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Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Final Report

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Author(s): Anna Burgess, Andy Parkinson, Oliver Allies, Paula Gallagher, Jakob Abekhon and Endaf Griffiths



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

For further information please contact:

Sean Homer

Social Research and Information Division

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

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Glossary

Acronym/Keyword	Definition
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
JGW+	Jobs Growth Wales Plus
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 [Working Wales](#) is a Welsh Government-funded service designed to provide streamlined and efficient employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs. Introduced in 2019, the service aims to provide free and impartial employability and careers advice across Wales, delivered for the Welsh Government by Careers Wales.
- 1.2 The main function of Working Wales is to provide an all-Wales 'one-team approach'¹ entry point for employability support. It enables individuals to talk to accredited careers advisers about employment and skills, their aims and aspirations, and any challenges that they face in obtaining and maintaining work, education or training or advancing their career.
- 1.3 Prior to the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Working Wales advice and guidance were provided face-to-face at Careers Wales offices, remotely via telephone and online services, local Jobcentre Plus sites, and community outreach locations (e.g. libraries and community centres). The requirement to stay at home due to COVID-19 government-mandated lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 resulted in greater demand for virtual services and led to the development of a virtual meeting offer for customers. Since COVID-19 restrictions to stay at home and/or stay local were lifted in 2021, Working Wales support has continued to be available in person and remotely.

Overview of the scope and parameters of the evaluation

- 1.4 The Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill in 2019 to explore the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Working Wales. In the initial stages of the evaluation, a theory of change and an evaluation framework were developed, as detailed in [the Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Report 1](#). This was followed by [an evaluation summary paper](#), the first in a series detailing findings from service delivery. The Rural and Urban Paper, a Refugee and Migrant Paper, and this Strategic Paper (the final report) are from the final stage of the evaluation.

¹ The 'one team' approach means regardless of an individual's careers advice or employability support needs, they will be able to access the Working Wales service and be referred onto the most appropriate support.

1.5 The key research questions informing this final stage of the evaluation are as follows:

- Are the benefits of the 'one-team approach' being realised?
- Is the service accessible, particularly to customers in more rural areas? The term 'accessible' in this context refers to geographical access.
- Which models work well (the co-location of services with partners, community drop-ins, etc.)?
- What can the service do to be more inclusive? This will consider where there are equality gaps in relation to service access, based on demographic characteristics or geography, and be framed around groups who face the greatest gap.
- In supporting young people to meet their own individualised lifelong journeys, are Working Wales reaching those who would benefit from a Working Wales interaction? If not, what changes does the service need to consider to aid an increased reach? How are customers entering the service and what outreach/engagement activities are in place?
- What is the service offer across areas and how does it interact with partner organisations, services, demand, and labour market conditions?

Report structure

1.6 This report aims to assess the delivery model adopted by Working Wales, considering where it works well, where gaps in the service are apparent, and, looking forward, the future potential of the service. The report is structured under the following headings:

- Methodology – this section provides details on the approaches taken in the final stage of fieldwork and considers methodological limitations faced.
- Policy Context – this section explores the origins of the service, how it aligns with existing policy and national programmes, and current socioeconomic trends and labour market trends.

- Overview of Support Offer – this section provides an overview of Working Wales monitoring data, assessing the service reach. Moreover, this section explores staff and stakeholder perceptions of the current Working Wales delivery model and the wider support offer.
- Understanding of the Service Model and Future Potential – this section provides an assessment of the current efficacy of the Working Wales model, particularly highlighting the strengths and challenges associated with the model as well as the place of careers guidance within this.
- Conclusions and Recommendations – this section provides a summative set of findings and recommendations based on analysis throughout the report.

2. Methodology

2.1 This section details the methodological approach taken in the final stage of the Working Wales evaluation which informed this final report. Furthermore, this section explores the additional methodological limitations faced and considerations taken.

Research methods and activities

2.2 Fieldwork and desk-based research undertaken to inform this final strategic report include:

- A thematic desk-based literature review regarding the strategic position of Working Wales. Within this desk-based research, researchers conducted extensive searches across various sources including Welsh Government policy and strategy papers, other evaluation reports, studies, and other published literature. After curating relevant materials, researchers critically analysed and summarised key findings that related to Working Wales. The synthesis of this information included identifying patterns, discrepancies and gaps in existing literature. This process was undertaken to contextualise the evaluation to ensure that the evaluation findings can meaningfully contribute to this body of work. Please note that a full list of source references can be found in Section 8.
- An in-depth quantitative analysis of programme-level monitoring information provided by Careers Wales. These data include all 95,164 individual Working Wales customers between February 2019 and March 2023 as well as 120,730 customer episodes detailed within this same time period. In many cases, customers received support from Working Wales multiple times. The following terminology has been used when describing customer involvement with the Working Wales service:
 - Where this report refers to **customer engagement**, this refers to the unique customers who have engaged with the service.
 - Where this report refers to **customer episodes**, this is the total number of customer cases which required support. Working Wales staff often work with a customer on multiple occasions; each occasion

is recorded as an 'episode'. An episode can be a single day (e.g. where only one interaction is needed) or may extend to several months (e.g. ReAct+ support to a redundant customer seeking a new career direction). The total number of customer episodes (120,730) will contain repeat customers who have received support from the service multiple times. It is important to note that customer circumstances may change between different episodes, for example a customer may have different labour market status or live in a different location. Where these variables occur analysis has been conducted by episodes of support rather than customers in order to fully understand the support the service has provided.²

- **Customer interactions** refers to the methods through which customers engaged with the service e.g. via telephone call or in person. For a full list of interaction type variables analysed please see Annexe Three.
- In-depth semi-structured interviews with 28 management and delivery staff to reflect on the current Working Wales model, its efficacy, strengths and challenges, and future considerations to ensure that the model achieves its all-Wales entry point vision. These interviews took place from July–September 2023.
- In-depth online semi-structured interviews with 14 internal and external stakeholders to explore the efficacy of the current Working Wales model and the future role of Working Wales. Internal stakeholders were Careers Wales staff, and external stakeholders were individuals employed outside of Careers Wales but working with the Working Wales service. These interviews took place between August and October 2023. All qualitative data were thematically analysed using grounded theory methodologies³.

² Please note that in some instances, the analysis has been conducted by analysing the first customer episode each year and therefore does not include all episodes of Working Wales support. Where this occurs a note has been included in the graph source to clarify,

³ Bryman, A., [Quantity and Quality in Social Research](#), 1998 and Charmaz, K., [Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods](#), in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) [Handbook of Qualitative Research](#) 2nd Edition, 2000.

- Surveys with a total of 167 customers who have accessed Working Wales support to gather feedback on customer support preferences and views regarding the Working Wales service. This survey was undertaken from August–October 2023. Careers Wales supplied Wavehill with contact details for 354 customers who had accessed the service between May and July 2023 (providing a response rate of 47 per cent). These customers were selected as they had meaningful engagement (at least three interactions) with the service within three months prior to being surveyed and were therefore well placed to feedback on their experiences with the service. To ensure that the evaluation engaged with customers across a range of different geographical locations, customers based in Cardiff, Swansea Gwynedd and Wrexham were selected. Of the 167 customers surveyed, 25 were completed face-to-face in Working Wales centres based in the four local authorities by the Wavehill research team (15 per cent of the sample) and 142 were completed online or by telephone via the Qualtrics survey platform (85 per cent of the sample). All quantitative data were analysed using Excel and/or StatsIQ on the Qualtrics platform.

Limitations and considerations

- 2.3 It is important to highlight that whilst this report has undertaken a range of extensive analysis of programme-level monitoring information, customer relationship management (CRM) systems used by Careers Wales were changed in 2021, meaning that some variables were removed and additional options were added at this stage. In most cases, the analysis has been able to identify where information sources should be merged; for example, previous programmes such as ReAct III and Access have been amalgamated into the new programme ReAct Plus. Therefore, figures included in this report, from analysis of raw programme-level monitoring information, may not align with aggregated reporting figures supplied by the service to Welsh Government
- 2.4 As Working Wales delivery began in February 2019, and annual data collection for the programme runs until March, the first ‘year’ of delivery consisted of 14 months. For the purposes of analysis, data has been aggregated by calendar year and

therefore it is important to note that data from 2019 represents customers who accessed support from February 2019 to December 2019.

- 2.5 Please note that for 29,990 episodes, interaction type data was unavailable for customers. There are a number of internal factors which account for this including changes in CRM reporting highlighted above and the challenging nature of reporting some elements of delivery including work in prisons and inward referrals. Despite having no data on interactions (method of engagement with the service), through discussions with programme management, we are confident that in the majority of cases these records do relate to customers who have engaged with the service and therefore have chosen to include these episodes in our analysis.
- 2.6 It is important to highlight that location data was not available for ten per cent of all Working Wales customers (9,041/95,164), this is due to the programme's Retention and Archive Policy which removes this data from the programme CRM once three business years have elapsed. Additionally, 158 customers (0.2 per cent of the total sample) were recorded as living outside of Wales, 60 of which were Welsh-domiciled customers currently serving prison sentences in England and were therefore eligible to receive support.
- 2.7 To identify the total number of refugees and migrants engaging with Working Wales, analysis has combined the total number of customers identified as refugees and asylum seekers with any additional customers who were not classed under either category but were referred to Working Wales by a service that only supports refugees and/or migrants, e.g. the Welsh Refugee Council and local Ukrainian Welcome Centres.
- 2.8 Within monitoring information, refugees and migrants are identified by 'country of origin' (rather than nationality). Working Wales only began gathering this information in 2022 in response to the conflict in Ukraine.
- 2.9 It is acknowledged that categorising regions across Wales into a binary 'urban' or 'rural' category would be of limited use and would not provide sufficient detail to explore trends across a diverse range of areas. To ensure that the diverse spread of geographical areas across Wales is effectively captured, the following Welsh Government definitions have been utilised within analysis:

- Rural authorities – Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Monmouthshire. These are often referred to as the nine ‘broadly rural’ local authorities.
- Valleys authorities – Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, and Torfaen. These are selected as the five authorities that contain parts of the Heads of the Valleys action area.
- Urban authorities – Swansea, Cardiff, and Newport. These are the largest settlements in Wales.
- Other authorities – Flintshire, Wrexham, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, and Vale of Glamorgan⁴.

2.10 As highlighted above, face-to-face customer surveys were completed in Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, and Gwynedd to ensure that the evaluation engaged with customers across a range of different geographical locations. Whilst this enabled the evaluation to obtain a wide range of feedback across distinct localities, it may not be representative of the wider customer cohort. Similarly, whilst online and telephone interviews were undertaken to ensure that perceptions of the remote Working Wales offer were also explored, the majority of all interviewed customers had attended a Working Wales site (95 per cent; 158/167). As a result, the survey findings may not be representative of customers who only accessed the service remotely.

⁴ Welsh Government (2008) [‘Rural Wales’ - Definitions and how to choose between them.](#)

3. Policy Context

Origins of the service

- 3.1 The Working Wales service was introduced in 2019 to offer streamlined and efficient employability support that is tailored to an individual's needs⁵. Working Wales is delivered by Careers Wales, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Working Wales provides free bilingual independent and impartial careers and employability advice, information and guidance, and also provides access to training to help customers get into work or further their career. Working Wales is delivered by professionally qualified careers advisers help customers to become more effective at successfully managing and planning their career development.
- 3.2 The Working Wales service is embedded in the wider vision set out in the 2017 Prosperity for All strategy⁶. The aim of the strategy is to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. Equipping people with skills and providing them with secure and sustainable employment are presented as crucial steps on the path towards enhanced well-being and greater prosperity.
- 3.3 In December 2017, the Economic Action Plan⁷ was published by the Welsh Government. It was designed to contribute to each of the priority areas defined in the Prosperity for All strategy by championing inclusive growth, i.e. increasing both wealth and well-being while reducing inequality. A key emphasis in the plan is to support people 'wherever they are on the employment ladder, helping them move closer to, gain, retain and progress in work'⁸ in order to drive prosperity.
- 3.4 The Employability Plan⁹, published in March 2022, outlines the new approach under which the Welsh Government is aiming to deliver employability support. The main priorities set out in the plan include:

⁵ Welsh Government (2019) [Working Wales – Briefing for Stakeholders](#).

⁶ Welsh Government (2017) [Prosperity for All: the national strategy](#).

⁷ Welsh Government (2017) [Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan](#).

⁸ Welsh Government (2017) [Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan](#) (p.19).

⁹ Welsh Government (2022) [Employability Plan](#).

- Promote youth participation, progression and employment.
- Tackle economic inequality.
- Promote Fair Work for all.
- Support people with a long-term health condition to work.
- Raise skill and qualification levels, and the mobility of the workforce.

- 3.5 Working Wales plays a key role in eliminating the gap in unemployment rates and qualification levels between Wales and the UK average within 10 years. The goal is to reduce the number of people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), while supporting unemployed and economically inactive people as well as those at risk of redundancy into sustained work and careers.
- 3.6 The Programme for Government 2021–2026¹⁰ displays a renewed commitment by the Welsh Government to providing decent jobs as well as employability support that fosters relevant skills and new training opportunities.
- 3.7 In November 2021, the Welsh Government emphasised its commitment to supporting the employability of young people by announcing the [Young Person's Guarantee](#). The scheme aims to provide young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales with an offer of support to gain a place in education or training, find a job or become self-employed. The Working Wales service is designed as a simple route to accessing programmes and services tailored to young people, such as [Jobs Growth Wales Plus](#) and [Big Ideas Wales](#).
- 3.8 The principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹¹ are also closely aligned with the design of the Working Wales service. Among the national well-being goals specified by the Act is 'a prosperous Wales', which is understood to be a society 'which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work'¹². To achieve the well-being goal, five ways of working are championed in the

¹⁰ Welsh Government (2021) [Programme for Government 2021 to 2026: Well-being statement](#).

¹¹ Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (n.d.) [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

¹² Welsh Government (2021) [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 - Essentials](#).

Act (Long-term (thinking), Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, and Involvement). Collaboration and Integration are at the heart of the design rationale for the Working Wales service.

How the service aligns with national programmes

- 3.9 The Working Wales service acts as a free gateway into tailored employment support that is available to anyone aged 16 or above and living in Wales¹³. In addition to providing direct careers support and guidance, Working Wales careers advisers can identify an individual's needs and refer them to other suitable services and programmes, given their extensive knowledge of local and national support offers. As a result, the Working Wales service is able to extend the reach of careers support services into communities and to help people across a wider range of needs and labour market positions. The following examples showcase some of the numerous targeted programmes that have been frequent referral destinations via Working Wales.

ReAct III and ReAct+

- 3.10 Between 2015 and 2019, ReAct III focused on supporting short-term unemployed people as well as people who are under notice of redundancy¹⁴. The successor programme, [ReAct+](#), supports the same target groups who have been made redundant or are at risk of redundancy, and additionally supports individuals over the age of 18 who are ex-offenders or offenders serving a community sentence as well as individuals who are aged 18–24 and not in education, employment or training (NEET). ReAct+ aims to minimise the time before individuals find new and sustainable employment, by providing individuals with the necessary skills. The programme also helps to alleviate the negative effects of redundancy before a new job has been found, by providing financial support via the Personal Development Support (PDS) grant. The grant helps individuals overcome barriers to training and/or employment that are not skills-related or covered by the other 'standalone'

¹³ Please note that the service can also be accessed by 15-year-olds living in Wales who have left school. In these cases, the young person will be born later in the academic year (i.e. July or August) and, therefore, about to turn 16 years of age.

¹⁴ Please note that various iterations of the ReAct programme have existed since June 2004.

grants, such as care and expenses. This may include licences/tickets and ESOL for less intensive language needs.

Jobs Growth Wales+

- 3.11 [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) is targeted at young people (aged 16–19), particularly those who are leaving full-time education imminently or not in full-time education, employment or training and, thus, are far removed from the labour market. Across the three strands of the programme (engagement, advancement, employment), young people are given the opportunity to build their confidence, develop skills, and gain qualifications and work experience.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+)

- 3.12 [Communities for Work Plus](#) offers specialist employment advice and intensive mentoring tailored to people who belong to groups that are underrepresented in the labour market (young, old, disabled, minority ethnic people, and people with care responsibilities). A mentor meets individuals within their local community, identifies individual needs, and supports them during the next steps.

Business Wales

- 3.13 [Business Wales](#) provides free independent advice to people starting, running or growing a business in Wales¹⁵. It offers specialist guidance on a wide range of sectors (e.g. creative and filming industries, food and drink, and marine and fisheries) and advises businesses at all stages regarding various aspects involved in running a business (e.g. taxes, training, exporting).

Personal Learning Accounts (PLA)

- 3.14 The [Personal Learning Account](#) (PLA) initiative in Wales enables individuals aged 19 or above to access part-time courses to gain relevant skills and qualifications, with an emphasis on the green and digital priority sectors. The scheme is aimed at those earning below £30,596 (with exceptions), facing job uncertainty or seeking a career change. PLA courses are fully Welsh Government-funded and can be accessed after a digital pre-admission interview with a Working Wales adviser.

¹⁵ Welsh Government (n.d.) [Get support for your business from Business Wales.](#)

Welsh Government apprenticeships

Apprenticeship Scheme

- 3.15 The Welsh Government's [Apprenticeship Scheme](#) provides individuals aged 16 or above with the opportunity to gain valuable experience in government while earning a salary. The scheme offers apprenticeships in Digital Data and Technology, Business and Administration, and Finance.

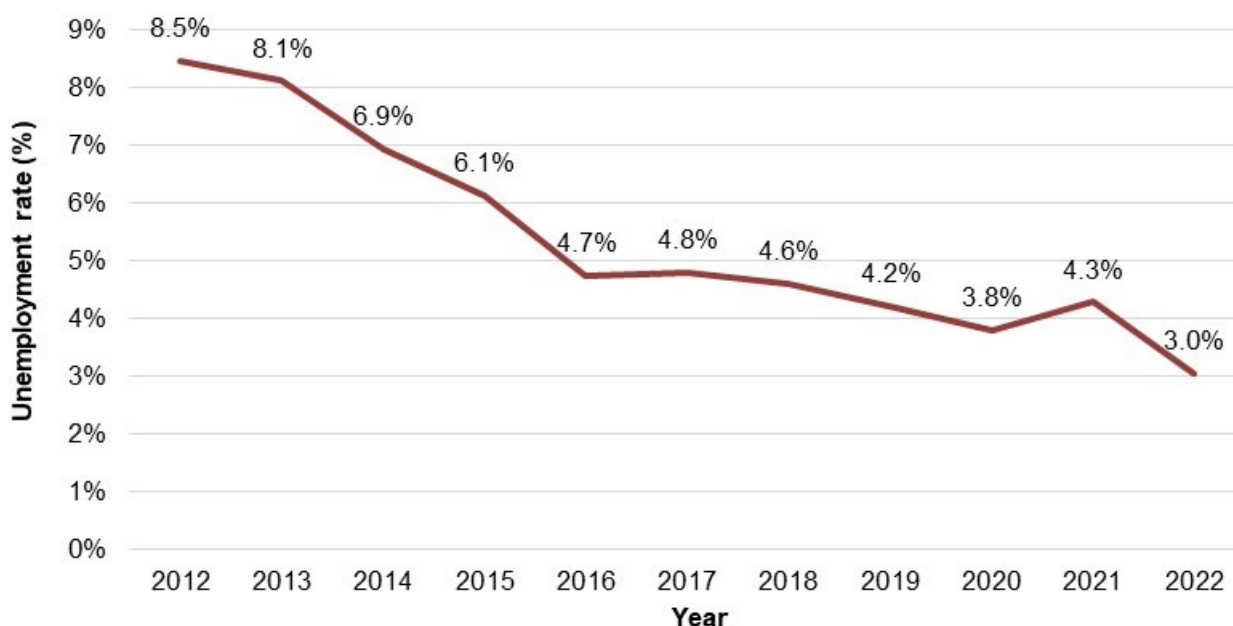
Labour market trends

- 3.16 The following section provides an overview of labour market trends in Wales. This is necessary to contextualise the circumstances under which Working Wales has operated thus far. As can be seen below, labour market trends were severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring the Working Wales service to adapt to changing client profiles. After the general overview of labour market trends, the report will proceed to closely examine three themes — technological developments, demographic change, and the net-zero transition — that are projected to have a transformative impact on the Welsh labour market. Developments in these areas will substantially alter skill requirements for the Welsh workforce of the future, which, in turn, poses new demands on employment support services like Working Wales.

Socioeconomic context

- 3.17 Since beginning to recover from the 2007–2008 financial crisis, Wales has witnessed a steady decline in unemployment rates, falling below four per cent for the first time in 2020 (see Figure 3.1). This trend was only temporarily interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as Wales achieved its lowest unemployment rate in recent history in 2022 at three per cent.

Figure 3.1: Unemployment rates in Wales (16–64-year-olds)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023a) Annual Population Survey¹⁶

3.18 Figure 3.2 shows that economic inactivity rates have initially followed similar trends, decreasing from 26.4 per cent in 2012 to a historic low of 23.3 per cent in 2018. Since 2018, inactivity rates have increased again, with a peak of 24.4 per cent in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). Outcomes for young people also present a mixed picture.

¹⁶ Office for National Statistics (2023a) [Annual Population Survey](#).

Figure 3.2: Economic inactivity rates in Wales (16–64)

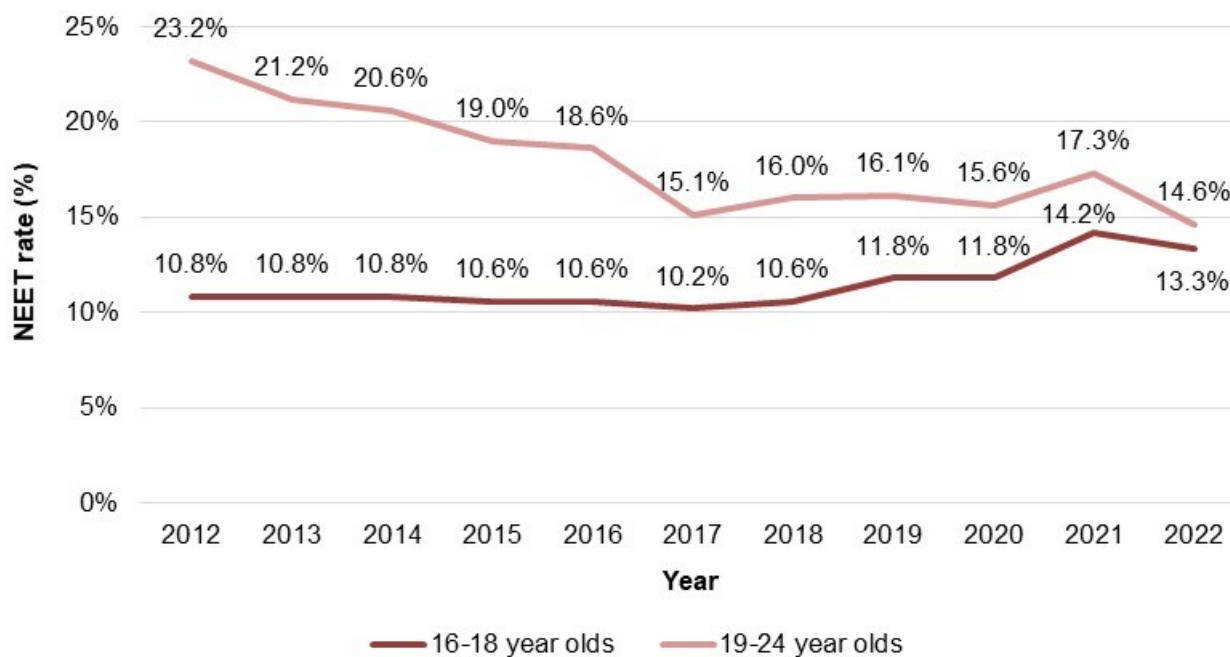


Source: Office for National Statistics (2023a) Annual Population Survey¹⁷

3.19 From 2012 to 2017, NEET rates for young people aged 16 to 18 were stagnant at around 11 per cent, before they started to increase gradually to up to 14.2 per cent in 2021. In contrast, NEET rates for individuals aged 19 to 24 have decreased in comparison to 2012 levels. Most of this decrease occurred between 2012 and 2017, when NEET rates decreased by 8.1 percentage points to 15.1 per cent. For both age groups, NEET rates witnessed an accelerated increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, but subsequently decreased in 2022.

¹⁷ Office for National Statistics (2023a) [Annual Population Survey](#).

Figure 3.3: NEET rates in Wales (16–18 & 19–24)

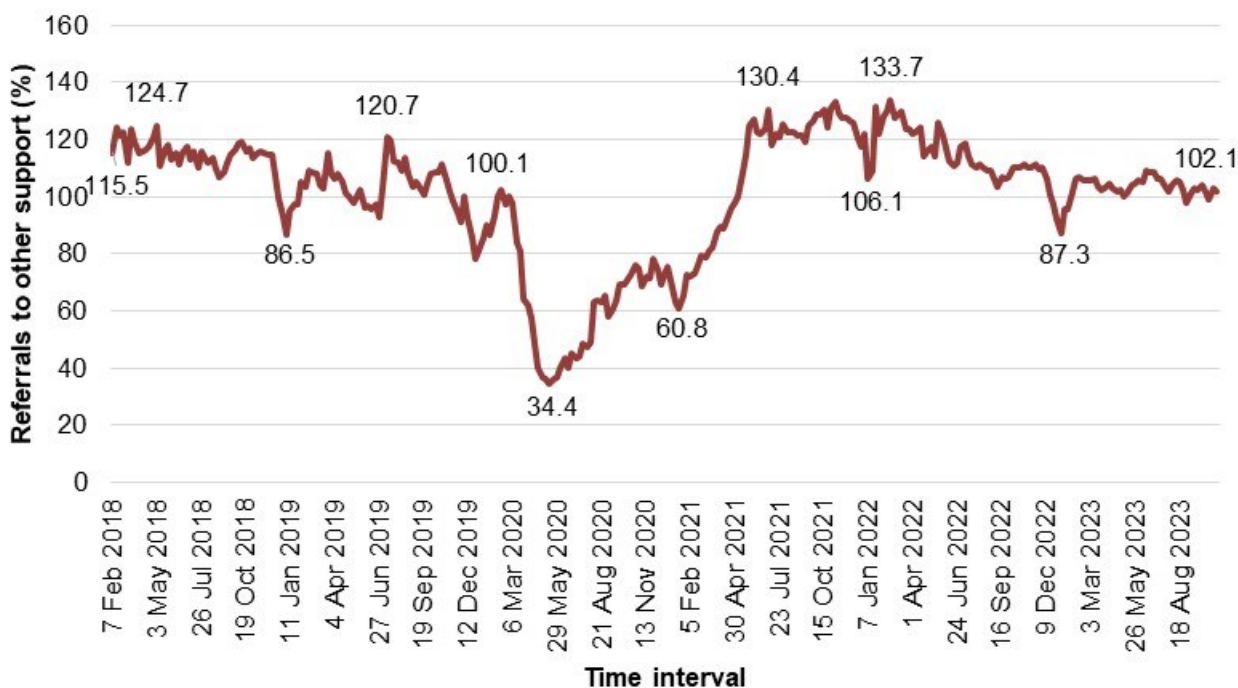


Source: Welsh Government (2023) Young people not in education, employment or training¹⁸

3.20 The number of new job adverts decreased steeply at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two previous years had already witnessed a gradual decline in job adverts. While new job adverts temporarily exceeded 2018 levels by August 2021, the negative trend continued as job adverts gradually returned to numbers observed just before the start of the pandemic.

¹⁸ Welsh Government (2023) [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#).

Figure 3.4: Online job adverts in Wales (unique job adverts indexed on February 2020 average)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023b) Online job advert estimates¹⁹

3.21 Data from the Employer Skills Survey²⁰ suggest that skills gaps have become more prevalent since the COVID-19 pandemic. While the proportion of employers reporting skills gaps among their workforce had been gradually declining since 2013, it increased by one percentage point between 2019 and 2022. The steep post-pandemic increase in the skill shortage vacancy density²¹ suggests that businesses' skill needs have changed considerably and are becoming more difficult to fill. Another major contributing factor to skill shortages across Wales are the reduced levels of immigration from the EU²². A study found that shortages in managerial skills, in particular, are linked to the lack of EU immigration. Professional and scientific industries, food services and accommodation, and information and

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (2023b) [Online job advert estimates](#).

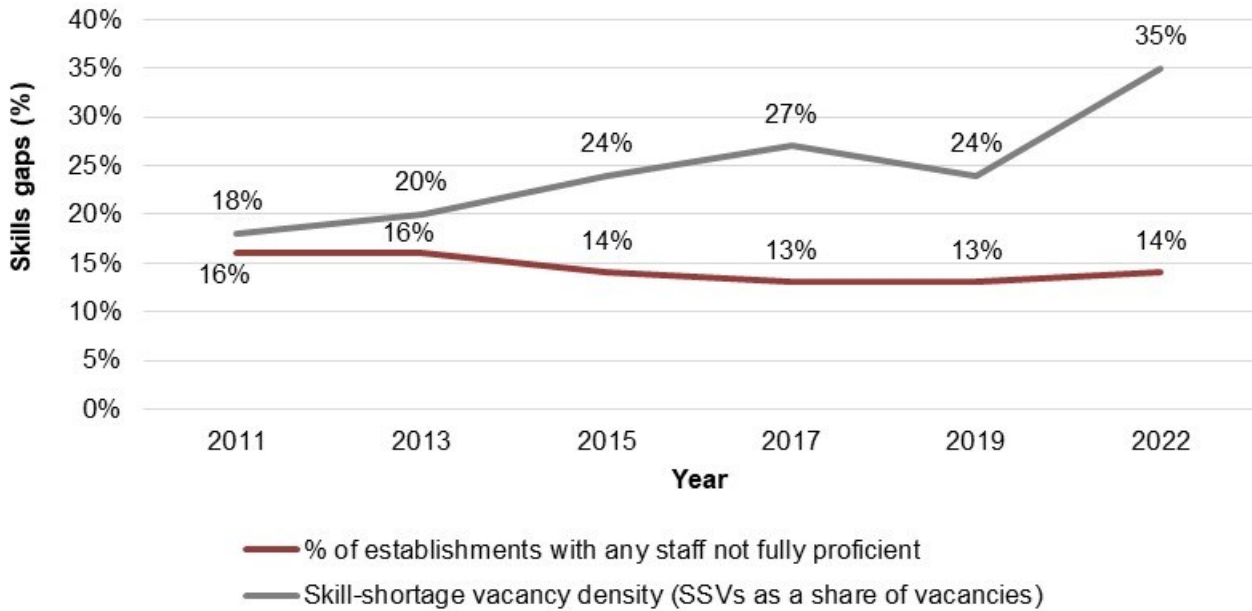
²⁰ UK Department for Education (2022) [Employer Skills Survey](#).

²¹ The share of vacancies which are reported to be difficult to fill because applicants lack relevant skills, qualifications or experience.

²² O'Carroll (2023) [Shortfall of 330,000 workers in UK due to Brexit, say thinktanks](#).

communication sectors are especially affected by skill challenges associated with Brexit, such as difficulties in staff recruitment²³.

Figure 3.5: Skills gaps in Wales²⁴



Source: UK Department for Education (2022) Employer Skills Survey²⁵

3.22 The section below addresses the three key trends of technological development, demographic change, and the net-zero transition. While they are all part of global trends, the report will outline how they may affect the Welsh labour market, given Wales' current economic make-up. Moreover, it highlights the role that Working Wales may play in supporting the Welsh workforce through the change in skill requirements.

Technology and digitalisation

3.23 The rapid advances in digital innovation, including automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics, present crucial challenges and opportunities for economies across the world, including the Welsh economy.

²³ Tiwasing, P. (2021) [Brexit and skill shortages: an empirical analysis of UK SMEs](#).

²⁴ Please note that a skill shortage vacancy is a vacancy that attracts applicants who do not have the appropriate skills for the role.

²⁵ UK Department for Education (2022) [Employer Skills Survey](#).

Digital skills gap

- 3.24 The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital working because the adoption of technology was critical to businesses' survival²⁶. As the landscape of work becomes increasingly digitally dominated, digital skills become near-universal requirements for gaining and maintaining employment across the entire labour market²⁷. However, the demand for digital skills outpaces their availability in the labour market²⁸. In 2022, 11 per cent of labour force adults (18+) in Wales had no digital abilities for work, while only 38 per cent were able to complete all of the essential digital tasks required for work (as defined in the UK Essential Digital Skills benchmark)²⁹. Consideration of customers' digital skills is key for Working Wales, particularly the barrier that they present to people realising career aspirations.

Automation

- 3.25 Approximately one third of the Welsh workforce are employed in industries that are characterised by low levels of productivity as well as low pay, which are more vulnerable to automation³⁰. Estimates of exactly which proportion of Welsh jobs are at risk of automation vary and range from 19 per cent of jobs by 2037 (based on task-based estimation approaches) to 46 per cent of jobs (based on occupation-based approaches)³¹. The impacts of automation will not be distributed evenly across Welsh society. It is likely that industrial centres in the North East (Alyn and Deeside) and the South East (Newport East) will be considerably impacted³². Men and individuals with lower levels of education are overrepresented in job sectors that are more susceptible to automation, which means that they are at a greater risk of potential job displacement³³. Globally, the most vulnerable sectors are

²⁶ Jaumotte, F. et al. (2023) [IMF Blog: How Pandemic Accelerated Digital Transformation in Advanced Economies](#).

²⁷ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills](#).

²⁸ Patterson, G. (2021) [Bridging the digital divide to create the jobs of the future](#).

²⁹ Lloyds Bank (2022) [UK Consumer Digital Index 2022](#).

³⁰ Public Policy Institute for Wales (2018) [The Future of Work in Wales](#).

³¹ Welsh Government (2019) [Wales 4.0: Delivering Economic Transformation for a Better Future of Work](#).

Occupation-based estimation involves assessment by technical experts on how easy it is for technology to substitute specific occupations such as nurses, software engineers or customer service agents. Task-based estimation involves breaking down occupations into various tasks and then having experts assess the risk of each task being automated.

³² Dickins, S., BBC (2018) [Automation: '1 in 3 Welsh jobs at risk by early 2030s'](#).

³³ PwC (2018) [Will robots really steal our jobs? An international analysis of the potential long-term impact of automation](#).

transportation and storage (>50 per cent of jobs at risk), manufacturing (>40 per cent of jobs at risk), and construction (>35 per cent of jobs at risk)³⁴. Other sectors are more resilient in the face of automation and will likely see future increased demand, such as hospitality, education, and public services. A relatively high proportion of the Welsh labour force are employed in public services, which may offer some protection from the negative impacts of automation³⁵. However, it remains uncertain as to whether this can offset job losses in other sectors. The extent to which Wales will be able to take advantage of digital innovation will depend on how the country is able to position itself in the global gross value added (GVA) chain. Considering the likely shift in sectoral employment numbers (given automation), it is likely that the role of Working Wales within multi-agency responses to redundancy will continue to be important going forward.

Skills

- 3.26 As noted above, digital skills are becoming increasingly crucial for being a productive member of the workforce. ‘Baseline digital skills’³⁶, which include common productivity software, will be required across all sectors. In the face of automation, however, baseline digital skills may not be enough. Even high-skilled jobs that only require baseline digital skills have a 37 per cent risk of automation, while low-skilled/baseline digital skills jobs have an 80 per cent risk of automation³⁷. Jobs requiring specific digital skills such as software programming, data analysis, and digital marketing carry a much lower risk of automation³⁸.
- 3.27 In addition to digital skills, further complementary skills will be required to thrive in a labour market in which many routine tasks will have been automated. Across Europe and the United States, social and emotional skills as well as higher cognitive skills will witness growing demand, while the demand for physical and manual skills will decline³⁹. This is due to most of the projected net job growth being driven by

³⁴ PwC (2018) [Will robots really steal our jobs? An international analysis of the potential long-term impact of automation.](#)

³⁵ Public Policy Institute for Wales (2018) [The Future of Work in Wales.](#)

³⁶ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills](#) (p.24).

³⁷ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills.](#)

³⁸ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills.](#)

³⁹ McKinsey (2018) [Skill shift: Automation and the future of the workforce.](#)

growth in Professional and Associate Professional occupations, which rely more heavily on skills such as communicating with coworkers, organising and prioritising work, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships as well as making decisions and solving problems⁴⁰.

Employment support

- 3.28 The scale of the digital skills gap in the UK is substantial. An estimated 90 per cent of UK workers will have to learn new digital skills to be able to perform their jobs⁴¹. This will likely require considerable employment support.
- 3.29 As new technology is developed and adopted at a fast pace, there is a continual demand on workers to upskill and reskill in order to remain employable⁴². Because of this, lifelong learning offers will become indispensable features of employment support.
- 3.30 While 78 per cent of UK businesses reported in 2021 that young people leaving education possessed the basic digital skills that they required, the figure for advanced skills is much lower at 48 per cent⁴³. Employment support could therefore help to close the digital skills gap by helping to upskill young people entering the labour market. Employment support could also contribute to closing the skills gap by providing young people with high-quality information and careers guidance regarding careers that require advanced digital skills. A 2021 report by WorldSkills UK identifies the widespread lack of such adequate guidance as one barrier to young people choosing digital careers⁴⁴. The need to support young people's digital skills development is particularly pronounced for those in lower socioeconomic groups, as 21 per cent lacked access to a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet⁴⁵. Employment support could thus play a vital role in compensating for socioeconomic differences in access.

⁴⁰ Top 4 skills projected for 2035 by: Dickerson, A. et al. (2023) [An analysis of the demand for skills in the labour market in 2035](#).

⁴¹ Salesforce (2021) [Nine in 10 U.K. Workers Must Learn New Digital Skills by 2030](#).

⁴² McKinsey (2019) [Competitive advantage with a human dimension: From lifelong learning to lifelong employability](#).

⁴³ WorldSkills UK (2021) [Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap](#).

⁴⁴ There are gendered disparities regarding the extent to which young people feel adequately informed about digital careers: WorldSkills UK (2021) [Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap](#).

⁴⁵ WorldSkills UK (2021) [Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap](#).

- 3.31 Employment support for digital skills will have to be dynamic. Required skills change continually over time as new software packages are developed and popularised. Accounting for this dynamism will have to be a key feature of employment support for it to remain effective and relevant⁴⁶.
- 3.32 Employment support will also have to be regionally differentiated. While digital skills are needed everywhere, the demand for specific digital skills is concentrated locally in digital skills clusters⁴⁷.

Demographic changes

- 3.33 Similarly to many other OECD countries, Wales is facing the demographic challenge of an ageing society. This already has marked impacts on the Welsh labour market and will only intensify in the future. In addition, a reduction in immigration from EU countries due to Brexit may lead to a reduction in the working-age population in Wales⁴⁸.
- 3.34 Wales may witness a 15 per cent increase in overall life expectancy in the next 50 years⁴⁹. The proportion of over-65-year-olds is set to increase from around one fifth to around a quarter of the population⁵⁰. This will lead to increased healthcare and social care needs. Careers Wales, therefore, identifies the health sector as an employment growth sector in the medium-term future⁵¹.
- 3.35 While the demand for social care is increasing, there is currently a large gap in the supply of social care workers. Between January 2019 and February 2022, vacancy rates for social care roles more than doubled, and as of September 2021, there were 700 unfilled positions in the care sector⁵². Reduced levels of immigration post-Brexit are part of this reason. While the effects of Brexit are cushioned by the Health and Care Worker or Skilled Worker Visa, fewer roles in social care will qualify for these visas, exacerbating existing challenges⁵³. In December 2023, the UK

⁴⁶ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills](#).

⁴⁷ DCMS (2019) [No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills](#).

⁴⁸ Welsh Centre for Public Policy (2021) [Brexit and Wales](#).

⁴⁹ Public Policy Institute for Wales (2018) [The Future of Work in Wales](#).

⁵⁰ Public Policy Institute for Wales (2018) [The Future of Work in Wales](#).

⁵¹ Careers Wales (n.d.) [Jobs in Health](#).

⁵² Wales Centre for Public Policy (2022) [Social care workforce crisis in Wales and what is being done to fix it](#).

⁵³ Welsh Centre for Public Policy (2021) [Brexit and Wales](#).

Government also announced legal changes to visa rules to reduce immigration, which included prohibiting social care workers from including dependants on their visa⁵⁴. Another major reason is the migration of social care workers into alternative employment, such as healthcare, retail and hospitality, due to the poor pay, regulation, and working conditions in social care. This was especially pronounced during the pandemic and served as an impulse for seeking alternative employment⁵⁵. As a result, it is suggested that Working Wales will continue to play a vital role alongside Regional Skills Partnerships (RSP) in supporting key sectors to fill vacancies.

Skills

- 3.36 For the social care sector to be able to manage the heightened demands of an ageing society, social care workers have to be increasingly confident in using digital technology⁵⁶. In particular, the use of digital assistive technologies in care work proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic⁵⁷. With the number of dementia patients expected to increase sharply over the coming years, expertise in dementia care is likely to witness greater demand⁵⁸, as will other specialised skills related to conditions more common at an older age (e.g. caring for people with multiple long-term conditions)⁵⁹.

Employment support

- 3.37 Addressing the social care workforce crisis is a wider challenge that will likely require a number of stakeholders such as the government, the NHS, and social care staff to work together, along with stronger funding commitments⁶⁰. Nonetheless, employment support can play a role in facilitating the recruitment and

⁵⁴ UK Government (2023) [Changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas in 2024](#). Research Briefing.

⁵⁵ Wales Centre for Public Policy (2022) [Social care workforce crisis in Wales and what is being done to fix it](#).

⁵⁶ Beech, J. et al. (2019) [Closing the gap: Key areas for action on the health and care workforce](#).

⁵⁷ Luijnenburg, O. et al. (2022) [Skills at the heart of care: a scoping review of evidence on skills gaps in the social care workforce](#).

⁵⁸ Alzheimer's Society (2021) [How many people have dementia in the UK?](#)

⁵⁹ Luijnenburg, O. et al. (2022) [Skills at the heart of care: a scoping review of evidence on skills gaps in the social care workforce](#).

⁶⁰ Wales Centre for Public Policy (2022) [Social care workforce crisis in Wales and what is being done to fix it](#).

training of new social care staff, including support in developing employability skills tailored to the social care sector⁶¹.

Net-zero transition

- 3.38 The Welsh Government has increased its ambitions to achieve net-zero emissions before 2050, its legal commitment⁶². The independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) highlights emission reductions within the industrial sector as being crucial for achieving this goal⁶³. The transformation needed for Wales to become carbon-neutral brings both opportunities and challenges.
- 3.39 Wales has the potential to meet its entire energy needs through renewable energy. Decarbonisation makes the energy sector an employment growth sector, as investment in renewable energy production creates three times as many jobs as does investment in energy production from fossil fuels⁶⁴. Across the UK energy sector, 260,000 new jobs will have to be filled to meet the net-zero challenge⁶⁵. In North Wales alone, 24,400 new jobs could be created as part of the delivery of renewable energy generation⁶⁶. Employment in other industries, such as automotive and electric vehicle battery manufacturing, is expected to expand by 2040 across the UK⁶⁷. However, due to a lack of UK investment, Wales is not currently set to benefit from the net-zero transition in the automotive industry⁶⁸.
- 3.40 Other industries will face challenges. The Wales Trade Union Congress highlights how the required emission cuts in the industrial sector will put particular pressure on carbon-intensive industries⁶⁹. Wales has a small number of companies that are responsible for a large share of its emissions, e.g. Port Talbot Steelworks. People employed in these companies/industries are facing a high risk of job displacement.

⁶¹ Skills for Care (n.d.) [What core skills do I need to work in social care?](#)

⁶² Welsh Government (2021) [Wales commits to net zero by 2050, but sets out ambitions to get there sooner.](#)

⁶³ CCC (2020) [Advice Report: The path to a Net Zero Wales.](#)

⁶⁴ UKERC (2022) [Green job creation, quality, and skills: A review of the evidence on low carbon energy.](#)

⁶⁵ National Grid (2020) [Building the Net Zero energy workforce.](#)

⁶⁶ Wales Energy Service (2020) [North Wales Energy Strategy.](#)

⁶⁷ Resolution Foundation (2022) [Net zero jobs.](#)

⁶⁸ Wales Centre for Public Policy (2023) [Net zero skills: Insights and evidence from emissions sectors in Wales.](#)

⁶⁹ Wales TUC (2021) [Negotiating the future of work: Net Zero.](#)

Working Wales could play a key role in supporting Welsh workers' transition into new industries.

Skills

- 3.41 The net-zero transition will alter the demand pattern for a wide range of skills across many sectors including electricity/heat generation, road and rail transport, residential buildings, agriculture, waste management, and industry and business⁷⁰.
- 3.42 Much of the demand for upskilling is driven by the adoption of new technology. For example, the energy, residential building, and transport sectors will require skills for the development, installation and maintenance of renewable energy production and other electric systems and machinery (e.g. heat pumps, electric vehicle (EV) charging).
- 3.43 In addition to specialist technical skills, project management and scientific skills will also be in greater demand. Motivating young people to engage with STEM-based subjects, not only at university but also at the apprenticeship level, will be crucial in meeting the projected demand.

Employment support

- 3.44 Employment support will play a vital role in the net-zero transition.
- 3.45 Workers in the fossil energy sector and in other carbon-intensive industries will require reskilling to facilitate their job transition into cleaner, renewable sectors in which their experience remains valuable.
- 3.46 In many other sectors, workers can likely remain in their occupation but will require upskilling to be able to adapt to new technologies, materials and demands. For example, workers in waste management will have to learn how to handle changes in waste materials, while farmers will need training in carbon assessment and accounting as well as land and business management.
- 3.47 Similarly to the digital skills support discussed above, employment support will have to be regionally differentiated. Some areas, such as Neath Port Talbot, will witness

⁷⁰ Wales Centre for Public Policy (2023) [Net zero skills: Insights and evidence from emissions sectors in Wales](#).

greater disruption and job displacement because a relatively high proportion of people there are employed in carbon-intensive industries⁷¹. These areas will require more resources for facilitating job transitions, while others may require only minor support in upskilling.

- 3.48 While governmental employment support will be needed, government, employers, industry bodies, and unions will have to work together to ensure that everyone will be able to access upskilling and reskilling opportunities⁷².

⁷¹ Wales Centre for Public Policy (2023) [Net zero skills: Insights and evidence from emissions sectors in Wales](#).

⁷² Green Jobs Taskforce (2021) [Report to Government, Industry and the Skills Sector](#).

4. Overview of Support Offer

- 4.1 This section assesses the reach of Working Wales and the processes associated with delivering the service. This section is informed by the views of staff, stakeholders and customers and an analysis of programme-level monitoring information.
- 4.2 Working Wales support looks to support customers into the 'right' employment for that individual. This may include self-employment and/or apprenticeship programmes. When first engaging with Working Wales, customers are supported by a careers adviser to identify barriers preventing them from accessing employment, education or training. Based on a customer's circumstances and aspirations, trained careers advisers identify the most suitable support available to enable the individual to progress at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.3 To ensure that the Working Wales careers adviser identifies all barriers and refers the individual to the correct support, they use an advice and guidance-led enhanced needs assessment of the individual's circumstances and barriers preventing them from progressing, which enables them to refer the individual to the right support.
- 4.4 The primary objective of the enhanced needs assessment is to identify the appropriate level of support required. This includes assessing customers' current skill level, work experience history, career aspirations, travel availability, childcare and caring responsibilities, health and disability, as well as housing status to identify barriers preventing the individual from obtaining and maintaining employment, education or training. As of April 2023, Working Wales staff are also able to offer customers a mid-career review, including a psychometric test, to support and shape their steps in their careers⁷³.
- 4.5 Once the enhanced needs assessment has been undertaken, a Working Wales careers adviser then supports the customer to improve their motivation, confront any challenges that they face in securing or progressing with employment, build individual resilience, learn about prospective careers, jobs and the labour market, and encourage them to proceed with plans made to achieve their career goal.

⁷³ [The Morrisby Psychometric Test](#) is used and is free at the point of access.

Depending on the extent and/or nature of a customer's barriers, careers advisers, in agreement with the individual, may make a referral to the most appropriate support available or offer employability support to those who are eligible via a Working Wales employability coach (previously known as the STEPS Programme)⁷⁴. Details on the Working Wales employability support offer are explored in Section 4.7.

4.6 The careers advice and guidance offered through Working Wales are provided by a careers adviser who is qualified or working towards a Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development⁷⁵. A Level 6 careers adviser meets the requirement for the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, the single national point of reference for all professional careers practitioners. This professional qualification allows the adviser to use careers guidance theories, interpret career and labour market information, and effectively engage a wide range of people in different circumstances, ensuring that careers advice and guidance are of a high standard. To ensure that they retain their enrolment on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, all Working Wales Level 6 careers advisers are required to sign up to the Career Development Professionals' Code of Ethics and undertake a minimum of 25 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) training each year. This ensures that high-quality careers advice and guidance are maintained within Working Wales.

4.7 Working Wales also provides customers with employability support. This support is delivered by a Working Wales employability coach. The Working Wales employability support offer includes supporting customers to find and apply for jobs and prepare for interviews. This may include support in writing and developing a CV and interview techniques. Working Wales employability coaches also work with partners, such as Jobcentre Plus, to offer employability support to customers in need. This may include group employability sessions and responding to urgent

⁷⁴ The Working Wales employability support is for customers aged 16 or above. Customers have a range of support from a Working Wales employability coach, which includes writing or improving a CV, preparing for interviews/mock interviews (incl. digital interviews), how to promote oneself (Context, Action, Result), completing applications, understanding the labour market, job search support, and using social media to gain employment.

⁷⁵ More details on the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development can be found on the [Career Development Institute](#) website. The Career Development Institute is the UK's professional body for careers work.

support needs (e.g. supporting a customer to prepare for an imminent job interview). It is important to highlight that Jobcentre Plus cannot support customers in work.

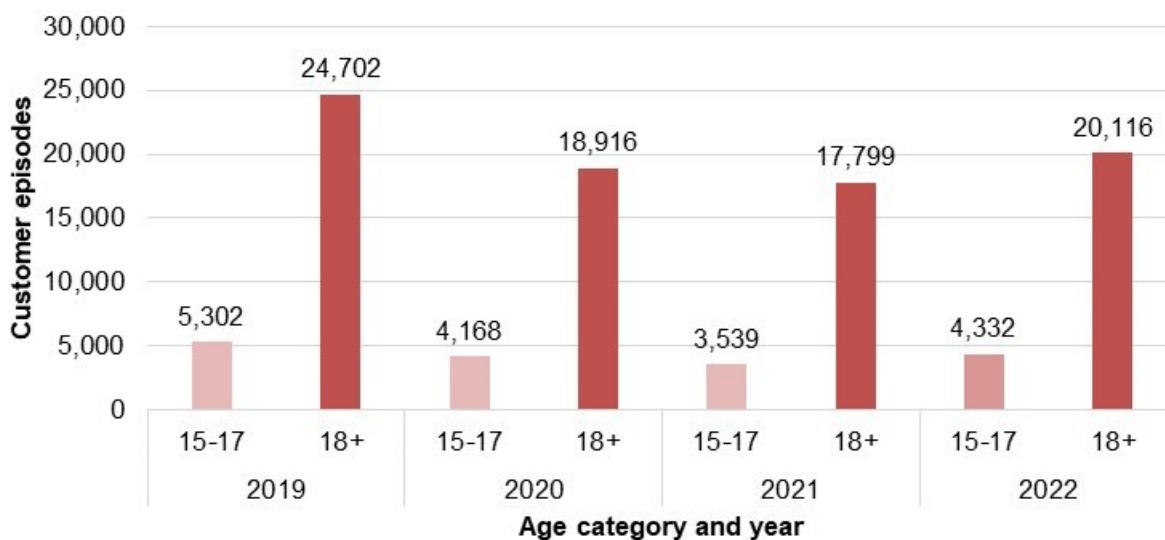
- 4.8 Reflecting on the delivery model, stakeholders reported that, over time, a greater number of employed individuals have accessed Working Wales than originally anticipated. As perceived by stakeholders, this trend is likely due to a range of factors including labour market trends such as over-50s re-entering the workforce⁷⁶, crowded employability support markets in which there are a range of services that focus specifically on unemployed groups, and the introduction of support within Working Wales to assist employed people (i.e. mid-career reviews).
- 4.9 The subsections below explore how the reach of Working Wales has changed over time, as well as stakeholder, staff and customer perceptions of the support offer.

Customer profile and service reach

- 4.10 Between February 2019 and March 2023, Working Wales worked with 95,164 customers through 120,730 episodes across Wales. As illustrated by Figure 4.1 below, the number of customers accessing support has fluctuated year on year between the 2019 peak of 30,004 customers supported and a low of 21,338 in 2021. This is unsurprising when considering the temporary closure of key Working Wales sites, e.g. Careers Wales offices and Jobcentre Plus sites, during the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 (when government-mandated lockdowns were implemented).

⁷⁶ Please note that this refers to customers who have already re-engaged in the workforce but want additional careers advice or employability support.

Figure 4.1: Working Wales customer episodes, by year and age group



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=98,874 customer episodes). Please note that 2023 has been excluded because these data currently only capture the first three months of 2023. Please note this analysis only includes age for the first customer episode in each year meaning that the base figure is lower than the total number of customer episodes between 2019 and 2022 (n=111,381). Figures are derived from the date customers started receiving support.

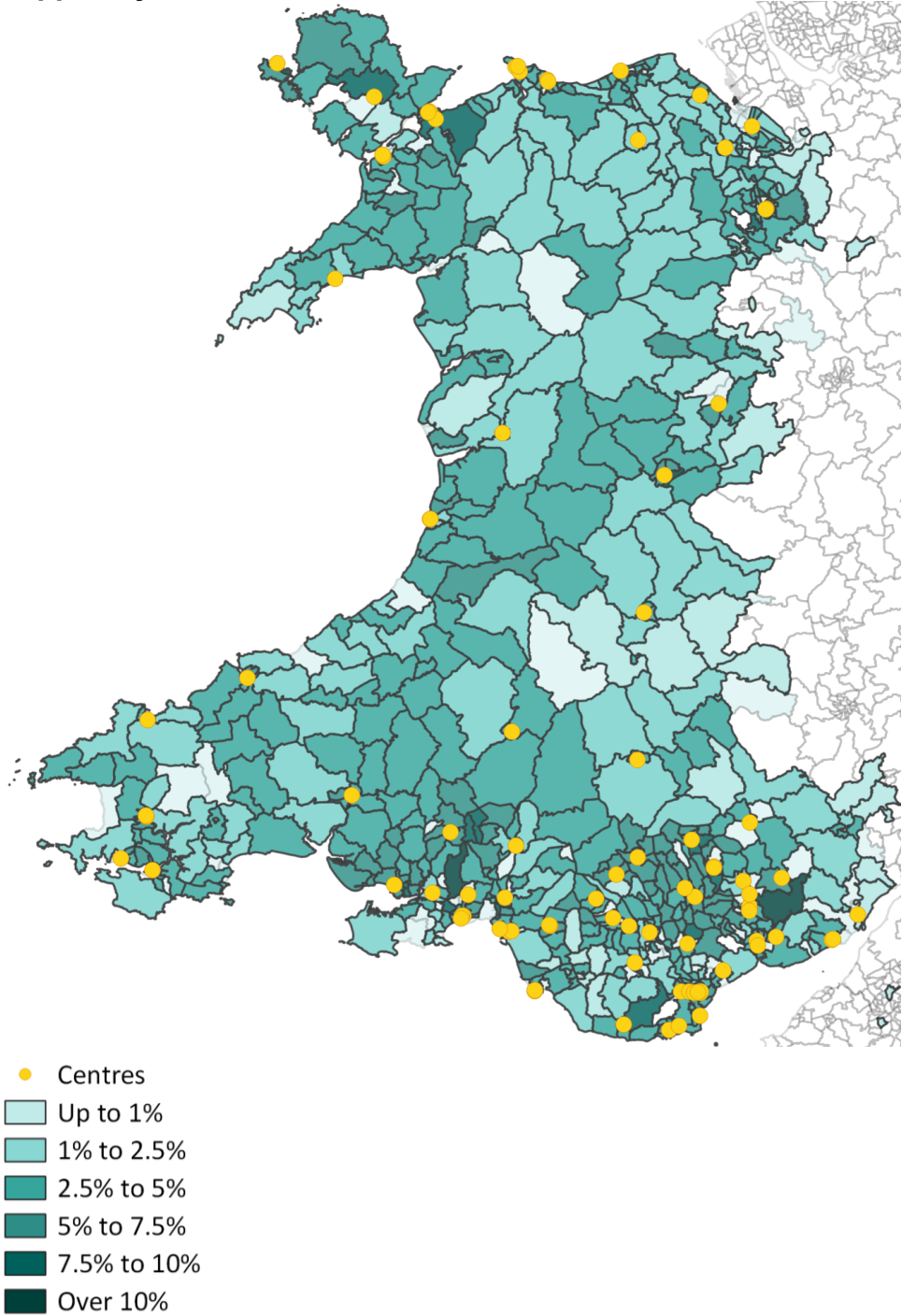
4.11 Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 below detail the geographical spread of customer engagements with Working Wales across Wales. Figure 4.2 also provides details on the location of co-location sites⁷⁷. As would be expected (given the population sizes), monitoring information suggests that over 10 per cent of all customers reside in Cardiff (11.6 per cent; 9,960/86,123), whilst nearly two per cent of the sample reside in Ceredigion (1.9 per cent; 1,633/86,123).

4.12 In most cases, as illustrated in Figure 4.3, customer engagement is broadly reflective of population sizes across local authorities. Customers in Blaenau Gwent, Carmarthenshire, and Caerphilly appear to be the most overrepresented based on general population sizes, whilst customers in Flintshire and Cardiff are the most underrepresented. To gain a better understanding of why some areas are overrepresented or underrepresented, future provision should look to develop systematic processes in which Careers Wales shares this contextual information

⁷⁷ A co-location site is a site of another service or programme in which Working Wales staff are also based. Depending on the co-location site, staff may be based at the site five days per week or less based on the agreement.

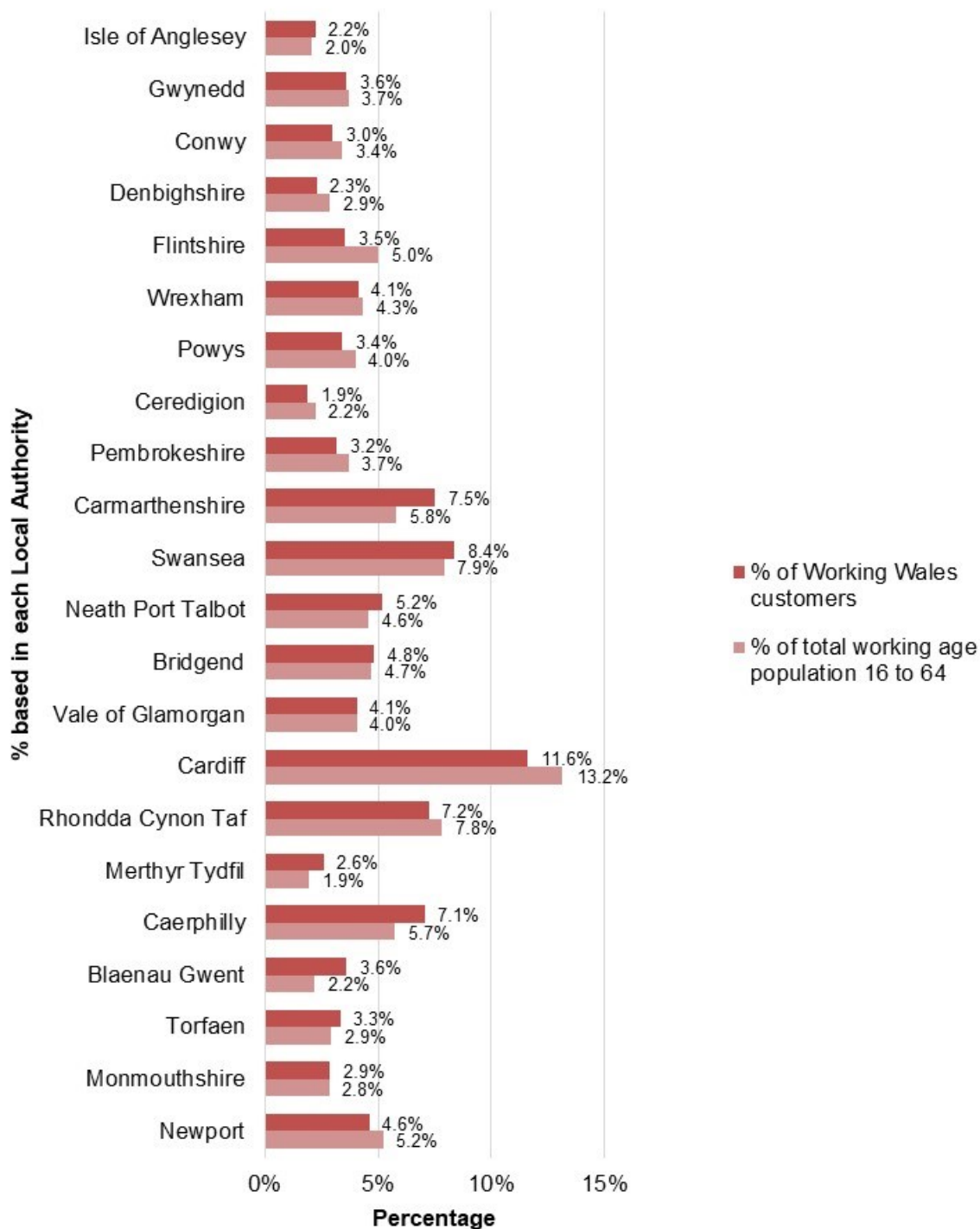
with regional Working Wales teams to ensure that there is greater dialogue surrounding performance and engagement.

Figure 4.2: Percentage of ward residents who were Working Wales customers, mapped by ward



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=80,730 customer engagements) and ward data from Census 2021. Records were excluded where no ward data was provided. Some areas in England are highlighted because 117 customers were identified as living in English wards. Further detail on this is available in the methodology.

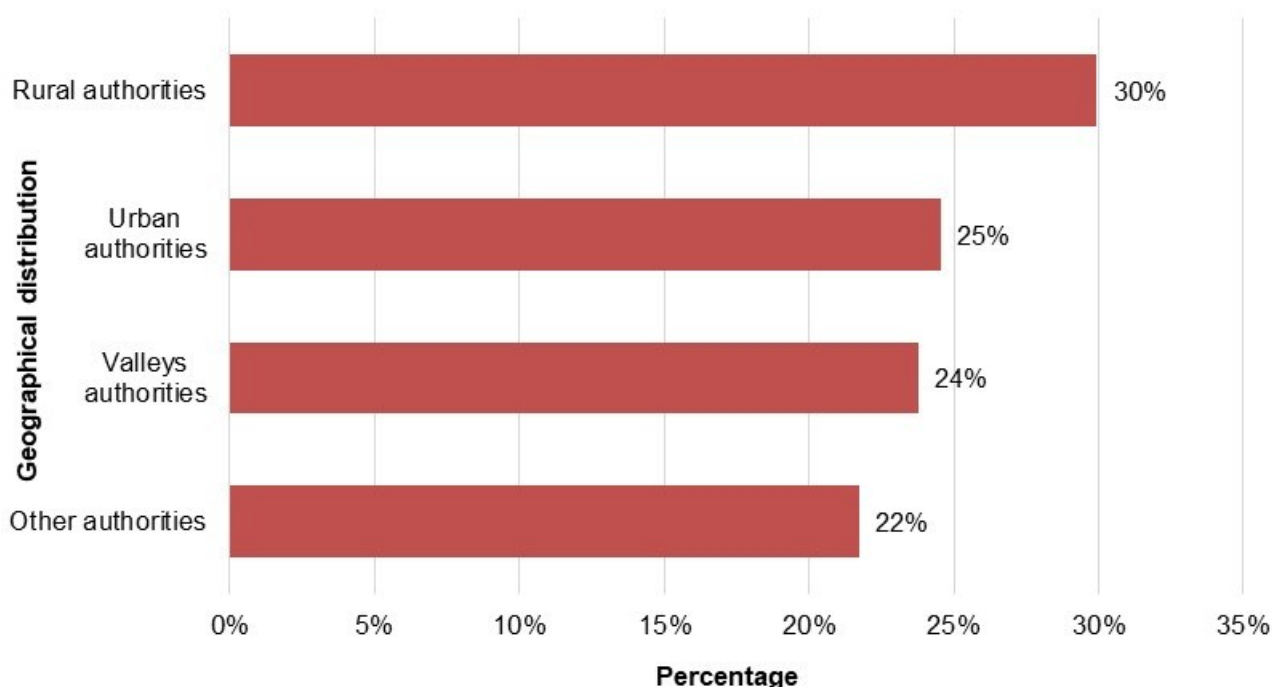
Figure 4.3: Customers engaged in Working Wales (Feb. 2019–March 2023), by local authority



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n= 85,965 customer engagements) and 2021 Census (n= 1,835,580). This excludes all unknown customer locations as well as customer locations outside of Wales. Further details on unavailable location data can be found in the Limitations and considerations section of the methodology.

4.13 Based on Welsh Government definitions of rurality, as explored in the methodology, almost one third (30 per cent; 25,790/85,965) of all Working Wales customers reside in rural authorities, whilst a quarter of customers live in urban authorities and almost a quarter live in Valleys authorities (Figure 4.4 below). Considering the proportionate coverage of local authorities and the distribution of customers across a range of urban and rural localities, Working Wales appears to effectively cover a diverse range of geography across Wales.

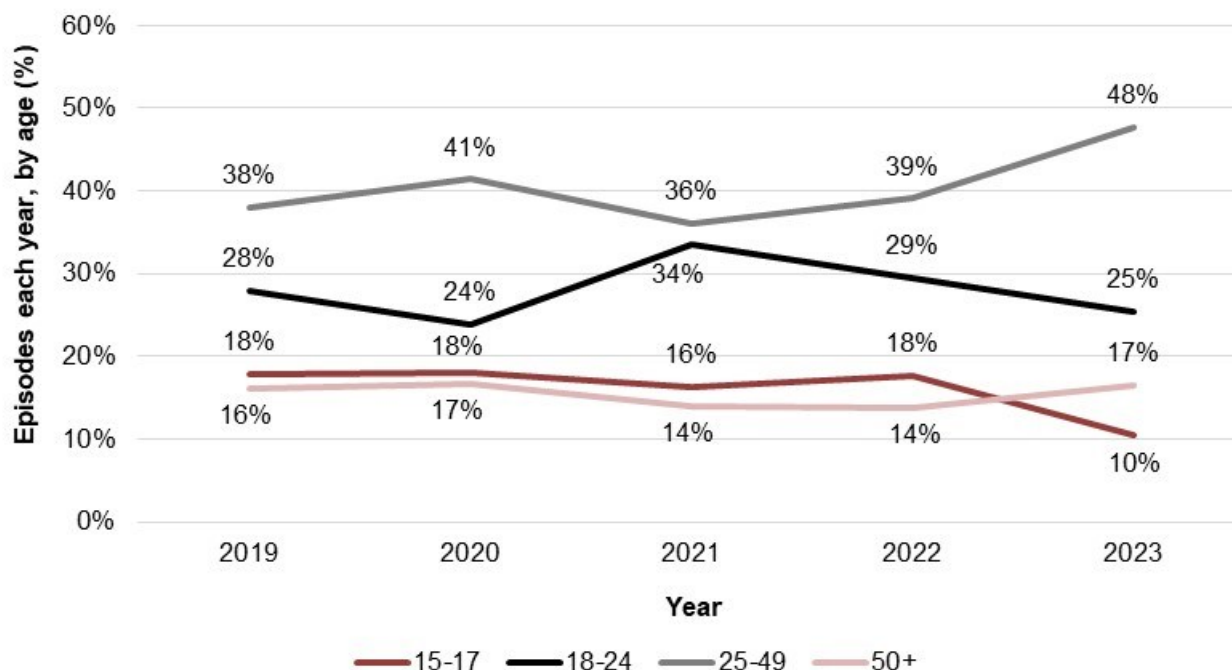
Figure 4.4: Geographical distribution of Working Wales customers



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=85,965 customer engagements). This excludes all unknown customer locations as well as customer locations outside of Wales. Further details on unavailable location data can be found in section 2.6 of the methodology. Please note that in this chart totals add up to over 100% due to rounding.

4.14 Figure 4.5 shows that Working Wales customers aged 25–49 were consistently the largest age cohort who accessed Working Wales support for all years of delivery (39 per cent; 47,076/120,708 episodes). Whilst 2023 data are currently still being collected, it is assumed that the 18–24 age bracket will remain lower than in previous years due to the ability of young people to self-refer to JGW+ (as of May 2022).

Figure 4.5: Episodes each year, by age groups



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=120,708 customer episodes). Please note that data from 2023 are incomplete because this data collection is ongoing. Data on reported ages deemed unreliable was also omitted (e.g. age 0).

4.15 Table 4.1 illustrates that 92 per cent of all customers identified as White, aligning with 2021 Census data (in which 93.8 per cent of the Welsh population also identified as White)⁷⁸. Asian/British is the second-largest ethnic group identified in Working Wales (2.4 per cent) and across the Welsh population (2.9 per cent).⁷⁹ The number of customers identifying as having a mixed ethnicity is consistent across Working Wales and Census data (1.8 per cent in the Working Wales sample and 1.6 per cent across Wales), whilst customers identifying as Black/British is overrepresented in Working Wales in comparison to the rest of the country (1.8 per cent in comparison to 0.9 per cent). This indicates that the ethnic profile of customers engaged in Working Wales is broadly in line with the ethnic profile across Wales. Whilst there are not fixed demographic targets for Working Wales customer engagement, service engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups is

⁷⁸ Welsh Government (2022) [Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language and Religion in Wales](#) (Census 2021).

⁷⁹ Please note that this data has been aggregated and was collected in the monitoring data in full detail in order to demonstrate more meaningful percentages of the programme population. These categorisations are intended to capture customers' ethnic heritage only, and as far as possible exclude considerations of nationality, citizenship and national identity.

proportionally higher than in some Welsh Government employability programmes (such as Jobs Growth Wales Plus) and in line with others (such as the Personal Learning Accounts programme)⁸⁰.

- 4.16 Male customers constitute just under 60 per cent of the total customers engaged in Working Wales. Whilst unemployment rates for males across Wales are slightly higher than for females (3.9 per cent in comparison to 3.2 per cent⁸¹), females constitute a slightly higher proportion of the population (51.1 per cent as opposed to 48.9 per cent) and there is a higher rate of economically inactive females than males (27.3 per cent in comparison to 19.8 per cent). As Working Wales is designed to be accessible to employed, unemployed, and economically inactive people across Wales, population statistics suggest that males are overrepresented in the customer sample. Additional interrogation at a local level should be conducted to better understand why more males are engaging with the service and how outreach could better engage females.
- 4.17 Demographic assessments of the profile of Working Wales customers also suggest that disabled people are underrepresented across the sample, with 8.2 per cent of Working Wales customers identifying as being disabled in comparison to 21.1 per cent across the country. In staff and stakeholder interviews, difficulty in engaging with disabled people only arose in a few cases⁸². Where it was referenced, staff suggested that they engage very few disabled people because Jobcentre Plus has ‘very robust’ approaches in place to support disabled people to secure work. However, evidence suggests that Jobcentre Plus and other Department for Work and Pensions programmes similarly struggle to engage disabled people due to prospective customers’ perceived distrust of governmental employment support services⁸³. Other employability support programmes, such as those supported through the European Social Fund, have also typically found it difficult to engage

⁸⁰ Demographic characteristics of participants in the Welsh Government’s Personal Learning Accounts programme can be found in the June 2023 [final report](#) on page 56.

⁸¹ Welsh Government (2023) [Annual Population Survey](#).

⁸² Whilst there was little evaluation feedback on the support provided to disabled people, please note that Careers Wales is in partnership with [SignVideo](#) in order to be accessible to the Deaf and BSL community.

⁸³ UK Government Work and Pensions Committee (2021) [Disability Employment Gap Report](#).

economically inactive customers⁸⁴ including disabled customers and those with long-term health conditions. As of October 2023, the disability employment gap (the difference in the employment rate between disabled and non-disabled people) was 29 per cent⁸⁵. This suggests that across the UK there remain challenges in engaging disabled individuals with employment support and employment. It is likely that difficulties in engaging customers within Working Wales align with this wider context.

Table 4.1: Demographics of Working Wales customers

Category	Subcategory	N	%
Ethnicity (n=83,218) ⁸⁶	White	76,577	92.0%
	Asian/British	1,996	2.4%
	Black/British	1,470	1.8%
	Mixed	1,469	1.8%
	Other Ethnic Group	1,706	2.1%
Gender (n=95,005)	Male	56,296	59.3%
	Female	38,553	40.6%
	Other	156	0.2%
Disability (n=65,204)	No	59,839	91.8%
	Yes	5,365	8.2%
Preferred language – verbal (n=76,945)	English	75,152	97.7%
	Welsh	1,793	2.3%
Preferred language – written (n=76,941)	English	75,248	97.8%
	Welsh	1,693	2.2%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=95,164 customer engagements). Please note that for each category, customers were excluded where demographic data was not provided.

4.18 Table 4.2 below provides additional details on additional circumstances for customers by episodes of accessing support. This demonstrates the wide range of customers and customer needs that Working Wales has supported since its inception.

⁸⁴ Please note that [economic inactivity](#) is defined as an individual who is not in employment, who has not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or who are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

⁸⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023) [Employment of Disabled People](#).

⁸⁶ Please note that this data has been aggregated and was collected in the monitoring data in full detail in order to demonstrate more meaningful percentages of the programme population. These categorisations are intended to capture customers' ethnic heritage only, and as far as possible exclude considerations of nationality, citizenship and national identity.

Table 4.2: Customer additional circumstances by episodes

Additional circumstances category	N	%
Looked-after child or care leaver	921	0.8%
Youth Offending Service – offending behaviour detailed	361	0.3%
Probation	278	0.2%
English as an additional language	247	0.2%
In custody	216	0.2%
Housing issues or homeless	198	0.2%
Young single parent or pregnant	184	0.2%
Substance issues	145	0.1%
Carer	145	0.1%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=120,730 customer episodes)

4.19 In over half of all Working Wales episodes (53 per cent; 63,853/120,477), customers were unemployed when they accessed Working Wales reiterating that this is a key demographic for the service. Considering that 21 per cent of people of working age in Wales are economically inactive⁸⁷, the proportion of economically inactive customers accessing Working Wales appears to be low⁸⁸. As highlighted in Section 4.17, this aligns with challenges identified in other employability programmes, where engaging economically inactive customers has been consistently challenging. Over time there has been an increase in the number of employed customers engaging with Working Wales to review their skills and career progression. This confirms that a broad range of support, tailored to different needs, has been and continues to be expected of Working Wales.

⁸⁷ This figure excludes students.

⁸⁸ Welsh Government (2023) [Labour market statistics \(Annual Population Survey\) April 2022 to March 2023](#).

Table 4.3: Customer employment status on accessing Working Wales, % of episodes by year

Employment status	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Unemployed	57%	63%	60%	51%	56%	53%
Employed	17%	20%	18%	21%	24%	19%
Economically inactive	6%	4%	8%	9%	7%	8%
Further education	6%	4%	5%	10%	8%	6%
In school	9%	6%	6%	5%	1%	6%
Apprenticeship or traineeship	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%
Higher education	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%
Volunteering	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Engaged in JGW+	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=120,477 customer episodes). Please note that this excludes where the status on joining is unknown.

4.20 As illustrated in Table 4.4 below, the consistent rate of customers with low qualifications accessing Working Wales between 2019 and 2023 indicates that the service still primarily caters to this demographic. However, over time, Working Wales has worked with slightly more customers with Level 6 qualifications or above; six per cent of Working Wales episodes in 2019 had a Level 6 or equivalent qualification in comparison to nine per cent of episodes engaging in 2022. It is likely that this increase is the result of broader labour market trends (e.g. higher rates of redundancy between 2020 and 2022 as well as skilled older individuals returning to the workforce). The changing demographics and needs of customers illustrate the wider value of the Working Wales model and its all-Wales approach. By retaining broad eligibility criteria in which all individuals living and legally able to work in Wales can access the service, Working Wales supports Welsh Government efforts to encourage economic growth and productivity across the country for sectors and all skill levels.

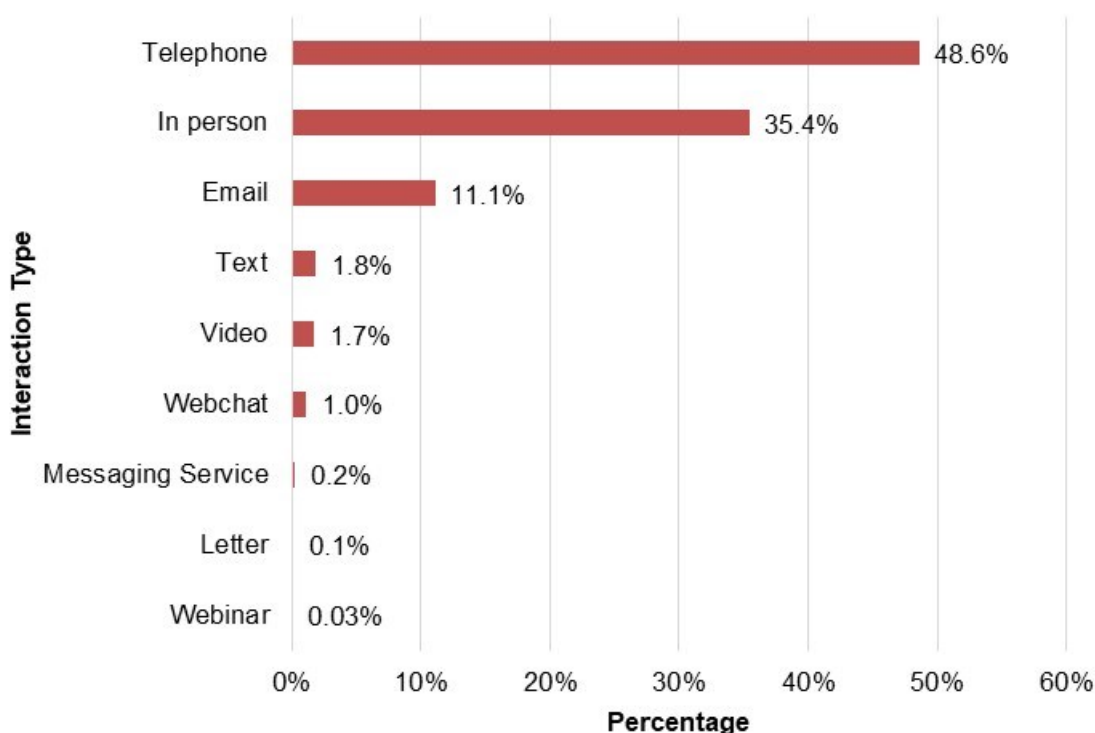
Table 4.4: Customer qualification level, % episodes by year

Qualification level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
None (no qualifications)	10%	7%	8%	10%	10%	9%
Entry level	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Level 1	17%	14%	13%	13%	14%	14%
Level 2	33%	33%	34%	34%	33%	33%
Level 3	15%	19%	19%	18%	16%	18%
Level 4	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Level 5	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Level 6	6%	8%	9%	9%	11%	8%
Level 7	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Level 8	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other qualifications	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=53,627 customer episodes). Please note that this excludes where the qualification level is unknown (n=67,103 customer episodes), and also that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, totals may exceed 100 per cent.

- 4.21 Over time, Working Wales has sought to increase and enhance its support offered to refugees and migrants due to a greater number of people seeking refuge in Wales as a result of emerging and ongoing crises and conflicts across the world. To offer this support, the service has increasingly worked with specialist partners, e.g. the Welsh Refugee Council, increasing outreach into these communities.
- 4.22 Analysis has ascertained that Working Wales has supported 1,250 individual refugees and/or migrants. More detail on this can be found in the Refugee and Migrant summary paper.
- 4.23 Customers were able to interact with the services through various means and, on average, customers engaged with the service for 1.3 episodes through 2.9 different interactions (median: 2, mode: 1). Working Wales monitoring information demonstrates that interactions via telephone were the most popular. Changes in interaction trends over the programme lifetime are explored further in the Remote Support Offer section below.

Figure 4.6: Percentage of interactions by type



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n= 214,512 customer interactions)

Delivery model

- 4.24 In final evaluation interviews, staff reported that the Working Wales delivery model is consistent across all regions and local authorities. Each regional team is based in Careers Wales offices within each local authority, with Working Wales services also available at co-location sites, pop-up sites and outreach centres, where Working Wales careers advisers and employability coaches work with other partners (e.g. Jobcentre Plus). The support available to customers is then understood to be needs-led, with customers able to access support and mid-career reviews directly from Working Wales and to be referred to other employability support where appropriate.
- 4.25 Whilst the model is consistent across Wales, the approach taken to providing support and making referrals appears to vary depending on local partners and infrastructure. In each region, the infrastructure for Working Wales differs based on the availability and proximity of Careers Wales offices, partner relationships (and therefore co-location sites), and the availability and knowledge of potential outreach

locations (e.g. libraries, refugee welcome centres, and other locally relevant sites). This flexibility is key to the added value of Working Wales, supporting effective collaboration and efficiency (rather than maintaining a rigid model).

- 4.26 In many cases, staff were positive about the adaptability of the Working Wales approach, reporting that it allowed them to use their local knowledge and networks to best position the Working Wales offer for local people. However, stakeholders also reported that regional differences in the Working Wales service can result in the availability of the offer varying across Wales, in some cases leading to delays to support for customers and/or customers being missed. Where regional Working Wales offers were perceived to be less effective, this was commonly due to resource pressures as well as variation in how different regional teams prioritised their caseloads.
- 4.27 It is to be expected that regional Working Wales teams' approaches will vary to align with local needs. However, staff and stakeholders highlighted concerns regarding consistency in the support offer as well as risks of duplication with other local services. Whilst this is identified as a risk, the potential for employability support to duplicate other services is a common concern for a wide range of employability support across Wales. Employability support across Wales is funded by a range of sources including but not limited to the Welsh Government.⁸⁹ This concern suggests that there is a need for wider coordination of employability support across Wales, although this may be beyond what is feasible for Working Wales and the Welsh Government where support is funded via other sources.
- 4.28 Improved information sharing between Careers Wales, Regional Skills Partnerships⁹⁰ (RSP), and regional teams could support a greater systematic approach to identifying local needs, support, referrals, and co-location and outreach offers. It is suggested that additional or existing resource be allocated to annual or biannual strategic meetings between the Careers Wales central and regional teams and RSPs to agree on targeted local Working Wales approaches. This could be

⁸⁹ This includes UK Government Schemes, such as [Restart](#) for individuals who have been in receipt of Universal Credit for 9 consecutive months or more.

⁹⁰ [Regional Skills Partnerships](#) are strategic bodies tasked with identifying regional and sub-regional priorities to drive investment in skills. These include producing and analysing labour market intelligence which is then reported to the Welsh Government. There are four Regional Skills Partnerships across Wales.

informed by assessments of local labour market information, local support offers and needs, and live Working Wales referral data.

COVID-19

- 4.29 Working Wales underwent considerable changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Government-mandated lockdowns from March 2020 necessitated a temporary pause in face-to-face support. This expanded the focus and opportunities for remote and digital interaction with Working Wales customers, primarily via telephone, video, text, email, and instant messenger chat. In most cases, some remote Working Wales support was available prior to 2020, but this offer was limited and varied. Moreover, the pandemic resulted in considerably reduced Working Wales team engagement with co-location and outreach partners during government-mandated lockdowns due to the remote focus of support at that time.
- 4.30 Changes to the Working Wales delivery model associated with COVID-19 demonstrated the ability of the service to be flexible and, staff suggested, had a positive long-term impact on the delivery model. Whilst remote support was available prior to COVID-19, this type of support is now a key aspect of the Working Wales approach, particularly to ensure that customers in rural and/or isolated locations can still engage with Working Wales (even if they cannot easily access a physical site).
- 4.31 Following the series of COVID-19 lockdowns⁹¹, re-engaging with previous and new partners was a key focus for Working Wales regional teams. In many cases, staff described this as an opportunity to reassess their existing provision, reducing the presence of staff in outreach and co-location sites in which there was limited footfall, establish new relationships with partners, and revise ways of working in line with new customer needs (e.g. offering drop-in services in the evening). Whilst COVID-19 resulted in a range of severe challenges for the Working Wales service and Wales as a whole, the need to suspend some aspects of service delivery enabled regional teams to reflect, early on in the delivery of Working Wales, what was working and what needed to be altered:

⁹¹ [Dates of COVID-19 lockdowns](#).

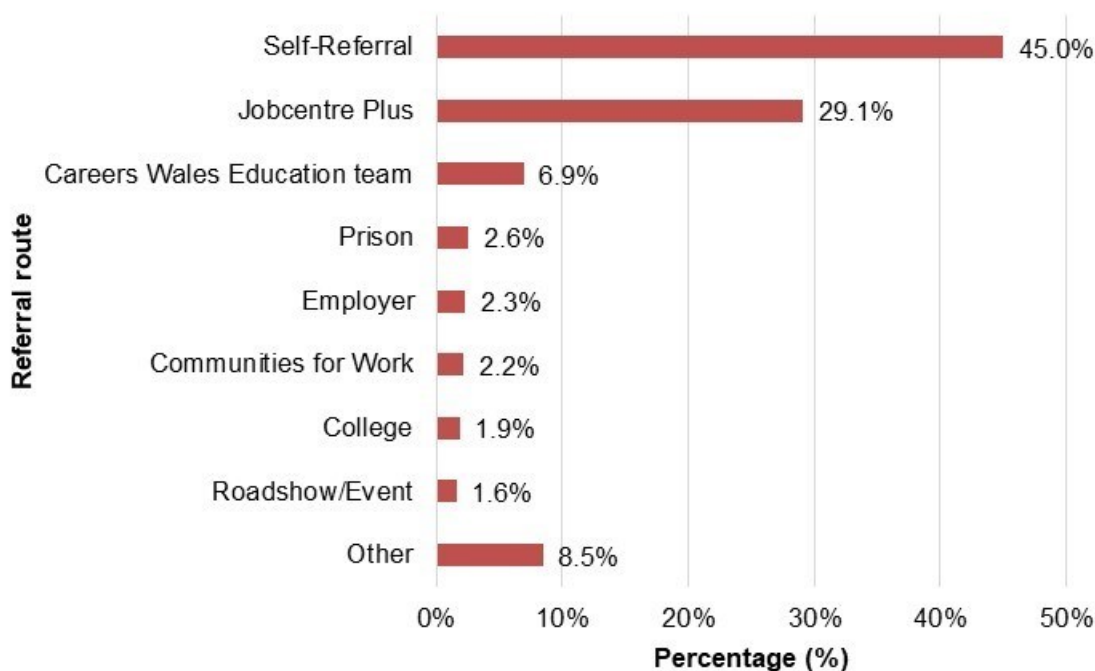
4.32 'We've definitely changed location [as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic]. Before COVID-19 hit we were quite a new service, so we were really sort of dipping our toe in and seeing where we could work from. Initially, we tried to support Communities for Work venues because our thinking was there would be more customers there who need the support from Working Wales as well, but, actually, the referrals to us were quite low and it just wasn't value for money for an adviser to be there.' **(Management and delivery staff interview)**

Awareness raising and outreach

4.33 As illustrated in Figure 4.7 below, almost half (45.0 per cent; 42,560/94,585) of all Working Wales customers first refer themselves to the service, whilst over a quarter of first referrals are via Jobcentre Plus (29.1 per cent; 27,531/94,585)⁹². Whilst there are a wide range of referral routes into Working Wales, the prominence of self-referrals suggests that general awareness-raising activities and outreach are not only effective but also vital for the longer-term sustainability of Working Wales.

⁹² This number does not include first referrals into Working Wales through JCP Youth Journey (one per cent; 1,096/94,585).

Figure 4.7: First referral routes into Working Wales



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=94,585 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes where the referral route is unknown. Eighteen referral routes that each accounted for less than 1.5 per cent of all engaged have been combined into an ‘Other’ category.

4.34 Staff and stakeholders cited a range of awareness-raising and outreach activities adopted to promote Working Wales and engage customers. These included a range of national and local marketing activities such as presence at larger events including Royal Welsh, Eisteddfod, and Pride events, attendance at local job and careers fairs, the distribution of leaflets and posters, canvassing town centres and community centres, and national social media campaigns. As a result of this range of outreach activities, staff and stakeholders felt that Working Wales can and does reach people who are actively seeking support and who may not have been reached by other programmes. It is important to consider, however, that these types of activities may be less effective at reaching individuals who are further from the labour market and less ready to engage.

4.35 At a local level, staff felt that being ‘visible’ in local areas is key to successful awareness as well as customer engagement. In particular, staff reported that they need to be ‘in the right place at the right time’, consistently attending a range of local events and sites to ensure that anyone who wants to know more about

Working Wales can find out. Whilst it is understood that Working Wales teams need to be adaptable and engage with a wide range of people, interviews indicated that there is a limited consistent promotional strategy locally, with many regional teams having to rely on local knowledge and partners to promote Working Wales:

- 4.36 'Well, the one [...] that's quite challenging for my team is that I don't think our office stands out enough to be able to advertise our services and I am addressing it with marketing. [...] We very often have people come into the office and they go, "How long you been here then? Are you new to the area?" You know when they've lived in [the area for] 20 years as well and they don't even know we're here and we're right on the high street.' (**Staff interview**)
- 4.37 The resource available through the centralised social media team for Working Wales was praised by stakeholders and staff, as it was perceived to be having greater capacity than that of other support programmes to showcase the service and engage prospective customers. However, staff and stakeholders also suggested that national social media for Working Wales 'does not go far enough' because it cannot publicise local events or target specific groups that regional teams are looking to support:
- 4.38 'The one challenge is the whole-Wales approach to the marketing — they don't target [marketing] at individual areas or regions. You need to go about it in a different way. They could do more about generating engagement [if marketing were targeted], especially young people NEET who maybe don't claim [Universal Credit].' (**Stakeholder interview**)
- 4.39 Future delivery should consider if and how additional resource could be provided to regional teams for them to enhance their local offer and social media campaigns. Any additional local social media strategies should be in line with local needs identified between regional teams, RSPs, and in response to Careers Wales data.
- 4.40 Reflecting on how well the service engages potential customers, staff and stakeholders noted that a lack of differentiation between Working Wales and Careers Wales can be confusing and problematic. In some cases, staff and stakeholders noted that the difference between Careers Wales and Working Wales

could be unclear to staff and customers due to the similar support offer. This challenge is explored in more detail in Section 5.

- 4.41 Staff highlighted that there are a number of groups that they find difficult to engage in Working Wales activities. Most frequently, staff reported that engaging young people can be challenging. In these cases, staff suggested that, in particular, re-engaging young people in any type of provision once they have left formal education and/or other support is difficult. In addition, stakeholders suggested that vulnerable young people and young people NEET are difficult to engage because they do not typically engage with Working Wales outreach and are more socially isolated than other groups. It is important to acknowledge, however, that Working Wales does not have a responsibility to support young people NEET, as highlighted in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF)⁹³. Whilst current Working Wales outreach appears to be effective for older age groups, greater engagement with specialist youth support in local areas may be required to better target young people who have disengaged from education and/or alternative support.
- 4.42 Staff and stakeholders also commonly reported that they faced challenges in engaging with individuals who identify as Black, Asian and/or another minority ethnic group. Where this was the case, staff suggested that their workforce is not typically representative of the populations that they look to serve, with most staff identifying as White. Whilst, where possible, regional Working Wales teams try to work with partners that better represent minority ethnic groups, staff acknowledged that greater efforts to diversify the Working Wales delivery team may be required in the future to ensure that individuals across Wales, regardless of their ethnicity, feel more comfortable about accessing the service. In line with this feedback, Working Wales internal reporting on progress towards their 4-year Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) outlines that efforts have been made to engage partners who support customers from an ethnic minority background and that this has resulted in greater representation of ethnic minority customer groups. This will remain a key priority for the service going forward. The Working Wales service also aims to continue

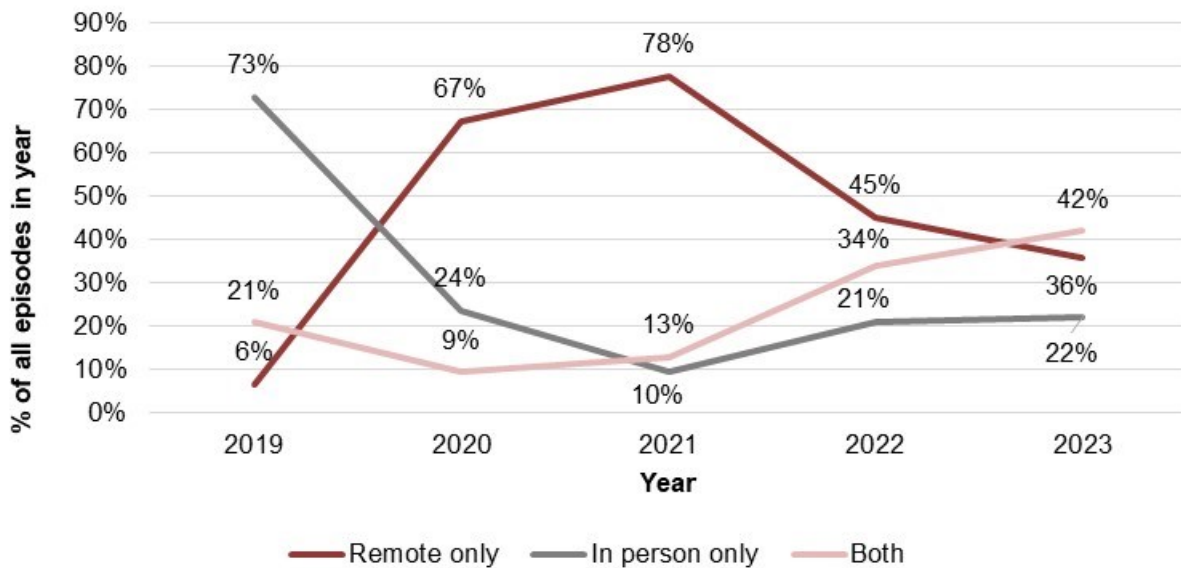
⁹³ [More details on the YEPF tier model and duties of responsibility](#)

working closely with Welsh Government to implement their [Anti Racism Action Plan](#) within Working Wales activities.

Remote support offer

4.43 Figure 4.8 below evidences the considerable increase in remote Working Wales support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As described in Section 4.29, the pandemic resulted in an immediate service adaptation in which all in-person support was suspended and was offered via telephone, video call, text, or email. Over time, remote interaction has declined, whilst in-person support has increased at a slower rate. As of 2023, ‘blended’ support in which customers receive a combination of in-person and remote support is most common, constituting two fifths (42 per cent) of all Working Wales episodes. This suggests that beyond the lifetime of pandemic restrictions, there is still considerable demand for the remote Working Wales support offer but a combination of remote and face-to-face support is the customer preference.

Figure 4.8: Support received by customers each year, % of episodes by mode of interaction



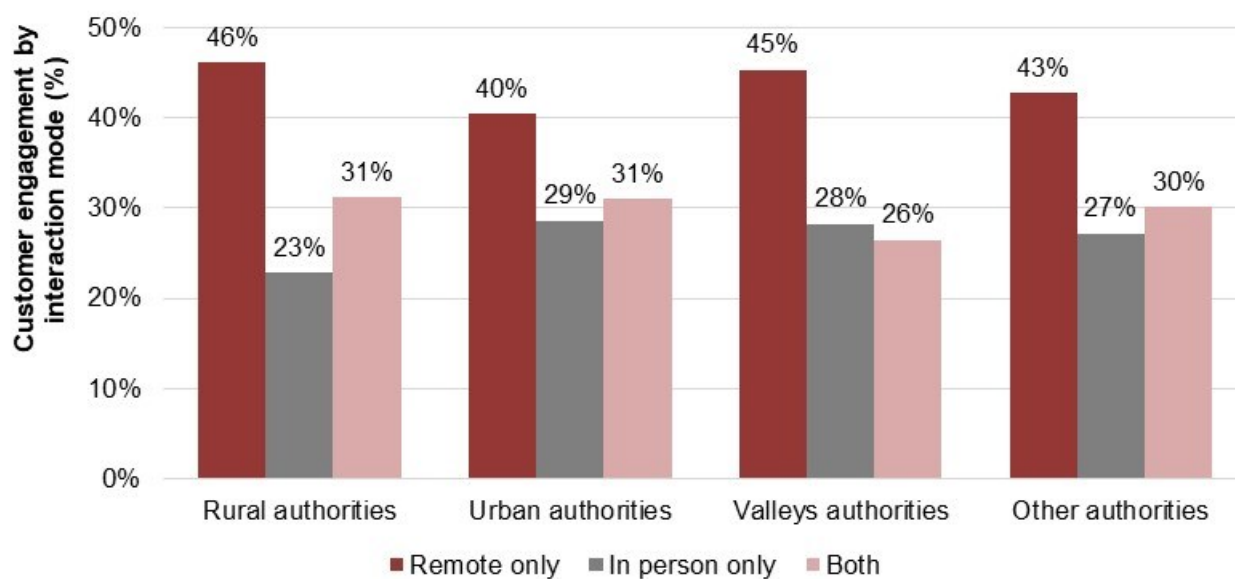
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=100,845 customer episodes). Percentage bases are calculated as the number of Working Wales episodes that occurred in each year.

4.44 Staff and stakeholders commonly praised the continued use of ‘blended’ support in which customers can decide whether they want to engage with Working Wales staff

face-to-face or via a remote forum (commonly via telephone or video call). Providing a range of options was perceived to be maintaining a flexible and adaptable service that responds to the needs of customers. This approach was described as particularly beneficial for customers in rural locations.

4.45 Figure 4.9 below indicates that the remote offer was most frequently used in less sparsely populated local authorities, particularly rural authorities. However, a ‘remote-only’ offer, where customers have only accessed Working Wales support via telephone, video call, email, and other messaging services and not accessed Working Wales support in person, is the most common interaction mode across all types of local authority. This suggests that, when given the choice, customers most commonly interact with remote Working Wales services.

Figure 4.9: Customer interaction mode, by local authority typology



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=67,316 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes customers for which no geographical data were recorded or where a geographical location outside of Wales was recorded. This also excludes customers who have not had any recorded interactions with Working Wales. Further details on unavailable location and interaction type data can be found in the Limitations and considerations section of the methodology.

Table 4.5: Customer interaction mode, by local authority typology and customer episodes per year

Authority type	Interaction mode	2019	2020	2021	2022
Rural authorities	In person only	64%	20%	8%	18%
	Remote only	7%	69%	78%	43%
	Both	29%	12%	14%	38%
	Total N	4,288	4,861	5,199	6,734
Urban authorities	In person only	69%	26%	12%	23%
	Remote only	5%	60%	73%	41%
	Both	26%	14%	15%	36%
	Total N	3,419	3,366	3,749	5,491
Valleys authorities	In person only	76%	23%	7%	20%
	Remote only	5%	67%	83%	48%
	Both	19%	10%	10%	32%
	Total N	4,009	3,645	3,738	4,591
Other authorities	In person only	76%	25%	11%	19%
	Remote only	5%	66%	74%	41%
	Both	19%	9%	14%	40%
	Total N	3,178	3,316	3,361	4,775

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=67,720 customer episodes). Percentage bases were calculated by the first customer episodes that year in each local authority typology (Total N). This means that the base figure is lower than the total number of customer episodes between 2019 and 2022 (n=75,350 customers). Figures are derived from the date customers started receiving support. Please note that this excludes customers for which no interaction mode or local authority was recorded as well as customers with locations outside of Wales. For customers who have moved across authority types (n=310), their first recorded authority type was used. Further details on unavailable location data can be found in the Limitations and considerations section of the methodology.

4.46 Whilst staff and stakeholders praised the increased opportunity for customers to engage with Working Wales remotely, it was commonly perceived that face-to-face support is more effective than remote support in addressing customers' presenting needs. This feedback is unsurprising because traditional employability support is perceived to be working most effectively face-to-face. Staff and stakeholders reported that face-to-face support, when a customer first engages with Working Wales, allows them to see the 'whole picture', including potential barriers on which they may not pick up remotely. In these cases, it was suggested that remote support is most effective when preceded by face-to-face support. This allows customers and staff to establish a trusting relationship in person before engaging remotely. Whilst face-to-face interaction is perceived to be an effective way in which

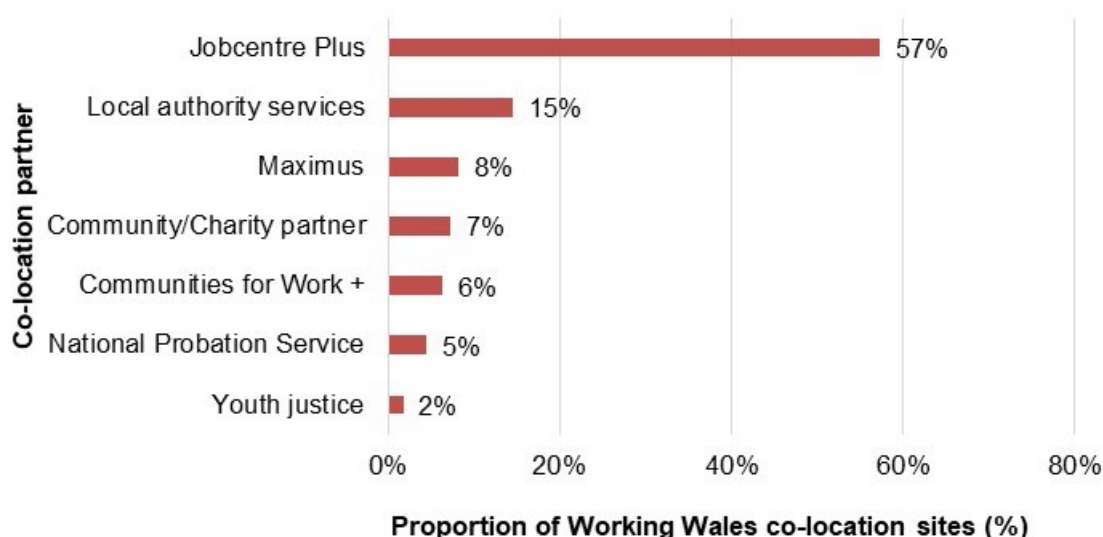
to build customer and staff rapport, it is also important to acknowledge that remote support commonly allows customers to meet with an adviser sooner.

- 4.47 Similarly, two thirds of surveyed customers who felt able to answer the question (66 per cent; 74/112) said that they would prefer to have all Working Wales support face-to-face. This commonly stemmed from customers finding it easier to talk to a Working Wales adviser face-to-face for various reasons including hearing impairments, challenges with English as a second language, and limited digital literacy. In a minority of cases, customers also reported that talking to an adviser face-to-face felt more personal:
- 4.48 'Some things are better discussed in person. You're able to show more concern in person. On the phone they may give more basic responses.' (**Customer survey response**)
- 4.49 When asked if there were any aspects of the Working Wales service that they would like to access remotely, most surveyed customers who felt able to answer the question said that they would rather access support face-to-face (79 per cent; 115/145). It is, however, important to acknowledge that most surveyed customers had previously attended a Working Wales centre or pop-up (95 per cent; 158/167) and found it relatively easy to access a physical Working Wales site (92 per cent; 152/166). Where customers wanted remote support, this was typically for administrative purposes, e.g. booking appointments and registering for training, or to receive labour market information and other useful resources.
- 4.50 A minority of staff also highlighted accessibility concerns regarding remote support. Staff reported that online support could be challenging for customers with limited or non-existent digital literacy and/or limited English or Welsh language skills. Whilst there is consistent demand for remote support, Working Wales staff should look to offer additional support to customers where it is difficult for said customers to access a physical site and where their digital skills and/or English or Welsh language skills are limited.

Co-location and pop-up sites

- 4.51 Interviewed staff and stakeholders were broadly positive about working with co-location partners. Partners that were commonly referenced to be adding value to the Working Wales offer included [Jobcentre Plus](#), [Communities for Work Plus](#), [Maximus](#), local youth hubs, and the [National Probation Service](#).
- 4.52 As of October 2023, Working Wales has 110 established co-location site partners. Figure 4.10 below shows that over half of all co-location partners were local Jobcentre Plus sites (57 per cent; 63/110). This indicates that whilst a range of partners are used in the delivery of Working Wales, Jobcentre Plus is central to the delivery model.

Figure 4.10: Working Wales co-location sites



Source: Co-location sites as reported by the national Working Wales team (n=110). Please note that this information was supplied to Wavehill in November 2023 by the national Working Wales management team.

- 4.53 Staff reported that co-location sites were predominantly decided based on existing access to an area with customer demand and/or high footfall. Strategic motivations to engage co-location partners were also cited by staff. These included working with potential co-location partners to develop a strategic overview of local services, to minimise the duplication of employability support, and to create a hub that was mutually beneficial for all partners and supported customer transitions between services. Working Wales regional teams suggested that these approaches to co-location delivery allow them to consider where they are currently meeting the needs

of customers and where additional effort should be deployed, therefore driving efficiency, reducing gaps in provision, and improving the ability of staff to cross-refer customers.

- 4.54 Many staff noted that the decision to work in certain areas was driven by the need to access a certain geographical area or demographic group. This included access to physical settings in more rural areas, where physical facilities are typically limited, and the opportunity to offer services in a range of locations. Moreover, one staff member noted that there was a need to have services outside of town centres, as some young people were barred from entering their respective town centres:
- 4.55 '[We co-located with] Youth Justice Services [so that we could] remove that barrier of going into the town centre, which some of the young people were barred from doing.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)
- 4.56 In the early stages of Working Wales delivery, it is understood that the service commissioned a segmentation study⁹⁴ to provide a detailed breakdown of population characteristics across local authorities to inform outreach provision. In most cases, interviewed staff described decision making regarding co-location sites to be based on staff's knowledge of local areas, the demographics of local people, and infrastructure and services. Whilst staff's expertise and local knowledge provide considerable value to Working Wales, as staff can adapt based on emerging trends and service delivery, there is a risk that decisions are not being made based on current, full and extensive knowledge of local services and needs. As previously highlighted, greater coordination of Careers Wales monitoring information as well as dialogue between regional teams, the Careers Wales data insight team, and RSPs would aid regional teams' informed decision-making process regarding co-location sites.
- 4.57 Co-location relationships with Jobcentre Plus were of particular importance to staff. This is unsurprising when considering that Jobcentre Plus was the most common co-location partner. In over a quarter of all episodes, customers were referred to Working Wales via Jobcentre Plus (28 per cent; 33,707/120,730). Co-locating with

⁹⁴ This segmentation study was undertaken by [CACI](#).

Jobcentre Plus was seen to be supporting referrals and allowing staff to effectively work together, reducing the risk of duplicating effort or working with the same customers.

- 4.58 Co-working with Jobcentre Plus, in particular, was perceived by staff and stakeholders to be generating a good level of referrals for Working Wales. Effective referral processes are seen most frequently where Working Wales staff have a physical presence at Jobcentre Plus sites, as this encourages immediate and same-day referrals and ensures good communication between Working Wales and Jobcentre Plus staff. In a few cases, however, staff did identify that Jobcentre Plus locations do not work for all customers due to existing public stigma surrounding entering a Jobcentre Plus site and/or because of the lack of privacy in said sites⁹⁵. This suggests that whilst Jobcentre Plus is a particularly effective co-location partner, a multi-method approach to customer interaction across a number of partners and sites is an effective approach for Working Wales.
- 4.59 Similarly to decisions regarding co-location sites, many staff detailed processes for identifying and reviewing new pop-up locations based on potential customer footfall, with a few staff suggesting that they review each new location after three months. Within staff interviews, however, the distinction between outreach, pop-up locations, and co-location sites was not always clear. Whilst it is acknowledged that this distinction may not be clear to staff, it suggests that greater formalised detail as to the processes for selecting co-location and pop-up sites may need to be shared across regional teams.
- 4.60 Where pop-up Working Wales sites are seen to be effective, they meet a specific and, in some cases, urgent need. Staff and stakeholders praised Working Wales pop-up sites in workplaces in which mass redundancies were occurring, and suggested that this worked well because it provided customers with consistent and needed support. This demonstrates the added value of the Working Wales model, as it is able to respond quickly, as part of a multi-agency response, to unforeseen events. Establishing pop-up sites at refugee and migrant welcome centres was also

⁹⁵ Please note that it is acknowledged that privacy in other co-location sites may also be an issue; in this case, however, Jobcentre Plus was explicitly cited.

perceived by staff and stakeholders to be effective, as it ensured that easy and accurate advice was immediately available for people entering Wales. As Working Wales support continued to be offered to refugees and migrants once they were relocated away from welcome centres, this support was also perceived to be consistent and reassuring to those seeking it.

- 4.61 Where pop-up models appear to be less effective, this is commonly due to limited customer footfall and/or demand. Staff and stakeholders commonly reported that in some cases, pop-up locations do not gain much traction with local people, regardless of the promotion and outreach undertaken to encourage people towards the site. It was suggested that this is because there are additional challenges in engaging with rural populations, because pop-up sites were still not known about and/or because the pop-ups were not on days or at times that worked for people. Staff and stakeholders described instances of pop-ups not being held on market days in small towns and rural villages, resulting in customers having to take public transport on multiple days if they wanted to also attend a Working Wales pop-up. Whilst this is understandable, it suggests that greater coordination is required across regional teams to ensure that pop-up sites are decided based on expected volumes and how they will address local needs.
- 4.62 The combination of multiple co-location sites and pop-up locations was also described as a challenge for multiple Working Wales staff managers. Managers reported that limited staff resource being spread across a number of sites is difficult to manage, particularly where staff are based in co-location sites with differing organisational processes. Working across multiple sites also means that managers are reliant on staff to effectively engage and maintain relationships with partners. Whilst this was reported to generally work well, managers did acknowledge that changes in staff meant that relationships and the knowledge of what Working Wales does could be difficult to maintain:
- 4.63 'It's always challenging managing staff in a location that isn't yours, just ensuring their safety and things like lone working. Our policy for working in an outreach location has to be adhered to pretty quickly because if they're the only person from Working Wales working there, then you have to rely on them in taking

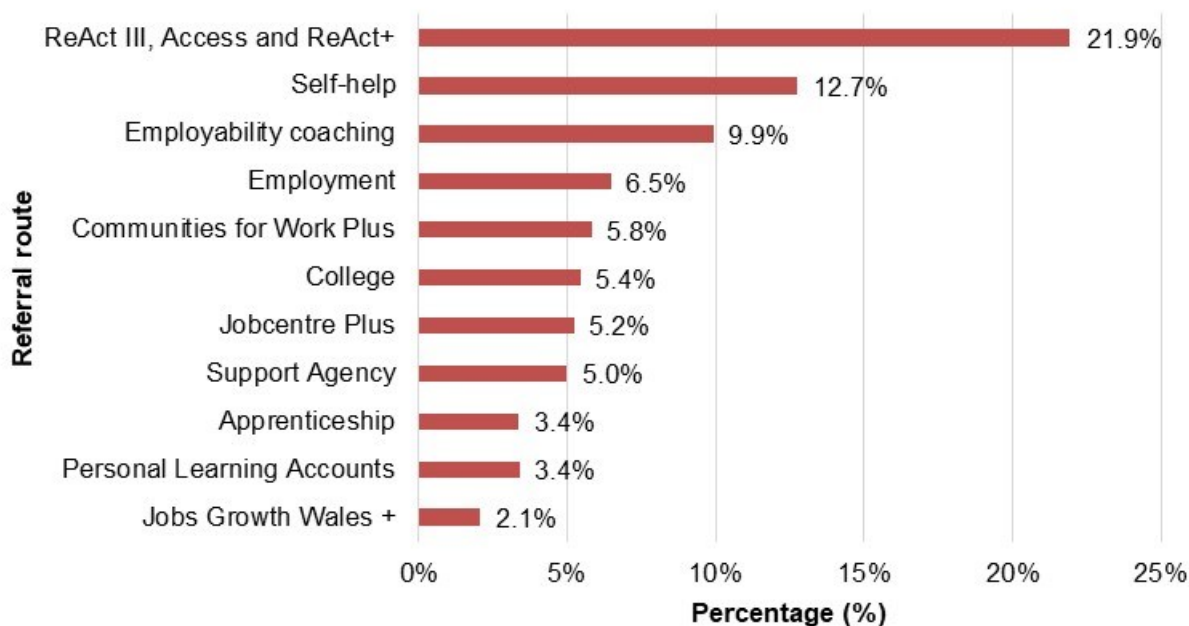
responsibility for themselves in regard to their safety. [It is also difficult] putting the right personalities in there who can build those relationships with the [other] staff. We rely quite heavily on [partners] to know who we are to get those referrals, so they work quite closely with Jobcentre Plus and other outreach staff to make sure they know why we are there.’ (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

Referral pathways

- 4.64 As illustrated by Figure 4.11 below, since 2019 over one fifth (21.9 per cent; 20,873/95,164) of all customer engagements were referred to ReAct III, Access, or ReAct Plus⁹⁶. This is unsurprising when considering that Working Wales was tasked by the Welsh Government to offer support as part of ReAct Plus and that referrals for the service can only be received through Working Wales. This support includes eligibility evidence gathering, careers advice and guidance, submitting applications for grant funding (e.g. Personal Development Support grants), and ongoing customer mentorship. As highlighted in Section 4.63, staff and stakeholders perceived Working Wales to be particularly effective where it offered pop-up services in workplaces in which mass redundancies had occurred. It is likely that in these cases, Working Wales staff referred customers to ReAct Plus.

⁹⁶ As previously highlighted, ReAct III and Access have been combined to create ReAct Plus.

Figure 4.11: Working Wales referrals to other support



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=95,164 customer engagements). Support routes that less than two per cent of customer engagements had been referred to have been excluded from this chart. Please note that self-help refers to customers whose initial needs for information/advice have been met, that referrals to employment reflect where advisers have specifically referred a customer to an opportunity, that employability coaching relates to Working Wales' own service, and that support agency refers to any 'other' support programmes.

4.65 Whilst Figure 4.11 depicts a concentration of customers being referred to some other support, it also represents a diverse range of onward referral routes. This is positive because it suggests that Working Wales is diagnosing the needs of a diverse client profile and addressing the underlying needs of said individuals.

4.66 National programmes that can be referred to from sources other than Working Wales, e.g. Communities for Work Plus, Jobs Growth Wales+, and Personal Learning Accounts, have (as would be expected) fewer referrals from Working Wales than ReAct Plus. Almost one-fifth of all Working Wales customers (19.2 per cent) appear to be 'self-sufficient' after engaging with Working Wales as 12.7 per cent are identified as being able to support themselves (through self-help) and 6.5 per cent are noted as securing or continuing with employment. Combining customers who are self-sufficient and those referred to Working Wales' own employability coaching services indicates that 29.1 per cent (27,721/95,164) of

Working Wales customers have been or are being effectively supported solely by the service, suggesting the efficacy of the support.

Customer support offer

- 4.67 Programme-level monitoring data indicate that of all customers who had engaged with Working Wales, 75 per cent (71,257/95,164) received one-to-one support directly from Working Wales, 14 per cent (13,552/95,164) engaged the Careers Wales Connect hotline for advice, and 25 per cent were provided with advocacy liaison support to access other programmes (24,116/95,164).
- 4.68 Staff and stakeholders were broadly positive about the Working Wales support model and highlighted that it is necessarily a ‘broad church’ which can offer a multitude of support-based customer needs. This flexibility is seen to be vital, allowing staff to know about and understand the local support offer and adapt as needed:
- 4.69 ‘The ethos is to try and offer a service that is easily accessible for everyone, based in their communities digitally or face-to-face. Whatever service they need, we try to offer it in that way.’ (**Management and delivery staff interview**)
- 4.70 The assertion that Working Wales tailored support successfully supports customers with a range of needs is further evidenced by customers. Almost three quarters of surveyed customers (72 per cent; 119/165) reported that Working Wales was able to meet their support needs ‘to a great extent’. This was typically due to the effective careers advice and guidance provided to customers.
- 4.71 Stakeholders reported that Working Wales careers advisers’ specific knowledge of local labour markets, national programmes, and specific support of relevance (e.g. refugee- or migrant-specific expertise) ensures that customers are offered in-depth and holistic advice that would be difficult to access elsewhere.
- 4.72 In many cases, Working Wales careers advisers are perceived to be sitting in a unique and advantageous position in which they can offer high-quality and impartial careers guidance and employability support which directly benefit the person with whom they are working, alongside being able to utilise resources and expertise

across their team and other programmes to ensure that the customer has the best chance possible of securing positive next steps.

- 4.73 Employability coaches were infrequently mentioned in final evaluation interviews; however, many staff and stakeholders referenced the support offer. It is likely that where staff and stakeholders have referenced 'staff' that this includes employability coaches.⁹⁷ Employability support is commonly perceived by staff and stakeholders to be valuable to other programmes as well as customers because it reduces the burden on other services that can offer CV building, interview techniques, and job search support.

⁹⁷ The 'one team' approach within Working Wales ensures that customer need can be supported by the appropriate staff member and appropriate support offer. Where staff and stakeholders have referenced 'staff' it is likely that some staff are employability coaches and others are careers advisers.

5. Understanding the Service Model and Future Potential

5.1 This section explores staff and stakeholder views on the efficacy of Working Wales as well as considerations of the service's key strengths and challenges. Staff and stakeholder views on Working Wales' longer-term position will also be considered.

Staff and stakeholder perceptions of the efficacy of Working Wales as a gateway for employability provision

5.2 Staff and stakeholders were generally positive about the position of Working Wales and believed that it is, or is becoming, an effective entry point for employability support across Wales. Where the model is perceived to be effective, this is primarily because Working Wales is now a recognised brand and because staff are seen to be collaborating well with other partners and services:

5.3 'Working Wales has a good brand, and the work of the advisers is valuable in identifying and advising on barriers for those seeking guidance around getting into work or developing their career. They have an important role to play as a single point of contact/gateway for people across Wales.' (**Stakeholder interview**)

5.4 Working Wales staff are seen to effectively share information with other services to ensure that there is greater awareness of where the service can offer support and add value to the wider employability offer locally and nationally, demonstrating its success as a multi-agency partner. This supports partners and other services to refer elsewhere where customer needs fit outside of their remit. Clear, consistent and effective lines of communication between Working Wales and other support partners are perceived to be a key aspect of the Working Wales model, which enables the service to be seen as a key broker and mechanism for employability support across Wales.

5.5 Working Wales staff are largely regarded by staff and stakeholders as having a role which covers all bases well. Within this, interviewees described Working Wales staff as possessing a wealth of knowledge across a wide range of areas. This ensures that customers are supported and signposted to the right support. Refugee and migrant support has been given as an example of where Working Wales has been

able to support customers with a wide range of needs, all with varying legal requirements and circumstances.

- 5.6 Stakeholders reported that they find working with Working Wales to be effective because the programme's staff are 'transparent' and 'willing to learn', which ensures that partners feel as though they are working with Working Wales (rather than alongside it). Overall, this effective co-working and information sharing are perceived to be encouraging a more coherent and less complicated overview of employability support across Wales. However, consideration of other employability services available could be included within scheduled strategic sessions between regional and national Working Wales teams, RSPs, and Welsh Government representatives. Where possible, this will ensure that regional teams remain up to date with current support offers and can continue to tailor local approaches accordingly. It is important to acknowledge, that whilst Working Wales can share information on other support offers (within and outside of Welsh Government) the Working Wales team and the Welsh Government do not have control over other UK government support offers. This includes short-term funded additional provision, for example, employability support funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 5.7 Concerns surrounding duplication were also provided by partner stakeholders. A minority of partner stakeholders who offer employability support suggested that it can feel like they are in direct competition with Working Wales because they receive fewer referrals from the service than they are expecting. In these cases, stakeholders suggested that this was because Working Wales could offer similar employability support to that of other services and, therefore, do not need to refer customers to other support. It is important to highlight that this was a perception expressed by stakeholders that cannot be verified by the evaluation. Moreover, the evaluation cannot verify that said partner support was the appropriate support to refer customers onto. The Working Wales service is impartial and looks to refer customers to support based on customer need, not on other programme referral targets. It is, however, recommended that greater information sharing by Working Wales with partners with regard to local Working Wales referral processes would alleviate partner concerns surrounding competition and disprove duplication claims. As previously highlighted, it is also recommended that information on local

approaches be more evidenced and informed by Careers Wales intelligence and insight in conjunction with feedback from regional and national Working Wales teams, RSPs, and Welsh Government representatives. Greater information and evidence sharing regarding local approaches will provide clarity as to where Working Wales' remit lies, at a local level, and what other services it should expect to provide.

- 5.8 As highlighted in Section 4.40, staff and stakeholders reported that they themselves were unclear as to the difference between the support offer available from Careers Wales and the support offer available through Working Wales. Whilst the support offers available across Working Wales and Careers Wales are delineated, this suggests that additional information on how the support offers differ may be required. To overcome any confusion surrounding how Working Wales and Careers Wales differ, it may also be beneficial for Working Wales project management at Careers Wales to review if and how Careers Wales staff could gain greater exposure to the Working Wales service to ensure that the differences in the support offer are clearer. Furthermore, customers expressed confusion as to the difference between Careers Wales and Working Wales. For customers, however, a lack of distinction between Careers Wales and Working Wales is not a concern, as the aim of the service is to offer a general gateway to individuals across Wales, regardless of the type of employability support for which they are looking.
- 5.9 When reflecting on the role that Working Wales should play going forward, stakeholders commonly suggested that they want to better understand the bespoke support that Working Wales can offer, particularly the careers guidance, so that they can more effectively utilise the service. To ensure that the service is being delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible, additional information and guidance regarding the Working Wales remit should be developed to be shared with internal Careers Wales staff and external partner staff. This will encourage a more defined understanding of what Working Wales can offer, as well as reducing the burden on delivery staff to inform new partners and/or new partner staff.
- 5.10 Whilst stakeholders were generally positive about the support available through Working Wales, this was largely because it supports their own capacity needs. On

the one hand, support available through Working Wales can be seen as an effective solution to a current resource issue. On the other hand, support risks being viewed as direct competition to other support and contributing to a lack of clarity surrounding the Working Wales offer. Future provision needs to consider whether this support offer can be better delineated by other similar services and, if not, whether it should be minimised to ensure that the Working Wales offer is clear and to avoid replicating similar available services.

Careers guidance and the skills agenda

- 5.11 Working Wales provides careers guidance through qualified careers advisers. It is the only service across Wales that can provide this offer to individuals in work⁹⁸. The impartiality and quality of the careers guidance on offer is commonly identified as a key strength of the Working Wales service.
- 5.12 Stakeholders and staff felt the impartiality of Working Wales was identified as a unique strength of the service. The impartiality allows Working Wales advisers to keep individual customer needs at the centre of their support offered. It was suggested that Working Wales can do this as they are not driven by limiting targets.
- 5.13 Working Wales careers information, advice, guidance and coaching is perceived to be of high quality due to the Level 6 Careers Guidance and Development qualification required by Working Wales staff as well as the wide range of knowledge held by advisers at local and national levels⁹⁹. The Level 6 qualification is perceived to be a unique selling point of Working Wales advice. Staff reported that this role requirement ensures that staff across the service are offering support of a high standard and that this is widely known (by other staff and partners).
- 5.14 Whilst a range of careers advice is available across other services, staff and stakeholders suggested that Working Wales is the only service for which a Level 6 qualification is required. Staff and stakeholders perceived this to be demonstrating that there is an assured level of competency when a customer accesses Working Wales support. The position of a Working Wales adviser in a local setting with

⁹⁸ Please note that to provide careers guidance, advisers need to have a Level 6 qualification.

⁹⁹ All Level 6 careers advisers within Careers Wales and Working Wales are registered with the UK Register of Career Development Professionals.

knowledge of local and national schemes was also perceived to be an advantage for customers.

Future considerations

- 5.15 Reflecting on how Working Wales could better achieve its vision of being an all-Wales entry point, staff and stakeholders offered varied additional feedback. This is largely because of the diverse range of views held on where Working Wales should sit within the Welsh employability support landscape.
- 5.16 Since its inception, Working Wales has had to respond to a range of labour market needs as well as external socioeconomic pressures, e.g. COVID-19, emerging and ongoing political global conflicts, and the cost-of-living crisis, adapting its support offer in order to accommodate a wide and diverse range of individual needs. This has been feasible because of Working Wales' flexible model and its limited eligibility criteria, allowing all individuals living and legally able to work in Wales to access the service. Retaining this flexible and inclusive model is critical for Working Wales to continue supporting economic growth and productivity across the country. Retaining this model and national infrastructure will also allow the Working Wales service to continue to adapt and respond to emerging future needs.
- 5.17 Stakeholders commonly reported that the employability landscape across Wales appears to be fractured and that this has been exacerbated by Shared Prosperity Funding which, due to concerns surrounding core delivery costs, has led to local authorities working in siloes. Stakeholders proposed that Working Wales should aim to have live oversight of national and local authority-led employability services to ensure that regional teams can best identify where their resources are best focussed at a given time¹⁰⁰. This, stakeholders suggested, could solidify the service's position as a well-informed broker, with Working Wales potentially leading efforts to enhance the cohesion of the employability support landscape despite not having direct control over all services. It is acknowledged that this role would be resource-intensive, particularly because of the short-term nature of some funded employability support.

¹⁰⁰ Please note that this is proposal is additional to the Working Wales service's current internal review of the support offered through the service.

- 5.18 Currently, Working Wales holds an aggregated level of intelligence and data detailing the reach of the service and, to an extent, other programmes. This insight is valuable and, if shared with a wider range of partners and stakeholders (e.g. Regional Skills Partnerships, the Welsh Government, and other programmes), could consolidate and improve Working Wales' supportive broker role. For example, this could provide intelligence and data on current and future labour markets locally, regionally and nationally. This insight could, as a result, help to inform if and how programmes target customers and future policy decisions. It is understood that the feasibility of a Careers Wales data intelligence hub, which is able to share an aggregated level of data, is currently being explored¹⁰¹.
- 5.19 Staff and stakeholders who operate within Working Wales reported that, to date, considerable efforts have been made to work within and across local networks to ensure that other services are aware of the support and resource that Working Wales can provide. However, to ensure that this is maintained and strengthened, it was suggested that greater support from the Welsh Government and local authorities be needed to ensure that various departments and national programmes understand and support the Working Wales remit. As illustrated by the quote below, staff described this greater support as including clear expectation setting with other services to ensure that other services knew that they were expected to engage with Working Wales whilst also alleviating any concerns other services had around support duplication.
- 5.20 'For me, it's having the backing from Welsh Government [and Welsh Government telling other services that] this is the expectation because every partner has got their own priorities and outcomes to meet, and I think that sometimes influences [how they react to Working Wales]. The key line I always give partners is we're not 'instead of' — we're 'as well as'. And so that message needs to come down and be embedded so we're not to be seen as a competitor. I think that message needs to come from policymakers down to or through Welsh Government.'
- (Management and delivery staff interview)**

¹⁰¹ Welsh Government (2022) [Careers Wales data linking feasibility study](#).

5.21 Overall, it is anticipated that a greater shared understanding of the Working Wales offer, both nationally and at a local level, and how it targets customers will improve staff and stakeholder buy-in. This will result in a more unified view of Working Wales as an all-Wales entry point to employability support.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Between February 2019 and March 2023, Working Wales worked with 95,164 customers through 120,730 episodes across Wales. During this time, it had to adapt to a wide range of external and global pressures, e.g. COVID-19, emerging and ongoing political global conflicts, and the cost-of-living crisis. Despite these pressures, Working Wales had successfully continued to adapt its service to ensure that it could support a diverse range of customer needs. This section summarises key strategic findings explored within the report and addresses key research questions outlined in Section 1.

The value of the model and its one-team approach

6.2 The main function of Working Wales is to provide an all-Wales 'one-team approach' entry point for free and impartial employability support. The Working Wales service was introduced in 2019 to offer streamlined and efficient employability support that is tailored to an individual's needs. It enables individuals to talk to accredited careers advisers and employability coaches about employment and skills, their aims and aspirations, and any challenges that they face in obtaining and maintaining work, education or training or advancing their career.

6.3 Where the 'one-team approach' is perceived to be working well by staff and stakeholders, this is largely due to the effective collaboration between staff across a range of partners. Whilst some variability in the offer was cited, clear and effective lines of communication between Working Wales and other partners are perceived to be a key aspect of the Working Wales model which enables the service to be an effective gateway for employability support across Wales.

6.4 As a result of the Working Wales approach, Working Wales staff are commonly perceived to be sitting in a unique and advantageous position which benefits customers. Careers advisers can offer high-quality and impartial careers guidance, and employability coaches can offer employability support which directly responds to the needs of the individual customer. Moreover, staff are able to utilise resources and expertise across their team and other programmes to ensure that the customer has the best chance possible of securing positive next steps. In addition,

stakeholders reported that they find working with Working Wales to be effective because the staff are 'transparent' and 'willing to learn'. This ensures that partners feel as though they are working with Working Wales (rather than alongside it). This effective co-working and information sharing are perceived to be encouraging a more coherent and less complicated overview of employability support across Wales.

- 6.5 As is common with employability support due to the wide range of providers and funding sources, some partner stakeholders expressed concerns surrounding Working Wales employability support duplicating other service offers. It is important to highlight that the evaluation cannot verify this perception. Moreover, it is important to consider that other service providers may duplicate the Working Wales offer and/or provide unsuitable support based on an individual customer's needs. Overall, greater information sharing by Working Wales with regard to local and impartial approaches may provide clarity as to where Working Wales' remit lies, at a local level, and what other services it should expect to provide.
- 6.6 Overall, staff and stakeholders were generally positive about the position of Working Wales and value it as a national model, reporting that it is, or is becoming, an effective entry point for employability support across Wales. Within the universal model, Working Wales staff are seen to effectively share information with other services to ensure that there is greater awareness of where the service can offer support and add value to the wider employability offer locally and nationally, demonstrating its success as a multi-agency partner.

Geographical accessibility of service

- 6.7 Working Wales customer engagement is broadly reflective of population sizes across local authorities. This suggests that Working Wales is successfully reaching customers across a wide range of local authorities. Customers in Blaenau Gwent, Carmarthenshire, and Caerphilly appear to be the most overrepresented based on general population sizes, whilst customers in Flintshire and Cardiff are the most underrepresented.
- 6.8 Almost one third of all Working Wales customers reside in rural authorities, whilst a quarter of customers live in urban authorities and almost a quarter live in Valleys

authorities. Considering the proportionate coverage of local authorities and the distribution of customers across a range of urban and rural localities, Working Wales appears to effectively cover a diverse range of geography across Wales.

- 6.9 The Working Wales remote support offer, which increased considerably as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, was widely perceived by staff and stakeholders to be a helpful addition to the service that has made Working Wales more inclusive. Whilst customers and staff still see considerable value in the face-to-face support offer, it was acknowledged that remote support is a more effective solution where physical access to a site is difficult and/or specific engagement is light-touch. Programme-level monitoring information also suggests that blended support has continued to be the preferred option across customers.
- 6.10 Since 2020, remote interaction has declined, whilst in-person support has increased at a slower rate. As of 2023, 'blended' Working Wales support (which includes a combination of in-person and remote support) is most common, constituting two fifths (42 per cent) of all Working Wales interactions. This suggests that there is still considerable demand for the remote Working Wales support offer after the easing of pandemic restrictions but that a combination of remote and face-to-face support is preferred by customers.

Reaching customers

- 6.11 There are a wide range of referral routes into Working Wales; however, almost half (45 per cent) of all Working Wales customers first refer themselves to the service, whilst over a quarter of first referrals are via Jobcentre Plus (29 per cent). The prominence of self-referrals suggests that general Working Wales awareness-raising activities and outreach are effective and essential for the longer-term sustainability of Working Wales.
- 6.12 A range of awareness-raising and outreach activities were adopted to promote Working Wales and engage customers. At a local level, staff felt that being 'visible' in local areas is key to successful awareness as well as customer engagement. As a result of outreach activities, staff and stakeholders felt that Working Wales can and does reach people who are actively seeking support and who may not have been reached by other programmes. However, interviews indicated that there is a

limited consistent promotional strategy locally, with many regional teams having to rely on local knowledge and partners to promote Working Wales.

- 6.13 The resource available through the centralised social media team for Working Wales was praised by stakeholders and staff because it was perceived to be having greater capacity than that of other support programmes to showcase the service and engage prospective customers. However, staff and stakeholders also suggested that local teams would benefit from more locally relevant social media resource to enhance engagement with local offers.
- 6.14 Staff interviews indicated that there are a number of groups that they find difficult to engage in Working Wales activities. Most frequently, staff reported that engaging young people in any type of provision once they have left formal education and/or other support is challenging.
- 6.15 Staff and stakeholders also reported facing challenges in engaging with individuals who identify as Black, Asian and/or another minority ethnic group. Where this was the case, staff suggested that their workforce is not typically representative of the populations that they look to serve, with most staff identifying as White. Where possible, regional Working Wales teams work with partners that better represent minority ethnic groups. However, staff acknowledged that greater efforts to diversify the Working Wales delivery team may be required in the future.

Inclusivity of service delivery

- 6.16 Working Wales is designed to be accessible to employed, unemployed, and economically inactive people across Wales. Population statistics suggest that males are overrepresented in the customer sample, with male customers accounting for under 60 per cent of the total customers engaged in Working Wales. This suggests that additional interrogation at a local level should be conducted to better understand why more males are engaging with the service and how the service could better engage females.
- 6.17 The ethnic profile of customers engaged in Working Wales is broadly in line with the ethnic profile across Wales. Whilst there are not fixed demographic targets for Working Wales customer engagement, service engagement with Black, Asian and

minority ethnic groups is proportionally in line with or higher than that of other Welsh Government employability programmes.

- 6.18 A demographic assessment of the Working Wales profile indicates that disabled people are underrepresented. It is known that other programmes, such as those supported through the European Social Fund, have similarly found it difficult to engage economically inactive customers, including disabled individuals and those with long-term health conditions. This suggests that, across the UK, there remain challenges engaging disabled individuals with employability support. Progress against Working Wales 4-year Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) demonstrates that relationships have been developed with Welsh Government Disabled People's Employment Champions and the DWP Disability Champions. This has enabled the promoting and sharing of information on the support available for individuals and employers, aiming to increase the number of disabled customers who progress into work.

Delivery model

- 6.19 Working Wales support looks to support customers into the 'right' employment for that individual. When first engaging with Working Wales, customers are supported by a careers adviser who uses an advice- and guidance-led enhanced needs assessment of the individual's circumstances and barriers preventing them from progressing, which enables them to refer the individual to the right support. For employability support, customers can be referred to a Working Wales employability coach. The Working Wales employability support offer includes supporting customers to find and apply for jobs and prepare for interviews.
- 6.20 Whilst there is a wide range of employability support on offer across Wales, the added value and key strength of Working Wales is perceived to be its unique careers guidance offer. Careers Wales and Working Wales are the only services across Wales that offer Level 6 accredited careers guidance. This ensures that a high-quality and impartial service is offered locally and nationally. In particular, stakeholders praised the ability of the service to be impartial, ensuring that customers are able to trust that Working Wales advisers are advocating for them and working to ensure that their best interests are met. Accredited advice as well as

Working Wales staff's in-depth knowledge of local and national schemes were perceived by staff and stakeholders to be an advantage for customers and supporting partners with information that was outside of their remit.

- 6.21 Reflecting on which Working Wales delivery models are working well, staff and stakeholders were positive about their ability to offer outreach and work with partners with expertise in engaging target groups. Strategic benefits of the co-location model were also identified by staff. These included working with potential co-location partners to develop a strategic overview of local services, to minimise the duplication of employability support, and to create a hub that was mutually beneficial for all partners and supported customer transitions between services. Working Wales regional teams suggested that the co-location model allows them to consider where they are currently meeting the needs of customers and where additional effort should be deployed. This is viewed to be driving efficiency, reducing gaps in provision and improving the ability of staff to cross-refer customers.
- 6.22 The added value of Working Wales is also evident through its multi-agency pop-up model. Where pop-up Working Wales sites are effective, they meet a specific and, in some cases, urgent need. In particular, staff and stakeholders praised Working Wales pop-up sites in workplaces in which mass redundancies had occurred. This model worked well because it provided customers with consistent and needed support.
- 6.23 However, whilst initial research was conducted to identify population characteristics and needs across local authorities, current approaches to outreach and co-location appear to be varied across Working Wales, with a considerable focus on footfall as well as potential volumes of referrals. Responding effectively to demand needs is a core aspect of the flexible Working Wales approach, but additional informed targeting of specific groups and needs may support a more systematic local approach to Working Wales support.
- 6.24 Reflecting on the 'blended' Working Wales support offer, staff and stakeholders praised the increased opportunity for customers to engage with Working Wales remotely. It was commonly perceived, however, that face-to-face support is more effective than remote support in addressing customers' presenting needs, as it

allows staff to see the 'whole picture'. Additionally, online support can be challenging for customers with limited or non-existent digital literacy and/or limited English or Welsh language skills. However, it is important to acknowledge that remote support commonly allows customers to meet with an adviser sooner. Overall, remote support was perceived to be most effective when preceded by face-to-face support, allowing customers and staff to establish a trusting relationship in person before engaging remotely.

Service offer across Wales (including partnership working)

- 6.25 Whilst the delivery model for Working Wales is consistent across Wales, the approach taken to providing support and making referrals varies depending on local partners and infrastructure. Regionally, the infrastructure for Working Wales differs based on the availability and proximity of Careers Wales offices, partner relationships (and therefore co-location sites), and the availability and knowledge of potential outreach locations. This flexible approach is key to the added value of Working Wales, supporting effective collaboration and efficiency (rather than maintaining a rigid model).
- 6.26 Staff were commonly positive about the adaptability of the Working Wales approach, as it allows them to use their local knowledge and networks to best position the Working Wales offer for local people. However, stakeholders also reported that regional differences in the Working Wales service can result in the availability of the offer varying across Wales. Where regional Working Wales offers were perceived to be less effective, this was the result of resource pressures as well as variation in how different regional teams prioritised caseloads.
- 6.27 Co-location sites were reported by staff to be predominantly decided based on existing access to an area with customer demand and/or high footfall. Co-location relationships also develop due to strategic motivations such as wanting to develop a strategic overview of local services or to minimise the duplication of employability support. This approach to partnership working was perceived by staff to be allowing them to consider where they are currently meeting the needs of customers and where additional effort should be deployed. This suggests that the current approach

drives efficiency, reducing gaps in provision and improving the ability of staff to cross-refer customers.

- 6.28 Although Working Wales staff's expertise and local knowledge do provide value to Working Wales, there is a risk that decisions are not being made based on current, full and extensive knowledge of local services and needs. Insight and intelligence are available from Careers Wales on the performance of the Working Wales service and how well it aligns with national and local needs. Stakeholder and staff reflections suggest that greater communication between local teams, RSPs, and the Welsh Government based on this intelligence would aid a mutual understanding of the Working Wales national and local remits. This process would also support the continued aim to ensure that the service is inclusive and effectively reaches individuals in need of support.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 As a result of the programme-level evaluation, the following recommendations have been identified to aid and improve future delivery of Working Wales:
- 7.2 **Recommendation 1:** To gain a better understanding of why some areas and customers are overrepresented or underrepresented, future provision should look to develop systematic processes in which Careers Wales shares this contextual information with regional Working Wales teams. This will ensure that there is greater internal dialogue regarding performance and engagement.
- 7.3 **Recommendation 2:** Additional or existing resource should be allocated to annual or biannual strategic sessions to inform and decide on local approaches, including processes for selecting co-location and pop-up sites, that will fit with the universal offer. It is anticipated that this will be informed by Careers Wales intelligence and insight on service reach, new and emerging support offers and local, regional and national labour market information. The sessions should be scheduled between regional and national Working Wales teams, RSPs, and Welsh Government representatives. This will ensure that outreach and co-location decision making is informed by demand, local needs, and the wider support offer.
- 7.4 **Recommendation 3:** Requirements for Level 6 accredited careers advisers should be retained for future provision. Level 6 accredited careers guidance ensures that Working Wales customers receive high-quality and impartial support. As the only service across Wales that offers this accredited support, sustaining this aspect of the Working Wales model will ensure that the additional value of the service is preserved.
- 7.5 **Recommendation 4:** Where feasible, a blended Working Wales support offer should be retained to allow for service efficiencies. Whilst remote support may be the only viable option for some customers due to the distance or inaccessibility of Working Wales sites, customers and staff benefit from a hybrid approach.
- 7.6 **Recommendation 5:** To ensure that the service is being delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible, additional information and guidance regarding the Working Wales remit should be developed to be shared with internal Careers Wales

staff and external partner staff. This will encourage a more defined understanding of what Working Wales can offer, as well as reducing the burden on delivery staff to inform new partners and/or new partner staff. Please note that this recommendation is based on views articulated by staff and stakeholders that engaged with this evaluation. This may not be generalisable across all Working Wales staff and stakeholders.

- 7.7 **Recommendation 6:** Future delivery should consider if and how additional resource or altered ways of working could support regional teams to enhance their local offer and their social media campaigns. This would enable regional teams to undertake more local marketing campaigns. Any additional local social media strategies should be in line with local needs identified between regional teams, RSPs, and in response to Careers Wales data.¹⁰²
- 7.8 **Recommendation 7:** Whilst current Working Wales outreach appears to be effective for older age groups, greater engagement with specialist youth support in local areas may be required in order to better target young people who have disengaged from education and/or alternative support. Specialist youth support may include local organisations and charities or organisations that have support offers nationally e.g. Llamau.
- 7.9 **Recommendation 8:** Employability support available should be reviewed at national and local levels to ascertain demand and duplication risk to inform regional teams and stakeholders on the 'live' employability support offer across Wales. This support offer could be considered in strategic meetings between Working Wales, the Welsh Government, and RSPs, informed by Careers Wales intelligence and insight.¹⁰³
- 7.10 **Recommendation 9:** To ensure that there is a consistent and accurate understanding of the universal and local Working Wales offer, the Welsh Government and local authorities should look to develop and share additional consistent messaging across departments and national programmes to encourage

¹⁰² Please note that strategic meetings referenced here are the same meetings proposed in Recommendation 2.

¹⁰³ Please note that strategic meetings referenced here are the same meetings proposed in Recommendation 2.

greater buy-in. It is acknowledged that the employability support landscape across Wales can appear to be 'fragmented' and changeable due to the range of support on offer through both longer-term and short-term funds. Working Wales should act as an 'anchor', mapping out existing local and national support and disseminating this information to key partners.

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Annexe One: Research Tools

Management and delivery staff interviews

Introduction

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role?

Delivery model

2. Could you tell me a little bit about how Working Wales is delivered in your area?
3. What are the key factors that influence the selection of outreach locations in your area?
4. What level of engagement do you tend to see within outreach locations, and how does this differ across locations?
5. How, if at all, has your approach to outreach changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. Have levels of engagement with outreach locations changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
7. How effective are current outreach locations for delivering the Working Wales service?
8. To what extent do you agree that the current locations in your region are easy for customers to reach? Please explain your answer.
9. To what extent do you agree that the environment(s) is welcoming? Is there anything that could be done to make the venues more inviting or welcoming?

Co-location and partnership working

10. Which, if any, partners do you work with in your area to co-locate services?
11. What influenced the decisions to co-locate with these partners?
12. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service in terms of either the level of engagement or the cohort of customers that you have been able to reach? If so, how has this been beneficial?

13. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service or has had unintended consequences? If so, how has this been less beneficial?
14. From your perspective, what works well regarding the overall delivery model in your area?
15. Is there anything that does not work or that has been challenging?

Service reach and engagement

16. What activities do you deliver to engage customers and raise awareness of Working Wales?
17. How effective are these activities at raising awareness and reaching customers?
Does this differ for different groups accessing Working Wales (e.g. young people)?
18. As far as you are aware, are there any communities that have been harder to reach or who do not engage with the provision?
These might include geographical communities or demographic groups.
19. Do you currently undertake any targeted activities to facilitate engagement from these groups or localities? If so, please describe.
20. What else do you think could be done to better support the engagement of these communities or localities?

Referrals and access to services

21. Have there been any changes to the services or partners that you typically signpost to within the last two years? If so, what client needs do these support?
22. Are there any gaps in the employability support available locally to meet the needs of Working Wales customers?
23. Can these needs be met by other local agencies or partners?

Changing economic and social context

24. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals approaching Working Wales for support changed, or have the support needs that individuals present with changed as a result of the changing economic circumstances?
25. Are there further adaptations that you feel that the service needs to make to respond to new or emerging customer needs?

26. Could any of these needs be met by other existing provision?

Support for refugees and migrants

27. What are the main support needs that refugees and migrants present to the service with?

28. What support is available in your local area to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations and other agencies)?

29. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or support available to refugees and forced migrants within your area that are not currently being met by Working Wales or appropriate local partners/services?

The whole-Wales approach

30. Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support as part of a 'one-team approach'. To what extent do you feel that this vision has been realised?

31. What do you feel are the main strengths of this approach?

32. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?

33. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?

34. Is there any employability provision in your local area that is not accessed through Working Wales? If so, what is the impact of this on the service and customers?

35. Is there anything else that has impacted the whole-Wales approach to employability provision?

Stakeholder interviews

Introduction

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role and how you have interacted with Working Wales?

The whole-Wales approach

Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support as part of a 'one-team approach'.

2. What do you feel are the main strengths of the Working Wales approach?
3. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?
4. Which elements of the service are most important and why?
5. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?
6. Going forward, what opportunities are there for the service to support the whole-Wales approach to employability?
7. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals who might benefit from a Working Wales interaction changed as a result of changing social and economic circumstances, or have the support needs of individuals changed?
8. How might Working Wales need to adapt to respond to these changes?
9. Are there any threats to the effectiveness of Working Wales that have emerged since the design of the service?

Delivery model – locations and partnerships

10. Working Wales is currently delivered remotely and face-to-face across a range of locations, with some sites/pop-ups co-located alongside other provision or services. Do you have any views on the current locations/pop-up sites used in your area?
11. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been beneficial?
12. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been less beneficial?

13. What are your perspectives on the current remote offer for Working Wales?

Delivery model – engagement, inclusion and accessibility of support

14. From your perspective, is Working Wales reaching those that would benefit from a Working Wales interaction?

15. If not, which communities or groups are not currently being reached? This could include geographical communities or demographic groups.

16. Are there any factors that may be impacting engagement with these communities? What could Working Wales do to better reach these communities?

17. Is there anything that you think that the service could do to improve the engagement and accessibility of support with individuals from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds?

18. Is there anything that you think that the service could do to improve the engagement and accessibility of support with disabled people?

Support for refugees and migrants

19. With regard to employability, what are the main support needs for refugees and migrants?

20. What support is available to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations and other agencies)?

21. How effectively are these needs currently being met?

22. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or employability support available to refugees and migrants?

Closing comments

23. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding Working Wales?

Participant Intercept Survey (remote survey)

1. Have you ever attended a Working Wales centre or pop-up?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. How do you access the Working Wales service? Please select all options that apply.
 - a. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through a career centre
 - b. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through Jobcentre Plus
 - c. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through a community venue
 - d. On the telephone
 - e. Online
 - f. Other
 - i.[If Other] Please explain how you have accessed Working Wales:

Perspectives on service location and venue

3. How easy is it for you to access a Working Wales centre/pop-up?
 - a. Very easy
 - b. Somewhat easy
 - c. Neither easy nor difficult
 - d. Somewhat difficult
 - e. Very difficult
 - f. Not sure
4. Why do you say that?
5. [If accessed a physical venue] How do you typically travel to the venue?
 - a. On foot
 - b. By bike/e-scooter
 - c. By bus
 - d. By train
 - e. By car
 - f. By taxi
 - g. Other
 - i.[If Other] Please explain how you travel to the venue:
6. How far do you have to travel to reach a Working Wales centre/pop-up location?

- a. Less than 1 mile
 - b. 2–3 miles
 - c. 4–5 miles
 - d. More than 5 miles
 - e. Not sure
7. [If accessed a physical venue] How welcoming do you find the venue for the service?
- a. Very welcoming
 - b. Somewhat welcoming
 - c. Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming
 - d. Somewhat unwelcoming
 - e. Unwelcoming
8. [If accessed a physical venue] Why do you say that?
9. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales location or venue?

Mode of access

10. [If accessed a physical venue **and** online/over the telephone] Do you typically access Working Wales provision face-to-face or remotely?
- a. Mostly face-to-face
 - b. Mostly remotely (via telephone or online)
 - c. An equal mixture of the two
11. Are there any aspects of the service that you would prefer to access face-to-face?
12. Are there any aspects of the service that you prefer to access remotely (via telephone or online)?
13. Which (if any) remote support have you accessed from Working Wales?
- a. Self-help resources on the website
 - b. The Support Finder tool
 - c. Web chat with an adviser
 - d. Video or telephone appointments with an adviser
 - e. Something else (Please tell me about it)
 - f. Unsure
 - g. None of the above

14. [Carry forward answers] How helpful was this support?

- a. Very helpful
- b. Somewhat helpful
- c. Not at all helpful

15. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales remote provision?

Experience of support

16. What prompted you to access the Working Wales service?

17. To what extent do you feel that Working Wales was able to meet your support needs?

- a. To a great extent
- b. To some extent
- c. To a little extent
- d. To no extent

18. Why do you say that?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to share about Working Wales?

Demographic information

As part of our research, we are looking to better understand how different people experience the service. To do this, we are asking customers to provide a few personal details to us. You are free not to answer any questions.

20. Which local authority do you live in?

21. Please could you tell me your age?

22. What is your sex?

23. Is the gender that you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

24. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

[Note to interviewer: Follow [GSS Guidance](#) on how this question should be read for telephone interviews]

25. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Participant Intercept Survey (face-to-face guide)

1. Name of Working Wales site
2. Host venue:
 - a. Career centre
 - b. Jobcentre Plus
 - c. Community venue
 - d. Other (Please state)

Perspectives on service location and venue

3. How easy is it for you to access a Working Wales centre/pop-up?
 - a. Very easy
 - b. Somewhat easy
 - c. Neither easy nor difficult
 - d. Somewhat difficult
 - e. Very difficult
 - f. Not sure
4. Why do you say that?
5. How do you typically travel to the venue?
 - a. On foot
 - b. By bike/e-scooter
 - c. By bus
 - d. By train
 - e. By car
 - f. By taxi
 - g. Other
 - i. [If Other] Please explain how you travel to the venue:
6. How far do you have to travel to reach a Working Wales centre/pop-up location?
 - a. Less than 1 mile
 - b. 2–3 miles
 - c. 4–5 miles
 - d. More than 5 miles
 - e. Not sure

7. How welcoming do you find the venue for the service?
 - a. Very welcoming
 - b. Somewhat welcoming
 - c. Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming
 - d. Somewhat unwelcoming
 - e. Unwelcoming
8. Why do you say that?
9. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales location or venue?

Mode of access

10. Do you typically access Working Wales provision face-to-face or remotely?
 - a. Mostly face-to-face
 - b. Mostly remotely (via telephone or online)
 - c. An equal mixture of the two
11. Are there any aspects of the service that you would prefer to access face-to-face?
12. Are there any aspects of the service that you prefer to access remotely (via telephone or online)?
13. Which (if any) remote support have you accessed from Working Wales?
 - a. Self-help resources on the website
 - b. The Support Finder tool
 - c. Web chat with an adviser
 - d. Video or telephone appointments with an adviser
 - e. Something else (Please tell me about it)
 - f. Unsure
 - g. None of the above
14. [Carry forward answers] How helpful was this support?
 - a. Very helpful
 - b. Somewhat helpful
 - c. Not at all helpful
15. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales remote provision?

Experience of support

16. What prompted you to access the Working Wales service?

17. To what extent do you feel that Working Wales was able to meet your support needs?

- a. To a great extent
- b. To some extent
- c. To a little extent
- d. To no extent

18. Why do you say that?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to share about Working Wales?

Demographic details

As part of our research, we are looking to better understand how different people experience the service. To do this, we are asking customers to provide a few personal details to us.

20. Which local authority do you live in?

21. Please could you tell me your age?

22. What is your sex?

23. Is the gender that you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

24. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

25. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Annexe Two: Privacy Notices

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with Working Wales management and advisers

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with Working Wales management and advisers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, workshops and surveys, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data are defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and, where available, telephone number) from either:

- Welsh Government in the case of Working Wales management staff; or
- Careers Wales in the case of Working Wales advisers.

The Welsh Government and Careers Wales hold your information because of your involvement with delivery of the Working Wales service. Wavehill will only use email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in an MS Teams interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. You can choose to take part in an interview over the telephone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it from the Welsh Government or Careers Wales.

In all instances, your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders, then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You are not required to provide any additional personal data as part of the interview, with the exception of your image if you agree to an MS Teams interview being video-recorded. We wish to record MS Teams interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme
- Assess the performance and impact of the service
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill three months after the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Wavehill will provide the Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this research project. You have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with stakeholders

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with strategic stakeholders and partner organisations.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data are defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and, where available, telephone number) from one of the following:

- Careers Wales, who hold your details because of your involvement with the Working Wales programme, and you have agreed for your details to be shared with Wavehill to take part in this research project; or
- you agreed that your details could be shared with Wavehill after being contacted by someone already participating in this research who suggested that you may wish to take part.

Wavehill will only use provided email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in an online interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders, then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You can choose to take part in an interview over the telephone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to an online interview being video-recorded.

We may need to record interviews for operational reasons. If this is the case, we will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon

as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
- Assess the performance and impact of the service.
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use these data for research purposes. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill within three months of the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this evaluation. Specifically, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.org.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – online and telephone survey with customers

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through a survey with customers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the survey, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

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What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data are defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and/or telephone number) from Careers Wales. Careers Wales hold your information as a user of the Working Wales programme. Wavehill will only use your contact details for the purposes of this evaluation.

How you take part in the research will depend on the contact details that Careers Wales have available for you:

- **If an email address is available:** you will have been invited by email to complete the survey via a link. Completing the survey does not capture your email address or IP address and, as a result, your responses are anonymous.
- **If an email address is not available:** you will have been invited by telephone to complete the survey via a telephone interview. Wavehill do not record your name or contact details as part of your survey response.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part, then please let us know using the email address or telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research, then we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, the responses that you provide. The full survey results are only accessible to Wavehill.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
- Assess the performance and impact of the service.
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use these data for research purposes. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

When conducting surveys, Wavehill use a survey software program called Qualtrics. We have ensured that Qualtrics is compliant with the UK GDPR and meets our expectations in terms of the security of any data collected via the software.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill within three months of the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Wavehill will provide the Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this evaluation. Specifically, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Annexe Three: Variables Analysed

- Year joined
- Duration of support
- Referral_source
- Referred_by_org
- Status_at_joining
- Ward
- Local Authority
- Ruralurbanindicator
- Urbangroups
- Age (available only for 2019–2021 data)
- Age_bracket
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Is_disabled
- Home_language
- Highest_qual_level
- Preferred_language_verbal
- Preferred_language_written
- Forced migrant, refugee, asylum seeker
- Origin_country
- Repeat_joiner_within_year
- Motivation_issues
- Free_school_meals
- Alternative_curriculum
- Substance_issues
- School_poor_non_attender
- English_additional_language
- Veteran_or_service_family
- English_as_additional_language
- Housing_issues_or_homeless
- Lac_or_care_leaver
- Carer
- Young_single_parent_or_pregnancy
- Other_forced_migrant
- Refugee
- Asylum_seeker
- Rurality
- Probation
- In_custody
- Yos_offending_behaviour
- Support
- One_to_one_count
- One_to_one_duration
- Cwc_support_count
- Cwc_support_duration

- Advocacy_liaison_count
- Advocacy_liaison_duration

Interactions

- In_person_interactions
- Email_interactions
- Letter_interactions
- Messaging_service_interactions
- Telephone_interactions
- Text_interactions
- Video_interactions
- Webchat_interactions
- Webinar_interactions

Referrals

- R_access
- R_apprenticeship
- R_business_wales
- R_citizens_advice
- R_college
- R_college_pla
- R_cfw_plus
- R_employability_coaching
- R_employability_skills_programme
- R_employment
- R_engagement
- R_esf_project

- R_event
- R_housing_support
- R_jcp_youth_journey
- R_jgw_plus_advancement
- R_jgw_plus_employment
- R_jgw_plus_engagement
- R_jobcentre_plus
- R_jgw_legacy
- R_learning_training_provider
- R_level_1
- R_la_provision
- R_other
- R_pace
- R_prison_project
- R_react_iii
- R_react_plus
- R_self_help
- R_skills_to_succeed
- R_social_services
- R_summer_sorted
- R_support_agency
- R_uk_enic
- R_union
- R_university

- R_voluntary_work
- R_youth_service