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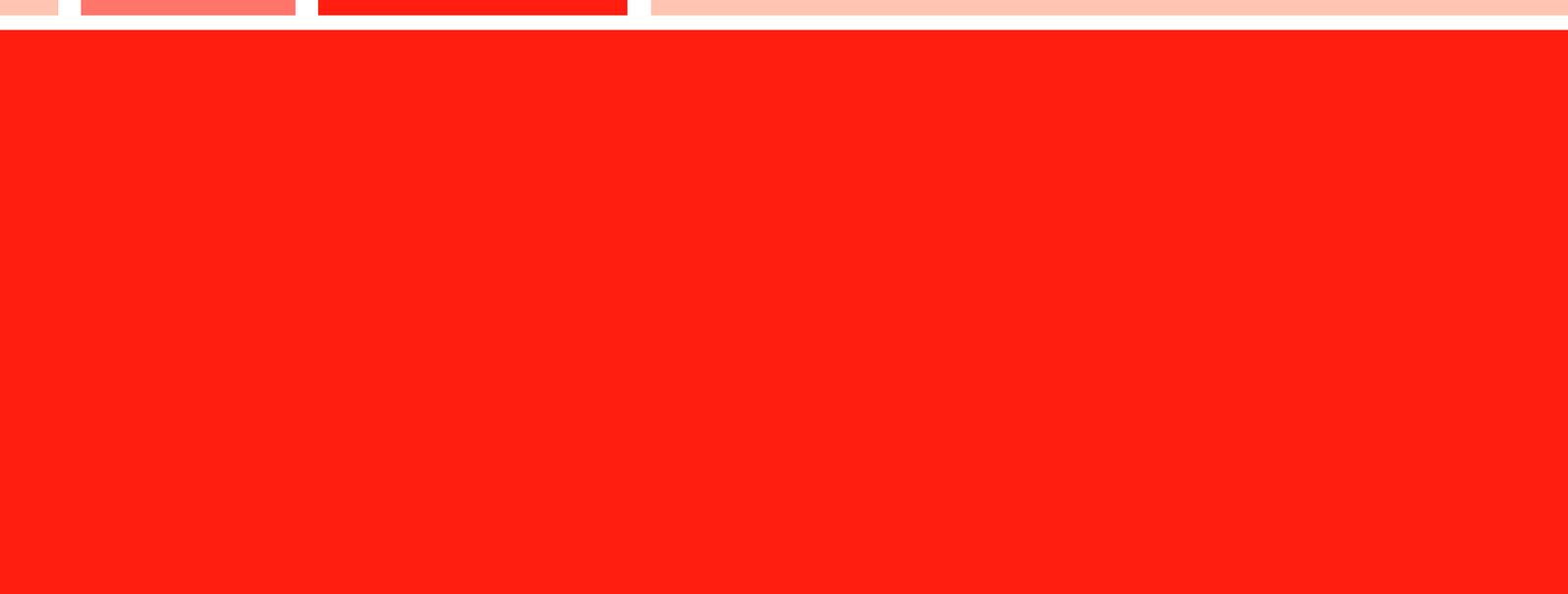
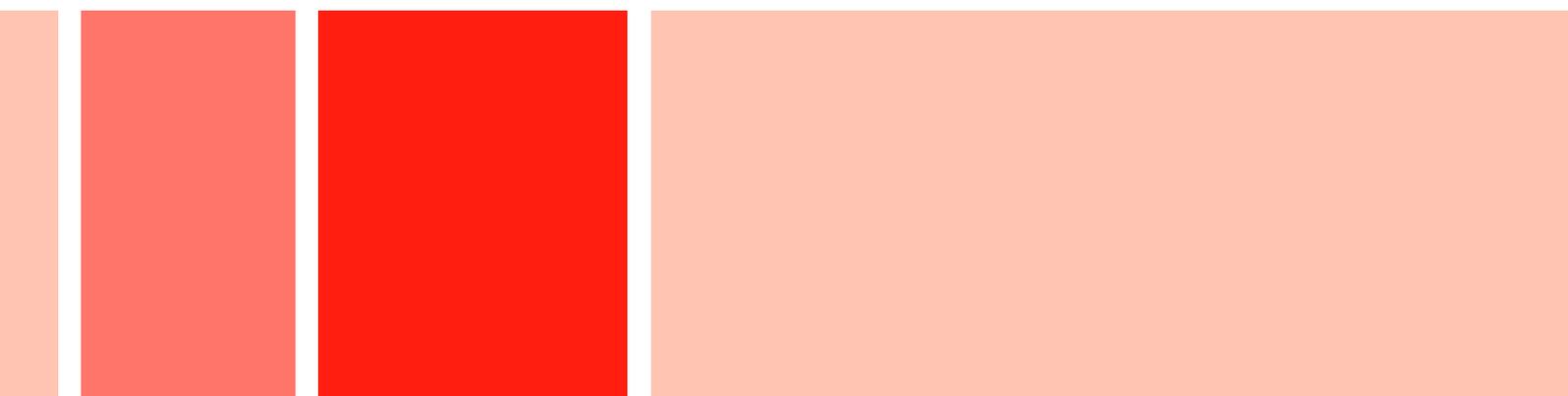
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National Evaluation of Genesis Wales 2

Good practice case studies



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Introduction

The Genesis Wales 2 project

1. The Genesis Wales 2 (GW2) project aimed to increase labour market participation across Wales through supporting individuals to move closer towards the labour market or into work. The project was funded through the European Social Fund's West Wales and the Valleys regional Convergence programme and the East Wales Regional Competitiveness and Employment programme.
2. The GW2 project provided a package of 'client centred' support, including personal development and soft skills, to engage with individuals who may otherwise be excluded from more mainstream training or employment opportunities.

The National Evaluation

3. In 2010 the Welsh Government commissioned a consortium led by SQW to undertake the longitudinal National Evaluation of the GW2 project. One of the primary objectives of the national evaluation was to investigate and understand *what works, for whom, in what circumstances* and *why*. In addition, it was important – particularly during the GW2 delivery period – that the achievements and best practice of local GW2 delivery were disseminated amongst GW2 delivery staff and more widely to other interested parties. As a formative evaluation this feedback on implementation provided opportunities to adjust activities and improve the quality of the GW2 project.
4. As part of the national evaluation research, all local GW2 teams were requested to provide examples of good practice in their area. Following the collation of the examples provided, a sample of these was selected and then developed into the case studies contained in this report. The sampling sought to ensure that the case studies represented a range of geographic locations throughout Wales and illustrated the diverse nature of GW2 outcomes and achievements for a range of types of participants.
5. The case study research detailed in this report forms an important piece of evidence for the national evaluation and provided valuable real-time learning regarding best practice.

Summary of case study findings

6. The sixteen case studies illustrate the varied nature of GW2 project delivery and successes. Participants were supported using an array of approaches to achieve 'hard outcomes', such as entering full-time employment, further learning and/or gaining qualifications, and a range of 'softer' outcomes, for example voluntary placements, job interviews, part-time employment and non-accredited training. Despite this diversity, a number of key themes and learning points were apparent from the case study examples.

1: Local GW2 case studies

Please note that in all case studies participant names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Case study 1: Megan, Blaenau Gwent

Background

- 1.1 Megan was a single parent with a young baby when she first accessed Blaenau Gwent's GW2 support. Megan had a history of involvement with social services. Prior to the GW2 support Megan had not worked for two years and was claiming Income Support for herself and Child Benefit/Tax Credits for her baby.
- 1.2 After leaving school at 16 Megan had experience of several low skilled jobs; including factory work, counter service and care work. Megan faced several barriers in returning to employment. Not only was her self-confidence very low, having been out of the labour market for so long, but the costs and accessibility of childcare and attending training courses were also too great for Megan.

GW2 Support

- 1.3 Megan found out about the GW2 support via her Common Assessment Framework (CAF) keyworker. As the CAF keyworkers support many vulnerable families in the Blaenau Gwent area the GW2 team established strong links with them to promote the GW2 service to appropriate individuals. After a home visit by a Genesis Adult Advisor, an action plan was completed with Megan that aimed to initially improve her self-confidence. To support this, Megan was enrolled on the Steps programme, which supported unemployed adults to access training and work experience opportunities in preparation for employment or further learning. After enjoying and completing Steps, Megan then undertook a variety of other sessions and courses. These included basic English and Maths classes, a nail and beauty taster course, a healthy eating/cookery course and a CV writing workshop. The mobile crèche provision was particularly important in providing childcare whilst Megan attended these courses and it was noted that her child's development flourished in this setting.
- 1.4 The emotional support and encouragement provided by GW2 boosted Megan's self-confidence and improved her resilience. She became much more assertive in taking responsibility for her own travel arrangements and making course choices/enrolments. GW2 also provided funding for transportation and college fees, which was fundamental in giving Megan the necessary resources needed to access the training opportunities.

Outcomes

- 1.5 Shortly after gaining her Maths qualification Megan successfully secured employment as a home carer. This was eighteen months after her first engagement with GW2. At Megan's final GW2 visit she noted that she was continuing to enjoy her job, which she had sustained for

five months, and was happy to have an improved income and a life outside of her home. Her child had also started Nursery and was doing well too. **The advice, encouragement and resources provided by GW2 had assisted Megan to transform her life and career prospects.**

Case study 2: Sarah, Pembrokeshire

Background

- 1.6 Sarah was in her early 20s and a single parent, claiming income support, child benefit and child tax credits. She lived with her toddler in rural Pembrokeshire. Although unemployed for several years since the birth of her child, Sarah's previous job roles included secretary, cafeteria assistant, supermarket cashier and bar assistant. Sarah's only qualifications were the GCSEs she achieved before leaving formal education at 16.
- 1.7 Sarah's goals were to change her life for the better, to provide for her child and to be a good role model. Sarah had decided that she would like to pursue a career in the childcare sector but felt that she needed to complete further training to assist her in securing future job opportunities. Sarah faced multiple barriers in reaching her ambitions: namely, access to affordable childcare, low self-confidence, few qualifications, insufficient money and poor access to transport.

GW2 Support

- 1.8 Sarah was provided with a GW2 leaflet by her local college and self-referred herself to see whether GW2 could help her in any way. An initial meeting with the GW2 team was arranged where Sarah explained her family circumstances, her learning needs and her interest in childcare. A plan was then put together to suit Sarah and she was advised to complete a Level 2 work-based qualification. Sarah was supported with transport, training and equipment costs allowing her to commence a course at the local college. Following this, the GW2 team advised and supported Sarah to source a volunteering placement to gain work experience within a school setting. This included helping Sarah with the necessary completion of her Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

Outcomes

- 1.9 Sarah made excellent progress with her training and received positive feedback from the head teacher at her volunteering placement. The school was so pleased with Sarah's contribution that she was asked to provide relief cover for existing learning support advisors when necessary. This helped Sarah to continue to develop her knowledge, experience and confidence in her own ability. When a learning support advisor vacancy at the school became available, Sarah was encouraged to apply and was successful. Since becoming employed full-time she has completed a Level 2 diploma in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools and has been described by the head teacher as '*an asset to the school*'.
- 1.10 Sarah has completed further in-house training at the school and is now undertaking additional training specifically to support children with language difficulties. Sarah is really pleased with her achievements and her life has changed for the better. She hoped to continue with her

childcare training and to develop her knowledge even further. Sarah has also now passed her driving test so transport is no longer such a barrier for her. **Sarah explained that her training course and volunteering experience enabled her to believe in herself again and to gain the confidence to achieve her goals of finding employment and being a good role model for her daughter.** Sarah was very supportive of the GW2 project and cannot thank her Advisor and the project enough for the support she received.

Case study 3: David, Wrexham

Background

- 1.11 David had been unemployed for two years when he first made contact with Wrexham's GW2 team. His previous work experience included various unskilled jobs that were mainly on building sites. David was a married father whose wife worked in a part-time low income job. He was claiming Income Support and Carers Allowance. David and his wife shared responsibility for looking after their children, which was a considerable commitment given the additional needs of one of their children who suffered from cerebral palsy. David felt his lack of skills and qualifications, as well as the need for specialist child care, were his main barriers to gaining employment.

GW2 Support

- 1.12 David was referred to GW2 by the Children's Services Advisory Service (Specialist Home Advisor). Initially the GW2 parent's advisor worked one-to-one to build David's confidence. As part of the action plan that David and the GW2 team developed, he was encouraged to volunteer with the Local Authority's County Parks cycling scheme that helped young people to repair and maintain their bicycles. David volunteered for four months before he had built up enough self-belief to meet with Careers Wales to discuss his options.
- 1.13 Following this meeting David decided that he would like to undertake a BTEC National Diploma in Electrical/Mechanical Engineering. A large barrier facing David was his concern about accessing specialist child care. Through working closely with the Wrexham Family Information Service, David was provided with a comprehensive list of child minders who specialise in caring for disabled children. Wrexham's GW2 team noted that this ability to work in partnership with other services, once it was recognised that David was ready to make the next step, was an important factor in GW2's success in supporting David.

Outcomes

- 1.14 Having gained his vocational qualification David also secured full-time employment as a trainee electrician. His confidence, self-esteem and belief in his own abilities greatly improved as a consequence. David and his family now have a better future to look forward to and the GW2 team noted that family morale is now higher and more positive.
- 1.15 A number of important elements contributed to the success of David's support: **his referral to GW2 was acted upon promptly** and his first GW2 appointment was within two weeks; **the support, guidance and encouragement from the GW2 team was on-going** to ensure

David reached his goal; and the **partnership working with other agencies facilitated a better all-round service** to meet David's needs.

Case study 4: Ellen, Flintshire

Background

- 1.16 Ellen was referred to the Flintshire GW2 project by Job Centre Plus for support with confidence and self-esteem building, followed by up-skilling leading to a return to employment. Ellen's primary needs were a consequence of the domestic abuse that she had suffered during her marriage. Ellen had previously given up her part-time work in a local shop as she moved temporarily to a refuge as, with no transport, she could no longer travel to her place of work.
- 1.17 Ellen had been out of work for three months when she registered with GW2. She was receiving Income Support, Child Tax Credits and Child Benefit. The GW2 team's first piece of support was to refer Ellen to the Citizens Advice Bureau for advice about her mortgage and for help to deal with other debt that she had. A one-to-one meeting was held with Ellen to assess her current situation and her needs. A discussion was had about the types of support that GW2 could provide, her qualifications and the various pathways she could take to fulfil her goal of working in the social care sector. Due to Ellen's very low confidence and self-esteem she initially noted that she had no positive future as a single mother and did not believe she had a way of gaining the skills required to find a full-time job.

GW2 Support

- 1.18 GW2 referred Ellen to Flintshire Community Parents to support her emotional needs while she was going through her divorce and to support her with her child's needs. She was also supported to access local basic skills sessions provided by GW2. Although Ellen had gained GCSE maths and English qualifications, this was some time ago and she needed support to build her confidence and develop her skills in preparation for undertaking a college course. Ellen continued her basic skills sessions for a full academic year (gaining Level 2 certificates) and attended GW2's in-house communication, confidence and self-esteem building course. GW2 supported Ellen with transportation to attend the courses and on-going intensive one-to-one advice.
- 1.19 At an information session, at the end of the GW2 in-house course, Ellen was able to discuss her interests with a representative from a local further education college. Ellen received advice on which courses would best meet her needs and which grants she would be eligible for if she started a course. Ellen applied for an Access to Social Care course and was soon offered an interview by the college. GW2 provided Ellen with interview tips and she was successful in being offered a place on the course. Flintshire Community Parents also advised Ellen that volunteering would be beneficial to her continued development and so she completed a volunteer training course and became a volunteer at Flintshire Community Parents.

Outcomes

- 1.20 Part-way through her college course Ellen was transferred from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) due to her child's age. As she was on a full time course and therefore unavailable to work, she was not eligible to receive JSA payment. Nevertheless, Ellen had become confident enough to find employment to help her through her college course. She completed the Access to Social Care course and started a degree. Ellen now believes that her and her child have a bright future and that her hard work has paid off.
- 1.21 GW2 supported Ellen to regain a belief in herself and her abilities and to possess a positive outlook for her future. **The one-to-one nature of the service was deemed particularly important in encouraging Ellen to take advantage of training opportunities.**

Case study 5: Mary, Newport

Background

- 1.22 Mary, a lone parent and full time mum, was referred to Newport's GW2 team having never worked. She left school with a small number of O levels but these were gained many years previously. Her lack of work experience resulted in her having almost no confidence in her own ability to find work (she began her GW2 support by indicating that she had nothing to offer potential employers).

GW2 Support

- 1.23 The GW2 advisor first visited Mary to find out what barriers she may face in finding work or returning to training and to explain the GW2 support. It was noted that Mary had a friendly personality and was highly organised with a large family. The first task was for Mary and her GW2 advisor to identify what skills she had to offer and to reassure her that these would be recognised by potential employers. It was agreed that Mary was adept at budgeting, organisation, delegation and motivation within the home.
- 1.24 Mary was then referred to the Basic Skills Co-ordinator in Newport and supported to attend an accredited basic maths course run by GW2 and delivered by community learning tutors. Mary also attended a GW2 confidence building course to overcome her initial nervousness about undertaking new training courses. The GW2 team noted that Mary was a valuable member of the confidence building group and her self-esteem grew as she started to realise the value of the skills she had. With support from her GW2 advisor Mary contacted Careers Wales to produce a CV and to gain information on volunteering opportunities in retail.

Outcomes

- 1.25 During her support, Mary's GW2 advisor was made aware of work trials in Marks and Spencer that were organised through Gingerbread, a UK charity that supports lone parents. Mary was successful in her interview and progressed into her work trial. She gained paid temporary employment with Marks and Spencer after the trial.
- 1.26 Overall, Mary achieved a number of positive outcomes through her GW2 support. These started off as small steps, such as attending courses and gaining certification and accredited

basic skills, to then successfully completing her job interview, her work trial and her period of temporary employment. These achievements were primarily a result of GW2 assisting Mary to realise – and have confidence in – the skills she possessed. **The one-to-one support provided by the GW2 advisors, together with the links that were developed and sustained with partner organisations, were crucial elements of the support** which helped Mary achieve her outcomes.

Case study 6: Karen, Caerphilly

Background

- 1.27 Karen was referred to the Caerphilly GW2 Project by her Health Worker. Karen had only recently moved to the area and her Health Worker believed that, following a period of 18 months of unemployment, she would benefit greatly from social interaction with other adults. By her own admission, Karen felt ‘isolated’; she was home alone with a young baby whilst her husband was out at work. As a result of this, her self-confidence, which she felt was already low, had suffered further. Knowledge of, and access to, affordable childcare was also identified by Karen as one of her biggest barriers in returning to training, education or employment

GW2 support

- 1.28 After initial discussions with the GW2 team it was decided that Karen would benefit from joining a six-week beauty therapy Level 1 Agored Cymru course arranged by Genesis in the local health clinic. This provided Karen with an opportunity to expand her social circle, gain a qualification and acquire skills that she felt enabled her to improve her personal presentation, which also increased her self-confidence and esteem.
- 1.29 Whilst attending the beauty therapy course, Karen made use of the Genesis mobile crèche. This provided her with a short break from being ‘Karen - house wife/mother’ to be ‘Karen – one of the girls, individual and arty’. Karen explained that the positive experience with the crèche provided her with increased confidence in using childcare services in the future.
- 1.30 Successful completion of the beauty therapy course provided Karen with motivation to continue learning and a desire to pursue a beauty therapy employment path. Karen highlighted that Information Technology was a particular skills gap for her and so Karen was referred to a partner agency and enrolled on an ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) course.

Outcomes

- 1.31 As Karen’s barriers to re-entering the labour market decreased, and her motivation for doing so increased, she became more positive about job searching and more determined to secure employment. Karen was eventually able to secure a permanent 30-hours per week position as a sales assistant.
- 1.32 Karen was assisted to identify funding to enable her to attend the beauty therapy Level 2 Agored Cymru course arranged by Caerphilly County Borough Council’s Community

Education Department. She was also able to access the childcare provided by the Genesis mobile crèche. Karen appeared to relish the opportunity to continue with her personal development and enrolled on the course. Delivery of the course was actually outside of her community but given Karen's improved confidence, this didn't deter her from participation.

- 1.33 **Karen's steps back to employment started small but each hurdle she overcame resulted in an increase in her confidence in her own abilities.** The GW2 team noted that Karen is now a contented working mother with a bright and animated 'can-do' approach to anything she puts her mind to.

Case study 7: Marian, Conwy

Background

- 1.34 Since leaving school Marian had a mixed employment history that included some sales-assistant work and some voluntary work. Marian suffered from mental illness and had also experienced spells of homelessness. When she connected with the Conwy GW2 project, she was claiming Income Support and was living in a rural area with one child. Before it lost funding, Marian was initially receiving support through Cam Ymlaen, a local mental health support agency. She was also being advised by a Jobcentre Plus Lone Parent Advisor – who made Marian's referral to GW2.

GW2 Support

- 1.35 Marian received one-to-one support that primarily acted as a 'sounding board' to support her to make her own decisions. She was encouraged to attend the in-house GW2 engagement group called Lets Get Arty, which prompted her to socialise and meet other adults. Marian was open to volunteering opportunities and so met the Conwy Voluntary Services Council. Marian found two volunteer placements: one in an internet café supporting older people with IT skills; and one as a customer advisor in a castle.
- 1.36 Marian enjoyed her placements and it was evident that her confidence had grown as a result. She moved from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance and was then supported with advice and guidance from her GW2 support worker in writing a CV. Marian's greatest needs were to have someone to run her decisions passed and to encourage and motivate her to persevere. Marian was assisted with job searches and was offered several interviews. She was successful in gaining employment in an office.

Outcomes

- 1.37 **The key aspect of Marian's support was the one-to-one advice and mentoring.** She started by needing constant reassurance but slowly she built her confidence levels to ultimately enable her to volunteer and then gain employment. She became more content and able to make decisions more easily without constantly seeking reassurance.

Case study 8: Geraldine, Flintshire

Background

- 1.38 Having previously been supported by the Flintshire Early Intervention and Prevention Team to develop coping strategies, set boundaries and define realistic tasks and goals, Geraldine was referred to the GW2 project. Geraldine's health visitor had initially referred her to the Flintshire Early Intervention and Prevention Team in response to her depression (including severe post-natal depression after having her children). Geraldine was also attending counselling sessions to support her to deal with childhood traumas that she was yet to overcome.
- 1.39 Geraldine was well educated and before having children she held professional positions in the legal services sector. She had particularly struggled after having her children as she felt that she had gone from having a high-powered job to, in her mind, having nothing. She believed that she had lost her identity and her self-worth. Her confidence and her self-esteem were particularly low. Due to his own long hours, Geraldine's husband was unable to fully support all of her and her children's needs. Nevertheless Geraldine did want to return to work but after six years of inactivity she found the idea of returning to be a daunting prospect. She was also unsure of returning to her previous role as it was incompatible with her family life.

GW2 Support

- 1.40 One reason for Geraldine's engagement with the GW2 project was that it was recommended by a friend who had noted to Geraldine how the project had helped her. Following her initial meetings with the GW2 team it was decided that the first step for Geraldine was to attend the in-house confidence and self-esteem course called Life Works. This course supported participants in developing strategies for personal behaviour changes, communication, assertiveness and goal setting. Geraldine also received individual childcare funding to enable her to attend the course and continuous intensive one-to-one support from the GW2 project.
- 1.41 On completion of the course, Geraldine was put in contact with Careers Wales to discuss apprenticeships; something that she had shown an interest in investigating as a possible route back into the labour market. She was also attending Basic Skills sessions to improve her maths, a subject she was not comfortable with and one which she felt would support her return to work.

Outcomes

- 1.42 Of particular importance to Geraldine, in enabling her to progress and move forward, was **meeting others with similar circumstances and being able to share her experiences** and to talk openly and honestly about her hopes, fear and goals. This significantly reduced her feelings of isolation. Through the confidence course she was able to build her self-esteem and rediscover her sense of identity and self-worth. Geraldine went on to secure several job interviews and was eventually successful in returning to employment.

Case study 9: Gareth, Anglesey

Background

- 1.43 Gareth was a lone parent, looking after his young child. His child raising responsibilities and daily chores – cleaning, cooking, taking his child to school – occupied most of his time. Gareth did have some past employment history as a butcher however he had been out of work for over twelve months. His parental responsibilities were his largest barrier preventing him returning to employment. He was claiming Income Support and Family Tax Credits.

GW2 support

- 1.44 Gareth's health visitor referred him to the GW2 project. To accommodate Gareth's circumstances, the initial meeting with the GW2 outreach worker was organised to be held in a local café. After the initial one-to-one meeting Gareth was encouraged to enrol on the Exercise and Socialise confidence building initiative. This included access to a gym, a healthy lunch and free childcare. After assessing his options Gareth also undertook a basic introduction to ICT class.

Outcomes

- 1.45 Since Gareth's involvement with GW2 he has achieved several new computing skills resulting in him meeting the levels for an ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification. Gareth was able to secure a voluntary position at SOVA, the national volunteer mentoring organisation. **The personalised GW2 supported provided to Gareth throughout his journey was thought to have been the main reason for success.**

Case study 10: Lyn, Newport

Background

- 1.46 Lyn was a single mum of twins claiming Income Support. She lacked confidence and felt as if she was on her own and isolated by her family situation. Once her children started to access their Flying Start childcare entitlement Lyn saw this as an opportunity to re-establish some control over her own life. Lyn faced several major barriers. Her basic skills were poor, she did not have any qualifications or previous work history and she required childcare for her two children.

GW2 support

- 1.47 Lyn contacted the GW2 project via the Family Information Service free phone number. She first made contact with the project to ask for general help. Although she wanted to make changes to her life, she was not sure where to start. A Genesis advisor first met Lyn in her home and they discussed with Lyn her options and developed an action plan.
- 1.48 Lyn expressed an interest in becoming a teaching assistant and so she was offered a place on the Making Choices course provided by Genesis at the Share Centre. This course provided participants with the opportunity to explore different career paths that involve working with children. A Genesis Advisor arranged to meet Lyn at the Share Centre for the first week of

the course as she was very anxious about attending the group by herself. Her twins attended the crèche provided by Sure Start and funded by GW2 at the Share centre. GW2 also provided bus tokens for Lyn to travel with the twins to and from the Centre. This was considered to be a huge step for Lyn as she was very apprehensive about leaving her house and catching a bus with her children, especially to join a group of people she didn't know.

- 1.49 Attending the Making Choices course built Lyn's confidence much faster than was anticipated and she was keen to continue onto another GW2 group. Lyn then joined the Personal Development Level 3 course, also run by GW2 at the Share Centre. These courses prompted Lyn to make the next step. After researching her options with the GW2 advisor she eventually enrolled on a part-time Level 2 Teaching Assistant course at Coleg Gwent Further Education College. In addition, Lyn organised a placement at a local Primary School for one day a week. As her children only accessed part-time nursery, GW2 arranged for a childminder in the local area to provide additional wrap-around care.

Outcomes

- 1.50 Lyn gained a variety of outcomes as a result of her GW2 support. She was awarded certificates for attending the two GW2 courses, she began attending her further education course (Level 2 Teaching Assistant) and she organised her own work placement at a local primary school. In achieving all of these Lyn overcame many anxieties and potential barriers, such as her worry of leaving her own home to join a group of unknown individuals.
- 1.51 Two particular aspects of Lyn's support were highlighted as being important. **The one-to-one support from the GW2 Advisor was essential in giving Lyn the initial advice and guidance to begin her journey** and the motivation to then conquer her apprehensions. In addition, **without the GW2 financial support to meet Lyn's childcare needs and enable her to afford transportation to get to training courses Lyn's achievements would have been much less likely.**

Case study 11: Carole, Pembrokeshire

Background

- 1.52 Carole had been unemployed for four months when she first engaged with the Pembrokeshire GW2 project. She was a single parent to a five year old child living in a rural part of the county. Before her child was born Carole had five years' experience as the head housekeeper in a hotel; however she had given up this job when she became pregnant. Immediately prior to her engagement with GW2 she had undertaken casual work as a temporary chambermaid for a season in a local hotel. Carole was in receipt of Income Support, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit.
- 1.53 Although Carole wanted to retrain, to gain the skills and qualifications needed to find permanent employment, she faced several barriers. Carole could not afford to pay for childcare or the cost of transport, equipment and training. Carole also had six criminal convictions. Carole wanted to change her life for the better and was extremely keen to start a training programme that might allow her to gain employment related to childcare. When

Carole was referred to GW2 by her Jobcentre Plus advisor she was unsure about how to access training and didn't think she would be able to fund the cost of the training.

GW2 support

- 1.54 Carole and the GW2 team devised an action plan and she was provided with information about available training courses. GW2 also supported her financially with the training fees, essential equipment, travel and childcare costs. Carole commenced suitable training courses in childcare and IT and started to volunteer at a school to gain hands-on experience whilst she trained. GW2 provided on-going support and reassurance to Carole during her studies and she began to grow in confidence in the school environment. After completing her initial courses Carole enrolled for a Diploma Level 2 in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools.

Outcomes

- 1.55 Carole's commitment and progress was acknowledged and rewarded by the school as she was given the opportunity of paid work one day a week. Carole was delighted with the offer and pleased that she had found a career that she really enjoyed. In addition to her Diploma, Carole continued to develop her computer skills and started a text processing Level 1-3 course.
- 1.56 Through the support she received Carole developed into a focused individual and realised that she could reach her goals once she was given the opportunity. **GW2 provided Carole with the information and financial support to access training** which led to marked improvement in her self-confidence. She now feels like she has the necessary skills to be a successful childcare practitioner.

Case study 12: Harriet, Blaenau Gwent

Background

- 1.57 Harriet had spent the past six years as a full-time mother and housewife. She had very little employment experience, besides short spells in retail and manufacturing jobs many years ago, and her confidence in her own ability to find and maintain employment was very low. Her economic inactivity coincided with her move to Blaenau Gwent so she had limited knowledge of employment, or employment support services, within the area. Notable barriers faced by Harriet included: a lack of transportation; childcare needs; and low confidence in her work-related skills. Harriet was married, her husband worked full-time as a self-employed builder and she was not claiming any state benefits.

GW2 support

- 1.58 Harriet self-referred herself to the Blaenau Gwent GW2 project after seeing a GW2 advertisement. After her first appointment, she expressed an interest in becoming a classroom assistant and was offered the opportunity to attend a seven-week Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) taster course. Following the taster course, Harriet decided that this was the employment route she wanted to embark on. Harriet then enrolled on a CCLD Level 2 night course at a local Learning Access Centre. This course was easier for Harriet to attend as her husband was at home in the evenings to look after their two children. Harriet also

began to volunteer as a classroom assistant at a local primary school – further improving her skills, confidence and experience to help her gain employment in the future.

Outcomes

- 1.59 **The support provided by GW2 was the crucial first step in getting Harriet onto her new career track.** GW2 helped her to access the taster course which in turn gave her the required confidence to access further learning and to progress to a suitable qualification that has enabled her to apply for suitable employment opportunities.

Case study 13: Rosie, Wrexham

Background

- 1.60 Rosie had been unemployed for four years when she got in touch with Wrexham's GW2 team. She had become a mother when she was still a teenager. She struggled to cope with the added demands of her child's diagnosed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other health problems. She was claiming Disability Living Allowance for her child as well as Income Support and Carers Allowance.

GW2 support

- 1.61 Rosie self-referred herself to GW2 after noticing a leaflet in Jobcentre Plus. An action plan was drawn up at her first meeting. Several one-to-one appointments offering support and guidance took place over the next weeks. Rosie had previously completed a beauty therapy course and appeared to be quite confident, despite not knowing what she wanted to do or which direction to take.
- 1.62 Rosie was initially signposted to Careers Wales for advice and help with updating her CV. This spurred Rosie to investigate the possibility of becoming self-employed and starting her own mobile beauty therapy business. She was also assisted by the Wrexham Family Information Service (WFIS), which informed her of the range of support that she could access to help with care for her child. WFIS signposted Rosie to a local ADHD support group where she was given information about relevant child care settings and activity groups that cater for older children with special needs. Rosie was then referred to Businessline – a professional business information service provided by Wrexham Library. This provided Rosie with advice about starting a business and becoming self-employed.

Outcomes

- 1.63 Rosie quickly secured part-time work as a mobile beauty therapist. It was noted that she became much more positive about facing the challenges of looking after her child and is able to plan her work around their needs. She met other parents with similar issues at the ADHD support group and made new friends. She felt proud to be working again and stated that without GW2 support she would never have had the confidence to 'go for it'.
- 1.64 Overall Rosie's GW2 support lasted just four weeks. Her example shows that a client's journey does not have to be long or complicated to be successful. The fact that the **GW2**

support was flexible, client-centred and able to access timely and reliable information from partner organisations was vital in securing Rosie's successful outcomes. The well-connected package of support ensured that Rosie never lost her impetus to engage with these services.

Case study 14: Vanessa, Conwy

Background

- 1.65 Vanessa was a lone parent living with her two children. She had been out of work for four years and was claiming Income Support. The main barriers preventing her from returning to employment were a lack of job-specific skills, rural isolation and caring responsibilities for her family.

GW2 Support

- 1.66 Vanessa was referred to Conwy's GW2 project by her lone parent advisor at Jobcentre Plus. She had previously noted that she was interested in undertaking a plastering course but her confidence was low and she required support with accessing information about suitable training and affordable childcare. Her Jobcentre Plus lone parent advisor thought that the GW2 project may be able to support Vanessa in overcoming some of these issues.
- 1.67 The GW2 team provided Vanessa with advice and guidance about potential childcare arrangements, assistance with funding her course and transport options. Once a college course was identified Vanessa unfortunately found that, due to her age, she was ineligible to travel on the college's free bus. Vanessa's GW2 support worker liaised with the college to explain Vanessa's circumstances and in the meantime GW2 funded weekly bus passes until the college agreed to allow Vanessa to travel on the free bus to her plastering course.

Outcomes

- 1.68 Vanessa was able to travel to college and undertake the course of her choice. This led to noticeable improvements in her confidence levels and she began to feel more positive about her future. **Had GW2 not funded her temporary weekly bus pass and helped to convince the college to allow Vanessa to ride the college bus for free, she would have been unable to attend the course.**

Case study 15: Lauren, Ceredigion

Background

- 1.69 Prior to engaging with GW2, Lauren had very few qualifications and lacked the knowledge, confidence and motivation needed in order to improve her situation. As a lone parent to two young children Lauren had recently moved to the area to escape an abusive relationship. She was receiving support from the local Women's Aid. Lauren had been economically inactive for approximately 10 years, over which time she had been claiming Income Support. After leaving school, at a very early age, without any qualifications, Lauren had managed to gain 3 GCSEs independently but had not achieved above NQF Level 2 or entered any official paid or

voluntary employment. As well as receiving support from Women's Aid, including residing with her family at the women's refuge, Lauren had also begun to receive support from Flying Start for help with childcare and parenting.

GW2 support

- 1.70 Lauren was informed of GW2 by both her Women's Aid and Flying Start support workers, who completed a referral form on her behalf. Lauren was then contacted by a GW2 Advisor who went to meet with her in person to assess her needs. The initial meeting was then followed by several follow-up meetings, texts and phone calls to encourage and monitor Lauren's progress and adapt her Action Plan accordingly.
- 1.71 GW2 supported Lauren to engage with the local volunteer centre, through which she began her first voluntary placement. GW2 and Flying Start also supported Lauren to gain an award in first aid training. Lauren's voluntary work was followed by engagement with the local community learning centre, where she began an IT course. Within a year she had progressed onto a more advanced course and gained a full ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification.
- 1.72 These initial steps boosted Lauren's self-belief and drive dramatically and she became confident enough to apply for a full-time further education course. Her application was successful and she subsequently entered into further learning eleven months after engaging with GW2. Since then Lauren set her sights on studying at university degree level.
- 1.73 Throughout her journey, Lauren received intense mentorship and tailored support from her GW2 Advisor. This encompassed emotional support, such as listening to varying issues and offering advice or signposting, as well as practical support, such as liaising with tutors and organisations, relaying information, organising childcare and booking course places. The financial support provided by GW2 for additional childcare was fundamental to her progress.

Outcomes

- 1.74 With the help of GW2, Lauren was able to progress significantly and achieve several positive outcomes. These included: voluntary work experience; a full ECDL qualification; a first aid award; and entrance into further learning, with a view to studying at university level. These were significant outcomes given Lauren's initial circumstances. All aspects of GW2 support were noted as integral to her progress. However, as Lauren lacked a local support-network, **the most important aspects of the GW2 support were the provision of additional childcare and the continuous GW2 one-to-one mentoring.** This support helped to motivate Lauren as well as helping to define her goals and achieve them.

Case study 16: Ffion, Anglesey

Background

- 1.75 Ffion was a well-educated mother who had been unemployed for over two years. After being a victim of domestic abuse, Ffion had registered with Women's Aid and it was through this outlet that she first heard about the Anglesey GW2 project. The Anglesey GW2 team had

sought to forge links with the local Women's Aid centre to ensure that GW2 services were well advertised to the women who were in contact with Women's Aid services. Ffion was keen to access GW2 as an opportunity to improve her confidence and get her life back on track through returning to work.

GW2 support

- 1.76 Engagement with GW2 came during an introductory session that was a joint programme run by Anglesey Domestic Abuse Service (Gorwel) and GW2. The Freedom and Socialise course explored the issue of domestic abuse and how to bounce back. Emphasis was placed on attendees taking a positive outlook and this was combined with GW2 self-confidence sessions that provided individuals with an opportunity to feel good about themselves. Following this support Ffion was referred to Careers Wales for further advice on returning to employment.

Outcomes

- 1.77 Besides her initial low self-confidence, Ffion was considered to be intelligent, competent and capable of making changes and working quickly towards the next chapter of her life. At the time GW2 was supporting Ffion with advice on potential further learning courses she managed to secure an interview for a position in a local primary school and took up a post as a catering assistant. **The GW2 team played an important role in supporting Ffion take her first tentative steps back towards employment.**