



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Young Person's Guarantee

National  
Conversation  
2023-24



Update  
for Participants

## 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.

### **What has happened so far:**

The first round of focus groups conducted by Beaufort Research took place during the Summer of 2022. Additional conversations were held with participants of employability programmes and other youth groups. We also put our questions to young people aged 16-24 across Wales via an on-line survey.

All the information gathered from these groups and surveys was used by Golley Slater to produce the [YPG National Conversation Report](#). Welsh Government published the report and shared it widely across Welsh Government departments and with stakeholders who have an interest in young people, education, training and/ or employment.



Following Round 1 of the National Conversation, we provided participants with an update on the actions we had taken so far to address the issues that they had raised.

### **Rounds 2 and 3**

For the second and third round of focus groups and surveys, we wanted to delve deeper into some of the barriers identified in round one. Following the second and third round, Golley Slater produced a report based on the findings.

The remainder of this document will provide you an update on what we have done so far in relation to each of these specific issues. It will also cover what we have done regarding wider issues raised and what we have planned for the future.

- **Work Experience**
- **Transport**
- **Mental Health and Confidence**
- **Experiences of Disabled Young People**
- **Transition**
- **Communication**

Additionally, whilst we didn't specifically ask young people about their experiences of the cost of living crisis, it has been an underlying theme throughout the focus groups we held. Some barriers directly link to the affordability of education, training, or employment. Additional interventions that have been undertaken to help young people during this time are also outlined.

- **Cost of Living**





## 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.

**Response:** [Careers and work-related experiences](#) are now a mandatory part of the Curriculum for Wales for ages 3 to 16. This brings the emphasis into primary schools as well as secondary schools. This includes offering learners opportunities that they can actively participate in. They will be able to experience different learning opportunities such as role plays or simulations. They will be able to take part in volunteering activities, work visits, work placements and contacts with visitors.

The Welsh Government is also making changes to the curriculum. The changes will come into place in 2025. The updated curriculum guidance is about the learning experience for 14-16 year olds. It will include a broad offer of learning and experiences to support learner career pathways.

**Response:** Careers Wales are providing tailored work experience placements for up to 500 learners. The Welsh Government has allocated over £500,000 to Careers Wales to do this. The placements are for Year 11 learners who have struggled to return to education following the pandemic. The project invited schools from all 22 Local Authorities to take part. During their placement learners are finding out about the personal qualities and qualifications employers are looking for. Being valued and praised by their 'employer' has a positive impact on learner confidence and self-esteem.

**Response:** The Welsh Government has continued its Junior Apprenticeship Programme. This programme aims to engage young people (aged 14-16 years old) who are



at risk of disengaging with the school system. The Programme is delivered by colleges in close collaboration with schools and local authorities. Learners study for a level 2 qualification in a chosen vocational pathway. They are also supported to undertake GCSEs in Maths and English or (First Language) Welsh.

**Response:** In 2022/23 academic year, a programme called the Placement Enhancement Programme was piloted in FE colleges. This allowed the college to add a work placement if the programme did not already include one. The work placements helped learners develop employability skills. They also raised aspirations and supported career goals. This programme has now been made permanent. It gives Level 3 learners the opportunity to access up to 100 hours of work experience. The work experience will be relevant to the

course being studied. It can be for academic or vocational programmes at FE colleges.

The Vocational Qualifications Review made a recommendation 'to extend work placement opportunities to all level 3 learners who do not have work placement as a mandatory part of their qualification'. The Welsh Government has accepted this and will work towards this target.

**Response:** Every Further Education college in Wales now has an [Employment and Enterprise Bureau](#) (EEB). Over £2 million has been provided by Welsh Government for this academic year. The EEBs will help young people prepare for work through a package of opportunities. This support will include providing learners with

contact with employers. This could be through formal business partnerships, employer talks and inspirational employer activities. The EEBs can also help learners to build essential employability skills. They can do this by offering support with activities such as interview skills and CV writing. They can also help arrange industry visits, work experience or volunteering opportunities. EEBs also hold careers fairs and college and university visits. The support

is available for both full and part-time learners.

**Response:** The [Careers Wales Education Business Partnership](#) brings together schools and businesses. The aim is to inform, inspire, and motivate learners about their career opportunities. These opportunities allow employers to provide real world insight and inspiration to learners. It allows learners and their teachers to meet with employers



from a wide range of sectors. In many cases, their parents, guardians, and/or carers also get to participate.

**Response:** The Welsh Government has commissioned a study on work placements. It is part of the new curriculum arrangements in Wales. The study aims to learn about the work placement experiences of learners in secondary and special schools. It will help develop guidance for learners, schools, and employers.

## 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.

**Response:** The Welsh Government funded Transport for Wales (TfW) now has a variety of travel concessions for young people, including:

### TfW Student Railcard

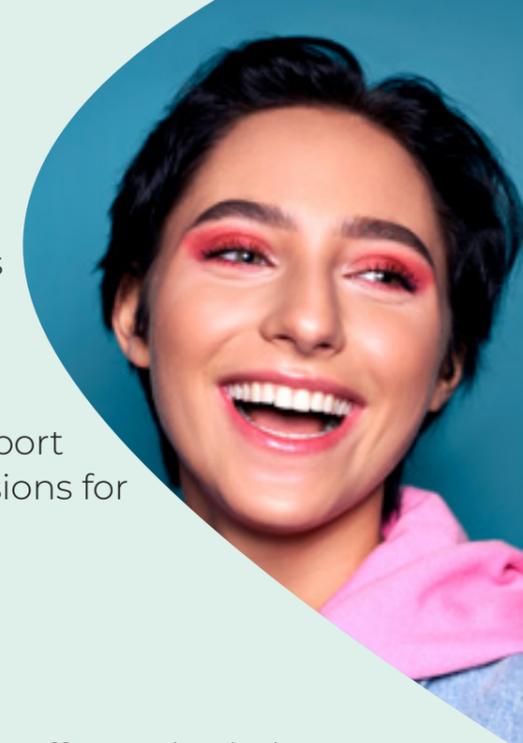
- Must be in full or part time education.
- £21 Annual Fee.
- 34% discount off Standard Class Tickets and 10% off Standard Class Season Tickets.
- Applicable on TfW Rail Services only.
- More info: [Railcards | Railcard discounts and offers | Transport for Wales \(tfw.wales\)](#)

### My Travel Pass

- 16-21
- Free to apply for.
- 1/3 off all bus journeys in Wales.
- More info: [Home ♥ mytravelpass | Welsh Government](#)

**Response:** TfW also promotes and accepts the UK wide 16-25 Railcard:

- £30 Annual Fee.
- 1/3 off rail fares across the UK.
- More info: [16-25 Railcard | Only £30 | National Rail](#)



**Response:** 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](#)

**Response:** New train conductors receive Accessibility and Inclusion training as part of their new entrant training programme and existing conductors receive refresher training. The training includes how to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance around physical and non-physical impairments.

**Response:** TfW continue to introduce further [new initiatives for independent travel](#) to help our customers with additional needs travel comfortably, safely and as independently as possible.

**Response:** Learners who are on Welsh Government [employability programmes](#) continue to receive financial support. These programmes include Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+), ReACT+ and Communities for Work Plus (CFW+). Learners on JGW+ can continue to claim 100% of their travel costs. Additionally, the training allowance has been doubled to £60 per week. Participants on ReACT+ can claim up to £300 of extra support. This support is towards additional costs while training, including travel. Some learners on Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) are eligible

for barriers funding support. This funding is to help pay towards travel costs whilst they're undertaking training. Additionally, some FE colleges provide free or subsidised transport.

**Response:** Transport for Wales (TfW) have produced a number of resources aimed at making transport more accessible for all. Welsh Government will ensure that providers of our programmes are fully aware of these resources. This will ensure they can better assist their learners with any accessibility requirements.

**Response:** We aim to increase awareness of current support, including financial assistance. Our goal is to ensure that all young people, and those who work with them, are aware of available help and receive the support they are entitled to.





We are increasing communications through given opportunities. This includes through stakeholder engagement, the YPG Young Person's Advisory Board, and Enterprise and Employment Bureaus at FE colleges.

**Response:** The Welsh Government is making changes to legislation to give people of all ages a greater say on the design and delivery of the bus services they need. This will include routes that people need for work and pleasure.

**Response:** Our YPG Young Person's Advisory Board met a representative from Transport for Wales (TfW) to discuss the issues raised and TfW have agreed to look into and respond to the feedback. We will provide a further update in the coming months We will continue working with young people to examine solutions to transport-related issues.

## 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.

**Response:** 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. Our draft budget includes £13.6m in 2024-25 to support schools to implement the framework. In previous years funding has been used to:

- Expand and improve school counselling services.
- Provide wellbeing interventions for the whole school or individual pupils.
- Train teachers and other school staff on wellbeing.
- Support health boards to roll-out Children and Adult Mental Health Services school in-reach across all-Wales. This allows for dedicated mental health practitioners to be available in schools. They can provide consultation, liaison, advice and training.

**Response:** Welsh Government has produced the [Power up Campaign](#) to support learners who are struggling with stress or anxiety due to school work or exams. The campaign offers advice on wellbeing support as well as giving practical support on taking exams.

**Response:** Qualifications Wales are reforming all 14-16 qualifications in Wales to support the new curriculum. One of the guiding principles of this work has been to support positive mental health and wellbeing. From 2025, there will be more non-examination assessments in GCSEs.

**Response:** All FE colleges have developed wellbeing strategies. The strategies help to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff and learners. They are continuing to implement these strategies. For academic year 2023/24, an additional investment of £4m has been allocated directly to FE colleges. The funding will enable them to continue to focus on increasing the size of wellbeing/welfare teams. This will help them to respond to growing numbers of referrals.



Individual FE colleges provide wellbeing and mental health support for their learners in a wide variety of ways. This support includes counselling services and online support. It also includes resilience training, tutorial programmes, transition support, and wellbeing days.

The funding also supports dedicated posts to lead on wellbeing initiatives. It also allows for projects and research that will benefit learners. Some of the projects already undertaken have developed useful resources. These resources are available on Hwb.

Welsh Government want to continue to strengthen support for learner's mental health and wellbeing in FE. National projects in 2023/24 include the development of resources and training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This will support institutions in adopting a Trauma informed approach. There will also be research and development of resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of young carers within FE.

**Response:** The Mental Health Toolkit, available via Hwb continues to link young people to websites, apps, helplines, and more. The toolkit offers support with anxiety, low mood, keeping healthy, bereavement, crisis support and more.

**Response:** The JGW+ programme continues to offer enrichment activities for learners. This is available to learners who require support with their wellbeing. It can also support them to remain engaged with their programme where they may be at risk of dropping out. The Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) programme continues to provide learners with access to mentors. Mentors provide bespoke, tailored one to one support to individuals and confidence building courses.

**Response:** In Carmarthen, the 24/7 Crisis Hwb facility has been established by Hywel Dda University Health Board. The Children and Young People's Sanctuary service offers tailored mental health support. It provides this support in the right environment, at a time when children and young people need it most. .

Response: Healthy Working Wales (HWW) is a national programme. It supports employers to create healthier working environments and workplaces. This benefits their employees and the wider community. The programme has been moving towards a more digitally led, flexible offering.

The focus is on providing a virtual offer that will help employers to measure and improve their employee health and wellbeing strategies. This includes strategies for young people.

Healthy Working Wales will work with Business Wales to increase promotion of their business support services. They will also align with the delivery of our In-work support programme to provide occupational health support. This will ensure that the programme reaches as many people as possible.

**Response:** The [Out of Work Service](#) will be extended until 2025. The Out of Work Service helps the most vulnerable and those furthest away from employment. It provides mentoring support to people recovering from mental health or substance misuse issues.

**Response:** The Welsh Government's new [In-Work Support Service](#) commenced in April 2023. The service provides free rapid access to therapeutical support for people with mental and physical health conditions. It plays a vital role in helping people to retain employment by aiming to prevent sickness absences from work due to mental or physical health conditions. It also helps those on sickness absence to return to work more quickly.





## 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.

**Response:** One of the key commitments set out in Welsh Government's Employability Plan is to increase the number of employers who create inclusive and supportive workplaces for

disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. The Welsh Government has employed a network of [Disabled People's Employment Champions](#). They are supported by Business Wales Disabled People's Employment Advisors to provide advice, information and support to employers across Wales. This is a free service available to all employers in Wales regardless of size.

**Response:** The [In-Work Support Service](#) provides rapid access to tailored occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychological therapy services. The services are designed to help employed or self-employed people return to work or manage a health condition in work. This may be a mental health problem or a musculoskeletal problem. A training programme is available to help employers identify the wellbeing needs of the workforce.



It also helps them implement a tailored programme of measures designed to improve wellness at work. This includes training workshops and wellbeing treatments. This programme is extended until 2025.

**Response:** The latest published data indicates that 24% of young people on the JGW+ programme identify as being disabled and/or having an additional learning need. For the last few years the Welsh Government has been trialling the provision of [Supported Employment Coaches](#). These coaches are available to join learners on work placements or offer one to one support to develop independent living skills. Following the trial, Supported Employment Coaches are now fully available as part of the programme.

There is also dedicated funding for those with additional needs.  
**Response:** Welsh Government's

[ReAct+](#) programme offers a package of support to help someone unemployed, get back into work quickly. The programme offers employers up to £3,000 for the first 12 months to help cover their wages. It can also pay up to £1,000 for any job-related skills training needed to bring them up to speed. If an employer recruits a young disabled person aged 18-24, an additional £2,000 is available.

**Response:** Welsh Government's [Communities for Work+](#) programme has also made strong progress in supporting participants who identify as disabled or having long term health conditions. This accounts for 24.3% of those supported. It includes providing intensive, one-to-one mentoring support to participants.

There is also a 'barriers fund' to help with costs such as transport, certification, interview clothing and much more.

**Response:** The study on work placements as part of the new curriculum arrangements in Wales, will include special schools. This will ensure that the needs of disabled children and young people are considered in any guidance developed.

**Response:** The Welsh Government funds the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Network. They have developed a 'Four Pillars ILS Curriculum'. The curriculum mostly consists of non-accredited learning. Learners work to achieve individual targets. This allows learners to focus on recognising and recording progress and achievement rather than focussing on accredited learning. The core four pillars are Health and Wellbeing,



Employability, Independent Living and Community Inclusion. The ILS Network continues to work together to develop and share effective practices and resources. They regularly review and update the curriculum to ensure the best experience for young people in Further Education colleges in Wales.

The ILS Pathway 4 is sometimes referred to as 'Supported Internships'. The programme aims to prepare young people with learning difficulties/disabilities for paid employment by;

- Supporting them to develop skills valued by employers
- Enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace
- Developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work

This is achieved by combining workplace-based learning with a personalised study programme. Pathway 4 learners will rarely be in college. The programme recognises the importance of setting and

reinforcing new habits in getting to and from work regularly. It also focuses on gaining on-the-job skills. Learners are also supported by their tutors and job coaches to enable successful and sustained employment placements. They also ensure learner wellbeing and safety. The on the job support helps the learner develop strategies to enable independence in the workplace. The off the job training complements their on the job learning and allow learners to gain support and advice from each other. This helps to prevent feelings of isolation in their individual workplaces.

Learners on Pathway 4 will, typically, be aged between 16 and 25, and will have a diagnosis of a learning disability /difficulty and/or autism.

**Response:** Welsh Government is investing £18.4 million to enable further education institutions (FEIs) to implement the ALN Act. This will provide the support necessary for learners with additional learning needs to succeed in their studies. It will also provide professional learning opportunities for staff to develop provision for learners with complex needs. The Welsh Government wants to make further education accessible to as many young people as possible. They should be able to access education without leaving their local area. In rare cases, local mainstream services can't meet a young person's complex needs. We

**Response:** To encourage more disabled people to take up [apprenticeships](#), we continue to prioritise and implement the Inclusive Apprenticeship Disability Action Plan. We work in partnership with the network of Disabled People's Employment Champions. We also work with key stakeholders and employers to remove barriers to apprenticeships for disabled people.

An Employer Incentive Scheme operates which encourages employers to recruit disabled people with a payment of £2,000.



Supported Shared Apprenticeships are for disabled people with wide-ranging learning and employment needs. A job coach offers intensive support to the learner to complete an apprenticeship. Supported apprenticeships support learners to transition into apprenticeships, and then sustainable jobs with training. The scheme supports adults who have completed supported internships and are leaving further education colleges.

Employers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled apprentices have support that is tailored to meet their needs.

**Response:** Careers Wales have a dedicated section on their website, [‘My Future’](#), for disabled young people. The resources support young people to think about what they’d like to do in the future. It helps them to explore their interests and understand the skills they have. Young people can watch a video of a Careers Adviser speaking about the different options open to them when they reach 16.

## Transition/Pathways

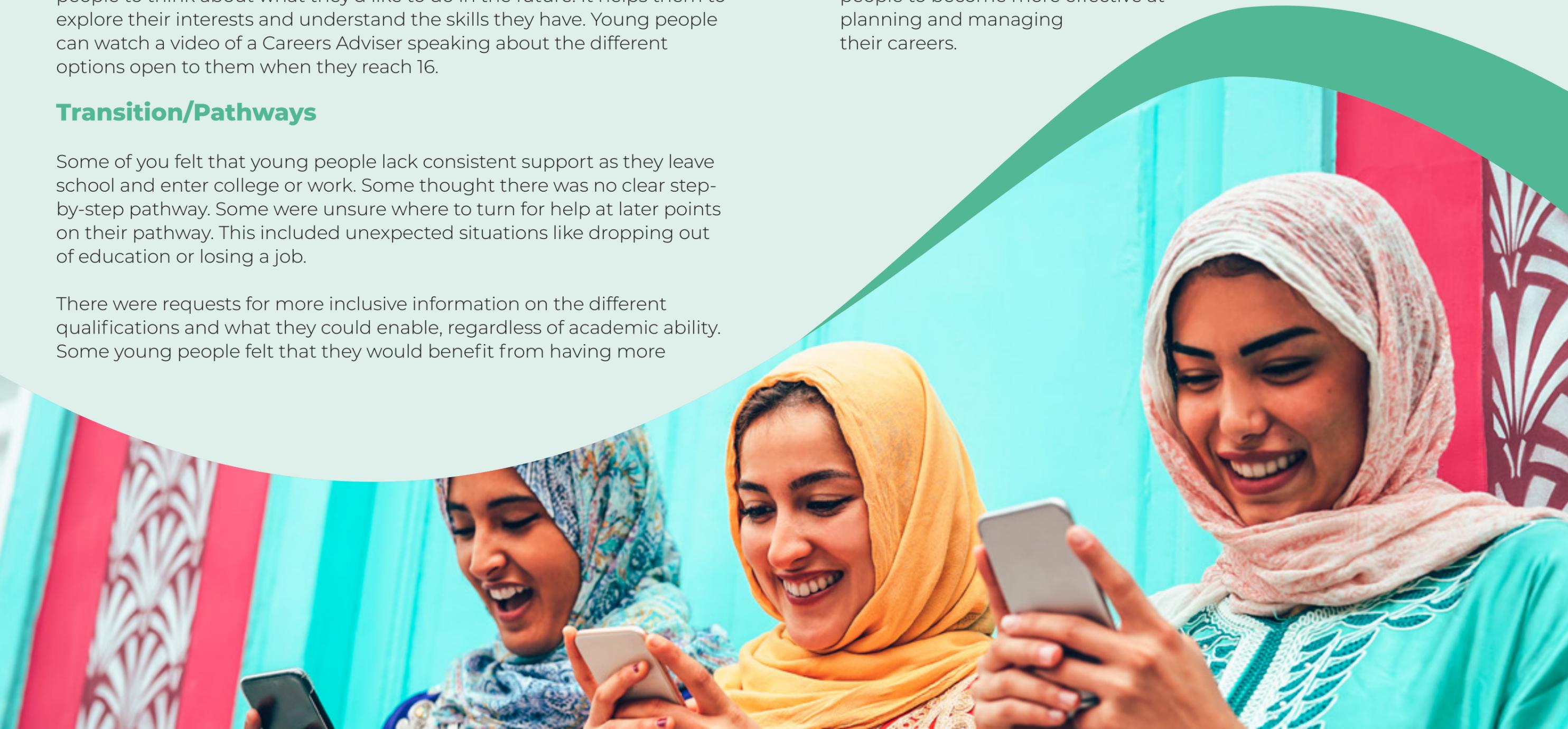
Some of you felt that young people lack consistent support as they leave school and enter college or work. Some thought there was no clear step-by-step pathway. Some were unsure where to turn for help at later points on their pathway. This included unexpected situations like dropping out of education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

**Response:** Careers Wales work in schools and colleges to support young people to become more effective at planning and managing their careers.





They support learners in years 7 to 9 to understand how their choices can impact their future career ideas. They use tools such as online quizzes and interactive sessions.

In years 10 and 11, learners are encouraged to learn more about their career options and how to take their next steps. They undertake activities such as careers interviews and take part in group sessions. Group sessions focus on learning about things such as the availability of jobs in a particular area. They also learn about all the options that are available after school (post-16 options).

Sixth form students receive support to understand their options after sixth form (post-18 options).

Careers Wales also work to support young people with additional learning needs (ALN) by carrying out assessments for those who are leaving school, as part of the transition process. In 2022/23 4,068 interviews were delivered to 2,690 young people with Additional Learning Needs. 2,820 Transition Reviews and 466 Learning & Skills Plan Reviews were also conducted.

Careers Wales also deliver impactful events and marketing and communications activities throughout the year. This includes National Careers Week and Year 8/9 options campaign. They also deliver a campaign called 'Moving on Moving Up' that helps young people in sixth form or college to decide on their next steps.

**Response:** 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 their education or training journey.

**Response:** In 2022/23 academic year, the Futures Programme was piloted in FE colleges. This programme enables learners to experience a range of vocational areas. It increases exposure to different progression pathways. For this (2023/24) academic year, this programme has been mainstreamed. It helps Level 1 learners who are at risk of becoming NEET. It gives them the opportunity to build resilience, employability skills and wellbeing strategies. It is an intensive tutorial and support programme.

**Response:** The Welsh Government has made a commitment to increase parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications. This means giving equal value to both education and vocational routes.

Qualifications Wales will be introducing new National 14-16 Qualifications, to be in place by September 2027. This will include qualifications from entry level to level 2, across a range of subjects. Schools will be able to offer learners a choice of the following types of qualifications:

- [Made-for-Wales GCSEs](#)
- VCSEs (Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education)
- Foundation qualifications
- a Skills Suite - with Skills for Work, Skills for Life and Personal Project qualifications

These new qualifications will ensure learners are better prepared for the different pathways after age 16, whether they choose vocational or general education, employment or training.



**Response:** [Regional Skills Partnerships \(RSPs\)](#) are organisations that drive investment in skills. They develop responses based on local and regional needs. RSPs were awarded extra funding to produce careers guides for young people. The guides detail pathways to gain a job in their chosen sector, such as engineering or digital. Some of these Pathways documents also link to priority jobs in particular regions. Schools, colleges, and learners can use them to guide young people along their chosen career pathway.

**Response:** Jobs Growth Wales+ has a part of the programme which used to be called Summer Sorted and is now called 'Get Ready'. Get Ready is a stepping stone to help young people who aren't ready to start a formal programme of learning that helps them get to where they need to be. It offers a combination of one-to-one and team activity-based learning. Get Ready includes team building, mental health and wellbeing, outdoor pursuits and problem solving activities. It also offers practical advice and guidance on topics such as money management and benefits. The new activity aims to help young people build confidence and learn the life skills they need to get ready for their next step. Get Ready replaces Summer Sorted, so although it will give young people the chance to have a focus over the summer months, we have changed it to allow them to start this part of the programme at any time through the year.

**Response:** The Welsh Government funded Working Wales service continues to enhance [its Support Finder Tool](#). The Support Finder involves completing a short questionnaire to help young people find out what support is available to help them improve their skills and job opportunities

**Response:** The Open University and Higher Education Institutions across Wales have continued to develop and expand the range of resources on the University Ready Hub. The resources are intended to support learners progressing to university study. Resources are kept relevant and current to benefit existing and new cohorts of learners.

Universities have worked together to publish a series of bilingual podcasts. The podcasts showcase current students discussing a range of topics. The topics include concerns around student life and money. They also discuss barriers around applying to university and transition to Higher Education. They have also developed a parent/carer guide. The guide gives advice on how to support young people through the university application process.

**Response:** [Big Ideas Wales](#) provides support at primary schools through the Enterprise Troopers, at secondary schools through Role Model workshops and through to our colleges and universities where staff are supported to include it in their teaching

**Response:** The Welsh Government has started work on a new pathways resource. This resource is to help young people, and those who support them, understand the education, employment and training progression pathways available to them to reach their full potential. It will also help them understand what support is available to enable them to undertake their chosen pathway. The YPG Youth Advisory Board is currently reviewing this new resource. The plan is that it will be available on the YPG-Working Wales website this Spring (2024)

## 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.

**Response:** 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, and via TV and radio campaigns. Our online YPG marketing campaigns have seen in excess of 320,000 clicks, likes and shares as at December 2023.





**Response:** Careers Wales have 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.

**Response:** We have established a network of partners to support and promote the YPG, this includes colleagues in local authorities who lead on education, employment and youth services, third sector organisations, the Department for Work and Pensions and a Stakeholder Advisory Group comprising a wider network of contacts. A new YPG communications toolkit has been developed and shared with them. We are also in the process of finalising a teacher's resource pack and new case study videos.

We have established a network of partners to support and promote the YPG. These partners include colleagues in local authorities who lead on education, employment and youth services, third sector organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions. We have also established a Stakeholder Advisory Group. The group consists of people from different organisations that work with young people. A new YPG communications plan has been developed and shared with them.

We are also in the process of finalising a teacher's resource pack and new case study videos. Response: In April 2023, with the support of Children in Wales, we established a YPG Young Person's Advisory Board. The purpose of the Board is to advise on, and help design, new policies. It will help to identify and address any existing

or future potential issues. The Board now has up to 16 members. So far, the Board has held sessions with Transport for Wales, Careers Wales, the Money Advice and Pensions service, Jobs Growth Wales+ participants and the South West Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership, amongst others.

### 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.

**Response:** All our employability programmes enable participants to access direct financial support for barriers such as travel and subsistence costs. This support is available while they undertake training, attend work experience, or go to interviews. Similarly childcare costs can be funded whilst individuals are undertaking training and essential start-up costs for those entering self-employment are also funded. Response: Learners continue to benefit from changes to support for those on the Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+) programme. Additional support includes an increased training allowance (doubled to £60 in April 2023), a free meal allowance and temporary travel assistance allowing 100% of travel costs to be claimed. In addition, the eligible

age range has been extended to 19 years old enabling more young people to benefit directly from the offer.

**Response:** Communities for Work+ offers holistic support to individuals. This includes, referrals to housing and debt advice, and to local foodbanks. The programme can provide funding to programme participants for essential expenditure. The expenditure can include travel costs when attending training or work experience. It can also help during the first few weeks of employment. Funding can also be provided for childcare, work clothing and other essential costs. This helps to support the individual into employment or training. This funding can be paid in advance but individuals need to provide receipts for expenditure incurred.

**Response:** Learners continue to benefit from the increased Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The allowance was increased in April 2023 from £30 per week to £40 per week for eligible learners in FE colleges and school sixth forms. Response: 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.

**Response:** The Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) can help eligible learners in Further Education colleges. The fund is for those facing financial difficulties. The Welsh Government has increased the FCF by 6.5% the 2023/24 academic year. The FCF is targeted towards learners who are experiencing financial hardship. It provides help for eligible learners who might otherwise be unable to attend college.

It can be used for course-related costs such as childcare, transport, free meals, equipment and learning materials.

**Response:** £845,000 has been allocated to the further education (FE) sector in the 2023-24 financial year to continue the provision of free period products in FE. The funding is used to support all learners and people in the college community who require access to period products. This ensures that no learner misses out on college due to an inability to afford period products.

**Response:** The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) have developed a series of helpful guides. The guides are aimed at professionals working with vulnerable children and young people. They will ensure the professionals understand the financial support that is available. They can embed opportunities for learning about money into the support they provide to children and young people. The aim is to improve their financial wellbeing through good quality financial education

The Welsh Government will continue to promote these guides to our training and education providers. This way, they can offer support and advice to the young people that they work with.

## What Next?

### What will happen next:

As noted earlier, with the completion of the National Conversation exercises, in April 2023, with the support of Children in Wales, we established a YPG – Young Person’s Advisory Board to advise on and help design emerging policies and address and foresee issues. The Board now has up to 16 members, however, we continue to welcome new members.

To get involved, complete our [registration form](#).

For further updates on the YPG and the progress of our work please refer to our [website](#).



