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Evaluation of the Traineeships Programme: Final Report 2015 - 2019

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Evaluation of the Traineeships Programme: Final Report

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

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Glossary

Acronym	Definition
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALS	Additional Learning Support
ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
BCR	Benefit to Cost Ratio
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CW	Careers Wales
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EDMS	European Data Management System
EET	Education, Employment or Training
ESDGC	Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
ESF	European Social Fund
EW	East Wales
FE	Further Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMRC	HM Revenue & Customs
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
JGW	Jobs Growth Wales
LEO	Longitudinal Educational Outcomes Study
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLWR	Lifelong Learning Wales Record
MI	Management Information
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NPV	Net Present Value
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
SHELL	Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning
TRF	Traineeship Referral Form
WBL	Work-based Learning
WEFO	Wales European Funding Office
WLHC	Work-limiting Health Condition
WWV	West Wales and the Valleys
YEPF	Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This final report contains the findings from the research undertaken by Learning and Work Institute (L&W) and Wavehill Research to evaluate the Welsh Government's Traineeships programme between 2015 – 2019 which was part funded by European Social Funds.

Aims and objectives

- 1.2 The evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Traineeships programme for the funding round of January 2015 to March 2019. It focuses on the performance and impact of the programme, with some review of the programme design and delivery processes. In particular, this evaluation explores:
- The impact the programme has had in both its hard and soft outcomes.
 - The overall value the programme has added through a cost-benefit analysis.
 - Lessons learned for the future delivery of similar programmes and how good practice can be replicated and benefited from.
- 1.3 The evaluation focuses on the 2015 to 2019 funding round of the Traineeships programme and will consider and present the findings for both West Wales and the Valleys (WWV) and East Wales (EW), as well as for the programme overall in line with European Social Fund (ESF) and Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) evaluation requirements.

Methodology

- 1.4 The evaluation has been delivered between April 2017 and March 2019. During this time, it has included the following elements:
- Scoping, desk-based review of programme documentation, published Welsh Government statistics and relevant literature and bespoke analysis of Welsh Government Management Information (EDMS) data for Traineeship completions.
 - Analysis of the WEFO 'ESF Participant Survey' data.
 - Interviews with Welsh Government Officials and key partners (7).
 - Two rounds of interviews with providers and subcontractors delivering the Traineeships programme (17 and 11).
 - Interviews with employers (48) and trainees (105) participating in the programme.
 - A counterfactual impact assessment using matched administrative data, specifically the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data which combines

data on learning from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), DWP administrative data on benefit receipt, and HMRC data covering earnings and employment.

- A cost-benefit analysis using the results of the impact assessment for earnings to form the basis of an estimate of the value of the net economic impact of Traineeships.

Further details on specific elements of the methodology are included below. Full details of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis of ESF Participant Survey

- 1.5 The 2018 ESF Participant Survey was conducted by IFF Research. Data was collected between February and September 2018, there were 911 respondents, all who had been participants in the Traineeships programme between February and September 2017.
- 1.6 Survey data was analysed to learn about the impact of the intervention (such as movement to employment, education or further training, as well as impact on softer skills such as motivation and confidence), the experiences of participants and their reasons for participating. The large sample size and representative weighting allows for a robust assessment of these issues. However, the quantitative nature of the survey limits the depth of the analysis.
- 1.7 Where possible, a systematic analysis by demographic breakdown and region was conducted; however, results are included in the report where they are statistically significant or relevant to the evaluation.

Interviews with Welsh Government Officials and key partners

- 1.8 In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven Welsh Government officials and partners (see Annex B for topic guide). Interviewees were identified by Welsh Government.
- 1.9 Interviews were used to investigate the approach to implementation, administration and management of the programme. They explored the performance of different aspects of the programme and its alignment with current policy. They also explored the extent to which Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Learning Support (ALS) budgets are being accessed to support people with additional learning needs, and how are they being used, whether and how the needs of trainees have changed over recent years and how the referrals process has been

working in practice and the role of Careers Wales. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of interviewees.

Initial round of provider and subcontractor interviews

- 1.10 In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventeen providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme (see Annex C for topic guide). Interviewees were selected to ensure that all lead providers with a Traineeships contract and a sample of sub-contractors, FE colleges and private training providers were engaged, with all bar one lead provider being interviewed.
- 1.11 To recruit training providers to the evaluation, a list of organisations delivering work-based learning contracts was obtained from the Welsh Government website.
- 1.12 Interviews focused on the impact of the programme on participants' soft skills, confidence and motivation, policy context, stakeholders' experience and opinions of the management, administration and implementation of the programme, the performance of different aspects of the programme, cross-cutting themes and Welsh language. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of experience of interviewees. In addition, the method of recruitment was resource-intensive.

Second round of provider and subcontractor interviews

- 1.13 A second round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 of the providers and subcontractors who had been interviewed in the initial round (see Annex D for topic guide) and who were willing to engage in a subsequent interview.
- 1.14 These were conducted in order to further explore the use of Welsh language in Traineeships provision and the ESF cross-cutting themes. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of experience of interviewees.

Learner survey

- 1.15 A telephone survey was conducted with 105 Traineeships participants (see Annex E for topic guide). The target was to secure survey responses from 100 trainees, ultimately 105 trainees participated in the telephone survey.
- 1.16 Fieldwork with trainees sought to provide information on participants' experience of the Traineeships programme, and help to assess its impact on their soft skills, motivation and confidence.
- 1.17 The main limitation of the learner survey is the sample size, which is roughly one ninth of that of the ESF Participants Survey; results therefore cannot be considered as the most robust source. However, the learner survey contained a wider array of questions with the ability to probe certain issues qualitatively; this allowed for a greater depth of qualitative analysis.
- 1.18 Details of learners on the Traineeships programme were provided by the Welsh Government. The sample frame for the research was devised by stratifying participants by the lead contractor (training provider) and then randomly sampling from within each stratification.
- 1.19 To ensure that the survey was appropriate for the target population (the trainees) a three-stage approach to survey implementation was adopted: internal piloting, cognitive testing and a test sample (see Appendix A for full details).

Employer survey

- 1.20 A telephone survey was conducted with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement (see Annex F for topic guide) in order to:
- Understand what had prompted their engagement with Traineeships.
 - Gain an understanding of the process of engaging with young people through the Traineeships programme.
 - Gather perspectives on the barriers faced by young people participating in the Traineeships programme.
 - Gain an understanding of the nature of work placements and support offered by employers.
 - Gain insight into the opportunities and impacts arising for employers through their participation in the Traineeships programme.

- 1.21 Monitoring information associated with the Traineeships Programme did not include details of the employers with whom Traineeships participants had secured a placement.
- 1.22 There are two main limitations of the methodology for the employer survey. Firstly, the small sample size potentially limits the breadth of experience of interviewees and does not allow for a robust statistical analysis of the results. Secondly, the recruitment method (as described above) was highly resource-intensive and did not allow for the targeting of specific employer groups. The main strength of the method is the breadth and depth of questions included, enabling a valuable insight to employers' views and perspectives.

Counterfactual impact assessment

- 1.23 The counterfactual impact assessment uses matched administrative data, specifically the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data which combines data on learning from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), DWP administrative data on benefit receipt, and HMRC data covering earnings and employment.
- 1.24 Individuals who had been on the Traineeships programme were matched with similar individuals who had not participated in the Traineeships programme using the following seven variables:
- Age at start of learning.
 - Gender.
 - Ethnicity.
 - Level of Learning.
 - Whether individual has a self-declared learning difficulty or disability or not.
 - Whether individual has a self-declared work-limiting health condition or not.
 - Whether individual resides in East Wales or West Wales and the Valleys.
- 1.25 Once the treated and matched comparison groups were established, these were combined into one dataset with an identifier indicating whether individuals are in the treatment (participating in the Traineeships programme) or comparison group. Six multivariate regression models were estimated with the following dependent variables (for full details see Annex A):

- Job Entry.
- Three month job sustainment.
- Earnings in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus one”.
- Earnings in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus two”.
- Days in employment in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus one”.
- Days in employment in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus two”.

1.26 The use of LEO data affects the nature of counterfactual against which we compare outcomes for trainees. The counterfactual group are also taken from LEO, so they are also undertaking learning as the LLWR dataset which is incorporated into LEO only covers people who are undertaking some form of post-16 learning. The counterfactual group are those undertaking learning at either Entry Level or Level 1 in Wales whose learning finished before 31 March 2016, the same period for which we consider trainees. This allows an assessment of subsequent earnings and employment outcomes for one and two years after participation in learning. Hence, this is not a ‘policy off’ counterfactual of comparing trainees against those who have not undertaken any learning.

1.27 The approach has some limitations:

- Firstly, that our matching process could not, at this point in time, consider information from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) (for full details see Annex A). In particular, PLASC data may help address the potential bias to our results from possible unobservable differences between the programme participants and the counterfactual group.
- Secondly, only one and two year effects and not any longer term effects can be estimated with the data that is currently available.

Cost-benefit analysis

1.28 Learning and Work’s approach to cost benefit analyses of labour market programmes is based on, and consistent with, the Treasury Green Book, the DWP

Social Cost Benefit Analysis Framework, and other official guidance from government departments.

1.29 A labour market intervention, such as the Traineeships programme, is likely to have a range of costs:

- Referral Costs.
- Programme delivery costs.
- Administration costs.
- Costs falling on employers or participants.

The Welsh Government have supplied claims data made for the purpose of claiming reimbursement of eligible costs from the European Social Fund. These costs cover programme delivery costs, and staff administration costs, and possibly referral costs falling on Careers Wales. Based on knowledge of programme referral costs from other programmes, these referral costs are not expected to be very large and so their potential exclusion does not materially impact on our cost benefit analysis results. Estimates for costs falling on participants or employers are not included. The evaluation findings suggest that 90% of participant travel costs are covered by the programme. Hence, the vast majority of these costs will be included in the figures for the programme delivery costs. Given the age group covered by the programme childcare costs are not expected to be substantial either and in addition the programme already provides support for these costs where relevant. No figures for costs on employers are included, neither assessments of the output benefits accruing to employers whilst trainees are on a work placement with them. It is expected that these benefits to employers would at least cover the costs of offering work placements as otherwise it would not be financially worthwhile to do so.

1.30 The programme provided an allowance to all trainees at a level of £30 a week for those in the Engagement strand and £50 a week for those in the other two strands. As these allowances are transfer payments and not resource costs, we need to adjust the figures provided by the Welsh Government to subtract the amounts spent on the trainee allowances. The Welsh Government supplied disaggregated expenditure figures on support costs including, childcare costs, training allowances and travel costs. It is anticipated that the large majority of these costs will pertain to the training allowance and so assume that three quarters of these support costs are

for the training allowance and so deduct these from overall costs supplied by the Welsh Government.

1.31 As discussed our impact assessments assesses the outcomes for trainees against the alternative of Entry Level or Level 1 learning in further education. Hence, our cost benefit analysis needs to take account of the potential costs of this alternative learning as well as the costs of the Traineeships programme. The estimate of the costs of this alternative provision uses three different approaches:

- Based on data from the Auditor General for Wales.
- Based on the costs of English provision.
- Based on the lowest cost provider from the Auditor General for Wales study.

In addition, a stress test was undertaken with no allowance made for the costs of any alternative learning. This stress test effectively treats the cost benefit analysis as if the impact assessment had been undertaken on a policy off basis. This stress test is not intended to be a credible estimate of the Net Present Value or Benefit to Cost ratio of the Traineeships programme but as a challenging test of the programme's value for money given the uncertainties surrounding the costs of the counterfactual alternative learning provision.

1.32 Once the programme costs, alternative counterfactual costs, and programme benefits have been calculated we can move on to calculating the overall programme net present values and benefit to cost ratios. In order to calculate the net present values (NPVs) of the programme costs, alternative counterfactual costs, and programme benefits we need to discount¹ these cost and benefit estimates back to a common base year, in this case 2014/15. We use the 3.5% real discount rate as per the Treasury Green Book guidance.

1.33 The overall NPV of the programme is then equal to the difference between the NPV of the programme benefits and the NPV of the net costs of the programme. In turn, the NPV of the net costs of the programme is equal to the NPV of the gross programme costs minus the NPV of the alternative counterfactual costs. The programme's benefit to cost ratios (BCRs) are another way of expressing how the

¹ Discounting in this way allows us to compare costs and benefits occurring over different periods of time and with different relativities in different years on a consistent basis. Discounting in this way is based on the notion of time preference – that in general people prefer to receive benefits now rather than later.

programme's benefits and costs compare and are equal to the programme benefits divided by the programme costs. For a programme's benefits to outweigh its costs, and so for it to represent value for money, the overall NPV should be positive and the BCR should be above one.

2. Background

This chapter presents a background to the Traineeships programme drawn from the scoping and desk-based review activities. It also compares performance to date with the 2014-2022 programme targets.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- 2.1 The proportion of 16-18-year olds NEET in Wales has, except for a brief dip in 2005 and 2006, remained above 10 per cent for the past two decades, with occasional rises above 12 per cent. Latest provisional figures (end 2017) show it to have dropped to 9.5 per cent, the lowest level since comparable figures became available in 1996.²
- 2.2 The proportion of 19-24-year olds who are NEET follows a similar pattern, remaining above 17 per cent in each year except 2004, and rising above 22 per cent between 2010 and 2012. The latest provisional figures (end 2017) show it to be running at 16.2 per cent for 19-24 year olds, the joint lowest level since comparable figures became available.³
- 2.3 Whilst not directly comparable with the headline figures, sample estimates of the proportion of young people who are NEET based on the Annual Population Survey enable a direct comparison with the UK as a whole. Latest estimates for the year to September 2018, give Wales a higher level both for 16-18 year olds (8.8% compared to 7.1%) and 19-24 year olds (15.2% compared to 14.1%).⁴
- 2.4 Research tells us that long-term NEET status can have serious detrimental impacts on an individual's future labour market prospects, their health and a range of other outcomes. It can also contribute to a cycle of deprivation that impacts their children's future labour market prospects and life chances. In a continuation of previous (Welsh and UK) government policy on work-based learning programmes, Traineeships, introduced by Welsh Government in 2011, were designed to reduce the proportion of 16-18-year-old young people who are NEET in Wales. Traineeships combine a mixture of soft and essential skills training with a period of work experience. The programme aims to reduce the proportion of young people

² 2018, Young people not in education employment or training (NEET), Gov.Wales

³ 2018, Young people not in education employment or training (NEET), Gov.Wales

⁴ 2018, Young people not in education employment or training (NEET), Gov.Wales

classified as NEET and to facilitate progression into employment or further learning by enabling young people to overcome barriers to employment, and to increase participants' confidence and motivation.⁵

Previous Evaluation

- 2.5 The initial funding round of the Traineeships Programme ran from 2011-15. It was an All Wales programme, utilising ESF funding for Traineeships participants located in the Convergence Area of Wales, now West Wales & Valleys (WWV).
- 2.6 As part of a wider assessment of Welsh Government's work-based learning programmes, an evaluation was conducted of the Traineeships programme during its 2011-2015 funding round.⁶ The evaluation reported approximately 24,500 individuals completed Traineeships in the period to July 2014.
- 2.7 Stakeholders were found to be in broad agreement about the effectiveness of Traineeships in supporting 16-18-year olds as part of Welsh Government's work-based learning programme aims. Both employers and trainees were positive about the programme, considering it to make a valuable contribution to the work-readiness of the young people involved. Overall, two-thirds of individuals had progressed into a positive destination (defined as progression into employment, self-employment, voluntary work or learning at a higher level) three months after completion of their Traineeship in both 2012/13 (67%) and 2013/14 (68%); although it should be noted that this includes progression from the Engagement to Level 1 strand.
- 2.8 There was a mixed record for the achievement of the targets for ESF Convergence areas (WWV); they were met for number of completions (12,450 compared with the target of 12,120), female participation (45% compared with the 42% target) and entry to employment (26% compared with the 21% target), but not met for achievement of qualifications (36% compared with the 61% target) or entry to further learning (14% compared with the 18% target).
- 2.9 Despite generally positive views on Traineeships, in the initial evaluation some stakeholders expressed specific practical concerns related to issues such as provider staffing, lack of flexibility and stakeholder engagement. There were also

⁵ 2016, Operational plan for 2014-2022 operation: Traineeships (East Wales or West Wales & Valleys), Gov.Wales

⁶ 2016, York Consulting et al, Evaluation of work-based learning programme 2011-15: Traineeships

concerns that individuals classified as Tier 2⁷ in the five-tier model used within the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) were not receiving sufficient one-to-one or additional learning support. There were also concerns about the proportion of young people being directed towards an Apprenticeship following completion of a Traineeship.

2.10 The evaluation made a number of recommendations for amendments to the Traineeships programme, including⁸:

- A focus on employer engagement to ensure adequate provision of good work placements, particularly of organisations in the third sector in order to secure opportunities for trainees with additional needs.
- Monitoring of the proportions of work placements in 'real' and 'simulated' workplaces, possibly through additions to the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR).
- An extension of lower intensity support from a period of four weeks to eight weeks.
- Facilitation of increased collaboration between Traineeships providers.
- Clarification of the role of Careers Wales.
- Review of national and local marketing approaches.
- Review of programme elements to ensure the Engagement element provides sufficient, tailored support to the entire eligible cohort, and the Level 1 element and Bridge-to-Employment strand have improved progression to Apprenticeships.
- Review of additional learner support to ensure it is accessed when needed.
- Welsh Government should ensure the publication and review of data as compared to ESF targets.

Current programme

Aims and Structure

2.11 The aim of the current Traineeships programme is to reduce the proportion of 16-19-year olds in Wales classified as NEET and to facilitate progression into

⁷ Unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, known to Careers Wales, who are not available for education, employment or training

⁸ 2016, York Consulting et al, Evaluation of work-based learning programme 2011-15: Traineeships

employment or further learning and increase participants' confidence and motivation.

2.12 ESF funding has been secured under:

- Priority Axis 3: Youth Employment and Attainment.
- Specific objective 1: To reduce unemployment and the number of 16-24-year olds who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).⁹

2.13 The 2014 to 2022 Traineeships Operational Plan sets out the following required components of a Traineeship¹⁰:

- One-to-one support for trainees to access mentoring and careers guidance.
- Short, interactive vocational courses relative to the world of work.
- Numeracy and literacy skills.
- Employability skills.
- Life skills.
- Interaction with employers, or work experience.

2.14 The Operational Plan commits Welsh Government to regularly review the operation of the Traineeships programme to ensure the findings of the previous phase evaluation (as described above) are integrated into the programme.

2.15 There are three strands of the Traineeships programme: Engagement, Level 1 and Bridge-to-Employment.¹¹

- **Engagement:** The Engagement strand is aimed at young people who either have barriers to further learning and employment or who require confirmation of a chosen occupational focus or progression route. It involves the identification and assessment of barriers, work placements with an occupational focus, training in required skills and an opportunity to complete Entry Level (QCF or NQF frameworks) or Level 2 and below (Essential Skill Wales framework) qualifications.
- **Level 1:** The Level 1 strand is aimed at young people who already have an occupational focus and are assessed as able to complete a Level 1 but not a

⁹ See 2016, Guidance on indicator definitions, data and evidence requirements: ESF: Priority 3: Youth employment and attainment, Gov.Wales

¹⁰ 2016, Operational plan for 2014-2022 operation: Traineeships (East Wales or West Wales & Valleys), Gov.Wales

¹¹ 2015, Work based learning programme specification and guidance, Gov.Wales

Level 2 or above qualification. It involves the identification of barriers to learning, and aims to address them by delivering a career-aims relevant Level 1 (QCF or NQF framework) or Entry Level 3 to Level 2 (Essential Skills Wales framework) qualification through the use of work placements, community and voluntary work and centre-based learning.

- **Bridge-to-Employment:** The Bridge-to-Employment strand is aimed at young people who are occupationally focused, employment-ready and have completed at least one of the other two strands. If they have completed the Engagement strand they must be above Level 1; if they have completed the Level 1 strand they must have completed required Level 1 qualifications. This strand delivers elements of Level 2 (QCF framework) qualifications to test occupational competencies, Technical Certificates (from an appropriate Apprenticeship framework) and/or Level 2 or above (Essential Skills Wales framework) qualifications. During recruitment to a Traineeship placement, there is an intention that employers will offer employment to young people after completion of the Traineeship.

Cross-cutting themes

2.16 As a condition of ESF funding, the Traineeships programme has incorporated the following cross-cutting themes: equal opportunities, sustainable development and tackling poverty.

- **Equal opportunities:** Providers are required to have suitable equality and diversity policies in place to ensure that all eligible young people have equal access to Traineeships opportunities regardless of protected characteristics. Providers must review their performance annually, and aim to challenge stereotypes and tackle discrimination.
- **Sustainable development:** As a requirement for receipt of ESF funding providers must support and encourage sustainable development. At the start of this funding round of the Traineeships programme providers were required to have a documented strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). However, this has now been superseded by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Providers must have a documented strategy for encompassing commitment and leadership, organisational management, teaching and learning and community and partnerships, noting the well-being goals of:

- a prosperous Wales;
- a resilient Wales;
- a healthier Wales;
- a more equal Wales;
- a Wales of cohesive communities;
- a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- a globally responsible Wales.

The strategy should be reviewed annually. Providers are also requested to report their method of addressing Community Benefits to the Welsh Government's Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (SHELL) Group.

- **Tackling poverty:** Traineeships can help to tackle poverty by increasing trainees' skills and experience and hence increasing their labour market potential. In addition, a non-means tested allowance is provided to all trainees at a level of £30 a week for those in the Engagement strand and £50 a week for those in the other two strands. Reasonable travel costs of up to 10 per cent of the weekly allowance are also covered.

Eligibility

2.17 The current Traineeships programme is available to individuals who meet the following criteria¹²:

- Aged 16-19 at commencement of the Traineeship, or aged 15 at completion of full time education and turning 16 before the beginning of the following September.
- Are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Are ordinarily resident in Wales.
- Meet programme specification criteria (e.g. in assessment of need).

2.18 It should be noted that the 16-18 age range and the up to Level 2 eligibility criteria (as described for the individual strands above) for the Welsh Traineeships programme are key differences compared to the English Traineeships programme, whereby young people with up to Level 3 qualifications, aged 16-24 (or 25 if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan) can participate.

¹² 2015, Work based learning programme specification and guidance, Gov.Wales

Enrolment

- 2.19 Under the current programme, referrals to the Traineeships Programme are made via Careers Wales. In most cases, this will be a direct referral by a Careers Wales advisor after an assessment of an individual's needs. Such referrals are the only methods of enrolment for the Engagement and Bridge-to-Employment strands. However, it is possible for eligible individuals to self-refer to the Level 1 strand, although they are required to complete a vocational guidance interview with a Career Wales advisor in order to be issued with an application form.¹³
- 2.20 After referral, it is the responsibility of providers to conduct an initial interview, induction and initial assessment, and to develop and monitor an individualised learning plan (ILP).

Data Management

- 2.21 All data is submitted electronically by providers through the LLWR system. It is used to draw down ESF funding through the European Data Management System (EDMS), to which data is downloaded from the LLWR system. Data is checked by the Welsh Government's Provider Assurance and Governance Service to ensure it matches the terms of the programme specification and provider contracts. Data is also used by Welsh Government to assess participation rates by protected characteristic and to monitor equality and diversity.

Standards

- 2.22 To ensure the quality of the programme, providers are required to complete annual Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Development Plans, based on Welsh Government guidance. Welsh Government conducts an annual risk-based review through its Provider Performance function, reporting progress against key benchmarks to Ministers.
- 2.23 It should also be noted that in 2017, Welsh Government published new professional standards for further education and work-based learning practitioners. The new standards, co-constructed with sector representatives, aim to support all practitioners to engage in professional learning.¹⁴

¹³ 2015, Work based learning programme specification and guidance, Gov.Wales

¹⁴ [Professional standards](#)

Job Support Wales

- 2.24 Welsh Government will be replacing the current suite of employability skills programmes including Traineeships, Jobs Growth Wales, React and the Employability Skills Programme with a new, single employability programme: Job Support Wales. This programme will support delivery of the Welsh Government's Programme for Government, Taking Wales Forward commitment to reshape employability support for all individuals and forms an important part of the government's Employability Plan.
- 2.25 The programme will support individuals who are aged 16¹⁵ and over and ensure that they receive the bespoke support required to progress towards, and enter sustainable education, employment or training (EET). This will have a greater focus on employer engagement and will provide ongoing support to individuals as they progress into education, employment or training.
- 2.26 The only referral mechanism into the programme will be through the Working Wales service which will be delivered by Careers Wales. Individuals will receive an independent and professional enhanced needs-based assessment through an advice and guidance process which will identify both their strengths and their barriers to entering and sustaining EET. Advisors will support the individual by identifying barriers to employment, the best route to employment, and by referring them to the most appropriate intervention/s available to best meet their needs.
- 2.27 Job Support Wales will have three strands: Youth Engagement, Youth Training and Adult.
- **Youth Engagement:** This strand is for individuals aged 16-18¹⁶ who are further from the labour market (NEET), with significant or multiple barriers to gaining sustainable employment, education or training. It will provide intensive, tailored, specialist support to address barriers and aims to progress young people into employment, education or training.

¹⁵ Individuals aged 15 at the point of entry will also be considered for the programme if their enrolment date is after they have completed education in the June before their 16th birthday in June, July or August of the same year.

¹⁶ Extended eligibility is offered to individuals aged up to and including the age of 19 on entry who hold a statement/s of special educational need/s (or who had equivalent needs and were following an equivalent review programme) whilst at school; *and* are not in full time education, employment or training (NEET); *and* have been assessed by WW service as being suitable for the programme.

- **Youth Training:** This strand is for individuals aged 16-18¹⁷ who are closer to the labour market and work ready, but require improved employability skills, a clearer career focus and better job-related skills. It will provide support to address these barriers and aims to prepare and support young people into employment, education or training.
- **Adult:** This strand is for individuals aged 18 and over who have one or more barriers to secure, sustained or meaningful employment. It will provide tailored, flexible and innovative support to address barriers and aims to progress adults into secure and sustainable employment.

2.28 Job Support Wales builds on the findings of substantial evaluation and research evidence of Welsh Government programmes, including findings from the evaluation of the 2011-15 phase of the Traineeships programme and evaluations of other programmes such as ReAct, Jobs Growth Wales and the Employability Skills Programme. It also draws on lessons learned from other similar activities both nationally and internationally. The programme will be procured during 2019.

Key Findings

3. Programme structure

This chapter presents findings relating to the structure of the Traineeships programme. It is based on:

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven Welsh Government officials and partners.
- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement.

Key findings:

- Most officials, partners, and providers agree that the overall structure and approach for the Traineeships programme is the correct one. Respondents consider the split into different strands to be a positive feature of the programme, providing different levels of opportunity which can be targeted for different learner needs.
- There is low use of the Bridge-to-Employment strand of the programme due to the perceived restrictive nature of the offer, the demands of the payment model, and the relative financial advantages of comparable offers (such as the Apprenticeship and Jobs Growth Wales programmes).
- Employers who have participated in the programme generally consider its key strengths to be the opportunity for young people to gain work experience and skills through the programme, and that it provides an alternative option for individuals who have not had their needs fully met by mainstream provision.
- Most providers are using consortia or subcontracting arrangements to deliver the programme, including some use of third-sector partners to better engage and support harder to reach target groups.
- Traineeships providers, officials and partners regularly meet at networks convened by the National Training Federation for Wales. These meetings are

considered by the vast majority of respondents to be a useful opportunity for sharing experiences, successes and challenges in delivering the programme.

- Officials and partners felt that the Traineeships programme aligns well with Welsh Government policies and priorities and is important in helping to prevent young people falling into long term NEET status and keeping people out of poverty.
- Providers generally considered the programme to align well with the Apprenticeships programme, which was perceived as a natural progression route, and, to a lesser extent, the Employability Skills programme and Jobs Growth Wales programmes.

Programme design and management

Perceptions of the model

- 3.1 Providers, officials, and partners were positive about the purpose and intent of the Traineeships programme, considering it an effective approach for supporting this cohort of young people. At the time of re-commissioning it was felt that more time was needed to 'bed in' the relatively new structure of the programme; as such, only minimal changes had been made in the specification for this phase of the Traineeships programme. Nevertheless, the development of Job Support Wales seeks to address an identified disconnect between programme design and programme delivery especially for harder to reach young people.
- 3.2 As outlined earlier within the report, the Traineeships programme operates across three strands: Engagement, Level 1 and Bridge-to-Employment. All providers contracted to deliver Traineeships are actively delivering services within the Engagement and Level 1 strands (broadly operating with two thirds of participants on Engagement and one third on Level 1 provision). However, most providers are not delivering the Bridge-to-Employment strand of the Programme. Most officials and partners raised concerns about the Bridge-to-Employment strand, and were aware that take-up of this strand was low which may limit progression opportunities. The Bridge-to-Employment strand is almost entirely absent from the services offered by providers, and, in a number of interviews, training providers indicated that they were unfamiliar with what may be offered through the strand. Many providers also indicated that they perceive the Bridge-to-Employment strand as overlapping with the Apprenticeships programme, which they are more likely to refer young

people to. In the minority of cases where there was familiarity with the Bridge-to-Employment strand, respondent providers described the restrictive nature of the offer, the demands of the payment model and the relative financial advantages of comparable offers (primarily via the Apprenticeship and Jobs Growth Wales programme).

- 3.3 Respondents typically described the offer as a useful stepping stone in progression towards employment, providing trainees with a taster of a particular sector or occupation whilst allowing them, following that exposure, to change their minds and follow a different route.

I think some of these young people do need little stepping stones for them to be able to progress. (Welsh Government Official)

- 3.4 The structure of the programme, separated into strands, is also widely welcomed. Providers identify that both Engagement and Level 1 are critical to the offer as Engagement on its own would be considered insufficient to progress many young people into employment, whilst Level 1 offers a step up in terms of qualifications and activity and introduces a need for more commitment from the participant.

- 3.5 Currently, following a referral from Careers Wales who will use the TRF to assess individual needs, providers decide which strand of the Traineeships programme trainees access. For the majority (13 out of 17 providers) the allocation is determined through the initial assessment in which they identify the learner's level of focus on a particular occupation or sector, alongside pinpointing any specific barriers to learning and employment. This assessment, for most providers, is an informal process in which they assess the work readiness of the learner. Within this they typically consider the learner's previous qualifications and whether the individual has any severe barriers, such as homelessness, caring responsibilities or substance abuse issues.

'Engagement picks up people classed as being unfocussed (less than 2 Ds at GCSE) who often come from problematic family backgrounds. We put them into a practical environment and give them a broad learning including about life and develop their maturity etc.' (Provider)

- 3.6 In one instance, a provider also stated that Traineeship strand allocation is determined by the referral the provider receives from Careers Wales. The referral

form, the provider suggested, indicates the level of skill of the learner as well as highlighting any existing barriers.

3.7 Regardless of the strand in which the young person had participated, it was felt that the support typically provided through a Traineeship enabled a young person to develop a broad platform of enhanced skills, especially in relation to employability and soft skills, such as confidence, aspirations, social interaction and maturity in particular.

3.8 They also welcomed the high degree of flexibility and autonomy to identify support they deemed most suitable and relevant to moving a young person along that journey.

Without the funding and the flexibility, certainly that Engagement offers, we would have a large body of students who would struggle to get through a L1 qualification. (Provider)

If we know that learners have carer responsibilities or are struggling we can reduce their hours or number of days to make it work around them.

If they need additional support we'll make sure that's available.

Sometimes we extend engagement for those who need it or conversely, we can fast track some onto Level 1. (Provider)

...it is down to the provider to do what they want to do with the individual, to move them forward. (Partner)

3.9 Officials and partners were confident that the programme would achieve its overall targets, but had concerns that participation in the programme was mostly at Engagement and Level 1 levels (rather than Bridge-to-Employment) and that subsequent progression was often in-programme or into Further Education (FE) courses and not on to the Bridge-to-Employment level or other outcomes such as employment or Apprenticeships. However, some providers also felt that the Traineeships programme did not always provide a sufficient grounding from which to progress to the Apprenticeships programme. Such providers described the trainees as often having complicated needs and barriers such as behavioural issues and/or chaotic home lives which required further support to enable them to become work-ready. In these cases, providers typically signposted learners to other services that they believed could offer the most appropriate and effective support to address more complex individual needs.

- 3.10 Progressing learners from Engagement to Level 1 results in additional payments for the provider. In some instances this is a risk, as it may result in individuals being placed on the Engagement Strand inappropriately (and then progressing quickly on to the next strand, leading to payment) or individuals on the Engagement Strand progressing onto Level 1 when a different progression, for example to FE, would be a better fit.
- 3.11 It was noted by one partner, however, that in practice the Engagement level did not work as designed. Constraints on provider capacity due to the amount of time they are given to work with trainees, and their desire to meet performance targets by ensuring that participants to make positive progressions within four weeks of completion, meant that they felt less able to tailor their offer based on individual learner needs.
- 3.12 In terms of delivery approach, several providers referred to increasingly moving away from the traditional classroom approach, instead finding and offering experiences that were vocationally orientated (often located in a workplace) to help trainees identify what they want to do and the career they wish to pursue. In one instance, a provider described a partnership they have with a local café, with whom some of their trainees do a work placement, providing the trainees with customer service skills. It is understood that enabling work placements in the café allows trainees to develop their skills within a 'sheltered environment,' whilst all café profits go to an adjoining hospice.
- 3.13 Under the current Traineeships model, participants who have achieved the Level 2 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C) or above are not eligible for the Traineeships programme. Some providers raised concerns that a focus on attainment may overlook challenges around self-confidence and other soft skills, a lack of previous work experience and appropriate workplace behaviour which may undermine a young person's preparedness for work. In these instances, Traineeships was considered by providers to be a suitable model to support them.
- 3.14 Similarly, several providers suggested that widening the age group eligible for the programme would be beneficial for supporting a wider group to access training and employment. Typically, they suggested Traineeships should be available up to the age of 20. However, it should be noted that individuals are entitled to benefits from the age of 18, which means that Traineeships may not be the most attractive option in the short term and other support is available to them that may also be suitable.

Employer perspective

- 3.15 A total of 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement participated in the employer survey. Employers who have participated in the programme generally consider its key strengths to be the opportunity for young people to gain work experience and skills, and that it provides an alternative option for individuals who have not had their needs fully met by mainstream provision:

The key strength of the programme is that it provides a safety net for those who are falling through the cracks of the mainstream education system. It provides an achievable progression route and an opportunity to develop skills that the participants wouldn't normally have. It offers a chance for someone to completely transform their lives. (Employer)

I think it's really good that we can provide a scheme for young people leaving school who aren't ready for higher education or employment, it does fill a gap...(Employer)

It works well, they come out of it with a qualification but mostly experience and it's obviously a benefit to an employer to see the difference you've made to them. (Employer)

- 3.16 Others spoke of the flexibility and ongoing relationship that they have with their training providers:

It's very flexible and the providers are very approachable and open with us. They do tell us beforehand whether they think the young person will work out so they're very open in their opinions and give us a heads up if they think they might let us down. (Employer)

- 3.17 Three quarters of surveyed employers either could not identify any weakness of the programme (14) or any improvements that could be made (22). Just over a fifth (10) suggested that the overall quality of service offered by providers could be improved, particularly providers' ability to motivate trainees engaged in the programme and ensuring that they set up appointments. A similar number (11) felt that communication from training providers could be improved, for example through more frequent meetings and by providing more detailed information on the learner prior to the work placement. Seven employers (7) in particular felt that more information on the trainees they are about to take on was required (see paragraphs 6.11 to 6.13). A further five respondents suggested increasing the training

allowance given to trainees participating on the programme, as a way of creating greater incentive for the learner to carry on with and work hard on the work placement.

Procurement and contracting

- 3.18 The procurement process for the Traineeships Programme formed part of the work-based learning programme for Welsh Government. Contracts are issued annually on an academic year basis, with procurement undertaken every 4-5 years.
- 3.19 For the 2016/17 academic year, seven of the providers on the work-based learning programme secured contracts to deliver the Traineeships programme (a reduction from eight providers the previous year) with a wide range in contract value per provider from £620,000 to £11.6m.¹⁸
- 3.20 A number of providers operate within consortia and all providers subcontract at least some elements of the services that they provide through the Traineeships programme. In some instances, all in-house training is subcontracted to third parties whilst in others, only trainees that are seeking technical, sectoral or occupationally specific training such as the repair of motor vehicles (mechanics) or health and beauty is subcontracted.
- 3.21 There are three third sector subcontractors delivering Traineeships through three separate lead contractors, reflecting the Welsh Government's aim that the third sector is more engaged with Traineeships. Providers typically referred to the extent of commerciality surrounding the contract. Whilst not all payments are linked to outcomes, outcomes payments linked to positive progression were identified as a disincentive for both third sector providers and sub-contractors, since third sector organisations typically do not have the resources and infrastructure to deliver activity unless funding is provided either at the start of their engagement or at regular points throughout.
- 3.22 Conversely, Welsh Government officials felt it was important that third sector partners be involved in the delivery as they are seen as a key partner for engaging and supporting a diverse range of trainees. However, there was uncertainty about the extent to which providers had been successful in this. Some mentioned variability in the performance of providers in this area. A number of providers have

¹⁸ <https://gov.wales/work-based-learning-wbl-contracts>

good partnerships with third sector providers whereas others, for example, prefer to do everything 'in-house'; whether driven by the needs of the learner or by business needs.

- 3.23 Lead providers were asked for their perspectives on the procurement process for the Traineeships programme. The majority of providers were content with the procurement approach although several providers felt that more clarity on the key criteria for selection would be useful. This was particularly the case in circumstances in which a provider secured a contract in one geographical area but did not secure the same contract in another.
- 3.24 Stakeholders referred to two instances where providers had secured contracts to deliver in certain geographical areas where they had no previous experience. Where this arose it typically lengthened the implementation of the programme as providers sought to extend their familiarity of the target area, establish linkages with partner organisations (particularly Careers Wales) and third-party providers and to establish their own presence within that location. Whilst this in itself does not present a reason to not award a contract to a particular provider, it's important that all stakeholders clearly understand the timing implications and the potential impact on delivery.
- 3.25 Broadly, Welsh Government officials and partners felt that the commissioning and management of the programme had gone well, however, one respondent stated that some issues in contract management still needed resolving to ensure the quality of provision. This was due to any monitoring only being at a high level to ensure adherence to the terms of the contract, rather than, for example, the extent to which they are building relationships with other providers and looking at what they are actually delivering.

I think the failure has been in actually holding providers to account for what they said they were going to deliver, really. (Welsh Government official)

Training offer

- 3.26 As outlined earlier within this section, providers praised the high degree of flexibility of the Engagement and Level 1 strands of the Traineeships programme, enabling them to utilise provision (either directly delivered or delivered by third party providers) that best meet the needs of the trainees.

- 3.27 In terms of the level of training available, a minority of providers proposed the reintroduction of provision up to NQF Level 2 in response to a perceived gap in service provision between the Level 1 strand and the Apprenticeships Programme. However, the majority were happy with the level of provision that is available with a minority requesting that no further changes to the model are made.

Progression

- 3.28 Welsh Government's Work Based Learning Programme Specification and Guidance¹⁹ states that, to qualify as a positive measurable progression from the Traineeships programme (into learning at a higher level, employment, voluntary work or self-employment) the progression needs to take place within four weeks of a young person leaving the programme. This represents a reduction from 13 weeks from the previous iteration of the Traineeships programme. This reduction creates a particular challenge over the summer, where, for example, a participant may complete a Traineeship in July and then wish to enrol on a further education course that is not commencing until September. As a result, some providers are managing the timing of courses to ensure that they do not finish until within four weeks of the start of the course onto which a young person wishes to progress. Whilst this reduction is met with some frustration by providers, it is aligned to European Social Fund eligibility requirements and it should be noted that the requirements for what constitutes a positive outcome are more generous than they were previously in terms of the level and duration of further learning, which has been a factor in enabling providers to meet progression targets. It should also be noted that positive progression is not required for every learner; the contractual target is for fifty per cent positive progression.

Sharing best practice

- 3.29 Traineeship providers, officials and partners regularly meet in networks convened by the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW). The vast majority of respondents welcome these meetings, describing them as a useful opportunity for sharing experiences, successes and challenges in delivering the programme. A small minority questioned the frequency of these meetings and wondered whether they should be held less often.

¹⁹ 2015, Work based learning programme specification and guidance, Gov.Wales, Annex E

Programme alignment

- 3.30 Officials and partners felt the Traineeships programme aligns well with Welsh Government policies and priorities and is important in helping to prevent young people falling into long term NEET status and keeping people out of poverty. It was felt that provision of this nature is needed to ensure young people further away from the labour-market can engage and have a stepping stone into learning and work; although some acknowledged that, in practice, providers may not always be engaging those with the highest level of barriers or needs.
- 3.31 Providers felt that the Engagement and Level 1 strands align well with the Apprenticeships programme in particular, and, to a lesser extent with the Employability Skills Programme and Jobs Growth Wales programmes. However, there were some concerns about overlap between the Bridge-to-Employment strand and Apprenticeships. The extent of alignment can be undermined where a provider has secured a contract to deliver Traineeships in one geographical location but has not secured a contract to deliver the Apprenticeships programme. Acknowledging that many providers facilitate a smooth handover to Apprenticeship providers, it was felt that the trainees are keen to stay with their coaches/assessors and that transferring to another provider can affect their progress.
- 3.32 Several providers referred to a reduction in the level of training offered through Traineeships when compared to its predecessor, the Skill Build programme. It was, however, also felt that there was the potential for duplication in particular areas of skill development as, in some cases schools had already delivered 'soft skills' training up to Level 2 and the young person's enrolment onto the Traineeships programme represented something of a step back in the level of 'soft skills' training previously received. However, these young people would not have received the employability support that the Traineeships programme offers.
- 3.33 Similarly, several Welsh Government officials and partners noted there is the need to identify and understand potential duplication between Traineeships and other local ESF provision which may offer support to similar target groups, particularly those on the Engagement strand. It should also be noted that WEFO have approved a number of projects aimed at a similar cohort of young people.

*A lot of programmes looking at 16 to 18 year olds are fishing in the same pond
(WG Official)*

Examples of similar local projects include the Learning4Life element of Llamau in south east Wales, which provides pre-vocational training for 16-19 year olds with barriers to education; and Team, a 12 week programme for unemployed 16-25 year olds run by Prince's Trust, including work experience and English, maths and employability skills provision.

4. Recruitment, referral, engagement and delivery

This chapter presents findings relating to the recruitment and engagement of young people to the Traineeships programme and providers' approach to delivery. It is based on:

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven Welsh Government officials and partners.
- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- Secondary analysis of the 2018 ESF Participant Survey (911 respondents).
- A telephone survey of 105 trainees.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement.

Key findings

- Family and friends, schools and/or careers teachers and Careers Wales Advisors, are the main routes through which young people first find out about Traineeships. Most young people receive further information about the programme through either a Careers Wales Advisor or a training provider, with almost all learners feeling that they had enough information about the programme before embarking on it.
- Providers report that they use a range of approaches to engage their target audiences including through schools, social media, and referral partners. However, more than half of providers described a steady fall in the number of young people being recruited on to the Traineeships programme.
- Several providers and partners noted the key role that Careers Wales plays in ensuring young people are receiving advice about their options. This includes undertaking an assessment of each individual young person's needs, interests and aspirations, and, if appropriate, making a judgement about their suitability for the Traineeships programme.
- It was also noted by Welsh Government officials, partners and providers that the role of Careers Wales in the referral process can sometimes create delays, due

in some cases to Careers Wales' capacity and resource, and the need in some cases for learners to be referred to Careers Wales after they are initially engaged by the provider – which could potentially lead to them being placed with another provider.

- Providers offer a broadly consistent delivery process, involving the following steps:
 - An informal interview, including diagnostic/needs assessment.
 - Induction.
 - Development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
 - Participant engages in provision.
 - Monthly Reviews.
- Based on an assessment of trainees' skills, abilities and aspirations, activities are tailored to their needs. The majority of trainees receive training and support in areas such as CV writing, job applications, numbers, reading, writing and interview technique.

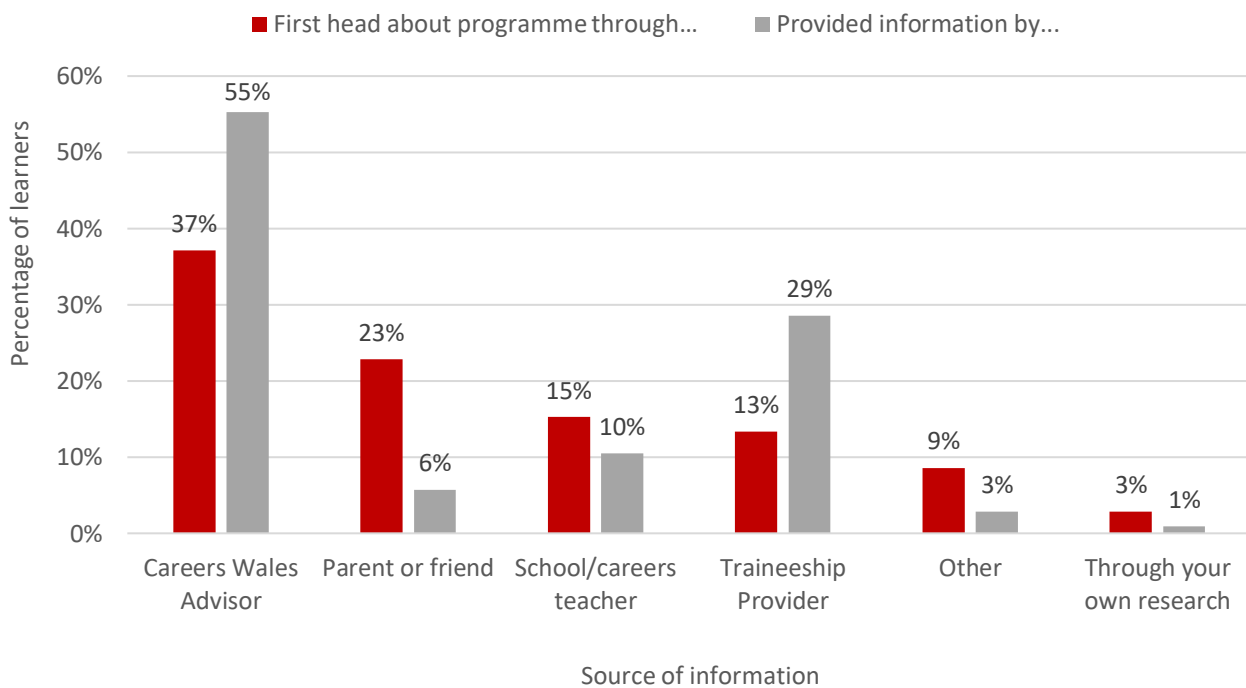
Recruitment to the programme and its promotion

- 4.1 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey (sample size of 911) show that the three most common routes for participants to find out about Traineeships were family members or friends (24%), schools and/or a careers teachers (24%) and Careers Wales Advisors (23%). This was followed by college or university (7%), employer (5%) and Job Centre Plus (5%). These sources were consistent across demographic groups, although respondents with a declared disability were significantly more likely to have heard through a college or university (13% compared to 5%)²⁰.
- 4.2 Although a smaller sample size (105), the learner survey asked respondents both how they first found out about Traineeships and where they received further information about them from. These findings are shown in Figure 1. and are included to compare the sources for these two stages of the process. Although less than two fifths (37%) of respondents to the learner survey had first heard about Traineeships via a Careers Wales advisor, over half (55%) received further

²⁰ Using a chi square test the significance level (p value) was less than 0.001

information about the programme through them; this demonstrates the importance of Careers Wales Advisors in learner engagement. In addition, although only 13 per cent had first heard about the programme through training providers, almost a third of learners (29%) had begun engaging with training providers at an early stage and obtained further information about the programme from them. This suggests that the majority of trainees, regardless of whether they had heard about the programme in a more informal way, sought information about the programme through a formalised method. It is also worth noting that trainees were likely to have both heard about the programme and received information through the same source. The exception to this was for trainees who had heard about the programme from a parent or friend; these respondents typically then sought information from a Careers Wales Advisor (10 out of 24) or a training provider (six out of 24).

Figure 1: How did you first hear about the Traineeships programme and who gave you information about the Traineeships Programme?



Base = 105 trainees

- 4.3 Trainees felt that they had enough information about the Traineeships programme before embarking on it, with 91 per cent of respondents to the learner survey agreeing with this.
- 4.4 More than half of providers interviewed (nine out of 16) described a steady fall in the number of young people being recruited on to the Traineeships programme.

Typically, providers perceived that the fall in numbers reflected a lack of promotion of the programme or a reduction in the number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET. Some also referred to changes in the eligibility criteria, inferring that it has led to a smaller group of young people eligible for the programme. Two out of the 16 providers also referred to competition with other programmes for the same cohort of young people. Consequently, self-promotion of the Traineeships programme has become increasingly prominent amongst providers in response. However, it should be noted that internal Careers Wales figures show that there are sufficient young people assessed as Tier 2 and Tier 3 who are eligible for Traineeships, although the programme will not necessarily be the correct option for all of these individuals. In addition, providers are often reluctant to take on young people with complex needs (many of whom would be assessed as Tier 2) due to a perception that they lack the time and resources to support such needs (see paragraph 4.17).

- 4.5 Schools represent a prime market for recruiting young people to the Traineeships programme. As described in the previous paragraph, providers' perception of a fall in Traineeship numbers has encouraged them to promote the programme directly themselves. However, private sector providers frequently cited challenges in schools' willingness for them to promote Traineeships to their pupils. In most cases these challenges related to a perception that schools and parents considered the programme to be the least preferable destination for young people when compared to sixth form and further education provision. Consequently, providers felt that schools were often reluctant to promote Traineeships, leading to a low level of awareness amongst the target groups and people who might influence their decisions. The lack of awareness was compounded by a relative lack of underlying brand awareness when compared to other provision such as the Apprenticeships programme.
- 4.6 There is some anecdotal evidence from providers of geographical patterns in the extent to which schools are willing to engage with Traineeships. For example, there is a perception that many schools in Caerphilly are willing to engage. However other providers suggested that willingness to engage simply varied from school to school. In one instance a provider cited the loss of Careers Officers in schools as a factor that had increased the challenge of engagement, whilst another provider has benefited from establishing a specific department with dedicated responsibility for school recruitment, which has helped to overcome some of these challenges.

- 4.7 None of the further education colleges contracted to deliver Traineeships described challenges in promoting the programme within schools, instead describing their positive involvement at school and college open days. This is likely to be a reflection of the breadth of provision that they will offer as part of their promotional work with schools. This approach enables providers to promote Traineeships as part of a suite of support offered to young people.
- 4.8 Social media is increasingly seen as a key route to promotion of the programme and is actively pursued by all providers but particularly so by those in the private sector. Not all providers had measured the success of promotion through social media, however there is a perception that it's an increasingly effective tool for promotion and recruitment of young people to Traineeships. Some providers were particularly positive about its role: '*social media is the way to go these days*'. Many providers also cited 'word of mouth' as an important route to reach young people, thus emphasising the importance of providing a positive experience.

Referral process

- 4.9 A clear referral process exists within the support model for participants who will participate at the Engagement strand and Level 1 strand (although participants can also self-refer for the Level 1 strand of the Traineeships Programme). They are required to attend their local Careers Wales centre, regardless of how they initially encounter the Traineeships programme (young people who initially engage with a provider are referred to Careers Wales, prior to potentially being referred back to that provider or a different provider altogether). When attending a local Careers Wales centre, young people often get the opportunity to engage directly with local providers, who are able to outline the typical support they offer through the programme. In some areas (e.g. Cardiff) young people have the opportunity to go out and visit the providers. However, the majority of providers reported that they are not afforded these opportunities and some providers feel that the young people are not given sufficient information about the support on offer prior to commencement of their Traineeship. This contradicts findings reported in paragraph 4.4, where 91 per cent of respondents to the learner survey felt that they had received enough information about the programme before embarking on it; indicating that, in general, providers and trainees have a different perspective on the sufficiency of information provided. Following a review of the different providers, the young person, typically in conjunction with a Careers Wales advisor, will then identify the most suitable

provider for their needs and career aspirations. The strand of Traineeships that they participate in is initially guided by the Careers Wales referral and is influenced by an individual's attainment in school. That said, providers typically then undertake a diagnostic assessment as part of the engagement process, to determine if that strand is appropriate for the individual.

- 4.10 Welsh Government officials and wider partners felt that partnership working between Welsh Government, providers, Careers Wales and other partners on the Traineeships programme to support referrals was 'patchy'. It was felt by some that this was a particular challenge when ensuring effective and efficient 'turn-around' of referrals by Careers Wales. This was seen to be due to the available resource and capacity at Careers Wales to be able to effectively deal with referrals. Others mentioned delays in providers sending start and leave data to Careers Wales or the internal progression of young people rather than re-referral.
- 4.11 Partners reported that where strong partnerships are in place, things work well, for example, where local authorities are involved in the YEPF referral process they can support the engagement and referral of young people to Careers Wales and the re-engagement of those at risk of dropping out. One official described how, when partnerships are working well, a young person may be referred to Careers Wales by a local authority and quickly referred on to a provider, who will then flag if they drop out or are at risk of it. Another official mentioned the effectiveness of providers being part of *'local authority-led discussions about progression for young people'*, including youth engagement and the five-tier progression model.
- 4.12 The majority of providers, however, raised concerns about the referral process. Some questioned the impartiality of Careers Wales based on the perception that there was an imbalance in the volume of referrals to each provider. This concern specifically related to the Engagement strand where the provision on offer is largely generic, reducing the need to refer based on specific career aspirations. However, the extent of subsequent referrals to more specialist providers following completion of the Engagement strand is unclear. This suggests a clear need for an appropriate referral at initial engagement and for better onward referral mechanisms.
- 4.13 Furthermore, whilst there was an acknowledgement that the young person could have influenced the destination of their referral, just over a third of providers (6/16) identified instances where young people were being referred to their programme with no interest in the offer or the careers that the support would typically lead to.

Providers perceived this as a result of the referral process, however, it is also important to acknowledge that the target group includes young people who typically struggle to identify with a potential career and who lack motivation. Therefore, this sense of initial disinterest reported by providers could be considered as a barrier to engagement, regardless of the effectiveness of the referral process.

- 4.14 Similarly to officials and partners, seven training providers also expressed concerns about a perceived lack of resources at Careers Wales, impacting on the efficacy of the referral process. It was suggested that the process was, at times, slow and the number of steps that a young person goes through as part of the referral process can be inefficient and complex. For example, a young person might directly approach a college and then have to be referred to Careers Wales before being referred back to the college (or another provider)., This was identified as a concern by many training providers as it increases the risk of young people dropping out before starting the programme.

It makes participants jump through hoops unnecessarily and some have to travel over to their nearest CW office and can't afford it. But with CW you can wait for three weeks for a guidance interview and three weeks for the referral form. Research has shown a need to engage with youngsters immediately after they leave school and if it takes too long many of them will get lost
(Provider)

- 4.15 Approximately one third of providers (6/16) were also frustrated that they were required to refer young people, who initially engaged with them, back to Careers Wales only for Careers Wales to potentially refer them back, or onto a different provider. Some of these people were not referred back to the same providers who had invested resource into engaging with them in the first instance.
- 4.16 Some providers, however, were positive about the process with many citing their good relationship with Careers Wales and others stating it would be wrong for it to be self-referral: *'I'm a big fan of the referral process, young people ought to have advice – it shouldn't be self-referral'* (Provider), highlighting the importance of strong relationships with Careers Wales advisors and of a comprehensive and detailed Traineeship Referral Form (TRF).
- 4.17 Most Welsh Government officials and partners voiced concerns about the appropriateness of referrals into the different strands of Traineeships, in particular

those being referred to Engagement. There is a widespread view that those most in need of the Engagement strand were not necessarily the ones getting on to the programme as providers have been reluctant to take on "more challenging individuals". This was seen as a result of some debate over the level of pre-engagement that providers were required to offer, with providers suggesting that they do not have enough time or resource allocated to support complex needs and enable a positive outcome at the end of the Engagement strand. A similar perspective was given by a Welsh Government official who felt that their role is not to be:

'going to a young person's house, getting them out of bed ... some food, getting them on a bus, getting them to a provider' (Welsh Government official).

Whilst overall, the flexibility of the programme was praised, several stakeholders suggested that greater flexibility was needed in the Traineeships model to ensure providers can be more responsive to the needs of trainees with complex needs. For example, one WG official suggested the option of a phased approach to the engagement strand in order to gradually introduce trainees with complex needs or barriers to provision.

- 4.18 In terms of the referral itself, great importance was placed on the TRF by providers; however, the quality of the information contained within the form was considered variable, depending on the Careers Wales office it had originated from. This has created particular challenges where mental health issues (for example) hadn't been adequately captured within the form. In one instance, a provider reported that this impacted on their ability to claim for Additional Learning Needs/Additional Learning Support funding as they did not have the appropriate evidence in place (see 5.16 below). One provider suggested that the independent guidance interview may be more effective at around four weeks after commencement on the Engagement strand to provide clearer direction in consultation with a young person.
- 4.19 A self-referral pilot has been trialled in Conwy and Denbighshire that enabled the direct recruitment of participants to the Engagement strand. The three providers who referred to participating in the pilot offered mixed views on the experience. One provider felt it had provided a degree of autonomy, increased flexibility and responsiveness to the model, enabling them to deploy engagement officers within communities to actively target and engage young people and recruit them directly to the programme. Another provider had experienced less success through the pilot,

suggesting that young people naturally view Careers Wales as the first step in engagement with Traineeships because of the awareness of the organisation gained through school.

- 4.20 In general, trainees start the programme fairly quickly after referral; the ESF Participant Survey findings show that almost nine in ten (88%) started their course within a month of referral, and over two thirds (70%) within two weeks.

Engagement and delivery process

- 4.21 Although not possible in all areas, trainees in some parts of Wales are presented with a choice of training providers to engage with, providing greater option to pursue a Traineeship most closely aligned to their career aspirations. Within the learner survey, 42 respondents (40%) described being involved in the choice of their training provider; typically, by choosing between two or three different options provided by Careers Wales. The primary influencers on choice of training provider were proximity to home (57%), influence of peers (31%) and the nature of training that participants sought (24%). However, 42 per cent of respondents stated that they had had no choice in provider, with a further nine per cent indicating that there was either only one provider close enough to home or only one that could offer the specific placement or sectoral focus they were looking to pursue
- 4.22 Once engaged on the programme the approach offered by providers is largely consistent and broadly involves the following steps:
- An informal interview – to initially outline the provision on offer and to explore the young person's aspirations.
 - Induction – a programme of initial engagement and familiarisation activity ranging from two days to two weeks.
 - Development of their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) – this element of the model (which is a requirement of delivering Traineeships) was of variable value to providers. Some felt it to be a useful motivational/directional tool that provided useful structure to the monthly reviews, whilst others viewed it as something of a tick box exercise.
 - Participant engages in provision. This ranges from directly delivered training, to third party provider support or work placements.
 - Monthly Reviews - to review progress and expectations/aspirations.

- 4.23 Most of the 911 respondents to the ESF Participants Survey (79%) felt that the Traineeship was at least fairly tailored to their needs. However, only 31 per cent of respondents recalled developing an individual learning plan. Responses to the learner survey show that, out of those who remembered developing an individual learning plan (45 out of 105), 92 per cent felt that it was a useful process to go through. The learner survey also indicated that inductions are widely adopted by training providers, with 89 per cent of trainees (81 out of 91) recalling some form of induction, typically involving essentials skills tests and associated training or a series of team building exercises. Ninety percent described this as being either useful or very useful.
- 4.24 As opposed to other similar employability programmes, trainees receive an allowance on Traineeships. Currently participants receive £30 per week whilst on the Engagement strand and £50 per week on the Level 1 strand. Several providers suggested that the allowance offered to trainees on the Engagement strand of the programme should be increased to ensure that trainees are able to pay for some costs related to the programme, e.g. travel and work-clothes. It was suggested that doing this would make the programme more appealing to young people when compared with other options. One provider felt that as the disparity between the minimum wage and the allowance increases, participants are becoming increasingly motivated to secure a minimum wage job as it will provide them with a higher wage in the immediate future, albeit with potentially less room for progression.
- 4.25 Based on an assessment of trainees's skills, abilities and aspirations, activities are tailored to their needs, with the majority receiving some form of additional training or support. For example, 85 per cent of respondents to the learner survey identified support in CV writing, 79 per cent help with job applications, 73 per cent help with numbers, reading or writing and 65 per cent with interview technique.

5. Participant backgrounds and support needs

This chapter presents findings relating to the background of participants prior to engaging in the Traineeships programme, their wider support needs and barriers to participation. It is based on:

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven Welsh Government officials and partners.
- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- Secondary analysis of the 2018 ESF Participant Survey (911 respondents)..
- A telephone survey of 105 trainees.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeship work placement.

Key findings

- Findings suggest that the programme has been successful in engaging young people who face barriers to securing employment, with over half of respondents to the learner survey having no prior work experience. Trainees predominantly participate in the programme in order to increase their employability skills and prospects.
- The learner survey indicates that, prior to participating in the programme, the majority of trainees lacked clarity and direction as to how to progress in education or employment, with 72 per cent expressing general uncertainty around their next steps and direction, 68 per cent uncertainty around how to find a job, 62 per cent about where they could access help and support and 58 per cent uncertainty about a particular college course.
- Providers reported that young people engaging with Traineeships display an increasingly complex set of needs and barriers, including mental health difficulties and wider social issues such as housing and accommodation. Employers frequently cited barriers related to attitudinal challenges, a lack of work ethos, absenteeism and punctuality.

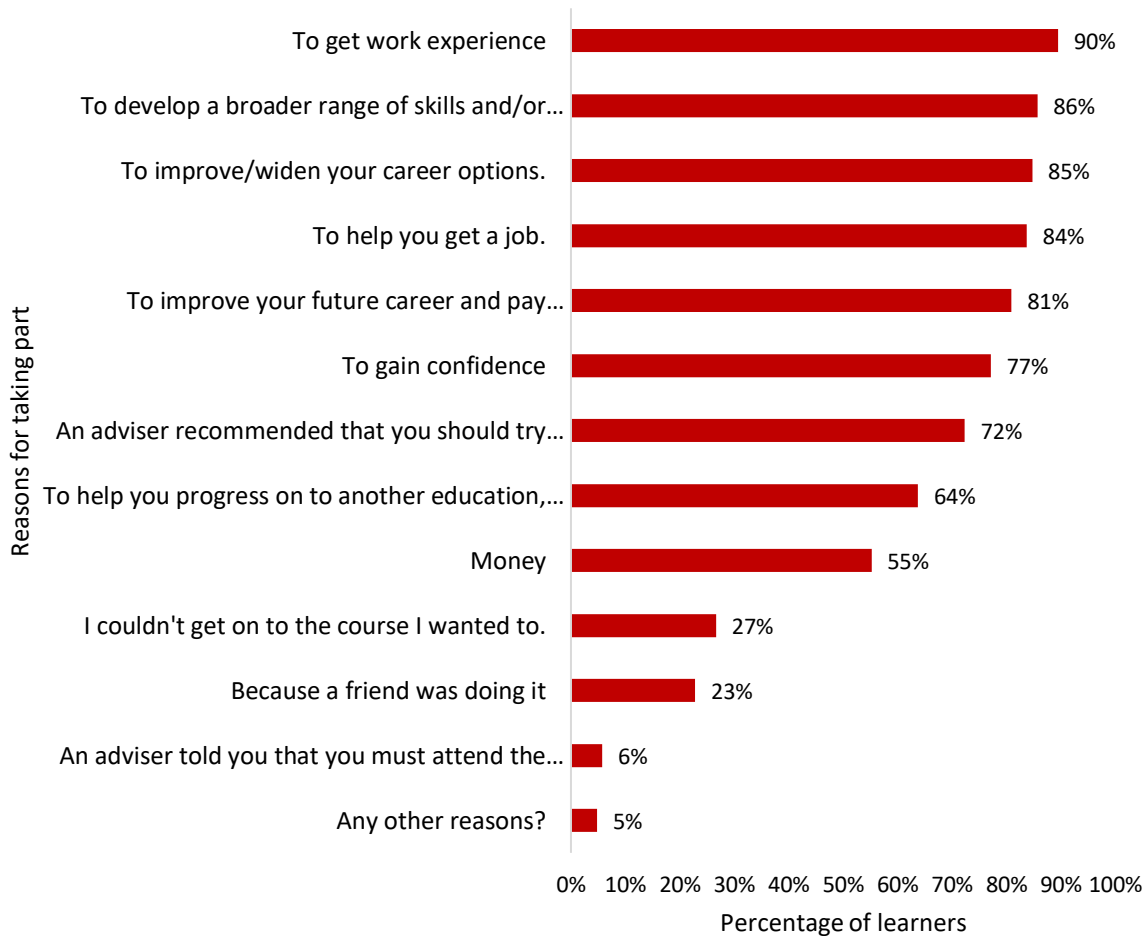
- Officials and partners frequently expressed concerns that the Traineeships programme was not reaching the hardest to reach groups, as many providers lack the capacity to offer the more tailored and personalised support required for the Engagement strand.
- Despite Welsh Government amendments to the process it was noted that take up of ALS funding was still low, with many providers not attempting to access the funding due to the perceived administrative burden of the process and that they often feel able to offer support within their own organisation.
- Almost a third of respondents to the ESF Participant Survey left the programme before completion. For two fifths of these respondents (41%) this was a positive progression, either to a job or another course.

Prior experience and reasons for participation

- 5.1 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that, prior to commencement of the Traineeships programme, just under half (45%) of respondents were unemployed and looking for work and just under a third (31%) were in education or training. In addition, eleven per cent of respondents stated that they were in employment.
- 5.2 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey shows that over two-thirds of Traineeships respondents (68%) felt that they didn't have relevant work experience. Almost half (48%) felt that, prior to commencement of the programme, a lack of the 'right skills' was making it difficult for them to find work, with a similar proportion (47%) feeling that they did not have the right qualifications. Similarly, over half of Traineeship participants who responded to the learner survey (56%; 59 out of 106) had no experience of work prior to engaging with the Traineeships programme, with a quarter stating that they had a health problem or disability that made it difficult for them to find work. Collectively these findings suggest that the programme has been successful in engaging young people who face barriers to securing employment.
- 5.3 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that for almost half of respondents (48%), the main reason for participation in the Traineeships programme was to develop skills or knowledge; for over a third (35%) it was to help get a job. The learner survey looked at reasons for participation in more detail, as shown in Figure 2. The vast majority of participants in the Traineeships programme did so because they wanted to gain work experience (90%). This was closely followed by a desire to broaden their skills and/or knowledge (86%), to improve or widen their career

options (85%), to get a job (84%) and to improve their future career and pay opportunities (81%). This evidence illustrates that trainees predominantly participated in the programme in order to increase their employability skills and prospects. Other reasons, such as the financial benefits of participating in the programme (55%) and participating in order to progress to further learning (64%), were also popular, but less prominent than the more work-oriented reasons.

Figure 2: Reasons why you took part in the Traineeships Programme (multiple responses)



Base=105 trainees

5.4 The learner survey indicates that, prior to participating in the programme, the majority of participants lacked clarity and direction as to how to progress in education or employment. A majority expressed general uncertainty around their next steps and direction (72%) as well as uncertainty around how to find a job (68%), where they could access help and support (62%) and uncertainty about a particular college course (58%).

Support needs and barriers

- 5.5 There was general agreement amongst providers and partners that young people engaging with Traineeships display an increasingly complex set of needs and barriers.
- 5.6 Mental health issues are deemed to have become particularly prevalent amongst young people, whilst trends of increased levels of substance misuse, self-harm and homelessness are also apparent.
- 5.7 The majority of providers perceived high levels of young people with complex issues and backgrounds on Traineeships to be the result of a wider societal trend.
- 5.8 One provider, however, considered there to be a correlation between higher levels of self-referral onto the Level 1 strand and the increased prevalence of participants from challenging backgrounds.
- 5.9 As noted previously, officials and partners believe that in some instances complex barriers and needs such as homelessness, caring responsibilities and substance abuse are preventing young people from engaging with the Traineeships programme, who would otherwise benefit from it. However, not all providers have the capacity to provide the resource-intensive support required to enable some of these young people to secure good outcomes from Traineeships. It should be noted though that the programme does offer the flexibility for providers to engage specialist third sector organisations to provide support for these young people. It is not clear why providers are not securing specialist support for these young people.
- 5.10 The most common barriers identified by employers who participated in the survey (see Figure 3) related to attitudinal challenges or a lack of work ethos (19 out of 48) or absenteeism and punctuality (10). Although training providers typically referred to talking to participants about workplace rules and guidance during programme induction, employers have still cited a poor attitude or work ethic as problematic. In many instances this has been described as trainees treating work as they would school and habitually being on their phones rather than working.

Probably low aspirations, they think we have a low expectation of them, they probably weren't the ones who did best in school or school wasn't for them so they might have a bit of a negative attitude towards people in authority. Separation from their mobile phones can be a problem too. (Employer)

Many of the youngsters struggle to engage with customers. Their listening and communication skills are quite poor so we only put them in a customer service role when we think they are ready. (Employer)

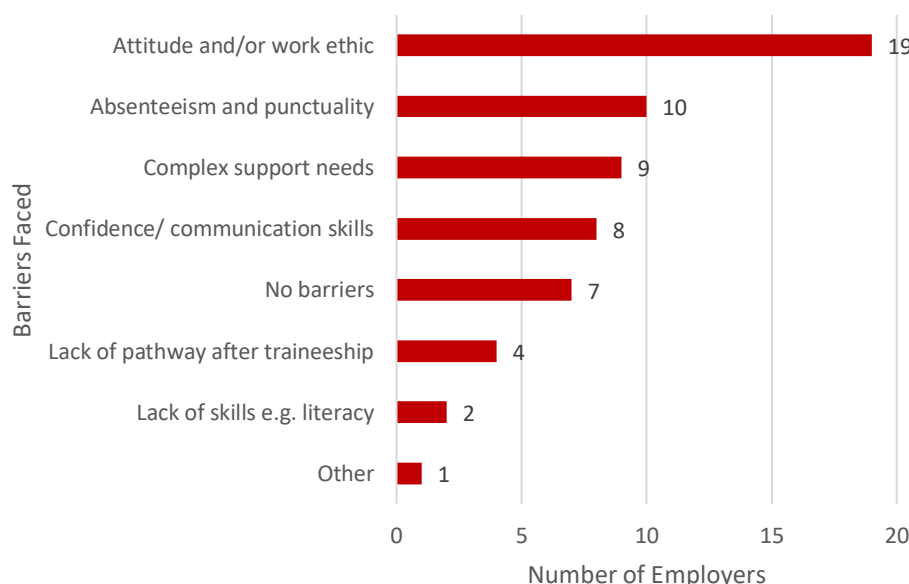
For the first trainee who didn't last long, it was just his whole attitude to work and doing things and his lack of work ethic but the second lad was fantastic, his attitude was a complete opposite. (Employer)

- 5.11 In nine interviews (amongst almost one fifth of respondents), employers described complex support needs as a key barrier amongst young people on the Traineeships programme. In the majority of cases, this is described as being a result of a complex family life and the financial implications of this.

Poverty is the biggest challenge. They don't eat properly, they don't have presentable work clothes and can't afford the travel costs. The domestic situation at home is usually highly dysfunctional so they require emotional support. (Employer)

One of the biggest barriers can be whether they are seen as a 'cash cow' by the family and by that I mean it depends a lot sometimes on what benefits the parents get. (Employer)

Figure 3: What particular/typical barriers/challenges do you encounter amongst those young people you have taken on through a Traineeship placement?



Base = 48 employers

Adaptations to the Engagement strand

- 5.12 In response to the increased level of barriers and needs faced by Traineeships participants, several providers have sought to adapt the Engagement strand. This has included splitting the offer into two and providing a pre-engagement, preparation element to help participants to overcome some of the barriers they face, followed by a more employability focused element to the strand.
- 5.13 The majority of providers identified a reduction in weekly hours for the Engagement strand from 30 to 21 as one of the key changes in programme design. Whilst most providers acknowledged that they had the flexibility to extend these hours of delivery, it was felt that this reduction impeded the momentum established with participants who typically have complex barriers and require more intensive support. In addition, responses from providers also suggest a level of confusion about the rules on weekly delivery hours, with some providers incorrectly stating that it is not possible to extend the hours or assuming that the structure of their delivery is due to programme requirements rather than provider choice.
- 5.14 With regards to timeframes, other providers cited the removal of a limit in the duration of time over which a participant can receive support (some will participate for a just a few weeks, others may be with the programme for up to a year) as a positive adaptation of the programme. They perceived the extension to have been introduced in recognition of the additional needs encountered by many young people.

Additional Learning Needs and the Additional Learning Support budget

- 5.15 The Additional Learning Support (ALS) budget is offered as a supplementary resource to support participants who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Providers vary in the extent to which they utilise these budgets, with some providers not accessing them at all and others actively targeting these resources. There is a tendency for small private sector providers to be less likely to use the budgets, compared to larger providers, however there are also exceptions to this pattern. Some smaller providers perceive themselves as not having sufficient resource to dedicate time to the administrative process of accessing the ALS budget, whilst larger providers are more able to absorb this cost.
- 5.16 Officials and partners noted that the application process for ALS funding had been simplified following early feedback that accessing this funding was an administrative

burden. However, they noted this had not seemed to have led to an increased take up of the funding and expressed concern that it may prevent some of the key target groups for Traineeships from engaging with the programme.

5.17 Providers who tend not to access these budgets, described several reasons for this:

- Whilst it was acknowledged that efforts had been made to simplify the process (although none described having experienced the process following these refinements), some providers perceived it to be a complex, lengthy procedure involving a large volume of paperwork and consequently believed that decisions on eligibility for the funding were made too late in the process of engagement.
- Availability of other resources within their organisations (particularly colleges) to support these needs.
- Lack of sufficient intelligence within the TRF regarding a participant's background, which acts as a constraint on accessing ALS funding. Unless providers are given an individual's background information by Careers Wales, they can find it difficult to source the appropriate information unless it is readily available from an individual's school, undermining the strength of their application.
- Some providers mentioned restrictions in the type of ALS expense that could be claimed. The purpose of the ALS budget is to cover additional costs that a provider incurs. Therefore, all applications are assessed on the specific context of delivery and needs of the individual learner. This may mean that ALS funding is not necessarily available if support is delivered by staff not specifically employed for that role as no additional costs are incurred.
- Providers successfully utilising the ALS budget typically benefitted from the presence of in-house, salaried counsellors; although since these staff bring with them a cost, this option was perceived as impractical for smaller providers:
'one provider has employed a counsellor and they are managing through that to draw down [funds] but that's a very expensive thing to do, which is only okay for a larger provider. It's not achievable for a medium-sized provider.' (Provider)

5.18 Just over one in ten (14%) respondents to the ESF Participant Survey reported that they had required additional support during their Traineeship. The vast majority of

respondents who received additional support (86%) felt that it had been adequate to meet their needs.

Suspension

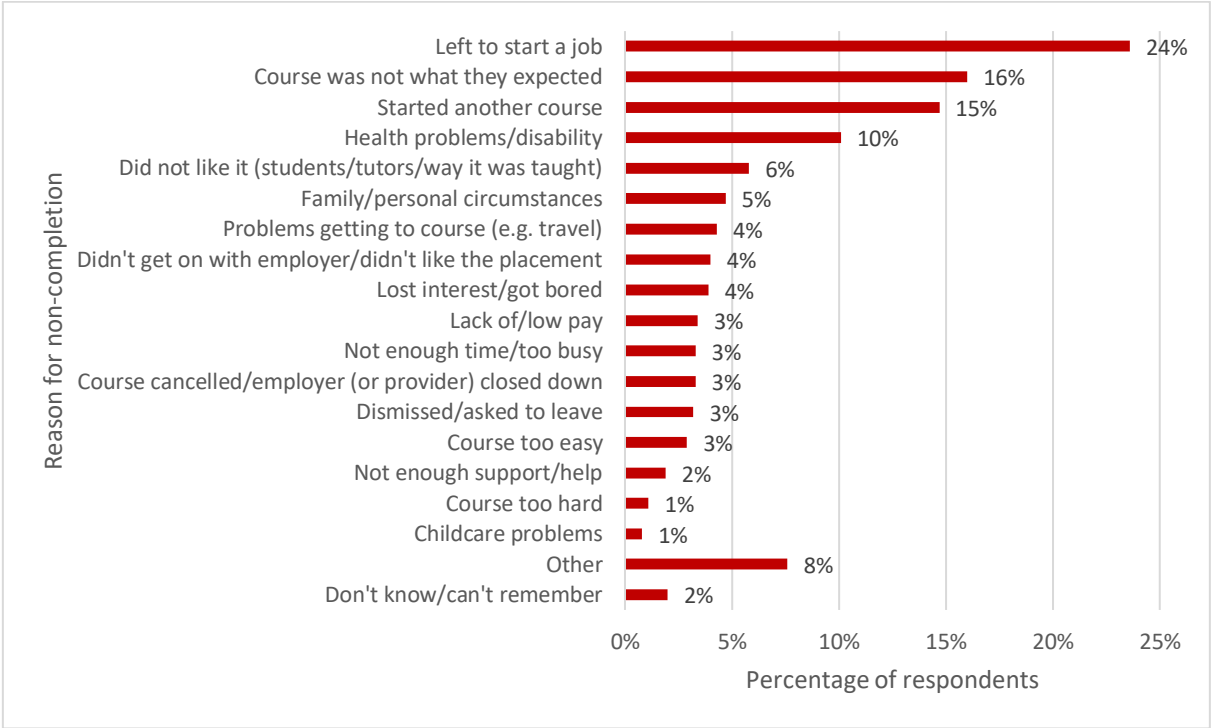
- 5.19 Another element of refinement identified by providers related to a perceived loss of autonomy around the suspension of participants on the Traineeships programme. Providers described no longer being able to suspend a participant who has failed to turn up for ten days, instead, providers reported these participants are required to restart the programme. Providers felt that they were engaging with young people who often had chaotic lifestyles which sometimes led to absenteeism from the programme beyond the ten allowable days. Providers reported that in some instances, where a young person was subsequently re-engaged, their absence was justified, however the restrictions were leading to those individuals having to reapply and restart their participation in the Traineeships programme. However, it is understood from the Welsh Government programme team that 'authorised absence is allowed for a range of specialist support' with an expectation that the provider retains some form of contact during the period of absence. Where there is contact during the time of programme absence in this context it is considered that there is no necessity for a young person to reapply.

Non-completions

- 5.20 Almost a third (31%) of the 911 Traineeship participants who responded to the ESF Participant Survey left the programme before completion. Figure 4. shows their reasons for doing so. For roughly two fifths of these this was a positive progression, either to a job (24%) or another course (15%). Other respondents mentioned a range of issues or problems, both with the programme, placement or provision or related to their personal lives. The most common issue was that the course was not what they expected (16%), followed by health problems (10%). There were no significant regional differences in reasons for non-completion. However, male respondents were significantly more likely to have left to start a job (30% compared to 17%), and female respondents significantly more likely to have stopped due to health problems or a disability (16% compared to 4%)²¹.

²¹ Using a chi square test the significance levels (p values) were respectively 0.017 and 0.002

Figure 4: Reason for non-completion of Traineeships for ESF Participant Survey respondents (multiple response)



Weighted base = 283; unweighted base = 258

6. Work Placements

This chapter presents findings relating to employers' and trainees' experience of the work placement aspect of the Traineeships programme. It is based on:

- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- Secondary analysis of the 2018 ESF Participant Survey (911 respondents).
- A telephone survey of 105 trainees.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement.

Key findings

- Providers described increased challenges in engaging employers to offer placements. The lack of awareness of Traineeships as a brand/programme of support and the unfamiliarity of the offer was felt to impact negatively upon levels of employer engagement. In addition, some providers believe there is a stigma around Traineeships, with negative perceptions linked to young people who had misbehaved at school.
- Over half of respondents to the employer survey were also engaged with other forms of work-based learning provision, primarily through the Jobs Growth Wales programme or the Apprenticeships programme. Most employers sustained their engagement with the programme after their first work placement; 43 out of the 48 surveyed employers had kept engaged with Traineeships for at least 12 months.
- Employers typically described their reason for participating in the programme as a desire to help young people in their careers generally; others mentioned a specific role they wished to play in their local community, whilst also recognising the complementary benefit they would gain as an employer..
- Most employers recruit trainees for work placements through training providers, although a small proportion of employers recruit young people directly, without initially involving a training provider in the process. Most employers are happy with the information about trainees they receive from providers, which generally

relates to the young person's background and interests. However, almost a third of respondents to the employer survey did not receive any information.

- Employers are generally happy with the support provided both to themselves and to their trainees during the placement. This is typically attributed to a consistent and regular level of communication.
- Placements are closely aligned to occupational roles within the employer's organisation, thereby providing additional capacity whilst also enabling the young person to develop skills relevant to their job role. Trainees are given a wide range of tasks and are particularly able to focus on the improvement of their soft skills, such as communication and confidence, regardless of sector.
- The majority of trainees are very positive about their placements, with most describing them as useful or very useful, and typically referring to the opportunity to gain insight, skills and experience in a sector in which they wish to pursue a career.

Background

- 6.1 Through the Level 1 strand of the Traineeships programme, participants regularly access work placements as part of the offer. An issue raised by several providers related to the reduction in reimbursement rates when a participant is on a placement. Providers argued that the extent of support required by trainees whilst on placement did fall, but that support was still required, and that the reduced rate of reimbursement failed to fully cover the cost of 'in-placement' support delivered by providers. There is also a risk that the reduction in reimbursement may influence the model of support offered, with placements being less prominent within the offer.

There should be way more emphasis on learning and or work experience but you don't get paid half as much so it is not seen as valuable. (Provider)

Currently the biggest concern is that if we put a learner out on placement, it's about 60 per cent less funding than we receive, however we have still got to give that learner a significant amount of support so that they are prepared to work, provide support for the employer and the learner is also still coming to the centre. As a provider, we still do it because that person needs to be well-balanced and be able to get a job. But it does make you think, from a financial point of view, not putting them on placement is where you would make your money. (Provider)

- 6.2 Several also described increased challenges in engaging employers to offer placements, with a minority suggesting that incentivising employers would boost levels of interest. Furthermore, providers described their keenness to target placements where employment may be an outcome, aligning with the Apprenticeship programme as a potential progression pathway from the initial placement typically helped to strengthen this offer.
- 6.3 The lack of awareness of Traineeships as a brand/programme of support and the unfamiliarity of the offer was also felt to impact negatively upon levels of employer engagement. In addition, some providers believe there is a stigma around Traineeships, with negative perceptions linked to young people who had misbehaved at school. Promoting the programme and its potential link to Apprenticeships would help facilitate an understanding of the longer term, strategic benefit of the programme.
- 6.4 Most trainees (63 per cent of the 911 respondents to the ESF survey) undertake a work placement at an employer, although almost two fifths have a placement at a voluntary organisation (21%) or a community project (17%). Trainees with a declared disability were significantly²² less likely to have undertaken a work placement with an employer (50% compared to 66%), suggesting increased barriers to access for this group.
- 6.5 Although based on a smaller sample (48), over half of respondents to the employer survey (27) were also engaged with other forms of work-based learning provision, primarily through the Jobs Growth Wales programme (16) or the Apprenticeships programme (14). Most of these employers (14) believed that Traineeships linked well with these others forms of provision:

There is a clear progression between the Level 1 Traineeship and the Level 2 apprenticeship. Most of the topic areas are very similar but the Level 2 goes into a lot more depth. (employer)

The tasks that the trainee undertook as part of his placement were designed to give him a good basic knowledge of car maintenance and repair. It was a good stepping stone to the more advanced content he would cover in the Level 2 apprenticeship. (employer)

²² Using a chi square test the significance level (p value) was less than 0.001

- 6.6 Most employers kept engaged with the programme; over half (27) had participated for three or more years, and all but five for longer than one year. Since 2015, roughly three quarters (45) had run at least two placements, with a quarter (12) running five or more.

Employers' knowledge of the programme and aims

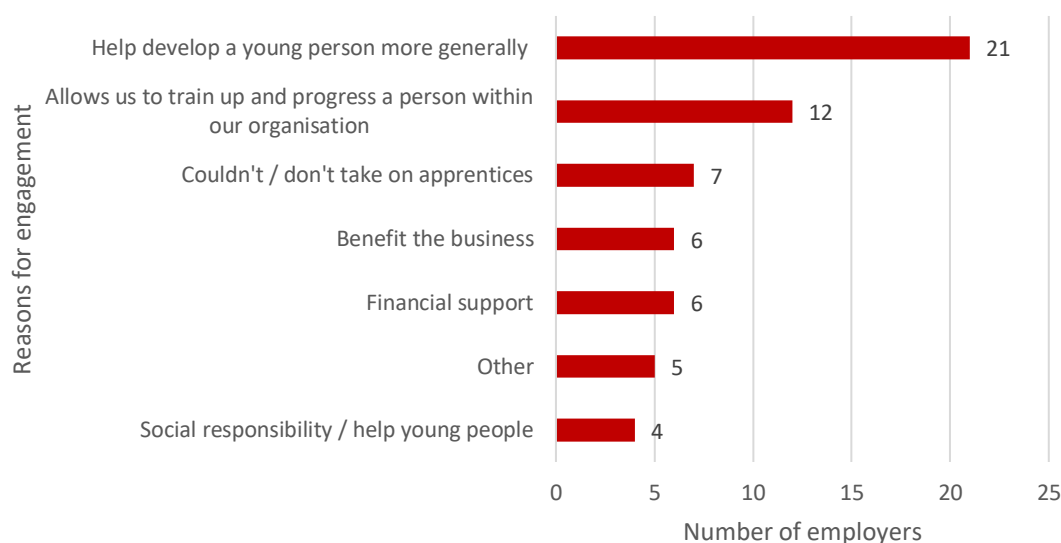
- 6.7 Over half of surveyed employers (26 out of 48) first heard about Traineeships through an education or training provider, whether an FE provider (21), school (1) or simply 'the college' (4). Other sources included word of mouth (6), Welsh Government (3), Careers Wales (2), employer networks (2) and the Job Centre (1).
- 6.8 Figure 5 shows surveyed employers' main reasons for engaging with the programme. Employers typically referred to a desire to help young people in their careers generally; some referred to a specific role they wished to play in their local community, whilst also recognising the complementary benefit they would gain as an employer:

I wanted to increase our community involvement and give back to the community. It made economic sense as it gave us a cost effective solution to recruitment. It would allow us to train staff and embed them in our culture and I felt it was important to provide young people with vocational opportunities.
(Employer)

We wanted someone new and fresh to work here. Also, we wanted to help out young people with work experience and our existing staff with their work load.
(Employer)

It's basically down to costs, knowing that we could get the trainees wages funded was a help and that we could train them up ourselves in the way we needed to. (Employer).

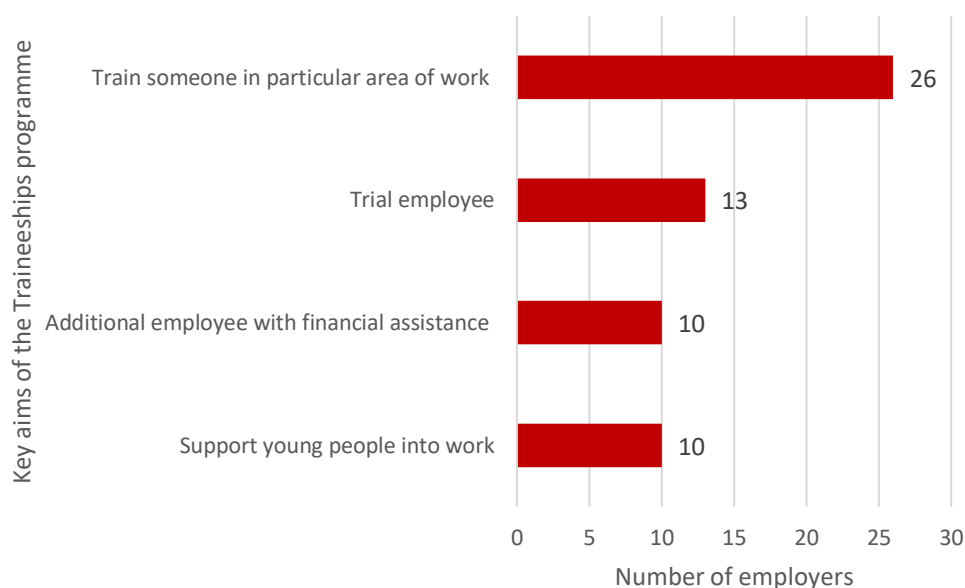
Figure 5: Why did you decide to engage with the Traineeships programme? (multiple responses)



Base = 48 employers

6.9 Conversely, the majority of employers (26) saw the key aims of the Traineeships programme for employers as training someone in a particular area of work (see Figure 6 below). Employers elaborating on this point typically described the benefit of training an individual in their organisational practices without having to take on the cost of training themselves. It is also notable that for almost two thirds of employers (33), Traineeships are not built into their recruitment strategy. These employers typically recruit trainees based on opportunity and capacity, either when approached by a provider or by approaching a provider themselves, rather than as part of a formalised recruitment process. In this instance, employers suggested that this approach, based on their own capacity, suited their needs.

Figure 6: In your opinion, what are the key aims of the Traineeships programme for Employers (multiple response)



Base = 48 employers

Engagement of trainees in work placements

- 6.10 In most cases (33 out of 48 employers), training providers suggest potential trainees to employers for their work placement position. However, in a minority of cases (6) employers lead this process themselves. In these instances, employers reported advertising for the role themselves (whilst describing it as a Traineeship), interviewing applicants and then approaching the training provider with their selected candidate.
- 6.11 Most employers received information on the trainees from the training provider, as shown in Figure 7. This primarily related to the young person's background and their interests and often included a CV. Where information was provided, two thirds felt this information to be accurate, ultimately matching up with the experience of that individual during their placement.

The training provider tends to give us quite a lot of background information about the trainees. They will tell us about their personality and if they have any problems. They will also tell us what they are working on improving with the training provider e.g. need help with maths or reading and writing etc.
(employer)

6.12 However, in almost one third of instances (14), employers reported that no information about trainees had been provided. Lack of information can prevent employers from putting appropriate support in place for trainees, and may contribute to the negative perception of Traineeships as noted in paragraph 6.3.

None really and I think that's a pitfall as we don't always have a lot of background and sometimes we pick up things that the training providers haven't picked up for example dyslexia and lots of issues like ADHD but there isn't enough information about that person. (Employer)

Figure 7: What, if any, information are you provided with about the young people by the training provider? (multiple response)



Base = 48 employers. Please note that qualitative answers have been coded as multiple choice

6.13 The vast majority of employers who received information (30 out of 32) agreed that it reflected their own experience of the young person on placement to at least some extent, as shown in Figure 8. Employers also acknowledged that there was only so much they could learn about the young person before having met them themselves, although in a few instances, they suggested that they would have benefitted from more detailed background information on the young person so that they could ensure the right support was provided.

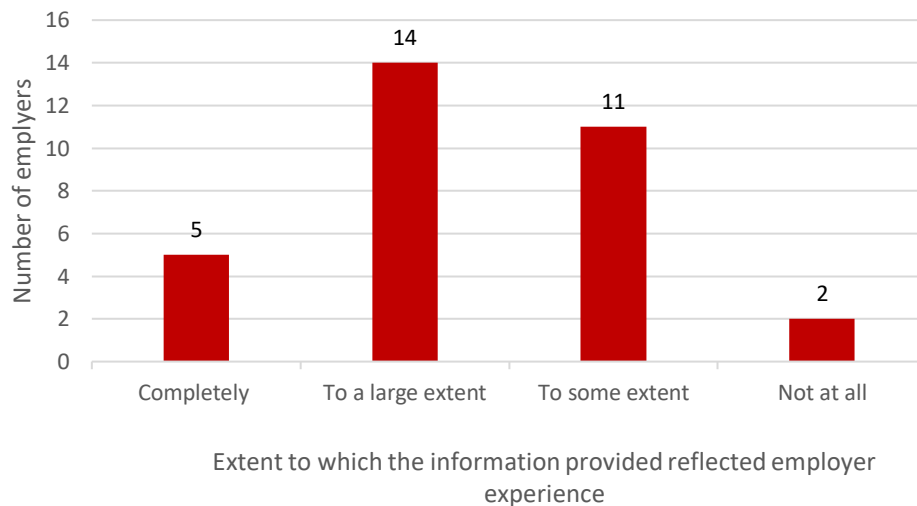
The information provided by the training provider matched the young person exactly. We knew that he had a keen interest in [the sector] and this was

shown in his attitude. We were also told that he was very shy and we made sure that we started him off working with somebody who wasn't too loud and intimidating. (Employer)

It does help, it gives us a picture of what we should be expecting from them but we don't know exactly until we meet them. We can get a better picture of them when we meet them. (Employer)

It's a bit vague really but we get to know them better within the two week trial. They usually don't have CVs or work history as they've just left school but some trainees have brought their CV in with them so I can have a look at that too. (Employer)

Figure 8: To what extent did the information provided reflect your own experience of the young person?



Base = 32 employers, excluding 'Don't know' answers from analysis and those employers who had described not receiving any information about the young people.

- 6.14 After the placement had been confirmed employers typically used either an induction process (19 out of 48), in which trainees were introduced to in-house processes, policies, health and safety regulations, and any in-house training required for the job, or an informal meeting (16), in which employers outlined what was expected of the learner. Only a small number referred to implementing a trial period (7) in which to determine whether the learner has the appropriate skills and/or are a good fit in the workplace.

Employer experience of work placement

- 6.15 Employers were generally happy with the support received from training providers, with two thirds of those surveyed (32) describing it as either effective or very effective. These employers typically described a consistent level of communication with providers. In some instances, this was a monthly catch-up meeting to ensure the placement was going well; in others, employers referred to prompt responses from providers if and when needed.
- 6.16 Employers also tended to be positive about the support provided to their trainee by providers, with three quarters describing it as effective or very effective. Again, this was mostly due to the consistent and regular communication between provider and trainee. Several employers also provided examples of providers supporting trainees both emotionally and financially.
- 6.17 Results from the employer survey indicate that employers provide trainees with a range of tasks during their placement, which benefit both the organisation and the learner (see Table 1). The majority of employers described providing trainees with customer service-based tasks; in some instances, this was as part of a sales or hairdressing role, whilst in others it was alongside childcare (i.e. in relation to parents) or technical tasks such as window repairing. These findings indicate that, regardless of sector, trainees are particularly able to focus on the improvement of their soft skills such as communication and confidence. Administrative and sales tasks were also popular, with more sector-specific activities (such as hairdressing or childcare) also prevalent.

They work with small groups of children, come on visits with us when we go on day trips, they're very hands-on with looking after and supervising the children. (Employer)

Administration, customer service, they can get involved with catering, we have offered and we do offer much wider than that, anything really and it can range from everything from ordering stationary, stock checks, invoicing, we get them involved in. (Employer)

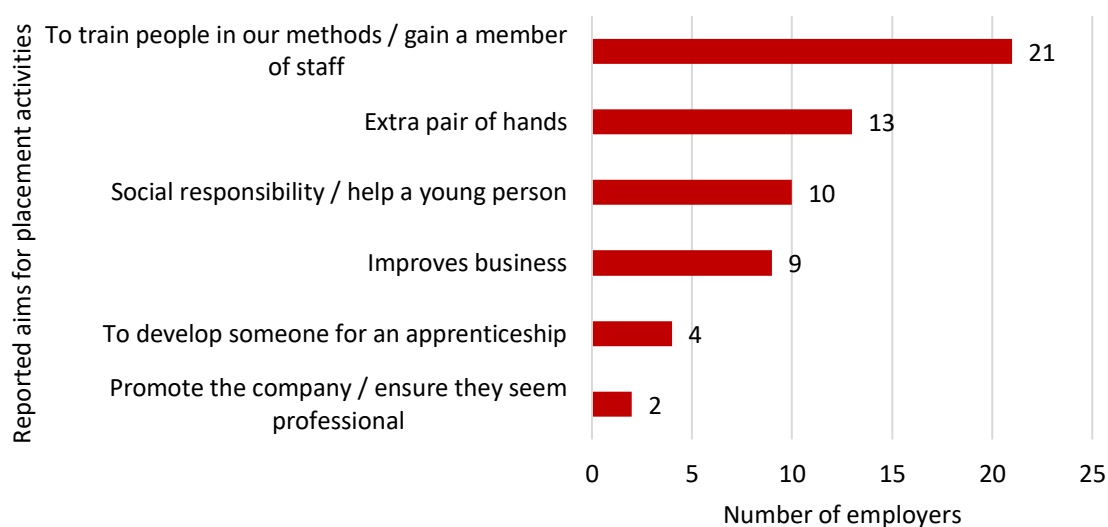
Table 1: On placement what type of activities do they get involved with

Tasks	N
Customer service	27
Administrative	15
Sales	14
Hairdressing	9
Childcare	9
Technical e.g. mechanics	7
Labouring / maintenance	7
Hospitality e.g. catering	6

Base = 48 employers. Please note that total exceeds 48 as answers have been coded as multiple choice, demonstrating the multiple of tasks trainees are involved in on their placement.

6.18 Placements are therefore closely aligned to occupational roles within the employer's organisation, thereby providing additional capacity whilst also enabling the young person to develop skills relevant to their job role. Employers thus enable trainees to improve their soft skills, benefitting the young person, whilst also providing benefit to the organisation through the additional resource that they offer. This closely aligns with employers reported aims for placement activities (Figure 9), where both gaining a member of staff (21), or extra pair of hands (13), fits alongside helping a young person (10) and developing them for an Apprenticeship (4).

Figure 9: What do these activities aim to address for your organisation? (Multiple response)



Base = 48 employers

Learner experience of work placements

- 6.19 Most respondents to the learner survey (66%) had undertaken a work placement as part of their Traineeship. Work placements were most commonly with one employer (64%), but two or more placements were also fairly common (36%). The most common length of a placement was four to six months (31%), although roughly one in ten lasted less than a month (10%) or more than a year (7%). The majority (80%) were offered a choice of placement that enabled them to pick one most closely matched to their interests.
- 6.20 The majority of respondents were very positive about their placements; almost two thirds (65%) described them as very useful and almost a fifth (18%) as useful. When describing why placements were useful, respondents typically referred to the opportunity to gain insight, skills and experience in a sector in which they wished to pursue a career:

I've learnt a lot, I've been working there 4-5 days a week since last August and next month I'm starting an apprenticeship there, I really enjoy it. (Traineeship Participant)

The placement has been very useful as I have been learning skills on the job and getting practical work experience. I now know that I want a job in bathroom and construction design. (Traineeship Participant)

It just gave me experience of working in a nursery school and built my confidence so now I'm more confident to do everything really, I'm quite quiet and never used to participate in anything but now I will. (Traineeship Participant).

- 6.21 A negative experience of the placement was uncommon, with only 14 per cent of respondents citing this. Mostly, this was due to the placement not meeting their expectations; for example, in the type of work available or tasks they were given:

I didn't enjoy the placement at all and I didn't want to do an admin job but there were no other placements available. (Traineeship Participant)

It was not my cup of tea at all. I wasn't allowed to engage with the customers as they wouldn't let me so I was just stuck upstairs in the store room all day. (Traineeship Participant).

Most of these respondents described the placement as the 'least useful' part of their Traineeship.

- 6.22 Thirty per cent of trainees received extra financial support from their provider in addition to their weekly placement; in all instances this was used for travel costs to and from the placement.

7. Cross-cutting themes and Welsh language

This chapter presents findings relating to how the Traineeships programme addresses the ESF cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities, sustainable development and tackling poverty, supports the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and supports the Welsh Language Strategy. It is based on:

- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- The second round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- Secondary analysis of the 2018 ESF Participant Survey (911 respondents).
- A telephone survey of 105 trainees.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement.

Key Findings

- Providers were confident that their delivery of the Traineeships programme addresses the requirements of ESF equal opportunities. It was felt that the flexibility of the programme allows the theme to be addressed from a learner-led perspective.
- A key element of the Traineeships programme is work experience, which involves participants working alongside employees, who will be paid at least the National Minimum Wage. The majority of providers felt that the training allowance had a negative impact in terms of equal opportunities, describing it as 'unfair' and 'disincentivising' for trainees to be working alongside paid employees, undertaking similar hours, yet earning significantly less.
- From their experiences, most providers did not consider the availability of ALN/ALS funding to have had an impact on equal opportunities. Six out of the eleven providers interviewed in the second round of provider interviews had had little or no experience of using it; three of those who had used it described how, as a result of the administration in accessing the funding, they no longer

attempted to access the funding because of the associated costs and instead choose to cover the costs of support themselves.

- Providers asserted that the sustainable development theme was embedded within their delivery of Traineeships; four out of 11, however, were unable to identify specific examples. Examples given included information in inductions and specific projects such as beach cleaning.
- Respondents consistently suggested that the Traineeships programme has a key role to play in tackling poverty. Although providers generally did not perceive the programme as alleviating poverty directly in itself, many gave examples of actively supporting trainees (e.g. with food or clothing), signposting them to appropriate services they were aware of or have links with and embedding learning around poverty (such as budgeting or healthy eating) as part of the programme.
- Providers generally felt that they were able to support their trainees' health and well-being as part of the programme, and hence support the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The flexibility of the programme was identified as a key feature in enabling this.
- Providers generally felt that the programme supports the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy to at least some extent. Most, but not all, providers described their trainees as having a limited level of Welsh language ability prior to engaging with the programme; this is generally considered to be related to geographical location. Most providers described a range of activities to promote Welsh language and culture and ensure that trainees had exposure to incidental or conversational Welsh during the programme. Take up of provision through the medium of Welsh was generally low, with providers emphasising that this was due to a lack of interest rather than a lack of availability; almost all providers indicated that this was available to all who wanted it.

Equal opportunities

- 7.1 In general, providers were confident that their Traineeships delivery addresses the ESF equal opportunities theme and felt that it was consistently embedded across their training provision. The programme seeks to reduce the numbers of young people NEET and providers operated with general awareness of its importance and applied 'open door policies' to maximise accessibility to all eligible participants.

Some providers described how equal opportunities were addressed in the initial induction with young people to highlight its importance, whilst others asserted that its importance was generally known and understood.

- 7.2 The majority of providers who participated in the second round of interviews (8/11) noted that, due to the flexibility of the programme, they have been able to address the equal opportunities theme from a learner-led perspective. Most (7 out of 11) stated that they had included units and/or discussion around equal opportunities in their induction, whilst six had held specific sessions on equal opportunities. Inductions and sessions were said to include discussion and learning around gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion and radicalisation.
- 7.3 The examples given by providers of how they had embedded the equal opportunities theme within their delivery predominantly focussed on gender. For example, seven out of the eleven providers who participated in the second round of provider interviews described how they encourage trainees to choose placements in which they are interested regardless of the gendered connotation of specific roles of sectors, such as encouraging female trainees to go into mechanics and male trainees to go into care and childcare-related roles. Encouraging trainees to consider and try sectors which traditionally are dominated by the opposite sex meets the Equal Opportunities Gender Mainstreaming project level indicators four and five in the 2014-2022 Traineeships Operational Plan. This has been described as successful to varying degrees, with three providers describing how they have had female trainees receive job offers from well-known automotive companies.
- 7.4 Whilst all 11 providers in the second round of fieldwork agreed that the training allowance provided through their work placement impacts trainees, the majority (7) perceived the impact as negative, describing the allowance as 'unfair' and 'disincentivising'.
- 7.5 Four providers, however, suggested differently, describing the training allowance as a motivational incentive which encourages trainees to think about career progression. This is supported by findings from the ESF Participant Survey, where 57 per cent of respondents felt that they could not have completed their Traineeship without the training allowance.
- 7.6 Just under half of providers in the second round of interviews (five) believed the allowance to be at an insufficient level, whilst only two thought that it was sufficient.

The remaining four thought that it was sufficient in some cases but not others; for example, some trainees are financially able to rely on parents or carers to supplement their allowance, whereas others have to supplement travel expenses, clothing for interviews and food. It was also highlighted that in some cases, particularly on the engagement strand in which trainees receive £30 a week for 21 hours work, it is perceived as unfair to be working alongside others who are on significantly higher wages:

We have a massive amount of young people who do 21 hours for £30 and over 21 hours for £50 and I know that they say it's unfair because they are working alongside people with a proper wage. We try to promote that this is a stepping stone, but I don't actually think it's fair. I get that they aren't experienced, and they are learning but it's a massive difference and I don't think it's appropriate. [...] with this there is no incentive and it hasn't changed in a very long time. I think it needs a top-up.' (Provider)

- 7.7 Although only two out of the 11 providers in the second round of interviews considered the availability of ALN/ALS funding to have made an impact on equal opportunities, they were the only two to have used the funding since the process was amended by Welsh Government. Three other providers, who have not used the amended process, thought that the funding hadn't previously impacted on this theme as a result of the administration around accessing it, however, this may not have been the case with the new updated process of accessing ALN/ALS funding.

Sustainable development

- 7.8 Sustainable development was the least evidenced cross-cutting theme in the initial round of provider interviews, with examples mostly focusing on limiting printing and using web-based resources.
- 7.9 All of the providers who participated in the second round of interviews asserted that the sustainable development theme is embedded within their delivery of the Traineeships programme. This is, however, to varying degrees and in a variety of ways. Five providers stated that, through their use of activities for the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) qualification, they have embedded information about sustainable development into inductions and sessions. Four providers noted that they encourage trainees to take part in a variety of projects around sustainable development such as beach cleans and upcycling:

'We get the learners to do projects e.g. upcycling palettes to make plant pots and we made a bench and chairs and gave it to primary school and did a poppy display using recycled plastics. We also do litter picking and go out walking dogs and goats. Some of our learners also do bag packing and work in food banks. Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) has just been drilled in over the years.' (Provider)

This aligns with Sustainable Development project level indicator five in the Traineeships Operational Plan.

- 7.10 Almost half of providers in the second round of interviews (five out of 11) stated that the level to which sustainable development is and could be embedded within the programme is dependent on the sector. For example, providers suggested that within electrical and construction professions, sustainable development was far easier to address than in other roles.

We are quite lucky because we have electrical and construction courses which are quite big on reusing which their learners will have to do on site. (Provider)

- 7.11 Whilst all providers indicated that the sustainable development theme was embedded within their delivery of Traineeships, four were unable to provide greater detail beyond an understanding that trainees know there is an expectation within the centre or college.

Tackling poverty

- 7.12 Respondents consistently suggested that the Traineeships programme has a key role to play in tackling poverty. There was general agreement that the programme helps to address this theme indirectly by providing young people with work opportunities and tackling barriers to employment by improving employability skills.
- 7.13 The majority of providers who participated in the second round of interviews did not perceive the programme as alleviating poverty directly in itself. However, seven providers stated that they actively support their trainees through the provision of food, clothing and emotional assistance where needed, whilst three providers signpost trainees to appropriate services as required, aligning with the Tackling Poverty project level indicator three in the Traineeships Operational Plan. One provider described how, through their consortium, they have access to a deprivation fund to resource such instances where trainees need additional food and support.

Two providers suggested that a hardship fund should be considered by Welsh Government:

[Poverty is a] real area of concern for some of our young people [...] and we support them but I'm not quite sure Welsh Government appreciate just how much we have to support them. We will always do it, of course, but there needs to be some sort of hardship pot.' (Provider)

- 7.14 Almost half (five) also highlighted how they are able to embed learning around poverty such as budgeting and healthy eating as part of the programme. This is understood as providing additional support for trainees to break down barriers and achieve their aims as outlined in the Tackling Poverty project level indicator five in the Traineeships Operational Plan. This support, providers suggest, positively affects young people's ability to learn, particularly those from deprived areas:

'There is proper poverty here. It starts from the minute they start on programme, we look at budgeting and try to make sure they understand what money means and the dangers of debt and we talk to them about the dangers of payday loans, healthy living and budgeting how to cook a meal for a family which is cheap but not junk. It's very difficult, I've had people come to me in floods of tears, struggling to get placement with 5 brothers and sisters and their mum at a food bank collecting food. It's difficult because you can only do so much. You support them and make sure they are being fed healthy food in the day.' (Provider)

- 7.15 Whilst a small number of providers (three) perceived that the training allowance helps to alleviate poverty by providing trainees with income they did not previously have, it was highlighted in the initial fieldwork that the pro-rata reduction in the training allowance for the Engagement strand from £50 to £30, reflecting the decrease in weekly hours from 30 to 21, had made it more difficult for some trainees to travel to their work placement. Although travel costs are subsidised through the programme, it was perceived that there was insufficient budget to cover trainees' travel to work before they were paid. This was particularly the case in rural areas:

They will not have the money to get to their placement for the first week. This is a barrier until they get into employment. There needs to be something more at the beginning to support them even just getting to the centre for the first

week. We will fund them but we don't get funding for that, even things like lunches that first week are a concern for our learners. (Provider)

It is understood that 90 per cent of travel costs are funded through the Traineeships programme. It is possible that travel costs are higher than anticipated in some situations, which, combined with lack of budgeting skills amongst some participants, may contribute to insufficient funds to travel, despite the receipt of travel subsidy and an allowance.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 7.16 Almost all providers in the second stage of fieldwork (10) felt that they were able to support their trainees' health and well-being as part of the programme, and hence support the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. A range of examples were given, such as cooking classes, access to sports, outdoor activities and trips and more generally through the holistic support offered to trainees. One provider stated:

Well-being is the big thing we are having to do so much, having to make these young people resilient because of what life throws at them, 80% have a mental health issue and some with really severe anxiety. We do a lot to try and get them active, get them outdoors. When we do that they usually talk to us about their home lives. A lot of what we do is about building a relationship and so they open up and talk to us when they are struggling, unhealthy or have drug debt. (Provider)

- 7.17 One mentioned that the programme was able to support trainees' health and well-being due to its flexibility, which enables providers to cater to the needs of individual trainees.

Welsh Language

Ability

- 7.18 Most providers who participated in the second round of interviews (8) described their trainees as having 'limited' Welsh language ability when first engaging with the programme, with only a quarter (3) considering them to have a good level of ability. For both groups this was suggested to be a result of geographical influence. For providers who report that their trainees generally have a high level of ability, Welsh language was typically embedded within Traineeships delivery:

At recruitment, we ask them if they are fluent or not fluent and with the ones going into schools, we ask them if they want to go into a Welsh speaking school. We talk about Welsh culture a lot through the induction and then if they want to go to a Welsh speaking placement, we try to source that.
(Provider)

- 7.19 For providers who report that trainees have limited Welsh language ability, location in predominantly English-speaking geographies was cited as the key reason, as well as a disinterest on the behalf of the trainees. Out of these eight providers, seven indicated that they provide the opportunity for those they know to be Welsh speakers to carry out the course in Welsh, however, that this is not commonly taken up. It is suggested that in these instances, whilst providers try their best to encourage the trainees to conduct the course, or elements of the course, in Welsh, as it is not compulsory, they find this particularly difficult. One provider stated:

We don't have many first language speakers even though the majority have done it at school. They are not keen and don't want to carry on with it. We actively promote it as a college and try to explain that it would really help their Traineeship as it is an employability skill. (Provider)

- 7.20 Whilst all providers highlighted that the majority of their trainees had received compulsory Welsh education, in the form of reading, writing and speaking, only four providers cited a proportion of their trainees as having a Welsh language qualification prior to starting the programme.

Support and opportunity for Welsh language through the programme

- 7.21 In the initial round of interviews, most providers stated that they support the Welsh language by aiming to have at least one Welsh speaking member of staff, described in a few instances as a 'Welsh Language Champion'. All providers who participated in the second round of interviews agreed (at least to some extent) that the Traineeships programme supports the Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy.
- 7.22 Just under half of the providers who participated in the second round of interviews (5) described how they delivered learning through the medium of Welsh and encouraged fluent Welsh speakers to take up this option. Most (7) stated that Welsh language and culture at their centre or college is continually promoted. Providers described this promotion occurring through a wide range of activities. For example,

providers organised trips to areas of Welsh culture such as the Big Pit Museum and Cardiff Castle, and described structured teaching of Welsh language and culture through Welsh language champions and workshops; one provider in this instance referred to 'Welsh Wednesdays' at their centre. One provider stated:

Welsh language and culture are embedded in everything we do here.

Teachers drop Welsh into their conversations with learners. We have started this term doing an online Welsh programme centred on learning basic Welsh language for the workplace and the lessons are tailored to sectors. (Provider)

- 7.23 The majority of providers (8) stated that they ensured that their trainees were provided with, or had consolidated, incidental or conversational Welsh whilst engaging with the programme. This, providers suggest, ensures that trainees are prepared for their work placement as they would be able to carry out administrative duties in both languages; for example, by answering the phone in Welsh.
- 7.24 Over half of providers (6) offered a level of Welsh language assessment as part of their Traineeship delivery, including level one and level two qualifications and introductory Welsh language certificates. The remaining providers confirmed that they offer trainees the option to complete assessments in Welsh but are not tested on their Welsh Language skills specifically. It is also important to highlight that three providers suggested that they would be able to provide a Welsh language assessment, as they have qualified Welsh Language teaching staff, but that their trainees have not expressed an interest in doing so.
- 7.25 As previously iterated, over half of providers (six) suggested that, whilst trainees are provided with Welsh language opportunities, there are differing levels of take-up due to their non-compulsory nature. It is hypothesised that since trainees have left school and no longer have compulsory Welsh provision, many decide not to carry on:

'It can be a real a challenge to get buy-in from the learners. They're teenagers, some have come from a fluent Welsh school and like that they have the opportunity to speak English. It feels more modern for them because of things like social media.' (Provider)

This is illustrated by findings from the learner survey, where three quarters of the 105 trainees (77%) were offered bilingual support by their providers and 70 per cent the opportunity for Welsh-only provision, but only 24 per cent (25) received bilingual

provision with the remaining 76 per cent (77) receiving English-only delivery. Figures from the ESF survey are even lower, with only four per cent of the 911 trainees in both EW and WWV stating they had partially received provision in Welsh and no respondent receiving it fully in Welsh. This may indicate confusion between bilingual provision (i.e. provision through the medium of both Welsh and English) with provision of Welsh language; 22 per cent of trainees in the ESF Participant Survey reported an improvement in their Welsh skills, so it is reasonable to assume they had the opportunity to practice Welsh language during their provision, even if only through incidental or informal usage.

- 7.26 Almost a third of the 105 respondents to the learner survey (29%) who had taken part in a work placement had done so with an employer where the Welsh language was used. Similarly, although based on a smaller sample of 48, just under a third of surveyed employers (14) stated that they used the Welsh language to some extent within their day-to-day operations, whilst six employers used the Welsh language to a great extent. Specifically, ten of these employers referred to it being used in a conversational manner, whilst a further ten used the Welsh language more extensively through the provision of bilingual services (see Table 2).

Table 2: Ways in which employers report using Welsh language (multiple responses)

Type of usage	N
Conversational Welsh is used e.g. phone greetings	10
Service delivered in Welsh	6
Welsh language support with service where requested e.g. with Welsh speaking clients	4
Information/publications provided bilingually	2

Base = 20 employers

- 7.27 When asked whether they have been able to support the Welsh language needs of employers, the majority of providers (seven) stated that they were unaware of their employers having any Welsh language needs. In some instances, providers described how they would cater for employer needs if this became apparent, however they had not experienced employers having any particular need. Four providers, however, stated that they felt they do support the Welsh language needs

of employers, ensuring that trainees have at the very least incidental Welsh relevant to their workplace, and in some instances ensuring that Welsh language speakers are in Welsh speaking placements. The employer survey showed this to be important to some employers, with a quarter considering it to be somewhat (9) or very (3) important to secure a trainee with Welsh language skills. However, in these instances only half of employers had actually been successful in securing a trainee with the appropriate language skills.

8. Outcomes and reported impact of the programme

This chapter presents findings relating to reported impact of the Traineeships programme on trainees and employers. It is based on:

- Bespoke analysis of Welsh Government Management Information (EDMS) data for Traineeship completions.
- The initial round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme.
- Secondary analysis of the 2018 ESF Participant Survey (911 respondents).
- A telephone survey of 105 trainees.
- A telephone survey with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement.

Key Findings

- Neither WWV or EW are currently on track to meet their targets for Traineeship completions. By December 2018, WWV had achieved over two fifths (41.8%) of its target, compared with less than a third for EW (28.1%). Extrapolating these figures suggests that, if the programme were to run to 2022 on its current basis, WWV would achieve 75 per cent of its target by December 2022 (19,348 completions) and EW 51 per cent of its target (9,302 completions).
- EDMS data shows that just under a third of participants (31.1%) entered employment upon leaving the Traineeships programme. Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that by 12 months after leaving the programme over half of young people (52%) were employed. Most participants who had entered

employment suggested that the programme had helped them to do so to some extent.

- EDMS data shows that a seventh of participants (14.3%) entered education or training upon leaving the Traineeships programme. Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that by 12 months after leaving the programme this had risen to over a fifth (22%).
- Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that, 12 months after leaving the programme, just under a fifth of young people (17%) were unemployed and looking for work.
- Trainees report a wide range of benefits arising from participation in the Traineeships programme, in particular social engagement and the development of soft and employment-related skills. In particular, the vast majority of trainees perceived an improvement in their general employability skills such as team working and organisation, in addition to those specifically relating to securing employment such as job search, CV's and interview techniques. A majority of respondents also referred to improvements in their essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Most young people feel that their long-term job prospects have been improved by the programme to at least some extent. Most agreed that they felt more prepared for work as a result of the Traineeship and that their understanding of what employers expect from them had improved. Most also felt that it has provided them with greater clarity on their career and/or learning progression.
- Providers generally cite improvements in soft skills, particularly in relation to confidence, aspirations, the ability to socially interact and maturity, as a key impact of the programme on trainees. Similarly, employers frequently referred to improvements in trainees' soft skills, describing how improved confidence had enabled trainees to engage more with colleagues and customers. Employers also recognised the enhanced levels of work experience as a key benefit of the programme, which was perceived as enabling trainees to gain real-life experience which they would be able to take forward into future employment.
- Most of the employers interviewed for the survey had taken on a trainee on a permanent basis following completion of their Traineeship, with many feeling that they would not have recruited without the support of the programme.

Progress to Targets

- 8.1 The 2014-2022 programme has an overall target of 18,418 completed Traineeships in East Wales (EW) and 25,698 completed Traineeships in West Wales and the Valleys (WWV).
- 8.2 Table 3 shows predicted targets (outputs and outcomes) for the Traineeships programme, for the period 2014-2022, along with progress to date (December 2018); a breakdown of outcomes by gender is shown in Table 4.²³ Note that this is bespoke analysis of EDMS data, which has been undertaken specifically for this evaluation, and will not be consistent with published Welsh Government official statistics, which use a later final freeze of data and wider cohort: EDMS data includes only ESF-funded trainees, whereas published Welsh Government official statistics also include trainees funded by alternative sources. Key points are:
- WWV has achieved over two fifths (41.8%) of its Traineeships completion target, compared with less than a third for EW (28.1%). Extrapolating these figures suggests that, if the programme were to run to 2022 on its current basis, WWV would achieve 75 per cent of its target by December 2022 (19,348 completions) and EW 51 per cent of its target (9,302 completions).
 - Neither region is on track to meet the target of 56 per cent gaining qualifications upon leaving, although WWV is closer at 51.7 per cent compared with 47.3 per cent for EW.
 - Neither region is on track to meet the target of 20 per cent in education or training upon leaving, although EW is closer at 17.6 per cent compared with 12.7 per cent for WWV.
 - Both regions are exceeding the target of 28 per cent entering employment upon leaving, with figures of 31.7 per cent for WWV and 30.0 per cent for EW.
 - Within both regions, female participation is under the 50 per cent target, although it is higher in EW (47.6%) than WWV (44.6%).
 - For EW, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) participation is far exceeding the 2.2 per cent target (10.6%), although WWV is not currently on track to meet it (1.6%).
 - WWV is close to meeting the 20.6 per cent target for the proportion of trainees declaring themselves to have a disability and/or learning difficulty, or work-

²³ Welsh Government Traineeships Progress Reports, December 2018.

limiting health condition (WLHC), with a figure of 20.5 per cent. EW is not on track to meet it with a figure of 18.9 per cent.

- Both regions have exceeded the 1 per cent target for the proportion of trainees declaring themselves as having caring responsibilities; EW has achieved 1.5 per cent and WWV 1.4 per cent.

Table 3: Traineeships programme targets and performance from January 2014 to December 2018²⁴

Region	Area	Target (2022)		Number of trainees	Current performance	Percentage progress to overall target (2022)
		Proportion	Number			
East Wales	Completed Traineeships		18,418	5,168		28.1
	Proportion gaining qualifications upon leaving	56.0	10,314	2,442	47.3	23.7
	Proportion in education/training upon leaving	20.0	3,683	909	17.6	24.7
	Proportion entering employment upon leaving	28.0	5,157	1551	30.0	30.1
	Proportion Female	50.0	9,209	2,462	47.6	26.7
	Proportion BAME	2.2	405	549	10.6	135.6
	Proportion who declared disability, learning difficulty, or WLHC	20.6	3,794	977	18.9	25.8
	Proportion who declared caring responsibilities	1.0	184	79	1.5	42.9
West Wales & Valleys	Completed Traineeships		25,698	10,749		41.8
	Proportion gaining qualifications upon leaving	56.0	14,390	5,556	51.7	38.6
	Proportion in education/training upon leaving	20.0	5,139	1,361	12.7	26.5
	Proportion entering employment upon leaving	28.0	7,195	3,406	31.7	47.3
	Proportion Female	50.0	12,849	4,793	44.6	37.3
	Proportion BAME	2.2	565	173	1.6	30.6
	Proportion who declared disability, learning difficulty, or WLHC	20.6	5,293	2,206	20.5	41.7
	Proportion who declared caring responsibilities	1.0	256	146	1.4	57.0

²⁴ Welsh Government Traineeships Progress Reports, December 2018.

Learner Outcomes

- 8.3 Combining EDMS data for EW and WWV (to December 2018, as shown in Table 3 above)²⁵ shows that half of Traineeships participants (50.2%) gained a qualification upon leaving their course. This was the most common positive outcome from the programme, and was slightly higher in WWV (51.7%) than EW (47.3%).
- 8.4 Just under a third of participants (31.1%) entered employment upon leaving their course. Again, this was slightly higher in WWV (31.7%) than EW (30.0%).
- 8.5 The least common positive outcome was progression to further education or training, accounting for 14.3 per cent of participants overall. This outcome was more common in EW (17.6%) than WWV (12.7%).
- 8.6 Table 4 shows a breakdown of outcomes by region and gender. For both regions, the proportion of participants gaining qualifications or employment who were female was fairly similar to the proportion of female participants overall. Respective figures were 48.3 and 48.8 compared to 47.6 per cent for EW; 45.7 and 44.2 compared to 44.6 per cent for WWV. However, for EW the proportion entering education who were female was over three percentage points lower than the overall figure (44.3% compared to 47.6%) and for WWV it was over two percentage points lower (42.4% compared to 44.6%); this indicates that female participants were underrepresented in progression to education or training.
- 8.7 Combining the figures for both regions shows that, overall, 45.6 per cent of those who completed a Traineeship were female, as were 46.5 per cent of those who gained a qualification, 45.7 per cent of those who progressed to employment and 43.2 per cent of those who progressed to education or training.

²⁵ Welsh Government Traineeships Progress Reports, December 2018.

Table 4: Traineeships programme outcomes breakdown by gender from January 2014 to December 2018 ²⁶

Region	Outcome	Number of trainees	Female		Male	
			Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
East Wales	Completed Traineeships	5,168	2,462	47.6	2,706	52.4
	Gained qualifications upon leaving	2,442	1,180	48.3	1,263	51.7
	Entered employment upon leaving	1,551	757	48.8	793	51.1
	Entered education or training upon leaving	909	403	44.3	506	55.7
West Wales & Valleys	Completed Traineeships	10,749	4,793	44.6	5,956	55.4
	Gained qualifications upon leaving	5,556	2,538	45.7	3,018	54.3
	Entered employment upon leaving	3,406	1,507	44.2	1,900	55.8
	Entered education or training upon leaving	1,361	577	42.4	784	57.6

²⁶ Welsh Government Traineeships Progress Reports, December 2018.

- 8.8 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that, 12 months after leaving the programme, over half of the 911 young people (52%) were employed (including self-employed and apprenticeships). This is higher than the 31 per cent who entered employment upon leaving the course (as described in paragraph 8.4), indicating that young people continued to gain employment over the 12 months after completion of their course. Over a fifth (22%) were in education or training at the time of the ESF survey, again higher than the 14.3 per cent who entered this upon leaving the programme (see paragraph 8.5). The ESF survey shows that, 12 months after leaving the programme, just under a fifth of young people (17%) were unemployed and looking for work (17%) and five per cent were unemployed and not looking for work.
- 8.9 Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents to the ESF Participant Survey who had gained employment had started their job during or immediately after their course, with two-thirds (66%) feeling that it had at least helped them to get their current job. There were some regional differences, with respondents from EW slightly more likely to be employed at the time of the survey (54% compared to 51%) or to be volunteering (3% compared to 1%). Respondents from WWV were slightly more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (19% compared to 15%) or in education or training (23% compared to 21%). There was a significant difference²⁷ between genders, with male respondents more likely to be unemployed but looking for work (19% compared to 15%) or in education or training (24% compared to 21%) and female respondents more likely to be economically inactive (8% compared to 2%). Respondents with a declared disability were less likely to be employed (53% compared to 48%) or in education or training (21% compared to 23%) and more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (19% compared to 17%).
- 8.10 A small number of respondents to the ESF survey (7%) were in employment both before and (six months after) their Traineeship. Most of these respondents stated that they had gained work-related benefits from their Traineeship. This was most commonly having more opportunities for training (86%), better job security (78%), more job satisfaction (76%), improved prospects for pay and promotion (76%) and securing a pay rise (76%). Twenty per cent of these individuals also reported that they had secured a promotion. These findings indicate that the Traineeships

²⁷ Using a chi square test the significance level (p value) was 0.003

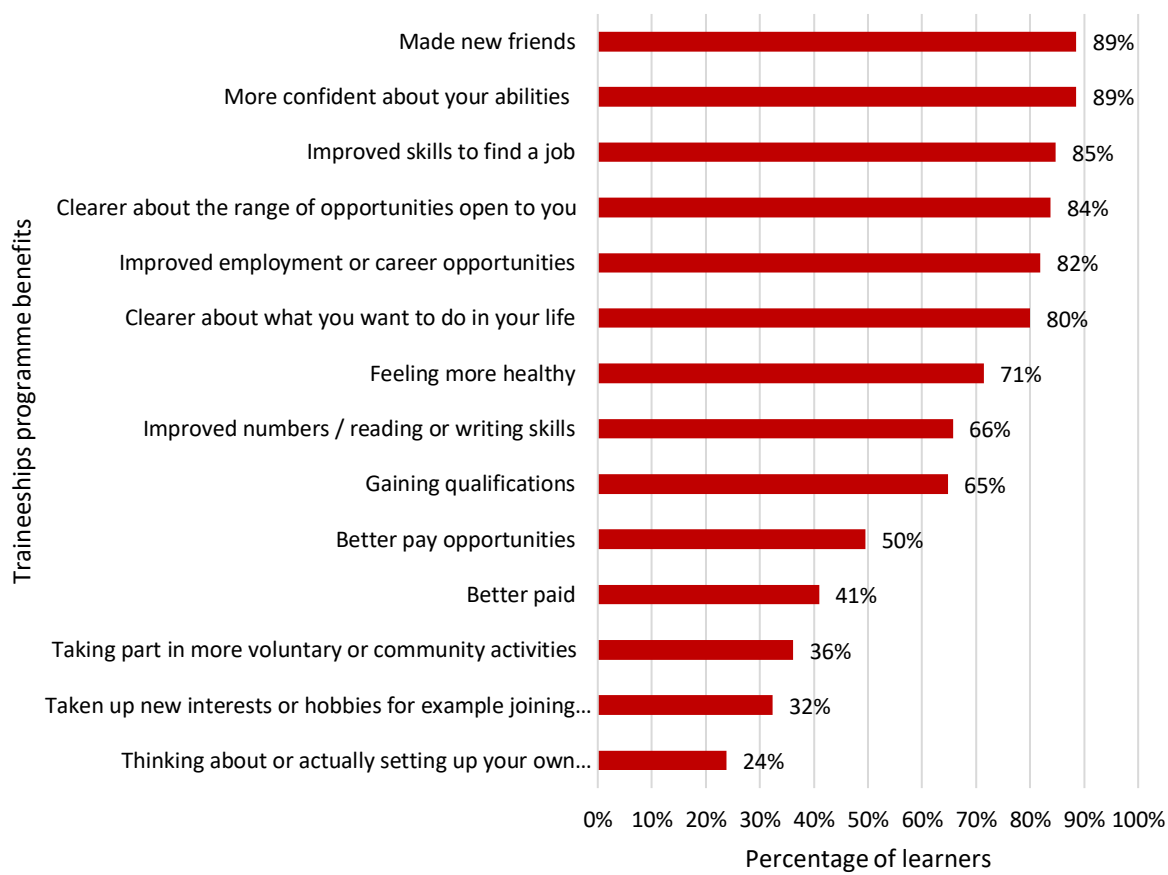
programme has substantial work-related benefits even for individuals in employment at commencement.

- 8.11 Out of the 105 respondents to the learner survey, 20 were employed. Out of these, eight described their Traineeship as very important in securing their employment and a further seven as important. Whilst it may be inferred that the attributed level of importance may be closely linked to whether that employment was gained at the employer who provided the placement, it is interesting to note that only a quarter of these respondents gained employment at the location of their work placement; over half (9) secured employment through opportunities advertised on the open market.
- 8.12 Comparing trainees' reasons for taking part in the Traineeships programme (as identified in the learner survey) and their working status at the time of the survey shows no strong trend between the two. This indicates that trainees' reasons for participating did not influence their outcomes.
- 8.13 The ESF Participant Survey asked respondents who were out of work what they thought was making it difficult for them to find work. Although lower than the corresponding figures prior to them starting the programme, 45 per cent of out of work respondents felt that not having relevant work experience was making it difficult for them to find work (compared to 68 per cent pre-programme). In addition 37 per cent that it was hard to get appropriate work experience (compared to 42%), 40 per cent that they did not have the right qualifications (compared to 47%) and 34 per cent that they did not have the right skills (compared to 48%). Respondents to the learner survey also mentioned factors such as age, lack of appropriate jobs to apply for, transport difficulties and a lack of confidence as ongoing barriers to employment.

Skills development and other benefits

- 8.14 Respondents to the learner survey described a wide range of benefits gained through participating in the Traineeships programme, as shown in Figure 10. Social engagement and the development of soft and employment-related skills were commonly cited as benefits arising from participation, suggesting that aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act will be supported through a more prosperous and resilient Wales. There was also a perception amongst four-fifths of respondents that the support had provided them with greater clarity on their career/learning progression (84%) and that it had improved their employment or career opportunities (82%).

Figure 10: Thinking about the Traineeships Programme, do you feel you benefitted in any of the following ways?

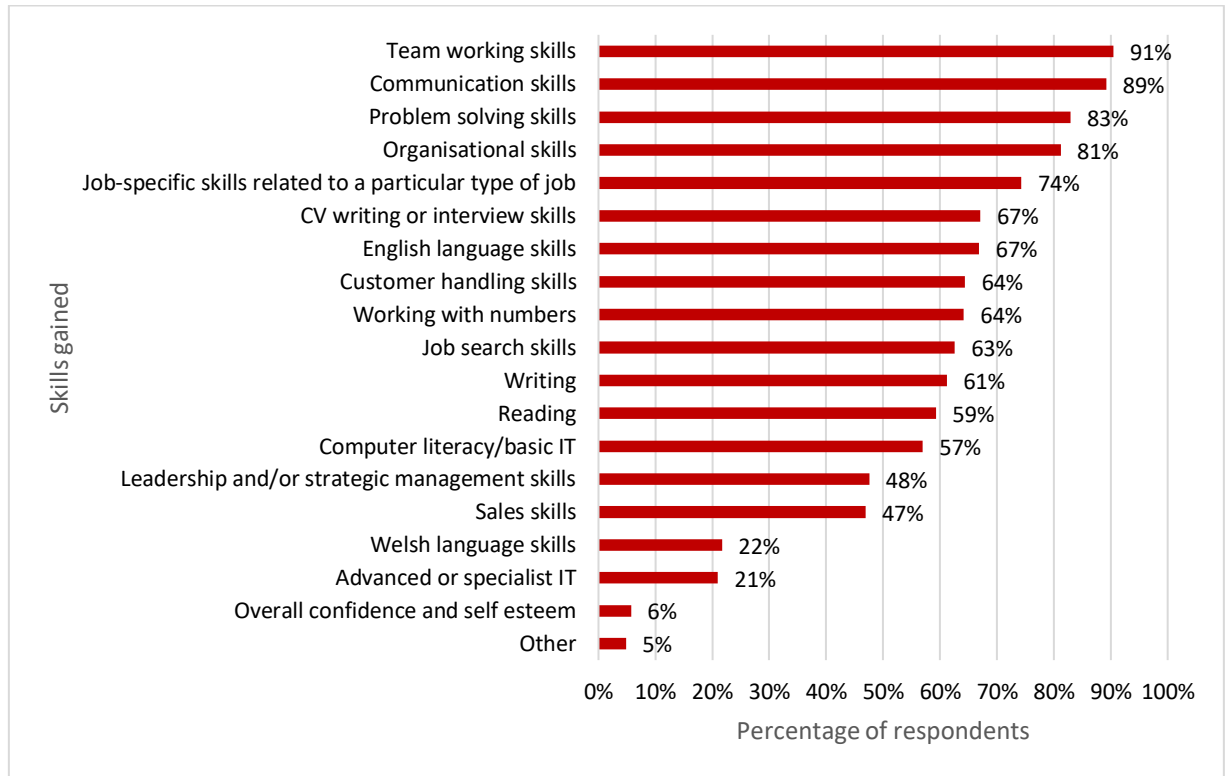


Base = 105 trainees

- 8.15 When asked specifically if their long-term job prospects had been improved by the Traineeship, half of respondents to the learner survey (50%) agreed completely and 37% partially agreed; only 12% felt that they had not been improved at all. Most trainees either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more prepared for work as a result of the Traineeship (85%) and that their understanding of what employers expect from them had improved as a result of the programme (83%).
- 8.16 Findings from the ESF Participant Survey show that trainees felt that they had gained or improved a wide range of skills through the programme (see Figure 11). The most common skills respondents felt they had gained related to team working (91%), communication (89%), problem solving (83%) and organisation (81%). Roughly three quarters (74%) also felt that they had developed job-specific skills. Most respondents also perceived an improvement in skills specifically relating to securing employment such as CV writing or interview skills (67%) and job search skills (63%). Most also referred to improvements in their essential skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT). There were some demographic differences on skills gained,

with female respondents significantly more likely to say that they had gained sales skills (52% compared to 43%) and respondents with a declared disability significantly less likely to feel that they had gained organisational skills (74% compared to 83%).

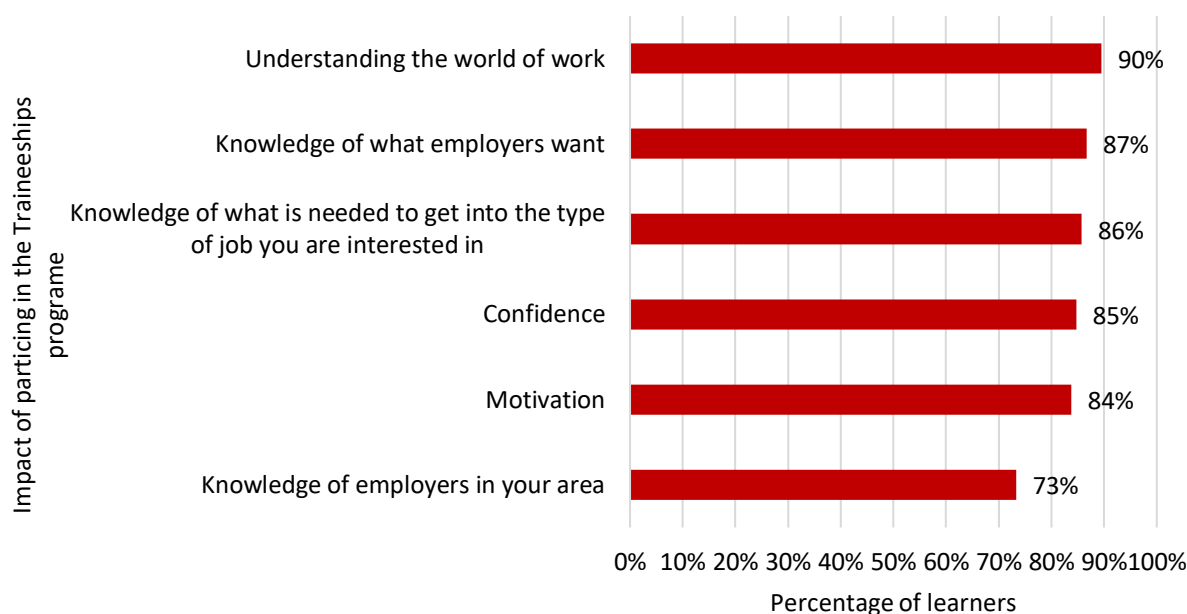
Figure 11: Skills gained during Traineeships for ESF Participant Survey respondents (multiple response)



Base = 911 trainees

- 8.17 Although a smaller sample (105), respondents to the learner survey overwhelmingly felt that they had improved a range of wider employment and soft skills during the programme, as shown in Figure 12. Roughly nine in 10 felt that they had an improved understanding of the world of work (90%), knowledge of what employers want (87%), knowledge of what is needed to get into the type of job they're interested in (86%), confidence (85%) and motivation (84%). Seventy-three per cent also cited improved knowledge of employers in their area. Over half of trainees (51%) felt that they would definitely not have gained these skills had they not participated in the programme. In addition, almost half of respondents (48%) had already used what they learnt through the programme, with a further 39 per cent feeling that they would do so in future.

Figure 12: And do you think you have gained anything from doing the programme in terms of...



Base = 105 trainees

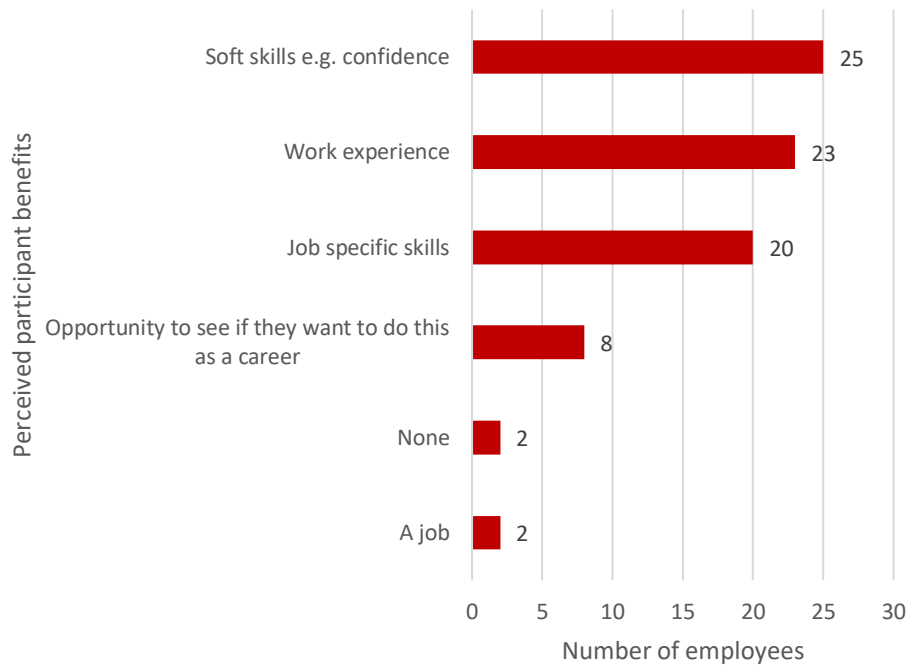
- 8.18 When providers were asked about the perceived impact of the programme, most described changes in participants' soft skills, particularly in relation to confidence, aspirations, the ability to socially interact and their maturity. Whilst these elements were most commonly cited, various approaches to capturing the information are adopted with some providers describing them as a critical measurement tool.

'Soft outcomes are integral, we have had learners who couldn't walk down the street with their head held up before joining. The confidence and support is life changing. We provide this support in baby steps, we give them tiny milestones so they feel like they are achieving something.' (Provider)

- 8.19 Similarly, employers frequently referred to improvements in trainees' soft skills (25 out of 48), describing how improved confidence had enabled trainees to engage more with colleagues and customers. Employers also recognised the enhanced levels of work experience (23), which was perceived as enabling trainees to gain real-life experience which they would be able to take forward into future employment (see Figure 13). Employers also referred to improvements in job specific skills (20), such as childcare or technical skills for a particular trade, and the opportunity for trainees to experience a particular type of job or sector (8). It is

interesting to note the close alignment of these benefits with what employers understood to be the key aims of the Traineeships programme (see paragraph 6.9).

Figure 13: In your opinion, what benefits does a participant get out of a placement at your organisation? (multiple responses)



Base = 48 employers

- 8.20 These findings are supported by the results of the ESF Participant Survey, which showed that 85 per cent of respondents felt the programme had (slightly or significantly) increased their confidence in their own abilities, 79 per cent their general motivation and behaviour, 71 per cent their career direction and 70 per cent their general quality of life. Almost all (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that Traineeships are good for getting experience and skills, and roughly nine in ten that they are a stepping stone towards an apprenticeship (90.9%) or are good for getting qualifications (88.5%). Three quarters (76.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that Traineeships are respected by young people in general. This suggests that the Traineeships programme is effectively supporting the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act through its focus on creating a more prosperous and resilient Wales.
- 8.21 The ESF Participant Survey shows that the majority of young people (60%), if starting out again, would do the same Traineeship at the same place. One in ten (12%) would do a Traineeship at a different location, with just over a quarter (28%) stating that they would do something different. Considering that 31 per cent of

respondents did not complete their programme, this demonstrates trainees' generally positive experience of it.

Impact on employers

- 8.22 Almost a third of the 48 employers (15) described a positive impact from participating in the Traineeships programme on their recruitment, as shown in Table 5. This was due to recruiting a trainee into a job, subsequent to their placement, which was considered an efficient route to recruitment. Six employers referred to a positive impact on their productivity. The remaining 17 respondents stated that there had been no tangible impact for their organisation from participating in the programme.

Table 5: Employers' perceived impact on their business

Impact	N
Employed trainees / impact on recruitment	15
Productivity	6
Increased social awareness / impact on social responsibility	4
Young people are trained in the way we want them to be	2
Improved customer service	2
Someone who works the way we need	1
New dimension to workforce	1
Provided a direction for young volunteers / employees	1
No impact	17

Base = 48 employers. Please note that total exceeds 48 as answers have been coded as multiple choice.

- 8.23 Almost three quarters of employers (35 out of 48) had taken on a trainee on a permanent basis following completion of their Traineeship. In over half (19) of these instances, employers felt it unlikely that they would have recruited without the Traineeships programme, as a result of limited capacity and resource, whilst a further two employers would not have recruited as quickly or as many staff.
- 8.24 All but one of the surveyed employers would recommend the programme; typically, this was due to the perceived opportunity that the programme presented to young

people and to their business (see Figure 14 below). This aligns well with employers’ original reasons for taking part in the programme, which focused both on assisting in a young person’s development and in benefits to their business (see paragraph 6.8).

Figure 14: Why would you recommend the Traineeships programme to other employers? Qualitative explanation



Base = 47 employers

8.25 Almost two thirds of employers are currently taking on or plan to take on further Traineeship participants.

9. Counterfactual impact assessment and cost benefit analysis

This chapter presents findings relating to the impact assessment and the cost benefit analysis. It is based on:

- Using matched administrative data, specifically the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes study (LEO) data which combines data on learning from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), DWP administrative data on benefit receipt, and HMRC data covering earnings and employment.
- The use of LEO data enables the exploration of the impact of participation in the Traineeships programme on subsequent employment and earnings outcomes.
- The use of LEO data means that the group against which we compare outcomes for trainees, are also undertaking learning at either Entry Level or Level 1. Hence, it is not a 'policy off' counterfactual.
- The results of the analysis of the impact of the traineeships programme on participants' subsequent earnings form the basis of the estimate of the value of the additional economic impact of Traineeships Programme. In the Cost Benefit Analysis, these are considered against the additional costs of Traineeships i.e. the programme's costs minus the costs of the alternative of other Entry Level / Level 1 learning.
- This approach is consistent with Treasury Green Book and other official government guidance, for example, DWP social cost benefit analysis framework.
- There are some limitations to the cost data that is available, especially for the alternative Entry level/level 1 learners, therefore a number of scenarios are developed for these costs as follows:
 - based on data from the Auditor General for Wales.
 - based on costs of apprenticeship provision for 16-18 year olds in England, adjusted for programme length.
 - the lowest cost provider from the Auditor General for Wales data.
 - a "stress test" which excludes any such costs.

Key Findings

- Compared to individuals engaged in Entry Level or Level 1 further education, those participating in Traineeships achieved the following:
 - 16 percentage point higher job entry.
 - 16 percentage point higher rate of three-month job sustainment.
 - £642 higher earnings in the financial year following that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - £1,811 higher earnings in the financial year two years after that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - 33.7 more days in employment in the financial year following that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - 61.4 more days in employment in the financial year two years after that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
- The Cost Benefit Analysis results depend on the length of time over which the potential future benefits of the programme are considered (the time horizon), and the assumption we adopt with respect to the cost of the alternative provision undertaken by the counterfactual group.
- For a two year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £23.9 million to £81.7 million.
- For a three year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £67.7 million to £125.5 million.
- For a five year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £148.7 million to £206.5 million.
- While it is difficult to know exactly how long the impacts of the Traineeship programme might last a three year time horizon appears both conservative and reasonable.

Impact assessment

- 9.1 Our counterfactual impact assessment uses the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset developed by the UK Government. This is a matched administrative dataset which brings together data on learning from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), DWP administrative data on benefit receipt, and HMRC data

covering earnings and employment. LEO allows an assessment of subsequent earnings and employment outcomes for one and two years after participation in learning.

Regression analysis

9.2 Six regression models²⁸ with the following dependent variables were estimated:

- Job Entry.
- Three month job sustainment.
- Earnings in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus one”.
- Earnings in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus two”.
- Days in employment in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus one”.
- Days in employment in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus two”.

9.3 The full regression results for these six variables are shown in Annex G. Below we focus on the impact of participating in the Traineeships programme and the impact of local labour market conditions which we modelled explicitly in our regression equations.

9.4 Table 6 shows the estimated treatment effects of participating in the Traineeships programme on the six modelled outcome variables. All these treatment effects were statistically significant.

²⁸ Regression models are statistical tools for estimating the relationship between a dependent variable and a range of explanatory variables which are believed to explain its behavior.

Table 6: Estimated programme impacts over that of comparison group (Entry level/level 1 learners)

Outcome	Programme Impact
Increase in the Job Entry Rate	16% points
Increase in the 3 month job sustainment Rate	16% points
Earnings, year plus one	£642
Earnings, year plus two	£1,811
Days in employment, year plus one	33.7 days
Days in employment, year plus two	61.4 days

9.5 We included two local authority level variables in our regression analysis: gross weekly earnings for 2018 and the employment rate for people aged 16-24. These were included to pick up the influence on outcomes of local labour market or neighbourhood conditions. In all six cases, the earnings variables did not have a statistically significant effect. The employment rate variable however was statistically significant in all cases. Table 7 shows the impact of a 10% point increase in the local employment rate on the six modelled outcome variables. For such a large increase in the local employment rate these impacts, albeit statistically significant, are trivial in size. Hence local labour market or neighbourhood conditions do not materially impact on outcomes from the Traineeships programme.

Table 7: Estimated impacts of a ten percent point increase in the local employment rate

Outcome	Local Employment Rate Impact
Job Entry	<0.1% points
3 month job sustainment	<0.1% points
Earnings, year plus one	£2
Earnings, year plus two	£3
Days in employment, year plus one	<1 day
Days in employment, year plus two	< 1 day

Cost Benefit Analysis

Programme Costs

- 9.6 Costs data supplied by the Welsh Government was adjusted to put it on a financial year basis. As the costs data provided did not cover the whole evaluation period to December 2018 the last few months of data had to be forecast. Finally, these costs were adjusted for inflation to 2014/15 prices.

Counterfactual costs

- 9.7 As the impact assessment assesses the outcomes for trainees against the alternative of Entry Level or Level 1 learning in further education, the potential costs of this alternative learning need to be taken into account. The cost of this alternative provision has been estimated using three different approaches:
- Based on data from the Auditor General for Wales (AGfW)²⁹.
 - Based on the costs of English provision³⁰.
 - Based on the lowest cost provider from the AGfW study.
- 9.8 Again, these costs figures were adjusted for inflation to put them in real terms.
- 9.9 In addition, a stress test was undertaken with no allowance made for the costs of any alternative learning. This stress test effectively treats the cost benefit analysis as if the impact assessment had been undertaken on a 'policy off' basis. Logically, this implies an assumption that either the alternative learning had zero impacts on labour market outcomes (as would be the case with a policy off comparison) or that these outcomes could be obtained at zero cost (again policy off has no costs). Hence, this stress test is not intended to be a credible estimate of the actual value for money of the programme but as a strong test of this given the uncertainties surrounding the costs of the counterfactual alternative learning provision.

²⁹ Taken from Auditor General for Wales (2017), 'Welsh Government oversight of further education colleges' finances and delivery', Wales Audit Officer.

³⁰ Frontier Economics and CFE Research (2016), "Costs and behaviours in the 16 to 18 apprenticeship system", a report for the Department for Education.

Benefits

- 9.10 The benefits of labour market interventions potentially take two forms: the economic benefits of people being in employment who otherwise would not, and the non-employment benefits that flow from these people being in work. These non-employment benefits include, for example, health improvements, or reductions in criminal activity. As we are unable to quantify these non-employment benefits, our estimate of the benefits of Traineeships is based solely on the estimated employment or economic benefits of the programme. These economic benefits of the programme are based on its estimated impacts on earnings over 2 years, 3 years and 5 years. In all scenarios, the earnings figures are adjusted for inflation.

Net Present Values and Benefit to Cost Ratios

- 9.11 With the programme costs, alternative counterfactual costs, and programme benefits having been calculated, the value for money of the programme can be calculated using standard measures. These are the net present values (NPVs) and the benefit to cost ratios (BCRs). In simple terms the estimated cost and benefit figures (which were already corrected for inflation) are adjusted to allow for the fact that their pattern varies over time.
- 9.12 For a programme's benefits to outweigh its costs, and so for it to represent value for money, the overall NPV (benefits minus costs) should be positive and the BCR (benefits divided by costs) should be above one.
- 9.13 Tables 8 to 10 show the NPVs of our cost estimates, our benefit estimate and the resulting overall programme NPVs and BCRs for the two-year, three-year and five-year time horizons respectively.

Table 8: Programme Net Present Values and Benefit to Cost Ratio, Two Year Time Horizon

Counterfactual Cost Estimates	AGfW	Based on English provision	AGfW, lowest cost provider	Stress Test
NPV Programme Costs	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650
NPV Counterfactual Costs	£69,386,430	£33,033,285	£11,577,572	-
NPV Net Costs	-£18,134,781	£18,218,364	£39,674,078	£51,251,650
NPV Benefits	£63,543,933	£63,543,933	£63,543,933	£63,543,933
Overall Programme NPV	£81,678,714	£45,325,569	£23,869,855	£12,292,283
Benefit to Cost Ratio	n /a	3.49	1.60	1.24

Table 9: Programme Net Present Values and Benefit to Cost Ratio, Three Year Time Horizon

Counterfactual Cost Estimates	AGfW	Based on English provision	AGfW, lowest cost provider	Stress Test
NPV Programme Costs	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650
NPV Counterfactual Costs	£69,386,430	£33,033,285	£11,577,572	-
NPV Net Costs	-£18,134,781	£18,218,364	£39,674,078	£51,251,650
NPV Benefits	£107,393,592	£107,393,592	£107,393,592	£107,393,592
Overall Programme NPV	£125,528,372	£89,175,227	£67,719,514	£56,141,942
Benefit to Cost Ratio	n /a	5.89	2.71	2.10

Table 10: Programme Net Present Values and Benefit to Cost Ratio, Five Year Time Horizon

Counterfactual Cost Estimates	AGfW	Based on English provision	AGfW, lowest cost provider	Stress Test
NPV Programme Costs	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650	£51,251,650
NPV Counterfactual Costs	£69,386,430	£33,033,285	£11,577,572	-
NPV Net Costs	-£18,134,781	£18,218,364	£39,674,078	£51,251,650
NPV Benefits	£188,364,643	£188,364,643	£188,364,643	£188,364,643
Overall Programme NPV	£206,499,424	£170,146,279	£148,690,566	£137,112,994
Benefit to Cost Ratio	n /a	10.34	4.75	3.68

- 9.14 The calculated values of the programme's NPV and BCR depend on the assumption that is made with regard to the costs of the counterfactual learning and the time horizon over which the benefits of the programme are considered. In all such scenarios the estimated overall programme NPVs are positive. Where relevant the BCRs are thus above one and often substantially so. A BCR figure can only sensibly be calculated where both the benefit and costs figures are positive. Hence, we cannot calculate a BCR figure where we use the average costs from the AGfW study as the basis for our estimate of the costs of the alternative counterfactual costs as these are larger than our estimated costs for the Traineeships programme. This results in a negative net cost figure and so a negative BCR.
- 9.15 The average AGfW based estimated costs of the counterfactual FE learning may overestimate these costs and so produce too low an estimate of the net costs of the Traineeships programme. This is because these counterfactual costs relate to general FE provision, including learning at higher levels than the Entry Level and Level 1 learning. This higher level provision is likely to involve higher costs than Entry Level and Level 1 provision. The use of data for the lowest cost provider from the AGfW study may go towards the other extreme and provide too low an estimate of the counterfactual costs, and so over estimate the net costs of Traineeships. The estimated counterfactual costs based on estimates for English FE provision sit between the two estimates based on the AGfW study's data.

9.16 Our estimates of the programme's NPV rises the longer the time horizon we consider. The most conservative option assumes that the impact lasts for just two years in line with the period we can model impacts for. This is likely to be an overly conservative assumption, because research suggests that skills and training programmes, such as Traineeships, have impacts over a number of years. While, it is difficult to know exactly how long the impacts of the Traineeships programme might last a three-year time horizon appears both conservative and reasonable, while the assumption of a five year time horizon represents a more optimistic assumption.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter contains conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings.

Progress to targets and learner outcomes

10.1 An analysis of EDMS outcomes data to December 2018³¹ shows that:

- Gaining a qualification was the most common positive outcome of the programme, with 50.2 per cent of participants doing so upon leaving their course.
- Just under a third of participants (31.1%) entered employment upon leaving their course.
- The least common positive outcome was progression to further education or training, accounting for 14.3 per cent of participants.

10.2 A comparison with programme targets shows that:

- WWV has achieved over two fifths (41.8%) of its Traineeships completion target, compared with less than a third for EW (28.1%).
- Both regions are currently meeting the target for 28 per cent of trainees to progress into employment upon completion.
- Neither region is currently on track to meet the target for 20 per cent of trainees to progress into education or training upon completion upon leaving, with figures of 17.6 per cent in EW and 12.7 per cent in WWV. Both are also missing the target for 56 per cent to gain qualifications upon completion, with figures of 47.3 per cent for EW and 51.7 per cent for WWV.
- Neither region is currently on track to meet the 50 per cent target for female participation (47.6% in EW and 44.6% in WWV). Both regions are exceeding the target of 1 per cent for the proportion of trainees with declared caring responsibilities (1.5% in EW and 1.4% in WWV). However, neither region is meeting the 20.6 per cent target for the proportion of trainees with a declared disability (including learning difficulty or work-limiting health condition) (18.9% in EW and 20.5% in WWV); although both are .

³¹ Welsh Government Traineeships Progress Reports, December 2018.

- Both regions are currently meeting the target of 1 per cent for the proportion of trainees with declared caring responsibilities. The 2.2 per cent target for BAME participation is currently being met in EW but not in WWV.

Reported Impact on Participants

- 10.3 Trainees report a wide range of benefits arising from participation in the Traineeships programme, in particular social engagement and the development of soft and employment-related skills. Most young people also feel that their long-term job prospects have been improved by the programme to at least some extent and that they have greater clarity on their future career and/or learning progression.
- 10.4 Providers generally cite improvements in soft skills, particularly in relation to confidence, aspirations, the ability to socially interact and maturity, as a key impact of the programme on trainees.
- 10.5 Employers also consider improvements in soft skills to be a key benefit of the programme, along with the enhanced levels of work experience which are perceived as enabling trainees to gain real-life experience to take forward into future employment. Most employers had taken on a trainee on a permanent basis following completion of their Traineeship.

Impact Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis

- 10.6 The impact assessment indicated that compared to the counterfactual of individuals engaged in Entry Level or Level 1 further education, those participating in Traineeships achieved the following additional outcomes:
- 16 percentage point higher job entry and three-month job sustainment rates.
 - £642 higher earnings in the financial year following that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - £1,811 higher earnings in the financial year two years after that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - 33.7 more days in employment in the financial year following that in which they undertook their Traineeship.
 - 61.4 more days in employment in the financial year two years after that in which they undertook their Traineeship.

10.7 The cost benefit analysis shows that:

- For a two year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £23.9 million to £81.7 million.
- For a three year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £67.7 million to £125.5 million.
- For a five year time horizon the estimates of the net present value of the programme range from £148.7 million to £206.5 million.

10.8 All of the various scenarios thus give positive estimates of the programme's net present value and thus indicate that it has provided value for money to the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund.

Cross-cutting themes and Welsh language

10.9 In-depth interviews with providers indicate that their delivery of the Traineeships programme addresses each of the ESF cross-cutting themes (of equal opportunities, sustainable development and tackling poverty), and supports the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, to at least some extent. In particular:

- Providers felt that the flexibility of the programme allows the equal opportunities theme to be addressed from a learner-led perspective.
- Providers asserted that the sustainable development theme was embedded within their delivery of Traineeships, for example in inductions and specific projects such as beach cleaning.
- Although providers generally did not perceive the programme as alleviating poverty directly in itself, they consistently suggested that it has a key role to play in tackling poverty through associated activities such as supporting trainees with food or clothing and signposting them to appropriate services.
- Providers generally felt that the flexibility of the programme enabled them to support trainees' health and well-being, and hence support the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- Although providers reported that the Welsh Language ability of trainees varied considerably, most described a range of activities to promote Welsh language and culture and ensure that trainees had exposure to incidental or conversational Welsh during the programme. Although take up of provision

through the medium of Welsh was generally low, almost all providers indicated that this provision was available to those who wanted it.

- 10.10 The majority of providers felt that the training allowance had a negative impact in terms of equal opportunities, describing it as 'unfair' and 'disincentivising' for trainees on work placements to be working alongside paid employees, undertaking similar hours, yet earning significantly less.

Effectiveness of programme and other lessons learned

- 10.11 Most officials, partners, and providers agree that the overall structure and approach for the Traineeships programme is effective, in particular the split into different strands, the degree of flexibility provided in the model and providers' autonomy to identify suitable and relevant support.
- 10.12 Most providers are using consortia or subcontracting arrangements to deliver the programme, including limited use of third-sector partners to better engage and support harder to reach target groups.
- 10.13 However, some issues and concerns about how this model is delivered in practice are apparent, including:
- There was uncertainty about the extent to which providers had been successful in involving third sector providers in delivery of the Traineeships programme, despite this being an aim of Welsh Government.
 - There is low use of the Bridge-to-Employment strand of the programme.
 - Whilst providers recognised the degree of flexibility provided by the model, it was noted that the Engagement level is more standardised than originally planned due to limited provider resource and expertise to provide more personalised support within the funding model.
 - Officials and partners frequently expressed concerns that the Traineeships programme was not reaching the hardest to reach groups, as many providers lack the capacity to provide the resource-intensive support required to enable some of these young people to secure good outcomes from Traineeships.
- 10.14 Employers who have participated in the programme generally consider its key strengths to be the opportunity for young people to gain work experience and skills through the programme, and that it provides an alternative option for individuals who have not had their needs fully met by mainstream provision.

Work placements

- 10.15 Providers described increased challenges in engaging employers to offer placements; felt to be due to a combination of a lack of awareness of Traineeships, unfamiliarity with the offer and perceptions of Traineeships as linked to young people who had misbehaved at school.
- 10.16 Over half of respondents to the employer survey were also engaged with other forms of work-based learning provision, with most continuing to engage with the Traineeships programme after their first work placement. Employers generally described their reasons for participating in the programme as a desire to help young people in their careers, wishing to play a role in their local community and recognising the benefit of the programme to them as an employer.
- 10.17 Most employers recruit trainees for work placements through training providers. Employers are generally happy with the support provided both to themselves and to their trainees during the placement; typically attributed to a consistent and regular level of communication.
- 10.18 Most employers are happy with the information about trainees they receive from providers, which generally relates to the young person's background and interests. However, in almost one third of instances (14), employers reported that they had received no information from providers about trainees before commencement of the placements.
- 10.19 Placements are closely aligned to occupational roles within the employer's organisation, thereby providing additional capacity whilst also enabling the young person to develop skills relevant to their job role.
- 10.20 The majority of trainees are very positive about their placements, with most describing them as useful or very useful, and typically referring to the opportunity to gain insight, skills and experience in a sector in which they wish to pursue a career.

Engagement of trainees

- 10.21 Providers report that they use a range of ways to engage their target audiences including through schools, social media, and referral partners. However, over half reported a continuing fall in their recruitment numbers.
- 10.22 The main routes for young people to find out about Traineeships are family and friends, schools and/or careers teachers and Careers Wales Advisors. Almost all

trainees feel that they had enough information about the programme before embarking on it.

- 10.23 Several stakeholders noted the key role that Careers Wales plays in ensuring young people are receiving advice about their options. However, it was also felt that the role of Careers Wales in the referral process can sometimes create delays, due in some cases to their capacity and resource, and in others the need for learners to be referred to Careers Wales after they are initially engaged by the provider.
- 10.24 Findings suggest that the programme has been successful in engaging young people who face barriers to securing employment, with over half of respondents to the learner survey having no prior work experience and the majority lacking clarity and direction as to how to progress in education or employment.
- 10.25 Trainees predominantly participate in the programme in order to increase their employability skills and prospects.
- 10.26 Providers report that young people engaging with Traineeships display an increasingly complex set of needs and barriers, including mental health difficulties and wider social issues such as housing and accommodation.
- 10.27 Despite Welsh Government amendments to the process it was noted that take up of ALS funding was still low, with many providers not attempting to access the funding due to the perceived administrative burden of the process and that they often feel able to offer support within their own organisation.

Recommendations

- 10.28 In designing a future employability programme Welsh Government should consider:
- Ensuring that different provision, comprised of distinct strands of activity/support, links to provide a coherent pathway for young people.
 - Exploring ways in which the flexibility and funding associated with, for example, the Engagement strand of Traineeships, is embedded into new provision.
 - Ensuring that provision targeted at young people with complex needs continues to be flexible in terms of duration.
 - Exploring options for greater flexibility in the progression period for individuals after having engaged with employability programme support.
 - Issuing new guidance about how to complete the Traineeship Referral Form (or equivalent document under a future employability programme) and the

importance of capturing wider support needs within this, to share with providers, employers and other delivery partners.

- Issuing guidance about the requirement to directly involve trainees in the development and ongoing review of their Individual Learning Plan.
- Issuing new communications to providers, highlighting how the ALS application process has been simplified, along with worked examples of how the funding can be used.
- Consulting about an adequate rate of reimbursement for providers whilst a young person undertakes a work placement, and that such rates are set at an adequate level in a future employability programme, along with guidance about effective work placements.

10.29 It is recommended that Welsh Government review the range of provision available to young people. Whilst a future employability programme may not be able to cater for the full range of needs that young people present, it is important that:

- All stakeholders, providers and third sector organisations have good awareness of the different support available and adopt a joined-up approach to referring young people to provision that is most appropriate for their individual needs, whether this is within or outside the scope of an employability programme.
- Providers have good awareness of wider funding that could be utilised to support trainees facing financial hardship.
- Providers are proactive in engaging employers and enabling them to understand the individual support needs of trainees with a declared disability.
- Welsh Government issues providers with new guidance around effective employer engagement and support. This could include examples of good practice, case studies and resources, such as a checklist.
- Welsh Government explores the wider use of positive messages, case studies and marketing material to promote Traineeships. This could be tailored to the motivations and interests of different stakeholders, such as schools, parents and young people, to promote the programme and reduce any stigma currently associated with it.
- Effective partnership models between Careers Wales and providers are shared widely to ensure these can be incorporated into wider delivery. This includes with employers, to facilitate understanding of long term, strategic benefit of this, or any future employability support programme.

- Welsh Government review the resourcing allocated to referral processes, to secure a more efficient and stream-lined process in the delivery of a future employability programme.

10.30 To establish a robust evidence base for future evaluations and research it is recommended that Welsh Government:

- Commissions further research to gather data on the conversion of work placements directly into employment or apprenticeship outcomes for young people.
- Continues to develop and enhance the LEO dataset by adding in data from PLASC, DWP data on benefit receipt and exploring the possibility of also including data from Careers Wales. Over time, LEO will allow the analysis of longer run impacts of programmes such as Traineeships than is currently possible.
- Considers more flexible use of data on Traineeships from 2011 onwards which cut across different funding arrangements would allow the estimation of longer run impacts now. We recommend research of this type be undertaken and such longer run impacts have important implications for evidence-based policy making.

Annex A: Methodology

The evaluation has been delivered between April 2017 and March 2019. During this time, it has included the following elements:

- Scoping, desk-based review and bespoke analysis of Welsh Government Management Information (EDMS) data for Traineeship completions.
- Analysis of the Wales European Funding Office 'ESF Participant Survey' data.
- Interviews with Welsh Government Officials and key partners.
- Two rounds of interviews with providers and subcontractors delivering the Traineeships programme.
- Interviews with employers and trainees participating in the programme.
- A counterfactual impact assessment using a linked government administrative dataset.
- A cost-benefit analysis.

Further details on specific elements of the methodology are included below.

Analysis of ESF Participant Survey

The 2018 ESF Participant Survey was conducted by IFF Research. It is an annual telephone survey of approximately 6,000 individuals who have undertaken courses in Wales partly or fully funded by the European Social Fund during the previous year.

L&W and Wavehill worked with Welsh Government to contribute to the development of 5 minutes of Traineeship operation-specific questions to be included in the 2018 Participant Survey, in addition to the core questions. Data was collected between February and September 2018. L&W received the responses of all 911 respondents who had been participants in the Traineeships programme between February and September 2017.

Prior to analysis, survey data was weighted to ensure it was representative of Traineeship participants for the corresponding time period (February to September 2017) with regard to region, gender and disability. This was based on EDMS data for this period provided by Welsh Government. Table 11. shows a demographic breakdown by region, gender and disability.

Table 11: Demographic Breakdown of ESF Participant Survey Sample

		Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
Total		911	911
Region	WWV	573	628
	EW	338	283
Gender	Male	520	492
	Female	391	419
Declared Disability	Yes	215	183
	No	696	728

Survey data was analysed to learn about the impact of the intervention (such as movement to employment, education or further training, as well as impact on softer skills such as motivation and confidence), the experiences of participants and their reasons for participating. The large sample size and representative weighting allows for a robust statistical analysis. However, the depth of the analysis is limited by the quantitative nature of the survey.

Where possible, a systematic analysis by demographic breakdown and region was conducted; however, results were only included in the report if statistically significant or relevant to the evaluation.

Interviews with Welsh Government Officials and key partners

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven Welsh Government officials and partners (see Annex B for topic guide). Interviewees were identified by Welsh Government.

Interviews were used to investigate the approach to implementation, administration and management of the programme. They explored the performance of different aspects of the programme and its alignment with current policy. They also explored the extent to which Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Learning Support (ALS) budgets are being accessed to support people with additional learning needs, and how are they being used, whether and how the needs of trainees have changed over recent years and how the referrals process has been

working in practice and the role of Careers Wales. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of interviewees.

Initial round of provider and subcontractor interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventeen providers and sub-contractors who have been involved in the delivery of the Traineeships programme (see Annex C for topic guide). Interviewees were selected to ensure that all lead providers with a Traineeships contract and a sample of sub-contractors, FE colleges and private training providers were engaged, with all bar one lead provider being interviewed.

To recruit training providers to the evaluation, a list of organisations delivering work-based learning contracts was obtained from the Welsh Government website.

However, at the point of engagement with these providers it became apparent that approximately one third were not contracted to deliver the Traineeships programme. There were also challenges faced in identifying the most suitable individual within each organisation to engage with. Subsequently, information held on the Welsh Government website has been enhanced to address this issue (providing specific contact details and contractual awards). Details on subcontractors were obtained from the lead providers with a sample of subcontractors selected to reflect breadth of origin (private sector, third sector and geography) and breadth of lead contractor.

Interviews focused on the impact of the programme on participants' soft skills, confidence and motivation, policy context, stakeholders' experience and opinions of the management, administration and implementation of the programme, the performance of different aspects of the programme, cross-cutting themes and Welsh language. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of experience of interviewees. In addition, the method of recruitment was resource-intensive.

Second round of provider and subcontractor interviews

A second round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 of the providers and subcontractors who had been interviewed in the initial round (see Annex D for topic guide) and who were willing to engage in a subsequent interview.

These were conducted in order to further explore the use of Welsh language in Traineeship provision and the ESF cross-cutting themes. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed topics to be covered in an in-depth manner and analysed thematically and inductively. A limitation of this element was the small sample size, which potentially limited the breadth of experience of interviewees.

Learner survey

A telephone survey was conducted with 105 Traineeships participants (see Annex E for topic guide).

Fieldwork with trainees sought to provide vital intelligence on participants' experience of the Traineeships programme, and help to assess its impact on their soft skills, motivation and confidence. To gain insight into these elements the fieldwork involved the exploration of a series of topics, including:

- How young people became aware and engaged on the Traineeships programme.
- The employment/education situation of young people at the time of their engagement on the Traineeships programme and their situation now.
- The nature of support they received on the Traineeships programme and whether their engagement with the programme involved a work placement.
- What benefits the young people gained from the Traineeships programme and which elements of the support had contributed most to them gaining these benefits.

The main limitation of the learner survey is the sample size, which is roughly one ninth of that of the ESF Participants Survey; results therefore cannot be considered as robust. However, the learner survey contained a wider array of questions with the ability to probe certain issues qualitatively; this allowed for a greater depth of analysis.

Sampling and recruitment

Details of learners on the Traineeships programme were provided by the Welsh Government. The sample frame for the research was devised by stratifying participants by the lead contractor (training provider) and then randomly sampling from within each stratification. By randomly sampling within each stratification the sample of participants included those participants supported by the lead contractor as well as those supported by a subcontractor. A minimum target (sample size) was

applied to each lead provider that is broadly reflective of the proportion of Traineeship participants supported by either themselves as lead provider, or one of their subcontractors with a minimum threshold of five participants for each lead provider.

The evaluation was targeted with securing survey responses from 100 trainees, ultimately 105 trainees participated in the telephone survey.

A summary of the population of Traineeships participants and samples achieved is set out within table 12 below.

Table 12: Population and Sample Sizes for each Lead Contractor

Lead Contractor	Number of Available Contacts	Overall Target number of trainees	No. Achieved
ACT Ltd	450	30	31
Coleg Cambria WBL	59	5	5
Grwp Llandrillo Menai	89	7	8
ITEC Training Solutions (Ltd.)	197	16	16
Neath Port Talbot College	106	9	9
Pembrokeshire College	146	12	12
PeoplePlus Group Ltd.	128	11	11
Rathbone	24	5	6
Torfaen Training	60	5	6
Unallocated			1
Total	1,259	100	105

Survey design and Refinement

To ensure that the survey was appropriate for the target population (the trainees) a three-stage approach to survey implementation was adopted:

- **Stage 1: Internal piloting**, with members of Wavehill's experienced Research Team role playing and providing feedback. The main purpose of this round of testing was to identify issues in the delivery and design of the survey, and the ease of response from the perspective of a potential respondent.
- **Stage 2: Cognitive testing**, with a small sample of externally recruited volunteers. The sample was selected based on the closest possible match to the general population of the Traineeships programme, predominantly age (16-18 years old). The purpose of the cognitive testing was to test the user friendliness of individual questions, the ability of respondents to give clear and accurate

answers to those questions, and to determine if the language used was appropriate to the target population.

- **Stage 3: Test sample**, with an initial set of respondents drawn from the survey sample. The first 10 percent of the survey respondents (10 participants) were asked to complete a short feedback questionnaire (no more than three questions) at the end of the survey to determine the ease of the respondent journey through the survey. The purpose was to validate the survey design and delivery and to identify any issues that had not been corrected to this point. The survey was halted after this 10 percent quota was met in order to review the feedback questions; it then proceeded with the full sample once any issues identified were rectified and resolved.

Employer survey

A telephone survey was conducted with 48 employers who had provided a Traineeships work placement (see Annex F for topic guide) in order to:

- Understand what had prompted their engagement with Traineeships
- Gain an understanding of the process of engaging with young people through the programme
- Gather perspectives on the barriers faced by young people participating in the Traineeships programme
- Gain an understanding of the nature of work placements and support offered by employers
- Gain insight into the opportunities and impacts arising for employers through their participation in the programme.

There are two main limitations of the methodology for the employer survey. Firstly, the small sample size potentially limits the breadth of experience of interviewees and does not allow for a robust statistical analysis of the results. Secondly, the recruitment method (as described below) was highly resource-intensive and did not allow for the targeting of specific employer groups. The main strength of the method is the breadth and depth of questions included, enabling a valuable insight to employers' views and perspectives.

Recruitment

Monitoring information associated with the Traineeships Programme did not include details of the employers with whom Traineeships participants had secured a

placement. To obtain contact details of employers that had provided placements the research team requested that training providers distribute an online survey to employers that they could respond to as a route through which to offer their consent to participate in the evaluation. This generated a small number of employers for the research team to engage with, but further employer details were required to increase the robustness of the survey. As a result, further options were considered for engaging employers on the programme and ultimately a list of employer names and postcodes were provided to the research team which were obtained from data held on the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR).

Recruitment was conducted by contacting employers on this list (after identifying contact details via an internet search).

Counterfactual impact assessment

LEO Dataset

The counterfactual impact assessment uses the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO data) developed by analysts within the Welsh Government. This is a matched administrative dataset which brings together data on learning from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), DWP administrative data on benefit receipt, and HMRC data covering earnings and employment. These individual datasets are combined at the individual level using ‘fuzzy matching’ based on: National Insurance Number, forename, surname, date of birth, postcode and gender. Using the LEO data allows us to explore the impact of participation in the Traineeships programme on subsequent employment and earnings outcomes.

The use of matched administrative data has many advantages. The only practical alternative to using LEO data would have been to match LLWR data with data from the five quarter longitudinal Labour Force Survey (LFS). Using LEO is preferred to this alternative because:

- It provides close to 100% data coverage of trainees and those on other forms of Further Education (FE) based learning while the LFS is a sample survey covering less than one percent of the population. Hence, the likelihood of finding an acceptable match for a programme participant is much lower for an LFS based counterfactual.
- The longitudinal LFS only covers a five-quarter period of time. Hence the maximum time over which outcomes can be assessed using an LFS based

counterfactual is four quarter or one year. Currently the use of LEO data allows consideration of outcomes up to two years after programme participation for those who were trainees in 2015 and 2016. With time it would be possible to assess outcomes for trainees over longer periods of time. This is important because research suggests that human capital type programmes, such as Traineeships, have impacts over a number of years, for example, Patrigliani et al (2017)³² found a significant impact on earnings at age 28 for those who had completed an apprenticeship by the age of 22.

- Taking data for both programme participants (the treated group) and the counterfactual group against which they are compared from the same data source ensures that all variables used for matching, as measures of outcomes or as explanatory variables within any regression analysis are all defined in the same way. Inevitably, if programme MI is matched against an external data source such as the LFS then some variables will not be defined in exactly the same way and this can affect the results of any estimation of the programme impact.
- Data from the LFS will include proxy responses, where one person from a household, which has been surveyed, answers on behalf of other members of the household. A higher proportion of data pertaining to young people aged 16-18 (the ages covered by Traineeships) will be proxy data. Proxy data is known to have higher degrees of inaccuracy than non-proxy responses.

In line with the recommendations of the 2016 Bean Review³³ increasing use has been made in recent years of administrative data to investigate economic and social issues. One pertinent example being Bibby et al (2015)³⁴ which analysed the impact on subsequent employment and benefit receipt outcomes for unemployed individuals undertaking FE learning in England.

The use of LEO data affects the nature of counterfactual against which outcomes for trainees are compared. The counterfactual group are also taken from LEO so they are also undertaking learning as the LLWR dataset which is incorporated into

³² P. Patrigliani, G. Conlon and S. Hedges (2017), "The earnings differentials associated with vocational education and training using the Longitudinal Education Outcomes data", Centre for Vocational Education Research, Research Discussion Paper 007.

³³ Prof. Sir Charles Bean (2016), "Independent Review of UK Economic Statistics".

³⁴ D. Bibby, A. Cerqua, D. Thomas, and P. Unwin (2015), "Impact of Skills and Training Interventions on the Unemployed: Phase II Report", Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

LEO only covers people who are undertaking some form of learning. The counterfactual group are those undertaking learning at either Entry Level or Level 1 in Wales whose learning finished before 31 March 2016, the same period for which trainees are considered. This allows subsequent earnings and employment outcomes to be assessed for one and two years after participation in learning. Hence, this is not a 'policy off' counterfactual of comparing trainees against those who have not undertaken any learning. This also has implications for our cost benefit analysis which are detailed below.

Matching

A Coarsened Exact matching approach³⁵ is used. This matching approach has in recent years been seen as a preferred approach to matching in the research community. Formal statistical comparisons have indicated that it achieves a closer match between the treated group (programme participants) and the matched comparison group it is compared against³⁶. However, this advantage can sometimes come at the cost of matching only a subset of the treated group, and also only having a small number of matched comparators against which to compare them. Fortunately, this was not case here, as 99.4% of all trainees for whom we had been supplied data were matched with a similar non-participant undertaking Entry Level or Level 1 learning.

We used seven variables to match the treatment and counterfactual groups:

- Age at start of learning.
- Gender.
- Ethnicity.
- Level of Learning.
- Whether individual has a learning difficulty or not.
- Whether individual has a health problem or not.
- Whether individual resides in East Wales or West Wales and the Valleys.

³⁵ This is the matching method that was used in Bibby et al (2015).

³⁶ See for example, S. Iacus, G. King and G. Porro (2011), "Multivariate Matching Methods That Are Monotonic Imbalance Bounding", Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol. 106, No. 493, Theory and Methods.

The success of any matching procedure is judged by assessing the improvement in balance between the treatment and counterfactual groups. Balance here means the degree to which the treatment and comparison groups are more similar to each other after matching than they were prior to matching. Many measures of such balance only assess the degree of difference in the means of the variables used to match the treatment and counterfactual groups. However, reducing such mean imbalance may, when the whole distribution of the matching variables is considered, leave the treatment and matched counterfactual groups highly imbalanced. Hence, a measure of balance (L1)³⁷ which estimates the distance (or extent of dissimilarity) between the whole distributions of the matching variables for the treatment and counterfactual groups is used.

Data was available on 7,545 Traineeship participants for the period to March 2016 and it was possible to find matches for 7,479 (99.4%) of them in the matched counterfactual group – see Table 13.

Table 13: Results of the Matching processes

	Counterfactual	Trainees
All cases	86,708	7,545
Matched	3,727	7,479
Unmatched	82,981	66

The improvement in statistical balance between pre and post matching was indicated by the fall in the L1 measure of overall imbalance from 0.97 to 0.29.

One generic issue with matching methodologies is that they can only match on factors which are observable. Hence, part of the difference in outcomes for the treatment and matched comparison groups may be the result of differences in factors such as levels of motivation and confidence between the two groups.

Regression Analysis

Once the treated and matched comparison groups had been produced, they were combined into one dataset with an identifier indicating whether individuals are in the

³⁷ This measure of statistical imbalance was first set out in S.lacus et al (2011), Ibid.

treatment (participating in the Traineeships programme) or comparison group. We then estimated a multivariate regression as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T + \sum \beta_i X_i, \text{ for } i = 2, \dots, n$$

Where Y is the outcome variable being modelled and X_i are a set of other potential explanatory variables which are the seven variables noted above that we used for matching, plus two local authority level variables to pick up the impact of local labour market conditions on the modelled outcomes: gross weekly earnings in April 2018 and the average local employment rate for people aged 16-24 years for the period April 16 to September 2018. T is the treatment variable which takes the value 1 for all in the treatment group (trainees) and 0 for those in the matched comparison group. The coefficient β_1 then represents the treatment effect of undertaking a Traineeship.

Six regression models were estimated with the following dependent variables:

- Job Entry (logistic regression)
- Three-month job sustainment (logistic regression)
- Earnings in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus one” (linear regression)
- Earnings in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “earnings year plus two” (linear regression)
- Days in employment in the financial year following that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus one” (linear regression)
- Days in employment in the financial year two years after that in which the Traineeship participation ended, “days in employment, year plus two” (linear regression)

As the job entry and job sustainment rates were modelled using a logistic regression, percentage point treatment impacts were calculated by applying the treatment effect coefficients shown in Annex G to the gross outcomes for the participant group from the LEO data supplied by the Welsh Government. This then allows the gross outcomes that relate to the counterfactual group to be inferred. Taking the difference between these two gross outcome rates gives the treatment effect in percentage point terms. The other four variables were modelled using linear regression equations, so the programme impacts here are simply the value of the treatment effect coefficients as shown in Annex G.

Often for matching based studies of the sort we have undertaken, the multivariate regression modelling stage is dispensed with and researchers just look at the difference in outcome being considered between the treatment and matched comparison groups. The multivariate approach which includes the matching variables as potential explanatory variables influencing the outcome variable being modelled is a superior approach. This is because it provides a further check that the estimated treatment effects are not being biased by the influence of these other factors. It also allows us to explicitly demonstrate the impact of local labour market conditions on the outcome being modelled via inclusion of the local earnings and employment rate variables in our estimated regression equation.

Methodological Issues

The work on this project has revealed some limitations to the approach adopted and provides some suggestions for how the LEO data set could be used and enhanced in the future. We first discuss what more could be done in the future as that helps throw light on the limitations to our current approach.

We understand that there are plans to incorporate data from the Public Level Annual School Census (PLASC) into the LEO dataset and that it is hoped that this will be achieved In Summer 2019. This is a very welcome development as it will provide information on a range of school age factors, including educational attainment at age 16, history of any receipt of free school meals (as an indicator of living in poverty / material deprivation), any history of truancy and school exclusions, and information on any special educational needs assessments. This data will in future be very important for matching purposes to ensure that any counterfactual group is as similar as possible to trainees or indeed other participants in labour market programmes.

Similar to the above greater linking in of DWP data on benefit receipt into LEO would both provide historic data on benefit receipt which would give greater precision to the matching of participants and the counterfactual group and with time allow the impact of Traineeships (and other programmes) on benefit receipt to be assessed and quantified. More speculatively, we wonder about the potential to incorporate relevant data from Careers Wales into the LEO dataset.

The inclusion of these types of data would in turn heighten the robustness of any estimated programme (or treatment) effects derived from studies employing a matching methodology. The availability of data on individuals' situations prior to

participation also helps address the significant issue of potential unobservable differences between programme participants and the counterfactual groups against which they are compared.

Data matching can only be done on the basis of observed factors. Hence, it is not possible to rule out that a matched comparison group may have unobservable differences (for example, in levels of motivation and, or confidence) from programme participants that make them more or less likely to achieve the labour market outcomes being considered. This potential source of bias can be at least partially addressed by matching participants and a non-participant comparison group on their previous histories. This ensures that participants and those they are compared with have similar prior experiences, which reduces the chances of there being relevant unobservable differences between them. This is because if there were such unobservable differences between the two groups, then we would expect to see differences in their prior histories.

Given the LEO data that is currently available we were only able to estimate the impact of Traineeships on employment and earnings outcomes up to two years after participation on a Traineeship. With time, it will be possible to estimate longer run outcomes. This is likely to be important for programmes which seek to increase levels of human capital, such as Traineeships, as existing research has indicated that these type of programmes can continue to have impacts over a number of years. The corollary of this argument is that the impact of Traineeships could be assessed over longer periods by utilising data on Traineeships from 2011 and cutting off the data at an appropriate date to give a longer post programme period over which earnings and employment outcomes could be assessed.

The above discussion also highlights some of the limitations of the approach we have undertaken. Firstly, that our matching process does not and could not, at this point in time, consider some potentially highly relevant information from PLASC. In particular, PLASC data may help address the potential bias to our results from possible unobservable differences between the programme participants and the counterfactual group. An enhanced LEO dataset should lead to greater precision in the matching process, but it should also be noted that by making the matching process more onerous (because there are more variables to be matched on) it may reduce the number of matches that can be made for programme participants. There is an unavoidable trade off here and researchers will in all likelihood have to use their judgement to balance off precision of matching against the extent of matching.

Secondly, we can currently only estimate one and two year effects and not any longer term effects. This is an obvious limitation to our analysis. In addition, given the extent of the data available first year effects are rather more robustly based than the second year effects.

Finally, one limitation relates to the availability of earnings data at the local level from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The only earnings data from ASHE available at the local authority level relates to people of all ages and not young people specifically. If it had been available, then data on the earnings of young people would have been included as this would clearly have provided a better indication of young peoples' prospects in the areas in which they live.

Cost-benefit analysis

Learning and Work's approach to cost benefit analyses of labour market programmes is based on, and consistent with, the Treasury Green Book, the DWP Social Cost Benefit Analysis Framework, and other official guidance from government departments.

Programme Costs

A labour market intervention, such as the Traineeships programme, is likely to have a range of costs:

- Referral Costs.
- Programme delivery costs.
- Administration costs.
- Costs falling on employers or participants.

The Welsh Government supplied claims data made for the purpose of claiming reimbursement of eligible costs from the European Social Fund. These costs cover programme delivery costs, and staff administration costs, and possibly referral costs falling on Careers Wales. Based on our knowledge of programme referral costs from other programmes, these referral costs are not expected to be very large and so their potential exclusion does not materially impact on our cost benefit analysis results. No estimates for costs falling on participants or employers were included. The evaluation findings suggest that 90% of participant travel costs are covered by the programme. Hence, the vast majority of these costs will be included in the

figures we have for the programme delivery costs. Given the age group covered by the programme childcare costs are not expected to be substantial either and in addition the programme already provides support for these costs where relevant. While no figures for costs falling on employers are included, neither are any figures for the output benefits accruing to employers whilst trainees are on a work placement with them. These benefits to employers can be expected to at least cover the costs of offering work placements as otherwise it would not be financially worthwhile for employers to do so.

Transfer Payments and Resource Costs

The programme provided an allowance to all trainees at a level of £30 a week for those in the Engagement strand and £50 a week for those in the other two strands. One key issue for cost benefit analysis is the need to distinguish between transfer payments and resource costs. Transfer payments are payments of money for which no good, or service is received in exchange, and so consumes no resources that might be used for other purposes (opportunity cost). Examples include social welfare payments such as, social security, old age or disability pensions, student grants, or unemployment benefits. Similarly, these trainee allowances are also transfer payments, as the trainees are not required to supply goods or services to the Welsh Government in exchange for these payments. Hence, the cost figures provided by the Welsh Government were adjusted to subtract the amounts spent on the trainee allowances. The Welsh Government supplied disaggregated expenditure figures on support costs including, childcare costs, training allowances and travel costs. The large majority of these costs are likely to pertain to the training allowance and so it is assumed that three quarters of these support costs are for the training allowance.

Data on claims costs were provided for the following periods: January 2015 to March 2015, April 2015 to February 2016, March 2016 to May 2017, June 2017 to December 2017, and January to September 2018. Data on support costs was available for April 2015 to July 2016, August 2016 to July 2017 and August 2017 to July 2018. These two cost categories were converted to a financial year basis using a simple proportionating methodology. For example, claim costs for 2015/16 were calculated as equal to those for the April 2015 to February 2016 period plus one fifteenth of the claim costs for the period March 2016 to May 2017. As the evaluation period extended to December 2018, the claims data for October 2018 to

December 2018 and the support costs for the period August 2018 to December 2018 had to be forecast. This was done by simply carrying forward data from the preceding period to cover expenditure in these months. Finally, to allow for inflation these costs were deflated using figures for the GDP deflator to 2014/15 prices. The results of our calculated programme costs are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Traineeship Programme Costs, 2014/15 constant prices

Financial Year	Real Programme Costs
2014/15	£2,742,518
2015/16	£13,914,216
2016/17	£22,457,821
2017/18	£13,277,857
2018/19	£4,226,078

Note the data for 2014/15 only covers the period January to March 2015 and that for 2018/19 only covers the period April 2018 to December 2018.

Counterfactual Costs

As discussed above our impact assessments assesses the outcomes for trainees against the alternative of Entry Level or Level 1 learning in further education. Hence, the cost benefit analysis needs to take account of the potential costs of this alternative learning as well as the costs of the Traineeships programme. The costs of this alternative provision were estimated using three different approaches:

- Based on data from the Auditor General for Wales³⁸.
- Based on the costs of English provision³⁹.

³⁸ Taken from Auditor General for Wales (2017), 'Welsh Government oversight of further education colleges' finances and delivery', Wales Audit Officer.

³⁹ Frontier Economics and CFE Research (2016), 'Costs and behaviours in the 16 to 18 apprenticeship system', a report for the Department for Education.

- Based on the lowest cost provider from the Auditor General for Wales study.

The unit cost per learner estimates were adjusted to a 26 weeks basis (the average length of a Traineeship) and for inflation using the GDP deflator to put them in 2014/15 prices. Table 15 shows the resulting unit cost estimates.

Table 15: Estimated counterfactual unit costs, 26 weeks basis, 2014/15 prices

Scenario	Unit Cost per learner
AGfW (2017)	£2,363
Based on English provision	£1,125
Lowest cost provider AGfW (2017)	£394

In addition, a stress test was undertaken with no allowance made for the costs of any alternative learning. This stress test effectively treats the cost benefit analysis as if the impact assessment had been undertaken on a policy off basis. Logically, this implies an assumption that either the alternative learning had zero impacts on labour market outcomes (as would be the case with a policy off comparison) or that these outcomes could be obtained at zero cost (again policy off has no costs). Hence, this stress test is not intended to be a credible estimate of the Net Present Value or Benefit to Cost ratio of the Traineeships programme but as a challenging test of the programme's value for money given the uncertainties surrounding the costs of the counterfactual alternative learning provision.

The counterfactual unit costs shown in Table 15 were then combined with the number of trainees by financial year to give estimates of the costs of the alternative provision for the counterfactual group. The results of these calculations is shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Estimated counterfactual costs, 26 weeks basis, 2014/15 prices

Financial Year	AGfW	Based on English provision	AGfW, lowest cost provider
2014/15	£5,004,967	£2,382,750	£835,111
2015/16	£19,738,665	£9,397,125	£3,293,523
2016/17	£19,266,052	£9,172,125	£3,214,665
2017/18	£17,848,215	£8,497,125	£2,978,089
2018/19	£12,883,419	£6,133,500	£2,149,681

Note the data for 2014/15 only covers the period January to March 2015 and that for 2018/19 only covers the period April 2018 to December 2018.

Benefits

The benefits of labour market interventions potentially take two forms: the economic benefits of people being in employment who otherwise would not, and the non-employment benefits that flow from these people being in work. These non-employment benefits include, for example, health improvements, or reductions in criminal activity. In the absence of detailed MI covering the numbers of trainees with, for example, health conditions and past engagement in criminal activity, it is not possible to quantify these potential benefits from the programme. The qualitative analysis undertaken suggests that health, especially mental health, may be well be positively impacted by the Traineeships programme. Given the difficulty with quantifying these non-employment benefits, the estimate of the benefits of Traineeships is based solely on the estimated employment or economic benefits of the programme.

The estimate of the economic benefits of the programme are based on its estimated impacts on earnings in the two years after the programme. While the data available only allows the estimation of impacts for up to two years after participation in a Traineeship, it is possible to adopt different assumptions for how long the impact of the programme will last. The most conservative option is simply to assume that the impact lasts for just two years given impacts can only be estimated for this period.

However, this is likely to be an overly conservative assumption, because as already noted research suggests that human capital type programmes, such as Traineeships, have impacts over a number of years, for example, Patrighiani et al (2017)⁴⁰ found a significant impact on earnings at age 28 for those who had completed an apprenticeship by the age of 22. Hence, the benefits of the programme are also estimated using a 3-year and a 5-year time horizon. This is done by assuming that the estimated earnings impact for two years after participation also holds for up to three and up to five years respectively. While, it is difficult to know exactly how long the impacts of the Traineeships programme might last a three-year time horizon appears both conservative and reasonable. In all scenarios, we adjust the earnings figures for inflation using the GDP deflator. These estimated earnings benefits of the programme are shown in Tables 17 to 19.

Table 17: Real Earnings Benefits, 2014/15 prices, Two Year Time Horizon

Financial Year	Real Earnings Benefit
2015/16	£1,349,436
2016/17	£8,924,380
2017/18	£19,363,209
2018/19	£18,326,702
2019/20	£15,736,349
2020/21	£8,880,601

⁴⁰ P. Patrighiani, G. Conlon and S. Hedges (2017), "The earnings differentials associated with vocational education and training using the Longitudinal Education Outcomes data", Centre for Vocational Education Research, Research Discussion Paper 007.

Table 18: Real Earnings Benefits, 2014/15 prices, Three Year Time Horizon

Financial Year	Real Earnings Benefit
2015/16	£1,349,435.89
2016/17	£8,924,380.02
2017/18	£23,010,645.21
2018/19	£32,460,325.21
2019/20	£29,261,164.72
2020/21	£21,183,459.22
2021/22	£8,711,715.55

Table 19: Real Earnings Benefits, 2014/15 prices, Five Year Time Horizon

Financial Year	Real Earnings Benefit
2015/16	£1,349,436
2016/17	£8,924,380
2017/18	£23,010,645
2018/19	£36,044,069
2019/20	£46,631,254
2020/21	£48,069,594
2021/22	£33,808,231
2022/23	£20,382,291
2023/24	£8,377,467

Net Present Values and Benefit to Cost Ratios

With the programme costs, alternative counterfactual costs, and programme benefits having been calculated the standard metrics for value for money for the overall programme can be calculated. These are the net present values (NPVs) and the benefit to cost ratios (BCRs).

In order to calculate NPVs of the programme costs, alternative counterfactual costs, and programme benefits, these are discounted⁴¹ back to a common base year, in this case 2014/15. We use the 3.5% real discount rate as per the Treasury Green Book guidance.

The overall NPV of the programme is then equal to the difference between the NPV of the programme benefits and the NPV of the net costs of the programme. In turn, the NPV of the net costs of the programme is equal to the NPV of the gross programme costs minus the NPV of the alternative counterfactual costs. The programme's benefit to cost ratios (BCRs) are another way of expressing how the programme's benefits and costs compare and are equal to the programme benefits divided by the programme's net costs. For a programme's benefits to outweigh its costs, and so for it to represent value for money, the overall NPV should be positive and the BCR should be above one. The estimated NPVs and BCRs for the traineeships programme are shown in Chapter 9.

⁴¹ Discounting in this way allows us to compare costs and benefits occurring over different periods of time and with different relativities in different years on a consistent basis. Discounting is based on the notion of time preference – that in general people prefer to receive benefits now rather than later.

Annex B: Discussion guide for Welsh Government Officials and Partner interviews

Interviewer information

About the research

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We are working in partnership with Wavehill Social and Economic Research to evaluate the ESF funded Welsh Government Traineeships programme for the period of January 2015 to March 2018.

This evaluation will assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the 2015-2019 Traineeships Programme. The focus of the evaluation will be on the performance and impact of the programme, with some review of the programme design and delivery processes. The evaluation will comply with WEFO evaluation guidance and requirements. In particular, this evaluation will explore:

- The impact the programme has had in both its hard and soft outcomes.
- The overall value the programme has added through a cost-benefit analysis.
- Lessons learned for the future delivery of similar programmes and how good practice can be replicated and benefited from.

Introduction to the research

- Introduce yourself and thank interviewee for agreeing to take part. Provide a recap as to the purpose of the research (as previous).
- The interview will last around 60 minutes.
- Participation is optional and they can stop the interview or decline to answer specific questions at any time, should they wish.
- It is also important to note that the team undertaking the evaluation do not work for the Welsh Government or any of the organisations that are involved in the delivery or funding of this project. This is an independent evaluation.

Confidentiality and Consent

- We are undertaking this work on behalf of the Welsh Government. The information given to us in the research will be used to inform the development of further research activities, and interim and final reports. We will not use the names of any individuals in the reporting, although given the nature of the research, organisations may be identifiable.
- Quotes from the discussion may be used in the report but these will not be attributed to participants by name.
- We would prefer to record the interview as this helps us to capture exactly what is said. Recordings will be deleted once the project has been completed.
- Ensure interviewee is comfortable with recording.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Ask interviewee to verbally confirm that they understand the purpose and confidentiality of the research and that they are happy to take part.

This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in the interview.

Questions can be modified and followed up in more detail where necessary. Throughout the interviews where key issues and differences appear, probe for whether this applies to West Wales and Valleys, East Wales, or across the programme.

Section 1: Context

1. Please can you tell me about your role and how this relates to the Traineeships programme?
2. What has been the main rationale for designing the second phase of the Traineeships programme and how has this built on previous programmes?
3. What do you see as the key aims of the Traineeships programme? What will success look like?
4. Three levels of Traineeships are offered (Engagement, Level 1, and Bridge to Employment), what do you see as the rationale for each of these levels and why do you think it is important each is included in the Traineeships programme?

Section 2: Partnerships

5. A range of partners have been involved in the delivery of the programme e.g. Welsh Government, Careers Wales, WBL providers and subcontractors, and third sector organisations. How effective do you think partnership working has been and why?
 - What were the benefits of partnership working?
 - What were the challenges? How if at all have these been resolved or could they be resolved?
6. Based on your experience, to what extent has the role of different partners been clear to employers and individuals taking part in the programme?
7. Are there any other partners you think it would have been beneficial to engage with? Why is this?

Section 3: Delivery

8. How successful do you think the delivery of Traineeships programme has been in practice?
 - What has worked well/not so well?
 - How could this have been improved?
9. What has been your experience of the commissioning and administrative/monitoring processes involved in the Traineeships programme, both from the Welsh Government perspective and the EU funding perspective? What has worked well or not so well in your opinion? Which, if any, specific elements of this could have been simplified?
Interviewer to probe based on respondent's role in the funding application process, LLWR (or EDMS if aware), and working with providers.
10. What delivery and payment models are you aware of that are being used by the different lead providers? How effective do you think these are?
 - Which models have you found work well/not so well?
 - How could the different models be improved?
11. What has been the role of different partners in the referrals process?

12. To what extent has the referrals process worked as envisaged? How successful do you think this has been?
 - What has worked well/not so well?
 - How could this have been improved?
13. How effective do you think employer engagement has been and why?
 - What has worked well/not so well?
 - How could this have been improved?
14. How effective do you think approaches to assessing learner needs have been?
 - Which approaches have you found work well/not so well?
 - How could the different approaches to assessing learner need be improved?
15. To the best of your knowledge, how widely used are the ALN and ALS budgets to support people with additional learning needs to enter and complete Traineeships? How, if at all, has this changed over time?

Section 4: Impact

16. To what extent do you think the programme will achieve its targets in terms of participant numbers? What are the main barriers to this?
17. To what extent do you think the programme will achieve its desired impacts of learner progression to employment or learning at a higher level? What are the main barriers to this?
18. What wider skills and behaviours do you think the programme will help participants develop? How will it do this?

Section 5: Wider programme impact

19. In line with the European Union's cross-cutting themes (equal opportunities, sustainable development, and tackling poverty), how do you think the Traineeships programme can address these, how will this work in practice?
20. How does the Traineeships programme support wider Welsh Government policies and priorities?
21. What elements or learning from the Traineeships programme should continue after the current programme finishes? Why do you think this? How might it be adapted to better meet future policy requirements?
22. To the best of your knowledge, how effective has the programme been at (i) supporting learners' development and use of Welsh language skills, and (ii) supporting the Welsh language needs of employers?

Section 6: Summary

23. What do you think are the key strengths of the Traineeships programme?
24. How do you think the Traineeships programme could be improved and why?

Closing the interview

- Thank them for their time.
- Ask if they have any further questions and provide contact details for further comments/queries.
- Reiterate next steps and confidentiality.

Annex C: Discussion guide for Provider interviews

Interviewer information

About the research

Wavehill is an independent social and economic research organisation working in partnership with the Learning and Work Institute (L&W) to evaluate the ESF funded Welsh Government Traineeships programme for the period of January 2015 to March 2018.

This evaluation will assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the 2015-2019 Traineeships Programme. The focus of the evaluation will be on the performance and impact of the programme, with some review of the programme design and delivery processes. The evaluation will comply with WEFO evaluation guidance and requirements. In particular, this evaluation will explore:

- The impact the programme has had in both its hard and soft outcomes.
- The overall value the programme has added through a cost-benefit analysis.
- Lessons learned for the future delivery of similar programmes and how good practice can be replicated and benefited from.

Introduction to the research

- Introduce yourself and thank interviewee for agreeing to take part. Provide a recap as to the purpose of the research (as previous).
- The interview will last around 45-60 minutes.
- Participation is optional and they can stop the interview or decline to answer specific questions at any time, should they wish.
- It is also important to note that the team undertaking the evaluation do not work for the Welsh Government or any of the organisations that are involved in the delivery or funding of this project. This is an independent evaluation.

Confidentiality and Consent

- We are undertaking this work on behalf of the Welsh Government. The information given to us in the research will be used to inform the development of further research activities, and interim and final reports. We will not use the names of any individuals in the reporting, although given the nature of the research, organisations may be identifiable.
- Quotes from the discussion may be used in the report but these will not be attributed to participants by name.
- We would prefer to record the interview as this helps us to capture exactly what is said. Recordings will be deleted once the project has been completed.
- Ensure interviewee is comfortable with recording.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Ask interviewee to verbally confirm that they understand the purpose and confidentiality of the research and that they are happy to take part.

This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in the interview.

Questions can be modified and followed up in more detail where necessary. Throughout the interviews where key issues and differences appear, probe for whether this applies to West Wales and Valleys, East Wales, or across the programme.

Section 1: Context

1. Please outline your role and how it relates to the Traineeships Programme
2. (Ask Training Providers) In which geographical areas do you deliver the Traineeships Programme?
3. In your view, what do you see as the rationale for funding the Traineeships Programme?
4. What do you see as the key aims of the Traineeships Programme?

Section 2: Programme Design and Alignment

5. To your knowledge, what elements of the approach for the current Traineeships Programme have changed when compared to previous Traineeships Programmes
6. Three levels of Traineeships are offered (Engagement, Level 1, and Bridge to Employment), what do you see as the rationale for each of these levels and why do you think it is important each is included in the Traineeships programme?
7. How (if at all), does the Traineeships programme align to other programmes you deliver?
 - How does it align to other Welsh Government and other partner programmes?
8. What challenges (if any) were faced in aligning the Traineeships programme with other provision and how were these overcome?
9. (Lead Providers only) What delivery and payment model are you using with the subcontracted providers for the Programme?
 - How, if at all, does the payment model influence the type of subcontractors you work with?
10. (Subcontractors only) Please outline the payment and delivery model you have agreed with the lead contractor
 - Does the structure of this model influence how you approach the delivery of the Traineeships programme in any way?

Section 3: Procurement

11. To your knowledge, how were providers for the Traineeships Programme procured and selected?
12. From your perspective, how well did the procurement process work?
 - (If third sector provider) did your organisation face any particular challenges with the process?

Section 4: Recruitment

13. What is your understanding of how participants are identified and selected for the Traineeships programme?
 - Who do you think are the priority groups recruited to the programme?
 - Are there any evident patterns or trends in recruitment?

- Are any groups under-represented?
14. How is the programme promoted/marketed to schools/participants/parents/employers?
- How effective has this/these approach been? Why do you say that?

Section 5: Referral process⁴²

15. What are the typical referral processes for identified participants to work based learning providers – specifically:
- Which organisations are typically involved?
 - How effectively in your opinion is the referral process handled?
 - How are work based learning providers selected to support participants (purely on geography?)
 - How does the referral process work in practice (step-by-step walk through)?
 - To your knowledge is the referral process consistent across all WBL providers? If not, what differences in approach are you aware of, what effect if any does this have on the service?
 - Could the referral process be improved in any way?

Section 6: Engagement with WBLs

16. On receipt of a referral, from your understanding, what is the approach that is then taken with the individual?
17. How is the learner's Individual Learning Plan compiled? What key questions are asked of participants to inform the development of the ILP?
- How are the learner's goals and aspirations identified?
18. How do training providers subsequently monitor progression towards completing the ILP – to what extent is the ILP used as a motivational/directional tool with participants?

Section 7: Participant background

19. What are the typical challenges/barriers/issues that participants referred onto the programme are faced with?
- Are there any specific characteristics or barriers amongst participants that you struggle to support/overcome? How (if at all) are you able to address these (prompt for specialist support etc)
20. Have you seen any trends in the prevalence of these barriers amongst participants since 2015?
21. There are three levels of Traineeships offered (Engagement, Level 1, and Bridge to Employment), what are the typical patterns in terms of numbers referred to the Engagement and Level 1 strand?

Section 8: The training offer

22. In your opinion, what do you see as the key elements of the training offer – which aspects do you perceive as having the greatest impact on the participants?
- Are there any limitations/deficiencies in the current training offer/approach for participants?
 - Are these limitations consistent across all three levels?

⁴² Interviewer note – participants can self-refer to L1 strand and recent pilot in Conwy and Denbighshire enabled direct recruitment to the Engagement Strand (ended 31/3/17)

23. What flexibility is there to adapt the programme to meet participant needs?
 - Is this sufficient?
 - Are there any constraints which stop providers doing this effectively?
24. Are there any specific approaches required to attract/retain engagement?
25. To the best of your knowledge, how widely used are the ALN and ALS budgets to support people with additional learning needs to enter and complete Traineeships? How, if at all, has this changed over time?
 - How do the budgets enable support to be provided?
 - What do you consider to be the positives and negatives of the budget system in providing additional support?

Section 9: Soft outcomes/impacts

26. In your opinion, how is the support offered impacting on the participants? What wider skills and behaviours do you think the programme is helping participants to develop? How is it doing this?
27. How is their progress currently measured? Are there any systematic ways of measuring learners' achievement of soft skills such as confidence and self-esteem?
28. Are there any areas where an adaptation to the support on offer could assist in improving participant progress?
 - Are there any specific adaptations to the ALN support that would improve participant progress?

Section 10: Wider programme impact

29. In line with the European Union's cross-cutting themes (equal opportunities, sustainable development, and tackling poverty), in what ways, to your knowledge, is the Traineeships programme addressing these?
30. To the best of your knowledge, how has the programme provided opportunities for participants to develop their Welsh language skills for use in the workplace/further learning?
 - To what extent have these opportunities been taken up?
31. How, through the programme have you been able to support the Welsh language needs of employers?

Section 11: Completion and placements

32. On completing a strand of activity, how are participants supported to progress on to their next step?
 - Specifically, for those completing the Level 2 strand how do you facilitate engagement on a relevant work placement with an employer?
 - In terms of organisations for placements, how are these identified? How successful has this been?
33. Are there any patterns/trends in the type of organisations involved in providing placements for the Traineeships programme (voluntary/community/private?) and/or the level of interest?
34. To what extent are participants referred on to other programmes (Apprenticeships or JGW)?
 - (if to some extent) Please outline the referral approach
 - How effective do you consider the approach to be?

Section 12: Monitoring requirements

35. What information is captured as part of the monitoring process for the programme (above and beyond the LLWR requirements)?
36. Are data capture processes appropriate/effective or are there any improvements required?

Section 13: Partnerships/sharing of practice

37. To what extent do training providers share experiences and learning from the programme?
Probe as to who they share this with - other training providers/Careers Wales etc.
 - How useful has this been /could it be?

Section 14: Management support

38. (Lead Contractors Only) What role does the Welsh Government play in the management of the programme?
39. (Sub-contractors only) Please outline the nature of management support you receive from the lead contractor.
40. What elements of their approach to the management of the programme are particularly effective?
41. Are there any ways in which the management of the programme could be improved?

Section 15: Summary

Reflecting on the process and approach to the programme...

42. Is there anything that should/could have been done differently? What lessons from the current delivery model do you think can help inform future delivery?
43. Are there any other key challenges in delivering the programme that you would like to raise?
44. As part of the evaluation we would like to interview employers that have supported participants. Can you provide details of the employers that have support participants?
 - Would the information include a specific contact at the organisation too?
45. We would also be interested in speaking to employers who did not support the programme but engage with learning for their employees more widely e.g. through Apprenticeships – would you be able to help us facilitate these conversations?

Closing the interview

- Thank them for their time.
- Ask if they have any further questions and provide contact details for further comments/queries.
- Reiterate next steps and confidentiality.

Annex D: Discussion guide for additional Traineeship provider interviews

Interviewer information

About the research

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) and Wavehill Social and Economic research are working in partnership to evaluate the ESF funded Welsh Government Traineeships programme for the period of January 2015 to March 2019.

This evaluation is assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the 2015-2019 Traineeships Programme. The focus of the evaluation is on the performance and impact of the programme, with some review of the programme design and delivery processes. The evaluation complies with WEFO evaluation guidance and requirements. In particular, this evaluation is exploring:

- The impact the programme has had in both its hard and soft outcomes.
- The overall value the programme has added through a cost-benefit analysis.
- Lessons learned for the future delivery of similar programmes and how good practice can be replicated and benefited from.

Introduction to the research

- Last year you (or your organisation) participated in a telephone interview as part of this evaluation. Our interviews with Traineeship providers provided vital information for the evaluation, and have been summarised in our interim evaluation report (published in July). To help ensure the full coverage of the evaluation, we would now like to ask you a few additional questions about the use of the Welsh language in your Traineeship provision and ESF cross-cutting themes.
- The interview will last around 30 minutes.
- Participation is optional and you can stop the interview or decline to answer specific questions at any time, should you wish.
- It is also important to note that the team undertaking the evaluation do not work for the Welsh Government or any of the organisations that are involved in the delivery or funding of this project. This is an independent evaluation.

Confidentiality and Consent

- We are undertaking this work on behalf of the Welsh Government. The information given to us in the research will be used to inform the final report. We will not use the names of any individuals in the reporting, although given the nature of the research, organisations may be identifiable.
- Quotes from the discussion may be used in the report but these will not be attributed to participants by name.
- We would prefer to record the interview as this helps us to capture exactly what is said. Recordings will be deleted once the project has been completed.

Note to Interviewer

An initial round of provider interviews was conducted earlier in the project. Although questions on Welsh language and cross-cutting themes were included, the information gained was limited. It is therefore important to probe each question fully and to identify specific examples and their impact. The interviewer should follow up on answers to gain detailed descriptions.

Section 1: Welsh language

NB. For each question in this section, probe for examples relating to reading, writing, understanding and speaking Welsh.

1. Please give a brief description of the general extent of your trainees' Welsh language skills when they first engage with the programme. *Probe: skill levels, achievement of Welsh first or second language GCSE, proportion of trainees, skills in reading, writing, understanding and speaking Welsh*
2. To the best of your knowledge, how has the Traineeships programme supported Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales? *Probe for each question: specific examples/details and reading, writing, understanding, speaking*
 - a. How has the programme provided opportunities for participants to develop their Welsh language skills for use in their further learning?
 - b. How has the programme provided opportunities for participants to develop their Welsh language skills for use in the workplace, including informal or conversational use of Welsh?
 - c. To what extent have these opportunities been taken up?
3. Have you delivered provision and/or assessment to any of your trainees in the Welsh language, either in all or part? *Probe: reading, writing, understanding, speaking*
 - a. If yes, please give specific examples of how you have done this. *Probe: parts of provision, proportion of trainees, groups represented*
4. As a provider, have you encouraged or promoted the use of the Welsh language as part of your Traineeship provision? *Probe for each question: specific examples/details and reading, writing, understanding, speaking*
 - a. Have you encouraged the use and further development of existing Welsh language skills? *Probe: proportion of trainees, groups represented. How have you done this?*
 - b. What, if any, support do you provide for Welsh language use?
 - c. Have you encouraged trainees to learn Welsh? *Probe: At what levels*
5. How, through the programme, have you been able to support the Welsh language needs of employers? *Probe for each question: specific examples/details and reading, writing, understanding, speaking*
 - a. To the best of your knowledge, what proportion of employers you have worked with as part of the programme have Welsh language needs?
 - i. Please describe these needs?
 - ii. How have you addressed these through the Traineeships programme?

Section 2: Cross-cutting themes

As you may be aware, all ESF-funded programmes must address three cross-cutting themes: equal opportunities, sustainable development and tackling poverty

6. In what ways, to your knowledge, is the Traineeships programme addressing the equal opportunities theme? *If no, probe*
 - a. How have your delivery or programme activities supported equal opportunities?
Probe for specific examples and details
 - i. What impact do you think this has had, for example on particular groups of young people? *Probe for detail of impact and which groups for. Groups could include economically disadvantaged young people or any protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.*
 - b. Are there any aspects of the programme that have not been successful in promoting equal opportunities?
 - c. In what ways, to your knowledge, has the trainee allowance impacted the equal opportunities theme? *Probe for detail, specific groups.*
 - i. Do you think the level of the allowance has been sufficient? *Probe for detail. Specifically ask about engagement level allowance.*
 - ii. How useful has the ability to offer a training allowance been in improving equal opportunities? *Probe for detail, specific groups.*
 - d. In what ways, to your knowledge, has the availability of ALN/ALS funding [Additional Learning Support/Additional Learning Needs] impacted the equal opportunities theme? *Probe for detail, whether accessed etc.*
7. In what ways, to your knowledge, is the Traineeships programme addressing the sustainable development theme? *If no, probe*
 - a. How have your delivery or programme activities supported sustainable development? *Probe for specific examples and detail*
 - i. What impact do you think this has had, for example on particular groups of young people? *Probe for detail*
 - ii. How do you measure or evaluate the impact of this?
 - b. Are there any aspects of the programme that have not been successful in promoting sustainable development?
8. In what ways, to your knowledge, is the Traineeships programme addressing the tackling poverty theme? *If no, probe*
 - a. How have your delivery or programme activities supported tackling poverty?
Probe for specific examples and detail
 - i. What impact do you think this has had, for example on particular groups of young people? *Probe for detail*
 - b. Are there any aspects of the programme that have not been successful in tackling poverty?

Section 3: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

As you may be aware, public bodies in Wales are required to work towards seven goals as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These are: a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales.

9. Other than what you have already mentioned, in what ways, to your knowledge, is the Traineeships programme supporting these goals? *Probe each goal not already covered and for specific examples.*

Annex E: Discussion guide for learner survey

Good morning, afternoon, evening. My name is from Wavehill, a research and evaluation consultancy. Please could I speak to <NAMED RESPONDENT>?

About the research

Wavehill is an independent social and economic research organisation evaluating the Welsh Government Traineeships programme which aims to help young people into employment or further education. We understand that you have participated in the programme and we would like to get your feedback on the experience.

Your views are very important in helping the Welsh Government to understand the effectiveness of the programme in helping young people into further learning or employment. The interview will take about 15 minutes. Participation in the survey is voluntary, though we very much hope you will take part

Any comments that you make will be confidential and the information you provide will only be used for research and evaluation purposes. Comments that you make will not be attributed to you. This means it will be impossible for anyone to identify you from any published reports because information will be anonymised.

It is also important to note that the team undertaking the evaluation do not work directly for the Welsh Government, your employer or any of the organisations that are involved in the delivery or funding of this project.

This is an *independent* evaluation.

Please note: if you would like further information regarding this project, how your data will be used and your rights under data protection laws please see [Traineeships webpage](#)

Would they like time to review the privacy notice? y/n

Are you happy to continue with the interview? Yes/no (if no end survey) Please note you can end the interview at any time if you decide you do not want to continue.

If necessary

- The European Social Fund helps finance courses and provision that aim to improve work-related skills. This can include training in or out of the classroom; work experience; and personal and social development.
- You may have been on a course without realising that it was funded through the European Social Fund.
- All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Any results from this survey will be published in an anonymised format.
- We work strictly within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct
- Contacts at Wavehill are Oliver Allies and Louise Petrie if they would like to find out more about the survey
- Welsh Government contact is Hannah Davies on hannah.davies018@gov.wales here is a [web page](#) with more information about the evaluation.

- Respondent details were supplied to us by the Welsh Government.
- Participation in the study is completely voluntary, though we very much hope you will take part.

Questions for discussion

We understand that you received support through the Traineeships programme that was provided through xxx [provider supplied on database] and that you participated between xxx to yyy, can you recall this? Y/N **[If no end survey]**

Are you happy to answer questions on your experience? Y/N **[If no end survey]**

1. Would you like to do the interview in Welsh or English? English/Welsh *(if NOT fluent in Welsh pass to a Welsh speaking interviewer if available or agree a time as to when a Welsh speaking interview could call them).*
2. I'd like to ask you about how you came to be on the Traineeships programme.
 - a) How did you first hear about the Traineeships programme? OPEN – code as:
 - I. Careers Wales Advisor
 - II. Traineeship Provider
 - III. School/careers teacher
 - IV. Parent or Friend
 - V. Other, please specify _____
 - VI. Through your own research
 - b) Who gave you information about the Traineeships programme? Was it...
 - I. Careers Wales Advisor
 - II. Traineeship Provider
 - III. School/careers teacher
 - IV. Parent or Friend
 - V. Other, please specify _____
 - VI. Through your own research
 - c) Were any of the following reasons why you took part in the Traineeships programme *(order of responses read out will be randomised)*:
 - I. An adviser **recommended** that you should try the programme as it was suitable to your needs.
 - II. An adviser **told** you that you must attend the programme because it was suitable to your needs.
 - III. To develop a broader range of skills and/or knowledge.
 - IV. To improve/widen your career options.
 - V. To help you get a job.
 - VI. To improve your future career and pay opportunities.
 - VII. To help you progress on to another education, training or learning course.
 - VIII. To get work experience
 - IX. Money
 - X. Because a friend was doing it
 - XI. To gain confidence
 - XII. I couldn't get on to the course I wanted to
 - XIII. None of the above
 - XIV. Any other reasons? Please state _____
 - XV. Don't know (DON'T READ OUT)

3. Do you feel like you had enough information about the Traineeships programme before starting your Traineeship? OPEN – record as Y/N/DK
 - a) IF Y/N Why do you say that?
4. Did you have any involvement in choosing your training provider? If yes, please explain.
5. Do you remember having some form of induction or introduction activities when you started the programme? OPEN – record as Y/N/DK
 - a) (if yes) What were the activities?
 - b) How useful did you find the activities?
Very useful, useful, , not at all useful
6. Do you remember developing a learning plan with the training provider? OPEN – record as Y/N/DK
 - a) (if yes) How useful did you find this process?
 - i. Very useful
 - ii. Useful
 - iii. Not at all useful
 - b) **[If useful]** In what ways was it useful?
 - c) **[If not useful]** In what ways was it not useful?
7. a) Did the Traineeship involve any of the following?
 - I. Work placement with an employer
 - II. Work placement with a community project
 - III. Work placement with a voluntary organisation
 - IV. Learning at a training centre
 - V. None of the above
 - VI. I don't know/can't remember (DON'T READ OUT)
 - VII. Other
 - b) **[If undertook a work placement]** How many work placements did you do? OPEN – record as number
 - c) Thinking about the last work placement you did; can you outline what it was and who it was with? OPEN
PROBE
 - i. What role did you do whilst on the placement?
 - ii. How long did the placement last?
 - iii. How useful did you find the placement?
 - a) Why do you say that?
8. Did...
 - a) Your training provider ask you what type of work you wanted to do? OPEN – record Y/N/DK
 - b) You feel you had a choice of different placements so that you could pick one that most closely matched what you are interested in? OPEN – record Y/N/DK
9. Did you get any extra financial support above the weekly training allowance? OPEN – record Y/N/DK.
If yes, what was it used for? i.e. to help with travel costs, childcare etc.?
10. Did you receive any other training? OPEN – record Y/N/DK
 - a) If Yes - Can you describe it?
 - b) How useful did you find it?

11. Did you have support in any of the following (yes/no):

- a) Interview techniques
- b) CV writing
- c) Job applications
- d) help with numbers/reading or writing

12. Before starting the Traineeship, were you offered the option for it to be provided in...?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Welsh only			
English only			
A combination of Welsh and English			

13. Was the Traineeship delivered in Welsh only, in English only or in a combination of Welsh and English?

- a) Welsh only
- b) English only
- c) Combination of Welsh and English
- d) Can't Remember / Don't know (DON'T READ OUT)

14. And how would you have preferred the Traineeship to be provided, in...?

- a) Welsh only
- b) English only
- c) A combination of Welsh and English
- d) Don't know (DON'T READ OUT)

15. And for your Traineeship did you attend a placement where the Welsh language was used? OPEN - record Y/N/DK

Situation before to starting the programme

I'd now like to ask some questions about what you were doing before the Traineeship.

16. Which of the following best describes what you were mainly doing before starting the programme:

- a) In training / education
- b) Carer
- c) Work Experience / internship
- d) Working with Careers Wales or youth services to help prepare for work
- e) Unemployed looking for work
- f) Unemployed – long term sick
- g) Stay at home parent/guardian
- h) Volunteering
- i) Other

17. Before starting the programme, would you say you:

- a) Felt confused about your next steps?
- b) Were unsure about how to find a job?
- c) Were unsure about what college course to do?
- d) Were unsure about where to go for help?

18. Did you have any experience of paid work before the programme? OPEN – record as Yes/No/don't know
- a) **[If yes]** Can you tell me about it please?
- i. Probe for employer, when, how long,
19. Do you have a disability (learning difficulty) or a health condition (physical or mental) which has made it difficult for you to find work? OPEN – record as Y/N
- a) If Yes - were you given any support to help you take part in the Traineeships programme? Can you tell me about it?

Situation Since the Traineeships Programme

20. Which of the following best describes what you are currently doing?
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) Working full time | g) Work Experience |
| b) Working part time | h) Unemployed looking for work |
| c) Self-employed | i) Unemployed – long term sick |
| d) In training / education | j) Stay at home parent/guardian |
| e) Carer | k) Volunteering |
| f) Other | |

If answered 21 a, b, or c – else go to q28

21. How important was the Traineeships programme you participated in for helping you get into work/self-employed?
- Very important. Not at all important
22. **(If answered 21 a or b) – else go to q28** Is your current job with the employer who provided you with a Traineeship placement? OPEN – record as Y/N
- a) IF N - could you briefly describe how you secured this role?
23. Is this the first job you have gained since receiving support from the Traineeships programme? OPEN – record as Y/N
- a) **[If no]** What other jobs have you had since receiving support through the Programme
- (interviewer to capture number of jobs and length of time in each post)*
- b) In which month did you start your latest role?

24. Is this job?
- a) Permanent
- b) Seasonal, casual or temporary
- c) Under contract for a limited period
- d) Or another type of job that is not permanent
- e) Don't know__ (DON'T READ OUT)

25. How many hours a week, on average, do you usually work – excluding meal breaks but including any paid overtime?
- a) 40 hours or more per week
- b) 16 to 39 hours
- c) Under 16 hours
- d) It varies, it's a zero hours contract

26. Could you briefly describe your current role to us including your job title? OPEN
- [Coded to SOCs post- survey]*

Now go to q29

27. [If answered 21 h], which if any of the following things make it difficult for you to find work at the moment?

- a) Lack of qualifications or skills
- b) Lack of relevant work experience
- c) Lack of affordable childcare
- d) Having other caring responsibilities
- e) Alcohol or drug dependency
- f) Physical or mental illness
- g) Disability
- h) Age
- i) Having a criminal record
- j) Lack of appropriate jobs
- k) Transport difficulties and it being hard to get to appropriate work
- l) You only wanting to work part time
- m) Believing you would not be better off financially in work
- n) Lack of confidence
- o) Lack of support

Benefits of the Programme

28. Which parts of the support do you feel have been most useful to you and why? (*open answer*)

29. Thinking about the Traineeships programme, do you feel you benefited in any of the following ways? (*randomised order*)

- a) Taking part in more voluntary or community activities
- b) Gaining qualifications
- c) Clearer about what you want to do in your life
- d) More confident about your abilities
- e) Clearer about the range of opportunities open to you
- f) Feeling better about yourself generally
- g) Thinking about or actually setting up your own business or being self-employed
- h) Improved employment or career opportunities
- i) Feeling more healthy
- j) Better paid
- k) Better pay opportunities?
- l) Made new friends
- m) Taken up new interests or hobbies for example joining a club or society
- n) Improved skills to find a job
- o) Improved numbers/reading or writing skills

- i. How much better do you think your long-term job opportunities are now than before you had the support? Completely
- ii. Partly
- iii. Not at all

a) **[If completely or partly]** Is that due to the support that you've received?

- i. Is it for any other reason as well? (please explain)

30. Has the support you've received changed how you feel about education or training in any way? (yes/no)
- [If yes]** – in what ways
 - [If no]** Please explain why
31. **[If unemployed]** Has the support you've received changed how you feel about gaining employment?
- [If yes]** – in what ways
 - [If no]** please explain why?
32. Which, if any, of the following skills do you feel you have gained or improved from participating in the Traineeships programme? (random order)
- Skills related to a specific job
 - Problem solving skills
 - Team working skills
 - Organisational skills
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Number skills
 - Working with computers / ICT Communication skills
 - Customer handling skills
 - Job search skills, CV writing or interview skills
 - English language skills
 - Welsh language skills
 - Any other skills?
33. And do you think you have gained anything from doing the programme in terms of:
- Confidence?
 - Motivation?
 - Understanding the world of work?
 - Knowledge of employers in your area?
 - Knowledge of what employers want?
 - Knowledge of what is needed to get into the type of job you are interested in?
34. How likely is it that you would have obtained these skills elsewhere if you hadn't participated in the Traineeship?
- Definitely Possibly Definitely not
35. Have you been able to use what you learnt on the Traineeships Programme (and if currently working) in your work?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not yet, but I know I will be able to
 - Don't know/not sure
36. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements (using a scale of disagree strongly, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or agree strongly)
- My understanding of what employers expect from me has improved as a result of the Traineeship
 - I feel more prepared for work as a result of the Traineeship

37. Looking back, if you were starting out again, would you

- a) Do a Traineeship at the same place
- b) Do a Traineeship at a different place
- c) Do a different type of Traineeship
- d) Or not do the Traineeship
- e) Don't know

38. What was the most useful part of the training?

39. What was the least useful part of the training?

40. Would you recommend the Traineeships programme to family and friends?

- a. Why do you say that?

Annex F: Discussion guide for employer survey

About the research

Wavehill is an independent social and economic research organisation working in partnership with Learning and Work Institute (L&W) to evaluate the ESF funded Welsh Government Traineeships programme for the period of January 2015 to March 2019.

We would like to get your opinion on the programme, including the initial engagement, its outcomes and the placement itself.

The Evaluation

Your views are important as they help the Welsh Government to understand the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Traineeships Programme.

Confidentiality

Any comments that you make will be confidential and the information you provide will only be used for research and evaluation purposes. The information given to us in the research will be used to inform the development of further research activities, and interim and final reports. We will not use the names of any individuals in the reporting. Quotes from the discussion may be used in the report but these will not be attributed to participants by name.

It is also important to note that the team undertaking the evaluation do not work for the Welsh Government, your employer or any of the organisations that are involved in the delivery or funding of this project.

This is an *independent* evaluation.

Please note: if you would like further information regarding this project, how your data will be used and your rights under data protection laws please see the [Traineeship webpage](#).

Questions for discussion

Section 1: Context

1. Could you please briefly introduce yourself and your business.
 - a) What products do you create and/or services do you provide?
 - b) What is your role in the business?
2. Can you recall for how long you have engaged with the Traineeships programme?
3. And approximately how many Traineeships participants have secured a placement with your organisation since January 2015?
4. How did you first hear about the Traineeships programme?
5. Prior to engaging with the Traineeships programme did you...
 - a) Request /receive any information on what the programme was about?
 - i. (if yes) how useful was this?

- b) Speak to a training provider about the programme?
 - i. (if yes) how useful was this?
- 6. Why did you decide to engage with the Traineeships programme?
- 7. In your opinion, what are the key aims of the Traineeships programme for:
 - a) Young people?
 - b) Employers?
- 8. Are you familiar with the Traineeship's programme's different tiers – Engagement, Level 1 and Bridge to Employment? Yes/No
 - a) (if yes) Which tier do you typically engage participants through and why?
- 9. In what ways (if at all) is taking part in the Traineeships programme built into your recruitment strategies (both for apprenticeships and for jobs)?
- 10. Have you engaged with any other Welsh Government Work Based Learning programmes e.g. Jobs Growth Wales, Apprenticeships or Lift? [If so, please specify]
 - a) [If yes] From your perspective as an employer, to what extent have you been able to align the Traineeships programme with [Welsh Government Work Based Learning programme]?
- 11. Have you done anything to widen access to certain groups of individuals (e.g. people with disabilities, women, BAME individuals and those with caring responsibilities)?

Section 2: Engagement process

- 12. What is the approach taken for selecting an individual for a Traineeship placement at your organisation?
 - a) What, if any, information are you provided with about the young people by the training provider?
 - b) To what extent did the information provided reflect your own experience of the young person?
 - c) In your opinion, how effective is this approach?
 - i. Could anything be improved?
- 13. After the placement has been confirmed, what approach do you then take with the individual (s) prior to them joining you on a placement?
 - a) Are there particular processes used to address skills and training needs?
- 14. Thinking about the referral process and the time they are with you on placement, in your opinion, how effective is,
 - a) The support provided to you by the training provider?
 - b) The support provided to your learner by the training provider?
 - i. Why do you say this?

Section 3: Participant placement

- 15. What type of activities do young people from the Traineeships programme undertake as part of their placement in your organisation?
 - a) What do these activities aim to address for...

- i. The individual
- ii. Your organisation

16. What particular/typical barriers/challenges do you encounter amongst those young people you have taken on through a Traineeship placement?
 - a) What support (if any) do you provide to help address/overcome these?
 - b) What support (if any) do you get from the provider in these areas?
17. In your opinion, what benefits does a participant get out of a placement at your organisation?
 - a) What changes do you see in the young person as they progress through their placement?
 - b) Are there any particular challenges they encounter?
 - i. [If yes] How, if at all, are these overcome?
18. In your opinion, what are the key strengths of the current design of the Traineeships programme?
 - a) How, if at all, could these be enhanced?
19. What weaknesses are there in the current design of the Traineeships programme?
 - a) How, if at all, could these be overcome?
20. To what extent is the Welsh language used in the day to day operation of your company (not at all/to some extent/to a great extent/unsure)
 - a) (some or great extent) Could you briefly outline in what ways the Welsh language is used?
21. How important to your organisation is securing an individual with Welsh language skills (not at all important, somewhat important, very important)
 - a) (if 'somewhat'/'very important') Have you been able to secure a young person(s) for your placement(s) with the appropriate language skills?

Section 4: Outcomes

22. Has engaging with the Traineeships programme had any tangible impact upon your business that would not have happened otherwise? E.g. on existing staff, recruitment, productivity, customer service, raising social awareness and community benefits?
 - a) Were there any unexpected outcomes arising from your participation in the programme?
23. Have you taken on a Traineeship participant in a permanent position following the completion of their placement? (yes /no)
 - a) (if yes) Would you have recruited without support through the Traineeships programme?
 - b) (If no) for what reasons did you decide not to take them on in a permanent role?
24. To what extent (if at all) has participating in the Traineeships programme changed your view of young people in the workplace?
25. Has participating in the programme affected your recruitment practices in any way?

26. Would you recommend the Traineeships programme to other employers?

a) Why do you say that?

27. In what ways could the Traineeships programme be improved?

a) How could your experience of the Traineeships programme be enhanced as an employer?

Conclusion:

28. Are you currently taking (or planning to take on) Traineeship participants (yes/no)

a) (If yes) Is there any further support you would like in taking on participants in the future?

b) (If no) for what reasons are you no longer involved with the Traineeships Programme?

29. In your opinion, are there any lessons that can be learnt from current delivery of the Traineeships programme that we haven't already touched on?

a) [If yes] Please explain your answer.

30. Is there anything you were expecting to be asked that we haven't covered?

Annex G: Full Impact Assessment Regression Results

Variable	Job Entry (logistic)	3 month Job Sustain- ment (logistic)	Earnings, year plus one (linear)	Earnings, year plus two (linear)	Days in employ- ment, year plus one (linear)	Days in employ- ment, year plus two (linear)
(Intercept)	-2.612**	-3.702**	-8250.6**	-6617.4**	-172.26**	-150.23**
Treatment	0.651**	0.656**	642.22**	1811.23**	33.65**	61.40**
Entry level learning	-0.633**	-0.655**	-1316.1**	-875.76**	-47.49**	-22.98**
Male	0.254**	0.211**	785.55**	513.33**	4.96	2.10
No learning difficulty	0.468**	0.545**	634.20**	857.16**	25.23**	27.69**
No Health problem(s)	0.546**	0.491**	1159.84**	625.53**	38.16**	15.79**
Age at start	0.127**	0.155**	510.24**	256.81**	14.02**	6.29**
Living in West Wales and the Valleys	-0.098*	-0.098*	-83.12	-10.04	-7.43*	-0.28
Black Ethnicity	-0.314	-0.216	-1257.24*	-1022.83	-42.31*	-25.43
Asian Ethnicity	0.044	-0.067	-406.39	-537.31	-17.97	-17.97
Mixed Ethnicity	-0.222	-0.285	-884.20*	-689.28	-25.53*	-10.92
Other Ethnicity	-0.475	-0.460	-1795.7**	-253.39	-52.52**	-4.12
Ethnicity Not Known	0.376	-0.677	-593.10	-447.16	-22.32	-21.30
Local gross weekly earnings	-0.001	-0.001	0.67	1.60	-0.03	0.03
Local 16-24 employment rate	0.014**	0.015**	21.73*	30.85**	0.86**	0.86**

Note: * = coefficient statistically significant at the 5% level, ** = coefficient statistically significant at the 1% level.