

Inquiry into assisting young people into work

Monmouthshire Response to the Committee's Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are:

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

Support needs to be consistent to ensure it is most effective. Young people like route. The Lead Worker role/function has improved effectiveness in Monmouthshire for 16 –24 years. Communication is the key being informal but not patronising. Young People continually being encouraged and challenged by their Lead Worker. Peer support is also very important.

The main barriers to employment for young people that we come across are:

- perceived barriers of uncertainty, can't do the job, fear of the unknown
- lack of experience
- references
- DBS
- transport

To what extent is the Welsh Government's strategy for young people who are not in education, employment or training effective and value for money?

The Welsh Government's Strategy for young people who are NEET is effective through the investment in the Apprenticeship, Traineeship and Jobs Growth Wales Scheme. The value of early intervention and the support that is available to young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. However the strategy does not address the gap between formal education and the labour market. This needs to address to ensure young people leave schools and colleges with the right skills and qualification to enter sectors of growth identified in local, regional and national Labour Market Intelligence.

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

I am not sure what progress has been made on a national basis, however I can reflect on this in our authority. Monmouthshire Post 16 Steering group has recognised the need for a task and finish group to look at Employability programmes available locally and regionally to young people to ensure there is no duplication and that programmes address young people's requirements to enter the labour market. The value of organisations co-delivering programmes has benefitted Monmouthshire and is evidenced in our plan. For example the Way into Work Programme funded through the DWP Young Peoples Flexible Support Fund co-delivered by the Youth Service and Monmouthshire Housing Association. The Pre-Engagement course Careers Wales and the Youth Service co-delivery in preparation for young people 16 – 18 years entering work based learning.

The role/function of the Lead Worker in Monmouthshire for 16 –18 years and 18 –24 years has enabled appropriate support and progression into employment to have place in Monmouthshire. Also the Lead Worker supporting young people with social and emotional problems which can be a barrier to work.

How effective is the strategic role of local authorities and other key stakeholders including the Careers Service, the Youth Service, and the education regional consortia?

MCC's Partnership manager is currently reviewing the structures of all groups and how they will be aligned to feed into the Single Integrated Plan. The Integrated Youth Offer group fulfils the statutory responsibility of youth support services on behalf of the LSB and will provide the strategic governance.

The Monmouthshire Post 16 Steering group; Monmouthshire Business, Employment and Skills Partnership, and the Local Area Network are the operational groups which are responsible for young people entering work. All groups are made up of key stakeholders (EAS, Careers, Education, YOS,

Youth Service, Training Providers and Employers) and provide intelligence and evidence towards the SIP.

The extent of discrimination and its impact on the recruitment of young people

One area of discrimination we have come across is young people who are not IT literate and are unable to access the Universal Job Match, therefore not having access to the same employment opportunities.

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 European funding; and third-sector-run projects? Do they provide good value for money?

Yes these initiatives and projects are value for money, from speaking to employers and young people Jobs Growth Wales, apprenticeships and traineeships is good value for money. Jobs Growth Wales is invaluable, removing a host of barriers and vacancies do not necessary ask for qualifications. Providing the first steps into the employment market.

However as a Local Authority we have not fully benefitted from the JGWs scheme due to the criteria and eligibility as a public organisation. Also due to budget constraints within our authority has met sustaining JGW posts has been challenging for some departments. Our authority has its own apprenticeship scheme an arm of this is Y Prentis a partnership with Melin Homes providing opportunities in the construction industry.

The youth service delivers the traineeship scheme in Monmouthshire as a subcontractor for Torfaen Training. This has enabled us to provide provision using a youth work methodological approach. Centred based provision is run through our youth centres. Work placement are sourced through local business, public and third sector

Issues that the Committee is considering as part of these terms of reference include:

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

The public transport in Monmouthshire is limited and expensive. Due to rurality it is sometimes not feasible to car share. The only assistance we can provide is re-imbursment of travel tickets

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 disabilities

Provision that provides a bespoke learning packages. Peer support needed by people in similar situations to themselves. Content to remain the same as every other provision but tailored in a slightly different way.

The extent to which employers require Welsh-language skills, and whether this requirement is perceived as a barrier by some young people

We have not come across this has a perceived barrier to employment.

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

A change in social attitudes, there is clearly a stigma from employers that young people with social problems do not wish to work. There needs to be a cultural change perhaps a scheme whereby young people could be introduced to employers to dispel this ideology and young people with social problems are seen as being proactive in engaging the employment opportunities.