

Welsh Government

Traineeships Policy Review Final Report

York Consulting, 2016

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1 MAIN REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 York Consulting was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake a Review of Traineeships in December 2014.
- 1.2 The activities undertaken as part of the review included: document review; early scoping interviews; attendance at relevant meetings; three Wales-wide stakeholder workshops; further interviews with stakeholders; and, additional data provided by Welsh Government and Careers Wales. [Section A]
- 1.3 This report consists of a main report which links to a series of sections, each of which provides more detailed insight. Direct references to sections are indicated in square brackets.

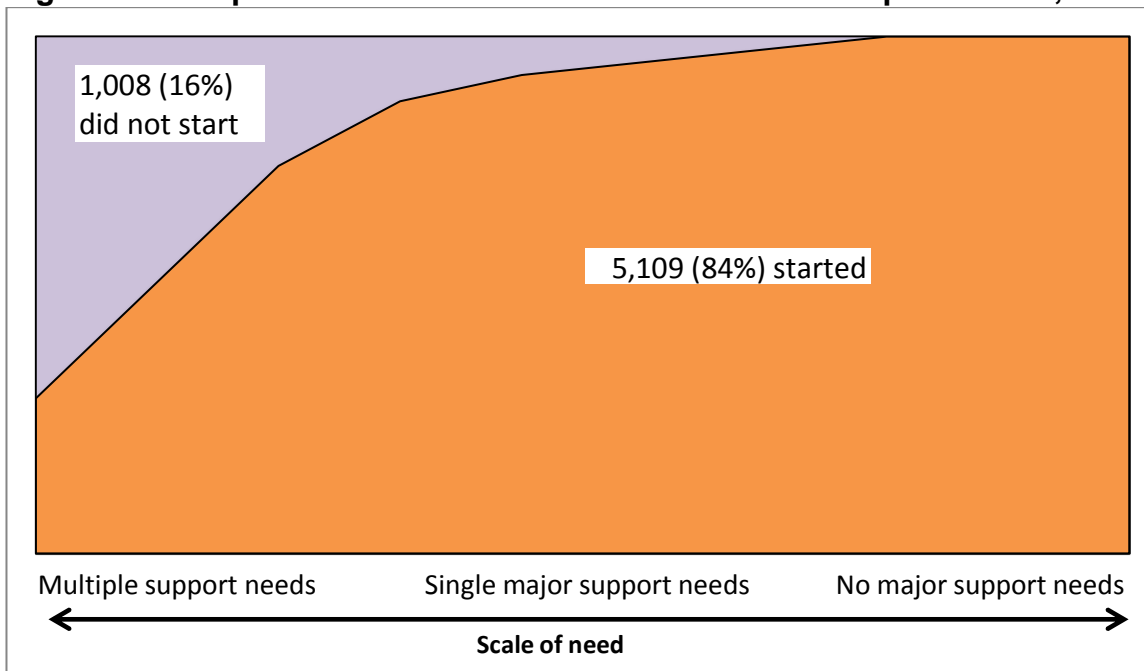
Key Findings

- 1.4 This review of Traineeships has considered how the current programme supports the intended client group for the programme and the extent to which there are areas for improvement or change.
- 1.5 The recent evaluation of Traineeships concluded that the programme was generally working for those clients that it currently supports, with some areas for improvement.
- 1.6 In this research we have explored:
 - **Potential clients** – young people who are in scope for support but who do not start a Traineeship and the extent to which the programme should support them.
 - **Programme operation** – how some elements of the programme could be improved.
 - **Alternative forms of support** – options as to how the current arrangements could change by reference to support in other countries.

Potential clients

- 1.7 A major finding of this review is that there is a sizeable minority (16 per cent) of young people, who are considered to be in scope for Traineeships but, who are currently not being supported. Figure 1.1 depicts this diagrammatically with the whole area representing all those referred by Careers Wales for a Traineeship in 2014-15 (these are mostly Engagement Traineeships although some Level 1 Traineeships are referred). The exact shape of the curve indicating the balance of those supported, by scale of need, is not known for certain, as data do not exist. However, evidence from discussions with providers, Career Wales and Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators indicates that this group that do not start a Traineeship are much more likely to have complex support needs. [Section C]

Figure 1.1: Proportion of all those referred to a Traineeship who start, 2014-15



Source: Careers Wales data, 2016

- 1.8 The reasons for referred young people not starting are not collected systematically. Evidence from stakeholders indicates a variety of reasons including young people changing their mind to do something different and providers not starting young people because they do not meet certain criteria (such as attending an agreed induction day or attending for a period prior to actual sign-up to the programme). Part of the purpose of induction days and pre-start periods, from the provider's point of view, is to assess how committed a young person is to engaging with the programme. From the provider's perspective there is a degree of logic in this approach as they are driven by a focus on positive outcomes. Providers feel they must exclude some young people who might cause problems with other participants (with a risk to the potential success of others) and for whom they feel they do not have the resource to support.
- 1.9 There is also evidence of some adapted behaviours in referral processes. As some Careers Wales advisors have recognised that some young people will not be started on a Traineeship, they have started to refer to different local programmes or to the local authority panel to identify appropriate support; some of this group might otherwise have been referred to a Traineeship. However, assessing numbers here is problematic.
- 1.10 Combining the group who are referred but do not start (accounting for some natural dropout) and the group who might have been referred to Traineeships we estimate that between 1,000 and 2,000 young people a year aged 16 and 17 could benefit from a Traineeship programme; but currently do not. Although they are likely to have the most complex needs and are likely to require more intensive support than other participants.
- 1.11 At this point there are a number of questions to consider: Why are providers not supporting these young people? What are the needs and characteristics of this group of young people? What happens to this group currently?

Why are providers not supporting some young people?

- 1.12 At this point it is very important to stress that the overwhelming evidence collected as part of this review shows that provider staff are very committed to the support of the young people that they work with. It is a challenging job, requiring passion, judgement and perseverance. Notwithstanding this each provider organisation has a management approach and philosophy that results in their delivery model.
- 1.13 The current funding model and the key outcome measures on which performance is measured, sets the context within which providers plan their business model. Without auditing providers' actual costs of delivery, assuming commercial confidentiality would allow this, then it is not possible to know precisely what resource allocation decisions that providers are making. However, evidence indicates that most providers operate a core 'programme' for the engagement phase, with different forms of flexibilities and additional resources for those participants that require it.
- 1.14 Participants typically have a tutor and access to a learning coach and/or pastoral support, plus staff who lead on different aspects of training ranging from essential skills to employability skills. Generally, participants work in groups of between eight and 16. Some degree of individual support is available but this is sometimes constrained by the responsibility of staff members to the whole group at any given time. Larger providers and colleges often have institution/organisation level systems used to support all learners such as counsellors and outreach staff who may be able to make contact if participants do not attend or face wider personal problems. However, the degree to which providers' business models have the flexibility to buy in specialist support for particular needs is less clear, for example, in relation to mental health or alcohol dependency.

- 1.15 The nature of the contract that providers have with the Welsh Government essentially states that the client groups are those identified by Careers Wales as being able to benefit from a Traineeship. This means that one, or a combination, of the following explains the reason for some young people not benefitting from the programme:
- i. Careers Wales advisers' judgements on referrals are incorrect and some young people are not ready for a Traineeship programme.
 - ii. Providers have misjudged their business models and are not allowing sufficient funding to provide the level of tailored support to those with the most complex needs and hence have developed strategies for not starting certain clients.
 - iii. The Welsh Government has not accounted for a material change, over recent years, in the challenges and support needs of the young people in scope; resulting in insufficient funding for the programme.
 - iv. There are aspects of the programme design which mean that it is not suited for those with more complex needs.
- 1.16 Each of these is dealt with in turn, while recognising that there are some interlinkages between these issues. Regarding (i), some providers did express concerns about the level of detail within Traineeships Referral Forms. One or two providers thought that young people were not suited to the programme as they felt that participants required a lower weekly engagement time (for less than 12 hours) at the beginning of the programme and/or required specialist, higher intensity provision. For example, those with offending histories and anger management issues. However, on balance this would not seem to be the dominant reason.

- 1.17 On point (ii) it is a fact that providers signed up to the contracts where the key criterion for entry to the Engagement element is that Careers Wales refer the young person [Section K]. Therefore, the first consideration is whether the Welsh Government should enforce the original referral in line with the contractual agreement. Although there has been some confusion about whether young people identified as Tier 2 should be referred, there is no explicit reference to Tier levels in the programme guidance documents. Therefore, providers should be accepting all those referred to the programme. The question is within the current arrangement how would Careers Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government enforce the original referral? There is no easy answer to this given current resource constraints at Careers Wales.
- 1.18 On point (iii) there are arguments from providers that young people have generally become more challenging to support, although there is no empirical evidence for this; mainly because it is difficult to collect such information reliably. There has been little change in the NEET rate over the past five years, but this does not tell us whether young people generally have more complex support needs now compared with five years ago.
- 1.19 Other agencies that provide support to a similar cohort of young people appear to have strategies and delivery models to support those with complex needs. The main differentiating characteristic of voluntary sector approaches appears to be based around a more individual form of support, with support workers having more freedom to tailor support to clients' needs. Another factor related to point (iv) is that some of these programmes have more flexibility on the hours of engagement with the programme. Having said this a pilot, by one private sector organisation in Swansea on subcontract to a Traineeship main contractor, has been able to generate good results with a more complex group of 24 young people, who would typically not be started on an Engagement Traineeship.

- 1.20 Without a more detailed exploration of actual costs faced by providers it is hard to determine whether programme funding is sufficient to support such individuals. A simple analysis of cost per participant on two programmes in Wales that support a similar client group (one that supported all age groups and one that supported 16-18 year old care leavers and those who have offended) puts the average Traineeship programme cost (c.£5,700) towards the higher end of the range between c.£1,100 and c.£7,600.
- 1.21 Finally on point (iv) a key element of the programme design, which generally is very flexible, relates to the level of intensity required at the start. Despite recent plans to extend the lower intensity period on the Engagement programme from four to eight weeks when the participant can attend for as few as 12 hours per week¹, Traineeship providers feel that some individuals are not ready to commit to this level of engagement.
- 1.22 Other programmes that support similar clients have more flexibility around the intensity of attendance and typically say some individuals can only manage around one to two part days for quite a few weeks to develop trust and confidence in provider staff. Having said this the pilot project, focusing on those with multiple support needs in Swansea, has managed to engage most young people with an intensive but varied timetable of activities.

What are the needs and characteristics of this group of young people?

- 1.23 The range of needs of the Traineeship client group, in particular those with multiple complex needs, is extensive and varied. Descriptions of the challenges faced by participants and case studies of those that have and have not been supported give testament to this range of needs.

¹ Although they need to be allocated home study projects equivalent in time to the difference between their agreed attendance requirements as specified on the Individual Learning Pathway Plan and 21 hours

1.24 In figure 1.2 we list a range of these needs but there will be others missing from this list. In many cases young people experience more than one area of support need which often compounds their situation. This means that some young people find it hard to function in groups initially and need to develop social skills relevant to work. It also important to recognise that we are talking about young people who are learning through experience, mistakes and wrong choices, which is a recognised characteristic of young people.

Figure 1.2: Support needs of potential clients

...related to Background related to life experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educational needs (SEN, including physical disability, ASD/Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, and those with no clear diagnosis after support at school) • Educated other than at school (EOTAS) • Gypsy travellers • Looked after children • Minority ethnic groups • Living in rural area • Welsh language speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage pregnancy/teenage parent • Mental health – risks of suicide, self-harm, self-neglect • Bereavement • Low confidence, self-esteem • Anger management • Young people who have offended • No stable accommodation (homeless, sofa surfing, left parental home) • Essential Skills / ESOL needs • Family issues (chaotic home life, fallen out with parents, low motivation) • Drug/alcohol dependency • At risk of abuse by others

Source: Evidence from consultations

What happens to this group currently?

1.25 Young people described above who do not start an Engagement Traineeship experience a range of provision or, in some cases, no provision at all [Section M]. Primarily we are talking about young people who are known to the local authority, Careers Wales and/or other services. Examples of support are through:

- Local authority youth support provision

- Local (often small voluntary sector) projects to support young people, for example, the Warehouse Project in Wrexham
- National projects (for example ESF funded) delivered at a local level (again often voluntary sector delivered), for example, Symyd Ymlaen / Moving On.

1.26 In some cases young people also pass through a number of different projects and programmes. In fact some of those who start but do not complete an Engagement Traineeship may find themselves accessing similar provision.

Programme operation

1.27 Programme delivery issues and examples of good practice have arisen in relation to: referral; initial assessment; additional learning support; learning activity; understanding the world of work; and, progression toward Apprenticeships.

Referral

1.28 An important challenge in receiving a referral is to know enough about a young person's situation in order to put in place the necessary level of support required. Providers felt that insufficient information was provided by Careers Wales to indicate all the challenges faced by a young person. One way to address this and potentially to improve the level of information about starting positions of young people would be to operate a more structured referral form that involved an indication of specific needs, challenges and risks in relation to a referred client. There would still be an open text box for more specific information but by collecting the key areas these could be recorded and compared with those identified by the provider (although this may have resource implications for Careers Wales that would need to be considered). This may require additional information to be collected through LLWR. [Section F]

Initial assessment

- 1.29 The process of initial assessment informs the development of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Currently WEST/BKSB² assessments (or similar) are undertaken to check a learner's essential skills level against progression towards ESW level 2. The process is generally regarded as working effectively. Some providers undertook early activities which helped them to assess a participant's ability to work in teams and communicate. Results of this then inform the ILP and the style of provision required to support them. [Section G]

Additional learning support

- 1.30 ALS is not generally being utilised effectively to support learners that need it, mainly because providers do not value the return on their investment in time to make a case. There is some confusion about when a client is eligible for ALS support which will need to be resolved. There are some specific recommendations for providers and the Welsh Government to consider in relation to ALS. [Section H]

Learning activity

- 1.31 There are some good examples of materials used to support learning for Traineeship participants. These are standardised but flexible for learners with different levels of need and are tailored to young people and concepts that are familiar to them. Providers make good use of technology and interactive techniques to support effective learning. [Section I]
- 1.32 In addition, providers use physical activities and motivational speakers to augment more formal learning.
- 1.33 Greater sharing and learning between Traineeship providers could be achieved through implementing plans agreed at the 2015 national conference.

² WEST Wales Essential Skills Toolkit; BKSB Initial Assessment Functional Skills English and maths

- 1.34 There has been acceptance by providers that they could do more to tailor provision to those with complex needs. However, there is no mechanism for collecting such data to know if this has been the case. An audit of randomly selected cases might be the only way to identify the specific support provided to a cross section or particular type of clients. However, even this would have limits unless it was undertaken in relation to current clients.

Understanding the world of work

- 1.35 There were good examples of providers developing young people's understanding of the world of work including visits to employers' premises, presentations by employers at a learning centre about the type of work they do and supporting young people to experience working in more than one occupational area. [Section I]

Progression towards Apprenticeships

- 1.36 Providers are not targeted to achieve progression on to an Apprenticeship over any other form of employment or higher learning outcome. There may be merit in having a clear target with an incentive for providers to move young people into an Apprenticeship outcome. This would be in line with Government policy and may encourage earlier discussion around an Apprenticeship outcome. At the same time it would make sense to capture the progression outcome to an Apprenticeship separately, as currently it is not isolated within the 'employment' outcome heading. [Section J]

Alternative forms of support

- 1.37 We discuss the alternative forms of support from two perspectives: different systems operating across the UK and the approach to supporting those with the most complex needs by other delivery agents in order to take advantage of their market expertise. This then results in a series of recommendations as to how the Welsh Government can plan the provision of support for young people. [Section N]

Different systems operating across the UK

- 1.38 The Scottish model of support is based at a local authority level, where councils bid into the national government for the volume of support they anticipate they will require for their young people. The funding is used to deliver two awards that have been developed by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The awards are delivered by providers and FE colleges. They are designed to prepare participants for the world of work and involve a placement with an employer which includes a training allowance. Local authorities linked to Skills Development Scotland identify young people and potential employers. The key differences to the Welsh model are that local authorities play a major role in operating the programme and contracting is undertaken by Skills Development Scotland a national organisation. A formative evaluation identified some learning from early implementation. One major concern was around providers focusing on delivering the certificate instead of focusing on outcomes such as employment for participants.
- 1.39 The elements in England and Scotland, equivalent to Welsh Traineeships Level 1, were more strongly focused on progression to employment (and in particular towards Apprenticeships).
- 1.40 The Northern Ireland model allows for vocational learning at levels 2 and 3 even if an Apprenticeship opportunity is not available.
- 1.41 In England the two elements of support are delivered by different types of providers; one focusing on initial engagement issues (Youth Contract) and the other on higher level engagement and work experience (Traineeships). The evaluation of the Youth Contract highlighted that a payment by results model, that aimed to incentivise sustainable outcomes through back-loaded provider payments, adversely affected up-front investment by providers and jeopardised successful outcomes for some young people.
- 1.42 The Northern Ireland (Skills for Life) and England (Youth Contract) programmes have elements that support those with the most complex needs, compared with the Welsh Traineeship Engagement phase.

1.43 The key observations for the Welsh Government from this review of other UK programmes are that:

- There needs to be a stronger focus on supporting those with the most complex needs.
- Possible options are to involve local authorities (tied to a national contracting agency as in Scotland) or operate a payment by results model as used in the Youth Contract in England.
- Developing a closer relationship between Level 1 and an Apprenticeship looks to be effective across the UK but there is limited evidence of actual impact yet.

Approach to supporting those with the most complex needs within the voluntary sector in Wales

1.44 Through use of ESF funding and other sources the WCVA and other voluntary sector bodies have developed programmes to support some of the young people with multiple support needs. However, these programmes are by definition temporal due to the uncertainties of future funding rounds. [Section M]

1.45 They also have an effect on related programmes such as Traineeships in both a positive way (providing support for those not covered by Traineeships) and in a competitive way by (supporting some clients who might have engaged on a Traineeship) and potentially in a duplicative way (with individuals cycling through the different forms of provision). The challenge is to design a national programme that has clear recognition of local programmes to match the support in an effective and efficient manner.

Conclusions

- 1.46 Generally, Traineeships is regarded as broadly fit for purpose by most providers and stakeholders consulted to date. The programme is satisfying a majority of participants and although performance data across England and Wales is not comparable there is some indication that performance is in line with a similar programme in England. However, there is evidence that Traineeships is not supporting an important minority of potential participants with complex needs effectively and may not be supporting some potential participants at all.
- 1.47 Essentially, providers are not sufficiently utilising the flexibilities designed into the programme to support such clients.
- 1.48 There are some frustrations regarding outcomes measures and how progression from the Traineeships programme is measured. These are relatively small changes that can make the system fairer for providers, such as the issue of neutral progression.
- 1.49 The Welsh Government should review their monitoring and assessment role in order to ensure they have a clear understanding about what delivery is taking place.
- 1.50 There is limited evidence of how many Traineeship participants progress on to Apprenticeships. The general feeling is that it is relatively low, but there is no clear data. The Bridge to Employment element of the programme is not working and could be adapted to make a more effective link to Apprenticeships.
- 1.51 The relationship between providers and Careers Wales is not working effectively. The source of this is a combination of culture, policy and resource. In terms of culture there are different philosophies in providers and in Careers Wales. The Welsh Government needs to ensure the position of Careers Wales as independent arbiters of the system is strengthened, or if not, then changed. The role of referral could lie with local authorities, but in practice is likely to utilise similar staff with IAG skills as those currently employed by Careers Wales.

- 1.52 There is evidence of confusion among young people and their parents but particularly employers about what Traineeships is about. There is some direct confusion with the Apprenticeship programme. There is also a lack of a clear understanding about the purpose of Traineeships compared with the way people's understanding of Apprenticeships has developed over the past 20 years. To some extent this is about sufficient time for a new programme to bed in, but it may also be about the clarity of the message. There continues to be a lack of promotion and communication of Traineeships (and Apprenticeships) within schools as an option at the end of Year 11.
- 1.53 There is a general view that the programme and its purpose is not well-understood by those who have not been involved including parents, young people and employers. Some believe it needs a clearer focus such as 'to help young people get a job' rather than overplaying the purpose of vocational learning. This is a delicate balance which if tilted too far the other way leads to accusations of exploitation and lack of investment in/progression of young people by employers.

Recommendations

- 1.54 The recommendations for consideration include:
- Consider the following combination of the options discussed: identify a way of indicating the level of support required by a young person (this could be a variation of the YEPF approach or looking at the numbers of support needs of an individual) to identify a clear category of need for young people. Continue to fund WBL providers to support those at Level 1 and at the higher end of the Engagement phase. Consider whether the unit costs would need to be lowered if there is a reduction in the level of need of the overall client base. Develop a model of support through local authorities (including a national co-ordination role) linked to voluntary sector providers to create a menu of provision (including existing and soon to be commissioned ESF provision) that includes a safety net programme from the Welsh Government to support those who do not find the necessary support. This could be piloted with a small number of local

authorities and would involve a limited fund for a fixed number of places to be used at their discretion to support individuals not supported by wider programmes. This should be about progressing a young person on to the Engagement phase of a Traineeship or other positive outcomes.

- Clarify the referral role (currently with Careers Wales) and enforce referrals that are made or change the way that referrals are made onto the Traineeships programme. [Section L]
- Implement specific additional learner support recommendations. [Section H]
- Introduce a payment incentive for progression onto an Apprenticeship. [Section J]
- Put in place a system to monitor the characteristics of those referred for a Traineeship and the Apprenticeship outcomes of Level 1 learners who progress. [Section F]

2 DETAILED RESEARCH

- 2.1 This section of the report highlights evidence around key areas of investigation as part of the review.
- 2.2 The following areas were identified as important as part of the original approach or became more relevant as the review process unfolded:
- (A) Objectives and methodology
 - (B) Policy and programme design
 - (C) Programme performance
 - (D) Traineeship client group
 - (E) Evaluation report key findings
 - (F) Programme delivery - eligibility/referral
 - (G) Programme delivery - initial assessment and essential skills
 - (H) Programme delivery - additional learning support (ALS)
 - (I) Programme delivery - other delivery issues
 - (J) Programme delivery - level 1 specific issues
 - (K) Funding model
 - (L) Relationships between key stakeholders
 - (M) Other provision available for similar client group
 - (N) Similar programmes elsewhere in the UK

(A) Objectives and methodology

2.3 York Consulting was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake a Review of Traineeships in December 2014.

Purpose of the Review

2.4 The review of the Traineeships programme aims to address three key questions:

- What is currently being delivered under the programme in practice?
- What are the issues associated with the current structure and delivery?
- How should the programme best be structured to fully meet the needs of the target group?

2.5 The requirements of this research include:

- Undertaking desk research to ascertain what approaches other nations are using to target learners who are not yet ready to move into employment or learning at a higher level. A synopsis of the different approaches and a brief analysis of the positives and negatives of each approach.
- Consideration of Traineeships in light of other Tier 2 type provision currently available. It is vital that the Traineeships programme is not considered in isolation (The Careers Wales five tier model of engagement for post 16 places each young person to one of five tiers. Tier 2 refers to young people aged 16 and 17 who are known to Careers Wales but not available for Education, Employment or Training). It is important that we consider whether Traineeships is meeting the needs of the intended cohort of learner, or are these individuals being referred to other engagement programmes? The flexibility of the Traineeships programme aims to ensure that it can cater for all learners;

- for those who just require a small amount of additional training or support in order to move into employment or learning at a higher level;
 - to those learners who have significant barriers and require intensive support and development.
- Considering if the Traineeships programme is being used in practice for those learners with significant barriers, or are other engagement/pre-engagement programmes being used.
 - Local authorities have undertaken a mapping exercise of all provision available in their area which will be made available for this research. We need to ascertain whether the Traineeships programme is fit for purpose and whether it truly meets the needs of a broad cohort of young people; from those at one end of the spectrum with significant barriers/issues, to those who only require a small amount of additional support and/or development to help them decide on an appropriate occupational focus.
 - Ultimately, by understanding how the programme is operating in practice, it will establish how best to structure provision going forward. Can the Traineeships programme really meet the individual requirements of these types of learners which represent such a large, complex and diverse spectrum of needs? Or, do we need to split the programme into two separate programmes - one for those young people who require a more intensive level of support and one for learners who are much closer to moving into employment/further learning or training.
 - To engage with an additional range of stakeholders to those currently under scope of the Work-Based Learning evaluation. These stakeholders include; Engagement and Progression Coordinators (EPC's), Local Authorities, National Training Federation of Wales (NTfW), Youth Service, Communities First, Families First etc. In addition, engagement will be required with relevant stakeholders as identified through the local authority provision maps.

- To attend and feed into an internal Task and Finish group that has been set up to guide and steer this evaluation. An ongoing and active feedback process will therefore be required to feed into this review. Engagement with internal colleagues at the Task and Finish group and with relevant policy teams, provider performance and contract management teams may also be required as part of this research proposal.

2.6 The research must build on the evaluation carried out under the Work-Based Learning review and further unpick the issues in relation to the Traineeships programme. This requires more focus on the structure of the programme, for example, an understanding of the funding attached to the programme, progression targets, qualifications and accreditations undertaken. This will allow the fundamental questions to be explored, in terms of whether the programme is structured in a way which allows providers to best meet the needs of the target group of learners and its focus upon individual learners' needs.

2.7 All of the above research will provide an evidence base, including the production of a report outlining a range of options and recommendations, which will allow us to inform future delivery and to make considered changes to the programme.

Approach to the Review

2.8 The review has involved the following elements:

- Review of key documents [January 2015 - February 2015].
- Early interviews with WG policy staff, providers and Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators (EPC) [January 2015 - April 2015].
- Attendance at relevant meetings: teleconference with Careers Wales and Welsh Government on 15 May 2015; meeting with Welsh Government on 15 January 2016; NTFW conference on 6 March 2015; NTFW Network meeting on 21 April 2015 and 17 November 2015; Welsh Government

policy meeting on 7 August 2015; Task and Finish Groups Meetings: 06/02/2015, 07/09/2015, 11/11/2015.

- Three workshops with Traineeships providers, Careers Wales staff and EPCs facilitated by York Consulting and observed by Welsh Government policy staff (South East and Central South Wales: 19 June 2015, Bedwas; Mid and West Wales: 22 June 2015, Swansea; and, North Wales: 29 June 2015, Llandudno).
- Further interviews with EPCs, providers and wider stakeholders. [May 2015 - January 2016].
- Additional data provided by Welsh Government and Careers Wales.

(B) Policy and programme design

Policy Context

- 2.9 The UK has a history of supporting Work-Based Learning programmes for young people such as the youth unemployment programmes of the 1980s leading up to the Welsh Skill Build programme of the 2000s (Wiseman, 2014). In addition, there has been increased recognition of the value of work experience alongside skills development to help create work-ready individuals (Webb 2007).
- 2.10 The expectation that employers should take greater responsibility, through investment in and development of young people, has been an increasing feature of government policy.
- 2.11 Feedback from providers, employers, Estyn, Welsh Government policy officials and contract managers in late 2013 indicated that the Traineeships programme had not been utilised to its full potential, and in reality had not offered a truly new and innovative response to the individual needs of those in the eligible learner group (Turner, 2014).
- 2.12 As the new round of funding commenced on 1 April 2015, known as WBL4, a number of more recent developments have taken place. These may have addressed some of these criticisms, such as new contracting consortia, improved networking of providers (through an emphasised role of the National Training Foundation for Wales) and national marketing.
- 2.13 The establishment of Traineeships as the successor to Skill Build aimed to create a very broad programme specification, providing an opportunity for innovative providers to develop new approaches to meet the needs of 16-18 year olds facing barriers to further learning or employment.
- 2.14 The Business Plan stated that up to 12,120 young people could be supported by Traineeships annually.
- 2.15 Traineeship annual delivery expenditure has been between £20 million and £24 million over the first full three year period.

- 2.16 The delivery of WBL 2011-15 was undertaken through three models of contracting: delivery consortia; lead contractors with sub-contractors; and, lead contractors with no sub-contractors.
- 2.17 During 2011-15 there were six delivery consortia and 18 lead contractors, with minimum contract values of £650,000 for Traineeships. Approximately 120 consortia members and sub-contractors were involved in delivering the WBL programme. In the previous WBL (2007-11) programme, the Welsh Government held contracts with 64 providers, with a minimum contract value of £99,000.
- 2.18 Generally providers felt that the consortia approach adopted in 2011 had worked well during and was an improvement on previous approaches. Providers were critical of the largely electronic processes, although the Welsh Government has tried to address this with more effective communication

Traineeships Policy

- 2.19 The term 'Traineeship' was first used by the Welsh Assembly Government in the brand 'National Traineeship' which supported level 2 learning. This subsequently became the Foundation Apprenticeship as the Apprenticeship brand and supporting policy developments evolved.
- 2.20 The term was re-introduced in its current form when the Skill Build programme ended in 2011. Particular criticisms of Skill Build which Traineeships sought to address included:

“Skill Build had not achieved wide recognition by employers and had little brand value amongst participants, being widely associated with failure. It was described as being too frequently part of the ‘revolving door’ phenomenon in which people went through cycles of unemployment, short periods of insecure employment, and participation in skills programmes without ending up in a reasonable job which lasts.” (Wiseman, 2014)

2.21 The primary objective of Traineeships is very clear from the programme specification:

“... to equip young people with the skills, qualifications and experience to enable them to progress at the earliest opportunity to learning at a higher level or to employment.”³

2.22 Furthermore, Traineeships were planned to have “clearly defined stages within them aimed much more clearly at progression towards employment and are more flexible as to the volume of skills development they supply. Whereas Skill Build had become known (not entirely accurately) as a ‘13 week programme’, Traineeships will not have a fixed schedule for all individuals but will supply the level of input which individuals need to become work-ready. It is not intended that the programme should be restricted to low-ability individuals and will be equally available to, say, young people with A/S level qualifications but who have dropped out of college or school” (Wiseman, 2014)

2.23 Traineeships was defined as a non-employed status training programme for 16-18 year olds not otherwise engaged in post-16 education or employment and has been available since 1 August 2011 as a successor programme to Skill Build. The Traineeships programme supports young people to gain sustained employment by helping them with their confidence and motivation, and looks to address barriers to learning – all of which may prevent a young person moving into employment or learning at a higher level. The programme sought to improve skills levels through the delivery of entry level qualifications up to NVQs Level 1 in their chosen occupational area. This includes the delivery of Essential Skills qualifications to enhance their learning experience.

³ Welsh Government, Programme Specification for Apprenticeship, traineeships, work ready and steps to employment programmes 2011-2015

- 2.24 In addition, young people would also receive work experience and the support and help they need to learn at a pace suitable to them. This could sometimes be with a dedicated employer or through a simulated work environment, depending on the level of support the young person requires.
- 2.25 Young people on Traineeships had direct access to apply for any Jobs Growth Wales (JGW) opportunity as a progression, or progress into an Apprenticeship opportunity, as part of a seamless routeway into employment or further learning at a higher level.
- 2.26 The Traineeship programme was developed with the aim of creating a very broad programme specification, providing an opportunity for innovative providers to develop new approaches to meet the complex and diverse needs of a cohort of 16-18 year olds.

Key Components of Traineeships

- 2.27 A summary of the three strands comes from the Traineeships Business Plan (2012):
- Engagement – for participants assessed as needing to address a barrier(s) to further learning or employment and/or needing to confirm or contextualise an occupational focus prior to entering further learning or employment. Learners must attend learning for 12 – 21 hours in any five day period (less than 21 hours in first four weeks). Learners are paid a non-means tested allowance of £30 per week; pro rata to attendance (providers can agree additional support costs such as travel/childcare).
 - Level 1 Traineeship – for participants assessed as being occupationally focused and able to follow a programme of study at Level 1. Learning delivery addresses identified learning barrier(s) that prevent the learner from progressing into vocational or other learning at level 1 or specified level 2 (excludes competency based NVQ training) or entering employment. Learners must attend learning for 30 – 40 hours in any seven day period. Learners are paid a non-means tested allowance of £50 per

week; pro rata to attendance (providers can agree additional support costs such as travel/childcare).

- Bridge to Employment – this strand is for learners who have achieved a level 1 and are eligible and are unable to progress to an alternative level 2 learning option (e.g. awaiting the start of a college course). Learners must attend learning for 30 – 40 hours in any seven day period. Learners are paid a non-means tested allowance of £50 per week; pro rata to attendance (providers can agree additional support costs such as travel/childcare).

2.28 Traineeships are an element of the WBL programme and are part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The Priority 1 Theme 2 of the ESF Structure Funds Programme in Wales focuses on “raising the aspirations of those at school and supporting those aged 16-19 to raise their **skill levels and avoid disadvantage and NEET status**”⁴. The focus of the project is “on young people aged 16-18 years who are **at risk of underachieving in education or training**. Some of these people will undoubtedly be at risk of becoming NEET, but this project does not seek to specifically target only that group. The target group includes **young people who need help and support to re-engage or remain in learning or training** in order to raise their level of achievement...”.

⁴ WEFO, Traineeships Business Plan, 2012

2.29 While there are detailed eligibility criteria in the Programme Specification⁵ for young people to start on the programme, Careers Wales' referral is a critical factor especially for the Engagement phase, where an individual is referred (using a Traineeship Referral Form) then they are eligible to start. An area of confusion has evolved as the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework was published after the Traineeships Project Business Plan and there is no overt reference to Tier levels in any Traineeships guidance. Individuals identified as Tier 2 are the responsibility of the local authority (through a Youth Service lead worker). The intention was that they would be eligible for the Traineeships programme but require intensive additional support.

Best practice to support young people

2.30 Research⁶ in England has established that the following types of support increase the chances of a programme effectively helping young people to prepare for Apprenticeships and other jobs:

- One-to-one personalised support so that young people can, for example, access mentoring or careers guidance that is individualised to their needs.
- Short, interactive vocational courses that are practical, applied in nature and offer technical skills and where the learning environment is as realistic to the world of work as possible.
- Numeracy and literacy skills that are, wherever possible, applied to the practical areas of interest to the young people.
- Employability skills so that young people can develop an understanding of, and enhancement of, the skills employers want young people to have (such as problem-solving and team-working skills).

⁵ WG, Programme Specification for Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Work Ready and Steps to Employment programmes, 2011-15

⁶ <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/99926/99926.pdf>

- Life skills such as how to apply for a job, what to wear for an interview and how to present oneself in an interview.
- Interaction with employers either through, for example, work experience or through employers' involvement in project work.
- Careers education programmes to develop young people's self-awareness of, for example, their strengths and areas in need of development.
- Impartial one-to-one careers guidance to enable young people to understand the options open to them and how they can access them.

2.31 The researchers concluded that:

“... when these elements are in place young people's confidence, aspirations and motivation to further develop their skills and progress into employment are enhanced.”

2.32 In broad terms it is clear that the Welsh Government Traineeship programme aims to provide all of these elements as part of the current programme.

Youth Engagement Policy

2.33 The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (Welsh Government, 2013a) followed on from Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales (2000) and the subsequent guidance on Extending Entitlement: Services and Support for 11–25 Year Olds in Wales (2002) and set out a number of policy ambitions:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement.
- Better brokerage and coordination of support.
- Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system.
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people.
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment.

- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

2.34 The intention was that these ambitions would be supported by the allocation of single point of contact (a lead worker) to the most at-risk young people *“to help ensure that support is delivered in a joined up and coordinated way and that works to meet their needs”* and through the development of a proactive and positive Youth Guarantee that *“will help to ensure that every young person has access to a suitable place in learning post-16”*.

2.35 The ambition was that lead workers would provide continuity through the transition which young people make at age 16. With lead workers supporting through the first three months of their time in post-16 education and training, except where the lead worker was a learning coach. At this point young people would be re-assessed as part of the Five Tier Model and a decision reached on whether the support from a lead worker should continue or not:

Recent Changes

2.36 The following changes were made in March 2015, following guidance from WEFO linked to EU requirements:

- Change to period for outcome measurement from 13 weeks to 4 weeks following the end of the programme: “[DfES] are making significant changes to the DfES performance measure for measuring the destination of learners leaving the Traineeship programmes. We are aligning with WEFO requirements and therefore moving from measuring the destination of the learner within three months of leaving the programme, to measuring the immediate destination of the learner i.e. within four weeks of leaving. This decision has been made as it would have been both confusing and bureaucratic for providers to request that they record and evidence outcomes which met both DfES and WEFO sets of requirements.”⁷

⁷ AskWBL email 16 March 2015: Ref 1415-FED-PS3-WBL072 - Performance Measure Traineeships Destinations

- Change to the suspension period: “As from 1 April 2015, providers are no longer able to suspend Traineeship learners. This change will apply to both new and continuing learners. Providers are reminded that they may approve pre-authorised absence of up to 15 consecutive working days (para L2 of the WBL Programme Specification refers) and it is anticipated that this flexibility will provide a sufficient timeframe for providers to re-engage learners. However, where this re-engagement process proves unsuccessful and the learner is absent for more than 15 consecutive working days, the learner should be terminated.”⁸

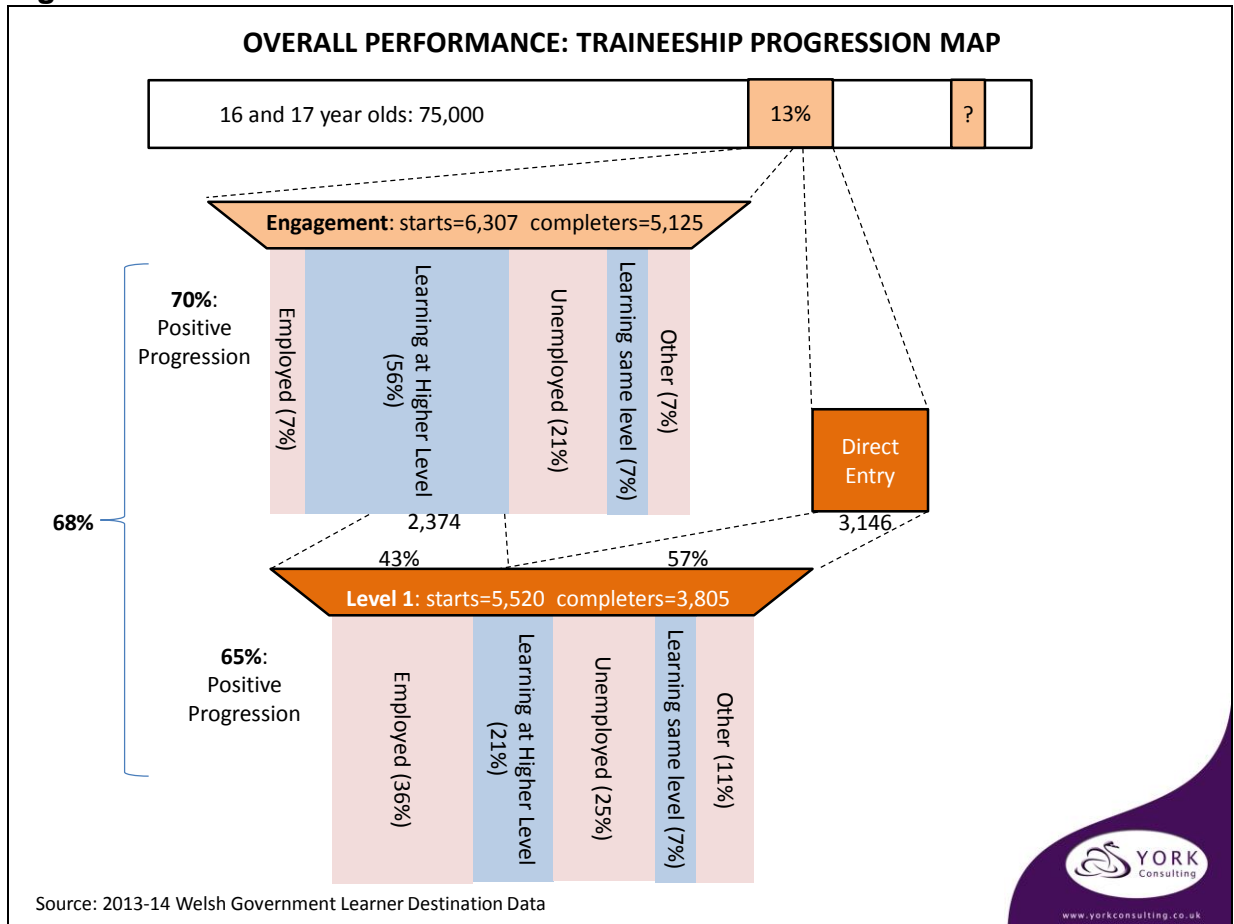
⁸ AskWBL email 19 March 2015: Ref 1415-FED-PS3-WBL078 - Traineeship learners on suspension

(C) Programme performance

- 2.37 To July 2014, over 27,000 young people had participated in the Traineeship Programme.
- 2.38 Performance in the first year of operation (2011-12), in terms of positive progression three months after completion, was classed as 'adequate' at 63 per cent. This was regarded as being linked to the bedding in of a new programme and delayed effects of the recession.
- 2.39 Performance improved in the second year 2012-13, with increased volumes and improved outcomes; reaching 67 per cent progression, closer to being classed as 'good'. Although data between England and Wales is not directly comparable, there is an indication that this is in line with the performance of a similar programme operating in England. The most recent data for 2013-14 in England indicates overall performance of 68 per cent progression.
- 2.40 Below the headline performance figure, it is important to explore the performance of each element of the Traineeship programme: in 2013-14 these were Engagement (70 per cent) and Level 1 (65 per cent). It is important to recognise that 43 per cent of those progressing from the Engagement element move on to a Level 1.
- 2.41 In 2013-14, around 6,300⁹ young people started an Engagement Traineeship, with 5,520 young people starting a Level 1.
- 2.42 Figure 2.1, drawing on 2013-14 data, indicates that around 13 per cent of the cohort of 16 and 17 year olds take up a Traineeship.

⁹ Welsh Government data provided by policy team

Figure 2.1



2.43 There are a number of unknowns:

- How many people are referred to Traineeships but do not start? This is indicated by the question mark in the diagram in the top box. We explore the answer to this question below.
- What proportion of the Level 1 participants that progress into employment go into Apprenticeships? This information is not readily available as an Apprenticeship outcome is not isolated for the achievement of employment.

- 2.44 Performance against other sub-targets was mixed. The overall numbers of participants targeted were achieved for female participation (45 per cent, surpassing the target of 42 per cent) and gaining employment (26 per cent compared with a target of 21 per cent). Performance was below target for other ESF progression targets such as gaining qualifications (36 per cent compared with a target of 61 per cent) and entering further learning (14 per cent compared with a target of 18 per cent).
- 2.45 Similar data available for the English Traineeships programme¹⁰ (which is more comparable to Level 1) indicated that, based on a survey covering participants between 2013 and 2015, *“trainees who had left or completed the traineeship were either on an Apprenticeship (22 per cent) or in work (28 per cent). A further 17 per cent were in training or education.”* This gives a total figure of 50 per cent in employment. No official management information rates are available; latest programme data for 2014-15¹¹ specifically instructs that a rate should not to be calculated from the data.
- 2.46 Other demographic characteristics of Welsh Traineeships included: over one in eight (14 per cent) participants indicated a disability and/or learning difficulty; 96 per cent of participants were white with just under 4 per cent being minority ethnic groups; in terms of language 7 per cent were fluent Welsh speakers, 7 per cent said they were Welsh speakers but not fluent and 85 per cent said they were not Welsh speakers.
- 2.47 Engagement participants’ average period on the programme was 16 weeks¹², for Level 1 this was 35 weeks. This suggests an average participant who is involved in the Engagement and Level 1 strands, is on the programme for about one year.

¹⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412424/bis-15-189-traineeships-first-year-process-evaluation.pdf

¹¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468833/SFR_commentary_October_2015_ofqual_update.pdf

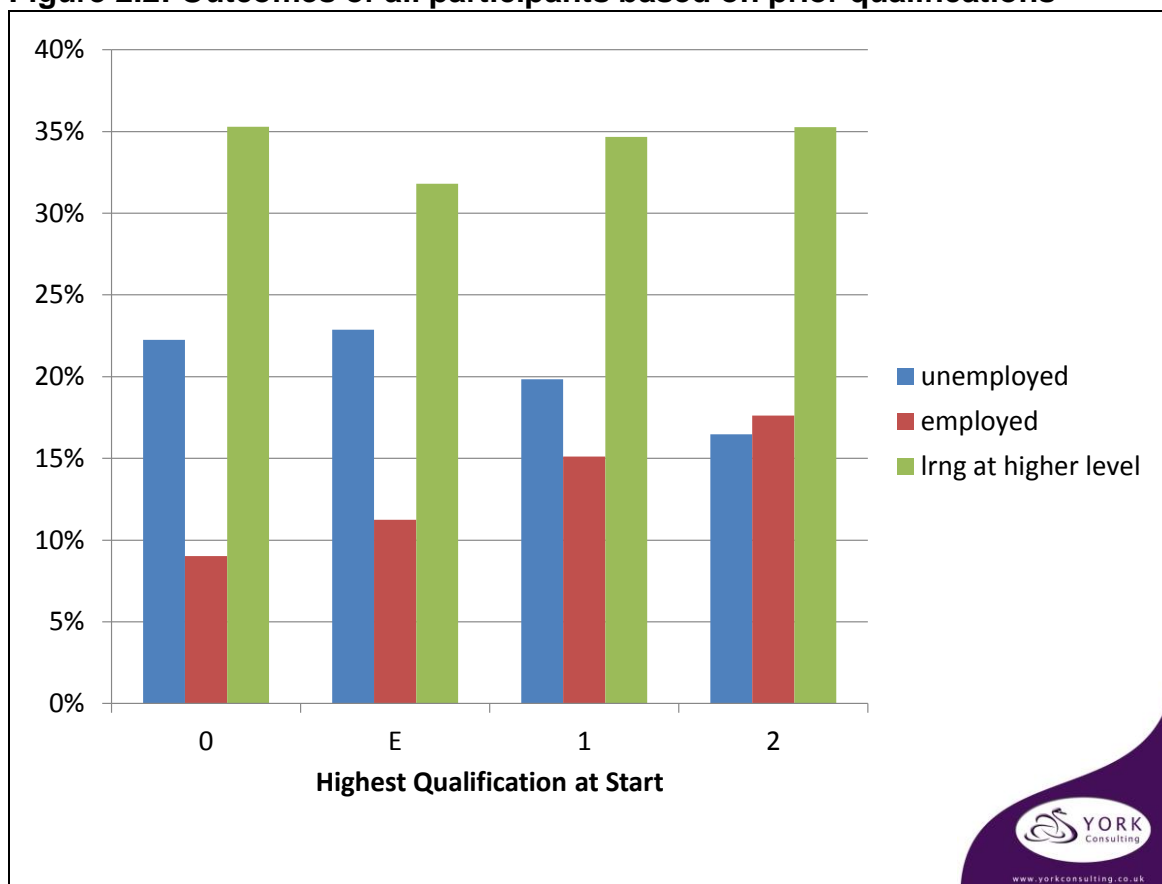
¹² Data from WG Policy staff, 2013-14

Which participants are most likely to progress?

2.48 The only variable available within LLWR which can help to isolate individuals that we might imagine are less likely to progress is level of prior qualification.

2.49 Analysis of this data (Figure 2.2) indicates that those with no qualifications or entry qualifications at the start are twice as likely to be unemployed than employed on completion.

Figure 2.2: Outcomes of all participants based on prior qualifications

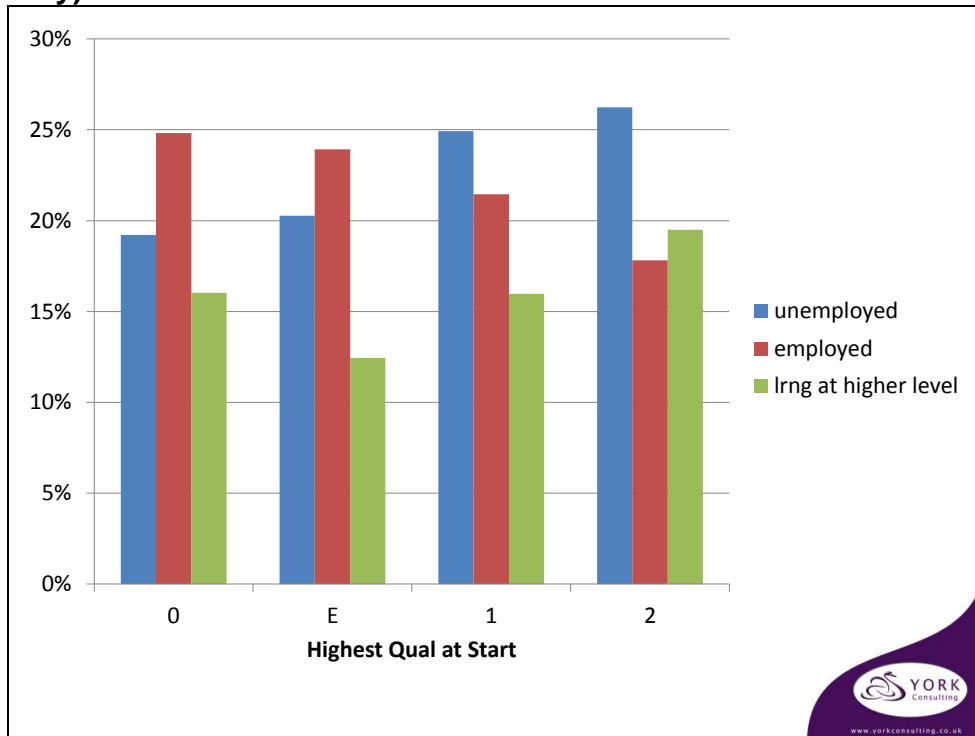


Source: LLWR data 2011-14; all Traineeships

Note: 0=no prior qualifications; E=entry level qualification; 1=Level 1 qualification; 2=Level 2 qualification. Outcomes do not sum to 100% as other outcomes include: still on programme and other outcomes.

2.50 This pattern holds for Engagement learners (Figure 2.4), although when we isolate Level 1 we can see that those with higher qualifications at the start are more likely to be unemployed at the end and those with lower qualifications at the start are more likely to be employed at the end (Figure 2.3).

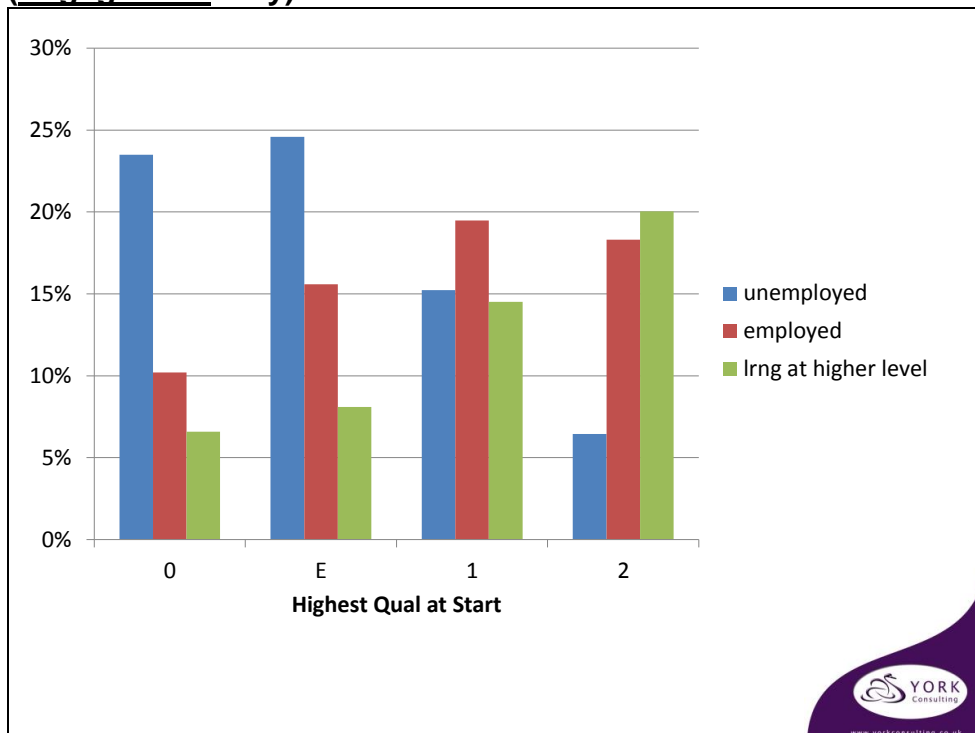
Figure 2.3: Outcomes of participants based on prior qualifications (Level 1 only)



Source: LLWR data 2011-14; Level 1 Traineeships

Note: 0=no prior qualifications; E=entry level qualification; 1=Level 1 qualification; 2=Level 2 qualification. Outcomes do not sum to 100% as other outcomes include: still on programme and other outcomes.

Figure 2.4: Outcomes of participants based on prior qualifications (Engagement only)



Source: LLWR data 2011-14; Engagement Traineeships

Note: 0=no prior qualifications; E=entry level qualification; 1=Level 1 qualification; 2=Level 2 qualification. Outcomes do not sum to 100% as other outcomes include: still on programme and other outcomes.

How many young people are referred but do not start a Traineeship?

- 2.51 The following table highlights that in 2014-15 around 16 per cent, or just over 1,000 of those referred to a Traineeship, did not actually start (Table 2.1). This effect is most significant for those on an Engagement Traineeship accounting for 938 participants who do not start the programme after a referral.
- 2.52 Data for 2013-14 and 2012-13 indicates that this situation has been the same over the last three years.

Table 2.1: Subsequent status changes by gender¹³, 2014-15

Strand / Provider	Referrals	Beneficiaries
Traineeship - Engagement	5,689	4,751
Female	2,432	2,068
Male	3,257	2,683
Traineeship - Level 1	428	358
Female	203	170
Male	225	188
Total	6,117	5,109

Source: Careers Wales data

- 2.53 When we look at this data by provider¹⁴, the proportions that do not start following a referral, ranges from as high as 43 per cent, of those that actually start an Engagement Traineeship, for some provider locations. Other provider locations start all those that are referred to them.

¹³ This data is compiled by looking for corresponding changes in a client's status following the completion of the Traineeship Referral Form. We look at changes after one month (calculated from the date of completion of the form). Note that status changes outside the reporting window (i.e. after 31/03/2015) will still be detected. Note that clients with more than one TRF will potentially be counted more than once.

¹⁴ for providers with more than 10 participants

- 2.54 The reasons for referred young people not starting are not collected systematically. Evidence from stakeholders indicates a variety of reasons including young people changing their mind to do something different and providers not starting young people because they do not meet certain criteria (such as attending an agreed induction day or attending for a period prior to actual sign-up to the programme). Part of the purpose of induction days and pre-start periods, from the provider's point of view, is to assess how committed a young person is to engaging with the programme. From the provider's perspective there is a degree of logic in this approach as they are driven by a focus on positive outcomes. Providers feel they must exclude some young people who might cause problems with other participants (with a risk to the potential success of others) and for whom they feel they do not have the resource to support. However, this runs counter to providing flexible, adaptable provision.
- 2.55 Some case examples, linked to youth offenders, highlight where young people do not appear to have received a fair opportunity to engage with the programme.

Case Study A:

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) raised concerns with Careers Wales regarding a training provider.

A client was due to start with the provider but when he arrived they didn't seem to know who he was and it was as if they weren't expecting him. The YOS then received a telephone call from the provider to say the client didn't need to attend again. No reason was given for this decision.

Careers Wales responded that they were not surprised, *"I thought I was referring in an organisation that was flexible to the needs of young offenders, would be non-judgmental and effective."*

"I am fed up of training providers talking the talk at policy and Welsh Government level but when it comes to the practicalities of dealing with our client group, they either avoid them like the plague or refer them to a 'one size fits all' provision."

Subsequently the YOS met with the provider who said they would work closer with the YOS to sort the issues. This remains an ongoing issue.

2.56 The following example highlights the complexity of a case but also how the balance between a staff members' desire to support can be constrained by a management decision which appears not to offer the level of flexibility that was originally envisaged as part of the programme.

Case Study B:

The client was a sexual offender (SO). The Youth Offending Service (YOS) contacted a local training provider in the first instance. The client was given an interview and was told he was not trustworthy due to the nature of the crime and would therefore not be able to be put out on placement and also 'how could he be trusted in centre'. Rather than considering whether the client's needs could be met – he was dismissed out of hand.

The YOS then approached another provider who said they were happy to work with clients out of centre and said they had no issues of working with a sex offender and arranged an interview date. However, following full disclosure the YOS received the following response:

"I have discussed with my Director and they have expressed a major concern over the severity and the nature of the disclosure surrounding the client. It is with great regret that at this present time we would be unable to accept the client as one of our learners as we have a high volume of vulnerable youths on board and it is our utmost priority to safeguard each and every one of our learners."

"As you are aware we deliver a work based learning contract and part of the contract is to ensure learners gain the experience from a work placement. As we have a legal obligation to disclose information of this nature to employers making it somewhat impossible to place the client into the work environment."

The provider was asked to explain why the client was turned down when they were already aware of the area of his offending, they had confirmed there were no under 16s on site and that it would be possible to place him with an employer. The YOS asked them to reconsider their decision explaining that many of the YOS clients needed 'bespoke' training opportunities and a provider that could do this with the right risk assessments. It was explained by the YOS that this would be an on-going issue with more SOs requiring ETE and a right to be able to engage in training as long as the situation was managed. The training providers response was

"We have discussed at lengths with the safeguarding department and management and I feel we have to delay a possible start for the learner until his level of monitoring is reduced in the future, as we are a mainstream training provider and it is sometimes unfeasible for us to offer the one to one monitoring that this particular learner would require, especially during breaks as well as during learning. Maintaining his confidentiality will also be difficult with having regular visits from the police to check phones, computers etc, we can't guarantee the potential learner won't get access to other learners mobiles and even if we allocate him a designated PC there is no way we could be 100% sure he wouldn't use other computers in centre and others use

his.”

“We have a ‘duty of care’ to all our learners and while we operate under equal opportunities and diversity and would like to help all learners access to learning, our centres and staffing do not allow for this.”

“We run work based learning so is it really fair on the person to have police regularly checking up on him in training and therefore potentially in the work place. It might be better for him to wait until the need for the high level of monitoring ends. Could you let me know when his level of monitoring would be reduced and hopefully we can offer a place for him.”

The YOS raised concerns that the provider had not understood the situation in regard to monitoring, as it is not the police that undertake that role but YOS and it is unlikely even with the level of supervision that the client requires that it would be that obvious that this was taking place especially if he was in training. They were unable to comment on the phone or computer aspect as they were not involved in the meeting when disclosure was made. The YOS felt strongly that the provider had somewhat over egged the situation in order to justify their response to his potential placement.

- 2.57 The YOS generally feel that while the Traineeship engagement provision does offer good opportunities to ‘work ready’ young people, unfortunately other young people with low academic ability and low confidence/classroom anxiety, can find themselves either, stuck in a classroom or drop out of the programme feeling they will not benefit from this support and feeling more and more anxious.
- 2.58 The YOS feel that a number of young people who they deem to be ‘work ready’, are not considered to be so by training providers; they are thus being marginalised. One young person in particular had massive anxieties about classroom situations and would not enter a classroom. However, when he has been on work placement, the mentor/boss reported him as being *“one of the best workers he has ever had”*. So the YOS feels this shows that this young person is ‘work ready’.

(D) Traineeship client group

Demographics

2.59 The cohort of 16 and 17 year olds in Wales amounts to just under 75,000¹⁵ individuals. Many of these will be studying A levels and other further education courses. Just over 12,000 individuals enrolled on Traineeships in 2013-14, with 8,930 leavers identified. Just under 2,000 individuals were regarded as being NEET in the 2014 Careers Wales destinations survey¹⁶, with around 500 not responding (Table 2.2). Many of these 2,500 individuals would be the potential client group of Traineeships, plus others who moved directly into Traineeships after school, plus others who drop out of an initial destination of FE learning and sixth form.

Table 2.2: Careers Wales destinations data, 2014

	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Able to find EET	786	262	-	-
Unable to find EET	254	58	-	-
All NEET	1040	320	634	1994
No response	209	123	169	501

Careers Wales destinations survey, 2014

2.60 It is hard to gain a detailed picture of the levels of support needs of this cohort of young people. Probably the most detailed data exists within Careers Wales' database, gained through interviews undertaken by Careers Wales' staff with young people. However, this is not readily analysable data.

2.61 Three recent measures¹⁷ of NEET young people aged 16-18 give a mixed picture over the past two years:

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics, Mid Year population estimates mid-2014

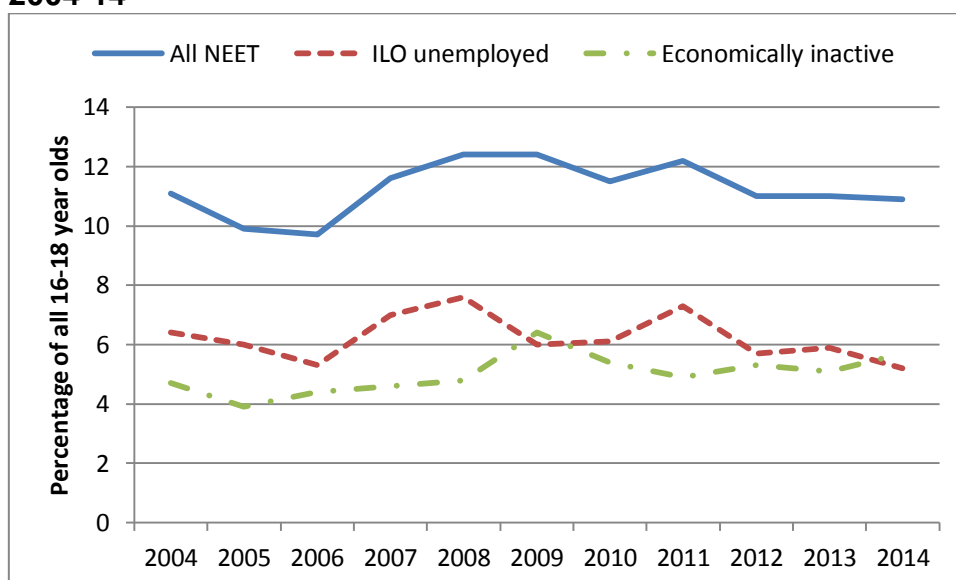
¹⁶ <http://destinations.careerswales.com/keyFindings.html>

¹⁷ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en>

- Statistical First Release basis: As at end 2014 (provisional), 10.9 per cent of 16-18 year olds were NEET (12,200) compared with 10.9 per cent (12,300) at end 2013.
- Annual Population Survey basis (new data): For the year ending Quarter 3 2015, 9.6 per cent of 16-18 year olds were estimated to be NEET, compared with 8.4 per cent at the year ending Q3 2014.
- Pupil Destinations basis: as at November 2014, 3.1 per cent of Year 11 leavers were NEET compared with 3.7 per cent in 2013.

2.62 However a longer perspective (Figure 2.5) suggests that over the past five years there has been a slight fall.

Figure 2.5: Estimated 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment, 2004-14



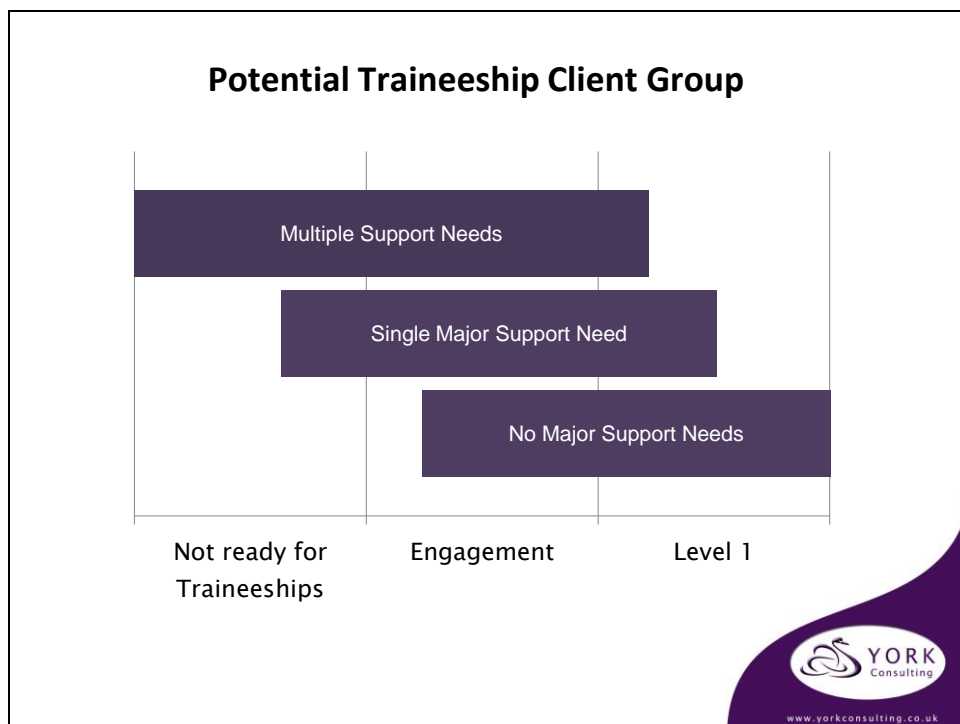
Source: StatsWales using ONS (Mid Year Population Estimates & Annual Population Survey), HESA, Welsh Government Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

2.63 In the later section on other programmes, similar to Traineeships, we explore the characteristics of their client groups which sheds light on their levels of need.

2.64 The following simple diagram outlines three key groups and their broad relationship to the programme:

- Those with no major support needs tend to benefit from the programme and to engage effectively, they can include individuals who are just shy or slightly under confident and who may not have a vocational focus.
- Those with a single support need that has been identified may be ready for the programme although depending on the nature of the need may have difficulties participating.
- Those with multiple support needs, often not all identified at one moment in time, are the most likely not to be ready for the programme or to need specialist provision which may or may not be available through Traineeships.

Figure 2.6

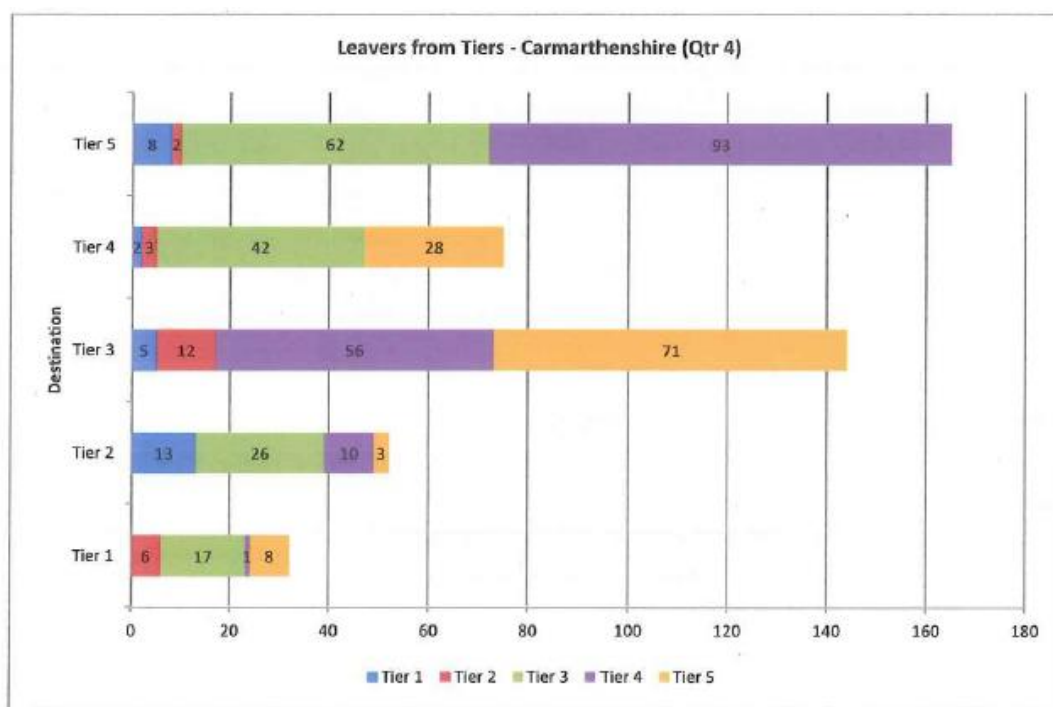


Tier level analysis

2.65 It is challenging to assess tier 2 and 3 numbers given the flow of young people between tier classifications over time.

- 2.66 Data available from Careers Wales identifies destinations of young people, on the 31st October 2014 (Table 2.2). Looking at those identified as NEET gives an indication of the size of the Tier 2 and 3 cohort. While some of those identified as able to find EET would likely be in Tier 3, there is also movement between Tiers to account for.
- 2.67 Reviews of some of the local authority (LA) Strand Lead information from Careers Wales identified the numbers of young people moving between Tiers over time (see Figure 2.7 relating to Carmarthenshire and Table 2.3 relating to Swansea). Evidence from these LAs suggest that the majority of movement is between Tiers 3, 4 and 5. There is evidence of smaller numbers moving into Tier 2 (for example if someone becomes pregnant) and into Tier 1 (as people disappear off the radar).
- 2.68 Qualitative evidence from one EPC suggested that the LA's Case Panel reviewed around 120 young people every six weeks, with around 50 in Tier 2 and the remainder in Tier 3 and 4.
- 2.69 Applying the estimates from the Careers Wales destination survey and the estimates from LA Tier movement data indicates that there might be between 2,000 and 2,500 individuals aged 16-18 identified as eligible who are not getting the support of a Traineeship over the course of a year.

Figure 2.7



Source: Career Wales 5-Tier data 2014-15

Table 2.3: Swansea Tier movement data

Tier at Start	Tier at End						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
0		2		6		9	17
1	2		8	43	16	19	88
2	2	6		29	5	6	48
3	1	154	68		105	124	452
4	3	16	5	198		588	810
5	6	16	4	191	115		332
Blank				5		9	14
Total	14	194	85	472	241	755	1761

Source: Careers Wales Nov 2014 to May 2015

2.70 When we interrogated national Careers Wales data on the Five Tier Model¹⁸ over the past year, focusing on those in Tier 2, the key findings are: 274 young people moved out of Tier 2 during the year; and, 487 young people moved in to Tier 2 during the year.

¹⁸ 1st April 2015 to 29th March 2016

2.71 Therefore in total around 750 young people were identified as Tier 2 from the start to the end of the year, ignoring those who may have passed through this category during the year. It is this group that providers were most likely to say were not ready for Traineeships when they were referred. According to Careers Wales around 80 were referred over a 15 month period.

Case study examples

2.72 We present below some examples of clients who have made positive progress and those that have not made positive progress to illustrate the range of clients and their needs. The first example indicates how a traumatic event such as bereavement can affect a participant, although with support she was able to overcome this.

Case Study A: Multiple Support Needs (Engagement – Positive Outcome)

This young person lives with her mum, dad and younger brother. She has a stable home life and had a happy school life (with good attendance and average grades). She entered the programme suffering a recent personal trauma and bereavement in the family so was in need of a lot of support.

She left school and came straight on to the summer Engagement programme with the provider. She was slightly unfocused, with some weak areas in Numeracy and Literacy, and with a need for work tasters to decide a confirmed careers SECTOR. The Initial Assessment identified Literacy E3 and Numeracy L1 requirements.

Over time it was identified that the learner wanted to work in Horticulture but was still open to other potential job offers and was still keen to look for other employment opportunities.

The main focus of support was around confidence and team building. A Learning Coach was involved very early on following the early disclosure of her personal trauma that led to attendance issues. She initially struggled engaging with attendance issues and group work, however with the offer of a learning coach and regular meetings with her parents she began to engage and trust the staff offering her support. She was involved in team building and confidence workshops and also basic employability skills. She also received additional one-to-one support on a regular basis with a Learning Coach to support her personal issues.

She went on to a project run by the Fire Service where her boundaries of trusting others were stretched and challenged and she grew further in

confidence through meeting new people. Feedback from her family was that she was returning to the bubbly girl she used to be. She had turned a corner.

Her outstanding personal drive on the programme was recognised by the Fire Service and she was invited back to complete the Leaders Award, supporting and guiding other Traineeships through their personal programme.

- 2.73 Case Study B highlights how someone with complex needs and uncertainty of vocational direction needs support but can achieve a positive result.

Case Study B: Engagement Positive Outcome

This young person was in poor health with one unstable kidney, an eating disorder, living independently, no parental support, money issues and living with an unstable boyfriend.

She had a poor experience at school, did not sit any exams and left with no formal qualifications.

The referral focused on lacking confidence and requiring support in this area. The Initial Assessment identified that she was a polite but troubled young person with many needs outside of the learning environment.

She had shown interest in Hairdressing but needed to improve confidence on centre based programmes before starting a Hair programme.

She had issues with controlling her life in terms of money including rent, bills and managing her finances.

She undertook a period of centre based activities followed by a Hair programme in centre then placement and Level 1 hairdressing. Attendance throughout all of the Engagement programme was very poor largely due to the health issues and circumstance that the YP had to deal with outside of the learning environment.

Her program included, ESW, Employability and Motivation and Personal development sessions, plus regular counselling. She then moved to Hairdressing which involved skills and theory sessions in the centre salon followed by a placement with a local salon. Attendance issues at the placement meant that she had to leave the salon.

She was then unable to secure another placement and so enrolled on a further learning programme that focused on motivation and personal development through team work and team building. After this she then chose to change direction and enrol on the Catering program. This involved 2 days at the centre teaching kitchen and again ESW, Employability and Healthy Living sessions. Again at the end of this programme she was unable to hold down a placement and so enrolled on the Employability programme. This focused on achieving a placement and or job. Through this focused process

she was successful in securing a job with a local bar/restaurant.

Progression from Engagement to employment was achieved. Although, the original ILP target of Level 1 hairdressing was not achieved. It was very challenging for the provider to support this learner due to the nature and complexity of the issues and needs. External medical and social specialist support was required to fully address them, which was outside of the control of the provider.

- 2.74 Case Study C highlights how a young person with complex needs can start to make progress before external factors nudge them off course in this case to the point of disengaging.

Case Study C: Engagement negative outcome

Learner C lived at home with her parents who had learning needs and medical concerns. Learner C supported her parents in daily tasks and administering medication. She also had a development coordination disorder as well as visual impairments, a speech disorder and other medical issues. She attended a specialist support school. Receiving 1:1 support, she enjoyed and progressed through school in the early stages however in the latter stages she became disengaged and demotivated.

Careers Wales made an Engagement referral, which as well as section 140 provided sufficient details for Learner C outlining previous support and recommendations of future support requirements and soft skill. Learner C underwent an informal interview where her referral, programme and the goals were discussed and a training place was offered. She came with an idea of pursuing tasters in Childcare and Animal Care.

She was supplied with a 1:1 support assistant, to help her in social settings, training tasks, focus and concentration and to assist the preparation of her work. She was also supported by a counsellor as well as working very closely with her parents and social worker.

Learner C was assessed at EL2 for application of number however on discussion with the provider it was recommended that she work towards EL3. She worked towards EL3 for communication skills. Daily workshops to support soft skills and Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) were delivered covering: anti bullying, confidence, motivation and goal setting. A work taster was arranged in a sympathetic setting as a starting point.

At the start of her journey she fully engaged with the provision; punctuality, motivations and general attitude all being marked as excellent. Over time and with changes to her personal circumstances she began to disengage.

She was very nervous about undergoing work experience and tasters, but

started her taster experience in a charity shop; this went on for 6 weeks with the aim of boosting her confidence and self-esteem, to progress her on to her identified goal of animal or childcare.

Learner C started to have personal relationship issues which were being brought into the training room, this had a knock on effect to her home life. Attendance and motivation were slipping and her focus was taken away from her academic work within the centre. She lost her placement and regressed back to her original starting point.

Regular counselling sessions were provided; start times and finish times were adjusted to support attendance. To make her feel safe the provider arranged for a member of staff to collect her from the bus station and walk her to centre. Regular meetings were held with social services and they assisted her in seeking supported accommodation and changed the way her training allowance was paid. Increased regular praise for meeting and achieving set goals was implemented. She achieved her EL3 qualifications.

Due to disengaging and then requesting to leave the programme Learner C did not complete any taster sessions in animal or childcare and she did not progress to a higher level.

The provider continued to contact Learner C on a regular basis as part of tracking but no change to her final destination or circumstances happened.

- 2.75 The next case study focuses on an individual with challenging behaviours, that were not able to be addressed, despite various attempts to help them develop.

Case Study D: Engagement negative outcome

Young person D had a troubled background, independent living, no parental support, constant money issues, very low Literacy and Numeracy levels, and problems at school (low achiever and very challenging).

The referral explained that any form of structured course would not be suitable for this young person. They were recommended for a work placement only. Young person D was found to be extremely confrontational towards staff and management.

He had some good skills in manufacturing and welding, and wished to have a placement based round this sector. Specific support included: anger management, support with living circumstances, support with money issues

Young person D started the programme, three days with employer on placement and one day in-centre with Literacy and Numeracy development. He agreed that he would be assessed in the workplace. However, he became increasingly challenging in the classroom towards staff and began to challenge the employer with irrational behaviour and threatened litigation because of perceived wrongdoings from several parties.

His irrational behaviour and threats to employers (all unfounded) about H&S litigation meant that the young person lost their placement. He found his own placement after this with his brother in law, however the premises was not fit for purpose and did not pass the vetting process. Consequently as the young person would not agree to another placement opportunity they left the programme. Counselling was offered to the learner and arrangements were made for them to discuss their money and living situation with the local authority. However in any meetings arranged the learner invariably became defensive, aggressive and exhibited irrational behaviour. When the parents became involved they too exhibited the same behaviour towards staff and employers.

This young person had such deep rooted animosity towards any form of authority that he became very difficult to deal with. Every decision was challenged despite many meetings with senior staff to try to understand the young person's point of view. The young person's behaviour was supported by the parents who legitimised it making it increasingly difficult to reach logical decisions about next steps. However the young person was given an opportunity in an area they had interest and skills but his behaviour made it impossible for the employer.

Tier 2 and Traineeships

- 2.76 A key result of the workshops with providers, Careers Wales and EPCs was the identification of a range of perspectives on who was eligible for Traineeships. In particular, this focused around how individuals are assessed at Tier 2 and who is responsible for supporting these individuals. Some providers understood that such individuals were not eligible for Traineeships (although in some areas providers felt there was insufficient provision for those at Tier 2 and hence they were accepted on to Traineeships); other providers understood that they were eligible for Traineeships. The confusion may stem from the fact that there is no explicit reference to the Tier levels in the Traineeship guidance.
- 2.77 There was clear evidence of different practices operating across Wales with some providers supporting those identified as Tier 2, while others did not see these as their target group. The Welsh Government have clarified that the target group are all participants referred by Careers Wales (which includes Tier 2 individuals).

Classifying Needs of Trainees

2.78 A Welsh Government internal report¹⁹ identified the particular issues that were experienced by a number of vulnerable groups and explained why they were at greater risk of becoming NEET. The list of vulnerable groups was:

- Gypsy Travellers
- looked after children (LAC)
- young mothers and teenage pregnancy
- minority ethnic including asylum seekers, refugees and children of migrant workers
- special educational needs (SEN)
- service children
- children and young people who offend.

2.79 However, as stated earlier the cohort is multifaceted and hard to summarise in a simple set of typologies. This list and others are confirmed by reference to other programmes supporting vulnerable young people.

¹⁹ Youth Engagement and Progression Framework - Vulnerable Groups and the Ability to offer the Youth Guarantee, December 2014

(E) Evaluation report key findings

2.80 Key findings from the recent evaluation study, covering the perceptions of stakeholders/providers, participants and employers provide evidence of how the programme has been perceived over the past four years.

Stakeholder and Provider Perspectives

2.81 There was a general view amongst providers that the cohort of young people in scope for Traineeships has become more complex and harder to help. This was perceived to be compounded further by economic circumstances and social changes, particularly in more deprived areas. To date we have not seen any objective evidence that this is the case.

2.82 There were differing views on whether the Traineeships programme was designed effectively for the client group. While there was general agreement that the programme contained the necessary flexibilities to support the different needs of participants, some providers felt that additional support was required for some participants prior to starting an Engagement Level Traineeship.

2.83 There were also concerns about the other end of the programme and the extent to which it is able to support progression from Level 1 Traineeships to an Apprenticeship.

2.84 The role of Careers Wales with young people involved in Traineeships was regarded to have been reduced by all stakeholders compared with the previous role of Careers Wales. Some providers felt that the referral process did not give them everything they need to support the young people.

2.85 There was general agreement that the extent of engagement of voluntary and community organisations that could provide placements has not been sufficiently developed.

2.86 The general view amongst stakeholders was that the performance of the programme has been satisfactory but could do better in terms of progression into employment.

- 2.87 Traineeships were regarded by stakeholders as the right way to go but not necessarily implemented in the best way. Stakeholders were concerned about the size of contracts, lack of flexibility and tailored provision, turnover of provider staff, competence of provider staff, lack of partnership between providers, lack of employer engagement and lack of involvement by Careers Wales.
- 2.88 Providers perceive a challenging client group, lack of recognition of some types of progression, insufficient resource, lack of national promotion/marketing, completers not ready for Apprenticeships, lower intensity of Careers Wales involvement and dispute the readiness of some young people referred to the Engagement strand.
- 2.89 All stakeholders and providers generally agree that young people: were low on confidence at programme entry; had low qualifications and skills; sometimes had negative experiences of learning from school; had the potential to contribute positively; typically just want a job with less value placed on learning.

Traineeship Participants

- 2.90 The majority of young people were looking for work. Most agreed their Traineeship was in their sector of interest, that the training provider asked them what type of work they wanted to do and that they had a choice of training subject area. A larger proportion of the trainees with a long term illness/health problems/disability left the course early. There was conflicting evidence about how many young people experienced work placements.
- 2.91 Former Traineeship participants were generally positive about Traineeships. They valued the support and experience which helped them to find work, gave them confidence and helped them to progress. They were less positive about Essential Skills/classroom-based learning. Of the trainees who were in paid employment and not working for the same employer as when they started the Traineeship over one quarter felt that the Traineeship was vital in them getting their current job and over half felt it helped. Only a fifth said it was not a factor in them getting the job.

Traineeship Placement Employers

- 2.92 Employers on the whole reported that trainees had had a positive impact on their organisation. Some employers were remarkably patient and understanding of young people's inexperience, unpredictability and support needs. Where employers had negative experiences they cited a lack of information about the young person's needs, lack of support/preparation (linked to provider role and programme design aspects such as lack of support for transport) and lack of commitment of young person.
- 2.93 The majority of employers felt that at the beginning of the Traineeship trainees were at a satisfactory or above level in areas such as punctuality and potential to progress into employment. Over half of employers also reported seeing improvements in these areas during placements. Between a fifth and a third saw no change or deterioration in these areas. A third of employers thought trainees were 'better than expected' while under two-thirds said they were not. Two fifths said trainees had learning disabilities and just over a quarter said they had behavioural difficulties.

(F) Programme Delivery – Eligibility/Referral

- 2.94 The key issue identified relates to the level of detail provided by Careers Wales staff on the referral form and the extent to which this helps providers put in place the most appropriate level of support.
- 2.95 It has been said by some stakeholders and providers that in some cases Careers Wales staff might be “*under-explaining an individuals’ complexities*” to ensure the young person is taken on. While this might be an adapted response to concerns that providers might be turning away more complex cases, it also leads to ineffective communication of relevant background to help providers work with young people. Ultimately, this leads to a sub-optimal system of support.
- 2.96 Some Careers Wales staff argue that in a one hour interview it is not always possible to probe and understand all aspects of a young person’s situation as often a degree of trust needs to be established before disclosure of important personal details.
- 2.97 It is hard to tell if this is a systematic practice without a more detailed audit of referral forms against case context. What is required is for a detailed analysis of a series of case files to explore the extent to which this might be happening and for some recommendations to adjust the overall approach.
- 2.98 A related issue is the extent to which school-based information about an individual is passed on to the providers to inform the support that they provide. However, we are not aware currently of any way this information could be transferred in a systematic process. Perhaps the process used to transfer relevant information from schools to colleges could be explored to see how it could be adapted to the Traineeship context.
- 2.99 One option would be to have a more structured referral form to ensure it captured clearer information on risks and needs faced by the young person. This would not guarantee all the required evidence but might help to isolate the key issues. However, it may be challenging for Careers Wales to resource this additional activity.

(G) Programme delivery - initial assessment and Essential Skills

Initial Assessment

- 2.100 The process of initial assessment informs the development of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Currently BKSB assessments (or similar) are undertaken to check a learner's essential skills level against progression towards ESW level 2. The process is generally regarded as working effectively.
- 2.101 ILPs are also informed by the Careers Wales referral form and other provider assessment/diagnostic processes. Other tools used include VAK learning styles and TRaCIO²⁰. They also involve setting targets and milestones to measure progress.
- 2.102 In some cases providers felt that they learned about issues which had pre-existed but only when they manifested themselves (such as mental health). This did not give them time to plan and build the support around the participant at the beginning.
- 2.103 Some providers undertook early activities which helped them to assess participant's ability to work in teams and communicate. Results of this then informed the ILP.

Essential Skills

- 2.104 The importance of Essential Skills is evident from the low levels of skills identified at the start of the programme. Delivery of Essential Skills is a clear part of the Traineeships programme, although it could be embedded more effectively in some provision.

²⁰ TRaCIO is a web-based tool that enables learning providers to measure 'soft skills' such as confidence, self-esteem, motivation, ability to co-operate, self-discipline and wellbeing.

2.105 Where it works well it is a seamless part of learning throughout the participant's experience. Where it works less well is when it is a stand-alone classroom-based element; participants view this as a negative aspect of the programme, especially where it feels like going back to school.

2.106 An important element of the initial assessment and continued communication was managing the young person's expectations. Some providers cited the role of the Learning Coach as helpful in this regard. However, others highlighted how few learning coaches were available to support young people.

(H) Programme delivery - Additional Learning Support (ALS)

2.107 Concerns were raised by providers that the ALS process was not effective and that they were not utilising this additional form of support intended to benefit individual participants. Their main concern was that the process was bureaucratic and inherently risky as they did not have certainty they would be paid for investments that they might make.

2.108 The Welsh Government staff do not understand why this should be the case, therefore there is a need to explore how this can be resolved to ensure the process and additional funding work properly.

2.109 Evidence from the Welsh Government indicates that few providers are using the ALS fund (**Table 2.4**).

Table 2.4: Number of Work Based Learning (WBL) Learners in receipt of Additional Learning Support (ALS)

Provider Name	Contract Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A4e Wales Ltd	0	0	0
Acorn Learning Solutions Ltd	0	0	0
Associated Community Training Ltd	39	43	17
Cambrian Training Company Ltd	0	0	0
Cardiff and Vale College	0	0	0
Coleg Cambria*	n/a	n/a	0
Coleg Llandrillo**	0	n/a	n/a
Coleg Menai**	3	n/a	n/a
Deeside College*	0	0	n/a
Employment Training City & County of Swansea	0	0	0
Gower College Swansea	14	11	23
Grwp Llandrillo Menai**	n/a	1	19
Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training (Ceredigion CC)	0	0	3
ISA Training Ltd	0	0	0
ITEC Training Solutions Ltd	132	221	262
Neath Port Talbot College	0	0	0
Pembrokeshire College	1	1	0
Rathbone Training	4	0	10
Torfaen Training (part of Torfaen CBC)	0	2	1
Vocational Skills Partnership (Wales) Ltd	0	0	0
TOTAL	193	279	335

Source: WG data analysis (on 9/4/15) taken from the months 1 to 12 for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 Provider Declarations for Support Cost Funding. Notes: * Coleg Cambria was established in 2013 as a result of the mergers between Deeside College and Yale College ** Grŵp Llandrillo Menai was established in 2012 as a result of the mergers between Coleg Llandrillo, Coleg Menai and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor

- 2.110 Nine out of 17 providers have never used the ALS fund, seven have used it for small numbers and one (ITEC Training Solutions) has used it extensively.
- 2.111 There was some limited evidence that where it takes time to identify specialist support then this can lead to the young person disengaging.
- 2.112 There was some anecdotal evidence that where ALS could be identified then this could be very helpful even with participants facing multiple complex support needs.
- 2.113 In response to a Welsh Government request to providers, to indicate any difficulties in accessing ALS, the following points were raised:
- A few providers mentioned the difference between the hourly rates and actual costs of support. For example: *“The hourly rate for ancillary support (£9.50 per hour) does not cover the cost of providing a member of staff. These staff are very often highly skilled specialists to support the young people with additional needs.”*
 - One provider mentioned difficulties in identifying additional staff, *“finding staff to deliver ALS is problematic due to the lack of guaranteed hours”*.
 - One provider explained that, *“We give our ALS workers a contract to enable them to have the security and benefits we offer our mainstream staff. However, if we don’t have the necessary evidence required for ALS funding we still give learners the support but fund it ourselves so that the learner does not miss out. We only apply for ALS funding if we have the necessary evidence.”*
 - When providers require a recognised professional diagnostic assessment for specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, they tend to buy in these services. The price quoted by one college was between £150 and £300, which may not be covered by the £20 per hour rate provided by the Welsh Government.

- Concerns that learners disengage during the period that it takes to identify and organise a recognised professional to undertake a diagnostic assessment.
- All purchases under £5,000 require a minimum of three written quotations, however, many items required often only cost a few pounds (such as a £5 overlay or £25 recorders for use by assessors) and the administrative cost of recording and claiming means that it is more cost effective to not make a claim.

2.114 In terms of Careers Wales role there has been some confusion around what Careers Wales do and the purpose of ALS. A review of the Careers Wales remit letter and S140 of the Learning and Skills Act indicates that Careers Wales' role is only to write the Learning and Skills Plan (LSP) for all statemented learners. It is expected that all learners eligible for ALS would have been identified by their last year of school and would have a statement of SEN or equivalent in place. Therefore, Careers Wales would not provide any evidence unless a learner was already statemented. The Welsh Government would not expect (or accept) a written statement from Careers Wales unless the learner was statemented.

2.115 The issue appears to be around those individuals who do not have a statement but the providers feel they should obtain additional funding support for. In these instances, the provider could obtain an independent assessment and reclaim the money for the test. However, a challenge relates to those learners who would not qualify for ALS funding under the ALS definition. These young people are those who have more complex barriers and issues (rather than assessed learning difficulties/disabilities), including functional literacy and numeracy needs.

2.116 One provider suggested that a procedure on how to access assessments for post 16 learners, "*who have slipped through the loop at school*", would be helpful.

2.117 Guidance relating to the ALS states that *“The learner has a learning difficulty/disability: i.e. a primary disability or learning difficulty, e.g. Dyslexia, Moderate Learning Difficulty (Mod LD), Visual Impairment. Recording an accurate and clear description is essential. Learners with functional literacy and numeracy needs are not eligible for ALS funding, as funding for such support is built into the payments for the relevant programme.”*²¹

2.118 Where the Welsh Government has received provider queries on ALS they have responded to say that they would expect the flexibilities of the Traineeship programme to provide the necessary support and tailored provision that the young person needs. Essentially, these are not young people who would actually qualify for ALS.

2.119 In light of this review of ALS:

- Providers should re-look at their internal procedures for deciding whether and how ALS applications can be made.
- The Welsh Government should undertake an analysis of past ALS claims to identify the number of hours claimed against different types of support and average costs of support.
- The Welsh Government should consider removing the requirement for three quotes for incidental spend under £500 (we understand this is in the process of being implemented).
- The Welsh Government should review the hourly rates at which they provide support, particularly for Ancillary staff (to ensure it covers living wage requirements) and costs of assessment (to ensure it covers the true cost of an assessment).

²¹ Welsh Government, Programme Specification and Guidance for Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Jobs Growth Wales Programmes, April 2015 – March 2019, Version 1.5

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160401-programme-spec-guidance-notes-en.pdf>

- The Welsh Government should consider circulating some case studies on how ALS has been used to support different types of individuals. This will help providers to understand how it can be used and encourage providers to access the support that learner might require.

(I) Programme delivery - other delivery issues

Learning activity

- 2.120 A variety of learning and development modules are used by providers to support young people's progression. In some cases these are well-developed using graphic design, PowerPoint, sound, video and other interactive methods. Examples were demonstrated/shared between providers at the recent NTFW conference. Some providers plug together a relevant set of modules to fit the participant's needs, representing tailoring of the programme design.
- 2.121 There was also evidence of providers tailoring provision but it was usually done around a core of standard provision for the needs of that type of participant. This was said to be necessary to make the programme operationally viable but meant it was not always possible to provide complete one to one support to all individuals that may have required it. Part of the tailoring is to use a broad spectrum of staff including counsellors, coaches, youth workers and trainers. There was good evidence of pastoral support while on the Traineeship and outreach activity for participants at risk of dropping out.
- 2.122 In addition, providers use physical activities and motivational speakers to augment more formal learning.
- 2.123 Overall the subject of tailoring is very difficult to judge without understanding the exact circumstances of the young person and the delivery provided.
- 2.124 There were examples of tailoring to specific circumstances such as the use of taxis initially to support travel and attendance, working with a young person's family and providing breakfast at the centre where they are not getting it at home. However, the extent to which external experts were commissioned for specialist support was less clear; with no data to document this.
- 2.125 Providers feel a constraint of the Engagement strand is the increase in hours of attendance required after the first four weeks. Some young people are regarded as not ready to increase to 21 hours participation. [This has subsequently been implemented with the length of the induction period extended to eight weeks].

2.126 More recently there has been recognition by providers that they can and should do more with the flexibility within Traineeships to support young people. The recent National Training Federation for Wales hosted a conference which considered that more could be done in terms of supporting participants through internal staff training and development and better sharing of materials and good practice.

Tasters/placement

2.127 The general view is that a variety of tasters and placements are made available for participants. The survey findings and qualitative research from the evaluation work supported this. However, there is no systematic data collected to indicate how many tasters or placements that young people experience.

2.128 Providers feel that they have to take risks with employer relationships sometimes in order to respond to learner expectations. They find that some employers understand, while others may feel that they are having their time wasted by young people's disinterest.

Dealing with concerns identified/ risk of drop out

2.129 Overall, providers had good structures in place to support young people during their Traineeship. Young people had regular contact with a range of staff who constantly monitor their progress and try to identify issues arising that may require further support.

2.130 Many providers have staff with job roles such as support workers, counsellors and engagement workers whose role is to maintain dialogue with participants and to be aware of any issues arising which they can respond to and communicate with other providers staff and/or Careers Wales. Providers tend to have regular caseload management meetings reviewing the progress of participants.

2.131 Providers have been less likely to involve Careers Wales when they identify a young person is at risk of dropping out of Traineeships. This is because they feel able to help young people themselves through pastoral support. Therefore, the system is not quite operating as originally intended.

2.132 At one workshop there was discussion about the possibility of seconding a Careers Wales advisor to a provider to support young people. Currently this is not a regular activity and may be a resource challenge for Careers Wales, given wider responsibilities.

Provider role to ensure employers actively support participants

2.133 Provider staff endeavoured to establish a strong relationship with employers; however, there were different approaches and different philosophies which influenced potential success. For example, some providers have clearly identified employer engagement roles. These are individuals with specific responsibility to make employers aware of Traineeships. In other providers the employer engagement role is a responsibility across the provider team. Some providers were very proactive about seeking employers, for example, most employers in a recent survey heard about the Traineeship from the provider. Although other providers were more passive, relying on national marketing and past relationships.

2.134 As identified in the research, employers had a mixture of motivations to engage with Traineeships.

2.135 The nature of the relationship can vary, particularly, between large and small employers. For example, in large employers a director or senior manager may agree to the Traineeship, but in practice an operational manager or supervisor will have most contact with the young person and provider.

2.136 Typically the same individual from the provider would 'account manage' that employer, although sometimes a different member of staff would maintain contact with a given young person. Provider staff had to be alert to pick up on any concerns (from the participant or employer) and be able to negotiate to resolve such issues. This could be challenging when expectations (of any of the parties) were unrealistic or misaligned. So some young people would grumble if they felt they were not receiving a good experience or being used to do menial jobs. Employers might complain to the provider if they felt the young person was not demonstrating acceptable behaviour. The employer's motivation to be involved influenced the extent to which they would support the development of the young person (for example, by providing feedback). For example, employers who saw the Traineeship as a way to recruit young people would be more likely to provide such support, but those that felt they were just providing a placement might expect the provider to handle such support.

2.137 Feedback from employers indicated that most (four-fifths) were satisfied with their Traineeship placements and a third said participants were 'better than they expected'. Many saw improvements in the young people, although around a quarter saw no change and two to eight per cent saw deterioration.

Delivery through the medium of Welsh

2.138 There was evidence of provision being offered through the medium of Welsh to over three-fifths of participants, although some participants did not recall being offered it. Nearly a fifth of learners offered provision through the medium of Welsh actually took up the offer (18 per cent).

2.139 Smaller proportions were offered: the option to speak Welsh on the in centre course (50 per cent), the option to work at a Welsh speaking employer (34 per cent) or to work towards a Welsh medium qualification (39 per cent). Between 9 per cent and 15 per cent actually took up these offers. All providers explained that they had the capability to undertake delivery through the medium of Welsh if required.

Professional skills required

2.140 There was a feeling among some providers that a different profile of staff was required to work with the harder to support clients with complex support needs (e.g. Tier 2 participants). Some providers felt that they had been aware of this and have been recruiting as necessary over the past few years. Others seemed to feel that they did not currently have the right mix (as they did not perceive that Tier 2 learners were their responsibility).

Range of vocational options

2.141 There was no particular evidence of a lack of vocational options provided to young people, from the evidence collected to date. As stated earlier around one in ten Traineeship participants felt they were not offered the options they wanted. Some examples of difficult to source, unusual occupations were mentioned, and in some cases satisfied, and in others not. Providers evidenced that they have transferred young people to other providers, both within their consortium and externally, where another provider could satisfy the young person's requirements. Although other stakeholders were sceptical that this happened very often.

Good practice

2.142 Examples of good practice around understanding the world of work included visits to employers' premises, presentations by employers at a learning centre about the type of work they do and supporting young people to experience working in more than one occupational area.

2.143 Some providers organised trips and outdoor activities based around self-esteem, team building and self-confidence. There is good evidence of innovative, attractive resources and teaching strategies being used to engage young people in activities from job search through to Essential Skills learning.

Third sector involvement

2.144 There was generally perceived to be a lack of third sector involvement in the programme delivery and provision of placements. This may be linked to external factors and the reduced number of larger work-based learning contracts which has made it harder for third sector providers to participate. However, use of the third sector to provide work experience placements did not seem to be exploited as much as it could be. The potential for third sector organisations to offer placements 'sheltered' from more commercial pressures can be an important opportunity for some young people to develop confidence and skills.

Planning for progression

2.145 Providers were actively involved in planning a progression path for Traineeship participants, supporting them with job search, interview skills and identifying further learning opportunities.

2.146 Although their view was that some participants needed more support before being ready to progress after Level 1, some providers felt some participants would be better continuing Level 2 work based learning provision rather than trying to make a leap to an Apprenticeship or an academic learning programme.

ESTYN assessment

2.147 During the workshops providers raised the question of how Estyn inspect Traineeship outcomes. WG staff identified that this topic had been raised before²², when the following was asked: *'Clarification was requested on how Estyn would perceive learners who had left the programme early due to progressing into employment, but by doing so had not completed their planned learning activities.'*

2.148 Estyn had made the following response:

"Inspections will focus-on and review:

²² one of the times it was brought up was at a Performance Measures Steering Group as far back as February 2012

- *the progression of learners into employment or further appropriate education or training*
- *the rates at which learners complete their ILPs, including appropriate development of their literacy, numeracy and employment skills*
- *the distance individual learners have travelled from their initial starting point.*

If learners leave Employability Programmes early and move into employment inspectors will review evidence and make a judgement as to whether the employment was as a result of the training programme or a naturally occurring work opportunity. Consideration will also be given as to the type of employment. For example, is it the chosen employment route as stated in the ILP or a short-term seasonal job”.

2.149 This suggests that inspections should not penalise providers if learners progress into a job in line with their ILP.

Summary

2.150 Overall, the Engagement strand has worked well for many participants but has not worked so well for those with complex support needs. For example some participants are not ready to move up to 21 hours per week after the first four weeks (when they participate for 12 hours per week); they require a longer period of support at a lower intensity. Others are not ready to engage in centre-based group learning; they require one to one support. [This has subsequently been implemented with the length of the induction period extended to eight weeks].

2.151 In some cases such individuals dropped out or failed to progress, in others they were regarded by providers as not being ready for the programme.

2.152 More understanding is required about the refusal of providers to accept some participants perceived to be borderline clients.

2.153 Some providers have models to support such young people with flexible and adaptable provision, drawing on experience from within their organisation and in some cases from partner organisations.

(J) Programme Delivery – Level 1 Specific issues

2.154 In this section we review the different stages of the Level 1 Traineeships programme where they differ from the above Engagement Level issues discussed above.

Level 1 readiness

2.155 Providers reported needing to ensure that a participant was ready to start a Level 1 Traineeship. Some participants were motivated by the higher allowance to try to convince Careers Wales and provider staff that they were clear about their vocational focus. This could prove challenging as participants might feel negative about being directed towards the Engagement phase initially because the allowance is lower.

Progression

2.156 There were sometimes challenges with timings, for example, if a Level 1 participant was ready to progress before their college course might be due to start: *“how do we keep them engaged in order to recognise the progression over a four week period?”*.

2.157 Providers felt that some participants were not ready or well-suited to progress on to an Apprenticeship or college learning programme. Instead they felt that the participants would be better supported by undertaking a Level 2 competence based course (such as an NVQ) through the structure of a Traineeship.

2.158 Providers are not targeted to achieve progression on to an Apprenticeship over any other form of employment or higher learning outcome. There may be merit in having a clear target with an incentive for providers to move young people into an Apprenticeship outcome. This would be in line with Government policy and may encourage earlier discussion with a participant, around an Apprenticeship outcome, before they finish their Traineeship. At the same time it would make sense to capture the progression outcome to an Apprenticeship separately, as currently it is not isolated within the 'employment' outcome heading.

2.159 The ending of the Young Recruits programme was regarded as reducing the successful progression to employment, with less incentive for employers to recruit a young person.

Employer engagement

2.160 A frustration felt by some providers was when employers did not inform them that the participant was not turning up. However, this was indicated by one provider as evidence of insufficient communication by providers themselves; where maintaining ongoing dialogue is critical to capture feedback and understand when things are not working.

Bridge to Employment Traineeship

2.161 The B2E strand was barely used; a very small number of participants had been involved. Providers say that lack of use of B2E is related to the risk that they will bear the cost of participation beyond 10 weeks. In fact only one provider has used B2E, specifically for military service provision.

Summary

2.162 The Level 1 strand generally worked well although some individuals were regarded as needing more support before they were ready to progress to an Apprenticeship.

2.163 There may be merit in having a clear target with an incentive for providers to move young people into an Apprenticeship outcome. This would be in line with Welsh Government policy and may encourage earlier discussion with a participant, around an Apprenticeship outcome, before they finish their Traineeship. At the same time it would make sense to capture the progression outcome to an Apprenticeship separately, as currently it is not isolated within the 'employment' outcome heading.

(K) Funding model

2.164 The current funding model for Traineeships is set out in the Welsh Government document entitled “2015-16 Pricing Document”. This describes, with examples, the current activity cost model (ACM) for the programme.

2.165 The key driver of the funding model is the value of each Learning Unit (LU) (currently £23.18) and the number of LUs for a given individual (based on various assumptions and weightings). The maximum that could be claimed for an individual is £8,970, if they accessed the maximum available LUs available for the Engagement phase and for the Level 1 phase.

2.166 Average costs based on average stay information from the Welsh Government across the different elements are:

- Engagement, average stay 16 weeks²³; therefore, estimated cost: £2,272.
- Level 1, average stay 35 weeks²⁴; therefore, cost: depending on the balance of Centre Based Vocational activity and Work Based Support and Assessment is £3,454.

2.167 Primarily provider behaviour, in terms of costs, is influenced by:

- Time participants are on the programme (and type of activity) – clearly higher volumes lead to higher levels of absolute funding, however, this is tempered by the need for an Individual Learning Plan (and potential audit

²³ Data in email dated 21 Oct 2015; other assumptions include attend average of 15 hours per week and no uplift for bilingual delivery. [(3 LU)+(15 hours x 16 weeks = 241 GCH / 6 = 41 LU x 2.3 = 95 LU) = 98 LU x £23.18 = £2,272]

²⁴ Data in email dated 21 Oct 2015; other assumptions include attend average of 30 hours per week (8 Centre Based Vocational activity hours and 22 Work Based Support and Assessment hours) and no uplift for bilingual delivery. [(3 LU)+(8 hours x 35 weeks = 280 GCH / 6 = 47 LU x 1.6 = 76 LU)+(22 hours x 35 weeks = 770 GCH / 11 = 70 LU) = 149 LUs x £23.18 = £3,454]

thereof) and the professional integrity of providers to deliver what is best for the participant.

- Likelihood of participants to achieve positive outcome (low performance against outcomes could jeopardise a provider's contract if they fall below the minimum threshold).
- Attitude to cost recovery – by this we mean the extent to which a profit or surplus is necessary or required within a provider's business model.

2.168 The ACM is a variable costs model, which results in variable funding for providers based on participant activity. However, providers face a mix of fixed and variable costs for the resources necessary to deliver the Traineeship programme.

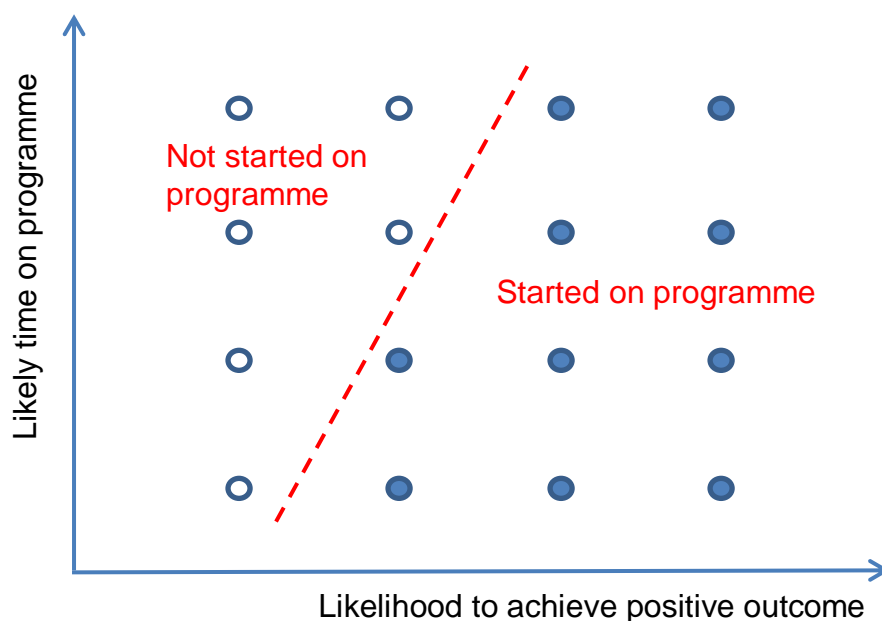
2.169 From an economic perspective, providers need to maximise volumes of participants (and the funding they generate) up to the point of their fixed and relevant variable costs, in order to be as cost efficient as possible.

2.170 Inevitably this means they take a risk portfolio approach in terms of the likelihood of participants to achieve on the programme; but what factors influence this risk assessment?

2.171 The following graph highlights what is understood to be the broad decision making model (Figure 2.8). It compares individuals with different likelihoods to be on the programme for different lengths of time, with the likelihood of the individual to achieve a positive outcome (or more specifically not to achieve a negative outcome as neutral outcomes also exist).

2.172 As discussed earlier, providers have some influence over whether a given individual starts the Traineeship programme. This diagram helps to understand that decisions about whether to formally start a participant are influenced by the funding model and the provider's assessment of an individual's likelihood to achieve.

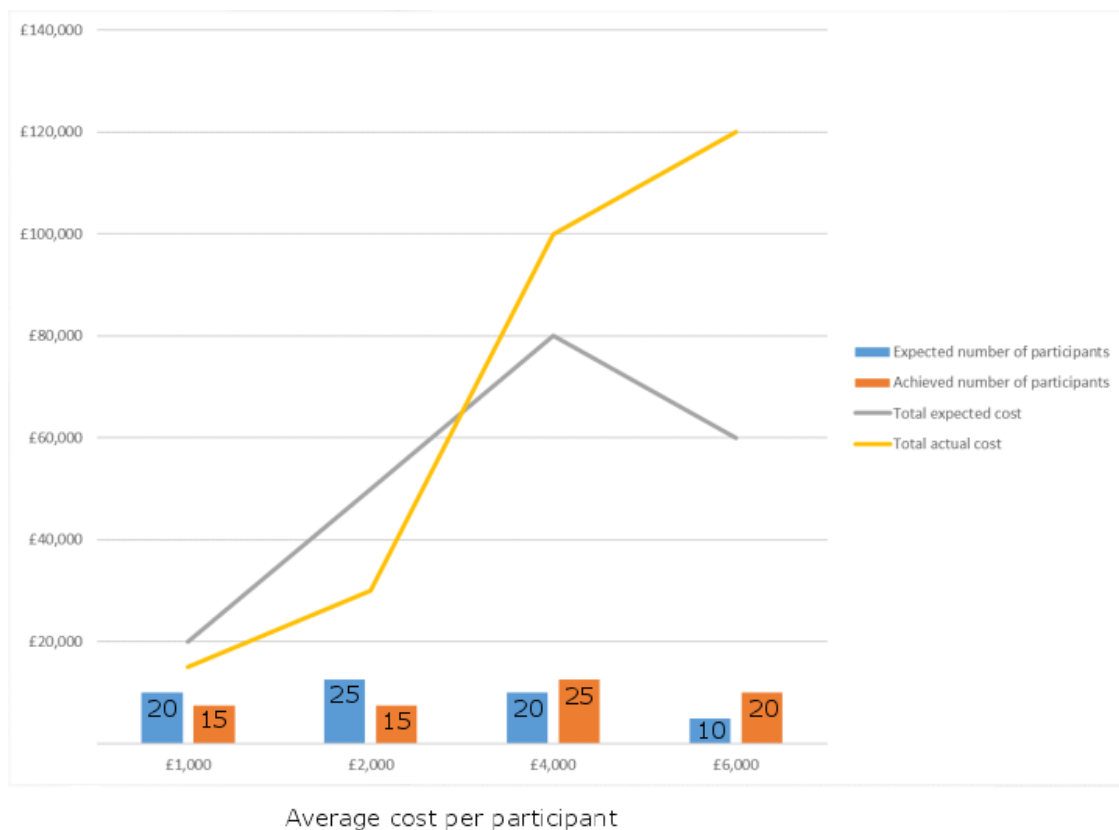
Figure 2.8: Modelling effects of decision-making



- 2.173 The line indicates the decision boundary of a given provider (it is likely this will be a different shape and position for each provider depending on their attitudes to risk and reward).
- 2.174 To be clear this is not necessarily implying that providers purely make decisions based on financial factors. However, one possible explanation of why providers do not start some potential participants is that they will be expensive to support as they will require more intensive one to one specialist support (which providers feel they cannot resource) and may not achieve a positive outcome. This analysis indicates that there may be logic in this approach based on the funding system and based on the way the programme is currently working.
- 2.175 The key, for a given provider, is the absolute cost of an average participant compared with those who might require more intensive support, and whether providers feel that they have the necessary funding to be able to support such individuals. Ultimately it will come down to the providers own model of delivery and how they balance costs for different elements that might be required.
- 2.176 The following graph highlights how a provider may assess this for themselves (Figure 2.9).

2.177 However, based on earlier evidence that suggests providers are ‘avoiding’ certain participants it is logical to assume that this is based on an assessment of likelihood to achieve (recognising that a negative outcome has the potential to penalise the provider) and the relative cost of supporting such individuals who might require expensive, specialist support and potentially away from a main site of delivery.

Figure 2.9: Differences between expected and accrual costs based on participant profile



2.178 Figure 2.9 presents the dilemma. If the balance of costs of the actual is different to that expected then it can have a big effect on overall and average costs to the provider. In this simple example the number of participants is not different but the extent of support required (and therefore the average cost) is higher. Assuming other things being equal such as the length of time on the programme then in this example there is a 26 per cent increase in average costs.

- 2.179 By the rule of the contract that providers bid for and the Welsh Government understanding of the relevant client group (essentially those referred by Careers Wales) then providers would have made some provision for a harder-to-help spread of participants. But in a commercial environment this type of swing could be the difference between a profitable and loss-making contract.
- 2.180 The choice in the current circumstances is to insist that providers start participants referred by Careers Wales (if this is possible) or make a change to the way the programme operates.

(L) Relationships between key stakeholders

2.181 The key stakeholders involved in the delivery of Traineeships are:

- Welsh Government (procurement and policy)
- Providers
- Careers Wales
- Local Authority Education Progression Co-ordinators (EPC).

2.182 The key interactions that have a direct effect on delivery of Traineeships that have been raised during the course of this review are the following:

- Between Traineeships providers
- WG and providers
- Providers and CW
- EPCs, CW and providers.

Between Traineeships providers

2.183 Since the Traineeships conference in 2015 and the ongoing meetings of the NTFW Traineeships groups there is evidence of more sharing of good practice between providers. This had been identified as an important area of development and the early indication is that this is working. Real progress will include evidence of sharing of approaches to delivery in order to improve overall performance.

WG and providers

2.184 Generally relations have been effective. Providers have become used to the AskWBL portal as a means of communicating with the WG. While they sometimes find it impersonal they understand that it is an efficient form of communication.

2.185 Probably the major sources of frustration have been changes made to programme design with perceptions of no consultation and no opportunity for dialogue. Providers understand that some changes have been made due to WEFO and EU requirements but the manner of implementation and the effect on performance figures have been perceived at best as counterintuitive and at worst as a changing of the goal posts. These types of changes tend to affect the perceptions of trust, perceptions of working together and feelings of engagement as a partner in the programme.

Providers and Careers Wales

2.186 The relationship between providers and Careers Wales is not working effectively. The source of this is a combination of culture, policy and resource. In terms of culture there are different philosophies in providers and in Careers Wales. This can be simplified as follows: providers believe Careers Wales are too idealistic about what is possible for a young person not recognising the practical limitations of the support; versus Careers Wales' belief that providers are not tailoring their provision sufficiently to the needs of each individual.

2.187 At the local level relations between staff of providers and Careers Wales is generally cordial although sometimes providers feel that Careers Wales' staff are stretched and quick reactions are not possible. Careers Wales' staff are keen to be involved and to undertake the role set out in the project business plan. In practice Careers Wales' staff tend not to be called in when a participant is thought to be in Tier 4, at risk of dropping out. Providers will tend to work with the individual providing forms of support, counselling and advice; fearing a loss of control if Careers Wales becomes involved. Consequently Careers Wales tends to be called in just as the individual is disappearing off the radar, making it too late to intervene. Part of the reason for this reaction by providers is related to their uncertainty that Careers Wales' staff will achieve practical solutions, uncertainty that Careers Wales' staff will act quickly enough and that Careers Wales' staff might be 'too soft' on participants. As a result of this Careers Wales' role as independent arbiters to participants during the life of the programme has been eroded away.

EPCs, CW and providers

2.188 Interactions via the local authority panels that help to decide how provision will be made for Tier 2 individuals have led to improved communication in some areas. However, the nature of these groups varies across Wales in terms of how often they meet and how they implement decisions.

2.189 In some areas there is close working between the three organisations such that EPCs and LA youth worker staff are made aware as soon as individuals drop out of Traineeship learning. In one case where LA staff undertakes regular outreach activity they can sometimes find a young person and help to re-engage them before too much time elapses.

2.190 Transfer of data and information has been raised as a continued problem in some areas. It appears that in areas where EPC staff are Careers Wales secondees then this is less of a problem.

(M) Other provision available for a similar client group

- 2.191 Documenting and analysing provision at this level is complex due to the dynamic and periodic nature of this support. As highlighted in table 2.5, this support is delivered by a range of providers including charities and community organisations. This provision is often delivered at the local level, reliant on periodic funding and based on the demand for provision. As a result a number of risk factors exist and often provision will be re-invented year on year, or come to an abrupt end.
- 2.192 Provision for individuals identified as requiring Engagement-style support is delivered at all qualification levels and provides a range of skills such as entry level digital skills, through to stable management and HGV license training. Some provision is aimed at all unemployed individuals whereas others are targeted at NEET young people exclusively.
- 2.193 LA/voluntary sector provision for individuals who do not start a Traineeship is important to the delivery of Traineeships, particularly the Engagement strand, and is used as an alternative where providers are not starting individuals or do not feel equipped to deal with complex needs and behaviour.

Table 2.5: Provision mapping example LA

	Providers	Qualification	Locations	Duration	Target	Referral	Course Areas
Non- accredited	Youth Justice Service, Cantref Foyer Programme, Youth Service, University, Fire and Rescue Service, Princes Trust, CAVO, social services, employer, arts centre, farm, business consultants, Riding Centre, Training Services, Driver Training, play area	N/A	Learning centre, professionals education centre, employer,	1 day, 2 weeks, one hour weekly, 12 weeks, 2 hours over ten weeks, 6, weekend, flexible	YSJ, NEET/UE, LAC NEET & at risk	YSJ yes by the service, NEET at risk by school or LEA	re-engagement, activity based group e.g. music, art, drama group, employment sector taster sessions, D of E, 3 day residential work skills short course, work placement, volunteering programme, keep fit, social media, soft skills via sport, targeted engagement with year 11 leavers, nail extension course, manicure course, beauty courses, community dance, art classes, hedge trimming, fundraising, methods to consult with children
Entry Level 1	Youth Justice Service	OCR	Council Offices	1-1 intensive on-going	YSJ	By YSJ	Life and Living Skills
Entry Level 2	community learning centre	Agored Cymru	Community learning centre	2 hours over 10 weeks	NEET/UE and Wider	Professional or self	Internet and Email
Entry Level 3	community learning centre	Agored Cymru, BCS	Community learning centre	2 hours over 10 weeks	NEET/UE and Wider	Professional or self	Digital skills, play guitar, music workshop
Level 1	YJS, youth service, charity supporting rural communities, community learning centre, County Council, Riding Centre	Agored Cymru, BCS, City & Guild, ASDAN, British Horse Society	Community education centre, stables, professional education centre, learning centre,	1 week, 6 months' work experience, 1 day weekly, 2 hours over ten weeks,	YSJ or care leavers, inclusive, NEET and at risk, NEET/UE	Yes for NEET at risk or YSJ or care leaver - referral needed by SSD, school	Skills with a paid work placement, D of E taster days, Citizenship, 3 day residential work skills short course, gain skills and accreditations in the woodlands, digital photography, improving maths and writing,

			woodland	37 weeks term time, flexible	and wider	or professional.	computer basics, i-pad basics, Excel, horse care and riding awards, stable management.
Level 2	YJS, youth service, charity supporting rural communities, community learning centre, County Council, Riding Centre, Fire and Rescue service	Agored Cymru, BCS, City and Guild, ASDAN, British Horse Society, WJEC	Community education centre, stables, professional education centre, learning centre, woodland, fire stations	2 week, 6 months' work experience, 1 day weekly, 2 hours over ten weeks, 20 weeks, 37 weeks term time, flexible	YSJ or care leavers, inclusive, NEET and at risk, NEET/UE and wider	Yes for NEET at risk or YSJ or care leaver - referral needed by SSD, school or professional.	Young fire fighters, GCSE maths, GCSE English, Skills with a paid work placement, D of E taster days, Citizenship, 3 day residential work skills short course, gain skills and accreditations in the woodlands, digital photography, improving maths and writing, computer basics, i-pad basics, Excel, horse care and riding awards, stable management.
Level 3	community learning centre, Riding Centre	Agored Cymru, BCS, BHS	Community education centre, stables, woodland	26 weeks, 10 weeks, flexible	NEET and at risk, NEET/UE and wider	Yes for NEET and at risk	Skills and accreditations in the woodlands, digital photography, computer basics, British sign language, Excel, build your own guitar, family history, horse care and riding, stable management
Other	Driver Training	HGV, PVC	External Site	7 day course, flexible	NEET, UE, Wider	No	LGV Class 1 Articulated Lorry: Category C and E Training, LGV Class 2 Rigid Lorry: Category C Training, PCV Coach & Trailer: Category D and E Training, PCV Coach: Category D Training, PCV Minibus: Category D1 and E Training

2.194 It has not been possible to analyse all mapping data across Wales as categories and headings are not sufficiently consistent. What is evident is that in some areas more flexible alternative provision is available. This is supported by anecdotal evidence from stakeholders that some local authorities have not yet commissioned their provision.

Focusing on those with complex needs

2.195 Two experiments within the current Traineeships programme have been focusing on support specifically for the harder to help individuals with the most complex needs.

ACT Enhance

2.196 Under subcontract to ACT this separate organisation is focusing on supporting a group of young people in the Swansea area, focused on the Engagement phase of Traineeships.

2.197 It is a tailored approach, to support, which incorporates group work and individual activities supported by five members of staff. In particular there is a clear and detailed programme of activities, both internal to the centre, and further afield, including:

- Session with the 'Grief Preacher' (a campaigner and motivational speaker against one punch violence and the importance of self-esteem <http://connorshelpinghand.wix.com/grief-preacher>)
- physical activities (gorge walking, Jerry Boxing class, Funky Pump fitness, circus skills, five-a-side football)
- healthy eating (breakfast club and smoothie making)
- creative activities (graffiti artist, YMCA music session/creating a CD, they are currently planning a zombie workshop involving make-up and filming)
- information sessions (financial literacy, tour of local college, visit to local training provider, alcohol awareness, sexual health)

- in-centre sessions focusing on literacy, communication, life skills and a WEST assessment)
- employers visits (e.g. Admiral and the Army).

2.198 The environment is very open and honest and involves the staff being highly responsive, especially at the early stages in order to overcome initial resistance and to reach a point where all participants commit to full involvement.

2.199 Many of the elements included in this approach are likely to be part of other providers' approaches to the engagement phase, however, this approach has specifically targeted those who have complex needs (including many on independent living). It is also more intensive, challenging participants to engage fully from the beginning rather than just starting at a low intensity.

2.200 The group of 24 participants were specifically selected in the local area as those who would normally struggle to sustain and benefit from the Engagement phase of Traineeships.

2.201 They have achieved positive progression with 16 (or 70 per cent) of those who started (one was classed as a neutral progression and the remainder were negative).

2.202 Of those that achieved a positive progression four achieved employment, one went to college and the remainder moved onto a Level 1 Traineeship (at another provider or at ACT Enhance).

2.203 Three of the participants that did not progress were in independent living shelters and found the programme "too much", due to personal issues. The view of the staff was that they might be able to sustain a six to eight week programme of one to two days but three days was too much for them. Having said this two of those who did make a positive progression were also from an independent living shelter, so it is not necessarily a barrier for all individuals.

Llamau

2.204 Examples of the characteristics of participants encountered on the programmes

Llamau have been running for young people, identified as in Tier 2, include:

- Gypsy travellers (without a mainstream education background)
- Looked after children (LAC, especially those living in supported accommodation and those leaving foster care)
- Teenage pregnancy
- Special educational needs (SEN, including physical disability, mental health, bereavement, ASD/Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, anger management, and those with no clear diagnosis after support at school)
- Young people who have offended
- Minority ethnic groups (including asylum seekers, refugees, children of migrant workers, those with ESOL needs)
- Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS, including those from Pupil Referral Units and who were home educated)
- Family issues (chaotic home life, fallen out with parents, low motivation)
- No stable accommodation (including those who are homeless, those who are sofa surfing, those who have left their parental home)
- Drug/alcohol dependency.

2.205 When Llamau compared categories of vulnerability between referral

organisations and their own assessment, they identified more young people experiencing teenage pregnancy, special educational needs, offenders and family/motivation/chaotic lifestyle.

2.206 The four most common vulnerabilities identified among participants starting with the largest were: family/motivation/chaotic lifestyle, SEN, LAC and offenders. Over half of the participants had three or more vulnerabilities. Just over 10 per cent had one vulnerability and just over 30 per cent had two vulnerabilities.

2.207 Data from the Symyd Ymlaen / Moving Forward project²⁵, included risk issues identified for participants and support needs addressed (Table 2.6). A summary is provided below to give a broad picture of the range of issues. It would make sense for any future Traineeships programme to collect similar data to identify the nature of support needs of young people.

Table 2.6: SYMF participant risk indicators

	N	Percentage
Participant has a known history of violence or aggression	450	64
Participant has a known history of non-compliance with professional medical advice or treatment	109	15
Risk of suicide or deliberate self-harm	205	29
Risk of self-neglect or accidental self-harm	155	22
Risk due to mental health	216	31
Risk of serious violence towards others	223	32
Risk of aggression / aggravation to people / property	281	40
Participant is at risk of being abused by others	210	30
Risk due to alcohol or substance misuse	417	59
Participant has a known history of behaviour incompatible with SYMF	94	13
No known risks	169	24

Source: Symyd Ymlaen / Moving Forward Partnership Board Report, October 2015

Note: Data cover a two year period 2013-2015

2.208 Similarly the data collected in respect of learner support needs (Table 2.7) helps to give a profile of the young people. Over half had no work experience since leaving school, two fifths had basic skills needs and over a third had no qualifications.

²⁵ Symyd Ymlaen / Moving Forward is delivered by Llamau and four other voluntary sector organisations, it provides young people who have offended and those leaving the care system greater access to employment and training

Table 2.7: SYMF participant additional support needs

	N	Percentage
Living in rural area	135	19
Needs training in Welsh	11	2
Homeless/in temporary accommodation	164	23
Has no qualifications	247	35
Still in local authority care	215	30
Attended PRU	167	24
Non-school attender	149	21
Has basic skill need	281	40
No work experience since leaving school	377	53
Left local authority care in last 3 years	140	20
Excluded from school	162	23
Has extra support in school	189	27
Statemented	100	14
No additional support needs	67	9

Source: Symbd Ymlaen / Moving Forward Partnership Board Report, October 2015

Note: Data cover a two year period 2013-2015

2.209 The experiences of voluntary sector organisations like Llamau highlight the challenge faced by trying to provide support to such vulnerable groups.

2.210 Llamau has been running a pilot to support individuals prior to starting an Engagement Traineeship under subcontract to ITEC a main Traineeship provider (effectively a form of pre-engagement support). Key experiences that they highlight include:

- *“Some young people have just sat under the table for a few hours, as they are not ready to cope with the initial idea of support”* – while this sounds extreme it highlights the dysfunctional nature of some young people’s situation.
- *“Some individuals can only manage 1 to 1.5 days initially”*. This lower level of initial intensity is used to gain participant’s trust and to start the process of motivating them to want to progress. Sometimes they have dropped a person’s hours as low as five hours per week, if they are facing

a particular crisis, just to keep them loosely engaged, then they can start to develop the intensity back up again.

- *“We are aware that many young people know each other and disputes/fights can develop”*, therefore they split up cohorts of young people into smaller groups or support them individually as required.

2.211 Examples of challenges include young people with mental health needs, for example, they have medical appointments, which make it challenging to make their hours on any programme. A small proportion might have CAMHS support or community mental health support, but this can be hard to source; especially soon enough to enable them to benefit from engagement-type programmes.

2.212 Progress is monitored using quantifiable measures of attendance, timekeeping, working in groups, self-learning, improved self-esteem, improved self-confidence. These are regularly reviewed using case level supervision meetings.

2.213 We do not currently have up to date performance information on this pilot activity.

Other voluntary sector provision

2.214 A range of provision has been available over the past few years to a similar client group as Traineeships (particularly relevant to young people identified at Tier 2). This is often delivered by voluntary sector organisations via public funding sources (including ESF). For example:

- The Engagement Gateway (managed by the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action – WCVA – and delivered by small localised community organisations).
- Learning 4 Life (Llamau) – pre-vocational training programme
- Symyd Ymlaen / Moving Forward provides young people who have offended and those leaving the care system greater access to employment and training (over 400 young people per year)

- The LIFT programme - supports the Tackling Poverty agenda and aims to provide 5,000 training and employment opportunities for people living in households where no-one is in work, especially more than six months out of work or training.

2.215 Exploring two of these where clear evaluations exist allows us to understand the scale and relative cost per participant. We compare this later with the cost per participant for traineeships.

The **Engagement Gateway** (2009-2014) All age ESF funded, locally based, small, tailored interventions in order to develop and improve participants' skills, confidence and employability. This helps to progress participants towards volunteering and further learning, providing them with qualifications and a variety of positive outcomes and also support them towards employment.

Total Funding: £29.6 M

Participants: 26,607

Simple cost per participant: £1,112

Source: WVCA, 2015, Final Evaluation of the Engagement Gateway Project - Final Report

The **Symyd Ymlaen / Moving Forward** project has been developed to target young care leavers and young people who have offended in Wales, aged 16-18, to enhance their chances of finding employment and accessing further learning or training. The project has been designed to reflect learning from other similar projects and take account of the complex range of needs often presented by young people who have offended and/or are in care – and who are rarely 'job ready'. It offers intensive, tailored support in the form of: pre-employability and basic skills training; a six month paid work placement for a minimum of 25 hours per week (with a six month wage subsidy); and, mentor support. SY/MF is delivered through a consortium partnership led by homeless charity Llamau.

Total Funding: £3.4 M

Participants: 448

Simple cost per participant: £7,589

Source: ICF Consulting Ltd, 2014, Evaluation of Getting Ahead: the Symud Ymlaen/Moving Forward project – Interim Report - A report to the Big Lottery Fund

https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/-/media/Files/Programme%20Documents/Getting%20ahead/Evaluation%20of%20Getting%20Ahead%20Final%20Interim%20Report_%20MASTER.pdf.

2.216 Case studies of individuals who have participated in such programmes provide insight into the complexity and multifaceted nature of their characteristics and circumstances. In particular they focus on the need for holistic solutions to support young people facing different barriers.

2.217 For example, in case study E provision similar to Traineeships from the voluntary sector provided the range of support required for this individual. However, the first challenge was getting him into stable accommodation.

CASE STUDY E (non-Traineeships provision)

Young person **E** was brought down to Wales from Scotland by his mum. Life in Scotland was not good, with constant rows and no money. They moved in with **E**'s auntie in Newport initially, however after 3 months, **E**'s mum decided to return to Scotland, leaving **E** alone.

Although he was living with his auntie, **E** hadn't made many friends. He enrolled on an IT course and things were starting to get better for him, but a few weeks later his auntie asked him to leave.

E went to the local authority but he did not meet the criteria for "*priority need*" and they were therefore unable to help him. Concerned for his safety, they called Llamau. Llamau worked with the housing department to get **E** accepted as a priority, following which he was referred to Llamau's York House project.

E stayed with Llamau for just over a year, receiving intensive specialist support to overcome a range of personal barriers, gaining independent living skills, before he was allocated a property with a local housing association. He now lives independently with support from Llamau through their tenant support scheme. **E** has completed his college course and has been awarded a diploma in performing arts and musical theatre. He has also obtained various qualifications including maths, English and IT.

E has made incredibly positive changes to his life. He has stopped using drugs and alcohol. **E** has also made contact with his mum and they now occasionally speak on the phone. **E** is now fully at home in Newport; Llamau's support has ensured he enjoys an independent and active life, attending football weekly as well as being a keen BMX biker and attending a boxing class. This has helped him feel focused and positive and together with support, has helped him to cease his self-harming – he has told us he no longer feels alone.

E has chosen to focus on music as a career and is hopefully applying to attend a Newport City radio course. **E** has been an inspiration for others in his project because of his struggle with emotions and anger and his battle through the most difficult of times yet despite this, he has emerged the other side, a more positive, hopeful young man. He demonstrates that with the right support even the most challenging and disadvantaged young people can make positive changes in life.

With support from Llamau, **E** has set up a new life for himself. **E** is a very quiet and shy person yet he has become a positive role model for others and a true inspiration.

Source: Llamau

2.218 Case study F highlights the impact that relationship breakdown with parents can have on a young person.

CASE STUDY F (non-Traineeships provision)

Young person **F** was referred to the Emergency Room in Llamau Trideg project by the Cardiff Leaving Care team. **F** had previously lived with short term foster carers.

F came to be in the care of Social Services due to a relationship breakdown with his mother and stepfather. Whilst living with Llamau this relationship has improved slightly. **F** has maintained communication with his family on a weekly basis and visits his brother weekly.

F moved into a flat and has settled in well, he has engaged in the support on offer to him to acquire independent living skills. Whilst living with Llamau, **F** is being supported with how to budget within his income. He attends regular cooking nights with staff and is now confident at cooking for himself. **F** is now confident at making his own appointments with relevant people if necessary and is more than capable of attending appointments on his own. **F** is very good at communicating his emotions.

While at Llamau **F** attends Learning 4 Life on a weekly basis and it is here that he worked towards and achieved his City and Guilds Certificates in Numeracy, Literacy and ICT. He has also attended a few days work placement through L4L with a local employer.

F has contributed to various activities outside of the project, such as taking part in a fun run for charity and attending various activities arranged by Llamau.

F's self-esteem and confidence has improved as a consequence of the support he has received and he is really looking forward to the day when he can have a job and live independently in the community.

Source: Llamau

2.219 Case study G highlights the impact that feeling uncertain about the future and feeling under confident can have on a young person.

CASE STUDY G (non-Traineeships provision)

Young Person **G** left school at a loss to know what career path he wanted. He felt a sense of neglect and confusion that he had not had the guidance and support after leaving school to discuss with someone what job opportunities there were available to him. *"I was not the only person who felt this way, a lot of my friends were experiencing the same sense of frustration, so I began to lose interest in seeking any job opportunities."*

G is fanatical about football and sport, and every weekend goes to watch local football matches. He had for a long time, a desire to take a referee's course and become a referee. Whilst watching a local football match, he met a young person who had previously been on Vi-Ability's Engagement Gateway courses, who told him that the course had given him new employability skills and the confidence to seek job opportunities.

G was also told that the course used football and sport as a means of learning. *"This really got me thinking and I thought, this is for me, I contacted Vi-Ability and was accepted on the next course in June."*

G completed the course with positive feedback and praise from the course tutor: *"His punctuality, attendance and commitment were excellent, and I could see an attitude of, I want to do well"*.

The course gave **G** a basic understanding of how business works, developed skills that he struggled with in school and gave him greater confidence. He now feels more confident in seeking a full-time job. *"Because the course uses sport as a way of learning, I and the other people on the course were never bored, we never lost interest, the sessions were interesting and fun and we never failed to show up for any of the sessions."*

Since completing the course, **G** has taken his driving test and passed, completed a course to become a rugby referee, and was offered a six-month paid work placement with Vi-Ability.

Source: WCVA

Future voluntary sector provision

2.220 There are currently plans for further programmes being proposed as part of the current ESF 2014-2020 funding round that focus on a similar client group.

Under Priority 3 Objective 1 (Increase in youth employment and employability of young people):

- Active Youth Inclusion (WCVA – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed – Focused approach to support those NEET in target groups: lone parents; work limiting health conditions; ex-offenders; with disabilities; and, BME)
- Achieve Wales (WCVA – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed - Focused approach to support those NEET in target groups: lone parents; work limiting health conditions and disabilities; workless households; and, BAME)

- Communities4Work 16-24 (WG – approved £8.3M – Intensive mentoring and employment support for those NEET in Communities First areas)
- Cam Nesa (Pembs CC – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed - Engagement, learning and training for those NEET who face significant barriers to the workplace)
- ADTRAC 16-24 (Grwp Llandrillo Menai CC – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed - Support for those NEET)
- Inspire 2 Work (Blaenau Gwent CBC – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed – Tailored support for those NEET)
- Enterprise (18-24) (The Princes Trust – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed – Tailored support for those NEET to gain self-employment).

2.221 Some of the planned projects under Priority 3 Objective 2 (Reduction of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or who are at risk of becoming NEET) also cover support for a similar client group:

- Inspire 2 Achieve (Blaenau Gwent CBC – approved £18.9M – One to one and group support for those at risk of becoming NEET)
- Cynnydd (Pembs CC – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed – engagement, learning and training for those at risk of becoming NEET)
- Real Opportunities (Caerphilly CBC – Business Plan stage, budget unconfirmed – Tailored support for those with learning disabilities/Autistic Spectrum Disorder).

(N) Similar programmes elsewhere in the UK

2.222 This section reviews the approaches to Traineeships or similar programmes across the UK.

Scotland

2.223 Where 'Traineeships' are referred to in Scotland they are in relation to legal traineeships or other sector led training schemes. 'Traineeships' as a brand does not exist in the context of an Engagement programme and is not aimed at those aged 16/17.

2.224 Scotland operates a National Fund, 'The Employability Fund' (EF), which supports local level employability provision for those aged 16-24. Local Employability Partners have the role of determining how needs should be met from the fund based on their knowledge of the area.

2.225 The EF was developed in response to concerns that the existing landscape of provision for pre-employment support in Scotland was too fragmented and not flexible enough to meet the needs of individuals and local labour markets.

2.226 It is delivered through a partnership between local authorities, WBL providers/colleges, private companies and the voluntary sector.

2.227 The provision is delivered in three stages, 'The Employability Pipeline':

- Stage 2 - provision to create a foundation upon which individuals can build their employability skills, personal development and core skills.
- Stage 3 - provision should support individuals in preparing for and sustaining employment, including entry into Modern Apprenticeships.
- Stage 4 - SDS approved industry specific provision should directly enable individuals to access sustained employment.

2.228 Therefore the delivery of provision at a level equivalent to Welsh Traineeships varies through localities. National guidelines exist but are not prescriptive toward the programme's delivery or content.

2.229 At present, a programme that could be considered the Scottish equivalent of a National Welsh Traineeship is a set of ‘work ready’ qualifications. Two qualifications are currently being delivered nationally:

- Introduction to Workplace Skills (IWPS) (SCFQ Level 3, employability pipeline stage 2)
- Certificate for Work Readiness (CWR) (SCFQ Level 4, employability pipeline stage 3).

2.230 These qualifications are part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and can be delivered using Employability Funding and are considered ‘National Programmes’. The SCQF is Scotland’s Lifelong Learning Framework and brings all of Scotland’s mainstream qualifications into one framework. The SCQF ranges from Level 1 to Level 12, with Level 1 being the least demanding, and 12 the most. The lowest level Modern Apprenticeship in Scotland is at SCFQ Level 5 (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: Scottish Qualifications

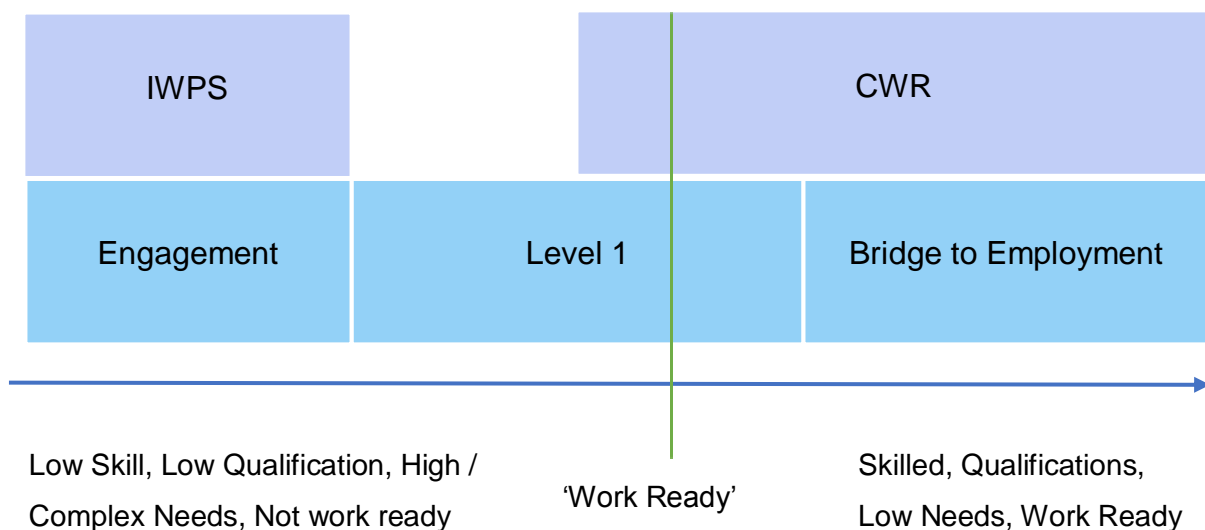
SCQF Level	SQA Qualifications	Vocational Qualification/ MA	Wales Equivalent
1	National 1, Access 1		Entry Level Certificate
2	National 2, Access 2		
3	National 3, Access 3		
4	National 4, Intermediate 1, National Certificate	SVQ Level 1	NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSE’s Grade D-G, Welsh Bac Foundation
5	National 5, Intermediate 2	SVQ Level 2 / Modern Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSE’s Grade A*-C, Welsh Bac Intermediate
6	Higher	SVQ Level 3 / Modern Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualification Level 3, GCSE AS and
7	Advanced Higher, Scottish Baccalaureate, HNC	SVQ Level 3 / Modern Apprenticeship	A Level, Welsh Bac Advanced

Certificate for Work Readiness

- 2.231 As suggested by the level of the qualification, the CWR is aimed at those who are close to being work ready. The programme delivers 'employability training' based on an accredited qualification and minimum of 190 hours of work experience.
- 2.232 The CWR programme is intended for those who are near being work ready and sits in stage 3 of the employability pipeline. The programme is designed to give young people the evidence to demonstrate their work readiness through completion of a qualification, and is therefore not intended for those who are some distance from being work ready and/or require specialist support. Those who participate are expected to have core numeracy, literacy and ICT skills and SCQF Level 3 or above. It is also not intended for those who already have the evidence to demonstrate their work readiness such as previous work experience.
- 2.233 The CWR is comparable to provision delivered through the Level 1 Welsh Traineeship (Figure 2.9), where participants have entry Level 3 or above in numeracy, literacy and ICT skills, and who are ready and able to complete an SVQ Level 1. However, the degree of 'work readiness' and the skill levels of Trainees on the Level 1 Welsh Traineeship could also be quite some distance from the minimum requirements for entry onto the CWR. The Welsh Traineeship Level 1 has scope for addressing the barriers to entry into Level 1 qualifications or entering employment, however the CWR requires young people to be almost work ready with good core skills and grades, and who require evidence/extended work placement to support this. Therefore CWR may be considered only comparable to a percentage of Level 1 Welsh Traineeships.
- 2.234 Unlike the Welsh Traineeship, the work placement element of the CWR must be completed at a 'real' place of work where business takes place. In some cases, Level 1 Welsh Traineeship participants may not be considered ready to enter a work placement in a real employment setting.

2.235 The intended level of ‘work readiness’ on completion is similar for both the Level 1 Welsh Traineeship and the Scottish CWR. Both encourage the natural progression into work, and have the potential to allow the participant to finish the course qualified to a level that will allow entry onto the first level of Apprenticeship or progression into education. However the CWR is highly focused on progressing young people into work, with many of its core elements being about ‘work readiness’ in comparison to the Traineeships which has a stronger focus on progression into education and further work-based learning, as well as employment.

Figure 2.9: Traineeships (and equivalent) Scotland and Wales



Introduction to Workplace Skills

2.236 The IWPS Qualification aims to bridge the gap between the less demanding SCQF Level 3, and the CWR SCQF Level 4 programme. The programme aims to provide a further stepping stone for participants prior to demonstrating readiness for substantive employment.

2.237 The IWP can be delivered in ‘protected’ work environments to accommodate those not ready to enter the workplace. Participants require a minimum of 150 hours of work experience. The programme focuses on core skills and competencies for entry level work and aims to provide improved opportunities for progression towards employment.

2.238 The qualification is similar in content and level to that of the Traineeship Engagement programme. Individuals are not expected to have clear ideas about any particular vocational routes they wish to pursue, and are expected to have below average grades. Participants require a 'positive attitude to work' which could be considered to set a similar entry requirement to Welsh Traineeships, where providers can reject a traineeship application if they feel they are not committed to the traineeship.

2.239 This course is intended to be delivered in stage 2 of the Employability Fund, providing a foundation level engagement programme. The pilot project for IWP was delivered in a youth offender's institute suggesting the programme intends to have the capacity to deal with participants with complex needs.

2.240 A formative evaluation²⁶ of the Employability Fund that supports the IWPS and CWR identified that it was generally welcomed by most stakeholders although there were some teething issues. Overall, around half of providers responding to a survey agreed that the programme offered flexibility to employers compared to previous forms of support. A major concern was that:

- *“the funding model across the different stages may be skewing behaviour. In particular, that the payment for certified learning was reported by ... consultees to be driving providers to focus on this, rather than the achievement of job outcomes, as it is easier to achieve.”*

England

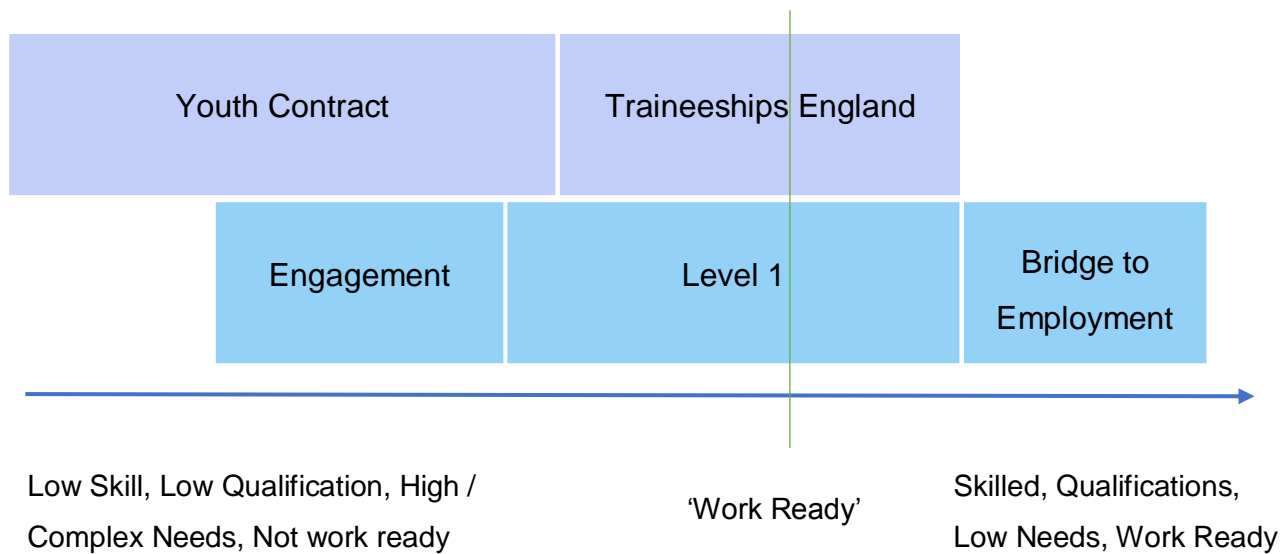
2.241 In England, a 'Traineeships' training programme has been in place since August 2013. Since its inception, the programme has been reviewed a number of times, with the most recent reviews to be implemented in August 2015.

²⁶ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40887/ef-formative-evaluation-executive-summary-jan-16.pdf>

- 2.242 The aim of the English Traineeships programme is to give young people the skills and experiences that employers are looking for, support progression into an Apprenticeship or sustainable employment or progress into further learning (subject to criteria).
- 2.243 English Traineeships are available to a wider age (aged 16-24, or 25 for those with LLDD or on an EHC) than Welsh Traineeships (aged 16-17 or 18 if on certain benefits). It was initially proposed in March 2013 for those aged 16-19, but was expanded to include aged 23 in July 2013 and then expanded further in 2015 to include those aged 24.
- 2.244 The programme is intended for those who are 'nearly ready' to enter an Apprenticeship or other sustainable employment or training. The young people are expected to be within reasonable distance of being ready for employment or an Apprenticeship, and progression should be achievable within six months. Traineeships eligibility is based on maximum qualifications, where trainees must be educated to level three or below, but can be in education, employment or training before entering a traineeship. This is unlike the Welsh Traineeship where a young person must be unemployed and not in formal training or education.
- 2.245 English Traineeship provision is in line with provision provided by the Level 1 Welsh Traineeships (**Figure 2.10**). The programme was not intended for those who require more intensive support, or who are not expected to be ready to become EET within six months. Therefore provision appears to be above that provided by the Engagement level Traineeship. Providers are able to reject Traineeship applications in England. In a recent evaluation 51% of providers said they had done so. Many of those who applied for English Traineeships were 'self-referrals'. Providers successfully rejected applications on the basis that:
- 'not enthusiastic about the traineeship'
 - 'concerns about ability to cope with work experience element'

- 'low likelihood of being ready for employment or Apprenticeship within 6 months'

Figure 2.10: English and Welsh Traineeships (and equivalent) provision



2.246 In England, where young people are not eligible for the English Traineeship, providers are encouraged to refer to other local provision or national provision such as the Youth Contract.

2.247 The Youth Contract aims to engage young people aged 16-17 who are hardest to reach and support them into education, training or a job with training. Provision is flexible and determined by the local provider. The programme is for those with no GCSEs or for care leavers or youth offenders with one GCSE or more who are not in full time education or training.

2.248 In comparison with Wales, a percentage of those attending the youth contract may be considered to be at a level that would require an Engagement level Traineeship in Wales (Figure 2.11). However, others on the youth contract may not have been accepted onto an engagement programme, or would find the provision to be set too high or to be too short - the Youth Contact programme was intended for 12 months, and could be extended to 18 months in special circumstances.

- 2.249 There is not an explicit minimum criteria for entry onto the Engagement Level Welsh Traineeships, and they are open to those with additional needs and who could be considered far away from the labour market. However, it is the decision of Careers Wales to refer the individual, and the decision of the provider to accept the individual. Where individuals are deemed not suitable for referral to Traineeships, or are rejected by providers for acceptance and referred back to LA, it could be considered that a baseline criteria does exist. Therefore the Engagement Traineeship cannot be seen to be completely in line with the Youth Contract and the Youth Contract may include individuals with lower skills and more complex needs – perhaps in line with Tier 1 and Tier 2 provision in Wales.
- 2.250 However, in recent evaluation cases of young people entering the Engagement Level Traineeship with no qualifications or work experience additional learning needs and complex behaviour were identified. In these cases the Welsh Engagement Traineeship in practice is more aligned with the Youth Contact.
- 2.251 English Traineeships have a fixed timeframe of six months, this sets a minimum entry requirement with regards to level or ‘work readiness’. The timescale of the Traineeships programme in Wales is not prescriptive. The length of the Engagement and Level 1 strands are based on the needs of each learner.
- 2.252 The level of work experience required on English Traineeships is in line with levels expected from Level 1 Traineeships in Wales, where trainees were expected to get a work placement in their chosen discipline. It is required in England that all participants undertake work preparation training and a minimum of 240 hours of work experience placements, where simulated work environments are not counted toward these hours. This is unlike Level 1 Welsh Traineeships, where trainees are able to take part in work placements or community projects which can be delivered in simulated work environments.

2.253 All learners undertaking English Traineeships are required to undertake a maths GCSE or a functional skills qualification for those at Level 2 if they did not have it. This is a higher target than for those undertaking Engagement Welsh Traineeships where trainees are expected to be only considering qualifications and getting themselves ready to undertake a qualification.

2.254 Similar to Welsh Traineeships, English Traineeships focus also on softer skills such as CV writing, employer skills, confidence and interviews. As part of the English Traineeship programme all employers who offer work placements are expected to provide an interview for the trainee, preferably for an available position but otherwise provide a mock interview for experience.

2.255 Progression focuses on outcomes and achievements in English Traineeships. England has introduced a 'minimum standards for job outcomes from Traineeships' in 2015/16. Progression is considered as:

- Employment taking place for at least 8 weeks at over 16 hours a week within 6 months of the traineeship (including self-employment).
- Learning where the qualification is recognised in performance tables and it Level 2 or 3 or for maths and English is at a higher level than that achieved through the traineeship.
- For the Youth Contract it is expected that any progression for those under 18 includes full time employment (above 20 hours) but also at least 280 hours of guided learning.

2.256 For those with learning difficulties or disabilities in England it is recommended that they participate in the 'supported internships' programme. This programme differs from English Traineeships as it expects participants will need more time and additional in-work support. Interns are provided with an expert job coach, who provides ongoing support. This is similar to Traineeship provision provided by some specialist providers in Wales, where Traineeships have been tailored to include job coaches and additional support for complex needs. However this is not a formal aspect of the Welsh Traineeships.

2.257 A recent Youth Contract evaluation report²⁷ identified the following relevant points:

- “The goals for the national Youth Contract (YC) were to test payment by results (PbR) in a re-engagement programme linked to tight eligibility criteria to focus support on the hardest-to-reach and -help young people. Implementing the YC through PbR with an emphasis on sustained outcomes and a black box delivery approach which granted freedom to providers to determine the nature of the intervention could allow innovative and effective practices to emerge. An open competition for YC delivery had the potential to bring new organisations into the education sector while also providing an opportunity for LAs to bid if they so wished. In practice, it appeared that few LAs had competed for delivery and prospective prime providers took differing stances to engaging with them as part of the tendering process.”
- “The model tended to limit involvement of voluntary sector organisations.”
- “The PbR model, linked to the tight eligibility, operated effectively, without some of the perverse incentives that can result from such schemes. National stakeholders had few concerns that it had encouraged providers to work with ‘easier-to-help’ young people and little evidence of this arose from the evaluation research. While some post-16 education providers involved in YC delivery did not provide an impartial service and focused their support on retaining their own learners who were considered at risk of drop out, this practice did not appear widespread.”

2.258 Some experiences were similar to those experience with Traineeships in Wales over the past few years:

²⁷ [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A -
The youth contract for 16- to 17-year-olds not in education employment or training evaluation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A_-_The_youth_contract_for_16-_to_17-year-olds_not_in_education_employment_or_training_evaluation.pdf)

- “However, the re-contracting of ESF NEET programmes in 2013, the withdrawal of LA-funded provision such as pre-Apprenticeships, the configuration of Study Programmes established by local post-16 providers and whether Traineeships were offered in local areas, were all noted by delivery agents to have impacted on the outcomes that could be achieved. Overall, a need for increased flexibility among education and training providers to boost the number of course start points during the academic year, in order to improve progression rates, was demonstrated. Ongoing support was crucial for young people to sustain outcomes since many required continued assistance with their barriers to be retained in learning or training. If false starts were made, key workers could step back in to lead a re-engagement process.”

2.259 Cost per participant was around £783 paid through the following PbR model:

- 20 per cent at Stage 1 (attachment/enrolment), 30 per cent at Stage 2 (re-engagement) and 50 per cent at Stage 3 (sustained re-engagement).

2.260 The PbR model was perceived to be ‘back loaded’ and in the eyes of providers “failed to sufficiently reward either the up-front investment needed to recruit staff or the time investment needed to reach and engage hard-to-reach or hard-to-help young people”²⁸.

Northern Ireland

2.261 The Training for Success (TfS) programme in Northern Ireland operates a re-engagement programme for those aged 16-17 (up to 22 for those with a disability) echoing the Traineeships programme in Wales.

2.262 The programme offers a guaranteed training place for every 16-17 year old who is NEET and provides a week allowance of £40 per week.

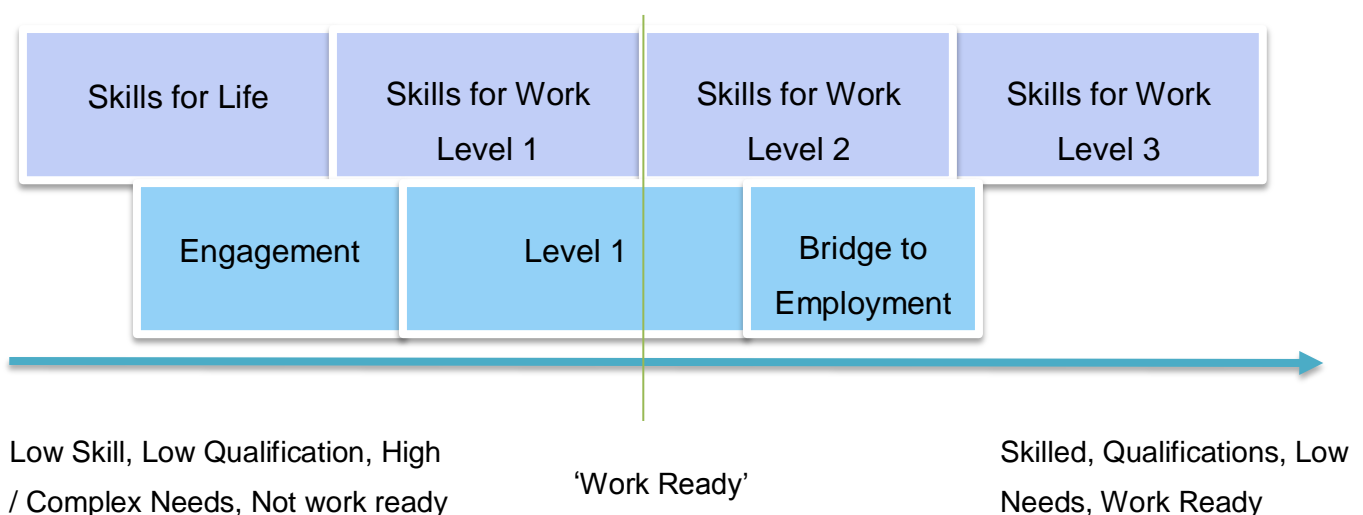
²⁸ [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A -
The youth contract for 16- to 17-year-olds not in education employment or training evaluation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A_-_The_youth_contract_for_16-_to_17-year-olds_not_in_education_employment_or_training_evaluation.pdf)

2.263 The programme operates across four strands:

- Skills For Your Life - Addresses personal development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and/or have significant barriers to education, training or employment including Essential Skills needs; this addresses the need for more focused provision for the significant minority of people for whom Skills for Work is not suitable.
- Skills for Work Level 1 – To help young people gain skills and qualifications at Level 1 in order to gain employment to progress to Skills for Work Level 2 or ApprenticeshipsNI.
- Skills for Work Level 2 – To ensure that those participants who have been assessed as capable of achieving at Level 2, but who have not yet secured employment, are prepared for future progression to an Apprenticeship. Participants must undertake the knowledge based requirements of the Apprenticeship framework in their chosen occupational area.
- Skills for Work Level 3 – To ensure that those participants who have successfully completed the Skills for Work Level 2 stand but have not yet progressed to employment can develop Level 3 knowledge and skills. Participants must undertake the knowledge based requirements of the Apprenticeship framework in their chosen occupational area.

2.264 The overall aim of TfS is to prepare participants for Apprenticeships and employment, access to regulated qualifications, and to address learner barriers. Essential Skills qualifications are embedded across all levels of provision.

Figure 2.11: Northern Ireland and Wales 16-18 provision comparison



- 2.265 The programme is similar to Welsh Traineeships in its 'levels' approach, however TfS employs a 'pre-engagement' phase of Skills for Life, potentially addressing participants that would not be accepted onto Engagement Traineeships. The TfS is also catered to provide a long period of support that allows progression through the strands, with participants receiving entitlement of up to 104 weeks (156 for those with disabilities). Welsh Traineeships do not have a maximum period for the programme as a whole, but its Bridge to Employment Level has maximums of 10 weeks funded support and Traineeships are not available beyond age 17 (18 for those on certain benefits). Technically Bridge to Employment can continue for longer but it is unfunded beyond 10 weeks (i.e. supported by the provider).
- 2.266 The Skills for Life stage focuses on high levels of pastoral care, support and encouragement and is intended for those who have disengaged from learning and have significant barriers to education, training or employment. This resonates with the Engagement Level Traineeship in part, but could also be considered to cater for those whose needs extend beyond Engagement Traineeships and who may be rejected for acceptance onto Engagement Traineeships by providers in Wales (**Figure 2.11**).
- 2.267 Provision at Skills for Work Level 1 is beyond that of Engagement Level Traineeships in its focus on delivering Level 1 qualifications. However, Skills for Work Level 1 has two strands: one for those who have chosen an occupational area professional and technical training is offered, and one for those who are unclear about their preferred occupation by offering work sampling, which could be seen to fit with Engagement Level Traineeship Provision.

2.268 The Skills for Work Level 2 and 3 provide support for those who are 'work ready' but unable to find employment or further learning at the time. It gives participants a chance to continue to develop their skills and undertake knowledge based components of an Apprenticeship framework. This is similar to the Bridge to Employment strand of the Traineeships programme, however the Bridge to Employment strand is only funded for 10 weeks through Traineeships. Given that the Level 1 strand does not have a time limit, part of the Level 1 Traineeship provision can be expected to be playing a similar role to that of Skills for Work Level 2.

Summary

2.269 While there is comparable provision across the UK it is organised differently based on different approaches to the next level up (Apprenticeships).

2.270 Key points include:

- The elements in England and Scotland, equivalent to Welsh Traineeships Level 1, are more strongly focused on progression to employment (Apprenticeships).
- The Northern Ireland model allows for vocational learning at Levels 2 and 3 even if an Apprenticeship opportunity is not available.
- In England the two elements are delivered by different types of providers.
- The Northern Ireland (Skills for Life) and England (Youth Contract) have elements that support those with the most complex needs, compared with the Traineeships Engagement phase.
- The Scotland delivery model is focused at a local authority level. LAs bid to the Scottish Government annually based on expectations of need.

