Review of Welsh Government Youth Entrepreneurship Programme 2016-2022

Final report

Presented to the Welsh Government by **Arad Research**

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Contents

Glossary

FE / HE	Further Education College / HE - Higher Education University
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
EEE	Enterprise and Employer Engagement
YEP	Youth Entrepreneurship Programme
4 E's	Four delivery themes of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme - Engage, Empower , Equip and Enable
YPG	Young Persons Guarantee
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
BIW	Big Ideas Wales
BW	Business Wales
AGP	Accelerated Growth Programme
EEC	Entrepreneurship Exchange Cymru
SPF	Shared Prosperity Fund

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Executive Summary

Background to the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme

The Youth Entrepreneurship programme (YEP) 2016-22 aims to:

- Raise aspirations and understanding of entrepreneurship;
- Develop entrepreneurial skills and attitudes through practical experiences;
- Identify and nurture our future entrepreneurs, developing their knowledge and building a network of young people interested in business start-up;
- Engage business, particularly Wales' entrepreneurs to share their expertise; and
- Empower the Further and Higher Education Sector in Wales to drive the entrepreneurship agenda and support student enterprise.

Youth Entrepreneurship services support the next generation of young entrepreneurs in Wales and encourages young people to be entrepreneurial and help those interested in starting a business take their idea forward. Part of Business Wales, the service aims to encourage young people to raise their aspirations and realise their own potential for creating exciting opportunities for themselves and others.

Youth Entrepreneurship services provide dedicated programmes of activity including the Enterprise Troopers Primary School Competition, Big Ideas website, Role Models, Big Ideas Wales Celebrated, Bootcamp to Business Challenge, Entrepreneurship Champions in FE/HE and the Entrepreneurship Exchange.

The Big Ideas Wales campaign is a phased social change campaign to raise awareness of entrepreneurship and promote understanding of business start-up. The campaign is delivered through online advertising, monthly PR case studies in the media, a newsletter for young entrepreneurs and social media.

The Youth Entrepreneurship programme also enables the Further and Higher Education sector to drive the entrepreneurship agenda and broker partner activity.

The Welsh Government provides grant funding to support Entrepreneurship Champions in all colleges and universities across Wales to raise awareness of entrepreneurship, provide practical experience for businesses, and nurture and support young entrepreneurs to start a business. The Champions network play a key part in working with partners and business with funding is currently in place until September 2022.

Aims and objectives of the Review

The purpose of this review is to evidence the impact of the current Youth Entrepreneurship Programme 2016-2022, assess its contribution to the development of Youth Entrepreneurship in Wales, and assess its future role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This will support policy decisions on key priorities in the design of future activity for needed for young entrepreneurs in the future. The aims of the review were to:

- Review the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme 2016-2021 to: provide headline assessment of the outcomes and impact against the objectives; identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement; assess value for money in delivering outcomes.

- Determine the role the Programme has played in the development of Youth Entrepreneurship in Wales and contribution to policy priorities.

- Consider the changing economic opportunities and digital developments to support young people under 25, review the future role of the Programme in the wider entrepreneurship ecosystem alongside private, third sector and other Government initiatives.

- Reassess the rationale for intervention and provide recommendations to inform design of the Youth Entrepreneurship programme to meet economic and policy priorities in delivering the new Programme for Government 2021-2026.

Method

The review was undertaken between January and June 2022 and involved:

- Inception meeting with Welsh Government officials to agree scope of review
- Desk based review of policy and programme documents and outputs
- Interviews with 12 FHE representatives (6FE and 6HE) and 20 stakeholders
- Analysing the findings of the desk review and interviews and preparing a report

Key findings of the review

The findings and recommendations contained in the report are for Welsh Government to consider in the design of future programmes to support Youth Entrepreneurship.

Engage

YEP has exceeded its engagement targets in relation to reaching education settings to promote enterprise activities and BIW services. The use of digital technology, especially social media, has supported the Programme's effective marketing and promotion. The BIW campaign has played a vital role in promoting entrepreneurship.

YEP has also supported engagement with some young people outside of education by working with partner organisations although the reach and coverage of this engagement is less consistent at FE and HE level. The Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) can be a driver to encourage further engagement and support for young people outside of education, placing an increased emphasis on YEP to focus on supporting entrepreneurship for under-represented groups and putting equality of opportunity at the heart of future enterprise activities.

Recommendation 1: An engagement plan would maximise the value of the Big Ideas Wales Campaign and strengthen it as the leading service supporting youth entrepreneurship in Wales. Future BIW Contractor providers should prioritise and strengthen Big Ideas Wales services to work more collaboratively, in particular to support young entrepreneurs outside education.

BIW Role Models have also played an important and influential engagement role and have been well received by young people and practitioners. The network of role models adapted quickly to digital delivery during the pandemic, offering a new channel for BIW delivery. Building on the strengths of the role model network will provide consistency of entrepreneur

visits and workshops in and outside of education to raise aspirations for entrepreneurship nationally.

Recommendation 2: Role Models should continue to be an integral element of YEP and Welsh Government should consider their potential to engage wider audiences across programme delivery in future.

There are nonetheless several areas where the impact of RMs could be enhanced. Efforts should be made to address shortages in some sectors such as ICT and construction as well as developing a network of Role Models in social enterprise.

Recommendation 3: There are opportunities for any future BIW contractor to improve communications with the role model network. This could include identifying shortage sectors, training and induction, regular updates on education settings in which they operate, signposting support available to young people to facilitate their engagement with Big Ideas Wales.

Empower

The ACRO model has provided a sound basis upon which to empower young people, particularly those of compulsory education age, with the skills and attributes required to be entrepreneurial. Enterprise Troopers has incorporated the ACRO model to good effect within the competition programme; although the level and reach of school participation can be improved.

Recommendation 4: The Enterprise Troopers competition has provided a good platform to showcase schools' achievements in enterprise; however future delivery should consider whether a competition is the right approach given a need to reach more schools and ensure teacher support aligns to needs of the new curriculum.

The new school curriculum and delivery of the Careers and Work-Related Experiences framework (CWRE) provide opportunities for the work of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme to be elevated further in schools and supported further through the work of Careers Wales. The focus on developing entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and experiences is a key driver for educators and clear opportunities exist to advance mainstreaming of entrepreneurship within the new curriculum. This should be also framed by a greater focus on the sustainability and connectedness of learner enterprise journeys through primary to secondary and onwards to further and higher education.

Recommendation 5: There is a need to support teachers with a range of resources to help them give their students an understanding of business, develop entrepreneurship skills and connect these skills to their career options. These can also support FE & HE where responsibility for Empower lies with the institution through the education system.

Recommendation 6: In the design of future services, Welsh Government should consider the role of Careers Wales and how best to support schools to prepare for the new curriculum and to ensure entrepreneurship is embedded through CWRE delivery.

Recommendation 7: Welsh Government should ensure that future BIW services providers work with a range of partners to deliver a connected entrepreneurship pathway that supports young people at all stages of their development.

Equip

Equipping young people to take steps and make informed decisions about entrepreneurship and starting a business in Wales is a key priority area for the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme. The report notes an increase in the number of young people being supported on a one-to-one basis to develop their business ideas. In addition, the findings indicate that young people who access Equip support gain softer outcome benefits such as increased knowledge, confidence, and aspirations that are not currently recorded.

On average, however, young people take considerably longer to progress from business idea to start up compared to older entrepreneurs and this should be a key consideration for future support under the programme.

Recommendation 8: There is a need to provide enhanced support through Big Ideas Wales to meet policy commitments made in the Young Persons Guarantee, which also takes into account the length of time young people need to progress to start up. An increased level of investment should therefore be considered for advisory and wraparound services and events to ensure this.

Recommendation 9: Monitoring and evaluation for the programme combines national measures and programme measures which indicate progress against targets set by Welsh Government. Consideration should be given to recording a wider set of metrics in equipping young people to take positive steps towards start up, including softer outcomes/indicators to better reflect the breadth of support provided.

Enable

Enabling targets for FE and HE institutions have been exceeded across the programme for the number of staff that have championed entrepreneurship. The BeTheSpark movement has some impact on connecting partners in the eco-system, as well as sharing research amongst stakeholder networks supporting entrepreneurial young people. The Enterprise Champion network across Further and Higher Education has been a key enabling network for services including BIW to young people in their institutions and a referral point.

The Entrepreneurship Exchange Cymru (EEC) project aimed to further support this ecosystem. It has nonetheless been challenging for the EE to operate as an independent element of YEP while being delivered under the BIW banner. In addition, EE does not currently appear to have a clearly defined role or outcomes making it difficult for stakeholders to fully engage with it and other methods of delivery should therefore be considered.

Recommendation 10: The outcomes of the enabling work of the Youth Entrepreneurship agenda would be better achieved being led by Welsh Government. This provides greater oversight and potential to increase the level of cross-departmental working required to meet policy commitments; whilst being supported operationally by the future BIW contractor.

Grant Awards to FE & HE institutions (Enabling grant awards)

Further & Higher Educations institutions have made good use of the grant funding over the last 3 years as demonstrated by their Annual Impact Reports. Both sectors were heavily impacted by the pandemic, with Further Education focusing its funding on boosting Engaging and Empowering activities to increase aspirations for entrepreneurship, widening participation and giving practical insights into entrepreneurship as a career option. Higher Education utilised their funding to collaborate and accelerate entrepreneurship, increasing

the numbers of businesses supported to start. Further good practice can be seen in the enterprise networks developed at a local and regional level and activities through the EC network with HEIs.

Progress towards embedding enterprise appears to have been achieved, to varying degrees across all institutions. It is likely that, without the grant funding, the focus on enterprise activities and the resources available to support business start-ups within most institution would fall – this is particularly the case across FE colleges.

If additional funding is available then this would help build on the successes achieved to date in both sectors, ensuring greater sustainability and consistency of opportunity across the FE and HE sectors while also addressing the specific needs and desired outcomes of both sectors. This will be particularly important in view of the upcoming establishment of the Commission for Tertiary Education & Research, which will be responsible for the oversight, strategic direction and leadership of the post-16 sector in Wales.

Recommendation 11: Any future funding should reflect the different entrepreneurship outcomes of FE & HE, with support for FE integrating with existing support for progression of young people through transition points and support in HE should focus on equipping those closest to business start-up and post-graduation.

Recommendation 12: Future support for FE and HE institutions should re-enforce the need for institutions to take leadership of the agenda and embed entrepreneurship in their overall offer to students and graduates.

Entrepreneurial Eco-system (Enabling the eco-system)

Future support for social enterprise could be a key factor to further reflect young people's motivations for starting a business and the developing context around Social Business Wales and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) will offer new opportunities for nation specific interventions, for example, linked to 'strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems' alongside supporting high quality skills training and investment in human capital and increasing life chances. YEP can also have a central role in supporting Welsh Government's Economic Resilience & Reconstruction Mission, which aims to support an entrepreneurial culture.

Recommendation 13: The Welsh Government should ensure that social entrepreneurship is embedded in future programmes aligned with the "Transforming Wales through Social enterprise" vision to ensure it is embedded across all areas of delivery.

Digital Technology (digital enabling future delivery)

The pandemic has played a key role in advancing digital delivery that will provide a platform for development of future services. The evaluation findings outline examples where the use of digital technology has been used to good effect and generated efficiency gains in the process. These include accessing wider audiences in promoting services as wells as delivering some specific areas of support. The report also acknowledges however the important role face-to-face engagement can make in building the confidence of young people in preparation for future careers and business start-up.

Recommendation 14: Future Youth Entrepreneurship services should consider a hybrid approach to delivery, making use of digital delivery where it can enhance face-to-face

delivery, drive efficiencies and value for money, and increase reach of specialist support and participation across Wales.

1. Introduction

The Welsh Government commissioned Arad Research in January 2022 to undertake a review of the delivery and impact of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (YEP) during 2016-2022. The aim of the YEP is to "develop and nurture self-sufficient, entrepreneurial young people in all communities across Wales, who will contribute positively to economic and social success".

1.1 Background to the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme

In developing the YEP, the Welsh Government made a long-term commitment to developing the entrepreneurial capacity of young people across Wales. The current Programme has operated for 6 years since its inception in 2016, investing a total of £14m and will end in April 2023. Delivered by the Department for the Economy, the Programme aims to "to develop and nurture self-sufficient, entrepreneurial young people in all communities across Wales, who will contribute positively to economic and social success".

Programme delivery has been focussed through four key delivery themes established through the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES) and these provide a national structure and focus for entrepreneurship education in Wales, aiming to build momentum and support the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem.

> Engaging: Promoting the value of entrepreneurship to create opportunities and develop young people. Raising awareness and aspiration for entrepreneurship.
>
> Empowering: Providing young people with entrepreneurial learning opportunities. Developing skills and attitudes through practical experiences.
>
> Equipping: Supporting young people to create and grow businesses. Supporting the journey to start up for those who wish to do so.
>
> Enabling: Driving Youth Entrepreneurship by connecting the eco-system and building capacity amongst partners and empowering others to deliver entrepreneurship.

In delivering on the ambitions of these themes, the role the wider ecosystem plays in supporting the culture of entrepreneurship is also recognised by Welsh Government. This includes education, curriculum reform, careers and wider support from partners in the private and third sector.

The Department for the Economy has specifically focussed direct interventions on inspiring young people to have the confidence to seek opportunities for themselves; promoting the entrepreneurial skills required and equipping young people with the right skills to start a business and increase the number of small firms being created. Engagement with stakeholders was also deemed essential to create a more cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem and support understanding of entrepreneurship.

The programme has delivered on its 2016-2022 commitments through two mechanisms:

- Welsh Government's centrally procured **Business Wales - Youth Entrepreneurship Services,** (Lot 1). Big Ideas Wales will support schools, colleges, universities and youth groups to encourage and raise the profile of youth entrepreneurship. Programme runs from 2016 to April 2023; and

- **Grant funding awards to Further and Higher Education Institutions**; awarded against a three-year application including their strategy to embed entrepreneurship and delivery across academic years and dependent on publishing of an annual impact report. Programme runs from 2019 to Sept 2023.

Activities delivered across the programme focused on:

- Entrepreneur led workshops to inspire next generation of young people
- Digital information to provide support, reach out and celebrate success
- Business start-up support through events, boot camps, networks and 1-2-1 advisory support for young entrepreneurs
- Partner engagement and learning, competitions, sharing knowledge and resources (Entrepreneurship Exchange)
- Enterprise champion network in FE/HE to embed enterprise and accelerate student start up
- Wider delivery of support to young people through Business Wales / Enterprise Hubs

1.2 Aims of the review

The aims of the review were to:

- Determine the role YEP has played in the development of Youth Entrepreneurship in Wales and its contribution to policy priorities.
- Provide a headline assessment of the outcomes and impact against YEP's objectives.
- Identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
- Assess value for money in delivering outcomes.
- Review the future role of the YEP in the wider entrepreneurship ecosystem alongside private, third sector and other Government initiatives.
- Consider the changing economic opportunities and digital developments to support young people under 25.
- Reassess the rationale for intervention and provide recommendations to inform design of the YEP to meet economic and policy priorities in delivering the new Programme for Government 2021-2026.

The review objectives were grouped into three areas:

1. **Impact & Delivery**

- Review the four delivery themes (4E's – Engage, Empower, Equip and Enable) and achievements of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme. Consider continued relevance, opportunities for improvement to the streamlining of the client journey and priorities for economic development.

- Examine the cohesion in delivery of the Programme between the Youth Entrepreneurship Services contract providers; the grant awarded FE & HE institutions; as part of the wider Start-Up provision to achieve programme outcomes.

- Review how effective the Programme has been in achieving inclusion and recognising intersectionality noting any success engaging audiences and increasing participation from groups with protected characteristics as laid out in the Equality Act including, age, socio-economic, disability, sex / gender and race.

2. **Rationale for support/Role of Government**

- Is there a continued rationale to fund the Further and Higher Educators sectors and deliver all of the Big Ideas Wales services? Are there any gaps in provision and how does each element support the priorities for Youth Entrepreneurship and the Welsh Economy

- What role should the Welsh Government (Department for Economy) play in supporting young people develop enterprising skills and capabilities?

3. **Future Delivery Models**

- How can we improve early stage (awareness raising) engagement in schools, Further and Higher Education, aligned to new curriculum and the role Careers Wales plays in supporting employer engagement?

- How can we improve engagement with young people outside education across Youth programme and integrated Business Wales offer? (Preparation for Young Person's Guarantee).

- Identify best practice in face to face and digital entrepreneurship support for young people, noting evidence of any wider trends or patterns in the consumption of support by young people to help shape a model(s) for future programme delivery.

1.3 Our approach

Our approach to this review included a combination of comprehensive desk research and interviews with a range of stakeholders associated with the delivery of, and recipients of, various support activities supported and delivered through YEP.

The desk research included a review of the following documents:

- o **Strategic / policy level documents**
  - – Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES)
  - – National Curriculum for Wales – Careers and Work-Related Experiences Framework (CWRE) toolkit
  - – The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG)
  - – Curriculum for Wales guidance

- o **Published research on Youth Entrepreneurship**
  - – The Youth Entrepreneurship Aspirations Research 2017;
  - – ICF Mid-term evaluation Business Support Services in Wales Dec 2018 - Includes Big Ideas Wales
  - – Mapping and review of enterprise and employer engagement activity across schools in Wales (Arad 2021)
  - – Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019 – data on 16-24 group
    Higher Education Business Community Interaction Survey 2019-2020

- o **Unpublished research on Youth Entrepreneurship**
  - – Mid-Term Review of the Youth Entrepreneurship Grant Funding to FE & HE institutions (2015-2018 Programme) – Redbox Research July 2018
  - – Big Ideas Wales Youth Voice 2020 and Youth Agents 2021;
  - – Evaluation of the Primary School Competition - Enterprise Troopers (Arad 2021)
  - – Impact Report for the work of the Entrepreneurship Exchange 2017-2021 (Carp 2021)
  - – Business Wales / Big Ideas Wales Website – Gender Lens report
  - – Business Wales population survey November 2021 – 18 plus, Beaufort Research
  - – Children's Omnibus survey 2019 – 11–18-year-olds (Career aspirations, enterprise participation)
  - – Business Wales population survey November 2021 – 18 plus, Beaufort Research
  - – Enterprise Catalyst – Academic year 2020-2021

The desk research also included a review of available monitoring data

- – Youth Entrepreneurship Services Output and performance against YEP's 4Es
- – FE/HE Grant Awards to institutions including award criteria, sample of strategic plans, monthly progress reports and annual impact reports to assess progress against institutional plans and targets
- – Youth Entrepreneurship quantitative analysis of event questionnaires for all activity.

The desk research was accompanied by a series of stakeholder interviews with:

- o Welsh Government representatives
- o Big Ideas Wales representatives
- o Business Wales representatives
- o FE and HE Enterprise Champions
- o Delivery partners
  - – 2BEnterprising Ltd
  - – Centre for African Entrepreneurship
  - – Prince's Trust
  - – Careers Wales
  - – UnLtd
- o Other representative bodies:
  - – HEFCW
  - – Universities Wales

Strategy, policy and research documents were coded and reviewed according to the main evaluation themes and / or YEP delivery models referred to. The findings of the documentation review informed the discussion schedules used to guide the stakeholder interviews as well as the findings included in this report.

The nature and level of engagement with the YEP varied across stakeholders interviewed. As such stakeholder discussion themes were tailored around the roles, knowledge and experience of the individuals interviewed. As with the policy review, stakeholder interview responses were coded and analysed within identified and agreed review themes.

The breadth of the service areas delivered, and support included within the YEP required a review of an equally broad set of data and interviews with stakeholders from a range of different organisations. The time and resources available did not always allow for a detailed review to be undertaken across all YEP delivery areas which places some limitations on the extent of evidence upon which the findings are drawn.

2. Policy Review

This section contains a review of relevant Welsh Government policy documents relevant to the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme and other developments.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Programme can be seen in the context of the Welsh Government's Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan that committed to develop and embed a culture of entrepreneurship in Wales, promote economic growth and provide jobs for young people. The 2016-2020 Programme for Government also highlighted the need to support school, college and university leavers to start a business and help build a more enterprising private sector.

The design and delivery of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (YEP) can be seen in the context of a range of previous and current Welsh Government policies as well as strategies for future social and economic progress for Wales. The research indicates that YEP does not operate as an isolated programme, but within a complex labour market and entrepreneurship landscape in Wales. Stakeholders reported that the programme has become more agile and responsive over the years, acting at a local and regional level as well as linking to key national policies and economic and social drivers.

For some stakeholders this flexibility has delivered a joined-up approach to supporting youth entrepreneurship in Wales, with the country enjoying advantages of scale in comparison to other UK countries and focusing on a more partnership-based approach. Stakeholders considered therefore that the programme has been adhering to the principles outlined by 'Be The Spark'[1] of a 'visible, simple, and connected entrepreneurial ecosystem in Wales' through its wide range of activities, funding and collaboration opportunities.

These findings are further reinforced in a recent Entrepreneurship Education paper[2] (Conway 2022), which states that Wales is "unique" in linking work on education and innovation policy to school effectiveness and careers policy. The paper goes on to report that a 'key aspect of the proposed new curriculum was engagement at all levels of schooling, as well as linking the 'enterprise pipeline' to HE and FE offerings in Wales.' This again illustrates the focus on a joined-up approach that has been characteristic of the development of YEP in Wales.

Originally, YEP was seen in the context of key economic policies such as 2017 'Prosperity for All', which set out to '*encourage and enable an entrepreneurial culture in Wales and establish targets for the numbers of school, college and university leavers starting companies*'[3]. YEP has also linked to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) goals from its outset in terms of supporting a 'prosperous' and 'resilient' Wales through cultivating home-grown Welsh talent by promoting and supporting entrepreneurship throughout the education sector.

The programme has strategic links to some of the key 'wellbeing goals' of this Act, including 'a prosperous Wales' and 'a Wales of cohesive communities'. These goals aim to support a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, thereby creating a society that enables people to fulfil their

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[1] Be The Spark
[2] APPG for Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship Education — The Entrepreneurs Network (tenentrepreneurs.org)

[3] Welsh Government (2017) *Prosperity for All: economic action plan* p. 34

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potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background). Through its commitment to bilingual opportunities for entrepreneurship the YEP also links to supporting a Wales of a thriving Welsh language.

Since the YEP's launch Welsh Government has also set out its ambitious programme of curriculum reform[4]. Careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) is a cross-cutting theme across the new curriculum while the skills supported by enterprise education can be integrated the new Areas of Learning Experience (AOLEs). The YEP can be seen in the context of the Curriculum's four purposes, ensuring that children and young people will be 'enterprising, creative contributors' while a growing focus with YEP partners on the importance of social enterprise (see also section 3.8) and sustainable development can be linked to the goal of developing 'ethical, informed citizens.'

'Enterprise education comes down to resilience, confidence and communications – these are 21st century skills.' Stakeholder

In 2021 the Welsh Government launched the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) as part of its Programme for Government (2021-26), to ensure that no generation loses out due to the effects of the pandemic. This offers young people the opportunity to engage with education, training or advice to progress to self-employment and starting a business. Again, this illustrates the potential integral role of the YEP to supporting strategic goals for young people in Wales's social and economic benefit. Stakeholders considered that this element of the YEP should have greater focus in future and this is further discussed in sections 2.6 and 2.7.

'YPG is a key driver now and those outside education are now a particular priority. It's a more bespoke approach and involves a range of community partners to promote entrepreneurship to those furthest away from the job market.' Stakeholder

YEP activities, in particular those linked to higher education, are also in line with the Welsh Government's post-COVID economic reconstruction mission[5]. Its objectives include retaining graduates and talent in Wales by building strong linkages between universities and employers and ensuring firms are grounded in Wales and provide future opportunities. One stakeholder commented, *'entrepreneurship is seen as part of 'building back better' and responding to socio-economic needs in Wales post-Covid.'* The programme therefore has the potential to be an integral part of Wales's future economic and social development.

A literature review of Enterprise and Employer Engagement (EEE) (2021) illustrated that the key objectives of entrepreneurship education were to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, improving academic engagement, increasing employability, stimulating quality entrepreneurship and expanding access. It also noted the importance of entrepreneurship as a component of high-quality careers provision and equity in terms of access to support. Views from stakeholders and the results from evaluations of YEP indicate that the programme is supporting many of these objectives through current activities and that any future programme should be measured by these objectives.

'The strength of the programme is how its grown and how it fits well with the new curriculum and the Welsh Baccalaureate. *It is so relevant, and this will help with any future iterations of*

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[4] Welsh Government (2017) *Education in Wales: Our National Mission*
[5] Welsh Government (2021) *Our Economic Resilience & Reconstruction mission*

the programme and support the relationship with schools. It is contributing to changing the minds of young people and giving them a can-do spirit.' Stakeholder

There were a number of recommendations from the EEE review that should be considered with regards to the future design of the YEP. These included that new Statutory Guidance for CWRE should promote the EEE resources and partnerships currently available and support schools in linking EEE activities to the new curriculum. It was recommended that Welsh Government work with Careers Wales, schools and regional education consortia to ensure that professional learning is available to CWRE curriculum leads as well as wider teaching staff across all schools and that schools should have a designated person responsible for EEE in order to promote enterprise as a whole-school strategy.

3. Headline findings of the impact of YEP

As noted in section 1.1, the YEP operates around two different delivery mechanisms:

- Youth Enterprise Services delivered under the banner of Big Ideas Wales - a cultural change programme aimed at raising aspirations and understanding of enterprise through the Big Ideas Wales campaign, and
- Grant Awards to HEIs and FEIs institutions aimed at encouraging institutions to embed entrepreneurship by delivering entrepreneurship activities across academic years and support students along the journey towards business start-up.

Both delivery mechanisms focus on and report progress around the themes of the 4 Es - see section 1.1

This section examines the impact of the YEP and progress against the 4 Es within these two delivery mechanisms using quantitative data from the desk research and documents as well as feedback offered during stakeholder interviews detailed in the methodology - section 1.3.

BIW Youth Enterprise Services

This delivery mechanism has supported schools, colleges, universities and youth groups outside of education. Services and activities delivered within BIW include:

- Enterprise Competitions for primary and secondary schools
- Inspirational and business idea workshops and webinar sessions delivered in schools, colleges, universities and youth settings outside of education
- Weekend residential Bootcamps (Pre–Covid). Bootcamps delivered during and after the Covid pandemic, were delivered as focussed online webinar sessions.
- 1:1 support from business advisers
- £2,000 start-up grant

FE/HE grant funded activities

The grant funding mechanism of the programme has been provided to FE and HE institutions to support them to engage young people within their institutions and introduce them to entrepreneurship. In most cases, particularly within FEIs, the grant has been used to fund the role of an Entrepreneurship Champion (EC) who's responsibilities include raising awareness of entrepreneurship within their institution, as well as nurture and support young entrepreneurs along the journey towards business start up. The grant funding provided during 2019-2021 was intended to support institutions to focus on the themes of Equipping and Enabling. Institutions were expected to take responsibility for Engaging and Empowering students and graduates through the funded role of the EC as an enabler and from the support available through BIW services.

BIW services and FE-HE grant supported services are not delivered exclusively separate from each other. BIW services often support grant funded enterprise and entrepreneurship activities delivered in FEIs and HEIs. Similarly, enterprise activities available to schools, colleges and universities which are not funded by YEP also support or complement BIW activities and often contribute to the wider outcomes achieved by these services.

In previous FE-HE grant funding rounds the Welsh Government set achievement targets which institutions were expected to meet. However, in the most recent funding round 2019-21 institutions were responsible for setting their own targets and to note how the funding was supporting them to achieve them. The aim of this was to encourage institutions to take ownership of their entrepreneurship activities and not just deliver them because the funding criteria required them to do so. This was linked to a further aim of encouraging institutions to embed entrepreneurship within their strategic priorities.

3.1 How delivery services support the 4 Es

BIW Youth Enterprise Services and FE-HE grant funded activities relating to each of the 4E themes are summarised in more detail below:

Engaging: Raising awareness and aspiration for entrepreneurship

Engage activities supported through BIW services

Engage activities delivered through BIW include Inspire workshops sessions delivered in schools, colleges and youth settings outside of education aimed at raising young people's awareness of entrepreneurship and offer them a flavour of what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur. These workshops are often delivered by BIW business Role Models - real businesspeople who are recruited and trained through BIW to deliver bespoke sessions to groups of young people. During these sessions or workshops, Role Models share their personal business start-up story aimed at inspiring future entrepreneurs. Further details relating to the way in which Role Models operate are included in section 3.2.1 below

BIW services also deliver Exploring Big Ideas workshops. These are more experimental learning workshops aimed at building confidence and giving young people the opportunity to share their business ideas with entrepreneurs as well as understand more of the practicalities of starting a business. These sessions also help participating young people generate ideas for business and to create an action plan to take their idea forward.

Role Models recruited through the YEP play an integral role in almost all these workshops, and BIW regional coordinators play a pivotal role in organising and coordinating workshop events.

Engage activities supported through the FE/HE Grant

The grant funding allocated to FE and HE institutions does not, or is not intended to, directly fund Engage activities. However, the role of ECs (who in most cases are funded through the grant), includes, among many others, raising students' awareness of entrepreneurship which falls directly under the theme of Engaging.

ECs within FE and HE institutions often run entrepreneurship awareness raising sessions during induction events. ECs also organise, through BIW regional coordinators, Inspire and Ideas workshops led by BIW Role Models. As such in many cases the FE-HE grant does, indirectly, fund many Engage activities in FE and HE through ECs Enabling role (see section 3.2.2 below).

The extent to which FEIs and HEIs use grant funded resources (mainly ECs) to deliver Engage activities, varies across institutions; and generally, the way in which the grant is used across HEIs is often very different to the way the funding is used in FEIs. For example, many HEIs don't use any of the grant funding to support Engage (or Empower)

activities; although they still record these activities and report on progress achieved twice a year as part of their contribution towards the YEP monitoring records submitted to the Welsh Government. On the other many FEIs use the grant / time of EC to deliver many Engage (and Empower) activities.

ECs and other stakeholders interviewed during the course of this review also noted that COVID had negatively impacted FE and HE students' confidence and awareness of opportunities for starting their own business. As such, the role of ECs and therefore funding issued via the grant, increasingly focussed on raising students' awareness of business start up opportunities and to raise their aspirations of starting their own business – i.e. Engaging activities – during 2020 / 21.

Engaging: Headline achievements against targets:

YEP monitoring data indicates that 'Engaging' targets for the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme from 2016-2022 have been exceeded in most areas apart from face-to-face targets, which have inevitably been affected by COVID.

Table 3.2: Achievement of BIW Services collectively against programme targets set for the 4Es. **BIW Services targets** have **consistently been exceeded** through the programme (2016-2021)

Youth Entrepreneurship Service Output Targets and achievements Jan 2016 to August 2022					
Output Definition	Breakdown by Sector	*Annual Target*	Jan 2016-August 2022 target	Total Achieved	Variance
No. Inspire workshops	Schools Pre-16	*710*	6,419	5,951	-468
	Total No. of School Pupils participating in Inspire Workshops	*17,618*	156,226	149,506	-6,720
				*achievement impacted by school closures in 2020/1	
No. Explore/Tailored workshops	Schools Post-16	*225*	1,933	1,409	-524
	Further Education	*480*	3,114	3,344	+230
	Higher Education	*250*	1,566	1,599	+33
	Outside Education	*350*	2,303	1,890	-413
	Total No. of young people participating in	*33,251*	189,647	194,906	+5,259

	explore/tailored visits				
PRIMARY TARGET: Total No. of young people engaged in awareness raising activity (face-to-face delivery)		*50,000*	326,922	353,156	+26,234
PRIMARY TARGET: Total No. of young people interested in starting a business		*4,000*	26,095	41,470	+15,375
Campaign outcomes (Web visits)		*40,000*	214,125	298,918	+84,793
Total No. individuals receiving support through events programme		*636*	3,743	5,976	+2,233
PRIMARY TARGET: Total No. of young people nurtured to start a business		*500*	2,724	3,108	+384
No. individuals starting a business		*60*	375	528	+153

BIW services – Engage Highlights

- All schools in Wales were engaged by the BIW delivery team during 2016-2021.

- Participation in BIW **Inspire and Explore Big Ideas workshops** during 2016-2021 were above target for pre-16 and post-16 schools up until 2020. Numbers fell short of targets during 2020-21 and 2021-22 because of COVID – see also table 3.3

- All secondary and middle schools in Wales took part in at least some BIW Inspire, Explore or other tailored workshops during the period 2016-2021 This was a target set for the end of the programme (2022) but was already achieved by 2021.

- Activity levels of secondary and middle schools varied during 2016 – 2021. Most schools (67%) participated in, or took up 30 Inspire, Explore or tailored workshops,

about a third of schools participated in 30-80 workshop sessions and 5% of participated in 80 or more workshops across the programme period.

- School activity level (middle and secondaries) also varied by local authority. Some of the most active participation was in Bridgend (on average Bridgend schools took part in workshop activities 58 times over the programme), Anglesey (43 times on average), Swansea (39) and RCT (38), compared to Pembrokeshire (20) and Powys (15).

- Across schools, FE, and HE, BIW Role Models engaged with over 315,000 young people, and were ahead of target pre-pandemic. However, face to face engagement for schools, FE and HE was however below target, with numbers being affected by COVID due to education establishment closures. However, the BIW service provider adapted quickly to shift to digital delivery to provide virtual sessions - see also table 3.3

   Engaging targets in FE and HE

As noted above, the YEP grant was not intended to support engaging activities. However, ECs supported by grant funding did deliver, and enable other services including BIW services to deliver Engage activities in their institutions.

- '**Engaging' targets** for FE and HE have **consistently been exceeded** through the programme (2016-2021)

Impact of Engaging activities

The Engaging activities supported appear to have made a positive impact on young people's interests and enthusiasm towards self-employment and / or starting their own business. For example, BIW Services monitoring figures for the number of young people (Schools/FE/HE) interested in starting a business was above target across the programme.

The positive impact of Engaging activities is also reflected in the positive views reported in the Children's Omnibus Survey (2021) for 10–18-year-olds[6.] The survey findings indicate that the proportion of 10- to 18-year-olds surveyed who were aware that that being their own boss or starting a business was a career options that was available to them increased from 77% in 2019 to 84% in 2021. The survey findings also indicate that the number of 10- to 18-year-olds who think that they probably or definitely would like to run their own business after leaving school increased from 53% in 2019 to 65% in 2021. Improvements have also been seen in the desire to start a business overall between 2019 and 2021, in particular from females.

These findings outline the positive impact of Engage activities in raising awareness and aspirations of young people of entrepreneurship and its value.

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[6] Children's Omnibus Survey. Prepared for Welsh Government by Beaufort Research November 2021

Empower: Providing young people with entrepreneurial learning opportunities and developing skills.

BIW Empower services Empower activities supported through BIW services

BIW services have promoted the Empowering theme in various ways within its delivery including primary school competitions such as Enterprise Troopers, and secondary school competition such as Big Ideas Celebrated (now finished). The competitions complement the enterprise activities schools already do and offer participating learners the opportunity to compete against each other and showcase their enterprise activities and products created and sold in the process. As part of the competitions participating learners are introduced to the principles of enterprise using the ACRO skills and attributions (Attitude, Creativity, Responsibility and Organisation). The Enterprise troopers project also provided learning practitioners with some enterprise teaching resources and online training modules.

The Empower delivery theme is also supported by a range of activities outside the aegis of YEP but which nonetheless complement the activities taking place under the theme. These include

- education activities through implementation of the new curriculum,
- work-based learning, traineeships and apprenticeships,
- Careers Wales Employer engagement activity / work experience,

There are also sponsored opportunities that support this delivery theme including Young Enterprise and Young Business Dragons.

Empower activities supported by the FE/HE Grant

As with Engaging activities, the grant funding allocated to FE and HE institutions does not, or is not intended to, directly fund Empower activities. However, HE and FE grant recipients and ECs funded by the grants have used the money to support various Empower activities aimed at developing the entrepreneurial skills of students including:

- Workshops to support students to further develop their ARCO skillsets.
- Entrepreneurship and employability skills sessions including webinars covering each of the 15 Entrecomp Competencies.[7]

Many of these sessions have been delivered collaboratively with BIW services, coordinated by ECs and led by BIW Role Models. Some workshops have also been led by Business Wales services to add value and reduce duplication. Typically, these workshops will include entrepreneurial guest speakers (RMs), topics will include identifying business markets, business planning, financial planning, business models and sources of finance - all of which are core entrepreneurial skills and competencies.

The two-year review of Youth Entrepreneurship Grant Awards[8] outlines that institutions increasingly consider entrepreneurial attributes such as a proactive mindset, creativity and innovation, problem-solving, time-management and resilience, as essential life skills. The

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[7] The EntreComp framework is a shared definition of entrepreneurship as a competence, consisting of 3 interrelated competence areas: 'Ideas and opportunities', 'Resources' and 'Into action', each of which is made up of 5 competences, which, together, constitute the building blocks of entrepreneurship.

[8] Two year review of Youth Entrepreneurship Grant Awards to FE & HE
January 2019 – December 2020 (Red Box Research)

negative impact of COVID on the confidence and resilience of young people has placed an even greater emphasis on the general need of these skills to all aspects of life.

ECs within institutions have also supported activities and sessions, aimed at encouraging and supporting colleagues within their institution to embed entrepreneurship into the curriculum. Progress on this has varied during the programme period with ECs reporting resistance to embrace this amongst some subject tutors, lecturers and / or faculties. On the other hand, they also outlined potential opportunities to introduce more entrepreneurship skills into vocational courses - particularly in FEIs.

Empowering: Headline achievements against targets:

BIW services

176 primary schools have been engaged through the Enterprise Troopers[9] competition. A recent evaluation of Enterprise Trooper concluded that the leaners and schools participating in the competition gain a number of positive outcomes including ACRO skills and ethical values. However, the evaluation also concluded that participation remains lower than initially expected and participating schools make up a relatively small proportion of all primary schools in Wales.

HE and FE

For FE and HE, the 'Empowering' targets have been exceeded during the last grant funding period 2019-2021 with the total number of students participating in activities to increase entrepreneurial capacity, skills, knowledge and experience (35,839) exceeding the target set of 22,278 set by the institutions themselves.

Impact of Empowering activities

The impact of Empowering activities supported through YEP can be considered within the context of the extent to which young people in Wales have the motivation, confidence, drive and ability to start a business. The Enterprise Catalyst (ECAT) report 2020 – 2021 measures this in terms of Enterprise Fuel.[10]

- The report findings indicate that Enterprise Fuel was highest amongst FE/HE students aged 25+, perhaps reflecting a combination of both their academic and work experience and lower for FE students under 16 years of age. (ECAT report 2020-2021)
- Enterprise Fuel was much lower among schoolchildren aged under 11 years and people who identify their gender in another way.

The GEM report (2020)[11] outlines that over 40% of non-entrepreneurs in Wales state that they have the skills, knowledge and experience to start a business if they decided to do so. This suggests that individuals are gaining the skills and knowledge required to start a business even if they haven't done so yet. The GEM findings also indicate a resilience within the population in Wales in terms of ability to start a successful business and knowledge of the conditions to do so and outlines that the level of youth entrepreneurship in Wales was significantly higher in 2020 than it was in 2001. This at least partly reflects the fact that young people in Wales are well equipped with the skills and attributes needed to start their own business.

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[9] Evaluation of the Primary School Competition- Enterprise Troopers; Arad Research (2021)
[10] Enterprise Fuel' is a composite indicator that comprises three distinct measures; 'Motivation and Drive', 'Capacity to Self-Determine and Influence' and 'Willingness to Learn'. The higher the Enterprise Fuel, the stronger the basis upon which to build for future entrepreneurial activity
[11] GEM UK: Wales Report 2020

Equipping: Supporting young people to create and grow businesses

BIW Equip services

Under this theme young people have been supported through a range of BIW Youth Entrepreneurship Services., One of the key services delivered is the 1:1 support service offered to young people the who have well established business ideas but require additional support to turn their business idea into an actual business start-up. The Equip team offer these young people bespoke advice and guidance relating to business practices such as marketing, finance and / or accessing premises etc.

Other BIW Equipping services available to young people include:

- The Communications campaign & Young Entrepreneurs network,
- Business start-up events & workshops,
- Online learning (BOSS / Simply Do),
- Mentoring and Role Model support,
- Bootcamp to Business Challenge,
- Young Entrepreneur Network,
- Business Wales (BW) & Accelerated Growth Programme events and service delivery and Accelerators (Entrepreneurship Hubs).
- Start-up grants – up to £2,000

BIW support young people to develop their business ideas up to the point where their business is actually launched. Once their business has been launched, these young people are referred to the post start up support offered by Business Wales. The delivery and focus of BIW Equip services take into consideration that young people typically take longer than over 25s to convert their business idea into a business start-up.[12]

Equipping: Headline BIW Services achievements against targets:

Equipping targets BIW services have been exceeded across the programme period (2016-2021). The primary target; *Number of Young People Nurtured* was exceeded by 383. The number of young people supported to start a business was exceeded by 153 business start ups. See Table 3.2.

This has been a significant achievement of the BIW services. As part of the Young Person's Guarantee this target has since been stretched by 400 starts per year. Additional investment has been secured for this area.

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[12] In 2017 the Entrepreneurship Exchange commissioned research into the aspirations of young entrepreneurs. Results from this 'Aspirations Research' revealed that young people between 18-30 typically take 15-18 months to progress from inception to start, including 6 months planning, and identified a gap between high aspiration and progression to sustainable start-up.
**Entrepreneurial capacity (opportunity recognition and prior entrepreneurial experience -i.e., perceived ability to act in an entrepreneurial way).

Equipping activities supported by the FE-HE Grant

FE and HE institutions also offer a with a wide range of Equip activities supported through the grants these include**:**

- Test trading opportunities - via partner sponsorship,
- one-to-one support from the Entrepreneur Champions,
- Events, Workshops & networks and incubation facilities – including incubation facilities available at some institutions and through BW supported Enterprise Hubs

Business Wales (BW) also provides pre-business-setup support at institutions for potential entrepreneurs aged 25 and over but includes similar services such as business planning workshops and 1:1 mentoring support, that are offered by BIW services. Although the intention is that these services provide Equipping services specifically for individuals within different age groups there are occasional overlaps in service provision. Some stakeholders were of the view that this reflected a lack of information sharing and cooperation between BW and BIW. However, others considered that the differing types of Equip support required by individuals is not necessarily based on age. Therefore, some overlap between the services BIW and BW can be justified due to the differing needs of would-be entrepreneurs of all ages at the varying stages of their start-up development. As such continued flexibility in the age of individuals supported by BW and BIW should continue where it's appropriate to do so. This flexible approach should, however, be delivered through greater communication and collaboration between the two organisations.

Equipping: Headline achievements against targets:

Equipping targets for FE and HE institutions have been exceeded across the programme period (2016-2021) apart from the total number of businesses started.

Impact of Equipping activities

The YEP programme has delivered a positive impact in terms of the level of youth entrepreneurship in Wales. Numbers of graduate start-ups have improved and are ahead of the UK average and Wales has also narrowed the gap and is again on a par with the rest of the UK in terms of overall new start-ups. Levels of youth entrepreneurship have substantially increased and YEP activities can be assumed to have contributed to this increase. Wales is also making some progress in terms of narrowing the gender gap of start-ups and new businesses compared to other UK nations.

- The profile of graduate start companies in Wales as a % of the UK total has improved between 2016/2017 (5.9%) and 2019/2020 to 8.8%. (HEBCIS)
- Similarly, the 3-year survivability has also improved from 2015/2016 (12.2%) to 2018/19 (16.9%) with a slight dip in 2019/2020 (15.9%), which may be due to Covid (HEBCIS)
- Wales is on a par with the rest of the UK in terms of new start-ups (GEM 2021)

- The level of youth entrepreneurship in Wales is significantly higher in 2021 (10%) than 2002 (2%). (GEM 2021)[13]
- Wales is making some progress in narrowing the gender gap compared to England and Scotland: Wales TEA rate for females 9.8% and males 10.7%, both rates were the highest on records for Wales. (GEM 2021)

Enabling: Promoting excellence in entrepreneurial learning and good practice regionally, nationally and internationally.

A key aim of Enabling activities support by the YEP is to support connectivity and cohesion between youth entrepreneurship services in Wales – the entrepreneurship ecosystem inspired by the Be the Spark ethos. Many of the activities relating to the theme of Enabling are delivered through the Entrepreneurship Exchange (EE). EE plays a key role in enabling entrepreneurship across eco-system partners, linking the support available across the marketplace, making introductions for collaboration and supporting delivery. This is reviewed in greater detail in section 3.6.

Strengthening connectivity and cohesion across and between services is also supported within the role of BIW Regional Executives who work with regional partners to connect support and ensure representation of BIW at local and national events.

The Enterprise Champion network

ECs within FE and HE institutions also play a pivotal role in encouraging staff colleagues within their institutions to support entrepreneurship and to 'champion' entrepreneurship within their subject area. ECs have also supported the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Wales through the Entrepreneurship Champions network. In the past the network has met in various physical locations. As a result of the pandemic, however, the EC network meetings during 2020 – 2021 took place online. Some ECs noted that hosting network meetings online encouraged more frequent contact and greater collaborative activities between institutions.

Views on the Enterprise Champion network were generally positive. Stakeholders interviewed appreciated being involved in a wider network with HE institutions and felt that they were part of a larger support structure for entrepreneurship. Some also thought that the network served as an effective benchmark for enterprise support across the FE-HE sector in Wales, and provided an opportunity to work together, address common challenges, and cultivate a team spirit. The EC network was used to organise joint events such as the Summer Start-Up week; host guest speakers; share resources and best practice. In some cases, more region-specific sub-networks were established for areas e.g., rural areas of west Wales. As such the EC network can be considered as having contributed well to the supporting the Enabling theme of YEP and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Wales.

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[13] Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM UK) Wales report 2021 | GOV.WALES

Links between education institutions, BIW and other services

Across schools, FE and HE institutions ECs and enterprise coordinators often engage with and book BIW services to complement other enterprise and entrepreneurship activities that they support within their institutions. The BIW services that are most widely used across institutions are those delivered by BIW Role Models. FE-HE engagement with BIW Role Models has been varied across institutions with some institutions using them extensively while others have engaged with RMs on a relatively infrequent basis.

Generally, BIW was reported as being the 'first port of call' for FE ECs to book Role Models. However, some FE institutions also opted to book their own local entrepreneurs to act as role models during enterprise sessions, as they felt these business owners offered better engagement with students particularly those on specific courses that related to the businesses owned by the role models booked.

'We book more people from creative sector – people that haven't done traditional work routes. A lot of them have fresh experience of what it's like to be at this age. Some of the BIW folks [RMs] *are a bit older so it's good to get a variety of perspectives.'*
Entrepreneurship Champion, FE college.'

The importance of local entrepreneurship 'stories' was highlighted as an important role of RMs by many ECs as well as schools and BIW Regional Executives try to ensure they match institutions with local RMs that best suit their needs.

Other BIW services accessed by FE and HE institutions include 1:1 mentoring and support services and Bootcamp events delivered by the BIW Equip team. Whilst most interviewees at HEIs had positive views of these BIW services, several said they preferred to offer their own in-house 1-1 support to students. For example, some interviewees noted that students prefer personalised support which they do not get by engaging with BIW, especially within the context of students struggling with confidence. Some HEIs noted that the timing of support services delivered by BIW (e.g., annual bootcamps) did not always align with the timing of enterprise events and support activities planned by the HEIs. A few ECs noted that they plan their enterprise activities up to 18 months ahead, whereas in their view, BIW activities seem to become available on a more 'ad-hoc' basis, which is often 'out of sync' with their plans.

Some HEI interviewees noted that they were reluctant to refer students to BIW because BIW are unable, due to GDPR; to share data about the students they help with their institution. These interviewees felt that the relationship between HEIs and BIW could be more collaborative: for example, HEIs promoting BIW in exchange for BIW sharing more information with HEIs. Another interviewee noted that BIW do not capitalise on the expertise within universities to aid with their design and delivery of enterprise education. More and better communication and partnership between BIW and HEIs was seen as desirable by many interviewees and may be an area that requires strengthening during the next funding round.

Some HEIs raised the point that their utilisation of BIW was minimal because mature students over the age of 25 are not eligible for BIW support. Furthermore, a number of those interviewed noted that HEI students over the age of 25 are often at a stage in life where they are more likely to start a business soon after graduating compared to their younger counterparts. This suggests that some of those who could capitalise on the practical support of BIW may not be able to due to their age. Further flexibility may be

required to enable young people under or 25 and over to access BIW or BW services basing the suitability criteria of the services provided by each more on the needs of the individual rather than their age.

Interviewees from FE and HE institutions noted that establishing a good working relationship with individual staff members from BIW was important in ensuring that regular meetings to scope out support and work collaboratively take place. A minority also noted however, that a lack of staff consistency within BIW hindered engagement of this nature with the service.

BIW services are not the only organisations that schools ECs and the EC network work with. Other organisations within the wider ecosystem of youth entrepreneurship support include BW funded Enterprise Hubs, Prince's Trust, Young Enterprise, UnLtd, Social Business Wales, as well as commercial business including banks which can complement and add value to institutional activities. ECs within FE-HE and enterprise coordinators within schools work with these organisations to broker services that compliment areas of entrepreneurial focus within their institutions and further support the Enabling aims of YEP.

Knowledge of and access to these wider services is an important feature of the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The EE should play a key role in brokering these relationships and therefore needs to be coordinated by an organisation and body that has wide reach and influence while being considered an honest and independent broker – see section 3.5.

A key area of support that FEIs and HEIs often require is access to incubator or other space and facilities to develop products and support pre and post new business start-ups. Some HEIs have their own incubation space – others access space and services available from BW funded Enterprise Hubs or do not have access to any space or facilities of this nature. Engagement between FE and HE institutions with BW Enterprise Hubs has varied between regions based on whether or not they are located nearby. Some HEIs such as Bangor University have strong and well-established links with their local Enterprise Hubs. Overall, however, engagement with Enterprise Hubs has been minimal. FE-HE may require further support to access more space and services similar to those available within BW Enterprise Hubs. Further research is required to determine the level of demand and current availability and access to these facilities and services across institutions.

The range of stakeholders that can   support youth entrepreneurship in Wales is very broad and navigating through this complex landscape of enterprise related services can be challenging. However, most ECs interviewed felt that they understood this eco-system and could identify where specific expertise lies. The ability of institutions to navigate through this eco-system has also led to strengthened links between learning institutions and industry resulting in some FEIs and HEIs being able to leverage in additional private sector investment (PSI) to support entrepreneurship activities within their institutions.

Enabling: Headline achievements against targets:

Enabling targets for FE and HE institutions have been exceeded across the programme for the number of staff that have championed entrepreneurship (1,969 staff championing entrepreneurship against a target of 816 set.

- The amount of PSI levered in by FE and HE institutions to support entrepreneurship within their institution £626,048 exceeded the £593,553 target set by the institutions themselves.

The EE also recorded a number of outputs that have contributed to strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem these include:

- Hosting 44 knowledge Exchange Events
- 1084 partners attending organised events
- Engaging with 931 partners
- 202 new connections made
- Creating 72 resources
- 137 best practice examples shared

Table 3.1: Achievement of Further & Higher Education institutions collectively against programme targets set for the 4Es

	2019-2021 Targets	2019-2021 Achievement	Variation
Enable: Number of staff championing entrepreneurship within their academic subject or department (Staff Champions)	816	1,969	+1,153
Enable: Private Sector Investment (PSI) to support Entrepreneurship	593,553	626,048	+32,495
Engage: Total number of students introduced to entrepreneurship	170,842	177,804	+6,962
Empower: Total number of students participating in activities to increase entrepreneurial capacity (skills, knowledge and experience)	22,278	35,839	+13,561
Equip: Total number of students validating business ideas or test trading	3,452	4,757	+1,305
Equip: Total number of students and graduates receiving support to start a business (pre-start support)	3,039	4,077	+1,038
Equip: Total number of Businesses started	1,260	1,124	-136

Summary of HE compared to FE: Achieving the 4 E's

Engaging

The total number of students engaged in awareness raising activities - 50% of FE institutions met or exceeded their targets across the period 2019-2021 compared to 25% of HEIs. On average FEs managed to engage more students than HE – 6,955 on average per HE over the period, compared to 8,855 on average for FE's. In terms of student population size this is roughly 40% of FE students each year compared to 18% of HE Students.

Empowering

HEIs are stronger compared to FE colleges in terms of targets met, but FE colleges perform better in terms of proportion of student population: Figures for the number of students participating in activities to increase entrepreneurial capacity show that 87% of HE institutions met their targets for 2019-2021 compared to 50% of FE's. However, if these are considered within overall student population sizes, then approximately 8% of students each year in FE institutions have participated in activities to increase their entrepreneurial activity, compared to 4% of students in HEs for the period 2019-2021.

Equipping

HEIs perform slightly better than FE in all Equip areas: i.e. in i) number of businesses started, ii) testing trading and validating ideas and iii) total number of graduates receiving pre-start support. The largest gap is for testing and validating ideas, with approximately 0.5% of FE students validating business ideas each year during the period 2019 - 2021 compared to 1% of HE students

HE institutions outperform FE Colleges in terms of total number of business start-ups. Across HE and FE, 37% of HE and 30% of FE institutions met or exceeded their target for the period 2019-2021 in relation to the total number of businesses started. In total, there were 849 HE start-ups between 2019-2021, compared to 263 in FE – a total of 1,112 start-ups – an average of 106 start-ups per HEI and 22 per FEI. If we consider this within the context of total student population size of the HE institutions taking part in the scheme compared to FE, roughly 0.2% of the HE population created a start-up each year between 2019-2021 compared to 0.1% of the FE population[14].

Enabling

The number of staff championing entrepreneurship within their academic subject or department (Staff Champions) was 62% for HEIs compared to 75% of FE colleges exceeding their targets across 2019-2021 period. In terms of student population size this is roughly 227 students per staff member in FE each year (over 2019-2021) compared to 1204 students per staff member in HE. There are also some examples of academic champions of enterprise which have won national awards in recognition for their work.[15]

The gap between HE and FE appears to be particularly stark when looking at Enable: Private Sector Investment (PSI) to support Entrepreneurship. Where 100% of HEI's met or exceeded their target compared to just 58% of FE colleges over the period 2019-2021. On average £60,664 was secured across the period (2019-2021) for HE compared to just £9,189 on average for FE. However, it is worth noting that 4 of 8 universities in Wales receive Santander funding which contributes to the majority of the PSI achievement recorded against programme targets.

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[14] Latest HE and FE population size used for academic year 2020-2021 to provide an indication of proportion of students for both FE and HE across 2019-2021.
[15] 2019 Winners of NEEA from University of Wales Trinity Saint Davids 2019 Winners – NATIONAL ENTERPRISE EDUCATOR AWARDS (neea.org.uk)

3.2 Individual services and funding support delivered through YEP

The following sections consider individual services and funding support delivered within the 4Es in more detailed.

3.2.1 Role Models

Big Ideas Wales Role Models (RMs) are business owners and entrepreneurs who run workshops in schools, colleges, universities as well as some activities outside of education aimed at inspiring young people to start their own business. Role Models services support the achievement of outcomes relating Engage, Empower and Equip.

A Wales-wide network of 482 Role Models has been recruited and received training through YEP to enable them to deliver their sessions. To date, Role Models have engaged with over 315,000 young people and are widely considered by many of the stakeholders interviewed to be the 'jewel in the crown' of the programme. They are very well received by education practitioners and young people who generally see them as being inspirational, relatable and credible.

Ways in which Role Models are used

In primary schools Role Model are used to support the Enterprise Troopers Competition, this involves supporting the 5 regional events and the National final by running inspirational and practical workshops during the course of the events and judging the entries. This intervention take place once a year at Primary level.

In secondary schools Role Models are used in years 9 and above to introduce young people to the idea of entrepreneurship as well as challenge some of the entrepreneur stereotypes. Stakeholders were of the view that engaging with local Role Models from within the geographical catchment areas of the respective schools worked well alongside wider school enterprise / entrepreneurship activities or events. It was reported that Welsh language RMs were playing a growing role in delivery and that online resources in Welsh have also been enhanced during the last few years.

> *'The 'square mile' of RMs is really important in terms of building relations and aspirations of students, and the importance of local stories – they are there to inspire.'*
>
> *'RMs are real success story of the (YEP) programme. They are given free rein – and encouraged for their enthusiasm and inspiration, young people want a story and a context so local RMs really help here.'*
>
> *(Stakeholders)*

Within further and higher education settings stakeholders noted that Role Models associated with specific sectors can offer students specialist insights linked to their studies. The use of digital technology has offered some opportunities to enable Role Models with specific interests or business backgrounds to reach wider audiences and this is further discussed in later parts of this section.

Role Models' activities are generally allocated on their strengths, with some more suited to engagement with schools while others are more suited to engaging with older students in

FE or HE. As well as offering inspirational workshop sessions for groups of young people, Role Models are also occasionally used by the Equip team within YEP to support the delivery of workshops and business bootcamp events as well as supporting some one-to-one business support activity.

While the Role Models are considered a very successful element of YEP, some stakeholders noted that they could be used further to support young people studying more vocational subjects in FE and HE to consider starting their own business. It was acknowledged however that there were shortages of Role Models operating within some sectors e.g., ICT and agriculture. Some stakeholders also commented that although Role Models successfully inspire young people, they do not usually have the knowledge or capacity to offer any follow up support to those who demonstrate an immediate interest to pursue entrepreneurship or self-employment opportunities.

> *'RM training does need a boost, in line with the new requirements for YPG and a potential greater mentoring role. They have to adapt to digital delivery too. The networking aspect of RMs is really important, as is linking them to new and growing sectors.'* Stakeholder

These findings suggest that a recommendation included in the Youth Entrepreneurship Heath Check Report (2020) that a core number of RMs should be offered training to specifically support the Equip service and YPG as well as supporting young people with shadowing, work experience and mentoring opportunities, remains relevant.

The findings also further support recommendations included within the mid-term Evaluation of Business Support Services in Wales (2018) that Welsh Government / Big Ideas Wales should ensure that RMs direct young people who are interested in becoming their own boss, towards the next step towards achieving this. This recommendation has been acted upon and RMs are now shown how to introduce young people to the next step along their entrepreneurship journey as part of their Role Model training but there are opportunities to update and re-enforce this through communications with the Role Model network.

Engaging with Role Models

Engagement with individual Role Models can vary considerably. It was noted during stakeholder interviews that inconsistencies also exist in the way some institutions and organisations engage with and book Role Models. As a result, some Role Models are used often while others are called upon infrequently.

Regional Executives (REs) employed through Big Ideas Wales, are available to coordinate and prepare for Role Model visits in schools, colleges and universities. Their role is to ensure that there is a good match between the institution's needs and the experiences and expertise of the Role Models. In most cases educational institutions and other organisations book Role Model visits via this route. However, there are occasions when institutions bypass the REs and contact the Role Models directly. This has led to some of the inconsistent use of Role Models noted above.

Some stakeholders also noted that the process of booking Role Models sometimes involves a number of individuals, all of which are funded through the YEP e.g., Entrepreneurship Champions in further and higher education institutions contacting REs who then contact the Role Models etc. This led some stakeholders to question whether a more efficient system of

booking Role Models could be considered, possibly via a facilitated database system similar to the Careers Wales Education Business Exchange (EBE)[16] Other stakeholders, however, were of the view that a purely online / digital system of this nature would not offer the same opportunities to effectively match Role Models with the needs of individual institutions or audiences.

Payment for Role Models

Role Models are usually paid a flat rate fee for delivering their workshop sessions. This rate has not changed for a number of years and is offered to cover Role Model travel costs and costs associated with taking time away from their core business, as opposed to additional or alternative income. Stakeholders were questioned whether Role Models needed to be paid for their services, given that some other business representatives offer their time to engage with schools and colleges for no fee – e.g., some Business Wales, and Social Business Wales mentors.

A number of stakeholders were of the view that it would be challenging to persuade many of the small business owners included in the Role Model network to give up their time for free to deliver their workshop sessions. *"Some [Role Models] would do it for no fee others would not – and this would change the dynamics of the Role Model network" (stakeholder interviewed).*

Most Role Models consulted during a focus group in 2019[17] noted that their main motivation to become a Role Model was to 'give something back'. However, the same consultation noted that the fees were overwhelmingly important to Role Models and that most would not be able to engage as much (or at all) if the fee wasn't available.

As well as Role Models, BIW offer the services of BIW Ambassadors (young entrepreneurs who have been supported through BIW) and occasional speakers (business owners who offer inspirational talks to young people). BIW Ambassadors and Occasional Speakers deliver similar sessions to those delivered by Role Models but have not received RM training and therefore do not receive a fee. Although this wider group of inspirational business representatives adds value to the existing network, the different titles used and the way their costs are reimbursed, causes confusion.

Role Models and digital technology

As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, all RM sessions that took place during 2020 – 2021 were delivered virtually and, in some cases, these sessions were pre-recorded. Delivering sessions digitally in this way offered several efficiency advantages including reduced travel time for Role Models and the ability to potentially reach wider audiences during each session.

However, many stakeholders outlined that it was more difficult for RMs to interact effectively with groups of young people during online sessions. It was also reported that the attention span of groups, particularly younger school groups, were lower when sessions were delivered digitally, partly as a result of 'screen fatigue'. Stakeholders outlined that it is more difficult to record how many young people are reached or attend sessions that are delivered online and gathering evaluation feedback from online participants can also be challenging.

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[16] Education Business Exchange (gov.wales)
[17] Role Model Consultation/Focus Groups Feedback 2019

Some representatives for further and higher education institutions noted that digital delivery of Role Model sessions has often worked well in their settings. Institutions located in more rural areas welcomed the opportunity this delivery approach provided in terms of accessing RMs from specific sectors who were located relatively far away from them and therefore less likely to travel and attend in person. Role Model sessions have also been successful delivered via digital technology during Bootcamp sessions delivered through BIW.

The findings of a 2020 survey of BIW Role Models[18] outlined that the majority of Role Models were happy and comfortable to deliver virtual sessions; however, they also noted that, when safe to do so, they would prefer to have the face-to-face connection.

Stakeholders noted that digital technology was successfully used during the pandemic to deliver online training sessions to new Role Models. Delivering training in this way overcame a number of the previous access to training barriers faced by potential Role Models including travelling to a training location and / or releasing themselves from their core business to attend the sessions. Although delivering Role Model sessions digitally may improve overall reach and overcome some travel and time barriers for the RMs, it is not likely to generate significant cost savings as they will still require a fee to deliver sessions whether it's online or face to face.

Overall, the findings indicate that the experiences of delivering Role Model services digitally during the pandemic offer opportunities for a blended approach in future. This could include digital / online delivery of Role Model training and the delivery of some of the Role Model sessions, particularly those relating to specific sectors, in FE-HE. Stakeholders also suggested that opportunities for digital mentoring be further explored. However, delivery of Role Model sessions in schools and to younger age groups outside of education is likely to require face to face interaction.

Impact and influence of Role Models

The review findings indicate that RMs provide young people with the initial spark of interest and enthusiasm that can lead to the start of their journey towards being their own boss. Within schools, RM presentations introduce learners to the idea of enterprise and self-employment in general – often for the first time. In the process, they demonstrate what can be achieved locally and challenge young people's perceptions as to what an entrepreneur is and does. At further and higher education level RM presentations can spark similar enthusiasm towards entrepreneurship and often focus on specific businesses type that links with the subject areas being studied by students.

These findings support those found in other independent studies that outline the importance of influential and, importantly, relatable role models in supporting young people along their entrepreneurial journey. For example, a study undertaken by Innovate UK and FSB[19] found that 75% of UK entrepreneurs grew up with a dynamic role model. This study also found that just under a third (29%) of small business owners said that not having a relatable role models meant their entrepreneurial journey had been slower. The study also outlines the importance of female role models and role models from ethnically diverse backgrounds to inspire more women and young people from diverse backgrounds to start a business.

Overall, the findings lead to the conclusion that Role Models have played an important and beneficial role in the YEP and are an essential element that can positively influence young

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[18] Role Model / Young Ambassador Survey (BIW December 2020) Sample size 96 Role Models
[19] UK Business News 2021

people towards considering self-employment and entrepreneurship as a viable career option. As such, RMs should continue to form a central part of any future programme aimed at supporting youth entrepreneurship in Wales.

3.2.2 Grant Awards to Further & Higher Education

Through grant funding, the Welsh Government has made a long-term commitment to developing the entrepreneurial capacity of the Further and Higher Education sector in Wales. Institutions are funded to help them take leadership and drive and own their entrepreneurship agenda, whilst using the financial grant stimulus to nurture and accelerate entrepreneurship practices. The programme looks to recognise the role institutions play in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem and to help implement and embed institutional strategies for enterprise and entrepreneurship and look for opportunities to mainstream this activity in their institutions longer term.

The current programme of work 2019-2022 was developed on the basis of the Mid-Term Review of the Youth Entrepreneurship Grant Funding to FE & HE institutions (2015-2018 Programme) undertaken by Redbox Research July 2018. A funding model based on student numbers was used the allocate the funding against a strategic plan and a set of outputs where the institutions set their own annual targets.

The mid-term review identified that the grant funding instrument was an important delivery component of a long-term policy commitment by the Welsh Government to encourage and support youth entrepreneurship. It also highlighted the key role played by the FE and HE sector in delivering entrepreneurial experiences and opportunities. Academic institutions were identified as an integral component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Wales, with Entrepreneurship Champions (EC's) a key catalyst for stimulating entrepreneurship in academia. The grant was considered to be achieving results, however the evaluation also found that there were areas for improvement.

In particular, the review recommended that FE and HE institutions should make a commitment to entrepreneurship and provide clearer progression routes of the student start up journey and support available. It also noted that there were key opportunities for the programme to respond and contribute to changes in the economic policy landscape – specifically in terms of driving regional economic growth and supporting FE and HE's role in regional economic development. These recommendations have guided Welsh Government's ongoing management of the YEP and also supported some institutions progress towards embedding entrepreneurship.

This section looks in more detail at how each sector has utilised the funding over the last four years and looks at how institutions could be supported in the future.

Further Education

How the funding is used by Further Education Institutions

In every FE college interviewed, the YEP grant was used to fund the role of an Entrepreneurship Champion (EC) partially or wholly and/or Entrepreneurship Co-ordinator. These roles varied between part-time and full-time – in some cases, the YEP grant allowed a part-time EC to increase their work hours, therefore allowing more entrepreneurship-related activity to take place within the college. Dependence on the YEP grants varied.

Some ECs noted that without the funding there would be no entrepreneurship-related activity taking place.

However, several other ECs noted their role was likely to be continued even in the absence of the grant but that their impact would be potentially reduced. Overall, the role of the Entrepreneurship Champion/Co-ordinator was seen as crucial for coordinating support for entrepreneurship within FE institutions, and therefore, given the reliance on the grant to fund these roles, the grant was considered equally crucial within these institutions.

'The EC role is a connector / conduit to navigate the complex entrepreneurship landscape -- to make it easier for students (to access entrepreneurship activities).' (Stakeholder)

Beyond funding staff roles, YEP grants were used for a series of joined-up initiatives between institutions as well as activities within FE colleges. Examples include:

- Enterprise academy (learning specific skills needed to set-up a business) - **Empowering**
- Business start-up events / workshops (for students who expressed a specific interest in entrepreneurialism) - **Equipping**
- Clubs and societies (e.g., an 'enterprise community' group meeting during lunchtime) – **Engaging**
- Commissioning external agencies to run events and hosting events within college – **Engaging and Equipping**
- Collaborations with other stakeholders (e.g., Wales Cooperative Centre) – **Equipping**
- Facilitating enterprise competitions (within and between colleges) – **Empowering**
- Access to Role Models (including those sourced from Big Ideas Wales) – **Engaging, Empowering and Equipping events**
- Offering small grants to students to help them establish a business – **Equipping**
- Offering CPD to teachers to enable delivery of entrepreneurship education. - **Empowering**

The impact of Covid in Further Education Institutions

The YEP grant offered to FE as well as HE was largely intended to support Equip activities (supporting business start-ups) across these institutions. However, it was widely reported by ECs that, as a result of COVID, many students had lost a considerable amount of their confidence to start a business as well as the enterprise networks they had established. Most FE institutions reported therefore that they had rolled back their Equip provision in order to return to Engaging and Enabling provision aimed at raising aspirations and confidence to address the confidence lost by many students because of the pandemic.

During the pandemic, much of the enterprise engagement support activities supported by the grant, were delivered online. FE institutions differed in the speed at which they developed online delivery of Engagement. Many ECs noted the benefits of online delivery: for example, engagement and provision of support was more readily accessible to more students, and staff in larger FE institutions could engage with a greater number of students.

All interviewees recognised the benefits and challenges associated with online delivery. A handful of interviewees noted that they had spent less of their overall enterprise budget due

to COVID restrictions and the need to deliver services online. All mentioned, the importance of engaging with students face-to-face specifically in light of difficulties with engagement online due to 'Zoom fatigue' and overall lower levels of wellbeing amongst students. However, many were also of the view that a hybrid delivery, combing online with face to face, was a potential delivery approach that could be continued beyond the pandemic.

A small number of FE institutions capitalised on the adverse circumstances presented by COVID-19 lockdowns to enhance their delivery. For example, one Entrepreneurship Champion took to creating vlogs (video blogs), podcasts, and Instagram stories all related to promoting entrepreneurship-related education within the college. This was described as a different use of the funding than before the pandemic and was created specifically because students engaged more effectively with material they could access in their own time.

Embedding entrepreneurship in Further Education

A key aim for the YEP grant, has been to support FE and HE institutions to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship activities and culture within their institutions. The extent to which entrepreneurship is embedded within the college differed between FE institutions. Interviewees reported difficulties engaging with specific departments/faculties, such as the arts or STEM, though this varied between institutions. Engagement with humanities faculties was reported as difficult by several interviewees due to the more exam-based nature of the discipline and the perception of less obvious routes into self-employment.

In some colleges, Enterprise Champions were engaged with multiple departments as well as leading college-wide activities. This was reported as helping spread better awareness and coordination of enterprise education at a strategic level and highlighting routes for self-employment for students. Some ECs reported that further opportunities to embed entrepreneurship within vocational courses associated with sectors such as construction and health and beauty also existed within their respective institutions. Several noted their ability to promote and compete in skills competitions linked to enterprise as another positive outcome of the grant.

Barriers to embedding entrepreneurship include limited time and resources, various levels of interest in enterprise between college departments, and levels of confidence amongst teachers regarding teaching enterprise. However, these challenges differ according to the size of institution – for example, securing buy-in across faculties was not reported as a problem by smaller FE institutions which tend to be more cohesive in their approach to enterprise education. Overall, the embeddedness of entrepreneurship education in FE institutions is more embryonic than in the HEI sector where there is generally broader buy-in.

Higher Education

How the funding is used by Higher Education Institutions

In some HE institutions, YEP grants were used to wholly or partially fund Enterprise Champion roles. However, HE institutions were far more likely to use the grant funding to employ additional enterprise staff beyond an already existing Enterprise Champion role funded by the HEI, such as an Enterprise Co-ordinator or an enterprise support assistant. A few HEI interviewees described the funding as enabling them to be more innovative and take more risks with their enterprise provision and to be able to formulate longer-term plans

for enterprise education provision (e.g., longer term planning for enterprise education within curricula).

Other activities supported by the YEP grant were similar to those of FE institutions and include: bootcamps; inviting guest speakers and industry experts; co-funding Summer Start-Up week; CPD for staff (for example through EEUK); and provision of 1-1 student support. Interviewees at HEIs were more likely to mention skills development and 1-1 support than speaker events or role models compared to their FE counterparts. This links with the notion of students progressing through the 4 Es, where at university there is a greater focus on Equip and Empower than Engage as students progress through their entrepreneurship journey.

As noted in section 3.1 FE and HE 'Empower' targets have been exceeded across the length of the programme from 2016-2021 in terms of students participating in activities to increase entrepreneurial capacity (skills, knowledge and experience).

Larger HEIs were more likely to report different sources of funding, such as from HEFCW's Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF), or private sector sponsors to further support entrepreneurship activities over and above the support received through the grant. Nonetheless, it was recognised that different income streams fulfilled different targets, most of which were distinct from the targets YEP grants are aiming to fulfil. In contrast, smaller HEIs were more likely than larger ones to note that they would struggle to provide enterprise education in the absence of the YEP grant.

A minority of HEIs reported confusion regarding reporting requirements for what YEP grants have enabled them to achieve. This was the case especially for HEIs in receipt of multiple sources of funding where enterprise education initiatives can overlap or closely relate. This was also a problem for HEIs who said that they were already delivering on the 4 Es prior to the implementation of the grant reporting requirements.

Overall, for HEIs the YEP grant was a valued and necessary part of a broader suite of support and investment to boost enterprise education in their respective institutions. This is notably different from FE institutions, for whom the YEP grant was usually their only significant source of investment for supporting enterprise education in their institutions.

'HEIs value the support overall and the opportunities it creates. It has facilitated a shift in resources in areas of supporting enterprise. It has also led to more support for networks and sharing good practice. The funding allows ECs to be secure and makes enterprise more visible in HEIs.'[Stakeholder]

Impact of COVID in Higher Education

Similarly to FE institutions, HEIs reported an initial surge in engagement as more students were accessible with online delivery, before experiencing a dip in engagement as students became fatigued with online learning provision. In light of extra-curricular workshops receiving less engagement, many HEIs opted to focus on and promote pan-Wales virtual events to students, as well as events by BIW and Enterprise Hubs. It was felt these events added value by offering students broader perspectives beyond their individual institution.

Interviewees noted that they had more money to spend due to saving on expenditure during COVID. With remaining budgets, three HEIs decided to collaborate in order to create an

online resource and platform for students to engage with enterprise education provision and activities when they wanted to. This is an example of the type of partnerships supported through the grant which could be encouraged in future to support further joint working, regional approaches and offer the opportunities for efficiencies within the programme.

Embedding entrepreneurship in Higher Education

As outlined in table 3.1 below, YEP has met and exceeded targets in terms FE and HE staff championing entrepreneurship. In most HEIs, embedding entrepreneurship was reported as being dependent on specific staff members and their expertise and interest in enterprise rather than being embedded within HEI strategy. There were nonetheless differences in how HEIs approach embed entrepreneurship within their departments, teaching curriculum and additional support activities. Several institutions focus enterprise on specific departments, another institution, however, had incorporated enterprise into a general module which every student in the university takes.

One HEI has developed an institution-wide approach to promoting and embedding entrepreneurship. Key strategic elements include providing opportunities for student mobility through 'entrepreneurship placements', creating a designated and safe space for innovation and start-ups, encouraging Colleges and Schools to provide spaces for students to experiment, collaborate and test ideas and recognise and reward entrepreneurial learning and achievements through accreditations, awards and certifications. One HEI reported challenges to embedding enterprise education across the whole institution and therefore created a new role, an Enterprise Curriculum Development Officer. This role was funded by HEFCW and is an example of alternative funding sources complementing YEP provision.

Stakeholders additionally highlighted the alignment between YEP funding and HECW's RWIF programme, which supports spin-off, start-ups and CPD linked to individual HEI's public engagement and research missions. They noted that there are similar ambitions to support the enterprise ecosystem through investment and commercialisation and place-based economic growth through Universities Wales and Wales Innovation Network. This illustrates the entrepreneurial ecosystem linked to higher education in Wales and this is further explored in section 3.2.5.

Value added by YEP Grant

FE Entrepreneurship Champions and Co-ordinators were asked about the value the YEP grant provided. Many commented on the impact of specific face-to-face interaction in restoring confidence in students lost over the COVID-19 lockdowns. Others noted its value in giving Entrepreneurship Champions the opportunity to undertake the sustained engagement with students required (e.g., through 1-1 sessions or workshop series). Lastly, Role Models were mentioned frequently as a valuable and inspiring resource for learners. The YEP grant enables ECs to access and utilise external services (e.g., Role Models from BIW) to good effect, which adds value to overall programme impact.

"As an Enterprise Champion, going into classrooms to deliver sessions to learners has a high level of impact because it hugely increases the chances of a learner then coming to see me for a 1-1 session", Enterprise Champion, FE college

Most interviewees said that the YEP grants enabled them to conduct events and other activities that they would not be able to otherwise. Most also reported that they did not receive other significant funding to support entrepreneurial education within their institution. However, some institutions did receive support from other sources. Though less common, these sources included: match funding from the FE institution; the Prince's Trust; Wales Co-op Centre; local businesses and entrepreneurs. This further supports the sustainability and comprehensiveness of approach in some institutions.

"We've done things we wouldn't have been able to do otherwise, like helping set-up an in-house business… I've been able to extend reach to students and to undertake bigger projects due to the funding", Entrepreneurship Champion, FE college

These findings from interviews with Entrepreneurship Champions link to the findings from the two-year review of Youth Entrepreneurship FE-HE Grants (2019-2021). This report highlights that FE colleges are key to supporting students into vocational occupations (which are often closely linked to self-employment) and therefore 'essential providers of engage and empower activities' through the grant.

3.3 Schools

Secondary schools in Wales have been targeted through Engage, which runs entrepreneurship awareness raising training in schools (and FE and HE) through a network of role models and other activities Primary schools have been targeted through Empower, through the enterprise competition Enterprise Troopers.

The research indicates that engaging with enterprise activities at an early age can have benefits in terms of raising learners' aspirations and developing skills. An evaluation of Enterprise Troopers highlighted positive impacts for learners including softer skills such as self-confidence, communication and presentation skills as well as resilience and an increased enthusiasm for learning. The evaluation reported that participating in the Enterprise Troopers also provided opportunities for schools to link enterprise to the curriculum and support learners' literacy and numeracy as well as add value to existing enterprise activities and encouraging learning between schools.

Nevertheless, the evaluation also highlighted the low levels of engagement from schools across Wales in the competition and this reflects a wider challenge identified by other studies and annual monitoring of YEP for engagement with schools. The Enterprise Troopers evaluation highlighted schools' lack of engagement with the competition across some areas of Wales e.g., rural areas and issues such as the sustainability of staff engagement and lack of transport as other barriers. The 2018 mid-term evaluation of YEP reported lower levels of awareness of Big Ideas Wales in schools and made recommendations to improve this.

In terms of pre and post 16 school Engage targets for YEP workshops and activities targets were met for the number of Inspire/Explore and tailored workshops with schools across the programme apart from 2020-21 and 2021-22 where figures were affected by Covid. A goal for the programme was to engage 100% of middle and secondary schools in Wales with YEP workshops and activities and this target has been met, with varying levels of

engagement across each local authority and individual schools in each authority over the course of the programme.

Some of the most active schools (middle and secondary) are in Bridgend - on average Bridgend schools took part in YEP workshops and activities 58 times over the course of the programme, compared to with Powys where schools took part 15 times. Reasons cited by stakeholders for variation in school include some schools prioritising enterprise activities whereas others may have used curriculum 'free time' for other activities such as wellbeing. Whether schools were taking part in the Welsh Baccalaureate or not also influenced how engaged they are with enterprise activities.

While there are very positive responses reported in the 2021 Children's Omnibus survey regarding their attitudes to entrepreneurship and starting their own businesses low levels of awareness of Big Ideas Wales were also reported. This indicates the need for further engagement at schools-level to support the take up of YEP activities. Stakeholders also noted the lack of consistent engagement with schools across Wales, which is highlighted in the school engagement data above. They considered this to be a priority for future iterations of the YEP, including a greater focus on the sustainability and connectedness of learner journeys through primary to secondary and onwards to further and higher education.

'There are massive gaps up until year 10, something that Enterprise Troopers can't address on its own. Learner disengagement can start earlier at years 7 and 8 so YEP needs to have more of a presence here, through the role models and others, for example targeted seminars for years 7, 8 and 9.' Stakeholder

The evaluations noted above produced a series of recommendations including more focus on local partnerships, use of new technologies, professional learning for teachers, platforms to share good practice, and resources to ensure there is equitable engagement across schools and that learners are not disadvantaged. Further objectives were reported in the unpublished Welsh Government's Big Ideas Wales Strategic Objective 7: Heath Check Report including a more focused approach with teachers being given more awareness about business, delivery to smaller learner groups and more focused interventions with students that have shown an interest in business (e.g., business studies students).

There is overwhelming agreement amongst stakeholders that the new curriculum offers opportunities to further enhance the delivery of YEP in schools as well as integrating enterprise into the wider education system. The new curriculum, in particular CWRE, was seen as an opportunity to develop a consistent approach and cohesive offer that can support practitioners' skills and learners' creativity and employability. For some stakeholders, this can address some of the challenges regarding current levels of support and the joined-up nature of the entrepreneurship journey through primary and secondary school towards FHE and start-ups.

'Innovative teaching and learning needs to be part of the approach in future as well as a more consistent approach to supporting enterprise in years 7 and 8. Schools need more guidance to embed enterprise across the curriculum and link it to skills and knowledge development.' Stakeholder

Stakeholders also noted that gaps in enterprise provision and engagement have occurred due to other priorities. Organisations such as Careers Wales have tended to focus on employment rather than entrepreneurship and generally support schools' engagement with

larger companies not small local enterprises nor those who are self-employed. With enterprise now having a stronger policy focus, stakeholders noted that Careers Wales and other partners will be integral to further supporting this in schools, particularly in areas such as coordinating and promoting enterprise teaching resources. This links to the findings of the EEE literature review as to the importance of entrepreneurship as a component of careers education.

Careers Wales current policy document, Brighter Futures (2021-26)[20] outlines a range of goals linked to CWRE, which can support these ambitions. These include delivering a high-quality professional learning service to build the skills, knowledge and confidence of educational professionals to deliver effective CWRE; designing and delivering a new CWRE award for excellence in the curriculum and proactively supporting the implementation of the CWRE statutory guidance.

The vision also outlines the stages of careers support from an introduction to CWRE in primary schools, broadening horizons and raising aspirations in years 7-9, making informed and effective decisions in year 10-11 and then supporting effective transition into learning and work. These stages offer the opportunity to build entrepreneurship into all aspects of young people's careers education as they moved through school.

A further key goal for Careers Wales is to work with employers, training providers and entrepreneurs to understand their skills requirements and opportunities for young people. The recent Estyn Thematic[21] (2022) notes the importance of learners having 'a variety of meaningful experiences in learning, work and entrepreneurship.' It also recommends that the work of Careers Wales, schools, employers and other education and training providers needs to complement each other to ensure that 'learners get the knowledge and experiences they need to make decisions and plan for their progress towards employment.' These partnerships will be a key element of supporting entrepreneurship in future.

The YPG was also considered to offer more opportunities for enterprise in schools in future by stakeholders. The synergy between schools, community partners, charities and local employers was emphasised as crucial to ensuring that target groups such as NEET can engage with the programme. It was also noted that where local enterprise networks are developed between primary schools (such as the Swansea Primary Enterprise Challenge) this can encourage sustainable partnerships with businesses and address barriers such as time, cost and travel. Stakeholders reported that these activities have the potential to complement national activities led by Welsh Government in future.

Impact of COVID in Schools

As with the delivery of most services, the delivery of Enterprise Troopers in primary schools and Inspire / Explore workshops in secondary schools were limited by school closures and other restrictions relating to COVID restrictions. Regional and national Enterprise Troopers were cancelled during 2020 although these were resumed as online events during 2021. Funding that would have been allocated to supporting these events were repurposed towards developing resources and online enterprise training events for school practitioners.

Role model led Inspire and Ideas workshops were also disrupted by school closures. However, the delivery of Role Model sessions were soon changed to be delivered online or

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[20] BRIGHTER FUTURES - Our vision 2021-26 (gov.wales)
[21] Impartial careers advice and guidance to young people aged 14-16 years provided by Careers Wales advi ansers | Estyn (gov.wales)

recorded for sessions to be delivered on screens. Most Role Models adopted well to this way of delivering sessions although it was reported that it was more challenging to interact well with audiences of young people online. BIW staff also noted that it was not always possible to record how many young people participated in RM workshop sessions delivered online.

A summary overview of the impact COVID had on the delivery of all BIW service delivery is outlined in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Impact of COVID on BIW Service Delivery – across all educational settings

KPI	April to November 2019	April to March 2020	April to November 2020	Numerical Impact - April to Nov comparison	% Impact	
Total Number of Young people Engage	51529	74,761	18,022	33,507	65.02	65% decrease
Total number of workshops	1683	2428	537	1146	68.09	68% decrease
Total Number of Young people Interested in starting a business	8581	12707	6104	2,477	28.9	29% decrease
Total number of young people receiving support through the events programme	547	630	748	-201	-36.74	37% increase
Total Number of young people nurtured to start a business	329	536	289	40	12.16	12% decrease
Total number of young people starting a business	51	76	70	-19	-37.25	37% increase

- Face to face delivery was significantly impacted due to the schools, colleges and universities closing – from historically overachieving targeting performance decreased by 65%
- Interestingly **the events programme performance increased by 37%** as they became more accessible due to sessions being delivered virtually. Virtual sessions also enabled many young people to attended sessions that were delivered outside of their region. This brought great benefits to the programme and changed delivery in a positive way. As a result the number of young people starting a business increase by 12%

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3.4 Supporting enterprise outside education

Alongside supporting entrepreneurship amongst young people in schools and further and higher education, Big Ideas Wales also works closely with various community partners outside education. These partners include national all-Wales organisations such as Young Farmers and Prince's Trust as well as smaller partner organisations that support specific groups of young people such as the Centre for African Entrepreneurship. BIW also work with employment support groups and training providers across Wales.

Many of these organisations deliver their own enterprise activities aimed at introducing entrepreneurship to the young people they support. Big Ideas Wales representatives then outline the services they can offer and how these may complement those already delivered by the partner organisation. Big Ideas Wales representatives may then have the opportunity to run a session with young people supported by organisations. These sessions may take the form of presentations outlining the services available e.g., 1:1 support of Bootcamps or they may be a workshop session delivered by one of the Role Models.

A target for the programme was to increase engagement with partners outside of education and an increase in workshops delivered to organisations outside of education can be seen from 2016 (68% of target) up to 2019-20 (where it exceeded the 350 explore/tailored workshop target for outside of education organisations). The engagement level then dropped off in 2020-21 due to Covid (68%), increasing again to 86% in 2021-22 [Youth Entrepreneurship Services Outputs from Contact Start to End].

BIW have thus made progress however this engagement often appears to be dependent on individual contacts and has often lacked a coordinated strategic approach at national or regional level and consistent partnership work. Supporting young entrepreneurs outside education would therefore benefit from a planned engagement strategy rather than responding to requests for support and this is something that should be considered for future iterations of the programme.

As noted in the views expressed by stakeholders in section 2.1, the YPG is now a key driver for YEP to further support young people outside of education to engage with enterprise activities. The potential of the YPG through Big Ideas Wales to achieve this is nevertheless reliant on the extent to which BIW can continue to develop working relationships with groups and organisations that support and represent young people outside of education.

Interviews with FE and HE representatives indicate that institutions are generally open to the idea of engaging more with young people outside of education, however few obvious examples were offered as to how institutions actively pursue these opportunities beyond standard widening access activities with some of the partners outlined above and community groups. Challenges outlined by representatives include time and resources and lack of shared spaces.

3.5 Supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Fostering entrepreneurship by supporting individuals along the journey from enterprise opportunity awareness to business start-up and sustainability, requires input and support from a range of individuals and organisations. These include government, education and academia, community partners, finance providers and the existing entrepreneurial

community. The interplay and dependencies (direct and indirect) between these groups are often referred to as the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Most stakeholders were of the view that Wales has a relatively joined up entrepreneurial ecosystem compared to other UK regions. This, they considered, was in due in part to the relatively small geographical size of Wales and the connections between institutions and organisations that already exist. However, it was also acknowledged that there was room for improvement and that there is a continued need to establish new links as well as strengthen existing ones to support further knowledge exchange and reduce some areas of support duplication. It was also noted that the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Wales should have a global reach and not be confined to the boundaries of Wales.

The development of the wider youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in Wales is supported through the Entrepreneurship Exchange (EE) which is funded through the YEP and delivered by Big Ideas Wales but as an independent element of its core services. Between 2017 and 2021 The EE project brought together diverse organisations including, providers, educators, strategists, entrepreneurs, and advisers to work collaboratively and support the delivery of:

- 44 Knowledge Exchange Events – attended by 1084 partners
- Created 72 resources to be shared
- Shared 137 examples of best practice[22]

The external evaluation of EE (2021) also reported that the service had "brought everyone together and shared information." The evaluation also identified a number of strengths associated with EE including:

- Positive influence on enterprise education within FE/HE
- Influence on 'key players' from different sectors and regions
- Joined up thinking has contributing to international leadership role for entrepreneurship in Wales
- Effective at networking with partners
- Enabling best practice to be shared, creating a Welsh national direction

Members of the Big Ideas Wales services delivery team noted that they had, in their view, successfully managed to deliver the EE as impartial service. They noted that this had been challenging and required appointing a dedicated member of the team whose only responsibility was to coordinate EE activities. It was reported that the EE coordinator left their position within BIW and this was perceived to have left a gap in the leadership role and the service without a clear direction or purpose.

Some stakeholders also noted that having a project that is delivered at arm's length to Big Ideas Wales but also funded under the same banner as other BIW services limits the extent to which it is perceived as being independent.

This was recognised in the views expressed by some stakeholders who noted that the EE has evolved since it was introduced in 2016 / 17. For example, EE started as an information exchange support service, then more recently it has been a platform to provide a voice for young people. These changes in focus have been beneficial in respect to EE's ability to be

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[22] External evaluation of EE undertaken by CARP Collaborations 2021

agile and responsive to needs, but at the same time not having a clear outcomes-based objective has caused some confusion as to what EE 'is' or 'does.'

'EE brings all the main players together; its website is good for mapping the enterprise journey, but it is still not clear about its purpose. It has all fizzled out a bit and needs more definition. Things need to be more young people focused in terms of skills development, networking and skillset.' Stakeholder

These views echo those presented in the external evaluation of EE which noted that there was some 'confusion regarding how Big Ideas Wales, Welsh Government, EE and other flagship initiatives are inter-related. Some of the objectives felt unclear, leading to replication'.

Most stakeholders were of the view that there is a continued need for a service such as EE. The findings of the evaluation considered that EE should continue to coordinate and explore joined-up approaches to entrepreneurship activities in Wales and ensure that these have a clear link to Welsh Government policy. The evaluation also reports that EE is ideally placed to 'spot opportunities for training, either in providing training and CPD for enterprise staff in schools colleges and universities or acting as a facilitator in exploring opportunities and accessing resources to support this kind of training.'

Some stakeholders additionally noted the need to support teaching practitioners to introduce more enterprise within their institutions in line with the requirements of the new curriculum. As noted in section 2.5, there appears to be a considerable demand amongst practitioners for enterprise teaching resources. It was therefore suggested that the EE could be a platform where information exchange of this nature could take place.

These suggestions for the future role of the EE offered by stakeholders and recommendations from previous evaluations appear to be aimed at supporting a more cohesive eco-system.

Delivering EE within the Big Ideas Wales service has remained challenging as they are unable to lever the influence needed over other partners. With this in mind, consideration should be given to removing the EE project from the Big Ideas Wales delivery portfolio and bringing it in-house to be delivered by the Welsh Government itself. This could enable the EE to further build on its positive impact of creating a national direction for Welsh entrepreneurship.

3.5.1   The use of digital technology in YEP

The use of digital technology to organise and deliver Big Ideas Wales services has increased in recent years. In many cases this has emerged from the need to move away from face-to-face interaction because of the pandemic. This section considers the benefits and limitations of continued use of digital technology in the context of YEP services in relation to cost (particularly in light of European Union funding coming to an end) as well as the reach, efficiency and value and impact of services delivered.

Many of these points relating to digital delivery of Role Model activities have already been discussed earlier in section 2.3. However digital technology has been used to support the delivery of other YEP and Big Ideas Wales services. Digital tools such as Google ads as well as social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become a key feature in the way Big Ideas Wales promotes its services and engages with young

people. The use of digital technology in this way appears to have worked well to date and is likely to continue to be used in future marketing and promotion campaigns.

Figure 1 below shows the increase in the number of followers for both Twitter and Instagram over the course of the programme (2016-2021). The total number of Facebook followers has also remained consistent across the programme and shows that currently, Facebook is the preferred social media channel in terms of number of followers - with 209,000 following compared to 136,000 on Twitter and around 50,000 Instagram followers. Unique number of visitors to the BIW website has been consistently above 40,000 from 2018-19, peaking in 2021-22 at 61,000, which shows an increase in traffic to the website across the programme. Similarly, the total number of page views has been consistently above 90,000 since 2018.

Figure 1: Number of Unique Visits to BIW website, compared to #BIW Twitter, FB and Instagram Followers (2016-2021)
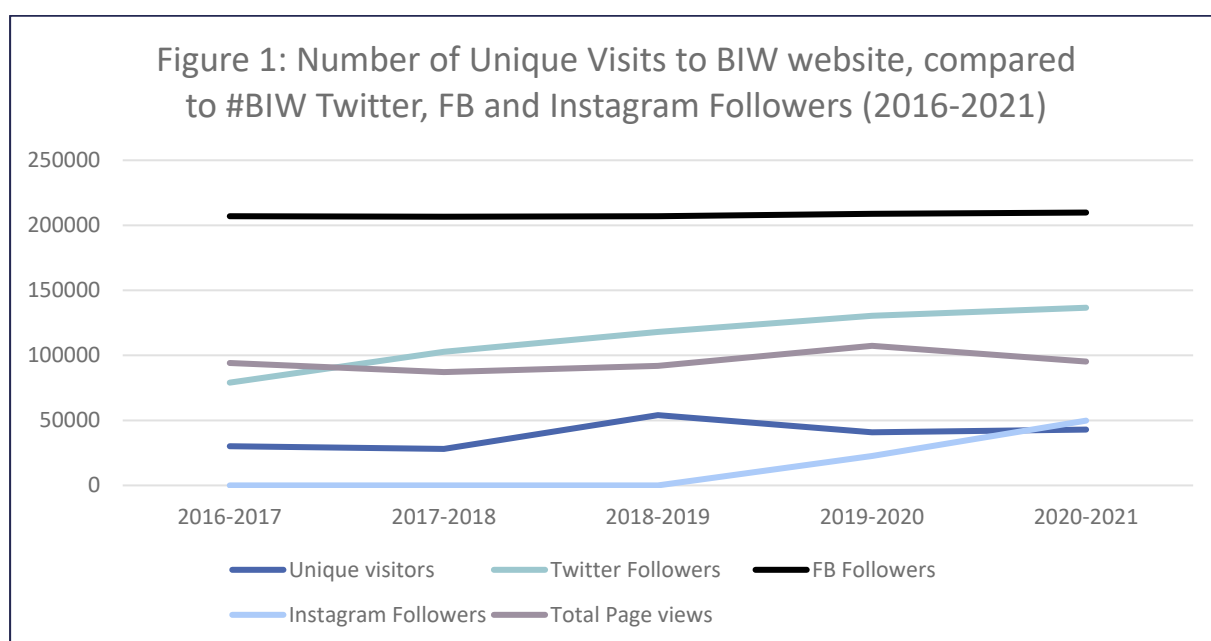
Source: BIW digital data monitoring

Entrepreneurship Bootcamps are residential courses (one in north Wales and one in south Wales) delivered through Big Ideas Wales for young people who are at the pre-business start-up stage. Before the pandemic approximately 30 to 50 young people would attend each of these events and spend a weekend together participating in various activities aimed at aimed at equipping them with the confidence and ability to take the step towards starting their own business.

During the pandemic these residential courses came to a halt but were replaced by a series of shorter online events. The shorter online events offered the opportunity to organise sessions tailored to specific groups e.g., Welsh speakers and young people with disabilities. Event organisers noted that targeting sessions at specific groups worked well in that those attending could relate well with each other and could discuss and address issues that they felt were specific to them. Delivering sessions online also enabled some young people who may not otherwise be able to or feel comfortable attending a weekend bootcamp event to take part.

Event organisers also noted that although delivering bootcamp sessions online is more resource efficient and can broaden the participation and reach, they lack the immersive

interaction that a residential course can offer. Now that Covid restrictions have eased the aim is to return to organising the two annual weekend bootcamps as before, but accompany these with a series of shorter, but targeted online events to build on the positive outcomes noted above.

The Big Ideas Wales website was also referred to by some stakeholders as a good and valuable resource. The website is also considered by these stakeholders to be 'appealing' and 'relevant' to most young people. A study by Chwarae Teg for Business Wales suggests that the Big Ideas Wales site is generally 'good regarding the presentation of gender' through images although the study did identify some areas of the site where a greater number of male representatives are featured in comparison to females.

Digital technology has also been used, particularly during the pandemic to enable young people to participate in events that they would normally attend in person – see for example the bootcamp example referred to above and has also enabled more frequent engagement between ECs as part of the EC network. Similar examples were also noted in relation to hosting Enterprise Troopers competition events for primary schools. The evaluation of Enterprise Troopers noted that the main advantages for digital delivery of these events were that it made it removed travel and supply teacher costs, making it easier for schools to participate. However, the evaluation also noted that the main disadvantage of hosting a digital competition event was that participating leaners did not consider it to be a 'big occasion' and this in turn would make it less exciting and inspiring.

As part of Enterprise Troopers programme, digital technology also provided the opportunity to share and exchange information including teaching resources, through EE – see section 2.7. The evaluation report recommended that resources, freed up by delivering online events, should be used to support more digital classroom resources and a platform to share good practice and to deliver online CPD for practitioners.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Research and views from stakeholders indicate that YEP has become more agile and responsive since its launch in 2016. It is operating – and having an impact - at a local and regional level as well as linking to key national policies and economic and social drivers. It has successfully linked to previous policies such as Prosperity for All and the flexibility and support for joined up partnership approaches indicate the programme has the potential to support current and future Welsh Government policy, in particular the Young Persons Guarantee. It also includes the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act as this becomes more embedded within economic, social and environmental government policy – offering the opportunity to link enterprise to key goals such as a prosperous and more equal Wales.

4.1 The progress of YEP against the 4 E's: Engage

YEP has exceeded its engagement targets in relation to reaching education settings to promote enterprise activities and BIW services. The use of digital technology, especially social media as illustrated in section 2.8, has supported the Programme's effective marketing and promotion. BIW Role Models have also played an important and influential engagement role and have been well received by young people and practitioners.

YEP has also supported engagement with some young people outside of education by working with partner organisations although the reach and coverage of this engagement is less consistent at FE and HE level. The findings also indicate that relationships between BIW and partner organisations are often stronger at a local level than they are at a regional or national level. The Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) can be a driver to encourage further engagement and support for young people outside of education, placing an increased emphasis on YEP to focus on supporting entrepreneurship for under-represented groups and putting equality of opportunity at the heart of future enterprise activities.

Recommendation 1:
An engagement plan would maximise the value of the Big Ideas Wales Campaign and strengthen it as the leading service supporting youth entrepreneurship in Wales. Future BIW Contractor providers should prioritise and strengthen Big Ideas Wales services to work more collaboratively, in particular to support young entrepreneurs outside education.

The Role Models (RMs) have been a hugely positive element of YEP and should be integral to the future of the programme. There are nonetheless several areas where their impact could be enhanced. Efforts should be made to address shortages in some sectors such as ICT and construction as well as developing RMs in social enterprise. Additional training to enable RMs to provide follow up support and signposting to those who demonstrate an immediate interest to pursue entrepreneurship or self-employment opportunities would help sustain their role. Consideration could also be given to their engagement with other elements of Welsh Government entrepreneurship delivery, e.g. to under-represented groups to enhance value for money.

A facilitated database may help to address inconsistencies in the booking RMs. Payments are an important element of supporting RMs work and should be continued. In future, a blended approach may work best, embracing digital mentoring targeted at specific sectors

and groups along with more general engagement and for younger pupils through face-to-face encounters.

Recommendation 2: Role Models should continue to be an integral element of YEP and Welsh Government should consider their potential to engage wider audiences across programme delivery in future.

Recommendation 3: There are opportunities for any future BIW contractor to improve communications with the role model network. This could include   identifying shortage sectors, training and induction, regular updates on education settings in which they operate, signposting support available to young people to facilitate their engagement with Big Ideas Wales.

4.2 The progress of YEP against the 4 E's: Empower

The ACRO model has provided a sound basis upon which to empower young people, particularly those of compulsory education age, with the skills and attributes required to be entrepreneurial. Enterprise Troopers has incorporated the ACRO model to good effect within the competition programme; although the level and reach of school participation can be improved. An enterprise competition aimed at secondary schools - Big Ideas Celebrated – is no longer delivered through YEP, although similar enterprise competitions facilitated by other organisations are still available.

Recommendation 4: The Enterprise Troopers competition has provided a good platform to showcase schools' achievements in enterprise; however future delivery should consider whether a competition is the right approach given a need to reach more schools and ensure teacher support aligns to needs of the new curriculum.

Recommendation 5: There is a need to support teachers with a range of resources to help them give their students an understanding of business, develop entrepreneurship skills and connect these skills to their career options. These can also support FE & HE where responsibility for Empower lies with the institution through the education system.

Stakeholders noted the lack of consistent engagement with schools across Wales and considered this to be a priority for future iterations of the YEP. This included a greater focus on the sustainability and connectedness of learner journeys through primary to secondary and onwards to further and higher education to address perceived gaps in provision.

The new curriculum thus offers potential for YEP through CWRE and developing creative, innovative and ethical learners. The emphasis on enterprise included in the new curriculum may suggest that this in itself will generate the momentum required to ensure that enterprise activities are embedded within schools across Wales, and therefore the need for additional support through YEP may no longer be necessary. However, the findings of the review indicate that many school practitioners need support to enable them to deliver more enterprise focused activities within their establishments.

As such, for the next round of YEP, further support for schools is likely to be needed, particularly in the form of teaching resources to allow schools to take the lead in planning and delivering entrepreneurship. The role of Careers Wales in designing a professional learning service to build the skills, knowledge and confidence of educational professionals to deliver   effective CWRE and proactively supporting the implementation of the statutory guidance will therefore be key.

Recommendation 6: In the design of future services, Welsh Government should consider the role of Careers Wales and how best to support schools to prepare for the new curriculum and to ensure entrepreneurship is embedded through CWRE delivery.

Through the new curriculum there is potential for a more consistent approach and cohesive offer that can support practitioners' skills and learners' creativity and entrepreneurial aspirations. This should be also framed by a greater focus on the sustainability and connectedness of learner enterprise journeys through primary to secondary and onwards to further and higher education. Career Wales' staged approach through the year groups offers the opportunity to build entrepreneurship into all aspects of young people's careers education as they moved through school. The recently published CWRE toolkit[23] will further support this process and also help to measure learner progress through evaluation.

More focus on local partnerships, promoting the use of new technologies to support access to activities, platforms to share good practice between teachers and enterprise, and resources to ensure there is equitable engagement for schools across Wales are all options to be considered to support this connectedness. This partnership approach is in line with the vision outlined in the Estyn Thematic on careers to deliver a complementary approach to support learners' decision making and progression towards employment.

Recommendation 7: Welsh Government should ensure that future BIW services providers work with a range of partners to deliver a connected entrepreneurship pathway that supports young people at all stages of their development.

4.3 The progress of YEP against the 4 E's: Equipping

The 1 to 1 advisory support provided by BIW, as well as the annual Bootcamp sessions delivered in north and south Wales have been well received and had a positive impact on participants.

Evidence from Entrepreneurship Exchange commissioned research (see page 22) indicate that, on average young people take considerably longer to progress from business idea to start up compared to older entrepreneurs. As a result, some young people supported through YEP, may go on to use the support they receive to start a business later in life – however this would not be recorded as a YEP Equip outcome. In addition, the findings indicate that young people who access Equip support gain softer outcome benefits such as increased knowledge, confidence, and aspirations that are not currently recorded.

Recommendation 8: There is a need to provide enhanced support through Big Ideas Wales to meet policy commitments in the Young Persons Guarantee which also takes into account the length of time young people need to progress to start up. An increased level of investment should therefore be considered for advisory and wraparound services and events to ensure this.

Recommendation 9: Monitoring and evaluation for the programme combines national measures and programme measures which indicate progress against targets set by Welsh Government. Consideration should be given to recording a wider set of metrics in equipping young people to take positive steps towards start up, including softer outcomes/indicators to better reflect the breadth of support provided.

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[23] Careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) toolkit (gov.wales)

4.4 The progress of YEP against the 4 E's: Enabling

Enabling targets for FE and HE institutions have been exceeded across the programme for the number of staff that have championed entrepreneurship. The BeTheSpark movement has some impact on connecting partners in the eco-system, as well as sharing research amongst stakeholder networks supporting entrepreneurial young people. The Enterprise Champion network across Further and Higher Education has been a key enabling network for services including BIW to young people in their institutions and a referral point.

The Entrepreneurship Exchange Cymru (EEC) project aims to further support this ecosystem, through partner exchange and sharing information and resources. It has nonetheless been challenging for the EE to operate as an independent element of YEP while being delivered under the BIW banner. In addition, EE does not currently appear to have a clearly defined role or outcome making it difficult for stakeholders to fully engage with it and other methods of delivery should therefore be considered.

Recommendation 10: The outcomes of the enabling work of the Youth Entrepreneurship agenda would be better achieved being led by Welsh Government. This provides greater oversight and potential to increase the level of cross-departmental working required to meet policy commitments; whilst being supported operationally by the future BIW contractor.

4.5 Other areas for consideration: Grant Awards to Further & Higher Education

The FE and HE YEP grant has also been used to support various activities to empower young people across institutions with entrepreneurial skills and attributes. This has been particularly important during the pandemic when many young people across further and higher education lost confidence in their enterprise ability and capacity. YEP has exceeded its targets regarding the total number of students participating in activities to increase entrepreneurial capacity (skills, knowledge and experience).

The YEP grants have been influential in supporting FE colleges to deliver a range of joined up activities – events, activities, small grants and CPD for staff. Overall, the role of the Entrepreneurship Champion/Co-ordinator supported through the YEP grant was seen as crucial for coordinating support for entrepreneurship within FE institutions. Embedding enterprise across FE colleges nevertheless varies – where Enterprise Champions were engaged with multiple departments and leading college-wide activities this has led to better awareness and coordination of enterprise education. This is an approach that should be encouraged across FE in future alongside further CPD opportunities.

Another opportunity to strengthen the approach in FE in future could be for institutions to link their YEP provision to the Careers Development Award, designed by Careers Wales. This will be presented to FE institutions for a three-year period if they commit to the long-term development of careers education by working closely with Careers Wales, identifying key areas for development and implementing a plan to address these. Combining these approaches could lead to further opportunities to embedding enterprise with FE colleges, and support CPD activities too.

Further good practice can be seen in the enterprise networks developed at a local and regional level and activities through the EC network with HEIs. These types of collaboration should be encouraged further in future as part of the YEP grant to support regional enterprise ecosystems and exchange of good practice between FE and HE. Some colleges have sourced funding from other organisations to support their provision and this should additionally be encouraged in order sustain this provision and add value to the YEP grant.

One of the main aims of the YEP grants was to support FE and HE institutions to embed entrepreneurship and enterprise activities within their institutions. Progress towards this appears to have been achieved, to varying degrees across all institutions that have received the grant. However, the findings indicate that without the grant funding, the focus on enterprise activities and the resources available to support business start-ups within most institution would fall – this is particularly the case across FE colleges.

The situation across HEIs is more varied as is their reliance on the grant. For many HEIs the ability to support enterprise activities through the grant enables them to access other funding such as RWIF. As such, not having access to the grant fund could potentially lead to a reduction in other funding support.

This continued need for the grant may indicate that most FE and HE institutions have not yet been able to fully embed enterprise within their institution, or it may indicate in some cases an over-reliance on the grant. The impact of COVID and the need for institutions to use the grant to support more Enabling as opposed to Equipping activities has also limited, or delayed, progress to embedding enterprise.

In light of potential funding restrictions following the end of European Union funding streams, discontinuing the grant could offer a potential opportunity to introduce some cost efficiencies in the next round of YEP. However, the findings indicate that this would have a negative effect on many institutions, particularly FE colleges. Although not all HEIs are dependent on the grant, some smaller ones are. As such discounting the funding to HEIs is likely to have a disproportionate impact on some institutions compared to others.

Nevertheless, there are potential opportunities for more collaboration between HEIs and FE colleges to share good practice and opportunities for CPD, along with more effective alignment with other funding supporting research and innovation and a commitment to embed enterprise within their institutional mission and student offer.

The Welsh Government, working in partnership with the sector and the forthcoming Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER), is aiming to deliver a tertiary education system to support a more strategic, coherent and efficient approach across the sector. As with the reforms to the school curriculum, the sector will be supported to help learners grow as engaged and enterprising citizens, contributing to national and individual prosperity and well-being, in line with some of the key goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The strong focus of YEP on the FE and HE sectors therefore will offer the opportunity to enhance sector-wide support for entrepreneurship in future. If additional funding is available then this would help build on the successes achieved to date in both sectors, ensuring greater sustainability and consistency of opportunity across each sector while also addressing the specific needs and desired outcomes of both sectors.

Recommendation 11: Any future funding should reflect the different entrepreneurship outcomes of FE & HE, with support for FE integrating with existing support for progression of young people through transition points and support in HE should focus on equipping those closest to business start-up and post-graduation.

Recommendation 12: Future support for FE and HE institutions should re-enforce the need for institutions to take leadership of the agenda and embed entrepreneurship in their overall offer to students and graduates.

4.6 Other areas for consideration: the entrepreneurial ecosystem (enabling the ecosystem)

Future support for social enterprise could be a key factor to further reflect young people's motivations for starting a business and the developing context around Social Business Wales. The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) will offer new opportunities for nation specific interventions, for example, linked to 'strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems' alongside supporting high quality skills training and investment in human capital and increasing life chances. Social businesses are an important and dynamic component of the Welsh economy and support local jobs, talent and investment in communities. Research undertaken by Beaufort and OB3 (2017) indicates that 1 in 10 young entrepreneurs in Wales are social innovators. These are 'ambitious individuals who are attracted to running their own business to achieve social change and make a difference to their community and clients, whilst also making a comfortable living'.[24]

Support for young people should thus continue to promote social enterprise opportunities within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. For example, the Young Person's Start Up Grant will be available up to 2025 to enable young people not in education, employment or training to start their own business, create a social enterprise, become self-employed, a freelancer or social entrepreneur in Wales.

With regards to the SPF, there is potential for future entrepreneurship support for young people to be linked to the key areas of funding focus on communities and place, supporting businesses and people and skills. There will also be opportunities to support youth entrepreneurship through existing city deal infrastructure and allocations to local authorities aligned with the Framework for Regional Investment. As part of a local and regional partnership approach encouraged through the SPF, BIW can potentially play an important future role supporting SPF projects.

Similarly, Entrepreneurship Exchange Partnership Managers could co-ordinate a wider ecosystem as more and more SPF projects in enterprise and entrepreneurship emerge. YEP can have a central role in supporting Welsh Government's Economic Resilience & Reconstruction Mission (2021). This aims to support an entrepreneurial culture through providing training for self-employment through the 'Covid Commitment', and a new self-employment grants, offering up to £2,000 to support business start-ups through Business Wales. The Mission also aims to help rebuild, grow and strengthen the social enterprise

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[24] Youth Entrepreneurship Aspiration Research Beaufort and OB3 (2017) – Final Report

sector so that it is 'a natural business model of choice' for entrepreneurs delivering solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.

Recommendation 13: The Welsh Government should ensure the future YEP programme is aligned with the "Transforming Wales through Social enterprise" to ensure it is embedded across all areas of delivery.

4.7 Other areas for consideration: Digital Technology (enabling future delivery)

The use of digital technology to coordinate and deliver YEP funded activities has increased in recent years, in many cases as a direct result of limited face-to-face interaction necessitated by the pandemic. The review findings outline examples where the use of digital technology has been used to good effect and generated efficiency gains in the process. These include accessing wider audiences in promoting services as wells as delivering some specific areas of support.

The findings also indicate however, that delivering services such as RM sessions digitally online would be unlikely to lead to significant cost efficiency gains but would be likely to reduce the impact generated by these services. Efficiency gains could, however, be gained by delivering more of the RM training sessions online, and further use of digital technology could help extend the reach and availability of some specialist services e.g., those linked to growth sectors within the regional or national economy.

Recommendation 14: Future Youth Entrepreneurship services should consider a hybrid approach to delivery, making use of digital delivery where it can enhance delivery, drive efficiencies and value for money, and increase reach of specialist support and participation across Wales.