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# Young Person's Guarantee Highlight Report:

## March 2025–March 2026



# Young Person's Guarantee

The Young Person's Guarantee is a Programme for Government commitment.

Over **64,000** young people supported since November 2021.



More than **10,000** young people progressed into employment.



More than **900** started their own business.



**18,535** engaged through **Jobs Growth Wales Plus.**



**14,125** engaged through **Communities for Work Plus.**



**795** engaged through **ReAct Plus.**



**30,395** Apprenticeship starts.



Wales hosted the WorldSkills UK finals for the first time in November 2025.

Wales was represented by a total of

**122** competitors, winning an impressive **78** medals.



**2** Medallions of Excellence won by Teams Wales at EuroSkills in September 2025.

An increase of almost **9%** in our inclusive skills competitions in the last year.



**86.3%**

of 16 to 24-year-olds in Wales are in Education, Employment or Training (as of 2024),\* contributing to National Milestone of at least **90%** of 16 to 24-year-olds in Education, Employment or Training in 2050.\*

According to provisional estimates: **Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2023 and 2024 (provisional) | GOV.WALES**

## Introduction

The **Young Person's Guarantee** (the Guarantee) was launched in November 2021 to ensure 16 to 24 year olds in Wales can easily access the support they need to continue in education, pursue training, start an apprenticeship, enter employment or launch their own business.

The Guarantee brings together a range of programmes, such as Jobs Growth Wales Plus, ReAct Plus and Communities for Work Plus, and can be accessed through Working Wales.

Since then, we've supported over **64,000** young people to access employability and skills programmes. More than **10,000** of those young people have progressed into employment and over **900** have started their own business.

This is the fourth and final annual report, setting out progress made during the last year.



## Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) aims to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (referred to as 'NEET') or at risk of becoming NEET. The YEPF supports 11 to 18 year olds and complements the Guarantee, which applies to all aged 16 to 24.

The YEPF has processes in place to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET or who are NEET to ensure they receive tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression. This process is led by local authorities and their delivery partners. Partner organisations include Careers Wales, schools, post-16 education and training providers and third sector organisations. Young people with significant barriers to engagement are allocated lead workers to help them transition to post-16 education, training or employment.

Building on wider **YEPF guidance** issued during this Senedd term, in 2025 we published further case studies on **Hwb** that showcase processes local authorities have established under the YEPF. This allows our stakeholders to see what processes other organisations have in place that can be replicated or adapted, enabling organisations to learn from each other and strengthen support networks for young people.

We have continued to take forward the recommendations of **Estyn's review of the lead worker role**, with particular focus on professional learning. In 2025, we delivered two regional events aimed at lead workers, with a third delivered in February 2026. These events provided valuable opportunities for networking, enabling lead workers to share approaches and exchange best practice. Feedback has been highly positive, particularly regarding the quality of session content and the insights gained into different local authority structures and strategies.

Estyn's review recognised that organisations across Wales continue to come across a number of challenges around data sharing, and more clarity was needed to help strengthen the delivery of the YEPF. Although information on data sharing is already included in YEPF guidance, we are exploring how we can bring all information on data sharing together in one place supported by relevant YEPF case studies from Hwb to highlight good practice on data sharing.



# Evaluation of the Young Person's Guarantee and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

In October 2025, we published an **evaluation of the Guarantee**. There is also a **summary for young people**.

The evaluation looked at how the Guarantee was set up and how it has supported young people. It also looked at how it works alongside the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**. As part of the research, interviews and workshops were held with our stakeholders and with young people from across Wales.

Overall, the findings were positive with **40–60% of participants in our programmes achieving positive outcomes** (job or further education). The evaluation found that both the Framework and the Guarantee are enhancing young people's capabilities, motivation and access to opportunities, helping them make transitions. However there was recognition that more work could be done to support young people aged 19 to 24 and young people who are disengaged and/or facing barriers such as ill-health and disabilities.

It is an in-depth piece of work, and we will learn from the experiences of those involved in developing and delivering the Guarantee.

## The latest data

All actions and delivery under the Guarantee and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework contribute towards the Welsh Government's National Milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment or training by 2050.

The latest provisional estimates show that **86.3% of 16 to 24 year olds were in education, employment or training in 2024**.

We are not complacent about these figures and are keen to learn more about the barriers that affect disengagement and economic inactivity for our young people. Since April 2025, we have been working with the UK Government on an **Economic Inactivity Trailblazer** pilot project to explore local ways of reducing inactivity.



## Case study 1: An inspiration to Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners through the Trailblazer project

A young person was referred to the Trailblazer by a department in Neath Port Talbot Council. The 20 year old had learning difficulties and attended a SEN school in Neath Port Talbot before leaving to attend college. Since leaving education, the young person had struggled to find work. They expressed an interest in working in a school, specifically the SEN school that he attended. The Trailblazer team brokered a flexible paid work

opportunity in September at the school. The team will continue to work with the young person over the Summer to identify any learning required and support needed. They will also continue this support whilst he is working at the school.

The young person said that he wants to show learners in a SEN school that they can achieve anything they want to and that they don't have to put a limit on their potential.

## Case study 2: Blaenau Gwent Youth Service gaming project through the Trailblazer project

The Blaenau Gwent Youth Service Gaming Project, delivered in partnership with GoConnect and the Social Gaming Network, is funded through the Welsh Government's Trailblazer initiative. This innovative programme offers both online and in-person gaming sessions for young people aged 16–25 who are currently economically inactive. While the project is inclusive and open to all, the majority of participants to date have been young men. The initiative is specifically designed to reach individuals who face social isolation and limited opportunities for interaction, often compounded by additional barriers such as neurodiversity, subcultures, and diagnosed mental health conditions including anxiety and depression.

The project is showing promising outcomes, with participants reporting reduced anxiety, increased confidence and self-esteem, and improved social skills. By using gaming as a tool for engagement, the programme creates a safe and supportive environment where young people can build meaningful connections and develop essential soft skills.

Looking ahead, the project aims to expand its impact by offering pathways into volunteering, further education, and employment – both within the gaming industry and across broader sectors. It also supports young people in exploring their aspirations and identifying potential routes for personal and professional growth.

Quotes from gaming group attendees:

*"I love coming to the gaming sessions to meet new people and have fun. If I didn't come to the sessions I would be stuck in the house and bored. Since working with the Youth Service sessions, I am now working with Barnardos and am volunteering in a local Pantry."*

*"I was referred to the session by the job centre. I wasn't doing much or talking to anyone. The sessions have given me opportunities to socialise, meet new people in person and not online. The sessions have given me drive to work towards my future goals."*



## Case study 3: A fresh start and a bright future through the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer project

After making a spontaneous decision to move from Reading to Wales, a young person found herself seeking a new beginning. The young person shared that she had faced significant challenges, including multiple mental health diagnoses, Bipolar, EUPD, and ADHD and a history of trauma. Despite these obstacles, her passion for helping others and creating positive change remained strong.

From the outset, the young person expressed a desire to support people in a holistic way. However, moving to a new area without a support network left her feeling isolated and struggling with confidence and self-worth. Her goal was clear: reconnect with services, build structure, and regain a sense of purpose.

The Economic Inactivity Trailblazer has supported the young person by enrolling them on a resilience course. The impact was immediate as she left the course feeling empowered, having learned valuable tools for her own wellbeing and shared her experiences to help others.

Recognising the young person's interests, Trailblazer introduced her to the 'Down To Earth' project, which combines wellbeing in nature with opportunities to support others. The young person is due to attend a collaborative building event and progress to a Level 2 Award in Supporting Wellbeing in Nature – a key step toward her goal of working in a support setting. She has now set her sights on becoming a Support Mentor, helping people who are struggling with mental health challenges and using her lived experience to make a real difference.

Beyond training, the young person has embraced community life through social events run by the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer, such as mince pie making, wreath crafting and movie nights. These activities have helped her feel connected, structured and optimistic about the future.

The young person's story is a testament to resilience, community and the power of tailored support.

The Young Person's Guarantee has a range of programmes to support young people...

## Key statistics and progress from our programmes

### Jobs Growth Wales Plus

Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+) is our flagship programme launched under the Young Person's Guarantee. It provides a tailored package of support for young people aged 16 to 19 with training and development activities through employment, formal training or voluntary work, to aid their successful transition into the labour market.

**18,535** young people have been engaged through JGW+ since the programme launched in April 2022. **In 2024 to 2025, 66.8% of leavers had a positive outcome**, up from 60.3% in 2023-2024. There was a large increase in the employment destination with 1,150 leavers in 2024-2025 compared to 775 leavers in 2023-2024.

For disabled learners and (or) those with a learning difficulty, the positive outcome rate has **increased between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 from 57.9% to 62.3%**.

The proportion of programmes started by learners who self-identified as having a disability and/or learning difficulty increased in 2024-2025 to 25.6% from 23.9% in 2023-2024.

In 2024-25 2.2% of programme starts were from Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 1.2% were from an Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British ethnic background, and 1.1% were from Black, African, Caribbean, Black British and Black Welsh ethnic background. The proportion of starts by learners from Other ethnic backgrounds was 2.2%.

An interim evaluation of JGW+ **Success of Youth Employment Programme Offers More Than a Job**, found that **89% of young people said that the support given had met or exceeded their expectations and had supported their career development**. They also said that their individual needs had been considered resulting in them participating in tailored training and development activities. **97% of young people stated that the JGW+ programme had improved their work prospects**. The final report can be accessed here: **Formative evaluation of Jobs Growth Wales+ final report**.

The full statistical release for 2024-25 can be accessed here: **Jobs Growth Wales+ statistics: April 2024 to March 2025 [HTML] | GOV.WALES**.

More information on **Jobs Growth Wales+** can be found on our webpages.



## Case study 4: Finding direction with support from JGW+

A young person left school at age 19 and wasn't sure what to do. He studied his A-Levels at Coleg Llandudno and applied to university before eventually deciding not to go. He explains how JGW+ has enabled him to meet employers and apply for jobs:

*"I was lost before I found JGW+. When I attended a universal credit meeting, they told me about the JGW+ programme. I decided to apply for the Life Skills course and started in January. I am due to complete the course in September and I finally feel like I am on the right path to gaining a career for myself. I've already applied for jobs. As part of the course I attended a jobs fayre. There I met the company Excel, a leading recruitment agency for teaching jobs. They've helped me apply for an assistant teaching role. The job fayre was so useful and sessions and workshops were really beneficial.*

*I enjoy writing poems and would love to eventually become an English teacher. I'm really enjoying learning through the JGW+ programme. It's given me a variety of opportunities and is helping me explore career choices.*

*Since starting the course, I've met lots of new friends of a similar age and plan to keep in touch with them afterwards. The JGW+ team is really supportive and friendly. They've given me so much confidence and have made me feel part of the community.*

*I've learnt lots of new skills. The life skills sessions that are taught on the course have given me new skills and knowledge that I can use in the future. These included money management, mortgages and even driving theory tests. I have learnt lots of skills that I wouldn't have learnt in school or college. JGW+ brought in guests that gave us tasters sessions. We even took part in graffiti workshops which I loved as I enjoy art and find it inspirational."*



## Case study 5: Finding confidence with support from JGW+

When a young person first joined the employability programme, they were a quiet and nervous, unsure of their abilities and hesitant to speak up in group settings. Simple tasks like introducing themselves or sharing ideas felt daunting. However, with the patient support of mentors and encouragement from peers, they gradually began to open up. Through confidence-building workshops, mock interviews, and teamwork activities, they started to believe in their own potential.

A turning point came when the young person began a work placement that combined warehouse operations and retail

experience. At first, the busy environment was a bit overwhelming, but with guidance and practice, they learned to manage stock efficiently, communicate with customers, and work as part of a team. Their supervisors noticed their growing confidence and dedication.

By the end of the placement, the young person had transformed from a shy participant into a reliable, proactive team member. Their hard work paid off when they were offered employment. They now speak proudly about how far they've come – from wanting to be invisible to thriving in a fast-paced workplace

## Communities for Work Plus

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is our outreach and mentoring services based in communities across Wales, delivered by local authorities. It has focussed its support on people who are most at risk of disadvantage or under-represented in the labour market, providing specialist employment advisory support and mentoring for NEET individuals

and those facing complex barriers to employment, aged 16 years and above.

Since April 2022 to January 2026, **14,125** young people have engaged with CfW+ and **6,243** have entered employment with support from CFW+.

More information on **Communities for Work Plus** can be found on our webpages.

## Case study 6: Communities for Work Plus person-centred support

A young person facing homelessness, mental health challenges and limited resources attended a recruitment day with Torfaen Leisure Trust for support with gaining employment. They were referred to Communities for Work Plus for tailored support with employment and training. Initially, they were uncertain about their career direction and explored lifeguarding, security, retail and social care roles, gaining qualifications and volunteering experience along the way.

Despite setbacks, including a withdrawn job offer, they demonstrated resilience and secured full-time employment with the British Heart Foundation taking part in a volunteering opportunity arranged through the Communities for Work Plus mentors. With ongoing mentoring, the young person also achieved permanent accommodation and independence.



## ReAct Plus

ReAct Plus (ReAct+) provides grant support for vocational training, travel and other support costs for those seeking to re-enter the labour market, for those aged 20 years and above. The grant is targeted at those under formal notice of redundancy, those who have been made redundant in the last six months, ex-offenders and offenders serving community sentences.

The programme has supported **795** young people since its launch in June 2022.

More [information on ReAct+ can be found on our webpages](#).

## Self-employment support

Big Ideas Wales supports young people aged 25 and under who are facing barriers to starting a business. Since April 2021 to January 2026, **324,544** young people under 25 years of age have been involved in enterprise workshops and webinars led by **Big Ideas Wales Role Models** to raise awareness and understanding of self-employment. **4,046** young people have progressed their ideas for business and received business advice and as a result **939** clients have started their business through Big Ideas Wales.

The **Young Person's Start Up Grant** was launched in July 2022 to provide additional financial support to unemployed young people. From July 2022 to January 2026 **796** grants were approved to support young people to start a business.

More [information on Big Ideas Wales and self-employment support can be found on our webpages](#).

## Case studies 7: Big Ideas Wales '12 days of entrepreneurship'

In December, we ran 12 days of entrepreneurship on Big Ideas Wales channels featuring the following grant recipients from the Guarantee:

1. Caitlyn Jones: **Three Little Birdies personalised gifts**
2. Khalid Ameen Aslan: **KB Retro second-hand clothing store**
3. Claire Hennessy: **Inky Pinky Tattoo Studio**
4. Hannah Worth: **Bowla baked bread bowls**
5. Ben Jenkins: **Bull-Ectrics electrical services**
6. Sally Pierse: **The Chai Bike serving masala chai**
7. Sophie Morgan: **Peaceful Polish nail business**
8. Ellen Firth: **Firth Flock Flowers floristry**
9. Isabella Jackson: **The Welsh Squirrel Bakery**
10. Evan Richards and Lewis Morgan: **Gower Wales water sport rental**

## Case studies 8: Young Person's Start Up Grant

Two recent success stories showing the impact of the Young Person's Start Up Grant:

11. Abigail Rooke: **Rooke's Pet Portraits**
12. Jack Cain: **Cain's Auto Detailing**

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job alongside additional study, allowing an apprentice to gain work experience, learn new skills and get a nationally recognised qualification while earning a wage. Since the

launch of the Guarantee in November 2021, there have been over **30,395** apprenticeship starts (provisional data). **A link to the figures is available on the Medr website.**

More **information on apprenticeships can be found on our webpages.**

## Case studies 9: Apprenticeships

13. Megan's story: [www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/megans-story](http://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/megans-story)
14. Gabi's story: [www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/gabis-story](http://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/gabis-story)
15. John's story: [www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/johns-story](http://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/johns-story)

Video case studies for apprenticeships can be found via **this YouTube link**. **Out of**



## Work Peer Mentoring Service

Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service is focused on providing long term support to people recovering from mental health and (or) substance misuse issues for people aged 16 and over who are NEET. It helps the most vulnerable, and those furthest away from the labour market, to rebuild their lives and to get back into training, education and employment.

Between October 2022 and December 2025, the service has supported **3,335** young people aged 16 to 24. Of these:

- **1,090** have achieved a work relevant certificate or qualification
- **385** entered education
- **946** engaged in job search
- **331** entered employment
- **620** increased employability by completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity.

More [information on the Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service can be found on our webpages](#).

## Working Wales

Working Wales offers free and impartial careers advice and guidance for young people aged 16 or above. The service helps young people connect with the programmes mentioned above like Jobs Growth Wales Plus or ReAct Plus.

Between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2025, Working Wales supported **44,842** young people aged 16 to 24. The support provided included:

- **134,663** individual interactions, totalling over 72,000 hours of direct support
- **67,872** onward referrals to further support and opportunities.

There are a range of [case studies hosted on the Working Wales website](#).

## Case study 10: Working Wales and Careers Wales Apprenticeship and Opportunities Event

Last year, Working Wales and Careers Wales teams organised the Apprenticeship and Opportunities Event, which took place in their Newport Careers Centre. A variety of employers and providers attended, including Specsavers, ONS, Newport Norse, Screen Alliance Wales, Transport for Wales and Educ8. **67** members of the public attended in total, with a majority being young people seeking opportunities. The event was a success with positive feedback from both the employers and the public.

Following the event, a parent contacted Working Wales and Careers Wales to share the great news that her son had secured an apprenticeship with ONS. She expressed gratitude in "helping both

her children into something meaningful" and said, "it couldn't have happened without the help from Working Wales".

Another parent shared a similar experience:

*"I took my son to the apprenticeship event in Newport. I stayed in reception while he walked around and spoke to the employers. He was encouraged to apply for vacancies at Specsavers and was called in for an interview the following week. During the hour-long interview, he secured the job/apprenticeship. He started on 5 May and is loving the experience".*

Working Wales and Careers Wales are looking to replicate similar events in the New Year, in hopes to support as many as we can in finding their career.

## Feed Your Positivity

The Young Person's Guarantee is communicated through the 'Feed Your Positivity' marketing campaign that targets young people and parents to promote awareness and uptake of the Guarantee, and to deter young people from not being in employment, education or training after completing their compulsory education.

Throughout the exam results period, we showcased **case studies** to spotlight the variety of opportunities available. Promotion of the Guarantee has continued in October and will run until March 2026.

## Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales

Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales supports young people to develop their aspirations through vocational competitions that take place regionally, nationally and internationally.

In November 2025, Wales hosted the **WorldSkills UK Finals** for the first time. In preparation, a **Torch Relay** took the WorldSkills Wales torch on a journey through colleges and hometowns, honouring competitors, alumni and the communities that support them.



Competitions took place across five venues in South Wales, covering over 40 skill areas from engineering and digital to hospitality, construction and the creative industries. The official results were announced during a medal ceremony at ICC Wales. Team Wales delivered an outstanding performance, securing a total of 61 medals and dominating the league table in the top 10 educational institutions across the UK. Of these, Team Wales achieved 13 Gold, 15 Silver, 18 Bronze and 15 Highly Commended medals. The team also excelled in Foundation Skills competitions, securing an additional 15 medals, which is a testament to Wales' inclusive approach to skills development. This means a total of 76 competitors went home with a medal over 31 skill areas.

Inclusive skills competitions are designed to give young people with disabilities or additional learning needs the opportunity to benchmark their skills, gain confidence and progress from local to national and international stages. In 2025/26, participation in the Inclusive skills competitions continued to grow, with registrations increasing from 323 in **2024/25 to 352** – an uplift of almost 9%. Additionally, we have increased the number of competitions which have the Welsh language element from 7 to 16, showing our commitment to embedding the Welsh Language into a range of skill areas.

More **information on Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales can be found on our webpages.**

## Case study 11: Skills Competition Wales

Highlights, insights from past and present competitors, and an interview with Project Director Paul Evans on the importance of

inspiring skills excellence in Wales in skills development: **Skills Competition Wales 2025 | Cystadleuaeth Sgiliau Cymru 2025.**

## Case studies 12: WorldSkills UK Finals

Robert Jones, a gold medallist in Aircraft Maintenance, said:

*"After taking Gold at Skills Competition Wales and Silver at Nationals, I was determined to go for Gold this time. The experience has been invaluable – it's helped me evaluate my skills, improve through feedback, and push myself to the next level. Representing Wales makes me so proud, and my goal now is to keep developing and hopefully travel with work to showcase my skills around the world."*

Anisa Abdin, highly commended in the Beauty Therapy competition, said:

*"Competing at the WorldSkills UK finals is something I never imagined. A year ago, I wouldn't have believed I'd be here. It has pushed me to aim higher and maintain high standards, and it's helped me grow so much in confidence. Having this achievement on my CV will make a huge difference for my future. My dream now is to progress to Level 4 and one day open my own salon – this experience has shown me that anything is possible."*

