



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY

Strengthen the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF): integrated impact assessment

An assessment of proposed changes to strengthen the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF).

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Section 1: what action is the welsh government considering and why

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) is a systematic, multiagency approach to reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. Strengthening the YEPF is a Programme for Government commitment, to be achieved by:

- incorporating the early identification and prevention of youth homelessness
- updating the YEPF guidance to reflect changes in policy and political context and provide practical guidance to support the delivery of the YEPF
- other actions to improve the implementation of the YEPF

Long term trends and challenges

Trends around youth homelessness are not easily quantified, as much of homelessness is hidden. As well as people who are rough sleeping, people may be 'sofa surfing', staying temporarily with friends or family, and may not necessarily recognise themselves as homeless. Anecdotal evidence indicates the pandemic exacerbated family conflict in many cases, which may have resulted in more young people becoming homeless.

As regards, young people who are NEET, provisional estimates (taken from the Statistical First Release (SFR) series, [Participation of young people in education and the labour market](#)) suggest the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET (NEET figures comprise unemployed young people and those who are economically inactive) increased to 13.6% in 2021, the highest level on record. This increase is largely driven by an increase in the economic inactivity rate (economically inactive means to be out of work and not looking for a job, excluding students) for 16 to 18 year olds, though there was also a slight

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increase in unemployment.

Overall trends since 2014 are shown below:

SFR series

Statistical First Release (SFR) series	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (provisional figures)	
16 to 18 years olds	NEET Individuals	12,000	11,700	11,300	10,600	10,800	11,900	11,900	14,200
	%NEET	10.8%	10.7%	10.6%	10.3%	10.6%	11.7%	11.7%	13.6%
19 to 24 year olds	NEET Individuals	52,200	47,700	46,000	36,900	38,500	38,900	37,700	37,800
	%NEET	20.4%	18.9%	18.5%	15.1%	16.0%	16.1%	15.8%	16.3%

(Although the updated YEPF is aimed at 11 to 18 year olds, NEET rates for 19 to 24 year olds give an indication of the longer term impact of the YEPF.)

Final estimates for 2020 and provisional estimates for 2021 cover part of the period of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Some of the changes

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observed may result from conditions brought about by the pandemic. This would include:

- delayed or missed learning
- changes to examinations and assessments
- changing labour market conditions, including the shutdown of sectors such as hospitality and non-food retailing, where young people are disproportionately concentrated. (There was also **early evidence in 2020 that young employees were most likely to have lost work due to furloughing, jobs losses and hours reductions**)
- the toll taken on young people's mental health (as referenced in the Public Health Wales document '**Children and young people's mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic**' (2021) this is supported by the emerging findings from the National Conversation on the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), which have further highlighted significant mental health and confidence issues.

In view of these challenges, strengthening the YEPF means:

- more young people will move on to a destination that is right for them when they leave school, whether that is education, employment or training
- the prevention of homelessness can happen much earlier and that young people are identified and supported before they reach a crisis point

Prevention

Intervening early, to prevent young people from being NEET or homeless, addresses not only individuals' life chances but can break an intergenerational cycle of worklessness by preventing longer term scars which feed into the next generation.

The YEPF enables early intervention with young people at risk of NEET and/or

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homelessness, by putting in place support that is appropriate to their needs, and which can address the underlying causes of their disengagement or risk of homelessness. Young people who are most at risk of becoming NEET are allocated a lead worker who can advocate on their behalf and if necessary negotiate with other support services and professionals. Youth homelessness co-ordinators 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 in to independent living when appropriate.

Integration

The YEPF's contribution to other policy areas includes:

- Support under the YEPF can boost young people's employability skills and their economic prospects.
- Safeguarding: under the YEPF, school leavers are allocated against the Careers Wales five tier model of engagement. If their destination is not known (Tier 1) this triggers online, telephone or face to face contact by local authorities to ensure they are supported into a positive destination. A related benefit of this process is that local authorities can assure themselves those young people are visible and safe.
- Housing: contributes to the Programme for Government commitment to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing.

As regards the wellbeing objectives, strengthening the YEPF contributes towards:

- A Prosperous Wales, as keeping young people engaged helps to foster a skilled and well-educated population
- A More Equal Wales, by supporting young people with barriers to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their

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socio economic circumstances)

- A Healthier Wales, by:
 - recognising the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing in supporting young people's engagement, and signposting young people to appropriate support to maximise their mental health and wellbeing
 - enabling young people to remain in education, employment or training and/or avoid youth homelessness, thus improving their life chances and their health, due to the link between income and health and wellbeing (The Health Foundation, '**Poverty and Health, How do our money and resources influence our health?**' (2018))

Collaboration and involvement

In 2021, the **Learning and Work Institute (LWI)** carried out a consultation on **the YEPF on behalf of the Welsh Government**. It involved consultation workshops for external stakeholders and Welsh Government officials and, for young people, an online questionnaire and focus groups; this allowed us to gather intelligence on what matters to young people who are supported under the YEPF.

The following were invited to participate in the consultation:

- External stakeholders: local authorities, schools and Pupil Referral Units, Further Education Institutions, work-based learning providers, apprenticeship providers, Careers Wales, Estyn, the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, representatives from the voluntary youth work sector, National Academy for Educational Leadership, Big Ideas Wales, Regional Skills Partnership Boards, WISERD (Cardiff University), Learning Disability Wales, representatives from operations approved under Priority 3, Specific Objective 2 of the 2014 to 2020 ESF Programme, the WLGA, Colegau Cymru, National Training Federation of Wales, CWVYS, WCVA, HEFCW, NYAS Cymru, the Department for Work and Pensions, third sector

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- organisations, including Llamau, Hafal, Plattform, the Prince's Trust, YMCA
- Welsh Government
 - Young people

As a first step in strengthening the YEPF, we have used feedback from the consultation to update the guidance on the YEPF (consisting of a [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: overview](#) and [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: handbook](#)).

Impact

The arguments below have been explored through the initial consultation, followed by ongoing dialogue with EPCs and Careers Wales, who have acted as sounding boards for and contributed to the development of the updated guidance on the YEPF.

Arguments for strengthening the YEPF

- The YEPF puts the young person at the heart, with a system that brings partners together to ensure the young person receives the right support and is able to make progress. Without this multi-agency approach, it would increase the risk of duplication, and there would be no one having the overview of all the support a young person is accessing and their progress.
- This holistic approach to supporting young people will be particularly important as young people are dealing with the effects of the pandemic, and the new challenges arising, the [negative impacts on mental health](#) (Lanset, 2021) and on the labour market, with [young people disproportionately more likely to have lost work](#) (Resolution Foundation).
- This is not brand new, but a refresh of an existing model to ensure it reflects the current policy landscape and addresses some very practical challenges around implementation. The consultation identified aspects of the YEPF that

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need to be refined and improved.

- There is scope to use the early identification of risk data that is collected to identify other risks, for example, risk youth homelessness, to enable young people to be supported in another aspect of their lives.
- The successful operation of the Framework is a matter of collective responsibility and accountability, **linked to our national milestones**, in particular the milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training (EET) by 2050.
- With new guidance in place, stakeholders have greater clarity on how more recent government priorities and initiatives align with the YEPF, and how these affect their current working practices. In the absence of detailed information, there has been a tendency for stakeholders to ‘fill in the gaps’ with assumptions.

Arguments against strengthening the YEPF

- The YEPF is a complex system as it relies on multiple elements and is delivered by a number of partners. It therefore requires ongoing review and revision to ensure it continues to achieve its aims.
- Not all of the components of the original YEPF are easily within the Welsh Government’s gift to influence. In 2014, the **Wales Audit Office carried out a review of the Welsh Government's actions to help reduce the number of NEETs**, focusing on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. It concluded that the Welsh Government is well-placed to reduce the number of NEETs aged 16 to 18, but less well-placed to reduce the number of 19 to 24 year-olds. For this reason, and in response to findings from the **2021 consultation on the YEPF** which indicated a more distinct approach was needed for pre and post 18 was required, the updated guidance on the YEPF has re-focussed on 11 to 18 year olds.
- At present, local authorities are facing significant challenges due to the loss of EU funding for projects that support young people who are at risk of NEET or who are NEET. These projects therefore support the YEPF and without it

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the implementation of the Framework is at risk. The UK Government's replacement funding for the European Social Fund (ESF) is the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) (2022 to 2025), and is significantly less than local authorities would have received under ESF.

Costs and savings

Early intervention to prevent young people from becoming NEET will reduce the risk of scarring and future welfare dependency. To be unemployed when young increases the likelihood of long-term 'scarring' in later life, for example, subsequent lower pay, higher unemployment ('[Young people and the Great Recession](#)', Bell and Blanchflower, 2011) and poorer mental health ('[Unemployment and mental health scarring during the life course](#)', Strandh et al, 2014).

Funding is currently made available through the annual Youth Support Grant (YSG) to local authorities; £1.1m in 2022 to 2023 on YEPF activity to support young people who are at risk of NEET or who are NEET, and a further £3.7m in 2022 to 2023 for the prevention of youth homelessness. The YEPF operates by harnessing existing services to the benefit of young people who need support, so support offered under the YEPF will exceed these amounts, but the full expenditure is not quantifiable.

EU funding for projects that support young people who are at risk of NEET or who are NEET is coming to an end. The funding available via the Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF), the UK Government's replacement funding, represents an effective cut to the overall Welsh budget of over £1.1 billion over three years.

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Mechanism

The YEPF is non statutory therefore no legislation is proposed as part of the update to the guidance and other actions taken to strengthen the YEPF.

Section 8: conclusion

How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it

We carried out a [consultation on the YEPF in 2021 with stakeholders and young people](#). For young people the consultation approaches adopted were:

- access to an online portal (received 49 individual responses)
- 6 young people's focus groups (51 individuals, aged between 16 and 22, participated)
- one to one interviews with 4 individuals identified during the group sessions who were interested in providing further detailed feedback based on their individual circumstances or where a group session was not feasible due to practical considerations. 3 of the 4 individuals were children (aged 16 and 17).

Stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of ten structured online workshops (2 workshops for Welsh Government officials and 8 thematic workshops for external stakeholders). The majority of stakeholders who participated in the workshops worked with young people and helped deliver the YEPF.

We did not consult separately with young people with protected characteristics and Welsh speakers or Welsh language specialist groups. However, we have

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used available research and data to consider the impact of strengthening the YEPF on those protected groups and Welsh speakers (as set out in the Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment).

What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative

Strengthening the YEPF has the following impacts:

People

Positive impact on 11 to 18 year olds who are supported by the YEPF and ongoing impact on young people aged 19+ who had previously been supported by the YEPF to make a positive transition into education, employment or training or to stay in their homes. In revisiting and updating the YEPF early identification guidance for risk of NEET and/or youth homelessness, we will consider certain protected and/or disadvantaged groups.

Culture

No identified impact.

Welsh language

The YEPF is there to identify and support young people across Wales. The YEPF is a mechanism for bringing services together to work co-operatively to support young people at risk of becoming NEET or youth homelessness. We would expect those services to be delivering their provision in line with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language.

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Economy

By intervening early via the YEPF, young people who are at risk of living in poverty throughout their life, are identified and supported to stay in or progress to education, employment or training or to remain in their own homes. Its overall impact is therefore positive, by improving young people's life chances.

Environment

Overall, strengthening the YEPF will have no impact on the environment other than, by encouraging young people to be engaged in learning for longer, so they are better informed citizens, who can make sensible life choices. The impact is expected to be minimal or moderate.

The consultation with young people and stakeholders identified the following key themes:

- The impact of poor mental health on NEET rates.
- Support for using early identification processes for the early identification of young people at risk of becoming homeless.
- The need to consider the age range across which the YEPF operates, and the possibility of a different approach between pre- and post-18 (the original YEPF covered ages 11 to 24 but was less effective in supporting the entire 19 to 24 cohort).
- Practical challenges with the sharing of data, making it more difficult to track and support young people.
- Shared responsibility for delivering the YEPF needed to translate to a sense of shared accountability for its outcomes.

Strengthening the YEPF contributes towards the following wellbeing goals:

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- A Prosperous Wales, as keeping young people engaged helps to foster a skilled and well-educated population.
- A More Equal Wales, by supporting young people with barriers to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic circumstances).
- A Healthier Wales, by:
 - recognising the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing in supporting young people's engagement, and signposting young people to appropriate support to maximise their mental health and wellbeing
 - enabling young people to remain in education, employment or training and/or avoid youth homelessness, thus improving their life chances and their health, due to the link between income and health and wellbeing (The Health Foundation, '**Poverty and Health, How do our money and resources influence our health?**' (2018))

A strengthened YEPF will also contribute to the following **wellbeing objectives, as set out in the 2021 to 2026 Programme for Government:**

- continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise, by identifying young people who have barriers to engagement, and providing them with the support they need to achieve
- build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future, by boosting young people's confidence, their employability skills and their economic prospects

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In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals and/or avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts

It is not anticipated that strengthening the YEPF will have any negative impacts, and overall the effects of this approach will be positive.

Strengthening the YEPF will have no impact, either positive or negative, on biodiversity.

As part of a children's rights-based approach, the [consultation on the YEPF in 2021](#) included a consultation with young people. This was carried out via access to an online portal (49 responses), 6 young people's focus groups (51 participants) and 4 one to one interviews.

We have also considered research evidence and data on specific factors which might increase the risk of children and young people becoming NEET or homeless, including protected characteristics and other potential risk indicators. By identifying at an early stage the factors that increase the risk of a young person becoming NEET or homeless, and taking preventative action, the YEPF can have a positive impact on young people's life chances.

We have considered the following risk factors (The Children's Rights Impact Assessment covers these various factors in more depth, with links to the appropriate evidence):

- poor mental health
- socio-economic disadvantage
- SEN or ALN
- disability
- being a looked after child

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- young carers
- sexuality
- race
- age

As regards the impact of the YEPF of the Welsh language, it is not anticipated that strengthening the YEPF will have any impact, either positive or negative, nor a positive or a negative impact on the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities. The YEPF harnesses existing services to work collaboratively to identify young people who need support, and provide that support, so there is an expectation that the partner organisations supporting young people under the YEPF will offer support in Welsh where that is the young person's preferred language.

Strengthening the YEPF will help reduce inequalities of outcome arising from socio-economic disadvantage. Material deprivation means that families are unable to afford basic resources, which has a negative impact on children's educational achievement. Without intervention, this can lead to intergenerational cycles of poverty. The YEPF contributes towards our goal of **tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment**, by helping us re-engage young people and raise their aspirations, to ensure no one is left behind. It also helps protect young people from the adverse effects of homelessness, by intervening early before a crisis point is reached.

How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes

We will know if the YEPF has been strengthened by looking at:

- NEET rates
- the number of young people at risk of youth homelessness who receive support

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Information currently collected includes:

- **Pupil destinations**, which reports the destinations of learners who have reached statutory leaving age, (Year 11, and students leaving school in Years 12 and 13).
- The **Welsh Government's annual estimates of the participation of young people in education, employment or training**.
- The '**Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)**' series published quarterly which 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' bi-annual reports to Welsh Government in respect of the Youth Support Grant, which cover the YEPF and the prevention of youth homelessness.

Further data may become available as part of the wider monitoring by Welsh Government of progress being made towards the **national milestone** of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050.

The evaluation of the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) in 2023 and 2024 will also feature the YEPF.

We will also commission a lead worker review to better understand and improve the capacity and capability within the system.

Wider monitoring of the progress being made towards the national milestone.

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Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Policy objectives

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) is a systematic, multiagency approach to reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET, by identifying children and young people who may need support and ensuring the appropriate support is put in place. The YEPF has been in place since 2013.

This impact assessment is concerned with the decision to strengthen the YEPF (a Programme for Government commitment) using various levers including:

- updating the 2013 guidance on the YEPF
- incorporating the identification and prevention of youth homelessness into the YEPF
- developing new guidance on early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET or homeless
- supporting organisations involved in delivering the YEPF to strengthen their partnerships and make new links
- reviewing the role of lead worker within the YEPF, to understand how this role might be bolstered

Gathering evidence and engaging with children and young people

Research and data, impact on various groups

We carried out a [consultation on the YEPF in 2021](#) to inform the update of the

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YEPF guidance. This included a consultation with young people. This also encompassed some early development work associated with the implementation of the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG).

The contract specification required the contractor to develop appropriate approaches to consult with young people. In the event, the consultation approaches adopted were:

- access to an online portal
- young people's focus groups
- one to one interviews

During the consultation period of four weeks, the contractors received 49 individual responses through the online portal.

A total of six focus groups were facilitated, four of which were with young people studying at college (Pembrokeshire College and Gower College Swansea) and the remaining two with young people engaging with work-based training providers (ITEC and Llanelli Rural Council). 51 individuals, aged between 16 and 22, participated in the focus group sessions.

The one to one interviews were with 4 individuals identified during the group sessions who were interested in providing further detailed feedback based on their individual circumstances or where a group session was not feasible due to practical considerations. Three of the 4 individuals were children (aged 16 and 17).

Key themes arising from the consultation with young people were:

- recognition of the support available in post compulsory education
- a contrast in young people's awareness of, and experience in accessing, support to explore their options in pre- and post-compulsory education
- the need to value all learners

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- the need for more support to negotiate key transition points
- the need for a greater focus on the provision of practical support to help young people make the transition to life as an independent adult
- how positive relationships in education settings help improve engagement
- the importance of support and advice on employment or self-employment
- support for identification and support for young people with mental health issues and at risk of youth homelessness to be part of the YEPF
- strong agreement that a guaranteed place in school, FE or work based learning would make young people feel more confident (and a number flagged up this would make them feel less anxious)
- how the pandemic has affected the opportunities available to young people
- the importance of seeking young people's views in future planning

Not all of the feedback received is within the scope of the YEPF to resolve, however the consultation report was shared with relevant policy colleagues, including officials working on the implementation of the YPG. As part of the ongoing development of the YPG, in 2022 the Welsh Government commissioned a National Conversation with young people, to understand areas that could be improved. Amongst the key issues identified were lack of transport to get to a new course, training or a job and mental health issues and/or lack of confidence. The updated guidance on the YEPF includes signposting to mental health support services. As regards transport, the **Programme for Government** includes commitments to explore extensions of the **MyTravelPass for reduced-cost travel for young people**, and to build on the success of our concessionary travel scheme and look at how fair fares can encourage integrated travel to ensure that public transport is affordable for everyone. We are also taking forward a programme of work that encompasses consideration of a **complete revision of the Learner Travel Measure**.

Other evidence considered as part of this assessment:

- **Pupil Destinations** data published by Careers Wales.
- The annual **Participation of young people in education and the labour**

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market (SFR) series.

- The quarterly **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) statistics**, based on the APS (Annual Population Survey carried out by the ONS).
- The Wales Centre for Public Policy report, **Preventing Youth Homelessness** (2018), highlighted strong-evidence to support school-based interventions. It suggested a collaborative approach between schools and youth services, using a tool to identify those at risk and a flexible and responsive practice framework.

In working to strengthen the YEPF we have also considered research evidence and data in respect of specific factors which might increase the risk of children and young people becoming NEET or homeless. These are outlined:

Poor mental health

Evidence of the links between poor mental health and NEET rates, '**What accounts for changes in the chances of being NEET in the UK?**' (2019), Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford; SKOPE, Department of Education, University of Oxford. This was supported by anecdotal evidence received during the consultation.

Deprivation

There is **evidence that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to become NEET**. Material deprivation can mean that families are unable to afford basic resources, which can have a negative impact on children's educational achievement.

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Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

One of the key identifiers of young people at risk of becoming NEET is poor attendance at school. Welsh Government attendance data, for 6 September 2021 to 10 June 2022, shows that children and young people with SEN or ALN are as likely than their peers to be absent from school for more than 10 days (20% had SEN or ALN, the same percentage as in the overall school population); but were far more likely to be absent for more than 30 days (28% had SEN or ALN, compared to 20% of the overall school population).

Disability

The quarterly **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) statistics** provides users with statistics from the Annual Population Survey (APS) (APS estimates have become increasingly volatile in recent years, and there is increasing divergence between the APS and SFR estimates). It includes data on the disability status of young people who are NEET. The statistics for the three year period to 30 June 2022 highlights that disabled young people are far more likely to be NEET than young people that are not disabled. This difference is even more pronounced for 19 to 24 year olds compared to 16 to 18 year olds.

Young people who are NEET by disability and non-disability (APS series)

Average of the three years to 30 June 2022	Number	Percentage
16 to 18 disabled	3,100	18.7%

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Average of the three years to 30 June 2022	Number	Percentage
16 to 18 not disabled	5,400	6.3%
19 to 24 disabled	17,500	38.6%
19 to 24 not disabled	18,100	9.7%

Young people in or leaving care

The evidence^[footnote 1] shows that 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.**

Young carers

Evidence published by Public Health Wales shows that 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 be at a higher risk of disengaging from learning.

LGBTQ+

Evidence shows that LGBTQ+ young people are four times more likely to become homeless than their peers. Homelessness is challenging for anyone, but LGBTQ+ young people often have to cope with homophobic and transphobic

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violence and discrimination as well.

Race

The quarterly **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) statistics** includes data on the ethnicity of young people who are NEET. In the period from year ending June 2020 to year ending June 2022 young people from a White ethnic background (including White minorities) were more likely to be NEET (13.5%) than young people from ethnic minorities (excluding White minorities) (8.6%). In addition, **Pupil Destinations data published by Careers Wales for 2021** shows year 11 school leavers from minority ethnic groups were more likely to continue in full time education. A higher percentage of those with white backgrounds went into the various labour market categories compared to minority ethnic groups. In terms of progression into post-16 education, there is substantial variation between minority ethnic groups. The **Welsh Government's statistical article on post-16 learner outcomes** during the pandemic provides more detailed breakdowns on different groups of Year 11 pupils going into post-16 learning.

The **Resolution Foundation's Uneven Steps report** (April 2021) shows before the onset of Covid-19, 25% of economically active Black 16 to 24 year-olds were unemployed, compared to 10% of their White counterparts. Since the onset of Covid-19, the UK jobless rate for young black people rose by more than a third to 35%.

Age

The original YEPF was aimed at 11 to 25 year olds, the updated version has been refocussed on 11 to 18 year olds. In deciding to refocus the YEPF on 11 to 18 year olds, a number of factors were taken into account, including:

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- Monitoring progression is one of the 6 components of the YEPF. In changing the age range, we are recognising the inability of the YEPF to track an entire cohort of 19 to 24 year olds and making our expectations clear on this point. The differing availability of data for those aged 19 to 24 versus those aged 11 to 18 has led to the decision for the updated YEPF guidance to signal a focus on the latter group.
- We are also taking into account the evidence gathered from the **YEPF consultation**, the consultation report stated: The weight of evidence gathered shows the framework is well developed between the ages of 11 to 18 but remains less developed and effective post-18 (page 10).
- Nevertheless, to **support progress towards the national milestone** of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training (EET) by 2050, we would expect local authorities and their partners who are already working with a number of young people over the age of 18 (for example, through youth work) to support those young people via YEPF approaches where appropriate.

Adverse childhood experiences

Feedback from the 2021 consultation on the YEPF showed a real concern around the impact adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have on young people's life chances, and support for considering ACEs as part of a broader set of indicators to support a robust and comprehensive analysis of the challenges young people are facing in their lives.

Impact

Overall the YEPF impacts young people positively by identifying children and young people who have vulnerabilities and ensuring appropriate support is put in place. As part of the work to developing new guidance on early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET or homeless, we will consider the risk to

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specific groups described.

Engagement with young people

Our **2021 consultation on the YEPF** included an online consultation with young people and some focus groups, carried out with young people based in further education colleges and private training providers. **Feedback from the consultation** has been used to inform the redraft of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework guidance and the overall policy direction to strengthen the YEPF. Augmenting the original feedback received, is more recent feedback from the National Conversation with young people which is helping to shape the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG). As the **YEPF and YPG both contribute towards the national milestone** of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training (EET) by 2050, and indeed they overlap for ages 16 to 18, the national conversation also provides useful insights for strengthening the YEPF.

Analysing the evidence and assessing the impact

Impacts on Articles in the UNCRC

UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
Article 3 The best interests of	X		The YEPF aims to keep young people engaged in education, training or employment and prevent them from becoming homeless. The best interests of the child are therefore paramount in

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UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
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			the operation of the YEPF.
the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.			

Article 12	x		Young people's views were sought as part of the consultation, to inform the update of the YEPF guidance.
Respect for the views of the child			Where the child needs intensive support under the YEPF, particularly where they have significant barriers to engagement or are at risk of youth homelessness, lead workers and youth homelessness co-ordinators will listen to and work with the child to find the best way forward for them.

Article 23	x		The YEPF supports children aged 11 and over, including children with disabilities. Disabled young people are more likely to be NEET than young people that are not disabled, therefore they are amongst the groups that most need to be supported by the YEPF.
Children with a disability			

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UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
Article 28 The right to an education	x		The YEPF seeks to ensure that young people remain engaged in education, employment or training.
Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full	x		The YEPF provides a mechanism to keep young people engaged and prevent them from becoming homeless so they can flourish. By listening to young people and assessing their needs, through the YEPF, young people can be supported to pursue their own interests and achieve the goals they want to achieve.
Article 39 Recovery from trauma and reintegration	x		The consultation identified that adverse childhood experiences should be considered as one of the potential indicators for early intervention under the YEPF.
Article 42 Knowledge of rights	X		The YEPF promotes children's rights by giving them support, including the support of a lead worker where appropriate. This means they receive coaching, mentoring, wellbeing support as necessary, to enable them to make the most

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UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
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of educational opportunities that are available. The lead worker may need to advocate for the child to ensure they receive the provision they need in order to progress.

As regards citizens within the scope of:

- [Part 2 of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement](#)
- [EEA EFTA Separation Agreement](#)
- [Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement](#)

strengthening the YEPF could potentially have a positive impact on:

- their family members (including dependent children and grandchildren) who were also resident in the UK on the dates set out in those agreements
- their close family members (including dependent children and grandchildren) who joined citizens protected by Citizens Rights Agreements

In such cases, those children (from 11 to 18) would equally be able to be supported under the YEPF if necessary.

Ministerial advice and decision

Strengthening the YEPF is an ongoing, evolving process, which is being carried out via a series of actions (as outlined in the response for Section 1 of this CRIA). This means there is no single Ministerial decision required to strengthen

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the YEPF, separate advice has been submitted and will continue to be submitted as we move through the various steps.

Ministers have been advised of the findings of the consultation and related research (referenced in this CRIA), which in turn have been used to inform the development of the new guidance on the YEPF (consisting of a [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: overview](#) and [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: handbook](#)), published in September 2022.

This impact assessment is being finalised after the publication of the new YEPF guidance which has set the new strategic direction for the YEPF. Other planned activities to strengthen the YEPF are either at an early stage or not yet commenced. Future ministerial advice will reflect this CRIA and other impact assessments as appropriate.

Communicating with Children and Young People

Young people's views were sought as part of the consultation on the YEPF, via focus groups and an online consultation, and the [consultation report](#) has now been published. However, the YEPF is not a brand that young people would recognise, even those who are or have been supported by it. The YEPF is about identifying young people who need support and providing that support, it does not depend on young people self-identifying and seeking support themselves. The YEPF guidance is aimed at stakeholders involved in its delivery.

As we move forwards with strengthening the YEPF we will consider how we might further communicate with young people about the steps we are taking.

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Monitoring and Review

The evaluation of the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) in 2023 and 2024 also features the YEPF. Following the publication of the YEPF guidance in September 2022, we're looking to establish whether the shared responsibility for delivering the YEPF is now translating to a greater sense of shared accountability and also whether stakeholders now understand how the YEPF and the YPG align.

We will also commission a lead worker review to better understand and improve the capacity and capability within the system, and consider opportunities for sharing good practice and networking by lead workers across local authorities and organisations.

In addition, the YEPF will also be part of wider work by the Welsh Government to monitor the progress being made towards the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training by 2050.

Following review, any revisions required to the policy or its implementation are to be confirmed.

Footnotes

[1] [Preventing youth homelessness: An international review of evidence](#) (2018), Wales Centre for Public Policy; [Youth homelessness and care leavers: Mapping interventions in Wales](#) (2018), Wales Centre for Public Policy.

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