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Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Report 1

The Theory of Change, the Impact of COVID-19, and the
Evaluation Framework

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Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Report 1

The Theory of Change, the Impact of COVID-19, and the Evaluation Framework

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Glossary

Acronym/Initialism/Keyword	Definition
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Programmes
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESA	Employment Support Allowance
ESP	Employability Skills Programme
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument
JSTOR	Short for Journal Storage for data in the Careers Wales system
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NTFW	National Training Federation for Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACE	Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (a Scottish Government programme)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WPRS	Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.0 Working Wales is a Welsh Government-funded service designed to provide streamlined and efficient employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs. Introduced in 2019, it is a new approach to providing free and impartial employability and careers advice across Wales, which is delivered for the Welsh Government by Careers Wales.
- 1.1 The evaluation of the Working Wales service will cover the period from April 2019 to April 2022. The main role of this first report is to set out the theory of change¹ for the service and, building on that theory, the evaluation framework. Moreover, it will report on the findings of the scoping phase of the evaluation, a review of the management information for the service, and a review of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the delivery of the service. Case studies of 10 users of the service, exploring the support that they have received and its benefit to them, are presented.
- 1.2 This introduction outlines the policy context within which Working Wales is operating, before providing an overview of the service. The aims and objectives of the evaluation are also set out.
- 1.3 The remainder of the report is then structured as follows:
- Chapter 2 outlines the methodology for the research undertaken for this report
 - Chapter 3 explores the theory of change for Working Wales
 - Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the management information available for Working Wales
 - Chapter 5 considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the service
 - Chapter 6 includes the case studies based on interviews with Working Wales customers
 - Finally, Chapter 7 draws together the key conclusions that we can draw from this first phase of the evaluation.
- 1.4 The evaluation framework, which draws on the findings set out in this report, can be found in Appendix 3.

¹ Please refer to Chapter 3 (A Theory of Change for Working Wales) for an introduction to the theory of change process.

Policy context

- 1.5 The policy context for Working Wales is aligned with the seven shared national well-being goals enacted by the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(2015\)](#). The goals include A Prosperous Wales (which aims to develop a skilled and well-educated population in an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work). The Act includes five ways of working, as reflected in the aspirations of Working Wales: Long-term (thinking), Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, and Involvement. Furthermore, the Act includes the goal of a Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language, and it is expected that Working Wales will create conditions for promoting the Welsh language and, therefore, align with the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy and Cymraeg 2050 ambitions.
- 1.6 Published in September 2017, [Prosperity for All](#) is the national strategy whose long-term aim is to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. The strategy identifies employability as a core theme for well-being and prosperity, and sets out a vision to drive integration and collaboration across the public sector and put people at the heart of improved service delivery.
- 1.7 Additionally, as set out in 2016's [Taking Wales Forward](#), the Programme for Government, intensifying youth engagement and employment is a priority for Wales, which includes the commitment to increasing the engagement and progression of young people.
- 1.8 A key part of this commitment is that of reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) through the [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework](#) (2013), which covers individuals aged 11 to 25. The Framework provides a systematic mechanism for local authorities to identify those in need of support, establish the support available, and track the progress of young people as they make the transition from education into further education or employment. The Framework requires an integrated approach from all organisations involved in delivering activity for young people, focusing on the needs of the individuals. It is based on six-component elements, which have been proven

to be effective in increasing youth engagement and progression. The six elements aim to:

- Identify young people most at risk of disengagement
- Provide better brokerage and coordination of support
- Provide stronger tracking/transition of young people
- Ensure that provision meets the needs of young people
- Strengthen employability skills/opportunities for employment
- Provide greater accountability for better outcomes for young people

- 1.9 The [Economic Action Plan](#), published in December 2017, sets out the Welsh Government's vision of inclusive growth, built on strong foundations, and supercharged industries of the future and productive regions. The Plan drives the twin goals of growing the economy and reducing inequality with a focus "on supporting people wherever they are on the employment ladder, helping them move closer to, gain, retain and progress in work".
- 1.10 This means working together across policy areas (education, health, housing, regional development, and communities) to drive better employment outcomes, reduce economic inactivity and unemployment, and raise qualification and productivity levels.
- 1.11 The new [Programme for Government 2021-2026](#) includes the Welsh Government's commitment to providing decent jobs, relevant skills, and new training opportunities. This includes a further commitment to delivering the Young Person's Guarantee, giving everyone below the age of 25 the offer of work, education, training or self-employment.
- 1.12 There is consensus that because barriers to employment are diverse and can be complex in their interaction, early intervention and personalised advice and guidance, as well as practical support, can make a significant difference. To reflect such complexity, employment-focused support needs to be flexible and appropriate to individual circumstances. Moreover, support needs to be coherent to enable individuals to access and navigate the range of interventions.

- 1.13 To achieve this, the Welsh Government is taking a cross-governmental approach to reshaping employability support to make it fit for the future. The key to effective employability support is thought to be that of simplifying access, tailored advice, interventions to meet the needs of individuals, as well as referring individuals to available support to help people to overcome barriers to obtaining work. This is one of the main drivers in the development of Working Wales, as introduced below.
- 1.14 Finally, the [Employability Plan](#), published in March 2018, sets out how the Welsh Government will deliver employability support in a smart and joined-up way, which cuts across traditional boundaries, both inside and outside of government. Through the Plan, the Welsh Government aims to contribute to increasing productivity levels in Wales in the next decade by:
- Eliminating the gap in working-age unemployment and in economic inactivity rates between Wales and the UK average within 10 years.
 - Eliminating the gap between Wales and the rest of the UK at all qualification levels in 10 years and ensuring that in the future — as a minimum — we maintain our performance relative to the rest of the UK.
 - Reducing the number of people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales.
 - Increasing the number of disabled people in work.
- 1.15 In October 2020, the Welsh Government published [Covid Reconstruction – Challenges and Priorities](#), which sets out eight priority areas, including short- and long-term actions, designed to help stabilise Wales both during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently.
- 1.16 Helping people whose livelihoods have been affected by the lockdown to find work is identified as a key short-term priority, as is helping individuals and Welsh firms to transition to the economy and jobs of the future. This includes building on existing skills programmes and creating an environment of lifelong learning. Moreover, there is a commitment to supporting job creation and emerging sectors in helping people to find sustainable jobs and a continued focus on fair work.
- 1.17 It is noted that the pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of digital delivery of public services, and of remote ways of working. Consolidating the

progress that has been made in that respect during the pandemic is highlighted as a priority, as is identifying opportunities to use digital ways of working and design to support interventions across the public sector. At the same time, the need to ‘step up’ the support for digital inclusion and facilitation for those who will otherwise risk becoming (often even more) marginalised from public services is also recognised.

An overview of the Working Wales service

- 1.18 The main function of Working Wales is to provide an all-Wales entry point to employability support. It enables individuals to talk to trained careers advisors about employment and skills, their aims and aspirations, and any challenges that they face in obtaining and maintaining work, education or training.
- 1.19 Advice and guidance are provided on a face-to-face basis at Careers Wales offices (although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on this, as discussed later in this report), local Jobcentres, or community outreach locations, over the telephone and online.
- 1.20 Advisors help by identifying barriers preventing an individual from accessing employment, education or training. Based on individuals’ circumstances and aspirations, trained careers advisors identify the most suitable support available to support the individual in progressing at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, Working Wales helps to overcome barriers that may be created by the complexity of the range of employability support which may be available to the individual concerned.
- 1.21 Dependent on the extent of the individual’s barriers, advisors, in agreement with the individual, will either refer individuals to the most appropriate support available or offer some light-touch employability support to those eligible via a Working Wales Employability Coach (which was previously known as the STEPS Programme, but has been referred to as Working Wales employability support since April 2021).²

² The Working Wales employability support is for customers aged 16 or above. Customers have a range of support from a Working Wales Employability Coach, which includes writing or improving a CV, preparing for interviews/mock interviews (incl. digital interviews), how to promote oneself (Context, Action, Result), completing applications, understanding the labour market, job search support, and using social media to gain employment.

- 1.22 To ensure that the Working Wales advisor identifies all barriers to employment and refers the individual to the correct support, they use an advice- and guidance-led enhanced needs assessment of the individual's circumstances and barriers preventing them from progressing, which enables them to refer the individual to the right support.
- 1.23 The primary objective of the enhanced needs assessment is to identify the appropriate level of support required. This will include assessing their current skills level, work experience history, career aspirations, travel availability, childcare and caring responsibilities, health and disability, as well as housing status to identify the barriers preventing the individual from obtaining and maintaining employment, education or training.
- 1.24 The individuals identified as being most in need of Working Wales support include (but are not limited to) those who are:
- Economically inactive
 - Unemployed
 - Not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - Underemployed
 - Under a notice of redundancy
 - Disabled
 - In custody within a secure prison estate
 - In custody but due for release
 - Serving sentences in the community

Aims and objectives of the evaluation of Working Wales 2019–2022

- 1.25 The overall aim of the evaluation is to explore the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Working Wales for the period April 2019 to April 2022. The focus will be on the performance and impact of the service, with a review of the service design and delivery processes. The specific aims are to:
- Evaluate how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, and provide lessons to inform future delivery; and
 - Evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on customers in terms of employment, skills acquisition and development, and well-being.

1.26 The objectives of the evaluation are:

- a) To review whether and how well the service supports the delivery of key Welsh Government priorities, including the Employability Plan, the Economic Action Plan, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Youth Engagement Progression Framework, and the Welsh Language Strategy.
- b) To assess the performance of Working Wales against its stated aims and objectives for the period under review, including a review of the obstacles that customers and Careers Wales have faced and whether and how these have been overcome, as well as a review of engagement and participation (to understand who are and who are not engaging with the service) and a review of progress against targets.
- c) To review the design, management and implementation of Working Wales in order to assess its suitability in supporting the achievement of the service aims and objectives. This will include understanding any regional differences in implementation, success factors, unanticipated outcomes, and the contribution of the service to the Welsh language objectives of the Welsh Government (as set out in Cymraeg 2050).
- d) To assess the impact of Working Wales on achieving a streamlined and efficient system of employability support through providing independent, holistic and appropriate assessment (including use of the categorisation tool), guidance, and referral; where possible and dependent on the availability of the necessary data, this will include a comparison to a counterfactual cohort and analysis by referral type.
- e) To assess the impact of the service on those individuals who have accessed Working Wales, particularly considering the immediate and longer-term outcomes achieved by individuals who have accessed Working Wales and whether these can be attributed to Working Wales itself.
- f) To make recommendations for future policy development based on lessons learnt from the evaluation.

2. Methodology

2.1 This chapter briefly sets out the methods and research activities undertaken and reported upon in the chapters that follow.

Scoping interviews and meetings

2.2 Undertaken at the beginning of 2020, the purpose of the scoping interviews was to engage with a range of stakeholders to explore the rationale for Working Wales and specific elements of its design. Moreover, they provided an opportunity to discuss the priorities of the research. Importantly, the scoping interviews also contributed to the development of the theory of change and the evaluation framework (as set out in later chapters of this report).

2.3 Thirty scoping interviews were undertaken, including with key members of the Working Wales team within Careers Wales, Welsh Government officials (including those involved in the design of the service), and a range of partner organisations working in the field of employability in Wales (including the National Training Federation for Wales (NTFW), a number of local authorities, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the Trades Union Congress (TUC)).

2.4 A range of activities have also been undertaken to engage with stakeholders and partner organisations during the scoping phase of the evaluation. These have included attending Working Wales Stakeholder Steering Group meetings (2) and meetings with Regional Skills Partnerships groups (South West and South East Wales). The primary purpose of these meetings was to raise awareness of the evaluation, but also, again, to collect views on key issues that the evaluation will be exploring.

Analysis of management information

2.5 The evaluation uses the management data being collected by the Working Wales team to explore a range of issues including, but not limited to, the demand for the support being provided, the method of accessing the service, and the typology of customers. The analysis will be undertaken at regular intervals during the evaluation, building on the initial analysis for the period April 2019 to December 2020, as found in this report.

Theory of change workshops

- 2.6 As introduced in a later chapter, developing a theory of change is an important part of the scoping phase of an evaluation and a key element of this report. Two workshops with Welsh Government officials were undertaken to inform the development of the theory of change, with eight participating in the first workshop and 12 in the second.
- 2.7 The workshops were undertaken during the lockdown period as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as a result, were facilitated by Microsoft Teams and using Microsoft Whiteboard to capture the discussion. The key questions discussed during the session were as follows:
- What is the goal of Working Wales? What is the outcome that the service is seeking to achieve?
 - What are the intermediary outcomes that we can use to map the progress that individuals are making towards that outcome/goal?
 - What assumptions have we made? What are the barriers that need to be overcome? What are the key enablers?

COVID-19 response review

- 2.8 The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have spread to Wales in late February 2020, with a lockdown period being introduced on 23rd March and running until an easing of the restrictions in May and June 2020. Localised lockdowns were, however, reintroduced in September 2020 due to spikes in infections, with a “firebreak” lockdown period of 17 days being imposed across Wales in late October 2020.
- 2.9 There were substantial changes in the way in which Working Wales was delivered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown periods, and the evaluation has sought to examine what the impact of these changes has been on the service.
- 2.10 This has been included as an additional work stream introduced in Phase 1 of the evaluation with the fieldwork for the review undertaken during October 2020 (before the “firebreak” lockdown). This included telephone interviews with 18 members of the Working Wales management team and an online survey of frontline Working

Wales staff, to which 96 responses were received (all Careers Wales staff and with a response rate of 48%). A breakdown of the profile of respondents to the online survey can be found in Appendix 3.

The impact of COVID-19 on the methodology

- 2.11 It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions and lockdowns have also had an impact on the research undertaken during Phase 1 of the evaluation. The majority of the fieldwork has, for example, been undertaken via telephone and video, rather than in person.
- 2.12 The most substantial change to the methodology was that no substantial consultation with customers in the Working Wales service was undertaken during Phase 1, which had been planned to explore the service from a participant perspective. Undertaking substantial fieldwork with customers was not considered to be appropriate during the pandemic, as the restrictions in place were likely to have a significant influence on the responses to questions. The delaying of consultation with customers (which will be a key part of Phase 2 of the evaluation) also released resources that allowed the review of the impact of COVID-19 on the Working Wales service, as introduced above, to be undertaken.
- 2.13 To address the lack of contact with customers during Phase 1 of the evaluation, an additional phase was introduced in late 2020, which was undertaken in early 2021. This involved the development of 10 in-depth case studies with a range of individuals who have engaged with Working Wales at some point over the past 12 months. These case studies can be found in Chapter 6 of the report.

3. A Theory of Change for Working Wales

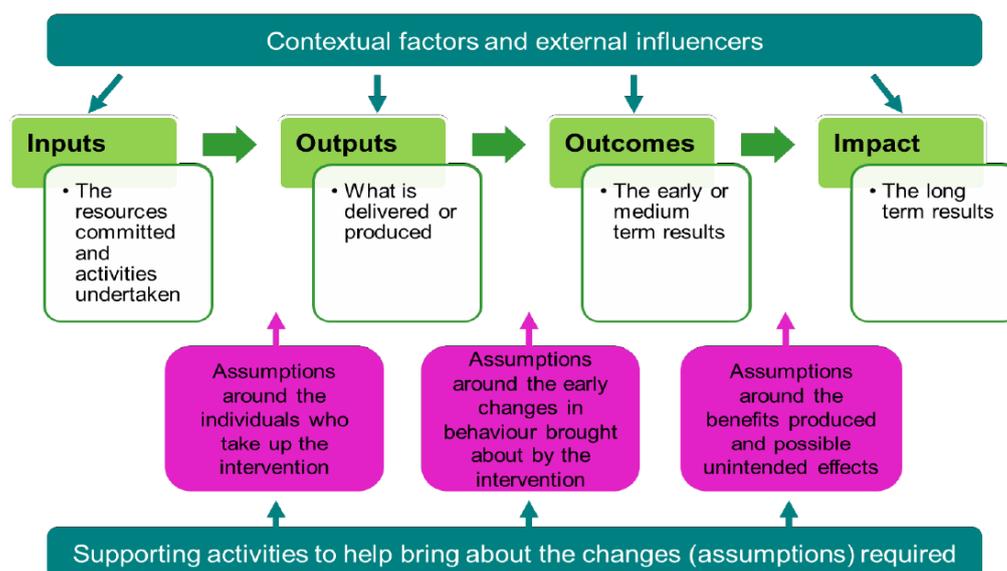
Key points

- A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to work, starting with the inputs, followed by the outputs (the activities undertaken), the immediate outcomes (as a result of the activities), and, finally, the longer-term impact of the intervention.
- The inputs of the Working Wales service include the budget of £9m per annum provided by the Welsh Government for the delivery of the service by Careers Wales, plus an allocation of £1.7m from the Careers Wales core budget. The input from outside of Careers Wales by Welsh Government officials and those organisations that refer customers to the service also needs to be included.
- The principal output for the service is the number of individuals supported via the range of activities undertaken. We are also interested in the characteristics of those individuals who have been supported.
- A main outcome of Working Wales is the number of individuals whom it refers or signposts. We are also interested in the types of signposting/referrals being made (the type of course, the type of support, etc.) and, again, the characteristics of the individuals being signposted/referred.
- The 'quality' of the outcome is important because this is a key element of the rationale for Working Wales. Are individuals being referred to the most appropriate/effective support to address their particular/specific needs?
- For the individuals supported, it is anticipated that the support will lead to an improvement in motivation and self-confidence as a result of an improved understanding of the support available, job opportunities, and so on.
- Working Wales should make a positive contribution to achieving economic impacts relating to employability. The service cannot, however, achieve those impacts in isolation, being reliant on the effective delivery of training and development support (to which it refers in terms of achieving a positive impact).

Introduction

- 3.1 [HM Treasury's Magenta Book](#) states that good policymaking necessitates a thorough understanding of the intervention and how it is expected to achieve the expected outcomes. Good evaluation also requires this understanding, and a theory of change is an approach which helps to ensure that the subject of an evaluation is fully understood.
- 3.2 A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to work (setting out all of the steps expected to be involved in achieving the desired outcomes), the assumptions made, the quality and strength of the evidence supporting them, and wider contextual factors.³ Developing a theory of change typically involves considering the proposed inputs (what investment/actions will take place) and the causal chain that leads from these inputs through to the expected outputs (what is delivered or produced), outcomes (the early or medium-term results), and, ultimately, impact (the long-term results).

Figure 3.1: An example of a linear theory of change

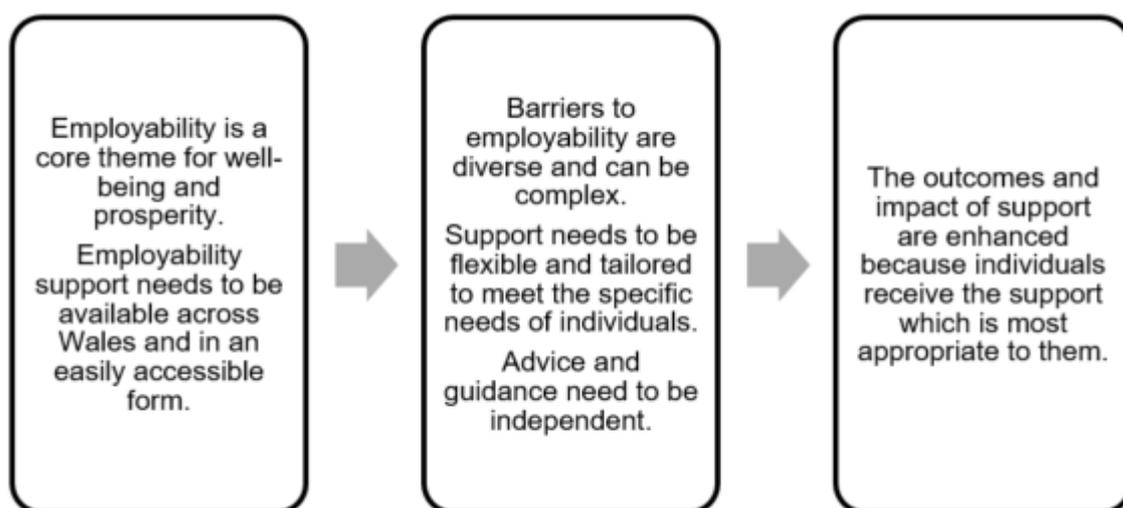


Source: The Magenta Book: Central Government Guidance on Evaluation

³ There are several tools that can be used to explore how an intervention is expected to work, often described as the 'programme theory'. These include a theory of change, logic mapping, log frames, benefits mapping, and system mapping. All of these processes involve the mapping of causes and effects. See Chapter 2 of the Magenta Book.

- 3.3 Drawing on insight gathered from the scoping interviews, the workshops with Welsh Government officials involved in the design, management and delivery of the service, and the engagement with partners and stakeholders, this chapter outlines a theory of change for the Working Wales service, beginning with a review of the rationale for Working Wales as an intervention.
- 3.4 An illustration of the theory of change can be found in Figure 3.2. In summary, however, we note that the theory of change for Working Wales is built on a relatively simple central logic, as illustrated below.

Figure 3.2: Central logic of the Working Wales theory of change



- 3.5 The discussion that follows and the theory of change shown in Figure 5.3 draw on two types of theory of change developed to explore Working Wales as an intervention, namely one from an activity and outcome perspective and one that began with the journey of participants. Illustrations of both models can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 3.1: A linear theory of change for Working Wales

<i>Within the control of Working Wales</i>			<i>Outside the control of Working Wales</i>	
Inputs →	Outputs (activities) →	Outcomes A →	Outcomes B →	Impacts
<p>The budget provided to Careers Wales to deliver the Working Wales service + allocation to the service from the Careers Wales core budget</p> <p>Welsh Government officials' input in a policy and management capacity</p> <p>External stakeholders' and partners' referrals to the service (e.g. DWP)</p>	<p>The number of individuals supported</p> <p>A wide range of individuals engage with the support — illustrating that barriers have been removed</p> <p>The amount and source of referrals/signposting</p> <p>The range of activities undertaken/support provided</p> <p>Outreach activities</p> <p>Stakeholder and partner engagement activities</p> <p>Marketing and promotional activities</p>	<p><i>For the service:</i></p> <p>The amount of referrals/signposting made</p> <p>The range of individuals being referred/signposted</p> <p>Improvement in the 'quality' of referrals/signposting (subjective)</p> <p><i>For the individual:</i></p> <p>Improved knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>a) Personal potential/capabilities</p> <p>b) Training and personal development opportunities</p> <p>c) Local employment opportunities</p> <p>d) Means of overcoming barriers to employment</p> <p>Leading to positive change in respect of:</p> <p>(a) Self-motivation</p> <p>(b) Self-confidence</p>	<p>Increase in the benefit that individuals gain from the further support/training undertaken (due to it being the right support for them, better motivation on the part of the individual, etc.)</p> <p>Possible indicators include an increase in the number/proportion completing training courses, etc.</p>	<p><i>Contributing to:</i></p> <p>A positive economic impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased labour market churn • Reduced unemployment • Reduced underemployment • Reduced economic inactivity • Increased productivity <p>A positive impact on levels of well-being</p> <p>Employability support is delivered more effectively and efficiently, improving the cost-benefit</p>

<i>Within the control of Working Wales</i>			<i>Outside the control of Working Wales</i>	
Inputs →	Outputs (activities) →	Outcomes A →	Outcomes B →	Impacts
<i>Assumptions, barriers and enablers →</i>	Ability to deliver the service as designed Demand for the services/support being provided Awareness of the service Ability to access	Ability to deliver the service as designed The availability of the training/support required (to refer/signpost to) The willingness of individuals to be referred/signposted Limitations in the ability of individuals to be referred/signposted	The quality of the training/support provided (to which Working Wales has referred/signposted)	The availability of appropriate jobs/opportunities
<i>External influences →</i>	Prevailing economic conditions General population health conditions (e.g. the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) Prevailing welfare and unemployment support structures (e.g. benefits regime, other employability schemes, etc.)			

Rationale

- 3.6 The primary role of Working Wales is to provide an all-Wales entry point to employability support via which individuals can access an enhanced needs assessment to identify the appropriate level of support required to meet their individual needs. Whilst Working Wales is ‘available to all’, several categories have been identified as being ‘most in need’ of Working Wales support, as listed in the introduction, which is an important element of the service.
- 3.7 The theory underpinning Working Wales sets out that:
- Employability is a core theme for well-being and prosperity
 - A new approach to employability (as set out in the Welsh Government’s Employability Plan) is to be smarter and more joined up to cut across traditional boundaries, both inside and outside of government, and reduce duplication
 - As barriers to employability are diverse and can be complex in their interaction, early intervention and personalised advice and guidance, as well as practical support, can make a significant difference
 - To reflect such complexity, employment-focused support needs to be flexible and appropriate to individual circumstances. Moreover, support needs to be coherent so that individuals can access and navigate the range of interventions.
- 3.8 The vast majority of those interviewed for the scoping interviews described the rationale for the Working Wales service as being clear and strong. Only a small minority of interviewees were negative towards the rationale for the service, raising concerns surrounding meeting the substantial demand likely for the service being provided without compromising on the quality of the service. Specifically, a small minority expressed concern regarding the availability of the necessary number of qualified staff to deliver the service should the demand be very high. (It should be noted that these comments were made before the COVID-19 pandemic, which is likely to increase the demand for support.)
- 3.9 The concerns, therefore, were not about the rationale for the intervention but about its deliverability and, specifically (to use theory of change terminology), the availability of the ‘input’ required. The concerns also identify one of the key assumptions within Working Wales — that sufficient resource is available to meet the demand for the service effectively and efficiently.

Inputs

- 3.10 Funding of just over £9m per annum is provided by the Welsh Government to Careers Wales for the management and delivery of Working Wales. In addition, £1.7m per annum is allocated to the delivery of the service from within the Careers Wales core budget. That funding is specifically allocated to:
- All activities with 16–17-year-olds NEET
 - All activities with year 11/12 school leavers who plan to progress to employment or training
 - All activities with young people in secure estates
- 3.11 Working Wales is delivered by a team of 209.3 FTE staff (including 35.5 FTE staff funded via the Careers Wales core budget). Organised on a regional basis, the positions within the team are shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Working Wales staff titles and number

Staff/Role	FTE Total Staff
Head of Employment Advice	1.00
Operational Development Managers	3.93
Working Wales Project Manager	1.00
Working Wales Strategy Manager	0.80
Team Managers	11.80
Careers Advisors	119.63
Employability Coaches	36.79
Admin Assistants	24.17
Senior Systems Developer	1.00
Senior Management Information Services Officer	1.00
Marketing Senior Co-Ordinator	1.00
Stakeholder Engagement Managers	4.00
Learning & Development Co-Ordinator	1.00
Careers Wales Connect Team Manager	0.60
Marketing Co-Ordinator	0.40
Information Co-Ordinator / Content Lead	0.20
Technical Data Checker	1.00
Total	209.32

Source: Careers Wales

- 3.12 Services are provided at careers centres as well as in outreach locations. Online/digital services are also provided, which require input in respect of hosting, etc.

3.13 However, the service also requires input from outside of Careers Wales to operate. This includes the time of several Welsh Government officials in a policy and management capacity. Importantly, external stakeholders and partners also provide input in the form of referrals to the service.

Outputs (the activities undertaken)

3.14 The principal output for the Working Wales service is the number of individuals supported via the range of activities undertaken, which include:

- Face-to-face support in a range of settings
- Support for individuals via telephone and video (especially since the COVID-19 lockdowns)
- Group sessions (including rapid response to redundancy situations)
- Web chats
- A range of digital services

3.15 We are, however, also interested in the characteristics of the individuals supported and, particularly, in the extent to which Working Wales is engaging with the specific groups within the population that have been targeted by the service and is helping to overcome barriers to engaging with employability support.^{4 5}

3.16 Extensive partner and stakeholder engagement activities are also undertaken as well as a range of marketing and promotional activities (which generate outputs including the number of engagement activities and so on). The core output is, however, the number (and types) of individuals supported.

Outcomes (the results of the activities)

3.17 Outcomes represent what happens as a result of the activities being undertaken. For Working Wales, there are two specific types of outcomes (which are discussed below). Firstly, there are the outcomes for the Working Wales service; secondly, there are the outcomes for the individuals that are being supported.

⁴ For ease of reference, those groups are: individuals who are economically inactive, unemployed, not in education, employment or training (NEET), underemployed, under notice of redundancy, disabled, in custody within a secure prison estate, in custody but due for release, and offenders serving sentences in the community.

⁵ This analysis will draw on personal information that Working Wales customers provide. The provision of that data is, however, voluntary (which will need to be taken into account when the analysis is undertaken).

For the service

- 3.18 At a service level, the amount of referrals and/or signposting made by Working Wales to subsequent support and the number of individuals being referred are important outcomes (reflecting the fact that individuals can be referred more than once or to more than one service). Furthermore, we are interested in the types of referrals/signposting being made (the type of course, etc.) and the characteristics of the individuals being referred.⁶
- 3.19 There is also interest in the ‘quality’ of the outcome, as this is a key element of the rationale for Working Wales. An anticipated outcome of Working Wales is that the approach being adopted means that individuals are referred to the most appropriate/effective support to address their particular/specific needs. However, assessing whether or not this is the case (i.e. defining the quality of the referral) is difficult, as it is not easy to establish what the referral would have been had the Working Wales service not been in place (i.e. to establish the counterfactual).
- 3.20 As set out in the evaluation framework later in this report, it is, however, an outcome that the evaluation will seek to explore by assessing the ‘quality’ of the referral being made from several different perspectives, including that of the participant being supported and the organisation to whom the referral was made.
- 3.21 A further outcome is that the introduction of Working Wales should break down barriers to accessing employability services that some groups may experience via, for example, outreach activities. This should lead to a reduction in the exclusion of individuals/groups from the provision of employability support, particularly those groups identified within the service design as being ‘targeted’.

For the individual

- 3.22 Several outcomes for the individual being supported are identified within the theory of change that are generated by — as a result of the support provided — improved knowledge and understanding of:

⁶ It is important to note that we are differentiating between ‘referrals’ and ‘signposting’. The Working Wales programme will refer individuals to other Welsh Government programmes or to further support that can be provided from within the service. Individuals are signposted to programmes and support which are provided by third parties.

- a) Personal potential/capabilities (strengths, weaknesses, etc.)
- b) Opportunities in respects of (i) the labour/job market and (ii) training/personal development support
- c) Means of overcoming any barriers to employment that may exist.

3.23 This improved knowledge and understanding then lead to positive changes in the individuals in terms of what are often referred to as ‘soft outcomes’, specifically:

- a) Motivation (due to understanding the opportunities, potential, etc.)
- b) Self-confidence (for the same reasons)

3.24 This should, in turn, lead to an increase in the benefit that individuals gain from the further support/training that they undertake. This is because they are receiving and/or undertaking the support that is best or most appropriate to their needs. Furthermore, they will be more motivated because they better understand the value of the support/training that they are undertaking. This is identified in Figure 3.3 as Outcome B.

Impact (the longer-term results)

3.25 The impact that Working Wales is designed *to contribute towards* is the achievement of Welsh Government policy objectives in respects of employability, economic development, and well-being, as set out in the policy context section within the introduction to this report. It does so by analysing the needs of individuals and referring them to the most appropriate support to address their needs, thereby generating a positive impact. What the theory of change shows, however, is that those impacts cannot be achieved by Working Wales in isolation. Subsequent interventions are required in order to address the needs that have been identified.

3.26 The ‘final outcome’ that Working Wales can directly influence is the making of the referral as well as the quality of the referral, as discussed in the previous section. The key role that Working Wales plays within that ‘bigger picture’ is clear. The outcomes that Working Wales is designed to achieve will directly contribute to the following impacts:

- Individuals achieve their potential, thereby increasing their economic prosperity
- Employment outcomes lead to well-being outcomes for the individuals concerned and for society as a whole

3.27 The fact that Working Wales cannot achieve these impacts in isolation (and, therefore, cannot be judged solely on whether or not these impacts are being observed) is, however, an important point.

- 3.28 A further impact from a service management perspective is that Working Wales, by enhancing the quality of the referrals and/or signposting, should lead to the delivery of a more effective and more efficient employability programme of support in Wales. If individuals are receiving the support that is most appropriate (and, thereby, most effective) to them, this should lead to a reduced need for support/intervention in the future, thereby reducing the cost to the public sector in the future.
- 3.29 It is also important to note that Working Wales will signpost individuals to non-employability services when appropriate. These could include housing support, health-related support, and so on, meaning that Working Wales has a role beyond employability support.

Key assumptions, enablers and barriers

- 3.30 The development of the theory of change for Working Wales has identified several important assumptions, key enablers, and barriers that need to be overcome if Working Wales is to achieve the desired outcomes and impact.
- 3.31 Perhaps the most important assumption is that the type of support which the Working Wales team identifies as being required is available — i.e. that a referral/signposting can be made to the type of support that is identified as being needed and that, if available, it is of the appropriate quality.
- 3.32 This underlines the fact that Working Wales is only part of a broader intervention that needs to be in place to generate the impact that Welsh Government employability policy is seeking to achieve. The first part (Working Wales) will not be effective (in terms of generating the desired impact) without the second part (the provision of training, etc.). Ensuring that the latter is in place and effective is, therefore, very important.
- 3.33 There is also an assumption that (a) there is a demand for the type of support that Working Wales is providing and (b) individuals will be able to access the support that is being provided. There will be barriers that some individuals and groups will need to overcome to be able to access the service, and marketing and outreach activities are identified as key 'enablers' in that respect.
- 3.34 The marketing and outreach elements of the service are designed on the basis that the demand exists and that there are individuals and/or groups that are seeking support but did not, before the introduction of Working Wales, access it. If this is not the case, there would be no need for marketing or outreach activities. This is

something that the evaluation can examine by exploring how customers became aware of and engaged with Working Wales.

- 3.35 Linked to the aforementioned is the assumption that the inputs being provided (specifically the resources available within Careers Wales) are sufficient to meet the demand for support (without having to compromise on the quality of the service). As noted previously in this chapter, there was a concern amongst a small minority of those participating in the scoping interviews that this may not be the case, which will be an important issue for the evaluation to explore.
- 3.36 Similarly, there is an assumption that a service which is of an appropriate standard can be provided and sustained by the Working Wales team. The theory of change relies on a high-quality service being provided, which effectively assesses the individual needs of each participant. Maintaining the standard of the service and quality control will therefore need to be a key element of the delivery of Working Wales. This includes maintaining high levels of awareness and understanding of local labour market conditions and the training which is available for the individuals being supported by Working Wales.
- 3.37 Developing and maintaining links with local partners and stakeholders is identified as a key enabler within the theory of change for this reason. Those stakeholders include Regional Skills Partnerships, the DWP, JCP, local authorities, employability support projects across Wales, and so on.
- 3.38 The influence that the prevailing economic conditions will have on Working Wales is also important to note here. As discussed in Chapter 5, the economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions put in place to control the virus has had an impact on both participant numbers and the types of customers, with an increase in the number of customers engaging due to their being made redundant.
- 3.39 There will also be other factors going forward which are likely to have an impact on the ecosystem or context in which Working Wales operates and its 'performance'. These include the longer-term impact of Brexit on the economy and the labour market, changes in the support available to individuals as ESF funding comes to an end, and the introduction of new interventions (including interventions being managed from outside of Wales). The final point is particularly important and there is already an example of such a change with the introduction of the [Kickstart](#)

[Scheme](#) at a UK-wide level in 2020 in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷ Such programmes will have an impact on Working Wales in terms of, for example, participant numbers and individuals who may be supported by that scheme as opposed to engaging with Working Wales. The evaluation will therefore need to take such factors into account.

Conclusion

- 3.40 The principal finding with respect to the process of developing a theory of change for Working Wales is that the theory is relatively simple and robust. The focus is on the number (and types) of customers of the service, the amount (and types) of referrals, as well as signposting, being made, and the benefits of participating in Working Wales to the individuals (customers) concerned.
- 3.41 There is also an interest in the ‘quality’ of the outcome that Working Wales generates, as this is a key element of the rationale for the service. Are individuals being referred and signposted to the most appropriate/effective support to address their particular/specific needs? This will be more challenging to evaluate, albeit very important.
- 3.42 The process has also found that Working Wales will (if the theory of change is realised) make a positive contribution to achieving economic impacts relating to employability. Importantly, the service cannot, however, achieve those impacts in isolation, being reliant on the effective delivery of training and development support (to which it refers in terms of achieving a positive impact). This is the key assumption within the theory — that the support to which individuals are referred is available and effective.

⁷ Introduced by the DWP in September 2020, the Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16–24-year-olds on Universal Credit. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

4. Analysis of Service Monitoring Information

Key points

The analysis in this chapter covers the whole of Year 1 of the service (April 2019 to March 2020) and covers Year 2 up to the end of December 2020.

Year 1 (April 2019 to March 2020)

- The number of new adult customers per month regularly topped 2,000.
- There were more than 17,000 new adult customers who were unemployed when they joined, with just over eight per cent under notice of redundancy.
- Between 100 and 200 unemployed young people were joining per month.
- During Year 1, 23,731 adult customers and 5,630 young customers were referred to further support.
- Working Wales were offering support in approximately 110 outreach centres (including their own centres) until the first lockdown on 23rd March 2020.
- There were more than 37,000 face-to-face interactions with adults, constituting 55 per cent of all direct interactions with adults.
- Nearly 60 per cent of direct interactions with youth customers were carried out face to face — equivalent to 6,700 face-to-face interactions.
- Nearly 115,000 texts and 16,000 emails were sent to adult customers.
- More than 114,000 unique users accessed the Working Wales microsite.
- More than 12,000 (or 46 per cent of) adult referrals were self-referrals. Referrals from Jobcentre Plus accounted for 36 per cent of all referrals (or 9,631 referrals).
- Half of all youth customer referrals to Working Wales were self-referrals, equivalent to nearly 2,700 referrals. Nearly 1,500 referrals (or 27 per cent of all referrals) were from the Careers Wales Education Team.
- Twenty-one per cent of (or nearly 7,000) referrals for adult customers from Working Wales went to self-help, with another 12 per cent going to ReAct III and seven per cent being referred to the STEPs Programme. Nineteen per cent of (or 6,440) customers required no further support.
- For youth customers, 32 per cent of referrals from Working Wales were to traineeships. More than 1,000 youth customers were referred to apprenticeships (or 11 per cent of all referrals).

Year 2 (April 2020 to December 2020)

- There was a reduction in new adult customers at the beginning of Year 2, but numbers started to increase again during the summer of 2020. New youth customer numbers per month followed a similar pattern.
- There was an increase of new adult customers who were under notice of redundancy after the first lockdown at the beginning of Year 2, with a peak during July 2020.
- Adult customers were more impacted by the first lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) than were youth customers.
- Face-to-face interactions and group session interactions were hardly used during and after the lockdown due to Careers Wales centres not being open, but there was a significant increase in telephone interactions.
- In terms of indirect interactions, text use decreased in the second year, while the use of emails increased.
- Referrals to all types of provision from Working Wales decreased in the first few months of Year 2. However, there was subsequently a steady recovery in the numbers referred.
- Engagement-level traineeships for youth customers increased from 24 per cent in Year 1 to 58 per cent in Year 2.

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter provides an overview of the monitoring data for the Working Wales service for the periods April 2019 to March 2020 (Year 1 of the service) and April 2020 to December 2020, with the latter representing two thirds of Year 2 of the service.
- 4.2 When considering the figures for Year 1 and Year 2 (to date), the restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic must be taken into account. These have impacted the number of customers and the type of support being provided during Year 2 to date. Caution is therefore necessary when interpreting and making any comparisons of the data. Presenting the data side by side is, however, preferable because it clearly demonstrates how the service has changed as a result of the pandemic, which is important from an evaluative perspective. No judgements are made based on the changes in the data from Year 1 to Year 2.

4.3 For ease of reference, the initial COVID-19-related lockdown in Wales started on 23rd March 2020 and lasted until 1st June. There was an easing of restrictions from 1st June to 7th September before a reversal of the easing from 7th September to 19th October but with 'local lockdowns' being introduced in various parts of Wales. A national 'circuit breaker' was introduced from 23rd October to 9th November, with Wales returning into lockdown on 20th December 2020 (which remained the case at the time of writing).

Number of customers

4.4 The cumulative number of Working Wales customers supported during Year 1 (April 2019 to March 2020) was 35,485, and in Year 2 was 20,189⁸ (April 2020 up to the end of December 2020).

4.5 During Year 1, the number of new adult customers per month regularly topped 2,000. There was a reduction in new adult customers at the beginning of Year 2, but the numbers started to increase again during the summer of 2020 (see Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1a and 4.1b). New youth customer numbers per month followed a similar pattern to those of adults (see Figures 4.2a and 4.2b). The number of prisoners receiving one-to-one support per month from Working Wales advisors decreased significantly during Year 2. This was because Working Wales were not allowed in the prisons and because restrictions were imposed on digital interventions (see Figures 4.3a and 4.3b).

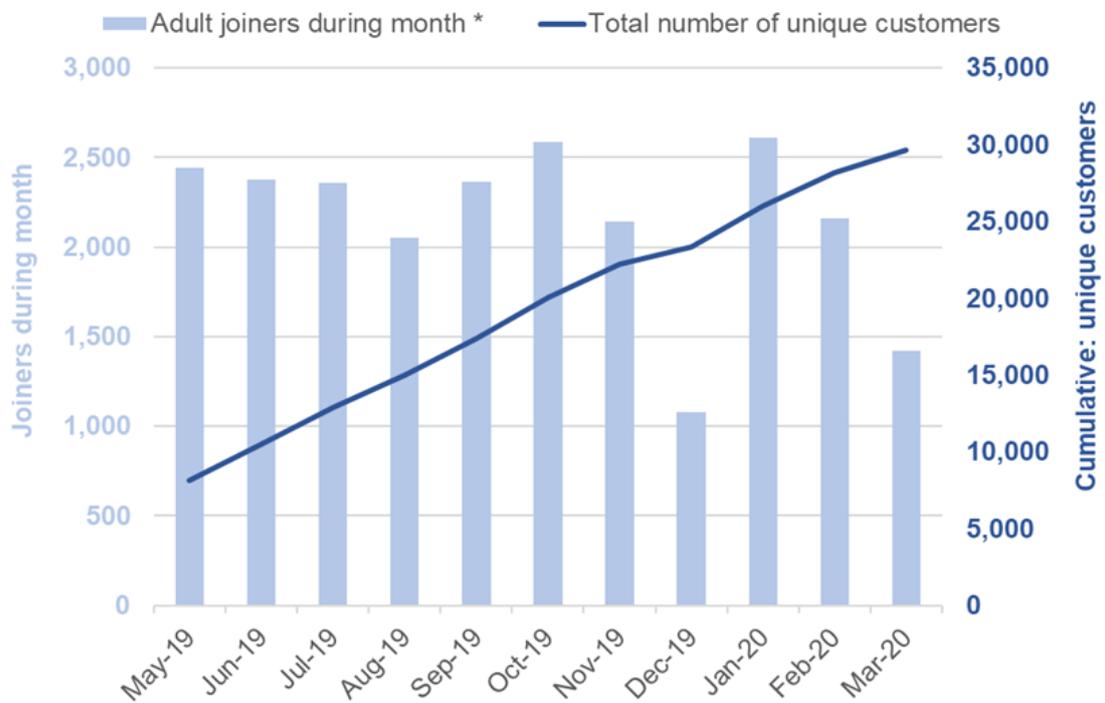
⁸ A cumulative total of 20,189 unique customers accessed Working Wales support during the period between 1st April 2020 and 31st December 2020. Of this figure, a total of 15,808 adults and 4,381 young people accessed support. It is important to note that the total figures for this period for both adults and young people include existing customers ('stayers') who were already accessing support prior to 1st April 2020, together with new customers ('joiners') accessing support during the period between 1st April 2020 and 31st December 2020.

Table 4.1: Total number of unique customers accessing support by year

Customer Group	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)
Adult	29,618	15,808
Of which, adult prison service	1,084	121
Youth	5,867	4,381

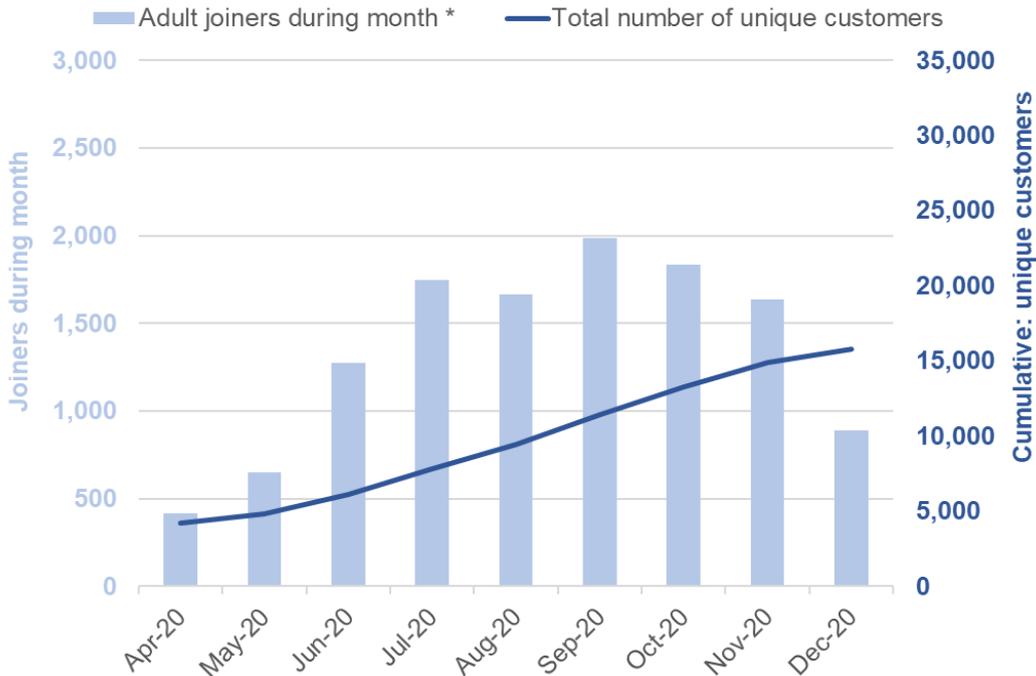
Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.1a: Cumulative number of adult Working Wales customers and adult joiners per month, Year 1



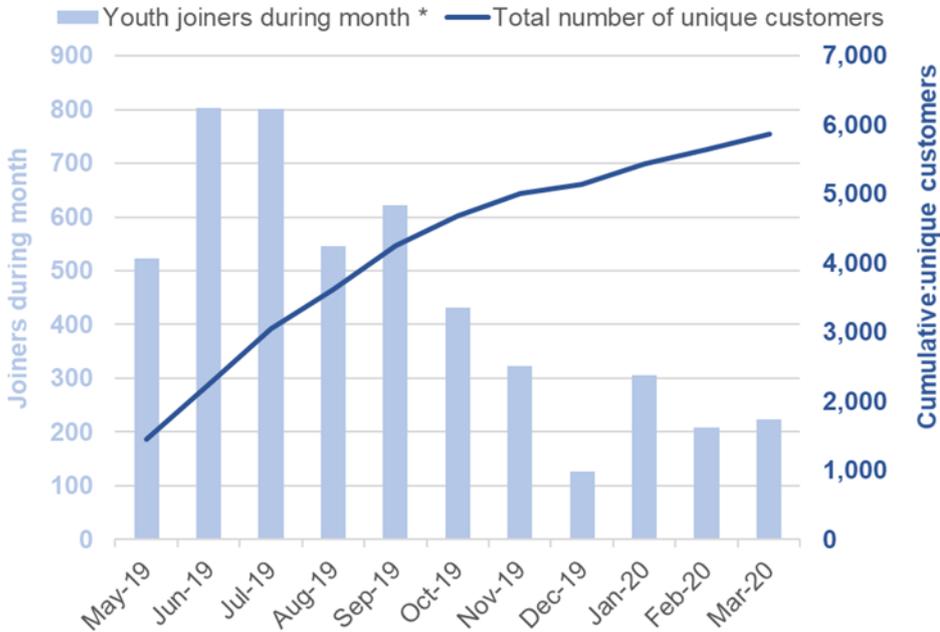
* Joiners during month could contain repeat customers
 Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.1b: Cumulative number of adult Working Wales customers and adult joiners per month, Year 2



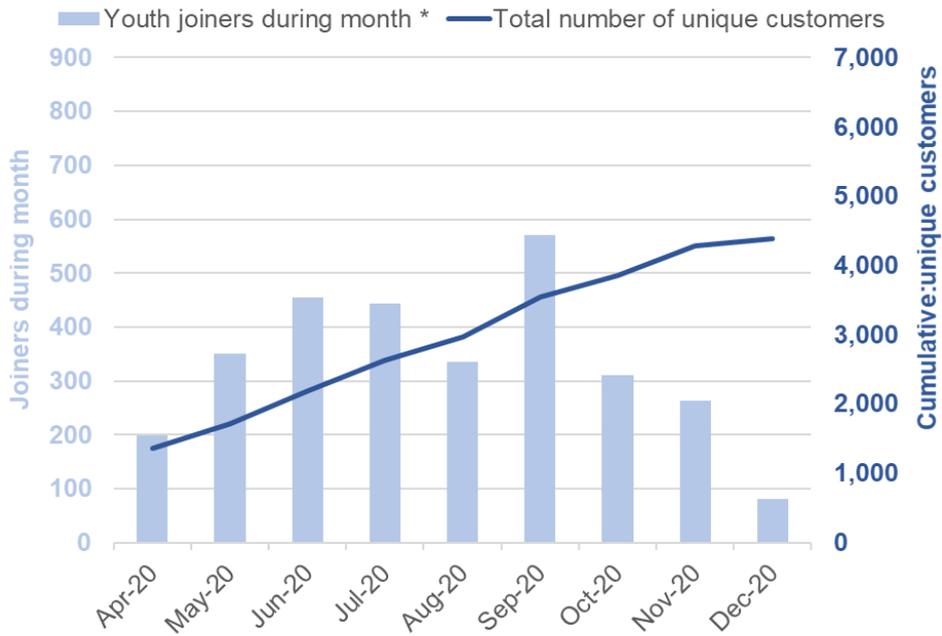
* Joiners during month could contain repeat customers
 Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.2a: Cumulative number of youth Working Wales customers and youth joiners per month, Year 1



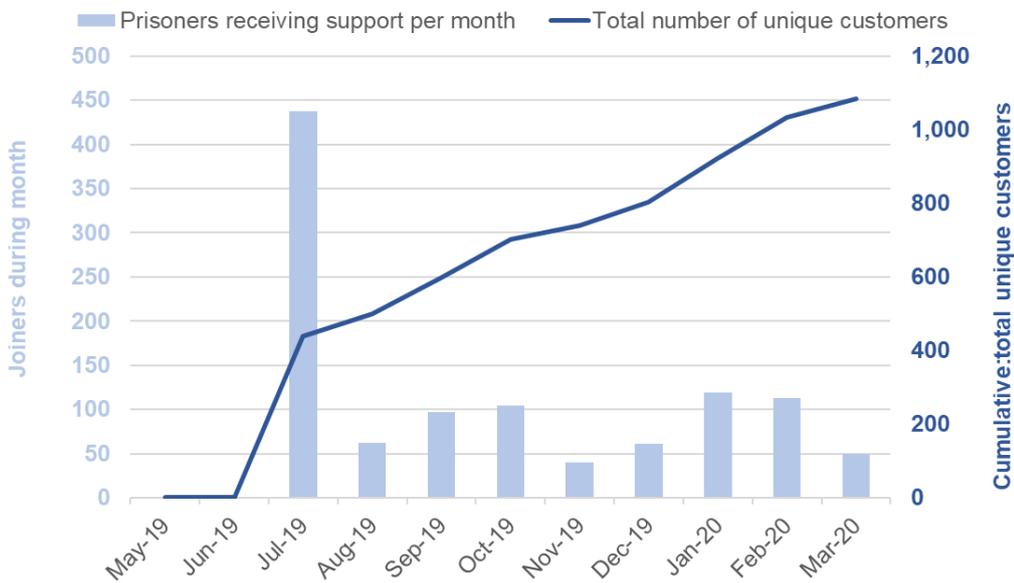
* Joiners during month could contain repeat customers
 Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.2b: Cumulative number of youth Working Wales customers and youth joiners per month, Year 2



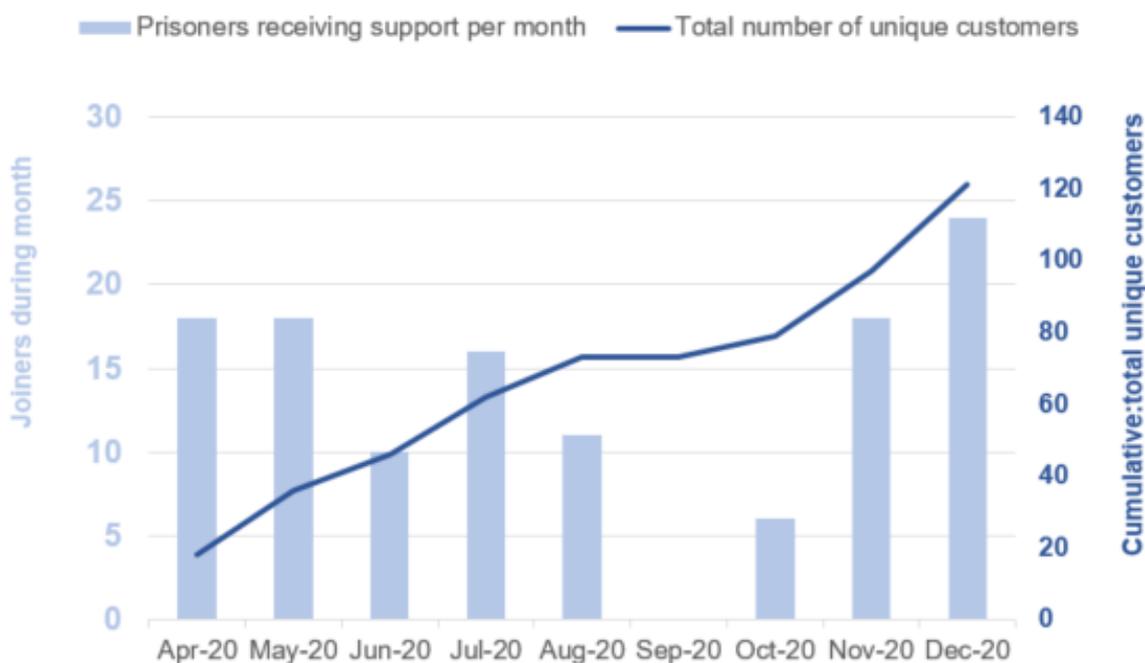
* Joiners during month could contain repeat customers
 Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.3a: Cumulative number of prisoners receiving one-to-one support and numbers per month (prisoners are included in the totals for adults), Year 1



Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.3b: Cumulative number of prisoners receiving one-to-one support and numbers per month (prisoners are included in the totals for adults), Year 2



Source: Careers Wales

Status of new adult customers

- 4.6 During Year 1, there were more than 17,000 new adult customers who were unemployed when they joined. After a reduction in April 2020, the number of adult customers who were unemployed started to rise again from May 2020 up to September 2020 but did not reach the peak in Year 1. Overall, two thirds of customers were unemployed — the proportion in Year 2 (to date) is higher than in Year 1 (see Table 4.2).
- 4.7 In Year 1, just over eight per cent of new adult customers were under notice of redundancy. There was an increase in customers after the first lockdown (starting in June 2020) for those who were under notice of redundancy, with a peak during July 2020 (Figure 4.4). Thus far, in Year 2, the proportion under notice of redundancy is 12.6 per cent. The introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (better known as the ‘furlough scheme’)⁹ has reduced the number of potential redundancies, but there may be further customers holding this status once the scheme comes to an end nearer the end of 2021.

⁹ On 20th March 2020 the UK Government announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The purpose of the Scheme is to provide grants to employers to ensure that they can retain and continue to pay staff, despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

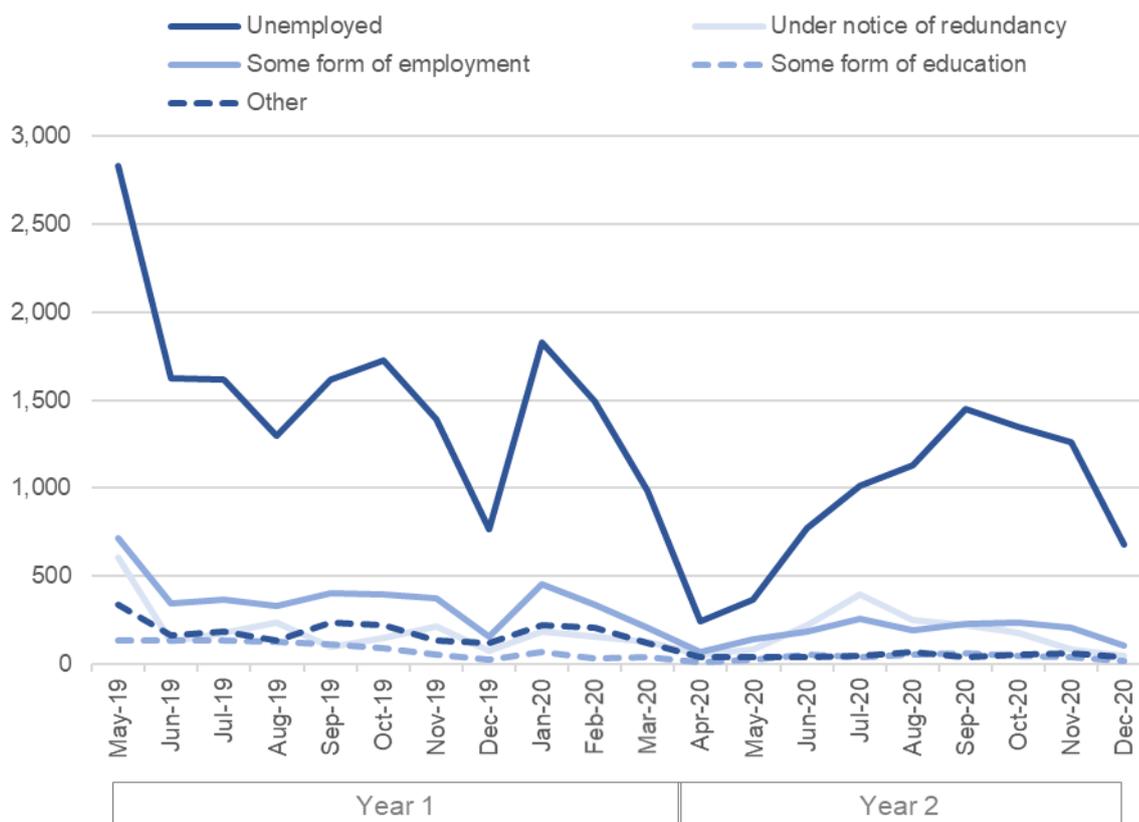
4.8 During Year 1, Working Wales engaged not only with a large number of unemployed customers and those who were under notice of redundancy but also with those who were further away from the labour market, e.g. more than 1,000 customers who were not available for education, employment or training (EET) for various reasons and more than 500 customers who were economically inactive (which could be because of health or disability issues or because of caring duties, amongst other reasons).

Table 4.2: Status of new adult customers by year

Status	Year 1		Year 2		Total	
	(April '19 – March '20)		(April '20 – Dec '20)			
Unemployed	17,189	64.9%	8,275	67.7%	25,464	65.8%
Under notice of redundancy	2,151	8.1%	1,540	12.6%	3,691	9.5%
Employed full-time	2,418	9.1%	1,019	8.3%	3,437	8.9%
Employed part-time	1,474	5.6%	477	3.9%	1,951	5.0%
Not available for EET	1,103	4.2%	137	1.1%	1,240	3.2%
Full-time further education	799	3.0%	305	2.5%	1,104	2.9%
Economically inactive	561	2.1%	146	1.2%	707	1.8%
Other WG employability/skills programme	310	1.2%	105	0.9%	415	1.1%
Self-employed	205	0.8%	128	1.0%	333	0.9%
Higher education	116	0.4%	35	0.3%	151	0.4%
Part-time further education	51	0.2%	8	0.1%	59	0.2%
Resides outside of Wales	4	0.0%	2	0.0%	6	0.0%
Total	26,480		12,225		38,705	

Note: The totals include those with an invalid status: 99 in Year 1 and 48 in Year 2
Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.4: Status of new adult customers per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

Source: Careers Wales

Status of new youth customers (15–17)

- 4.9 In Year 1, nearly 2,000 youth customers were in KS4 education¹⁰, constituting 37 per cent of all new youth customers. Another 26 per cent were unemployed, while 19 per cent were in full-time further education. Moreover, there was engagement with more than 300 young people who had additional barriers and were not available for EET or were economically inactive.
- 4.10 During June 2019, more than 500 young people in KS4 education were seen. The numbers per month decreased thereafter, but there was an increase in customers who were in KS4 education between February 2020 and March 2020. However, the numbers decreased substantially during the summer of 2020, which would generally be the case during the summer months (see Figure 4.5).

¹⁰ These are young people who are planning to leave education at the age of 16 and to whom the Working Wales service has been delivered whilst in school.

- 4.11 Between 100 and 200 unemployed young people were joining per month in Year 1, which lasted until the last few months of Year 1 (when the numbers fell below 100). The numbers were lower during the first half of 2020 before increasing again and reaching a peak in September 2020, with the numbers higher than before the lockdown. This is a different pattern from that of adults who were unemployed when joining, with higher peaks in Year 1. However, this can be attributed to 9,000 more adult customers in Year 1 than in Year 2.
- 4.12 Roughly 100 youth customers who were in full-time further education joined per month during Year 1. Thus far, in Year 2, the monthly numbers of youth customers who were in full-time further education have been down but started to increase towards the end of 2020.

Table 4.3: Status of new youth customers (15–17) by year

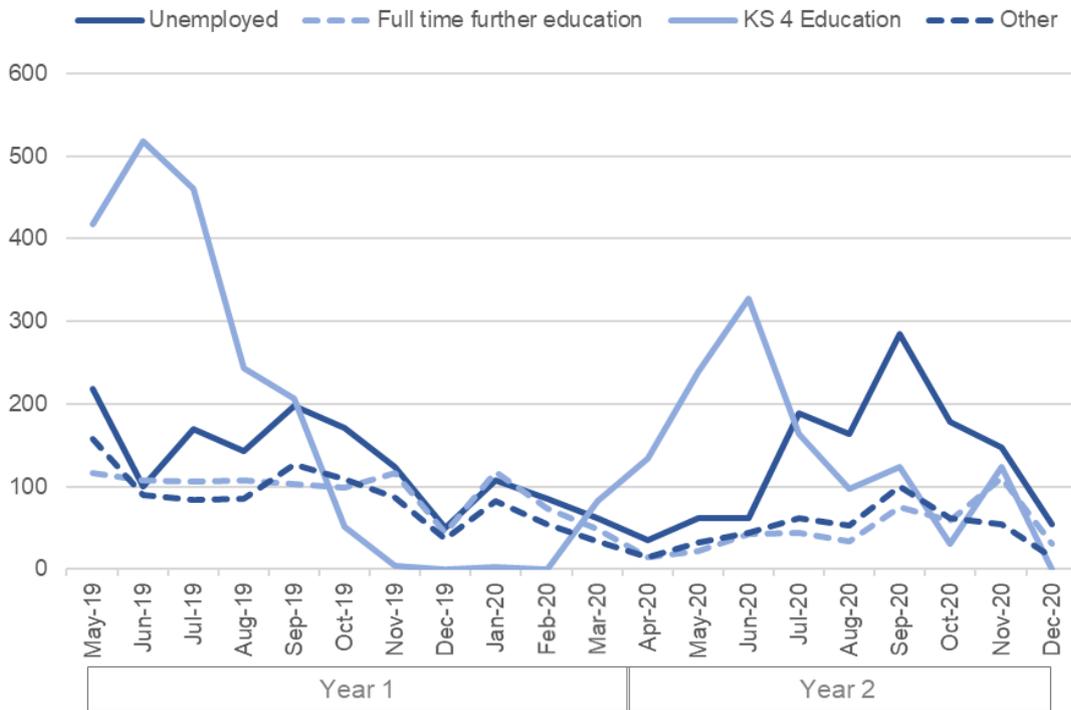
Status	Year 1		Year 2		Total	
	(April '19 – March '20)		(April '20 – Dec '20)			
KS4 education	1,985	37%	1,238	38%	3,223	37%
Unemployed	1,429	26%	1,177	36%	2,606	30%
Full-time further education	1,038	19%	430	13%	1,468	17%
Other WG employability or skills programme	325	6%	124	4%	448	5%
Not available for EET	219	4%	113	3%	332	4%
Employed full-time	129	2%	50	2%	179	2%
Economically inactive	99	2%	63	2%	162	2%
Employed part-time	109	2%	51	2%	160	2%
Invalid status	44	1%	25	1%	69	1%
Resides outside of Wales	13	0%	7	0%	20	0%

Status	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total
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Part-time further education	6	0%	2	0%	8	0%
Self-employed	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
Under notice of redundancy	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Total	5,398		3,281		8,679	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.5: Status of new youth customers (15–17) per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

Source: Careers Wales

Referrals to further support

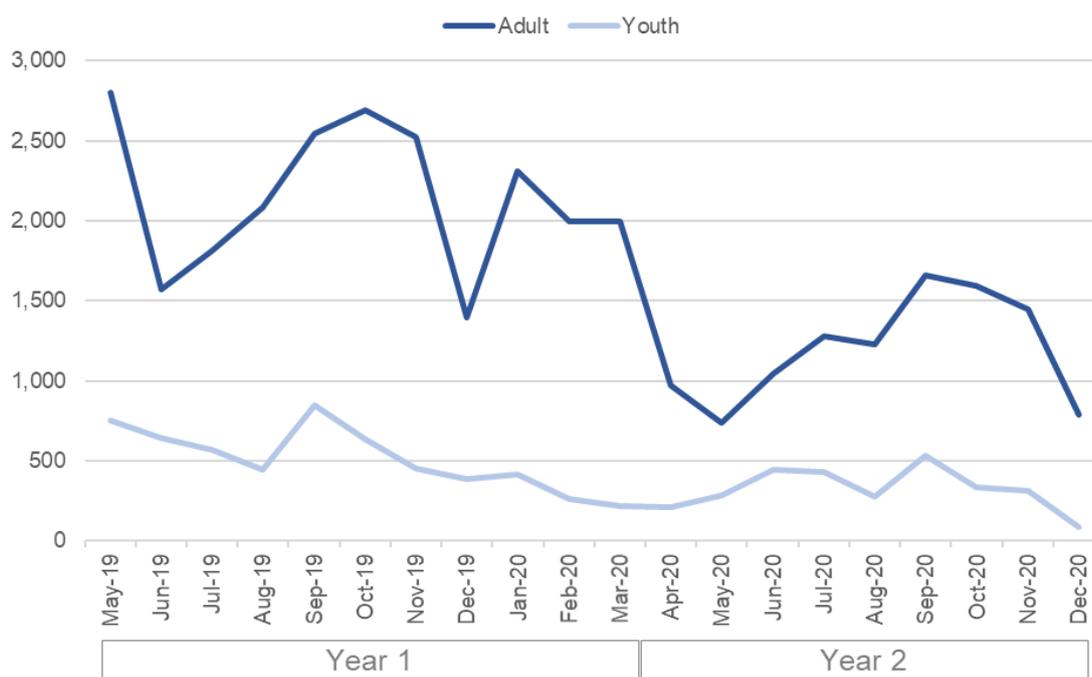
- 4.13 During Year 1, 23,731 adult customers and 5,630 youth customers were referred to further support.
- 4.14 The service for adult customers was more impacted by the first pandemic-related lockdown than was that for younger customers. There was a significant reduction in referrals during April 2020 in comparison to the previous month (see Figure 4.6). Table 4.4 shows that, percentage-wise, the proportion of total referrals that were adults has decreased slightly from 81 per cent in Year 1 to 79 per cent in Year 2 (to date). The reduction in adult referrals is due to the reduction in customers during Year 2, whereas the impact of the lockdown is less visible for youth customers, as they have the option to remain in school.
- 4.15 Referral numbers started to increase again in June 2020 but did not reach the numbers achieved before the lockdown. There was a further reduction in referrals during the Christmas holiday period (see Figure 4.6).

Table 4.4: Total number of customers referred to further support by year

Customer Group	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	%	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec' 20)	%	Total Referrals	%
Adult	23,731	81%	10,758	79%	34,489	80%
Youth	5,630	19%	2,910	21%	8,540	20%
Total	29,361		13,668		43,029	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.6: Number of customers referred to further support per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Provision of service

Where adult and youth customers were seen

- 4.16 During Year 1, Working Wales were offering support in approximately 110 outreach centres (including the Careers Wales centres). However, from 23rd March 2020 they were able to offer a digital-only service, and customers were no longer seen at Jobcentres. Other premises also witnessed a reduction in interactions (such as employer premises and prisons).
- 4.17 Careers Wales centres began to open when the lockdown eased but there was no return to any outreach provision. The majority of cases from April 2020 have been digitally delivered interactions with customers by Working Wales advisors and, in order to ensure robust monitoring of the service, advisors have been instructed to record their telephone appointments and interactions against their base office. Therefore, the majority of Year 2 interactions recorded in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.7 (for adults) against Careers Wales by advisors were via telephone or other digital channels. The same is true for Table 4.6 and Figure 4.7 (showing youth provision).
- 4.18 There was a significant increase in the number of customers when lockdown rules were relaxed during the summer, but it decreased again during the Christmas holiday period (which also coincided with the lockdown introduced on 20th

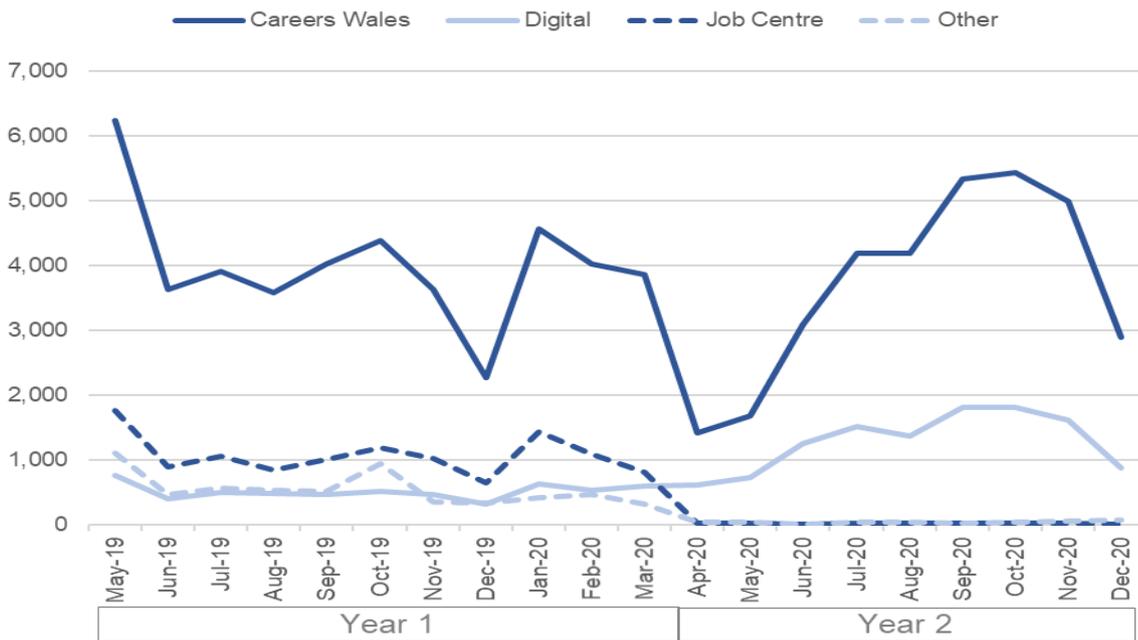
December). Interactions via digital services witnessed a steady increase after the initial lockdown in April, before a decrease in December 2020.

Table 4.5: Where adult customers were supported by Working Wales by year

Where Seen	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
Careers Wales	44,170	65%	33,283	73%	77,453	68%
Digital	5,727	8%	11,649	26%	17,376	15%
Jobcentre	11,811	17%	242	1%	12,053	11%
Other	6,037	9%	407	1%	6,444	6%
Total	67,745		45,581		113,326	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.7: Where adult customers were supported by Working Wales per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

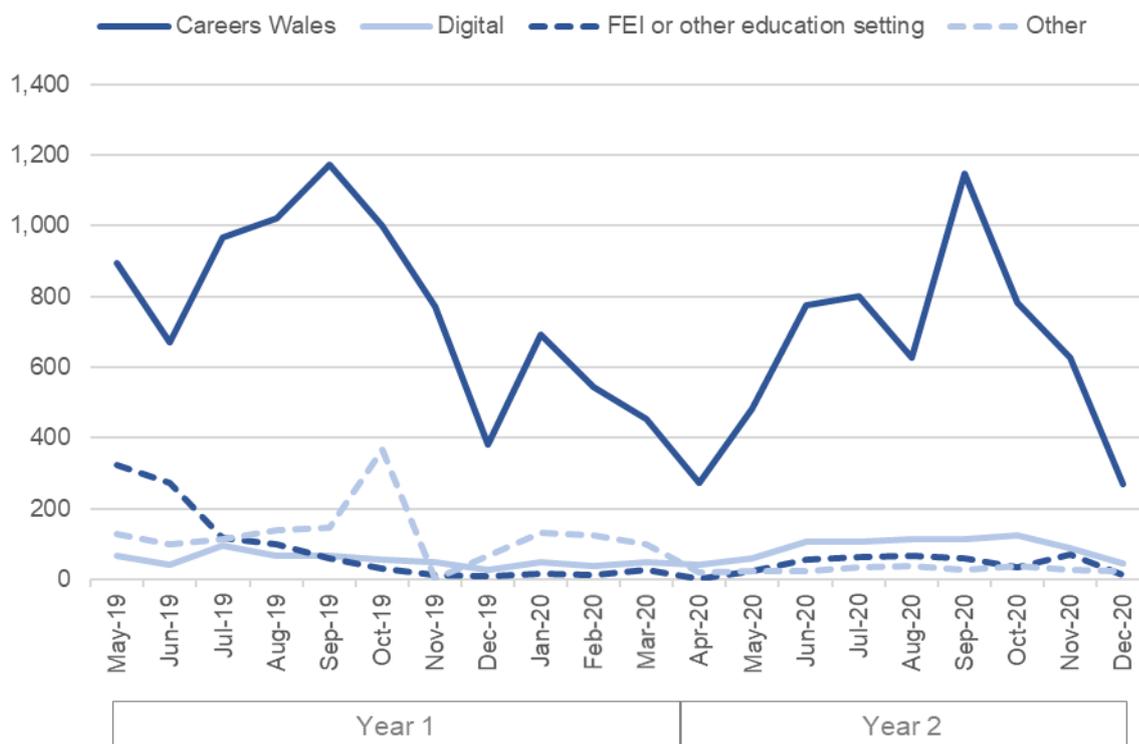
Source: Careers Wales

Table 4.6: Where youth customers (15–17) were supported by Working Wales by year

Where Seen	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Careers Wales	8,567	75%	5,782	80%	14,349	77%
Digital	604	5%	795	11%	1,399	7%
FEI or other educational setting	980	9%	386	5%	1,366	7%
Other	1,315	11%	251	3%	1,566	8%
Total	11,466		7,214		18,680	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.8: Where youth customers (15–17) were supported by Working Wales per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

Source: Careers Wales

Type of interaction for adult customers¹¹

- 4.19 Working Wales' customer interactions are divided into 'direct' and 'indirect' interactions.
- 4.20 A direct interaction will involve substantial two-way communication between the customer and the advisor, both of whom are simultaneously present, e.g. face-to-face, telephone or video chat. Meanwhile, an indirect interaction will usually be one-way, e.g. an email or text message sent. Texts and emails are counted as 'direct' if there has been a substantial two-way exchange.
- 4.21 A direct interaction involves support targeted towards a specific customer or customers, e.g. a guidance interview, or a group session to improve a customer's interview skills. Meanwhile, an indirect interaction may be targeted towards a specific customer in some cases (e.g. reminding a customer that they have a job interview on the following day) or may be concerned with more general information (e.g. texting 100 unemployed customers at once to tell them that a local employer is having a recruitment event).
- 4.22 A direct interaction will always be one in which the customer is present (albeit sometimes virtually) and actively participating, while indirect interactions will also include supporting activities that the advisor carries out in which the customer is not present (e.g. advocacy/liaison-type activities such as phoning a number of training providers to find one that can provide a particular course or emailing a college to advocate on a customer's behalf).
- 4.23 A direct interaction always indicates the time spent supporting a customer. Meanwhile, an indirect interaction may be support, may be concerned with 'keeping in touch' (e.g. to confirm that a customer still wants support following a missed appointment), or may be that of attempted contact (e.g. leaving a voicemail message).
- 4.24 A direct interaction will always have a duration associated with it, whereas indirect interactions generally do not have a duration (as they may be with many customers at the same time), with the exception of advocacy/liaison work.

¹¹ Data is missing on the intensity of the interactions of advisors with customers. The time spent with WW customers has increased; therefore, even when the numbers were low, the intensity of the interactions was much higher for the advisor. Data will be gathered on this for future MI reporting.

Direct interactions

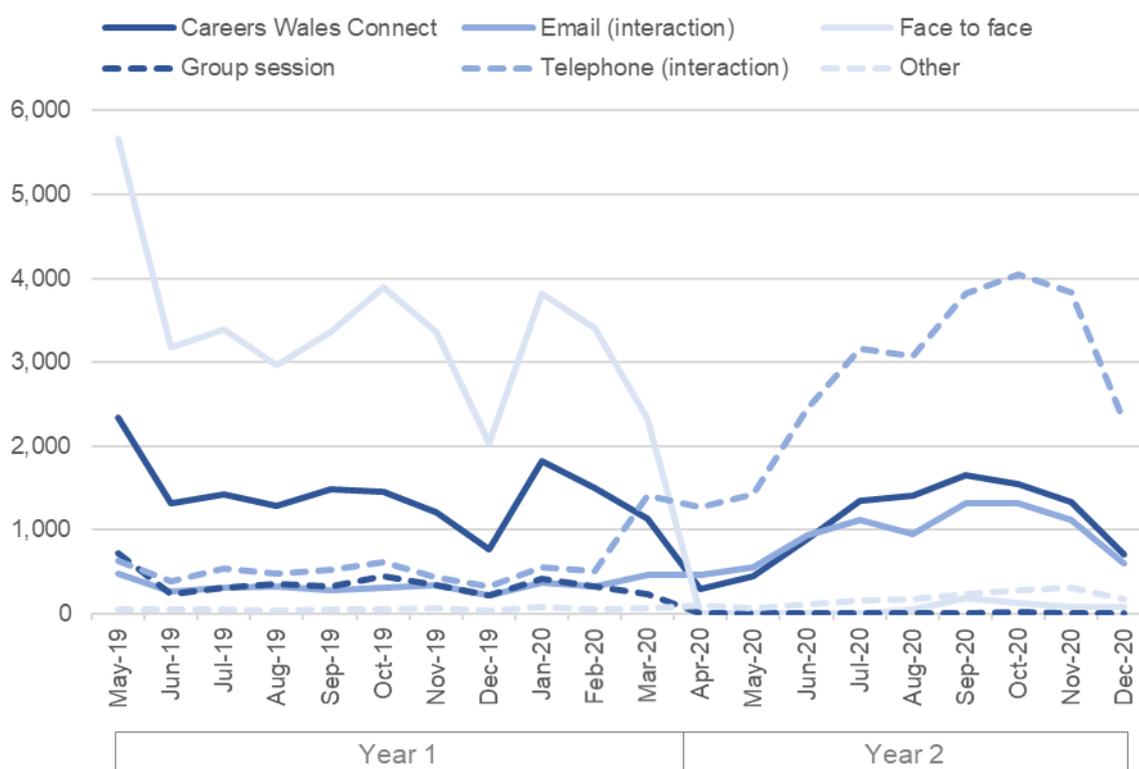
- 4.25 In Year 1, there were more than 37,000 face-to-face interactions with adults, constituting 55 per cent of all direct interactions with adults. A further 4,000 adults were seen in group sessions. Unsurprisingly, face-to-face and group session interactions were hardly used during the lockdown in Year 2.
- 4.26 More than 6,000 interactions with adults were carried out via telephone during Year 1, but there was a significant increase in telephone interactions in Year 2 as a result of the restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as increases in the use of email and Careers Wales Connect (Careers Wales Connect is a call centre service including a 'live chat' system for Careers Wales and Working Wales customers), as shown in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.9.

Table 4.7: Types of direct interactions with adults by year

Interaction	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Face-to-face	37,386	55%	539	1%	37,925	33%
Telephone (interaction)	6,398	9%	25,372	56%	31,770	28%
Careers Wales Connect	15,746	23%	9,649	21%	25,395	22%
Email (interaction)	3,687	5%	8,387	18%	12,074	11%
Group session	3,931	6%	35	0%	3,966	3%
Other	597	1%	1,599	4%	2,196	2%
Total	67,745		45,581		113,326	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.9: Types of direct interactions with adults per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Indirect interactions

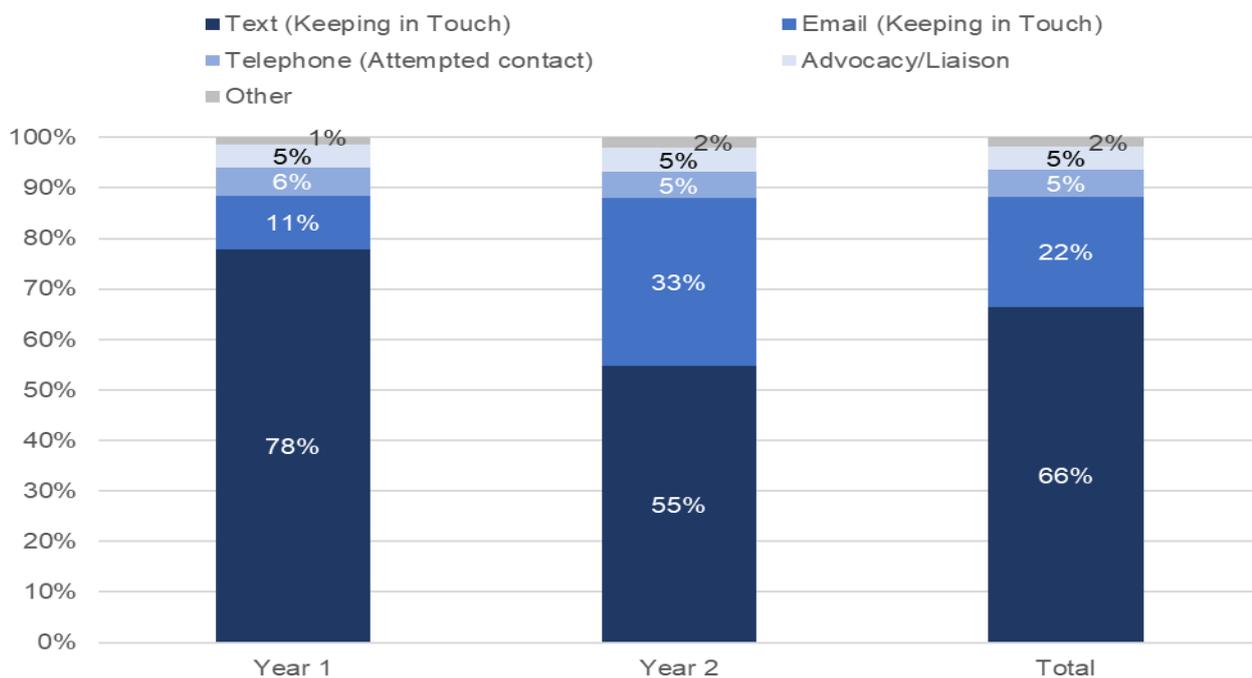
- 4.27 Nearly 115,000 texts and 16,000 emails were sent to adult customers during Year 1. Overall for the two years, two thirds of indirect interactions were via text, while 22 per cent were via email. Texts decreased during April and May 2020 and then started to increase again, while the use of emails increased significantly in the second year.
- 4.28 In addition, there were more than 8,000 telephone interactions during Year 1 and 6,732 interactions were via advocacy/liaison. Both interaction methods were sustained at the same level during Year 2 (see Table 4.8 and Figure 4.10).

Table 4.8: Types of indirect interactions with adults by year

Interaction	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Text (keeping in touch)	114,945	78%	78,916	55%	193,861	66%
Email (keeping in touch)	15,758	11%	47,958	33%	63,716	22%
Telephone (attempted contact)	8,145	6%	7,435	5%	15,580	5%
Advocacy/liaison	6,732	5%	6,789	5%	13,521	5%
Other (attempted contact)	2,058	1%	3,022	2%	5,080	2%
Total	147,638		144,120		291,758	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.10: Types of indirect interactions with adults by year



Note: Year 1 covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, while Year 2 covers the period from April 2020 to December 2020 only

Source: Careers Wales

Types of interactions for youth customers (15–17)

Direct interactions

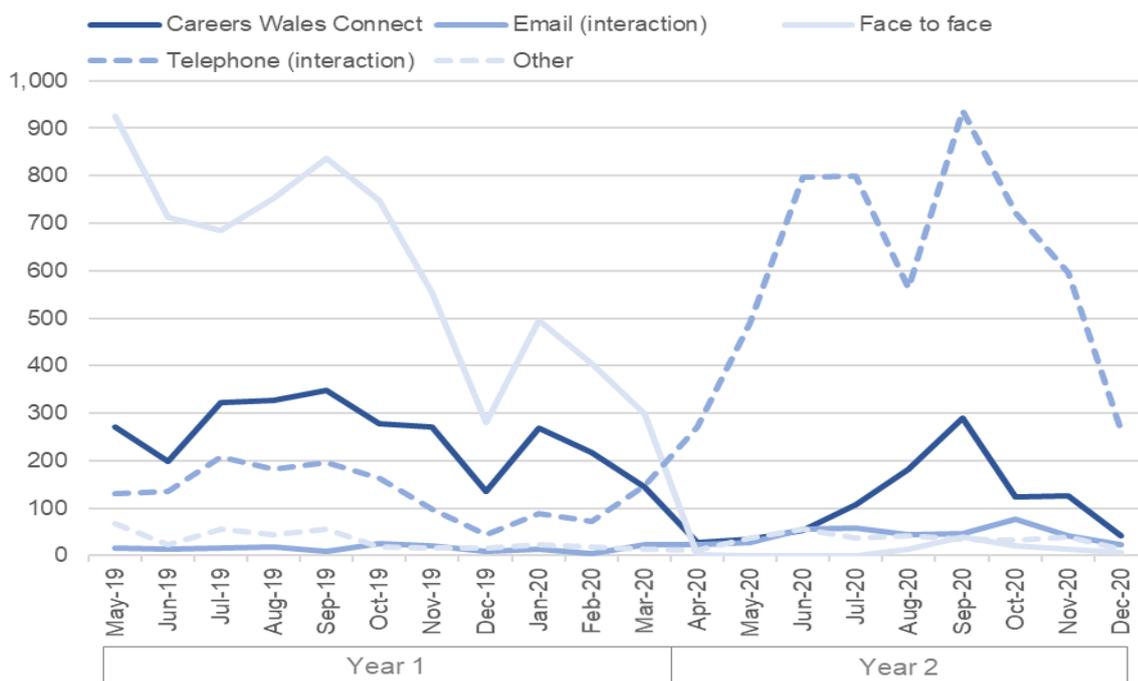
- 4.29 During Year 1, nearly 60 per cent of direct interactions with young people were carried out face-to-face — equivalent to 6,700 face-to-face interactions. A quarter of direct interactions were via Careers Wales Connect and another 13 per cent via telephone (see Table 4.9 and Figure 4.11).
- 4.30 As with adults, face-to-face interactions were hardly used during and after the lockdown, but there was a significant increase in telephone interactions (as well as increases in the use of Careers Wales Connect) after the lockdown. Both types of interactions decreased again after September 2020. Three quarters of all direct interactions with young people during Year 2 were via telephone.
- 4.31 There were only a small number of email interactions during the first year, but these have increased during the second year. There were no group sessions due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Table 4.9: Types of direct interactions with youth customers (15–17) by year

Interaction	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
Telephone (interaction)	1,469	13%	5,442	75%	6,911	37%
Face-to-face	6,697	58%	93	1%	6,790	36%
Careers Wales Connect	2,778	24%	983	14%	3,761	20%
Email (interaction)	170	1%	397	6%	567	3%
Other	352	3%	299	4%	651	3%
Total	11,466		7,214		18,680	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.11: Types of direct interactions with youth customers (15–17) per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

4.32 From April 2021 onwards, data on indirect interactions will focus on the area of advocacy/liaison support, which will form part of the evaluation moving forward.

Use of the Working Wales website and social media interactions

4.33 More than 114,000 unique users accessed the [Working Wales website](#) in Year 1. There was a substantial reduction in users of the ‘Welsh’ and ‘English’ version of the website and of the Welsh pages of the website in Year 2. Meanwhile, the English pages of the website witnessed only a small reduction in unique users (see Table 4.10 and Figure 4.12).

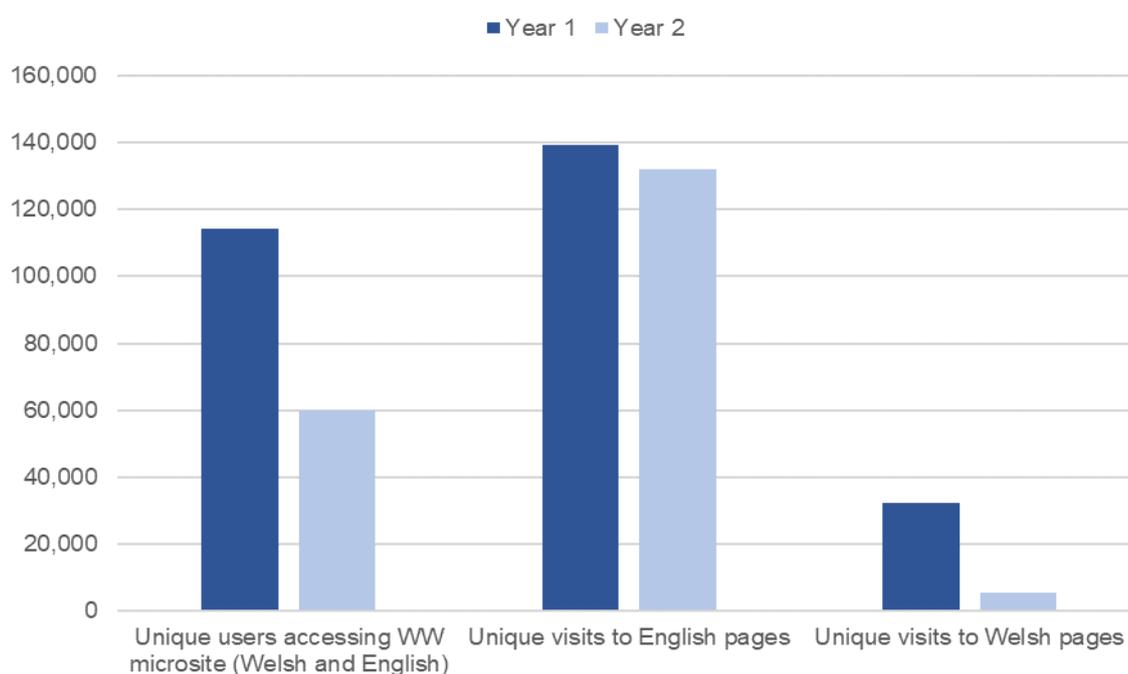
4.34 Website administrators confirmed that website usage is down between the two years, particularly during the first lockdown. The last quarter of the 2020–2021 year has witnessed website traffic increase again. This pattern is the same for the main [Careers Wales website](#), which has also witnessed much less traffic between the two years.

Table 4.10: Unique users accessing Working Wales microsite by year

Website Page	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total
Unique users accessing WW microsite (Welsh and English)	114,194	60,023	174,217
Unique visits to English pages	139,538	131,976	271,514
Unique visits to Welsh pages	32,188	5,565	37,753

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.12: Unique users accessing Working Wales microsite by year



Note: Year 1 covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, while Year 2 covers the period from April 2020 to December 2020 only

Source: Careers Wales

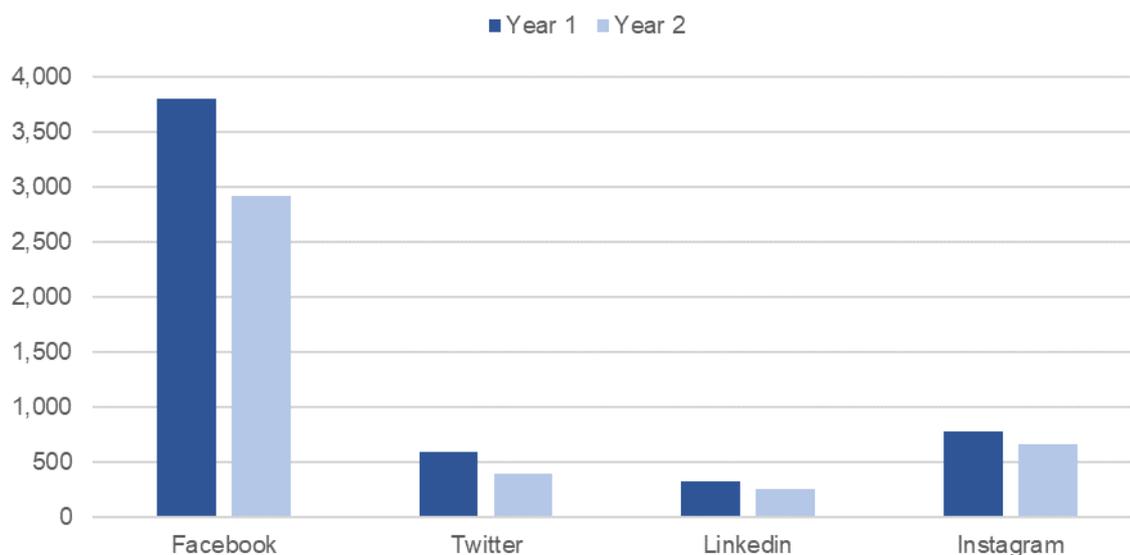
- 4.35 The Facebook page for Working Wales had 3,800 new followers during Year 1, as well as nearly 800 new users of the Instagram page and 600 new users of the Twitter page. During Year 1, nearly 70 per cent of all social media followers used Facebook, followed by 14 per cent who used Instagram and 11 per cent who used Twitter (see Table 1.11 and Figure 1.13).
- 4.36 There were reductions in the number of followers using all social media websites in Year 2, but this may increase with a full year's data. Proportionally, users of the different social media websites were similar to those in Year 1.

Table 4.11: Number of new followers on social media by year

Social Media	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
Facebook	3,800	69%	2,911	69%	6,711	69%
Twitter	594	11%	396	9%	990	10%
LinkedIn	322	6%	255	6%	577	6%
Instagram	781	14%	661	16%	1,442	15%
Total	5,497		4,223		9,720	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.13: Number of new followers on social media by year



Note: Year 1 covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, while Year 2 covers the period from April 2020 to December 2020 only

Source: Careers Wales

Adult prison service

- 4.37 More than 1,000 prisoners received one-to-one support from an advisor in Year 1. A further 85 customers accessed Careers Wales support following their release from prison (see Table 4.12).
- 4.38 Due to lockdown restrictions, there was a substantial reduction in the number of prisoners receiving one-to-one support from an advisor in Year 2. The number of prisoners accessing Careers Wales support following release decreased by nearly 70 per cent in Year 2, as access to prisoners was restricted and in some prisons stopped due to lockdown restrictions.

Table 4.12: Customers using the adult prison service by year

Prison Service	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total
Number of prisoners receiving one-to-one support from Careers Wales advisor	1,084	121	1,205
Number of prisoners accessing Careers Wales support following release	85	27	112

Source: Careers Wales

Referrals to Working Wales

Adults

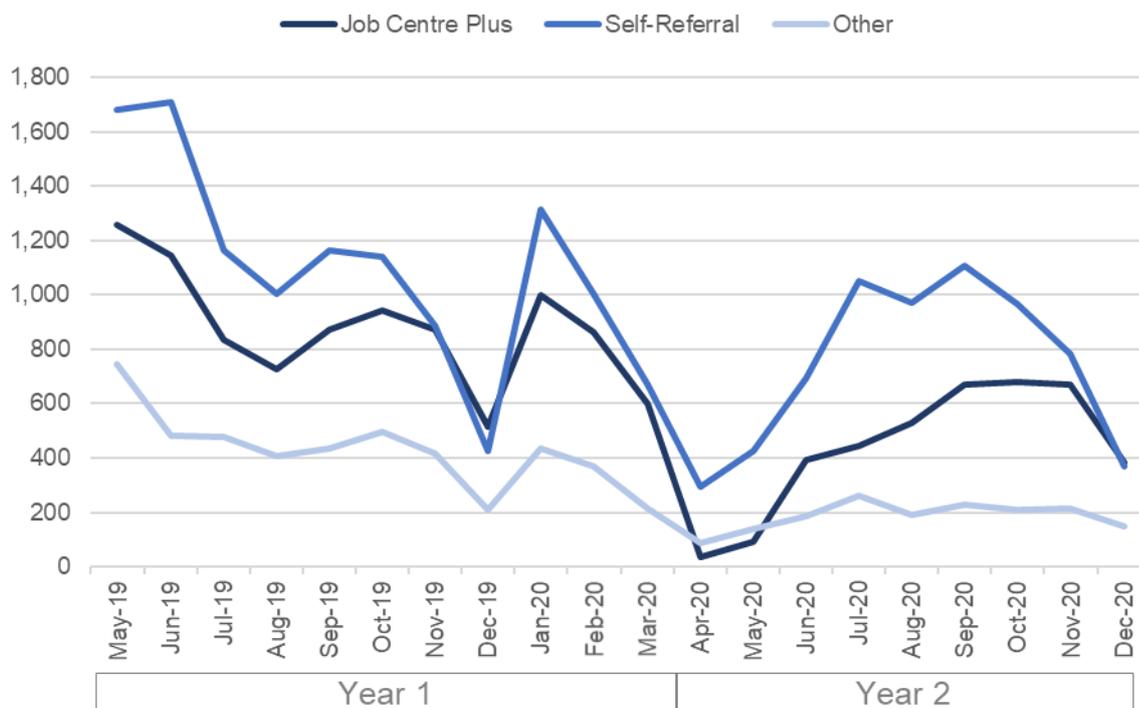
- 4.39 More than 12,000 (or 46 per cent of) adult referrals were self-referrals in Year 1. Referrals from Jobcentre Plus accounted for 36 per cent (or 9,631) of all referrals (see Table 4.13).
- 4.40 Self-referrals and referrals from Jobcentre Plus decreased significantly during the first lockdown but increased again quickly during the summer months in 2020. However, the referral numbers did not reach the peaks before the first lockdown (see Figure 4.14).

Table 4.13: Adults referred by year

Referral Source	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Jobcentre Plus	9,631	36%	3,900	32%	13,531	35%
Self-referral	12,163	46%	6,661	54%	18,824	49%
Other	4,686	18%	1,664	14%	6,350	16%
Total	26,480		12,225		38,705	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.14: Adults' referral source per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

Source: Careers Wales

Youth (15–17)

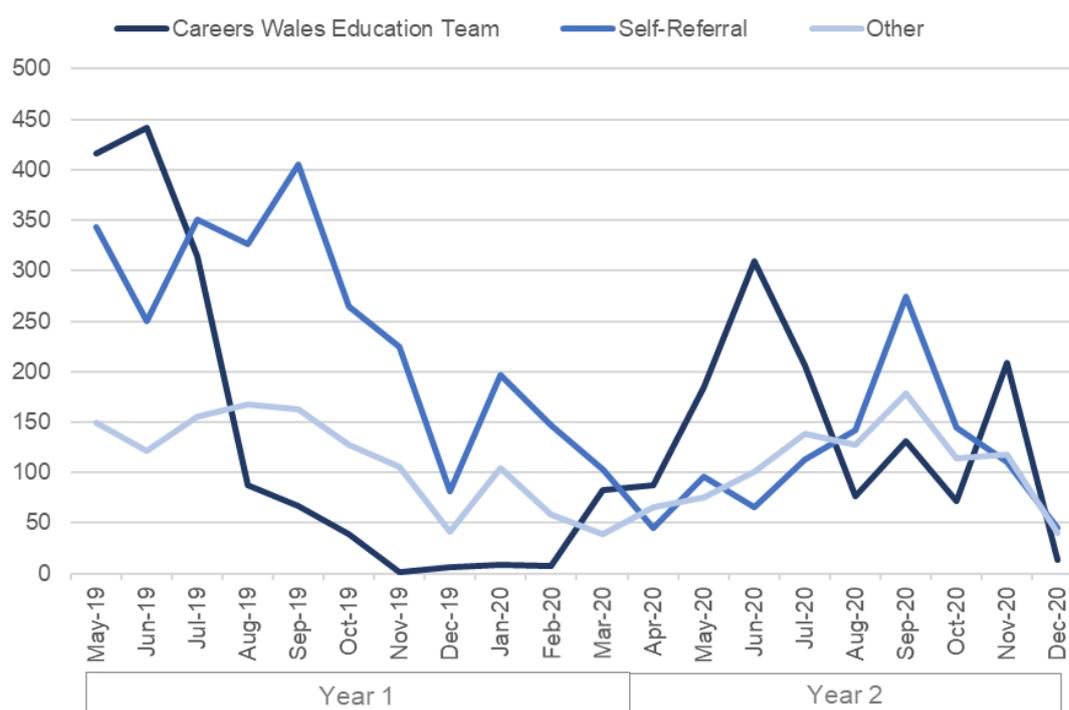
- 4.41 In Year 1, half of all youth referrals were self-referrals, equivalent to nearly 2,700 referrals. Nearly 1,500 referrals (or 27 per cent of all referrals) in Year 1 were from the Careers Wales Education Team.
- 4.42 Referrals from the Careers Wales Education Team were already decreasing during the summer of 2019, as were self-referrals from September 2019 onwards. However, referrals from the Careers Wales Education Team were increasing from March to June 2020 before decreasing again during the summer of 2020.
- 4.43 A review of the data for previous years finds that there is a recurring pattern in respect of a reduction in referrals during the summer months. The lower figures in the current period could be linked to year 11 interventions usually being conducted in schools, but there is no evidence to support this. Schools have, however, been closed for the majority of the last academic year; therefore, access for young people has been digital, which has impacted access.
- 4.44 Self-referrals witnessed another increase during September 2020 but not at the levels achieved in the previous year (see Table 4.14 and Figure 4.15).

Table 4.14: Youth customers (15–17) referred by year

Referral Source	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
Careers Wales Education Team	1,472	27%	1,288	39%	2,760	32%
Self-referral	2,693	50%	1,035	32%	3,728	43%
Other	1,233	23%	958	29%	2,191	25%
Total	5,398		3,281		8,679	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.15: Youth customers (15–17) referred per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Referrals from Working Wales

Adults

4.45 Table 4.15 and Figure 4.16 show referrals to various provisions for adults. During Year 1, 21 per cent of (or nearly 7,000) referrals went to self-help, with another 12 per cent going to ReAct III¹² and seven per cent being referred to the STEPs Programme.¹³ Nineteen per cent of (or 6,440) customers required no further support at the point of interaction, as all of their support needs would have been met (though they may be referred later during their period of Working Wales support).

¹² A Welsh Government programme delivered via Careers Wales and providing funding to individuals within 12 months of being made redundant or unemployed, or under current notice of redundancy, to retrain or update their skills so that they can return to employment as quickly as possible.

¹³ A light-touch employability support programme delivered by Careers Wales (please refer to footnote 23 for further information).

- 4.46 Referrals to all types of provision decreased in the first few months of Year 2. However, there was a steady increase in the numbers referred to most provision after the initial lockdown, such as the STEPS Programme and Access.¹⁴ Referrals to ReAct increased at a higher rate in comparison to other provision and witnessed higher monthly referral numbers than those achieved before the lockdown.
- 4.47 The major components constituting the total for 'Other' are referrals to Communities for Work (four per cent), apprenticeships (three per cent) Jobcentre Plus (three per cent), and the category 'Support agency'¹⁵ (three per cent).

Table 4.15: Referrals to appropriate provision – adults 18+ by year

Provision	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)		Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)		Total	
STEPS Programme	2,364	7%	1,578	11%	3,942	8%
Self-help	6,910	21%	2,099	14%	9,009	19%
Access	2,467	7%	1,449	10%	3,916	8%
ReAct III	3,957	12%	4,049	27%	8,006	17%
Other	11,476	34%	5,727	38%	17,203	35%
No further support	6,440	19%	016	0%	6,440	13%
Total	33,614		14,902		48,516	

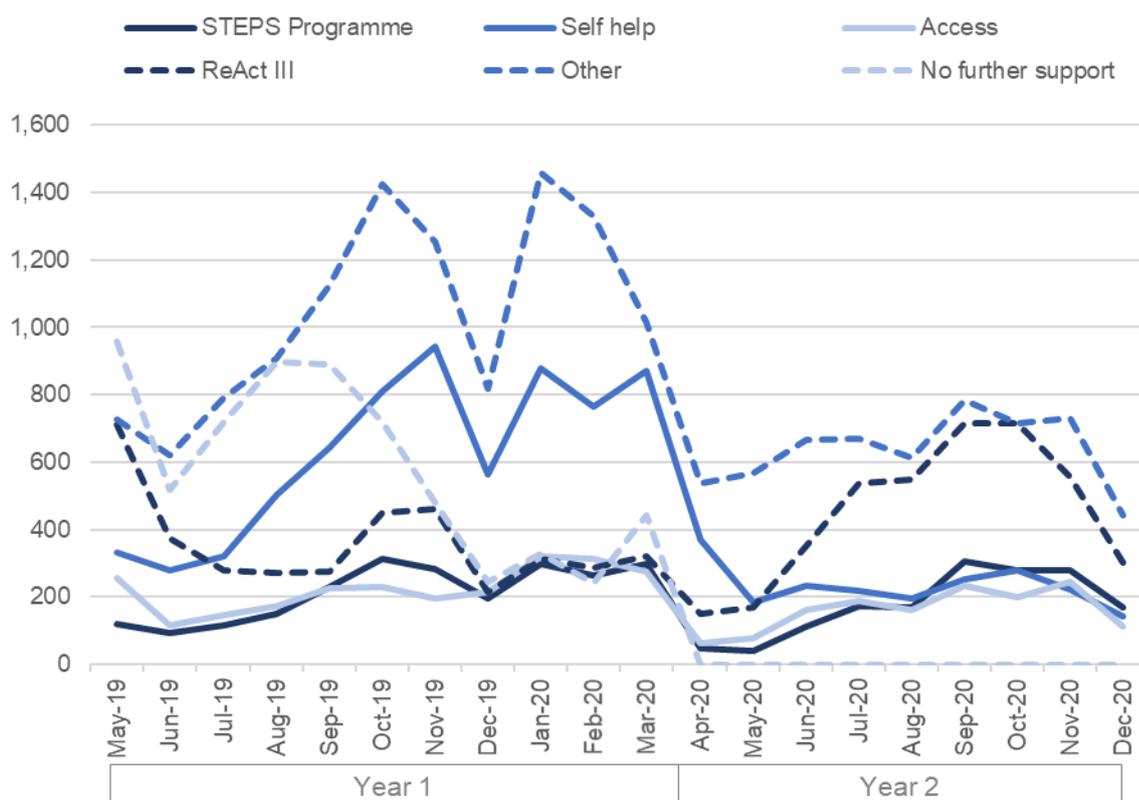
Source: Careers Wales

¹⁴ A Welsh Government employability support programme in the Valleys Task Force area for unemployed adults who are near to the labour market, helping them to gain the skills and experience needed to gain and retain employment.

¹⁵ 'Support agency' collectively covers partner agencies that may send to/receive from Working Wales but in small quantities, hence not being individually identified.

¹⁶ Data was no longer collected under the subcategory 'No further support' from April 2020.

Figure 4.16: Referrals to appropriate provision – adults 18+ per month¹⁷



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

Source: Careers Wales

Youth

- 4.48 Table 4.16 and Figure 4.17 show referrals to various provisions for young people. During Year 1, 32 per cent of referrals were to traineeships. More than 1,000 young people were referred to apprenticeships (or 11 per cent of all referrals). Only four per cent required no further support at the point of interaction.
- 4.49 Youth referrals to all types of provision were decreasing after January 2020 before the lockdown. Referrals to the STEPS Programme increased slightly in February 2020 and remained the same in March 2020. Referrals to ‘Self-help’ increased in February and March 2020. During Year 2, employers were recruiting much less, as many had staff on furlough.
- 4.50 ‘Referred to tier 2 support’ and ‘Traineeship referrals’ were not Working Wales subcategories in Year 2; therefore, both of these are presenting as zero in Year 2.

¹⁷ Timing is very important with referrals to ReAct and Access. Both had a period of deferment. For the customers in this timeframe the advisor would not have recorded this referral to ReAct/Access. The actual referral would have been made later once the deferment had reduced.

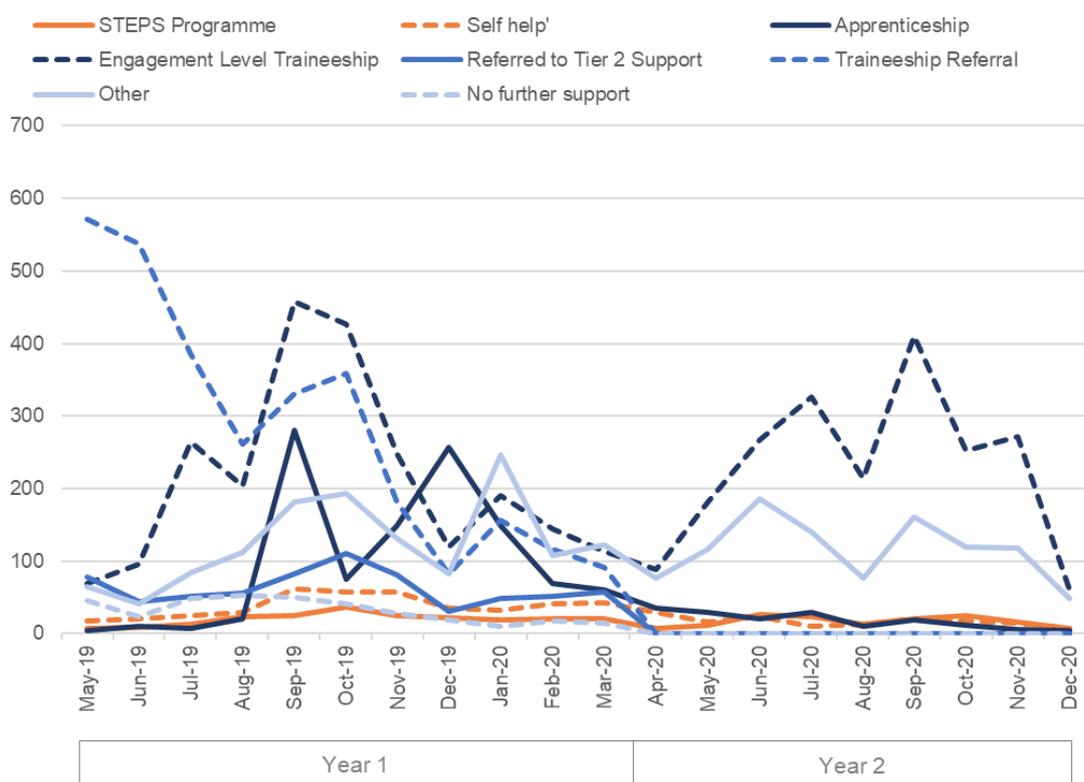
Therefore, like-for-like comparisons with Year 1 would not be appropriate in these cases. The same applies to 'No further support'.

Table 4.16: Referrals to appropriate provision – youth customers (15–17) by year

Provision	Year 1		Year 2		Total	
	(April '19 – March '20)		(April '20 – Dec '20)			
STEPS Programme	222	2%	152	4%	374	3%
Self-help	423	4%	153	4%	576	4%
Apprenticeship	1,083	11%	168	5%	1,251	10%
Engagement-level traineeship	2,331	24%	2,072	58%	4,403	34%
Referred to tier 2 support	690	7%	0	0%	690	5%
Traineeship referral	3,071	32%	0	0%	3,071	23%
Other	1,370	14%	1,043	29%	3,363	26%
No further support	353	4%	0	0%	353	3%
Total number of referrals	9,543		3,588		13,131	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.17: Referrals to appropriate provision – youth customers (15–17) per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Light-touch support¹⁸

Adults

4.51 The total number of adult customers identified for 'light-touch' support was 2,368 in Year 1. Two thirds of these customers received 'light-touch' support, three quarters of whom completed the support. Outcomes were achieved for nearly 50 per cent of those who completed some support (575 adults) — half of these outcomes were into paid employment.

¹⁸ During Year 1 and Year 2, Working Wales offered a 'light-touch' employability programme called 'STEPS to Success'. Initially intended to support those customers whose needs were not significant enough for a referral to further support, the service later shifted its focus to offering specific employability-related activities, often as part of a larger programme of support provided in partnership with other agencies (e.g. Communities for Work). Part of the requirement of the 'light-touch' offer was that Working Wales follow up with customers three months after they left the service, ensuring that outcomes were not only positive but also sustained. This three-month delay leads to a lag in the reporting of outcomes. Further, high levels of participation in STEPS in 2019/2020 will be reflected as high numbers of outcomes continuing into early 2020/2021. Similarly, the reduction in new customers at the beginning of the pandemic will only materialise in outcome data once those customers have received STEPS support (~8 weeks), and the required interval until the follow-up has passed; therefore, an April joiner would be likely to be a September outcome, for example.

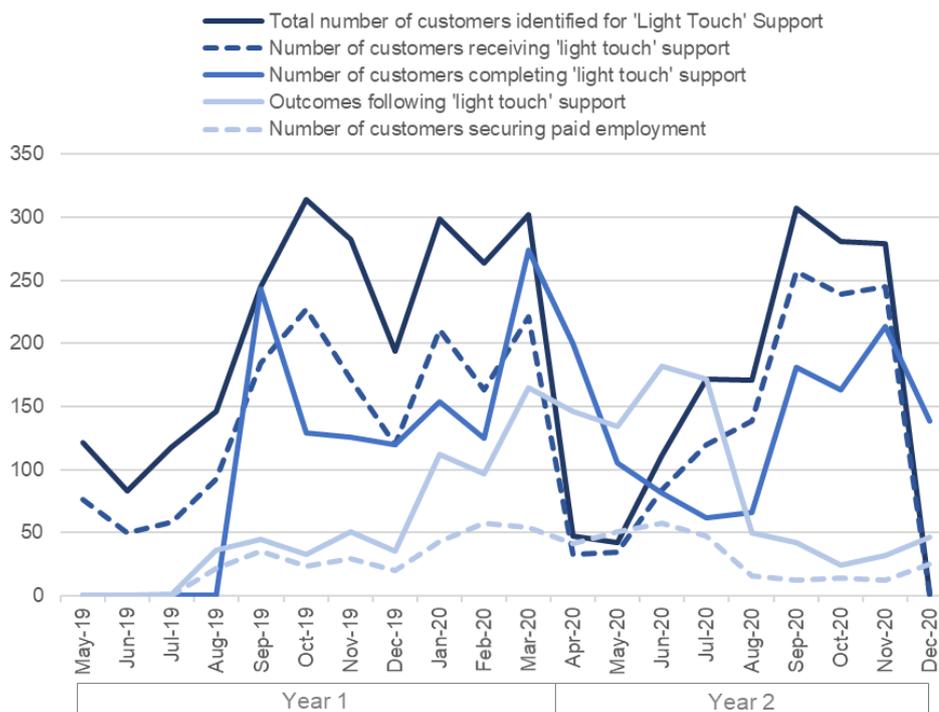
4.52 The numbers decreased during the first few months of Year 2, but adults identified for, receiving and completing light-touch support returned to pre-lockdown numbers by September 2020 in Year 2 (see Tables 4.17 and 4.18 and Figures 4.18 and 4.19).

Table 4.17: Customers progressing after 'light-touch' support – adults 18+ by year

Progression	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total
Total number of customers identified for 'light-touch' support	2,368	1,411	3,779
Number of customers receiving 'light-touch' support	1,574	1,148	2,722
Number of customers completing 'light-touch' support	1,171	1,209	2,380
Outcomes following 'light-touch' support	575	828	1,403
Number of customers securing paid employment	283	275	558

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.18: Customers progressing after 'light-touch' support – adults 18+ per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

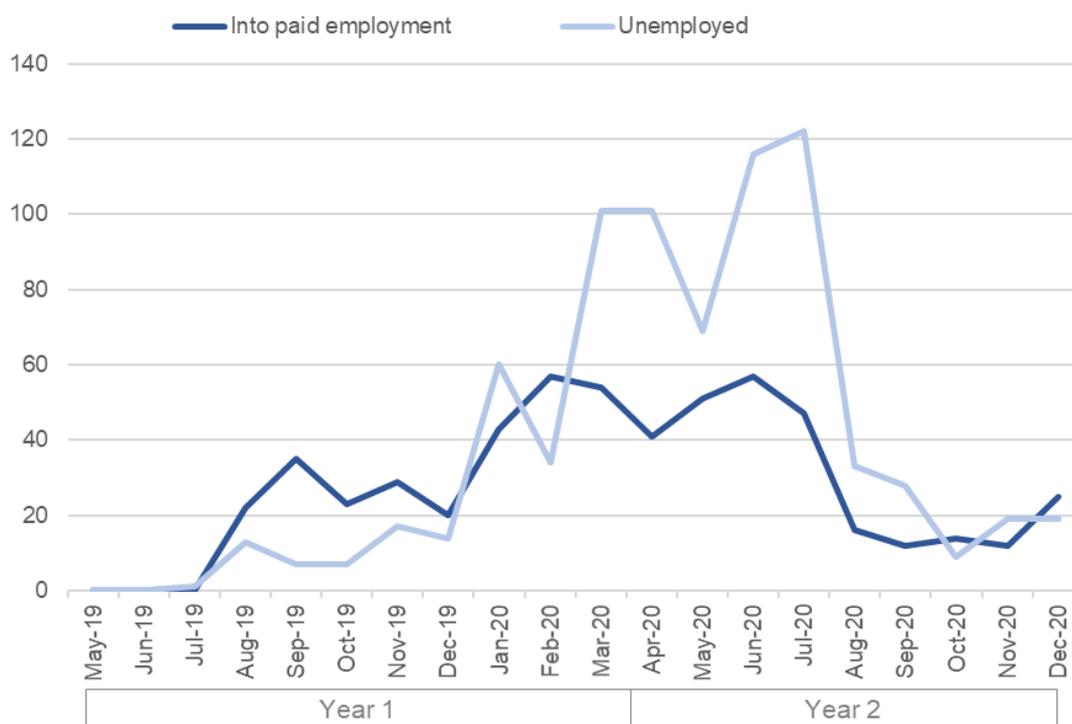
Source: Careers Wales

Table 4.18: Outcomes from ‘light-touch’ support – adults 18+ by year

Progression	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total	%
Into paid employment	283	275	558	40%
Employed full-time (30+ hours)	192	185	377	27%
Employed part-time (<30 hours)	84	80	164	12%
Employed status training (apprenticeships)	3	3	6	0%
Self-employed	5	7	12	1%
Into voluntary work/work experience	11	12	23	2%
Voluntary work	11	12	23	2%
Non-positive outcome	266	528	794	56%
Non-positive outcome*	12	12	24	2%
Unemployed	254	516	770	55%
On to further learning	17	17	34	2%
Further learning	5	5	10	1%
Learning at a higher level	5	3	8	1%
Traineeship/training programme	7	9	16	1%
Total**	577	832	1,409	

* Those for whom the current status is unknown, have moved out of Wales or customer deceased. ** Does not include customers who have re-engaged with Working Wales (ensuring that no outcomes are double-counted)
Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.19: Outcomes from ‘light-touch’ support – adults 18+ per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019
 Source: Careers Wales

Youth customers

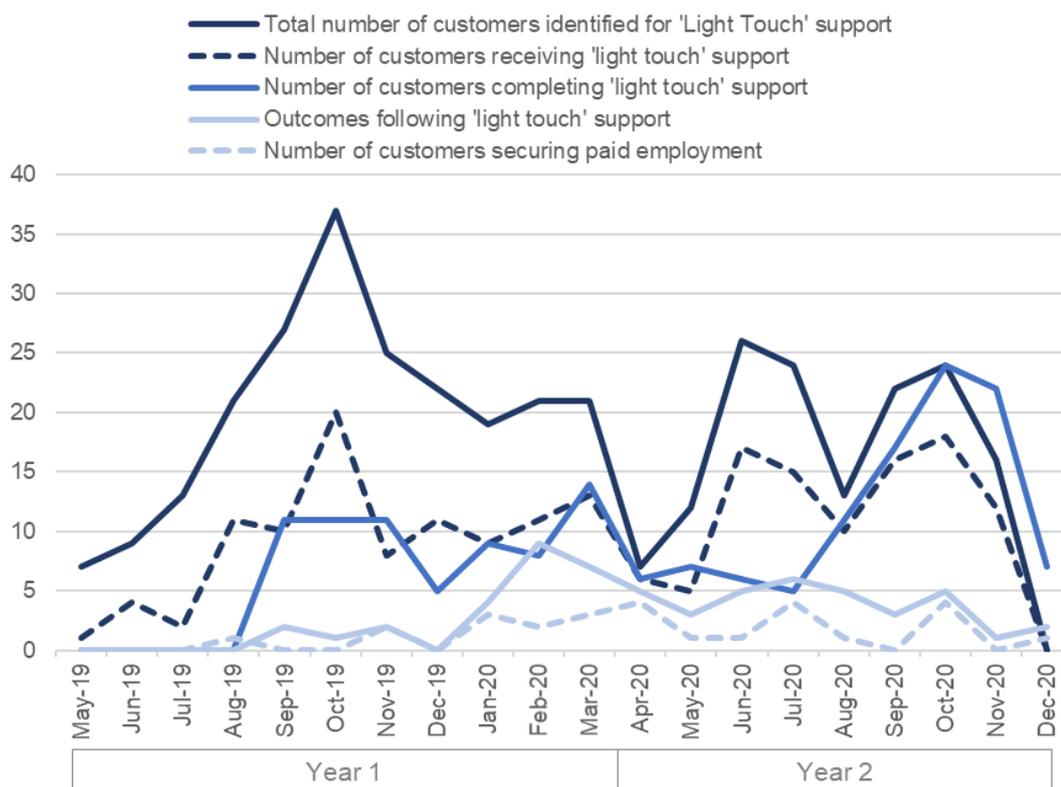
- 4.53 The total number of youth customers identified for ‘light-touch’ support was 222 in Year 1. Forty-five per cent of these customers received ‘light-touch’ support, nearly 70 per cent of whom completed the support. Outcomes were achieved for 36 per cent of those who completed some support (25 young people) — 11 of these outcomes were into paid employment.
- 4.54 Customers identified for, receiving and completing light-touch support recovered by June 2020 in Year 2. Outcomes increased in Year 2 for young people but the overall number of outcomes was small (see Tables 4.19 and 4.20 and Figures 4.20 and 4.21).

Table 4.19: Customers progressing after ‘light-touch’ support – youth (15–17) by year

Progression	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total
Total number of customers identified for ‘light-touch’ support	222	144	366
Number of customers receiving ‘light-touch’ support	100	99	199
Number of customers completing ‘light-touch’ support	69	105	174
Outcomes following ‘light-touch’ support	25	35	60
Number of customers securing paid employment	11	16	27

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.20: Customers progressing after ‘light-touch’ support – youth (15–17) per month



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019

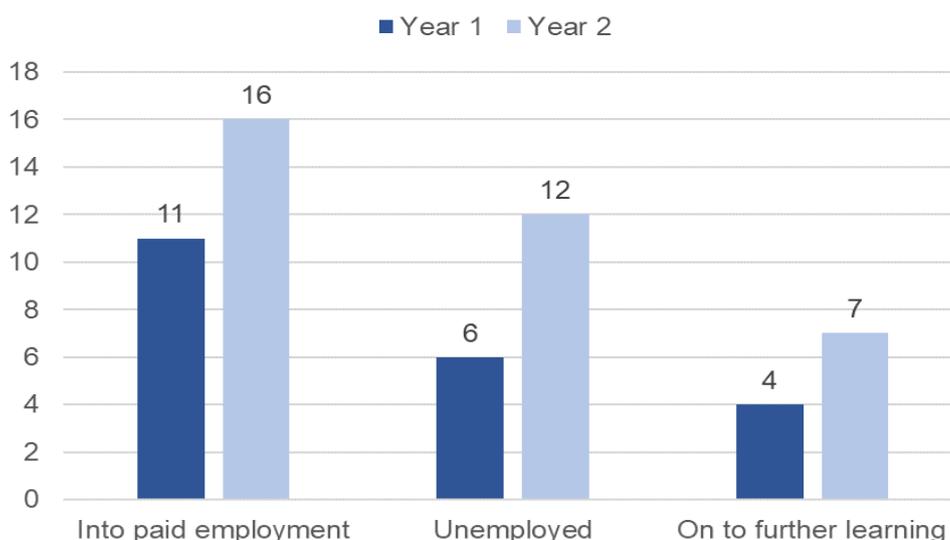
Source: Careers Wales

Table 4.20: Outcomes from ‘light-touch’ support – youth customers (15–17) by year

Progression	Year 1 (April '19 – March '20)	Year 2 (April '20 – Dec '20)	Total	%
Into paid employment	11	16	27	44%
Employed full-time (30+ hours)	8	8	16	26%
Employed part-time (<30 hours)	1	6	7	11%
Employed status training (apprenticeships)	2	2	4	7%
Into voluntary work/work experience	0	0	0	0%
Non-positive outcome	10	13	23	38%
Non-positive outcome	4	1	5	8%
Unemployed	6	12	18	30%
On to further learning	4	7	11	18%
Further learning	0	1	1	2%
Traineeship/training programme	4	6	10	16%
Total	25	36	61	

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4.21: Outcomes from ‘light-touch’ support – youth customers (15–17) by year



Note: May 2019 also includes customers from April 2019. Year 1 covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, while Year 2 covers the period from April 2020 to December 2020 only
 Source: Careers Wales

Conclusion

- 4.55 The analysis in this chapter clearly shows the scale and impact of Working Wales during Year 1 of its operation. The service regularly engaged with more than 2,000 new adult customers per month and referred nearly 30,000 customers (both adult and youth) in the first year alone. Furthermore, during Year 1, there was a strong mix of channels through which customers could interact. These included 37,000 face-to-face interviews and 4,000 in-group sessions, as well as significant numbers interacting on the telephone and via Careers Wales Connect.
- 4.56 The data also demonstrates the different circumstances under which Working Wales operated in Year 2. As discussed further in Chapter 5, the impact of the restrictions put in place as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way in which the service was delivered, with a suspension of work in outreach venues and of attendance at events such as the Eisteddfod and the Royal Welsh Show; moreover, the ways in which customers were able to interact were reduced. Significantly, Working Wales moved to a digital-only offer on 23rd March 2020, while ongoing lockdown and social distancing requirements meant that centres were either closed or limited in the service that they could offer during this period. In contrast to the original vision of Working Wales, all outreach provision was suspended during this period. This may have limited the ability to engage with individuals who may not be aware of the service and with groups that are

traditionally more difficult to reach. These issues are discussed further in the following chapter.

- 4.57 The challenge of delivering the service in Year 2 is reflected in the different profile of direct interactions found in the management information up to December 2020. For example, while across the two years, face-to-face interaction was the single-largest type of direct interaction, it accounted for 55 per cent (adults) and 58 per cent (youth) of all direct interactions in Year 1 but only one per cent in Year 2. In contrast, only nine per cent (adults) and 13 per cent (youth) of interactions in Year 1 were carried out via the telephone, which increased to 56 per cent (adults) and 75 per cent (youth) in Year 2. This reflects not only the challenge of the switch to a digital/remote model of delivery but also the flexibility of the service in being able to offer multiple routes for customers.
- 4.1 The management information indicates that there is clearly a need for the Working Wales service, with 35,485 customers supported during Year 1 and 20,189 customers supported during the first nine months of Year 2. Unemployed new joiners constitute nearly 65 per cent of all customers in Year 1 and nearly 66 per cent overall to date.
- 4.2 Customers in the 'unemployed adults' category did not reach pre-lockdown peaks in the first nine months of Year 2. This may be due to the economic impact of the pandemic being suppressed somewhat because of the interventions that have been put in place, including the furlough scheme, as discussed further in the following chapter.
- 4.3 This is different for young people, with Year 2 having witnessed a 10 per cent increase in the proportion of youth customers who are unemployed (Table 4.3). We can speculate that this may have been influenced by the different approach to education, training and employment in 2021 as a result of the pandemic, during which schools and colleges for example were offering increased online learning from home or in some cases were not open at all. Employers also paused their recruitment of new staff as a result of the pandemic. This is particularly the case in entry-level roles in the retail and hospitality sectors (which are large employers of young people).
- 4.4 What is more, Jobcentre Plus referrals have decreased not only because they have been closed during the lockdown but also due to the introduction of other UK Government schemes (such as 'Kickstart') to which Jobcentre staff are required to

preferentially refer customers, which will also have an impact on the number of unemployed adult customers (see Chapter 5). Meanwhile, referrals from the Careers Wales Education Team continued to witness the annual trend of a sharp increase in June before a sharp reduction in the summer for both years. Although the total numbers of youth customers reduced in Year 2, as a higher number of young people chose to remain in education, the interventions continued to occur in school and to support youth customers.

5. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Delivery of Working Wales

Key points

- This chapter draws on research that was undertaken with the Working Wales team in October 2020, which considered the impact of the restrictions in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic at that time.
- The lockdown led to a pause in all face-to-face activities, with Working Wales switching to a digital/online-only service.
- A range of new support was introduced in response to the pandemic by both the UK and Welsh Governments, changing the 'eco-structure' in which Working Wales was being delivered.
- The number of referrals to Working Wales from Jobcentre Plus declined dramatically, as DWP staff were redirected to deal with increases in the demand for support as a result of the pandemic.
- Views on how the Working Wales service had adapted were largely very positive, with a clear view that services, whilst being delivered differently, had continued to be delivered effectively.
- Several new services were introduced in response to the pandemic, including a Jobs Bulletin and monthly Labour Market Information Bulletins. Virtual jobs fairs were also introduced.
- A new generic Working Wales Referral Form was developed.
- There was a view that communication within the Working Wales team, whilst different, had increased during the pandemic period, utilising online platforms.
- The decrease in the need to travel to meetings and so on was considered to have led to a more efficient way of working, although some were concerned about the workload implications of the new way of working.
- Frontline staff identified at least some impact on the quality of the services due to, most notably, a lack of face-to-face support.
- Importantly, in several instances, such impact on the service was positive, however. Specifically, the provision of support via telephone/video was considered to have improved access to the service in some instances.
- The pandemic was identified as having had an impact on the provision of services to which Working Wales would usually refer individuals, as well as on referrals to the service. This has obvious implications for Working Wales in its ability to effectively make referrals.
- There was a view that potential customers and customers 'paused' their thinking about employment issues during the pandemic, preferring to wait until 'things get back to normal' and/or the economic situation becomes clearer.
- Frontline staff suggested a likely substantial increase in the demand for support during the coming weeks and months as a significant challenge, with some

concerned about the service's ability to effectively meet such an increase in demand.

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter considers the impact of the restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of the Working Wales service. The focus is on identifying the lessons learnt during the period and on informing discussions surrounding if and how any of the changes introduced should be maintained when restrictions are eased.
- 5.2 The discussion draws on discussions with the Working Wales senior management team (18 interviews) and on an online survey of frontline staff (96 responses and a response rate of 48 per cent). It is therefore important to be aware that this chapter discusses the impact of COVID-19 on Working Wales from the perspective of those managing and delivering the service within Careers Wales. No fieldwork has been undertaken with any customers or any other stakeholders at this stage.
- 5.3 It is important to stress that the fieldwork discussed in this chapter was undertaken during October 2020 and, therefore, represents the experience of respondents up until that point in time. The Working Wales team's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to evolve since that time, which means that some changes to the support being provided are not reflected in the discussion that follows.

Changes in delivery due to pandemic restrictions

Participant services

- 5.4 The lockdown measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant changes in the service being delivered by Working Wales. This was within a context in which the employability support landscape in Wales changed significantly during 2020 in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.5 As is apparent from the discussion of the management information for the service in the previous chapter, one of the most significant partnerships that Working Wales had in Year 1 was with Jobcentre Plus, delivering outreach from the majority of Jobcentres across Wales and with a substantial proportion of referrals to the service being made by Jobcentre staff. At the start of the pandemic, due to the substantial increase in benefit claimants contacting Jobcentres, there was a temporary pause in

referrals, as Jobcentre Plus staff were redirected to deal with the increase in the demand for resource elsewhere within the organisation.

- 5.6 The UK Government also introduced a suite of new services designed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, offering employability support available across the UK where the only 'entry point' was via the Jobcentre. These programmes included Kickstart (for those aged 16–24), JETS (an intensive support service for those unemployed for more than 13 weeks), and Job Finding Support (a series of four job search support interactions available from the first day of making a benefit claim).
- 5.7 The working relationship with Jobcentre Plus has remained in place and a number of initiatives have been developed (e.g. the Youth Journey and Kickstart Support) through close partnership work to realign Working Wales with the new provision and showcase the added value of independent careers guidance, the identification of barriers, and appropriate referral to wider support.
- 5.8 The most notable change to the Working Wales service was that all face-to-face contact came to an end during the lockdown periods, with staff working from home. Interviews with customers were all switched to telephone consultations from 23rd March 2020, with consultations via video being subsequently introduced. Facebook Messenger and live chat facilities were also introduced and became available, along with the telephone service, from Monday to Thursday (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and on Fridays (9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.). These hours represented an extension in the availability of the service in comparison to that which was in place before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.9 Some Careers Wales centres were reopened on an 'appointment-only' basis with social distancing measures in place as lockdown measures were eased. The first phase of reopening was in August 2020 in Cardiff, Wrexham, Swansea, and Newport. Thereafter, in November and December 2020, centres in Caerphilly, Bridgend, and Bangor (followed by Rhyl, Newtown, Llandudno, Neath, Cwmbran, Aberdare, Barry, Aberystwyth, and, finally, Llanelli, Haverfordwest, and Merthyr) reopened.

5.10 Local lockdowns and the subsequent national ‘firebreak’ lockdown period of 17 days starting on 23rd October 2020, however, led to all centres being closed again. There was some reopening of centres following the end of the firebreak period until the lockdown that was introduced in Wales on 20th December 2020 and remained in place at the time of writing.

The introduction of new services

- 5.11 Several new services were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A **Jobs Bulletin** was developed which provided information on live vacancies across Wales. Furthermore, monthly **Labour Market Information (LMI) Bulletins** were introduced for distribution both within the Working Wales team and to external stakeholders and partners. These services were developed utilising some of the resources that had become available as a result of the reduction in the number of customers in the service due to the pandemic.
- 5.12 A **furlough support** page was also added to the Working Wales website, providing links to a range of online training which individuals who had been ‘furloughed’ could undertake.
- 5.13 Between July and September 2020, Working Wales hosted a series of virtual **jobs fairs** via social media — in this case, Facebook — in collaboration with partners across Wales. All of the events enabled customers to access live job vacancies and receive support in relation to their employability needs, including individuals leaving education and seeking work, on furlough, unemployed, or at risk of redundancy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the events supported employers in the regions with respect to their recruitment.
- 5.14 The Facebook events took place across Wales, with:
- Two events in North Wales on 23rd July — attracting nearly 700 interested parties and attended by 414;
 - Two events in the West Wales region on 9th September — just over 1,000 parties showed an interest (with 672 attending); and
 - One event in South Wales for all 10 local authorities, which was attended by more than 600 (with around 1,200 showing an interest).¹⁹

¹⁹ Source: Working Wales Monthly Report, August 2020.

Additional stakeholder engagement and partnership work

- 5.15 Additional activity with which to engage with stakeholders and partners was also introduced in response to the pandemic. This included:
- A bimonthly **Stakeholder Newsletter** (started in June 2020) circulated to more than 800 partners, promoting Working Wales and updating them on service developments.
 - A number of **webinars for staff and customers**, hosted in partnership with employers struggling to recruit during the pandemic (e.g. Audit Wales apprenticeships) and with partners offering services tailored to those on furlough (e.g. Open University free OpenLearn courses).
- 5.16 A series of 'partner catch-up' meetings were undertaken via video during September and October 2020 across Wales. The meetings were held to allow Working Wales management an opportunity to update partners on current services and developments, as well as to facilitate discussions on local delivery. Those sessions were attended by approximately 200 partners from across Wales.

Service development

- 5.17 A range of training was provided to staff during the lockdown period with a focus on ensuring that the provision of services online was as effective as possible. This included providing training to careers advisors (funded through the Careers Wales core budget) to upskill them on Working Wales processes.
- 5.18 Notably, a new generic [Working Wales Referral Form](#) was developed. The introduction of the new form²⁰ was intended to lead to several benefits, including:
- A reduction of the administrative time associated with using multiple referral methods
 - Providing accurate and in-depth customer information to aid successful transitions
 - Promoting consistency of referral quality across Wales

Communication within the Working Wales team

- 5.19 An interesting feature of discussions with the Working Wales management staff, in particular, was the view that communication within the team, whilst different, had increased during the pandemic period. The level of contact (via video calls) had

²⁰ It should be noted that the new referral form has not replaced the existing documents currently utilised for traineeship, Access and ReAct programmes.

initially increased to discuss the setting-up of the new ways of working and for staff well-being reasons. However, the feedback was that this increased level of communication was sustained during the 'working from home' period, with meetings becoming more frequent due to the flexibility that meeting via video offered.

- 5.20 One of the examples given was that team meetings, which had previously taken place on a monthly basis, were currently happening on a more regular basis because of the convenience of meeting via video (which had now become the norm). Issues were therefore being discussed more quickly and more frequently than previously. Whilst disadvantages of not meeting in person were also identified (e.g. the lack of more informal communication), this change was generally considered by the Working Wales staff interviewed to have been beneficial to them and their colleagues.
- 5.21 The decrease in the need to travel (especially in larger and more rural parts of Wales) was also highlighted, with several interviewees highlighting the view that working from home was more efficient because of the time saved due to there being no need to travel, although this benefit has not been quantified. What is more, the environmental benefits of a reduction in travel were noted. The concern that some customers would not be able to access the service in the absence of the outreach work was also acknowledged.

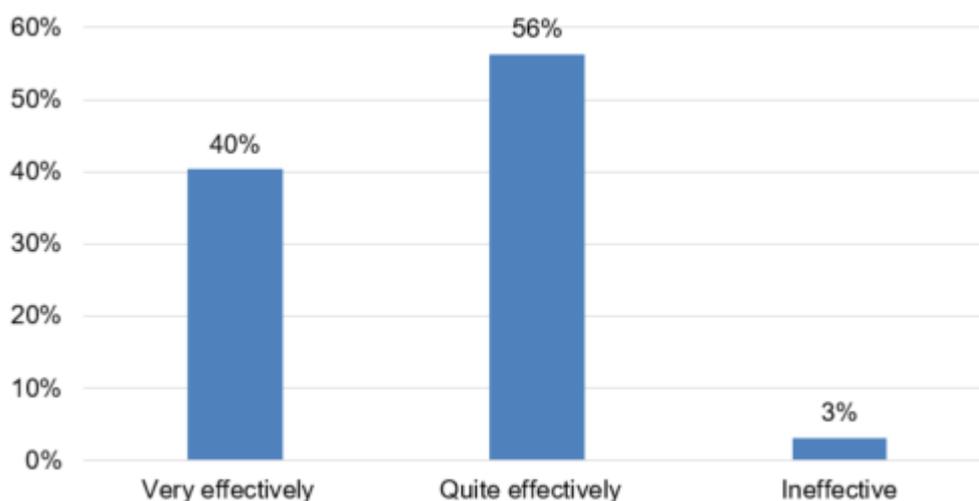
Views on the impact of COVID-19 on Working Wales services

- 5.22 The views of both management and 'frontline' staff on how the Working Wales team/service had responded to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic were positive. There was an acknowledgement that the service had been able to react quickly and had moved to a 'working from home' model "basically overnight". A key reason for this was that the necessary IT systems were already in place at least partly as a result of the outreach work undertaken by Working Wales. Senior management noted that IT issues were identified by some staff, which is not unexpected under the circumstances, but it would seem that they were relatively minor and quickly addressed:

"I feel that we have adapted well during the pandemic. The offices closed on Friday and by the following Monday we were all set up and ready to deliver a service to all customers digitally." (Working Wales Advisor)

5.23 Figure 5.1 shows that 96 per cent of respondents to the online survey stated that, overall, they had been able to deliver their role during the COVID-19 pandemic ‘quite effectively’ (56 per cent) or ‘very effectively’ (40 per cent).

Figure 5.1: Frontline staff views on how effectively they have been able to deliver their role during the COVID-19 pandemic



Base: 94

Source: online survey of Careers Wales staff

5.24 When asked to explain their response, the most common reason given was that the digital form of delivery had been effectively integrated into the delivery of the service (65 per cent) and that the service had effectively continued to be delivered (49 per cent):

“Thanks to the technology and software systems we have, I’ve been able to communicate and support my customers in the same way as I would on a face-to-face interview.” (Employability Coach)

“It has worked on the most part, and the customers I have dealt with have found the service effective. There are the odd occasions when a face-to-face appointment would have been easier; for example, helping create [a] CV can be done much more quickly in person.” (Careers Advisor)

5.25 Constraints identified included customers not having the right type of technology (11 per cent), an increase in the workload of the advisor as a result of the approach (nine per cent), and the need for training in the use of the online tools on the part of the Working Wales advisor (three per cent). As per the second quote above, the

respondents also identified that some elements of the approach, whilst they can be delivered via telephone/video, are simply more effective in person (10 per cent).

5.26 Only a small minority of respondents stated that they had not been able to deliver their role effectively (n=3), mainly due to being relatively new in the post.

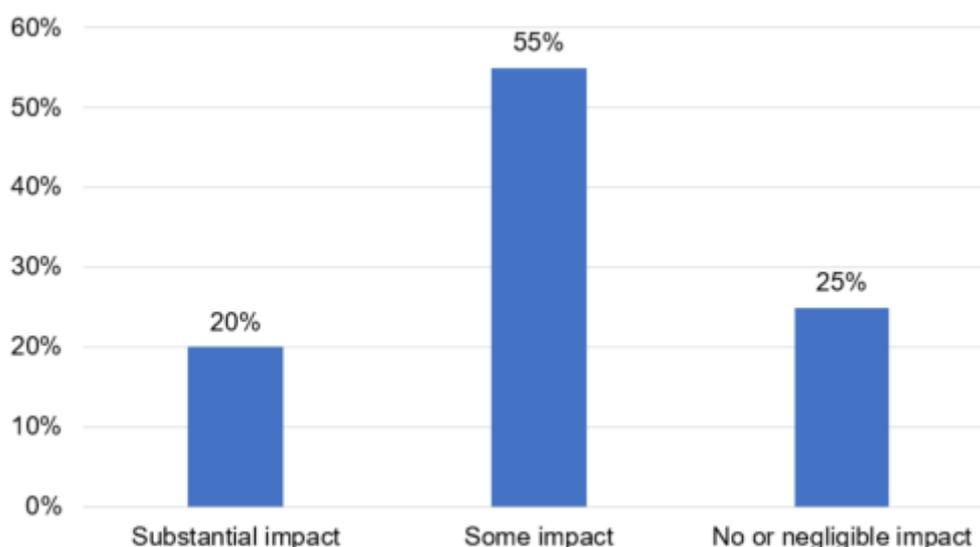
5.27 Interestingly, 14 per cent of respondents described the service being provided during the lockdown period as superior to the pre-COVID-19 service in some respects. Reasons for this included being able to contact and work with more customers via the telephone/video approach, and a lower number of appointments being missed:

“I [have been] able to contact more customers since working from home, and spend more time making sure that they have received the best service I can give them. I have also been able to follow up more with training providers to make sure the customers are being helped.” (Administrator)

“Better success rate with appointments via telephone than there was face to face in the office. Able to communicate well via telephone, text and email.”
(Employability Coach)

5.28 The service was generally considered to have continued to be delivered effectively. However, 75 per cent of frontline staff survey respondents identified at least some impact on the quality of Working Wales services as a result of the changes introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty per cent of those identified the impact as being substantial (Figure 5.2). One in four respondents, however, identified no or a negligible impact.

Figure 5.2: Frontline staff views on what, if any, the impact of the changes introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quality of Working Wales services and support has been



Base: 81

Source: online survey of Careers Wales staff

5.29 The responses include a mix of both positive and negative impacts being identified. The negative impacts include limited access to in-person support (n=28), IT issues (n=22), and an increase in workload (n=17). Where the impact identified was positive, the focus was on improvements in the effectiveness of the service (n=15).

5.30 The most notable change in the service is the move to undertaking all consultations with customers via telephone and/or video. The feedback from management and staff with regard to that change was generally positive, although there were some concerns, and there was a general preference for undertaking consultations on a face-to-face basis. The consensus was, however, that the standard of the service had not been dramatically impacted by the enforced change in approach:

“I’ve found that it’s been surprisingly easy to create a good rapport with people over the phone and video. Of course, there are some things that are more difficult (not seeing the body language can be a disadvantage with telephone appointments sometimes), but I’ve found that there are also occasions when people are more forthcoming over the phone.” (Careers Advisor)

5.31 The option of video consultations was introduced a few weeks into the first lockdown period (once potential issues surrounding the GDPR and confidentiality had been explored and resolved). The clear preference of the Working Wales team was to undertake consultations with customers via video (rather than via telephone).

The main reason for this was that video allows an individual's body language, for example, to be assessed during discussions, which is not possible when speaking to an individual via telephone. However, the number of individuals choosing to meet with a careers advisor via video was, at the time of the research, much lower than had been anticipated.

5.32 Several possible reasons for this were suggested during discussions with the Working Wales team, the most common being:

- Concerns surrounding the quality of the broadband connection and/or the quality of devices/equipment
- Limited experience in communicating via video, leading to nervousness with regard to choosing that option
- A more general concern surrounding 'appearing on camera'

5.33 The use of video was, however, considered to be increasing and actions for further promoting and encouraging the use of video for consultations were about to be undertaken at the time of the research.

5.34 The other major benefit of telephone/video consultations identified during discussions was that their introduction has enhanced the ability of some to access the service, especially in rural and other locations with poor transport connections (which made travelling to careers centres potentially difficult and time-consuming). In those circumstances, the telephone/video option may well be the preferred approach of many people, even in circumstances in which the careers centres are open. Indeed, several interviewees highlighted the need to maintain the telephone/video service going forward, in conjunction with the reintroduction of face-to-face services.

Perceived impact of the furlough scheme

5.35 Seventy-one per cent of respondents to the survey of frontline staff believed that the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (better known as the 'furlough scheme') had an impact on Working Wales. The three most common impacts identified were:

- An increase in the number of customers (n=29)
- An increase in the number of people considering their options (n=26)
- Increasing levels of concern regarding job security (n=23)

5.36 This feedback does, however, need to be considered within the context of a dramatically lower number of customers in Working Wales as a result of the

lockdowns during 2020 (as discussed in Chapter 4). The numbers suggest that the impact of the furlough scheme that frontline staff were identifying was yet to fully translate into engagement with Working Wales. This may change when the furlough scheme support ends, along with other support provided in response to the pandemic by the Welsh and UK Governments. A future increase in the demand for Working Wales services when the ‘furlough’ comes to an end was a common feature in the discussions with staff, although it was unclear as to when that would be at the time of the research:

“At the beginning, appointments seemed to be slower and quieter. However, with changes in the scheme and employers having to contribute, there has been a rise in individuals being made redundant and needing support from Working Wales.” (Advisor)

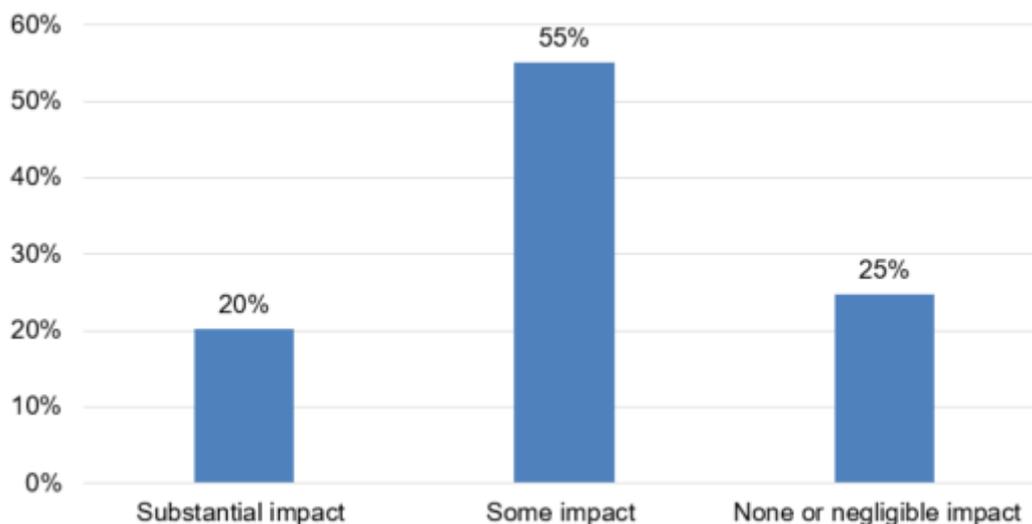
“If customers are made redundant as a result of the furlough scheme ending, then there will be an increased number coming to us for support.” (Advisor)

- 5.37 Working Wales senior management speculated that the pandemic has led to a change in attitude amongst users (both existing and potential) of the Working Wales service. Specifically, there was a view that people ‘paused’ their thinking about employment issues during the pandemic, preferring to wait until ‘things get back to normal’ and/or the economic situation becomes clearer. The introduction of the furlough scheme was considered to have contributed to this, with individuals thought to be delaying their engagement with Working Wales services until the furlough scheme came to an end.

Impact on support to which Working Wales refers customers

- 5.38 Eighty-nine per cent of respondents to the survey of frontline staff identified at least some impact on the provision of support to which Working Wales can refer individuals as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, with 20 per cent of those believing the impact to be substantial (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Frontline staff views on the impact of restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on the provision of support to which Working Wales is able to refer individuals



Base: 87

Source: online survey of Careers Wales staff

5.39 The most common reasons identified by the respondents when explaining their responses were:

- Issues surrounding the availability of training (n=30)
- A lack of in-person support (n=22)
- Delays in the provision (n=17)

“Obviously, our partners are working in a similar way to us during the pandemic, so certain types of situation group work (which, incidentally, applies equally to our service) or job clubs can’t take place — at least in the same way. But we manage.” (Advisor)

“Most services are not offering [face-to-face] appointments, and the usual referral channels and methods have changed or have not been there. This has resulted in many referrals not being completed or more time needed for a positive referral.” (Advisor)

5.40 The theory of change discussed in Chapter 3 of this report highlights that Working Wales cannot achieve the desired impact (employability outcomes, etc.) unless the support that it identifies as being needed is available and effectively provided. It is therefore important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on that sector when considering the impact on Working Wales. Whilst there are

obvious limitations within this research in that there has been no engagement with the providers of training in this phase, the suggestion is clearly that there has been some impact on their ability to deliver support during the pandemic, which has a knock-on implication for Working Wales.

Key challenges for the coming months

5.41 When respondents to the survey of frontline staff were asked what they foresaw would be the key challenges for Working Wales over the coming months, the two most common responses were coping with an anticipated increase in the demand for support (n=37) and ensuring that customers were able to access the support (n=23). The following quotes are examples of the comments made:

“The impact from redundancies will be a massive challenge for years to come and the economic impact hasn’t really been identified yet.”

“The amount of time taken for each customer’s need may increase; therefore, further members of staff will be required.”

“I hope that we will not be overwhelmed with customers accessing the service, and hope we can work well with other agencies to get customers into some form of training/work/employability or work experience so that customers can develop the skills they need.”

“Challenges will be keeping up with the workload as more and more people are losing jobs and looking for support from us.”

5.42 Other challenges identified by a smaller number of respondents included:

- A lack of appropriate skills amongst those being supported (n=11) — “This will lead to many customers needing to retrain in new skills and also (for some) needing to embrace the use of new technologies and new norms [...]”
- Staff issues within Careers Wales (n=11) — “I worry about the well-being of our staff and our capacity to deal with an increase in demand.”
- A lack of jobs and/or the labour market conditions (n=10) — “Many jobs are being lost altogether, so there will be more people trying to apply for [fewer] jobs.”

5.43 The core issue identified is the likely substantial increase in the demand for Working Wales support and the service’s ability to meet such demand without any compromise on the quality and effectiveness of the service being delivered. This is

an understandable concern and links to the theory of change discussed previously in this report, which identified the assumption that the inputs into the service would be sufficient to deliver the outputs (activities) and meet the demand for support. The clear suggestion is that staff are anticipating that this will be a challenge over the coming weeks and months as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Working Wales Customer Case Studies

Key points

- The case studies demonstrate the wide range of issues with which Working Wales is supporting its customers in dealing.
- Furthermore, the case studies demonstrate that Working Wales is much more than merely a 'needs analysis and referral' service supporting individuals who are sometimes in very difficult periods of their lives.
- None of the customers identified having any issues in accessing Working Wales support, despite the restrictions and the changes to the service as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All of the customers interviewed stated that they had benefitted from the support that they had received.
- The 'well-being' outcomes generated for Working Wales customers, as well as the employability outcomes, are apparent within the case studies.
- The 'positivity' and 'reassurance' that individuals had received from the Working Wales team were identified as being important, as was the 'personalised approach'.

Introduction

- 6.1 This chapter brings together 10 case studies of service users, hereinafter referred to as 'customers' (which is the term used by Working Wales staff), accessing the Working Wales service. They include a range of customers from across Wales, with various different personal circumstances and different needs. One of the individuals was below 21 years of age, five were within the 22–49 age group, and four were above 50 years of age. Those with physical disabilities or mental health issues are represented in two case studies. One case study represents an individual who identifies as an ethnic minority.
- 6.2 The case studies are based on semi-structured interviews conducted from February to March 2021. The interviews were conducted either via online video calls or via telephone. Customers were invited to discuss their experiences in their own words. To add further depth and perspective to the experiences described by the 'customers', their Working Wales advisors or Employability Coaches were also interviewed. Again, these were conducted via either video call or telephone and over the same period.

- 6.3 The contact details were supplied by Careers Wales for individuals who met the criteria to be included in the case studies and, due to this, all case study customers were notified of the potential for identifiability by the Careers Wales/Working Wales team. All customers were happy to proceed and it was not seen to impact the responses gathered. All names of the Working Wales customers and Working Wales employees have, however, been changed within the case studies.

Case study 1: Sam

Some background information

- 6.4 Sam lives and works in South Wales. Currently 49 years old, he had worked in various jobs in the flooring industry since he was 17. He was furloughed from his job during the first lockdown period in 2020 and saw that as an opportunity to access the Working Wales service in May 2020 with the objective of changing both his job and the sector in which he was working. Sam describes how he had been seeking to change sectors since 2019 and, specifically, was keen to join the Ambulance Service. He wanted to take his voluntary work with St John Ambulance and Mountain Rescue and convert it into a full-time occupation.
- 6.5 Sam had previously applied twice for a job in the Ambulance Service and on both occasions had made it through to the interview stage but did not get the job. He did not believe that this was due to a lack of experience, but rather to his working in the same sector for many years and, therefore, not having the necessary ‘interview skills’ or experience on which to draw. Sam initially thought that he would have to pay for support to help him to address those issues, but then he found Working Wales through an internet search.
- 6.6 Sam describes how contacting Working Wales was a challenge because he was not used to asking for help and becomes nervous when outside of his comfort zone. However, Sam overcame this and called to set up an appointment with a Working Wales advisor:
- “I don’t normally ask for help, but I thought I needed help. So I plucked up [the] courage to get in touch. Although I always seem confident as a sales rep, I’m not always confident in real life.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

Working Wales support

6.7 Sam started to meet regularly with an Employability Coach. Together, they identified the need to develop his interview technique. The Employability Coach was clear that while Sam was not in a situation of needing support in finding a job (as he was still in employment), his need for support was driven by his dream of working for the Ambulance Service. Making this career change was important for Sam's general happiness and job satisfaction. The provision of support was therefore more motivated by well-being factors than by economic factors (which are more traditionally associated with a service such as Working Wales):

“For him this was a long-term goal. It was a burning ambition and he had put a lot of work into volunteering and supporting people. And this was going [to] help him in a different way. Financially he had a job, but for fulfilment there was a need there.” (Employability Coach Interview, 2021)

6.8 Over the period of a few months, Sam and his Employability Coach worked together on addressing the issue. It was considered important that Sam understood the techniques that would help during a job interview. Moreover, they analysed and considered previous interview questions to see where he was going wrong and how he could improve. Aware of his career goal, Sam's coach was able to incorporate the use of the STAR method²¹ into their sessions, knowing that the NHS use this method when recruiting.

6.9 From there, they were able to dig deeper into the interview questions that he was likely to be asked, allowing Sam to offer examples and in-depth explanations of his relevant experience. To further prepare, Sam's Employability Coach organised a number of mock interviews with other members of the Working Wales team:

“It has opened the world to interview structure. It has given me what I wanted, which was to pass [the] interview, and that is what it has done.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

“We showed him how employers score applications. We pulled out things from job descriptions [...]. We would show him how they would use a scoring sheet.” (Employability Coach Interview, 2021)

²¹ The STAR method is used within interviews to test behavioural responses. The method encourages interviewees to answer situational questions through describing a situation, task, action and result (STAR) and to give focused and concise responses, which aids employers in judging their fit within the job role.

Outcomes

- 6.10 Recently, a job in the Ambulance Service was advertised by the NHS, for which Sam applied. Again, he was shortlisted for an interview and he got the job.
- 6.11 Due to the positive experience that he had with Working Wales, Sam now states that he suggests it to his colleagues whenever they discuss work or job progression.

Case study 2: Gareth

Some background information

- 6.12 Gareth lives in North Wales and is in his early 20s. He graduated with a Master's degree in Physics in late 2019 and had since been seeking full-time employment.
- 6.13 It was at the Jobcentre that Working Wales was suggested as a potential source of support to help Gareth into work. Although Gareth was able to access Working Wales support through this referral, he felt that the process included 'jumping through hoops', especially since he was already receiving employment support via the Jobcentre.
- 6.14 However, he subsequently found Working Wales to be flexible and convenient once the support started. Gareth started to use Working Wales in September 2020. His first appointment was an online meeting with his Working Wales advisor.

Working Wales support

- 6.15 Gareth did not feel that he needed to access any training, having only recently graduated. Rather, Gareth recalled that he felt as though he needed to discuss his career options and access 'non-judgemental' support:

"The main thing I wanted from a careers service was to be able to say out loud some ideas I had without a biased opinion towards me." (Customer Interview, 2021)
- 6.16 His advisor noted how Gareth had both long-term and short-term employment ideas. These initially focused on his need to bring in some money and have the independence that earning can bring. It was important for Gareth to have the sense of purpose that working can provide. Over the longer term, however, Gareth wanted to secure a role within his field of interest and related to his university studies:

“He was divided in looking for long-term and short-term roles — short-term to get into [a] job he could just do to earn money [...]. He was also wanting to look at graduate roles. That’s where long-term ideas came in [...]. He was wanting to do something science-based. He had other ideas but wasn’t sure. He was firing out that many applications at the time [...]. He wanted to check if his ideas would take him in [the] right direction.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

6.17 Although Gareth faced no barriers in accessing support, he felt that it was not very well suited to graduates in his position. He found that many of the jobs and opportunities that were sent to him focused on college training or apprenticeships, which, as a recent graduate, he did not feel were appropriate. Moreover, Gareth identified his location and the impacts of rurality on the types of jobs and opportunities available locally as an issue.

6.18 Gareth also stated that, as well as the employment support that he received, the Working Wales service had helped him to cope with the impacts of COVID-19 and its lockdown measures. Gareth stated about being unemployed:

“I guess the biggest thing is boredom. It feels like I’m not doing anything day to day, so that is probably not the best thing to feel. Then, with COVID-19, you can’t see your friends, so it feels isolating.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.19 His advisor noted how they discussed his employment options, as well as supporting him with job applications, signposting to job websites, and interview techniques. Furthermore, they discussed broadening his ideas of employment options and how Gareth’s skills can be applied to a range of roles and sectors (helping him to consider diversifying his job search).

6.20 Due to the time during which Gareth accessed the service and the associated increase in online interviews, his advisor noted that they had important discussions on how to take part in interviews at home and on techniques and ideas with which to help support Gareth in making the best impression in his home environment:

“We went over interview techniques and looked at example questions and preparing for interviews and background imagery. In his first appointment he was sat in [a] dressing gown with [a] poster of [a] band in [the] background!” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Outcomes

6.21 Gareth has since been able to find full-time employment in the field of work that he wanted. Overall, he was positive towards the effectiveness of the support that he was offered, and felt as though it had given him what he was seeking. He was hesitant, however, to attribute his gaining of employment solely to the work of Working Wales:

“I don’t want to undervalue or overvalue the service. I was applying for so many jobs and getting interviews. Just being able to speak about what I was applying to and the tests I had to do for the job applications and interviews [...] put my mind at ease.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.22 Gareth also felt that the support offered by Working Wales helped to reduce his anxiety in relation to finding a job. Having someone to discuss ideas with and receiving validation from his Working Wales advisor helped him to move forward with his career plan:

“I would say that what he needed to do was just to tell his story to see if that made sense [...]. He did have ideas but didn’t realise the potential, but he realised in the end. He was wanting to make sure he was on the right track, [receiving] reassurance and that kind of thing.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Case study 3: Peter

Some background information

- 6.23 Peter moved to the UK in 2006 after previously living and studying in both India and Singapore. He started his career in the hospitality sector in West Wales before moving to urban South Wales with his family for work. He started to work as an NVQ assessor within the hospitality sector in 2009. Peter is aged 22–49 and identifies as an ethnic minority.
- 6.24 Having worked as a trainer and assessor in the hospitality sector for 12 years, Peter was made redundant in August 2020 as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality sector. However, he was not unemployed when he accessed the Working Wales service, working on a part-time basis (again in the hospitality sector). This allowed him to continue to earn a wage whilst seeking the type of job that he wanted.

Working Wales support

- 6.25 Peter knew that his employment prospects would improve if he gained further qualifications. He discovered Working Wales and the ReAct programme whilst searching for appropriate training on the Internet. He then called Working Wales in September 2020 to arrange an appointment, hoping that he would be eligible for support:
- “From [the] first call I knew they were able to help me, and I was eligible for it and there was nothing stopping me.” (Participant Interview, 2021)
- 6.26 Peter wanted funding in order to undertake a Level 4 Assessors Qualification for which he could not afford to pay.
- 6.27 Peter’s eligibility for support was quickly established. The Working Wales advisor, however, felt that he was under a large amount of stress and pressure when he accessed the service. They attributed this to his not being in a situation of redundancy or joblessness previously. They felt that (through accessing training) Peter would become more confident and have a sense of purpose and a goal on which to focus:

“In the initial consultation he came across as talkative and I felt he was quite stressed [...]. I really let him unload initially. In [the] back of my mind [I] wanted to see how I [could] help him. I had to rein him in, or he would have talked for the whole hour [...]. [It was] getting that balance [of] letting him talk and working out how we could help him.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

6.28 The training needed was in short supply due to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Both Peter and his advisor felt that it was therefore important to secure a place on a course which was available at the earliest opportunity. This was also recognition of the stress that Peter was experiencing at the time.

6.29 His advisor noted how during a meeting with Peter he missed a call from a training provider and encouraged him to call back during the meeting. This call led to Peter being offered a place on a course starting the following week. The Working Wales advisor worked hard to push through the ReAct funding application within a matter of days to enable Peter to secure his place on the course.

Outcomes

6.30 At the time of writing, Peter was still undertaking the training course. He was very positive towards the support that he has received from Working Wales:

“[...] I never got that sort of support from anywhere else after coming to this country. I never got any sort of things like that. [The Working Wales advisor] was really helpful and really wanted me to do the course on time and I really wanted to do that course.” (Customer Interview, 2021)

6.31 The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the hospitality sector (in which Peter hopes to work). Therefore, in order to allow Peter to keep his employment options open, his advisor discussed with him the potential to use the Level 4 Assessors Qualification in other sectors, which Peter is now happy to consider:

“One of [the] things we did look at was barriers from his focus on hospitality, and with lockdown it’s whether there are people to assess. Some assessor awards can be used more generally. This Level 4 Assessment Qualification can. He has so much experience, qualifications and skills [that] he could diversify and use them in other areas of assessment.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Case study 4: Matthew

Some background information

- 6.32 Matthew lives in an urban part of North Wales and left school in the summer of 2020 without accessing any careers support or guidance, except for a brief meeting to undertake a 'career check survey' and some group work. As a result, Matthew was at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), as he had not made any plans regarding what to do after leaving school.
- 6.33 Matthew started to access Working Wales after his mother made the initial call to the service to set up a meeting with an advisor. She was worried about his anxiety and isolation due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Both Matthew and his mother were aware of Working Wales because his sister had previously accessed the service.

Working Wales support

- 6.34 Upon accessing the service in September 2020, Matthew was clear that he wanted to work in the agricultural sector and was keen on accessing a traineeship or starting a course at a local college. However, his advisor described how Matthew did not have a grasp of what that could mean or any idea of a career path. Therefore, initially, they worked together to identify the potential next steps for Matthew:

“He needed to know what the options were and where they were. When we went on to further interviews and steps, there was some misunderstanding about where he could study and colleges and paying for transport. The practical information [...]. A lot of the practicalities of college he wasn't aware of and needed support on that.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

- 6.35 Matthew's Working Wales advisor was also concerned about the suitability of a college course for him, as they believed that he had not found the school environment to be easy. Following a discussion, however, they agreed that the more practical nature of a college course in agriculture would be of benefit to Matthew, with more hands-on aspects of learning being more suited to his learning style.
- 6.36 Matthew decided to apply for a course in animal care, and joined the college at the beginning of October 2020. However, due to the more rural location of the college and the hour-long bus journey to reach it, Matthew made the decision that this course, at this time, was not right for him, and left the college at the end of

November. Although he had left the course, his advisor felt that he had stuck with it enough to realise that it was not best for him and resumed supporting Matthew in finding something more suitable.

Outcome

- 6.37 Subsequently, Working Wales has helped Matthew onto a traineeship. After overcoming an initial barrier to accessing the traineeship, i.e. Matthew could not find his National Insurance Number, he started in January 2021. This, his advisor hopes, will allow him to gain some vital first-hand experience in agriculture.
- 6.38 Matthew's advisor felt that he has engaged well with the support on offer and noted that any issues or reservations that he may have had in accessing careers support at school did not seem to exist any longer, which the advisor attributes to the fact that Working Wales is not connected to school and he was participating on a voluntary basis (rather than as part of compulsory school education).

Case study 5: Jenny

Some background information

- 6.39 Jenny was made redundant in August 2020. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the nursery in which she worked had to close down permanently. As a result, Jenny found herself without a job for the first time in 20 years:

“I think [that, because I was] working in the same place for so long, I was out of touch with things. You feel like you're in your own bubble.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

- 6.40 Jenny lives in urban South Wales and although she can speak some Welsh, she accessed the Working Wales service in English. She is 59 years old.

Working Wales support

- 6.41 Jenny was referred to Working Wales by the Jobcentre for help and support with respect to getting her back into work and accessed the service in August 2020 (which she described as being a smooth process). Jenny's Working Wales advisor described that in their area they have a strong link with the Jobcentre. Due to the nature of her referral from the Jobcentre, she was contacted directly via telephone by her Working Wales advisor (who carried out the initial meeting over the phone).
- 6.42 Jenny described how, at first, she was anxious about what Working Wales would ask her. However, her Working Wales advisor helped to put her mind at ease with

their positive and helpful attitude. This was important for Jenny because she had found redundancy to be an upsetting and worrying time:

“[The Working Wales advisor] was lovely to talk to and supportive and kind and he [asked whether I wanted] to go back to work and he said he’d do everything he can to help [me to] get back to work. Before that I was so upset, but after talking to [the Working Wales advisor] it made you feel that everything would be okay.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

- 6.43 Jenny’s Working Wales advisor described how it was important initially to offer emotional support so as to help Jenny to feel more positive, before working step by step towards Jenny’s goal of returning to work:

“Sometimes if people have been cut adrift, they feel helpless, but once [they] start to say [that they] can do this [and] once [they] can make steps, people feel in control; [furthermore], when they see what they have achieved, they feel more positive.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

- 6.44 Jenny was supported in developing her CV, received interview advice and experience, had assistance in seeking jobs, and received support with regard to using online technology for meetings and interviews. Although she was offered the potential to access training via the ReAct programme, she considered all of her qualifications to be up to date and did not feel as though she needed any additional training.

- 6.45 Jenny stated that the positivity from her advisor was very important. This helped to encourage her to continue seeking work, and gave her affirmation that she was doing the right things in job hunting. After having been in the same job for a long time, she possessed little knowledge of how to look for a job and use job websites, for example. Furthermore, Jenny was concerned about her age and how that may be a barrier to obtaining a job:

“I didn’t know whether there would be any jobs there for me and I was worried about my age — I’ll be 60 [years old this year]. I said to him [that] I didn’t know if anyone would want me, and he said [that] of course they [would] because of all [my] experience.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

- 6.46 Without the support from Working Wales, Jenny felt as though it would have been difficult to remain positive and that she may have become overwhelmed with the impact of redundancy and unemployment:

“[Redundancy] is a shock and not a nice feeling. I am saying [that] a lot of people would feel the same way if they lost their job, especially if they had loved their job for so long. It’s such a big turnaround in life, especially when you are older.”

(Participant Interview, 2021)

“I think it got her believing in herself again [...]. I am a strong believer that the job she gained was an outcome. Lifting her mood and spirits and increasing her motivation helped her present better in the interview.” (Working Wales Advisor, 2021)

Outcomes

6.47 Jenny recently secured a job working part-time in a local school as a nursery nurse. Working with local children and in her local community has always been something of great pride for Jenny and she noted how she feels fortunate to have secured a local job and to support her local community.

6.48 Jenny was very positive towards her Working Wales experience and noted that it was her Working Wales advisor who suggested that she look at the local council website for job postings, as this was something that she had not considered doing in the past. Previously she had been calling schools to ask about jobs, without realising that they had a centralised recruitment process:

“It was [the Working Wales advisor] who [suggested looking at the local council website for] schools. I was phoning the schools and they said [that] they don’t take on that way.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.49 Finally, Jenny felt that the positivity that she received during her time with Working Wales helped her through redundancy and joblessness. The knowledge of having someone to support you through this period was of great comfort and relief to Jenny. She stated:

“It affects your whole family when you lose your job [...]. You could easily have gone down, down, down, but I knew [that] there was someone there supporting [me] and things would get better.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

Case study 6: Simon

Some background information

6.50 Simon lives in North Wales and is 50 years old. He has a diverse employment history, including roles in retail, insurance, business, agriculture, and logistics. He

left his previous role working on a farm at the end of 2019 for mental health reasons and had undertaken some temporary work during the Christmas period in the same year. From there, he set about finding another job in early 2020.

6.51 Simon had been attending a course through the Jobcentre to help with computer skills to support him back into work, but he felt as though he was not seeing much benefit to it. He knew that having an updated CV would improve his chances of obtaining another job, more so than the course that he was taking.

6.52 He described himself as a technophobe with limited ability and knowledge with regard to using technology:

“I needed a CV doing, something I would have struggled with. I was on the course that wasn’t really helpful, and I needed [a CV] done urgently. So, having had the experience from 2008 with Careers Wales, I thought I’d get in touch.”

(Participant Interview, 2021)

Working Wales support

6.53 Simon attended his local Careers Wales office in February 2020 and was using the public-access computers to update his CV. The receptionist at the centre approached him and offered some further support from an Employability Coach. Simon agreed and returned to the centre an hour later to meet with the coach.

6.54 From his first hour-long meeting with his Employability Coach, Simon had his CV prepared and had even submitted it to a job website by the time he left the appointment. His Employability Coach noted:

“I think he was over the moon [because] he was able to see the end product after sitting together for an hour and had something to take away.” (Employability Coach Interview, 2021)

6.55 The coach described Simon’s confidence as being low when they met. Furthermore, they felt that in his recent employment he had been selling himself short and had much more to offer an employer in terms of skills and experience:

“Sometimes people stick with things because it is easy, and they undervalue what they have to offer [...]. He needed reminding of how useful his skills are. Sometimes people don’t realise their strengths.” (Employability Coach Interview, 2021)

6.56 Talking about his skills and experience and then working on his CV gave Simon a boost. Other support was potentially available to Simon via Working Wales, but Simon did not feel as though he needed it at that point. Simon felt that once he had the CV he would be able to move forward and obtain a job.

Outcomes

6.57 Simon found part-time employment as a delivery driver within a month of his session with the Employability Coach. This role initially started as a 16-hours-per-week post and then increased to 30 hours per week.

6.58 Simon was positive towards his Working Wales experience and attributed finding the job to the service. Being able to meet with the Employability Coach on the same day and leave the appointment with a CV and the knowledge of where to look for jobs was of great benefit to him and allowed him to move forward and start seeking work immediately:

“I have had help with CVs before from a friend. But having someone who does it professionally, it’s better to do it that way.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.59 Simon would like to find a full-time job and is thinking of returning to Working Wales to help update his CV so that he can look for a more suitable job role:

“I got my CV done (which was my primary goal) and I got a job. Whether it was the job I really wanted, I probably would have liked to look around more. Then [COVID-19] came along, so [I] thought I would stick with the job. [I] wouldn’t say it’s my dream job, but I am working.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

Case study 7: Nick

Some background information

6.60 Nick had been working in a management position with the Royal Mail for over 30 years when he was made redundant. He then moved into a self-employed contracting role with a national bank, which he held for two years. When COVID-19 struck, due to the nature of his role, Nick's contract came to an end and he became unemployed. Losing his employment had a big impact on Nick:

"I'd never ever had [a] day off work before then. It was something I'd never experienced before. It was not just a financial worry — it was the mental impact it was having on me, too. Suddenly, I was out of work and it's not something I've ever experienced [...]. [They were] extremely worrying times." (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.61 In his mid-50s, Nick lives in South Wales. Nick's Working Wales advisor stated that he had initially felt as though it would be easy for him to find a new job. However, after applying for several jobs online, Nick was having no success:

"I remember speaking to him and he sounded really down. He had been in work so long [that] I think he thought he'd be snapped up quickly. He had applied for hundreds of jobs and no one was even getting back to him [...]. [I] think he thought he'd fall into something and he was getting knocked back a lot." (Careers Advisor Interview, 2021)

Working Wales support

6.62 Nick's Working Wales advisor described how the first appointment was an opportunity to gather background information on Nick's employment history and find out his needs and the support that he required. From this first meeting it was clear that Nick needed an updated CV and help in preparing a cover letter tailored to the specific role for which he was applying.

6.63 Nick's Working Wales advisor also noted how he helped Nick in terms of offering support and being there for him. He described how those who are out of work often need reassuring that they are on the right track. He recalled that he often contacted Nick to tell him about new job vacancies and also to simply 'check in' on him:

“He had [...] applied for hundreds of jobs. We get this quite a lot [...]. People [have been] working in industry for a long time and usually [are] made redundant or made unemployed, and the landscape has changed a lot. His CV was quite old-fashioned, but he hadn’t needed one previously. [He came] out of work and [thought] he would find [a] job quickly and then [wondered whether he would] get back to work.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

- 6.64 Nick noted that he was surprised by the level of support that he received. His initial expectation of Working Wales was that it was a service through which to access current job vacancies. He felt as though the level of personal support that he received was invaluable:

“I honestly thought it would be a matter of them sending a few job specs, but it was way more than that. I am still amazed by the service — it was something I wasn’t expecting. The support I was given was great.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

Outcomes

- 6.65 Working Wales helped to bring Nick up to speed with the current job market. He also explained that Working Wales helped him to expand his job search, often applying for roles outside of what he would normally contemplate, including a role with the prison service, something which he would not have even considered without Working Wales:

“They sent significant jobs — office work, finance, and also sending all the live current jobs as well. [It was a] double whammy relevant to your field and jobs where [you] could apply for something out of [the] ordinary, which I did. I did get some offers — [for the] Prison Service I did an assessment [and was] offered [a] job and I would never have applied to them. It jumped out and [I] would never [have] considered it.” (Customer Interview, 2021)

- 6.66 Nick was hoping to find employment with a ‘reputable employer’, so he was pleased to secure a role with the Prison Service:

“He wanted this job to potentially be that last one before retirement and he wanted that security and the pension, holiday pay, that sort of thing. With his previous job he didn’t have those things [...]. [He wanted to] work for a company he could give something to.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

6.67 Overall, speaking of his experience of using Working Wales, Nick felt that it has been useful and helped to guide him into his new role. One of the main positives for him was the confidence which he gained from the service, which helped to rebuild his approach to seeking work after having many previous rejections:

“[The] biggest benefit [from Working Wales was that], because I worked in a job for 31 years, [I felt as though I had] become institutionalised — [that is] your comfort zone and you know it inside out. Once set out, it’s scary and you don’t realise you can do anything else [...]. [You gain] confidence that you could go for interviews and sell yourself and come across well [...], doing things you never dreamt you could. It did build a lot of confidence [to] keep plugging away and encouraged [that] it will come [...], instead of taking those knock-backs.”

(Participant Interview, 2021)

Case study 8: Anne

Some background information

6.68 Anne lives in South Wales and is in her late 50s. After being made redundant twice in the space of two years, Anne contacted Working Wales to access training that she had identified as being important in helping her to find employment. Anne described her situation as follows:

“In March, the job market was terrible. I was claiming [Jobseeker’s Allowance] and applying for jobs left, right and centre, but nothing was happening. I found out through the Jobcentre that I might be qualified to have training and they suggested I get hold of [Working Wales].” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.69 Anne, despite possessing 40 years of experience in the financial sector, was lacking in qualifications and certification with which to evidence her skills. She had noticed that a high proportion of jobs currently being advertised called for the ‘Sage 50’ qualification; without that, Anne was limited to the jobs for which she would be considered:

“Whilst she had working knowledge of it, she had no certification at all [...]. So she wanted [just] to add to give credence to experience she had. It’s those bits of paper that are important. Someone might have experience of 15 years with it, but employers don’t take those risks anymore.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Working Wales support

- 6.70 Anne described how her period of unemployment and the two recent redundancies impacted her, especially as she thought that her previous role was her “job for life”. She stated:
- “It was a shock. The CEO used to say to me [that I could] never retire. Then, when made redundant the second time [...], I didn’t realise how it had affected me. It made me anxious and stressed as well [...]. Then everything came to a head for me.” (Participant Interview, 2021)
- 6.71 Once Anne had contacted Working Wales in April 2020 via a telephone call to the service, she started to work with her Working Wales advisor, who helped her to use the ReAct programme to access a total of four days’ training relating to the use of Sage 50 and Microsoft Excel.
- 6.72 Although she noted that “two days” training doesn’t make you an expert, but helps to get a foot in the door” (Participant Interview, 2021), she also actively “trains herself” using online videos and practice.
- 6.73 Anne also felt that undertaking the training demonstrated that she had been keeping active during her period of unemployment. Anne described herself as “always learning”, placing great emphasis on her continuing professional development (CPD). She felt that this shows her adaptability and keenness “to give everything a go”:
- “I was convinced that if I had this extra training on [my] CV, [employers] could see I was not sitting on my laurels during unemployment.” (Participant Interview, 2021)
- 6.74 Anne’s Working Wales advisor identified the lack of face-to-face contact with her as a challenge. As Anne accessed support from Working Wales early on during the first COVID-19 lockdown, in April 2020, the support had only recently shifted online. Anne and her advisor have never met in person, only speaking on the telephone. This and the challenge of working from home made the process of offering and accessing the support “slightly more tricky” for Anne. Furthermore, Anne noted that she had to borrow her sister’s laptop to be able to undertake the training online.

Outcomes

- 6.75 Having completed the training, Anne was able to secure work and, at the time of the interview, was working in a temporary post within her field. Having the qualification allowed her to apply for jobs in which this was a requirement, thus opening up more opportunities. During her temping work, she has been able to use her new skills and gain further applied experience. Anne stated:

“I felt more positive because I had [the training]. I am a very confident person, but at the time I guess I wasn’t as confident as I normally would be or have been during my life. It gave me some oomph. Because I could add to my CV, it made me more confident [...]. I could be more positive about going into [roles].”

(Participant Interview, 2021)

Case study 9: Elena

Some background information

- 6.76 Elena, who is 25 years old, has a number of GCSE and A Level qualifications as well as a varied employment history (including in retail, working self-employed as a photographer, working as a teaching assistant, a nursery assistant, and a tour guide, as well as possessing a variety of volunteering experience). Moreover, she has undertaken a number of training courses that supplement her work experience.
- 6.77 During her period of unemployment, Elena contacted Careers Wales towards the end of 2020 for some support regarding her CV. From there she was referred to Working Wales. She then used the Connect Service to set up her first appointment.
- 6.78 Elena lives in North Wales and has some physical and learning disabilities, which she is determined not to let define her or any job that she can undertake. Her advisor noted how she is a very determined person, and even though she has some barriers to employment due to her disabilities, she does not see them in that way.

Working Wales support

- 6.79 From the outset, Elena wanted support in relation to updating her CV, as it was six pages long. Her advisor stated:

“[Elena] is inspirational and she is motivated [...]. Her CV is fantastic, and she has lots of work experience [...]. She uses her initiative and is putting herself out there. [There] is [a] lack of opportunities [...].” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

6.80 When she engaged with Working Wales, Elena was shielding and was keen to prepare her CV remotely and access any free online training from home:

“I have been doing these skills [courses] online. It is really helpful. I felt my brain was going to mush a bit, so this has really helped to keep my brain occupied.”

(Participant Interview, 2021)

6.81 Her Working Wales advisor worked with her on her CV and offered any advice and tips on how it could be improved. She was then referred to an Employability Coach for further CV support. Working Wales were flexible in the support that they offered to Elena and, due to her concerns surrounding attending a group session because of her dyslexia, she was offered one-to-one online support as an alternative.

Outcomes

6.82 Elena considered the support that she received from Working Wales to have helped her to take a step towards independence. Currently living with her parents and struggling to find full-time employment as a teaching assistant, being able to secure a job would mean that she could think about moving into her own home in the longer term:

“I would like to be able to have more independence and find my own home, so that is definitely one of my goals.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.83 Without the support on offer, Elena thought that she would still be ‘stuck’ with her CV and would not have had access to the online skills training suggested by Working Wales. She felt as though the support and skills training have helped her to prepare for when she can emerge from shielding and start seeking employment:

“I have too many positive points for them, to be honest [...]; they have been really, really great.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.84 In contrast, however, her Working Wales advisor noted that the feedback from the Employability Coach was that Elena had not been engaging with them or the support on offer. Her Working Wales advisor did caveat this with the feeling that perhaps she had gained all that she required from the initial meetings. Certainly, Elena felt that she had received a good level of support and interaction from the Working Wales team and did not raise any concerns.

6.85 The Working Wales advisor felt that Elena could benefit from more specialist support to help her into work, from organisations such as Scope.²² This could help to remove some of the barriers that she faces with regard to gaining employment. The Working Wales advisor signposted Elena to the services available through these organisations, but she believed that Elena was not interested. This was because she did not want to be defined by her disabilities and, therefore, did not feel as though the support was needed. Her Working Wales advisor respected that choice and continued to support Elena:

“I think she has accessed the service and got resources out of it. She could have got more if she [had taken] on board some of [the] support from [the] organisation available, but I understand the reasons why she has not.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Case study 10: Linda

Some background information

6.86 Linda lives in Mid Wales and is in her late 50s. Her employment history includes working in academia, the charity sector, and also previously running a consultancy business. Linda’s most recent job involved working for a national charity and delivering training, but she was made redundant unexpectedly towards the end of 2020.

6.87 The impact on Linda was massive. She described how she lost her income overnight and did not have assets or savings on which to fall back. Having a diverse employment history, this period of unemployment was ‘a frightening time’. She recalled how she applied for a job and was hopeful of obtaining it because she possessed all of the relevant skills and training, only to not even be shortlisted, finding out later that more than 400 people had applied for the same role. Finding this out indicated to Linda that she could not, and did not want to, compete in the employment market. She stated:

²² Scope is a disability equality charity which works across England and Wales. They campaign for social equality and fairness for disabled people and offer practical information and support to those with disabilities. Their current five-year strategy, i.e. Everyday Equality, aims to ensure that disabled people have equal opportunities, and includes the specific areas of supporting disabled people in living their life as they choose and advocating for financial security for disabled people.

“That shook me to the core and I realised that I don’t have the energy to participate in a competitive job market and I sat and looked at what I wanted.”
(Participant Interview, 2021)

- 6.88 After working out that there were three important factors in her life — her dog, being able to work from home, and working as an educator — she decided to start her own business, running online training programmes. To achieve this she felt as though she first needed training on how to market the business to support its launch and online development.

Working Wales support

- 6.89 Linda saw a social media advert about Working Wales and the ReAct programme and thought that they could be useful in helping her to access training in online marketing to support her new business. She contacted the Connect Service in November 2020 and set up an appointment with a Working Wales advisor.
- 6.90 Upon meeting Linda virtually, her advisor felt that she was panicking and needed help in calming down and thinking straight:
- “Initially it was all [about] calming her down and listening to what she wanted. I then put across the ReAct package and we discussed what training she felt she would need and I offered guidance on where she might access it. I was really just saying what [it is she needed] and getting her to identify it. I think she knew what she needed but at that time couldn’t verbalise it.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)
- 6.91 With the support of her advisor, Linda identified and accessed an online training course. Although Linda felt that the structure of the online learning was not best suited to how she traditionally learns, she felt that the support and guidance offered by her Working Wales advisor were very helpful.
- 6.92 Her Working Wales advisor noted that the need to move quickly was always clear whilst working with Linda so as to ensure that there were no gaps in her income. She stated that, in order to offer timely support, she gave Linda her direct telephone number, which she often used to ask quick questions so as to ensure that she could progress quickly:

“I think she appreciated [a] friendly ear and sounding board and to have someone to feedback positives and listen to her.” (Working Wales Advisor Interview, 2021)

Outcomes

6.93 Linda felt that the speed at which she was able to access the training was vital to her. Having accessed Working Wales in November, she undertook the training in December and then had the business up and running by January. Furthermore, she felt that the support and information offered and signposted to her were of benefit, stating:

“I was entering a field I knew nothing about and I was uncertain on legalities and they gave me that information. They gave me a [...] business plan [...]. I used it as [a] template for my business plan. I don't know I would have done that without this. It was helpful and I could forward it to people when engaging them about my business.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.94 She felt that her Working Wales advisor was empathetic and could relate to her well, which resulted in their developing a positive relationship:

“I'd feel more alone [without the support]. I don't feel so alone knowing there are people out there wanting me to succeed.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.95 To conclude, Linda felt that although she appreciated the support from Working Wales, the success of her setting up her business was her own:

“I don't want to give them all the credit. My success was because of me. I created a business in three weeks [while] working [16-hour] days. Like I said, they opened doors to information and access. So my engagement was pleasurable. It was good to know people there were championing me.” (Participant Interview, 2021)

6.96 This is something with which her Working Wales advisor agreed, and that Linda possessed the answers and a great deal of knowledge already, but that, crucially, she was able (through Working Wales) to gain the confidence and capacity to move forward with her business ideas and that the importance that she felt supported her in doing so.

Conclusion

- 6.97 The case studies set out above are very useful examples of how the Working Wales service is delivered. In particular, they demonstrate how much more than merely an ‘analysis and referral’ service it is, with the Working Wales team dealing with individuals who are sometimes in very difficult periods of their lives because of, for example, being made redundant. Moreover, the approach enables the advisors to identify and seek solutions to multiple barriers which the customers are facing as they look for a job or a different job.
- 6.98 All of the customers interviewed believed that Working Wales had been of benefit to them. Commonly, the customers noted that the ‘positivity’ and ‘reassurance’ that they had received from the Working Wales team had been important. These are clearly things which go beyond how the Working Wales service may be described on paper and in reports such as this one.
- 6.99 The personalised approach is clear from the case studies and is a key aspect of the success of the service being provided, with the Working Wales team being able to develop effective relationships with their customers, even under the challenging circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.100 Many of the individuals in the case studies expressed surprise towards the level of support that they were offered. This could have come from a general lack of knowledge and/or understanding of the way in which Working Wales works.
- 6.101 The fact that the Working Wales team is aware of the mental health issues that customers may have, such as stress and anxiety resulting from unemployment and/or redundancy (see case study 3: Peter and case study 8: Anne), is also noteworthy. This, many of the staff felt, was an integral part of their role and that of Working Wales more broadly.
- 6.102 The Working Wales team works with customers to develop their understanding on the reasons as to why certain steps or actions need to take place, which not only offers a solution but also puts in place a more sustainable solution and develops skills. There is a focus on allowing customers to build their own solutions and developing resilience. Furthermore, it is important to note that all customers involved in these case studies either had found further employment or had a clearer plan going forward.

- 6.103 The case studies, however, also highlighted some potential areas for improvement, including in the support available to graduates, although the fact that these are case studies (rather than a more comprehensive assessment of the support being provided) needs to be noted. Although Working Wales caters to everyone, both customers and staff members felt that the support for graduates was not as strong as it could be (see case study 2: Gareth). Whilst most graduates have access to employability services in their institutions, perhaps more could be done to offer support to these customers, e.g. providing information on more relevant employment opportunities.
- 6.104 These case studies also highlight that there are a number of issues that can potentially impact an individual's ability to access employment, education and training (including rurality and access to services). Crucially, none of these factors have impacted the customers in the case studies accessing Working Wales support, although this clearly may not necessarily be the case more broadly.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This final chapter draws together the key findings of this first report of the evaluation of the Working Wales service.
- 7.2 The development of the theory of change for Working Wales has found that, while the overall rationale and logic for the service may be straightforward, the complexity of barriers that need to be overcome by some individuals (as illustrated by the case studies in Chapter 6) adds a layer of complexity in terms of achieving a positive outcome for the individuals in question and demonstrating a causal link between that outcome and the support provided by Working Wales.
- 7.3 The principal output (i.e. activities) of the service is the number of customers engaged and then supported. What is more, we are interested in the characteristics of those customers in order to understand the groups of people being supported, or not, by the service. Furthermore, there is an interest in the type of support being provided in order to be able to understand what type of support is most effective. However, of more importance to the evaluation, perhaps, are the outcomes, which represent what happens as a result of the activities being undertaken.
- 7.4 Two types of outcomes are identified within the theory of change: service management outcomes, and outcomes for the individuals being supported. It will be important for the evaluation to explore both types, with both, therefore, featuring within the evaluation framework set out in Appendix 3.
- 7.5 The service management outcomes are quantitative — (a) the number of referrals to subsequent support, and (b) the number of individuals being referred (reflecting the fact that individuals can be referred more than once or to more than one service). The ‘quality’ of these outcomes is, however, also important from an evaluative perspective. Are individuals being referred to the most appropriate/effective support to address their particular/specific needs? This will be challenging to evaluate, albeit very important because it is at the heart of the rationale for the Working Wales service.
- 7.6 The outcomes for individuals supported by Working Wales are generated as a result of the improved knowledge and understanding that they should have (following their engagement with Working Wales) of: (a) their personal potential/capabilities (strengths, weaknesses, etc.), (b) the opportunities in respects of (i) the labour/job market and (ii) the training/personal development support that they can access, and

(c) the means of overcoming barriers that may be restricting their employment opportunities. The scoping interviews suggest that this should lead to positive outcomes in terms of individuals' personal motivation and/or their self-confidence, things to which we have often referred as 'soft outcomes'. The evaluation will engage with individuals supported by Working Wales to explore whether there is evidence of these outcomes being generated.

- 7.7 The final stage of the theory of change is concerned with the impact of the service. We find that Working Wales should contribute to achieving key Welsh Government employability and economic development policies. It is, however, clear that the service cannot achieve those impacts in isolation — there is a reliance on the training and support to which Working Wales will refer its customers. The role of Working Wales is to identify the needs of individuals, but it does not deliver the support needed to address those needs. This is the key assumption within the theory of change for Working Wales — that the support to which individuals are referred is available and effective. This is an important point when considering how the success of Working Wales should be judged.
- 7.8 The review of the management information for Working Wales in Chapter 4 shows a service that regularly engaged with more than 2,000 new adult customers per month and referred/signposted nearly 30,000 customers (both adult and youth) in its first year of operation. Furthermore, the first year included 37,000 face-to-face interviews and 4,000 in-group sessions with customers, as well as significant numbers interacting on the telephone and via the online service.
- 7.9 The COVID-19 pandemic had a massive impact on most things during 2020, including Working Wales (as the analysis of the management information shows). Primary research with the Working Wales team for this report found that the general view from within Careers Wales and the Welsh Government on how the service had coped with the restrictions put in place as a result of the pandemic was positive. Services, whilst being delivered differently, had continued and been effective. Moreover, several new services had been introduced, whereby enhancing the Working Wales service during the pandemic. Understandably, there had been some impact on the quality of the services due to, in particular, the lack of in-person support as a result of the closure of careers centres. Outreach activities, which are a key feature of the Working Wales service, had also been curtailed as a result of the pandemic (which has inevitably had an impact).

- 7.10 Importantly, a positive impact was, however, also identified by the Working Wales team. Most notably, the provision of support via telephone/video was considered to have improved access to the service in some instances; the view was that this approach should be maintained, alongside the reintroduction of the in-person support offered, going forward. This is an example of how challenging circumstances can lead to innovation and a positive change in how a service is delivered.
- 7.11 It is, however, important not to ignore the impact of the pandemic on the provision of services to which Working Wales would usually refer/signpost individuals and from which referrals to Working Wales are made. This has obvious implications for Working Wales in its ability to effectively receive and later make referrals and, thus, for the ultimate impact towards which the service is designed to contribute (as identified in the theory of change) to be achieved. The 'ecosystem' in which Working Wales is working also changed dramatically during 2020 with the introduction of new support in response to the impact of COVID-19 by both the UK and Welsh Governments. These changes will also have an impact on how Working Wales operates.
- 7.12 There is an awareness amongst the Working Wales team that there is likely to be an increase in the demand for support at a later time when interventions such as the furlough scheme come to an end and those who have, for now, 'paused' their thinking about their career decide to re-engage. Indeed, plans are in place to deal with such a situation, and additional resource (including additional budget) has been provided by the Welsh Government. In addition, the likely substantial increase in the demand for support as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic (specifically an increase in redundancies) and the pressure that is likely to be on the service for support during the coming months are clear, leading some staff to express concern regarding the service's ability to effectively meet such an increase in demand. This anticipated impact is something that will be reviewed as the evaluation proceeds to its next phase.

7.13 The 10 case studies of individuals supported by Working Wales are a positive reflection of the way in which the service is being delivered and the positive outcomes that it can generate for the individuals involved. The case studies demonstrate the wide range of issues with which the Working Wales service helps individuals. Importantly, they also show that those issues are often broader than what may traditionally be considered 'employment' issues. A key finding is that Working Wales is much more than merely a 'needs analysis and referral' service supporting individuals who are sometimes in very difficult periods of their lives. The 'positivity' and 'reassurance' that individuals had received from the Working Wales team were identified as being very important, as was the 'personalised approach'. The way in which the service/support is delivered is therefore equally important to the actual service being provided. These are issues that the evaluation will continue to explore with a wider range of customers as the evaluation progresses.

What is next for the evaluation?

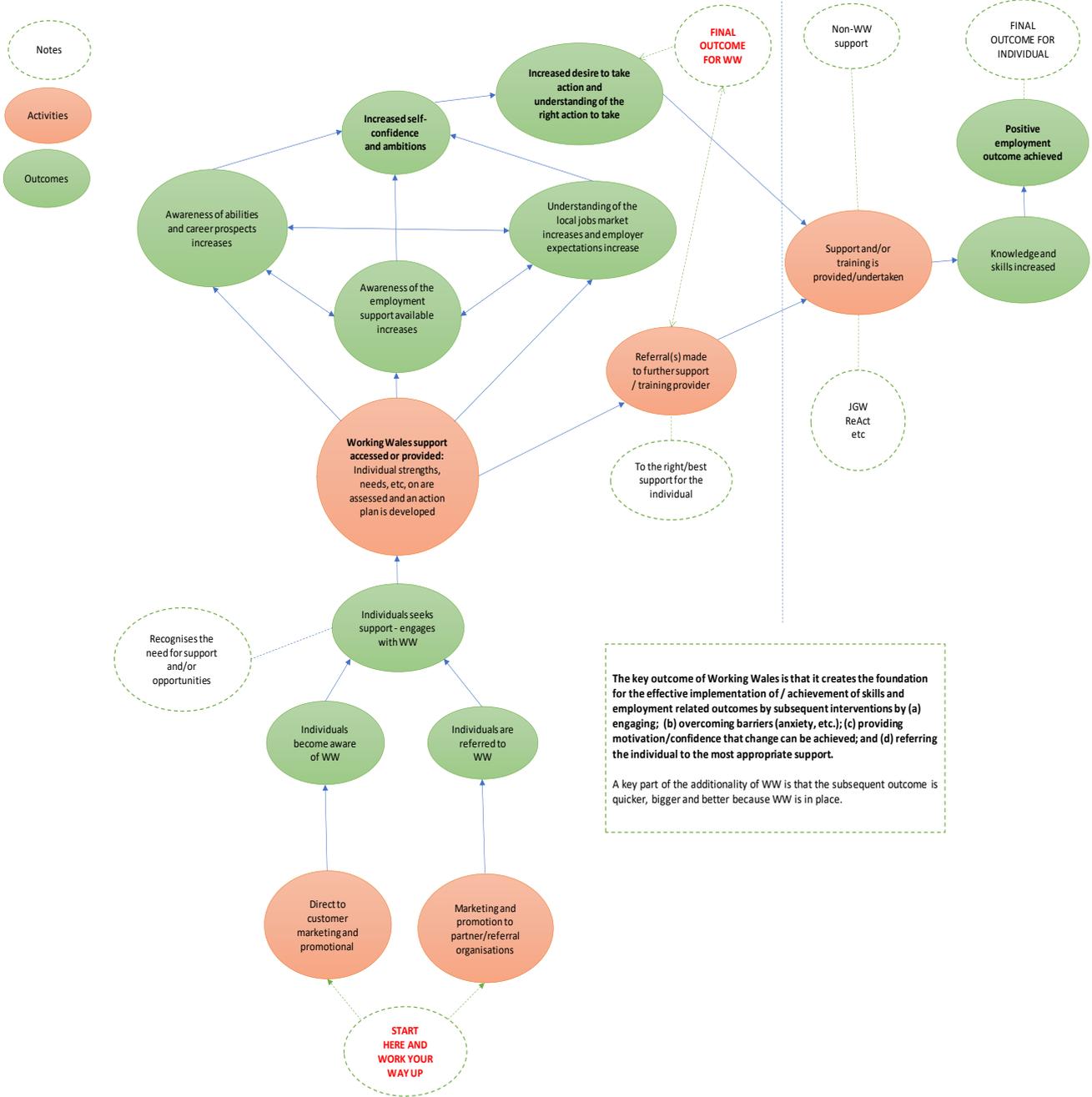
7.14 The framework set out in Appendix 3 provides the foundation for the following stages of the evaluation. Research that will be undertaken as part of the next phase will include consultation with:

- Individuals being supported by the service
- The management and delivery teams
- Stakeholders and partner organisations

7.15 The next report of the evaluation is scheduled to be published in the late summer of 2021.

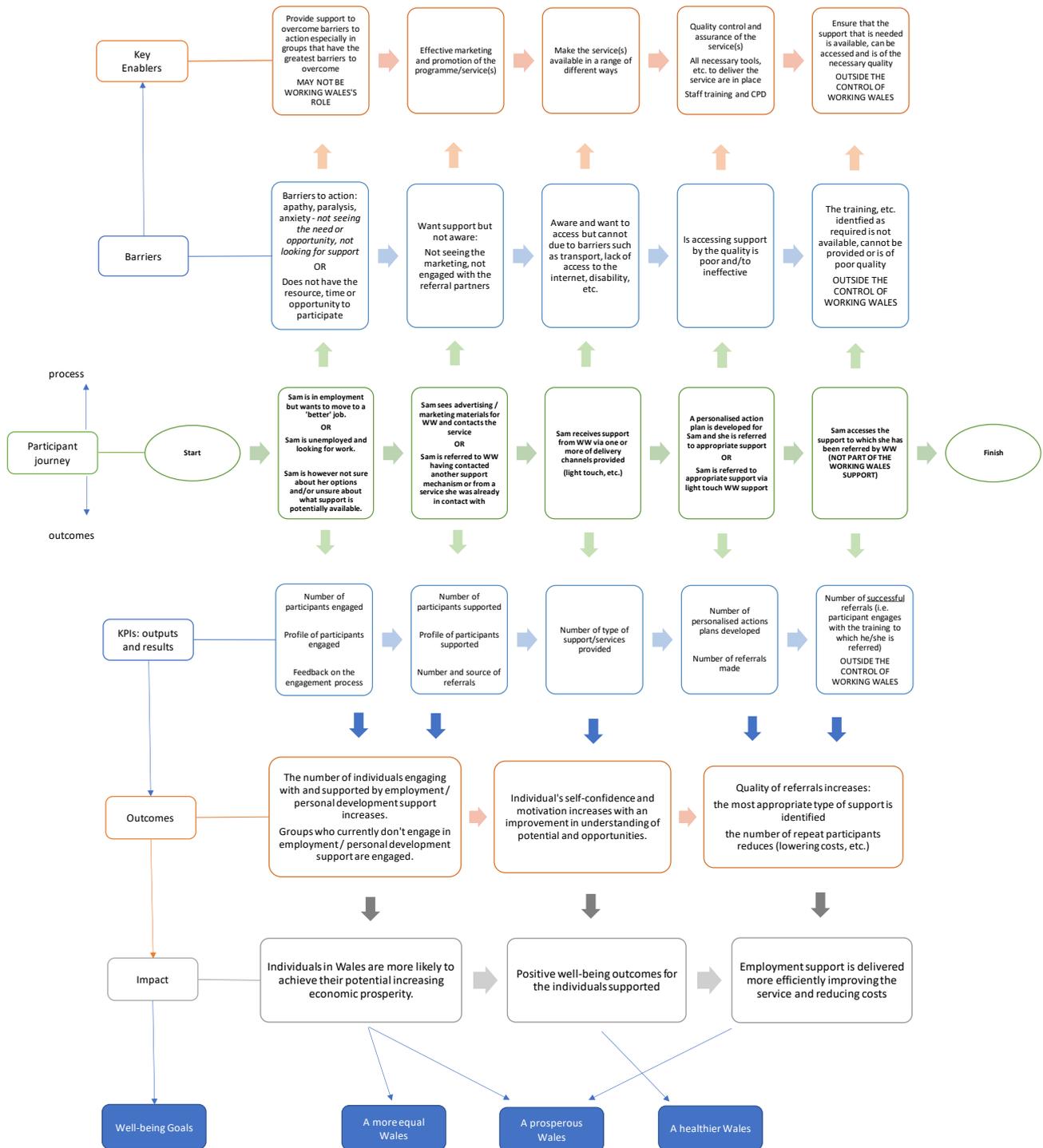
Appendix 1: Theory of Change Models for Working Wales

An activity- and outcome-based theory of change for Working Wales



A theory of change developed from the journey of participants

It should be noted that the character of Sam, who forms the basis for the participant journey below, is fictional, used here for illustrative purposes only.



Appendix 2: Online Survey of Frontline Working Wales Staff Supplementary Data

Table A3.1: The role of respondents to the survey

Response	N	% of Total
Working Wales Advisor	58	64%
Employability Coach	13	14%
Trainee Advisor	9	10%
Administrative Assistant	7	8%
Administrator	3	3%
Operational Development Manager	1	1%

Table A3.2: The local authority areas in which respondents worked

Local Authority Area	N
Isle of Anglesey County Council	1
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	1
Ceredigion County Council	2
City and County of Swansea	2
The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council	2
Denbighshire County Council	3
Monmouthshire County Council	3
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	4
Bridgend County Borough Council	4
Flintshire County Council	4

Local Authority Area	N
Gwynedd Council	4
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	4
Newport City Council	4
Caerphilly County Borough Council	5
Conwy County Borough Council	5
Pembrokeshire County Council	5
Torfaen County Borough Council	6
Wrexham County Borough Council	6
Powys County Council	7
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	7
Cardiff Council	8
Carmarthenshire County Council	10

Appendix 3: The Evaluation Framework

Introduction

In this appendix we set out the framework that has been developed based on the findings set out in the previous chapters of this report and which will form the basis for the evaluation going forward.

It is divided into four themes based loosely on the journey of an individual through the Working Wales service:

- Theme 1: Engagement and provision of support
- Theme 2: Referral and subsequent support
- Theme 3: Post-referral
- Theme 4: Outcomes

The following tables include the question that the evaluation is seeking to answer and both objective and subjective indicators that will be collected in order to answer that question.

The final column then identifies the sources of the data that will be collected.

Theme 1: Engagement and provision of support

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
1. How does Working Wales (WW) reach individuals directly and attract them to the service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
2. Where do referrals to the service come from? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How effective are other engagement by them and other parties and relationship building? (Including outreach activities)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views • Stakeholder and partner views
3. How does WW engage with individuals initially? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where does WW engage with, meet and advise individuals?</i> • <i>Phone, web chat, web hits, face-to-face, community outreach, events?</i> • <i>How are WW advisors flexibly supporting individuals through WW?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
4. Are WW locations accessible to meet individual needs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Considering the distance travelled by individuals to undertake a WW assessment/interview</i> • <i>Ability to complete the assessment at the chosen location</i> • <i>Accessible in terms of disabilities?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data — number and types of customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views • Participant views

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
5. Are Careers Wales using the categorisation tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is this used? How is the weighting applied? Do those using it have confidence in the assessment process and outputs?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of uses of the categorisation tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
6. How effective is the assessment process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How long does it take to complete the assessment?</i> • <i>Are all barriers declared at the assessment stage?</i> • <i>How are individuals' strengths considered in the assessment?</i> • <i>Do individuals complete the full assessment?</i> • <i>How many drop out before being referred and what are the reasons?</i> • <i>Are they assessing an individual's needs appropriately?</i> • <i>Are the weightings used appropriate to the individual's identified barriers?</i> • <i>Are the advice and guidance provided whilst undertaking the assessment consistent and accurate?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data • Quality assurance data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views • Participant views
7. What feedback is received on the WW assessment/service? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From customers</i> • <i>From referral interventions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant views • Referral organisation views
8. Is there a waiting time from enquiry to first contact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
9. What is the language split of the assessments being given? (Including languages other than English and Welsh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
<p>10. What challenges have been faced in delivering WW and how have they been overcome?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Locations</i> • <i>Technology</i> • <i>Resource/capacity to deliver</i> • <i>Regional variances</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data — data on access to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
<p>11. Who uses the WW service? Who does not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional variations</i> • <i>Volumes per region</i> • <i>Maximum capacity per region</i> • <i>Demographics of beneficiaries (including their employment status)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>12. What is the level of dropouts from WW referral before reaching an onward provider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
<p>13. Welsh-language-related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is being done to identify who wants the WW assessment through the medium of Welsh?</i> • <i>What is being done to address the demand for provision of the WW assessment through the medium of Welsh?</i> • <i>Are there sufficient opportunities for those who wish to utilise Welsh language support?</i> • <i>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that WW service users' Welsh language skills are mapped against employment opportunities?</i> • <i>How strategic is this mapping?</i> • <i>Are opportunities available to users of the WW service for (a) Welsh language skills support and (b) support through the medium of Welsh? How are the opportunities above presented to service users of WW?</i> • <i>What is the uptake of the opportunities for (a) Welsh language skills support and (b) support through the medium of Welsh?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
<p>14. How does WW engage with stakeholders and partners? (Including Regional Skills Partnerships)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnership engagements, meetings, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
15. How do WW advisors ensure that they are aware of the latest local labour market information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
16. Do WW advisors engage with employers? If so, how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of engagements with employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
17. What is the cost of delivering the WW service and subsequent referral? (Including cost per customers, per referral, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Theme 2: Referrals to subsequent support

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
18. Where does WW refer individuals to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What interventions, e.g. childcare, Careers Wales light-touch support, local authority support (youth work/services)?</i> • <i>Geographical variations</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
19. What is the level of dropouts from WW referral when customers reach an onward intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
20. Was the support that WW referred individuals to available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whom and how do WW advisors inform of a lack of provision (if applicable)?</i> • <i>What happens to the individual if there is no suitable support available?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
21. How do WW advisors keep the provision list for the support that they refer to from a WW assessment current?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views
22. How do WW advisors ensure that the provision that they are referring the individual to is of good quality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
23. How quickly are individuals receiving light-touch support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
24. Are individuals who are referred for support able to access the support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views • Participant views • Provider views
25. Are individuals able to take up the support referred to from WW immediately or is there a waiting period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant views • Provider views
26. How far do individuals have to travel to access the support referred to from WW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant views • Provider views
27. Did the assessment and referral send individuals to the right sort of support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer views • WW staff views • Provider views
28. Would customers/beneficiaries have accessed this service if they had not had an initial assessment through WW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer views • WW staff views • Provider views

Theme 3: Post-referral

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
<p>29. How many persons return to WW for another assessment? Why do they return?</p> <p><i>If individuals return:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are they referred to the same or different support interventions?</i> • <i>Do they express experiencing different barriers from in the initial WW assessment?</i> • <i>Were the initial barriers overcome by the support received?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management and staff views

Theme 4: Outcomes evaluation

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
30. What 'soft outcomes' have been achieved by customers as a direct result of their engagement with Working Wales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change in knowledge and awareness</i> • <i>Potential to overcome barriers to employment</i> • <i>Motivation</i> • <i>Self-confidence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer views
31. What progression towards employment has been made following the WW assessment and subsequent referral to the intervention? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outcomes for individuals by demographics and relative to the assessments (a) immediate and on reflection, and (b) six-month follow-up</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer views
32. Are there individuals receiving support and not progressing to either education, employment, or steps to taking up education/employment or training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer views
33. To what extent can outcomes be attributed to the Working Wales intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management views • Stakeholder views

Evaluation Question	Objective Indicator	Subjective Indicator
<p>34. How does WW align with and contribute to Welsh Government policy and strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employability</i> • <i>Welsh language</i> • <i>Equality</i> • <i>Disability</i> • <i>Race</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW management views • Stakeholder views