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# Basic income for care leavers in Wales pilot evaluation: annual report, 2023 to 2024

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Basic income for care leavers in Wales pilot evaluation:  
annual report, 2023 to 2024

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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## **Glossary**

### **Citizens Advice Cymru**

A network of independent, locality-based charities that offer free, independent and impartial advice to anyone. The service was initially linked to the development of the social welfare service, and areas of support include: benefits, work, debt and money, consumer rights, housing, family, law and courts, immigration and health. The organisation provided additional financial advice and support for recipients of the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot via the Single Advice Fund.

### **Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations (CMOs)**

A key premise of realist evaluation is that the mechanisms through which programmes work will only operate if the circumstances are right (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Context–mechanism– outcome configurations (CMOs) are ways of describing how an intervention causes a change in circumstances or behaviour in some instances. CMOs can be about a whole program or certain aspects of a program.

### **Cost-Consequences Analysis (CCA)**

A form of economic evaluation where disaggregated costs and a range of outcomes are presented. Cost-Consequences Analyses are recommended for complex interventions that may have multiple implications, and for public health interventions which may have an array of benefits that are difficult to synthesise in a common unit.

### **Foster care**

Foster care is a way of offering children and young people a home while their own family are unable to look after them. According to Foster Wales, about 70 per cent of children who are looked after away from home in Wales live with foster families. Unlike adoption, where the legal guardianship of children is transferred from their birth family, foster carers provide care until the child either returns to their birth family, or moves elsewhere, including out of the care system when they reach adulthood. This arrangement can last for many years.

### **Heads of Children's Services**

Heads of children's services are senior leaders responsible for children's services in local authorities. They typically set the strategic direction of the service, provide leadership, oversight, guidance and support for other senior managers.

### **Leaving Care Team Managers**

Those responsible for the team of young persons advisors in a local authority. They typically have a social work qualification.



## **Legal Aid**

Legal aid is a means-tested provision for people who cannot afford to pay for legal advice or representation in court by a solicitor or barrister, including on asylum and immigration.

## **Local authority**

There are 22 local authorities (councils) in Wales which make up the elected local government tier for Wales. They are typically responsible for delivering children's social care services.

## **National Health Service (NHS)**

Government funded medical and healthcare services that everyone in the UK can use without being asked to pay for the full cost of the service. The NHS was established as part of major social reforms following the Second World War. The founding principles were that services should be comprehensive, universal, and free at the point of delivery. There is more than one NHS in the UK, comprising of NHS England, NHS Wales and NHS Scotland.

## **Pathway plan**

Pathway planning is an important aspect of the transition to independence for young people leaving care, and it involves drafting a plan for how the local authority will support this transition. Pathway plans cover a range of both current and predicted needs, in areas including accommodation, education and employment, and health and development, and the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 (p86, point 440b) states communication with young people should be "at the heart" of assessment and preparation of pathways plans (Welsh Government, 2014).

## **Personal Adviser / Young Person's Advisor (often referred to as a PA or YPA)**

A personal adviser is responsible for working with young people who have left the care of the local authority (and is often in contact with them before this in order to transition as smoothly as possible from the provision of a social worker). Personal advisers also contribute to pathway plans and to making sure they are carried out correctly.

## **Realist Evaluation**

An approach to evaluation which is underpinned by the premise that any intervention designed to solve a social problem relies on human decision-making as well other factors to make them work. This means that the same intervention implemented in a different context may work (or not work) through different mechanisms and therefore produces different outcomes. Rather than determining the 'average effect' of a

policy, realist evaluations try to explain what works, for whom and in what circumstances.

### **Real Living Wage**

The real living wage is a wage which allows staff to meet their everyday needs, such as accommodation, food, and clothing. The rate is calculated according to the cost of living at that time and is set by an independent body.

### **Social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA)**

An extension of cost-benefit analysis, adjusted to consider the full spectrum of costs and benefits (including social and environmental effects) borne by society as a whole because of an intervention or programme.

### **Sofa surfing**

A form of homelessness, where someone who does not have permanent accommodation stays temporarily with family or friends. This is a common form of youth homelessness.

### **St David's Day Fund**

A fund set up by the Welsh Government in 2017 to support young people who are or have been in local authority care. It is part of the Childrens and Communities Grant. It is administered by local authorities and they are encouraged to be flexible and creative in deciding how to use it to best meet the needs of young people in the same way that birth parents might financially support their children.

### **Supported accommodation**

A rented dwelling in which the tenant receives care, support or supervision that is linked in some way to their accommodation.

### **Supporters**

The evaluation team asked recipients who took part in interviews or focus groups if there was anyone in their lives who supported them who would be willing to talk to the researchers about the impact of the basic income pilot on them. Those nominated most frequently included their young persons advisor, birth parents, kinship care provider or foster carer. The interviews carried out with 'supporters' focus on the impact on the young person and are therefore treated separately from discussions with professionals about their own experiences of the pilot and the impact on their caseload as a whole.

### **Universal Basic Income (UBI)**

A regular payment that is given to everyone in society to create a minimum income floor. The money is unconditional in that it is paid to people in any circumstances and the ways it can be spent are not dictated.

### **Universal credit**

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit, which is replacing a range of benefits and tax credits in the UK, including Housing Benefit, support for unemployed people (income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or JSA), those on lower incomes (Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit), or those with health conditions or disabilities that affect the amount of work they can do (income-related Employment and Support Allowance or ESA). It does not replace benefits to help with extra living costs for those who have a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability and have difficulty doing certain everyday tasks because of their condition (Disability Living Allowance, which has been replaced by the Personal Independence Payment or PIP). Universal Credit is paid monthly as a single amount and is made up of a basic 'standard allowance' and supplementary payments for those who meet additional criteria.

### **Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)**

A digital system that provides social workers and other health and social care professionals with access to a person's health and social care records.

### **When I am Ready**

'When I am Ready' enables young people in foster care to continue living with their foster carers once they turn 18, up to the age of 21, or up to age 25 if they are completing an agreed programme of education or training. It was set up by the Welsh Government in 2015 and is similar in many respects to the 'Staying Put' scheme in England, or to 'Extended Care' placements internationally. Young people who are over the age of 18 are no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after' by the local authority, so this does not count as a foster 'placement'. It is instead considered a 'post-18 living arrangement, meaning that the young person is effectively lodging in the home and the carer technically becomes the young person's landlord (and is therefore only paid on this basis). However, the expectation that a foster carer cares for a child placed with them as if they were a member of their own family carries through into the 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

**Zero-hours contract**

A contract between an employer and employee that enables the employer to hire casual workers as and when they are needed and are not required to promise a set number of working days or hours or any future work.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot (herein referred to as ‘the pilot’) was launched in July 2022 with the first payments issued to recipients in August 2022 (Welsh Government, 2022a). The evaluation of the scheme is now in its second year. This is the first report from the evaluation, and the first opportunity to present emerging findings from the study. It will form part of a series of annual reports focussing on different parts of the study. The next report in this series will focus on the experiences of young people who are receiving the basic income. Later reports, towards the end of the study, will focus on quantitative analyses of impact on key outcomes, and of cost effectiveness. The implementation and delivery of the pilot will also feature in reports as part of this series.

### Overview of the pilot

- 1.2. The pilot is unique in several ways, and as such it has garnered a great deal of interest from both within the United Kingdom and around the world. No other basic income scheme has given regular payments as large as those received by young people involved in the pilot, nor have other basic income schemes been open to a national cohort of care leavers from the age of 18 for two years of payments. More detail about the nature of the pilot is available from the Welsh Government [Basic income pilot for care leavers: overview of the scheme | GOV.WALES](#) but we briefly describe the key aspects of the scheme here.
- 1.3. Before we discuss the practicalities of who is eligible and how the basic income payments are delivered, it is worth noting that the pilot is based on some key principles. These were described by the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS (Welsh Government, 2022b).
- Taking part in the pilot should make no recipient worse off.
  - There should be no conditionality on income received.
  - The same payment should be paid to everyone.
  - The payment will not be altered midway through the pilot.
- 1.4. In order to be eligible, a young person must have been looked after by one of the 22 local authorities in Wales for a period of at least 13 weeks<sup>1</sup>, beginning after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and ending after they reached the age of 16 years. They must either be resident in Wales or being supported as a care leaver by a Welsh local authority’s social services department and living elsewhere (including anywhere in the world).

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<sup>1</sup> Or multiple periods amounting to at least 13 weeks.

- 1.5. For those meeting these criteria, the pilot had an enrolment period lasting 12 months, from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 for all those having an 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in that period. For those who enrolled, the payment started the month after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and continues for 24 months<sup>2</sup>. The total amount of the basic income payment is £1,600 gross per month, which is taxed at source to leave recipients receiving a net amount of £1,280 each month. Recipients of the basic income can choose whether this is paid in one monthly transfers of the full amount, or twice-monthly transfers of half the amount. They can also choose to have housing costs paid from the basic income directly to their landlords. Depending on their individual circumstances, some young people may be eligible for tax rebates. When the policy was developed, in 2021/22, the levels of payment were set to be broadly in line with the real Living Wage (Living Wage Wales, 2023) for a full-time employee at that time. These payments are unconditional, in keeping with the second principle mentioned above, and with the notion that recipients should be free to make their own life choices without being compelled to take a certain route.
- 1.6. In addition to the basic income payments each month, the young people involved are also eligible for support around budgeting and managing finances as part of the pilot. In most local authorities this is provided by Citizens' Advice Cymru, but some local authorities are providing financial advice via other providers (see Annex 5 for further details). This component of the pilot is designed to offer tailored financial advice and support for individual young people, including "signposting and additional support relating to well-being, education, work, as well as broader financial advice" (Welsh Government, 2022a). As part of the decision to enrol onto the pilot, an optional 'better off calculation' was available to inform this decision and estimate whether the basic income would constitute a net increase in a person's income.
- 1.7. No aspects of the pilot are intended to affect eligibility for the usual services for care leavers. This is in keeping with the first principle mentioned above and reflects a desire to add to the support available for care leavers rather than replace existing provision. As care leavers, young people are eligible for a range of services, including support from an allocated young person's advisor, who provides one-to-one advice and support in various aspects of life. They are also exempt from council tax liability, eligible for higher education bursaries and cost of living payments and can apply for financial grants through the St David's Day Fund, which is administered by local authorities alongside localised forms of support.

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of some who enrolled late for reasons outside their control, and who therefore started receiving payments shortly after this point.

- 1.8. While initial estimates of numbers of young people expected to join the scheme suggested around 550 would be eligible, recent statistical releases from the Welsh Government show this was an underestimate. These statistics give a sense of who is involved in the pilot, based on administrative data collected through the enrolment process (Welsh Government, 2023a). In total 635 recipients<sup>3</sup> enrolled at the closure of the enrolment window, on 31 July 2023. The most recent release of that dataset underlines the popularity of the pilot, with a provisional uptake rate of 97 per cent. These young people will be eligible for unconditional payments of £1,280 net<sup>4</sup> each month<sup>5</sup> for two years, meaning they are likely to be part of the pilot for two years (though they can leave at any point).
- 1.9. The pilot has a governance structure which includes a Steering Group, an Operational Group, a Research and Evaluation Advisory Group and an independent Technical Advisory Group (TAG). These groups include civil servants and independent experts, and their function is to give advice to the Welsh Government on their design and delivery of the pilot. In addition, the evaluation has a separate advisory group, which consists of experts from various fields of academic study and professional practice. This group meets on a biannual basis.

### **Overview of the evaluation**

- 1.10. The evaluation began in November 2022 and will end in 2027. Several aspects of the pilot are within the scope of the evaluation. We will measure its impact in the different areas of recipients' lives that we detail below. We will also explore how the scheme is implemented, the attitudes and experiences of key stakeholders involved, and the cost-effectiveness of the pilot from public sector and societal perspectives. The following research questions cover these disparate aspects of the scheme:
- Research Question 1: What is the impact of the pilot?
  - Research Question 2: Is the pilot implemented as intended?
  - Research Question 3: How is the pilot experienced?
  - Research Question 4: How does the pilot fit into the overall offer for care leavers in Wales?
  - Research Question 5: How cost effective is the pilot?

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<sup>3</sup> Following the publication of the monitoring data by Welsh Government in September 2023 (Welsh Government, 2023b), an additional six late enrollees to the pilot were identified, leading to a revised figures of 641 pilot participants.

<sup>4</sup> This is taxed at source, from a gross payment of £1600 each month. Some recipients will be eligible for a tax rebate depending on other taxable earnings, such as earnings from employment.

<sup>5</sup> Recipients can choose to receive the payment in one monthly transfers or split between two transfers per month.

1.11. A priority during the first year of the evaluation has been preparing a protocol for the study<sup>6</sup>. This describes our approach to answering these questions in greater detail. It also includes a more extensive summary of the background to the pilot, a discussion of previous research on the topic, and the challenges and limitations we face in conducting this study.

1.12. The evaluation is designed around five core areas called 'work packages'. These are briefly summarised as follows:

**a. Co-production**

Co-production underpins the study and participatory methods feed into the design and data collection. A group of care-experienced young adults, living in a range of educational, employment and housing situations, meet regularly to provide advice. Their role is to co-create research questions, data collection instruments, consider ethical and analytical questions and advise on policy and practice implications. Seven such meetings have taken place to date, involving 6-10 young people in each meeting, and the advice of the group has materially informed key decisions. Examples of changes and decisions made in conjunction with this group include which survey measures to choose, focus group questions for young persons advisors and a change to procedure to allow young people to take part in qualitative interviews in pairs or small groups, rather than just individually, if they choose to do so.

**b. Theory enhancement**

The study is a theory-based evaluation, and (see section 2.9 of this report) it employs techniques informed by realist evaluation (Chen, 2014; Pawson, 2013; Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The advantage of this approach is that it promises an insight into how and why the pilot may or may not have the intended effects for different people involved.

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<sup>6</sup> The protocol paper is currently under review at an academic journal.



### **c. Impact evaluation**

The impact of the pilot is being measured on several outcomes, so that we can see in what ways and how much of an effect it has for young people involved. The outcomes of interest for the pilot, which were specified at the outset by the Welsh Government, fall into the following categories:

- (1) wellbeing
- (2) financial literacy/ security
- (3) community cohesion/ engagement
- (4) the effects of poverty
- (5) access to labour and education markets
- (6) volunteering and life skills
- (7) physical and mental health.

### **d. Implementation and process evaluation**

This strand focuses on how the pilot is implemented, its ongoing delivery, and how the scheme is experienced and perceived by those involved. Also explored, within this analysis, is how the pilot fits into the overall offer for care leavers in Wales, including intersections with existing services. The qualitative elements of this work package were enhanced and extended in 2023 to increase the scope of the study to understand the lived experience of young people involved.

### **e. Economic evaluation**

The economic evaluation will consider whether the pilot represents value for money in terms of the outcomes achieved. It aims to synthesise the costs and consequences of the pilot, to inform a social cost-benefit analysis. Social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA) is an extension of cost-benefit analysis, adjusted to consider the full spectrum of costs and benefits (including social and environmental effects) borne by society as a whole because of an intervention or programme. A further cost-consequences analysis will examine a range of key outcomes to explore well-being where the data allow, and aspects of educational attainment, engagement in the labour market and financial security.

- 1.13. All research undertaken by Cardiff University must undergo ethical review. This study was considered by Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and approved in January 2023 under the reference SREC/323. An amendment, to include additional qualitative methods, was approved on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Prior to this, ethical approval for Coram Voice's administration of the survey was obtained from the University of Oxford under the reference CIA-22TT-149. The study was also considered in light of the Government Social Research (GSR) ethics checklist.

## **Aims and scope of this report**

- 1.14. In this report we focus on emerging findings in three areas of the study. First, we characterise the cohort of young people who are receiving the basic income, using quantitative descriptive data gathered through the baseline survey of this group, and from the Welsh Government's monitoring data. This is part of work package 3 – the impact evaluation – and relates to research question 1: 'what is the impact of the pilot?'. However, at this stage we can only report descriptive statistics about the intervention group because the collection of the comparative data needed to estimate impact is not yet complete. The focus in this section of the findings is therefore to describe the young people in general terms and set the scene for subsequent findings. In future reports we will build on this, initially by comparing this group, at baseline, with a comparator sample of care leavers who are not receiving a basic income, and then by comparing changes over time across the two groups with the aid of follow up data. This is the analysis that will enable us to estimate the impact of the pilot on the outcomes of interest.
- 1.15. Second, we present the first stage of our work on the theory of the pilot. This relates to work package 2, and to research question 2: 'Is the pilot implemented as intended?'. Again, this is the first iteration of this aspect of the evaluation. The analysis reported here draws on published literature and policy documents with the aim of understanding how the scheme might be expected to work in achieving its goals. In other words, this sketches out how the pilot is intended to operate, for us to later assess how closely the pilot has met these intentions, using the data collected through the study.
- 1.16. Third, we discuss the key insights from a range of qualitative work with professionals involved with the scheme. This is part of work package 4 and is one dimension of our answer to research question 3: 'How is the pilot experienced?'. Other dimensions of this question, such as how the pilot is experienced by young people and their supporters, will be the subject of further reports in this series.
- 1.17. As each section is based on a distinct methodological approach, the next part of this report describes the methods used to generate each of these analyses in turn. The following sections present findings from each of these analyses.

- 2.1. While we will use a range of methods across the study as a whole, we focus here on the methods used to generate the three sets of findings presented in the following section<sup>7</sup>.

### **Quantitative methods**

- 2.2. Two sources of primary data form the basis of the descriptive statistics we use to describe the cohort. The first is survey data, from the version of the 'Your Life Beyond Care' survey that was adapted for the pilot. The survey is based on a longstanding survey of care leavers' wellbeing<sup>8</sup> which is administered by the children's rights charity, Coram Voice, and is used widely with care leavers in England (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020). The survey was delivered by Coram Voice in collaboration with the Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities, through an online platform called 'Smart Survey'. All young people had the opportunity to voluntarily complete the survey at enrolment. The survey was completed by care leavers receiving the basic income at or close to the time at which they started receiving the basic income. This survey forms one time point, generally prior to any effects of the intervention, though as we note below many respondents had already started receiving the basic income at the time of completion. The original 'Your Life Beyond Care' survey was used from October 2022, and it was revised with additional questions (version two) in January 2023.
- 2.3. Local authorities were sent an email providing details, guidance and access to the survey in order to encourage them to recruit young people to complete the survey. As response rates were relatively low at first, the recruitment strategy was revised in various ways in the winter of 2022. This included offering different ways to complete the survey, including through in-person events facilitated by the local authorities and Welsh Government officials. The Welsh Government also communicated with young people directly, sending secure links by email and text message.
- 2.4. The second source of data is monitoring data that is collected by the Welsh Government as part of their administration of the pilot. This was gathered by the Welsh Government as part of the enrolment process for the pilot, and it includes all recipients – and therefore gives a more complete picture than the survey, which was voluntary. Young people who were signing up to the scheme were asked various questions as part of a form being completed with their young person's advisors. Most of the questions were about their demographic characteristics, but some other questions, such as ratings of their health, were also included.

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<sup>7</sup> Full study evaluation methodology will be found in the protocol paper we anticipate publishing in early 2024.

<sup>8</sup> [Bright Spots Programme - Coram Voice](#)

- 2.5. In addition to these two sources of primary data, we refer to other data to draw comparisons. These are the published results of a similar survey Coram Voice has delivered with care leavers in England<sup>9</sup>, and statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Welsh Government for broader comparisons (Briheim et al, 2020; ONS, 2021; Welsh Government, 2023a).
- 2.6. As noted above, our quantitative analysis at this stage will take the form of summary and descriptive statistics, formal comparative statistical tests and analysis of non-responsiveness. The first type of comparisons will explore whether those who did not complete the survey are systematically different from those who did, which will shed light on how far the results we generate from survey data might apply to the whole cohort. We will evaluate differences between respondents and non-respondents of the survey, by comparing the subset of responses from young people who completed the survey with the monitoring data, which includes the whole cohort. This allows us to compare various census-related characteristics such as gender, general health and ethnicity, to see whether these characteristics are associated with survey completion.
- 2.7. We will then examine any differences between outcomes measured from within the sample of survey respondents and other care leavers who are not receiving the basic income. This is based on existing data on care leavers in Wales and England as well as comparisons to the general population for that particular age group.
- 2.8. These analyses will help us determine to what extent the group of survey respondents differs on observed characteristics compared to a) basic income pilot recipients that did not participate in the survey, b) the population of care leavers more generally, using previous surveys conducted in England by Coram Voice, and c) the general population for the relevant age group using census data. Furthermore, we will examine to what extent participation to the survey is related to demographic characteristics using statistical tests of independence.

### **Methods used to generate initial programme theory**

- 2.9. As noted in the methodology section 4.1, the approach used to generate the initial programme theory drew upon established theory-based evaluation approaches. In order to create an initial programme theory, we compiled recent systematic reviews, academic work on theorising the causal impacts of basic income schemes, and key policy documents from the Welsh Government to form the basis for this analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> Note that this study draws on data from care leavers aged 16 – 26+

These were chosen to give an up-to-date and wide-ranging understanding of how the knowledge base for basic income might pertain to the pilot.

### **Analysis used to generate theory**

- 2.10. Using NVivo qualitative analysis software (NVivo, 2018), we coded all source texts into Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations (CMOs). We divided mechanisms into resources (direct consequences of what recipients are provided as part of the intervention e.g., basic income payments, financial advice) and reasoning (how the resources change the way the recipients think or feel). We used the following heuristic to start building configurations:

*Resources + Context* → *Reasoning = Outcome.*

- 2.11. This follows the idea that resources interact with the pre-existing context(s) and this leads to a change in recipients' reasoning and produces an outcome (Dalkin et al., 2015). This change in reasoning can be thought of as a change in a person's willingness to do something – for example, they may be more willing to prioritise their health if they are able to think more about the long-term future. To start building these configurations, we looked to identify links between mechanisms and outcomes (Jackson and Kolla, 2012) and worked backwards from the key outcomes and looked for the resources and reasoning relevant for that outcome. We then reviewed the contexts that had been identified and added key contexts into the CMOs
- 2.12. The initial draft formed the basis of discussions with the wider research team and members of the evaluation advisory group, and they provided feedback and further evidence for the theorised pathways. The discussion during the first five meetings of the co-production group also contributed to this piece of work.

### **Qualitative Methods**

- 2.13. Professionals from across Wales and of varying roles and seniority were invited to take part in focus groups to discuss their views on the design of the pilot and their experiences so far. At the time of the focus groups (largely conducted in spring 2023) no recipient had yet received a whole year of basic income, and some local authority teams had only a few young people enrolled. As such, the findings presented in this report represent professionals' early thoughts and observations. Follow-up focus groups will be held at the end of the pilot, when professionals will have further experience of the pilot.

- 2.14. Professionals who took part represented 20 of the 22 local authorities and included heads of children’s services (or their senior delegates), team managers and young person’s advisors<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 2.1: Participation in qualitative data collection activities**

<b>Participant type</b>	<b>Participation format</b>	<b>Numbers of participants (n=)</b>
<b>Heads of service/senior managers ('HoS')</b>	3 focus groups	12
<b>Team Managers ('TMs')</b>	2 focus groups	7
<b>Young Person’s Advisors</b>	4 focus groups; 1 interview	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 focus groups, 1 interview</b>	<b>41</b>

Source: Evaluation management information, Cardiff University, 2023.

### **Qualitative analysis**

- 2.15. All data were anonymised and fully transcribed and coded using NVivo software (NVivo, 2018). Coding was both deductive and inductive, in that the initial programme theory and research questions informed our initial codes, and further codes were identified from the data following transcription, reading of data and reflection by the evaluation team. The coding frame was refined and further developed in an evaluation team discussion after the initial two focus groups were coded. The rest of the focus group data was then coded. Following coding, we held further analytic meetings within the evaluation team to discuss how codes may be clustered into themes and to further interrogate these initial findings using the research questions and relevant literature and theory. Additionally, some early findings from the focus groups were discussed with the care-experienced co-production group, and insights from that meeting were shared and informed the analysis.

<sup>10</sup> Please refer to the Glossary for an explanation of what these roles are.

### **3. Findings: Baseline information on the pilot recipients**

- 3.1. In this section, we aim to describe the sample quantitatively, using descriptive statistics about the recipient group based on baseline survey data collected through the Your Life Beyond Care survey and the monitoring data collected at enrolment by the Welsh Government. Where appropriate, we draw comparisons with published results from a similar survey used with care leavers in England in recent years by Coram Voice (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020; Selwyn et al., 2017)<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Summary of survey for basic income recipients**

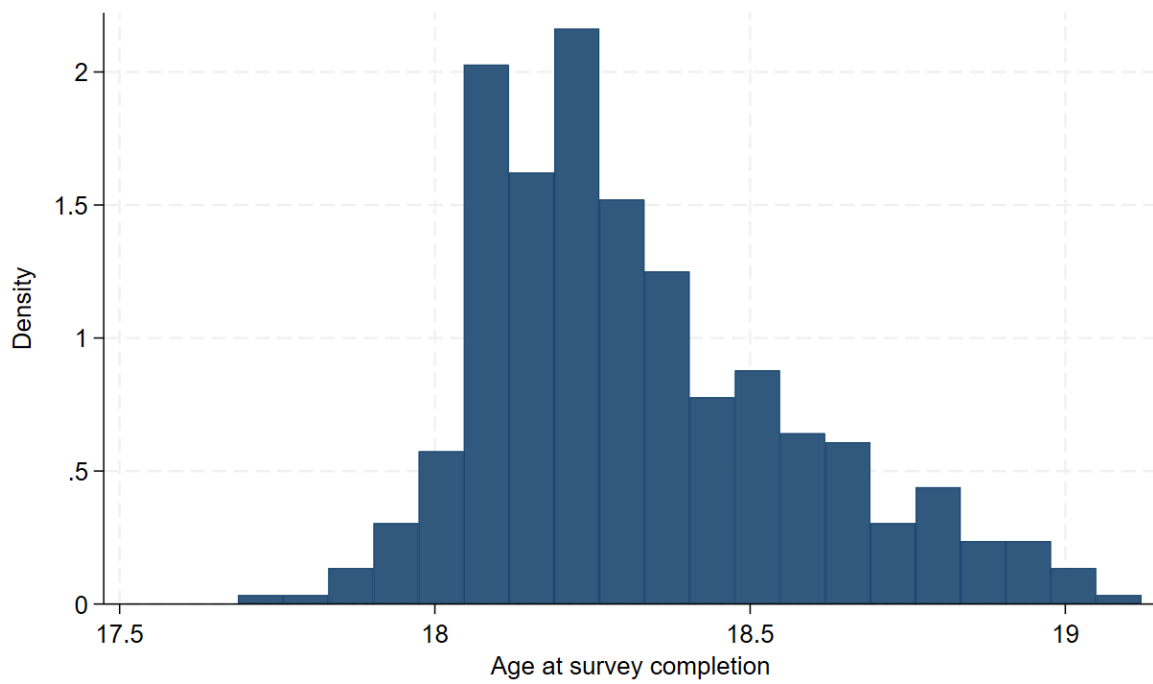
- 3.2. The total number of survey responses was 412 out of 641 Welsh Basic Income Pilot recipients<sup>12</sup>, giving a response rate of 64 per cent. This is in the upper interval of online survey response rates, which generally average at approximately 44 per cent (Wu et al., 2022). Moreover, this general average is somewhat higher than is typical for surveys of this population (care leavers), so the response rates achieved for this baseline survey are encouraging. Overall, response rates per local authority ranged between 51 per cent – 89 per cent with an average rate of 67 per cent. Although response rates varied greatly between local authorities, it is encouraging to note that no local authority had a response rate lower than 50 per cent.
- 3.3. The average age of respondents at the time of completion was 18.3 years old with a range of 17.7 - 19.1 years old, while 95 per cent of respondents were aged 17.9 – 18.9. The distribution of ages at the time of completion as seen in Figure 3.1 below are slightly skewed, suggesting that, on average, responses came 4-5 months after recipients turned 18. Notably, this suggests that many respondents had received around 4-5 basic income payments at the time they completed the survey.

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<sup>11</sup> Annex 3 gives details of the development of the survey.

<sup>12</sup> This figure reflects total recipients, including those eligible who joined the pilot after 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The latest Welsh Government statistical release reflects enrolments up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

**Figure 3.1. Distribution of age at time of completion**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

Base Size: 412 survey respondents



## Quantitative summary

**Table 3.1. Response rate to the baseline and enrolment groups by ethnicity**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Non-respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No response</b>	35.0%	65.0%	3.1%
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	36.1%	63.9%	5.6%
<b>Black, Black British, Caribbean or African</b>	45.8%	54.2%	3.7%
<b>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</b>	60.0%	40.0%*	3.1%
<b>Other Ethnic Group</b>	55.6%	44.4%*	4.2%
<b>White</b>	33.3%	66.7%	80.2%
<b>Total</b>	35.7%	64.3%	100%

\*Tests of independence showed that care leavers identifying as Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups were statistically significantly less likely to participate in the survey compared to care leavers who identified as 'White'<sup>13</sup>.

Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022, Welsh Government Enrolment Data 2023.

Base Size: Respondents = 412, Non-Respondents = 230

- 3.4. To explore differences between survey respondents and non-respondents, we present break downs in the tables below by ethnicity, gender and health<sup>14</sup>. There is some variation between the two groups, and a statistically significant association between whether or not someone completed the survey and their ethnicity<sup>15</sup>, with some evidence pointing towards care leavers identifying as Black, Asian and White as more likely to respond compared to those identifying as 'Mixed, Multiple' or 'Other Ethnic' groups. Generally, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic care leavers are over-represented in the survey responses compared to the general population of Wales,

<sup>13</sup> Mixed or Multiple Ethnic group:  $\chi^2(1, 534) = 6.1069$ , P-value<0.05;

Other Ethnic group  $\chi^2(1, 541) = 5.6479$ , P-value<0.05

<sup>14</sup> Percentage rates are reported instead of counts in order to prevent disclosure, as there are certain instances of groups with counts lower than 10. Counts are discussed within the main body of the report where relevant.

<sup>15</sup> The "No response" category was excluded in tests of independence;  $\chi^2(4, 605) = 12.2$ , p-value<0.05.

which is also echoed from previous work by Coram Voice which shows that these groups are typically over-represented among care populations (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020)<sup>16</sup>. As context, the latest census statistics (Welsh Government, 2022b) indicate that 93.8 per cent of the Welsh population described their ethnicity as White, while the other 7.2 per cent identified as Asian (2.9 per cent), Black (0.9 per cent), Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (1.6 per cent), or belonging to another ethnic group (0.9%).

**Table 3. 2. Response rate between the baseline survey and enrolment groups by gender.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Non-respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No response/I don't want to say</b>	29.6%	70.4%	4.2%
<b>Female</b>	27.7%	72.3%	42.7%
<b>Male</b>	43.5%	56.5%	51.6%
<b>Other gender identities</b>	11.1%	88.9%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	35.7%	64.3%	100%

Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022, Welsh Government Enrolment Data. Base Size: Respondents = 412, Non-Respondents = 230

- 3.5. Among the basic income recipients there were slightly more males than females (males 51.6 per cent (n=331); females 42.7 per cent (n=274)), which is likely due to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) being mostly male. In contrast to the entire pool of recipients we find a statistically significant effect of more females participating in the survey compared to males.<sup>17</sup> Other genders<sup>18</sup> were also very responsive, however the number of values per gender is not sufficient for accurate statistical inference.

<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that care leavers of an Asian ethnic background are an exception in this case, and are usually under-represented in care populations.

<sup>17</sup>  $\chi^2(1, 605) = 16.1$ ; p-value<0.01.

<sup>18</sup> Gender identities of Trans, Gender Fluid and Non-binary genders have been aggregated to avoid disclosure due to low numbers per category. This naturally limits further inferences on each gender category.

**Table 3.3 Levels of general health by response rate for the baseline survey and enrolment groups**

<b>General Health</b>	<b>Non-respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No response</b>	50.0%	50.0%	3.1%
<b>Don't know</b>	66.7%	33.3%	0.5%
<b>Very bad</b>	0.0%	100%	0.2%
<b>Bad</b>	71.4%	28.6%	1.1%
<b>Fair</b>	35.2%	64.8%	11.1%
<b>Good</b>	37.0%	63.0%	50.5%
<b>Very good</b>	31.2%	68.8%	33.5%
<b>Total</b>	35.7%	64.3%	100 %

Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022, Welsh Government Enrolment Data.

Base Size: Respondents = 412, Non-Respondents = 230

- 3.6. When we consider the general health of recipients, at first glance results seem positive. However, comparison to results from the general population suggests slightly worse health status among recipients. The 2021 Census for Wales on health for ages 15-19 reports that around 70 per cent were in “very good” health with 23 per cent reporting “good” health and 6.6 per cent “fair” or worse (ONS, 2021). This contrasts with the cohort of recipients where 33 per cent report “very good” health, with half reporting “good” health and 11.4 per cent reporting fair or worse health.

**Table 3.4 Levels of self-reported disability by response to the baseline and enrolment surveys**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Non-respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No response</b>	35.7%	64.3%	4.4%
<b>No</b>	34.9%	65.1%	81.7%
<b>Yes</b>	40.4%	59.6%	13.9%
<b>Total</b>	35.7%	64.3%	100%

Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022, Welsh Government Enrolment Data.

Base Size: Respondents = 412, Non-Respondents = 230

- 3.7. This cohort of care leavers reported a 14 per cent disability rate which was approximately 1 percentage point higher compared to the average disability rate in Wales of 12.7 per cent for those aged 15-19 (ONS, 2023). Comparatively, a report by Coram Voice (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020) looking into outcomes of care leavers in England found that 24 per cent of respondents indicated they had a disability or a health condition that limited their abilities, which is 10 per cent higher than the 14 per cent reported by the general UK population in 2019 (ONS, 2020).

### **Survey responses**

- 3.8. Having considered the differences in response rates between different groups for the monitoring data, we now proceed to consider a break-down of selected survey questions and answers from the cohort of survey participants (respondents).
- 3.9. The revised 'Your Life Beyond Care' survey (used from January 2023) included a range of questions about care leavers' wellbeing, financial and housing security, spare time, social connectedness, time spent in care and their experience of it, as well as their employment and education. In this section we focus on a subset of these questions, which relate to the following outcomes:

## **Wellbeing**

- Feelings and measures of stress
- Wellbeing (using the 'ONS 4' measure)

## **Employment, Education and Training (EET)**

### **Financial & Housing issues**

- Financial coping
- Paying rent and housing bills
- Purchasing decisions

### **About Care Leavers**

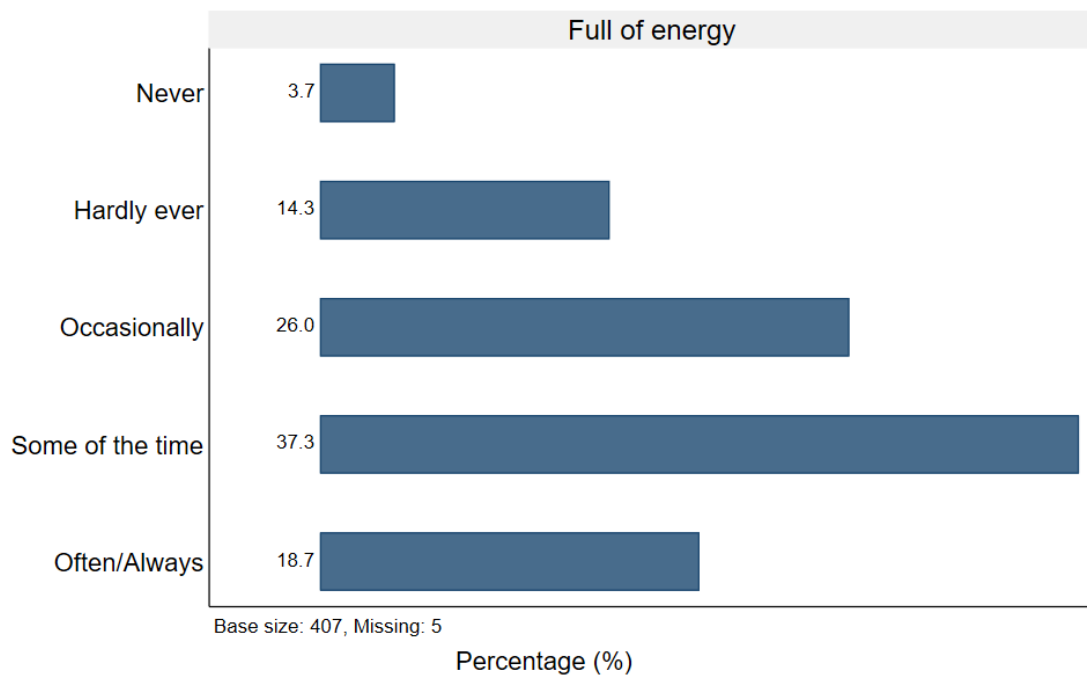
- Social connectedness and parenthood
- Spare time

### **Care and Leaving Care**

- Understanding of reasons for being in care
- Pathway planning and young persons advisors
- Qualitative responses.

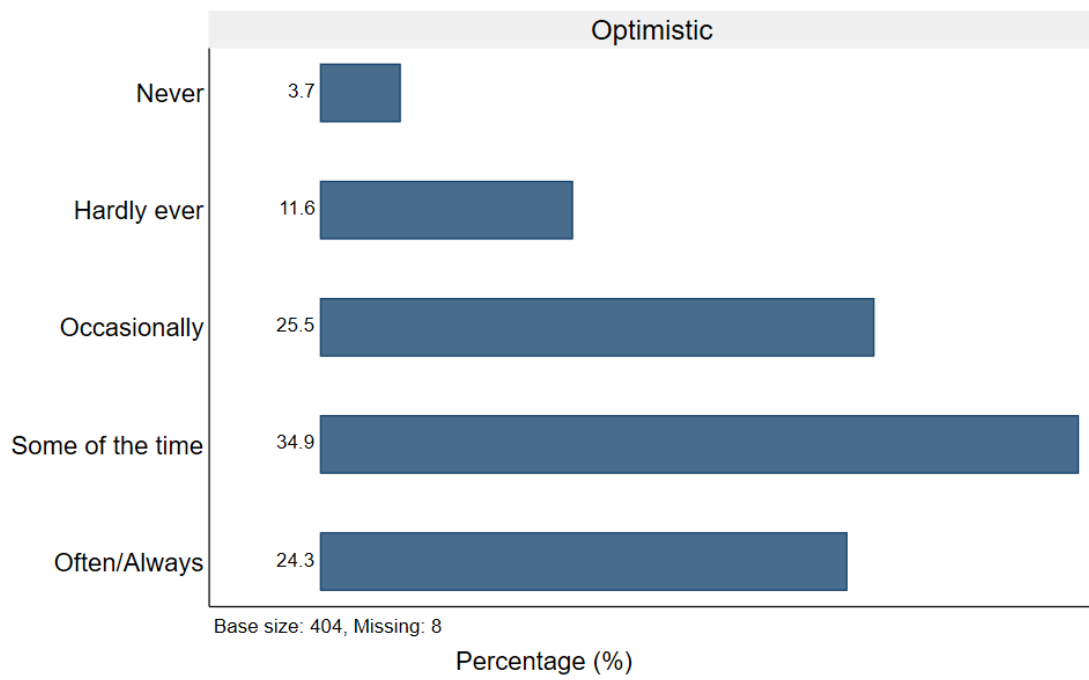
## Wellbeing

**Figure 3.2. Positive feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt full of energy**



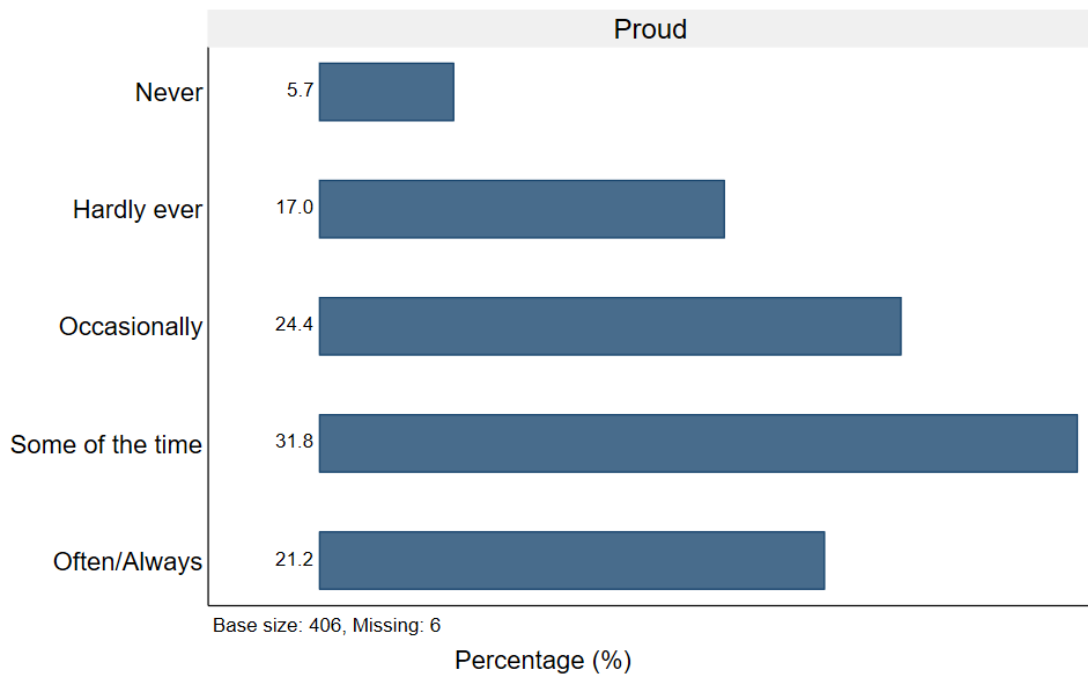
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.3. Positive feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt optimistic**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.4. Positive feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt proud**

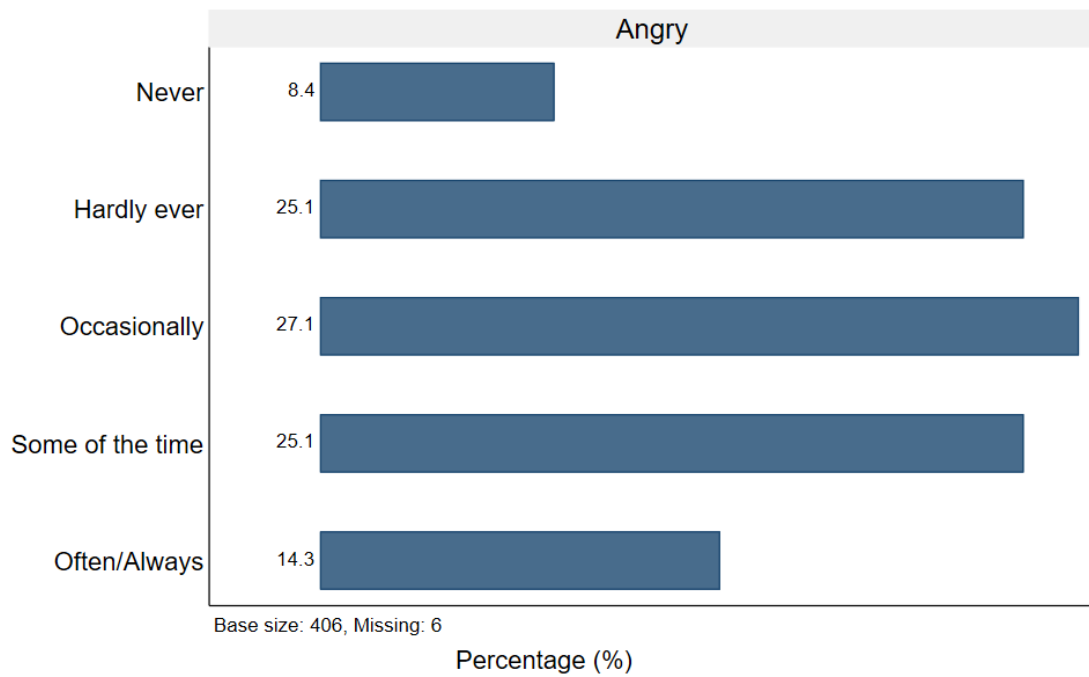


Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

- 3.10. Figures 3.2 to 3.4 suggest that approximately half of all recipients generally experienced positive feelings with 56 per cent, 59 per cent and 53 per cent expressing they felt full of energy, optimistic and proud respectively, at least some of the time. Pride had the most variation with approximately 23 per cent expressing they never/hardly ever experienced it in the last few weeks.

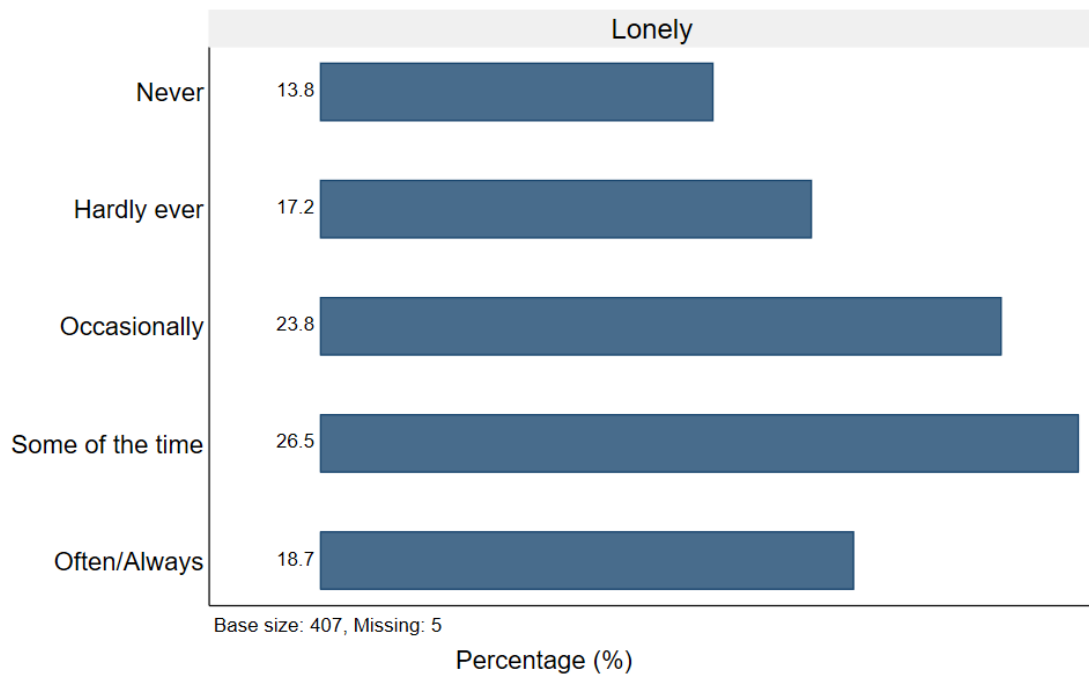


**Figure 3.5. Negative feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt angry**



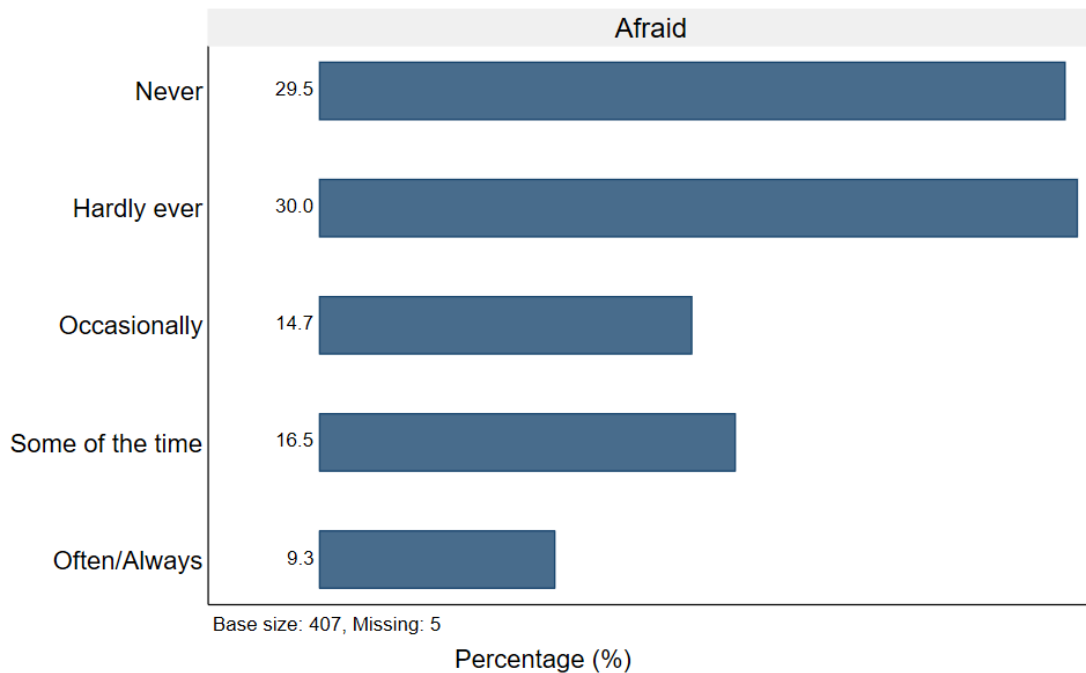
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.6. Negative feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt lonely**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

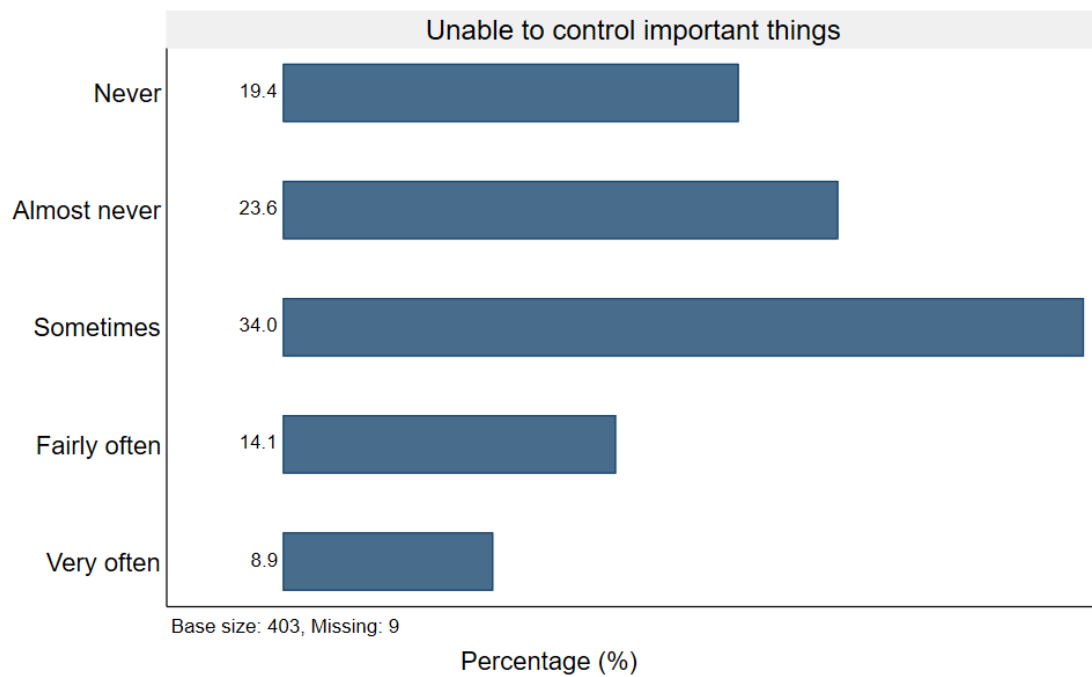
**Figure 3.7. Negative feelings: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last few weeks they have felt afraid**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

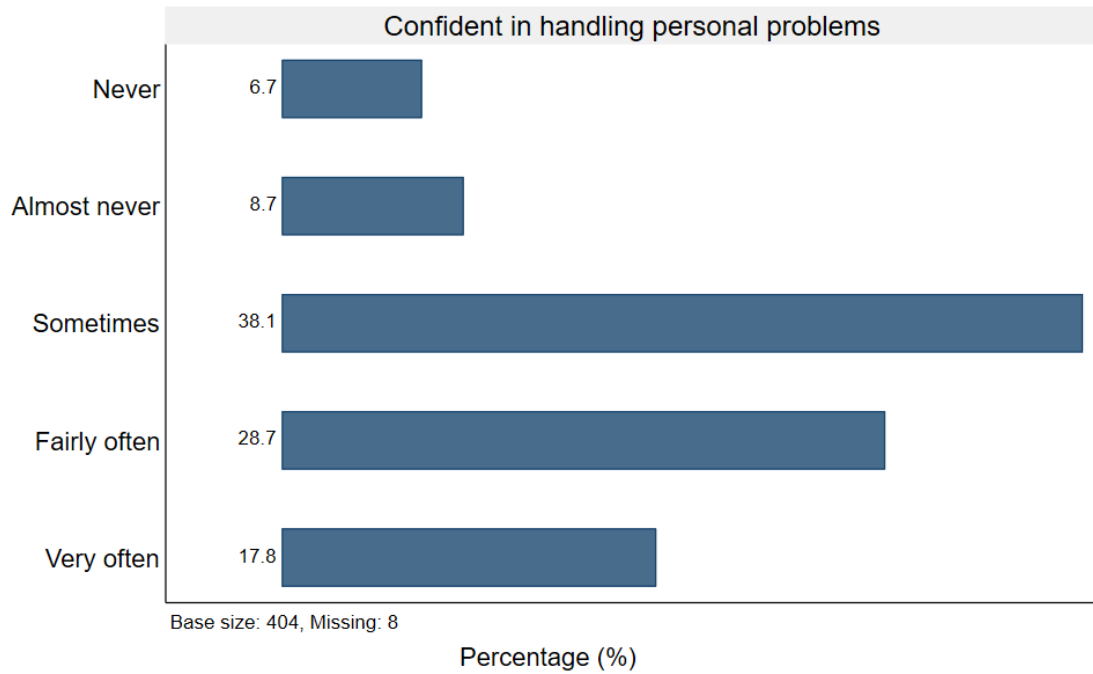
- 3.11. Figures 3.5-3.7 illustrate the distribution of answers on negative feelings. Results show that loneliness is the factor felt with the highest frequency with 45 per cent experiencing it at least some of the time, followed by anger approximately 39 per cent of the time.
- 3.12. Recipients were also surveyed on measures of stress. The questions explored were on the frequency by which they experienced the following feelings in the previous month:
- “Unable to control the important things in your life.”
  - “Confident about your ability to handle your own personal problems.”
  - “Things were going your way.”
  - “Difficulties were piling up so high you could not overcome them.”
- 3.13. Results shown in Figure 3.11 indicate largely similar findings to those by Coram Voice with a slight improvement in the frequency of difficulties ‘piling up’, with Coram reporting 34 per cent of care leavers having felt it Often/Fairly often in the last month compared to 21 per cent for this cohort (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020).

**Figure 3.8 Measures of stress: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last month they have felt unable to control important things**



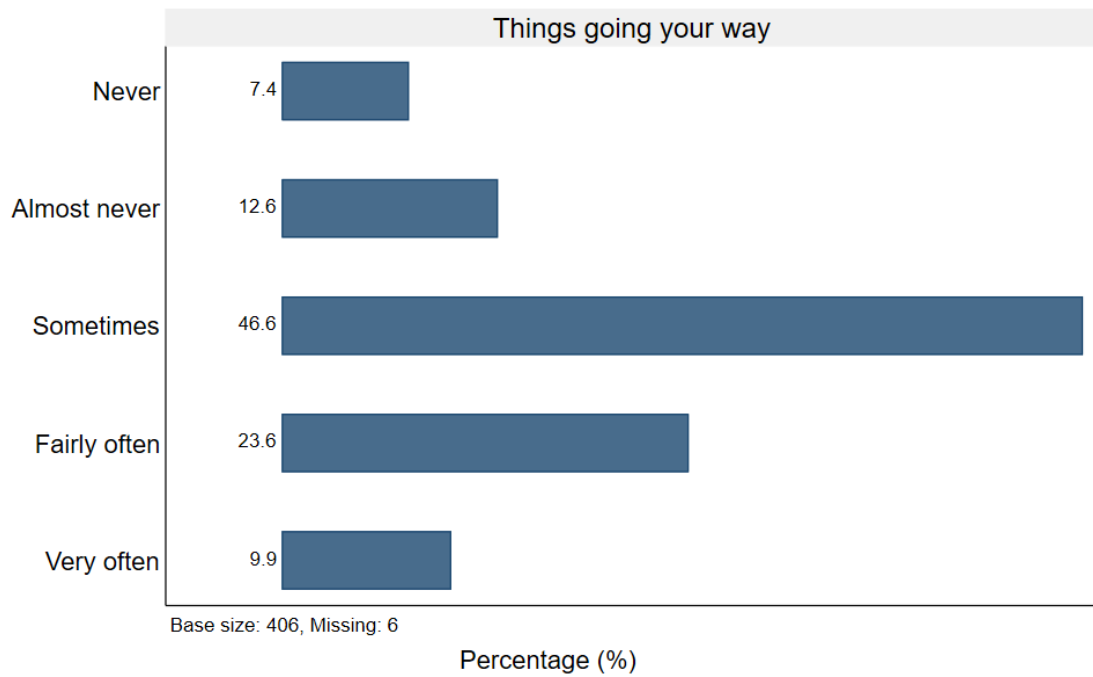
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.9 Measures of stress: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last month they have felt confident in handling personal problems**



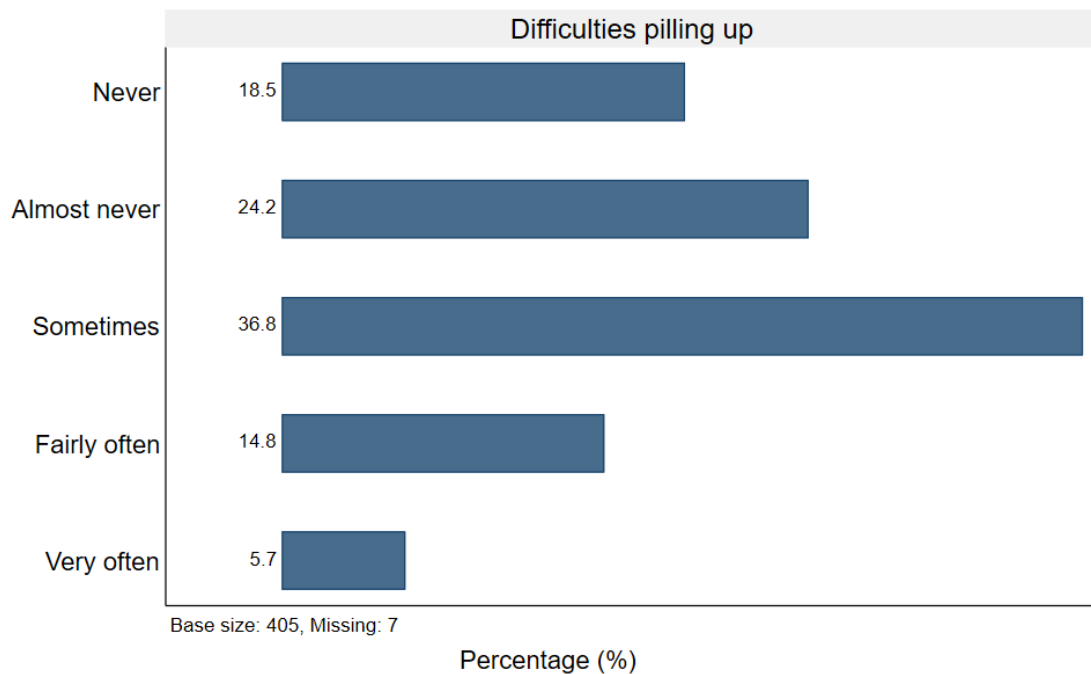
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.10 Measures of stress: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last month they have felt things are going their way**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

**Figure 3.11 Measures of stress: Percentage of care leavers reporting how often in the last month they have felt difficulties piling up**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

3.14. Another method of measuring wellbeing included in the survey is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 4 measure. These four questions are asked across a wide variety of representative surveys across the UK and provide a series of single item questions looking at four aspects of wellbeing. They are as follows:

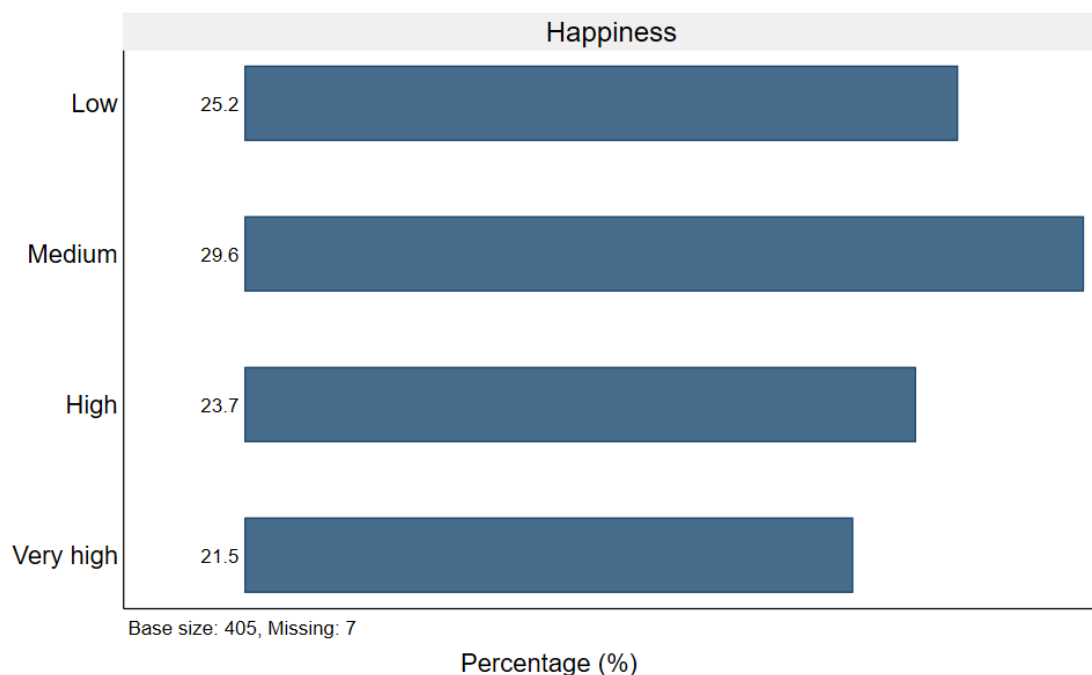
- Happiness: “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”
- Life Satisfaction: “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”
- Worthwhile: “Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”
- Anxiety: “On a scale where 0 is “not at all anxious” and 10 is “completely anxious”, overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”

3.15. Results are shown below in figures 3.12-3.14 for all respondents using the ONS classification for Happiness, Life Satisfaction and Worthwhileness with categories: “Low” (0-4), “Medium” (5-6), “High” (7-8) and “Very high” (9-10) and for Anxiety with categories “Very low” (0-1), “Low” (2-3), “Medium” (4-5) and “High” (6-10). Results are generally quite similar to the findings of Coram Voice across all domains,

suggesting no major differences between the two cohorts of care leavers (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020).

- 3.16. We know from the work of Coram Voice and others that care leavers tend to report lower levels of happiness and wellbeing than the general population, so it is not surprising that comparisons to the general population aged 16-19 suggests more negative levels on all domains for recipients (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020; Rylance and Sharry, 2023). For example, the percentage of responses indicating “Low” levels of Happiness, Life Satisfaction and Worthwhileness were 25.2 per cent, 24.1 per cent and 22.3 per cent respectively for pilot survey respondents. This contrasts markedly to the general population aged 16-19, who report 6.8 per cent, 3.1 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively (ONS, 2020). Similarly, while approximately 60 per cent of the responses by the general population of young people indicated “Low” or “Very low” anxiety ‘yesterday’, 51 per cent of care leavers who completed the survey expressed levels of anxiety that were “Moderate” to “High”.

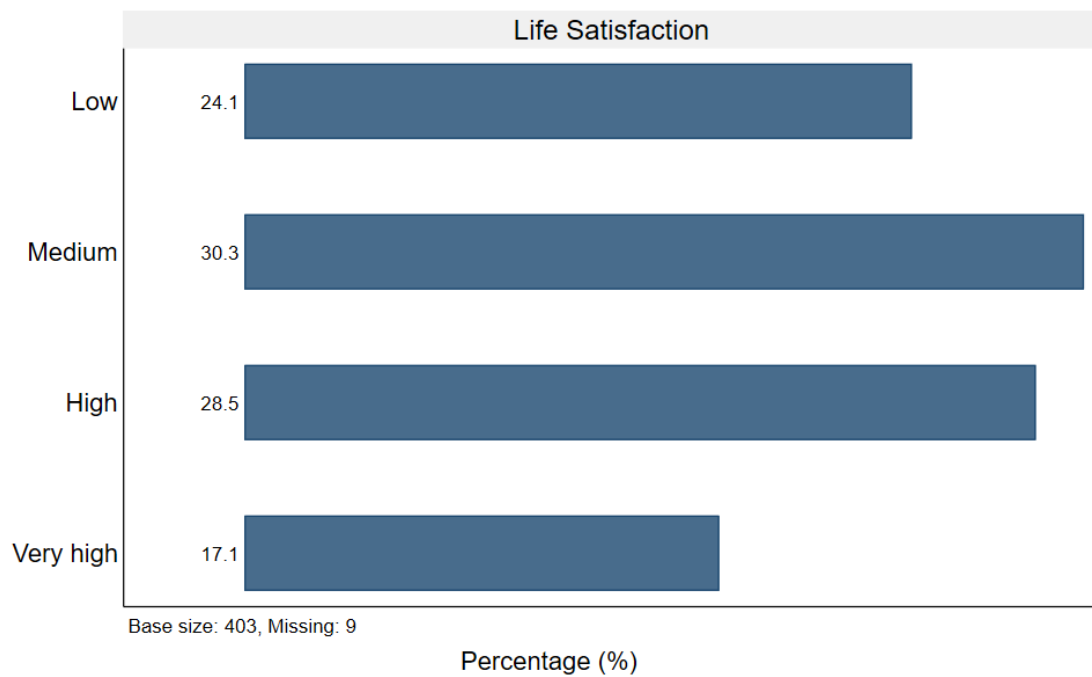
**Figure 3.12. Care leavers levels of happiness felt yesterday (%) (ONS classification)**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

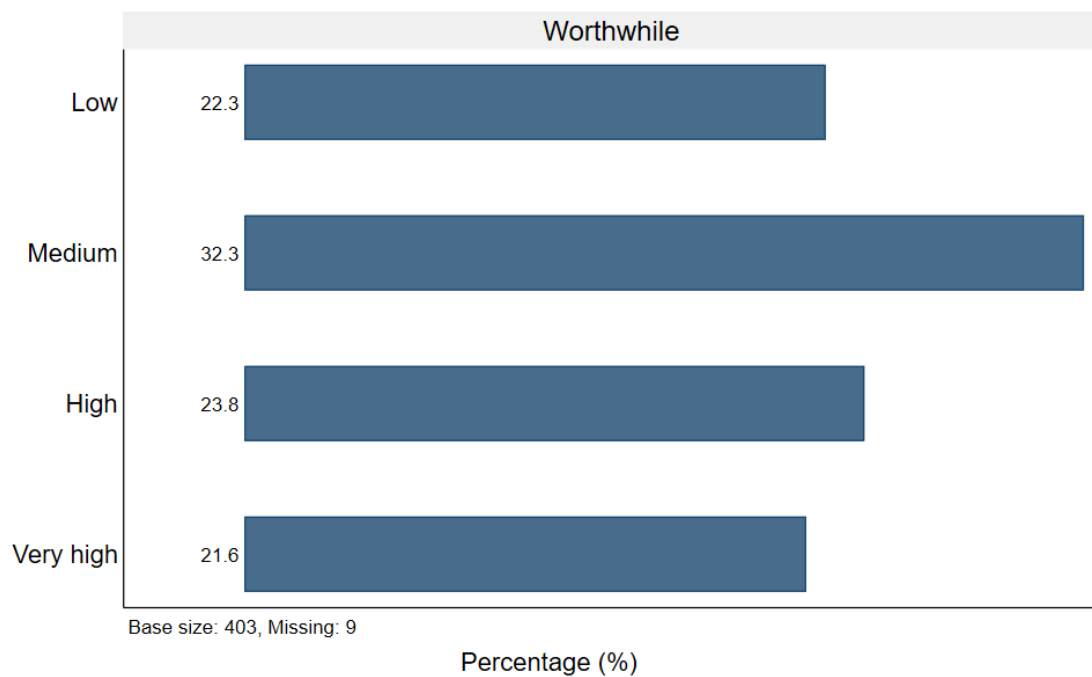


**Figure 3.13. Care leavers levels of life satisfaction (%) (ONS classification)**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

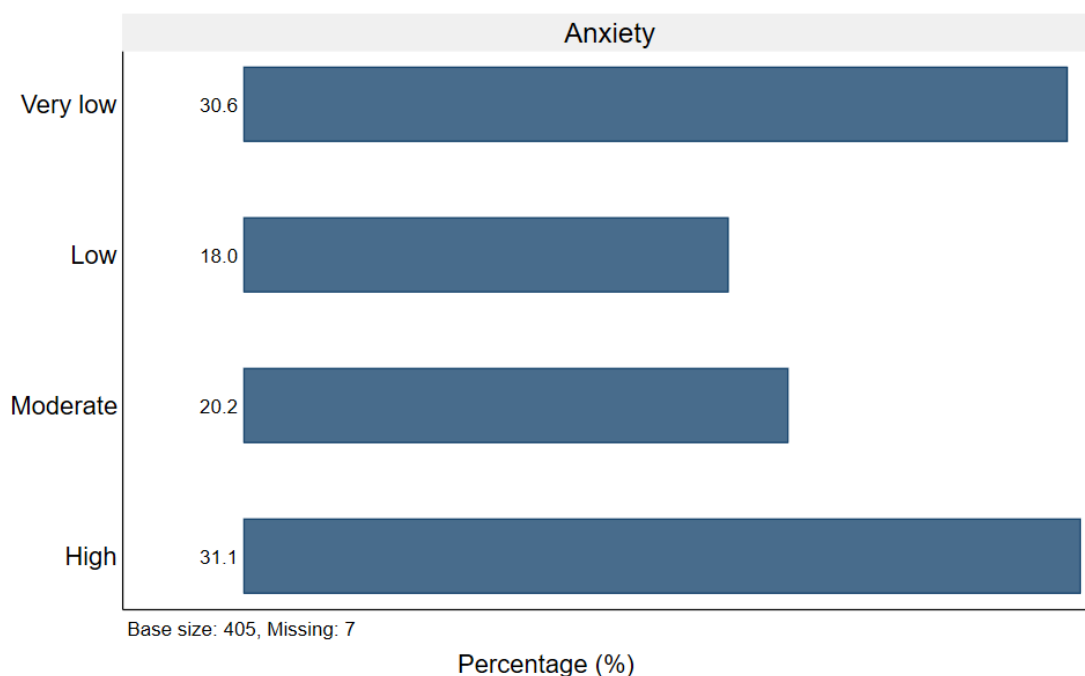
**Figure 3.14. Care leavers levels of feeling worthwhile (%) (ONS classification)**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

- 3.17. On the question of whether they were happy with how they looked from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely happy), with a notable exception of a spike of 10 per cent observed for not being happy at all, results were mostly skewed towards being happy. Overall, 18 per cent indicated a value of 5 while approximately 30 per cent gave a value of 8 or above.

**Figure 3.15. Care leavers levels of anxiety felt yesterday (ONS classification)**



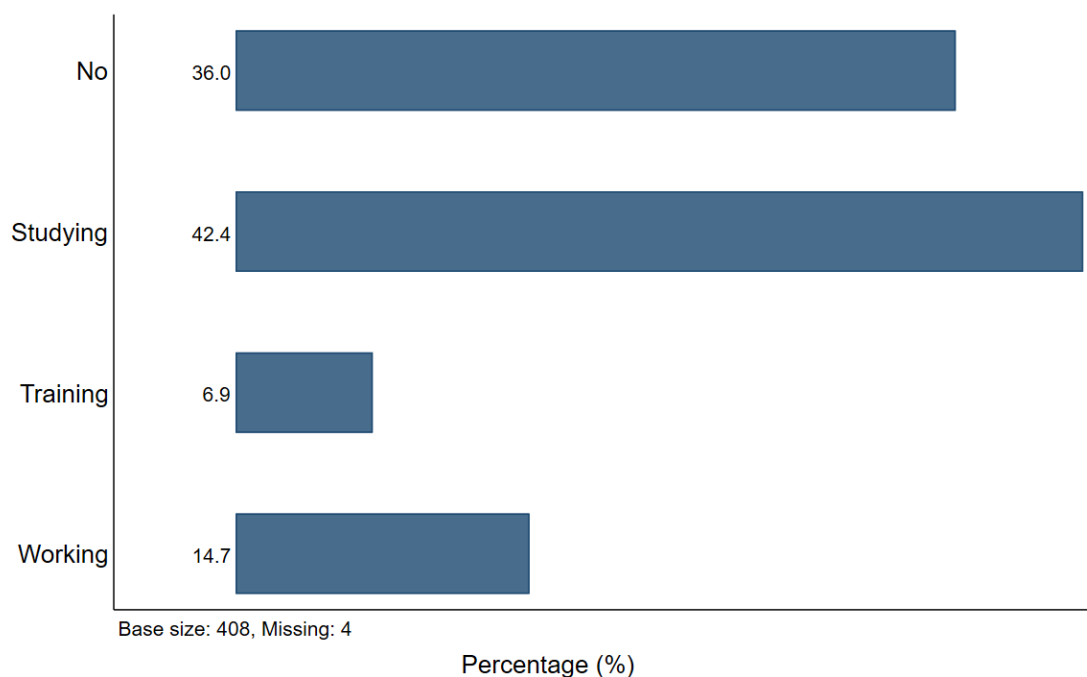
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

- 3.18. As figure 3.15 shows, respondents were most likely to fall into the very low, or high levels of anxiety in their answers. Compared with other data that looks at similar age groups, this suggests that low and moderate anxiety is somewhat less common, but that high anxiety is more common, although there is not a perfect comparison group for whom data are available (ONS, 2020).

### **Employment, Education and Training**

- 3.19. Results show that 42 per cent of care leavers were studying at the time of the survey, with approximately 21.5 per cent in work or training, leaving a relatively high percentage of respondents (36 per cent) not involved in employment, education or training (NEET). Most common reasons for not being involved in employment, education or training included looking for work, having an illness or disability and mental health issues.

**Figure 3.16. Employment, Education and Training**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation 2022)

3.20. Although the estimate of young people not in education, employment or training (36 per cent) may seem high at first glance, the latest data on 18-year-old care leavers in Wales for the year 2016 indicated a similar not in education, employment or training percentage of 38 per cent (StatsWales, 2016)<sup>19</sup>. For further context, it is worth noting the reported percentage of 18-year-old care leavers that were not in education, employment or training in England for 2016 was 31 per cent (Department for Education, 2017), again broadly similar to our findings for survey respondents. In England, the proportion of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training remained relatively stable through time with the latest value reported as 29 per cent for 2023 (Department for Education, 2023).

3.21. Similarly, the levels of engagement in employment, education and training among the survey respondents echo to some extent the results of Coram Voice (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020) care leaver surveys in England. These showed 20 per cent

<sup>19</sup> Latest available data on numbers of 18 year-old care leavers in Wales not in employment, education or training.

reported as being in employment/training and 35 per cent reported being in education, compared to 25 per cent and 42 per cent respectively in the pilot survey. This suggests comparatively higher rates of engagement in education employment and training among the pilot cohort, compared to previous cohorts.

### **Financial and Housing outcomes**

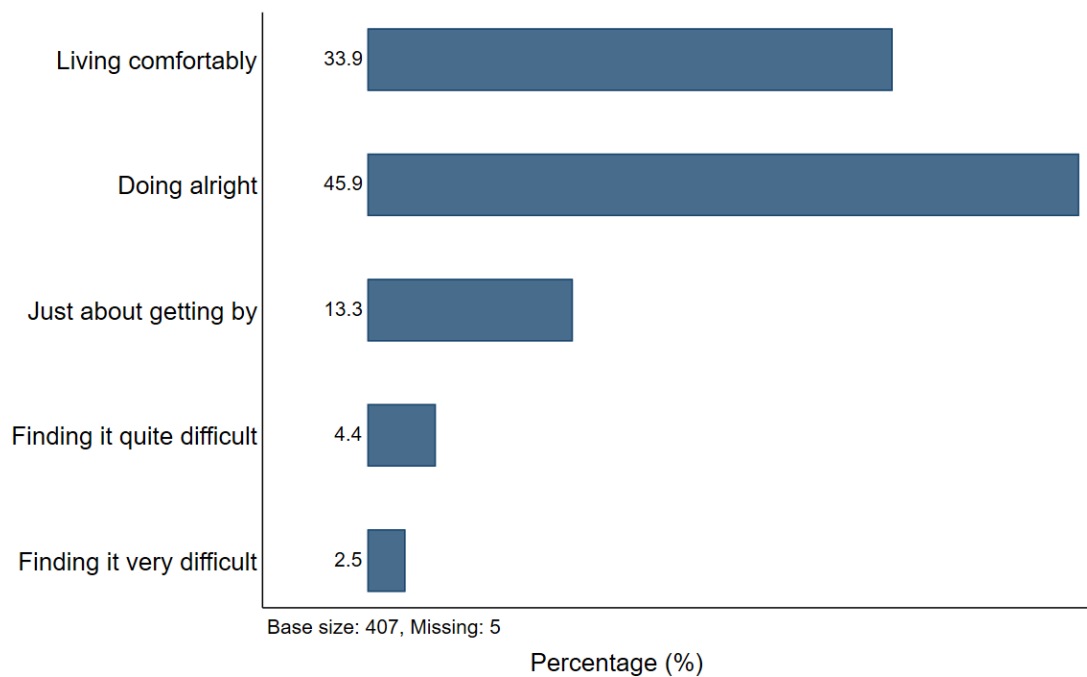
- 3.22. When asked about how they were coping financially, the picture was also relatively positive. A minority of approximately 21 per cent of survey respondents indicated they are 'just about getting by' or worse. This suggests this group are doing better on this measure at this baseline point compared to other care leaver estimates reported by Coram Voice. These indicated around half (54 per cent) were 'just about getting' by or worse (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020). It is important to note, however, that further investigation is warranted in order to disentangle by how much the anticipation of receipt (or receipt in some cases) of the amount may have influenced these responses.
- 3.23. In order to begin to explore this, we divided recipients who responded into two groups: those that provided responses before turning 18 (23 recipients) and those that were surveyed after turning 18 (385). This division effectively allows us to investigate the subgroup of recipients that could not have received the amount at the time they were surveyed, freeing their responses from the income effects of the cash transfer. Analysing these 23 recipients, we find that approximately 48 per cent of them were 'just about getting by' or worse – an estimate that is closer to the findings of Coram Voice about care leavers in England. Moreover, tests of independence showed significantly different responses (statistically significant at the 5 per cent level) between those that were surveyed before turning 18 and those after turning 18<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.24. Although these analyses shed some light on this issue, there are some caveats to bear in mind. First, age differences and their relation to employment opportunities that could generate income cannot be excluded as partial drivers of this difference. For instance, those who were already 18 may have different employment options, and different levels of remuneration, than those under 18. Second, even those completing the survey before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday will have known about the pilot, and the anticipation of it could have changed their outlook. Because of this, we intend to undertake further analysis when data from the comparator group is available<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup>  $\chi^2(4, 408) = 12.3$ , p-value<0.05

<sup>21</sup> Utilisation of endline intervention data as well as data from the comparator group at a later stage of this analysis will allow for the identification of the extent to which receipt of the financial assistance may be affected responses.

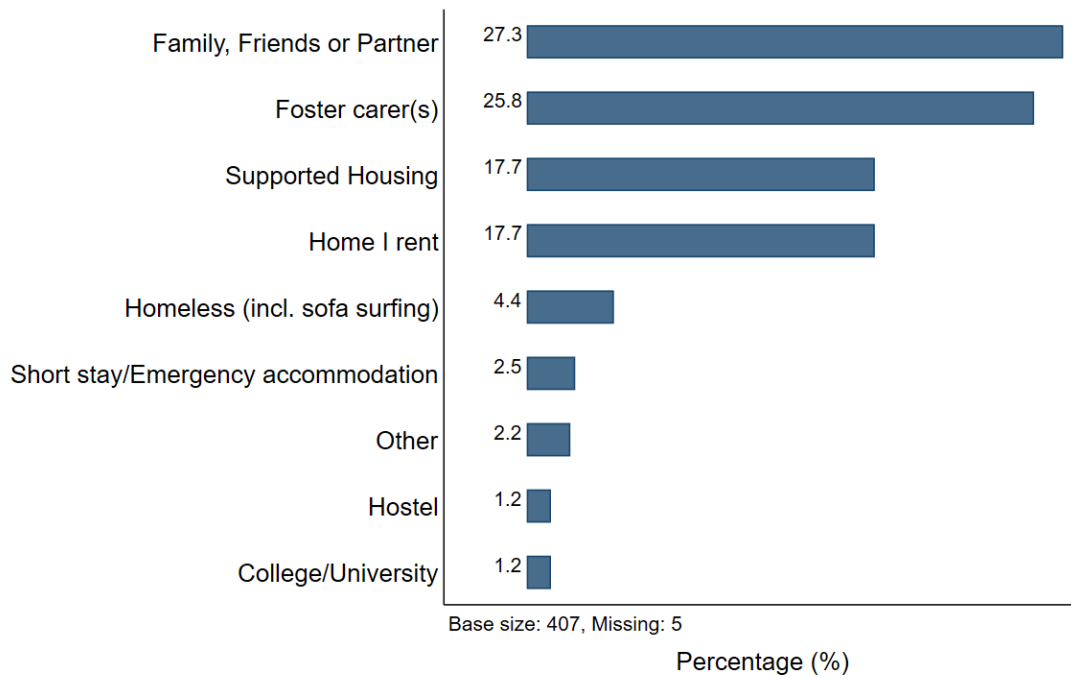
**Figure 3.17. Survey responses for whether or not respondents are coping financially**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

3.25. An important aspect of financial coping is the ability to afford accommodation costs and bills for utilities and services. However, these are more or less relevant for young people depending on their circumstances. When asked about the affordability of rent and bills, 25 per cent and 37.6 per cent respectively indicated those obligations did not apply to them. This coincides with their reported living arrangements shown in the figure below, since more than 50 per cent lived with friends/relatives or their foster carers and approximately 35 per cent resided in supported housing or home they rented with around 4.4 per cent indicating they were homeless (including 'sofa surfing'). Overall, around 3 out of 4 indicated they felt where they lived at the time of the survey was right for them.

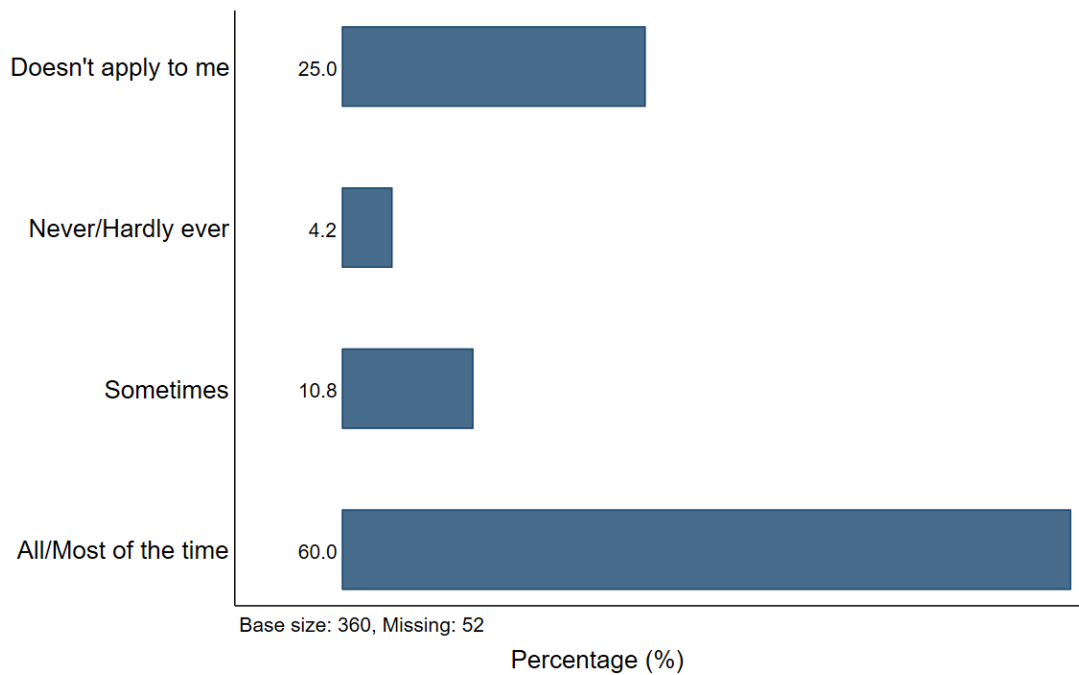
**Figure 3.18. “Where do you live?”**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation)<sup>22</sup> 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Rent and Bills questions were only used in the updated version of the survey and thus exposed to a subset of participants, resulting in high missingness figures.

**Figure 3.19. “I can pay my rent...”**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation)<sup>23</sup> 2022.

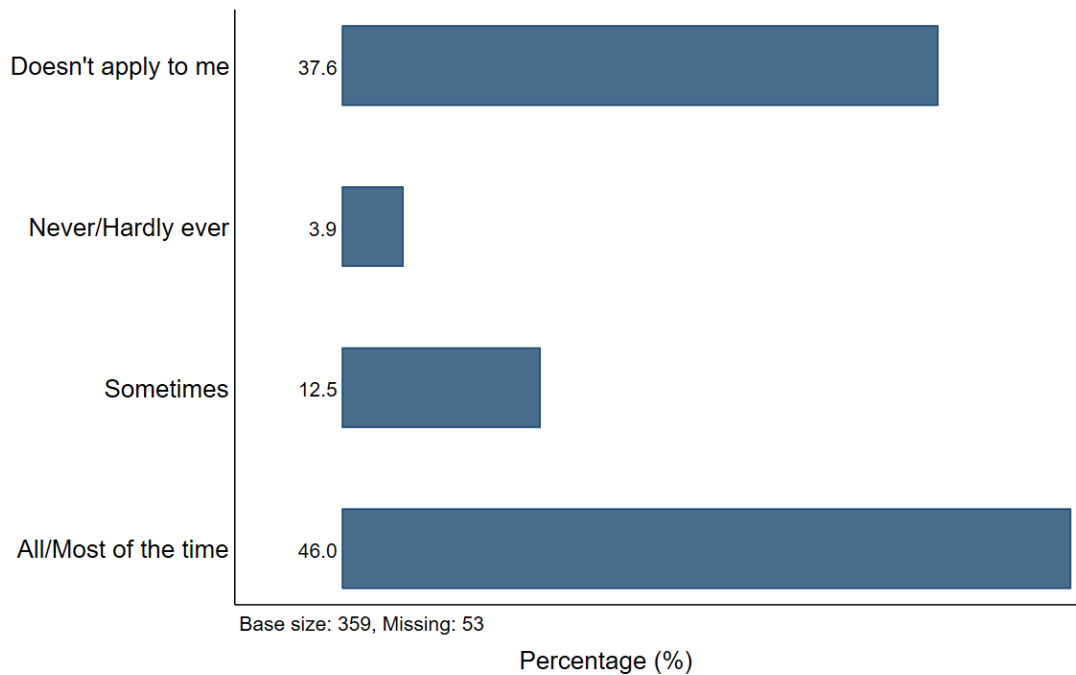
3.26. In total, out of those paying rent, 60 per cent reported being able to afford it, and 46 per cent reported being able to afford bills.

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<sup>23</sup> Rent and Bills questions were only used in the updated version of the survey and thus exposed to a subset of participants, resulting in high missingness figures.



**Figure 3.20. “I can pay my household bills...”**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

3.27. When asked to rate from 0 (does not sound like me) to 10 (sounds a lot like me) the extent to which the statement “I often buy things on impulse” was representative of their spending habits, results were mixed. Responses were primarily concentrated at the lower, middle and high end approximately in equal standing of 13-14 per cent, with all other responses normally distributed.

### **About Care Leavers**

3.28. Results on social connectedness suggest the most important relationships on which care leavers sought emotional support were primarily friends followed by partners, mothers, foster carers, siblings and YPAs. Pets were also considered important, where out of those that indicated they had a pet (51 per cent), 42 per cent of them pointed to their pet as a source of emotional support.

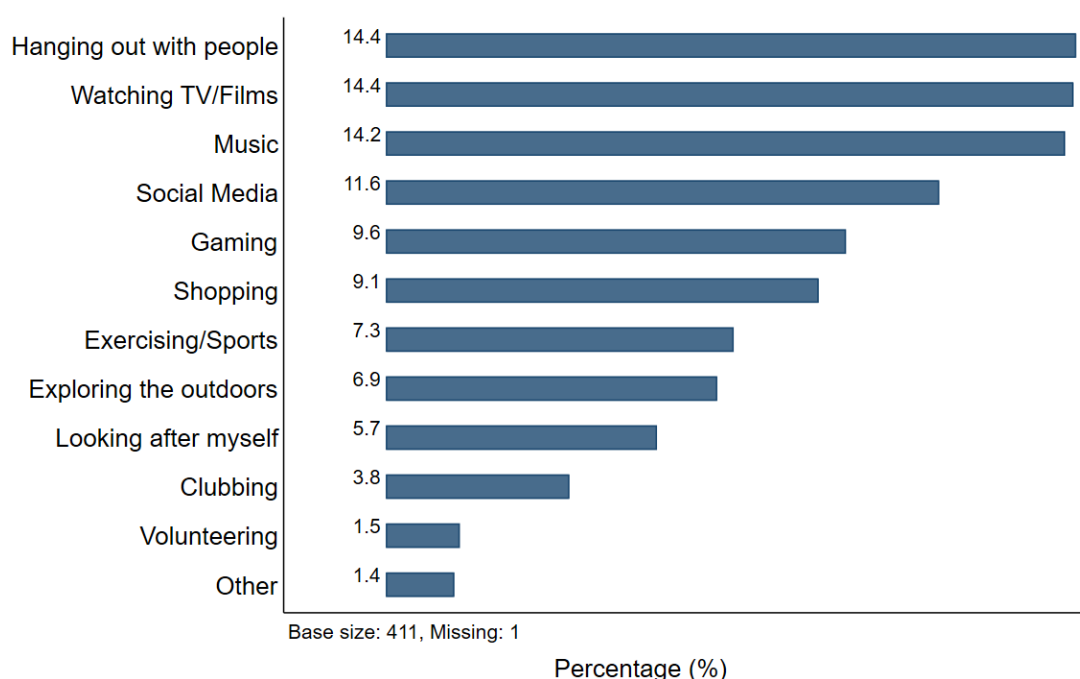
3.29. The lowest proportion of respondents relied on their own children, an observation which correlates with 8.5 per cent, indicating they were already parents or pregnant. This is considerably higher compared to the general population, where the official conception rate of women under 20 in England and Wales was 2.6 per cent in 2020

(ONS, 2022a). Approximately 10 per cent of female participants in this survey reported being parents or pregnant.

3.30. When asked whether they had someone in their life who they could trust to help them, approximately 87 per cent indicated they did.

3.31. Looking at care leavers' most popular leisure activities, results strongly echo the findings Coram Voice reported through their survey of care leavers in England (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020). The most popular activities included 'hanging out with people they like', 'watching television and/or films', 'using social media' and 'listening to or playing music' as shown in Figure 3.21. Overall, approximately 79 per cent indicated they felt they could do the same things as their friends sometimes or all/most of the time.

**Figure 3.21. Spare time leisure activities**



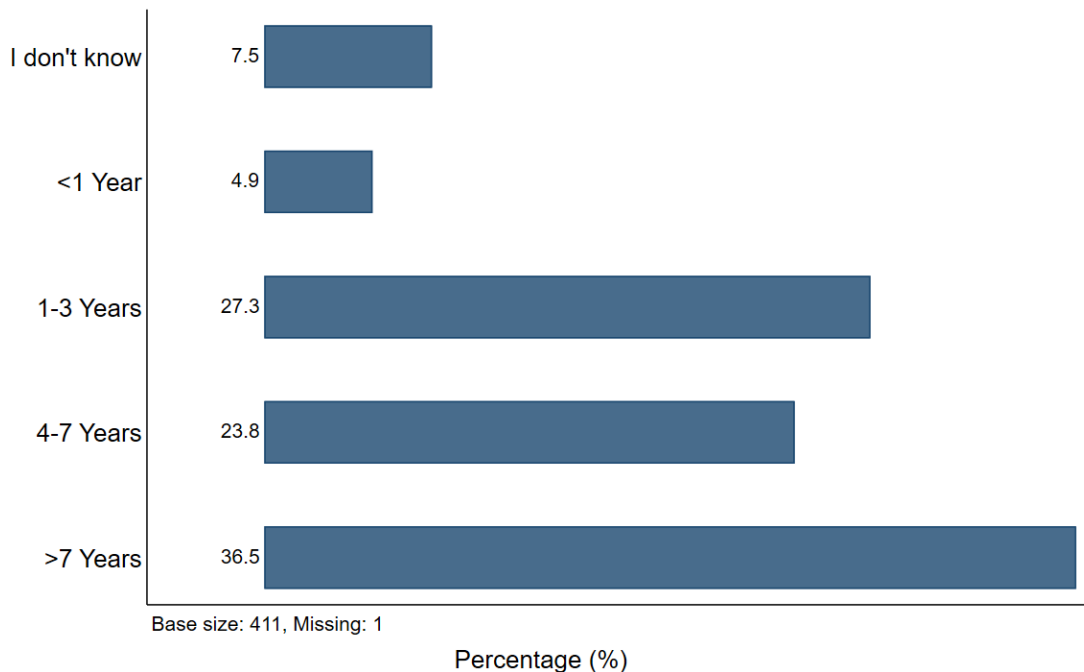
Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

3.32. Results shown in figure 3.21 represent the most popular spare time activities selected by care leavers. Since more than one option could be selected by each participant, the resulting percentage estimates represent the percentage of "votes" for each element with respect to the total number of votes from all participants across all elements. This allows us to interpret which activities were the most popular relative to each other. The base size shown indicates the lowest sample observed out of all activities.

### Time spent in Care

- 3.33. Since the pilot is available for all care leavers who were eligible, we would expect a wide range of experiences of care, including a range of periods of time spent in care. Out of all respondents, 36.5 per cent were in care more than 7 years, as shown in the figure below, with approximately 60 per cent being in care 4 or more years. This is a near identical finding to the one reported by Coram Voice for the cohort of care leavers surveyed in England (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020).
- 3.34. On the question “Has someone explained to you why you were in care?” approximately 81 per cent of participants indicated they knew all they wanted to, while 13.5 per cent answered affirmatively but still required some more information. Only 5 indicated they did not know.

**Figure 3.22. Number of years spent in Care**



Source: Your Life Beyond Care Survey (Adapted for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Evaluation) 2022.

### **Leaving care: Pathway Planning and Young Persons Advisors**

- 3.35. Pathway planning is an important aspect of the transition to independence for young people leaving care, and it involves drafting a plan for how the local authority will support this transition. Pathway plans cover a range of both current and predicted needs, in areas including accommodation, education and employment, and health and development. The Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 (p86, point 440b) states communication with young people should be “at the heart” of assessment and preparation of pathways plans (Welsh Government, 2014).
- 3.36. In terms of care leavers’ involvement in their pathway planning, more than 10 per cent said they either didn’t have a pathway plan, did not know what pathway planning was, or were never involved in their pathway planning. Again, this largely echoes results reported by Coram Voice regarding care leavers in England (Briheim-Crookall et al., 2020). In a similar vein, approximately 17 per cent of the pilot survey respondents indicated not knowing who their young persons advisor (YPA) was.
- 3.37. More positively, of the recipients who did know their YPA, almost 80 per cent expressed trust in their YPA all or most of the time. Furthermore, 73 per cent of those who knew their YPA indicated it was easy to get in touch with their advisor all or most of the time.

### **Qualitative responses**

- 3.38. The final question of the survey gave respondents an opportunity to give a free text answer to the questions ‘What would you like to say or tell us about leaving care?’ and ‘What could make your experiences better?’
- 3.39. This was the least answered question, where only around half of the recipients surveyed provided a response<sup>24</sup>. Responses were initially classified as positive, negative or neutral to get a broader understanding of sentiment. Naturally, certain answers were difficult to classify since they often involved or implied both positive and negative emotions, such as positive experiences with their foster carers but negative experiences with leaving care.

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<sup>24</sup>Although rates of non-responsiveness (missing values) on other questions of the survey were not substantial, they did suggest a possible association with question types relating to how participants felt (depressed, angry, lonely etc.). Investigation of the missingness mechanism, however, is beyond the scope of this report, and will be conducted at a later stage as part of the sensitivity analysis.

3.40. Out of the 215 care leavers who responded and could be classified, approximately half expressed negative experiences related to being in and/or leaving care. In terms of being in care, they emphasised often feeling unhappy in care and reported being happy to leave care, feeling they had little control over their life and looking forward to becoming independent. In terms of leaving care, and pathway planning in aid of this, they noted needing better housing arrangements, more emotional support, and help with general life skills. The following two comments illustrate this:

"Leaving care is hard when you're moving into your own flat, I think there should be a lot more resources and help given to people leaving long term because it's extremely overwhelming."

"It's an uneasy and unsure path ahead that can only be overcome by having people who care about you and the ability to be stable financially."

3.41. From approximately 20 per cent of those that responded as being happy with their leaving care arrangements, many emphasised a great quality of relationship with foster parents/YPAs. This suggests that having a strong emotional support network is likely case-dependent and directly related with overall experience before and after care.

3.42. Finally, a number of respondents also expressed gratitude for the pilot stating:

"It's been a great journey and I'm grateful to the Welsh Government for looking after us and supporting me financially, it's been a great experience, thank you."

"Personally I have been very lucky, I have stuck with my education and in September I am going to uni to study...I have stayed with the same carer of just under 13 years and have a very helpful PA. I also was put forwards for the basic income pilot, this really helped me feel more at peace about money for when I go to uni. I still plan on getting a job but it's not as much of a worry."

3.43. Overall, the final survey question which allowed care leavers to share their thoughts on leaving care was answered by about half the respondents. Among the 215 classified responses, roughly half revealed negative experiences associated with being in care, expressing unhappiness and a sense of limited control. Concerns related to leaving care emphasized the need for improved housing, increased emotional support, and assistance with general life skills. This underlines the importance of addressing these challenges to enhance the overall well-being and transition experiences of individuals leaving care.

3.44. As this section illustrates, the data gathered through surveys and enrolment forms gives an insight into many aspects of the lives of those participating in the pilot. This provides valuable baseline data about the cohort that we will use to measure how

they compare to peers who are not receiving a basic income, and how things change over time. Future reports will explore these issues comparatively, giving a more comprehensive picture of how being involved in the pilot is impacting on the lives of the young people.

## 4. Findings: Initial programme theory

- 4.1. This section focusses on the first stage of analysis of how the pilot might be expected to work, based on the focussed review of key research and policy documents outlined in the methodology section. Our evaluation is a theory-based study, and over its duration we aim to enhance and extend the existing theory in relation to basic income, with specific reference to the pilot. Theory-based evaluation offers a partial solution to the 'black box' problem - the idea that a purely outcome-focused stance can leave us unclear about how and why interventions work or do not work, and how they might be improved (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). Sometimes known as 'theory driven' or 'theory oriented', these approaches have become popular in social science since the 1980s (Chen, 1990).
- 4.2. The pilot is unique among basic income pilots, based on the combination of the size of payments, the decision to offer the basic income to care leavers, and the package of financial and social support on offer. As such, the existing literature provides an incomplete picture of how it might operate. This initial theory is therefore inevitably partial, and by nature it is part of an iterative process. Most importantly, it does not include data that we have collected within the study; this will be introduced into the analysis at a later stage to inform revised versions of the theory. These will be more comprehensive and more specific to the pilot in Wales. By the end of the evaluation, we will have updated versions of the theory and accompanying logic model. These will incorporate (1) the underlying evidence base (this initial stage), (2) insights from analysis of the data collected during the study (the next stage, where the theory is revised), and (3) a final version where 'formal' or general social science theories are integrated, where appropriate.

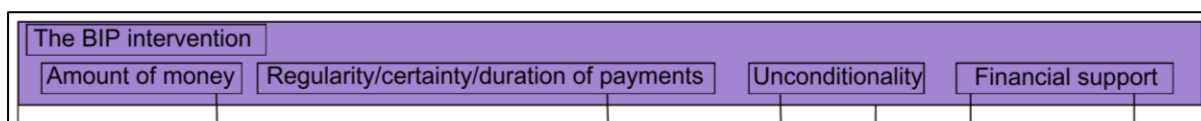
### Interim findings

- 4.3. At this stage we are describing the intervention, and the mechanisms through which it is thought to operate, at a relatively high level of abstraction. This eschews some of the detail and complexity we expect to add using empirical data from the study. We do this partly to keep the theory and logic model accessible, but also because the uniqueness of the pilot in Wales means the more specific pathways to impact will be more precisely articulated using empirical data from the study.

## Components of the intervention

- 4.4. Our initial logic model, which adds financial support to the high-level social determinants in Johnson et al.'s (2022) model of impact, depicts the intervention as having several components designed to increase the likelihood that the desired outcomes will be achieved. We conceptualise the payments in terms of their size and regularity over the 24-month period. In the broad strokes we are making here, this aims to provide a sense of security and the ability to plan, as well as multiple chances to consider spending behaviours.

**Figure 4.1: Snapshot of intervention components (initial logic model)<sup>25</sup>**



- 4.5. For example, unconditionality and regularity are thought to contribute to reducing beneficiaries' sense of uncertainty and precariousness, which have been shown to foreshorten people's 'time horizons' (the extent to which they think beyond the present, especially to the less immediate future) (Johnson et al., 2023b; Pepper and Nettle, 2017). Lengthening time horizons is argued to be a mechanism (response) by which people become more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviours and in education (Fieulaine and Apostolidis, 2015: 221).
- 4.6. Yet it is worth briefly acknowledging the rather more complex underpinnings of this. Multiple payments could also be considered as individual interventions, which enter into different contexts, and in turn activate different mechanisms.<sup>26</sup> For example, the first payment of £1,280 may be received by someone who had never had a similar amount of money before, whereas the last payment arrives in the context of that person having two years' experience of receiving such funds. Studies of the sociology of money and income suggest it is reasonable to hypothesise that recipients may have different attitudes to the same amount of money across the timeline of the pilot, and that spending patterns may differ as a result (Hecht and Summers, 2021). We intend to explore these more granular mechanisms in future iterations of the theory aided by the findings from our qualitative interviews and survey data.

<sup>25</sup> Figures 15-17 are taken from the full logic model, which is found in Figure 18. They are included within the text to ease explanation. The colours represent different components of context-mechanism-outcome chains, and are explained in the full logic model.

<sup>26</sup> This would be a logical extension of the idea that "When an intervention is introduced, it changes the context (by providing further reasoning, opportunities, permissions, legitimations, authorizations, and limitations), so presenting people with a different set of circumstances in which to exercise agency, leading to different outcomes." (O'Halloran et al., 2018).

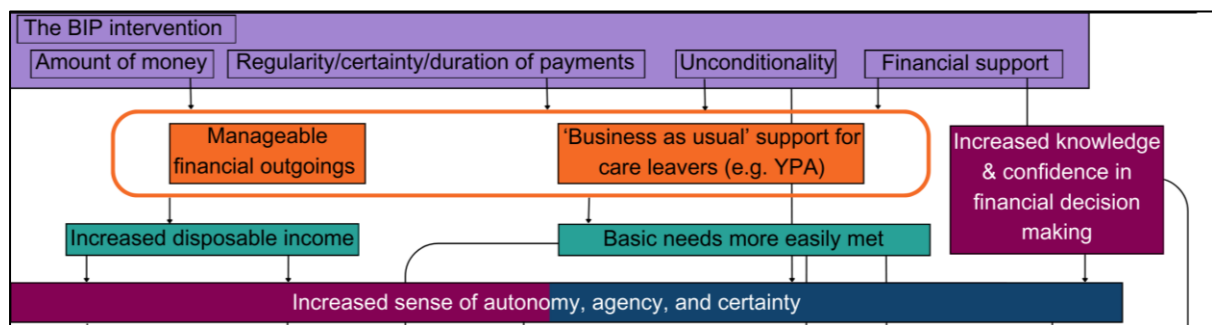


4.7. Insights from the existing literature have more relevance to some aspects of the pilot than to others. The cash transfer elements – including the amount of money, the payment in cash, the regularity of payments, and the unconditionality of participation, are fundamental to the theory of universal basic income and core features of basic income schemes worldwide. They are also well represented in the sources included in this analysis. In contrast, although several basic income schemes bundle additional services with basic income (e.g. Arriagada et al., 2018; Cluver et al., 2014; Roelen et al., 2023; WorkFREE, 2023)<sup>27</sup> the financial advice component of pilot is a bespoke feature of the intervention in Wales (see Annex 5). This means the current theory about this aspect of the scheme is particularly sparse. For now, we have assumed that the financial support is designed to lead to two shifts in reasoning in those who take up this support: increased knowledge about how to manage finances (e.g. budgeting, saving, minimising debt) and increased confidence in financial decision-making (which may feed into a broader sense of confidence) (see Figure 4.2).

### Proposed causal pathways

4.8. Some of the ways in which the intervention has been designed should lead directly to changes in recipients’ circumstances, if their outgoings are manageable and other forms of support in their lives continue (both are key contexts). They are the notions that (a) recipients’ basic needs are more easily met and (b) they have an increased amount of non-committed income that is not required for meeting housing, heating and eating needs (Villadsen et al., 2023). These changes are therefore conceptualised as mechanism: resource, as they are directly created by the income, without the recipients having to respond to bring this about (either through changes in how they feel or behave).

**Figure 4.2: Snapshot of mechanism resources (initial logic model)**



<sup>27</sup> These examples are from South Africa, Bangladesh and India.

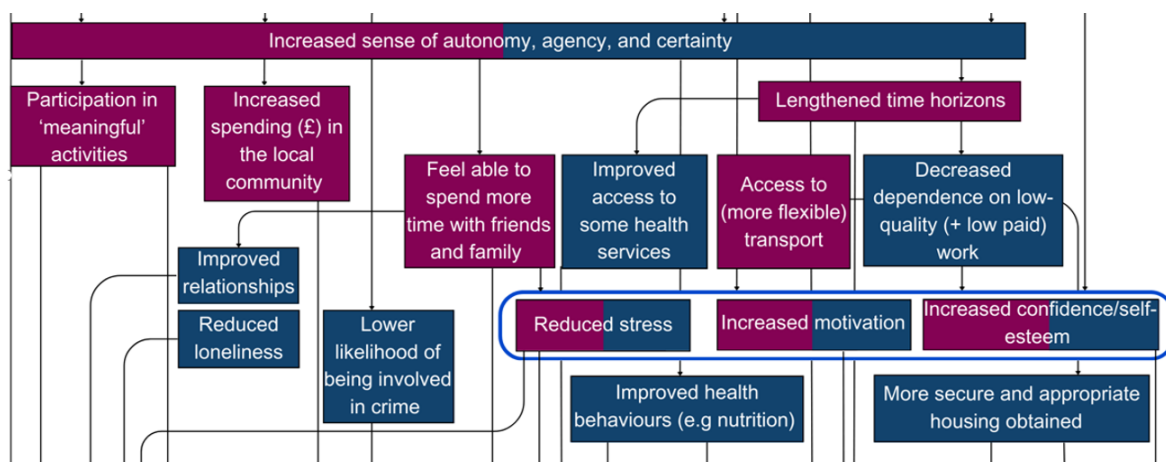
- 4.9. Also featured in Figure 4.2 is the idea that both the ability to meet basic needs more easily, and increased disposable income, are assumed to increase recipients' sense of autonomy, agency and certainty. The literature suggests this is because (a) the former should free their time from both low-paid, low-quality work and from meeting the conditions required to claim other benefits, thus allowing them to spend their time in whatever way they choose (Forget, 2011: 286). It is also because (b) the latter is designed to give them a sense of control over financial spending that subsistence living does not (Gibson et al., 2018: 36). Nonetheless, most previous pilots have involved amounts of income that are geared more towards meeting basic needs than discretionary spending, so this is less well-supported in the existing literature.
- 4.10. The importance of autonomy / agency is prominent in the Welsh Government's public statements and policy documents about the pilot. For example, the specification for the evaluation states "The Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot is an innovative approach to supporting care experienced individuals with the concepts of trust, autonomy, respect and independence at the centre of it" and that "It will provide dignity, independence and security [...] giving [recipients] greater control and trusting them to make decisions for their future." Similarly, in his foreword to The Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce's report on using basic income to address the mental health crisis, the First Minister stated that the pilot would give young people choice over "whether to undertake education, develop businesses, grow their skills, make plans" and the ability to "decide how they want to experience life as they make the transition to adulthood" (Johnson et al., 2022).
- 4.11. We view this as both a mechanism: response and as an intermediate outcome<sup>28</sup>. There is little doubt that the concepts of agency and autonomy are deeply interrelated. For our purposes the two concepts are useful only in understanding the mechanisms of change that the intervention might activate. Agency and autonomy are often used interchangeably, but more distinctly (especially in our context) can be seen as mutually enabling or synergistic in the process of empowerment.
- 4.12. Flowing from this, recipients are thought to have more time to participate in 'meaningful activities', or activities that are valued by the recipient. Types of activities highlighted in the literature include caring, pursuing hobbies, and volunteering, but this could include myriad others. In any case, spending time in ways that are meaningful for the recipient is assumed to improve wellbeing, understood as a sense of 'quality of life', and in some cases this will involve developing life skills and helping others (as would be the case for many forms of caring or volunteering).

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<sup>28</sup> We define an 'intermediate outcome' here as a consequence of how the intervention works in the context that also leads to further outcomes.

- 4.13. Increased disposable income has been shown to raise spending in the community (de Paz-Báñez et al. 2020: 20; Gibson et al. 2018: 55). Helping another group to do this (e.g. to frequent local restaurants, coffee shops or sports centres) is likely to benefit the local economy financially, as well as to strengthen community relationships with beneficiaries. However, given the nature of the pilot community benefits may be difficult to observe as the number of recipients is relatively small and they are geographically dispersed
- 4.14. As Figure 4.3 illustrates, we can also trace a fairly clear pathway between the ability to meet basic needs, the feeling of control over time this may provide (e.g. not needing to take a poorly-paid job), and their ability to invest their time in important relationships, including with friends and family. Although the links in these causal chains are not established in many of the studies included in this analysis, positive impacts on relationships have been observed, and linked to the ability to spend time together (Ferdosi et al., 2020 as cited in Jones, 2021). It is evidenced elsewhere that voluntarily spending more time together can improve relationships (e.g. Smart and Smart 2020; McAuley et al. 2012) and that high-quality relationships improve wellbeing (Thomas et al. 2017), partly via decreasing stress.<sup>29</sup> A further marker of relationship health that is established in the literature reviewed for this study is loneliness, with recipients reporting less loneliness and isolation (Jones, 2021), and this being in line with the Welsh Government’s broader strategic objectives as outlined in its loneliness strategy (The Welsh Government, 2020).

**Figure 4.3: Snapshot of mechanism responses and intermediate outcomes, (initial logic model)**



<sup>29</sup> It should also be noted that for young adults, purposely spending time alone can also have positive effects on wellbeing and the ability to adapt to life changes, and even on relationship quality (Dixon 2020). What unites these impacts is the ability to consciously decide how time is spent.

- 4.15. The link between basic income and improved access to health services is, of course, stronger in countries without free healthcare. Most health services in Wales are available free of charge for everyone, including prescribed medication. However, as some services (e.g. dentistry and optometry) carry charges in Wales, and transport is sometimes needed to get to medical appointments (particularly in rural areas), there is the potential for some impact on access. Notably, some forms of welfare benefit, such as Universal Credit, entitle recipients to subsidies for chargeable health services (National Health Service, 2020) whereas the pilot does not. There is, therefore, theoretical potential for negative impact where recipients do not prioritise spending on this.
- 4.16. Separately, there is evidence that basic income may improve access to free at the point of treatment healthcare for both those in and out of work. Those in low paid, precarious employment face obstacles to accessing treatment, particularly at the point that conditions become symptomatic, by virtue of their inability to reject or take time off work (Johnson et al., 2019). It is also clear that those in receipt of disability related benefit can face perverse incentives to avoid activity and treatment that would improve conditions since doing so increases the chances of their benefits' being removed (Johnson and Spring, 2018).
- 4.17. The relationship between the basic income and ameliorating the effects of poverty should be a direct one; the increase in money (manageable outgoings assumed) should mean that some of the worst effects of poverty are lessened. The notion that basic income can disrupt the 'welfare trap'<sup>30</sup>, in the sense of replacing benefits which might disincentivise work, is well-supported (Johnson et al., 2023b). However, escaping other aspects of the 'poverty trap'<sup>31</sup>, such as the inability to purchase assets or gain high-income employment, relies on some mechanism: responses (i.e. targeting spending in a certain way) and some things that might be outside the individual's control, such as their pre-existing level of education, and housing costs.
- 4.18. Moreover, there is strong evidence from systematic reviews that poverty – particularly absolute poverty – has been reduced by basic income (de Paz-Báñez et al., 2020; Gibson et al., 2018; Hasdell, 2020). Several effects of poverty have also been ameliorated in basic income experiments, including employment, entrepreneurship, purchasing of assets (such as agricultural tools), child nutrition, child behaviour, schooling and medical assistance and crime. Indeed, proponents

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<sup>30</sup> The term 'welfare trap' is sometimes used interchangeably with the 'poverty trap', or 'cycle of poverty', but is elsewhere used to refer to the conditions set around means-tested benefits that have the consequence of disincentivising work (e.g. Kingfisher (2012)).

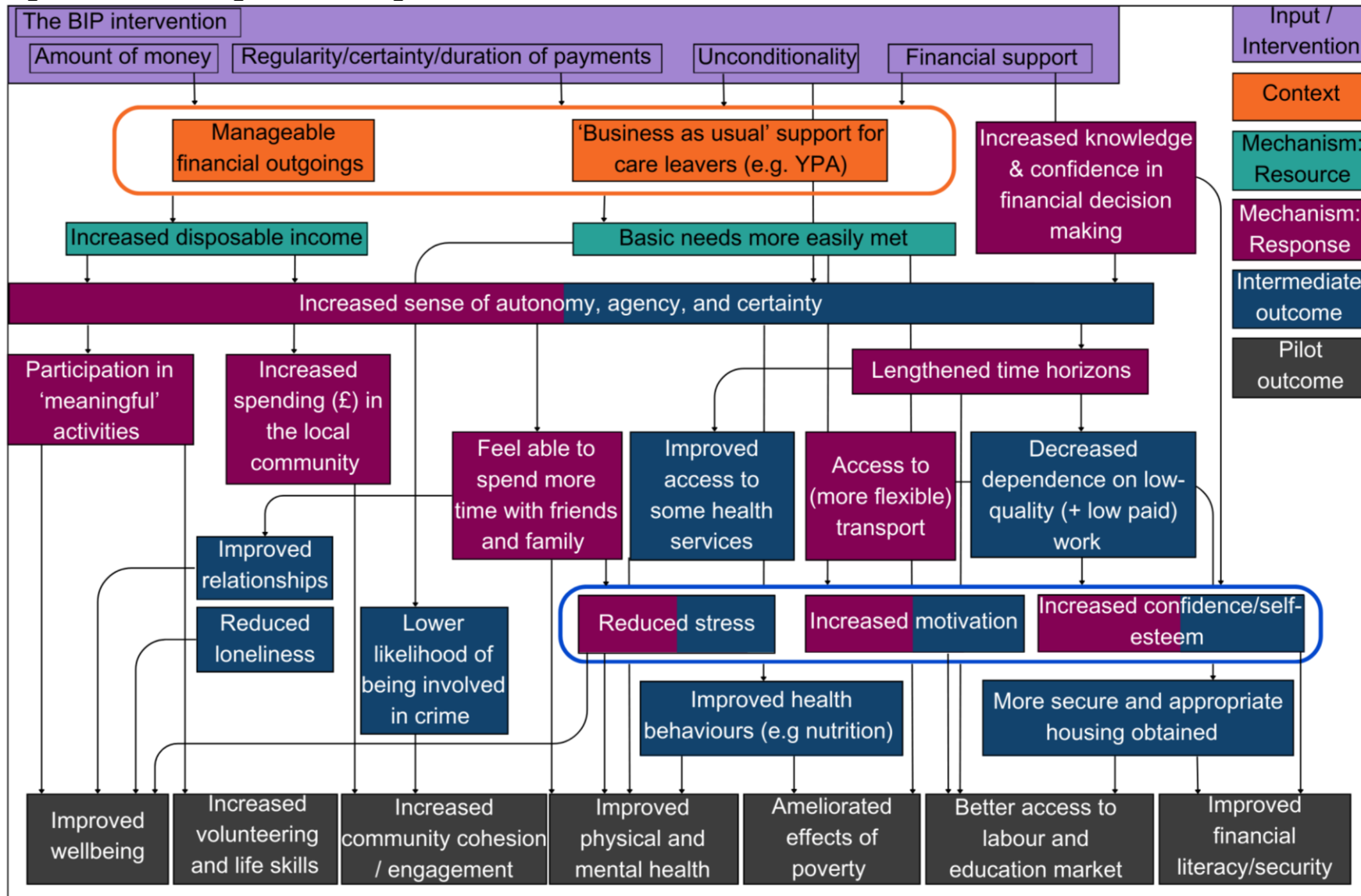
<sup>31</sup> Defined as 'any self-reinforcing mechanism which causes poverty to persist', either at the country level (Azariadis and Stachurski, 2005), or between groups within countries (e.g. Easterly, 2001).

argue that one of the strengths of basic income is that it can address poverty with a range of causes, including inability to work, caring responsibilities, and lack of human capital (defined as the set of skills and knowledge a person has which influence their productiveness in the economy (Rosen, 1989).

### **Conclusions and next steps**

- 4.19. This initial programme theory and logic model has drawn upon recent research findings about basic income in general, and documents about the Welsh basic income pilot specifically. We have outlined a series of intervention components, and traced some key pathways through which this literature suggests the pilot might operate. By making it easier to meet basic needs, and creating opportunities to use income in more discretionary ways, the intervention is thought to empower recipients to make a range of positive outcomes, both in the short and longer term.
- 4.20. This work is iterative in nature. At this stage we have not included many negative or unintended consequences. However, we intend to use data from the study to explore this in more detail and, based on the actual experiences of the pilot. In the next stage of the study we will incorporate data from the evaluation, using it to revise and enhance our understanding of how the pilot works empirically. The initial logic model is presented below, in Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4: Initial logic model diagram for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot.**



## **5. Findings: Professionals' views of the Welsh basic income for care leavers in Wales pilot and early experiences of supporting recipients.**

5.1 This section provides a qualitative analysis of professionals' views of the design of the Welsh basic income pilot and their early observations and experiences of supporting recipients.

5.2 Professionals' discussions focused largely on four key areas in relation to the design of the pilot including:

- care leavers as recipients of the basic income.
- the age at which the money is offered.
- the amount of basic income provided.
- the unconditional nature of the basic income offer.

### **Care leavers as recipients**

5.3 Professionals were broadly supportive of the basic income being piloted with care leavers, who they noted are "at a disadvantage" (P14, Personal Advisor)<sup>32</sup> and had less support than non-care experienced young people. These concerns about the disadvantaged position of care leavers were prominent among the professionals involved:

"I think it's a good choice, because there's a large proportion of the young people that don't have the support, you know, the family support. So, it is very interesting to see how they manage it." (P13, Personal Advisor)

5.4 In recognition of their disadvantaged position, professionals were broadly supportive of the focus on this group of young people and felt they were deserving of additional support:

"... I think that we all appreciate that this [basic income pilot] is something that we need to afford our care leavers, an opportunity in moving forward." (P17 Head of Service)

5.5 Nonetheless, as well as this making the cohort a good target for the pilot, concerns were also voiced regarding the vulnerabilities of some young people:

"I was concerned, as [care leavers] were already a vulnerable group, [and the basic income] was potentially adding to their vulnerability" (P26 Head of Service).

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<sup>32</sup> P refers to participant. Each participant is referred to with a unique number.

- 5.6 Related to this, some professionals believed recipients should be risk-assessed before receiving the basic income. For example, a Team Manager felt “there are some young people who this is not appropriate for” (P30, Team Manager), while a Personal Advisor stated: “I just think it’s not thought through enough [as there is potential] to give it to an eighteen-year-old in crisis” (P7 Personal Advisor).
- 5.7 While, overall, professionals were broadly supportive of the Welsh Government’s decision to offer the pilot to young people leaving care, there was also an often-expressed concern from professionals regarding the potential impact of the basic income for more vulnerable young people within the cohort. There appears to be general agreement for enhanced financial support for young people leaving care but also anxieties that the money could heighten risk and safeguarding concerns for some. These concerns will be revisited in other sections of the report.

### **Age of recipients**

- 5.8 Turning 18 typically encompasses changes to legal status, benefit entitlement, statutory support, education and living arrangements for care leavers. This means that, for this cohort of young people, their 18th birthday “...is possibly a bigger milestone than for other young people in society” (P19, Head of Service). The heightened significance of this milestone was observed by a number of professionals in our focus groups:

“I do think that 18 is the right age group to evaluate it on, for best outcomes, it is a critical point in their lives, with them stepping into the adult world, where they’re becoming increasingly more independent.” (P20, Head of Service)

- 5.9 Suggestions of a ‘bigger milestone’ and a ‘critical point’ are reflective of the multiple changes and decisions faced by care leavers at this point in their lives. As noted in the comment above, this is accompanied by a general expectation that young people will become more independent.

- 5.10 Nonetheless, despite this acknowledgement that care leavers will often have to navigate the adult world more independently than their peers, many professionals expressed concerns that 18 was too young for any young person to be trusted with large sums of money:

“I think, some of our biggest concerns and anxieties were around the age of the young people. So, it wasn’t the [care leaver status of the] cohort. So, actually, you know, care leavers, absolutely, we want to prioritise, but 18 does seem very young, and particularly with having to manage such large sums of money.” (P17, Head of Service)



“I don't think 18 is a good age to... test the pilot on. I know, when I was eighteen, if I had that amount of money a month, I wouldn't have been thinking about my future, and using it to better myself, and my future. And so, for our young people, who most of them have never seen that amount of money a month, that's not at the forefront of their mind. And not just because they're care leavers, like I said, I don't think there'd be many eighteen-year-olds who would be using it for their future.” (P12, Personal Advisor)

5.11 Considering this, some professionals felt the pilot should have involved older care leavers:

“... it would be nice to have seen the pilot [targeted] at a slightly older age, I suppose, because I think there would be more meaningful use of the whole thing, and it would be a real opportunity for them. I think there's a potential of it being a waste, that opportunity, and some of them might regret it in the future.” (P18, Head of Service)

5.12 Whilst acknowledging the capacity and developmental stage of 18-year-olds generally, care status was nevertheless considered relevant. For example, the Head of Service's comment above reflects a broader sentiment from professionals that care-experienced young people need to capitalise on this opportunity. In contrast to non-care-experienced 18-year-olds, who may similarly 'waste' the opportunity, the stakes are perceived as higher for those leaving care as they typically lack the support of family that most of their peers can rely on.

5.13 Many professionals emphasised that care-experienced young people had often faced challenges in life that have affected their maturity and development, and concerns for vulnerability were apparent in respect of some young people's capacity to manage the basic income:

“And I've got some coming up now that are turning 18, but present as maybe 14 or 15, that I've got real concerns with because they, even though their age is 18, their capacity is not 18.” (P6, Personal Advisor)

“Within that [leaving care] cohort, you've got this sort of group of young people that's, they don't have a diagnosis, but there is sort of delayed learning. You know, young age group that don't really comprehend what they're getting, or what they should do with it, and they're always a worry. (P4, Personal Advisor)

5.14 Whilst issues of capacity and developmental delay are not unique to young people leaving care, the quotation above reminds us of the difficult lived experiences of the cohort, including those before and during care, which have the potential to inhibit positive youth development.

## Amount of basic income

5.15 The amount of money being offered was also the subject of mixed views among professionals. Some supported the amount chosen, considered it “realistic” and reflective of an average salary. One Personal Advisor noted “it is a good amount of money. It is a lot, but I think that it is the average sort of salary, maybe, for them to get used to.” (P13, Personal Advisor), while a Head of Service expanded on a similar sentiment:

“It’s almost giving them that taste of what they could have, and hopefully, allowing them to, you know, raise the[ir] ambitions, and raise their sights to that level of finance to continue post-pay. I do think that’s a realistic amount of money. And that’s the purpose of this, isn’t it? To free them from those restraints, that would lead them into those opportunities, that they would be able to earn that money from?” (P20, Head of Service)

5.16 The amount of basic income provided to young people was calculated as being consistent with the ‘real living wage’ at the point when the scheme was being devised (November 2021), which aims to account for the true cost of living.<sup>33</sup> The comments suggest the income enables recipients to gain insight into managing a ‘realistic’ wage and the associated standard of living. In this way, the amount is perceived as having the potential to raise young people’s aspirations and motivation to ensure continuation of the level of income post-pilot.

5.17 There was also support for the basic income being subject to income tax, on similar grounds of being a realistic insight into how adults deal with earned income. A Head of Service articulated this in terms of building sustainable routines:

“I actually think, the fact that the basic income is taxed... is a really good thing as well, because I think it brings a little bit of normalcy around it. So, I know we were looking initially at just having 1,600 pound, but, I think, the idea that, actually, you get money, but you have to take some of a bit away, has built a really good routine into young people, because if they only ever been on UC [Universal Credit], they’ll not see that 25 per cent disappears somewhere. So, I think, actually, the way it’s been implemented is better.” (P22, Head of Service)

5.18 This suggests that the administration of payments themselves may have an educational quality. If they establish routines and regularity, and bring to life what may have previously been unfamiliar concepts (such as tax liability) for many young people, then this may be an additional benefit. In such instances, the basic income

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<sup>33</sup> For more details please see [living wage for Wales: for the real cost of living](#)

pilot has the potential to support young people to become acquainted with aspects of living life which include paying tax, and the difference between gross and net pay.

- 5.19 Despite these positives, some professionals felt the amount of basic income was too high. For some, this opinion was shaped by the concerns we discussed previously about young people’s vulnerabilities. Professionals made particular reference to substance misuse and exploitation, which they felt could be worsened as a result of the basic income. A Personal Advisor and a Head of Service voiced similar concerns about this increasing the risks to young people:

“I know we had a lot of concerns around some of the choices our young people make in regard to sort of alcohol and drugs, and where that money was gonna go, and you know, the [potential for young people to be a] danger to themselves” (P14, Personal Advisor)

“I think, in terms of this cohort of young people, again, I was really worried about the vulnerabilities. You know, we had a lot of young people who were being exploited.” (P27, Head of Service)

- 5.20 The comments in this section suggest the potential for both positive and detrimental impacts of the basic income. Professionals’ theorising about the income acknowledges the potential for negating the disadvantage faced by young people leaving care, but also the potential to heighten risk and vulnerabilities through increased spending capacity.

- 5.21 However, some of the critical views expressed about the amount of basic income were unrelated to young people’s outcomes. In several focus groups Personal Advisors were critical of recipients receiving what they perceived to be a comparable income to themselves. This created a sense of inequity, as Personal Advisors were central to the delivery of the pilot and the provision of support to young people, and they had to work full time to receive their income. As one Personal Advisor explained,

“I think, from our point of view, it was quite hurtful, ‘cause these young people are getting paid more than I’m getting paid, and I’m the one that is having to deal with all the stress and the work on it. And then they actually get paid every month when they claim their tax back, more than me. That’s like a bit sour.” (P34, Personal Advisor)

- 5.22 Full-time salaries for Personal Advisors in Wales are lower than the median salary in Wales<sup>34</sup>, but are higher than the basic income received by care leavers in the pilot<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> [Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2022 | GOV.WALES](#)

However, after paying tax, pension contributions, national insurance and union dues, the amount that some PAs are receiving monthly may feel only marginally higher than the basic income. Objections of this nature may also be related to issues of conditionality discussed in the next section.

## Conditionality

- 5.23 The unconditional nature of the basic income was largely unsupported by professionals, who criticised this aspect of the scheme. In contrast to notions that the amount of money being offered as a basic income, and the income being taxed, provided young people with a reasonable insight into adult life, the lack of conditions attached to the pilot was considered unrealistic. The following comments, from a Team Manager and a Personal Advisor, were typical of points raised in most of the focus groups:

“...at the moment, they are getting that amount for not having to do anything in return. So, I think some form of apprenticeship training, something along those lines, would have been more beneficial, and more productive, because it would have shown them exactly what it would have been like, in reality, to earn money but have to do something in return.” (P29, Team Manager)

“But I still feel that it should have been attached to an apprenticeship. And all that two-year period where they would have come out with a skill, you know, so that they could then go into the employment market and earn that type of money themselves.” (P5, Personal Advisor)

- 5.24 This represents a widely held view that not requiring young people to ‘do’ something in return for the money does not encourage a realistic understanding of paid work. While conditions related to employment, training and education were the most common suggestions, some professionals felt that other conditions would have supported young people’s skill development. One suggestion was that recipients should be expected to save a proportion of the money:

“I think, having it unconditional is a big problem, like, not having to do anything to get it at all, or not having anything that they, I dunno, save 20 per cent, like, something which means that we can help them be more responsible with it.” (P6, Personal Advisor)

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<sup>35</sup> Personal communication with a YPA team leader provided information that PAs in their team receive annual salaries of £27,344 - £30,151. A recent advertisement for a PA post had a salary of £25,481 - £29,577. It is possible that PAs may be on higher or lower pay scales in other local authorities. The Basic Income Pilot payments would be equivalent to annual salary of £19,200.

5.25 The Personal Advisors who offered these reflections took the view that conditions attached to the basic income would have helped steer recipients' choices for their future benefit. Their comments suggest that conditions (such as saving and/or engagement in education, training or employment) could have enhanced the pilot's transformative potential. Whilst it is important to note that the design of the pilot retained recipients' access to statutory support entitlements, and also included an offer of financial advice (typically through Citizens Advice Cymru), these are voluntary engagements.

5.26 Despite this, there was some scepticism in relation to the feasibility of standardised conditions because of the diverse nature of the cohort. Instead, a minority of professionals advocated tailored conditionality depending on individual circumstances. One senior member of staff who took this stance argued this would motivate young people, though they also acknowledged the challenges associated with agreeing, monitoring and enforcing such requirements:

“I suppose my view is a standardised condition, it wouldn't have been appropriate ... however, I think we could have considered something that was bespoke to the individual, because not all of our young people are going to... secure employment, or going to go to university. ... So it would be, you know, a motivating factor for the young person, but bespoke to the individual needs, and perhaps that would have avoided some people then just thinking ‘well, actually, I've got this money now. I'm not going to try and enter employment’, or ‘I'm not gonna to go back into education’.” (P17, Head of Service)

5.27 While the belief that young people would be less likely to take up employment or education when receiving the basic income was widespread, it will be seen in the next section that several professionals report they have been surprised by the fact that so many young people do indeed appear to be participating in employment or education in the early stages of the pilot.

5.28 Although these criticisms were commonly voiced in interviews and focus groups, a minority of professionals were more supportive of the unconditional nature of the pilot. They were typically but not exclusively those in more senior roles. When the discussion in one focus group turned to conditionality, one Head of Service stated “No, I don't think there should have been really any conditions” (P18, Head of Service). As part of the same discussion, another responded:

“I suppose it's around the purpose in which [this basic income pilot] was designed for. I think it was around giving everyone that equitable step up and maybe out of this evaluation, we will see that it's probably been more effective for those that are on education, training, employment, or that path. It's difficult to say. I think the hope was that it would offer more opportunities for some

young people. It would be interesting to know, at the end of our pilot [where] people are now from where they started, because we'll have that knowledge. ”  
(P19, Head of Service)

- 5.29 Offering a nuanced viewpoint, they note that the unconditional design will allow analysis of young people’s choices and trajectories at the end of the pilot. While the Head of Service hypothesises that the pilot will be more beneficial for young people engaged with education, training or employment, the absence of conditions allows for a wider consideration of progress and distance travelled through the exercise of free choice.

### **Summary of professionals’ views of the pilot design**

- 5.30 In summary, regarding the design of the basic income pilot, professionals were aware of the opportunity to reduce the disadvantage of young people leaving care and ease the particular challenges when turning eighteen. Professionals felt the basic income pilot has the potential to support independence, raise aspirations, increase motivation and enable young people to overcome some of the barriers that constrain their opportunities and limit their potential. Yet these positive attitudes towards the pilot are counterbalanced with some tensions and concerns. Concerns for how the basic income would impact pre-existing needs and vulnerabilities are discernible within the data, as is the potential for wasted opportunity, through a lack of maturity and/or an absence of conditions.
- 5.31 These issues will be revisited in the following section, where we discuss professionals’ experiences of supporting young people in the early stages of the pilot.

### **Early experiences of supporting young people enrolled on the basic income pilot.**

- 5.32 When considering data from professionals reflecting on their early experiences of the basic income pilot, we identified three key themes. The first relates to independence and the ways in which the basic income supported young people’s choice and control. The second highlights disparities in experience and opportunity, and the third revisits issues of risk and vulnerability.

### **Reduced reliance on support**

- 5.33 Early reflections from professionals noted that the basic income made the recipients more independent. In some instances, they have observed recipients of the basic income having less contact with the usual support services provided to care leavers. One Head of Service (P21 Head of Service) described having “three young people

saying ‘we’d like our case closed’”, and noted this was “unheard of for us, in terms of they [usually] stay in touch.” They went on to explain:

“What they’re saying is, ‘I’m financially independent of social services. Now I can make my own decisions about my own life. I don’t necessarily need you’. ... I didn’t expect to see that outcome. Young people would say, we’d been controlled by social services all their life, and now they have the right and autonomy, which is what it’s for, isn’t it? The freedom to make decisions, [and say] ‘You don’t need to look after me anymore, because I can look after myself, now.’ If that isn’t a good outcome, frankly, what is? (P21, Head of Service)

- 5.34 However, while professionals acknowledged the positives of increased independence and reduced reliance on support, they also expressed some anxieties about reduced levels of engagement. For instance, one of the Personal Advisors voiced concerns about having less contact, especially during more challenging times:

“But when they’re getting this big amount of money, and we’re not having that face-to-face contact because they’re off spending their money, having a great time, there is a risk then that you’re losing that face-to-face contact that you have because they just don’t need you quite as much because they’ve got all this money, if that makes sense. And my concern is that you lose that thread of contact with that young person, and they could go, you know, more off the rails maybe than they would otherwise.” (P6, Personal Advisor)

- 5.35 The comment above reflects concerns highlighted in the previous section that there are risks as well as potential benefits to recipients of the basic income and reductions in contact inhibit opportunities for Personal Advisors to support and influence young people. The opportunity for young people to exert greater independence over their lives was generally considered to be positive by professionals, and it is consistent with the expectations inherent in their transition from care. Nevertheless, underlying concerns remain as to how some young people will use the opportunity for greater choice and control. We intend to revisit this issue in future focus groups to gauge the extent to which these concerns are realised.

### **Increased opportunities**

- 5.36 Related to notions of increased choice and control, professionals reported examples where the basic income had increased the opportunities available to young people. For example, in respect of the opportunities the basic income opened up for young people’s leisure activities, a Head of Service reported:

“some of our kids have gone on holiday for the first time, how beautiful is that? Like, that’s something ... that’s what we want them to be experiencing. Those normal, typical things.” (P20, Head of Service)

5.37 In addition, professionals pointed to examples where the basic income had facilitated opportunities in respect of education, training and employment. Within this, professionals reported a tendency towards future or goal-oriented decisions, where young people were saving for the future or making decisions that would have benefits later on:

“I have got a few like I said, who are making it work for them, and they're saving, doing their driving lessons, saving for the car, saving for uni, continuing to work as well as being in education.” (P1, Personal Advisor)

“Those who are receiving the money, they are continuing to work, to go to college. I have one saving to buy a car. So, the first payment he had, he spent it all on clothes, and every payment thereafter he saved because he's in college, he's on an apprenticeship. So, he gets a wage. So, he's saving all his money.” (P25, Head of Service)

5.38 The comments above are reflective of others in the data where professionals in every focus group pointed to examples of young people using the money to improve their prospects. This included spending the basic income to bolster future employment opportunities (e.g. learning to drive and buying a car), as well as saving and engaging in additional work to ensure greater financial stability for future expenses (e.g. higher education and independent living). Related to this, the financial independence afforded by the basic income was reported to be enabling young people more choice in respect of employment and avoided positions characterised by precarity and uncertainty. One Head of Service described this in the following terms:

“... they're looking back at education, and then they can re-train, and they're looking back into employment as well. But ... [they don't have to take/rely on] that zero-hour contract, which is absolutely brilliant, because that's such a noose for our young people. It's awful.” (P22, Head of Service)

5.39 The Head of Service went on to illustrate the idea that the basic income was helping young people avoid uncertain employment contracts, by adding:

“So, for example, with one young person, she's been able to reduce her hours in the full-time occupation to be able to train for (*specific occupation in health and beauty*), and to do something that she really wants, and she really wants to move forward. And she's a really difficult young person to work with, but actually, it's got to a level where we're having very adult conversations, and very future-focused conversations, which is something that we've never had, because it's always been that 'social services haven't done this', and 'you haven't done that', and it's very much changed that narrative.” (P22, Head of Service)



5.40 As well as suggesting the basic income is enabling a greater sense of choice and control over the future, this also points to a changed relationship with the professionals supporting the young person. Conversations that are deemed to be more mature and productive have taken the place of interactions characterised by accusations and frustration. The more positive relationship with the personal advisor this engendered could be theorized as having various benefits.

5.41 Yet it is important to note that other examples were not positively framed, with some professionals believing the basic income had acted as a disincentive to engagement in training and employment:

“we’ve seen a lot of our young people leave training and employers now, because they’re receiving BI [basic income]. So, what’s gonna happen when the BI money stops?” (P2, Personal Advisor)

“some people unfortunately been making poor choices, which has led them down a risky behaviour path, disengagements from work, education, training, employment, as well. So that’s just an ongoing thing that we’re trying to reconnect with, and re-establish, and get them back on track. We’re hoping that it’s the initial months of having a splurge of cash to the accounts.” (P31, Team Manager)

“They’re not in any kind of routine. They’re not willing to do anything. They’re like, well, I’m getting this money now anyway. They’re not seeing it as a positive in terms of using it for the future or putting something behind them. They’re seeing it instead of benefits, I’m going to do what I want and I’m not going to engage in anything.” (P3, Personal Advisor)

5.42 The comments above can be related to discussions in the previous section about the unconditional nature of basic income. Whilst increased independence affords recipients greater choice and control over their lives, including decisions to opt-out of education, training or employment, professionals are concerned about the longer-term implications of such decisions for young people. This can be related to the notion discussed above, that the pilot is a higher stakes opportunity for young people leaving care. The implication of the comment above is that the income won’t be sustainable post-pilot, young people will experience temporary relief but then return to a position of disadvantaged access to support and resources.

5.43 Young people’s engagement with education, training and employment will be revisited in future focus groups. It is possible that young people will choose not to engage with education, training or employment whilst enjoying the security of the basic income. Yet it is also possible that this may be a temporary rather than longer-term choice. As noted by the Team Manager above, there may be initial ‘dips’ in young people’s motivation as they get used to the income, but with support and

encouragement to remember the temporary nature of the pilot, they may continue or re-engage with pursuing education, training or employment opportunities.

### **Disparities in opportunities and experience**

- 5.44 The previous section suggested that the basic income had afforded young people greater independence. However, professionals highlighted important disparities in opportunities and experience for some groups of recipients.

### **Accommodation and support**

- 5.45 Professionals reported that some young people exerted more control over their accommodation and exercised their independence through applying for private tenancies or making private arrangements to live with relatives. While this was positive for some, professionals also highlighted marked differences in the costs associated with certain types of accommodation, as well as the quality of support available. This is evidenced in the following quotation where young people in When I am Ready arrangements are contrasted with young people in other types of accommodation.

“We have had some positive outcomes, especially for ‘When I am Ready’ type placements. They’re very stable, they’ve still got adults around, they’ve still got people encouraging them to engage in education, training, and to do stuff with their lives. The disengaged ones ... haven’t necessarily made any positive changes in their lives, and we can’t stop that at eighteen, you know? And the parents aren’t encouraging them to do anything other, you know, with their lives, and [they] sit around playing PlayStation, etcetera. But yeah, we’re seeing disparities between the settled ones and the ones that gravitate home.” (P32, team manager)

- 5.46 This highlights the heterogenous nature of young people’s circumstances. While some experience positive relationships with supporting adults, have safe and stable places to live and are engaged with education, training and employment, this is not the case for all. Related to this, young people’s experiences both prior to and during their time in care will be similarly varied, with some enjoying more settled experiences and supportive relationships than others. As this team manager suggests, these differing histories and circumstances will likely influence young people’s experiences and trajectories during the basic income pilot. This reminds us that the initiative will not be a panacea for transforming the experiences and outcomes of all young people leaving care.

5.47 In addition to concerns regarding support for young people in different types of accommodation<sup>36</sup>, the varying costs of young people's arrangements was also a feature of discussion, with supported housing in particular costing much more than other living arrangements each month. Some professionals reported initial confusion about the impact of the basic income on young people's eligibility for housing benefit. Depending on individual circumstances, young people on the pilot may have to pay large proportions, and sometimes 100 per cent of supported housing costs due to reduced eligibility for housing benefit. Although all young people will have been offered 'better off' assessments before signing up to the pilot (that is, assessments to check that they will be better off financially on the pilot than not), different housing costs leave young people with very different amounts of non-committed income each month.

"...I've got some young people paying seven hundred and fifty pounds to live in a hostel where they don't even have their own bathroom. ... I found it really hard to have those conversations to say, 'I know I said you'd get twelve hundred pounds, and you'd be better off, but actually, you now need to pay seven hundred and fifty pounds in accommodation costs.'" (P34, Personal Advisor)

"we do have a couple of cases where somebody's in supported accommodation, so their rent is extremely high. But they work full time, so, they can't claim housing benefit. So essentially, bar twenty quid, all their BI is just paying their rent. That's not what the scheme is about, really. So, all of it is just going straight to the accommodation provider, and, you know, he sees about twenty pounds of the BI. So, it's literally just paying his rent for him, because the rent is like twelve hundred a month because it's supported accommodation." (P4 Personal Advisor)

5.48 Some professionals noted that those in supported accommodation may have additional needs and vulnerabilities, and that they may be less likely to engage with support and services. As a result of such disparities and some initial misunderstandings around how the scheme worked, some young people were reported to have accumulated rent arrears and debt. However, the following quotation about another young person, also in supported accommodation, illustrates again what a varied cohort this is:

"and there's a girl in supported accommodation, she pays her rent out of it, and then she works, so, she doesn't need, you know, she's not, she didn't ask for anything from anybody, you know, she survives." (P25, Head of Service).

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<sup>36</sup> See Annex 7 for details

5.49 Accommodation is an important consideration for recipients of the basic income, with wide variation on rent costs, especially when support is provided within the accommodation. Those spending large portions of the basic income on accommodation may have less choice and control over other areas of their lives as a result. This is an important consideration which resonates with concerns highlighted in the previous section regarding hopes for young people to capitalise on the opportunity provided.

### **Former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children<sup>37</sup>**

5.50 In addition to disparities related to accommodation, professionals also highlighted young people who were previously unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as potentially having a different experience within the pilot. Official guidance about the pilot notes that the level of basic income means that it is ‘unlikely that a young person would qualify for legal aid should they need legal representation’ (Welsh Government 2022). This is a particular issue for former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. As a result, young people faced uncertainty about future legal costs and the funds required to pursue and support their case. As one Personal Advisor explained,

“... I've got another young person that is an immigrant. So, he's struggling now with legal costs because he's not entitled to legal costs because he's on BI [basic income]. So, if his right to remain doesn't prove to stay, then he'll have to obviously go back to court and everything, pay for the legal side then.” (P2, Personal Advisor)

5.51 The potential for compounded disadvantage was similarly noted if a young person was seeking asylum and also living in supported accommodation:

“..., he's in supported accommodation. So, half of his BI is used for the supportive accommodation side. So, with the legal fees on top, he's gonna be struggling for money.” (P2, Personal Advisor)

5.52 As a result of higher-than-expected supported accommodation fees and uncertain legal costs, professionals reported differences in young people's disposable income and the extent to which they were considered ‘better off’. While the ‘better off’ assessments typically judged the basic income pilot to be advantageous for young people, in some cases the financial benefit was described as marginal. As noted in the previous section, this has implications for the transformative potential of the pilot

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<sup>37</sup> The Welsh Government refer to this cohort as ‘former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’ for consistency with broader social services/Home Office terminology, as at this stage of the pilot as they are all aged over 18. They are UASC under the age of 18 but are then considered ‘former’ post-18, even if asylum claims are still in progress.

as opportunities for increased independence and future-orientated decision making remain constrained. Nonetheless, it is important to note that those whose legal status has been settled early in the pilot are likely to be better off than their asylum-seeking peers who are not participating in the pilot and those whose legal status is yet to be settled.

### **Risk and vulnerabilities**

- 5.53 The following section outlines professionals' early observations about the influence of the pilot on perceived risks and vulnerabilities.

### **Substance misuse**

- 5.54 Some professionals voiced concerns about what they observed as a negative impact of the basic income pilot on how some young people used drugs. For instance, a Head of Service, speaking in general terms about the cohort rather than specifically about an individual, suggested that the increase in disposable income meant young people could afford more dangerous drugs, leading them to transition from Category B to Category A drugs, which could have legal and health implications:

... the drug use has changed. Whereas they could only afford cannabis before, they can now afford cocaine, is what we're seeing. ... I don't think it's a massive problem for us, but it is an acknowledgement of the fact that these young people may not have gone on to use those substances, if they hadn't had the money available." (P21, Head of Service)

- 5.55 Similarly, other professionals reported increased use of substances or alcohol. Comparisons with alternative forms of support such as Universal Credit were made:

"they are just blowing a ridiculous amounts of money now on alcohol and other things that we know young people do, because they've got the resources now to do it, that they wouldn't have had previously, and particularly if they were on UC, they wouldn't have been able to do it then." (P1, Personal Advisor)

- 5.56 This Personal Advisor drew a direct connection between these reported increases in substance misuse and basic income. However, others were more circumspect, and noted that it is hard to know if behaviours are associated with the basic income or would have happened anyway:

"It's really hard to weigh up the positive and the negatives, really, because they may well have made all the same decisions, but just not had that money, which [would have] resulted in debts to drug dealers, or anything like that." (P34, Personal Advisor)

5.57 In a contrasting example, it was observed that the young person had substituted drugs for takeaways. While being ‘addicted’ to pizza may have its own risks, this example nevertheless suggests a reduction in risk associated with illicit substances:

“... one of our worst drug users has actually kinda moved away from that. In his own words, ‘I’ve got a little chubby now’... He’s using his money for takeaways rather than drugs, would you believe? So, I prefer him being addicted to pizza than to crack. So, I’m all for that.” (P20, Head of Service).

5.58 More specific examples such as this, about a particular young person, were less common than the more general comments above. Substance use is clearly a concern for professionals, but there were few specific examples of changes in behaviour at this early stage of the pilot. Indeed, a number of professionals commented that so far they had not observed such behaviours with the young people they knew, despite their worries about this. We plan to return to this issue in future data gathering with professionals and young people to explore it further.

### **Exploitation**

5.59 Professionals involved in the focus groups also voiced concerns about exploitation, with young people perceived as making new and negative associations as a result of their higher income. One Head of Service noted the potential for these relationships to be exploitative:

“ ... there's these friends that kinda come along. We were obviously considering it in line with safeguarding, and things like that. But actually, I don't think those friends and those influences would have existed if they didn't have the ability to lend money out, and things.” (P22, Head of Service)

5.60 These were also concerns for young people living outside of Wales, due to more limited access to support for young people living outside of the local area, with the distance inhibiting professionals in both monitoring and responding to concerns:

“I think, young people that have been placed outside Wales who have had this money, and then suddenly had a group of friends around them, and it's gone from, you know, the going out drinking to the drug taking, and there are concerns around potential exploitation, and having to have discussions around that, and how we can support with those things.” (P31, Team Manager)

5.61 In addition to new ‘friends’ and associates from recipients’ peer group, professionals also noted “... there's also some concerns around some young people whose parents may take advantage of them because of the situation.” (P15, Personal Advisor). It is unclear from the comments above whether the concerns were speculative or had been observed. However, similar comments were made about the

potential for exploitative romantic relationships, whereby the financial position of recipients exacerbated the risks, and a comment from a Personal Advisor suggests they had experience of supporting young people in these situations:

“...so, the support element, I guess, is just mopping up the requests for more money, because they've spent it all, or so-and-so's boyfriend has [been] taking it all off them, or things like that, I guess.” (P4, Personal Advisor)

- 5.62 This early evidence exemplifies the concerns of some professionals about the impact of the pilot for young people with existing vulnerabilities and will be explored further as data gathering continues.

### **Professionals' views and early experiences: summary and discussion**

- 5.63 Care-experienced young people are a heterogeneous group, with varied experiences before, during and whilst leaving care. Such diversity of needs and circumstances is apparent in the early reports from professionals, suggesting young people in receipt of the basic income have had varied experiences of leaving care.
- 5.64 Stein (2012) has previously distinguished between young people leaving care as those 'moving on', 'surviving' and 'struggling'. Consistent with this, early experiences of professionals point to examples where the basic income has enhanced young people's transitions, supported their 'move on' to independence and increased choice and opportunity.
- 5.65 Previously Baldwin et al. (1997: 93) have argued 'that far from leaving care for independence, many young people face a future of continued instability and dependence on the state'. In contrast, early observations from professionals suggest that for some, the basic income has enabled greater choice in what they do, where they live and who they engage with. Consistent with professionals' perception of the pilot aiming to reduce the disadvantaged position of young people, reports included future-focused decision-making, with decisions to save, learn to drive and pursue education, training and employment options.
- 5.66 However, consistent with anxieties that some young people would 'waste' the opportunity, reports also included some decisions by recipients to withdraw from support, education, training or employment. In subsequent reports, we will revisit the rationale for these decisions and the extent to which they are temporary or longer lasting. Similarly, in the impact analysis we will measure whether outcomes are significantly different from a comparison group of young people leaving care who have not received the basic income.

- 5.67 The findings can be related to Arnett's concept of 'emerging adulthood', a developmental stage between adolescence and adulthood, offering choice and possibilities where young people experiment with their identity, relationships and professions (Arnett, 2000). Arnett argues that opportunities for change and exploration may not be available to all, and that for some marginalised young people, such as those leaving care, choices are more constrained (Arnett, 2007). Viewed in this way, young people's decisions, including those supported and opposed by professionals, may reflect the basic income enabling such experimentation and providing more equitable experiences with their non-care-experienced peers.
- 5.68 Despite observations suggesting increased equity and independence as a result of the basic income, professionals identified some disparities within the cohort. Choice and control remain constrained for some young people, as a result of additional costs and/ or future uncertainty. Previous research has highlighted distinct needs and challenges facing some minoritised groups of young people leaving care, including those with mental health needs (Butterworth et al., 2017). For some groups, challenges remain in ensuring adequate support that responds to on-going needs. Viewed in this way, data from professionals suggest that some young people may be 'surviving' and avoiding hardship, but not necessarily thriving. It is unlikely that the basic income in itself can serve to address all the challenges that some young people will face, particularly when these are rooted in wider societal inequalities such as refugee status or disability.
- 5.69 Finally, concerns for risk and vulnerability were recurrent across the data. For young people who are at risk of exploitation, or for those with substance misuse issues, professionals suggested that the basic income may make their situation worse. Alongside these concerns, professionals also pondered whether such concerns might have emerged in the absence of the additional income, noting that some risk-taking is normal in this age group. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales demonstrate that one-fifth of young people aged 16-24 report having used illegal drugs in the last year (ONS, 2022b) and that these rates decline with age. Similarly, 20 per cent of men and 11 per cent of women aged 16-24 drink above the recommended number of units of alcohol (although in the case of alcohol, usage tends to increase with age) (NHS Digital, 2022). While the available research on substance misuse of children in care is limited, certain studies have indicated in the past that young individuals in care were four times more prone to smoking, drinking, and drug use compared to their peers not in care (Meltzer et al., 2003). Nonetheless, professionals frequently suggested that early experiences of the pilot had led to their concerns about the potential impact on some vulnerable young people being reinforced.



- 5.70 In conclusion, insights from professionals regarding both the design of the pilot and early experiences of supporting young people is nuanced. It encompasses disparate perspectives and varied experiences. In recognition of the heterogeneity of young people leaving care, professionals did not anticipate the basic income pilot to be a panacea, but rather highlighted both advantages and disadvantages for those within the cohort. Optimism in the pilot and its potential to meaningfully reduce the barriers facing young people leaving care, is supported by early evidence of increased independence and decision making that has the potential to bolster prospects and enhance futures. Yet this is counterbalanced by anxieties for more vulnerable young people and generalised accounts of safeguarding concerns for some.
- 5.71 These early experiences will be revisited in subsequent reports, which will draw on further insights from professionals, as well as young people and some of the adults who support them.

## **6. Discussion**

- 6.1 In this report we have presented initial findings from three areas of the study. First, we presented some initial results from the baseline survey of recipients of the basic income and used administrative monitoring data from the Welsh Government and published data from other research on care leavers to contextualise this. Second, we described our initial programme theory and presented a logic model, based on an analysis of research and policy documents. This indicates how we might expect the pilot to work and will serve as a basis for further work around how the pilot actually works. Third, we discussed our analysis of professionals' perspectives, based on the qualitative data we have collected to date through interviews and focus groups.
- 6.2 The survey findings remind us that young people leaving care are likely to have higher support needs in terms of their health and engagement with education and employment than the general population. Similar to those leaving care in England, relatively high numbers (just over one-third) were not engaged in education, employment or training at the start of the pilot. This may be partly explained by the fact that 23 per cent of young people leaving care in 2021 had no qualifications (Welsh Government, 2023a), compared to only two per cent of the general population of school leavers (Welsh Government, 2023c). This highlights the suitability of this group as a focus of the pilot and gives a sense of how much potential there is for social gains if the intervention is successful. Yet it is also a reminder that there are many risks for this cohort, and realising these potential gains may not be straightforward for all recipients due to the complex challenges they face.
- 6.3 Nonetheless, the survey findings about coping financially are positive, suggesting that young people's early experience of the scheme, or the anticipation of the money

to come, may have led to greater confidence in financial security than participants of equivalent surveys previously carried out in England. Similarly, it is encouraging to note that 80 per cent of young people responding to the survey trust their young person's advisor all or most of the time.

- 6.4 The current theory focusses mainly on positive potential outcomes for recipients of the basic income. It suggests the pilot may make a difference to recipients in several ways, and through different mechanisms. Later iterations will include our research data and provide a more complex picture. This may include unintended negative consequences for some groups or individuals, as we further explore how and why the pilot works for different people, in different circumstances.
- 6.5 The analysis of professionals' attitudes and experiences has included their views the pilot at both an abstract and a specific level. They shared their theoretical perspectives in relation to the design of the pilot, and their experiences of working with specific individuals. These professionals accounts give an early insight into the complexities of the pilot and show a range of reactions to the pilot. For many, there is delight in the governmental recognition of the needs of this group and of some of the experiences and opportunities already afforded to young people in the early months of the pilot. At the same time, there are some concerns about the scheme being offered to more vulnerable people and critique about the lack of conditions, particularly around employment and education.
- 6.6 Finally, while we are yet to analyse the qualitative data to code for mechanisms relating to the programme theory, readers of these two sections will already notice links. For instance, professionals reporting increased opportunities to have "future-focused conversations" with young people implies that the pilot may indeed be facilitating the lengthening of time horizons that we included in the initial theory. Likewise, when a Head of Service described how a young person spent their first payment on clothing, and put subsequent payments into savings (see section 5.36), we are reminded that the intervention may serve different purposes at different times. We look forward to exploring these and other issues systematically in due course.

## **7. Conclusions and next steps**

- 7.1 These initial findings highlight the radical nature of this intervention and some early insights into the complexity of implementing it with a geographically dispersed group of young adults facing a range of barriers in comparison to the general population. Evaluating its impact presents a number of methodological challenges, but there is no doubt that the findings will contribute to the evidence base on both basic income schemes and the support needs of care-experienced young people. This evaluation

of the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot is complex, comprehensive and lengthy. There will be further reports over the next few years, and in future outputs we will revisit the topics and themes covered here.

- 7.2 The next report plans to focus on the experiences of around 44 recipients and around 15 of their adult supporters<sup>38</sup>, as reported in qualitative interviews. The well-being, perspectives, experiences and outcomes of those young people remain the most important elements of both the pilot and its implementation.

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<sup>38</sup> These are people who recipients can nominate to be invited to take part, and include professionals, friends and family members.

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## **Annexes 1-7: Further information and technical annexes**

## Annex 1: Short description of the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot

### Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales: Overview, October 2023

<b>Name</b>	Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot
<b>Why</b>	Care leavers face unique challenges. They are disproportionately disadvantaged and statistically more likely to experience issues such as homelessness, addiction, and mental health issues than their peers. They are over-represented in the criminal justice system with over 25% of the adult prison population having previously been in care. This pilot will provide greater support to this cohort as they transition to adulthood whilst also testing the principles of basic income as a mechanism for delivering this support.
<b>Who (recipients)</b>	'Category 3' care-leavers (as outlined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) turning 18 years of age between 01 July 2022 and 30 June 2023. Participation is non-compulsory and recipients have to enrol in order to join the pilot.
<b>What (materials)</b>	£1600 per month, pre-tax, per recipient over a 24-month period. The income is taxed at source, meaning a total of £1280 per month per recipient directly into their bank account (based on current tax rates).
<b>What (procedures)</b>	Additional support, including pre-pilot 'better off' calculations and ongoing budgeting support, provided through the Single Advice Fund providers. Continued ongoing support from local authority social services and Personal Advisor services.
<b>Who (provider)</b>	Pilot day-to-day management provided by local authority Social Service departments and leaving care teams. Welsh Government policy team undertake monitoring and guidance development. NEC Software Solutions administer the payments. Single Advice Fund providers provide the additional support component. Voices from Care Cymru administer practitioner and recipient forums.
<b>How (format)</b>	Payments provided by bank transfer. Additional support provided in-person or virtually according to recipient's preference.
<b>Where (location)</b>	Wales. Young people looked after by a Welsh local authority but living elsewhere are also eligible as long as they remain looked after and in contact with the Welsh local authority.
<b>When and how much</b>	Monthly payments of £1280 (net) or twice-monthly payments of

	£640 (net) over a 24-month period, in most cases commencing the month after the recipient's 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday. Recipients can also nominate to pay their landlord directly from the payments, reducing their monthly or twice-monthly amount accordingly.
<b>Tailoring</b>	Provision is tailored for young people who may have an appointee/deputy in place providing support for them. In addition, interactions with the criminal justice system may see a young person's participation suspended.
<b>Control condition</b>	This is not a randomised control trial. A comparator group has been established to enable comparison between the recipient cohort and their peers turning 18 between 01 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

Source: Welsh Government 2023

## Annex 2: Enrolment form

Section 1 – Confirmation of willingness to participate		
1.	Full name of individual:	
2.	Date of Birth:	
3.	WCCIS Number:	
4.	<p>Are you subject to any of the following circumstances? (If yes, please specify)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exiting custody</li> <li>- Living in supported housing</li> <li>- Subject to appointee/deputyship arrangements</li> <li>- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC)</li> </ul>	
5.	<p>Do you confirm you wish to enrol for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>(If answering 'no', move to question 6. If answering 'yes', move to Section 2.)</p>	
6.	If you do not wish to join the Basic Income	

	<p>for Care Leavers in Wales pilot, can you explain why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I already have other income which I'm happy with.</li> <li>- I'd prefer to continue receiving existing welfare support.</li> <li>- My health / disability prevents me.</li> <li>- I believe it would make me worse off.</li> <li>- I'd prefer not to be monitored.</li> <li>- This is not something I want.</li> <li>- Other [Please State]</li> </ul>	
<b>**This concludes the Enrolment Form for those not participating in the pilot.**</b>		
<b>Section 2: Personal Information</b>		
7.	<p>Would you like to correspond about the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot in English, Welsh or another language? Please specify your preference.</p>	
8.	<p>What is your National Insurance Number?</p>	
9.	<p>What is your home address?</p>	
10.	<p>What is your postcode?</p>	
11.	<p>What is your marital status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Single (never married and never registered in a civil partnership)</li> <li>- Married</li> <li>- In a registered civil partnership</li> <li>- Separated, but still legally married</li> <li>- Divorced</li> <li>- Widowed</li> </ul>	
12.	<p>Voluntary question – What is your sex?</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Female</li> <li>- Male</li> </ul>	
13.	<p>Voluntary question – Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> <li>- Prefer not to say</li> </ul>	
14.	<p>Voluntary question – If ‘no’, please state your gender identity.</p>	
15.	<p>Voluntary question – What is your religion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No religion</li> <li>- Christian (all denominations)</li> <li>- Buddhist Hindu</li> <li>- Jewish</li> <li>- Muslim</li> <li>- Sikh</li> <li>- Any other religion (please describe)</li> <li>- Don't know</li> <li>- Prefer not to say</li> </ul>	
16.	<p>Voluntary question - Which of the options to the right best describes your sexuality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heterosexual or straight</li> <li>- Gay or lesbian</li> <li>- Bisexual</li> <li>- Other (please state)</li> <li>- Don't know</li> <li>- Prefer not to say</li> </ul>	
17.	<p>How would you describe your national identity?</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welsh</li> <li>- English</li> <li>- Scottish</li> <li>- Northern Irish</li> <li>- British</li> <li>- Other (please specify)</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	
18.	<p>What is your ethnic group? Please specify one option from the list below that best describes your ethnic group or background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White</li> <li>- Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British</li> <li>- Irish</li> <li>- Gypsy or Irish Traveller</li> <li>- Any other White background (please describe)</li> <li>- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups</li> <li>- White and Black Caribbean</li> <li>- White and Black African</li> <li>- White and Asian</li> <li>- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background (please describe)</li> <li>- Asian / Asian British</li> <li>- Indian</li> <li>- Pakistani</li> <li>- Bangladeshi</li> <li>- Chinese</li> <li>- Any other Asian background (please describe)</li> <li>- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British</li> <li>- African</li> <li>- Caribbean</li> <li>- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please describe)</li> <li>- Other ethnic group</li> <li>- Arab</li> <li>- Any other ethnic group (please describe)</li> </ul>	
19.	Which of these best describes your ability in spoken Welsh?	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I'm fluent in Welsh</li> <li>- I can speak a fair amount of Welsh</li> <li>- I can only speak a little Welsh</li> <li>- I can say just a few words</li> <li>- Don't know</li> </ul>	
20.	<p>The Welsh Government recognises that disabled people are not disabled by their physical and/or sensory impairment, learning difficulty or mental health issue or by being neurodivergent or by using British Sign Language but by barriers they face due to attitudinal, societal and/or environmental factors (Social Model of Disability).</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as: 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'</p> <p>Do you consider yourself to meet either the social definition of disability which the Welsh Government uses and/or the definition in the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, please provide details if you're happy to do so.</p>
21.	<p>How is your health in general?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very Good</li> <li>- Good</li> <li>- Fair</li> <li>- Bad</li> <li>- Very Bad</li> <li>- Don't know</li> </ul>	
22.	<p>Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Yes</li><li>- No</li><li>- Don't know</li></ul>	
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**\*\*Please complete payment details overleaf\*\***

**Section 3 – Payment details**

23.	Confirmation of Local Authority	
24.	First Name	
25.	Last name	
26.	Date of birth	
27.	National Insurance number	
28.	Address Line 1	
29.	Address Line 2	
30.	Address Line 3 (optional)	
31.	Address Line 4 (optional)	
32.	Postcode	
33.	Email	
34.	Telephone number (optional)	
35.	Mobile number	
36.	Payment frequency	
37.	Advise if Landlord to be paid	
38.	If landlord to be paid – specify amount	
39.	Beneficiary bank account name (Payee)	
40.	Beneficiary bank account number (8 digits)	
41.	Beneficiary sort code (6 digits)	
42.	Landlord first name	
43.	Landlord last name	
44.	Landlord email	

45.	Landlord telephone number (optional)	
46.	Landlord mobile number (optional)	
47.	Landlord bank account name (Payee)	
48.	Landlord bank account number (8 digits)	
49.	Landlord sortcode (6 digits)	

**\*\*Please now move on to complete the consent form overleaf\*\***

## Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales – Confirmation of consent

<p>Please tick to confirm that you understand what joining the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot means for you. If there are any questions that you don't understand or need to know more about, ask your Young Person's Advisor or social worker.</p>	
<p><b>I have read and understood the Young Person's Guide to the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that by taking part in the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot, I will receive a basic income payment every month for 24 months</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that the payment of £1600 will be subject to tax and that this tax will be deducted prior to my receiving the payment. This means at current tax rates I will receive £1280 per month.</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I will need a bank, building society or credit union account to receive my Basic Income payments</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I can choose to have my rent payments automatically paid to my landlord</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that if I choose to have my rent payments automatically paid to my landlord I will be responsible for letting the payment processor know of any changes in relation to my rent</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that there are no conditions on how I use the Basic Income, and that I will be responsible for my financial commitments</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I will need to let the payment processor know if my account details change</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I will not be eligible for some other benefits by taking part in the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot, such as Universal Credit</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I will be able to access independent financial support and advice throughout the pilot</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that I will need to notify my Young Person's Advisor or Social Worker in the event of any changes to my personal circumstances (such as change of address or contact details)</b></p>	
<p><b>I understand that there are certain situations that mean my payments may have to be stopped during the pilot, such as if I go into prison</b></p>	

<p><b>I understand that researchers may want to find out about my experiences of receiving Basic Income, and that this research will help Welsh Government to decide what to do with Basic Income or for other care-experienced young people in the future.</b></p>	
<p><b>I consent to my details being used so that I can be contacted by researchers.</b></p>	
<p><b>I consent for my payment details to be passed to a payment processor in order for me to receive my funds.</b></p>	
<p><b>I consent for the Local Authority to store my data securely for the duration of the pilot for monitoring purposes.</b></p>	
<p><b>I consent for the Local Authority and payment processor to share enrolment information with researchers and Welsh Government to monitor the effectiveness of the pilot.</b></p>	

### Annex 3: Supporting information about the Your Life Beyond Care Survey

- 3.1. The original Your Life Beyond Care (YLBC) Survey was used in the early months of the pilot. This was an existing survey that had been developed and used extensively in England, having been developed in 2017 with care leavers. It built on a previous set of 'Your Life Your Care' surveys that had been in use since 2015. These surveys explored the views of looked after children (aged 4 - 18 years). Further details about the development of this survey can be found in Appendix 1 (Page 102) of the following report, by Coram Voice: [What Makes Life Good Report | Coram Voice](#)
- 3.2. Since January 2023, a revised version of YLBC survey has been used. All versions of the survey have been available in English and Welsh. The survey was completed using an online form hosted by 'SmartSurvey' software ([www.smartsurvey.co.uk](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk)).
- 3.3 The original survey included:

<p>1. What you and other care leavers have to say is really important. Do you want to answer the questions in the survey?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
--

2. What is your name?

First name:

Last name:

3. What is your date of birth?

D D M M Y Y Y Y

4. What is your National Insurance (NI) number?

O O O O O O O O O O O

5. Are you getting, or going to get, a monthly payment from the Basic Income Pilot?

Yes

No

I don't know what this is

6. Are you:

Female

Male

I don't want to say

Other (tell us more if you want) ✍

7. Are you a parent? You can tick more than one answer.

Yes

No

I am pregnant / my partner is pregnant

8. Are you:

Asian

Black

Mixed

White

I don't want to say

Other (tell us more if you want)



\_\_\_\_\_



9. Do you have a long-term health problem or disability that limits your day-to-day activities? (By 'long-term' we mean lasting at least 12 months.)

Yes

No

I don't want to say

10. How many years were you in care in total?

Less than a year

1 to 3 years

4 to 7 years

More than 7 years

I don't know

11. Has someone explained to you why you were in care?

Yes, I know all I want to

Yes, but I'd like to know more

No, I don't know

12. Do you feel involved in your pathway planning? (Pathway planning is when you and your young person's advisor set your goals for education and housing and the support you need.)

All or most of the time

Sometimes

Hardly ever / never

I don't have a pathway plan

I don't know what this is

13. How many young person's advisors have you had in the last 12 months?

One

Two

Three or more

I've not had a young person's advisor

14. Do you know who your young person's advisor is now?

Yes (go to question 15)

No (go to question 17)

15. Is it easy to get in touch with your young person's advisor?

All or most of the time

Sometimes

Hardly ever / never

16. Do you trust the young person's advisor you have now?

All or most of the time

Sometimes

Hardly ever / never

The people in your life

17. Do you have a really good friend?

Yes

No

18. Do you have a partner (are you in a relationship)?

Yes

No

19. Do you have a pet?

Yes

No

20. Do you have a person who you trust, who helps you and sticks by you no matter what?

Yes

No

21. Who gives you emotional support? You can tick more than one answer.

Friend(s)

Young person's advisor

Partner

Brother(s) or sister(s)

Mum

Dad

Other relative e.g. auntie, grandparent

Foster carer(s)

Your own child(ren)

Pet(s)

Counsellor / Mental health professional

Education professional (e.g. teacher, tutor, student support staff)

Residential home staff

Other care leaver(s)

I don't have anyone

Other (please tell us who) *✍*

22. Do you have a person who...

Yes

No

Listens to you?

Tells you when you've done well?

Believes you'll be a success?

23. Where do you live?

Flat or house I rent

Flat or house I own

With parent(s) or other relative(s)

(e.g. auntie, grandparent)

With foster carer(s) (Staying Put)

College or university halls

Supported accommodation

Supported lodgings

Short stay/emergency accommodation

(e.g. bed & breakfast, hotel, Nightstop)

I'm in custody

I'm homeless (including 'sofa surfing')

Other: ✍

**24. How do you feel about where you live?**

	Always	Sometimes	Hardly ever / never
In my home I feel settled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In my home I feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In my neighbourhood I feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**25. Is where you live now right for you?**

Mainly yes

Mainly no

**26. How are you coping financially?**

Living comfortably

Doing alright

Just about getting by

Finding it quite difficult

Finding it very difficult

Can you tell us your thoughts about managing money?



27. Right now, are you in education, employment or training?

Yes, I am studying

Yes, I am working

Yes, I am training (Youth Training, training for work, national traineeship)

No

28. If you are not in education, employment or training, can you tell us why?

(Please ignore this question if it is not relevant to you)

I am looking for work

I am caring for my child(ren)

Illness or disability stops me from working

Other (please tell us more if you want to):



29. In your spare time, what do you like doing? You can tick more than one answer.

Shopping

Hanging out with people I like

Clubbing

Gaming

Watching TV / films

Using social media

Pampering / looking after myself

Exercising / sports

Exploring outdoors (beach, woods, fields or parks)

Listening to / playing music

Volunteering

Other (please tell us what fun stuff you like):



**30. These questions are about using the Internet.**

	Yes	No
Can you connect to the Internet from your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you got a smartphone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**31. In the last few weeks how often have you felt:**

	Often/ always	Some of the time	Occasionally	Hardly ever	Never
Full of energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Optimistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lonely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afraid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**32. Everyone has ups and downs in their life. In the last month, how often have you felt:**



	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Unable to control the important things in your life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Things were going your way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>


33. How anxious did you feel yesterday?



Not at all Ok Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

34. How happy are you with the way you look?



Not at Ok Comple






0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The next four questions are asked to a random group of the UK population every year by the Office of National Statistics.






We're asking care leavers these questions so we can compare your responses with the national findings.

On a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely) ...






35. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

										
Not at		Ok		Complete						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>






36. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

										
Not at all		Ok		Complete						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

37. How happy did you feel yesterday?

										
Not at		Ok		Comple						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

38. How positive are you about your future?

										
Not at				Ok				Compleat		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

39. This is the very last question. What would you like to say or tell us about leaving care? What could make your experiences better?

**Revised survey**

3.4 The revised survey included additional questions to cover the whole range of outcomes the evaluation is seeking to measure. Additional questions included:

- Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ Several days
- \_\_\_\_\_ More than half the days
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nearly every day
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ Several days
- \_\_\_\_\_ More than half the days
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nearly every day

3. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ Several days
- \_\_\_\_\_ More than half the days

- \_\_\_\_\_ Nearly every day

4. Not being able to stop or control worrying

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ Several days
- \_\_\_\_\_ More than half the days
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nearly every day

- To what extent would you say the following statements apply to you personally?

- I find it more satisfying to save money than to spend it
- I often buy things on impulse
- I feel under pressure to spend like my friends even when I can't afford it
- I run short of money because I overspend
- I only buy things when I can afford them

- In your free time, do you get the chance to ...

... do similar things to your friends?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

- Do you have enough money to:

***Please select one option only***

- Pay your rent?
- Pay your housing bills – e.g., electric/gas?
- Buy enough food?
- Pay for your travel? (e.g. bus, train, share petrol money)
- Pay for the dentist?
- Pay for opticians?
- Buy new clothes when needed?

- Do the same as your friends?
- Take a partner out on a date?
- Care for your pets?
- Go to hairdressers/barbers?
- Take part in activities and hobbies?
  - CODES (1-4)
  - All/most of the time
  - Sometimes
  - Hardly ever
  - Never
  - Doesn't apply to me

## **Annex 4: Sample focus group topic guide**

Introductory exercise: All participants were asked to think of up to 3 words to describe the pilot or their experiences of it.

1. Views on the design of the pilot:
  - Care leavers as recipients
  - Age group
  - Amount of money provided
  - Length of pilot – 2 years
  - Support package in the policy
2. National and local implementation of the pilot (**asked to managers and senior managers**):
  - Experience of clarity of the policy aims and expectations of local authorities
  - Support and guidance from Welsh Government and other commissioned providers
  - Positive experiences and challenges in the implementation so far (for local authorities – we are not yet discussing recipients' experiences). Prompt impact on foster carers, PAs, other care staff including hostel or support staff.
  - Changes to other costs associated with supporting recipients (e.g., in terms of level of support needs, requests for funding or other forms of help)?
3. Details of role in supporting young people in the WBIP (**asked to PAs**):
  - Support provided to recipients (e.g., budgeting advice)
  - Similarities/differences to the support usually provided
  - Any changes in the amount or types of support for recipients
  - 'Better off' assessments
  - Decisions about BI payments.
  - support after the pilot ends
4. Impact on role (**asked to PAs**):
  - additional tasks / responsibilities
  - reduced tasks now the pilot is underway?
5. Impact of WBIP for young people:
  - Positives of the pilot for young people
  - Unexpected or negative experiences for young people
  - Engagement of young people with Personal Advisors
6. Conclusion:
  - Concluding remark – something they would like to reiterate or a comment they haven't yet had a chance to make.

## Annex 5: Financial advice and support

Throughout the pilot, Basic Income recipients have access to dedicated independent quality assured advice and support. This support is provided through the Welsh Government's Single Advice Fund, currently run by Citizens Advice Cymru. Care leavers are under no obligation to access advice before, or during their participation in the pilot, as there is no conditionality attached to the receipt of the Basic Income payment. The support available includes the following:

- Pre-pilot 'Better off' calculation

The decision by a care leaver to participate in the pilot is entirely voluntary. It is important that care leavers are supported to make informed decisions on whether they will participate, and this includes understanding how receiving a Basic Income payment will impact on their finances.

- Financial capability as a preventative measure

The Basic Income payment will be paid direct to a care leaver's bank account. Some care leavers will be confident in their money management skills and be competent in budgeting their income. However, others would benefit from an opportunity to engage with services that can advise and support them to develop their financial capability and budgeting skills.

- Advice and support

We know that care leavers often have a limited support network to turn to if they experience problems with aspects of their day-to-day life, such as housing, employment, and benefits, etc. Therefore, it is essential for a care leaver to have an established and trusted pathway through which they can access advice and support, at an early juncture, if they experience any problems with their housing, employment and welfare benefits, etc. Such a 'pathway to advice' could prevent a care leaver from facing a crisis situation.

- End of pilot focus upon future finances

Towards the end of their participation on the pilot some care leavers will need advice and support on their financial situation post-pilot. For example, their personal circumstances might require them to engage/reengage with the benefits system to access income.

Source: Welsh Government 2023



## **Annex 6: Interaction with tax and benefits**

The UK Government consider the basic income payment to be unearned income. As such, the payment interacts with the UK benefits and tax systems.

The basic income payment is taxed at source (before the recipient is paid) at 20 per cent in line with the current base rate of tax. Depending on the amount of other income received, some young people may be able to claim back some of the tax deducted in each financial year that they participate on the pilot. The basic income payment is not subject to National Insurance deductions.

The basic income payment is not disregarded for the purposes of calculating means-tested benefit entitlements, such as Universal Credit.

People who receive income-related welfare benefit payments, such as Universal Credit, can also be automatically eligible for a range of other benefits and schemes. These are known as 'passport benefits'. If a basic income recipient is not in receipt of Universal Credit, or one of the other means-tested benefits, they will not be eligible for any of the passport benefits.

Source: Welsh Government 2023

## **Annex 7: Accommodation**

### **Supported Accommodation**

Young people in and leaving care often need additional support before being ready to live independently. In supported housing, accommodation is provided along with support, supervision, or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community.

Recipients of the basic income payments who are living in supported, sheltered or temporary housing are entitled to make a claim for Housing Benefit in line with The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Supported Accommodation) (Amendment) Regulations 2014<sup>39</sup>.

Costs of providing supported accommodation can be high, due to the additional support and care provided. The Welsh Government's basic income pilot guidance encourages local authorities to use Discretionary Housing Payment in addition to Housing Benefit, so that a tenant in supported accommodation only pays, from their own income, a contribution equal to the rent they would be paying for a property in the Private Rented Sector.

The amount that recipients of the basic income pilot are expected to contribute to accommodation varies across each local authority.

### **When I am Ready**

When I am Ready is the term used in Wales for an arrangement whereby a young person in foster care remains with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18.

There are varying charging policies in place for each local authority to calculate contributions for care leavers in When I am Ready. As part of the basic income pilot, it is expected that local authorities should apply whatever the agreed charging arrangements are to those in receipt of basic income as they would any other care leaver. A recipient of basic income should not be treated any differently to how the local authority would treat any other care leaver in When I am Ready arrangements and receiving an income.

The amount that recipients of the basic income pilot are expected to contribute to When I am Ready arrangements vary across each local authority.

Source: Welsh Government 2023

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<sup>39</sup> [The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit \(Supported Accommodation\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)