

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into Assisting Young People into Work](#)

Evidence from Wrexham County Borough Council – AYP 07

ASSESSING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK INQUIRY

WREXHAM'S RESPONSE

The Committee's Terms of Reference for the enquiry are:

What support is most effective and what are the main barriers that face young people trying to enter the labour market?

- *The range and variety of projects, programmes and support available can make it difficult to evaluate individual interventions so sometimes their contribution can be unclear.*
- *Some are effective - Jobs Growth Wales does appear to offer a positive route into full-time employment for some young people mainly those who are high achievers and are more likely to engage in employment without additional support.*
- *More evaluation needed around individual schemes (including the 3rd Sector) to allow comparisons between interventions to know what is working.*
- *Plenty of training, engagement and education opportunities available to 16- 18 year olds, however, there seems to be a lack of progression into real employment for 18+ young people.*
- *In order to have effective support into the labour market provision needs to be informed of the gaps in the labour market*

The main barriers facing young people entering the labour market;

- *Not being work ready – lack of 'soft skills'*
- *Lack of basic qualifications (literacy and numeracy skills)*
- *Young people who fall into the Career Wales Tier Model of Engagement – Tier2, multiple and significant barriers to employment (young people in custody, pregnancy, chronically ill, disabilities, young carers)*
- *Particular issues for young people who are LAC.*
- *Lack of information for young people about opportunities available in the labour market.*
- *Transport issues (cost, frequency and reliability)*

To what extent is the Welsh Government's strategy for young people who are not in EET effective and value for money?

- *In Wrexham the strategy itself has not been that useful as Wrexham was already working to reduce the number of NEET's as a main strategic objective.*
- *The funding has been valuable in supporting further development and the progress of work already identified.*
- *The Welsh Government's strategy currently seems to be aimed at 16-18 year olds and lacks any real focus on EET opportunities for 19-24 year old.*
- *The number of staff at a strategic level within WG is not reflected in the support at operational level within the LA.*

What progress has been made to date on the Youth Engagement and Progression Implementation Plan?

- *Progressing in line with the WG timescales.*

How effective is the strategic role of LA and other key stakeholders including Careers Wales, The Youth Service and the educational regional consortia?

- *Careers Wales could be useful but due to increasing cuts to their service they lack the capacity to provide the required support and information.*
- *The strategic role of the LA in supporting young people into employment is good through the many strategic groups including the NEET Project Management Group, 14-19 Network and the NEET Partnership Group.*
- *The Youth Service plays an important role by providing collaborative working partnerships with many other services and agencies which support young people into employment. Youth Worker support focuses on supporting unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds, known to Careers Wales, who are not yet available for education, employment or training (Tier 2) and those young people at risk of dropping out of education, employment or training (Tier 4). All youth workers, including detached youth workers, have an important role to play in helping identify those who are unknown to Careers Wales (Tier 1).*

How effective are the range of schemes, initiatives and projects aimed at supporting young people into work, for example: Jobs Growth Wales; apprenticeships; traineeships; other projects supported by ESF and third-sector run projects? Do they provide good value for money?

- *Some of the above initiatives do contribute to progressing young people into education (further and higher) and training but not necessarily into employment.*
- *There appears to be too much emphasis on young people returning to education (college, 6th Form), young people are often unaware of other options such as traineeships, apprenticeships and other routes into employment.*
- *As already mentioned Jobs Growth Wales does seem to have some success in progressing young people into employment albeit these young people do seem to be moderately high achievers.*
- *There needs to be more evaluation of the current schemes in order to assess value for money.*

The impact of the Welsh Government's prioritisation of support for young people aged 16-18; and the impact of this prioritisation on those aged 19-24;

- *The issue of gaps in provision for 19-24 year olds has regularly been raised by Wrexham and its partners since the start of the YEPF pilot in 2012.*
- *The impact is that here in Wrexham the NEET figures for 18+ increase significantly.*
- *Unreliability of data means that we are not able to produce a clear picture of unemployment at ages 19-24.*

Transport (especially in rural areas) what are the problems and what assistance can be provided?

- *Yes this is an issue especially across the more rural areas of Wrexham. The cost, frequency and reliability of public transport do significantly impact on young people accessing appropriate employment.*

- *Not necessarily just affecting those that want to travel across Wrexham for work but also further afield such as Chester where sometimes this could involve a number of different buses.*
- *Concessionary bus travel for young people aged 16-24 would help with affordability and assist young people into accessing appropriate employment.*

The need for softer-skills; e.g. effective interview and job applications skills; ready-for-work skills;

- *This has been raised very recently at strategic level as a gap in provision. Current provision is targeted at specific groups of young people (LAC, Youth Justice).*
- *There is a lack of this type of provision (Tier 2) for mainstream/generic young people who require some additional (not intensive) support to access employment.*

What can be done to assist the groups of young people who are more affected by barriers to re-entering the labour market, for example those with disability?

- *We are aware that Welsh Government under the YEPF has very recently submitted a bid to Big Lottery Fund for widening provision for young people with disabilities including mental health.*

The impact and value for money of European Funds?

- *Wrexham has been unable to access ESF funding to date due to being in a convergence area. We are currently looking at submitting a regional bid with other LA's across north wales.*

The social problems that prevent young people from finding work, and how to change culture and attitudes that entrench unemployment for many

- *Not something that Wrexham has done any research in.*