



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Young Person's Guarantee

National
Conversation
2023-24



Summary
Update

Thank you for participating in the Young Person's Guarantee National Conversation.

The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) is the Welsh Government's commitment to support everyone under the age of 25 living in Wales to gain a place in education or training, to find a job or become self-employed.

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The Welsh Government wants to ensure that the advice, guidance, support and programmes available to young people offer the best possible opportunities to succeed. We wanted to hear from young people all across Wales to understand what can be done better. Your views can contribute to changes in existing policies and help shape new policies.

When you agreed to take part in the National Conversation focus groups, we told you that we would:

Listen to what you have to say.

Welsh Government wants to improve the services we offer so that every young person has an opportunity to succeed. We can only do this by listening to what you have to say.

Consider your views.

Once the information from the on-going focus groups has been collected, a report will be produced outlining what you've told us.

We will use this to consider how we can make changes to existing programmes and services.

Feed back to you to let you know how you have helped us to shape new provision.

Once we have considered what changes we might be able to make, we will consult with groups of young people so that they can help us make sure those changes make the biggest impact.

Please see below for the summary update or [here](#) for the full update.



Work Experience

Many of you reported a lack of work experience as a barrier to getting employment. Our focus group conversations show that many of you see the value in work experience. You are able to identify many advantages to undertaking such opportunities. However, some of you struggled to gain a placement or did not have the confidence to apply for one. Over a third of you felt it was important to be able to undertake work experience in an area that matches your interests. Some of you proposed that learners should get the opportunity to do courses connected to sectors that might interest them at school. You thought that this would allow them to gain the right knowledge and skills to help with their career choices.

What action is the Welsh Government taking and its partners in response?

Example:

500 learners in Years 10 and 11 who had struggled to return to education following the pandemic were provided with [high quality work experience placements](#), in a sector that appealed to them as part of wider Welsh Government work to prevent and reduce youth unemployment. Learners had to engage or reengage with core GCSE studies at their school as part of the scheme, whilst attending their work experience placement, one to two days a week.

A similar project will be continued in 2024/25 – speak to your school, [Careers Wales](#) or Youth Worker for further details.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).

Transport

Many of you told us about your experiences with transport issues. It was the number one barrier for many of you in being able to get the education, employment, or training that you wanted. The issues included unreliability, short timetables and affordability. Some of you are also affected by lack of availability, especially in rural areas. Some of you said you need better accessibility. Also, more support to build confidence to public transport was suggested. This support could include help to navigate timetables. The majority of young people in our focus groups felt that financial help through the MyTravelPass was useful. You also felt that free or subsidised transport provided by FE colleges and universities was useful. However, less than half of those young people had been aware of these schemes before.

What action is the Welsh Government and its partners taking in response?

Example(s):

There are three major Metro projects underway across Wales. The ambition is to offer a modern, sustainable bus, rail and active travel networks. The aim is quicker journeys, better connections between different types of transport, greater capacity more frequent, reliable and accessible services and more affordable travel with smart ticketing:

- South Wales Metro: [South Wales Metro Project | Transport for Wales \(tfw.wales\)](#)
- North Wales Metro: [Transforming transport in North Wales | TfW](#)
- Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro: [Swansea Bay Metro | TfW](#)

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).





Mental Health and lack of confidence

We learned that for some young people, your mental health can be a barrier to you gaining the education, employment or training that you want.

Poor mental health can affect people in many different ways. Some of the most prevalent reasons you mentioned were having anxiety about meeting new people and struggling to concentrate and stay motivated, Some worried that your mental health will prevent you from succeeding. Some also worried that an employer or education provider may not understand you, or may judge you.

You suggested that confidence could be improved if you understood where to get help and advice. Having a trustworthy person to turn to would also be helpful. You also suggested that getting help with meeting

new people, writing a CV, and understanding qualifications would also help improve confidence.

Most of you were positive about the current support available. However, some thought that more needs to be done to raise young people's awareness of the support available.

What action is the Welsh Government and its partners taking in response?

Example(s):

The Welsh Government's has legal guidance called the [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing](#). It requires schools to put support in place to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people. If you are a school pupil you can now expect things like:

- Expanded and improved school counselling services.
- Better trained teachers and other school staff on wellbeing support;
- Dedicated mental health practitioners available in schools.

For those in / going to a college in the future, you can now expect a variety of wellbeing and mental health support. This support includes counselling services and online support. It also includes resilience training, tutorial programmes, transition support and wellbeing days.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).



Experiences of Disabled Young People

Disabled young people face many of the same challenges as non-disabled young people. However, the impact can often be disproportionate. 92% of disabled young people that took part reported that you lacked confidence, the highest of any other segment. Transport also often presents additional challenges for many of you.

More disabled young people had participated in work experience than non-disabled young people. However, you were more likely to express dissatisfaction with the overall experience. Some of you expressed a need for more volunteering opportunities for disabled young people. Some felt

they could benefit from advice on finding employment suitable for those with additional needs. Pathways was recognised as an issue for both disabled and non-disabled young people.

People felt it would be helpful for schools to better recognise disabled young people's pathways. In addition, parents should be better equipped for employment expectations for their children, as it is a valid opportunity.

Participants suggested that, for disabled learners, it was crucial to provide clear signposting to specialist organisations that offer supported placements for work preparation.

What action is the Welsh Government and its partners taking in response?

Example:

Young people aged 16-19 year's old who are participating on or wish to participate on the [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) programme (work based learning for those not in education, employment or training) – and who identify as being disabled and/ or having an additional learning need – are likely to be eligible for [Supported Employment Coaches](#). These coaches are now available to join learners on work placements or offer one to one support to develop independent living skills. There is also dedicated funding for those with additional needs.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).

Transition/Pathways

Some of you felt that young people lack consistent support as they leave school and enter college or work. Some thought there was no clear step-by-step pathway. Some were unsure where to turn for help at later points on their pathway. This included unexpected situations like dropping out of education or losing a job.

There were requests for more inclusive information on the different qualifications and what they could enable, regardless of academic ability. Some young people felt that they would benefit from having more tailored support at school, specific to their individual needs.

We wanted to know more about where you sought advice and guidance. School teachers emerged as the most influential figures (40%), with parents/ carers (30%) and careers advisers (24%) being the next most common. Although teachers were most influential, many young people felt that schools focused mainly on A levels. They gave relatively less attention to vocational options.

When asked what could make transition easier, one fundamental element was the provision of relevant work experience or taster options. Participants widely considered this highly beneficial.

What action is the Welsh Government and its partners taking in response?

Example(s):

In the 2022/23 academic year, Further Education (FE) Colleges and Local Authority sixth forms received £3 million for Transition Funding. The funding was to provide Year 10 and Year 11 learners with the opportunity to visit a FE College. Where possible learners took part in relevant transition activities. These activities included college taster days, masterclasses, interactive workshops and summer programmes. In the current (2023/24) academic year there is a further £3m available for Transition Funding. This will continue to support Year 10 and Year 11 learners with making the next step in your education or training journey.

Speak to your school, college or [Careers Wales](#) for further details.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).



Communication

You told us that sometimes you don't know where to get the information that you need. When you do get information, it's from many different sources. Your school, college, or university is the top 'go-to'. Social media and your parents or carers follow. You told us that in future, you would prefer to access information from Careers Wales, Welsh Government or your school, college or university.

What action is the Welsh Government and its partners taking in response?



Example(s):

We have strengthened our awareness campaign for the Young Person's Guarantee ([Feed your Positivity](#)) to ensure that young people know where they can get the help and advice they need for all of their post-16 options. The focus is on short, uplifting videos. The videos will be used on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

Careers Wales have also published new [parent pages](#) on their website. The pages provide information and tools to help parents and carers support their child's learning and career decisions.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).

Cost of Living

Throughout our National Conversation, we have always been conscious that accessing education, employment or training can have financial implications for many young people. With that in mind, we have worked hard on providing support to as many young people as possible in different ways.

Many participants felt unprepared when it came to financial aspects of moving into post-16 education or employment.

Example(s):

In January 2023 we doubled the training allowance (now £60), as well as introducing a free meal allowance and temporary travel assistance allowing 100% of travel costs to be claimed for our [Jobs Growth Wales+ programme](#).

In April 2023 we increased the [Educational Maintenance Allowance](#) (EMA). The allowance was increased from £30 per week to £40 per week for eligible learners in FE colleges and school sixth forms.

The rate of maintenance support paid to full and part-time [higher education students](#) from Wales increased by 9.4% for the 2023/24 academic year.

Information on more actions taken/underway can be found [here](#).

