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Formative evaluation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Final report

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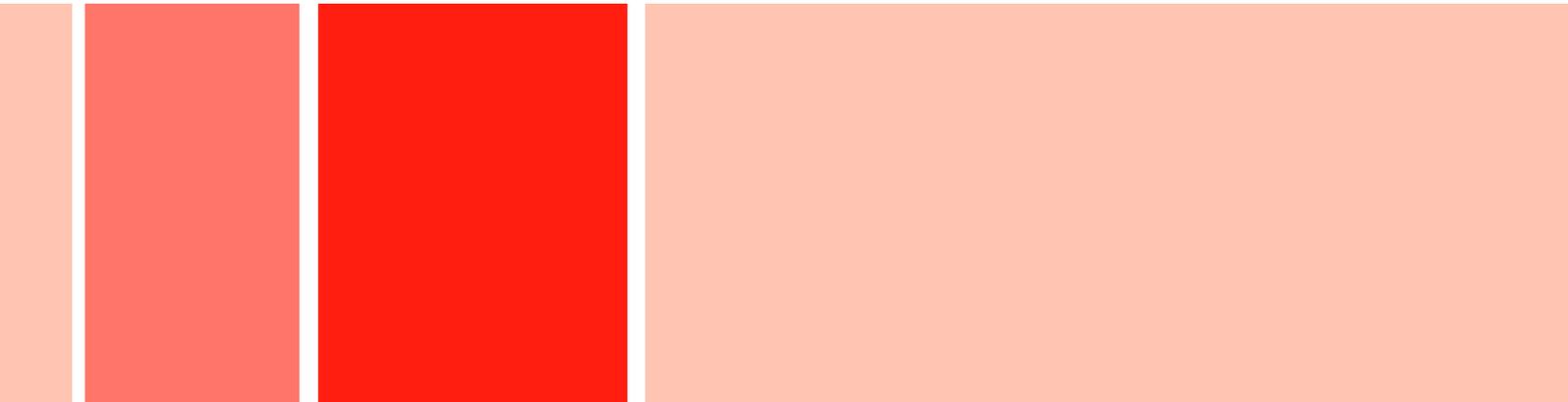
FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK: FINAL REPORT

ICF International   **Arad research**

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

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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AWS	Attendance and Wellbeing Officers
BRAVO	Bridgend College Risk Assessment and Value-added Outcomes
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CAHMS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CAIS	Cyngor Alcohol Information Service
CAP	Common Application Process
CF	Communities First
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CWVYS	Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
CWW	Careers and the World of Work
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EI	Early Identification
EOTAS	Educated Otherwise than At School
EPCs	Engagement and Progression Coordinators
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
FIS	Family Information Service
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GISDA	Grŵp Ieuenctid Sengl Digartref Arfon
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IAG	Information, Advice or Guidance
ICF	Inner City Fund
ISOS	ISOS
ISPs	Information Sharing Protocols
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JGW	Jobs Growth Wales
KIT	Keeping In Touch
LAs	Local Authorities
LLWR	Lifelong Learning Wales Record
LSB	Local Service Board
MIS	Management Information System
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NTfW	National Training Federation for Wales
PEP	Progressive Engagement Pathways
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PPG	Positive Pathways Group
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RAG	Red, Amber, and Green
RPA	Raising the participation age
SAO	Senior Accountable Officer

Acronym	Definition
SEET	Supporting Engagement in Education and Training
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
SRO	Senior Responsible Owner
STEM	Standards Training in Electronics Manufacture
TSWs	Transition Support Workers
UKCES	United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills
VCS	Voluntary Community Service
WASPI	Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information
WBL	Work Based Learning
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
YEPF	Youth Engagement and Progression Framework
YMCA	YMCA Wales Community College
YOTs	Youth Offending Teams

Executive summary

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) aims to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Framework has six components, proven to be effective at increasing youth engagement and progression when implemented together as part of a strategy. These are: early identification, better brokerage and coordination of support; stronger tracking and transition of young people; ensuring provision meets the needs of young people; a focus on employability skills and opportunities for employment among young people; and greater accountability. Local authorities (LAs) have been charged with the role of leading implementation of the Framework, working closely with Careers Wales, youth services, schools, training providers to those aged 16 and over and other partners.

Purpose of the study

The evaluation aimed to assess progress made to implement the Framework and the effectiveness of implementation processes with a view to considering whether the non-statutory guidance is sufficient to achieve the Welsh Government's ambitions and targets and identifying learning to improve guidance and implementation.

In parallel, a draft impact evaluation framework was developed to inform the approach and timing of an impact evaluation of the YEPF.

Method

After an initial scoping stage to develop an evaluation framework the formative evaluation included:

- mapping progress in each LA and across Wales to understand the rationale, management and implementation of local authority plans; progress made so far; and what evidence is being used to monitor progress and outcomes

- understanding what actions and systems have underpinned progress made to enable greater understanding of how local authorities and partners are working together to deliver the YEPF, what is working well, and what have been the challenges.

The study draws on the following research tasks:

- a review of data and documents about the YEPF. This included: internal programme management documentation, local authority progress reports and action plans; management information data; and published documents such as the YEPF implementation plan, timeline and accompanying guidance document

- eight scoping interviews with Welsh Government programme staff and key partners to develop an understanding of how the YEPF was designed and developed

- analysis of official statistics on achievement, employment and young people who are NEET in each local authority area to understand trends, differences and progress

- interviews of 162 local authority area implementation staff, with an average of seven interviews per LA. This included: 74 LA stakeholders (senior responsible officers, strategic managers, operational managers); 19 representatives of post-16 providers; eight representatives of schools; 24 representatives of Careers Wales; four representatives of Jobcentre Plus (JCP); and eight representatives of the voluntary and community sector. Towards the end of the study all but one of the Engagement and Progression Coordinators (EPCs) employed by LAs was re-interviewed to provide an update on progress

- interviews with 20 stakeholders with a close interest in the programme because of their involvement in its development, oversight of delivery and on the ground delivery with a range of LAs

- case study research in eight LAs focusing on a specific strand of the YEPF implementation where strong progress had been made and in 3-4 LAs focusing on a specific cross cutting theme (meeting Welsh language needs, managing change in difficult financial circumstances). These included 99 interviews of stakeholders in LAs, providers, Careers Wales and other organisations and the engagement of 49 young people who were beneficiaries (in six case studies where these could be identified)

- a stakeholder survey of participants in the implementation of YEPF to gauge perceptions of involvement and improvement in arrangements and systems since the launch of the YEPF. This had a 34% response rate

- discussion with participants in the YEPF regional meetings during December 2014 about processes to put in place elements of the YEPF successfully.

To consider the scope of an impact evaluation of the YEPF, the different approaches were assessed, an evaluation framework developed and data sources to measure outcomes and impacts were reviewed in consultation with staff in the Welsh Government, Careers Wales and local authority leads.

Key findings

The research found that all LAs have made progress with implementing the YEPF since October 2013. Many interviewees praised the YEPF as the best guidance/strategy related to young people produced by the Welsh Government. Most interviewees believe that the YEPF has made a difference to collaboration between all partners as well as the engagement of the key organisations' leaders. Below are findings in relation to specific areas of implementation[1].

- Generally, LAs have taken steps to develop effective strategic governance arrangements for the YEPF. All LAs had appointed a Senior Accountable Officer (SAO) for the YEPF. Most have strategic steering groups that include a range of relevant internal and external partners led by SAOs. A few LAs had still to finalise strategic steering arrangements and either did not have a full range of partners represented or had not (at the time of the research in Feb 2015) established a group. A few were not meeting regularly or frequently.

- Although it is difficult to fully assess the effectiveness of steering arrangements, there is evidence that more established strategic groups are functioning well: attendance is good; there are examples of active leadership from SAOs; partners are working well to oversee implementation and make progress; and there is improved sharing of data and information. This is supported by the majority of respondees to the stakeholder survey.

- A key barrier to establishing and maintaining robust strategic governance arrangements is ongoing re-organisation of LA services as a consequence of reductions in funding.

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[1] This was the situation at time of research in February 2015 – Local Authorities have continued to make progress on a number of strands since this time.

Operational arrangements

- All LAs had developed action plans for implementing the YEPF and shared them with the Welsh Government. Many of the plans did not include specific information on outputs and products, milestones, and resources required for implementation. Nor do LAs use a formal project management methodology to assist with monitoring implementation. Together this makes strategic oversight difficult.

- All LAs had appointed an EPC to coordinate delivery of the action plan. Most stakeholders believe they have made a significant difference. Many LAs have embedded the functions of the EPC in two or more roles in recognition of the wide ranging responsibilities of an EPC. In some, EPCs are stretched to perform operational as well as strategic roles.

- In some LAs, arrangements to take forward and develop most elements of the YEPF are clear with partnership arrangements established to arrive at practical solutions. In others, arrangements are less well developed. Very few LAs appear to have arrangements for development which cover all elements which should be moving forward.

- Nearly half of LAs had Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs) in place which has been helped by having the YEPF in place. All the others were continuing to develop one. Some of these have placement arrangements with Careers Wales, which allows five tier data to be shared with a named contact without the ISP. Partners in LAs with ISPs and placement agreements were very positive about being able to share information and considered that this supported improved early identification and tracking.

Early identification

- Most LAs either had a pre-existing early identification system in place for young people at school (under 16) which required development, or developed and tested a system since the launch of the YEPF.

- Although early identification has been a focus for most LAs, this has run behind schedule in many LAs. At February 2015, 20 LAs have developed plans; two have not.

- Seventeen of the 20 LAs have begun to implement their systems. Several are extending their systems to cover children in Years 9 and 10.

- LAs that have developed a new system appear to have adopted a robust development process, which includes consultation and feedback from a range of partners, including schools. Partners value the new system and perceive it to be helpful. Improvements since October 2013 have been reported by stakeholders.

- The key challenge in relation to pre-16 early identification systems is to ensure all schools use the system consistently and provide the information required. Technical issues, such as a lack of a single management information platform for schools and the LA, had contributed to delays in a few LAs.

- In general, processes for identifying young people who are at risk of disengaging were less well-developed for the 16-18 age group than the pre-16s but significant progress had been made since the middle of 2014.

- Thirteen LAs had developed plans for those aged 16-18 and 10 of these are implementing them; the remainder still had no plans at February 2015.

- Receiving systematic notification from all post-16 providers about young people disengaging from a course or formally withdrawing was a challenge for many LAs and Careers Wales staff. Careers Wales had effectively used annual partnership agreement review meetings as a mechanism for improving processes.

Brokerage

- Around two thirds of LAs had developed plans and arrangements for lead working. For under 16s, 12 LAs had implemented these and three had agreed plans for new/strengthened lead working. For 16-18s, 13 LAs had implemented their plans and 3 had agreed plans. In three of the other LAs, there were already relatively sound existing arrangements in place for young people pre-16 which was to continue. In the remainder no progress had been made.

- For young people under 16, some LAs are adopting school-based panels as the forum for allocating a lead worker and reviewing progress while others have area or LA-wide forums. In the case of 16-18 year olds, many LAs are using LA or sub-LA level multiagency practitioner groups. In general, LAs had not fully developed plans for case management and in the main training for lead workers had not taken place.

- There are a range of challenges for implementing lead working, including: delays in establishing ISPs, which prevents effective brokerage; difficulties in conveying the message that lead working is already taking place and is not a new approach; the hiatus in replacing ESF resources for lead working during periods when budgets were being reduced; challenges in establishing and communicating a clear process for early identification and brokerage; and difficulties in getting all partners to participate in operational groups to facilitate brokerage. The LAs which had implemented arrangements for lead working had overcome most of these.

Tracking

- In general, LAs that had a data-led early identification system in place for young people at school pre-16 had established processes for follow up and review on a termly basis at least. At least 14 LAs had this in place.

- There were examples of efforts at a local level to strengthen tracking at transition. These included: using practitioner groups to improve sharing of information between pre- and post-16 providers; allocating tutors within colleges to act as the link with particular schools; using a pre-16 lead worker to continue providing support during the first term in post-16 provision.

- There were also examples of LAs strengthening their identification of Tier 1 young people, such as using detached youth workers to visit households to find out about a young person's status. LA level multiagency practitioner groups were also being used to identify young people in Tier 1.

- Generally, there were fewer post-16 ISPs in place and so LAs and partners had found tracking the 16-18 age group more challenging. In general LAs and partners were very positive about receiving monthly five tier data from Careers Wales, even where this is only available in an aggregate, anonymised format. This was seen as a major improvement by stakeholders.

- There continued to be concerns that some schools/colleges/work based learning (WBL) providers were not providing timely and consistent information to enable tracking. The colleges had not developed a common reporting system.

- In LAs where there were ISPs in place there were examples of monthly tracking of those aged 16-18 by multiagency practitioner groups, which appeared to be working well to prevent disengagement and provide additional support where required.

- Few LAs had taken any action to improve the tracking of and support for young people aged over 19 and their transition to other support from JCP.

Provision

- All LAs had made progress with mapping provision against the five tier model in line with guidance from the Welsh Government. In most cases the EPC took the lead in coordinating this activity and liaising with partners. In all LAs, a draft provision map had been produced which stakeholders believed to be relatively comprehensive.

- Although several LAs and partners were positive about the knowledge they had gained from the exercise, in some LAs there appeared to have been some confusion about the process and purpose. Many LAs experienced challenges in obtaining accurate and timely information from all providers.

- There were very few examples of LAs that had carried out the provision mapping exercise alongside an analysis of labour market information. As a consequence there were few examples of a systematic analysis of provision compared to the needs of young people and employers.

- Several LAs reported they had identified gaps in provision through the provision mapping exercise. A common need identified across many LAs was a lack of Tier 2 provision, in some cases coupled with duplication of Tier 3 provision.

- There were examples of YEPF strategic boards responding to provision maps and operational groups' work to find provision and seeking to fill gaps. In most LAs, though, there did not appear to be any clear plans in place for how gaps in provision identified through the mapping will be addressed and how the maps will be updated.

- In relation to the Common Application Process (CAP), the main barrier to implementation is securing the commitment of schools. LA staff, partners and schools reported that many schools do not perceive there to be value in the online application to meet the Youth Guarantee.

Employability

- This strand of the YEPF had not generally been a focus for LAs so there were few new actions which had been taken since October 2013 as a result of the YEPF. Most LAs and their partners agreed that as at February 2015 this component of the YEPF was under-developed.

- Most LAs had included Jobs Growth Wales, Work Skills and other employability provision in their provision map and intended to make sure that all lead workers were aware of progression opportunities available through these programmes.

- Many LAs had limited their YEPF action plans to objectives to increase the numbers of work placement opportunities, apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities offered by public sector employers. This is a somewhat restricted scope of activity. In some LAs, scoping discussions had taken place to develop a wider range of activities and to use the provision mapping to contribute to (European Social Fund) ESF project plans.

- Most LAs were not seeking to ensure young people in employment without training were tracked and supported to take up education and training.

- Although generally no new employability projects had been developed under the YEPF, LAs and partners provided examples of existing initiatives that provide young people with knowledge about careers and work experience opportunities, which they will maintain or seek to extend.

Accountability

- In line with the national implementation plan, all LAs had participated in regular meetings with the Welsh Government to discuss progress in implementing their YEPF action plan. There had also been frequent and regular communication between meetings.

- All LAs had started to receive monthly data from Careers Wales on the numbers of young people aged 16-18 in each of the tiers of the five tier model. This data is analysed and submitted to strategic steering groups in an increasing number of LAs to facilitate monitoring of progress in increasing the proportion of 16-18 year olds in tiers 4 and 5.

- Few LAs had set any local targets for reducing numbers of NEETs. This was generally because the data systems were not in place to set benchmarks and targets for those aged 16-18.

Participation of young people in development and delivery of the YEPF

- Most LAs had not yet consulted with young people on the YEPF. They considered that implementation needs to progress further before a meaningful consultation can take place.

Support provided by the Welsh Government

- In general LAs and partners had found the communications, networking opportunities and support provided by the Welsh Government's YEPF programme team to be timely and useful. The only concern was over the guidance on provision mapping.

- The grant and its extension to 2015/16 had been welcomed and had enabled LAs to implement the YEPF, including funding an EPC.

Measuring impact

- From an assessment of the possible approaches to undertaking an evaluation with a counterfactual, a quasi-experimental approach would not be appropriate because it would not be possible to establish a comparator group within Wales or elsewhere.

- It is possible to analyse trends where indicator data is available before the YEPF was launched and continues to be collected during the programme (over five years) and to measure distance travelled (a before and after approach) where indicators are available as a baseline and through the programme period and beyond.

- For the indicators required to evaluate the YEPF to measure its success (for outputs as well as outcomes and impacts), many can be measured using secondary data managed by the Welsh Government and other national bodies (including Careers Wales, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Department of work and Pensions (DWP), and the United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)). The Careers Wales client information database (IO database) would have to be drawn off at specified intervals as it is a live database.

- For some it would require: data being collected by LAs in their YEPF action plans which in some cases would need to be verified by evaluators through qualitative research; data linking (such as between the IO database and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) employment data using national insurance numbers; or the IO database and data on school pupils and those attending post-16 providers); supplementary primary research surveying young people and stakeholders.

- If steps are taken during the rest of 2015 and the first part of 2016 to fill gaps, this would strengthen an impact evaluation which could be timed to take place from late 2016 to mid-2017 to capture the expected medium and longer term outcomes of the YEPF.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, it is clear that actions in the YEPF were and are being taken forward by those LAs which focus on reducing the number and proportion of young people who are NEET at age 16 as a foundation for reducing the numbers at older ages. This is through early identification, brokerage and tracking and beginning to address how they can reduce the number of young people becoming NEET at age 17 and 18 through provision, guidance on choices, early identification and brokerage, and tracking. They are not yet clearly addressing how they will drive up employability and work ready skills in schools and post 16 providers to provide a firm foundation for young people when they complete education and training so that they can reduce those who are NEET aged 19-24.

It is clear too that since the YEPF was launched LAs have generally made progress and this is observed by stakeholders. For many LAs this has brought about a step change. Although many of the milestones were not reached in the timescales set, just over half of the LAs had established early identification, brokerage and tracking systems for pre 16s and 16-18s while most others have some of these. It is of concern that a small number of LAs had not made such progress and had failed to have strategic steering arrangements and ISPs in place. Not having ISPs, functioning strategic and operational groups, school and college cooperation and engagement, and school and post 16 provider data systems are clearly related to the failures in LAs to establish early identification and tracking.

While in the main the support and guidance provided by the Welsh Government had enabled progress, some activities led by the Welsh Government had not. These include:

- the development of the online common application form and the CAP

- the development of the destination survey to capture destinations of 17 and 18 year olds in colleges and WBL providers

- the speed of developing ESF projects for the 2014-20 programme period.

Since many of the barriers to progress appear to be related to the extent that LAs and their partners had prioritised and taken forward activities that would implement the YEPF, additional pressure may be more effective than turning the YEPF into a statutory requirement when changes to the accountability framework for schools and colleges (the use of destination outcomes) may make some difference to motivations. At a later point when there is less government focus on the programme and no grant funding for EPCs, for example, statutory guidance might secure the progress made.

Recommendations

LA management of the YEPF

The programme team should:

- closely monitor progress with strategic governance arrangements in those LAs that do not yet have these in place. If necessary, the programme leads should discuss with SAOs any barriers and provide support to overcome these

- ensure that as part of the bi-annual review meetings with LAs, one to one meetings are held with SAOs. This should ensure that the YEPF remains a priority for senior managers, they are engaged in providing strategic leadership, and taking action to progress implementation

- bring forward reviews in the LAs where progress on early identification, brokerage and tracking is well behind schedule, advise SAOs and EPCs that action plans must cover the development and implementation of all components of the YEPF over two-three years, be refreshed, be in a form which can enable strategic monitoring, and contain outcomes and targets which would ensure higher level scrutiny and accountability of the plan by the LA and its partners.

LA implementation of the YEPF

The programme team should:

- continue to work closely with staff in the WASPI department to ensure that ISPs are approved as quickly as possible. If any common errors or problems are identified in draft ISPs, these should be shared with LAs that are in the process of drafting ISPs so they can avoid the same mistakes and the process can be expedited

- identify relevant training and support for LAs on project management methodologies if this is unavailable to them. The output of this should be improved action plans that identify a critical path, clear milestones and resources required for delivery. This should help LAs monitor their own progress and manage risks

- develop guidance on the employability component of the framework which would enable LAs and partners to develop more coherent responses to the Framework requirements

- continue to work closely and collaboratively with national partners such as Colegau Cymru, the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS). These partners should continue to encourage their members and the organisations they represent to participate fully in implementation of the YEPF. As far as possible, implementation of the YEPF should be a priority item at local and regional meetings

- during 2015/16 establish how LAs propose to take forward and support any outstanding implementation activities (including the staffing resources for the YEPF) to ensure the Government's targets will be met and to assess whether a statutory guidance would reduce the risk of failure.

Implementation of the six components

The programme team should try as far as possible to provide tailored support to LAs in relation to each of the six components. LAs' progress and needs vary. Rather than more general guidance and support a more targeted approach is likely to be more helpful and effective at this stage. This could be provided through more frequent link officer meetings and selective monitoring but also by offering to broker support/guidance from other LAs.

The programme team should:

(a) Early identification

- Ensure that LAs without central, standardised pre-16 and post 16 early identification systems focus on this as a priority.

- Ensure that LAs alongside Career Wales are working towards bringing all schools, colleges and WBL providers into line in providing information to monitor all those aged 16-18.

(b) Brokerage and tracking

- Ensure that LAs without ISPs have these in place by the end of June 2015.

- Use regional working groups to focus on drawing out and sharing lessons from brokerage and the creation and use of lead officers.

- Encourage LAs through schools and other post 16 providers to provide transition support at age 16.

- Identify how the Welsh Government and Careers Wales can better support the transition at age 19 and whether JCP can support those rising 19.

(c) Provision

- Develop the best practice guidance on how to most effectively analyse, update and use the information collected. This should, for example, provide guidance on assessing provision against evidence of young people's needs; analysing provision in the context of local labour market needs; and taking actions to fill gaps and remove duplication.

- Continue its efforts to engage schools in the YEPF and in particular to secure commitment to the use of the online application process that underpins the CAP to meet the Youth Guarantee. For example, there should be further discussions with and presentations to school heads. Recent changes to school accountability measures at Key Stage 4 designed to 'rebalance the undue focus that has emerged on the C grade at GCSE' are a potential lever to secure commitment as young people pre-16 in tier 4 are a potential target group for both policy initiatives. These links should be made in any discussions with head teachers.

(d) Employability

- Use the regional working groups as a forum to share good practice in relation to improving employability and work ready skills in schools and post-16 providers and meeting the needs of young people in employment without training. This could be from Wales and also other UK nations. LAs should be supported to identify opportunities and challenges to implement similar approaches in their own contexts.

- The bulletin (and the regional working group presentations) based on this report can be used to develop messages for LAs about missing ingredients in their plans and accelerating progress.

Preparations for an impact assessment

The programme team and colleagues in the Welsh Government should:

- Take steps to improve the data captured by LAs in YEPF action plans and reported for monitoring.

- Establish the cuts of data from the Careers Wales IO database.

- Consider the data linking exercises which could be carried out.

- Plan for a final impact evaluation which will include some primary research and qualitative research to verify the progress made by LAs between late 2016 and mid-2017.

1.   Introduction

Purpose of the study

1.1   The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) aims to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The YEPF has six components, found to be effective at increasing youth engagement and progression when implemented together as part of a strategy[2]. These are: early identification; better brokerage and coordination of support; stronger tracking and transition of young people; ensuring provision meets the needs of young people; a focus on employability skills and opportunities for employment among young people; and greater accountability. Local authorities (LAs) have been charged with the role of leading implementation of the Framework, working closely with Careers Wales, youth services, schools, providers of post-16 education and training and other partners.

1.2   ICF and Arad Research were appointed to conduct a formative evaluation of the YEPF to assess the design, effectiveness and the emerging impact of the programme. The evaluation had a primary focus on process. It aimed to assess the progress made to implement the Framework with a view to using the learning to improve guidance and implementation.

1.3   To achieve this, the objectives of the formative evaluation were to:

- assess the rationale of local YEPF action plans and whether they address key problems in local areas in relation to young people's achievement, employment and participation in education and training

- identify how LAs were managing the implementation of the Framework, including strategic and operational leadership, and assess the effectiveness of these processes

- identify how LAs were implementing each component and assess effectiveness of operational arrangements, including partnership working

- identify what is working well in relation to the management and implementation of the Framework and partnership working

- identify any barriers or obstacles that have been faced and how they have been overcome

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[2] J Nelson and L O'Donnell, Approaches to supporting young people not in education, employment or training, NFER, 2012

- map the progress made by each LA on each of the elements and assess whether short and medium term expectations set out in the national implementation plan are likely to be met and the barriers to meeting them

- collect the views of LAs and their partners on the usefulness of the guidance and support provided by the Welsh Government and other stakeholders in enabling them to progress in each element of the Framework and how it might be improved

- consider whether non-statutory guidance is sufficient to achieve the Welsh Government's ambitions and targets.

1.4 In parallel to the formative process evaluation, a draft impact evaluation framework has been developed in order to inform the data collection required to meet the needs of a future impact assessment. This is presented in a separate report with the implications and recommendations included in the conclusions to this report.

Methodology

Stage 1: Inception and initial scoping (July 2014)

1.5 The purpose of the inception and initial scoping research was to develop an understanding of how the programme is working and the expectations overall and in each LA. We conducted:

- an initial review of data and documents about the YEPF. This included: internal programme management documentation such as minutes of programme board meetings; LA progress reports and action plans; management information data; and published documents such as the YEPF implementation plan, timeline and accompanying guidance document

- eight scoping interviews with Welsh Government programme staff and key partners to develop our understanding of how the YEPF was designed and developed and the availability of qualitative and quantitative data to inform the evaluation. Interviewees included representatives of the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS), Careers Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Colegau Cymru, the YEPF Senior Responsible Owner and Programme Board chair, the Head of Youth Engagement Branch and the leads for brokerage and provision within the programme team.

1.6   We used this information to develop a framework to assess progress systematically across each LA. The progress framework is presented in Annex 1.

Stage 2 - Mapping progress (mid-July 2014 to mid-September 2014)

1.7   We then carried out the following research tasks:

Task 2.1 - Detailed documentary review

1.8   We reviewed LA implementation plans, reports and minutes from meetings with Welsh Government staff, and management information provided by the YEPF programme team. We extracted and recorded information about:

- the evidence underpinning the rationale for the priorities and focus of the plan

- the steps achieved in any element before the plan started

- the activities planned and their time scales against expectations

- the steps achieved since the start of the plan and the evidence of achievement.

1.9   The information was systematically collected in a template to allow comparison across LAs.

Task 2.2 - Contextual data review

1.10   We collected and analysed from official statistics key comparative data on achievement, employment and young people who are NEET in each LA area to understand trends and differences. This assisted interviewers to understand the local context, the baseline position and the direction of travel. This included data over the last five years on the:

- number of young people making the transition to employment

- attainment levels achieved at ages 16 and 19

- destinations of young people at age 16 and 18

- numbers/percentages of young people who are NEET from the official estimates and the Career Wales destination data

Task 2.3 - Interviews of LA area implementation staff

1.11   We interviewed the key staff in each LA area who are managing the delivery of the programme. We asked them to provide a perspective on progress to date,

the changes which have been made and how the arrangements for different elements are working.

1.12   We aimed to interview at least six people in each LA, including: the Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC), the senior responsible officer, and the lead members of staff in Career Wales, the education and training sector, a representative from the Youth Service, and the third sector working on the programme. We achieved an average of seven interviews per LA and interviewed 162 stakeholders in total mostly face to face. This included: 74 LA stakeholders (senior accountable officers, EPCs, strategic managers, operational managers); 19 representatives of post-16 providers; eight representatives of schools; 24 representatives of Careers Wales; four representatives of Jobcentre Plus (JCP); and eight representatives of the voluntary and community sector.

1.13   The interviews covered:

- how the Framework's implementation plan evolved from the initial understanding of their position in relation to the YEPF and the challenges to be addressed

- the progress made towards completing the steps and outcomes to be achieved in the plan (at least those to be achieved by the end of 2014) together with refinements; challenges; barriers and achievements

- the management arrangements established to deliver the plan including the engagement of partners and their active participation

- the monitoring arrangements to review delivery of the plan and the data being used/to be used to evidence progress and achievement of target/outcomes

- the processes followed to engage relevant partners, work together cooperatively, and share data, and how well they are working

- the value and relevance of the guidance and support provided.

1.14   We also collected documentary evidence such as internal planning documents, reports, baseline maps and provision reviews.

Task 2.4 - Interviews of stakeholders

1.15   We conducted telephone interviews with 11 stakeholders with a close interest in the programme because of their involvement in its development, oversight of delivery and on the ground delivery with a range of LAs. These included

representatives of: Careers Wales, the WLGA, a sector skills council, JCP, the National Training Federation for Wales (NTFW), Estyn, the Arts Council of Wales, the Prince's Trust, the South-West and Mid Regional Education Consortium and Welsh Government policy leads for employment and European Social Fund (ESF) policy.

1.16 These interviews explored understanding and perceptions of:

- their role in the programme and their contributions to support and guidance for LAs and any of the key partners locally

- management and leadership of the programme within LAs

- operational arrangements, collaboration and cooperation between key partners

- support and guidance provided by the Welsh Government

- progress on each element (where relevant to role)

- challenges that have been overcome and any barriers which need to be addressed nationally

- data sharing and linkage and any barriers to this.

Stage 3 - Understanding progress (October 2014 to February 2015)

1.17 The purpose of the final stage of the evaluation was to understand in more detail how local authorities and partners were working together on each of the elements of the YEPF. It aimed to understand what is working effectively and to what extent the programme is addressing some of the perceived problems with youth engagement and progression. It also obtained an update on progress since Stage 2 of the research.

1.18 We carried out the following research tasks:

Task 3.1 - Case study research

1.19 We developed eight local authority case studies and two thematic case studies. The three main purposes of the case studies were to provide:

- triangulation of the evidence collected in Stage 2 by engaging a wider range of interviewees

- additional information on the actions that had been taken by LAs and their partners in relation to particular elements of the YEPF

- learning about what is enabling progress and how challenges have been overcome to provide learning for other LAs

1.20   As a consequence, we selected components of the Framework to examine in more detail in the case studies where LAs had made progress which would provide learning to others. These were: pre-16 early identification (early identification) and brokerage; post-16 early identification and brokerage; provision mapping; and employability. The thematic case studies focussed on Welsh-language issues in relation to the YEPF and delivering the YEPF in a challenging financial climate.

1.21   All case studies examined the actions taken by the LA/LAs since the launch of the YEPF compared to the previous situation, what had enabled progress, what the challenges had been and how these had been overcome. They also aimed to draw out what difference the actions had made to partnership working and young people's engagement and progression in education, training and employment.

1.22   We aimed to interview nine stakeholders per case study and where relevant and appropriate to include the views of up to 12 young people. We achieved an average of 10 stakeholder interviews per case study and interviewed 99 stakeholders in total mostly face to face. This included: 45 LA staff (including managers and operational staff in education, youth and housing); nine school staff; 19 representatives of post-16 providers; seven representatives of voluntary and community sector organisation (mainly in the youth sector but also in housing); and 10 employees of Careers Wales. We also interviewed 49 young people in six case studies where it was appropriate to include them as beneficiaries.

Task 3.2 - Stakeholder survey

1.23   The objective of the survey was to collect information on perceptions of leadership and management, partnership working and strategic added value from LA stakeholders engaged in the YEPF. A secondary objective of the survey was to test whether a survey of stakeholders is a feasible and appropriate method to include in any future impact evaluation of the YEPF; and, if it is, it would provide a baseline.

1.24   The survey was designed to take between 10 and 20 minutes to complete and was conducted online using SNAP software. It was open for a period of three weeks. Over this period, three reminders were sent. It included closed questions and responses (some with Likert scales).

1.25   EPCs were asked to provide the names and email addresses of members of strategic and operational groups as well as any other key stakeholders. We reviewed lists to assess whether they appeared comprehensive and identified

that few LAs had included voluntary and community sector partners. To help ensure the perspective of the voluntary and community sector was included, CWVYS also sent a link to the survey to its members.

1.26 The survey was distributed to 579 stakeholders in total and a total of 199 replies were received, which is a response rate of 34 per cent. The types of stakeholder who responded to the survey are shown in Table 1.1. Almost half of respondents were LA staff, about a fifth were staff in post-16 providers, and about one in six worked for Careers Wales or a voluntary and community sector organisation.

Table 1.1   Survey respondents

Type of stakeholder	No. of respondents	% of respondents
LA	96	48
Post-16 provider	38	19
Voluntary and community sector organisation	29	15
Careers Wales	29	15
School	15	8
Jobcentre Plus	5	3
Employer	2	1
Regional education consortium	1	1
Other	3	2

Source: Stakeholder survey

Base = all (199) stakeholders surveyed

Respondents were asked 'Please indicate the type of organisation you work in'. They were asked to tick all that apply.

1.27 Of the 96 LA respondents, most worked in youth services (48 per cent) or education (43 per cent). Of the 38 post-16 provider respondents, 16 worked in colleges, 17 in work-based learning providers and five in another type of provider. Most of the voluntary and community sector respondents worked in voluntary youth work (59 per cent), the rest mainly in health, housing, and county voluntary councils. Of the 15 school respondents, two worked in a special school and two for a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

1.28 Thirteen of the respondents (seven per cent) reported working for two different types of organisation, while two respondents reported working for more than two organisations. Almost a fifth of respondents (17 per cent; 33 individuals) reported that they work with all LAs.

1.29 The survey has provided a baseline of perceptions of the arrangements in place before the YEPF and how they were in February 2015. While a response to a future survey to the same group of stakeholders may not

provide a comparable sample, it could provide quantitative evidence of the progress made with developing the Framework where it is difficult to draw conclusions from qualitative evidence in relatively few interviews.

Task 3.3 - Follow-up Engagement and Progression Coordinator interviews

1.30   We conducted short follow-up telephone interviews with EPCs to obtain an update on progress in implementing the six strands of the YEPF since Stage 2 of the research[3]. For LAs that participated in case study research, the update was obtained at the same time as the face to face case study research when possible. The interviews focussed on understanding progress over the last four months against the key milestones in the national implementation plan.

Task 3.4 - Updated documentary and data analysis

1.31   We reviewed:

- documents that had been issued by the Welsh Government to support implementation of the YEPF, such as new guidance for LAs on specific strands of the YEPF

- management information provided by the YEPF programme team

- updated LA action plans, where available.

Task 3.5 - Stakeholder interviews

1.32   We conducted telephone interviews with nine stakeholders. These were mainly Welsh Government staff responsible for coordinating and delivering components of the YEPF with responsibility for specific actions listed in the national implementation plan. We also spoke to leads of related policy areas such as on the Welsh Baccalaureate, a representative of Careers Wales and Colegau Cymru.

1.33   The interviews explored understanding and perceptions of:

- progress in implementing the YEPF

- management and leadership of the programme within LAs

- operational arrangements, collaboration and cooperation between key partners

- support and guidance provided by the Welsh Government.

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[3] It was not possible to arrange an interview in Caerphilly due to staff sickness.

1.34   In December 2014, we also facilitated workshops at YEPF regional meetings. These included the EPCs, Careers Wales staff and representatives of key partners such as schools, post-16 providers and voluntary and community sector organisations. The workshops supported attendees to reflect on how they could make further progress in relation to the post-16 early identification and brokerage and employability strands of the Framework. The workshop discussions provided further information about YEPF processes in LA areas. Where appropriate we have drawn on this qualitative evidence in the report.

Limitations of the methodology

1.35   There are some minor limitations to the analysis as a result of the research completed. These are:

- an average of seven interviews was planned within each LA in Stage 2, this does not provide sufficient triangulation and corroboration of views at LA level to allow any conclusions to be drawn about the effectiveness of processes within individual LAs[4]. However, this was not a key objective of the study

- the Welsh-language thematic case study included three LAs, all with relatively high proportions of Welsh speakers. It had originally been intended that the case study would include at least two LAs with relatively high numbers of young people educated in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools but who are not from Welsh-language households. Three LAs falling into this category were approached to take part in the case study and invited to discuss what has enabled progress and what challenges they had encountered. They declined to participate because they did not consider they had taken sufficient action to provide learning for other LAs. Because the case study only reflects the experiences of LAs with high numbers of Welsh-speakers, the learning from their experiences may not be transferable to LA contexts with fewer Welsh speakers

- for the stakeholder survey, we asked LAs to send us the contact details of members of strategic and operational groups they had established to support implementation of the YEPF and other key stakeholders. We adopted this approach to ensure that the survey reached appropriate people that had knowledge of LA YEPF processes. Because LAs

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[4] Even for those LAs that participated in a case study in Stage 3 of the research, the number and range of interviews conducted across Stage 2 and 3 does not provide sufficient evidence to make comparisons and draw conclusions about LA performance.

defined who their key stakeholders are, organisations that are not well-engaged or informed about the YEPF are unlikely to have been sent a link to the survey. As a consequence, the views of the 199 respondents cannot be generalised to the population of potential stakeholder organisations

- the number of survey responses from different types of stakeholders means that limited sub-group analysis is possible and we cannot draw firm conclusions about the views of different types of stakeholders. Where sub group data is responses are reported, numbers are stated alongside percentages of responses. Stakeholder responses also suggest that many of them may not be aware of all the activities that have been taken forward and which have not. For example, relatively high proportions of respondents felt that progress had been made in some strands since the YEPF was launched where this has not generally been the case. These results are treated with some caution.

1.36 The research questions for this study focus on understanding the processes in place at LA level. As a consequence, most of the research tasks have focussed on understanding the actions taken by LA staff and their partners and their views on progress. The national YEPF implementation plan does though include actions for the Welsh Government and national level partners. In order to provide a complete picture of actions undertaken as a result of the YEPF, we conducted interviews with Welsh Government staff to obtain information on these actions (reported in Table 5.7, 'Summary of progress against key milestones'). However, it was not within the scope of this study to assess the processes related to these national level actions.

Structure of the report

1.37 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- chapter 2 provides a high level overview of the YEPF, setting out intended roles, responsibilities and delivery arrangements

- chapter 3 analyses LA contexts, considering trends in education, employment and training in the five years before the introduction of the YEPF and also progress that LAs had already made in relation to the YEPF

- chapter 4 presents findings about the processes for managing and implementing the YEPF

- chapter 5 presents findings about implementation of the six components of the YEPF, including a summary of progress against key milestones

- chapter 6 draws conclusions about the effectiveness of processes for managing and implementing the YEPF.

2.   The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

2.1   In this section we provide an overview of the YEPF. We begin by describing the Welsh Government's policy and strategy objectives to which the YEPF is intended to contribute and the position when the YEPF was launched. We then summarise: how the framework was developed; its key aims and objectives; expected timescales for implementation; how it is managed and delivered; and its monitoring arrangements. We draw on interviews with stakeholders, policy documents and internal programme management documents.

2.2   This section provides a high level overview of intended roles, responsibilities and delivery arrangements, while subsequent sections describe and analyse in more detail what is happening in practice and present stakeholder views on progress with implementation.

Rationale: young people in education, training or employment

2.3   The Welsh Government's expectations and support for young people's progression and development were first set out in 2000 through the strategy Extending Entitlement: supporting young people in Wales. This set out the commitment to support every young person in Wales to maximise their potential in education, training and employment. Extending Entitlement was followed in 2011 by the publication of the Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan. This action plan was aligned to the principles of Extending Entitlement and set out 18 actions to reduce the number of young people who are NEET, which related to improving provision, ensuring strong brokerage of support for young people, accountability at all levels of the system, and enabling early identification of young people at risk of disengaging.

2.4   The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) builds on work undertaken as part of these previous policy initiatives. It remains committed to the Extending Entitlement principles of supporting all young people to maximise their potential and also develops the building blocks of effective practice introduced in the Action Plan. The YEPF Implementation Plan, published in October 2013, provides non-statutory guidance on how to implement targeted approaches to the provision of youth support services within local areas to increase the proportion of young people who make successful transitions from compulsory education to further education and training.

2.5 The YEPF also feeds into broader Welsh Government policy which looks to reduce poverty in Wales. In particular, it contributes significantly to two of the key commitments in the 'Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016':

- to reduce the number of young people aged 16 to 18 who are NEET to 9 per cent by 2017

- to reduce the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET in Wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.

2.6 Because the proportion of young people who are NEET has fluctuated between 10 per cent and 13 per cent for a long period even when the economy was performing well, the target of reducing the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are NEET to 9 per cent is seen as an ambitious target that should help to reduce the percentage of young people aged 19-24 who are NEET.

2.7 The proportion of young people who are NEET, particularly those aged 19-24, is significantly influenced by the UK's wider economic climate, much of which is beyond the control of the Welsh Government. The commitment to reduce the number of 19-24 year old who are NEET relative to the UK as a whole, is designed to take this into account.

2.8 The YEPF is also integrated with a range of other policy initiatives related to education, skills, young people and poverty. These are summarised in Table 2.1 on the next page along with where and how they are related to the YEPF.

2.9 This shows that:

- the achievements of some of these will be expected to have a positive impact on the implementation of the YEPF. In particular, the policy actions around Families First and Rewriting the Future should raise attainment in compulsory education especially in essential skills. The actions arising from the review of 14-19 Qualifications5 with the development of a new Welsh Bacc for pupils following a vocational programme in a college or other provider (due by 2015) is expected to provide a balanced programme of learning towards an initial VET qualification. The policy actions in relation to Jobs Growth Wales and Apprenticeships should increase opportunities for young people to make effective transitions to training and employment

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[5] Welsh Government (2012), Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales, Final report and recommendations

- the YEPF will itself make a significant contribution to enabling young people to take up opportunities, such as apprenticeships and traineeships, and achieving the Youth Guarantee and ambitions to meet equality objectives

- in LA areas there should be connections made with school improvement, Communities First programmes, Families First action plans, the development of the careers and world of work curriculum, and Jobs Growth Wales, among other policies being taken forward on the ground.

2.10   In this section we describe the education, training and employment of young people in Wales at national and LA level. We draw out trends in key indicators over five years before the introduction of the YEPF. This draws on published data on: the participation of 16-18s in education, training and employment; attainment at level 2 at age 15; and destinations of Year 11 pupils from schools. This is designed to provide an understanding of the differences between LA contexts, the baseline when implementation of the Framework began, any trends that can be discerned, and the evidence expected to underpin LA action plans.

The position in 2013

Attainment

2.11   In 2012/13 more than half of young people (52.7 per cent) at the end of compulsory schooling in Wales achieved the level 2 threshold (at least a grade C in five subjects including English/Welsh and maths). This ranges from around two fifths in schools in Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent (38.7 per cent in both) to over 60 per cent in schools in Flintshire and Ceredigion. The levels of attainment are lower than in England, for example, where 63% achieve at least a Grade C in five subjects including English and maths.

2.12   There are also wide differences between the attainment of boys compared to girls and between children eligible for free school meals and those who are not. For example, only 26 per cent of those eligible for free school meals attained the level 2 threshold compared with 59 per cent of those who were not[6].

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[6] StatsWales, Academic achievement and entitlement to free school meals, 28 January 2015

2.13   While overall attainment at age 15 has generally improved[7], improvement is at a slower rate than in England[8]. The gap in the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals has widened again after several years of narrowing[9]. Between 2009 and 2013, there was a 5.7 percentage point increase in those eligible for free school meals who attained the level 2 threshold while there was a 6.4 percentage point increase for those who are not eligible.

Participation in education, training and employment

2.14   The headline measure of young people who are NEET used by the Welsh Government showed that 10.5 per cent of those aged 16-18 were NEET at the end of 2013 (provisional)[10]. These data show that males are more likely to be NEET than females (12 per cent compared to 9 per cent). The quarterly Annual Population Survey data which is less statistically robust because of the sample size showed that 11.9 per cent were NEET in the last quarter of 2013. It also showed that the proportion who are NEET at age 16 of around 4 per cent rises to around 11 per cent at 17 to over 19 per cent at age 18. A higher proportion of those aged 16 to 18 who have a disability are NEET (just under 20 per cent).

2.15   Among those aged 19-24, the headline data showed that over 21 per cent were NEET at the end of 2013. These data also showed that females are more likely to be NEET at these ages than males (23 per cent compared to 20 per cent). Data from the Annual Population Survey suggests that the proportion rises from almost 18 per cent at age 19 to over 22 per cent from ages 20-23 falling slightly at age 24. For those aged 19-24 who are disabled over 40 per cent are NEET.

2.16   Careers Wales destination data for Year 11 showed that 3.7 per cent of young people (aged 16 in 2013) are reported as being NEET[11]. This ranged from under 2 per cent in two LAs (Ceredigion and Merthyr Tydfil) to over 4 per cent in six LAs (headed by Cardiff on 4.9 per cent).

2.17   The published statistics[12] indicate that there has been progress in increasing the number of young people aged 16-18 who are engaged in some kind of

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[7] StatsWales, Examination achievements of pupils aged 15 by year, SCHS0002: KS4 examination results, 2002/03 – 2012/13 [downloaded 25 October 2014]

[8] National Assembly for Wales Research Paper, Literacy and Numeracy in Wales, June 2013

[9] Statistical Bulletin SB 3/2014 Achievement and entitlement to free school meals in Wales, 2013

[10] StatsWales, Young people not in education, employment or training, SR 15 April 2014. The headline statistic is based on education data sources as well as the Annual Population Survey (APS) as is considered to be more accurate than the APS on its own.

[11] This draws on Statistical Bulletin SB 61/2014. The snapshot is taken on 31 October

[12] Welsh Government Statistical Release 113/2014, Participation of young people in education and the labour market (year end 2012 and 2013 (provisional)) July 2014

education and training from 75 per cent in 2007 to 82 per cent in 2013. At the same time the headline statistic of the proportion who are NEET has fallen from its peak of 12.4 per cent in 2008 and 2009 to 10.5 per cent in 2013. For those aged 19-24, the headline statistics showed that the proportions who are NEET rose sharply between 2008 and 2010 peaking in mid-2012 and have fallen since then.

2.18   Careers Wales destination data, based only on the number of young people leaving year 11 in schools shows that there has been a consistent fall in the proportion of young people who are NEET aged 16 from 5.7 per cent in 2009 to 3.7 per cent in 2013.

2.19   The same data for LAs shows a considerable variation in trends and fluctuations in the numbers and proportions of young people who are NEET over this period. However, all but one LA has experienced a fall between 2009 and 2013 in those who are NEET at age 16. Whereas 12 LAs had 5 per cent or more in 2009 (headed by Newport with over 9 per cent), all were below this level in 2013. Most also had a lower proportion in 2013 than 2011 (16 out of 22).

Challenges for YEPF

2.20   The data suggest that at the start of the national programme:

● while there has been an improvement across Wales, almost half of young people have failed to achieve Level 2 (at least a grade C in five subjects including English/Welsh and maths). This underachievement in core subjects remains a significant problem in many areas which must affect the opportunities for employment and further education which young people at 16 and 18 can take

● a reduction in the numbers of those aged 16 who are NEET has been taking place. This may be linked to NEET strategies as well as the improvement in the labour market

● much higher proportions of those aged 17-24 are NEET especially aged 20-23 than aged 16. While these numbers were beginning to fall but they are still very high and suggest that many are young people who have progressed to school sixth forms and further education and not found employment with education and training when they have completed courses or fallen out of the courses.

2.21   The challenges for the implementation of YEPF would therefore appear to be in most LA areas:

- continuing to reduce the number of young people who are NEET at age 16 with a much smaller range of differences between LAs

- raising the competences and attainment levels of young people to match labour market needs and education and training progression requirements

- reducing drop-out rates in post-16 education and training

- tackling the much higher levels of young people aged 17 and above who are NEET and reversing the rising proportions aged between 17 and 20

- reducing any socio-economic and demographic differences.

The development of the YEPF

2.22 The 2009 Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure introduced a statutory duty to widen choice and provide learner support services for all young people aged 14-19 which is believed to support retention in education and reduce early school leaving. This measure included the introduction of individual learning pathways; wider choice and flexibility of courses; wider learning around the 'Learning Core'; and improved learner support (including access to a learning coach, personal support, and careers advice and guidance). The government has lately consulted on changes to this measure. From 2014/15 providers are required to develop learning area programmes so that there is a complementary and comprehensive offer of 14-19 learning[13].

2.23 The YEPF is expected to work alongside these measures to improve the transition of young people from compulsory education to further education, training and work. While the Learning Pathways 14-19 focusses on all young people, the YEPF is much more targeted on young people who are NEET or at risk. It offers non-statutory guidance to LAs about how to improve the engagement and progression of these young people.

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[13] Welsh Government (2013), 14-19 Learning Pathways policy: the way ahead

Table 2.1   Summary of the Policies and Programmes linked to the YEPF

Policy	Description	Components of the YEPF linked to the policy
Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016	Sets the targets for YEPF: To reduce the number of young people aged 16 to 18 who are NEET to 9per cent by 2017; to reduce the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET in wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.	• All.
The Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan	The Welsh Government's Equality Objectives have been developed to ensure public services and employment are fair, accessible, responsive to people's needs, and that communities are inclusive. They sit within the Strategic Equality Plan and dovetail closely with objectives of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. A specific action within the Strategic Equality Plan is to: 'ensure evidence is generated and analysed on protected groups within adult basic skills courses and success rates. Use analysis to frame action to address issues arising e.g. barriers and under-representation and under-achievement amongst those with protected characteristics'.	• Provision – It is expected that the provision mapping undertaken by LAs as part of the YEPF may support this action by identifying gaps in provision for specific groups of young people who require additional support.
Welsh Language Strategy and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy	These strategies support an ambition to 'strengthen the use of the Welsh language in everyday life'.	• All – local areas are expected to consider the importance of the linguistic needs of young people in implementing the framework.
Looked-after children strategy	Following a Welsh Audit Office review of the attainment of looked-after children, the Welsh Government has published a strategy for improving the outcomes for looked-after children, which will be closely aligned and linked to the YEPF.	• All.

Policy		Description	Components of the YEPF linked to the policy
Children and Families	Youth Guarantee	The offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for any person transitioning from compulsory education for the first time, age 16. Full roll out from 2015. Much of the YEPF builds on existing practice whereas the Youth Guarantee is a new offer to young people through the framework (although it is building on a guarantee of a work-based learning place, which has been in place for a number of years).	● Provision (the Youth Guarantee is a key priority in the Provision component of the framework). ● Employability.
	Families First	Families First: Funding provided to LAs to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Each LA has developed a Families First Action Plan which sets out how it will implement the programme locally. Key principles of the support provided are that it must be: focussed on the whole family; bespoke and tailored to the circumstances of individual families; well-coordinated across services; proactive; and intensive. The programme has two outcomes that the YEPF can contribute to: ● children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty, achieve their potential ● children, young people and families are healthy and enjoy well-being.	● Early identification. ● brokerage and coordination (key workers from these programmes could also act as YEPF lead Workers; YEPF lead workers could also provide a progression pathway i.e when a family exits from support from a Families First key worker, a YEPF lead worker could take over and provide support focussed on education, training and employment for the young person).

Policy		Description	Components of the YEPF linked to the policy
	Communities First	The Welsh Government's community-focussed tackling poverty programme, aiming to narrow the economic, education/skills and health gaps between the most deprived and more affluent areas of Wales.	• Provision.
	National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2018	New strategy (2014) which aims to elevate the status of youth work as a service and profession. Aims to ensure that young people in Wales continue to have access to diverse formal and non-formal learning opportunities. The strategic outcomes from youth work provision listed in the strategy include: Open access provision is used effectively to engage and signpost young people requiring more targeted support; and, youth work provision interacts effectively with formal education providers to support positive outcomes for young people and support a sustained reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment.	• Provision. • Brokerage – youth workers are one of the range of professionals who can take on the lead worker role.
Education and Skills	Welsh Baccalaureate	A new look Welsh Baccalaureate will be delivered from September 2015, following recommendations made in the Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales (2012). It has been designed to be a more rigorous qualification that has a greater focus on literacy, numeracy and employability. The qualification includes an 'Enterprise and Employability Challenge', designed in partnership between WJEC and employers. Although delivery of the Welsh Baccalaureate is not a statutory requirement, it will be one of the Key Stage 4 performance measures used by the Welsh Government from 2018, and will be a post-16 performance measure from 2017 onwards. The Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales (2012) also recommended developing the provider destination measures which the YEPF encourages LAs to use to track young people's progress.	• Provision. • Employability. • Tracking. • Accountability.
	Rewriting the Future: raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools	A new programme designed to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment. The programme sets out actions for the Welsh Government, LAs, the educational improvement consortia and schools to ensure that all children in Wales can achieve their full potential regardless of family background and parental income. A key component of the programme is the Pupil Deprivation Grant to schools, which is intended to fund interventions and programmes that tackle disadvantage. The	• All.

Policy	Description	Components of the YEPF linked to the policy
	programme also includes funding for support to schools to deliver the national literacy and numeracy framework.	
Jobs Growth Wales	Programme that provides unemployed young people with a job opportunity for 6 months, paid at or above the national minimum wage for at least 25 hours a week. Early destination data is positive for JGW; the YEPF will try and build on the success here (YEPF Implementation Plan 2013) and will need to integrate effectively with JGW, using JGW provision to offer progression opportunities to young people.	• Employability.
Pathways to Apprenticeships /Young Recruits Programme	The Welsh Government intends to expand its support for apprenticeships by providing: 5,650 additional apprenticeships places; enhanced wage subsidy; one off payments to micro and small business to encourage them to take apprentices; £3.4m to support Welsh-medium and STEM training (YEPF Implementation Plan 2013). The Young Recruits programme provides a wage subsidy to small and micro-businesses taking on an apprentice.	• Employability.
Traineeships programme	Traineeships are available for young people aged between 16 and 18 years old. The programme provides young people the skills needed to get a job or progress to further learning at a higher level, such as an apprenticeship or other further education provision. Traineeships are available at three levels (engagement, a level qualification and a bridge to employment). They are not time-bound so that learners can progress at their own pace.	• Employability.
Careers and the World of Work	Careers and the World of Work (CWW) is part of the basic curriculum for all 11-16 year olds, and details the various ways in which young people are introduced to work. The Welsh Government will review the work-focussed experience requirements of the framework by March 2014, as part of their work on employer engagement (YEPF Implementation Plan 2013).	• Employability.
2014-2020 ESF Programmes	The next round of ESF structural funding. The YEPF Implementation Plan outlines the Welsh Government's commitment to work with WEFO to ensure these programmes are aligned to the YEPF, and include the newly developed identification and tracking systems and provision maps. The Welsh Government is also likely to seek future ESF funding to support Careers and the World of Work programme.	• All.

Policy	Description	Components of the YEPF linked to the policy
Qualified for Life - an education improvement plan for 3-19 year olds in Wales[14]	This plan sets out the aim that every child and young person in Wales should benefit from excellent teaching and learning. In support of this, it presents four strategic objectives for education for 3 to 19 year-olds in Wales to 2020: 1) An excellent professional workforce with strong pedagogy based on understanding of what works 2) A curriculum which is engaging and attractive to children and young people and which develops within them an independent ability to apply knowledge and skills 3) The qualifications young people achieve are nationally and internationally respected and act as a credible passport to their future learning and employment 4) Leaders of education at every level working together in a self-improving system, providing mutual support and challenge to raise standards in all schools.	• All.
Schools Challenge Cymru	Schools Challenge Cymru was announced in February 2014, and the 40 Pathways to Success Schools were named on 1 May. These schools are receiving additional resources and expertise to undertake a programme of swift, sustainable improvement. The Pathways to Success Schools will each be assigned an Adviser, with a proven track record of school improvement.	• All – participating schools should all be participating to some degree in implementation of the YEPF.

Source: Review of policy documents and scoping interviews

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[14] Please note that this was published while this report was being finalised (i.e. after the main period of desk research and fieldwork)

2.24 A consultancy, the ISOS Partnership, was appointed by the Welsh Government to support the development of the Framework. Staff from ISOS facilitated workshops with internal stakeholders to enable discussions about the structure and content of the framework; identified learning from the implementation of raising the participation age (RPA) in England; and also reviewed wider evidence of effective practice in relation to engagement and progression of young people. Findings from ISOS's work informed a Ministerial Policy Board paper.

2.25 When a basic 'skeleton' of the framework had been developed, the Welsh Government issued a request for expressions of interest from LAs to pilot the draft framework and to work with the Welsh Government to develop it further. Eight LAs volunteered: Cardiff, Caerphilly, Swansea, Wrexham, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil. Some were considered to offer examples of effective practice in areas of the framework, while all were willing to pilot new approaches. Each LA chose particular components of the draft framework to implement. Across the eight pilot sites all components of the framework were covered.

2.26 During the trialling period of the YEPF, workshops were held so that pilot LAs could share learning and experiences. Meetings were also held in March 2013 to inform non-trial LAs and wider stakeholders (such as Careers Wales, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and JCP) about progress and to seek their views on the framework.

2.27 A subsequent workshop aimed to bring together a wider group of stakeholders in order to introduce them to the framework, inform them about progress with the trials and to obtain their views on the YEPF. Those attending from across the public and voluntary sector included representatives of the NTFW, YMCA Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, Estyn, CWVYS, the Arts Council for Wales, Promo Cymru, Barnardo's, Colegau Cymru, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Prince's Trust.

2.28 Young people were included in the development of the framework through the Welsh Government's 'Real Conversation' process. This is a process, used to bring together young people, business leaders, and other stakeholders, to discuss a particular issue. An event was held in June 2013, to gain views and feedback on how to prevent young people becoming NEET. Feedback was gathered on early

identification, brokerage, provision and employability. Young people emphasised that reasons for disengagement are generally multiple, with funding and money issues particularly important. Issues were raised around careers advice and movement into work; young people often felt that they weren't made aware of the full breadth of provision (both mainstream and non-mainstream) on offer (schools: 'don't care where young people go as long as they go somewhere'). Work experience was reported as often not very meaningful.   With brokerage, young people emphasised that people often don't seek help, as they worry about being a burden; where they do seek help, it is often from peers.

Aims and objectives

2.29   The main aim of the YEPF is to contribute to targets in the Tackling Poverty plan:

- the reduction of young people aged 16 to 18 who are NEET to 9 per cent by 2017

- the reduction of the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET in Wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.

2.30   To achieve this, the YEPF has the following priorities:

- improving outcomes for 17 and 18-year-olds

- further reducing the number of 16-year-olds who are NEET in some areas – there are still large variations in LA performance

- sustaining improvements at age 16 to 18 to achieve reductions in the numbers who are NEET aged 19 to 24 as well

- ensuring that all young people are supported through education and training whatever their intended destination may be

- supporting better engagement and progression for all young people and contributing to higher achievement rates and employability skills at age 16 and 19 (YEPF Implementation Plan, 2013).

2.31   The YEPF is also intended to establish a new approach to implementation. It aims to ensure that existing good practice is understood and implemented more consistently in every area of Wales. Central to achieving this is effective coordination of responsibilities

between key stakeholders, defined in the Implementation Plan as the Welsh Government, LAs, Careers Wales, the Youth Service, schools and post-16 providers.

2.32   No specific funding has been allocated to set up provision to deliver the objectives of the framework. The intention is rather that existing sources of funding allocated to LAs, schools, colleges, Careers Wales and others will be re-aligned to the strategic objectives of the framework.

2.33   The YEPF is based on six building blocks that are intended to contribute to improved outcomes for young people:

- **early identification**: Identifying young people at risk of disengagement

- **brokerage**: Better brokerage and coordination of support

- **tracking**: Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system

- **provision**: Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people

- **employability**: Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment

- **accountability**: Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

Output and outcome targets

2.34   Beyond the high-level Tackling Poverty targets, the YEPF has no formal targets. Similarly, specific output and outcome targets have not been established for individual LAs for the reduction in young people aged 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 who are NEET. This is partly because until destination data at a point in time is available for all 17 and 18 year olds (not just school leavers at 16), baseline data is not available to inform target setting or measure a target[15.] It is also partly because destinations reported will not necessarily be sustained and this would not measure an potential area of the success of YEPF which could be reducing the time young people are NEET and sustaining destinations.

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[15] The YEPF Implementation includes a milestone for the Welsh Government to set out detailed proposals for developing destination measures. This is work in progress (see 'Accountability' section of Table 5.1, 'Summary of progress against key milestones'.

2.35 Although there are no specific output targets for LAs, the YEPF Implementation Plan includes key milestones to be achieved by LAs, Careers Wales and the Welsh Government to ensure successful implementation of the Framework. The timeframe for implementation of the YEPF is two years, from October 2013 to October 2015. Key milestones to be met over this period are presented in a timeline that accompanies the Implementation Plan (0 below).

2.36 This includes all LAs:

- having a new approach to early identification being implemented from September 2014 which join up school and LA systems for tracking

- implementing their proposals for lead workers from September 2014

- producing a baseline map of 16-24 provision by March 2014

- being ready to implement the Youth Guarantee from September 2015.

Figure 2.1   YEPF Implementation Plan Timeline 2013-2015

	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Autumn 2014	Spring 2015
Early identification		• **Dec** – WG issue further advice to LAs on development, content, operation of early identification systems → • **Mar** – LAs develop proposed approach to early identification	→ • **July** – WG discuss and agree proposed approach with LAs	• **From Sep** WG continue to share effective practice in early identification → • **Sep** – First implementation of new approach to early identification across Wales	
Brokerage		• **Dec** – LAs agree proposals for allocating lead workers with local stakeholders → • **Feb** – First wave of LAs discuss plans for allocating lead workers with CW/WG → • **Apr** – Implementation of first wave of LAs adopting lead worker **Jul** –Second wave LAs agree proposals for allocating lead workers	•	• **Sep** – WG start to capture good practice for lead workers → • **Sep** – Second wave LAs implement proposals for lead workers	
Tracking	• **From Sep** – CW provide LAs with information on a monthly basis • **From Sep** – Post-16 providers provide CW with regular notifications of drop out • **From Sep** – Local Area Prospectus and Common Application Process made available • **Jan** – WG/ColegauCymru provide further advice to FE on notification of drop out • **Mar** – Expanded CW Destination Survey published • **Oct** – CW Destination Survey expanded • **From Oct** – Quarterly reports from CW to WG and LAs (16 to 18 cohort against five tier model)			• **Sep at latest** – LAs and schools join up school level tracking and early identification systems • **By July** – Draft data sharing guidance available	
Provision	• **Sep** – WG work with WEFO to ensure alignment of ESF projects for 2014–2020 with framework • **Nov** –WG produce paper to support LAs with introduction of Youth Guarantee • **Mar** – LAs produce baseline map of provision against CW five tier model • **Apr** – LAs engagement with tendering organisations for traineeships			• **Sep** – LAs to implement Youth Guarantee for the first time (full national roll out from Sep 15)	
Employability	• **From Sep** – CW to contact all young people in Jobs Without Training • **Mar** – WG develop strategic project for employer engagement as a priority area for future ESF funding • **By 2014** – WG introduce integrated Employment and Skills Offer			• **By 2015** – WG introduce strengthened Welsh Bacc • **By 2015** – WG to consider programme-based approach of learning at Entry level	
Accountability	• **From Sep** – CW share quarterly data with WG and LAs • **Dec** – WG set out detailed proposals for developing Destination Measures • **Jan** – WG meet LAs to discuss approach to implementation • **Mar** – LAs develop and share with WG overall plan for youth engagement and progression • **By Apr** – First bi-annual review between WG/LAs takes place				

Source: YEPF Implementation Plan Timeline 2013-2015 (Welsh Government, 2013)

Management and delivery of the YEPF

Management of the YEPF

2.37   **Governance**: The senior responsible owner (SRO) for the YEPF is the Deputy Director Youth Engagement and Employment. A Programme Board has been established to support the SRO by providing strategic oversight and governance of the YEPF. The SRO acts as the chair of the Programme Board. The remit of the Programme Board is set out in Figure 2.2 below:

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Figure 2.2 Role of the Programme Board

The Board's purpose is to provide direction and contribute to the delivery of
the strategic outcomes and benefits of the Youth Engagement and
Progression Framework. It approves all major plans, key documents and
major deviations from the Programme.

Specifically the Board provides information, advice and assurance on:

- how delivery of the programme will be supported through policy
  areas from across WG/DfES

- strategic and cross cutting issues and risks that impact on the
  programme

- the identification and management of interdependencies

- communication

- finance and Resources

- adequacy and integrity of governance arrangements

- delivery of outputs and benefits identified in the programme
  documents.

Source: The Youth Engagement & Progression Programme Board: Draft Terms of
Reference

2.38   The first Programme Board meeting took place in July 2013. In the
early stages of the implementation phase of the YEPF, Programme
Board meetings took place every two months. Since then, meetings
have taken place less regularly although monthly 'highlight reports' of
progress have been provided to members on an ongoing basis.
Members are key internal stakeholders from across Welsh Government
with a responsibility for children and families, youth, employment and
skills and anti-poverty policy. External stakeholders are not represented
on the Programme Board.

2.39   **Management**: The Head of Youth Engagement is responsible for
managing the overall implementation of the YEPF. In addition, for each
component of the YEPF, there is an implementation lead:

- the Head of Youth Engagement is also responsible for
  overseeing early identification, tracking and accountability

- the Head of Youth Support and Guidance is responsible for
  overseeing brokerage and is the key point of contact for Careers
  Wales

- the Head of Youth Employment is responsible for overseeing provision, including development of the Youth Guarantee and employability.

Delivery of the YEPF

2.40 The YEPF Implementation Plan sets out how the Framework is intended to be delivered over the period 2013 to 2015. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in implementation (Figure 2.3 below). It emphasises that effective coordination and partnership working between these stakeholders is central to successful implementation of the Framework.

Figure 2.3   Roles and responsibilities for implementation of the YEPF

The **Welsh Government's** role in implementing the Framework is to set out clear standards and expectations, to help LAs to develop their plans and support their implementation by helping them to learn from effective practice across Wales, while holding LAs and providers to account for the outcomes achieved.

LAs have the lead strategic responsibility for implementation of the Framework. They should allocate responsibility for implementation of the Framework to a senior leader within the LA. In addition, they should develop the role of an Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) to provide operational leadership, and to work closely with Careers Wales and providers.

Careers Wales should help to bring greater consistency to implementation of the Framework across Wales and has an important role in supporting the development of new brokerage arrangements and in implementing the data and tracking systems.

The Youth Service should be well positioned to provide the lead worker role for some of the young people identified in greatest need of support. The National Youth Work Strategy (launched in March 2014) positions this role in the wider context of Youth Services.

Schools are responsible for ensuring the right young people have been identified and tracking the progress made by young people. They will support young people to use the common application process and ensure access to appropriate information, advice and guidance. Schools will be held to account by Post-16 Destination Measures being developed.

> **Post-16** providers have a key responsibility to identify young people aged 16-24 at risk of dropping out and providing support to keep them engaged. They will need to notify Careers Wales if young people drop out of education and training. They are also critical to ensuring an appropriate mix and balance of provision is in place in every area along with schools and LAs.

Source: Youth Engagement and Progression Framework – Implementation Plan, 2013

2.41   All stakeholders are expected to use the Careers Wales five tier model of youth engagement in their implementation of the Framework. The five tier model is a way of assessing the progression and engagement of young people aged over 16 in education and training – from those that are well-engaged and require no additional targeted support to those to those who are unemployed and prevented by multiple barriers from engaging. The tier within which a young person is judged to be is intended to determine the additional support they receive and the form this might take (see Figure 2.4 below). Crucially, the allocation to a particular tier determines whether or not a young person is allocated a lead worker.

Figure 2.4   The Careers Wales five tier model of engagement (for post-16) and allocation of lead workers

Tier	Client group	Lead worker
Tier 5 **Young People in Further Education, Employment or Training (EET)**	• Sustaining education, employment or training (EET). • Working or studying part time over 16 hours. • Voluntary Work.	• No lead worker is judged necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging.
Tier 4 **Young People at risk of dropping out of EET**	• Those engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. • Those who have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition who are subsequently in FE, sixth form or training. • Those who have been made aware to CW by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET.	Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk. • Low and medium risk – provider pastoral systems and/or allocation of learning coach as a lead worker. • High risk – may be allocated lead worker from either Youth Service or Careers Wales or if Families First involved Team Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker.
Tier 3 **Unemployed 16 and 17 year olds known to Careers Wales**	• Engaged with CW and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET, or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET. • This tier should also include those known to CW, actively seeking EET but not requiring CW enhanced support i.e. accessing support via CW.com, awaiting a college start date etc.	• Lead worker identified for 100% cohort. • Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases.
Tier 2 **Unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, known to Careers Wales, who are not available for EET**	• Young person not available/ unable to seek EET (sickness, young carers, pregnancy, custody). • Young people with significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support.	• Lead worker identified for 100% cohort. • Youth Service will provide lead worker in nearly all cases.
Tier 1 **Unknown status on leaving Careers Wales services**	• Young people unknown to Careers Wales.	• Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.

Source: YEPF Implementation Plan Timeline 2013-2015 (Welsh Government, 2013)

2.42   In terms of the Welsh Government's role in setting out clear standards and expectations, this has taken place through:

● **link officers**: There are nine Welsh Government policy staff who are link officers for the 22 LAs. Their role is to meet with the LA lead and EPC to discuss progress and provide support as required. The role is conceptualised as one of 'critical friend'

- **publication of non-statutory guidance documents** to help implementation. So far, there is guidance on early identification and draft guidance on delivering the Youth Guarantee. Guidance has also been issued to Regional Working Group members on the lead worker function and there was guidance on provision mapping

- **Regional Working Groups**: Regional Working Groups have been established by the Programme team. Their purpose is to facilitate the exchange of information and good practice between LAs and to provide an opportunity for mutual learning. Stakeholders from LAs, the post-16 sector, schools, Careers Wales, the WLGA and the voluntary and community sector are invited to attend. The workshops also allow the Programme team to monitor progress and identify any areas in which LAs may require additional support. It is intended that the Regional Working Groups will continue to take place after the official end of the implementation phase of the YEPF in October 2015. The programme team is considering whether a slightly more tailored approach would be more appropriate, which offers greater freedom to focus on different issues in each region, if desired by attendees.

2.43   LAs received a grant payment of £50,000 from the Welsh Government at the start of the implementation phase to enable achievement of early implementation milestones. There were no requirements for how LAs should spend this. Monitoring of how the funding was used took place through the meetings between link officers and LA staff. An additional £50,000 was awarded to LAs in April 2015 to support ongoing implementation. This is not intended to be an ongoing grant but is intended to support LAs to continue work undertaken so far and to provide 'continuity of resource' (grant letter). As a condition of the grant, LAs are required to provide a short, written progress report on their action plan (see **Error! Reference source not found.** below).

2.44   The Welsh Government has played a role in coordinating partnership arrangements. Although there is no official reference or steering group to bring together external stakeholders, the implementation leads for each component of the framework have a responsibility for these partnerships. There are, for example, designated leads for:

- **the voluntary and community sector** – to understand the role the voluntary youth sector plays in delivering the YEPF and to facilitate its involvement. To support this work, CWVYS has been commissioned to carry out scoping research with the voluntary youth work sector to understand how it is currently included in implementation of the YEPF. The project will result in a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the sector in the implementation of the YEPF

- **young people in the youth justice system** – to ensure that the YEPF supports the educational outcomes of young people in the youth justice system. A survey of the 15 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) has been conducted to gauge current understanding of the YEPF and to inform future actions. It is likely that the YEPF team will issue guidance to post-16 providers and YOTs about how they should work with EPCs, and to provide advice on how safeguarding should be handled. There is also work planned to raise awareness of the YEPF among professionals who work with young people in secure accommodation.

2.45　There are also partnership arrangements in place with Careers Wales, Colegau Cymru, the NTFW and the WLGA.

2.46　The YEPF policy team has also worked with colleagues in other policy areas. As well as the discussions that take place at the Programme Board meetings, there have been ongoing discussions with staff in other policy areas to ensure that linkages are made between policies. For example, guidance to schools on the Pupil Deprivation Grant includes clear references to the YEPF and EPCs have also been given guidance about how they should work with schools to encourage them to use the Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively for young people at risk of disengaging.

Monitoring arrangements

2.47　LAs were asked to submit an action plan to the Welsh Government that detailed how they intended to implement the YEPF. These were submitted in March 2014. A template was provided that listed key actions from the Welsh Government's Implementation Plan and asked for information on what LAs were currently doing in relation to the action; what the challenges were; and how they were going to take

forward the work. LAs were asked to provide a written update on progress with the action plan in March 2015.

2.48 **Link officers are intended to meet with LA leads every six months** and to discuss progress with the action plan. These meetings have taken place as planned. A checklist of questions for link officers to use in visits with LAs has been developed. Link officers produce a meeting note with qualitative information on progress, issues arising, risks and future plans.

2.49 **Careers Wales also plays a role in providing LAs and the Welsh Government with data** to support implementation and monitoring. It provides:

- monthly reports to LAs, which are one page summaries based on a snapshot of the number of young people in each tier of the Careers Wales five-tier model at the end of each month

- quarterly reports to the Welsh Government on the status of the full 16 to 18 cohort against the five tier model of engagement.

3. Management and implementation of the Framework

3.1   In this section we present findings about how LAs are managing and coordinating implementation of the YEPF and consider what is working well and what the challenges are. We draw on interviews with LA staff and partners, supporting documentary material, interviews with stakeholders and findings from the survey. Key messages are summarised at the end of the section.

Strategic management arrangements

What is in place

3.2   Since the launch of the YEPF in October 2013, all LAs have appointed a Senior Accountable Officer (SAO). In around half of LAs this is a head of service (education, youth or lifelong learning), while in others responsibility for the YEPF is at a more senior level with the chief executive or deputy chief executive (two LAs) or a director who oversees a group of services (around a third of LAs). One LA, Swansea, has also appointed an external senior project champion for the YEPF, a college principal, because of the central role of post-16 providers. The project champion works alongside two project sponsors from the LA, the Head of Poverty and the Prevention and Early Intervention Manager.

3.3   In almost all LAs (20) a strategic steering group is in place led by the SAO to oversee delivery of the YEPF. This group is chaired by the SAO or, in some cases, responsibility is delegated to another senior manager or the EPC. Membership of the strategic group typically includes a wide range of stakeholders from within the LA (education, youth offending teams (YOTs), youth services) and a college representative, a school representative and Careers Wales. At least a quarter of LAs have broader membership and include, for example, representatives from housing, economic regeneration, JCP and the voluntary and community sector.

3.4   Nearly all LAs had a NEET strategy before the introduction of the YEPF and the existing steering group for the strategy has taken over responsibility for the YEPF. In some LAs, membership of the strategic group stayed the same, although around a fifth of LAs reported that they had recruited new members or were considering doing so. This is reflected in findings from the stakeholder survey that indicate increased participation in strategic steering groups among stakeholders. Before

the launch of the YEPF in 2013, over half of respondents were members of a NEET or youth engagement and progression strategic steering group (52%, 98 out of 188 respondents), compared with over two thirds since the introduction of the YEPF (71%, 132 out 186 respondents).

3.5 Examples of new members who have joined strategic groups included JCP and voluntary and community sector organisations. Equally, the format of existing strategic steering groups has in some cases been adapted to reflect the YEPF. For example, around a fifth reported that the agenda for strategic meetings is now based on the six components of the YEPF to support closer monitoring and oversight.

3.6 Although most LAs have either adapted previous steering mechanisms or recently established new steering groups, two LAs had not finalised steering arrangements. In these LAs, an internal LA management group was overseeing the work of the EPC but longer term strategic governance arrangements were still being scoped and options considered.

3.7 Around a fifth of LAs were reviewing and revising existing NEET strategies and their related action plans as a consequence of the YEPF to include best practice guidance and also additional objectives and milestones. In a further two cases, the YEPF had triggered a more substantial re-write of existing strategies or a consolidation of two or more strategies related to support services for young people. One LA did not previously have a NEET strategy and was writing a strategy and action plan to respond to the requirements of the YEPF.

3.8 In around a quarter of LAs, the objective of reducing the number of young people aged 16 to 18 who are NEET and the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET had been included as a priority in the Single Integrated Plan. In these LAs, governance arrangements clearly link the YEPF strategic group to a high level partnership group, such as the Learning and Skills Partnership, responsible for delivering the Local Service Board's Single Integrated Plan. As a consequence there is scrutiny from elected members and senior LA staff.

3.9 LA education services that were in special measures or had recently come out of special measures (four LAs) had generally had a focus on reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET that pre-dates the YEPF as a result of recommendations by Estyn for the LAs to make

improvements in this area. As a consequence, in these LAs the YEPF strategic group reports to recovery or improvement boards, which helps to ensure the YEPF are seen as a local priority.

3.10 Most strategic groups appeared to be monitoring achievement of the key performance indicator of reduction in the number of proportion of young people who are NEET at 16-18 and 19-24. None had developed additional key performance indicators. Many strategic groups receive aggregate Careers Wales data on the numbers of young people in each tier of the five tier model. For some LAs, receiving this data was a new development that had been stimulated by the YEPF. At least three LA strategic groups receive more detailed management information. This includes monthly data on the destinations of the Year 11 cohort (defined by PLASC) over two years, showing movement between tiers. The data is available at provider level.

What is working well

3.11 The stakeholder survey indicates improvements in leadership of the youth engagement and progression agenda from LAs. It found that:

- over four fifths of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was effective leadership of the YEPF agenda from the local authority after the introduction of the YEPF (84 per cent; 163 of 193 respondents). This is 21 percentage points higher than respondents indicated was the case in October 2013 (in which 63 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 124 individuals out of 197)

- the greatest increase was in the number of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, which increased from almost a sixth before the introduction of the Framework (17 per cent, 34 stakeholders), approaching half after the Framework was introduced (47 per cent, 91 stakeholders)

- the proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, decreased from a fifth (20 per cent, 40 stakeholders) to under a tenth (7 per cent, 13 stakeholders) after the introduction of the Framework.

3.12 Careers Wales staff were particularly positive about the leadership of the YEPF from the LA. Nearly all Careers Wales staff who responded to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that there was effective

leadership of the youth engagement and progression agenda from the LA (27 out of 29 respondents, 93 per cent).

3.13 Findings from more in-depth interviews with LA staff and partners suggest that in general, both the new steering groups and those groups that have been renewed or re-designated have not had the YEPF within their remit for sufficiently long to make a full assessment of the effectiveness of steering arrangements. Some groups had only met two or three times by February 2015.

3.14 Nonetheless, the stakeholder survey provides early evidence of improved functioning of strategic groups. There was an increase of 22 percentage points in the proportion of stakeholders that either strongly agreed or agreed that there was a strategic group that effectively steered services and initiatives related to youth engagement and progression between the launch of the YEPF and the survey (61 per cent, 120 out of 196 respondents pre-YEPF; 83 per cent, 160 of 192 post- YEPF).

3.15 Interviews with LA staff and partners supported this and indicated that many thought attendance at steering group meetings was generally good and that there was strong and active leadership of strategic steering groups by SAOs, in some but not all LAs. A review of terms of reference indicates relatively comprehensive membership from a range of relevant stakeholders with appropriate responsibilities. Staff and partners in nearly all LAs reported that the YEPF has given strategic groups 'greater focus'.

3.16 The stakeholder survey suggests a particular improvement in partnership working between key strategic partners. There was an increase of 32 percentage points in the proportion of stakeholders who either strongly agreed or agreed that all key strategic partners were working collaboratively to support youth engagement and progression before the launch of the YEPF compared to since the launch of the YEPF (from 51 per cent pre-YEPF, 99 stakeholders out of 195; to 83 per cent post-YEPF, 160 stakeholders out of 194). Representatives of voluntary sector organisations were least positive about strategic partnership working although it was still the majority who strongly agreed or agreed that all key strategic partners were working collaboratively (72 per cent). LA staff and partners in most LAs also reported that the YEPF is helping to ensure a shared responsibility for achieving key outcomes 'it's now a case of this young person is at risk

of becoming NEET, what are we all going to do about it, as opposed to working in isolation from each other', (LA staff interview).

3.17 Interviewees in several LAs also reported that there has been improved data and information sharing between strategic partners as a consequence of the YEPF. This is helping to improve accountability and implementation of a strategic approach to identifying and tackling problems. One interviewee commented: 'the previous information we had was insufficient to have a strategic corporate overview. The YEPF has provided impetus and has really helped to move along partnership working' (Careers Wales staff interview).

Challenges

3.18 Although in general membership of strategic steering groups appears to be comprehensive, almost half of LAs reported gaps. It is not that certain stakeholder organisations are failing to engage across all LAs but rather that some LAs are experiencing challenges in engaging specific strategic partners owing to local circumstances, such as the organisation not having the resources to participate or not being convinced of the benefits. SAOs or EPCs appear to be generally aware of these issues and are endeavouring to resolve them.

3.19 As yet monitoring largely focuses on the actions in local plans (process based) and not on progress towards any local targets for reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET (overall, any sub-group/age group, specific schools) or the time young people are NEET.

3.20 It appeared that strategic groups had not made explicit links with policies relating to the Welsh language (for example, Welsh in Education Strategic Plans). Although it is clear that YEPF teams understand that the needs of Welsh-speaking young people must be met, there were no examples where strategic leads for Welsh in Education were represented on YEPF strategic groups or contribute to strategic discussions about planning and implementation.

3.21 Several LAs reported that as a consequence of reductions in funding, there have been restructures of LA services. In some cases this had delayed the development of governance arrangements, reduced participation and meeting frequency, and led to changes in attendance. Many LAs are concerned that continuing staff changes will affect their ability to forge the strong, sustainable partnerships required to implement the YEPF.

3.22 Table 3.1 sets out the emerging findings as at February 2015 drawing on the LA and partner interviews in all 22 LA areas.

Table 3.1   Consideration of LA management of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
SAO appointed	All LAs have appointed a SAO at a sufficiently senior level. Example of one LA that also appointed external champion (college principal).	Not all SAOs leading strategic steering groups.
Strategic steering group established and functioning (key internal and external stakeholders are members of the group and attend; regular meetings take place; active leadership from SAOs).	Most LAs have established a strategic steering group or an existing strategic group has taken on responsibility for the YEPF. Generally strategic groups appear to include a wide range of expected stakeholders. Terms of reference of strategic groups have been updated to reflect the YEPF in most LAs. Some LAs include an objective to reduce the numbers of young people who are NEET in their Single Integrated Plan. This ensures the YEPF is seen as a priority and there is scrutiny. Arrangements in place in LAs in special measures for the YEPF strategic group to report to local	A few LAs have not yet finalised strategic arrangements; some strategic groups not meeting regularly or frequently. Although in general membership of strategic steering groups appears to be comprehensive, some LAs reported gaps. Concerns that ongoing reorganisation of staffing may affect governance (active participation, continuity). Monitoring focused on process actions and not targets measuring progress towards the programme's aims.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
	improvement boards. Again, this ensures the YEPF is a priority. Partners value refreshed or new steering arrangements and consider they promote shared responsibility of outcomes for young people and sign up to the YEPF; many stakeholders believe they have improved.	
SAO taking an active role in the strategic management of the framework	Emerging examples of strong and active leadership of strategic steering groups by SAOs.	Contribution and active leadership of SAOs is not evident in all LAs.

Operational arrangements

What is in place

3.23   All LAs had developed a YEPF action plan, using the template provided by the Welsh Government. The template required LAs to state what they were currently doing, what the challenges were and then to list new actions they were committed to implementing. In general, a formal project management approach to developing and delivering action plans does not appear to have been adopted by any LAs. The level of detail in the action plans varies. There are only a couple of examples of project plans showing the key outputs and products, milestones, activities and resources required to implement the YEPF. Interdependencies between actions are also not generally stated in the action plans.

3.24   To meet these challenges and achieve the few targets set, we would therefore expect action plans that balanced activities to reduce the problems faced by those aged 16 which should bring down the proportions who are NEET aged 16-18 in the next few years with

activities to reduce the numbers who are currently NEET aged 17 and over. We would expect action plans to reflect too the role that partners can play in this in providing education and training and encouraging employers to provide employment with education and training for young people.

3.25 We have not reviewed each action plan in detail in relation to the local situation and trends but the plans and actions taken forward by LAs and their strategic partners suggest that they are:

- focusing on the reduction in the number and proportion of young people who are NEET at age 16 as a foundation for reducing the numbers at older ages

- beginning to address how they can reduce the number of young people becoming NEET at 17 and 18

- recognising that the long term reduction is not just a matter of early identification and tracking but also having suitable provision as well as support for making choices beyond initial post-16 education and training destinations

- not yet clearly addressing how the LA and their strategic partners will drive up levels of employability skills in schools and post 16 providers to provide a firm foundation for young people.

3.26 All LAs had appointed an EPC to coordinate delivery of the action plan. In some cases previous NEET leads have been appointed. As at February 2015, the length of time in post for EPCs varied from four months to well over a year. There are also differences between LAs in how the EPC role and functions have been established. At least a third of LAs considered that the responsibilities of the EPC as described in the national implementation plan were too broad for one person ('it's too much for one person to do', LA senior manager). As a consequence, they have embedded the functions in different roles. For example:

- a strategic manager is responsible for building and maintaining strategic relationships between partners and facilitating data sharing

- a service manager oversees or will oversee the case loads of lead workers and supervise decision making in relation to individual young people identified as at risk.

3.27 Other LAs had appointed just a single EPC, responsible for all components. At least four LAs consider that sharing data between partners and having the capacity to analyse data effectively is crucial to implementation of the YEPF. They have appointed a data officer, either part or full time, who is responsible for analysing all YEPF-related data and also working with partners on data issues.

3.28 Responsibility for the EPC varies between LAs. Most LAs have situated the role within youth services or education but in one LA the role is within economic regeneration and in another the EPC reports directly to a senior manager or director who oversees a group of services to encourage collaboration.

3.29 EPCs are responsible for coordinating partners to deliver the YEPF and for agreeing protocols for joint working. Around half of LAs have identified existing operational groups to take on responsibility for this (e.g. existing Keeping in Touch groups[16]). In around only a fifth of LAs, it was reported that task and finish groups or working groups have been established to develop specific aspects of the YEPF. For example:

- Pembrokeshire established separate task and finish groups for the provision mapping component of the YEPF and for early identification, tracking and brokerage at post-16

- Pembrokeshire, Flintshire and Wrexham used task and finish groups to support the development of Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs)

- Blaenau Gwent and the Vale of Glamorgan established working groups to develop their pre-16 early identification tools.

3.30 In many LAs, this is work in progress dependant on needs and priorities. In some LAs, arrangements to take forward and develop elements of the YEPF, such as for early identification and brokerage by lead officers are clear and have expedited partnership working to arrive at practical solutions while in others they are not well established. Very few LAs appear to have arrangements for development which cover all elements which should be moving forward.

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[16] The Welsh Government's *Extending Entitlement strategy* (see 2.1), required all LAs to have in place arrangements for sharing information about young people at risk of becoming disengaged and arrangements for keeping in touch with young people. As part of this, many LAs established multiagency operational groups known as 'Keeping in Touch' groups.

3.31   To support implementation, LAs have put an increasing number of ISPs in place between LA departments, Careers Wales and other delivery partners such as schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations. Just under half of LAs (10) had ISPs in place that are approved by the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI). All of the remaining LAs (12) had an ISP registered with WASPI as under development. These ISPs are supplementary to the Wales Accord and are an agreement between partner organisations to share information to support delivery of the YEPF. They detail 'the specific purposes for sharing and the personal information being shared, the required operational procedures, consent processes, and legal justification'[17].

3.32   While a robust ISP is the ideal in the medium-term, around a third of LAs without ISPs have established alternative arrangements with Careers Wales to enable them to access the Careers Wales I/O database. This enables sharing of information of named individuals at risk, which is crucial for effective early identification, brokerage and tracking. For example, some LAs have a placement agreement with Careers Wales, which allows a named person, such as the EPC, to receive information. In at least three LAs, a member of staff had been seconded to Careers Wales so they take on the data access rights of a Careers Wales employee. This is underpinned by a placement agreement.

3.33   In at least a fifth of LAs there are also practitioner networks that meet two or three times a year. These are large groups with broad memberships of all organisations supporting and working with young people from across the public, private and voluntary sector. YEPF teams have used these network meetings to share information and seek views on the YEPF. They are seen as 'a useful means of consulting more widely' or a 'temperature gauge of what is happening on the front line'.

3.34   To meet these challenges and achieve the few targets set, we would therefore expect action plans that balanced activities to reduce the problems faced by those aged 16 which should bring down the proportions who are NEET aged 16-18 in the next few years with activities to reduce the numbers who are currently NEET aged 17 and over. We would expect action plans to reflect too the role that partners can play in this in providing education and training and encouraging

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[17] Information Sharing Protocol for Carmarthenshire-Pembrokeshire YEPF, July 2014.

employers to provide employment with education and training for young people.

What is working well

3.35 There is evidence that partners in most LAs value the EPC role. They see the benefits of having one or two designated points of contact responsible for coordinating partners and facilitating information sharing. LAs that did not previously have a comparable role have in particular noticed the difference that the EPC role makes in taking forward the action plan.

3.36 In LAs that have a dedicated MI officer or data analyst, partners and LA staff value this role also and see it is as a key success factor to implementation of the YEPF.

3.37 LAs that have situated the EPC outside a specific service area department reported that this has helped to avoid tensions between departments and helped to ensure the YEPF remains a cross-cutting priority for a cluster of services rather than the responsibility of a single service area.

3.38 Task and finish groups to develop ISPs appear to have worked well. Although some LAs found the process difficult because it was unfamiliar, they have been able to work together to develop a draft ISP that has been submitted to WASPI for approval. Several partners commented that the YEPF has sped up finalisation of ISPs and were positive about the progress made.

Challenges

3.39 Establishing effective operational arrangements takes time and requires leadership from the SAO and EPC. It is apparent that in LAs where the EPC has only been recently appointed, operational arrangements are less well developed. Even in LAs where an EPC has been in post for longer, the process of setting up partnership working protocols and systems is an iterative one – models are trialled, reviewed and refined – and it can be several months before a final process is agreed between partners.

3.40 The main challenge experienced in relation to establishing operational groups and task and finish groups is ensuring active participation and contribution from all key staff in partner organisations. In particular:

- commitment to developing local YEPF implementation plans and partnership arrangements has been variable among post-16 schools, colleges and WBL providers

- partnership working protocols with JCP are not well-established in all LAs

- employers are generally not well engaged.

3.41 While an ISP or another means to share information especially with Careers Wales has been put in place in many LAs, this is still not the case in all LAs although it is critical for effective brokerage and tracking. Where the EPC functions are the responsibility of one person, LAs reported that it is a challenge for both strategic and operational responsibilities to be fulfilled.

3.42 Over half of LAs reported that they had used the £50,000 grant from the Welsh Government to appoint the EPC but not all had identified funds to sustain the post beyond March 2016.

3.43 Table 3.2 sets out the emerging findings as at February 2015 drawing on the LA and partner interviews in all 22 LA areas.

Table 3.2   Consideration of LA implementation of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
EPC in post or alternative arrangements functioning.	All LAs have appointed an EPC, and partners generally value the role and the post holders' ability to make progress with developing solutions. Most stakeholders believe they are making a difference. Some LAs have embedded the functions of the EPC in two or three roles, dividing strategic and operational responsibilities. Some LAs have a full or part time data officer to	The EPC role is critical to progressing YEPF; without it progress can be at risk. EPCs often expected to perform strategic, operational development and implementation roles which considerably stretches them.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
	support the EPC, which is valued greatly by partners and LA staff. The EPC is generally seen as someone working across internal and external organisational structures.	
LA develops implementation plan with clear designation of responsibilities.	All LAs have developed a YEPF action plan, which has been shared with the Welsh Government.	Action plans do not show key outputs and products, milestones, activities and resources required for implementation nor interdependencies between actions. This is a key risk to implementation.
Arrangements to develop implementation of each element of the YEPF are in place, such as working groups and task and finish groups.	Some LAs have these along with joint bilateral working with individuals in other services to take forward development work.	LAs rarely have arrangements for development which cover all elements which should be moving forward. Few examples of task and finish groups used for specific aspects of the YEPF. A project management approach to delivery of action plans has not generally been taken. This must make monitoring of progress and understanding contingencies difficult for EPCs and the strategic steering groups.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
EPC leads on developing partnership arrangements with Careers Wales, post-16 training providers, third sector partners.	EPCs are in the main actively coordinating membership of groups to develop new arrangements and operational groups. Strong relationships generally in place with Career Wales and internal parts of LAs (youth services, 14-19).	Mixed success in engaging all external partners.
LA leads on ensuring appropriate data sharing arrangements are in place.	Increasing number of ISPs in place between LAs, Careers Wales and other delivery partners such as schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations (ten LAs have a post-16 ISP in place, with almost all others actively in the process of developing one). Some LAs have placement agreements with Careers Wales, which allow five tier data to be shared. YEPF has sped up finalising some ISPs that were in development for a long time.	All the remaining 12 LAs are developing an ISP and have registered it.

Key messages

Strategic management arrangements

- Generally, LAs have developed good strategic governance arrangements for the YEPF. All LAs had appointed an SAO for the YEPF and most had strategic steering groups that include a range of relevant internal and external partners. Some LAs had yet to finalise strategic steering arrangements though and either did not have a full range of partners represented or had not established a group (two LAs)

- Although it is too early to fully assess the effectiveness of steering arrangements, there is evidence that more established strategic groups were functioning well: attendance is good; there are examples of active leaderships from SAOs; partners were working well to oversee implementation; and there was improved sharing of data and information

- The stakeholder survey responses show that membership and participation had increased since October 2013, and that most agree that collaboration and effective leadership of the agenda had improved

- A key barrier to establishing and maintaining robust strategic governance arrangements was seen to be the ongoing re-organisation of LA services and those in the private and voluntary sector grant aided by LAs as a consequence of reductions in funding.

Operational arrangements

- All LAs developed action plans for implementing the YEPF and shared them with the Welsh Government. Most of the plans do not include specific information on outputs and products, milestones, activities and resources required for implementation. No LAs appeared to be using a formal project management methodology to oversee and monitor implementation

- All LAs had appointed an EPC to coordinate delivery of the action plan, although some had only recently been appointed. At least a third of LAs had embedded the functions of the EPC across a few different roles in recognition of the wide ranging responsibilities of an EPC. In general, partners value the EPC role and believe it has brought a step change

- In some LAs, arrangements to take forward and develop elements of the YEPF were clear and had expedited partnership working to arrive at practical solutions while in others they were not well established. Very few LAs appeared to have arrangements for development which cover

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all elements which should be moving forward

- Just under half of LAs (10) had ISPs in place that were approved by WASPI. Some of those without an ISP had a placement agreement with Careers Wales, which allowed five tier data to be shared with a named contact. Partners in LAs with ISPs and placement agreements were very positive about being able to share information and consider it is supporting improved early identification and tracking. LAs without these arrangements face difficulties in implementing the YEPF

- Over half of LAs had used the £50,000 grants from the Welsh Government to appoint the EPC but not all had identified funds to sustain this post.

4. Implementation of the six components of the Framework

4.1 In this section we present findings about how LAs are implementing the six components of the YEPF: early identification, brokerage, tracking, provision, employability and accountability. As in the previous section, we draw on interviews with LA staff and partners, supporting documentary material and interviews with stakeholders. Key messages are summarised at the end of the section.

Early identification

What is happening

4.2 This component of the YEPF had been the prime focus for most LAs. Actions on this element for young people below the age of 16 were relatively well advanced in most but not all LAs.

(a) Pre-16

4.3 Around a third of LAs had an existing early identification system in place before the introduction of the YEPF, which was being used with Year 10 and 11 students and was relatively well-established. These systems all follow best practice guidance and are data-led but with practitioner input. For several LAs, the YEPF has provided impetus to extend use of the tool to younger students so that identification takes place earlier. Another LA with an existing pre-16 early identification system used the YEPF as an opportunity to review its existing model to ensure it effectively identified young people at risk and then adapted it.

4.4 Over a third of LAs did not have a consistent, standardised system in place and started work on this since or just before the launch of the YEPF. All of these LAs already recognised the need to introduce a standardised system and the YEPF has helped to stimulate this work. One LA described this as 'the YEPF pushing at an open door'. Typically in these LAs early identification previously took place within schools but schools used different measures and categories of risk and there were no protocols for sharing information between partners. Some of these LAs had started to scope possible models but these had not been tested before the introduction of the YEPF.

4.5 LAs that have developed a new early identification system since the launch of the YEPF generally described a thorough process for

developing and testing new models. All included most of the following ingredients:

- followed best practice guidance and research evidence to ensure the core indicators of behaviour, attainment and attendance featured in their model. Many drew on learning from other LAs who had already been through the process

- worked collaboratively with schools and other partners in appropriate working groups or task and finish groups, seeking their views on what the thresholds of risk should be and how the process of communication between schools and the LA should work

- linked their early identification system to the five tier model

- sought feedback on draft models and systems from partners

- tested their model by using historic data to assess if the model would have effectively identified young people who became NEET after leaving school

- piloted the new system either in one or two schools, carefully selected either because they had high numbers of Year 11 leavers who become NEET or because of strong support from a head teacher who was willing to contribute to a pilot, or gradually introduced it to all schools

- refined the model based on feedback and results from pilots by adjusting weightings, adding or removing risk indicators and changing the presentation of reports to make them more usable.

4.6   It appears that all systems that were already in place or had been developed use the core indicators of behaviour, attainment and attendance. A wide range of additional indicators were also used, including: Free School Meal status, looked-after status, whether or not a young person is educated other than at school (EOTAS), multiple school changes, additional learning needs and English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. The number of additional indicators used varies between LAs. Most of the systems also use a traffic light system for categorisation of risk.

4.7   A few LAs had produced process maps or written guidance for schools to support their use of and input to the early identification system.

> **Pre-16 early identification: Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan**
>
> Before the launch of the YEPF, there were no coordinated structures in place for the identification of young people aged under 16 who were at risk of becoming NEET in Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. Schools had their own internal processes for early identification but information was not necessarily shared with the LA or other stakeholders.
>
> Both LAs established small working groups to develop the tool by identifying indicators, establishing weightings to reflect their importance and to define thresholds for interventions. As part of this process a range of evidence was taken in to account including research literature, learning from other LAs and guidance from the Welsh Government.
>
> The output of both models is a RAG rating for all pupils, with pupils rated red needing intensive support, those rated amber as requiring some additional support and observation, and green meaning no additional action is required.
>
> In Merthyr Tydfil, information from the early identification tool is examined on a monthly basis by a new NEET operational group. At these groups, young people identified as being at serious risk of disengaging (i.e those with a red status in the RAG rating) are allocated a lead worker and the brokerage of additional support is agreed. In the Vale of Glamorgan, school-based multi-agency panels meet termly and fulfil this role.
>
> Although both LAs had already started scoping and development work of their pre-16 early identification systems before the YEPF, the introduction of the national framework has helped to secure the commitment of partners and to ensure finalisation of the work is a priority.
>
> A full case study of pre-16 early identification and brokerage in the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil is presented in Annex 2.

4.8   Two LAs in north Wales had made relatively limited progress in developing a standardised early identification system. There were school-level systems in place for monitoring behaviour, attendance and attainment and regular communication between the LA and schools, but the approach was not consistent or found in all schools. Limited progress was partly due to delays in appointing an EPC. Since EPCs had been appointed in these areas, they were contributing to regional EPC meetings to plan the development of a consistent approach to pre-16 early identification across north Wales.

4.9   The stakeholder survey showed a large increase in the proportion
        agreeing or strongly agreeing that the LA they work in/with was
        effectively coordinating pre-16 early identification processes rising from
        45 per cent before YEPF to 79 per cent after the introduction of the
        YEPF (an increase from 63 to 113 individuals). It also showed:

        ● the number of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that it
          was made clear by the LA who was responsible for different
          elements of the pre-16 early identification increased from 62 to
          110 (from 44 per cent of respondents to 77 per cent)

        ● 78 per cent of survey respondents (109 individuals) agreed or
          strongly agreed that the right partners were participating in pre-
          16 early identification processes after the introduction of the
          YEPF, compared to 40 per cent (57 individuals) pre-YEPF

        ● just over half of the respondents generally indicated an
          improvement in different aspects of the early identification
          process since October 2013.

        (b) 16-18

4.10   In general, processes for identifying young people who are at risk of
        disengaging were less well-developed for the 16-18 age group than the
        pre-16s. Some of those LAs that did not have a standardised,
        consistent pre-16 early identification system in place before the YEPF
        decided to focus on this before post-16 early identification (at least
        three out of nine LAs).

4.11   Even though many LAs had worked first on improving pre-16
        processes, since September 2014 (i.e. one year into the
        implementation phase) there has been a greater focus on
        arrangements for post-16 early identification. Over half of LAs had
        undertaken some work in relation to improving post-16 early
        identification and had some systems in place involving partners. For
        four authorities, the YEPF had ensured that existing good practice
        continued and remained a priority. Processes had continued to be
        monitored for effectiveness and any necessary modifications had been
        made.

> **Post-16 early identification: Torfaen**
>
> In Torfaen a dedicated member of staff is responsible for updating and analysing the five tier data – a key component of early identification of young people aged over 16 at risk of disengaging. The following process was established before the YEPF and has been continued and formalised since the introduction of the YEPF:
>
> - January: schools are asked to provide the LA with data on intended destinations of young people in Years 11, 12 and 13 by completing a simple pro forma. This pro forma is seen as an interim measure until the Common Application Process (CAP) is in place. Data is collected and made available to all stakeholders by April/May. It allows the LA, schools and Careers Wales to identify young people who require additional support, information, advice and guidance through the transition to post-16 provision
>
> - June: all schools are required to provide the LA with updated information on projected destinations of young people in Year 11
>
> - September: schools are required to update this list based on actual enrolments
>
> - end of October: the Careers Wales destination survey is carried out; and
>
> - October onwards: there are at least monthly discussions with post-16 providers (schools, WBL providers and colleges) to identify and discuss young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging.
>
> As a consequence of this work, there is agreement among stakeholders that tracking and monitoring of young people's progress has improved.
>
> A full case study of post-16 early identification and brokerage is presented in Annex 2.

4.12   In at least three LA areas, Careers Wales had used their partnership agreements with colleges as a means to negotiate and improve the sharing of information about young people who had disengaged. In one of these areas, the college was already providing Careers Wales with monthly lists of young people whose attendance had dropped or who had withdrawn from a course. Careers Wales found that in some cases a month's lag was too much and was preventing them from intervening

promptly before a young person disengaged even further. During the annual review of the partnership agreement, it was agreed that during the first term of the year weekly lists would be provided instead; then a two-weekly list around Christmas; and monthly lists later in the year. In two other LAs, where information sharing was not established, the partnership agreement review meetings were used to try and have open discussions with senior managers in colleges about how they could be supported to provide more timely information.

4.13 Careers Wales managers in some areas had reviewed arrangements for co-locating Careers Wales advisers in colleges. They recognise that staff 'who are extremely proactive have the ability to build positive working relationships with a wide range of college staff because it is not just their careers advice and guidance skills that are important' (Careers Wales staff interview).

4.14 Some LAs (where new ISPs had been set up) had established multi-agency practitioner groups to improve early identification for post 16s. They provided a regular forum for all post-16 providers and other partners to provide Careers Wales with updates about young people they worked with and specifically to notify Careers Wales of young people at risk of disengaging. In general, these groups were in the early stages of development.

4.15 There was evidence that some colleges had developed their own systems for identifying young people that were at risk of disengaging. These were generally in place before the YEPF; no new systems were reported. Examples include Bridgend College's BRAVO system, which is a data-led system that uses indicators such as hours of travel, hours of part time work, results of basic skills test and entry qualifications and automatically generates a list of young people at risk of disengaging. Student support/pastoral staff review the list and amend it in light of their own knowledge about individual students. Another example is Gower College, where a monthly list is produced of students whose attendance has dropped below 60 per cent and those who have formally withdrawn from a course. This list is then shared with Careers Wales and the college's student support workers. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that colleges also use Individual Learning Plans as a means to track progress of individual young people, although this information is not shared with LAs.

4.16 The stakeholder survey shows that many more respondents believed that the early identification process for 16-18s is better than before the

YEPF. Since the introduction of the YEPF, 84 per cent of 150 respondents (126 individuals) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated early identification processes for 16-18 year olds, compared to 45 per cent (68 individuals) before the introduction of the YEPF. This includes a large increase in the percentage of individuals who strongly agreed with the statement from 13 per cent to 29 per cent.

4.17 It also shows that:

- 74 per cent of 151 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all the right partners were participating in early identification processes for 16-18 year olds (compared to 40 per cent of 149 respondents pre-YEPF)

- in relation to two questions ("The local authority effectively coordinated early identification processes" and "all the right partners were participating in early identification processes"), just under half of respondents made no change in their rating of the process since the introduction of the YEPF, while just over a half reported it to be better.

What is working well

(a) Pre-16s

- There appears to have been good sharing of learning and experiences between LAs. There are several examples of LAs that already had an early identification system in place sharing their models and learning from the process with other LAs who were embarking on work in this area. This has helped to 'avoid reinventing the wheel and to learn from other people' (EPC interview).

- Schools appear to have been effectively involved in the development of early identification tools. All schools interviewed considered that they had an opportunity to comment on draft tools, share their views on where thresholds of risk should be set and to provide knowledge about young people's situations to complement evidence from the data. They understood the value of having a standardised, data-led early identification system and reported they were committed to its use.

- In LAs where a new early identification system has been developed, schools and other partners generally praised the proactive leadership of LAs in coordinating the process. Where written guidance and process maps have been produced by LAs, these are generally perceived to be helpful by schools.

- LAs, schools and partners welcome the flexibility to include additional indicators in their early identification systems that are relevant to their local contexts

- Most stakeholders believe that the process has improved since the introduction of the YEPF and nearly four in five believe it is being coordinated well.

(b) 16-18

- It was generally too early to say whether new and refreshed mechanisms for post-16 providers to give updates to Careers Wales about young people who had disengaged or were at risk of doing so are effective but partners view the fact they had been established in around half of the LAs as good progress.

Challenges

(a) Pre-16

4.18 Although the schools interviewed were positive about their role in developing early identification systems, LAs and partners commented that the challenge is to ensure that all schools are committed to participating in the early identification process. Typical comments included: 'I'm not sure processes are as watertight as they should be. Not all schools are always represented' (Deputy head teacher, South East). Schools where there is a head teacher or senior member of staff as a champion were typically more engaged.

4.19 Under a fifth of LAs reported that they faced technical challenges in implementing an early identification system because there was not a single management information platform in place for schools and the LA. A few LAs were in the process of purchasing new platforms to overcome this. In the meantime, data on behaviour, attendance and attainment was being reviewed and analysed manually, which is a time consuming process.

4.20   Larger LAs with more schools in their area reported that maintaining control over a centralised process of early identification was not feasible. To meet termly with schools to discuss the results of the early identification data analysis would be too time consuming, to overcome this, LAs were encouraging schools to take responsibility for the early identification process.

4.21   A few LAs had early identification systems in place that meet best practice criteria but over time, use of these had waned due to changes of staff. When a key member of staff, such as a data analyst within the LA moves on or the post is lost, the process had reverted to a less systematic approach that relies more on practitioner intelligence than a combination of data and practitioner intelligence.

4.22   The coordinated regional approach in north Wales was taking longer to develop because of the need to review existing processes in parallel and achieve consensus across a wider group of stakeholders. If implemented and rolled out effectively, the regional system should provide consistency and coherence across several LAs, which would benefit both professionals and young people. At February 2015, though, planning and development appeared to be at a relatively early stage.

   (b)16-18

4.23   Although it appeared that some post-16 providers have their own systems for early identification, communication with the EPC and Careers Wales was not consistently taking place in all LAs when a young person had disengaged or was seriously at risk of disengaging. Careers Wales interviewees in many LAs reported that pre-YEPF they received information on young people who had moved from Tier 5 to Tier 4 or Tier 2 that was either 'too late or provided on an ad hoc basis. The multiagency practitioner groups were expected to help improve sharing of information. The expectation was that these meetings would facilitate exchange of information between colleges, WBL providers, Careers Wales and the LA. Based on the information shared, Careers Wales should be able to identify more quickly young people at risk of disengaging.

4.24   LA and Careers Wales staff reported mixed experiences of working with WBL providers. Some found it easier to establish positive working relationships with WBL providers because they tend to be small organisations with just one or two points of contact. Others considered

that changes to WBL contracts had placed increased emphasis on obtaining a Level 2 or 3 qualification, which means some providers were less willing to commit time and resources to support young people working at lower levels. A few LAs (at least three) also reported that they had noticed that WBL providers were under increased pressure due to reductions in their funding contracts and so were not able to respond to requests for information about students at risk or to conduct interviews and register new learners as quickly.

4.25   Colleges and large WBL providers that work with multiple LAs generally reported that having to meet the requirements of several different LA early identification (and brokerage and tracking) systems could be challenging. Larger colleges had allocated different leads for each LA and although this was thought to work well, it placed pressure on resources. Providers reported that the main challenges were time to attend multiple steering group and operational meetings and also understanding the differences in approach in each LA.

Summary

Milestone 1: March 2014 – LAs develop proposed approach to early identification

Progress against milestone: 20 LAs have developed proposals for early identification for young people pre-16; not clear when remaining two LAs will develop proposals.

At least 13 LAs have developed proposals for early identification for the post-16 group and in a few other LAs this is in progress.

Milestone 2: September 2014 – implementation of new approach to early identification across Wales

Progress against milestone: 17 LAs implemented a new approach to pre-16 early identification from September 2014.

At least 10 LAs have implemented an improved post-16 early identification system (some LAs did this in September 2014; in other LAs implementation took place in early 2015).

Table 4.1 **Consideration of LA implementation of the early identification component of the YEPF**

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Use of evidence in developing proposals.	**Pre and post-16** Systems in place pre-YEPF appear to follow good practice guidance. Some LAs that did not have a system have developed one and have made good use of evidence, including the guidance from the Welsh Government. Good sharing of systems and models between LAs.	**Post-16** Some LAs have not taken steps to develop. plans for post-16 early identification.
Scoping: development of a system linked to the five tier model. Consultation with key partners on system.	**Pre-16** Examples of schools and other partners being effectively involved in development of new early identification tools. Some LAs that already had an early identification system in place before the YEPF for Year 11s are extending use of the tool to Years 9 and 10. Schools and other partners praised proactive leadership of EPCs in many areas that have developed a new tool.	**Post-16** Some LAs have not developed plans for post-16 early identification.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
	Post-16 Some LAs have strengthened or formalised existing systems for early identification to link to the 5 tier model.	
Development of early identification system: Agreement on risk factors, indicators and thresholds between all partners. All core indicators used. Pilot testing. Collection of feedback. Modification based on learning.	**Pre-16** LAs that have developed an early identification system in the main described a thorough process for developing and testing models. All previous or new data-led systems appear to use core indicators. LAs appreciate flexibility to use additional indicators to suit local circumstances and priorities. Refinement of tool based on feedback from partners. **16-18** In some LA areas, Careers Wales has used partnership agreements with colleges as a means to negotiate and improve information sharing and	**Pre-16** A few LAs have not developed an early identification system. **16-18** Processes for identifying young people aged 16-18 are not as well developed as those for the pre-16 age group and some LAs have not focussed on this yet. Few examples of post-16 providers with robust, internal systems

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
	has reviewed staffing to ensure colleges are well supported. Some examples of colleges with their own internal systems for early identification being used.	for early identification.
Roll out: All partners using the system consistently pre-16. All post-16 providers providing information to Careers Wales.	**Pre-16** Early identification systems for the pre-16 age group are relatively well-developed and are being used to identify those at risk. 17 LAs are now using these. **Post-16** 10 LAs have started to use monthly five tier data to improve early identification for over-16s.	**Pre-16** Some schools are more committed than others to participating in the early identification process – there is not consistent use across all schools yet. In a few LAs, early identification systems that were in place previously are not being used because of change in staff. **Post-16** Post-16 providers are not systematically notifying LAs and Careers Wales about young people at risk of disengaging. Post-16 providers are not participating equally in multi-agency forums designed to share information about young people over 16 at risk of disengagement.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Monitoring and evaluation: By the EPC and steering group. Ongoing feedback from partners.	Examples of strategic groups monitoring pre and post-16 identification and support.	

Brokerage

What is happening

4.26 Lead working was taking place in all LAs before the introduction of the YEPF to some degree and in some form. Most LAs gave examples of lead working as part of: a Team Around the Family approach (TAF) in the Families First programme; various sub-regional European Social Fund (ESF) projects, such as Pre-Vent and Lift, which up to 2013 provided staff and volunteers in schools and youth services to support those at risk of becoming NEET as well as those who were; and school and college-level efforts to allocate additional support to young people identified as at risk. Although a lead-working approach was being adopted, LAs noted that this terminology was not necessarily used by the LA and providers.

4.27 Since the introduction of the YEPF, around a fifth of LAs had recognised that they did not fully understand the scope and extent of lead working taking place. To address this, they had undertaken scoping exercises to map which organisations and services were currently taking on a lead worker role and which organisations had the skills, resources and capabilities to do so. In some cases, this had been done as part of the provision mapping exercise (see below) and in others a separate exercise had taken place. There was one example of an LA using Families First funding to commission an external, independent consultant to review and analyse ongoing lead working practice. Part of this exercise had also been to analyse existing research evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of different lead working approaches. This type of research and scoping exercise represents a more strategic approach to establishing lead working under the YEPF, which seeks to understand links between services. LA staff reported that the findings of scoping exercises to map existing

lead working could potentially result in a reconfiguration of existing services.

4.28 Development of plans and arrangements for lead working were in progress in many LAs. All interviewees recognised that a consistent offer of lead working and brokerage was a key component of the YEPF.

4.29 Lead working for young people under 16 was relatively well-developed. Over half of LAs (13) were implementing a new or strengthened form of lead working from September 2014.

4.30 For LAs that had developed and rolled out a new pre-16 early identification system since the launch of the YEPF, data from the new system underpinned brokerage. Multi-agency panels receive data from the early identification system and use it to make decisions about allocation of a lead worker and brokerage of additional support. In a couple of LAs, existing mechanisms for allocating pre-16 lead workers and brokering support had been reviewed. For example, in one of these, membership of school-based multi-agency panels had been widened and in another processes had been streamlined.

4.31 In all other LAs, there was already a form of lead working and brokerage for the pre-16 age group, which will continue.

4.32 The stakeholder survey showed that three quarters (75 per cent of 113 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated processes for pre-16 brokerage, compared to two fifths (40 per cent of 112 respondents) before the YEPF, an increase of 34 percentage points.

4.33 There was also a significant increase in the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the LA made clear how lead workers (or a similar function) should be allocated to young people under 16. Before the YEPF, 37 per cent of 113 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 69 percent of 114 respondents after the introduction of the Framework, an increase of 32 percentage points.

4.34 Generally, there was less progress in relation to lead working for young people over 16 during the first year of the implementation phase of the YEPF but this had subsequently picked up. Between October 2013 and September 2014, around a third of LAs (7) implemented new or reinforced arrangements for this age group. Between September 2014 and February 2015, a further seven LAs introduced new arrangements. As a consequence, in February 2015, almost two thirds of LAs had made some changes to arrangements for post-16 lead working. In at

least three of these, implementation was in the relatively early stages of refinement so modification was expected over the coming months.

4.35 In the remaining LAs (8), although preliminary scoping had taken place, the focus appeared to have been on other components of the YEPF and it was likely that lead working in its existing form was to continue in the short-term, until more detailed plans for development were produced. In these LAs, the strengths and disadvantages of different operational models were being weighed up in strategic planning meetings and consultation with partners.

4.36 Despite the relatively slower progress on post 16 brokerage, the stakeholder survey showed that almost four fifths (79 per cent of 138 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA made clear how lead workers (or a similar function) should be allocated to young people aged 16-18 compared to 38 per cent of 137 respondents before the introduction of the Framework, an increase of 41 percentage points. Similarly, almost four fifths (79 per cent of 139 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated processes for brokerage for 16-18 year olds since the YEPF, compared to 41 per cent of 137 respondents before the introduction of the Framework, an increase of 38 percentage points. For both questions, the number of individuals strongly agreeing with the statement greatly increased (from seven to 31 individuals and nine to 29 individuals respectively) since the introduction of the Framework.

4.37 Various models of brokerage were emerging as described in the box below.

> **For under 16s**, in some LAs youth workers funded by the youth service or learning coaches are responsible for being a lead worker. There are several examples of youth workers based in schools (who also cover post 16) who are already responsible for, or will be responsible for, becoming a lead worker and brokering additional support for young people identified as being at risk of disengaging (for example, Pembrokeshire, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Caerphilly and Bridgend). Typically, school-level panels that bring together the range of services working with a school are planned (or will continue) as the forum for sharing information and providing feedback to the EPC. In cases where a school does not have a designated youth worker, there are examples where an alternative school-based lead worker will be identified, for example, a member of pastoral staff. Some LAs (for example, Torfaen, Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff) have produced written guidance or process maps for schools to help them to

understand the intended process.

For young people aged 16-18 in Tiers 1 and 2, many LAs are using multiagency practitioner groups as the forum for allocating a lead worker and monitoring progress. In several LAs, a previous multiagency practitioner group existed (for example, Keeping in Touch groups) and has been adapted for the purposes of the YEPF. It is intended that practitioners will share their knowledge about young people's needs and the support they are providing and that the most appropriate lead worker will be negotiated and identified collaboratively between partners. A few LAs are exploring the possibility of smaller sub-groups (for example, the Vale of Glamorgan); while in Cardiff neighbourhood groups covering different geographical areas of the LA have been established. In most cases, there does not appear to be a formal referral process to the multiagency practitioner group. If a young person is in Tier 1 or 2, they will automatically be referred to the group. If they are in Tier 4 and meet a certain threshold of risk in the early identification system, they will be referred to the group. There are at least a couple of examples of a referral form being developed that collates information on a young person's needs and is reviewed by a 'Principal lead worker' before formal referral to the group.

4.38 In general, LAs did not appear to have fully developed plans for case management (when lead worker support should be withdrawn; exit strategies; appropriate caseloads for lead workers; processes for assessing the effectiveness of lead working and any provision brokered for a young person; and the most appropriate format for lead workers to provide feedback to EPCs).

4.39 Some but not all LAs appeared to be able to offer a Welsh-speaking lead worker to young people if they wish. Pembrokeshire, for example, had four youth workers within the youth service and one of these was Welsh-speaking and had lead working skills. In many LAs, there were Welsh-speaking Careers Wales advisors who could take on a lead worker role.

4.40 At least three LAs were developing or providing training for lead workers. Generally, LAs were keen to firm up and agree their plans between partners and had a clearer idea of how lead working would work, before focussing on training and development needs. A few authorities reported that this was likely to be an area of work during 2015.

What is working well

- The approach adopted by many LAs of allocating a school-based youth worker to young people at school identified as being at risk of disengaging was perceived to be working well as it 'provides continuity for a young person because they are likely to know the youth worker' (LA Youth Service interview) before they become an 'official' lead worker.

- Some LAs that participated in ESF projects that used lead workers reported that learning about effective practice from these projects had informed their scoping and development of the lead worker role under the YEPF.

- LAs which had made progress had adapted the roles of existing staff or created new roles and addressed challenges around funding, process mapping and demarcating responsibilities between the partners.

Challenges

4.41   In general, lead working was the component of the YEPF that most LAs were working on trying to operationalise. The research identified some challenges:

- in order for lead working and brokerage to be implemented, robust ISPs must be in place between partners. There is evidence that in some LAs, delays in approval of ISPs has prevented progress being made in lead working. Although scoping and development of plans had been able to continue, partners had not been able to come together to review individual cases, allocate lead workers and broker a package of support

- EPCs and strategic leads within LAs generally understood that the lead working requirement of the YEPF does not intend for a new role to be created (although it may require existing staff to be re-designated to fulfil a new role). They recognised that many practitioners were already taking on the responsibilities of a lead worker. The challenge for them, though, was to ensure this is more widely understood. They reported that 'a lot of services are afraid that we are asking them to take on more work without additional funding'

- currently in LAs in the ESF Convergence area a lot of post-16 lead working and brokerage is or has been funded through ESF projects. The current round of ESF funding is generally at an end and although there are examples of LAs reallocating funds to provide staff who could be lead workers (for pre and post 16 provision), some have not and are concerned that there will be a hiatus

- as many LAs were still in the process of developing their plans about lead workers, there was some confusion among partners about what their role will be and how lead working will function in practice

- LAs did not appear to have engaged a full range of partners in the lead working process and in the multiagency practitioner groups they have trialled. Participation of schools, colleges and WBL providers was reported to be variable and, similarly, some areas reported that they had not fully established working arrangements with voluntary and community sector organisations

- in a couple of LAs, stakeholders reported some tension between Careers Wales and the LA when a young person categorised as Tier 3 is judged by Careers Wales to be not ready to engage with education and training and so has been re-categorised as Tier 2. Allocation to tiers has resource implications for organisations and negotiation can be a sensitive process. Stakeholders did, though, report that having a practitioner group as a transparent forum for such discussions with input from a wide range of organisations helps to arrive at a fair and objective decision

- around a third of LAs were having debates at a strategic level about whether lead workers should focus on brokering additional support in relation to education, training and employment only or whether there should be a focus on addressing a young person's wider social, health and financial needs. A consideration in making this decision, reported by some LA staff, is whether staff have the skills required to broker wider support or whether they could be effectively upskilled.

Summary

Milestone 3: July 2014 – LAs agree proposals for allocating lead workers with stakeholders

Progress against milestone: 15 LAs have agreed proposals for lead workers for pre-16 young people; 16 LAs have agreed proposals for post-16. It is not clear when the remaining LAs will agree proposals.

Milestone 4: September 2014 – LAs implement proposals for lead workers

Progress against milestone: 13 LAs have implemented lead working for pre-16s from September 2014. 14 LAs have implemented lead working for post-16 (half of these have done so since September 2014).   Of the 14 LAs that have implemented new post-16 brokerage arrangements, at least 3 LAs are in the early stages of implementation and expect to refine/modify procedures over the next few months.

Table 4.2   Consideration of LA implementation of the brokerage component of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Initial design and planning: LAs review existing resources and mechanisms that could be used to support lead workers, in partnership with local stakeholders. Use of evidence on effective practice in lead working from other contexts. EPC leads on scoping of arrangements for sharing data between different delivery partners.	Some LAs have carried out a scoping exercise to map current lead working practice (pre- and post-16). Some LAs have adjusted staffing arrangements to provide for lead workers in pre and post 16 settings. Some LAs have tested plans during 2014 to be rolled out in 2015. Most stakeholders believe better coordinated	In 6 LAs, the LA and Careers Wales do not yet have an initial plan for post-16 lead working; in 7 LAs there is not an agreed plan for pre-16 lead working.

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Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
LAs and Career Wales develop initial plans for how lead workers will be identified and allocated.	arrangements are being developed by LAs.	
Development and testing LAs develop action plan with clear designation of responsibilities. LAs identify training and development requirements for lead workers; establish suitable provision; and deliver training. Clear processes for allocating a lead worker agreed between all stakeholders. The process is managed by the EPC. Clear processes for sharing information and data between delivery partners in place – all stakeholders understand their role. Clear protocol for how information from early identification component informs allocation of lead worker.	**Pre-16** Processes for allocating a lead worker for young people pre-16 appear to be generally understood by all partners. Example of process maps and written guidance to support this. Changes often being tested before full implementation. **Post-16** In some LAs learning from previous ESF projects has been used to develop the model for allocating a lead worker and defining the role. Protocols being tested with lead workers.	**Pre-16 and post-16** LAs aware that training for lead workers will be required but needs not yet identified and training provision not developed. LAs have generally not developed plans for case management. Delays in signing off ISPs is impeding lead working and brokerage in remaining LAs. Full range of partners not yet engaged in the lead working process in some LAs. Not evident that all LAs are able to offer lead working and brokerage in the medium of Welsh. Much post-16 lead working has been funded through ESF. Some LAs are struggling to revise with LA and grant funds.
Implementation and refinement Systematic assessment of	**Pre-16** 13 LAs now	**Pre-16** All schools do not participate equally in

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
whether expected benefits are being achieved by LAs.	implementing lead working.	multiagency panels.
Lead workers and EPC collect systematic data on needs of young people. Modifications to the process based on learning from early implementation (all stakeholders). Ongoing partnership working and consideration of views of all stakeholders, including young people. Sharing of learning between LAs.	**Post-16** New form of lead working resulting from the YEPF being implemented in 14 LAs. Steering groups expected to oversee progress of implementation and assess whether expected benefits are being achieved.	**Post-16** Few examples of learning between LAs so far. Few examples of how needs of young people will be systematically collected. Not all WBL providers are participating.
Ongoing delivery National system of lead workers in place and working effectively.		Lead working has not yet been established as a national system.

Tracking

What is happening

(a) Pre-16

4.42   In LAs where a standardised data-led early identification system had not been rolled out (around a third), progress review meetings informed by data had not taken place. Nonetheless, there was evidence that in some of these cases, there were meetings taking place at least termly between the EPC, school staff and other partners so that practitioners could share information and jointly assess whether young people's situation is improving.

4.43 In general, LAs and schools that already had robust and well-established early identification systems, appeared to have good processes in place for tracking, linked to their early identification systems and multi-agency groups. For example, in Newport, school-based wellbeing panels meet at least fortnightly to review progress. Similarly, in Blaenau Gwent, the EPC coordinates regular review meetings and data from the early identification system feeds into these. Merthyr Tydfil has established termly follow up meetings for Year 9 pupils identified as being at risk and monthly meetings with schools to track the progress of pupils in Year 11.

4.44 The stakeholder survey showed that almost four fifths of respondents (79 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated processes for tracking progress of young people at risk of disengaging aged under16, compared to only 46 per cent pre-YEPF. The number of individuals strongly agreeing with the statement almost tripled from 13 per cent to 37 per cent. Just over three quarters (76 per cent of 132 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA facilitated sharing of information between relevant partners to ensure effective tracking of progress of young people at risk of disengaging aged under 16 since the introduction of the Framework, compared to under half (46 per cent of 131 individuals) before the Framework was introduced.

(b) Transition

4.45 There were examples of well-developed actions to strengthen tracking during transition in at least a quarter of LAs. For example:

- multiagency practitioner groups were being used as a forum for information to be shared between pre-16 and post-16 providers about young people who have been identified as being at risk of disengaging

- a few LAs share data from the early identification tool with colleges and WBL providers (where an ISP is in place) so that post-16 providers are aware of young people joining their organisation who are at risk. In Swansea, this process had been strengthened with each school being allocated a link tutor from Gower College so that information can be shared between school and college staff

- in a few LAs, such as Merthyr Tydfil, lead workers assigned to young people while they are at school remain the lead worker for a young person after their transition to post-16 provision until December.

4.46 In remaining LAs, tracking during transition had not been a priority although there is recognition of the need to review and strengthen processes.

(c) 16-18

4.47 Generally, there were fewer finalised post-16 ISPs in place and so LAs reported that they were finding tracking the 16-18 age group more challenging than for the pre-16 group. In September 2014, in over a third of LAs (eight) absence of an ISP between Careers Wales and the LA prevented data on individual young people being shared. Since then, at least three of these LAs have had their ISPs assured by WASPI and were in the process of ensuring key partners were signed up. More robust tracking using named five tier data had very recently (at time of writing in April 2015) started or were planned to start in the first half of 2015.   ISPs were under development in all of the remaining LAs.

4.48 A few LAs reported that since the launch of the YEPF, they had succeeded in putting in place an ISP between operational partners but had not looked beyond this to assess how processes of tracking young people aged 16,17 and 18 could be improved.

4.49 In some LAs where there were ISPs in place there were examples of monthly tracking of Year 11 leavers aged 16 for two years. For example, in Swansea the KIT strategy team tracks, on a monthly basis, the destinations of a Year 11 cohort (as defined by PLASC) using five tier data. A similar process is in place in Torfaen.

4.50 In terms of identifying young people in Tier 1, there were examples of LAs using detached youth workers to visit households to find out about the situation of a young person who has become disengaged from services (Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, for example). In other LAs, the exchange of information between professionals in multiagency practitioner groups plays an important role in identifying young people in Tier 1 between the ages of 16 and 18 (for example, the Vale of Glamorgan). In Swansea, weekly meetings take place between the youth worker responsible for identifying young people in Tier 1 who are

unknown and a Careers Wales adviser to facilitate information sharing. In a few LAs, such as Blaenau Gwent, the YEPF strategic group has identified that there is no systematic process for identifying 'unknown' young people in Tier 1 and is seeking to fill this gap.

4.51 The stakeholder survey shows that over four fifths (84 per cent of 146 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated processes for tracking progress of young people at risk of disengaging aged 16-18 after the introduction of the YEPF, compared to 45 per cent of 146 respondents before the YEPF.

(d) 18+

4.52 Most LAs had not prioritised tracking young people in the transition to post 19 advice and support. There are nonetheless some examples of actions taken to try and improve tracking and support for this age group. It appears that in around a fifth of LAs, there were relatively good referrals from JCP to Careers Wales (with the consent of a young person to share information). For example:

- in Swansea, Careers Wales and JCP advisers are co-located in the main centres so that an immediate referral can take place (known as a 'warm handover') and the risk of a young person failing to attend a subsequent guidance session is avoided. In addition, JCP submits anonymous data on numbers of new claimants aged 18-24 at ward level to the YEPF steering group to inform decision making and planning

- in Merthyr Tydfil, a pro forma has been developed to help JCP advisers to more systematically obtain consent from young people to share their information

- in Ceredigion, there is a designated lead worker for young people aged 16-24 who are at risk of disengaging. This staff member works closely with JCP to ensure young people they are aware of who require additional support are identified.

4.53 The stakeholder survey shows that just over a third of respondents (36 per cent of 146 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively coordinated processes for tracking progress of young people aged 19+ at risk of disengaging after the introduction of the YEPF, compared to 21 per cent pre-YEPF. 8 per cent strongly agreed.

What is working well

4.54 LAs and partners were very positive about receiving monthly five tier data from Careers Wales. This is seen as a major improvement in partnership working and is widely welcomed, particularly in LAs where ISPs allow named data on individuals to be shared. LAs that have established a process of tracking a cohort post 16 using five tier data find this a systematic and helpful way to monitor progress. One SAO commented: 'previously one of the key barriers was sharing information about young people. We just didn't have this in place. It's only in the last few months that we've had the ISP, but we are really seeing an improvement as a result' (SAO interview). This was a widely-held view among LA staff. Analysing disaggregated data by provider allows steering and multiagency practitioner groups to pinpoint where a young person has become disengaged and to have conversations with relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders were generally very positive about this process.

4.55 Some LAs reported that having a wide range of organisations represented on operational groups had been helpful for identifying young people in Tier 1 who were previously unknown.

Challenges

4.56 A few LAs mentioned that they cannot legally share information with other LAs on a young person who has moved out of the area because neighbouring LAs were not part of ISPs and alternative systems for sharing information had not been established. Careers Wales staff working in different areas were reported to be able to share information between them, which helps to some degree, but LAs considered it would be more helpful if inter-LA ISPs were in place.

4.57 In terms of tracking 18-24 year olds, JCP staff try to obtain consent directly from young people to share information with Careers Wales but reported that this can be a time consuming process. If young people do not attend JCP appointments, it can be very hard to make contact to seek consent.

Summary

> **Milestone 5: From September 2013 – Careers Wales provide LAs with information on a monthly basis**
>
> **Progress against milestone:** ACHIEVED. All LAs receive monthly five tier data.

Milestone 6 : From September 2013 – Post-16 providers provide Careers Wales with regular notification of drop out

Progress against milestone: In progress in all LAs but none report that they achieve consistent and timely notification from all post-16 providers. Not possible to say when this is expected to be achieved.

Milestone 7: From September 2014 – LAs and schools join up school level tracking and early identification systems

Progress against milestone: At least 14 LAs have achieved this. In the remaining LAs, at least 3 are likely to achieve this milestone during 2015. Not clear in 6 LAs when this will be achieved.

Table 4.3   Consideration of LA implementation of the tracking component of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Initial design and planning LAs review evidence on effective practice (such as examples from the School Standards and Delivery Unit review). LAs and partners scope ways to track 'unknown' young people who are NEET - including sharing of information between LAs, voluntary and community sector organisations and other bodies. Draw on good practice examples.	**Pre-16** Schools with well-established early identification systems also appear to have good systems for (at least) termly monitoring. Evidence that processes to identify 'unknown' young people who are NEET are improving: use of detached youth workers for proactive outreach; sharing information in operational groups; good information sharing between Careers Wales and youth service.	**Pre-16** No processes for identifying young people who are in Tier 1 but are 'unknown' (identified by some LAs though provision mapping).

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Development and testing LAs provide support to schools to review their school-level tracking systems and embed good practice. Strong strategic leadership from heads/principals/senior management teams. EPC develops working arrangements with schools e.g. termly meeting to assess whether young people identified at risk are making progress; processes for collecting school-level data from schools; processes for analysing and assessing school-level data.	**Pre-16** Many examples of EPCs providing support to schools to improve school-level tracking systems. Working arrangements with schools being developed in many LAs, with EPC taking the lead in coordinating. Developing improved tracking at transition from pre-16 to post-16 has been a focus in some LAs and new processes have been put in place. **Post-16** Using Careers Wales five tier data to develop systems. Schools tracking Years 12 and 13; some colleges and WBL providers using early identification systems to report on drop outs and those at risk.	**Pre-16** Inconsistent leadership and commitment from schools. Tracking process not yet set up where early identification system is still in early stages. **Post-16** Lack of ISPs a deterrent to developing and testing post-16 tracking. LAs without ISPs can only receive anonymised, aggregate data. Not all post 16 providers engaged in developing and testing systems.
Implementation and refinement Piloting of any new processes established. Processes modified based on any learning from	**Pre and post-16** Many LAs piloting and implementing the sharing of information and five tier data at operational groups to	**Pre and post-16**

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
pilots/early implementation. Ongoing consultation with all stakeholders to feed in views and experiences. Schools have opportunity to feed in learning. Sharing of learning between LAs.	track and review lead worker action. Most LAs expect to modify processes as they learn from this.	
Ongoing delivery Schools provide LA with regular tracking data, linked to early identification system. Schools, LAs and any other relevant stakeholders meet regularly (at least termly) to assess progress. Tracking data used by teachers to provide differentiated/ individualised teaching to learners. Post-16 providers give regular updates to Careers Wales on young people's attendance. Analysis of CAP data to identify young people who require additional support during transition from pre- to post-16 education.	**Pre-16** Becoming established in 13 LAs. Examples of differentiated/individuali sed support and teaching for young people identified as being at risk of disengaging. **Post-16** LAs and partners value monthly reports from Careers Wales – seen as major improvement.	**Pre-16** Not all schools in all LAs are providing LAs with consistent and regular information and regular multiagency meetings between all stakeholders not happening for pupils in all schools. **Post-16** Evidence that not all post-16 providers are providing timely updates to Careers Wales. CAP data not yet available. In the main, tracking of young people post-18 is not taking place through the transition for 18 year

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Ongoing tracking of young people post-18 - links between Careers Wales and JCP. Careers Wales provides quarterly reports to LAs and Welsh Government on the status of young people against the five-tier model.		olds from Careers Wales support to JCP support. Quarterly report from Careers Wales is not yet in a final, useable format.

Provision

What is happening

4.58   All LAs had started the process of mapping provision against the five tier model following guidance from the Welsh Government. Most LAs had focussed on provision for young people up to the age of 19 but there were a few examples of LAs that had included provision for 19-24 year olds (Pembrokeshire, for example). In most cases the EPC was taking the lead in coordinating this activity and liaising with partners. Where strategic groups were in place they were overseeing the process, facilitating participation of delivery partners in the process and reviewing the results of the mapping exercise. In all LAs, a draft provision map had been produced and was being reviewed and providers are checking information about whether it is accurate. At least a fifth of LAs already had a provision map of some kind in place. As part of their YEPF action plan, they had reviewed and updated their existing plan.

4.59   In general, the process for developing the provision map appears to have included a wide range of delivery partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Typically, LAs had circulated a template and asked providers to complete it with information about the support services they provide. LAs were generally confident that the majority of providers and all the key ones had been included.

4.60   A few LAs had made the provision map available as an online directory for both practitioners and the public (Blaenau Gwent and the Vale of Glamorgan, for example). The directory is intended to ensure lead

workers are well-informed about provision available to help them broker a package of support for young people. It is also intended as a resource for parents and young people to help them to be aware of support on offer. Other LAs were working on improving the format of their provision map/directory to make it more user-friendly. A few were scoping the possibility of merging their new YEPF provision map with their existing Family Information Service (FIS) database.

4.61　The stakeholder survey shows that 84 per cent of respondents (151 out of 180 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA had worked effectively with all key stakeholders to map the available provision. Around two thirds (66 per cent of 178 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively analysed information collected as part of any provision mapping after the introduction of the YEPF. Over two thirds (69 percent of 179 individuals) also agreed or strongly agreed that the LA had an appropriate forum for making decisions about how provision should be adapted to better meet needs of young people.

4.62　There are very few examples of LAs that had carried out the provision mapping exercise alongside an analysis of labour market information to inform a review of provision (gaps, over supply). Pembrokeshire had taken this more strategic approach to inform their understanding of gaps (see box below).

Provision mapping: Pembrokeshire

In Pembrokeshire, as a result of the YEPF, previous mapping of post-16 provision has been updated and extended to include apprenticeships, traineeships and commercial WBL provision. The YEPF is considered to have 'kick-started' this work.

Between July and October 2014, the EPC led a robust process for provision mapping:

- a draft provision map was circulated via existing partnership groups and networks. This was based on data provided by the Welsh Government to providers. A full range of partners participated in the process including colleges, WBL providers and voluntary and community sector providers

- workshops were held with post-16 providers to discuss and refine the initial information provided

- a final, agreed provision map was produced for each provider.

The LA then led on the process of analysing the maps to identify duplication and gaps in existing provision. This was compared to information and data on the local labour market from the Regional Learning Partnership as well as information on young people's needs from the Careers Wales database and qualitative information from provider admissions staff.

Key findings and conclusions were presented in a report. This was presented to providers and partners to agree the findings and sign off the report.

The main benefits of the YEPF provision mapping are:

- WBL providers have adapted their provision to fill identified gaps in relation to entry level and level 1 provision, horticulture provision and provision with rolling start dates. The EPC has led and coordinated these discussions, which are ongoing

- information from the provision mapping is being used to inform regional ESF bids

- the information collected has been made available electronically to key partner organisations. This enables, for example, Careers Wales information, advice and guidance staff to have up to date information for their discussions with young people. Stakeholders consider that: 'children and young people are now more aware of their choices and options than they have ever been'.

Stakeholders consider that strong partnership working and cooperation has been the key to effective provision mapping. The YEPF has helped to strengthen and enhance existing partnerships and networks, which are reported to have 'gone from strength to strength' since the introduction of YEPF.

A full case study of provision mapping in Pembrokeshire is presented in Annex 2.

4.63   There was only one example of a systematic analysis of provision compared to the needs of young people or employers. Although LAs were aware of the numbers of young people in each tier of the five tier model and so can make an assessment of the volume of provision required, few had gathered or analysed data or evidence on the needs of young people in each tier to inform decisions about any changes required to the overall offer in their area[18].

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[18] This should feed into 14-19 partnership and planning arrangements.

4.64 LAs had generally not completed a full mapping of referral and progression pathways through provision. The first step had been to collect information on all providers and to ensure it is accurate; the next step will be to analyse and understand progression pathways.

4.65 Several LAs reported they had identified gaps in provision based on experience and information collected through the provision mapping exercise. A common need identified in many LAs was a lack of Tier 2 provision, in some cases coupled with duplication of Tier 3 provision, such as support with CV writing and interview skills. A few LAs also identified a need for:

- increased support and provision for young people aged over 18 (for example, Anglesey, Gwynedd and the Vale of Glamorgan)

- dedicated providers responsible for identifying and engaging young people in Tier 1 who are not known to services (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot)

- increased opportunities for work placements and work experience for young people at pre- and post-16 (Gwynedd and Anglesey)

- better coordination of provision commissioned at national level. A few authorities reported examples of provision that had been commissioned nationally, which had resulted in duplication of existing local provision. They had already been aware of this, but the provision mapping exercise drew this out very clearly

- more rural LAs often described a common problem with insufficient WBL provision owing to dispersed populations that make a diverse learning offer non-viable for providers (Gwynedd, Anglesey, Powys).

4.66 At least two thirds of LAs reported that they took account of provision available through the medium of Welsh in their mapping exercise; none reported any gaps in this area.

4.67 Although provision maps were in the main still in draft, there were emerging examples of YEPF strategic boards responding and seeking to fill gaps in provision. For example, in Blaenau Gwent, the YEPF strategic board was discussing possible joint bids for funding and in the Vale of Glamorgan, the YEPF team had approached new providers to try and fill gaps in available provision. In Swansea, where a gap in Tier 2 provision was identified, the EPC had worked closely with WBL

providers and the local college to develop a new vocational taster course for young people to help engage and to support improved decision making. A few LAs reported that they had held initial discussions with colleges about non-September start dates. They recognised the challenges faced by colleges in offering this and were trying to develop solutions. A few LAs had recognised, partly as a consequence of the provision mapping exercise, the need for more strategic joint commissioning (for example, Conwy and Denbighshire). They were scoping how this might be achieved in the longer term.

4.68　In at least a third of cases, though, there do not appear to be any clear plans in place for how gaps in provision identified through the mapping will be addressed. Some LAs recognised the potential role of the strategic group here, but little progress had been made in developing operational arrangements.

4.69　In relation to the CAP and Youth Guarantee, one LA, Swansea, had its own Guarantee in place, which is underpinned by a prospectus of Tier 4 and Tier 5 provision and an online application process for Year 11 students. Most other LAs did not have this in place. In preparation for the CAP, some EPCs and Careers Wales managers had been meeting with schools to promote the CAP and Youth Guarantee. These discussions seek to build on the initial presentations given by the Welsh Government to schools. Most had not started providing formal training on the CAP but planned to do so over the course of 2015.

What is working well

- several LAs were positive about the knowledge they had gained through the provision mapping exercise. As well as identifying gaps and duplication, they felt they had gained valuable knowledge about provision available in the voluntary and community sector, particularly for young people in Tier 2

- most LAs reported that the provision mapping work is feeding into regional work to identify opportunities to use ESF funding to trial new approaches and to fill gaps in mainstream provision.

Challenges

(a) Provision mapping

4.70 Some LAs did not appear to have fully understood the purpose of the provision mapping exercise. They were unclear how the provision map related to the CAP and also which tiers of provision should be included in the map.

4.71 Many LAs, and particularly those who had not previously produced a formal map of provision, found the process time consuming and quite challenging. LAs found it particularly challenging to map Tier 2 provision. Some reported low response rates from providers to requests for information. This was partly attributed by LAs to the fact that they were required to contact providers during examination periods. Others reported that providers gave them incomplete or inaccurate information. In terms of mapping against the five tiers, some LAs reported that providers' assessment of which tier they worked within was sometimes different to their assessment.

4.72 Given the challenges they faced in developing the provision map, at least a quarter of LAs were concerned about how the provision map would be kept up to date and many were unclear how they could use it effectively. They recognised that it is needed because many youth support services are funded through relatively short term grants, which means that provision will change from year to year. Reductions in LA grant funding for voluntary youth support services will also affect the stability and permanence of provision.

4.73 Some LAs did not consider that the template and format for the provision map suggested in the guidance from the Welsh Government was appropriate. They felt the final provision map was not user friendly.

(b) The Common Application Process

4.74 LA staff, partners and schools reported that many schools did not perceive there to be value in the online application for the CAP and were not yet committed to using it. Some considered that the initial presentation from the Welsh Government had not adequately answered their questions and concerns remain in schools about the process, how it will work in practice, and whether the technology will work effectively. Many stakeholders also perceived that schools are anxious about increased competition with post-16 providers as a result

of the CAP. Some school representatives indicated their concerns that students will require a lot of support to use the online application form and are concerned that resources may not be available for this. Some LAs appeared to be working hard to answer schools' questions and to explain the benefits although others appear to be less proactive.

4.75 WBL providers in principle appear to support the prospectus and online application process but they and other stakeholders were concerned that the first version of the prospectus will not include WBL provision. They would prefer the full breadth of provision to be represented from the outset.

Summary

Milestone 8: March 2014 – LAs produce baseline map of provision against five tier model
Progress against milestone: ACHIEVED. All LAs have a baseline map of provision against the five tier model.
Milestone 9: March 2014 – LAs engage with providers of traineeships
Progress against milestone: In progress in all LAs but not clear when this will be achieved.
Milestone 10: Full national roll out of the Youth Guarantee by 2015
Progress against milestone: Delayed - not likely to be achieved by 2015. All LAs report difficulties in engaging schools and none have clear plans in place for delivery of the Youth Guarantee.

4.4 Consideration of LA implementation of the provision component of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Initial design and planning Leadership from the EPC. All key stakeholders consulted to agree best approach to mapping. LAs use systematically collected data/information from early identification	In most LAs EPCs have led provision mapping work, with strategic groups overseeing the process. Stakeholders generally consulted systematically on requirements and purpose.	Some LAs do not appear to have fully understood the purpose and practicalities of the provision mapping.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
and brokerage process to establish what are the needs of young people.		
Development and testing LAs successfully engage key stakeholders in a mapping exercise (across LA, third sector and private sector) and they provide information on existing provision (scale, nature, uptake, geographic location, provider, evidence of outcomes and effectiveness). Information is systematically recorded. LAs map local provision against the Careers Wales five tier model and against data on local needs. Progression pathways and referral mechanisms between tiers are defined. This baseline provision map is submitted to the Welsh Government. Evidence from the mapping exercise is analysed to identify gaps, duplication, and unmet needs. Schools' awareness of the Youth Guarantee process raised.	Wide range of stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sector contributed to provision mapping exercises and information from partners has been systematically recorded in most LAs Provision has been mapped against the five tier model. All LAs have a draft provision map that has been submitted to the Welsh Government. Several LAs have identified gaps in provision through the provision mapping exercise as well as duplication.	LAs have generally not carried out the provision mapping exercise alongside analysis of labour market information. LAs have generally not carried out consultation. with young people about needs. Full mapping of referral and progression pathways has generally not yet taken place. Some but not all LAs have taken account of provision available through the medium of Welsh in their mapping exercise. LAs have generally not yet analysed findings of their provision map systematically against evidence of needs of young people/labour market. Many schools do not perceive there to be value in the online application process underpinning the CAP

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
		and Youth Guarantee and are not committed to raising awareness of the Youth Guarantee.
Implementation and refinement LAs work with 14-19 networks to adapt provision to ensure a more balanced offer to young people. New provision commissioned to fill gaps; duplicate provision de-commissioned. LAs influence and persuade FE colleges, WBL providers, school sixth forms and third sector providers to modify provision. LAs adapt referral mechanisms and thresholds as necessary. LAs work with 14 to 19 networks to aggregate local mapping to regional level to allow analysis of needs on a wider basis. Schools support young people to complete on line applications.	Emerging examples of strategic groups responding to fill identified gaps in provision and building on work by LA led 14-19 groups. Examples of provision maps feeding in to regional planning for ESF bids.	In many LAs, no clear plans for how identified gaps will be filled and the mechanisms of effective use of the mapping and updating it as the basis for the Prospectus. Progress with CAP delayed.
Ongoing delivery LAs monitor and evaluate whether provision continues to meet needs or whether young people's	This stage has not yet been reached.	

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
needs have changed. Baseline provision map reviewed and updated annually. The Youth Guarantee Prospectus of all provision is made available to parents and young people. Young people complete their applications online. Data from the CAP is analysed and targeted support offered to young people who have not accepted a suitable offer.		

Employability

What is happening

4.76 In general, this strand of the YEPF had not been a focus for LAs and few actions had been taken since October 2013 which had been aligned with YEPF. Most LAs and their partners agreed that at the time of asking this component of the YEPF was under-developed because the focus of attention had been on processes for early identification, brokerage and tracking and developing the provision map. Most were aware of activities in schools, colleges, and youth services to improve young people's transition to employment and the need to review and marshal these to bear down on young people becoming NEETs.

4.77 Strategic governance arrangements for this strand of the framework also appeared to be less well-developed than for other strands. There were existing partner groups in most LAs that seek to improve employer engagement in skills and training and to lead a strategic approach to employability and skills which focuses on new entrants as well as the existing workforce. In some but not all LAs, a member of the employability and skills strategic group participates on the YEPF

strategic group. In other cases a strategic lead for the YEPF participates on the employability and skills strategic group, which will be the group responsible for YEPF employability actions. In at least a third of LAs strategic arrangements for this component of the YEPF had not been established.

4.78 Even though strategic governance arrangements were not well-established across the board, LAs were considering the employability strand of the YEPF to some extent in their work. Most LAs had included Jobs Growth Wales, Work Skills and other employability provision in their provision map and intended to make sure that all lead workers were aware of progression opportunities available through these programmes. Few LAs could demonstrate, though, that analysis of the provision mapping would include an assessment of whether local provision is aligned to labour market needs.

4.79 Many LAs included in their YEPF action plan an objective to increase the numbers of work placement opportunities, apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities offered by public sector employers. LAs appear to have focussed on the public sector because it is easier for them to effect change within their own departments than to influence private sector employers although their Regeneration and Economic development colleagues acknowledge that the latter is one of their targets. For some LAs, early scoping discussions had taken place to progress work in this area (for example, Anglesey, Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan). A few LAs appear to have made more progress. For example, in Torfaen a year-long pilot programme that offers work placements within the LA for a small number of young people has been approved and work will begin shortly to set this up. A similar pilot project is also due to start in Gwynedd. No LAs stated in their action plans or reported in interviews that increasing work placement opportunities in private employers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a priority.

4.80 Many LAs also included in their YEPF action plan the objective of ensuring training and employment targets are written into procurement contracts and section 106 agreements to support local employment. In some LAs, this work had started before the YEPF but will continue to be developed. For example, Swansea's 'Beyond Bricks and Mortar' scheme was being actively promoted by the EPC to ensure providers have a good understanding of the opportunities it offers.

4.81   At February 2015, there were few examples of LAs and Careers Wales focussing on improving their outreach and offer to young people in jobs without training although all young people in jobs without training were sent a letter to inform them of the IAG and training opportunities available through Careers Wales. This may be because they are not being identified and tracked after the age of 16.

4.82   There were also no examples of LAs and schools working together to improve delivery of Careers and the World of Work. A representative of Careers Wales reported that from 2015, enhanced information, advice and guidance would be provided during the last term of school for those planning to move into employment.

4.83   Although generally no new employability projects had been developed under the YEPF, LAs and partners provided examples of existing initiatives that provide young people with work experience and placement opportunities, which they will maintain or seek to extend in 2015/16. These include:

●   a skills academy established by a local social enterprise in Anglesey (see box below)

●   in Conwy, an apprentice week during which providers and employers visit schools to promote apprenticeship opportunities

●   schools in some LAs making agreements directly with local employers about how they will support improved employability skills through mock interviews, work placements and work-based projects, for example.

Developing employability skills: Isle of Anglesey

In Anglesey, an enhanced work experience scheme has been developed in the local authority for young people who have been identified at risk of disengaging. It is intended to develop employability skills, provide accredited learning and help young people to identify vocational areas to progress into after school.

A secondary school has worked in partnership with Anglesey's Communities First team, known as Môn CF, to deliver the scheme. 14-16 year old pupils spend one or two days a week working voluntarily with a Môn CF mentor at one of their sites. Examples include: working on environmental enhancement projects at community sites around Holyhead; joinery work at the community skills academy; and construction work as part of a project to

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renovate empty premises in the town centre. Young people have the opportunity to achieve recognition for the skills they have gained as part of the programme[19]. All volunteers are also required to undertake core training in health and safety, manual handling and first aid. Progression is offered through Jobs Growth Wales placements. Môn CF staff act as referees and often act as advocates during the job interview to support young people with low confidence.

Stakeholders reported that young people are more motivated at school as a result of the enhanced work experience scheme. This is considered to be in part because they are more able to see the relevance of literacy and numeracy, for example. To date, around 50 young people have secured Jobs Growth Wales placements with over thirty employers.

The initiative pre-dates the YEPF but its objectives are well-aligned to the YEPF. Since the introduction of the framework, the LA is considering expanding the scheme to include more young people.

A full case study of actions taken to develop employability skills in Gwynedd and Anglesey is presented in Annex 2.

4.84 The stakeholder survey shows that just under three quarters (72 per cent of 170 individuals) agreed or strongly agreed that all key partners were working collaboratively to support improved employability skills among young people but only two fifths (43 per cent of 171 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA effectively engaged employers to improve the employability skills of young people and the same proportion (43 per cent of 168 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the LA led a strategic approach to volunteering and work experience opportunities for young people. A high proportion of individuals (between a fifth and a third) responded with 'don't know' to these questions.

What is working well

4.85 A few LAs and partners considered that the YEPF had helped to bring closer working between LA services (education, youth, regeneration) to create opportunities for young people to make the transition to employment and appropriate choices as well as to support improved involvement of the voluntary and community sector in strategic efforts

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[19] These are units of qualifications provided by Agored Cymru and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health among other awarding organisations.

to reduce the numbers of young people who are NEET. They consider that this should help to provide improved volunteering and placement opportunities for young people.

Challenges

4.86 Some LAs, particularly those in rural areas, indicated that lack of good public transport makes it difficult to offer viable work experience and placement opportunities to some young people.

4.87 In LAs where the SAO is not taking an active lead or a strategic manager has not been designated responsible for the YEPF, it appears that links with appropriate employability and skills strategic groups have not yet been made. These are essential to take this strand forward.

Summary

Table 4.5   Consideration of LA implementation of the employability component of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Initial design and planning Identify LA funding streams that can support this work identified. Review of evidence from previous initiatives. Operational arrangements established to integrate employability initiatives in YEPF.	Most LAs have included Jobs Growth Wales and other employability provision in their draft provision map.	Generally, few actions have been planned or have taken place to identify employability initiatives and integrate with aims of YEPF. Operational arrangements less well-developed than for other strands.
Development and testing Careers Wales reviews and assesses effectiveness of current approach to supporting schools to deliver Careers and World of Work	A few EPCs are situated within economic regeneration departments of LAs and have been able to ensure targets for education, employment and training are written into procurement	LAs and Careers Wales have not generally focussed on improving outreach and provision for young people in jobs without training. These young people are not being tracked.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
programme. Careers Wales reviews existing approach to identifying and supporting young people in jobs without training and a new/revised approach developed if necessary. LAs review links with Jobs Growth Wales and ensure the programme is used to provide progression to as many young people as possible.	contracts and Section 106 agreements.	
Implementation and refinement Improved partnership working with schools and employers to deliver Careers and World of Work. Employers effectively engaged. Formative evaluation of early implementation. Findings used to refine implementation.	This stage has not yet been reached.	
Ongoing delivery Monitoring and evaluation of all strands of activity.	This stage has not yet been reached.	

Accountability

What is happening

4.88 All LAs have participated in regular meetings with the Welsh Government to discuss progress in implementing their YEPF action

plan. There has also been frequent and regular communication between meetings. LAs have generally provided the information requested by the Welsh Government or if they have been unable to, have communicated reasons for this.

4.89   All LAs have started to receive monthly data from Careers Wales on the numbers of young people aged 16-18 in each of the tiers of the five tier model. As discussed in the 'early identification' and 'tracking' sections above, those that have placement agreements or WASPI-approved ISPs in place, are able to receive named data on individual young people; those that do not, receive aggregated, anonymised data. This data is analysed and submitted to strategic steering groups in an increasing number of LAs to facilitate monitoring of progress towards increasing the proportion of 16-18 year olds in tiers 4 and 5.

4.90   As discussed in section 0 on strategic management arrangements, many LAs have also established strategic governance arrangements that include a wide range of partners to try and foster shared responsibility and accountability for young people's outcomes at a local level. National stakeholders (such as the WLGA, NTFW and Colegau Cymru) also reported that implementation of the YEPF is discussed regularly in regional meetings.

4.91   The stakeholder survey shows that over three quarters (76 per cent of 195 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that there was good sharing of information between partners after the introduction of the Framework. This compares to 43 per cent (85 of 196 respondents) who agreed or strongly agreed before the introduction of the YEPF, an increase of 33 percentage points. Over two thirds (71 per cent of 195 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that LAs shared evidence on progress with all key stakeholders after the introduction of the YEPF.

What is working well

4.92   Many LA staff and partners expressed the view that there has been improved accountability for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET as a consequence of the YEPF. Although strategic governance structures were in some cases still evolving, many stakeholders expressed the view that the structures in place generally ensured shared responsibility between key partners. There were clear indications that data is being shared more effectively between partners and many highlighted that receiving monthly five tier data for scrutiny by all partners is a significant step forward.

4.93 A few LAs and partners expressed concern that because the YEPF is non-statutory guidance, some stakeholders' commitment may weaken over time.

4.94 A few LAs also felt that responsibility for the 19-24 age group was less well-defined and they felt that this needed to be clarified.

Summary

> **Milestone 11: March 2014 – LAs develop and share with the Welsh Government their overall plan for youth engagement and progression**
>
> **Progress against milestone:** ACHIEVED. All LAs have shared a plan with the Welsh Government.

> **Milestone 12: April 2014 – First bi-annual review between Welsh Government and LAs takes place**
>
> **Progress against milestone:** ACHIEVED.

Table 4.6   Consideration of LA implementation of the accountability component of the YEPF

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Step 1 Strategic leadership from LA – senior leader takes responsibility. Welsh Government engages with LAs to agree process for monitoring progress of local implementation plans. LAs develop appropriate mechanism for including young people and parents	All LAs have appointed a SAO. Welsh Government has agreed processes for monitoring with LAs.	Unclear systems for monitoring action plans systematically in LAs. LAs have not developed clear plans for including parents and young people in development of the YEPF. Few examples of the systematic collection of views of young people to inform planning and implementation.

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
in development of the YEPF.		
Step 2 LAs share their action/implementation plan with the Welsh Government. LAs scope and assess opportunities for working with other LAs in consortium or bilateral agreements. Strong partnership working between LAs and Welsh Government. Each LA allocated a point of contact within Welsh Government.	All LAs have shared their implementation plan with the Welsh Government. Examples of good partnership working between LAs and some consortium arrangements in North Wales. All LAs taking part in regular meetings with the Welsh Government. Link officers allocated to each LA. Frequent and regular communication between meetings.	Some partners and stakeholders consider responsibility and accountability for actions for young people aged over 18 is unclear.
Step 3 Careers Wales publishes monitoring data at LA level. LAs analyse Careers Wales data and use it to adapt local implementation.	All LAs have started to receive monthly five tier data and can see its value.	Monitoring data not necessarily being analysed to assess trends and performance.
Step 4 Bi-annual discussion between Welsh Government and LAs on progress in implementing youth engagement and progression framework.	Bi-annual discussions taking place.	

Expectation	What is working well	Challenges
Sharing evidence on progress with local communities and seeking views from young people on changes necessary.		

Young people's participation

4.95 Almost all LAs had not consulted with young people on the YEPF or involved young people in the development of plans. Some LAs reported that they had collected feedback informally through lead workers who are working with young people. Others planed to establish a YEPF young people's forum or to work through existing mechanisms (such as surveys that take place regularly or existing youth councils and forums) but have not yet started work on this. LAs generally recognised the importance of taking a participatory approach to planning and delivering the YEPF but considered that they need options on what they can offer before a meaningful consultation can take place. LAs that had sought to seek systematic feedback and input from young people include:

● Monmouthshire used an existing youth forum to receive feedback from young people on the YEPF. The LA implementation plan was presented to young people during a summer camp and the participation officer facilitated discussions to obtain feedback

● in Conwy and Denbighshire, the Progressive Engagement Pathways project (PEP), as part of the provision mapping exercise, consulted young people through participatory approaches (video booths where young people could film themselves) about their views on local provision. This project is described in the box below.

Young people's participation in a provision mapping and analysis exercise: Conwy and Denbighshire

In Conwy and Denbighshire, the Progressive Engagement Pathways (PEP) project was an ESF project commissioned by the Local Strategic Board. It aimed to improve opportunities for disengaged young people aged 19-24 across the two LAs. A key component of the project was mapping existing provision for 19-24 year olds to identify gaps and duplication. Although the project was developed before the YEPF was launched in October 2013, it was not delivered until afterwards so was run in parallel to the early implementation of the YEPF in

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Conwy and Denbighshire.

Alongside desk-based collection of information, 61 young people participated in workshops to gather their views on local provision. Some young people also provided feedback via a questionnaire. To encourage young people to participate:

- the project manager worked closely with frontline staff who had an existing relationship with young people

- skilled facilitators used different discussion techniques to elicit opinions from young people

- innovative methods were used to enable young people to contribute their views. For example, video booths allowed young people to provide oral feedback, which helped to overcome literacy issues; and

- travel costs were covered and food offered at the events as incentives.

Learning outcomes from the project about young people's participation in planning services were:

- including young people in the provision mapping exercise provided important insights about the quality and appropriateness of existing provision and was considered by stakeholders to be a benefit of the project

- dissemination of findings from consultations with young people needs to be built in to project plans. Providing young people who participated with feedback is motivating for them and shows them their views are valued and important to decision makers

- it is also important to share findings with partners. Those responsible for shaping provision felt that the findings from the young people's consultation were particularly helpful and persuasive in securing the commitment of partners to modify services to better meet needs.

The provision mapping and young people's consultation have been used to take forward work under the YEPF. The findings are being used to inform regional ESF bids that will provide funding for provision for the most disengaged young people in north Wales. The partnerships that were developed in the project have been maintained and are developing further aspects of the YEPF. There has also been closer partnership working between JCP, Careers Wales and the LA as a consequence of the project.

A full case study of provision mapping in Conwy and Denbighshire as part of the PEP project is presented in Annex 2.

4.96 The stakeholder survey shows that just under half of respondents (47 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that there were appropriate mechanisms in place to seek the views of young people to inform development and delivery of services after the introduction of the

YEPF; a small increase on the situation before the introduction of the YEPF, where 39 per cent of individuals agreed or strongly agreed. Very few individuals agreed or strongly agreed that there were appropriate mechanisms in place to seek views of parents in the development and delivery of services even after the introduction of the YEPF (22 per cent ,42 out of 195 individuals).

Support provided by the Welsh Government

4.97　In general, LA staff, partners and national stakeholders praised the YEPF programme team for being proactive, accessible and in regular communication with LAs. They had generally found the meetings with link officers to be a useful opportunity to seek clarification, review progress and receive guidance and support from the Welsh Government. Many reported that they had been in contact with link officers in between the formal meetings as well and that they normally received quick responses to questions.

4.98　Views on guidance documents about specific components of the YEPF were more mixed. Most LAs reported that the guidance on early identification was clear and helpful and many reported that they had used the guidance to develop their systems. Some LAs were less positive about the instructions for provision mapping and felt they could have been clearer to prevent unnecessary misunderstanding.

4.99　In general, LAs and partners had found the regional working groups useful. They considered it important to have the opportunity to share learning and experiences with other LAs. Some LAs mentioned in particular that they had been able to give their views on what the format of the group should be and the topics that should be covered in discussions. They felt they had 'been listened to' and that the programme team had been 'very responsive'. LAs that had made more progress against the actions in the YEPF before its official introduction in October 2013 reported that they were gaining less value from the groups. Although they were willing to share their experiences with LAs that had less developed processes in place, they reported that they would also like discussions more focussed on their specific needs. A few interviewees expressed concern that the regional working groups had grown and were now too large.

4.100　The £50,000 grant was perceived to be very helpful in supporting LAs to begin implementation of the YEPF promptly. Some LAs had used the grant to appoint an EPC, while others had used the funding to

purchase software or a MIS platform to support early identification. LAs welcomed the additional year of funding which was agreed for 2015/16.

Key messages

Early identification

- Most LAs either had a pre-existing early identification system in place for young people at school (under 16) which required development, or developed and tested a system since the launch of the YEPF.

- Although early identification has been a focus for most LAs, this has run behind schedule in many LAs. At February 2015, 20 LAs have developed plans; two have not.

- 17 of the 20 LAs have begun to implement their systems. Several are extending their systems to cover children in Years 9 and 10.

- LAs that have developed a new system appear to have adopted a robust development process, which includes consultation and feedback from a range of partners, including schools. Partners value the new system and perceive it to be helpful. Improvements since October 2013 have been reported by stakeholders.

- The key challenge in relation to pre-16 early identification systems is to ensure all schools use the system consistently and provide the information required. Technical issues, such as a lack of a single management information platform for schools and the LA, have contributed to delays in a few LAs.

- In general, processes for identifying young people who are at risk of disengaging are less well-developed for the 16-18 age group than the pre-16s but significant progress has been made since the middle of 2014.

- 13 LAs have developed plans for those aged 16-18 and 10 of these are implementing them; the remainder still have no plans at February 2015

- Receiving systematic notification from all post-16 providers about young people disengaging from a course or formally withdrawing is a challenge for many LAs and Careers Wales staff. Careers Wales has effectively used annual partnership agreement review meetings as a mechanism for improving processes.

Brokerage

- Around two thirds of LAs have developed plans and arrangements for lead working. For under 16s, 12 LAs have implemented these and three have agreed plans for new/strengthened lead working. For 16-18s, 13 LAs have implemented their plans and 3 have agreed plans. In three of the other LAs, there are already relatively sound existing arrangements in place for young people pre-16 which will continue. In the remainder no progress has been made.

- For young people under 16, some LAs are adopting school-based panels as the forum for allocating a lead worker and reviewing progress while others have area or LA-wide forums. In the case of 16-18 year olds, many LAs are using LA or sub-LA level multiagency practitioner groups. In general, LAs have not fully developed plans for case management and in the main training for lead workers has not yet taken place.

- There are a range of challenges for implementing lead working, including: delays in establishing ISPs, which prevents effective brokerage; difficulties in conveying the message that lead working is already taking place and is not a new approach; the hiatus in replacing ESF resources for lead working during periods when budgets were being reduced; challenges in establishing and communicating a clear process for early identification and brokerage; and difficulties in getting all partners to participate in operational groups to facilitate brokerage. The LAs which have implemented arrangements for lead working have overcome most of these.

Tracking

- In general, LAs that have a data-led early identification system in place for young people at school pre-16 have established processes for follow up and review on a termly basis at least. At least 14 LAs have this in place.

- There are examples of efforts at a local level to strengthen tracking at transition. These include: using practitioner groups to improve sharing of information between pre- and post-16 providers; allocating tutors within colleges to act as the link with particular schools; using a pre-16 lead worker to continue providing support during the first term in post-16 provision.

- There are also examples of LAs strengthening their identification of Tier 1 young people, such as using detached youth workers to visit households to find out about a young person's status. LA level

- multiagency practitioner groups are also being used to identify young people in Tier 1.

- Generally, there are fewer post-16 ISPs in place and so LAs and partners have found tracking the 16-18 age group more challenging. In general LAs and partners were very positive about receiving monthly five tier data from Careers Wales, even where this is only available in an aggregate, anonymised format. This is seen as a major improvement by stakeholders.

- There continues to be concerns that some schools/colleges/WBL providers are not providing timely and consistent information to enable tracking. The colleges have not yet developed a common reporting system.

- In LAs where there are ISPs in place there are examples of monthly tracking of those aged 16-18 by multiagency practitioner groups, which appears to be working well to prevent disengagement and provide additional support where required.

- Few LAs have taken any action to improve the tracking of and support for young people aged over 19 and their transition to other support from JCP.

Provision

- All LAs have made progress with mapping provision against the five tier model in line with guidance from the Welsh Government. In most cases the EPC took the lead in coordinating this activity and liaising with partners. In all LAs, a draft provision map has been produced which stakeholders believe to be relatively comprehensive.

- Although several LAs and partners are positive about the knowledge they have gained from the exercise, in some LAs there appears to have been some confusion about the process and purpose. Many LAs experienced challenges in obtaining accurate and timely information from all providers.

- There are very few examples of LAs that have carried out the provision mapping exercise alongside an analysis of labour market information. As a consequence there are few examples of a systematic analysis of provision compared to the needs of young people and employers.

- Several LAs reported they have identified gaps in provision through the provision mapping exercise. A common need identified across

many LAs is a lack of Tier 2 provision, in some cases coupled with duplication of Tier 3 provision.

● There are examples of YEPF strategic boards responding to provision maps and operational groups' work to find provision and seeking to fill gaps. In most LAs, though, there do not appear to be any clear plans in place for how gaps in provision identified through the mapping will be addressed and how the maps will be updated.

● In relation to the CAP, the main barrier to implementation is securing the commitment of schools. LA staff, partners and schools reported that many schools do not perceive there to be value in the online application to meet the Youth Guarantee.

Employability

● This strand of the YEPF has not generally been a focus for LAs so there are few new actions which have been taken since October 2013 as a result of the YEPF. Most LAs and their partners agree that at present this component of the YEPF is under-developed.

● Most LAs have included Jobs Growth Wales, Work Skills and other employability provision in their provision map and intend to make sure that all lead workers are aware of progression opportunities available through these programmes.

● Many LAs have limited their YEPF action plans to objectives to increase the numbers of work placement opportunities, apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities offered by public sector employers. This is a somewhat restricted scope of activity. In some LAs, scoping discussions have taken place to develop a wider range of activities and to use the provision mapping to contribute to ESF project plans.

● Most LAs are not seeking to ensure young people in employment without training are tracked and supported to take up education and training.

● Although generally no new employability projects have been developed under the YEPF, LAs and partners provided examples of existing initiatives that provide young people with knowledge about careers and work experience opportunities, which they will maintain or seek to extend.

Accountability

● In line with the national implementation plan, all LAs have participated in regular meetings with the Welsh Government to

discuss progress in implementing their YEPF action plan. There has also been frequent and regular communication between meetings.

- All LAs have started to receive monthly data from Careers Wales on the numbers of young people aged 16-18 in each of the tiers of the five tier model. This data is analysed and submitted to strategic steering groups in an increasing number of LAs to facilitate monitoring of progress in increasing the proportion of 16-18 year olds in tiers 4 and 5.

- Few LAs have set any local targets for reducing numbers of NEETs. This is generally because the data systems are not in place to set benchmarks and targets for those aged 16-18.

Participation of young people in development and delivery of the YEPF

- Most LAs have not yet consulted with young people on the YEPF. They consider that implementation needs to have progressed further before a meaningful consultation can take place.

Support provided by the Welsh Government

- In general LAs and partners have found the communications, networking opportunities and support provided by the Welsh Government's YEPF programme team to be timely and useful. The only concern has been over the guidance on provision mapping.

- The grant and its extension to 2015/16 has been welcomed and has enabled LAs to implement the YEPF, including funding an EPC.

5. Assessment of progress

5.1 This section draws together the findings and the analysis presented in the previous sections to present conclusions in relation to the key objectives of the study. It goes on to draw out recommendations to assist the Programme Board and Welsh Government policy staff to develop the Framework and improve their guidance and support for LAs as well as what could be done by the Welsh Government and other partners to overcome problems and accelerate activities.

Conclusions

The rationale of local YEPF action plans

5.2 The challenges for the implementation of YEPF in most LAs were:

- continuing to reduce the number of young people who are NEET at age 16 (towards elimination)

- raising the competences and attainment levels of young people to match labour market needs and education and training progression requirements so that there are fewer NEETs aged over 16

- tackling the much higher levels of young people aged 17 and above who are NEET which contribute to relatively high unemployment among young people aged 18-24

- eliminating any socio-economic and demographic differences.

5.3 To meet these challenges and achieve the targets set by the Welsh Government, we would therefore expect action plans that balance activities to reduce the problems faced by those aged 16 (which should bring down the proportions who are NEET aged 16-18 in the next few years) with activities to reduce the numbers who are currently NEET aged 17 and over as they progress in education and training and take up employment.

5.4 The plans and actions taken forward by LAs suggest that they were broadly:

- focusing on the reduction of the number and proportion of young people who are NEET at age 16 as a foundation for reducing the numbers at older ages

- beginning to address how they can reduce the number of young people becoming NEET at age 17 and 18 through provision, guidance on choices, early identification and brokerage, and tracking

- not yet clearly addressing how they will drive up employability and work ready skills in schools and post 16 providers to provide a firm foundation for young people when they complete education and training so that they can reduce those who are NEET aged 19-24

- from what we have seen, plans are not being regularly revised to take stock and develop new actions to move implementation of the Framework forward. It would help if the plans were reviewed and refreshed at least on an annual basis.

LA management of the YEPF

5.5 Strategic management arrangements for the YEPF developed since October 2013 were becoming well-established in most LAs. All LAs had appointed a SAO and most LAs had established a strategic steering group for the YEPF. Many had been able to build on and update existing arrangements, which had helped to establish robust governance arrangements. Membership of groups appears to be relatively comprehensive although some LAs have reported gaps in membership that they are trying to fill. Although the foundations were in place in most LAs, some LAs had not put adequate steering arrangements in place.

5.6 Although it was too early to fully assess the effectiveness of steering arrangements – some groups had only met a few times – there were emerging examples of strong leadership from SAOs in a few LAs. Members of strategic groups were also positive about the arrangements and perceive that they were contributing to strengthened partnership working and information sharing to put in place the Framework's components.

5.7 A few LAs had identified reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET as a priority in their Single Integrated Plan and in these LAs, the YEPF strategic group reports directly to the LSB or a sub-group. This was recognised as a means of ensuring that the YEPF is a strategic area priority and that there was a higher level of scrutiny and accountability within the LA and its partners.

5.8   In many LAs as a consequence of changes in funding there was ongoing reorganisation. In some cases this had delayed the development of governance arrangements, reduced participation and led to changes in attendance. This is a potential risk to implementation of the YEPF.

LA implementation of the YEPF

5.9   A major risk to the implementation of the YEPF is that LAs were not adopting a robust project management approach. Action plans do not adequately set out outputs, actions, milestones and resources required for delivery. Crucially, the action plans also do not set out a 'critical path' – an expectation of the sequencing of actions and interdependencies between actions. This makes monitoring of progress and identification of risks very difficult. As a consequence, LAs need a sound approach to project management to oversee implementation of the YEPF and to reshape action plans for effective strategic monitoring.

5.10   It is encouraging that EPCs are in post in all LAs and that most stakeholders believe they are making a difference. Some LAs have included the strategic and operational development responsibilities of the EPC within one role, while others have divided responsibilities between different roles. Where strategic and operational responsibilities are not split, there is a greater risk that plans are not being monitored and coordinated and that the implementation of arrangements for identification and tracking will not be sustainable. This may become an increasing challenge once the Framework is bedded into standard practices and the EPC is expected to take forward outstanding components of the Framework.

5.11   It is also encouraging that there are more ISPs in place but this has not increased significantly over the last six months. LAs that do not yet have an ISP ought to focus on this as a priority as failure to establish an ISP impedes progress with early identification, tracking and brokerage.

5.12   Some LAs have used the £50,000 grants from the Welsh Government to pay the salary of an EPC. Although this has helped to get implementation underway, it is a concern that some LAs have not yet identified ongoing funding for this role. Effective implementation relies on leadership and coordination from LAs so LAs need to ensure they have sound medium to long term plans in place for EPC functions.

Progress made by LAs on each of the elements

(a) Early identification

5.13   The milestones relating to early identification in the national implementation plan have not been fully achieved but progress is being made to achieve them. A few LAs do not have them in place for both pre and post 16s which is of concern.

5.14   Systems for the identification of young people at risk of disengaging pre-16 are relatively well established. Around three quarters of LAs now have systems in place that are data-led but allow for practitioner input; follow evidence-based practice and include the core indicators of behaviour, attendance and attainment. However, around a quarter of LAs did not have a data-led pre-16 early identification system. LAs also need to continue to make efforts to engage all schools in the early identification process as at present their participation in and contribution to the operational arrangements is not consistent across schools.

5.15   Processes for identifying young people post-16 were becoming better developed although 9 LAs had not developed plans.

5.16   Although there were examples of post-16 providers (colleges and WBL as well as schools) with their own internal systems for early identification, these were not in place in all providers or set up to engage with employers who directly recruit young people and do not provide training. Post-16 early identification should continue to improve as more ISPs are established. LAs that already had an ISP in place had started to see the benefits of being able to share data about young people at risk of disengaging between agencies and engage practitioners in discussions. An ISP alone will not be sufficient for improvements in this area though. Commitment from post-16 providers to providing and sharing information in post-16 multi-agency forums is variable.

(b) Brokerage

5.17   This indicates that in general lead working for young people under 16 appeared to be relatively well developed, with many examples of school-based or LA level multi-agency panels in place to allocate lead workers and broker a package of support. In some LAs, written

guidance and process diagrams had been developed by LAs to support all stakeholders to understand their role in the process.

5.18 Lead working and brokerage for young people aged over 16 was less well developed but significant progress had been made in 2014 to establish and implement these.

5.19 Just over a quarter of LAs had not made plans to introduce brokerage and lead working for pre and post 16 young people. It is also unlikely that they will do so by October 2015 since they tend to be LAs without ISPs or intentions to identify staff as lead workers within current resources.

5.20 Training for lead workers had not been established and plans for case management had not been agreed.

(c) Tracking

5.21 Processes for tracking young people aged under 16 were relatively well-developed. Schools that had a robust early identification system in place also tend to have a process established for regular review of progress. Those that do not yet use an early identification system tend to monitor progress less systematically. The same challenge of ensuring all schools participate in early identification applies to tracking.

5.22 Processes for tracking at transition from pre-16 to post-16 vary significantly between LAs. Some LAs had processes for sharing information and data from pre-16 early identification with post-16 providers that either pre-date the YEPF or had been developed since its launch.

5.23 Processes for tracking young people aged 16-18 were being put in place in some LAs generally where there was an ISP and lead workers established. The two key barriers to post-16 tracking were: post-16 providers failing to promptly notify Careers Wales of drop outs and lack of a robust ISP in place to enable information sharing. There were examples of practices in this area to overcome these problems but this had yet to be consistently introduced by all providers. Some LAs, particularly those that had not put standardised post-16 early identification systems in place, had not yet undertaken any actions to improve post-16 tracking.

5.24 Post-18 tracking had generally not been a priority for LAs. In the main tracking of young people post-18 and the provision of sound support at transition from Careers Wales to Jobcentre Plus support was not taking

place. This might benefit from guidance and support from the Welsh Government.

(d) Provision

5.25 The milestone in the national implementation plan for LAs to develop a draft baseline map of provision by March 2014 had been achieved by LAs (although the draft maps were in the main completed over summer 2014). EPCs appear to have led the process for collecting information from providers effectively and a wide range of partners had contributed information. Most stakeholders believed that these were relatively comprehensive.

5.26 LAs had not, though, generally progressed to the next step of systematically analysing the information collected and taking steps to fill gaps identified in provision. So far (February 2015), some LAs had identified general features (for example, many have reported a gap in Tier 2 provision) but detailed assessment of current provision against young people's needs and the needs of local labour markets had not taken place. To prepare for the CAP, a process for updating the maps of provision needs to be in place as well.

5.27 In terms of progress with the CAP, the main barrier to successful implementation for LAs is engaging schools. Currently, many schools are not committing to using the online application process and promoting it to young people.

(e) Employability

5.28 LAs need to turn their focus to the employability strand as few actions clearly linked to the YEPF have so far taken place because attention has been focused on other strands. These are now necessary to reduce the extent that young people will be at risk of becoming NEETs.

(f) Accountability

5.29 In general, the accountability component of the YEPF was being developed in parts. As highlighted in the discussion about strategic management arrangements, SAOs had been appointed and most LAs had established new strategic steering groups or updated existing groups. This was perceived to have contributed to improved accountability.

5.30 However, there were significant areas for improvement:

- ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place for young people and parents to contribute to the development of the YEPF by providing feedback and views

- having systems, targets and data to account for progress and performance to the Welsh Government and to local stakeholders (through the SIP)

- establishing clearer accountability for outcomes for young people aged over 18.

Guidance and support provided by the Welsh Government

5.31 In general, LAs valued the guidance and support that had been provided by the Welsh Government and had found the meetings with link officers and the regional working group meetings helpful. Most found the guidance documents useful but some found the guidance on provision mapping unclear. An area for improvement is ensuring regional working groups meet the needs of all LAs, including those that had made the greatest progress in relation to key actions.

5.32 LAs welcomed the grants of £50,000 to support implementation up to the end of March 2016. Funding for LA services which are engaged in implementing the YEPF, such as youth services, was generally being reduced and in most LAs this was having some impact on the organisational response. Some appeared to be managing better than others to reorganise staffing and funding to provide brokerage, for example.

5.33 Some activities led by the Welsh Government had not supported progress in line with the YEPF's milestones although these had not been critical to the development of early identification, brokerage and tracking. These included:

- the development of the online common application form and the CAP

- the development of the destination survey to capture destinations of 17 and 18 year olds in colleges and WBL providers

- the speed of developing ESF projects for the 2014-20 programme period.

5.34   Many of the barriers to progress appear to be related to the extent that LAs and their partners have prioritised and taken forward activities that would implement the YEPF (ISPs, functioning strategic and operational groups, school and college cooperation and engagement, school data systems and so on). While individual LAs can explain their relative progress and provide reasons for not progressing as quickly as others, it is clearly variable and becoming divergent.

5.35   Whether a statutory requirement in addition to changes to the accountability framework for schools and colleges (the use of destination outcomes) would make a difference to the pace of progress with implementation is doubtful. At a later point when there is less government focus on the programme and no grant funding for EPCs, statutory guidance might secure the progress made.

Measuring the impact of YEPF

5.36   The assessment of the possible approaches to undertaking an evaluation with a counterfactual indicates that a quasi-experimental approach would not be appropriate. This is because it would not be possible to establish a comparator group within Wales or elsewhere.

5.37   It is possible to analyse trends where indicator data is available before the YEPF was launched and continues unchanged during the programme (over five years) and to measure distance travelled (a before and after approach) where indicators are available as a baseline and through the programme period and beyond. This approach would require an assessment of the Framework's additionality.

5.38   For the indicators required for an evaluation of YEPF to measure its success (for outputs as well as outcomes and impacts), many can be measured using secondary data managed by the Welsh Government and other national bodies (including Careers Wales, HESA, DWP, and the UKCES). IO database data from Careers Wales would have to be drawn off at specified intervals as it is a live database.

5.39   For some it would require:

●   data being collected by LAs in their YEPF action plans which in some cases would need to be verified by evaluators through qualitative research

- data linking (such as between the IO database and HMRC employment data using national insurance numbers; or the IO database and LLWR/PLASC data); and

- supplementary primary research surveying young people and stakeholders.

5.40 These are detailed in the separate impact assessment report. If steps are taken during the rest of 2015 and the first part of 2016 to fill gaps, this would strengthen an impact evaluation which could be timed to take place from late 2016 to mid-2017 to capture the expected medium and longer term outcomes of the YEPF.

Recommendations

LA management of the YEPF

5.41 The programme team should:

- closely monitor progress with strategic governance arrangements in those LAs that do not yet have these in place. If necessary, the programme leads should discuss with SAOs any barriers and provide support to overcome these

- ensure that as part of the bi-annual review meetings with LAs, one to one meetings are held with SAOs. This should ensure that the YEPF remains a priority for senior managers, they are engaged in providing strategic leadership, and taking action to progress implementation

- bring forward reviews in the LAs where progress on early identification, brokerage and tracking is well behind schedule

- advise SAOs and EPCs that action plans must cover the development and implementation of all components of the YEPF over two-three years, be refreshed, be in a form which can enable strategic monitoring, and contain outcomes and targets which would ensure higher level scrutiny and accountability of the plan by the LA and its partners.

LA implementation of the YEPF

5.42   The programme team should:

- continue to work closely with staff in the WASPI department to ensure that ISPs are approved as quickly as possible. If any common errors or problems are identified in draft ISPs, these should be shared with LAs that are in the process of drafting ISPs so they can avoid the same mistakes and the process can be expedited

- identify relevant training and support for LAs on project management methodologies if this is unavailable to them. The output of this should be improved action plans that identify a critical path, clear milestones and resources required for delivery. This should help LAs monitor their own progress and manage risks

- develop guidance on the employability component of the framework which would enable LAs and partners to develop more coherent responses to the Framework requirements

- continue to work closely and collaboratively with national partners such as Colegau Cymru, the NTfW and CWVYS. These partners should continue to encourage their members and the organisations they represent to participate fully in implementation of the YEPF. As far as possible, implementation of the YEPF should be a priority item at local and regional meetings

- during 2015/16 establish how LAs propose to take forward and support any outstanding implementation activities (including the staffing resources for the YEPF) to ensure the Government's targets will be met and to assess whether a statutory guidance would reduce the risk of failure.

Implementation of the six components

5.43   The programme team should try as far as possible to provide tailored support to LAs in relation to each of the six components. LAs' progress and needs vary. Rather than more general guidance and support a more targeted approach is likely to be more helpful and effective at this stage. This could be provided through more frequent link officer

meetings and selective monitoring but also by offering to broker support/guidance from other LAs.

5.44 The programme team should:

(a) Early identification

- Ensure that LAs without central, standardised pre-16 and post 16 early identification systems focus on this as a priority.

- Ensure that LAs alongside Career Wales are working towards bringing all schools, colleges and WBL providers into line in providing information to monitor all those aged 16-18.

(b) Brokerage and tracking

- Ensure that LAs without ISPs have these in place by the end of June 2015.

- Use regional working groups to focus on drawing out and sharing lessons from brokerage and the creation and use of lead officers.

- Encourage LAs through schools and other post 16 providers to provide transition support at age 16.

- Identify how the Welsh Government and Careers Wales can better support the transition at age 19 and whether JCP can support those rising 19.

(c) Provision

- Develop the best practice guidance on how to most effectively analyse, update and use the information collected. This should, for example, provide guidance on assessing provision against evidence of young people's needs; analysing provision in the context of local labour market needs; and taking actions to fill gaps and remove duplication.

- Continue its efforts to engage schools in the YEPF and in particular to secure commitment to the use of the online application process that underpins the CAP to meet the Youth Guarantee. For example, there should be further discussions with and presentations to school heads. Recent changes to school accountability measures at Key Stage 4 designed to

'rebalance the undue focus that has emerged on the C grade at GCSE' are a potential lever to secure commitment as young people pre-16 in tier 4 are a potential target group for both policy initiatives. These links should be made in any discussions with head teachers.

(d) Employability

- Use the regional working groups as a forum to share good practice in relation to improving employability and work ready skills in schools and post-16 providers and meeting the needs of young people in employment without training. This could be from Wales and also other UK nations. LAs should be supported to identify opportunities and challenges to implement similar approaches in their own contexts.

- The bulletin (and the regional working group presentations) based on this report can be used to develop messages for LAs about missing ingredients in their plans and accelerating progress.

Preparations for an impact assessment

5.45 The programme team and colleagues in the Welsh Government should:

- take steps to improve the data captured by LAs in YEPF action plans and reported for monitoring

- establish the cuts of data from the Careers Wales IO database

- consider the data linking exercises which could be carried out

- plan for a final impact evaluation which will include some primary research and qualitative research to verify the progress made by LAs between late 2016 and mid-2017.

Annex A   Logic model framework

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
Early identification	Welsh Government provides clear guidance and leadership to LAs, including publication of core standards for early identification LAs appoint Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) to oversee process LAs review existing pre- and post-16 systems and analyse strengths and weaknesses	LA develop implementation plan – clear designation of responsibility for actions and clear rationale for the plan LAs and partners decide final indicators and thresholds to be used in risk assessment at all levels early years, primary, secondary and post-16. These are based on the core indicators of attendance, behaviour and attainment Clear links with and	Systematic assessment of whether expected benefits are being achieved by LAs Modifications to the process based on learning from early implementation (all stakeholders) Ongoing partnership working and consideration of views of all stakeholders, including young people Sharing of learning between LAs	All partners use the early identification system when providing support to young people – consistent use in pre- and post-16 Good integration of YEPF early identification processes with assessment and identification processes used in Families First, SEN support and other school-based systems and support services LAs oversee review, monitoring and evaluation	LAs have a clear assessment process and guidance in place for prioritising risk, which is used consistently by providers at pre-16 and post-16 Earlier and more systematic identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, which leads to reduction in number of young people at-risk of not participating pre- and post- 16

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[20] As part of the development of the impact evaluation framework, we will distinguish between outcomes and impacts

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	LAs analyse historical data on young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET LAs consult with providers (schools, FE, WBL) about appropriate indicators/risk factors and thresholds LAs scope how early identification system at secondary level can be linked to primary and early years and can build on Careers Wales early identification system	processes for feeding into the Careers Wales five tier model Piloting of the risk assessment tool / testing with providers Mechanisms established for ensuring practitioner intelligence can feed into process in addition to use of data		LAs provide ongoing support to Careers Wales, Youth Service and providers to use the new system (as required) Post-16 providers give regular updates to Careers Wales and Careers Wales update the status of the young person in the five tier model Key Stage 4 identification system linked to Key Stage 3 and early years Data collected on key indicators is used by all	

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	LAs and partners use Welsh Government guidance and also wider evidence on what works in early identification LA establishes strategic and operational groups and develops partnership arrangements with Careers Wales, Youth Service and providers and other initiatives such as Families First			stakeholders to ensure an appropriate package of support is in place for individual young people i.e feeds effectively into brokerage	
Brokerage	Welsh Government sets out clear expectations for brokerage function, including a clear specification for the	LA develop implementation plan – clear designation of responsibility for actions and clear rationale for the plan	Systematic assessment of whether expected benefits are being achieved by LAs Lead workers and EPC	National system of lead workers in place and working effectively (appropriate professionals take on the lead worker role and	Improved coordination between range of support services for young people, particularly at post-16 transition

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	lead worker function

LAs review existing resources and funding mechanisms that could be used to support lead workers-working in partnership with local stakeholders

Use of evidence on effective practice in lead working from other contexts

EPC leads on scoping of arrangements for sharing data between different delivery partners

LAs and Career Wales develop initial plans for | LA identify training and development requirements for lead workers; establish suitable provision; and deliver training

Clear processes for allocating a lead worker agreed between all stakeholders. The process is managed by the EPC

Clear processes for sharing information and data between delivery partners in place – all stakeholders understand their role

Clear protocol for how | collect systematic data on needs of young people

Modifications to the process based on learning from early implementation (all stakeholders)

Ongoing partnership working and consideration of views of all stakeholders, including young people

Welsh Government develop good practice guidelines and support LAs to implement

Sharing of learning between LAs | coordinate a personalised package of support)

Lead workers coordinate support for young person, act as advocate and formally report back to the EPC about whether support for young person is effective

EPC manages the process of allocating lead workers, brokers discussions between key support agencies and re-assesses allocations as necessary

Sharing of learning | Reductions in disengagement post-16

Improved targeting of personalised services to those needing support |

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	how lead workers will be identified and allocated	information from early identification component informs allocation of lead worker		between LAs Ongoing training for lead workers Welsh Guidance to provide new and updated guidance on learning coaching and also guidance on post-18 support	
Tracking	Welsh Government sets out clear expectations for tracking, including guidance on data sharing arrangements and protocols Welsh Government develops partnership working with Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus for post-18 tracking,	LA develop implementation plan – clear designation of responsibility for actions and clear rationale for the plan LAs provide support to schools to review their school-level tracking systems and embed good practice. Strong strategic leadership	Piloting of any new processes established Processes modified based on any learning from pilots/early implementation Ongoing consultation with all stakeholders to feed in views and experiences. Schools have opportunity to	Schools provide LA with regular tracking data, linked to early identification system Schools, LAs and any other relevant stakeholders meet regularly (at least termly) to assess progress Tracking data used by	Systematic tracking of young people across all schools in Wales Improved behaviour, attendance and attainment among young people Improved provision to young people that responds to needs

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	and Colegau Cymru LAs lead on scoping of how to link school level data with LA data on early identification LAs review evidence on effective practice (such as examples from the School Standards and Delivery Unit review) Welsh Government reviews processes for sharing data between providers and Careers Wales to ensure they are working well LAs and partner scope ways to track	from head teacher/ Senior Management Team EPC develops working arrangements with schools eg termly meeting to assess whether young people identified at risk are making progress; processes for collecting school-level data from schools; processes for analysing and assessing school-level data Welsh Government and partners develop Common Application Process (CAP) and Local Area Prospectus	feed in learning Sharing of learning between LAs Ongoing support from Welsh Government and partners such as Colegau Cymru to implement tracking systems LAP and CAP made available on www.careerswales.com	teachers to provide differentiated/individualised teaching to learners Post-16 providers give regular updates to Careers Wales on young people's attendance Analysis of CAP data to identify young people who require additional support during transition from pre- to post-16 education Careers Wales continues to lead on tracking between ages of 16 and 18. New destination survey for full cohort (school, Fe	

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	'unknown' young people who are NEET-including sharing of information between LAs, voluntary and community sector organisations and other bodies. Draw on good practice examples LA leads on setting up strategic steering groups and operational groups Welsh Government, Careers Wales and partners scope feasibility of extending the Careers Wales Destinations Survey to include those in FE	(LAP) Welsh Government establishes arrangements for Careers Wales to provide reports on the status of the 16-18 cohort against the five tier model to LAs and Welsh Government. New Careers Wales Destination Survey established and tested		and WBL leavers) is established and data analysed to support tracking Ongoing tracking of young people post-18-links between Careers Wales and JCP facilitated by Welsh Government Careers Wales provides quarterly reports to LAs and Welsh Government on the status of young people against the five-tier model Careers Wales provides monthly reports to LAs on the status of young people against the five	

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	and WBL.			tier model	
Provision	Leadership from the EPC Steering group established/ working group appointed with good links to the 14-19 network All key stakeholders consulted to agree best approach to mapping LAs use systematically collected data/information from early identification and brokerage process to establish what are the	LAs successfully engage key stakeholders in a mapping exercise (across LA, third sector and private sector) and they provide information on existing provision (scale, nature, uptake, geographic location, provider, evidence of outcomes and effectiveness). Information is systematically recorded LAs map local provision against the Careers Wales five tier model and against data on	LAs work with 14-19 networks to adapt provision to ensure a more balanced offer to young people. New provision commissioned to fill gaps; duplicate provision de-commissioned LAs influence and persuade FE colleges, WBL providers, school sixth forms and third sector providers to modify provision LAs adapt referral mechanisms and thresholds as	LAs monitor and evaluate whether provision continues to meet needs or whether young people's needs have changed Careers Wales collects data on progression of young people between tiers and shares on a monthly basis with LAs Baseline provision map reviewed and updated annually The Youth Guarantee Prospectus of all provision is made	Mix of education, training and re-engagement provision available meets the need of all young people. This leads to an increase in the number of young people engaged and sustained in provision Improved attainment levels Improved progression pathways for young people who are NEET and those at risk of becoming NEET (evidenced by reduced repeat courses)

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	needs of young people	local needs. Progression pathways and referral mechanisms between tiers are defined. This baseline provision map is submitted to Welsh Government Evidence from mapping exercise is analysed to identify gaps, duplication, unmet needs Welsh Government and agencies works in partnership with LAs to review whether national programmes are aligned to local needs Welsh Government,	necessary LAs work with 14 to 19 networks to aggregate local mapping to regional level to allow analysis of needs on a wider basis Welsh Government, Careers Wales and partners make technical modifications to databases/software made as required Schools support young people to complete on line applications	available to parents and young people. Young people complete their applications online Data from the Common Application Process is analysed and targeted support offered to young people who have not accepted a suitable offer	

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
		Careers Wales and partners manage technical development of databases/software required for the prospectus and application process to be available electronically Schools raise awareness of the Youth Guarantee process			
Employability	Welsh Government engages key strategic partners Steering Group established with appropriate members Scoping of funding streams that can	Welsh Government and partners develop a strategic project for employer engagement and submit an ESF bid Careers Wales reviews and assesses effectiveness of current approach to supporting	Implementation of ESF project (staff with correct skills appointed project outcomes and targets clearly defined, all relevant stakeholders engaged) Improved partnership working with schools	Monitoring and evaluation of all strands of activity	Increase in numbers of young people moving into skilled employment Increase in numbers of young people moving into higher education Increase in numbers of young people in sustained

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	support this work Welsh Government and partners review of existing Year 10 and Year 11 work experience programme Review of evidence from previous initiatives (such as traineeships and Learning Pathways)	schools to deliver Careers and World of Work programme Careers Wales reviews existing approach to identifying and supporting young people in jobs without training and a new/revised approach developed if necessary Continued development of Welsh Baccalaureate by Welsh Government Welsh Government leads on drafting of a new entry level programme for 14-16 year old learners (based on evidence of	and employers to deliver Careers and World of Work. Employers effectively engaged Formative evaluation of early implementation. Findings used to refine implementation		employment

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
		effective practice in other contexts; appropriate content) Welsh Government leads on expansion of apprenticeship programme LAs review links with Jobs Growth Wales and ensure the programme is used to provide progression to as many young people as possible			
Accountability	Strategic leadership from LA – senior leader takes responsibility Welsh Government engages with LAs to	LAs share their action/implementation plan with the Welsh Government LAs scope and assess opportunities for	Careers Wales publishes monitoring data at LA level. This is used by Welsh Government, LAs and providers to make modifications to	Bi-annual discussion between Welsh Government and LAs on progress in implementing youth engagement and progression framework	Reduction in number of young people who are NEET

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
	agree process for monitoring progress of local implementation plans Clear guidance, standards and expectations from Welsh Government on role of EPC LAs develop appropriate mechanism for including young people and parents in development of the YEPF	working with other LAs in consortium or bilateral agreements Strong partnership working between LAs and Welsh Government. Each LA allocated a point of contact within Welsh Government. Regular meetings take place and the support provided during these meetings is perceived to be helpful Welsh Government, Estyn and LAs agree how local area implementation will be inspected and formally assessed	processes as required. Careers Wales publishes destination data for 16,17 and 18 year olds for all providers LAs analyse Careers Wales data and use it to adapt local implementation Piloting of new provider level destination measures	Sharing evidence on progress with local communities and seeking views from young people on changes necessary	

Component of framework	Initial design and planning	Development and testing	Implementation and refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes and impacts[20]
		Welsh Government and partners scope feasibility of developing provider level destination measures			

Annex B   Case studies

Pre-16 Early Identification and Brokerage (Merthyr Tydfil)

Context

The LA Education department was placed in special measures in early 2013. Estyn's overall assessment of Merthyr Tydfil's education service was that:

- at all key stages, standards for learners are unsatisfactory

- exclusion rates are too high, too many young people are NEET and attendance rates in primary schools are unacceptably low

- support for school improvement and for promoting social inclusion and wellbeing is unsatisfactory

- the impact of youth support services is not evaluated to check that the provision addresses needs; and

- the failure of leaders to implement systems to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools has resulted in a lack of challenge and too little improvement in standards.

This indicates the difficult conditions in Merthyr Tydfil for young people prior to the introduction of the YEPF, despite the low rate of young people who were NEET at age 16 (1.9% of Year 11 leavers were NEET in 2013[21]).

Actions taken since the launch of the YEPF

Prior to the YEPF being introduced, there were no co-ordinated structures in place for the identification of young people who were at risk of becoming NEET or for tracking them. Brokering services did not exist. The Early Identification (EI) was carried out by the schools, and the information was not necessarily shared with the LA or other stakeholders.

A working group was set up to develop an EI tool, which included individuals from the education service, social services, Careers Wales, Youth Offending Team and the regeneration team.

The tool was developed by taking the models which were in place in Swansea and Blaenau Gwent and adapting these to fit the needs of Merthyr Tydfil. Initially, the model included a wide range of indicators which could be used to identify if a young person was at risk of becoming NEET. These included: achievement, attendance at school, ethnicity, eligibility for FSM,

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[21] Careers Wales Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales, 2013

English as Additional Language needs, exclusions and behaviour, and requirements for EOTAS provision, looked after children, offending behaviour, travellers, housing issues and a low level of parental support. The group experimented with weightings for these variables, and removed many of the variables, including all variables that could not be altered through service provision (e.g. ethnicity and FSM eligibility).

The output of the model is a RAG rating for all pupils, with pupils rated red needing intensive support, those rated amber as requiring some additional support and observation, and green meaning no additional action is required. It is the responsibility of the schools to populate the EI model with information from their systems.

The information for the EI tool is collected and examined on a monthly basis by a newly introduced NEET operational group. It holds monthly meetings because pupils can move between groups quickly. The NEET operational group is attended by the EPC, education services, social services, regeneration services, the Youth Offending Team, Careers Wales, youth services and the 14-19 co-ordinator. At this meeting, the brokerage for the young people identified as red is discussed and lead workers are assigned. The group discusses who is in the best place to act as the lead worker, depending on the young person's needs. Lead workers come from all of the organisations participating in the group, including youth services, Families First, YOTs and schools. Young people identified as amber are assigned a learning coach (who works in their school) as a lead worker.

The introduction of the NEET operational group has been beneficial for all the organisations taking part. Prior to the development of the group, there were no structured meetings between the different organisations who provide support to young people, meaning support could be duplicated through lack of awareness. Now, at the meetings the support for each at risk young person is discussed, and a lead worker is assigned for the young person to coordinate all the support they need.

What has enabled progress

The most important factor for the successful implementation of the EI tool was willingness by all parties to develop and use the tool. All schools and partners could see the benefit of having a consistent tool across the LA area with all relevant parties having access to it. There was a concern that the schools might be reluctant to participate, as it would create extra work for them. However, this was not the case, as the EPC successfully demonstrated to the schools the benefits of having the tool and involved them in the

development process.

The role of the EPC was seen as being crucial to the success of the development and implementation of the tool. The EPC used a strong relationship with secondary schools to ensure buy-in and was responsible for leading the work. Without the dedicated EPC role, it is likely that the tool would not have been developed.

The engagement with all the organisations involved in identification and brokerage meant that none of the organisations felt that they were having something new imposed on them, and they felt a sense of ownership of the new processes.

What have the challenges been

There were not any significant challenges in developing or introducing the tool. It was expected that buy-in from schools might have been a challenge, as the schools are responsible for collecting data and this would increase their workload. This has not materialised.

A challenge in terms of brokerage has been the end of the ESF Pre-Vent programme, which provided key workers in secondary schools in Merthyr Tydfil. The focus of the YEPF and the benefits of having the Pre-Vent key workers helped to make the case for the need for the LA to provide ongoing funding of key workers although the number of key workers providing support has reduced. The monthly meetings of the NEET operational group assign young people at risk to a lead worker from a variety of agencies including the key workers.

Outcomes

The feedback from schools and LA staff on the introduction of the early identification tool is positive. It was felt that the introduction of a standard tool for the whole LA 'helped to prevent some young people falling through the cracks as it identified some young people who would not have been seen as at risk previously' (LA interviewee).

The introduction of the NEET operational group to discuss the young people identified as at risk has reduced duplication of services and improved coordination between agencies. It has also improved accountability, as agencies report back to the group on the progress they have made with young people.

Young people are very positive about the support they receive, and particularly around their relationship with lead workers. They feel that without

the lead workers' support they wouldn't have achieved the qualifications they have and could be 'on the streets drinking, on the dole… getting in trouble.' (young person interviewee)

Pre-16 early identification and brokerage (Vale of Glamorgan)

Management arrangements

In the Vale of Glamorgan, the YEPF Strategic Group oversees pre-16 early identification and brokerage and all other components of the YEPF. It is responsible for the achievement of targets on reducing the proportions of young people who are NEET pre- and post-16. Before the introduction of the YEPF, this was the LA's NEET Strategy Group. As a result of the YEPF, the Terms of Reference of the group have been updated to reflect YEPF priorities, including improved pre-16 early identification and brokerage. The YEPF Strategic Group reports to the Learning and Skills Partnership, which is one of the five partnerships that work under the umbrella of the Local Service Board to deliver the key aims of the Vale's Community Strategy 2011-2021.

The LA's lead officer for youth and community learning is the strategic lead for implementation of the YEPF. He is responsible for the development of pre-16 early identification and brokerage. He established a working group to support development of early identification, which included representatives of schools, Careers Wales and the LA's youth services.

The strategic lead has been supported to develop pre-16 early identification and brokerage by a YEPF officer, who is the EPC. She is responsible for coordinating operational arrangements with schools, Careers Wales and voluntary youth sector partners.

What actions have been taken in relation to pre-16 early identification and brokerage?

Pre-16 early identification

Before the introduction of the YEPF, a standardised and systematic pre-16 early identification process was not in place in the Vale of Glamorgan. Most schools had some form of internal early identification process in place but this was not data-led in all cases and each school followed a different process. Partnership working with the LA and partners in relation to pre-16 early identification was inconsistent and all schools were not participating equally.

In order to strengthen pre-16 early identification, the LA developed a new

data-led early identification tool. Research evidence on what works in identifying young people at risk of disengaging was used to develop the tool, such as a research paper by the National Foundation for Educational Research and a Welsh Government research paper. The working group was convened to define and agree the indicators, weightings and thresholds for intervention. The 'draft' model was then tested. This was done by looking at data from three years ago on key indicators for 60 young people who were then in education or training but were currently identified as NEET, to see if the model would have predicted that the young people would become NEET. The model was then piloted in spring 2014 with two schools. The two pilot schools were selected because they had high numbers of young people who are NEET on leaving Year 11 and also because the LA had strong relationships with the head teachers. The model was then rolled out to the remaining schools in the LA in summer 2014.

The model that has been developed is data-led but informed by practitioners' knowledge of young people. The following process is run at the start of each term:

- the tool collates data on Year 9,10 and 11 pupils supplied by schools for the PLASC return in relation to EOTAS (Educated Otherwise than At School e.g PRUs), FSM status, SEN, achievement in literacy and numeracy, attendance, behaviour and looked after children

- a programme written by the LA's education team scores pupils in relation to each of these indicators, with weighting for key indicators. Those who receive a score of 1 or above are considered to be well-engaged; those with a lower score are considered to be at risk

- an automatically generated list of young people is then shared with schools so they can review it. They are asked to categorise the young people according to their level of risk. A RAG rating is used. Whether risk is categorised as red, amber or green is down to teachers' judgement – they are expected to draw on their knowledge of the young person and his/her circumstances to make their assessment 'we want them to give the story behind the data' (LA interviewee).

The LA began work on the early identification tool in August 2013, two months before the launch of the YEPF. Stakeholders considered that the subsequent introduction of the YEPF supported their efforts and helped to secure commitment to the process from partners. The guidance issued by the Welsh Government on early identification has also been helpful. The tool that

had been developed was reviewed to check it followed the best practice presented in the guidance. As a consequence of the actions undertaken by the LA and its partners, the milestone in the national implementation plan of introducing a new pre-16 early identification system that follows effective practice guidance has been achieved.

Pre-16 brokerage

Before the launch of the YEPF in October 2013, pre-16 brokerage was relatively underdeveloped. There were no formal and systematic processes for allocating named lead workers and monitoring progress of young people with lead workers. Previously, some schools would appoint lead workers and also work with partners such as the youth service to broker alternative provision to support improved engagement and progression of young people. Practice was not considered to be consistent across schools and processes for monitoring progress were not systematic. Since the launch of the YEPF and after the early identification tool was completed, the LA has focussed on developing improved processes for pre-16 brokerage.

Now, when the list of young people who are at risk of disengaging (those identified as having a 'red' status by the early identification tool) has been agreed between the school and the EPC, the EPC then collects further information about the barriers faced by the young people. This is seen as an important fact finding mission that is the basis for brokerage of provision and support.

There is a designated point of contact within each school who fulfils the function of a lead worker, although the label of 'lead worker' is not commonly used. The role that takes on this function varies from school to school and might be a head of year, member of pastoral staff or a youth worker responsible for delivering alternative pre-16 provision.

The mechanisms for brokering provision and support vary from school to school.

- in some schools, particularly, those in which there are high numbers of young people identified as being at risk, a multiagency school-based panel meeting is called. This is typically chaired by the LA lead for behaviour and attendance and other attendees include the EPC, representatives of the youth service, the deputy head or head teacher, head of year and Careers Wales. At the panel meeting, professionals discuss and agree a package of support for the young person

- in other schools, the designated point of contact/lead worker will work

directly with the EPC. The EPC will research provision that is suitable to meet the needs of young people and helps to coordinate arrangements between the provider and the school.

Since the start of the YEPF the types of provision brokered include:

- a youth worker-led accredited alternative curriculum delivered in schools to groups of young people. The programme can be tailored to meet the needs of individuals and typically includes vocational taster experiences, literacy and numeracy and practical activities designed to improve communication and team-work skills and confidence

- releasing individual young people one or two days per week to undertake a vocational qualification at college or with a work-based learning provider

- alternative provision provided by the Princes Trust and delivered out of school

- additional literacy and numeracy teaching provided in a community venue

- work experience in a local library one day per week for a young person in Year 10, provided by the LA community learning team.

The designated school contact/lead worker is required to provide a termly update on progress to the EPC. A simple reporting template has been developed, which asks for information on behaviour, attendance and attainment in literacy and numeracy before and after the package of support has been brokered.

What has enabled progress?

The main factors that have enabled progress in improving pre-16 early identification and brokerage are:

- **the strategic management arrangements.** The fact that the YEPF strategic group is linked to the high level Learning and Skills Partnership helps to ensure that senior leaders across the public, private and third sector are aware of the importance of the YEPF and how it can contribute to local strategic objectives

- **dividing the EPC function** between a strategic lead (the LA's lead for youth and community learning) and an operational officer (a YEPF officer)

- **drawing on research evidence, data and consultation with key partners to develop the early identification tool.** As partners have been included in the process from the start this has created a sense of ownership and helped to foster commitment to using the tool. Using a combination of evidence has also helped to ensure the tool is as effective as possible

- **building flexibility in to the process for brokerage.** The LA works in slightly different ways with different schools depending on their circumstances and preferences. This helps to encourage schools to participate in the process

- **working with a wide range of partners to broker an appropriate package of support.** By working closely with work-based learning providers, the college and voluntary youth sector organisations, the LA has been able to offer additional choice to young people pre-16, with increased opportunities for vocational learning.

What have the challenges been and how have they been overcome?

Participation in the early identification process still remains variable, with some schools proactively taking part but others who are less responsive. For example, a couple of schools have declined to participate in the LA-led brokerage process. In one or two schools where additional support has been brokered for young people, it has been challenging to obtain timely reports on young people's progress from schools. The LA's strategic lead is working with schools to overcome this. He commented on the need to reiterate the importance of the YEPF and explain processes on an ongoing basis.

Although a WASPI-approved ISP is in place there is still reluctance among some partners to share information. Changing practice and attitudes can take time and requires the LA to continually clarify processes and requirements.

Outcomes of the LA's work on pre-16 early identification and brokerage

Strengthening pre-16 early identification and brokerage processes has been the foundation for moving on to improve processes at transition and post-16 'over the last two years there has been a great leap in terms of collective responsibility. We now have a good foundation that can be shaped and grown' (LA interviewee). For example, now that the early identification tool systematically collects information on young people at risk of disengaging, processes are being established to ensure this is shared systematically with post-16 providers. The LA is leading on establishing post-16 multi-agency panels for high-risk young people as the forum for sharing information

between pre-16 and post-16 organisations, allocating lead workers and brokering support.

There have also been clear benefits to young people and schools as a consequence of the work to develop pre-16 early identification and brokerage. The tool has succeeded in identifying young people who would benefit from additional support. Previously, there was no guarantee they would be identified as processes were more ad hoc. One secondary school representative commented that although they were generally aware of young people at risk of disengaging, 'the spreadsheet did actually throw up some new students that we hadn't considered' (teacher interviewee).

Interviews also suggest that the alternative curriculum delivered by the youth service for pre-16s is beneficial. A youth worker, deputy head teacher and pupils all considered that the alternative curriculum had helped to improve behaviour, attendance, self-esteem and motivation among pupils. The youth worker attributes this to the 'more relaxed, informal approach', which she thinks helps to 'give them a lot more confidence that they can achieve something'. The deputy head agreed and indicated that no students working with a youth worker in Year 11 had been excluded, all their grades had improved and they were all continuing to sixth form or college after school. She also highlighted that they have a better idea about career options available to them, and 'the youth worker gave them a chance to believe in themselves and what they can do'. She considered that without the brokerage of alternative provision there would have been more fixed term exclusions. Young people reported that they enjoyed the alternative curriculum '[It is] much better than other lessons' (young person interviewee). The style of working of the youth worker, characterised by mutual respect and empathy, was important to them: '[the Youth Worker] understands what you're going through [...] other teachers don't understand and expect you to know everything' (young person interviewee). Some students noted that they were now getting much fewer detentions, and most students said that they felt happier at school after working with a Youth Worker and want to try harder in lessons: 'it's made us all change' (young person interviewee).

Transition and post-16 early identification and brokerage (Torfaen)

Context

Torfaen education department has been in special measures since March 2013 as Estyn found that insufficient progress had been made since a previous inspection in 2011. As a consequence, the YEPF has been

introduced at the same time as the authority is tackling recommendations from Estyn. Stakeholders consider that the YEPF has provided a useful framework around which to organise and monitor improvement actions.

The LSB's Single Integrated Plan includes a clear objective to reduce the proportion of 16-25 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. The Positive Pathways Group (PPG) is the strategic multiagency partnership group responsible for leading the reduction of the number of young people who are NEET post-16. It was established before the introduction of the YEPF in October 2013, and since then it has taken on responsibility for implementation of the YEPF.

What actions have been taken in relation to post-16 early identification and brokerage?

Torfaen's leadership team assessed the EPC role and decided its functions were too broad and varied to include within one role. They identified three main functions for the EPC:

- developing strategic relationships

- collating and analysing data

- case management and detailed conversations about young people

As a consequence, they have embedded the different EPC functions in existing roles. The Head of Skills and Employment is responsible for strategic leadership, including partnership working; a secondee from Careers Wales has been appointed to lead on collecting and analysing data; and the LA's NEET coordinator is responsible for overseeing allocation of lead workers, supervising case management and leading on operational arrangements.

The following processes have been established in relation to early identification and brokerage in transition from pre-16 to post-16 education:

- January: schools are asked to provide the LA with data on intended destinations of young people in Year 11 by completing a simple pro forma. The pro forma also asks for information on young people's attendance and attainment. Data is collated and checked against PLASC data to ensure that no young people have been omitted from the list. Since the introduction of the YEPF, information is also collected on young people in Years 12 and 13. This pro forma is seen as an interim measure until the CAP is in place

- April: a list of young people at risk of disengaging is compiled and

made available to all stakeholders in the Keeping in Touch group. This includes the LA, schools and Careers Wales. A lead worker is allocated to young people who require additional support, information, advice and guidance through the transition to post-16 provision. Typically, young people who are identified as most at risk (those with a red RAG status) are allocated a lead worker from the youth engagement and progression team. The youth worker remains a lead worker throughout the transition period. Young people who do not have problems with attendance or attainment but do not have a clear plan for post-16 education or training are allocated a Careers Wales advisor as a lead worker

- June: all schools are required to provide the LA with updated information on projected destinations of young people in Year 11

- September: Schools, colleges and WBL providers are required to update this list based on actual enrolments

- End of October: the Careers Wales destination survey is carried out, which provides information on actual destinations.

From October onwards, after the transition to post-16 education training, there are at least monthly discussions with post-16 providers (schools, WBL providers and colleges) to identify and discuss young people who have disengaged (those in Tier 2) or are at risk of disengaging (Tier 4) and to allocate a lead worker. Currently the Keeping in Touch group is responsible for this but the LA intends to trial the use of a smaller sub-group to allocate a lead worker. It is hoped that this will make information sharing easier and ensure that discussions are more closely focussed on individual young people, their needs and what can be done to support their progress. The Keeping in Touch group is also responsible for young people who are not in education, employment or training but are unknown to services (Tier 1).

The introduction of the YEPF has also supported the local further education college's own efforts to reduce the number of young people between 16 and 25 who are NEET. The college was in the process of writing a strategy for NEET young people when the YEPF was introduced. The lead for reducing the number of young people who are NEET, re-wrote the strategy to reflect the priorities and good practice included in the YEPF. A key component of the college's post-16 early identification strategy is a data-led early identification system, which uses data on attendance, basic qualification on entry (specifically literacy and numeracy), attainment and when the student enrolled with the provider as indicators of risk. This was in place before the

YEPF but has been used more consistently since the YEPF was introduced.

Lead workers from within the youth service and post-16 providers have coordinated packages of support for young people, which have included enhanced employability skills provision and information, advice and guidance.

What has enabled success?

There was consensus that the introduction of the YEPF has strengthened and supported existing mechanisms for post-16 early identification and brokerage in Torfaen.

The key factors that have enabled progress in relation to post-16 early identification and brokerage are:

- **division of the EPC role**. In particular, having a dedicated post to lead on collecting and analysing data from schools and post-16 providers on young people at risk of disengaging has been helpful. It has enabled more systematic and prompt sharing of information and helped to build partnership working between the LA, Careers Wales and post-16 providers

- **strong strategic leadership**. The LSB's objective to reduce the proportions of young people who are NEET between the ages of 16 and 25, combined with the clear strategic framework of the YEPF, have created an enabling environment. Senior managers in the main partner organisations are committed to the YEPF agenda and are driving changes. The PPG is an effective structure for bringing together partners and appears to be actively leading and governing implementation of the YEPF

- **collaborative working between operational partners.** Schools, colleges and WBL providers are generally committed to improved early identification and transition from pre-16 to post-16 and during post-16 education. This has been achieved in part through a consultative and transparent approach led by the LA. For example, schools were consulted as part of the development of the pro forma on intended destinations and also the timings for providing information and allocating lead workers.

- **experience and learning from the ESF Pre-Vent project** has informed YEPF implementation, particularly in relation to brokerage at transition to post-16 education. Pre-vent lead workers were funded through the last round of ESF. The LA maintained funding for the posts

after evaluation of the new role showed the benefits in relation to improved engagement and progression of young people.

What have been the challenges and how have they been overcome?

Key learning from the first year of implementation of the YEPF is that large provider meetings support the development of relationships between organisations but may not be the best situation to discuss individual cases, allocate lead workers and monitor progress. Initially the KIT operational group in Torfaen, consisting of a large number of providers, was responsible for brokerage at transition and post-16. This process is being modified so that the KIT operational group will be maintained as a network of providers but a smaller sub-group will be convened to allocate lead workers and monitor progress of young people.

It was identified that it can sometimes be difficult in large organisations to engage all members of staff in YEPF actions. For example, some tutors and teachers may fail to provide timely information on young people they work with. To improve this, senior managers within the provider organisation reported that they have tried to consistently emphasise the importance of the YEPF and related actions and to ensure failure to comply is managed appropriately.

At present, there are no formal structures for schools to share information on young people at risk of disengaging with post-16 providers to ensure that appropriate support can continue. This has been identified as an important next step to develop to take forward the actions already taken to improve early identification.

Outcomes

As a result of the actions taken since the introduction of the YEPF, as well as strengthening of existing arrangements, there has been improved coordination and joint working between partners. Partners are considered to be working well together to share information so that young people are identified early on and then provided with appropriate support that is coordinated by a lead worker. Typical comments included 'I think we are ahead of the game in terms of partnership and the way people are working together'. (Careers Wales representative) Many stakeholders reported that early identification has improved and that processes for brokerage are now more clearly defined.

Interviews with young people also indicated that the support that has been brokered by a lead worker is making a difference. Young people who had

completed the traineeship engagement strand with a local work based learning provider, described their experiences. They had been allocated a Careers Wales adviser as a lead worker during Year 11 or after leaving school, who had supported them to secure a place on the traineeship programme. Most of the interviewees recognised that before taking part in the programme they had struggled with communication and personal confidence. For example, one young person explained, 'I came here to help with not being able to talk to people very well' (young person). Young people valued the opportunities they had had on the programme to learn about different professions, take part in team building activities and outings and to improve their literacy and numeracy in a supportive environment. One participant commented, 'it pushed me to do things I wouldn't do myself…the main thing was they [the WBL provider] were able to create a level of comfort with those around you before they stuck you in an unfamiliar situation' (young person). For many a key feature of the lead working support and the provision was 'being treated as an adult, not like at school'. As a result of being allocated a lead worker and participating in provision that was brokered for them, the young people reported that it had improved their confidence and helped them to define their interests for further education and employment 'If it wasn't for this I don't think I even would have attempted to get a job...I'd probably do it again if I could' (young person)

Post-16 early identification and brokerage (Rhondda Cynon Taff)

What actions have been taken to implement post-16 early identification and brokerage?

Management arrangements

The strategic management arrangements for post-16 early identification and brokerage are the same as for all other components of the YEPF.

- The Head of Engagement and Participation is the SAO; the EPC reports directly to the SAO.

- The Supporting Engagement in Education and Training (SEET) group is the strategic steering group for the YEPF. Members of this group are senior managers of the key partner organisations including the LA, Careers Wales, schools, colleges, WBL providers and voluntary sector organisations. The SEET group is responsible for ensuring that development and implementation of the YEPF is aligned to the priority

objectives set out in the SEET strategy and action plan.

● The SEET group is accountable to Fframwaith, the Children and Young People's Partnership in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Post-16 early identification

The LA's early identification system identifies young people in Year 11 who are at risk of disengaging. For pre-16s, the school takes on the lead worker role by providing additional support to young people. This is usually led by a Pupil Development Officer. This includes: brokering additional work placements to help young people make decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment and offering alternative provision that is tailored to the learning style of young people.

An ISP has been signed which in principle allows information to be shared at transition with post-16 providers. To date this has been happening in an ad hoc manner rather than systematically. It is expected that the ISP, supported by new mechanisms such as regular transition meetings between LA staff, schools and post-16 providers, will improve the transition process. This should alert post-16 providers early on to young people who require additional support (i.e. are in Tier 4).

Post-16 providers monitor attendance of young people and if it drops, they alert pastoral staff who are expected to step in to identify why attendance has declined and to provide appropriate support (for example, signposting to wider services, a referral to Careers Wales for enhanced information and guidance)

Delivery of lead working

Before the introduction of the YEPF in October 2013, Rhondda Cynon Taff reconfigured its Youth Service. Two services, the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the Youth Engagement and Participation Service were merged to form a new Engagement and Participation Service. There are three types of staff within this new service :

● Youth Engagement and Participation Officers, who are responsible for the identification of post-16 young people in Tier 1 who are unknown to services. They also deliver pre-16 and post-16 engagement provision. Typically a Youth Engagement and Participation officer will work with six or seven young people at any one time. The names are checked against other systems (such as the school management information system) to verify that the young people are not already being

supported by other services. The Youth Engagement and Participation Officers take a proactive approach to identify young people, including visiting their homes and working in close partnership with other services

- post-16 Transition Support Workers (TSWs), who are responsible for Tier 2s. These staff are funded through Families First and provide intensive and flexible support to young people. This includes visiting young people at home, booking a Careers Wales appointment for them and accompanying them to the interview if desired, supporting them to work out travel arrangements for education and training and to gain confidence to travel independently. Typically, TSWs have a caseload of 30 young people

- Attendance and Wellbeing Officers (AWS), who have a legal responsibility to undertake, if necessary, court action for persistent school absence. The AWS provides support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. The AWS staff work mainly with young people under 16.

All of these staff can act as post-16 lead workers and lead working has been written in to their job descriptions. Cases are allocated to staff by the EPC, using the five-tier information they receive from Careers Wales. Staff are allocated cases initially for a six-week period and are expected to provide support over that time to help a young person to progress to the next tier. There is though flexibility for a lead worker to provide support for longer than six weeks if required.

The LA has invested in management information systems to support more effective post-16 early identification and brokerage. Their new system, which is due to be ready in June 2015, will automate the pre-16 vulnerability profiling. This should make it easier to pass on information to post-16 providers at transition from pre-16 education to enable them to provide tailored and targeted support to new joiners who require additional support. The new system will also include information on young people aged 16-19 who are in a school sixth form. This will allow their progress from pre-16 to post-16 education to be more effectively monitored.

What enabled progress?

The robust strategic management arrangements are considered by all interviewees to have enabled progress. The fact that the YEPF steering group reports directly to the Children and Young People's Partnership

ensures that the framework maintains a high profile and its objectives remain a priority among stakeholder organisations. There is proactive leadership from the SAO and members of the SEET group reported that the group functions effectively. Attendance is good and members proactively participate.

Having a defined period of six weeks for progressing young people to the next tier has enabled progress. This is considered to be 'motivating, and it helps to target work and help achieve results' (LA senior manager). Those involved suggest that this prevents unfocussed, non-progressive work with a young person. Similarly, they highlight their move away from a key worker model – where one key worker stays with the young person – to a model where workers specialise in each part of the pathway, as a success – allowing workers to focus on their specialism and professional strengths.

What have the barriers been and how were they overcome?

Ensuring that data input to MI systems is accurate is an ongoing challenge. Having accurate data is acknowledged to influence the type, quality and quantity of engagement with young people as 'what you do based on reports is only as good as the data coming in' (LA senior manager) The LA has coordinated and led awareness raising and guidance and actively supported partners to help improve the quality and accuracy of data.

Developing partnership arrangements between the LA and JCP has taken time and there have been administrative challenges. Joint working with JCP and LA staff on small projects that deliver employability to Tier 2 young people has improved communication between these organisations as well as voluntary sector partners and there is currently a common enrolment and referral form in use that enables data sharing.

Outcomes

As a result of the actions taken since the introduction of the YEPF a number of improvements in relation to post-16 identification and brokerage have been achieved:

- the local authority has successfully overhauled its service offer for young people while ensuring the most vulnerable young people continue to receive support and receive better support. The service has been rationalised; moving away from a universal youth service which employed a large number of part-time workers in a variety of roles to one that focuses on identifying and intensively working with

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- those young people who need support to progress and achieve

- staff members in new roles are highly-motivated and supportive of the new arrangements which allows greater flexibility as well as more intensive work as required on brokerage

- the number of individuals classified inappropriately as being in Tier 1 or Tier 2 has decreased. A systematic review identified a significant number of individuals classified as being in Tier 1 or Tier 2 incorrectly, generally because they had moved out of the area (for example, to go to university). This has freed up resources to be used to support Tier 2 young people.

Partnership working has increased, particularly for post-16 brokerage. Partnerships have been established with JCP, the third sector, WBL providers, and all colleges in the area. This is supported by improved information sharing between the LA, Careers Wales and the colleges, driven by the new ISP. It has also allowed the LA to continue to deliver its Your Future First targeted employability programme for a small number of post-16 young people. It would have not been cost-effective to do so without the goodwill and cooperation of partners.

Provision mapping (Pembrokeshire)

Context

In Pembrokeshire, work on provision mapping pre-dates the YEPF. In 2010, there was a shift to joint planning and commissioning of school and college-based post-16 provision across the county by the LA and Pembrokeshire College. This was driven largely by the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy agenda as well as reductions in funding that made increased collaboration necessary. In recognition of the need for a more strategic approach, existing post-16 provision (apart from WBL provision) was mapped. Analysis of this initial provision map identified duplication and gaps in provision. In response to this, the LA led on establishing mechanisms for more collaborative planning and delivery of post-16 provision and for reducing competition between providers. This is considered by stakeholders to have been successful and is reported to have reduced duplication and enabled subjects with comparatively low take up to continue to be delivered.

The introduction of the YEPF stimulated a piece of work to review and update the provision map and to extend it to include traineeships, apprenticeships and commercial WBL. The aim was that strategic YEPF stakeholders would

consider the findings and work collaboratively to agree necessary changes to WBL provision to improve the offer for young people.

What actions have been taken since the launch of the YEPF?

How the provision mapping was carried out

In Pembrokeshire, the EPC, who is the strategic lead for 14-19 education, led on the YEPF provision mapping exercise. The provision mapping is linked to actions set out in the LA's Improvement Plan and also in the LSB's Single Integrated Plan. This means there has been challenge and scrutiny on the process by key decision makers in the LA.

The EPC was supported by a data officer who collected information on provision from providers, input the information to a spreadsheet and analysed it. Although a formal task and finish group was not established, the Pembrokeshire Skills Network, which includes all post-16 providers, acted as a working group during the process to agree how the provision mapping should be carried out and to discuss findings.

A draft provision map was created using the template and data provided by the Welsh Government. This was then circulated to post-16 providers, who were requested to check the accuracy of the information and supplement it with additional information on the scale, target group, intended learning outcomes and effectiveness of the provision. The draft was also shared with members of the 14-19 Network.

Workshops were subsequently held with post-16 providers to verify the information and to fill any remaining gaps. This resulted in a curriculum map for each provider – a spreadsheet that listed available provision against key priority sectors.

How the provision map has been used

The EPC led the analysis of the data and information collected in the provision maps with the aim of identifying gaps and duplication. The analysis included a review of labour market information on the local area provided by the Learning and Skills Partnership. This enabled the analysis to draw out 'what we are offering compared with what we should be offering'. Additional information on demand from young people was also considered. This included, for example, information from the Careers Wales I/O database on sectors in which young people intend to or have applied for jobs and qualitative information from admissions officers in post-16 providers.

The EPC produced a report that summarised the strengths and limitations of

existing 16-18 provision. The main gaps identified by the analysis were:

- limited provision to support the projected growth in the agriculture sector, particularly in skilled agricultural and related trades

- limited Level 3 provision in energy & environment; agriculture; retail & commercial; financial services; preparation for life and work

- not all sectors have small volume (single A-level equivalent) vocational option to enable learners to access a mixed general-vocational curriculum

- lack of enterprise education provision

- limited opportunities to access bilingual or Welsh-medium education

- limited access to full-time Entry level and Level 1 opportunities

- limited traineeship progression opportunities in some key sectors including tourism; and

- limited apprenticeship opportunities in life sciences (a growth sector in the wider sub-region).

The provision mapping also suggested a general need to improve availability of rolling start dates.

The report was presented to the NEET strategic group in Pembrokeshire and also the Pembrokeshire Skills Network. At the time of the case study research partners in these groups were in the final stage of agreeing and signing off the report.

Processes to respond to the identified gaps have been initiated. For example, the EPC has coordinated and led discussions with WBL providers and they are responding to fill gaps in entry level provision and horticulture provision. Further joint planning discussions are in progress, with the expectation that there will be subsequent changes to provision.

The provision map has also been made available electronically for professionals working with young people. A manager in Careers Wales who sits on the strategic NEET group has shared the information with her staff and reported that they are using it in careers information, advice and guidance discussions with young people.

As a next step it is intended that volunteering opportunities will be added to the provision map as well as adding some further detail about the geographic

locations in which provision is available.

It is planned that the provision map will be updated on an annual basis. As the templates and processes have now been set up, the EPC considers this should be manageable.

What has enabled progress?

The main factors that have enabled progress are:

- **strategic leadership** from the LA to coordinate mapping and to secure the commitment of partners to responding to gaps and duplication in the provision. The strategic NEET group (known as the SEET group) has been responsible for overseeing the work and signing off the final report on the provision mapping. The work has been led by a senior manager in the LA who has invested considerable time in informing partner organisations of the objectives of the exercise and facilitating discussions between them to agree changes to provision

- **conducting a robust analysis that draws on a range of sources of evidence.** The use of information and data from providers, labour market information and information on demand for provision from the Careers Wales database has been a success factor. This has helped to ensure the findings of the mapping exercise are robust and credible in the eyes of stakeholders

- **a willingness among partners to work collaboratively.** Interviewees indicated an emerging willingness among WBL providers to work cooperatively to plan provision. This has been enabled in part by the LA's strategic lead, who has demonstrated to providers that adjusting provision to avoid duplication and fill gaps has benefits for providers as well as young people. This message needs to be reiterated and exemplified to help secure commitment of providers

- **guidance from the Welsh Government.** Having the template, data on provision and guidance note from the Welsh Government was reported to have been helpful.

What have the challenges been and how have they been overcome

From the LA's perspective, the main challenge is the time and resources required to lead and coordinate mapping and subsequent planning and re-organisation of provision. The time and skills of both a strategic manager with good links with strategic partners and administrative and data analysis

support are required.

Reducing competition between post-16 providers is another major challenge. Strategic leadership from the LA can overcome the barrier of providers working separately to plan provision and planning around their own budgets and resources rather than the needs of young people. In Pembrokeshire, the EPC has spent a lot of time emphasising that better coordination is in the interests of providers as well as young people, particularly in a climate of reduced funding. A transparent and robust process for collecting and recording information has also helped to engage providers. By presenting comprehensive information in a clear and accessible way, the rationale for making changes to provision is clearer to all stakeholders.

Outcomes

As a consequence of the provision mapping work undertaken under the YEPF:

- the LA has robust information to inform regional ESF bids to ensure that gaps in provision are filled and duplication avoided

- partnership working between providers has been strengthened. One stakeholder reported: 'We are no longer talking about withdrawal from provision [for a young person], we are talking about transfer, other provision, we're talking about entitlement under the Youth Guarantee. The network is getting stronger and stronger – it's not just about the college and young people' (college staff)

- there has been progress towards achieving a more balanced offer of 16-18 provision with greater choice for young people in Pembrokeshire. The gaps are now better understood. Some modifications have already taken place and others are currently being planned and developed. One stakeholder commented 'there was a tendency to roll out the same provision year after year- it's more responsive now' (college staff and managers)

- stakeholders reported that because professionals working with young people have improved information about the local labour market and provision, 'young people are better informed about opportunities than they have ever been before' (Careers Wales)

- the LA has most of the information required for the CAP prospectus.

Mapping provision for 19-24 year olds (Conwy and Denbighshire)

In Conwy and Denbighshire, the Progressive Engagement Pathways (PEP) project was an ESF-funded project commissioned by the LSB. It aimed to improve opportunities for disengaged young people aged 19-24 across the two LAs. Specifically, it sought to develop smarter commissioning of services, introduce strategic coordination between services and encourage greater collaboration. A key component of the project was mapping existing provision for 19-24 year olds to identify gaps and duplication. Although the project was developed before the YEPF was launched in October 2013, it was delivered for 12 months from November 2013 and so ran in parallel to the early implementation of the YEPF in Conwy and Denbighshire.

Rationale and context

The project was initiated by staff at Grŵp Landrillo Menai and Careers Wales in response to concerns that many of their learners aged 19-24 faced barriers to engaging in education, training and employment. They had noticed increased effects of poverty among their learners, including increasing prevalence of mental health problems. They also had anecdotal evidence of duplication of services, with reports of young people who had multiple case workers but were still not progressing in education and training. This was borne out by the local statistics on young people who are NEET, which had not improved. Senior managers from the college and Careers Wales presented the problem to the Local Service Board, which has the engagement and progression of 19-24 year olds as a strategic priority. 'This group is a key priority for us. We see them as a lost generation that we have to help' (LSB member*).* They requested funding to carry out a strategic mapping exercise to better understand the scale and nature of the problem. The LSB was supportive of the project and saw it 'as an opportunity to bottom out what the issues really were' (LSB member*).* The college was successful in securing ESF funding, which was match funded by the LAs.

How was the project managed and delivered?

A multi-agency strategic Project Board was established to oversee and steer the project. Its members were the chief executive of the college, the chair of the LSB, senior managers from the LAs and a DWP regional manager. A smaller operational group, led by a dedicated project manager, was established to deliver the project and to report progress to the strategic Project Board.

A template was designed to collect information from providers about the

services they provide to young people aged 19-24. This was distributed in a paper-based and web-format. The data was then validated by ringing providers to ask about gaps in the template and to ask about any unclear information.

The mapping identified over 250 organisations working with young people. Key findings from the analysis of the provision were that:

- there was duplication of provision in some geographic areas and gaps in others

- the number of young people accessing services was unclear

- the quality and impact of services was not being systematically measured

- the high level of financial investment was disproportionate to the relatively small numbers in the target group and the progress they had made in education, employment and training as a result of the investment.

Alongside the desk-based collection of information, 13 project workshops were held to gather the views of young people on local provision. 61 young people participated in the workshops, which took place in a range of community venues. Some young people also provided feedback via a questionnaire. Feedback from young people was wide ranging and included the fact that 'you can be passed around and between organisations over and over again' (voluntary sector partner) and that 84 per cent thought it would be helpful to go to one place for advice and help.

There was also a consultation exercise with provider organisations to obtain the views of staff working directly with young disengaged people on local provision.

The multi-agency strategic partnership has been responding to the problems identified in the provision mapping exercise. So far, this has been done by:

- working collaboratively to develop a north Wales regional ESF bid to fill gaps in provision and to create a more coordinated service offer to young people. As part of the development of the bid, the information on local provision is being assessed in light of local labour market information

- trialling a new referral process between Careers Wales and JCP to improve young people aged 19-24's transition to JCP support. A new

form has been developed that JCP (and other referring organisations) complete, which records information on education, training and employment status, identified needs and interests and consent.   A trial co-location of Careers Wales advisers in Jobcentres is also taking place. This is being carefully monitored and if successful, could potentially be extended to other Jobcentres

- updating the YEPF action and improvement plan by defining actions under the six components to be jointly led by strategic partners.

What enabled progress?

The main factors that have enabled progress are:

- **committed multiagency working.** Many interviewees commented that the joint working between JCP, the LA and college has been a success factor. This partnership working is relatively new, particularly with JCP. Having senior decision-makers from the organisations on the steering group who are proactive and committed to a new partnership approach has helped to quickly build relationships. It has also helped to ensure that the project maintains a high profile and remains aligned to the priorities of the LSB. 'This project has shown how productive a committed multiagency strategic group can be' (JCP manager)

- **excellent mechanisms to enable young people to contribute their views on local provision.** The inclusion of young people in the mapping exercise was seen as crucial. One front line professional commented: 'it's very easy to make assumptions and think you know what young people think but they provided a lot of insights'. A senior manager agreed, stating, 'it's a very good exercise to get direct evidence. Hearing directly from young people has really strengthened our resolve'

- **stakeholder dissemination events to consider findings and define actions.** An event was held to which all stakeholders, including young people, were invited. Learning from the project was shared. Stakeholders considered that this helped to ensure partners were committed to responding to the problems identified

- **having a dedicated project manager** supported by a small operational group was also seen as critical. As the operational group was small it was able to work quickly and responsively. It was also

important that there was frequent communication between the operational and strategic group, with the operational group bringing any issues or barriers to the attention of the Project Board as necessary so it could facilitate solutions.

What were the barriers and how were overcome?

Partners recognised that setting aside organisational differences and barriers took some time initially. Regular and open discussions between senior managers in key partners enabled progress.

There was a low response rate initially for requests for information from providers. To overcome this, the project made follow up telephone calls to providers. Persistent and frequent follow up was required to contact organisations and obtain the information required. In several instances, providers gave poor quality information. Project staff reported that this was either due to poor record keeping or concerns about sharing commercial data. The follow up telephone conversations helped to an extent to overcome this problem. In addition, the project manager contacted providers' funders directly to obtain the information about provision.

The project found that it was difficult to persuade disengaged young people to provide meaningful feedback on provision. To overcome this, the project manager worked closely with frontline staff who had an existing relationship with young people, including staff in Careers Wales and voluntary sector organisations, asking them to promote the workshops and encourage young people to attend. There was also learning about needing skilled facilitators to run the workshops who could employ different discussion techniques to elicit opinions from young people. In addition, innovative methods were used to support young people to contribute their views. For example, video booths allowed young people to provide verbal feedback, which helped to overcome literacy issues. Offering travel expenses and food as an incentive was also considered to help.

Outcomes

As a result of the mapping of provision for 19-24 year olds and subsequent changes to referrals, stakeholders reported improved processes for referrals from JCP to Careers Wales and improved sharing of information between partners. There is a view that 'referrals are smoother now' (Careers Wales interviewee) and that young people are more systematically being referred to Careers Wales. The college reported increased referrals and enrolments on provision among this age group and was confident that many are sustaining

attendance.

There is also improved partnership working at a strategic level between key partners. This has been sustained after the PEP project and strategic partners are now defining and taking forward other actions in the YEPF action plan, such as planning new provision for 19-24 year olds.

Developing young people's employability skills (Isle of Anglesey)

What actions have been taken to improve employability skills

Measures in place to improve young people's employability skills include:

- **an enhanced work experience scheme** has been developed in the local authority for young people at school who have been identified as being at risk of disengaging. The scheme has been piloted with a small number of pupils at risk of disengagement and the local authority is currently considering expanding it to include more young people. A partnership has developed between Holyhead school and Anglesey's Communities First team, known as Môn CF, to improve the employability skills of young people pre- and post-16. Môn CF is a registered charity that employs around 20 staff in offices in Holyhead and Llangefni, a nursery in Holyhead and a Community Vocational Skills Academy. The enhanced work experience scheme is intended to develop employability skills, provide accredited learning and to help young people to identify vocational areas to progress into after school. A staff member explained, 'most of the adults who come to us for help have no qualifications so this project is all about making sure these kids don't end up in the same situation' (Communities First representative interview). 14-16 year old pupils spend one or two days per week working voluntarily with a Môn CF mentor at one of their sites. Examples include: working on environmental enhancement projects at community sites around Holyhead; joinery work at the community skills academy; and construction work as part of a project to renovate empty premises in the town centre. Young people have the opportunity to achieve Agored Cymru, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and NVQ childcare qualifications as part of the programme. All volunteers are also required to undertake core training in health and safety, manual handling and first aid. Progression is offered through Jobs Growth Wales placements. Môn CF staff act as referees and often act as advocates during the job interview to support

young people with low confidence. To date, around 50 young people have secured Jobs Growth Wales placements with over thirty employers

- strategic planning for the Energy Island project, which has included **analysing current labour market needs and future trends and requirements** and including LA, employers, providers and schools in the process. An Energy Island strategic group focuses on how to ensure that local people are equipped with the skills to take advantage of job opportunities arising from the decommissioning of Wylfa nuclear power station and development of a new nuclear facility on Anglesey. This group includes representatives of the LA, Job Centre Plus, Bangor University, Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai, the development Agency, several Sector Skills Councils and Horizon

What has enabled progress?

Stakeholders considered that a key success factor of the enhanced work experience programme is that participation is voluntary and that the environment and culture of the scheme is different to school; there is greater emphasis on choice and participants are 'treated as adults and made to feel part of the team' (young person). Interviews with young people confirmed that this is an important feature of the programme. Young people particularly praised the staff involved from Môn CF and both staff from the school and Môn CF highlighted the good partnership that had developed as a key factor in the success of the scheme.

What have the barriers been and how have they been overcome?

Identifying and providing good alternative options for pupils at risk of exclusion presented a challenge for Holyhead school. The enhanced work experience scheme has provided such an alternative for some pupils, with staff from the school and Môn CF working closely together to develop the scheme. Additional funding from the Pupil Deprivation Grant has also enabled the school to provide support for the pupils within the school. Môn CF reported that being able to engage with young people at an earlier age (pre-16) has enabled them to overcome some of the barriers to working in a more preventative way.

One challenge highlighted by the local authority was how to extend the scheme whilst ensuring employers are well-prepared to support at risk young people through enhanced work experience or longer work placements. Môn CF highlighted the potential for increasing the package of qualifications

offered during the enhanced work experience in order to provide participants with the equivalent of a GCSE qualification.

An ongoing barrier is a lack of knowledge of full range of employability provision available. The local authority highlighted a need to review and refine the provision map to ensure comprehensive information on employability provision.

Next steps

At present, the LA and its partners are considering how to build on and take forward the existing work on employability skills for young people. A key means for this will be future ESF funding. It is intended that the Aspire ESF project will be used to trial different approaches to employer engagement in employability skills.

Outcomes

Stakeholders reported that young people are more motivated at school as a result of the enhanced work experience scheme. This is considered to be in part because they are more able to see the relevance of literacy and numeracy, for example. One staff member commented: 'A few sessions in joinery where they have to be able to measure things can show them the link between this and the real world' (Communities First representative). Schools can also incentivise young people by stating good behaviour and attendance at school as a condition for taking part in the work experience.

The young people interviewed who had participated in the enhanced work experience programme were positive about their experience of taking part. Some 'had expected it to be boring' but were pleased to find 'it has been really enjoyable'. Two of the pupils interviewed also felt that they now had a much clearer idea of what they would like to do after they leave school. One commented: 'This time last year, I had no idea what I wanted to do but now I can see a work path after school' (young person).

Developing employability skills at pre-16 and transition (Ceredigion)

Context and management arrangements

There has been a commitment to reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET in Ceredigion for a considerable time. The LA's key strategic documents, the Single Integrated Plan, the Corporate Strategy and the Improvement Plan, all include references to reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET. The Corporate Strategy for 2013-2107 states an

ambition for 'the number of NEETs to be the lowest in Wales'. In 2013 it was the lowest in Wales at age 16. The LA's NEET Strategy promotes a preventative approach and a commitment to providing targeted support for young people most at risk of disengaging. Since October 2013, the strategy has been updated to reflect the priorities of the YEPF.

There are also clear operational management arrangements in place to support delivery of the LA's strategic objectives. There are separate pre- and post-16 multiagency practitioner groups that meet monthly to share information about young people identified as being at risk, to allocate lead workers and to broker an appropriate package of support. The two groups meet to share caseloads at key points of the year to support transition of young people from pre-16 to post-16 education.

What actions have been taken in relation to employability skills at pre-16 and transition?

The key measures that are in place in Ceredigion to support improved employability skills of young people pre-16 were generally in place before 2013. These are:

- **vocational provision for pre-16 learners to widen choice and opportunities.** Both the college and local work-based learning provider offer vocational qualifications to school-aged young people. For example, Coleg Ceredigion has a formal partnership with two secondary schools and offers a range of vocational courses to Year 10 and 11 students. Between 50 to 60 pupils from these schools access 'school-link provision' on the college site. They spend one day a week at the college undertaking a vocational course. Currently, motor vehicle, construction and hair and beauty course are available. All young people in these schools are informed in Year 9 about the option to undertake more vocationally orientated learning alongside other GCSEs. College staff attend the school's pre-16 options evening, to which parents and young people are invited, and also attend events held by Careers Wales to inform young people about available provision. Year 9 pupils in the north of the LA do not have access to similar vocational provision

- **an alternative pre-16 curriculum.** ESF funding was used to develop an alternative curriculum for young people who were not achieving their full potential. This has been maintained because it was very successful in engaging and progressing young people. Currently, around 60 young people aged 14-16 access this provision, which is

delivered by the youth service. It offers a wide range of vocational tasters, independent living skills and outdoors activities. As far as timetabling will allow, an element of choice is built in. The course is accredited and pupils achieve a BTEC Level 1. Last year all participating pupils achieved the equivalent of 1 or 2 GCSEs

- **enhanced youth provision for young people in school who require additional support.** Some schools choose not to access the alternative curriculum for young people at moderate risk of disengaging (those with an 'amber status' in the early identification system). Instead, a youth worker works with young people for two days a week in school, delivering craft-based and practical activities. There is a focus on youth workers building a positive relationship with young people and building up towards Asdan key skills and life skills qualifications or a Level 1 BTEC

- **engagement provision for young people identified as being at high risk of disengaging.** The college and work-based learning provider also have engagement provision for pre-16 young people who have been home educated, excluded from school or are generally very disaffected. These are young people identified as 'red' in the early identification system's RAG rating. Around 20 learners currently access this provision. A number of subjects are offered at entry level, offering progression to GCSEs and mainstream provision

- **Careers Wales employability skills provision**. Careers Wales provides a range of employability skills development support, including: employer presentations in schools; producing work-related learning group-work exercises for year 9 students; and managing a work experience database in schools which students can access to find short-term work experience placements (employers on the database have all been vetted by Careers Wales). Careers Wales also offers a 'careers check' for year 10 pupils. This was carried out for the first time last year. Students are asked to complete a short questionnaire about their intended destination and about their knowledge of where to obtain careers information, advice and guidance.

And for developing employability skills at transition these are:

- **Careers Wales enhanced support and monitoring.** After the 'career check', young people identified as not having clear plans or poor

career development knowledge and skills, are provided with enhanced information, advice and guidance from Careers Wales. Progress is reviewed at least every six weeks

- **Summer skills courses.** The Youth Service ran an eight-day summer skills programme in partnership with Careers Wales and local post-16 providers. A range of vocational taster courses were offered to help young people define their interests and identify areas they might like to continue to train in. Over 40 young people participated and it was considered by stakeholders to be very successful. Over 100 accredited learning outcomes were achieved. Young people were then offered the opportunity to take part in a three-day employability skills residential course. This combined outdoors activities with training on CV writing, interview skills and other employability skills training

- **use of traineeships.** Young people identified as being at risk of disengaging at transition have been referred to the engagement strand of traineeships.

The YEPF has encouraged the LA to refine these measures and find funding for some of them so they could continue. To take forward the employability skills agenda:

- an **Employer Support Group** has been recently developed in Ceredigion. Members of this group are a range of agencies that work with employers including: Jobcentre Plus; Ceredigion County Council; Careers Wales; Aberystwyth University; work-based learning providers; Welsh Government; key voluntary and community sector organisations; Business Wales; Construction Skills and the Chamber of Commerce. The remit of the group is to find strategic solutions to recruitment opportunities in the Ceredigion area. It is intended that sharing information at a strategic level about employer needs will help education and training provision to be adapted to better meet employer needs

- **the EPC has been approved by Heads of Service in the LA as having responsibility for ensuring community benefits clauses are written into all relevant LA contracts and section 106 agreements**

- **planning and development of new intensive one to one provision for the most disengaged young people.** The LA previously trialled the Intermediate Labour Market Project run by Wales Council for

Voluntary Action. This project provided funding for third sector organisations and social enterprises to offer three month, paid supported employment opportunities combined with mentoring and intensive support. The project was particularly successful in engaging young people in the youth justice system. To build on this work, the LA is considering the use of forthcoming ESF funding to take forward the work. A work-related learning officer would be employed to proactively approach employers and to encourage and support them to provide opportunities to young people.

What has enabled progress?

The sound strategic management arrangements have ensured that the employability skills of young people under 16 remain a priority for the LA and its partners. Proactive leadership from the SAO and other senior managers appears to have been key to enabling progress. While arrangements were in place before the YEPF, 'the YEPF has given us a clear steer. It's a golden thread' (LA staff).

In recognition of the challenges of the rural geography of Ceredigion, post-16 providers operate flexibly to support young people's engagement. For example, start and finish times are not strictly enforced as providers recognise young people have to travel long distances to reach the provider.

What have the barriers been and how have they been overcome?

Although the strategic management and governance arrangements in Ceredigion are strong, there is recognition that they could be improved yet further with increased involvement of employers in strategic groups. Strategic managers are considering how this might be best done. A sub-group of the Employer Support Group, on which employers sit, may be developed.

Senior managers recognised the need to reiterate the objectives of the YEPF to ensure all partners are well-informed of the agenda and that the YEPF remains a strategic priority. 'It takes time to make sure all partners are up to speed. Staff change as well so it has to be continually re-emphasised' (LA staff).

Stakeholders reported that the re-tendering of WBL provision has temporarily disrupted processes. Schools and careers advisers have not had full and accurate information about the range of post-16 provision that will be available from April 2015.

Welsh-language thematic case study (Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Anglesey)

All LAs have a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2014-17, which includes their vision and aims for planning Welsh-medium education as well as action plans and targets for increasing the percentage of young people learning through the medium of Welsh (in line with the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy). LA policy leads interviewed considered there to be overlaps between YEPF strategic plans and WESPs, although the strategic links between these have in the main not been made explicit. For example, the WESPs and YEPF action plans do not specifically cross-reference each other. However, there are clear links between both at strategic level, with SAOs in Anglesey, Gwynedd and Ceredigion responsible for both Welsh-medium Education and the YEPF. Furthermore, LA staff interviewed noted that there are close working relationships between staff with responsibility for Welsh-medium education and the YEPF.

Stakeholders consider that actions taken under the YEPF contribute directly to the objectives of their WESPs. In Ceredigion, for example, outcome 3 of the WESP is to increase the number of 14-19 year olds studying through the medium of Welsh. The LA has taken a strategic approach to focus on increasing the availability and take-up of Welsh-medium vocational courses among young people, with a particular focus on those at risk of disengagement. Young people are encouraged to choose to study through the medium of Welsh, with the benefits of doing so promoted.

There are examples of operational management arrangements that help to ensure the YEPF meets the needs of Welsh-speaking young people and that the Welsh language is promoted by those implementing the YEPF. For example, Partneriaeth Beca, a partnership between the LA, schools and post-16 providers in South Ceredigion considers the supply and demand of Welsh-medium provision and works collaboratively to ensure demand is met. The group was established before the official launch of the YEPF but its remit has recently been extended to focus on the collaborative delivery of vocational provision in Key Stage 4 and to promote progression opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh in post-16 providers. For example, the partnership makes arrangements for joint timetabling and transport between providers to extend the offer of Welsh-medium provision to more students.

Demand for Welsh language provision

Generally across the three LA's specifically questioned about this, the data and evidence about demand among young people and employers for support

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in the medium of Welsh is qualitative in nature and is not measured systematically.

LA and Careers Wales staff in Ceredigion reported that local employers are increasingly promoting their ability to conduct business in Welsh to customers and so there is an increasing demand for employees with Welsh language skills. In response to this, in Ceredigion there has been a coordinated effort to promote the value of Welsh language skills among young people and to stimulate demand for Welsh language provision.

- the LA has encouraged post-16 providers to promote their Welsh-medium provision at careers and parents evenings. This has included the only English-medium secondary school in the LA where a significant number of pupils are able to speak Welsh

- Careers Wales advisers explain the benefits of studying in the medium of Welsh to young people and the value their Welsh skills will have in the local labour market

- the college promotes the benefits to learners at the start of their course to encourage them to consider studying part of their course in Welsh.

Across all three LAs, demand for pre-16 targeted YEPF provision varies between schools. In some Welsh-medium schools, demand is high with Welsh-medium provision requested by most pupils while in other schools bilingual or English-medium provision is the norm. However, demand and take-up of Welsh-medium support (e.g. brokerage) is not monitored systematically, with the focus on the offer of provision and support.

Across all three LAs, stakeholders reported efforts to promote the value of Welsh-language skills in the labour market. In Gwynedd, one LA officer outlined their rationale for promoting the importance of the Welsh language as a skill that is valued by employers, noting that many young people take their Welsh language skills for granted and do not see the economic value of their language skills. The officer also noted that confidence can often be a barrier, particularly among young people with lower academic ability: 'Many participants feel that their Welsh language skills are not good enough in a professional environment and there is a need to build their confidence to see that their skills are valuable.' (LA staff)

Supply of Welsh language provision

Generally, LAs reported that they have not so far collected comprehensive information about provision available in the Welsh-language as part of the

YEPF provision mapping exercise, particularly support and brokerage. LA and provider staff noted that information on the availability of Welsh-medium educational provision in schools, FE and WBL is available through data held by schools, providers and LA education departments. LA staff were also aware of the availability of Welsh-language support (e.g. lead worker capacity) in schools, youth services and Careers Wales and considered the availability to be good. However, they were less clear about Welsh-medium capacity in some voluntary and community sector providers. In Gwynedd, for example, stakeholders noted that there are voluntary sector providers that provide comprehensive Welsh-medium services (e.g. GISDA, CAIS). However, it was also noted that it is unclear to what extent all external providers have adequate Welsh-speaking capacity to meet the needs of young people, in particular larger organisations commissioned nationally.

At present the evidence about gaps in availability of provision and support in the medium of Welsh is largely anecdotal. In Anglesey, LA staff reported that there were a lack of 'Pre-NEET Level 1 courses', particularly Welsh-medium provision of this type. One stakeholder reported that there are currently few Welsh-medium post-16 courses that are suitable for young people, particularly with gaps in the availability of short taster courses and provision suitable for the NEET group. This was supported by stakeholders in Gwynedd and Ceredigion. Gaps in the availability of specialist Welsh-medium support services (e.g. CAHMS) were also reported although a lack of systematic evidence is available to support this. Evidence of gaps is often missed as young people are willing to accept English-language support: 'Young people are less likely to complain about the lack of a Welsh-medium service when there are waiting lists for support in general.' (LA staff)

LA staff agreed that the YEPF has helped to foster closer working arrangements with key partners (e.g. voluntary sector) and this now provides them with the foundation to assess more robustly partners' capacity to provide Welsh-medium support. This was seen by LA staff as a key priority for the next phase of implementation of the YEPF. Plans for how the work will be taken forward are expected to be developed over the coming year.

LAs and Careers Wales in all three LAs reported that young people are offered the opportunity to have a Welsh-speaking lead worker. LAs noted that they also have the capacity to offer most other specialist services in Welsh (for example, pupil inclusion, SEN staff, behavioural support). One reported that there had been improvements in the availability of Welsh-speaking school nurses.

In Ceredigion, an alternative curriculum has been developed for pupils in Key Stage 4 at school who are at risk of disengaging. This is available in the medium of Welsh. In some schools whole groups of pupils follow a Welsh-medium alternative curriculum programme, while in other schools it is delivered bilingually or in English, depending on the needs and preferences of young people. In general, all pupils are encouraged to undertake the alternative curriculum bilingually so that they improve their Welsh language skills. The LA has employed a Welsh-speaking Urdd Gobaith Cymru youth worker to deliver the alternative curriculum and as part of this to promote the Welsh language and opportunities to undertake post-16 qualifications in the medium of Welsh. 'Many of these learners may not realise that their Welsh skills are valuable to employers and therefore have not seen the value of Welsh-medium provision. The support can help change their perception of the value of the Welsh language'. (LA staff)

In post-16 education and training, the commitment to offering young people the choice to study in English or Welsh can create challenges for providers. For example, not all subjects or vocational areas are offered by WJEC in Wales (e.g. BTEC Horse Management). This means post-16 providers have to use other examination boards and, typically, there are limited Welsh-medium educational resources to support delivery of the qualification. The lack of teaching and learning resources in Welsh creates additional pressures for provider staff who have to translate materials themselves. For some newer subjects, there is also a reported lack of Welsh-speaking external assessors, which can create challenges for providers. For example, coursework portfolios have to be translated into English for assessors, which can create additional burdens in terms of checking the accuracy of translation.

To help overcome some of these barriers, colleges have appointed Bilingual Champions to help support the development of Welsh-medium provision. Examples of additional support for those studying in Welsh included:

- Welsh language consultants to support learners with their written work through the medium of Welsh or helping to build confidence to use their Welsh more often

- welfare officers and mentors have capacity to offer their services in Welsh.

In Ceredigion, there is also an effort to ensure work experience placements can be offered through the medium of Welsh. The LA's work experience officer's remit includes identifying employers who offer services through the

medium of Welsh, who value Welsh language skills and who can offer work experience. In Gwynedd, stakeholders noted that Job Clubs run collaboratively by LA youth workers, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus seek to encourage participants aged 16-24 to see the value of their Welsh language skills in the labour market.

What has enabled progress?

In all three LAs, stakeholders noted that efforts to increase the availability of Welsh-medium provision and support to stimulate demand were in place before the YEPF was launched. However, stakeholders also noted that the greater collaboration between providers since the YEPF had provided a greater focus on the availability of Welsh-language support (e.g. capacity of voluntary and community providers). The increased focus on early identification and preventative work with those at risk of becoming NEET has also aligned with efforts to increase the availability of Welsh-medium vocational provision.

What have the challenges been and how have they been overcome?

Although most specialist services are available bilingually, there are often difficulties in providing CAHMS services in Welsh. This reflects the wider issue of high demand for CAHMS services and lack of capacity and resources to respond to this. LAs also noted that there were occasional difficulties in recruiting Welsh-speaking educational psychologists. Similarly, this relates to a general challenge of recruiting specialist staff in rural areas.

In FE and WBL settings, some providers noted that young people who have had negative experiences at a Welsh-medium school sometimes associate their negative experience of school with the Welsh language and so it can be a challenge to persuade them of the benefits of training or learning in the medium of Welsh. It was reported that ensuring the availability of Welsh-speaking youth workers who build a positive relationship with young people and offer positive experiences that contrast with school can help to overcome these negative perceptions. Promoting the value of Welsh-language skills in the labour market (e.g. through work experience with employers that work through the medium of Welsh) was also considered to be an effective means of encouraging young people to choose Welsh-medium provision.

Implementing the YEPF in a challenging financial climate (Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and Gwynedd)

Challenges faced by LAs

LAs reported that since before the launch of the YEPF their budgets and those of partners have been reduced. This has continued since the introduction of the YEPF in October 2013. The extent of reduction varies between LAs. In one of the LAs, for example, the youth service budget was reported to have halved over the last few years. In others, reductions in youth services were reported to range from 6 per cent to 13 per cent. Although youth service and community learning budgets have been reduced, education budgets have been protected.

This has meant that the YEPF has been introduced at a time when senior managers are making difficult decisions about spending and having to reorganise services. In the main, interviewees reported that services supporting the YEPF have so far been maintained and there has been a focus on efficiency (delivering the same outcomes but with reduced funding) rather than service reduction. In one of the case study LAs where funding available for youth services has reduced substantially, targeted youth service provision for young people most at risk of disengaging has been prioritised over universal provision for all young people, with most aspects of universal youth provision no longer available.

As a consequence, the YEPF has been introduced at a time of substantial changes to service provision. LAs reported reductions in staffing, which has meant that remaining staff have had to assume more responsibilities within their role. Changes to staffing arrangements have posed challenges to working relationships for implementing the YEPF. Time has been required to form new relationships, to update staff knowledge and to reinstate morale. This is perceived to have affected the pace of progress of implementing different components of the YEPF.

LAs in the Convergence area also noted that the end of the 2007-2013 ESF programme funding coincided with the introduction of the YEPF. As a consequence, they have had to consider how LA funding should be re-allocated to maintain roles such as transition workers and lead workers that are integral to delivery of the YEPF that were previously funded by ESF.

Actions taken in response to the challenges

All the LAs recognised that in the longer term, intervening early and preventing disengagement of young people is more cost effective than

investing resources in expensive intensive re-engagement services. The objectives of the YEPF are clearly aligned to a preventative approach. As a consequence, the LAs reported taking a range of actions to overcome the financial challenges reported and to ensure implementation of the YEPF progressed despite reductions in budgets and staff. These included:

- **re-designing youth services**. Two of the LAs have redesigned their youth services to better meet the objectives of the YEPF and in response to financial challenges. Previously, they offered universal, open access youth services. Reductions in budgets meant this was no longer feasible and there was a shift to targeted youth services for young people most at risk of disengaging, 'we don't put ourselves forward as a youth service any more. Our universal provision is minimal. It has had to be this way', (LA senior manager). In one LA, the redesign included reducing managerial positions and diverting resources to frontline youth support staff who work directly with at risk young people

- **identifying a range of funding streams to support delivery of the YEPF.** LAs reported that they have had to 'think far more creatively than before' in order to identify a wider range of funding streams to support implementation of the YEPF. New funding streams that are being used include Families First, the Adult and Community Learning grant, and the 14-19 Learning Pathways Grant. For example, in Cardiff, Families First funding is used to fund learning coaches, while in the Vale of Glamorgan, it has been used to fund ten-week alternative provision for 8-16 year olds to support improved literacy, numeracy, communication skills and self-esteem. The Adult and Community Learning Grant is being used in the Vale of Glamorgan to provide pre-engagement provision for young people aged 16 who are not yet ready to undertake a Level 1 work-based learning qualification

- **strengthening partnership working.** LAs reported that they have invested the time of senior managers to improve joint working with key partners. For example, they have spent time ensuring that senior managers in partner organisations such as the police, social services, education, youth offending, housing and VCS partners understand the relevance of the YEPF to their work and how it can contribute to their own strategic objectives. This has been done through discussions and formal presentations as well as by ensuring partners are invited to attend the YEPF strategic steering group. This is considered to 'help

share the burden among partners', (LA senior manager). For example, in one LA, a senior manager has worked closely with Lottery-funded voluntary sector youth providers. He ensured they were aware of the YEPF and then offered them use of LA premises for delivery of their Tier 2 provision, on the proviso that they used their funding to work with young people referred to the provider by his staff. He considers this to be a mutually beneficial arrangement because the VCS providers receive referrals without having to invest time and resource and have premises for delivery, while the LA levers the benefits of the Lottery funding for young people in the YEPF target group. He described this as 'using money more intelligently to give more opportunity for progression without looking for other funding. It's about making sure their money is targeted on the people I am interested in'. In terms of securing the commitment of education partners, LAs have made efforts to show how support for young people that may be perceived as 'leisure' or 'soft youth work' can contribute to 'hard educational outcomes'. They have used data on attendance, behaviour and attainment to make the case to schools that they should be using their Pupil Deprivation Grant for such purposes

- **improved performance management of services.** Two of the LAs reported that they have focussed on more closely monitoring and managing performance to ensure that resources are used as efficiently as possible. In one LA, for example, youth engagement and progression staff work with young people for a six week period, which is followed by a review of progress. There is an expectation that in this six week period there is evidence of improvement and progress. 'If you haven't made some kind of difference in six weeks, you are either the wrong person or you're doing the wrong thing' (LA senior manager)

- **sharing infrastructure.** There are also examples of sharing of resources between LAs, such as premises and management information systems. This helps to reduce operating costs associated with the YEPF and prevents duplication of effort.

What has enabled progress?

Strong leadership has enabled progress. Proactive leadership from a senior, strategic manager has helped to raise awareness of the YEPF, secure commitment of partners, align funding streams and embed service redesign. Without this, it is likely that progress would have been at a much slower pace

or would not have occurred at all.

LA-led partnership working between LA departments, other public services, Careers Wales and voluntary and community sector providers has alleviated pressures on individual services and ensured that coordinated actions to support achievement of the YEPF objectives are implemented. Interviewees recognised the important role of the EPC in continually updating partners about the operational arrangements for the YEPF, particularly important at a time of staff changes.

In the cases of service reconfiguration, ensuring the process for change is transparent and that the remit and rationale of the new service is clear has been important.

Interviewees agreed that having the YEPF as an overarching framework for all partners working with young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so has been useful. It has helped politically to secure resources and commitment of partners' and 'enabled me more effectively influence partners and stakeholders by it allowing me to go and say this is the area I think we need to be specialising/ delivering in'. *(LA staff interviews)*

What have the barriers been and how have they been overcome?

LAs that have re-designed services recognised that this scale of change cannot be implemented quickly. It takes time to establish new processes and for staff to get used to new ways of working and, in some cases, to be upskilled to work in different ways. Loss of staff has meant a loss of skills and expertise that it is not easy to quickly re-gain.

LAs also recognised that although they have so far been successful in identifying new funding streams to enable delivery of the YEPF, these funding streams are likely to be reduced in future and so there will be a need to re-visit and identify new solutions in future. In some LAs, it was reported that collecting and using evidence of improved educational outcomes from youth activities will be key to the plan for making the business case for sustained funding in future.

Outcomes

As a consequence of the actions described, LAs reported that they have been able to make progress in their implementation of the YEPF without using additional funding. There was consensus that support for young people at risk of disengagement has improved since the launch of the YEPF and that this has been achieved without increased expenditure.