

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi

YMCHWIL GYMDEITHASOL
Y LLYWODRAETH

CSR

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH

Analysis for Policy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Young Person's Guarantee Process Evaluation: Young People's Summary





The aim of the evaluation was to look at how the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) was set up and how it works with the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. It looked at how they have been put into practice. It also examined how well the YPG engages and supports young people.

What is the Young Person's Guarantee?

The **Young Person's Guarantee** (YPG) gives young people aged 16 to 24 living in Wales support to find education, training or a job, or become self-employed. Introduced in 2021, it aims to give young people easy access to advice, guidance, support and programmes to help them succeed.

The **Working Wales** service is part of Careers Wales and gives free and impartial careers information, advice and guidance. This gives a way for young people to access YPG support (although some of this support is also available directly to young people, without the need to go through Working Wales). The support available includes:

- Communities for Work Plus**
A job advice and mentoring service for people aged 20 and older. It helps people who are facing barriers to employment. It can also be used by people aged 16 to 19 who are not suitable for or choose not to have help from other programmes.
- Jobs Growth Wales Plus**
A training and development programme for people aged 16 to 19. It aims to give young people the skills, qualifications and experience they need to get a job or further training.

Big Ideas Wales
Self-employment support and advice for people aged 25 and under.

Apprenticeships
Practical training in a job combined with study.

The **Young Person's Guarantee: highlight report March 2024 to March 2025** contains more information.



What is the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework?

The **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** has been in place since 2013. It works with the Young Person's Guarantee. It helps young people aged 11 to 18 years who are:

- not in education, employment or training;
- at risk of becoming out of education, employment or training;
- at risk of being homeless.

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework helps young people who need support tailored to their circumstances. Local authorities and their partners work with other organisations to provide this help. Young people with the biggest barriers to engaging with learning are given lead workers, such as youth workers, to help them progress into work, education or training when they leave school.



The National Milestones for Wales

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** has seven national well-being goals. These goals are shown below.



The associated milestones are:

- that at least 90% of 16 to 24 year-olds will be in education, employment or training by 2050;
- to eradicate the gap between the employment rate in Wales and the UK by 2050, with a focus on fair work and raising labour market participation of under-represented groups.

The YPG and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework aim to help meet these national milestones.

How was information gathered for the evaluation?

- Research methods included:
- Reviews of official statistics, management information from services and programmes that help deliver the YPG, and evaluations of these services and programmes.
 - Interviews, focus groups and workshops with 75 stakeholders involved in developing and/or delivering the YPG and/or who work on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
 - In-depth interviews with 81 young people aged 16 to 24 living in different parts of Wales. The young people represented a range of equality characteristics. The interviews explored their experiences of making transitions (for example, moving from education to work).



Findings

Design

The YPG and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework share aims. They also have differences. For the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, young people can be tracked and contacted, and they have to reject the offer of support. In contrast, for the YPG, young people have to choose to take up support. There is an expectation that as adults, young people aged 18 years and over are independent. Having to choose to take up support works well for young people who feel motivated to continue in education or training or find work. Between 85 to 90% of young people aged 16 to 24 years make successful transitions into education, work, or training. But having to choose to take up support means a small number of young people who are not looking for work, education or training may miss out.

Putting it into practice

As part of the evaluation, we interviewed people who were involved in setting up the YPG and/or who worked on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. They suggested that putting the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and YPG into practice has generally worked well. But areas for improvement included:

- More detailed, unbiased information, advice and guidance for young people making choices at 16.
- Better communication of information to young people about the pathways they can take when they leave school.
- Strengthening employer engagement as part of the YPG.
- Further developing links between the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions and YPG services and programmes.

Effectiveness

The YPG is working for very large numbers of young people. Over 50,000 have now taken up the support. The evaluation showed that:

- A range of support is offered by the YPG and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. This works well to engage and support young people. The support is given through services like Working Wales and the Out of Work Service. It is also given through programmes like Jobs Growth Wales Plus and Communities for Work Plus.
- Around 40 to 60% of young people supported by programmes that make up the YPG achieve positive outcomes (for example, finding a job or progressing in their education). However, it was not clear whether some of these outcomes may have happened anyway, without the participants receiving YPG support.

Furthermore, the available evidence suggests that:

- A significant minority of young people do not take the offer of support.
- Overall there is continuing under-representation of disabled young people aged 16 to 24 in education, work and training support programmes and generally in education, work and training. This is despite stronger representation of disabled young people in programmes like Jobs Growth Wales Plus.
- Young women are also under-represented in some EET support services and programmes.

In addition, too many young people who are in education, work or training are not reaching their potential. For example, they might be in unsatisfactory education or training. Or they might be in unfair work, that is poorly paid, insecure and doesn't offer much opportunity for progression.

Official statistics tell us that the total number of young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in education, work or training in Wales has declined since the Great Recession (2008 to 2010). This decline has been particularly marked for young women aged 19 to 24. However, among young people who are not in education, work or training, there is a trend for some groups not to seek work.

As shown in Charts 1 and 2 below, in comparison to 2010, in 2023 there had been an increase in the number of young men aged 19 to 24 not in education, work or training who were not actively looking for or available to start work (called being economically inactive). In contrast, in this time period, the number of young women aged 19 to 24 not in education, work or training who were economically inactive had reduced. This is potentially reflective of:

- The rise in the proportion of young people (notably young men) who are economically inactive due to ill-health; and
- a decline in the proportion of young women who are economically inactive because of caring responsibilities, seen over the same period.

This rise in economic inactivity is a concern, because it potentially means that these young people are less likely to seek support to find work, compared to young people who are unemployed and actively looking for work.



Chart 1.

The estimated percentage of 19 to 24 year old males in Wales not in education, training or employment, by unemployment and economic inactivity status, 2004 to 2023.

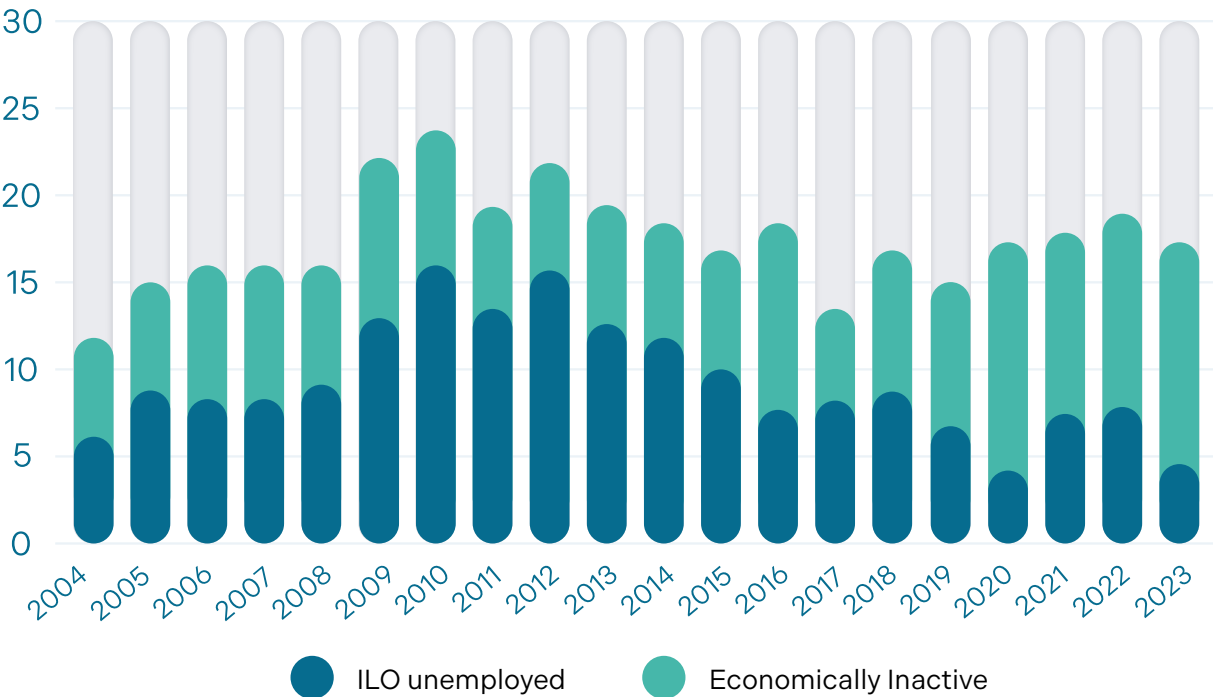


Chart 2.

The estimated percentage of 19 to 24 year old females not in education, training or employment, by unemployment and economic inactivity status, 2004 to 2023.



Source for the charts above: **Welsh Government: SFR Participation of young people in education and the labour market.** Estimates for 2023 are provisional.

Young people's transitions

The young people interviewed for the evaluation gave a range of things that helped or didn't help them make transitions into education, work, or training. These included:

- Difficult experiences in school. These were often linked to negative experiences such as bullying or periods of time in care. Some young people felt they had unmet additional learning needs and health problems. This included mental health issues. The disruption to their education caused by the pandemic was also mentioned a lot.
- Barriers to seeking out or taking up support. This included a lack of knowledge or trust/confidence in services. It also included feelings of being looked down upon or viewed badly by other people for using Job Centre Plus or mental health services.
- Feeling lost or unsure about their next steps. Young people described the value of trusted adults who could help guide and support them.
- Impairments, neurodivergence and/or mental health issues. This included the ways these could lead to discrimination when applying for a job. It also included failure by society to make reasonable adjustments, for example at college.



Conclusions

The YPG has influenced the support on education, work, and training available to young people in Wales. It has also helped link up policy areas concerned with education, work and training after statutory school age (16). A lot of young people aged 16 to 18 have taken up support from programmes like Jobs Growth Wales Plus. This may have helped to reduce the number of these young people who are not in education, work or training. Moreover, youth unemployment did not rise after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to 2021 as it was predicted to. Many interviewees said this was due to the success of the YPG and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

However, it is less clear if these changes in the offer of support contributed to as large a change as hoped in the behaviour of young people aged 19 to 24. Compared to those aged 16 to 18, a larger proportion of 19 to 24 year-olds are not in education, work, or training. Furthermore, among young people who are not in education, work or training, there is a larger proportion of 19 to 24 year-olds than 16 to 18 year-olds who are not looking for work and not engaging with the YPG.

There are differences in data collection across different programmes and services and there is difficulty comparing service or programme data with national statistics (for example, on disability). This makes it difficult to test how effective the YPG has been for different groups of young people. But the evaluation did find gaps and weaknesses in education, work and training support for some young people. This included young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues, those who are neurodivergent and those living in rural areas.

What does this mean for Welsh Government policy?

The current programmes that make up the YPG are effective and based on evidence (informed by 'what works'). But the evaluation shows that new strategies are needed to reach and engage young people. This particularly applies to 19 to 24 year-olds who have become more and more disengaged from education, work, and training and the support available. These new strategies are likely to be needed to help achieve the national milestones, particularly that 90% of young people are in work, education or training by 2050, and that this participation is increased for under-represented groups.

Options include continuing with the existing YPG approach and adapting the support offered where necessary, and trying new approaches to help young people. If trying new approaches, research evidence suggests the need to experiment with these by trying them out in some local areas as a first step. For example, a new project could be set up to focus on young people who do not engage with help from the YPG. In order to understand if this new project was working, the evaluation recommends regular review, with changes made as needed. It also recommends a strong focus upon young people's experiences during the project, taking into consideration their capabilities, motivations, access to opportunities and feedback on the project.

Relationships with trusted adults has a part to play in re-engaging young people in education, work and training. This should build upon actions taken to motivate young people, such as the Feed Your Positivity campaign and making access to welfare payments conditional (for example, on seeking work). Relationships between young people and trusted adults take time to develop and nurture. This highlights the importance of long-term funding for services.

It is likely that the Young Person's Guarantee is limited in how much it can increase young people's capabilities, motivation and access to opportunities. So, achieving the national milestones will likely require action:

- in pre- and post-16 education and training to help build young people's capabilities and improve young people's access to impartial information, advice and guidance about the options open to them.
- with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure a 'joined up' approach to employment support for young people.
- with employers and education and training settings to help ensure that, where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are made.

There will be a need for action across Welsh Government departments to help address all the issues young people may face. Welsh Government will also need to work with Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education in Wales), and at regional and local levels through the work of local authorities and Regional Skills Partnerships.



Who coordinated the evaluation and what were the challenges?

Welsh Government commissioned a charity called People and Work to carry out the evaluation in January 2023. People and Work were also commissioned to carry out an **Evaluability Assessment** of the YPG, to see if it was suitable for different kinds of evaluation and how it could be evaluated. This was published in January this year. Before that, People and Work completed a **Rapid Evidence Review: supporting young people who are not in employment, education, or training**,

to examine the wider research evidence on this topic. The evaluation described in this summary was then completed between April 2024 and July 2025.

A challenge for the evaluation was defining the boundaries and scope of the YPG. This is because it has many parts, tries to oversee all employability programmes for young people, and its offer has developed over time.

Further information

For further information, you can read the full evaluation report or main summary, available here: gov.wales/young-persons-guarantee-process-evaluation.

You can also find more information relating to the Young Person's Guarantee online:

- Working Wales web site: [Young Person's Guarantee | Working Wales](#).
- Most recent Welsh Government report about YPG developments: [Young Person's Guarantee: highlight report March 2024 to March 2025](#).
- Information about focus group research conducted with young people across Wales: [Young Person's Guarantee National Conversation: update for participants](#).
- Overview of Beaufort research: [Delivering insight into the education, training, and work needs of 16–24-year-olds in Wales](#).

The email address for queries or further information is KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

Details about the summary

This summary was produced by the Welsh Government and is based on a report produced by People and Work:

Duncan Holtom with Rhodri Bowen and Emma Preece (2025), Young Person's Guarantee: Process Evaluation. Summary. Cardiff: Welsh Government. GSR report number 93/2025.

The link to this report is above.

All figures were correct at the time of drafting.

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

OGL © Crown copyright 2025, Welsh Government, WG52997, Digital ISBN 978-1-80633-500-8
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd /
This document is also available in Welsh