reflect the targets and ambitions outlined in these relevant national milestones. KPIs should also be centred around recognising the needs of the at-risk young person.

Partnership collaboration is also vital for the early intervention and prevention of youth homelessness. The Youth Homelessness Coordinator role is based within the youth service and should work closely with the Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator (EPC) to help identify young people who may be at risk of homelessness at an earlier age, in order to put suitable support in place. It is also important that these roles work with housing, social services, education and voluntary sector colleagues to ensure there are appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support available to young people who need them.

This Handbook encourages all providers and stakeholders to work together to provide support and opportunities for young people in Wales. It should be read in conjunction with the '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)', which sets out the strategic narrative around the Framework and shows how it aligns with government priorities.

This Handbook seeks to bring clarity by setting out the practices and processes required for different components of the Framework. The Handbook also includes a number of case studies, showcasing working practices already happening in different parts of Wales or illustrating possible ways of working.

## Early identification

Early identification of young people who have barriers to engagement or to remaining in their home and who need support is the foundation of the Framework. Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people's needs. Not only does this give us the best chance of preventing situations such as homelessness that at-risk young people are vulnerable to, it can also increase individuals' engagement, improve attainment and develop positive pathways to employment.

We are formally embedding the identification and support of young people at risk of youth homelessness within the Framework. The early identification systems that are already in place under the Framework can be used to proactively work with those individuals at an earlier stage. Feedback from the '[Refresh of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Stakeholder and Youth Consultation Report](#)' (2021) ('the consultation on the Framework') was supportive of this approach.

[The consultation on the Framework](#) also indicated that early identification systems are a strength of the current Framework. However, we can further improve these systems by introducing greater standardisation in approaches (such as in relation to data collected) to help ensure a greater level of equity in access for young people across Wales.

To achieve this, we will work with stakeholders and develop comprehensive, up-to-date guidance on early identification, which includes the identification of those at risk of homelessness. This will allow for a greater standardisation in approaches across Wales. Work will commence on this new guidance in 2022.

The case studies below are based on the early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, as this is the most developed area.

For young people in school, early identification systems have focused on attendance, behaviour and attainment indicators, and all local authorities in Wales have added their own relevant local indicators.

Early identification data is used at termly, multi-agency meetings where partner organisations share relevant information where the individual is under 16 years old. This is to ensure that young people who require support from more than 1 organisation experience a seamless and effective service; and that services are coordinated, coherent and achieve intended outcomes. The data is therefore informed by practitioner input, where the discussion confirms a young person's at-risk status.

## **Case study: multi-agency meetings in Pembrokeshire**

The multiagency or service Team Around the Pupil, Parent and Setting (TAPPAS) panels are operational in all Pembrokeshire secondary schools and units, comprising of a high priority strategic initiative supported by the Children and Schools Directorate. The panels act as a central point to identify at an early stage learners at risk from disengaging from their education (or become NEET), and to broker support and/or provision for individual learners or groups.

TAPPAS panels convene termly, clerked and chaired by the local authority. Membership includes school staff with responsibility for vulnerable learners (including those with additional learning needs (ALN)), local authority services (for example, Inclusion, 14 to 19, youth service), post-16 providers (Pembrokeshire College and work-based learning), Careers Wales, voluntary sector youth services, and health services (including emotional health).

Schools or partner services are responsible for referring young people deemed

vulnerable for professional discussion at TAPPAS. In advance of meetings, the local authority compiles and shares a database of early identification indicators and relevant information on learners to be discussed, including attendance, behaviour, education outcomes, ALN, barriers to education and known agency involvement. A vulnerability assessment profile (VAP) score is calculated using either a red, amber or green (RAG) status. For Year 11 learners, the likelihood of them becoming NEET is scored by the school. The Year 11 cohort are discussed with post-16 providers at the start of meetings so that the latter may leave prior to a discussion of younger learners.

Professional multiagency discussion enables a holistic, deeper understanding of need to support the young person. Needs are captured, and an action plan is formulated naming the responsible lead worker. If necessary, onward brokerage of services or provision is agreed. Action plans and learner progress are reviewed at subsequent meetings. During the academic year 2021 to 2022, 779 learners were discussed at TAPPAS, with 202 learners discharged at the end of the year as their needs were met. The 3 significant areas for support brokered during this period were transition, learner behaviour, and emotional health and well-being.

## Case study: Swansea's approach to early identification

Swansea local authority takes a data-driven approach to identify and support young people at all stages of their journey. They identify young people through use of their VAP. They consider those young people scoring highest (red and amber), as well as those already supported by their Early Help Hubs (EHH). In considering young people with the highest assessment scoring, they then look at additional identifiers such as previous or current social services involvement, previous or current EHH support, well-being needs, whether they have applied or interviewed for a post-16 destination and if they have missed any careers appointments.

Each term the EHH manager chairs a multi-agency meeting with the school, careers officers, pastoral support, **Cynnydd** support and education welfare. During the meeting, they discuss:

- levels of support for identified high risk young people of statutory school age
- who will lead on support
- whether an early referral is needed

Each professional then agrees a score on a scaling question (0 representing not confident that they will make transition and 10 representing very confident of making transition). At this meeting, all professionals also have the opportunity to add other young people to the list.

In the summer term, Careers Wales will also prioritise the young people in Year 10 they identify as most at risk. Those young people will be:

- offered opportunities to meet with their careers worker
- provided with support to help them decide on their post-16 EET options

Between April and October every year, referrals come into the post-16 lead work team from school pastoral or Progress (Cynnydd) leads, Careers Wales advisers and EHH lead workers regarding young people in Year 11. Support is offered to those young people most at risk of not making a successful post-16 transition.

Between July and November, weekly case monitoring is completed using the data available through Careers Wales and the post-16 lead work team. This includes regular updates and feedback on individuals to support their successful transition into EET.

## **KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

Data is critical in the early identification process. Professional judgement is also crucial, as professionals may have insight into what is happening in a young person's life, which is not picked up by the data alone.

### **Case study: how professional judgement can make a difference**

Siân is 14 years old and has always done well at school. However, since she started Year 10 she has been bullied by a group of girls, and this is starting to take its toll. Siân has become increasingly anxious and withdrawn. Siân hasn't spoken to her teachers about this as she thinks that will make things worse.

Siân attends a local voluntary youth centre, where the youth worker had noticed Siân hanging back and not joining in activities, and that she seemed to have lost her confidence. The youth worker had a chat with Siân, who opened up about the bullying, and the impact it was having on her self-confidence. Siân said she was feeling overwhelmed and she was worried her schoolwork was suffering as she was feeling so upset and distracted. She was finding it increasingly difficult to engage in class and felt demotivated.

The youth worker asked Siân if she would mind if she spoke to the local authority and/or the school, to address the bullying and get additional support for Siân, and Siân agreed to this.

The youth worker contacted the EPC to highlight what was happening to Siân. The EPC recognised that Siân needed support and arranged for the youth worker to act as Siân's lead worker to advocate on her behalf. The EPC also agreed to speak to the headteacher to make him aware of the bullying and the effect it was having on Siân, and to explore how the school's pastoral systems could be used to tackle the bullying and provide further support for Siân. It was agreed that Siân's case would be considered at the termly multi-agency meetings at the school, so that her progress could be monitored, and support adjusted as necessary.

## **WORKING WITH VOLUNTARY YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS**

There is scope to improve the links between voluntary youth work organisations and EPCs so they can provide additional support for the early identification process where they are working with young people outside of local authority settings. The Welsh Government facilitates regular meetings of EPCs, Careers Wales representatives, with representation from the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS). As CWVYS does not cover all voluntary youth work organisations, links also need to be made at a local level between EPCs and other voluntary youth work organisations to enable a coordinated approach.

## **EARLIER IDENTIFICATION**

The Framework applies to young people aged 11 to 18. However, during **the consultation on the Framework** there was strong support for early identification to start at primary school, in Year 5 or 6, to allow for earlier interventions and for support to be put in place for the transition from primary to secondary school.

Some local authorities have been exploring using early identification processes with primary school learners. This approach is currently outside the scope of the Framework. However, the Welsh Government will continue to liaise with local authorities so as to remain focused on the outcomes of this approach.

### **Case study: Monmouthshire's use of early identification for Years 5 and 6**

In Monmouthshire, the use of the NEET Early Identification Tool (EIT) was extended to Year 5 and Year 6 in December 2020. The existing EIT used in secondary schools was adapted for use with Key Stage 2 learners, remaining consistent with indicators, weighting and thresholds, with data cuts provided 3 times a year:

- at the end of the Autumn term
- at the end of the Easter term
- at the end of the academic year

All 30 primary schools within the county were contacted and discussions were held with 29 of these, with the majority of schools optimistic about the work, positively engaging and recognising the overlap between those learners identified through the EIT and those they had highlighted as needing support.

In January 2021 it was decided to only work with Year 6 learners as the demand for support was growing and capacity for Year 5 was limited. 180 children (out of a potential 874) were discussed across the 29 Primary Schools at Year 6, with support later being concentrated to 121 Year 6

learners across 19 schools who would be supported with their Year 7 transition across the local authority's 4 secondary schools.

COVID-19 has presented many problems. Initially all meetings with school staff were held online where concerns were discussed, and professional discussions held. When it was safe to do so, primary schools were visited in person, children met and their needs, concerns and support were discussed individually.

Timetables for visiting the learners in their secondary schools were drawn up.

Feedback from primary and secondary schools, parents, carers and learners show that the approach was proving very successful, with 93% of participating pupils embracing the support. The approach used is constantly being adapted and developed to suit the needs of the schools and learners.

## **EARLY IDENTIFICATION AT 16 TO 18**

After young people have moved to post-16 EET they may find they require support, even if they have not previously needed any. Adolescence is a period of great change and can be challenging for young people to navigate.

If young people are struggling, if they are beginning to or have disengaged, early identification processes should kick in to show that they may require extra support. We expect post-16 education or training providers (or the young person) to tell Careers Wales when young people need additional support (and Careers Wales can align them with the appropriate tier in the Careers Wales

5-tier model of engagement).

For those identified at risk of homelessness, post-16 education or training providers should signpost young people to the local authority or to Shelter Cymru to ensure early support can be put in place to avoid the young person becoming homeless.

## **SELF-EVALUATING EARLY IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

In all areas of the Framework, we expect partners to proactively work together to develop and improve methods to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET or of becoming homeless. An important part of the early identification process is to review and reflect on whether the early identification system is working, to inform the ongoing development of the process.

Understanding how well the early identification process is working goes beyond looking at the NEET rates. Some young people might be NEET at 31 October, but are about to start a job or a training course. Unless there is a risk they will not make a successful transition to post-16 EET, they would not be of concern. It is more important to consider those cases where, despite support being in place, individuals have not made a successful transition or have ended up homeless. Or alternatively, to understand why an early identification system has not identified an individual who then becomes NEET or homeless. The review and reflection process allows EPCs and their partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the process is working and where improvements can be made.

We would expect a core team to lead self-evaluation activities in each local area, led by the EPCs, working with youth homelessness co-ordinators, local partners, Careers Wales (including Working Wales for the YPG), Regional Skills Partnerships, Community Employability Programme mentors, as well as representatives from the voluntary youth work sector. This should involve a process of reflection, working, as appropriate, with partners and/or the young person, and consider:

- whether school leavers who are NEET at 31 October had previously been identified as at risk of being NEET. If they had not been identified, explore why
- whether all educational leavers had moved on to a positive destination, and if not why
- what more could be done to engage with young people whose destination is 'unknown'
- whether young people who had received support under the Framework have managed to move on to a positive destination, and if not, why
- whether young people at risk of homelessness were being identified via the Framework's early identification system
- young people identified as at risk of NEET who also identified as at risk of becoming homeless

## **Brokerage**

### **ASPECTS OF BROKERAGE**

There are different aspects to brokerage under the Framework:

#### **Strategic**

There is a need to maintain strategic overview of services on offer in each local authority area to support those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, and to broker appropriate support for young people. The successful operation of the Framework relies on services working together and being readily available for those with complex and multiple needs. This can include young people with ALN or disabilities, or who need support for their mental health, young people involved in the youth justice system, young carers, as well as young people at risk of becoming homeless. These aspects of brokerage are covered by the EPC and youth homelessness co-ordinator roles.



## **Operational**

Providing continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people. This aspect is covered by the lead worker role.

## **ROLE OF THE EPC**

The EPC function will continue to play a critical and strategic role, overseeing the Framework at a local authority level. Each local authority should have established an effective EPC function with sufficient influence at a senior level across the local authority and partner organisations. The EPC is instrumental in brokering agreements with service leaders regarding the availability and quality of services on offer. This includes brokering support services for specific groups identified as needing bespoke support.

The EPC function should coordinate and oversee a local partnership that will assist them in considering the overall picture of provision and how they can successfully collaborate to meet the needs of young people in their area.

EPCs will also report to senior leadership within the local authority on a regular basis. They will provide updates to the Welsh Government, through the reporting system for the Youth Support Grant, which is a term and condition of the grant.

EPCs will also work with Welsh Government officials towards developing an annual report for Welsh Ministers on the contribution of the Framework (see Accountability).

The EPC role will involve working with local partnerships to:

- manage the data process and guide the early identification system at a local authority level, to be aware of which young people are least likely to make successful transitions at 16 or be of concern pre-16
- facilitate the process or systems to start to identify the specific support needs of young people to feed into the brokerage conversation
- develop an understanding between partners as to which organisations are doing what to support a young person at any given time. This includes maintaining channels of communication with relevant local authority officials (for example home education, Families First) and other services
- facilitate the development of a network of experienced lead workers who can work with young people
- using the outputs from early identification to broker a discussion between key support agencies to identify whether a young person should be allocated a lead worker and if so, which organisation is best positioned to play that role, as well as who else will be involved in delivering support
- ensure the allocation of lead workers as appropriate, and ensure that lead

worker support is offered to those identified as requiring additional support

- receive feedback (through agreed mechanisms) from lead workers where support is not helping a young person move forward and to work with partners to find new solutions
- manage the provision mapping at a local authority level to inform a local level prospectus for young people (see Provision)
- manage the interface between the local authority and Careers Wales, and inform the 5-tier model with updates on young people in Tier 1 and 2 via the monthly spreadsheets

### **Case study: Caerphilly's brokerage of support for looked after children**

In the Caerphilly local authority, looked after children (LAC) have been identified as being particularly vulnerable. The EPC has brokered an additional level of support for this cohort.

For the pre-16 cohort, the EPC holds 6 multi-agency meetings a year with schools, providers, and other professionals (including colleagues working on the prevention of youth homelessness) in order to identify and support vulnerable learners, including LAC, into EET. A young person who is looked after, and is uncertain or uneasy about their future, is supported by a LAC worker. The LAC worker attends the meetings and works closely with the EPC to facilitate a programme of support from Careers Wales and into a post-16 destination.

Support includes providing assistance with applications, visiting venues and starting new EET.

For the post-16 cohort of young people in care, the EPC arranges information, advice and support into EET. The EPC makes referrals based on information from other panels and departments within the local authority, as well as Tier 1 and 2 data indicators. The EPC regularly attends meetings with other professionals to track progress and report on it.

Young people who are in care may sometimes become homeless, which is where the involvement of local authority officials working on youth homelessness prevention becomes so important. The local authority has established the Progress (Cynnydd) scheme, where care leavers are identified for opportunities in EET and supported into that opportunity by the EPC and a Llamau-funded progress worker. Options utilised include further education, traineeships and Llamau's Moving Forward scheme.

During [the consultation on the Framework](#), concerns were raised around how to identify home-educated young people who need support, and who are outside the school system. Brokering

support for specific groups can therefore include young people who are home-educated, to ensure these young people can be signposted to additional support if they need it. To achieve this, good channels of communication between EPCs and local authority home education officials need to be in place.

When young people are taken off the school roll to be home-educated, it provides an opportunity for local authorities to make an offer of support. This could include:

- ensuring awareness of youth work provision to ensure the young person has continuing opportunities to socialise and access to a broad range of experiences
- inviting young people who are home-educated to careers events or open days
- arranging bespoke careers or induction events for groups of home-educated young people

## **ROLE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS CO-ORDINATOR**

Some young people will require additional support to prevent homelessness. The youth homelessness co-ordinator exists to ensure that young people at risk of becoming homeless are identified earlier and they receive the necessary support to help them stay within the family home or transition into independent living where appropriate. The Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant provides annual funding to local authorities for a youth homelessness co-ordinator position. This is a specific role aimed at establishing collaborative, partnership working arrangements across housing, health, education, social care, voluntary sectors and a wide range of services and partners, to ensure a coordinated approach and shared working practices.

The youth homelessness co-ordinator should:

- work with the EPC to strengthen the Framework's early identification system to account for indicators associated with young people at risk of youth homelessness
- develop appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support
- develop and deliver youth service-led training to practitioners across a range of local services, in order to develop awareness of risk factors for youth homelessness and understand how to support young people effectively to prevent them becoming homeless

The role aims to prevent youth homelessness from happening, rather than for crisis management when a young person is already homeless. This means that youth homelessness coordinators should have a focus on working with young people under the age of 16, identifying them early and putting suitable support in place. The role should be located within local authorities' youth service and not within their housing directorates. In order to avoid duplication in identifying young people at risk and providing support, it is important that the youth homelessness co-ordinator works closely with the EPC.

## ROLE OF LEAD WORKER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF BECOMING NEET

The lead worker function is intended to provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people to remain in, or to enter EET. It should be focused on those needing sustained support, and an offer of additional support to an individual.

However, for young people up to the age of 18, we expect EPCs to use a range of resources, including local authority staff (for example youth workers, Families First staff), and to work with partners (for example Careers Wales and voluntary youth services), as well as linking with other support services such as [Community Employability Programmes](#).

For young people aged 16 to 18, the lead worker support is allocated against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement.

The specific functions associated with the lead worker role are:

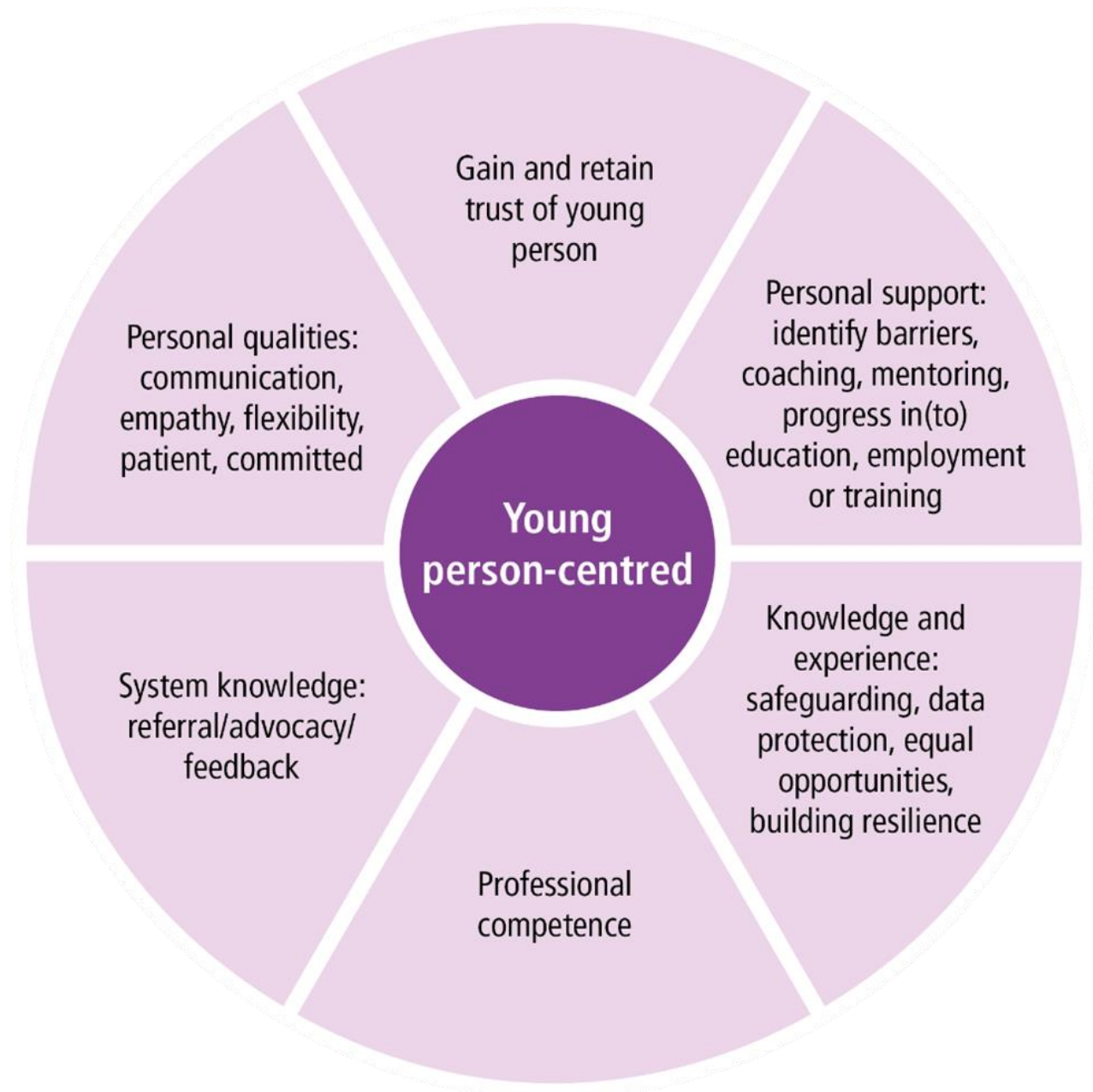
- being a named individual responsible for regularly keeping in touch with the young person
- having an awareness of the range of support in place around an individual, and if necessary, negotiating with other support services and professionals and advocating on behalf of the young person as appropriate
- flagging to a supervisor or EPC if support is not helping a young person move forward
- helping to build resilience of a young person in ways relevant to the lead worker's organisation and its particular focus and expertise
- reviewing the 'status' of the young person against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement, and providing feedback to the EPC

Lead workers will therefore include a range of professionals from different organisations. In general terms, those undertaking the lead worker function should:

- build a rapport with, and gain the trust of the young person
- have the skills, competence and capacity to help the young person progress in (or into) EET
- have a knowledge of local provision and other support services
- have the communication skills to work with other professionals and advocate on behalf of the young person

Placing the young person at the centre, the diagram below shows what skills, knowledge and qualities are required by the lead worker.

## Young person-centred diagram



The allocation of the lead worker resource should be driven by early identification systems, based on data and practitioner input. The lead worker function is the offer of additional support to young people who have been identified through early identification systems. The specific circumstances of the young person should be considered when deciding which organisation is best- equipped to provide the lead worker role.

This guidance provides some starting assumptions about which young people might benefit most from lead worker support, and who may be best placed to play the role. However, the final decision will need to be informed by practitioner input and agreed through discussion between local partners.

### **Case study: how a lead worker can support a young person**

A youth worker from the local authority youth engagement and progression team contacted a young person who had disengaged in early June 2021, initially via phone calls and finally a door knock. David, the young person, was very hesitant to speak to the youth worker, but did express a wish to go to college. In order for him to progress, further support was needed. He had become socially isolated due to COVID-19 he had experienced a change of gender identity, and had developed anxiety problems. At this point, he had not attended school for 12 months nor left the home for over 4 months.

The youth worker became David's lead worker. After a few meetings with his lead worker, David's confidence increased, and he agreed to meet with his lead worker outside the home. After building a trusting relationship with the lead worker, who showed him different provision opportunities, David expressed an interest in a pre-vocational course at a local college. The lead worker supported David with his application, and a transition meeting was set up with the college to ensure David had further support once the course started.

David was accepted onto the course and was supported by his lead worker to apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) grant and given information on the Digital Inclusion Grant. The lead worker also helped David get an exemption card from the college so that he wouldn't have to wear a mask.

The lead worker arranged a meeting at the college so he could speak to learner services and provide further background on David to help David's transition to college.

The lead worker was able to support David at college on his induction day. David had a prior appointment, so his lead worker negotiated a different start time for his induction. During the induction David showed signs of high anxiety but his lead worker was able to reassure and calm him. The support he received helped David to progress into college.

## Allocation of lead workers for young people aged 11 to 16 at risk of being NEET

The table below shows when a lead worker will or will not be allocated to a young person and who that lead worker could be.

### Allocation of lead workers

<b>Young person's circumstances</b>	<b>Lead worker offered?</b>	<b>Possible professional</b>
Young person settled in provision and judged to be at a low risk of disengagement	No	N/A
<b>Young person's circumstances</b>	<b>Lead worker offered?</b>	<b>Possible professional</b>
Young person engaged in provision and judged to be at a low to medium or medium risk of disengagement from EET	No	Schools or providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate
Young person engaged in provision and judged to be at medium to high or high risk of disengagement	Yes	Schools or provider pastoral systems or youth worker
Where a young person is disengaged from EET	Yes	Youth worker, voluntary or specialist agency

## Allocation of lead workers for young people aged 16 to 18 at risk of being NEET/who are NEET

For young people aged 16 to 18, support is allocated against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement. The model aims to guide and not restrict or silo operations across Wales. Strong partnership working to support individuals to get a positive EET outcome is the ultimate aim of all involved.

### Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement for young people aged 16 to 18

Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
<b>Tier 5:</b>  <b>In further education or EET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In EET.</li> <li>• Working or studying part time over 16 hours.</li> </ul>	No lead worker necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging. Providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate.	Careers Wales
<b>Tier 4:</b>  <b>At risk of dropping out of EET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in less than 16 hours of EET.</li> <li>• Have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition but are subsequently in further education, sixth form or training.</li> <li>• Have been identified to Careers Wales by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET.</li> </ul>	Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For low and medium risk use provider pastoral systems and/ or allocate a learning coach as a lead worker.</li> <li>• For High risk a lead worker may be allocated from either youth service or Careers Wales or if Families First involved Team</li> </ul>	Careers Wales



Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
		Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker.	
<b>Tier 3:</b>  <b>NEET or actively seeking EET but known to Careers Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with Careers Wales and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET, or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET.</li> <li>This tier should also include those known to Careers Wales, actively seeking EET but not requiring Careers Wales enhanced support, for example accessing support via careerswales.gov.wales or awaiting a college start date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort.</li> <li>Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases.</li> </ul>	Careers Wales
<b>Tier 2:</b>  <b>Young people known to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support.</li> <li><b>Not available or unable to seek EET (for example due to illness, being a</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort.</li> <li>Youth service will provide lead worker in most cases (in some</li> </ul>	Careers Wales

Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
<b>Careers Wales who are NEET and are not ready or available to seek EET</b>	young carer, pregnancy, in custody).*	instances this role may be allocated to other services or organisations providing intensive personal support).	
<b>Tier 1: EET status unknown to Careers Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unknown to Careers Wales.</li> </ul>	Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.	Careers Wales

\* We expect EPCs to be aware of these young people (for example those who are long term sick, who are in custody, pregnant or are young mums) and to have arrangements to keep in touch. Where individuals have multiple barriers and are supported by services such as Families First, Community Employability Programmes, social services, their lead professional can act as lead worker.

## Supporting the lead worker role

To support and strengthen the lead worker role, the Welsh Government will:

- commission a lead worker review to scope out how many lead workers local authorities are able to call upon, and how often they engage with individual young people
- consider opportunities for sharing good practice and networking by lead workers across local authorities and organisations

## **Monitoring progression**

Monitoring the progression of young people involves looking at what support and/or provision they are receiving and the impact it is having, so it can be adjusted as needed. Local area partnerships can evaluate, on a case by case basis, whether the support they have put in place is working for a young person. This allows adjustments to be made where necessary.

Monitoring progression also involves taking steps to identify young people who have fallen outside the monitoring system and establishing whether or not they are in EET. This is critical at the end of years 11, 12 and 13, when school leavers may be at risk of not making a positive transition into a post-16 destination. Young people with an 'unknown' destination on leaving school, or who have dropped out of post-16 education or training, should be located, and offered support under the Framework if needed.

## **MONITORING THE PROGRESSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE PRE-16**

Local authority EPCs manage the process of holding termly pre-16 multi-agency meetings in all schools, to identify learners most at risk of not progressing into EET when leaving compulsory education. This means EPCs and partners have a good idea of which young people need support before the end of Year 11.

Attendees at these meetings should include school pastoral staff or family engagement officers, youth workers and Careers Wales advisers. Through this process, the specific support needs of young people are identified, so appropriate support can be brokered.

When learners have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET, having effective processes in place ensures that agencies can quickly intervene when young people become disengaged.

## **Case study: Merthyr Tydfil's approach to supporting young people in education other than at school**

In Merthyr Tydfil there is a specific process in place for learners who are in education other than at school (EOTAS), and at a greater risk of becoming NEET. This entails monthly multi-agency meetings to consider learners' progress and allow for speedy intervention if required.

The local authority has information sharing protocols in place with partners to allow the sharing of personal information with pre- and post-16 partners. Multi-agency 'NEET Review' panels are held monthly to ensure that appropriate support is in place for EOTAS learners in years 7 to 11. By

the end of Year 10 it is apparent which young people in EOTAS will be at an increased risk of NEET, and support is put in place to reduce this risk.

Throughout Year 11, partners provide monthly updates of the stage each young person has reached in their transition and the young person is offered support to move forward. At the end of Year 11, Careers Wales and the EPC will consider any EOTAS learner who is potentially 'high-risk' of becoming NEET and, if they are not ready or available to seek EET, allocate them against Tier 2 in the 5-tier model.

A monthly Post-16 NEET panel allows cases new to Tier 2 to be considered and referred to a post-16 project for support. When an EOTAS leaver is thought to be work-ready, they are referred to Working Wales for further support in entering EET. Those not engaging with or dropping out of Tier 2 provision are allocated to another provider for further attempts to be made; this continues while they remain in Tier 2.

While this process cannot guarantee that all EOTAS-leavers engage in EET, it allows the team that works with young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET to offer support, and helps to ensure that there are no vulnerable young people whose circumstances on leaving school are 'unknown'.

## **MONITORING THE PROGRESSION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS INTO EET**

### **School leavers with 'unknown' status**

Throughout the summer months, as young people leave Year 11, multi-agency meetings should continue, with the involvement of post-16 teams and Careers Wales, to ensure continued support.

Despite the early intervention that takes place, each year there remains some school leavers in Year 11 who have 'unknown' status. This means that they are not known to Careers Wales, and so it is not known whether they have plans for EET, or whether they are at risk of becoming NEET. Careers Wales pass on the details of the 'unknown' young people to EPCs in July. The EPCs, working with the youth service and the wider Framework partnership, then try to contact those people to find out their plans. This may involve carrying out home visits to speak to young people.

### **Case study: Carmarthenshire's approach to locating and monitoring the progress of individuals with 'unknown' status**

Careers Wales share information of Tier 1 'unknown' individuals with Carmarthenshire local authority. Local authority staff then use various methods to contact young people, including telephone calls, e-mails, letters, home visits and leaving calling cards. There are challenges to this

process. Contact information is sometimes incorrect or outdated, including telephone numbers, which is frustrating and time consuming to correct.

Home visits have proven to be the most successful approach. By interacting directly with young people, local authority staff were able to:

- establish which young people are already engaged in EET
- which young people require additional support put that support in place, and update their records accordingly
- signpost individuals with no planned destination to Careers Wales, to receive information, advice and guidance
- secure an offer of appropriate support for young people who have significant barriers to engagement

Young people with 'unknown' status are considered at the monthly multi-agency SEET (Supporting Engagement into Education, Employment and Training) meetings, in which all partner agencies are signed up to a Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) approved Information Sharing Protocol. Partner agencies may be engaging with the young people or working with siblings or families. This pooled knowledge can help identify which individuals require support. The SEET function has proven to be an effective means of monitoring the progress of individuals with 'unknown' status and those with significant barriers, as:

- updates are fed back to Careers Wales

- young people's movement against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement are recorded
- movement in and out of the local authority area is recorded

The COVID-19 pandemic caused some disruption to locating young people with 'unknown' status and home visits have not been possible due to restrictions.

However, responses from young people by other methods of contact, including social media platforms, have increased.

### **Case study: support for young person from Wrexham in Tier 1**

Wrexham local authority's Tier 1 Project has a team of 2 staff, whose role is to locate young people in Tier 1 and ensure that those who are NEET receive the support they need.

The team works through the list of young people in Tier 1, based on postcode areas, and calls at the homes of young people on the list. If there is no reply the team leave a letter offering support to the young person. Home visits are repeated. A young person may receive 2 to 3 visits in a six-week period. As young people in Tier 1 may be hard to reach, this persistence is important to get results.

Joshua was one of the young people targeted by the Tier 1 Project team. After he finished Year 11, the team visited Joshua's home a number of times. Each time he was out. Eventually he sent a text message to the mobile number provided on the letter left by the Tier 1 Project team, asking for support.

A member of the Tier 1 project team, met with Joshua in an informal setting, over a coffee, and carried out an assessment of Joshua's needs. This showed Joshua had some significant barriers to progression, accordingly he was allocated against Tier 2. The Tier 1 project worker then referred Joshua to the MAPS (Motivate Achieve Participate Succeed) project, which supported young people via a bespoke mentoring plan. A MAPS worker arranged to meet Joshua at his home.

The MAPS worker spoke to Joshua and his mother and decided that the most suitable provision for Joshua would be Communities for Work. He referred Joshua onto this programme. When Joshua missed his initial appointment, Communities for Work alerted his MAPS worker who made contact with Joshua, and continued to support and encourage him to engage with suitable provision.

## WHAT HAPPENS ONCE AN 'UNKNOWN' LEARNER HAS BEEN LOCATED

Once a young person has been located and spoken to, an assessment of needs will identify their level of engagement against the 5-tier model of engagement.

This information is then fed into Atlas, the Careers Wales customer relationship management system, via a monthly spreadsheet.

From July each year, EPCs, youth service staff and Careers Wales staff work intensively with young people in tiers 2 and 3 to support them into a positive destination. Young people in these tiers are allocated a lead worker, responsible for regularly keeping in touch with them and then formally reporting back to the EPC. The lead worker will highlight if the support package and interventions put in place for an individual are not actively helping re-engage and move the young person forward.

From July onwards, further education institutions, training providers and schools and further education colleges submit information to Careers Wales showing which young people have started EET. (Training providers send Careers Wales a weekly list of starters and leavers because individuals' movement in and out of training provision is more fluid.) Careers Wales then updates young peoples' statuses against its 5-tier model. This information is essential to identify not only young people who have started EET, but also those who have not started provision as planned.

'Real-time' information about starters and leavers is particularly helpful as it allows leavers to be offered support as soon as possible, so they can be re-engaged.

In the autumn, the Welsh Government also provides Careers Wales with data from the [Lifelong learning Wales record](#) (LLWR), to confirm the starter information already received and to flag up any new starters not notified to Careers Wales. LLWR data usually arrives some time after the event, and is therefore most useful for checking the data that is already held.

Careers Wales advisers change the learners' status from Year 11 to their correct status against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement (for example. Tier 5: fulltime college course). The status change therefore informs the 5-tier model. Information on tier status is held on Atlas.

The annual [Careers Wales pupil destinations survey](#) reports the destinations of learners from all maintained and special schools across Wales who have reached statutory leaving age (Year 11), and students leaving school in years 12 and 13. The destination information is a snapshot of the learner's known activity on 31 October after they have left school. The information is published on the Careers Wales website, early the following calendar year.

(It is important to note that Careers Wales is not able to merge all the data they receive to publish the destinations survey into their own customer management database. Careers Wales can only merge and hold data on individual young people where they have an agreement in place. This

agreement will be held with either the young person directly, the school the young person attends, or the local authority.)

After 31 October every year, EPCs and the local Framework partnership should continue to monitor the number of young people aged 16 to 18 in Tier 1, and work together to locate them. If a young person aged 16 to 18 has an 'unknown' status and there are concerns about their safety, the EPC and/or their team should contact the local authority safeguarding lead or the Safeguarding Children's Board for advice. The Welsh Government guidance, [Keeping Learners Safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002](#) (2021), includes detailed information on the process and expectations for safeguarding in schools, and the wider system.



## Data flow for Careers Wales' customer relationship management system (Atlas)

### Pre-16

(Years 10 and 11)

Management Information System (MIS) data from schools

Pupil data from pupil referral units

Pupil level data from local authorities

EPC input

Additional information, for example, young people who have moved school



### Post-16

(Ages 16 to 18)



Starter and leaver information from school sixth forms



Starter and leaver information from further education institutions (FEIs)



Starter and leaver information from training providers



Starter and leaver information from LLWR for FEIs and training providers



Tier 1 and 2 updates from EPCs via a monthly spreadsheet



Tier 3 updates from Careers Wales Advisers



### Careers Wales – Data hub outputs

- Destination survey.
- New and current Tier 1 and Tier 2 data for EPCs, via data hub.
- NEET reports, via data hub.

## DATA SHARING

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). (For ease of reference, this guidance refers to UK GDPR, and covers data protection legislation in general.)

One of the key messages from [the consultation on the Framework](#) was the challenges of sharing data since the introduction of UK GDPR, both in terms of barriers to sharing data and also perception of UK GDPR requirements. (Anxiety about GDPR requirements is also cited in [Estyn's report Post-16 partnerships: Shared planning and provision between schools, and between schools and colleges](#), (2021).)

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent authority, established to uphold information rights. Detailed information and guidance on UK GDPR is available on the [ICO website](#), including [detailed guidance on data sharing and children](#). The ICO guidance on data sharing and children highlights that organisations may share children's personal data, provided they can demonstrate a compelling reason to do so, taking account of the best interests of the child. Organisations should build this into all of the systems and processes in their data sharing arrangements.

Organisations in Wales that are directly concerned with the health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people use the [WASPI](#) as a tool to help them share personal information effectively and lawfully. The WASPI website includes guidance to help organisations determine [what type of data sharing agreement is required](#) in specific circumstances. For data sharing under the Framework, the following WASPI agreements are commonly used, depending on whether the data flow is one-way or reciprocal:

- Data Disclosure Agreements (DDA) are used when personal data is to be disclosed (that is passed one way) from 1 data controller to another for a specific purpose. [Guidance on how a DDA should be developed in line with the WASPI framework is available on the WASPI website.](#)
- Information Sharing Protocols (ISP) are developed to record practices involving the regular, reciprocal sharing (that is information flowing back and forth between organisations) of personal information between data controllers. [Guidance on how an ISP should be developed is available on the WASPI website.](#)

Monitoring the progression of individuals under the Framework is underpinned by DDAs and ISPs as appropriate.

Individuals must be informed which personal information will be processed and why, where, how and when, and who it is shared with. This information is usually provided via a privacy notice, ideally at the first point of contact with an individual or at the first point their data is being collected and processed. It can be part of a registration or consent form or a standalone document.

Local authority maintained schools are expected to issue a privacy notice to their learners and/or parents, carers and guardians, which reflect DDAs and ISPs that are in place.

The privacy notice should also set out:

- the identity of the data controller and the contact details of the data protection officer
- the lawful basis for processing personal data
- how and why the personal data is being processed
- how long the personal data will be retained
- the rights of the individuals under data protection legislation

The data controller is the organisation (legal body) that makes decisions on why, what, how and when data is collected, what it is used for, how it is kept and for how long. The data controller is the main decision-maker when it comes to how people's personal information is handled, and how it is kept safe. Careers Wales is the data controller for the information it stores on Atlas.

With the appropriate processes in place, the progression of young people can be monitored so that when a young person is at risk of not making a successful transition into EET, they can be identified, and offered support.

### **Case study: how data sharing enables young people to be supported under the Framework**

Alisha was in Year 11 at school and was engaged and interested in the work. She was working hard towards her GCSEs and was hoping to go to a local further education institution to study Information Technology. She sometimes experienced anxiety but was able to manage her condition with the support and understanding of her mother and her friends.

In March 2020, after the first lockdown was announced, Alisha experienced worsening anxiety. Over a period of weeks, Alisha began to experience poor sleep, and she became irritable. Alisha really missed her friends and was also worried that her mother, who worked as a carer, would catch COVID-19.

With the easing of restrictions in June 2020, Alisha's anxiety improved as she was able to meet up with friends. She was pleased with her GCSE results and enrolled at her local further education college on her chosen course.

However, after she started on the further education course in September, Alisha felt overwhelmed by the reports of rising Covid cases. Her anxiety levels increased and she found it difficult to concentrate on her new course. She dropped out of college in early November.

The college had a Youth Engagement and Progression Framework WASPI document in place, which enabled them to inform Careers Wales that Alisha had left college. The college then informed the Careers Wales link adviser that Alisha had left college, describing her change in circumstances and her current barriers to continuing in education.

The information received from the college was immediately recorded on Atlas and a status change to Tier 2 was made. This status change initiated a referral to the EPC via the data hub, where the EPC could access the notes describing why Alisha left college and the barriers she is currently facing.

The EPC requested a member of the local authority's engagement team to contact Alisha and offer appropriate support. Alisha agreed to meet with a member of the team for an assessment of her needs.

The assessment showed that Alisha needed support for managing her anxiety and boosting her self-esteem, and Alisha agreed to a referral to local authority counselling provision and youth services to help meet these needs. A lead worker from the engagement team spoke to the college on Alisha's behalf, and the college agreed that Alisha could enrol on a number of taster courses, to help her decide the best course for her.

## **Provision**

We aim to ensure the mix of provision available in every area of Wales can meet the needs of our young people. Within the context of the Framework, 'provision' refers to programmes that keep young people engaged in EET and prevent youth homelessness. There is more information on provision available in Annex A, although this is not an exhaustive list.

Some young people may also need to be signposted to specific support to boost their mental health, well-being and self-esteem: Annex B provides more information on the different support available.

The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will oversee the strategic planning of educational and skills delivery across all post-compulsory education and training, including funding, contracting, quality, and financial monitoring. This will bring a greater degree of coherence and efficiency to post-16 provision.

Young people identified as needing additional support can benefit from targeted pre-engagement activity. This can ensure they are aware of their options and are confident in making decisions about what they do when they leave the school environment.

### **Case study: Pre-engagement programme in Pembrokeshire**

In Pembrokeshire, (pre-engagement programmes) PEPs are targeted transition programmes for vulnerable Year 11 learners identified as being 'at risk' of NEET or 'not making a successful transition' to post-16 education, training or employment.

The programmes are run in partnership with post-16 providers with funding secured via an inclusion service grant. In the academic year 2020 to 2021, learners attended the programmes 1 day a week during the spring and summer terms.

Transport and lunch were provided for all learners, irrespective of whether they were eligible for free school meals.

The aims of the programme were to:

- prevent or reduce the number of young people who were NEET
- reduce drop-out rates and increase retention rates on post 16 programmes
- reduce anxiety linked to transition to post-16 EET
- aid familiarisation with post-16 settings
- sustain motivation, engagement and attendance
- support learners in their decision making
- increase learner knowledge of post-16 options and pathways Programme

content included:

- a range of vocational tasters
- information, advice and guidance on all post-16 options
- opportunity for a one-to-one careers guidance interview with Careers Wales advisers
- familiarisation activities
- visits to and from other post-16 providers
- health, fitness and well-being activities
- team building and fun activities

- support to develop skills in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy as well as interpersonal skills (research skills, completing and submitting applications and interview techniques)

In the academic year 2020 to 2021, of the 119 learners referred to PEPs, 89 completed the programme, with 95% of all learners who participated progressing into a successful post-16 destination.

Key to the success of the programmes were:

- senior leadership support at both local authority and school level
- having an effective early identification system
- the flexibility and willingness of the providers
- development of good relationships between the local authority, schools, providers, parents, carers and learners

### **Case study: offering a range of provision to meet a young person's needs**

Harry was disengaged in mainstream school and was generally apathetic to the educational process. He had behavioural issues, which led to him being permanently excluded from one secondary school, transferred to another, and then placed in a pupil referral unit (PRU) for 2 terms. He was on the fringes of child criminal exploitation.

The local authority's Hard to Place/EOTAS panel referred Harry to its progression team, which allocated a lead worker to support Harry. The lead worker knew the family, as he had supported older siblings, and knew the parent. The lead worker initially made home visits, until Harry felt confident enough to meet outside the home.

The lead worker asked Harry about his likes and interests, which enabled a bespoke package of education to be provided. Harry attended a weekly sport course and then a 12-week art course, and achieved 100% attendance at these. Although he had ceased to attend school, he was still on the school roll. Harry began to attend a military preparation course with a military preparation college (MPCT). However, there was a drugs incident and Harry lost his place with MPCT.

The progression team referred Harry's case to the local authority's ALN decision panel, which agreed that Harry would benefit from also attending an outreach PRU, to give him a wider educational experience, while continuing with the sport course and completing the art course.

At the PRU, staff fostered a reignited engagement with education, through skilful curriculum design and delivery. As a measure of Harry's improved engagement he took public transport to the PRU every day, and achieved 100% attendance.

Harry was now attending provision 3.5 days a week, through a combination of the sports course and the PRU.

As there were still concerns around child criminal exploitation, the progression team and the EPC called a meeting with providers, Harry and his mother to discuss behaviours and concerns. The progression team contacted the police and youth justice services to obtain additional support. Harry was also found in possession of cannabis on a few occasions, so the progression team referred Harry to the local authority's drugs and alcohol team, which carried out a group session around drug awareness at the sports course. Subsequently Harry showed he was able to discuss substance misuse and that he was comfortable being challenged on his views. He was able to take on board the negative implications of substance misuse and agreed to continue attending group and individual sessions on substance misuse.

Harry has achieved some qualifications at the PRU and is studying towards additional qualifications. He recently secured a weekly work placement with a local mechanical garage.

### **Case study: offering provision to align with a young person's interests**

Lewis has been attending a local voluntary youth drop-in centre since the age of

13. He comes from a large blended-family. Lewis first started attending the centre when he was in school, where he wasn't doing very well academically and was seen as disruptive. However, he flourished at the youth centre and was instrumental in helping staff develop a cooking project.

The youth workers realised very quickly that Lewis was very comfortable in the kitchen, where he supported staff to purchase ingredients, cook food and serve the members at their evening meal night. Lewis also really enjoyed developing new recipes and started a smoothie and flavoured milkshake sale. Throughout this time, Lewis was still experiencing difficulties outside of the youth project and regularly was sent home for street drinking and verging on anti-social behaviour. Sometimes, his behaviour was difficult at the youth project, but while he was busy and engaged he did well. He was given the opportunity to gain a food hygiene qualification, first aid qualification and an [Agored Cymru](#) unit in event planning.

The youth workers encouraged Lewis to take more and more responsibility at their café, and Lewis also ran a pop-up café at a local festival.

Lewis succeeded in gaining a place at a local college to study catering and after completing the course he accepted a job at a local hospital, with a dual role in catering and cleaning.

## HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GAIN SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

In the context of youth homelessness provision [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted young people wanted a greater focus on the provision of practical support to help make the transition to life as an independent adult. The young people wanted to improve their knowledge and understanding of various areas including:

- housing options
- bank accounts
- payslips and wages
- taxes
- bills
- insurance

### Case study: provision to help prevent youth homelessness

Pembrokeshire's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is an online platform designed with, by and for young people. It provides information, support and learning resources to aid a successful transition to living independently and to help prevent youth homelessness.

It uses the experiences of young people to inform content and ensure their needs are addressed. The site hosts 7 interactive skill development modules covering a range of topics including:

- budgeting
- rights and responsibilities
- tasks involved in running a new home.
- items required for a new home
- tenancy administration
- housing options
- consequences of a tenancy failure

These modules feature activities, videos and resources which are co-designed and produced by young people.

The platform also hosts a 'Voices' element. This is a library of audio clips featuring young people talking about their own experiences of related matters. While the primary aim of this is to give users an opportunity to learn from others, it also provides those with lived experiences a chance to express their views and opinions which are then presented to associated sectors and organisations to help shape their services. A 'Big Blue Button' facility enables young people to access youth workers live via video conferencing, or a messenger provision from within the actual portal.



Finally, the overall project aims to enable young people to deal with certain housing issues affecting them, including the factors which contribute to youth tenancy breakdowns and homelessness. Furthermore, by involving this age group in every aspect of the project, it not only looks to inform, educate and guide young people, but also use their lived experiences to benefit others.

## **MAPPING PROVISION**

The EPC will continue to play a critical and strategic role in mapping and coordinating provision at a local partnership level to help consider the overall picture of provision and how local partnerships can successfully collaborate to meet the needs of young people in their area.

Once young people have been identified as needing support under the Framework, ensuring they have the right type of support is critical. Stronger mapping of existing provision was one of the key actions in the original Framework, and [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted the need to ensure those coordinating support are aware of the provision that is already available in their area. The consultation on the Framework also highlighted the importance of young people feeling informed about their full range of options in compulsory and post-compulsory education. It is important that individuals with specific vulnerabilities who are being supported under the Framework are also made aware of other key support services, such as drug and alcohol misuse services.

Mapping remains a key priority for organisations supporting young people, to identify what is available in their area.

At a local level, there are a range of different provisions available, which is why local provision mapping is critical. EPCs are responsible for managing the mapping within their local authorities, to ensure they have up-to-date information on what support is available for young people. We would expect EPCs to consult on the creation of the provision map and make that document visible and accessible to all stakeholders and partners. To support this process, the Welsh Government will continue to update EPCs on any further support that it introduces. A list is available in Annex A, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

The Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD), is currently running a project with Careers Wales, Welsh Government and Civil Society Organisations in Wales with the aim of providing a road map to better refer young people to a wider range of support.

## Case study: mapping provision in Caerphilly

Caerphilly County Borough Council has developed a website, [Welcome to Caerphilly Pathways](#), which shows the full range of education and training opportunities available to young people in the county, including school sixth forms, further education institutions and local work-based training providers.

A large part of the site is an online prospectus providing details of the A-level and BTEC courses that are on offer. Other parts of the site are designed to show young people the progression routes, careers, degrees and apprenticeships that are linked to the subjects they might wish to study.

## DETAILS OF PROVISION AVAILABLE

Set out below is the provision that is available around post-16 education and training (see also Employability and Employment Opportunities) as well as for preventing youth homelessness. This is not an exhaustive list, and will be subject to updates.

## YOUNG PERSON'S GUARANTEE (YPG)

From age 16, young people can access the YPG via the Working Wales service. The YPG aims to provide young people under 25 across Wales with support into EET or self-employment. There will be a new YPG web presence in place on the Working Wales website together with web chats, Skype, e-mail and SMS texts. Dedicated advisers will operate online, on the high street and through improved outreach facilities across Wales.

Young people can also use the [Working Wales Support Finder](#) to search for programmes that will help to improve their skills and work opportunities, with further support from advisers. In addition, the course search facility provides thousands of learning opportunities on the database to choose from, including all part-time further education, community education, opportunities with private providers and work-based learning.

## FURTHER EDUCATION

At 16, young people may decide to remain in school or move into further education. There are 13 [further education institutions](#) in Wales. Most are general further education colleges which deliver a broad range of provision to learners aged 16 and over. This includes academic and vocational programmes from entry to degree levels, apprenticeships, adult learning and independent living skills programmes for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities. More than 100,000 learners study at further education institutions each year.

There is also a range of employability programmes, covered under Employability and Employment Opportunities in this Handbook.

## **PROVISION FOR PREVENTING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

Grant funding has also been made available to local authorities since 2019 to 2020, as part of the Youth Support Grant, to fund the role of a Youth Homelessness Coordinator in every local authority, to develop support for young people at risk of youth homelessness or signpost to existing support that may be needed such as mental health and well-being. This includes universal provision such as delivering awareness raising sessions in schools and youth work settings, highlighting the signs and causes of homelessness, particularly hidden homelessness. It also includes more targeted support such as family mediation, to enable young people to continue living within the family home, or independent living skills and tenancy skills to help young people make a successful transition to independent living when they are ready to move on.

Youth Homelessness Coordinators are expected to develop appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support, by mapping the relevant local provision available to support those at risk of homelessness. Shelter Cymru has developed a Youth Homelessness Early Prevention Padlet Sharing Platform where coordinators can share resources they have developed.

## **Employability and employment opportunities**

As well as using the Framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the Framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment. In this way, we can set young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances.

The Welsh Government's plan for employability and skills '[Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills: summary](#)' (2022) sets out areas of interim focus over the next 5 years, linked to the national milestones, which includes maintaining post-pandemic improvements in levels of young people in EET, with a focus on transition to employment.

[The consultation on the Framework](#) showed support for a broader and more flexible range of vocational options being made available. Feedback from young people highlighted an appetite for greater focus on employment, employability and work experience, and for comprehensive information on their options.

Young people wanted to receive quality employment or self-employment support and advice in all education settings. They also wanted a greater focus on the

provision of practical support to help them make the transition to life as an independent adult.

We have been considering options available to deliver adult and youth employability provision both during the COVID-19 recovery phase and longer term in Wales. This is being delivered through a combination of new and existing programmes, at a national and local level. This Handbook references national projects only, partner organisations should also be aware of what is available locally.

## PRE-16

### Within schools

All young people will have access to careers services within the school setting. The curriculum in schools should enable learners to gain experiences related to work and careers, developing knowledge of the breadth of opportunities available to them throughout their lives. This learning will help them make informed decisions about their career pathways. The **four purposes** of the curriculum (to create ambitious, capable learners; healthy, confident individuals; enterprising, creative contributors; and ethical, informed citizens), and the integral skills which underpin them, are central to preparing learners for careers and work. These skills support learners to be resilient, creative and ambitious, requiring them to solve problems, engage with different issues, and work independently, as well as preparing them for the opportunities and challenges of a changing economic reality.

Learning about careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) is fundamental to developing skills for work and life. CWRE helps learners to understand the relationship between their learning and the world of work. Experiences should aim to open learners' eyes to the opportunities that lie ahead and should provide high-quality advice about skills and career pathways, raising the aspirations of learners who may not otherwise consider the possibility of certain opportunities being available to them. In January 2022, the Curriculum for Wales Guidance for Careers was updated with the integrated CWRE guidance. The majority of the guidance can be found at **Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum**). There are also updated sections for CWRE within the areas of learning and experience in the cross-curricula sections, as well as updates to the legislation section. The new Estyn National Framework will support schools in implementing CWRE.

Access to entrepreneurship learning can help young people develop entrepreneurial skills as part of their curriculum. These skills and experiences are valued by employers and are essential for starting and running a business. **Big Ideas Wales** provides an opportunity for learners to explore enterprise and learn from the experiences of entrepreneur role models. It gives information, advice and guidance to help them on the path towards becoming self-employed or starting their own business.

## **Junior apprenticeships**

Junior apprenticeships offer Year 10 and 11 learners the opportunity to study full-time for a future career in a college setting from the age of 14. The

apprenticeships offer a two-year programme of work-related education with work experience built in, alongside a Level 2 course that is equivalent to 4 or 5 GCSEs, in a range of different vocational pathways. Each apprentice also studies GCSEs in Maths and English alongside their chosen area. There are a number of programme codes in the directory to reflect different junior apprenticeship pathways.

Each junior apprentice should have access to support with learning and teaching, help with behaviour management, and a designated welfare officer to provide pastoral care and day-to-day support.

The aim of the junior apprenticeship is to make the learner employable or ready to progress onto a higher-level vocational course or apprenticeship at the age of 16.

The junior apprenticeship programme is primarily funded by the local authority and therefore it is essential that agreement is reached between the college and the respective local authority before this provision is agreed.

## **ADVICE, SUPPORT AND PROVISION AVAILABLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE POST-16**

Young people go on to a range of destinations at 16. Most young people will stay on at school or choose to move onto further and higher education. A small percentage may choose an option within the adult community education sector.

Some young people will choose to enter work-based learning straight after school. The key mainstream offers made available will be the Welsh Government's new Jobs Growth Wales+ programme and apprenticeships. There is, however, a range of further training and learning opportunities available, as set out in this document.

Young people often need support during this sometimes stressful transition, such as further advice on their future options and on how to overcome barriers. Some young people worry about making the wrong decision and are anxious about what options are available to them if they change their mind and their career goals. In addition, young people, who do not think staying on in school or further education, have fed back that they often feel they do not have the information or support to explore alternative options such as apprenticeships, work-based learning or employment and self-employment.

## **Advice services for young people**

When young people reach the age of 16 they are eligible to access the [Working Wales](#) service. This service provides free advice, guidance and access to training across Wales.

Working Wales is also the gateway into the YPG, and has a dedicated [Young Person's Guarantee webpage](#). The Working Wales advice and guidance processes will assess young people to determine their most suitable option and help them make an informed decision to move to the type of provision that can best support them.

Young people can register on the Working Wales website for the YPG. They will receive support by an adviser where their needs will be assessed via a guidance assessment, resulting in a referral onto provision. Working Wales will measure and report on the number of registrations and number of referrals.

In addition, many young people will have access to additional advice services made available via further and higher education as well as the UK Government Jobcentre Plus services.

## **WORK-BASED LEARNING AND OTHER EMPLOYABILITY AND TRAINING OPTIONS**

### **Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+)**

The Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) programme, launched in March 2022, and is available to young people between the ages of 16 to 18. It aims to progress young people into employment or further learning and increase participants' confidence and motivation by undertaking a bespoke package of training and development support.

The programme has 3 strands:

#### **1. Engagement**

For those needing to confirm or contextualise an occupational/educational focus prior to entering further learning or work.

#### **2. Advancement**

For those able to follow a programme of study leading to a Level 1 Qualification but assessed as being unable to currently follow a Level 2 or above programme.

#### **3. Employment**

For those who are occupationally focused and job ready.

It is important that EPCs, Careers Wales and JGW+ providers have strong partnership working relationships in place. This ensures that young people who would benefit from participating in the JGW+ programme (from those that are furthest away from the labour market through to job-ready individuals) are identified quickly and offered appropriate support. This will enable a smooth referral process via Working Wales.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Wales are open to anyone aged 16 or over. They combine practical training in a job with study. Individuals will gain hands-on work experience, learn new skills and gain a nationally-recognised qualification. They also get the chance to earn a wage at the same time. Apprenticeships can take between 1 and 4 years to complete.

Apprenticeships are available from levels 2 to 6 and have the following qualification equivalence:

- Foundation Apprenticeship Level 2 = 5 GCSEs or NVQ Level 2 equivalent
- Apprenticeship Level 3 = 2 A-levels or NVQ Level 3 equivalent
- Higher Apprenticeship Level 4 or 5 = HNC, HND or Foundation degree equivalent
- Degree Apprenticeship Level 6 = Bachelor's degree equivalent (Degree Apprenticeships are currently available in ICT, digital, engineering and advanced manufacturing occupations)

Apprenticeships are available through the medium of Welsh and bilingually, allowing individuals to train and learn in their chosen language.

Apprenticeships are available for those who have a disability, health conditions or learning difficulties. Almost all apprenticeships can be made accessible and the employer will work with the individual to ensure they get tailored support to meet their needs so they can work confidently.

Further advice and guidance, including information on the [Find an Apprenticeship](#), apprenticeship vacancy service and [Manage Apprenticeships service](#) can be found by [visiting our apprenticeships section](#).

## Entrepreneurship: Business Advice and the Big Ideas Project (16 to 24)

[Big Ideas Wales](#) is part of the Business Wales service to nurture young entrepreneurial talent and to support young people age 16 to 24 to develop enterprise capabilities and start their own business. Support, to access information and business advice, talk through processes and finance options, and help build knowledge and networks to help create sustainable ventures, is available through further and higher education, for community groups and for individuals.

## Case study: entrepreneurship programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) supports young people aged 11 to 25 to improve their resilience to deal with current and future challenges, supporting their well-being and their positive engagement in and contribution to the communities in which they live.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the YEPS team noticed just how creative young people were, with some using their new-found hobbies, passions and skills to support themselves, their families and communities, and raise money for charity. Few young people, however, had envisaged this passion being turned into a viable business. This is where YEPS was able to help through an exciting opportunity to provide the first youth-led entrepreneurship programme, in partnership with Welsh ICE, called the '5 - 9 Club'. This meant YEPS could help people learn how to turn those new skills, passions and ideas into a business.

A programme was developed to provide young people with the tools to market their idea, showing them how to source funding and learn from other entrepreneurs to develop their own business. The programme engaged with a group of 15 young people each week. It was offered through a blended-learning approach, which meant it was possible to cater for participants who preferred in- person learning, as well as those who wanted to attend sessions online. There was a community of support throughout the programme and beyond, with a WhatsApp group, Facebook group and support from Welsh ICE.

The objective of this programme was to give young people (16 to 25 years) the skills and confidence to be able to launch a new business. The YEPS team is optimistic that, now they have completed the programme, the young people will have the best possible chance of making their start-ups a success. As of 4 October 2021, 6 new businesses had been supported to begin trading with guidance and financial start-up from YEPS.

## **The Out of Work Service**

The Out of Work Service supports people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET and are recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues. It is a specialist programme, catering for those who cannot, or will not, engage with mainstream services, or for whom mainstream services are not suitable. Free confidential support is provided by peer mentors who have personal experiences of mental ill-health and/or substance misuse.

Between November 2016 and April 2022, over 4300 children and young people were supported by the Out of Work Service.

The Welsh Government is extending EET funding support until 2025 for young people who are NEET and recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues.

## **Personal Learning Accounts**

The Personal Learning Accounts (PLA) Programme provides support across Wales for employed people aged 19 and over and earning under the median income to gain higher-level skills which will improve their career and earning prospects.



It specifically enables people on below average salaries to achieve higher earnings on a sustainable basis. It uniquely offers flexibility around how and when people learn by helping colleges deliver courses that fit around an individual's work and family commitments.

The programme is also responsive to employers' upskilling requirements, by prioritising skills and qualifications in preparation for the future, to help employers rebuild their businesses and in turn support the economy.

In collaboration and with key advice from Regional Skills Partnerships delivery is targeted at the priority sectors of:

- logistics (in particular HGV and LGV driving), including driver licence fees and tests
- net zero and green construction (including retrofit, wind, tidal and solar power)
- advanced materials and manufacturing (including technical engineers)
- hospitality (including chefs, catering assistants, waiting and front of house staff)
- digital
- health and social care re-engagement

Full information on eligibility and how to apply for a PLA can be found on the [Careers Wales](#) and [Working Wales](#) websites.

## DWP

The DWP provides a range of support and opportunities to young people who are claiming Universal Credit and other benefits to support them progress into work. At the time of publication these include:

- the Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) scheme which offers a six-month training scheme for those who have been unemployed for over 13 weeks
- the [Work and Health programme](#) which offers training and support and is available for those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months
- the [Restart](#) Scheme which offers 12 months of intensive support for those who have been unemployed for more than 9 months with some scope for early entry
- Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) which is a voluntary programme aimed at claimants with disabilities who also have complex needs
- New Enterprise allowance which provides mentoring and an allowance to help those with an idea to start their own business
- [Access to work](#) which helps those who have disabilities or a physical or mental health condition to get and stay in work

## Accountability

Responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners (see [Roles and Responsibilities](#)). However, [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted a lack of collective accountability across all partners working within the Framework.

Local authorities are best placed to provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementation of the Framework. The Welsh Government also has a key interest in terms of alignment with the YPG and other government priorities, as set out in the '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)'. Local partnerships (including providers) have a critical role to play in delivering provision to support the Framework. This means local authorities and their partners need to have regular, honest conversations about what is working, and when a different approach is required.

## GOVERNANCE

### Governance structure

Local authority senior leaders should have oversight of the delivery of the Framework, ideally with a senior leader acting as a champion for the Framework. This means an appropriate governance structure needs to be in place, with EPCs providing regular updates to senior leaders on performance against the Framework. Where the Public Services Board (PSB), established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in an area has identified actions to support young people, there is an opportunity for the Framework to be integrated with its local well-being plan. The local authority is a statutory member of the PSB.

Updates should also be provided to the multi-agency groups involved in delivering the Framework, so they can drive continuous improvement by understanding what approaches have worked and where there are lessons to be learned.

For those aged 11 to 16 updates should include:

- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming NEET
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming NEET supported by the Framework
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless supported by the Framework
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless also identified as at risk of becoming NEET

For those aged 16 to 18 updates should include:

- the number of young people aged 16 to 18 whose destination is 'unknown', and whether there are any safeguarding concerns

- the number of young people 16 to 18 who are NEET
- the reasons underlying the NEET figures, and trends
- how long individuals have remained within a tier and the progress they have made (it may be appropriate for some young people to remain within a tier for more than a defined number of days, as long as they are still making progress)
- background information on why some individuals have not moved between tiers
- the success stories and the lessons to be learned and shared

By keeping senior leaders fully informed and escalating any issues outside the EPC's sphere of influence, senior leaders can bring their own influence to bear when there are blockages in the operation of the Framework.

### **Case study: Senior leaders in the Vale of Glamorgan supporting their staff to reduce the number of young people who are NEET**

During the 2018 to 2019 financial year the Vale of Glamorgan ('the Vale') began to see a gradual rise in its NEET figures through the year. The NEET percentage had increased from 0.5% in 2018 to 1.4% in 2019.

Quarterly NEET data is examined by the Vale's YEPF Strategic Board, which compares trends and direction of travel. The rise in the number of NEET young people was escalated to the local authority's Head of Standards and Provision. The EPC highlighted that the rise in the number of young people who were NEET could be mitigated by improved communication between partner organisations.

The Head of Standards and Provision intervened to improve and open channels of communication at various levels. Working with the Head of Service within Careers Wales helped to prioritise the NEET agenda in the Vale.

The Vale's EPC developed an action plan that was agreed and finalised by partners, and arranged regular meetings between managers in the youth service, the EPC and Careers Wales. Weekly meetings were also set between the EPC and the Working Wales manager to monitor the number of young people allocated to Tier 3 in the 5-tier model. The main focus of the meeting was to ensure young people were moving into Tier 3, from Tiers 1 or 2, and receiving feedback on the progress of those in Tier 3 awaiting offers or start dates. As reducing the number of young people who were NEET was a recognised high priority, the Vale's youth service was able to prioritise resources to increase the frequency of 'door-knocking' at the homes of young people with 'unknown' status.

The local authority's list of young people in Tier 1 was shared regularly with partners and Careers Wales. The list was updated frequently as new information became available. This meant all partners understood what progress was being made in locating young people in Tier 1.

The support from the heads of services in the local authority and Careers Wales allowed the development of a governance structure that aided close collaboration and improved

communication. This helped reduce the percentage of young people who were NEET for the following financial year (2020 to 2021) from 1.4% to 0.9%.

## **IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY**

At a national level, we propose that Welsh Government officials will work with EPCs and youth homelessness co-ordinators towards developing an annual report for Welsh Ministers on the contribution of the Framework to reducing the number of young people who are NEET and the number at risk of youth homelessness who have been supported. This report will highlight effective practice and current challenges, in order to provide an overarching update for Ministers on the contribution of the Framework.

Schools are important partners in the delivery of the Framework, in particular for identifying young people who need additional support. However, there can be tensions, as identified in Estyn's report, '[Pupil registration practices](#)' (2019).

This report has highlighted 'the increased availability of comparative data led to school leaders seeing data as a key element of 'high stakes' accountability', in particular feeling pressure to achieve good results at the end of Key Stage 4. This has unintended consequences, as noted in the report. There is evidence schools may be using off-rolling or other inappropriate registration practices to improve their performance data. This is not in the best interest of vulnerable learners. 'Pupil registration practices' contains recommendations for schools and governing bodies, local authorities and the Welsh Government, to address these practices.

Local authorities, schools and governing bodies, and post-16 providers are expected to consider their NEET data as part of their ongoing reflection and self-evaluation processes, and in relation to the overarching aim of preparing young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Additionally, local authorities, schools and post-16 providers are expected to provide up-to-date NEET data to Estyn inspectors in the course of an inspection.

## **MONITORING PERFORMANCE: WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE?**

[Pupil destinations](#), based on an annual survey of school leavers, reports the destinations of learners across Wales who have reached statutory leaving age, (Year 11, and students leaving school in Years 12 and 13). (This applies to learners from all maintained and special needs

schools.) It also shows the number of school leavers with 'unknown' status (identified as 'No response').

The destination information is based on a snapshot of learners' known activity in the autumn after they have left school (usually carried out on 31 October), and the information is published on the Careers Wales website.

Pupil destination data is available at a national and a local authority level. Schools receive pre-release data on pupil destinations, so are aware of the number of their school leavers who are NEET.

Within local authorities, the Pupil destinations findings are used to review performance, particularly in respect of whether the number of young people who are NEET has increased or decreased compared to previous years. This information should supplement local authorities' own in-house reporting and scrutiny.

Information is fed into the Atlas and then the Careers Wales data hub provides EPCs with live information on young people in the 5-tier model. (The information flow into Atlas and the data hub outputs are set out in 'Monitoring Progression'.) EPCs are able to access information on the data hub on all 5 tiers, to inform their in-house reporting and scrutiny procedures. EPCs can also use the data hub to access more detailed information on young people in Tiers 1 and 2, as EPCs are more directly involved in managing support for those young people.

The more regularly EPCs check the information on the data hub and reconcile it to their own records, the more accurate the information they hold on young people.

Most partners working within the Framework are held to organisational key performance indicators (KPIs). [The consultation on the Framework](#) identified evidence of different organisations and programmes working to different KPIs and objectives. There is also anecdotal evidence of the 5-tier model being used as the basis for KPIs, which creates some tensions, as this is not the purpose of the 5-tier model. For example, a young person in Tier 2, who experiences significant barriers, may make progress, but this will not always be reflected in a KPI based solely on whether individuals have progressed to another tier.

In setting their KPIs, organisations should recognise the needs of the young person at the centre of activity. Organisations should explore how they can collectively own KPIs and best reflect the targets and ambitions outlined in the relevant national milestones. Rather than looking at young peoples' immediate destinations, KPIs could be drawn up on the basis of longer-term outcomes (for example how many young people who have received support under the Framework are still in EET after a year) rather than solely looking at immediate post-school destinations.

In all cases it is critical that the needs of the young person are placed ahead of programme targets or individual organisational KPIs.

The Welsh Government publishes **estimates of the participation of young people in education, employment or training** annually, and these provide information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales at the end of the calendar year. This publication also provides the main estimates for young people who are NEET in Wales (the Statistical First Release (SFR) series). Estimates are published for young people aged 16 to 18 as well as for those aged 19 to 24. These estimates can only be disaggregated by gender due to limitations in the various primary data sources used to calculate them. For those reasons, the Welsh Government also publishes a second measure, the '**Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)**' series.

The 'Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)' series are more timely but less statistically robust survey-based estimates, are published quarterly by the Welsh Government. They can be disaggregated to show NEET rates by single year of age, gender, region and disability status.

Data is available for **employment rates, unemployment rates** and **economic activity rates** (excluding students) at a national and local level.

Local authorities provide qualitative information to the Welsh Government on the operation of the Framework through bi-annual reports submitted in respect of the Youth Support Grant.

## **KEY ACCOUNTABILITY MESSAGE**

To summarise, developing the accountability strand of the Framework means all partners involved in its delivery need to be part of an ongoing process of review and reflection to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their area, its successes, and where improvements can be made.

This process should be supported by senior leaders. This approach will help drive improvements in NEET rates and a reduction in youth homelessness.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

This section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Framework that we have set out throughout this document.

## **THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

- Sets core standards and expectations.
- Links the Framework to national policies and programmes.

- Brings together policy officials to work collectively on this agenda, through the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Task Force.
- Provides guidance to strengthen the operation of the Framework.
- Facilitates best practice across local authorities.
- Facilitates the sharing of effective practice.
- Updates EPCs on Welsh Government provision that is being introduced.
- Holds local authorities and providers to account.
- Leads on the YPG to support young people across Wales.
- Monitors NEET levels in order to determine progress against the national milestone and YPG.
- Takes forward actions set out in the guidance document '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)'.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

- Have strategic oversight of the operation of the Framework in relation to young people up to the age of 18 in the local authority area.
- Work closely with delivery partners.
- Provide EPC role.
- Provide Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator role.
- Provide lead worker role for young people in Tiers 1 and 2, and monitor those who decline immediate support.
- Provide and promote suitable provision to keep young people engaged or to reduce their risk of becoming homeless.
- Part of self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working.

## **CAREERS WALES**

- Inputs information into Atlas, their customer relationship management system.
- Makes information available to local authorities via the Careers Wales data hub on young people aged 16 to 18 in Tiers 1 and 2.
- Provides lead worker function for young people in Tier 3. Part of self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working.

## **WORKING WALES**

- Identifying young people aged 16 to 18 accessing the YPG with significant barriers and referring them to the EPC and/or appropriate Tier 2 support.

## LEARNING PROVIDERS

Learning providers include schools, further education colleges, work-based learning providers, Community Employability Programmes, contracted providers delivering the JGW + programme, voluntary sector, including voluntary youth work organisations. Their roles and responsibilities include:

- helping to identify young people at risk of disengaging, or at risk of youth homelessness, or who require support for their emotional mental health and well-being
- supporting operational delivery of the Framework, including:
  - providing lead workers for young people in Tier 2 and 4 and/or pastoral support as appropriate
  - providing suitable provision to keep young people engaged or to reduce their risk of becoming homeless
  - providing timely notification to Careers Wales of starters and leavers
- improving the number of young people with positive destinations at 16, 17 and 18, including supporting them to prepare for a successful transition
- monitoring the EET destination of their leavers to drive continuous improvement
- being part of the self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working

## Annex A: Signposting to support for mental health and well-being

There is a link between young people's mental health and well-being, their engagement in EET and their risk of becoming homeless. The [consultation on the Framework](#) with young people highlighted the importance of positive relationships with individual teachers and support staff. Individuals who spoke positively about the support they received to help stay engaged in their education felt this support was an essential contributor to their successes in education and longer-term progression.

The consultation on the Framework identified concerns about a gap in relation to provision that supports young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties to engage with education and training. [The impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health has been well-documented](#). There is a range of support available to bolster young people's emotional mental health and wellbeing, and young people can be signposted to this.



## FRAMEWORK ON EMBEDDING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

For young people in school, the [Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being](#) aims to address the emotional and mental well-being needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff, as part of the whole-school community. It recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of what is a complex population of young people, whose needs will vary as they progress through infancy to adolescence and early adulthood. Primarily it is about building resilience and ensuring preventative action. However, it also provides guidance on how to recognise the signs and address poor well-being when it arises and to ensure effective support for schools and the learner when a learner experiences more severe distress.

The Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being is meant to support and complement the Curriculum for Wales and in particular the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.

## CURRICULUM FOR WALES

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales framework there are four purposes which are central to every decision made about the Curriculum for Wales. One of the four purposes is to support children and young people to become 'healthy confident individuals'.

A further introduction to the Curriculum for Wales is available in [the Curriculum for Wales guidance](#).

The Curriculum for Wales includes a [Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience](#) which enhances a curriculum's focus on the health and well-being of learners. For the first time, health and well-being has an equal status in law to other important areas of the school curriculum. This is an innovative part of the Curriculum for Wales and aims to ensure that learning and support around issues such as physical, mental and emotional health are provided to all young people in Wales.

## INDEPENDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES

Local authorities in Wales are required to make reasonable provision of [independent counselling services](#) for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 on the site of each secondary school that it maintains and for learners in Year 6 of primary school. A local authority may in addition offer counselling services at other locations, for example at independent schools, further education colleges or at other community facilities.

## **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS) IN- REACH**

The CAMHS in-reach Pilot Programme was established to build capacity (including skills, knowledge and confidence) in schools to support learner mental health and well-being and improve schools' access to specialist liaison, consultancy and advice when needed. [The evaluation reports on the implementation of the Pilot](#), including what worked well and how it fitted with other initiatives. The [Programme for government: update](#) includes a commitment to roll out the 'CAMHS in-reach' in schools across Wales.

## **YOUTH WORK APPROACHES**

Grant funding has been made available to local authorities since the financial year 2019 to 2020, as part of the Youth Support Grant, to support young people's emotional mental health and well-being through youth work approaches. Youth workers, both voluntary and paid professional staff, are skilled at working with young people and developing trusted relationships with them. They are often well-placed to identify whether a young person may need additional support, and when that support may need to be provided by more specialist services. Youth workers based at the local authority are connected with EPCs and can highlight when individuals are struggling.

Youth work supports young people to develop holistically, facilitating their social and emotional development, enabling them to develop their voice, influence and place in society. It can take place in a wide range of settings such as in youth clubs, online, through outreach programmes, and in other settings to meet the needs of young people. Youth work responds well to creating a 'safe space' for young people who are struggling with their emotional well-being, and the informal nature of the engagement can make a substantial difference to a positive outcome.

## **FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN FURTHER EDUCATION**

Dedicated funding for further education institutions to support mental health and well-being was introduced in the financial year 2020 to 2021. It supports institutional, collaborative and national projects designed to improve both learner and staff well-being. The funding is used for a wide range of initiatives including frontline counselling for learners; dedicated well-being coordinators in colleges; professional learning; and the development of tutorial programmes. National projects have included the development of toolkits on [substance misuse](#) and [trauma informed practice](#).

## THE OUT OF WORK SERVICE

The Out of Work Service, which is explained in greater detail under Employability and employment opportunities, supports people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET and are recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues.

## DEWIS CYMRU

The [Dewis Cymru](#) website gives individuals the opportunity to research what sources of support are available for their well-being.

## MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

[The Mental Health Toolkit](#) links young people aged 11 to 25 to websites, apps, helplines, and more, to build resilience across 6 categories:

- anxiety
- low mood
- keeping healthy
- bereavement
- coronavirus information
- crisis

This resource enables users to take control of their mental health with information, self-help, and advice about how to seek further support embedded throughout. This online resource will continue to be revised and updated as required.

## SILVERCLOUD

SilverCloud is an online course which offers support for anxiety, depression, and much more, all based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Anyone aged 16 or over can sign up at [nhs.wales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/](https://nhs.wales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/).

## CALL MENTAL HEALTH LISTENING LINE

CALL provides a confidential mental health listening and emotional support line which is open 24/7. CALL can also signpost to support in local communities and a range of online information. To use CALL, telephone 0800132737, text 'help' to 81066 or visit [callhelpline.org.uk/](https://callhelpline.org.uk/).

## INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL HEALTH BOARDS

Local health boards have made available clear advice and information on how to access local mental health services, if needed. This can be found on individual health board websites:

- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board: [Mental health, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board: [IAWN \(information, awareness and well-being now\), Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: [Mental Health Hub, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: [Mental health and well-being](#)
- Cwm Taf University Health Board: [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#)
- Swansea Bay University Health Board: [Get help with mental health](#)
- Powys Teaching Health Board: [Your Local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\): Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 – 2034**

REVISION C  
**17 OCT 2024**

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# Introduction

## What is a Youth Engagement Strategy and Why Do We Need One?

The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is a "systematic mechanism to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, which are led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners."<sup>1</sup>

Neath Port Talbot is a distinct community, with opportunities and challenges that impact on and shape the lives of our young people. It is important that we use the systematic mechanisms and processes outlined in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework in a way that works for our young people, in our community. This Youth Engagement Strategy considers how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.

## Who Is This Strategy For?

This Strategy requires a multi-agency approach to ensure young people have the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. It is for all the organisations that work with and empower young people, including Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Careers Wales, and a range of providers and third-sector partners.

It is also for the young people who live in Neath Port Talbot so they can understand the choices available to them and the options they have.

## How Was It Developed?

The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy builds on The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 and a range of other local, regional and national policies.

It uses data and evidence from a range of sources to understand the needs of our young people, and the challenges which impact on their transition into adulthood.

Engagement was at the heart of the development of this strategy. This included conversations, through focus groups and one-to-one meetings, with over 100 young people, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGTBQ+ young people and NEET young people. Their lived experiences, ideas and perspectives have informed this strategy.

This strategy has also been informed by a workshop session that brought together a range of services and providers to explore how to "**work together to identify young people** who need support and provide appropriate **support to ensure they have positive outcomes.**"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)

## Listening To Young People

It was vital that this strategy was informed by the experiences and ideas of young people. We spoke to over 100 local young people, aged between 11 and 25 years of age, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGBTQ+ young people, young people in work-based learning, the youth council, and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Through focus groups, meetings and one-to-one conversations, we explored with young people how they make choices about their future, the support they need and the barriers that prevent them from accessing help.

The conversations we had with young people have informed this strategy and corresponding action plan. Their stories and experiences are shared within to illustrate the strategic objectives and why change is needed. In our conversations with young people, they talked to us about a range of topics including:

- **The importance of knowing the options available to them:** Young people want to feel empowered and enabled to make choices and take ownership of their lives. It is seen as an important part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. When decisions are made for, or things are done to (rather than with), young people, this can lead them to disengage. There is a perception that the current approach to education and training in Neath Port Talbot provides limited options and that the pathway/s available are defined by the curriculum and not the individual.

*"I think there needs to be more support for the individual so you know what you can think about doing, not just what they think you should do."*

17-year-old attending work-based learning

*"I'm going to be honest; I didn't know what I could do so I just copied my friends."*

16-year-old in attending work-based learning

*"I was told I was bad at making decisions. I've gone between A levels and vocational, I wanted to do media but was told 'I wouldn't be capable of it'. It feels like I'm being told what to do."*

18-year-old care experienced young person

*"Becoming an adult is about choosing what you do, not being told what to do."*

18-year-old college student





- Their mental health:** Research by the School Health Research Network (SHRN) at Cardiff University found that nearly a quarter of secondary school learners in Wales reported having very high levels of poor mental health symptoms in the years following COVID-19. Young people spoke of their mental health affecting their home lives, participation in education / training, employability, and how they feel about their future. There is a concern among young people that the support available is insufficient and inadequate. Young people spoke of seeking help – for mental health, self-harm and other conditions – and being told *“we can’t help you, it’s not bad enough.”*

*“My son has been on a waiting list for 3 years. He’s autistic but not autistic enough to get help.... He’s suicidal, he’s starved himself, but he’s not bad enough to get into CAMHS.”*

Parent of a 19-year-old young person not in education, employment or training

*“I had to learn that my results don’t define my life, otherwise I would crawl back into my anxiety hole.”*

17-year-old attending work-based learning

*“I’ve not had a lot of help with my mental health, I’m really overwhelmed... Staff change all the time, you can’t build a relationship with them.”*

17-year-old student

- Why they disengage with education and training:** School attendance in Neath Port Talbot is lower than comparable areas and unauthorised absence rates are high. We asked young people why they disengaged with education and training. In addition to poor mental health, there was a perception that additional needs, and LGBTQ+ young people, were not being supported. There’s a belief that the people who work with young people need more training to understand and support those with additional needs. Young people also believe that professionals are focused on results rather than them as people. Bullying was a persistent issue, with young people talking about not feeling safe in education settings and a belief that *“school is not doing anything about bullying.”*

*“I want to learn, but when I get to school I’m bullied for being in a foster care. For having parents who are druggies. I spend my breaks in the toilet. I don’t want to be there.”*

14-year-old care experienced young person

*“30 people in a class are too many. It’s loud and chaotic. You don’t get listened to. Why would you want that?”*

15-year-old at risk of homelessness

*“If you’re not doing well, some teachers make it feel like ‘you’ve failed, you’re a bad student.’ Teachers only care about grades.”*

16-year-old at risk of homelessness



- **The barriers to support:** There are many reasons why young people cannot and do not access support. These range from preferring to *“help myself”* to a perception that the people you ask for help will not provide the help you need. There were other issues; for example, transport was seen as a barrier, particularly for those living in rural communities. In addition, young people were unsure of what help they’re entitled to and how to access it; and there was a reliance on professionals to refer them to support.

*“You ask for help, and you don’t get it. Workers promise the world but don’t deliver. Why would I trust them?”*

19-year-old living in supported accommodation

*“I prefer to be left alone, to sort myself out.”*

16-year-old college student and young carer

*“Teachers don’t understand young carers and the challenges we face so we can’t ask them for help.”*

14-year-old young carer

*“We can’t get to these places because the buses have been cut and when you reach out, they all blame it on each other and we’re left with nowhere to go.”*

College student



## Learning from stakeholders

We worked with stakeholders to explore how to “**work together to identify young people** who need support and provide appropriate **support to ensure they have positive outcomes.**”<sup>3</sup> These conversations highlighted the need to:

**Tackle the barriers to collaboration:** There is an aspiration to work together to ensure and enable young people to transition successfully into adulthood. However, there are a range of barriers that prevent this, including how services / projects / initiatives are funded, siloed working, and limitations to sharing information and data. There is also a need to re-establish and re-define governance required to deliver this Youth Engagement Strategy.

**More robust identification:** Reductions in budget, resources and capacity have resulted in fewer earlier intervention and prevention projects; both young people and stakeholders agree *“it would help if we could get help sooner. I feel like you have to wait and wait. Are they waiting for it to get worse?”* (young person interview). Stakeholders felt the current vulnerability index approach is not capturing all young people that need support as not all needs can be captured in data sets. Professional discussion is also needed to identify young people in need and systems to systematically capture the voice of young people are currently missing.

**A clear understanding of what’s available:** There is a wide range of support available to young people, from a variety of service providers. However, there is not a comprehensive and complete picture of what is available, how it can be accessed and by whom. This impacts on needs-based decision-making and is a barrier to young people and professionals finding the support that young people are entitled to.

**Limitations imposed by funding criteria:** Every young person has their own aspirations, needs and barriers. Stakeholders believe that a person-centred approach is needed which puts young people’s needs first.

**Involving young people:** Young people have told us they don’t want decisions to be made for them, or for changes to simply happen to them. Stakeholders felt that involving young people in service design, enabling them to shape the decisions that affect them, is critical to young people getting the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. The Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy sets out an approach to ensure young people’s voices inform the decisions that affect them.

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<sup>3</sup> [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)



## Vision and outcomes.

### A Shared Vision

This youth engagement strategy seeks to set out how partners will come together to achieve this vision.

All young people in Neath Port Talbot will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them. Working together we will reduce youth unemployment in Neath Port Talbot by positively encouraging and supporting young people to stay in education, employment and training. We will prevent youth homelessness, and ensure young people have the safe and stable homelife they need.

### Strategic Objectives

To deliver on this shared vision, we will focus on five strategic objectives. These outcomes, set out below, are interlinked and build on the *better outcomes for young people* diagram taken from the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook.<sup>4</sup>

- Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are **identified as early as possible**.
- **Services work together collaboratively** to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.
- The support available to young people is **monitored and evaluated** to ensure it is meeting their needs.
- **The right provision is in place** to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.
- **There is strategic oversight and leadership**.

This section of the strategy uses quantitative and qualitative data to explain why each outcome is important, outlines the work that is already being done and sets out priorities for the action plan.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-handbook-html>

Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are identified as early as possible.

### Why It's Important

- The Neath Port Talbot Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (2023/23 – 25/26) states “we will see a number of young people transition from Children and Young People Services over the next few years. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist service to meet the needs of young people.”
- “Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people’s needs. Not only does this give us the best chance of preventing situations such as homelessness that at-risk young people are vulnerable to, but it can also increase individuals’ engagement, improve attainment, and develop positive pathways to employment.<sup>5</sup>”
- Engagement with young people highlighted the barriers that prevented them from asking for help. Proactively identifying young people that would benefit from additional support / early intervention would address these barriers.
- Early identification can provide improved outcomes for young people, preventing escalating need or risk, and in so doing reduces demand for statutory and/or specialist services.

### What We Are Already Doing

There are a number of ways that youth support services identify and engage young people in Neath Port Talbot. These include:

- Young people can be identified as needing support by the **schools, social workers, youth workers, or any professional** and can be referred into targeted services.
- **Young people** who identify themselves as needing support can self-refer through the **Neath Port Talbot Single Point of Contact**. Family members can also make referrals through this service. Young people can also self-present at the **Opportunity Hub** in Port Talbot Shopping Centre.
- The **Vulnerability Assessment Profile** is a tool used for identifying young people who may benefit from additional support. It uses a range of factors, including free school meals, young people with experience of care, young carers, young parents and those with experience of economic disadvantage.
- Neath Port Talbot Youth Service is piloting **Upstream** which asks students aged 11 to 16 to complete a survey, focusing on a wide range of areas. This data on student well-being, resilience and engagement can help identify young people at risk of homelessness and/or in need of additional support.

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<sup>5</sup> [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook](#)

## What Are We Going To Do Next?

We will work together, in partnership, to improve early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless by:

- Working across services to **increase the public's awareness, with a focus on young people**, of available services, support, benefits and entitlements for young people who are or are at risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
- **Evaluating the Upstream Pilot** to think about how we can embed the early identification of young people at risk of homelessness.
- Addressing the **barriers to data sharing** and explore ways to bring together data from a wide range of places to identify young people who would benefit from additional support.
- Exploring ways to encourage and enable young people to ask for help as soon as they identify an issue.
- **Providing the training and workforce development needed** to enable those who work with and engage young people to have the professional judgement that is needed to identify the young people that need support – which is often missed by data-driven approaches.
- **Increase multi-agency input into early identification** by piloting Multi Agency Transition Screening Meetings (MATSM) in schools.



Services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.

## Why It's Important

- The cost-of-living crisis, the legacy impact of the pandemic and other factors are likely to lead to an increase in demand for support services from young people. It is therefore vital that partners work together to meet this demand, minimise duplication, and enable young people to access the support they need.
- Young people in engagement expressed concern about having to tell their stories to multiple services and said that a perceived lack of joined-up thinking and poor communication between services can disengage and frustrate them.

## What We Are Already Doing

**Housing and Homelessness Prevention:** Homelessness prevention is a statutory duty for Local Authorities, under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Housing teams work with social services to support 16- to 18-year-olds; give advice and support; find somewhere suitable to stay whilst deciding what other help to give and may try to help young people go back home if it is safe/suitable.

**Housing Options** provide a number of services to support young people known to Children Social Services, who are transitioning into adulthood, including '**When I'm Ready**' and '**Supported Lodgings**'. They also provide accommodation or support for those who need it as part of their transition plan.

Welsh Government's Housing Support Grant (HSG) is utilised to deliver local authority services as well as to commission services from external providers. The aim of the funding is to intervene early and prevent homelessness or to support vulnerable people to maintain their current accommodation. The grant is complementary to the local authority's duty to prevent homelessness and cannot fund that statutory duty.

The funding can support people to overcome issues such as dealing with debt, finding employment, managing a tenancy, substance misuse, mental health, and violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). The support offered through the grant is person-centred, helping individuals to improve their health and well-being by increasing skills, confidence, capability and agency.

**Neath Port Talbot Youth Service** supports young people aged 14 to 18 to prevent youth homelessness, funded by the Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant (YSG). Work includes awareness raising / prevention sessions for young people aged 14 plus in schools, colleges, training providers and youth groups. The aim of the sessions is to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues and of sources of support. There is also targeted, bespoke prevention and early intervention sessions for young people identified as at risk of youth homelessness. The young people can be brought together to form a group, or they can receive one-to-one support.

In addition to HSG and YSG funded services, **Dewis Housing** offer help for young people in the form of "a mixture of supported accommodation in Neath Port Talbot, including shared flats and houses and self-contained flats for young people who are homeless, potentially homeless or in other housing need." The team at Dewis Housing provide support "to enable young people to live independently and maintain a tenancy with the aim of moving on to accommodation with either a Housing Association or in the private rental sector".

**NEET / Prevention of NEET:** The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework recommends the notion of lead workers, who "have a direct relationship with the young person, being a consistent point of contact and support as they move forward and helping them to build and develop the long-term resilience they need to succeed in education, training and employment". It also provides some guidance as to whom should provide the lead worker role along a continuum of support. The table below outlines how lead works provide support across the 5 tiers in Neath Port Talbot.

**Table 1. Leader Worker Support**

Tier	Client group	Lead worker
<b>Tier 5 Young People in Further Education, Employment or Training (EET)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustaining education, employment or training (EET).</li> <li>• Working or studying part time over 16 hours.</li> <li>• Voluntary Work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No lead worker is judged necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 4 Young People at risk of dropping out of EET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. Young people in a job without training.</li> <li>• Those who have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition who are subsequently in FE, sixth form or training.</li> <li>• Those who have been made aware to CW by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET.</li> </ul>	<p>Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low and medium risk – provide pastoral systems and/or allocation of learning coach as a lead worker.</li> <li>• High risk – may be allocated lead worker from either Youth Service or Careers Wales. Or if Families First involved, Team Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 3 Unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds known to Careers Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged with CW and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET.</li> <li>• This tier should also include those known to CW, actively seeking EET but not requiring CW enhanced support, i.e. accessing support via CW.com, awaiting a college start date etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead worker identified for 100% cohort.</li> <li>• Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2 Unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds, known to Careers Wales, who are not available for EET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young person not available/ unable to seek EET (sickness, young carers, pregnancy, custody).</li> <li>• Young people with significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead worker identified for 100% cohort.</li> <li>• Youth Service will provide lead worker in nearly all cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 1 Unknown status on leaving Careers Wales services.</b>	<p>Young people unknown to Careers Wales</p>	<p>Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.</p>





**School-based support:** Schools employ Youth Engagement Workers who work with pupils who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training). Workers are linked to all secondary schools within Neath Port Talbot, including Ysgol Hendrefelin, and work with young people to overcome or manage any issues that are contributing to their disengagement from mainstream education.

**Transition Support:** Neath Port Talbot Youth Service and Youth Justice Early Intervention and Prevention Service support pupils in Year 11 both inside and outside of the classroom environment, including those who are Electively Home Educated. The interventions can vary depending on the needs of the young person and continues throughout the summer following their school-leaving data and their entry into a post-16 destination.

The aim is to prepare and support young people into a positive post-16 destination. Examples of the interventions include classroom support; home visits; partnership work with the education Welfare Officers, Teachers, Careers Wales, Social Workers, colleges; and work-based learning providers.

**16–18 Support:** Neath Port Talbot Youth Service is the lead organisation providing support to young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Tier 2 to help them make an effective transition to a positive EET destination. Targeted support along with tailor-made action plans are devised for individuals. The provision offers help and advice with job search activities, CV creation and interview techniques. Youth workers also provide wellbeing, emotional and life skills activities, which help the participants to achieve their goals.

In addition, the team are tasked with working in partnership with Careers Wales to reach out to young people aged 16 to 18 whose EET status is unknown. Although Post 16 Education and Work Based Learning Providers provide lead worker role for young people in Tier 4, youth work support is also offered to young people in work-based learning needing help to sustain their placement.

**Careers Wales:** Careers Wales provides support to enable young people to plan their career, prepare to get a job and find the right apprenticeships, courses and training. For example, they provide enhanced support to young people in Tier 3.

**Third Sector:** It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the role of the Third Sector that provides a wealth of community-based support for our young people. This includes programmes targeted at groups of young people with additional needs, such as mental health issues, LGBTQ+, gypsy traveller young people and young carers. The third sector is a vital component of provision for young people in Neath Port Talbot. There are also a range of providers that enable and empower young people to take alternative approaches to education and training.

There is a lot of provision available to our young people, with a shared aim of preventing young people from becoming NEET, supporting those that do and/or preventing youth homelessness. However, there is no complete picture of what initiatives are available to young people and the relevant referral pathways, and young people are not always able to access the services they need when they need them. Young people we talked to as part of the engagement expressed frustration at being unable to access support for a number of reasons – in some circumstances they felt that *“the help I get isn’t about me, it’s about ticking a box”*.



## What Are We Going To Do Next?

To ensure that services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people in Neath Port Talbot who need it, we will:

- Ensure those in **lead worker roles** have the understanding, training and continuing professional development needed to enable young people to access support.
- **Maximise the use of tools that enable joint working**, for example joint commissioning and the establishment of an alternative providers framework.
- Refresh and repurpose the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group around the three common principles that are key to multi-agency working: **information sharing, joint decision-making and intervention**.
- **Map provision available to young people** and establish shared cross-partnership pathways.
- Explore and exploit the **opportunities resulting from the Curriculum for Wales** to provide person-centred support for young people.
- Work collaboratively with schools, the third sector and local area coordinators to **provide community-based, local support that young people can access**.
- Work with schools to **implement school-community partnerships aimed at delivering interventions capable of preventing youth homelessness**. The foundation of these interventions should be partnerships between schools, healthcare, mental health support, community-based social services and the third sector.
- **Explore options to provide wellbeing support** for young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.
- **Continue to improve the links** between services for young people aged 16 and 17, known to NEET and housing teams.



The support available to young people is monitored and evaluated to ensure it is meeting their needs.

### Why It's Important

- The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook states that "in all areas of the Framework, we expect partners to proactively work together to develop and improve methods to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET or of becoming homeless."
- Monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring support is meeting individual young people's needs, enabling early identification and person-centred approaches.
- The Framework sets out an aspiration to "embed a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among all partners and stakeholders". Evaluation and monitoring are part of a process of reflection and review that can ensure lessons are learnt, and improvements are made, providing young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities.
- To build confidence and trust in young people who need this support, and their families.

### What We Are Already Doing

Currently it could be argued that monitoring and evaluation processes are primarily driven by the requirements of funders. Data is also collated and analysed to understand progress in relation to the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28.

**Lead workers** should take a young person-centred approach. They must be able to monitor and evaluate the support the young person / people they are working with are receiving, to understand if it is meeting those young people's needs and enable changes to be made if required.

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "monitoring progression also involves taking steps to identify young people who have fallen outside the monitoring system and establishing whether or not they are in EET. This is critical at the end of years 11, 12 and 13, when school leavers may be at risk of not making a positive transition into a post-16 destination. Young people with an 'unknown' destination on leaving school, or who have dropped out of post-16 education or training, should be located and offered support under the Framework if needed." **Currently this monitoring is shared between Careers Wales, education providers and the local authority.** Engagement with stakeholders suggests there is a need to evaluate the process by which information is shared about the transition and destination of our young people.

**Pre-16** Local Authority Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator's (EPCs) manage the process of identifying those most in need of support by holding meetings in all schools. This process enables the identification of learners most at risk of not progressing into education, employment and training. This is enhanced throughout the year by the feeding in of new information and intelligence. During the school holidays, as young people leave year 11, multi-agency meetings continue, bringing together **post-16** teams and Careers Wales to make sure all young people have continued support.

**Post-16** performance is continuously monitored, both in terms of our current performance against past performances and against the rest of Wales.



## What Are We Going To Do Next?

To ensure the support that is available to young people is monitored and evaluated so that it meets their needs, we will:

- Evolve the role of the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group to include a **self-evaluation partnership looking at how well identification and support systems are working.**
- **Give young people a role in evaluating the services that support them.**
- Look at how **outcome-driven approaches** can be used to evaluate and monitor the impact of the support our young people receive, **in order to inform decision-making on a case-by-case and collective basis.**
- Establish a monitoring process to **improve the monitoring of the transitions and destinations of our young people.**
- Create a **multi-agency pathway for young people** who have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
- **Develop an evaluation framework** for front-line services to assess their progress towards youth homelessness prevention.



The right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.

## Why It's Important

- Young people want to be able to choose their employment, skills and/or training pathways, take ownership of their future, and choose what they think is right for them.
- The Neath Port Talbot Employability and Skills Strategy includes an objective to “create a person-centred approach that enables people to choose their own employability and skills pathways” and “ensure that there is a lifelong employability and skills journey for local people.”
- The Neath Port Talbot Early Years, Children and Young People’s Plan states: Our Vision is that Neath Port Talbot will be a place where all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are part of a community that meets their needs and supports them to thrive **in a way that works best for them.**
- “As well as using the Framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the Framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment. In this way, we can set young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances.”<sup>6</sup>
- The Swansea Bay City Deal, Celtic Freeport, Wildfox, Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) and other investment will present a wide range of opportunities for our young people. We need to ensure they are well placed to meet them.
- The Curriculum for Wales, aims to enable schools to develop curriculums that will enable their learners to become:
  - ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
  - enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
  - ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
  - healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

## What We Are Already Doing

Neath Port Talbot’s Employability and Skills Strategy explains that the shift to Shared Prosperity funding has provided an opportunity for the realignment of employability, skills and business support. Within the Council, this has resulted in a cross-directorate way forward with improved collaboration.

The programme will support and enable a closer working relationship between the local authority and businesses in the area, ensuring that the skills and training needs of local businesses inform decision-making. A number of sector-based business forums have been developed to support meaningful engagement with local businesses, driving the conversation around change and need forward.

The [South West Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025](#) is the regional skills plan for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It lays out the “the future skills need of the region with an aim to influence the Welsh Government’s planning and funding of post-16 education through full-time courses and apprenticeships. The plan contains key actions on training needs, including the emerging technologies to meet the net zero agenda.” It sets out the future skills requirements for the region across a range of sectors, highlighting that the region is “lacking in key transferable skills.” The Regional Learning and Skills Partnership business survey also puts an emphasis on ensuring young people are work ready when they join the workforce.

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<sup>6</sup> Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook



## What Are We Going To Do Next?

Working together we will make sure the right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them. To do this we will:

- Work with the employability and skills team to **create the work ready programmes / work experience** that have been requested by businesses from all sectors.
- **Involve young people in service design**, enabling the community to shape and inform the services that are there to help them.
- **Promote the full range of pathways** including apprenticeships, degree-apprenticeships and vocational qualifications – and how to access them.
- Ensure **equity and quality of advice and support** to all young people across Neath Port Talbot.
- Work with schools and education providers to **make the most of the opportunities the Curriculum for Wales offers**.
- **Enable young people to successfully transition to and from the support they need**, helping them to transition to further support (should they need it) when they leave youth services.



## There is strategic oversight and leadership.

### Why It's Important

- The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners". However, both the consultation of the framework, and the stakeholder engagement to inform this Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy, suggest there is a lack of collective accountability across all partners.
- It is important that Neath Port Talbot Council, across all the departments that impact on young people and the partners, have a mechanism for having regular, honest conversations about what is and is not working.
- For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."

### What We Are Already Doing

There is an established **NPT Youth Support Agency Group**, which is coordinated by the local authority and brings together partners from across the public, private and third sectors that provide provision for young people. There is a need to update the governance and terms of reference of this group to reflect the updated Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. **Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum** aims to establish a dialogue between voluntary organisations, so that their needs and concerns can be accurately reflected within the planning process. The **Neath Port Talbot Youth Providers' Network** is run in partnership between Neath Port Talbot's Youth Service and Neath Port Talbot CVS, with representatives from organisations within voluntary, statutory, and independent sectors. It has a generic concern for all issues affecting young people aged 11 to 25 years in Neath Port Talbot.

Responsibility and accountability for delivering relevant Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 objectives sits with the **Children and Young People's Leadership Group**, which brings together senior stakeholders from across local government, health, education, third sector and emergency services to champion the needs and priorities of children and young people.

### What Are We Going To Do Next?

To bring partners together to work collaboratively, sharing responsibility and accountability, we will:

- Put in place a **governance structure that supports and enables partnership working**, enabling multi-agency working.
- **Secure buy-in from leadership** across the partnership to enable sharing of knowledge, power, decision-making and funding to change services and interventions to meet the needs of our young people.
- **Re-establish the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group**, to deliver the aspirations of the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
- Ensure **young people know who is responsible and accountable for the support they receive**.

## Governance

Achieving our vision that "all young people in Neath Port Talbot will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them" requires collaborative working and needs organisations to work together in partnership in a way that ● meets the needs of our young people.

The **Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board**, brings “together local organisations and strengthens the way they work together to improve the well-being of the people who live in our county borough.”<sup>7</sup> The Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board is working to give “all children the best start in life.” This includes:

- Taking a co-ordinated approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of our children and young people so they are able to flourish and thrive.
- Ensuring a better alignment of early intervention services in order to meet the needs of our children, young people and their families.
- Supporting and advising our school leavers to increase access to employment, education and training.

To deliver the well-being objective above, a **Children and Young People’s Partnership** has been created. This partnership will take a strategic role in delivering this Youth Engagement Strategy. It will also provide a link to the **West Glamorgan Children and Young People’s Programme**, localising regional approaches to meet the needs of Neath Port Talbot’s young people.

To enable the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy, operational task and finish groups will be established. These groups will have time limited, defined tasks, and the tasks will be derived from this plan. Each group will bring together the key organisations required to deliver the action/s within it. The task and finish groups will report to the Children and Young People’s Partnership, who, in turn, will feedback to the Public Service Board.

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<sup>7</sup> [Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board](#)





# Appendix 1. policy context

## National Policy Context

In 2022 the Welsh Government published a strengthened **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**, which contributes to the broader goal of tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. It is built around the early identification of those aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training or homeless (NEET), understanding their needs, putting appropriate support and/or provision in place, and monitoring their progression.

This Framework operates alongside our Young Person's Guarantee for people aged 16 to 24. This aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training. Collectively, these support the national milestone of at least 90% of 16- to 24-year-olds in education, employment and training by 2050 and the mission to prevent youth homelessness.

There are six components to the Framework, which are interlinked. The application of each depends on the vulnerability stage and age of the individual. These are:

- Early identification
- Brokerage
- Monitoring progression
- Provision
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability



How the six elements combine to secure better outcomes for young people



A range of other National Policies have also been taken into consideration in the development of this Youth Engagement Strategy. The **Young Person Guarantee (YPG)** is “the Welsh Government’s key commitment to provide everyone aged 16 to 24, living in Wales, with support to gain a place in education or training, help to get into work or self-employment.”<sup>8</sup> It is an “umbrella structure that sits above Welsh Government funding programmes for young people, aiming to fully utilize interventions, and to create a straightforward journey for young people regardless of circumstances and background.” It aims to ensure that every young person under 25 in Wales is guaranteed an offer of support to gain a place in education or training, find a job or become self-employed.

**Stronger, Fairer, Green Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills** has an area of action, Future Generations, that focuses on investing in and strengthening the whole system approach to delivering the YPG “to make it easy for everyone under the age of 25 to access an offer of work, education, training, or self-employment. This offer includes the young people who will benefit from 125,000 new Apprenticeships to give people of all ages high quality routes into better jobs.”<sup>9</sup> **The Curriculum for Wales** “aims to help each school develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners (aged 3 to 16) to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum – the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/young-persons-guarantee-html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/stronger-fairer-greener-wales-plan-employability-and-skills-summary-html#92543>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/curriculum-wales-overview>

The four purposes of the curriculum are to support children to be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

### Regional Policy Context

The **West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board** aims to improve the health and well-being of the region's population. The remit of their **Children and Young People's Programme** "includes supporting Children and Young People (CYP) who receive support as they transition into adulthood, where they may receive a different type of service as an adult. An underlying principle of this work is to follow a 'whole systems approach', which will form part of a new framework across health and social care services for CYP (covering both the statutory and voluntary sectors)."<sup>11</sup>

The **South West Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022–2025** is the regional skills plan for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It lays out the "future skills needs of the region with an aim to influence the Welsh Government's planning and funding of post-16 education through full time courses and apprenticeships. The plan contains key actions on training needs, including the emerging technologies to meet the net zero agenda."<sup>12</sup>

### Local Policy Context

The **Neath Port Talbot Public Service Boards Well-Being Plan 2023–28** is based around four objectives.

Highlighted below are the relevant aims within each objective:

1. All children have the best start in life.
  - Support and advise our school leavers to increase access to employment, education or training.
2. All our communities are thriving and sustainable.
  - Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.
3. Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
4. There are more secure, green and well-paid jobs and skills across the area are improved.
  - Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them.
  - Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future.

One of the objectives of the **Neath Port Talbot Recover, Reset, Renew Corporate Plan 2022–2027** is to ensure all children get the best start in life. Actions against this objective include helping pupils reconnect with school and improve attendance rates; providing effective early intervention; helping young people leaving care to access and maintain appropriate accommodation; working with partners to reduce youth unemployment; and increase work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

The **Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Plan** sets out a vision that "Neath Port Talbot will be a place where all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are part of a community that meets their needs and supports them to thrive in a way that works best for them." The strategy sets out services and interventions that will work together to deliver the following priority outcomes:

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/programmes/children-and-young-peoples-programme/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rlp.org.uk/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=2&mid=13&fileid=50>

- Supporting our youngest children to be healthy and ready to learn.
- Children, young people and their families are able to access the right support at the right time with positive outcomes.
- Children and young people can access education that inspires them to learn and develop the skills they need for the future they want.
- Children and young people are listened to, and they have opportunities to be actively involved in decision-making.
- All children and young people should be supported to help themselves be physically healthy and feel mentally and emotionally strong.

The **Neath Port Talbot Employability and Skills Strategy** sets out to ensure that “Neath Port Talbot will be a place where local people and businesses have access to the range of skills and opportunities our economy needs to grow. We will work together to maximise the potential of the planned investment in the area and ensure that growth benefits our residents and communities.” It sets out the need to “ensure that there is a lifelong employability and skills journey for local people” including targeted support for young people.

The **Housing and Homelessness Strategy Plan 2023/4 – 2025/6** sets out the council's strategic approach to reducing and preventing homelessness by “managing the challenges of homelessness and affordable housing across the Borough”. The plan acknowledges that “there is a need to develop more accommodation-based services and provide a more specialised response to young people facing homelessness and young care leavers so that they can thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there are sufficient specialist services to meet the needs of these young people.

The **Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025** sets out how to “increase meaningful participation of children and young people through inclusive engagement. This will ensure children and young people will be able to influence issues and decisions that impact directly and indirectly on them, their families, and communities.”



## Appendix 2. Understanding who needs support.

In Neath Port Talbot, we want young people to engage in activities that are meaningful to them, to feel a part of their communities and have a sense of belonging. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is there to support our young people to fulfil their potential through ensuring they are engaged at school, supporting them on the pathway into work and preventing youth homelessness. It is designed to enable early identification of those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.

There is a wealth of research that identifies groups of young people who might be more at risk of becoming NEET. These young people often face multiple barriers to progressing into employment, education or training. The evidence suggests that it requires a combination of factors to co-occur to make transition more challenging. Research shows that factors tend not to exert influence individually. More often a combination of factors co-occur that together make transition more challenging. The Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review<sup>13</sup> explains how for those young people who have inadequate housing or are homeless, “it is often much harder to find the physical and economic resources required to access the labour market or to re-engage with education.” In addition, this can limit a young person’s capability to search for work and their “capability to search for work and their motivation and access to opportunities (as employers can be reluctant to interview or employ people who are homeless). Homelessness is also linked to other risk factors, such as an increased risk of mental health problems and/or substance misuse.”

It is important that evidence informs decision-making. This appendix therefore provides a summary of the data available that can help us understand the number of young people experiencing the risk factors that can lead to them being at risk of, or becoming, NEET and/or homeless.

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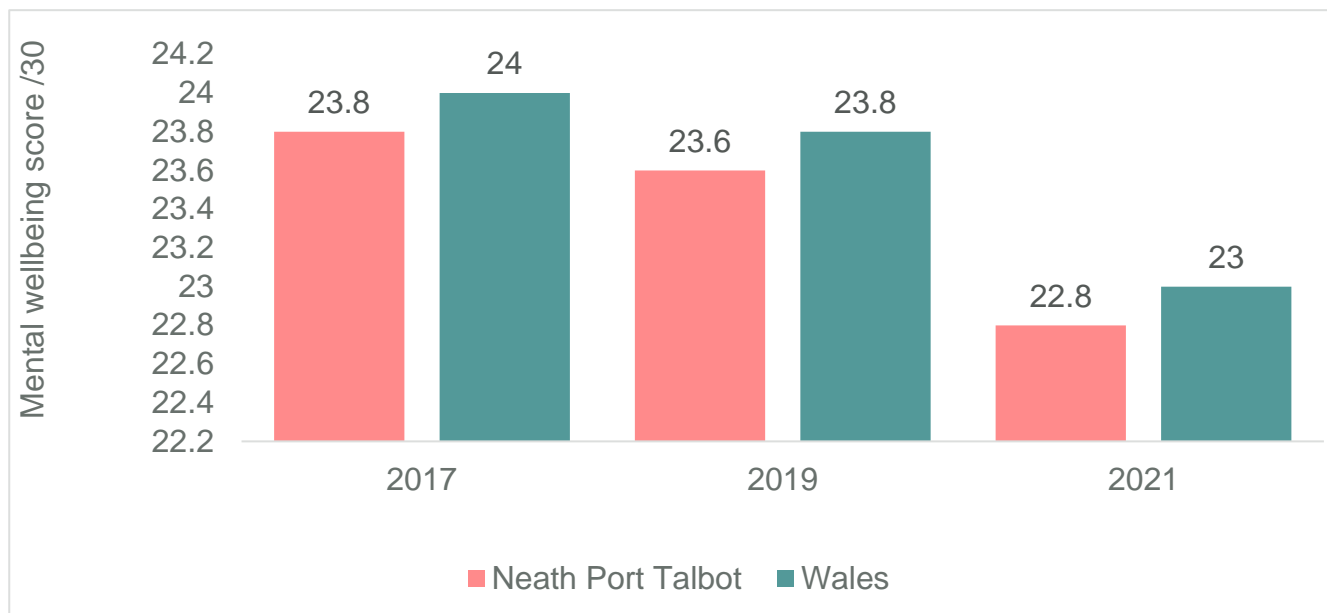
<sup>13</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

## Poor mental health

Good emotional health and well-being is crucial for young people to participate and benefit from learning and have a smoother transition into adulthood.

**In Neath Port Talbot the mental wellbeing of young people aged 11 to 16 is slightly lower than the Wales average and is declining.**

Public Health Wales, School Health Research Network Data Dashboard



Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review<sup>14</sup> reports that “over the last 15 years there has been a rapid increase in self-reported mental ill health, and around one in six (17.4%) of 17 to 19 years in England now have a probable mental health disorder (NHS Digital, 2021)”. The review also found that “poor mental health has been identified as having a larger effect on the chance of being NEET than other health conditions, particularly for young men. The increase in the number of young men, in particular, who have mental health difficulties has been marked and has offset the decline in the number of young women who were economically inactive due to home or caring responsibilities.”

## Socio-economic disadvantage

There is evidence that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to become NEET. Material deprivation can mean that families are unable to afford basic resources, which can have an impact on children’s access to education, and achievement. There are 5,294 children living in relative low-income families in Neath Port Talbot, and there are neighbourhoods of severe deprivation in urban areas as well as in some rural areas.

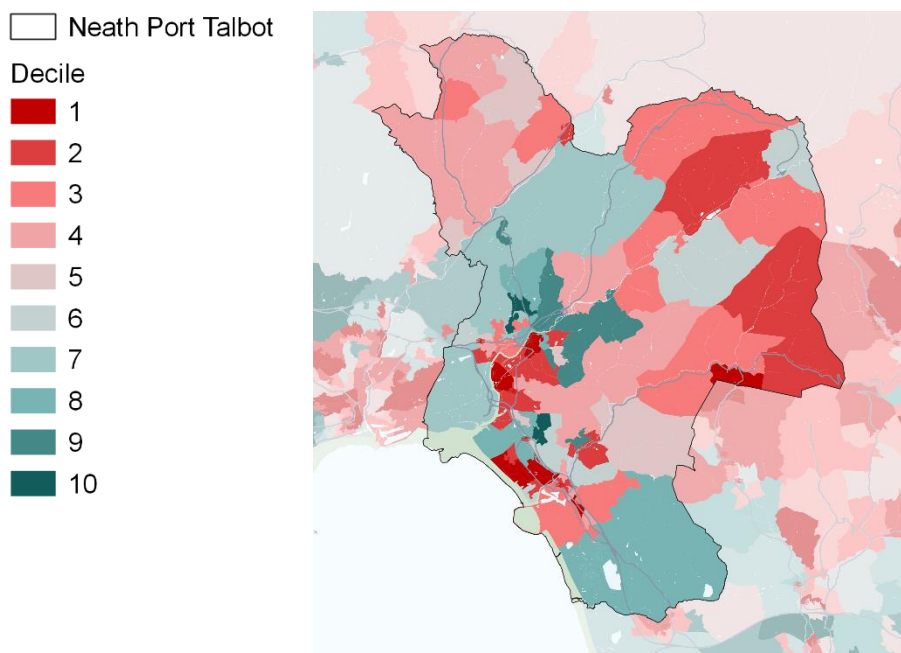
An analysis of matched data from the Welsh Government Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) found that “pupils that live in the most deprived areas were over five times more likely to become NEET than pupils living in the least deprived areas.” In addition, “pupils who are eligible for free school meals were almost three times more likely to become NEET than pupils who are not eligible (Welsh Government, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review<sup>15</sup> found that “socio-economic disadvantage is also often linked to other risk factors which can add to or compound the challenges young people face, such as:

- Family worklessness and poor educational experiences (LWI, 2018b);
- Choices about post-16 pathways, with, for example, lower rates of participation in higher education, amongst young people from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, such as areas with higher levels of deprivation, or with parents with lower levels of education or from lower socio-economic groups (HESA, 2023);
- Ill health and disability (IOHE, 2020)”.

Index of Multiple Deprivation, Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government 2019



## Awareness of training and employment pathways

The YPG National Conversation<sup>16</sup> was a conversation with young people about their future. “Many [young people] claimed they did not know what to do next, having completed school or college.” Around a third of those surveyed lacked clear aspirations. The literature review to support and inform the conversation highlighted low aspirations; lack of confidence, hope or expectation of employment; and/or weak knowledge or understanding of EET pathways.

The YPG National Conversation also showed that many of the young people consulted were ‘not very aware’ of the support available, and therefore it is reasonable to infer that they are not taking up support and as a result forgoing the chance/s to “build their capabilities, increase their access to opportunities and/or strengthen their motivation.”<sup>17</sup>

## Additional learning needs

<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

An analysis of matched data from the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that pupils whose additional needs were supported at School Action Plus were almost five times more likely to become NEET than pupils without Additional Learning Needs (ALN).<sup>18</sup>

## Those with a disability

Disabled young people are disproportionately likely to be NEET. This is even more pronounced for 19 to 24-year-olds compared to 16- to 18-year-olds. 2,359 (19%) young people aged 16 to 24 in Neath Port Talbot were disabled under the Equality Act in 2021, a higher proportion than the Wales average.

In Wales, almost one in five (18.7%) disabled people aged 16 to 18 are NEET, rising to almost four in ten (38.6%) of disabled people aged 19 to 24.<sup>19</sup>

## Social Services Involvement

Among homeless youth populations, a very large proportion of those young people have been involved in the child welfare system. There is also evidence of a large gap in attainment between looked after children and other pupils at all stages of education, critically at Key Stage 4, which impacts on their opportunities for progression.

Local data analysis has identified that young people receiving support from Social Services, but not Looked After, is a key identifier for young people at risk of experiencing homelessness by the age of 20.

National data analysis of the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that pupils in care were around four times more likely to become NEET than other pupils.<sup>20</sup>

## Young Carer

Young carers are less likely to be in full-time education, are more likely to have lower educational attainment levels, experience worse mental wellbeing and are at a higher risk of disengaging from learning. Data from the 2021 census suggests that 939 young people in Neath Port Talbot had caring responsibilities in 2021.

Research has found that young carers are a particularly vulnerable group, in part because their caring responsibilities limit when and where they can participate in employment, education and training but also because it can result in (unlawful) discrimination. Being a carer is associated with a range of risk factors including:

- “The emotional stress associated with being a young carer, which can impact upon mental health and also motivation, as young carers may be more vulnerable to pessimistic thinking and be ‘present-orientated’ in their thinking, finding it difficult to think ahead or plan for their futures and/or reluctant to relinquish their caring responsibilities to others (and leave behind the person/people they care for);
- Negative experience of school, linked to lower levels of educational attainment.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Welsh Government, 2013, p.24

<sup>19</sup> Welsh Government, 2022

<sup>20</sup> Welsh Government, 2013, p.24

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)



## Transport and rurality.

As part of the national conversation to inform the YPG, young people identified inaccessibility, reliability and/or cost of transport as the most common barriers to EET.<sup>22</sup>

## Minority Groups / Protected Characteristics

There is intersectionality between being NEET and/or homeless, and sexuality, race and gender.

The Welsh Government's Rapid Review<sup>23</sup> found that "few or no qualifications are often clustered with other risk factors associated with a higher risk of being 'NEET', such as socio-economic disadvantage; disabilities and/or ALN; some ethnicities, most notably Gypsy Traveller and Roma; and young people whose first language is other than English."

## Prior Experiences of Education and Training

A negative experience of school can have a lasting effect on a young person's education, employment and training. Research shows that a "particular risk factor seems to be those who had poor school attendance or who were excluded". The YPG National Conversation<sup>24</sup> includes the accounts of a number of young people who felt that school had "failed them" and as a result they were unprepared for the transition into EET.

An analysis of the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that:

- Pupils with an attendance rate of 50% or less are around 15 times more likely to become NEET than pupils with an attendance rate of 90% or more;
- Pupils with an unauthorised absence rate of above 30% are almost 11 times more likely to become NEET than pupils with an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or less.

## Acknowledgements

This Youth Engagement Strategy has been shaped, supported and enhanced by a wide variety of people and organisations. Every person who took part in the conversation has played a part in developing the action plan and will go on to play a role in delivering it for the benefit of the people of Neath Port Talbot.

Particular thanks must go to the young people of Neath Port Talbot who shared their experiences and their ideas for the future.

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<sup>22</sup> [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

<sup>23</sup> Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people's thinking and behaviour](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

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**Impact Assessment - First Stage**

**1. Details of the initiative**

<b>Initiative description and summary: Adoption of the new Youth Engagement Strategy</b>
<b>Service Area:</b> Employability, Skills and Poverty
<b>Directorate:</b> ELLLS
<b>Strategic Decision:</b> Yes

**2. Does the initiative affect:**

	Yes	No
Service users	x	
Staff	x	
Wider community	x	
Internal administrative process only		x

**3. Evidence used in the Assessment**

<p><b>Local Data</b></p> <p>Youth Homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people under 16 – End of June 2024 65 dependent children and young people within Neath Port Talbot were Temporarily Accommodated;</li> <li>Annual data shows that during 23/24 there were 18 young people aged 16 to 17 who presented to Housing for assistance;</li> <li>Annual data shows that during 23/24 there were 186 young people aged 18 to 14 who presented to Housing for assistance;</li> </ul> <p>Young People at who are Not in Education, Employment or Training:</p> <p>For the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 reporting period there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>139 young people aged 16-18 whose status was unknown to Careers Wales (Tier 1);</li> </ul>
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- 286 young people aged 16-18 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training with multiple barriers (Tier 2);
- 172 young people aged 16-18 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training but were actively seeking a provision (Tier 3).

### **National Policy Context**

In 2022 the Welsh Government published a strengthened **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**, which contributes to the broader goal of tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. It is built around the early identification of those aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training or homeless (NEET), understanding their needs, putting appropriate support and/or provision in place, and monitoring their progression.

The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners". For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."

This Framework operates alongside The **Young Person's Guarantee** for people aged 16 to 24. This aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training. Collectively, these support the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds in education, employment and training by 2050 and the mission to prevent youth homelessness.

A range of other National Policies have also been taken into consideration in the development of this Youth Engagement Strategy. The **Young Person Guarantee** (YPG) is "the Welsh Government's key commitment to provide everyone aged 16 to 24, living in Wales, with support to gain a place in education or training, help to get into work or self-employment." It is an "umbrella structure that sits above Welsh Government funding programmes for young people, aiming to fully utilize interventions, and to create a straightforward journey for young people regardless of circumstances and background." It aims to ensure that every young person under 25 in Wales is guaranteed an offer of support to gain a place in education or training, find a job or become self-employed.

**Stronger, Fairer, Green Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills** has an area of action, **Future Generations**, that focuses on investing in and strengthening the whole system approach to delivering the YPG "to make it easy for everyone under the age of 25 to access an offer of work, education, training, or self-employment. This offer includes the young people who will benefit from 125,000 new Apprenticeships to give people of all ages high quality routes into better jobs." **The Curriculum for Wales** "aims to help each school develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners (aged 3 to 16) to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum – the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales."

The four purposes of the curriculum are to support children to be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives

- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

### **Regional Policy Context**

**The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board** aims to improve the health and well-being of the region's population. The remit of their Children and Young People's Programme "includes supporting Children and Young People (CYP) who receive support as they transition into adulthood, where they may receive a different type of service as an adult. An underlying principle of this work is to follow a 'whole systems approach', which will form part of a new framework across health and social care services for CYP (covering both the statutory and voluntary sectors)."

**The South West Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022–2025** is the regional skills plan for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It lays out the "future skills needs of the region with an aim to influence the Welsh Government's planning and funding of post-16 education through full time courses and apprenticeships. The plan contains key actions on training needs, including the emerging technologies to meet the net zero agenda."

### **Local Policy Context**

The **Neath Port Talbot Public Service Boards Well-Being Plan 2023–28** is based around four objectives. Highlighted below are the relevant aims within each objective:

1. All children have the best start in life.
  - Support and advise our school leavers to increase access to employment, education or training.
2. All our communities are thriving and sustainable.
  - Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.
3. Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
4. There are more secure, green and well-paid jobs and skills across the area are improved.
  - Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them.
  - Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future.

One of the objectives of the **Neath Port Talbot Recover, Reset, Renew Corporate Plan 2022–2027** is to ensure all children get the best start in life. Actions against this objective include helping pupils reconnect with school and improve attendance rates;

providing effective early intervention; helping young people leaving care to access and maintain appropriate accommodation; working with partners to reduce youth unemployment; and increase work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

**The Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Plan** sets out a vision that "Neath Port Talbot will be a place where all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are part of a community that meets their needs and supports them to thrive in a way that works best for them." The strategy sets out services and interventions that will work together to deliver the following priority outcomes:

- Supporting our youngest children to be healthy and ready to learn.
- Children, young people and their families are able to access the right support at the right time with positive outcomes.
- Children and young people can access education that inspires them to learn and develop the skills they need for the future they want.
- Children and young people are listened to, and they have opportunities to be actively involved in decision-making.
- All children and young people should be supported to help themselves be physically healthy and feel mentally and emotionally strong.

**The Housing and Homelessness Strategy Plan 2023/4 – 2025/6** sets out the council's strategic approach to reducing and preventing homelessness by "managing the challenges of homelessness and affordable housing across the Borough". The plan acknowledges that "there is a need to develop more accommodation-based services and provide a more specialised response to young people facing homelessness and young care leavers so that they can thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist services to meet the needs of these young people.

The Neath Port Talbot Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (2023/23 – 25/26) states "we will see a number of young people transition from Children and Young People Services over the next few years. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist service to meet the needs of young people."

**The Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025** sets out how to "increase meaningful participation of children and young people through inclusive engagement. This will ensure children and young people will be able to influence issues and decisions that impact directly and indirectly on them, their families, and communities."

#### 4. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L/D	Reasons for your decision and details of the impact
Age	x				M	The Strategy will focus on young people and will help support those young people at risk of becoming not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and those who are at risk of youth homelessness.
Disability		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Gender Reassignment		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy/Maternity		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Race		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Religion/Belief		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L/D	Reasons for your decision and details of the impact
Sex		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual orientation		x			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.

**5. Does the initiative impact on:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		x			L	There will be no impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language. The strategy is intended for all young people, regardless of their first language, and young people will be supported in either Welsh or English as appropriate.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		x			L	There will be no impact on the way the Welsh language is treated. The strategy is intended for all young people regardless of their first language and will be available in Welsh and English.

**6. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
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To maintain and enhance biodiversity		X			L	There will be no impact on biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		x			L	There will be no impact on biodiversity.

**7. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):**


	Yes	No	Details
<b>Long term</b> - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	X		If adopted, the Strategy aims to provide the framework for supporting young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET opportunities to move into education, employment or training, with the aim of improving their future life chances
<b>Integration</b> - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	X		The Strategy supports the long term well-being of young people and is linked directly to wellbeing objectives 1 and 4.
<b>Involvement</b> - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	X		Young people and key stakeholders have been involved in the development of this strategy.
<b>Collaboration</b> - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	X		There have been workshops and consultations with young people, key stakeholders and internal partners in developing the Strategy and a key component of the Strategy is collaboration and <u>multi agency</u> working.


	Yes	No	Details
<b>Prevention</b> - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	x		If adopted, the strategy supports an early intervention and prevention model of working wherever possible.

**8. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):**

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is not</b> required	x
Reasons for this conclusion	
Having completed the screening assessment it has been determined that a full impact assessment is not required as the adoption of the Youth Engagement Strategy has no negative impacts. The screening indicates that the protected characteristic of Age is likely to be positively impacted upon from the adoption of the strategy and that the strategy supports the sustainable development principles.	

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is</b> required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Jason Haeney	Principal Youth & Community Officer		14/10/24

Signed off by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Service/Director		15.10.24
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