Evaluation of Journey 2 Work

Interim Report

Rhodri Bowen with Dr Duncan Holtom and Heather Pells

July 2021

Pobl& People
Gwaith &Work

Contents

Pobl& | **People**
Gwaith | **&Work**

Table of Anacronyms

Acronym	Definition
ACE	Achieving Change through Employment
AIF	Active Inclusion Fund
BME	Black Minority and Ethnic
CCC	Cardiff County Council
CCT	Cross Cutting Themes
CEMP	Community Evaluation and Monitoring Project
EI	Economically Inactive
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English as a Second Language
J2W	Journey to Work
JCP	Job Centre Plus
LA	Local Authority
LTU	Long- term unemployed
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
MHA	Monmouthshire Housing Association
NCC	Newport City Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PaCE	Parents Childcare and Employment
SIA	Security Industry Authority
STEM	Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office

Pobl & | **People**
Gwaith | **& Work**

Key definitions

People are defined as economically inactive (EI) if they are aged 16-64 and who are not involved in the labour market, because they are neither working nor actively seeking employment.[1] It therefore includes students, early retirees and the long-term sick.

People are defined as unemployed if they are aged 16-64 and like the economically inactive are not involved in the labour market, but who unlike the economically inactive, are actively seeking employment.[2]

People are defined as long-term unemployed (LTU) if they have been unemployed for 12 months or more.

---

[1] The Office for National Statistics defines the economically inactive as 'People not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks'. (ONS, 2022).
[2] The Office for National Statistics (using the International Labour Organisation definition) defines people as unemployed if they are 'without a job, have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks' or are 'out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks'. (ONS, 2022).

Summary of project performance

Table 1 provides an overview of performance against targets during the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period (November 2017- January 2020) and over the lifetime of the programme (November 2017- April 2021, including the period of lockdowns from March 2020 onwards). It draws upon an analysis of project data and documents; a desk based literature review and qualitative research with stakeholders, including project staff (n=7) and participants (n=13). Table 1. illustrates the impact of COVID-19 and policy responses like lockdown upon, for example, engagements and therefore project performance. However, as the commentary illustrates, while important, COVID-19 is not the only factor shaping performance.

Commented [HH(-W1]: Would be good to have a table listing the abbreviations at the start of the document

Commented [HP2R1]: Good Idea, added

Pobl&
Gwaith | **People**
&Work

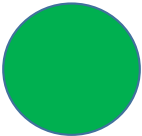**Table 1. Overview of project performance against targets**
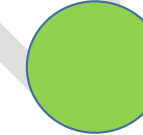
RAG Rating	>115%	95%-115%	85%-94%	<85%
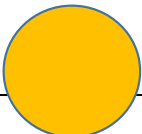
Outcome	Performance pre-COVID-19 against target (Nov 2017-Jan 2021)	Performance over the lifetime of the programme against target (Nov 2017-April 2021)	Commentary
Engagement of Economically Inactive (EI) participants	90%	60%	• Pre-pandemic, recruiting (engaging) EI participants was challenging as they were less likely to be referred by partners than LTU participants and the project relied more on community engagement and 'word of mouth' recommendations (which was more difficult than recruitment via referral from partners). • COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns further slowed recruitment with the closure of, or restricted access to, points of contact with potential participants, such as local authority (LA) hubs and Job Centre Plus (JCP), which provided referral pathways into the programme. • Potential participants probably deferred engagement until restrictions eased given, for example, negative media
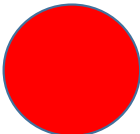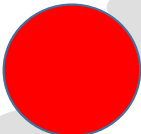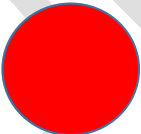
Commented [HH(-W3]: Write out every acronym in full first. Could be useful to have an abbreviations table at the start of the document.
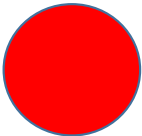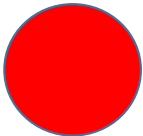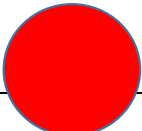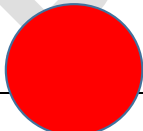
Commented [HP4R3]: Good point, added
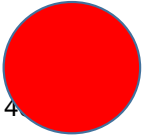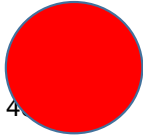
			coverage of the impact of lockdowns upon employment (and perceptions about the difficulties of finding work); fears of catching COVID-19; childcare responsibilities; and the perception that many public services were shut down (in practice Journey to work (J2W) continued to operate throughout the period, albeit moving delivery online).
Engagement of LTU participants	121% 🟢	85% 🟠	• Pre-pandemic, recruitment (engagement) of LTU participants had been strong. This was attributed primarily to the establishment of effective referral pathways from partners such as JCP in Cardiff and Newport, and hubs which were well sited and accessible to many LTU people. In addition, links with job clubs and the central location of sites such as Newport library facilitated the recruitment process. In contrast, Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) was more reliant upon internal referrals, which were weaker than anticipated. • This recruitment model was also effective with some potentially hard to reach groups, such as people from Blackblack, Asian and Minority minority Ethnic ethnic communities.

			• The COVID-19 pandemic had a large impact upon engagements in Cardiff and Newport, largely due to the reasons highlighted above (in relation to recruitment of EI participants). In contrast, in Monmouthshire, which was less reliant upon referrals from partners like LA hubs and JCP, improvements in project delivery meant that engagements in Monmouthshire increased, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit from a low base.
Employment outcomes for EI participants	172%	120%	• Pre-COVID-19 performance in relation to employment outcomes were so high, especially in Newport, that this cushioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, where job outcomes fell sharply in Cardiff and Newport. In contrast, in Monmouthshire, employment outcomes actually improved after Jan 2020. This is likely to be linked to the increase in the number of participants engaged on the project and improvements in project delivery.
Employment outcomes for LTU participants	147%	112%	• Because engagements have been lower than anticipated, the very strong performance in terms of employment outcomes means that the conversion rate of engagements to employment outcomes has been higher than anticipated (with 28% of all participants gaining employment).

8

			• The high conversion rate is a measure of project effectiveness (and is to be celebrated). The skills and experience of advisors and the collaborative, person-centred approach they have taken, are likely to have been key factors. • However, it may also suggest that some participants had fewer complex barriers than expected. The lower than expected proportion of participants who, for example, needed qualifications to access work, is consistent with this inference.
Employment outcomes for EI participants six months upon leaving	144%	144%	• Employment outcomes six months after exiting the project were very strong pre-~~COVID-19~~pandemic and have continued to remain strong ~~post-COVID-19~~as COVID-19 restrictions have been eased, for EI participants. • Employment outcomes six months after exiting the project were slightly below target for LTU participants pre-COVID-19 pandemic but have improved sharply since. • This is an important measure of the programme's effectiveness in not only getting participants into work, but in supporting them to find sustainable employment, which is a vital part of reducing poverty.
Employment outcomes for LTU participants six	94%	139%	

months upon leaving			• However, this improvement was driven by Cardiff, and post-2020, the proportion of participants in work six months after exiting the project fell in Monmouthshire and, to a lesser degree, in Newport. This may reflect differences in the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon different sectors of the economy with, for example, Newport taking a larger economic hit than Cardiff.
Qualification outcomes for EI participants	70% 🔴	47% 🔴	• Performance has been weak, primarily because: (i) the demand or need for participants to gain qualifications in order to gain employment has been lower than expected (with support for job search skills and mentoring proving sufficient) and (ii) engagements were lower than anticipated (which meant fewer participants could complete qualifications). • Performance was further weakened by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon engagements and access to training. Many training providers were not active, especially during the first lockdown period, and/or restricted their activity. The moves to deliver training online were also reported to have created additional barriers for some participants, in accessing training (e.g. those with poor IT skills, or who could not afford or access devices and data).
Qualification outcomes for LTU participants	92% 🟡	67% 🔴	

Completion of Work Experience placements for EI participants	52% ⬤	33% ⬤	• Performance in relation to the completion of work experience placements was weak before the COVID-19 pandemic and has weakened further since for both EI and LTU participants, with only Newport on target with LTU participants, pre-COVID-19pandemic. • The reasons are somewhat similar to the weak performance in relation to qualifications: (i) the demand or need for participants to complete work experience in order to gain employment appears to have been lower than expected (with support for job search skills and mentoring proving sufficient); (ii) engagements were lower than anticipated (which meant fewer participants could complete work experience; and (iii) securing access to work placements from partners was challenging pre- COVID-19, and there was room to improve internal work experience options. The challenges increased markedly during lockdown.
Completion of Work Experience placements for LTU participants	70% ⬤	46% ⬤	

	46%	46%	
Job search outcome for EI participants	51% 4	46% 4	• Performance in relation to job search outcomes was weak before the COVID-19 pandemic, with only Newport on target, and performance weakened further in all three areas after COVID-19the pandemic. • In part, this reflects the lower than anticipated engagement (meaning fewer participants could improve their job search skills). However, this is also a reflection of the project's success in securing employment outcomes. Staff were frustrated that while their support to help participants enhance their job search skills was helping them enter employment, job search outcomes could not be counted for those who achieved employment outcomes.

**Pobl &
Gwaith** | **People
&Work**

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the recommendations to the beneficiaries include:

R1: Consider proposing to WEFO a reprofiling of the project targets, to increase the employment outcomes target for both EI and LTU participants, while reducing job search outcome targets (which cannot be claimed if a job outcome is claimed).

R2. Continuing to closely monitor project performance, given the uncertain economic outlook and risk that restrictions on social contact are reinstated, which may impact upon engagements and outcomes.

R3. Exploring how engagements with potential participants could be further strengthened. This should include: work with existing partners to raise awareness of the project and also sharing evidence of success (and the impact upon participants referred by partners); identifying potential partners who are known and trusted by people with more complex barriers to employment, such as drug and alcohol misuse and mental health services and community groups and organisations; and assessing the cost effectiveness of direct community outreach work.

R4: Celebrating and sharing good practice from the project around engagement and support for[3] participants from ~~Black~~black, Asian and ~~Minority~~ minority ~~Ethnic~~ ethnic communities, with partners and other local authorities and projects in Wales.

R5. Exploring how the project's offer of training, work experience and placements can be strengthened and made more attractive. Advisers are likely to have a key role here in drawing upon assessments of participants' skills and experience in order to advise clients on how investing in skills and experience may help them secure better paid and quality work; for example, training and/or

---

[3] Engaging practice would likely need to be different in other local authorities, as Cardiff and Newport have a far higher proportion within the general population.

work experience may be used to address issues like weakness in social and emotional skills, such as motivation, confidence and/or mood/anger management, basic or essential skills gaps, and/or specific skills gaps for particular jobs. Improving access to work experience and placements and addressing barriers to online learning (by enhancing ICT skills and improving access to devices and/or data) are also likely to be important.

R6: Ensure a strong focus upon and reporting of activity to support the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs). It will also be important to ensure that all staff understand the importance of the CCTs. Actions should include:

- project partners to develop an 'active offer' of Welsh, and for example, enact recommendations around Welsh language engagement and offer for services (see e.g. p.14, Citizens Advice Bureau, 2015) and Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) to translate project promotional material on their website into Welsh;
- project partners to undertake additional activity focused upon challenging occupational segregation by broadening people's horizons about employment possibilities, rather than 'challenging' them and also encouraging men to consider entry into female dominated professions.

Project partners should also consider, for example:
- exploring the scope to develop mentoring and role modelling to expand participants' employment horizons;
- actively promoting the Social Model of Disability;
- developing advisers' skills and experience in relation to supporting currently under-represented groups, such as disabled people; and employer engagement to support employment of groups with complex barriers.

There may also, for example, be scope to continue to work online and/or by phone even once restrictions on social contact are eased, reducing the environmental impacts of travel. However, the needs of participants, who may struggle to access or engage with an online offer need to be balanced against

the environmental gains, and a blended, and flexible, person-centred offer that works with participants' preferences, is likely to be appropriate.

R7: Explore options to systematically collate results from the Star assessment and participants' evaluation forms centrally, in order to strengthen monitoring of soft outcomes.

R8: Reassess elements of how the new neighbourhood hub system works in Newport, such as establishing a system to cover staff workloads in cases of absence.

**Pobl &
Gwaith | People
&Work**

1. Introduction

Journey to Work

1.1.   Journey to Work (J2W) aims to support:

- 1,033 people aged 25 and over who are economically inactive (EI), not in education or training, and who have complex barriers to employment; and
- 770 people aged 25 and over who are long-term unemployed (LTU) and who have complex barriers to employment.

1.2.   It aims to achieve this through six key activities[4]:

- **Participant Engagement and Recruitment;** for example, through developing partnership work, referral pathways and direct marketing and outreach work;
- **Assessment and Support;** for example, by Engagement and Support Officers providing baseline assessment and referrals routes;
- **Skills Development and Continued Support;** for example, soft skills, work relevant certification, qualifications and further learning;
- **Volunteering Placements** to develop employability skills;
- **Employability Support;** for example, by sharing local job market expertise and employer liaison officers helping with writing CVs and careers advice;
- **Tracking and Monitoring** of participant progress during the project, and then 3 and 6 months after they leave the project, to monitor sustained outcomes.

The evaluation

1.3.   In August 2020 People and Work were commissioned by Newport City Council (NCC) as the lead beneficiary on behalf of the joint beneficiaries that include Cardiff City Council (CCC) and Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) to evaluate the Journey 2 Work (J2W) project.

---

[4] These are based on details from the tender specification.

Pobl& People
Gwaith &Work

Research aims

1.4.   As outlined in the terms of reference for this evaluation:

'The ultimate aim of this evaluation is to provide a critical assessment of the regional approach to increasing the employability of Economically Inactive and Long Term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment. As part of this, the evaluation should examine issues to do with the planning, implementation and management of the regional operation team, including the effectiveness of the operation and the suitability of the interventions offered to the needs of the participants.'

'The evaluation should provide an assessment of the short and medium term outcomes of the operation and its ability to help participants re-engage with training, job searching, work experience and employment opportunities. It should also examine if there were any significant variations in different demographic groups; for example, those with low or no skills, a work limiting health condition or disability (including substance or alcohol misuse), care or childcare responsibilities, aged over 54, from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities group or from a jobless household (p.13).'

1.5.   A breakdown of the research objectives and questions are provided in **appendix 1.**

This report

1.6.   An inception report was produced in November 2020 and this interim report will be followed by a final report in September 2022.

1.7.   In this report the term **'beneficiaries'** is used to describe the lead (NCC) and joint beneficiaries Cardiff City Council (CCC) and Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA).

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

2. Methodology

Introduction

2.1. The interim report draws upon three sources of data:

- a desk-based literature review;
- quantitative and qualitative data collected by the project, including data drawn from the project's participant database; and
- qualitative research with project staff and participants.

Literature review

2.2. Broad searches of literature and sources were undertaken using Google and Google Scholar and the websites of selected organisations (the Welsh Government, the Wales Centre for Public Policy and Chwarae Teg)[5]. The sources searched and search terms used are summarised in table `.

Table 1. Summary of research questions and search terms used

Research questions (for the literature review)	Search terms used
- What barriers exist which prevent LTU and EI (aged 25+) participants entering employment, education or training? - What works in supporting those with low or no skills, a work limiting health condition or disability (including substance or alcohol misuse), care or childcare responsibilities, are aged over 54, are from a BME group or from a jobless household, into education, training and employment?	Research OR Evaluat* AND barriers AND employment OR training AND "long term unemployed" OR "economically inactive"

---

[5] Searches of these websites was conducted by adding the organisational website into the string of search terms e.g. Site:Gov.Wales   and   Site:Chwarae Teg.

• What is known about gender segregation in work, and stereotypical employment opportunities? [given the project's aim to address this][6] • What works in providing opportunities for participants to develop skills and access opportunities that challenge stereotypical employment opportunities?	Research OR Evaluat* AND effective* AND project AND employ* AND gender segregation OR occupation* segregation

Commented [HH(-W5]: Why the particular focus on gender? Can this be made clearer?

Commented [DH6R5]: Good point - detail added in a footnotre, thank you

2.3.   Research or evaluations identified through searches were sifted to determine if they met the inclusion criteria. The initial sift was based upon a review of title and abstract (or summary) and the full text of those that appeared relevant was considered, to assess if they met the inclusion criteria. Given the breadth of search terms, sifting of items identified through Google searches was limited and once saturation appeared to have been reached (and no more relevant material was identified), sifting of search results was stopped.

2.4.   Items identified through the searches were included if they met the following criteria:

- they focused upon employment programmes and opportunities for the specified client group (i.e. LTU or EI adults aged 25+); **and**
- they discussed barriers to employment for LTU or EI aged 25+ **or** what works in supporting LTU or EI adults aged 25 **or** occupational segregation in Wales **or what** works in reducing occupational segregation; **and**
- were published from 2005 to present; **and**
- they met the quality criteria outlined below.

2.5.   The quality of research was judged by assessing if:

---

[6] As part of its contribution to the the CCT related to Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, the project's aimed 'to deliver activities to challenge traditional assumptions and stereotypes and to raise participation levels in occupations and sectors where a particular gender or recognised equality groups are under-represented.'

- the aims and objectives and the approach taken were clearly reported;

- there was adequate description of the context in which the research was undertaken to enable conclusions about, for example, its external validity to be considered;

- there was adequate description of the methods used to collect and analyse data (including description of the sample and how it was identified and recruited);

- the methods used to collect and analyse data were appropriate given the research aims and objectives and context (including availability for data); and

- the findings and conclusions were supported by data presented.

2.6.   Studies that were judged inadequate on any one of these criteria were excluded.

Project data

2.7.   In order to maximise the use of existing data, the evaluation made extensive use of data collected by the project. This was used to assess overall outcomes and performance and also to explore project outcomes for different groups of participants, such as men and women and participants from different ethnic groups.

2.8.   Overall project performance was assessed by drawing upon the project's 14 quarterly reports and indicator summary documents. Performance pre- and post- lockdown was considered, to provide context for the findings (i.e. engagement and outcomes before the influence of COVID-19).

2.9.   Outcomes for different groups of participants were assessed by drawing upon data from the participant database in April 2021. The database includes details of participants' characteristics and outcomes.

2.10.   Additional, primarily qualitative, data about project delivery was drawn from a review of the project's progress reports. This included data and reflections on

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

the project activities, such as how the participants' barriers and the CCTs were addressed.

Qualitative research with project staff and participants

2.11. A purposive sample of project staff, participants and partners was planned. This was intended to provide representation of the different areas and groups of participants. In total, 13 participants and 7 staff members were interviewed.

2.12. The project staff interviewed included the three operational managers (each one represents a beneficiary area), two mentors from Cardiff, an economic inactivity worker[7] from Newport and a work and skills wise adviser from Monmouthshire (7 in total)[8]. The evaluation also drew upon data from the inception report, which included discussions with leads from NCC and scoping interviews with the three operational managers.

2.13. The number of participants interviewed was a little under the target of 15 as, despite efforts[9], only one participant from Monmouthshire chose to take part in the evaluation (two short of the target of three participants). However, the gender[10] split and outcomes achieved[11] were similar to the proposed sample and there was representation of participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities[12].

2.14. The research aimed to interview three partners. Unfortunately, despite requesting interviews with partners, not one agreed to the interview and therefore their views are not represented in the report.

---

[7] Similar role to the mentor - both are staff.
[8] A figure between six and nine was proposed.
[9] The offer of a £20 e-voucher to participate and MHA repeatedly requesting participants to take part.
[10] Seven men and six women were interviewed.
[11] Seven had achieved entering employment / self-employment, four had achieved qualifications and three had work experience.
[12] Ethnicity was not included in the original sample frame, due to limitation of numbers, however, WEFO had requested the inclusion of ethnicity and, through chance, five of those interviewed were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **& Work**

Strengths and weaknesses of the methods and data

2.15.   The quantitative data enables a reasonably comprehensive assessment of project performance before and after the first lockdown, while qualitative data drawn from project reports and interviews provides insight into the 'story' behind the data. Overall, the data in this report is strong enough to draw conclusions on the evaluative aims and objectives. However, data on the CCTs was limited, and mainly drawn from project reports. Qualitative data on Monmouthshire (while representing a small part of the project (roughly 10 per cent)) was more limited than the other two areas. External perspectives upon the project were limited by the difficulties in engaging partners in the evaluation.

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

3. Desk-based literature review

3.1.   The desk-based literature review addressed four key questions:

- what barriers prevent LTU and EI (aged 25+) participants entering employment, education and training?
- what works in supporting those with low or no skills, a work limiting health condition or disability (including substance or alcohol misuse), care or childcare responsibilities, those aged over 54, and those from a ~~BME~~ black, Asian or ethnic minority group or from a jobless household, into education, training and employment?
- what is known about gender segregation in work, and stereotypical employment opportunities? and
- what works in providing opportunities for participants to develop skills and access opportunities that challenge stereotypical employment opportunities?

Barriers to entry to employment, education and training

3.2.   Barriers to employment, or to education or training which can lead to employment, are well documented; these include:

Situational barriers

3.3.   Barriers linked to people's circumstances (or situation), such as care responsibilities (overwhelmingly childcare) and lacking transport to get to work, education or training (women in particular may face additional barriers to travelling at night[13], while some people with disabilities may face barriers travelling early in the morning[14])[15]; for example, research by Chwarae Teg identifies that English to Speakers of Other Languages ESOL classes are

---

[13] Perez (2019) *Invisible Women*, Penguin Random House UK.
[14] Kantar Public and Learning and Work Institute (2018) *Decisions of Adult Learners,* Department for Education.
[15] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three – Social Research Number 36.*

crucial to help ethnic minority women into employment, but that these are not always easy to access due, for example, to lack of childcare. Outreach classes or online classes were suggested for those with limited access to regular classes due to other responsibilities[16]. These may also assist some learners with disabilities[17]. However, lack of digital access may be an issue, particularly for some groups of people who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive[18].

Institutional barriers

3.4. People with disabilities may have additional barriers to taking up temporary paid employment, due to the disruption this may cause to their benefits. In research for Chwarae Teg, the inflexibility of the benefits system was criticised by disabled women, in terms of failing to accommodate the life cycle or fluctuating nature of some disabilities or health conditions, meaning that some people can only work for shorter or fluctuating periods.[19].

Barriers linked to skills and health

3.5. Lacking qualifications or work-related skills or having work limiting health conditions are also barriers to employment. Other barriers relate to emotional and mental health, such as low levels of self-confidence and mental health issues, most commonly feelings of anxiety or depression[20] [21]. These link to what are sometimes described as 'dispositional barriers', such as a lack of self-belief in one's ability to succeed in employment, education or training or a weak self-identity as a learner or (paid) worker.

---

[16] Turkmen (2019) *Triple Glazed ceiling – barriers to BAME women participating in the economy,* Chwarae Teg.
[17] Kantar Public and Learning and Work Institute (2018) *Decisions of Adult Learners,* Department for Education.
[18] Beaunover, Dupere and Guitton (May 2020) *Covid-19 and digital inequalities: Reciprocal impacts and mitigation strategies,* Computers in Human Behaviour.
[19] Paterson and Turkman (undated) *Society is the Disability – disabled women and* work, Chwarae Teg.
[20] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three – Social Research Number 36.*
[21] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Complex barriers

3.6.   Those who have been out of work for a very long time are likely to have particularly complex needs and a range of barriers, which may include an interplay of factors already mentioned and may also include disability, drug or alcohol dependency, low literacy and numeracy or a criminal record[22].

Barriers to sustaining and progressing in employment

3.7.   As well as barriers to entering employment, there are also barriers to sustaining employment; for example, initial employment retention for benefit leavers is a problem for some groups, such as those with low qualifications, and lone parents. Barriers, such as difficulties arranging childcare, can persist even after people enter employment. Moreover, even if people are able to sustain employment, they can struggle to progress and too few people in low paid jobs are able to develop careers which involve progression to better paid jobs. The evidence suggests that somewhere between 40 and 75 per cent of workers remain stuck in 'dead-end' jobs[23].

Barriers to sustaining and progressing in education or training

3.8.   Research identifies that people with no prior qualifications and no previous experience of self-study are more likely to drop out of courses[24], a finding which highlights the importance of adequate support to inexperienced learners throughout their adult learning journey. In relation to basic (or essential) skills learning, persistence is supported when learners establish and set goals along the learning journey and outline the steps to achieve them, and when achievement of goals is recognised, and this then leads to revision of goals. Implementation intentions ('if-then' plans that detail when, where and how a person will take action when a barrier arises) also help with persistence. Recognition of smaller gains is particularly important for vulnerable and harder to reach learners. Labelling courses so that they are seen as relevant to

---

[22] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[23] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[24] Melrose (2014) *Encouraging participation and persistence in adult literacy and numeracy – literature review,* Department for Education.

Pobl & | **People**
Gwaith | **&Work**

accomplishing a goal, such as managing finances, being more organised or help with children, may be particularly effective.

What works in supporting people into education, training and employment?

3.9. People who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive are likely to have significant barriers to entering education, employment or training, such as limited skills, health or disability challenges, caring responsibilities or being older. They are therefore likely to require more support to enter employment, education or training than someone without these barriers. Research suggests that more intensive and personalised support is therefore more effective than work placements (without additional support)[25]. Research has consistently identified that one to one support from an employment support worker, who has more time and flexibility than a mainstream employment programme to work in a person-centred way, helps people to overcome the barriers they face[26] [27] [28] [29] [30].

The qualities of effective employment support advisers and mentors

3.10. Evaluation of the Communities for Work programme identified that the qualities of advisers that contributed to favourable experiences were found to be:

- continuity in adviser support;
- personally tailored support;

---

[25] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer*, Department for Work and Pensions.

[26] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36,* Welsh Government.

[27] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.

[28] Meadows (2008) *Local Initiatives to help workless people find and keep paid work,* Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

[29] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

[30] Bowen, Pells (2020) *Evaluation of Change Grow Live - Achieving Change through Employment,* People and Work.

- advisers demonstrating understanding of and empathy towards a participant's circumstances;
- a collaborative relationship between participant/adviser;
- advisers seeing participants more frequently and for longer, to maintain motivation and momentum;
- advisers taking a proactive approach to addressing barriers.

3.11.   Holistic interventions addressing health, housing, childcare and substance misuse were also seen as effective[31] [32]. In contrast, participants in the research tended to reflect unfavourably on adviser support where a 'one size fits all' approach was used, which did not take account of the needs and aspirations of individuals and where advisers were felt to be condescending towards participants.

3.12.   Staff offering personalised support therefore need to have sufficient specialist knowledge of the barriers that individual participants face[33] [34] [35]; for example, for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, negative experiences of support were related to instances where it was felt that staff understanding of the impact of specific conditions or impairments was limited[36]. Employment of experienced staff is therefore seen as an asset, as these staff are able to trade on their existing connections and reputations[37]. Skilled and empathetic staff are also able to build reputations and trust within communities (including communities of interest as well as geographic or

---

[31] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36.*; Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

[32] 32 Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

[33] Citizen's Advice Bureau (2017) *Halving the Disability Employment Gap.*

[34] Bennet, Ray and Wilson (2016) *Addressing barriers to work for disabled people and those with long term health conditions,* Learning and Work Institute.

[35] TUC (2015) *Disability and Employment,* Economic Report Series.

[36] Bennet, Ray and Wilson (2016) *Addressing barriers to work for disabled people and those with long term health conditions,* Learning and Work Institute.

[37] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36.*

**Pobl&People
Gwaith&Work**

ethnic communities), enabling word of mouth referrals. Strong links to partner organisations are also important[38].

3.13.   Flexibility in terms of local service delivery has been identified by the OECD as an important element in developing effective local responses[39], while research in the UK identifies that employment advisers' work needs to be structured in ways that ensure that staff are able to work with participants with the most complex needs; for example, it is important that targets are not set in such a way to discourage work with the most time consuming and challenging people[40].

The time and commitment that participants need to overcome barriers

3.14.   Evaluation of the Communities for Work programme also identified that the dispositional barriers people face require that participants understand the nature of the issues affecting them and demonstrate considerable commitment to overcoming them, sometimes over a protracted period[41]. Similarly, in an evaluation of a support programme for the very long term unemployed, the researchers stated that, for those with the most complex barriers, six months was not considered adequate to address those barriers, let alone achieve employment outcomes[42].

Employer engagement

3.15.   Working with employers is also seen as an import part of interventions to support people with complex barriers. This can include: meeting employers' skill needs, ensuring training is employability focused and includes ESOL (where appropriate), and helping employers to meet corporate social

---

[38] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36.*
[39] OECD LEED (2013) *Tackling Long-Term unemployment amongst vulnerable groups.*
[40] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36.*
[41] Welsh Government (2018) *Evaluations of communities for work – stage three- Social Research Number 36.*
[42] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer*, Department for Work and Pensions.

responsibility goals[43], as well as engaging with employers on pre-work and early work experiences[44].

3.16. Similarly, work with employers is seen as important in meeting the needs of participants with additional barriers; for example, research for the Learning and Work Institute found that when employers received appropriate support, they were more likely to recruit and retain disabled employees,[45].

3.17. As well as ensuring that employment advisers have specialist knowledge of the needs of older people seeking to return to work[46], work with employers has also been found to be important. To enable people over 50 to access work, there needs to be enough 'good' employers who offer diverse job openings, as well as sustainable and flexible work opportunities to retain older workers. There can also be a need to work with employers to challenge age-bias and stereotypical attitudes towards older workers. Research suggests that this is best tackled at a local level using local networks, local influences, local success stories and local champions for change. There is also a need for:

Training and upskilling

3.18. Training is crucial to enabling some participants to enter work. Interventions to support individuals in the transition to work will need to consider different skills needs (basic, employability and technical) and ensure that skill deficits are filled in the right sequence to meet the specific needs of individuals and employers[47]. Employment advisers need to have access to a budget which

---

[43] Sisson, Dewson and Carta (2010) *Understanding worklessness in Newham: Final Report,* Institute for Employment Studies.

[44] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

[45] Bennet, Ray and Wilson (2016) *Addressing barriers to work for disabled people and those with long term health conditions in Brighton and Hove,* Learning and Work Institute.

[46] Parsons and Walsh (2019) *Employment support for over 50s: rapid evidence review,* Centre for Ageing Better.

[47] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

enables them to fund training for participants, but also any additions they need to access work[48] [49].   Training and support are valued where they address basic skills levels or move participants closer to work. They are not seen as favourable if they are not offering anything new or relevant[50]. Skills interventions for the most disadvantaged often need to be accompanied by other services and support in areas such as childcare, health or employer engagement, in order to overcome the multiple barriers to employment that some people face[51].   Training is more effective than 'work first' type interventions in producing sustained employment and a reduction of the 'low pay/ no pay' cycle[52].

Work placements and work experience

3.19. Work placements and experience are another key tool in supporting people into employment. An evaluation of a six-month work placement programme found that work placements benefited participants whose main needs were around developing a work ethic and who had a lack of recent work experience[53]. Work placements increased motivation to work even amongst those initially opposed to a placement. Participants' confidence in their abilities, interpersonal and team-work skills were also enhanced by work experience.   Confidence was increased through satisfaction gained from having a routine and a sense of achievement.   However, a minority of participants reported a negative shift about their views of work, and this was highest amongst those on the work placement programme who did not achieve a work placement.

---

[48] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[49] Bowen, Pells (2020) *Evaluation of Change Grow Live Achieving Change through Employment,* People and Work.
[50] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[51] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[52] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[53] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.

Pobl& | People
Gwaith | &Work

3.20. Factors that participants reported that improved their experience of work placements included:

- providers taking the time to select appropriate placements, with participants having some involvement in the process, so that the types of placement selected fitted with participants' needs and/or work aspirations;
- placements which suited participants' way of working, were varied and interesting and/or carried a degree of responsibility;
- supervision by placement managers/other staff that which was flexible enough to meet their needs, collaborative in nature and/or meant they were treated equally to other staff; and
- having a sustained six-month period of work experience, although there was some disagreement around whether 30 hours a week was too long[54].

3.21. Research also suggests that voluntary training options appear more likely to improve motivation, and result in satisfaction and lead to more positive learning and employment outcomes than mandatory approaches. Referral to a work placement may also be timelier once other higher priority barriers, such as basic skills needs, are addressed through the increased skills conditionality[55].

What is known about gender segregation in work, and stereotypical employment opportunities?

3.22. The cause of gender segregation at work and the gender pay and opportunity gap is multi-dimensional and complex in its causes and consequences[56] [57]. Key reasons for these differences are likely to include: men and women's choice of study, stereotypes, the demand for shorter or flexible hours of work

---

[54] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[55] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[56] Bosworth, Kersley (2015) *Opportunities and outcomes in education and work: Gender effects,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[57] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market - Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

because of the unequal care burden and differential income roles, and covert barriers and biases in organisational practices[58].

Occupational segregation in Wales

3.23.   Occupational segregation is a particular problem in Wales. Three quarters of workers in Wales are employed in gender segregated work. Wales has a more persistent and prevalent problem with occupational segregation than other parts of the UK.   Men hold almost two thirds of full-time work across Wales, whilst women hold almost four fifths of part-time work. 43 per cent of women are in part-time work, a proportion little changed since the 1970s. Three quarters of all part-time work is in low and low-middle skilled work, such as sales, administration and personal services[59].

Wage gaps and working patterns

3.24.   Within the UK there is very little difference between the wages of men and women when they enter the workplace but from the late 20s and early 30s a large gap appears as women's wage progression levels out, and men's continues to rise. Gender differences in part-time work are important partial explanations for these differences. Whilst part-time and flexible working enable (predominantly) women to balance work and caring responsibilities, (though this raises questions on why it is still women who overwhelmingly take on the role of balancing care and work), moving to this way of working limits career progression. Furthermore, there is a shortage of quality part-time work for women seeking this. Most senior women in part-time/ flexible hours contracts have negotiated this after reaching their senior position[60]. There is also evidence that searching for 'hour friendly' professional roles re-segregates women into gendered niches or hinders entry or progression to roles and work with irregular or higher working hours[61]. Meanwhile part-timers

---

[58] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market - Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.
[59] Felstead, Davies, Jones (2013) *Skills and the quality of work in Wales 2006-12. Main Report for the UK Employment and Skills Council'.* Cardiff WISERD, cited in Parken (2015).
[60] Government Equalities Office (2019) *Improving women's progression in the workplace,* Government Equalities Office.
[61] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market - Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

in lower occupational jobs (most of whom are female) receive low wages, with limited opportunities for progression. Another key difference is that women who enter the labour market in low-paid jobs experience 'sticky floors', rarely progressing upwards. By contrast, such jobs are 'springboards' for men into higher paid positions. This 'springboard' versus 'sticky floor' dichotomy has worsened over time[62].

Occupational segregation and pay

3.25. Occupational segregation remains a feature of the labour market. Occupations in which a high proportion of the workforce is female, such as retail, food services and administrative and support services, attract low pay. Typically male-dominated occupations in manufacturing and construction and in skilled trades are seen, by contrast, to attract higher median rates of pay. Occupational segregation risks limiting female access to these higher paying roles[63]. However, across the UK and most EU member states, mixed-gender occupations have increased, though unequally, as more male-dominated professions become increasingly mixed gender than female-dominated occupations[64].

Institutional barriers

3.26. Although legal barriers or restrictive practices to women's entry have long been outlawed, covert biases or forms of impediment still operate, often restricting career paths and career prospects for women within occupations; for example, discretionary managerial practices for selection, hiring and promotions that favour men. There is evidence that most of the factors sustaining segregation are becoming less prominent among younger cohorts of educated, professional women. This is less clearly the case for women in low-paid occupations[65].

---

[62] Government Equalities Office (2019) *Improving women's progression in the workplace,* Government Equalities Office.
[63] Bosworth, Kersley (2015) *Opportunities and outcomes in education and work: Gender effects,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[64] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.
[65] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.

Pobl& | People
Gwaith | &Work

The impact of economic change upon occupational segregation

3.27. A degree of polarisation is emerging in the pattern of future skill needs, with growing occupations at the lower end of the (recognised) skill spectrum, such as sales workers, unbalanced in favour of female employment, and growing occupations at the top end of the spectrum unbalanced in favour of male-dominated jobs, such as computing. For de-segregation to occur, men should be drawn into female-dominated areas such as care work, and women's advancement in managerial professions or the growing technical occupations should be facilitated[66]. This is important because, as outlined in the next section, there are reasons to believe that there are greater challenges in attracting men into female-dominated professions than vice versa. This is likely to reflect both the gendered stereotyping of some roles and lower rate of pay and more limited progression opportunities in some female dominated sectors, such as customer service (both of which may discourage, or mean men do not consider these occupations).

> **Commented [HH(-W7]:** I suppose not all that surprising, given the lower wage, longer hours and fewer progression opportunities.
>
> **Commented [RB8R7]:** Good point

What works in providing opportunities for participants to develop skills and access opportunities that challenge stereotypical employment opportunities?

3.28. Tackling gender stereotypes is extremely challenging as gender-based stereotypes in early childhood[67] can persist into later childhood and into adulthood[68]. Even where children are aware that all opportunities are open to them, their choices reflect existing occupational segregation patterns[69] [70]; for some people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, gendered beliefs around the role of each sex may be particularly strong. Such well ingrained expectations and beliefs around gender-based roles are extremely challenging for a single employment support organisation to overcome.

---

[66] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.
[67] Fawcett Society (2020) *Unlimited Potential – the final report of the commission on gender stereotypes in early childhood.*
[68] Fine (2010) *Delusions of Gender,* Icon books.
[69] Ofsted (2011) *Girls' Career Aspirations.*
[70] National Union of Teachers (2016) *Stereotypes stop you doing stuff,* Ruskin Press.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

3.29. Because there was little evidence in the literature reviewed about what works in challenging stereotypical employment opportunities, evidence from other areas has therefore been included.

Changing social and cultural norms

3.30. With regard to research on women from ethnic minorities, research by Chwarae Teg into BAME women and barriers to employment identified that supporting women to tackle cultural barriers can help them to advance in employment. They recommend revisiting views of the roles of men and women within the community and through social networks at a personal level. Mentoring was also a strong recommendation from research participants[71] and coupled with role modelling, may be effective in expanding the horizons of the breadth of employment opportunities for women and men from majority and minority ethnic communities[72].

3.31. Indeed, mentoring and role modelling repeatedly appeared in the literature as an effective way to encourage people of all ethnicities, both men and women, to consider employment outside gender-based stereotypes; for example, mentoring and role modelling is seen as important in encouraging men to enter female-dominated professions, such as early years work or nursing[73] [74]. A report from Europe found that events which are designed to encourage atypical choices amongst boys and girls are typically used in countries with the longest traditions of 'desegregation' policies (that is, seeking to end gender 'segregation' in the work choices of men and women). These events initially encouraged mostly girls to enter male areas of work. However recent initiatives also encourage boys to enter female areas of work, like teaching or caring[75].

---

[71] Turkman (2019) *Triple glazed ceiling – barriers to BAME women participating in the economy,* Chwarae Teg.
[72] Engeli, Burgess and James (2018) *Men's perceptions of gender equality,* Wavehill Ltd.
[73] https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Men-in-Early-Years-Seminar-26.09.19-Alison-Malcolm.pdf
[74] Clifton, Crooks, Higman (2020) *Exploring the Recruitment of Men into the Nursing Profession,* JAN Learning Global Nursing Research.
[75] Bettio, Verashchagina (2009) *Gender segregation in the labour market Root causes, implications and policy responses,* EU European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment.

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

Support networks

3.32. The benefits of gender-segregated support networks for those who are just entering, or are already in, a profession where their gender is in the minority are also important. This may be via single-gender training, or establishing single gender networks or buddy systems, or mentoring once in work or training[76]. Knowing that these supports exist may help people to consider professions dominated by the opposite sex.

3.33. Employers also need to be willing to challenge any discrimination or harassment that their staff face due to their gender. As well as zero tolerance approaches to sexual harassment, which will predominantly affect women, other support will be needed where people find their status diminished compared to their majority gender colleagues; for example, men working in childcare can find that parents object to them carrying out personal care on their children. Managers need to support their male staff in these instances to ensure that their status next to women early years workers is not diminished[77].

3.34. Men entering female-dominated professions may fear shame about what others think of them[78]. In this way, men entering female-dominated professions may suffer from a societal judgement that males 'trade down' to take on 'female' roles whereas women benefit from 'trading up' to take on 'male' roles. The fact that male-dominated roles tend to pay better than female-dominated roles means that this fear is given weight by the financial recompense given to 'masculine' versus 'feminine' work. While men make up around 11 per cent of the nursing workforce[79] and 3 per cent of the early

---

[76] https://epa.tquk.org/how-to-encourage-more-female-apprenticeships-in-stem-sectors/
[76] https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Men-in-Early-Years-Seminar-26.09.19-Alison-Malcolm.pdf; https://epa.tquk.org/how-to-encourage-more-female-apprenticeships-in-stem-sector; Clifton, Crooks, Higman (2020) *Exploring the Recruitment of Men into the Nursing Profession,* JAN Learning Global Nursing Research.
[77] https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Men-in-Early-Years-Seminar-26.09.19-Alison-Malcolm.pdf ; https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/parents-uncomfortable-with-male-practitioners-changing-their-child-s-nappy
[78] https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Men-in-Early-Years-Seminar-26.09.19-Alison-Malcolm.pdf
[79] https://www.rcn.org.uk/congress/what-happened-at-congress-2019/Male-nurses

years' workforce[80], women make up a higher proportion of STEM careers, at 26 per cent[81]. There may be deeper rooted cultural and practical challenges to encouraging men into female dominated roles than vice versa.

Challenging occupational segregation in apprenticeships

3.35. Apprenticeships are also affected by occupational segregation with ~~which leads to~~ male apprentices earning a higher hourly rate than female apprentices[82]. This apprenticeship gender pay gap largely reflects differences in the sectors in which men and women undertake apprenticeships.

3.36. In order to tackle occupational segregation in apprenticeships, case studies included in a good practice toolkit by the Learning and Work Institute[83] ~~through~~ provide real life examples of the suggested strategies to ~~as regards~~ address ~~ing~~ this such as: ~~Good practice examples include:~~

- targeting outreach at women and girls;
- using female apprentices as role models in outreach work;
- providing pastoral support for apprentices in professions where they are the minority gender; and
- offering part-time and flexible working apprenticeships[84] [85].

3.37. However, it is worth noting that, while Union Learn[86] and the Learning and Work Institute both title their publications as addressing gender equality, they both only address women entering male-dominated professions. This may reflect and also encourage an attitude of 'trading up' to male-dominated professions that subtly reinforces the idea that female-dominated professions are 'low status'. This may add to the discouragement of men entering female-dominated professions. In seeking to challenge gender stereotyping,

---

[80] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/calls-for-more-men-to-work-in-the-early-years

[81] https://www.stemwomen.co.uk/blog/2021/01/women-in-stem-percentages-of-women-in-stem-statistics

[82] Male apprentices in 2017 earned an average £7.25 per hour, while female apprentices earned £6.67 - from Union Learn (TUC) (2018) *Tackling Apprenticeship gender inequality.*

[83] http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk/gender-3/

[84] ~~Union Learn (TUC) 2018 *Tackling Apprenticeship gender inequality.*~~

[85] ~~http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk/gender-3/~~

[86] Union Learn (TUC) 2018 *Tackling Apprenticeship gender inequality.*

Commented [HH(-W9]: Highlighted by? Rather than leads to?

Commented [HP10R9]: Wording changed.

Commented [HH(-W11]: Not sure what this means?

Commented [HP12R11]: I've changed the wording to try to make this clearer. The case studies reflect real life examples of the strategies outlined above in the report, in terms of how to address occupational segregation.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 1.25 cm, Hanging: 0.5 cm

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 1.25 cm, Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 2 cm + Indent at: 3.27 cm

employment support initiatives should be careful not to unconsciously encourage a bias against female-dominated professions as being 'low status'.

Respecting and challenging people's aspirations

~~3.37.~~3.38.   It should also be noted that there are tensions between taking a person-centred approach to employment support which reflects (and respects) people's aspirations' to, for example, ~~where people may wish to~~ seek work typically associated with their sex, ~~if there is also~~and a desire to challenge people's expectations of going into work that is typically associated with their sex. ~~and also seeking to challenge employment opportunities that people wish to pursue that are dominated by their own gender.~~ A~~s a~~ report on work experiences for school-aged young people ~~stated that the~~identified, a 'freedom of choice' model may exacerbate existing inequalities[87]. This may be the same for employment support work, as not all communities will have the same experiences or expectations of gender equality.   However, this poses particular challenges for employment support projects, which have limited time for working with participants who may have established ideas about themselves and work expectations.   Any approach should focus more on broadening people's horizons about employment possibilities, rather than 'challenging' them.

> **Commented [HH(-W13]:** Unsure what this sentence is saying
>
> **Commented [HP14R13]:** Thanks, I have amended the wording to try to make the meaning clearer.

Summary of what works

~~3.38.~~3.39.   The research reviewed suggests that employment support agencies need to work with employers to reach out to participants to encourage them to consider roles which are not typical for their gender. This includes working with employers to engage in outreach, including employee/ apprentice role models of the gender they wish to attract and ensuring there is support in place for minority gender employees, such as mentoring, single-sex networks and managerial support and encouragement where gender-based prejudices and harassment arise. Participants should be made aware of this support at outreach events.

---

[87] Francis, Osgood, Dalgety and Archer (2005) *Gender Equality in work experience placements for young people,* Equal Opportunities Committee.

3.39.3.40.   Finally, while social and cultural norms can be difficult to change, these are not the only causes of occupational segregation and one of the key ways to overcome gender-based obstacles to employment is to ensure that caring responsibilities, which fall overwhelmingly on women, or the cost of caring responsibilities, and the challenge of overcoming the practical and psychological barriers[88] which fall predominantly on women, do not form obstacles to education, training or employment.

---

[88] In two-income households, the cost of childcare is often associated solely with the woman's wage, rather than being seen as a household cost, so that it is seen as 'not worth it' for a woman to return to work if childcare takes up too high a proportion of 'her' salary. Although the household can afford the childcare costs, the psychological barrier of framing childcare costs in this way can act as a barrier to returning to work for women, and can have longer term implications for the woman's financial security and wealth.

4. Findings: ~~progress on~~project performance in ~~engagements~~ engaging participants

Introduction

~~4.1.~~ This section reports on the project's performance in relation to engagements in each beneficiary area and in relation to economically inactive (EI) and long term unemployed (LTU) participants, pre- and post- lockdown. ~~Describing performance and qualitative insights into how and why engagements were met or not, are addressed in section 5. Data relating to engagements around characteristics of participants (e.g. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, older people and disabled people) are summarised in section 8, to provide context to the CCTs.~~

~~4.2.~~4.1. Table 2 below ~~shows~~ outlines the project's engagement targets for April 2021 which this section reports upon and the project's final targets for December 2022.

Table 2. Project engagement targets for April 2021 (current target) and December 2022 (final target).

	Apr '21 No.	Dec'22 No.
Economically Inactive participants aged 25 and over	757	1033
Long Term Unemployed participants aged 25 and over	576	770
Total	1,333	1,803

Source: Journey to Work Business plan re-evaluation (2022)

4.2. Section 5 discusses how and why engagements targets were achieved while section 8, which discusses actions to address the CCT, considers the project's success in recruiting different groups of participants, such as people from back, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, older people and disabled people.

Performance against engagement targets

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Recent progress

4.3.   Overall, the project is struggling ~~a little~~ somewhat to engage enough
participants, although it is faring better in terms of engaging LTU participants.
Since the start of the project in November 2017 to its (cumulative) target in
April 2021 the project overall has engaged:

- 71 per cent of **all** participants;
- 60 per cent of **EI** participants; and
- 85 per cent of **LTU** participants.

Pre- COVID-19 progress

4.4.   Recent progress is in marked contrast to progress ~~the~~ pre- COVID-19
~~progress~~ (January 2020) when, overall, the project was on target (104 per
cent), although at this time engagement of EI participants was a little under
target (90 per cent). As would be expected, the COVID-19 pandemic had a
considerable impact on engagements with a 33 per cent decrease in
engagements (from January 2020 to April 2021).

Progress of beneficiaries

4.5.   Graph 1 shows cumulative engagements by April 2021 (during the COVID-19
pandemic period) and in January 2020 (pre ~~COVID-19~~pandemic) in all three
beneficiary areas. It illustrates key patterns that include:

- pre-pandemic, ~~COVID-19~~ EI participant engagement levels were just a
little under target in all three areas (around 90 per cent). By April 2021
(following the COVID-19 pandemic) engagements had fallen by at least a
quarter in all areas.
- pre- COVID-19 pandemic ~~COVID-19~~ LTU participant engagement levels in
Newport and Cardiff were strong and were just a little under target in
Monmouthshire. ~~By~~ However, by April 2021, engagements had fallen
dramatically in Newport and considerably in Cardiff. In contrast, in
Monmouthshire ~~it had actually risen~~they rose by 14 per cent.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Graph 1. Percentage of EI and LTU engagements achieved in relation to the target in January 2020 (pre COVID-19) and April 2021 (cumulative)
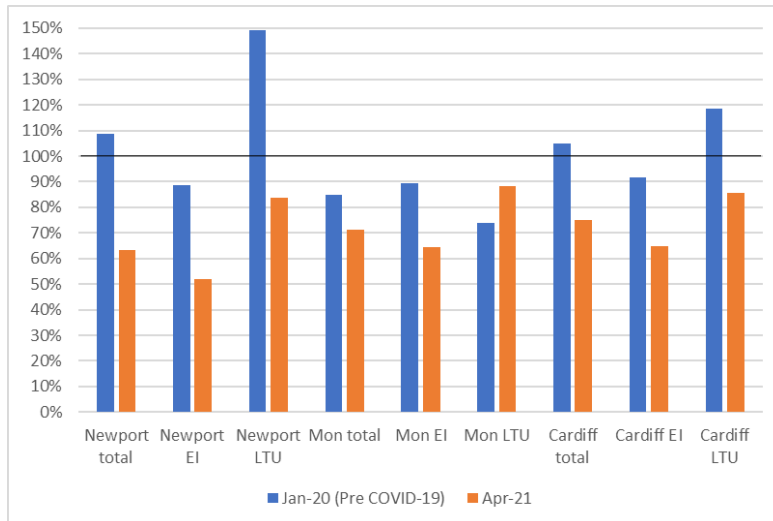
Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance Jan 2020 and April 2021

4.6.   To a certain extent, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic COVID-19 upon performance in Newport and Cardiff have been softened because they have been able to rely on a 'cushion' created by their strong performance pre-COVID-19, particularly in relation to engagements of LTU participants. This means that, despite the sharp fall in engagements due to the COVID-19 pandemicCOVID-19, performance measured in terms of cumulative engagement has not been as badly affected as might have been expected. In contrast, while the decline in the number of EI participant engagements has been smaller, because pre- COVID-19 engagements were lower and the project was below target, the impact upon performance, measured in terms of cumulative engagement, has been greater.

4.7.   While Monmouthshire has managed to increase engagements of LTU participants, the impact of this upon overall project performance has been modest, because Monmouthshire only accounts for around 10 per cent of all engagement targets.

43

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

5. Findings: explanations of progress on engagements

Introduction

5.1.   This section draws on qualitative data, primarily from interviews with participants and staff, to evaluate project implementation and to consider the story behind the project's performance in terms of engagement, discussed in section 4 (i.e. how and why engagement targets were, or were not, met). Understanding reasons for the levels of engagement is important as it has a direct correlation to the outcomes for the project and its contribution to the CTTs, such as success engaging participants with different characteristics.

Overview of key engagement patterns

5.2.   Feedback from staff indicated that staff capacity was a key factor that helped explain MHA's performance in relation to participant engagements. As outlined in section 4, in contrast to Newport and Cardiff, Monmouthshire had improved its LTU engagement performance between January 2020 and April 2021. Staff suggested this could be attributed to changes in personnel and the need for staff to cover staff maternity leave, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic period, which reduced capacity and slowed progress. The consequent stability of the staff team after this difficult period helped counter the negative impact of the pandemic and policy responses (e.g. lockdown) upon engagements. In addition, during the pandemic, it was reported that MHA tenants often had more time on their hands and were more receptive to communication regarding the project.

5.3.   Feedback from staff indicated that referrals from partners was a key factor that helped explain NCC's and CCC's performance in relation to participant engagements. It was reported that they performed better in terms of LTU engagements than EI engagements, (especially pre pandemic) because they relied more on referrals from organisations such as the DWP, which tended to refer more LTU people. Moreover, CCC and, more recently, NCC had local

authority-wide hubs and services on which they could draw for EI and LTU participant engagements, discussed further below (see para 5.5).

5.4.   Overall, EI participants were reported by staff to be more difficult to recruit because they were less likely than LTU people to be referred from Job Centre Plus (JCP) and there is greater reliance upon recruitment via community engagement and 'word of mouth', which can be more difficult and more resource intensive than referral from a partner such as JCP. Moreover, as outlined in the literature review in section 3, EI people can face significant dispositional and attitudinal barriers to seeking employment or entering education or training, making them a more challenging group to recruit directly (rather than recruiting via a referral partner).

Referral Pathways across the three areas[89]

5.5.   In addition to referrals from JCP, referrals from council services and, in particular, the Cardiff[90] and Newport[91] Hubs ('one stop shops' for advice and access to services) were important in NCC and CCC. The hub system in Cardiff and Newport meant that, outside lockdown periods, the project was guaranteed a certain amount of contact with potential participants throughout the local authority area; for example, there were up to twelve voluntary services in Newport that could be accessed under the same roof[92] that, pre-pandemic, helped guarantee a consistent level of footfall in the hub[93]. In addition, it was reported by interviewees that the project staff could readily refer to other services and projects within the council, with which other projects had fewer associations.

---

[89]How is the regional operation progressing against approved targets? Were there any differences in results and practices between different populations? What are the reasons for this?
[90] There are 19 hubs (7 of these are small satellite ones) across Cardiff and 5 J2W mentors across the city covering the West, South, Central, North and the Star area (Splott, Tremorfa, Adamsdown and Roath).
[91] Four hubs covering Central, East, North, and West Newport.
[92] Communities for Work, Communities for Work+, Journey to Work, Inspire to Work, Skills@Work, Family Intervention, Family First, Flying Start, Youth Service, Youth Academy, Legacy (Community Development, libraries (Journey to Work Progress Report, January 2020).
[93] The number of people entering a place or area in a given time.

45

Commented [HH(-W17]: Is this a finding from your current qual analysis?

Commented [RB18R17]: Good question, this is referring to the literature review, I've added 'literature review' to the sentence to make it clearer.

5.6.   There were also examples of 'word of mouth' recruitment, with friends or family members who had been helped by the project telling others. This, along with the location of the hubs in areas of with larger numbers of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups was reported by staff to be particularly effective in recruiting people form these groups; which is discussed further in section 8.

5.7.   The referrals route in Cardiff was reported to be particularly strong, as it was able to build upon the established Into Work Advice Service and the associated Job Club team[94] that referred participants. In addition, as the project progressed in Cardiff, participants from the council's adult learning programme were being automatically referred. In NCC beyond the hubs, other projects supported by NCC, such as The Lighthouse Project (in partnership with Taff Housing Association), had also referred participants, but the numbers referred were smaller. Referral processes remained largely the same following the pandemic, however, the number of referrals reducedfell considerably (see para 5.13 and 5.14) and communications with participants reliedmoved to on phone and online contact notrather than face to face contact.

> **Commented [HH(-W19]:** Was there a difference in referral processes pre- and post-Covid?
>
> **Commented [RB20R19]:** Good question, points added

5.8.   MHA was more reliant upon in-house referrals from its own clients and to a lesser extent on JCP referrals (compared to the other areas). To help with recruitment during the pandemic, a job portal was developed on their Facebook group and bite size 'Wednesday's work' videos were available, that provided advice on applying for jobs and also encouraged people to contact MHA for further support, which could potentially result in further engagements.

> **Commented [HH(-W21]:** Is there participant drop out? If so, why?
>
> **Commented [RB22R21]:** Good question. This is purely regarding trying to engage more people - so I've clarified this. The drop out is mixed, not as much anticipated for EI in Monmouth but higher than anticipated for LTU.

Competition from other projects

5.9.   Overall, staff interviewed as part of the evaluation, felt that competition from other projects did not the hamper project recruitment and offer of support was not hampered by other projects and this aided the recruitment process. This is supported by the project's strong performance, in terms of engagements,

> **Commented [HH(-W23]:** Evidence should be provided to support statements where possible
>
> **Commented [DH24R23]:** Agreed - detail added

---

[94] Which refers from 45 different areas in Cardiff.

before the COVID-19 ~~performance~~ pandemic ~~(in terms of engagement) which~~ (see graph 1)~~,~~ ~~indicated~~ indicating that there was sufficient demand for support from the project.

5.10.   No reference was made by staff and participants to competition from projects that were not ESF funded and direct support by JCP staff was reported by participants to be 'light touch' compared to that provided by the project. Moreover, as outlined in the inception report, the project complements other programmes delivered by the beneficiaries; for example Skills@Work, active in all three local authorities, focused upon upskilling those already in employment and there were examples of participants who gained entry level employment through Journey 2 Work who went on to access Skills@Work.

5.11.   Desk research showed that a~~A~~lthough there is competition from other ESF projects that help people gain employment, the project had the advantage of either covering a wider geographic area or appealing to a wider client group; for example:

- Communities for Work is only active in (former) Communities First areas;
- the ACE project targets people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;
- ReAct3 targets those at risk of being made redundant or who have been made redundant[95];
- PaCE targets parents; and
- projects funded by the Active Inclusion Fund targets those with complex needs.

5.12.   Moreover, as staff commented while J2W might 'compete' with other projects in terms of referral from JCP, J2W did not have to compete with other non-local authority projects, such as the ACE project, and projects funded by the

---

[95] J2W has only worked with 35 participants (4 per cent of total) who have been impacted by redundancy (April 2021).

Pobl&
Gwaith | **People**
&Work

Active Inclusion Fund (AIF) for referrals via council hubs in Newport and Cardiff.

Challenges of referrals and engagements

5.13. Engagements fell in early 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. As expected, they fell particularly sharply during the national and local lockdowns. Access was closed and / or restricted to local authority hubs and services and to JCP offices during this period, limiting engagements. J2W staff reported that they kept trying to 'get the word out' that they were still active, as many people assumed they were closed throughout the whole period. In Cardiff, staff reported making links with the local community, including schools and housing associations, as well as charities, to maintain referrals and more recently the project was attempting to work in partnership with employment unions.

5.14. However, there were also factors which the project had some form of control over, which hampered engagements, such as:

- restrictions on the use of social media to advertise the project following issues[96] in Newport, and there had been issues with adequatedisappointingly low numbers of referrals from third parties, although this the latter had improved over time, as the a result of work with partners to clarify and raise awareness of the project's eligibility criteria; and

- some participants disengaging from the process due to delays from participant referral to the participant being signed up.

---

[96] To ensure all posts are appropriate and comply with NCC policies, all social media posts are organised centrally. This made the online advertising less responsive than when it was devolved to the project team, as it was at the start of the project.

6. Findings: performance against outcomes

Introduction

6.1. This section reports on the project's performance against outcomes in each beneficiary area and in relation to economically inactive (EI) and long term unemployed (LTU) participants. Like section 4, it focuses upon describing performance. Table 3 below shows the project's outcome targets for April 2021 which this section reports upon and the project's final targets for December 2022.

Table 3. Project outcome targets for April 2021 (current target) and December 2022 (final target)

Economically Inactive participants	Apr '21	Dec'22
Entering employment upon leaving (including self-employed)	124	183
Engaging in job search	314	482
Gaining a qualification or work related certification upon leaving	258	411
Completing work experience placement or volunteering opportunity	169	252
Gaining employment six months after leaving	27	55
Long Term Unemployed participants	**Apr '21**	**Dec'22**
Entering employment upon leaving (including self-employed)	113	174
Gaining a qualification or work related certification upon leaving	221	354
Completing work experience placement or volunteering opportunity	127	181
Gaining employment six months after leaving	31	62

Source: Journey to Work Business plan re-evaluation (2022)

**Pobl &
Gwaith** | **People
& Work**

6.1.6.2.   Qualitative insights into how and why engagements were met or not, are addressed in section 7, while outcomes for different groups (such as participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities) are discussed in section 8, to provide context to the CCT.

Performance against employment targets

6.3.   The key focus of the project is to support people into employment and the project is performing strongly in this area. It is encouraging that more participants than expected have remained in employment six months after starting work. However, overall, progress has been weaker in relation to other outcomes.

Pre- pandemic progress

6.4.   During the pre- COVID-19 period (November 2017-January 2020) the project was over performing in relation to its target for **EI** participants (172 per cent) and **LTU** participants (147 per cent) entering employment upon leaving the project.

Progress to date

6.5.   Since the start of the project in November 2017, to its (cumulative) target in April 2021, the project as a whole has achieved:

- 120 per cent of its employment target amongst **EI** participants;
- 112 per cent of its employment target amongst **LTU** participants;
- 144 per cent of its employment target **six months upon leaving** amongst **EI** participants; and
- 139 per cent of its employment target **six months upon leaving** amongst LTU participants.

6.6.   The very strong pre-pandemic performance meant that when, as expected, the proportion of LTU and EI entering employment upon exit fell during the period when COVID-19 restrictions were in full force, the project continued to out-perform its targets. Moreover, since the pandemic started in early 2020,

there has been no decline in the numbers of (formerly) **EI** participants in employment six months upon leaving for participants and the numbers of (formerly) LTU participants, there was an actual increase (45 per cent increase).

Progress of beneficiaries

6.7.   Graph 2 shows cumulative employment outcomes in April 2021 (during the pandemic) and in January 2020 (pre pandemic) in all three beneficiary areas. It illustrates that by April 2021, with the exception of employment outcomes for LTU participants in Monmouthshire, employment outcomes continue to exceed targets. It also shows that:

- pre- COVID-19, performance in Newport was exceptionally strong for both **EI** and **LTU** participants. However, they fell sharply from early 2020. This may reflect the particularly severe impacts of the pandemic upon employment in Newport compared to other areas[97].
- pre- COVID-19 pandemic performance in Cardiff was strong for both **EI** and **LTU** participants, and the fall in performance in Cardiff was considerably smaller from early 2020, compared to Newport. This may reflect the more modest economic impact of COVID-19 upon Cardiff.
- pre- COVID-19 pandemic performance in Monmouthshire was strong for **EI** but weak for **LTU** participants, and while both increased somewhat by April 2021, outcomes for **LTU** participants remained below target.

---

[97] See e.g. McCurdy, (2020). From-locking-down-to-levelling-up.pdf (resolutionfoundation.org)

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Graph 2. Percentage of EI and LTU employment <u>upon leaving</u> achieved in relation to the target in Jan 2020 (pre COVID-19) and April 2021 (cumulative)
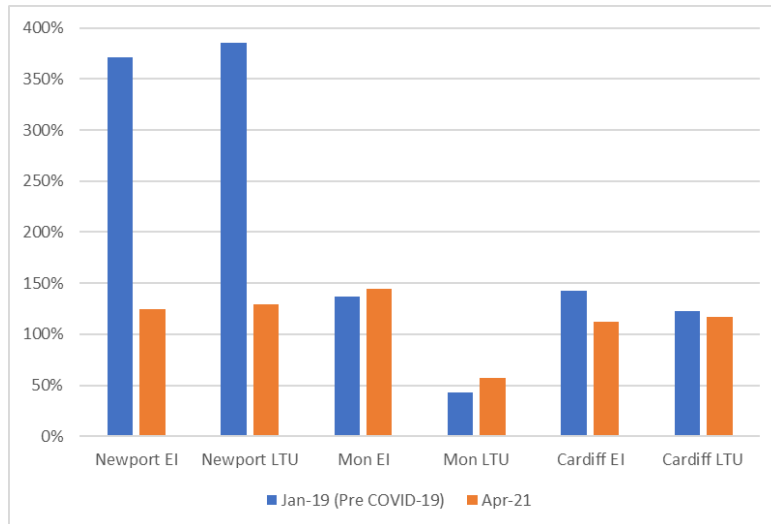
Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance January 2020 and April 2021

6.8. Graph 3 shows cumulative employment outcomes **six months upon leaving** in April 2021 (COVID-19 period) and in Jan 2020 (pre- COVID-19) in all three beneficiary areas. It shows that:

- pre- COVID-19 pandemic performance in Newport was very strong for **EI** and on target for **LTU** participants. However, they both fell sharply from early 2020 resulting in them being under target.
- pre- COVID-19 pandemic performance in Monmouthshire was very strong for both **EI** and **LTU** participants, but fell sharply by April 2021, which resulted in Monmouthshire being under target (especially for LTU participants).
- pre- COVID-19 pandemic performance in Cardiff was strong for **EI** participants, but weaker for **LTU** participants. However, both grew considerably by April 2021.

Pobl& People
Gwaith &Work

Graph 3. Percentage of EI and LTU employment achieved <u>six months upon</u>
<u>leaving</u> in relation to the target in Jan 2020 (pre- COVID-19) and April 2021
(cumulative)

Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance Jan 2020 and April 2021

Performance against qualification targets

Pre- COVID-19 pandemic progress

6.9.   Progress was far stronger pre- pandemic, with outcomes for LTU participants roughly on target (92 per cent) and outcomes for EI participants not far from the target at 70 per cent.

Recent progress

6.10. However, qualification outcomes, for LTU and EI participants fell following the pandemic (indicating its impact) and the project is therefore struggling to meet its qualification targets, particularly for EI participants. Since the start of the project in November 2017 to its target in April 2021 (cumulative) the project as a whole (all beneficiaries) has achieved:

- 47 per cent of its qualification target amongst EI participants[98]; and

- 67 per cent of its qualification target amongst LTU participants[99][100].

Progress of beneficiaries

6.11. Graph 4 shows cumulative qualification outcomes in April 2021 (the COVID-19 pandemic period) and in January 2020 (pre-pandemic) in all three beneficiary areas. It shows that:

- pre-pandemic, outcomes for **EI** and **LTU** participants were very strong in Newport, and whilst they dropped in early 2020, this provided a cushion, and they are not far off the target; and

- pre-pandemic, outcomes for **EI** and **LTU** participants were disappointing in Monmouthshire and have fallen further since early 2020;

- pre pandemic, outcomes for **EI** and **LTU** participants were also disappointing in Cardiff and have fallen further since early 2020; and

- although both remain below target, outcomes for **EI** participants were stronger in Monmouthshire, while outcomes for **LTU** participants were stronger in Cardiff.

---

[98] 55 per cent at level 2, 41 per cent and level 3 and 5 per cent level 1 or below.
[99] 46 per cent at level 2, 38 per cent and level 3 and 16 per cent level 1 or below.
[100] 46 per cent at level 2, 38 per cent and level 3 and 16 per cent level 1 or below.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Graph 4. Percentage of EI and LTU employment achieved qualifications in relation to the target in January 2020 (pre- COVID-19) and April 2021 (cumulative)
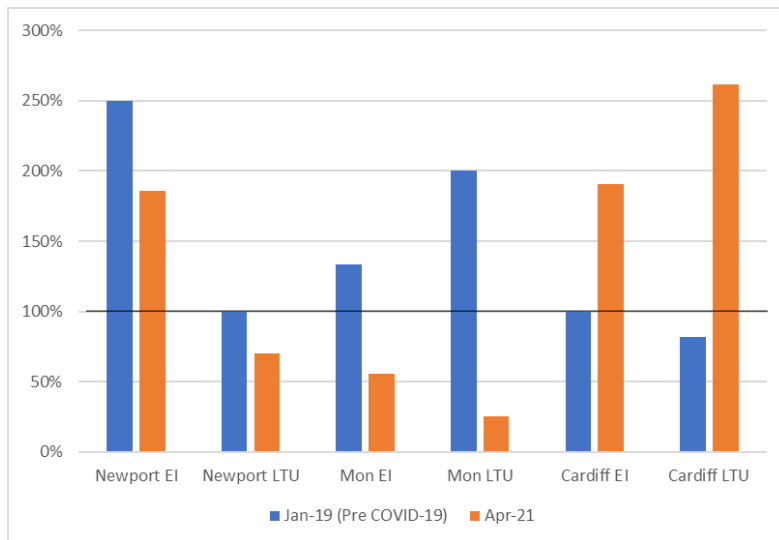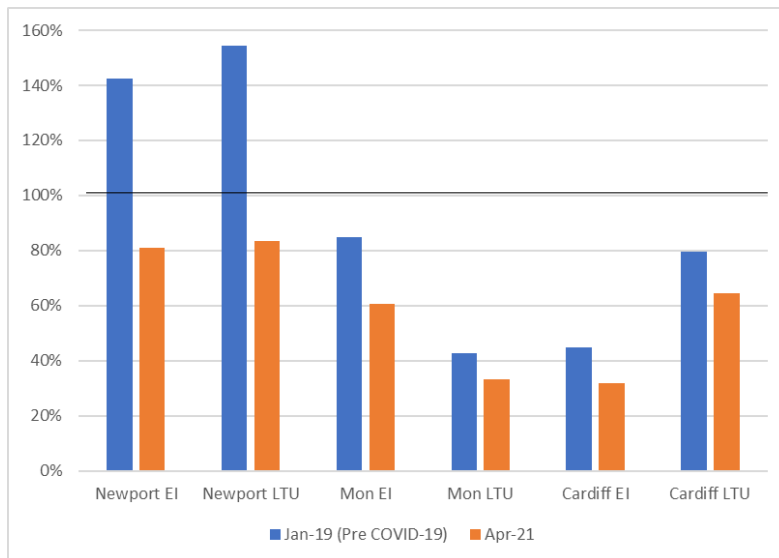

Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance January 2020 and April 2021

Performance against work experience targets

6.12.   The project aimed to provide work experience opportunities. Interviews with staff and participants highlighted examples of this, such as administrative tasks within local authority departments and helping with various charities, such as separating materials in a recycling centre. However, there was no readily available list of all the types of work experience and volunteering opportunities accessed.

Pre-pandemic progress

6.12.6.13.   Progress was fair before the pandemic, with the project achieving around half the target for EI participants and 70 per cent of the target for LTU participants.

Pobl &
Gwaith
People
& Work

Recent progress

6.13.6.14.   Performance feel sharpy following the pandemic (indicting its impact) and the project is struggling to meet its work experience targets for EI and LTU participants**.** Since the start of the project in November 2017, to its target in April 2021 (cumulative), the project as a whole (all beneficiaries) has achieved:

- 33 per cent of its work experience target amongst EI participants; and
- 46 per cent of its work experience target amongst LTU participants.

Progress of beneficiaries

6.14.6.15.   Graph 5 shows cumulative work experience outcomes in April 2021 (COVID-19 period) and in January 2020 (pre- COVID-19) in all three beneficiary areas. It illustrates that all beneficiaries are currently struggling to meet their targets, although Newport is faring better. Key patterns include:

- apart from LTU participants in Newport, the project was below target prior to COVID-19; and
- Monmouthshire LTU participants and Cardiff EI participants are considerably under target (under 20 per cent) in April 2021.

57

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Graph 5. Percentage of EI and LTU employment achieved work experience placements in relation to the target in January 2020 (pre- COVID-19) and April 2021 (cumulative)
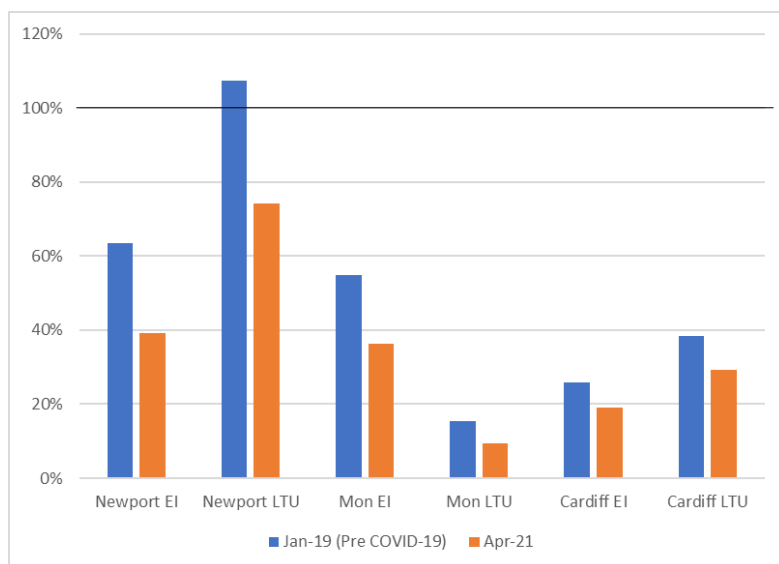
Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance January 2020 and April 2021

Performance against job search outcomes

Recent and pre- COVID-19 progress

6.15.6.16.   The project is struggling to meet its job search targets**.** Since the start of the project in November 2017, to its target in April 2021 (cumulative), the project (all beneficiaries) has achieved 46 per cent of job search targets amongst EI participants[101]. Furthermore, it struggled pre-pandemic, only engaging about half the target number.

Progress of beneficiaries

6.16.6.17.   Graph 6 shows cumulative job search outcomes in January 2020 (pre-COVID-19) and in April 2021 (COVID-19 period) in all three beneficiary areas. It shows that:

Commented [HH(-W32]: What about LTU participants?

Commented [RB33R32]: Good question, job search isn't a target for LTU participants but all the other targets are the same.

Commented [HH(-W34]: Job search?

Commented [RB35R34]: Well spotted, thanks - amended

---

[101] This is not an expected outcome for LTU participants.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

- pre-pandemic, job search outcomes for participants were very strong in Newport, but weak in Cardiff and Monmouthshire; and
- by April 2021, all three areas were currently struggling to meet their targets.

Graph 6. Percentage of EI engaged in job search in relation to the target in Jan 2020 (pre COVID-19) and April 2021 (cumulative)
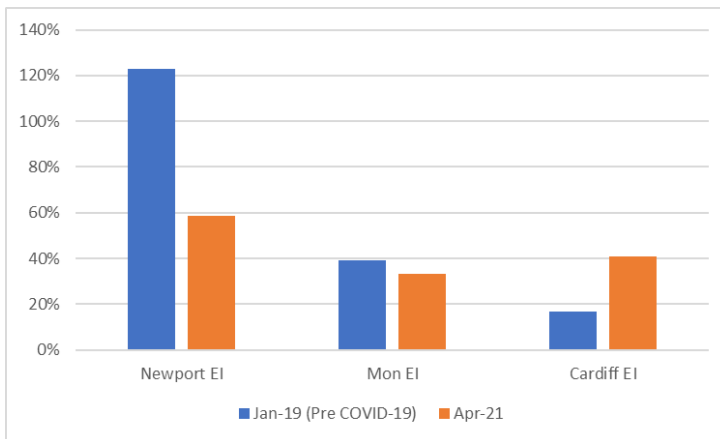
Source: NCC summary of cumulative performance January 2020 and April 2021

59

Pobl&　People
Gwaith　&Work

7. Findings: explanations of progress on outcomes, barriers to employment

Introduction

7.1.   This section draws on views of participants and staff interviewed for the evaluation, upon the outcomes observed, in terms of how the project was implemented and how and why observed outcomes were generated or not. It also considers patterns in the project's performance in relation to engagements and outcomes (discussed in section four and six) which are likely to influence the progress on outcomes.

7.2.   This section also includes reporting on the project's strengths and challenges in terms of the project's delivery model that includes:

- location (point of contact);
- assessment;
- mentoring;
- other types of support; and
- monitoring and management.

Comparison is made with other projects to provide context to its strengths and weaknesses.

7.3.   In addition, it reports on the barriers to employment that participants faced, and additional outcomes as identified by staff and participants.

Overview of key outcome patterns
Employment outcomes

7.4.   As highlighted by staff and the pattern in graph 2, employment outcomes have remained strong, mainly because, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, employment outcomes were very strong, especially in Newport and, to a

lesser degree, Cardiff, which provided a cushion for a weaker performance during the COVID-19 period in Newport and Cardiff.

7.5.   Monmouthshire, which is smaller LA in terms of population, had lower outcome targets than the other two areas. This reduced the impact of weak pre- COVID-19 performance in Monmouthshire upon the project as a whole. Monmouthshire was also unusual because, unlike Newport and Cardiff, employment outcomes improved during the COVID-19 period. In regard to LTU participants in Monmouthshire, the data shows the improvement is likely to linked to the improvement in engagements (as shown in graph 1).

> **Commented [HH(-W36]:** If this is not based on your qual findings, should it be presented in the section above?
>
> **Commented [RB37R36]:** Good question, we think its better to keep the possible explanations (interviews (qual) and related data patterns) in one section as it could get confusing if we attribute reasons when reporting on outcomes and then again in the following section. However, as you say the source of the data needs to be clearer so we've added this in.

7.6.   Given the weaker than planned performance in terms of engagements (see graph 1) the stronger than planned performance in terms of employment outcomes means that the project has a higher conversion rate from engagements to employment than was originally anticipated (28 per cent of participants gained employment). This suggests that the support from the project is effective and that, if the effects of COVID-19 decrease over time, returning to somewhere near 'normal', the project should consider increasing its employment targets.

Employment after six months

7.7.   As graph 3 illustrates, performance in relation to the proportion of EI and LTU participants still in employment six months after entering employment was very mixed across the three areas and across EI and LTU participant groups. Performance in relation to the proportion of EI participants still in employment six months after entering employment have remained strong in Newport, but fell in relation to LTU participants. In Monmouthshire there was a sharp fall for both EI and LTU participants during the COVID-19 period. Staff interviewed as part of the evaluation suggested this may be because during the pandemic the type of employment they were gaining was more likely to be unsustainable.

7.8.   Conversely, performance in relation to the proportion of EI and LTU participants still in employment six months after entering employment has

increased since the pandemic in Cardiff. This was attributed by staff interviewed as part of the evaluation, to the strong employment outcomes (see graph 2), which were sustained. This is consistent with the quantitative data.

7.8.   strong employment outcomes (see graph 2) which then turned into the six month employment outcomes over time.

7.9.   Therefore, the data indicates, if performance in relation to employment outcomes remains strong, it will be reasonable to assume that, over time, this would filter throughtranslate into employment outcomes six months after entering employment remaining strong.

Qualifications

7.10. The weak overall performance in relation to the qualification targets, particularly for EI participants, reflected a number of factors, including:

- the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with staff reporting that training providers and also some participants were less active, especially during the first lockdown, combined with an overall fall in engagements in this period, and;
- to a lesser extent, a lower than expected need for participants to gain qualifications in order to enter employment, with interviews with participants highlighting how some only needed help with job search type skills to gain employment, and therefore did not access the qualification opportunities.

Work experience

7.11. As outlined in section 6, there was a similarly weak overall performance in relation to the work experience placements target, particularly post pandemic. The reasons for this echo the reasons, reported by staff interviewed as part of the evaluation, why overall performance in relation to qualifications targets were weak, most notably with the restricted or closed access to work placement opportunities due to COVID-19.

Commented [HH(-W38]: Is any part of this section based on qual data or speculation based on the quant findings?

Commented [RB39R38]: Good question, we've made it clearer now which parts are based on interviews (qual) and data patterns. We believe the assumptions made here (and elsewhere in the section) in regard to the data patterns are worth making and the links reasonable to assume (e.g. high employment outcomes are likely to translate into higher employment outcomes after 6 months, higher engagements translate to higher employment outcomes).

Commented [HH(-W40]: What level of qualifications are participants obtaining through the support?

Commented [RB41R40]: Good point, added into section six (para 6.11)

Commented [HH(-W42]: What is the source of this information?

Commented [RB43R42]: Thanks, confirmed

7.12. However, there were also reported by staff interviewed as part of the evaluation, to be issues in sourcing work placements ~~prior~~prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, due to lack of partnership work with organisations outside the Cardiff and Newport local authorities and the additional administrative tasks needed to access work experience in organisations outside these authorities. Although internal opportunities were being used, staff highlighted the need to secure more work placement opportunities with partners and expand the number of work placements within the beneficiary organisations[102].

> **Commented [HH(-W44]:** Why?
>
> **Commented [RB45R44]:** Good point, added.

> **Commented [HH(-W46]:** What type of work or volunteering opportunities were participants accessing?
>
> **Commented [RB47R46]:** Good point, added into section six.

Job search

7.13. As outlined in section 6, there was a similarly weak overall performance in relation to job search targets. This was weak in Monmouthshire and Cardiff pre-pandemic and worsened post-pandemic. This reflected the strength of performance in relation to employment outcomes (with participants entering employment rather than exiting with increased job search activity). Feedback from staff highlighted their frustration that they could not claim a job search outcome for a participant who gained employment and requested whether this rule could be changed.

Strengths of and challenges for delivery and support

Locations

7.14. The project uses council buildings in Cardiff and Newport. Staff reported that the project may in some cases benefit from more of a traditional community-based approach where staff engage and support participants in informal local settings, such as local parks and cafés. However, as reported by staff and participants council hubs were often convenient place to meet, given their high footfall. Feedback from participants highlighted that they were happy with where they met staff; for example, the library in Newport was reported to be a central location with good transport links and the various hubs in Cardiff were reported to be local to participants (often within walking distance).

---

[102] CCC employ around 13 thousand people in Cardiff and NCC employ around 5 thousand in Newport.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

7.15. During the COVID-19 lockdown periods communication was maintained mainly via phone (as preferred by most participants) and, to a lesser extent, online (see para 7.17). Staff reported problems in maintaining contact and the continued engagement of participants during lockdown.

Assessment

7.16. As a person-centred service, following enrolment and establishing eligibility, the project includes an assessment of participants' needs[103]. Staff reported concerns that the assessment process could be overly bureaucratic, with some suggesting the use of Star outcome tool could be curtailed. However, feedback from the participants about the process was positive, highlighting how staff made the process as 'smooth as possible' and contributed to the build-up of a trusted relationship between participants and staff; for example, comments included:

'He literally went through all that happened and what I could do now, and all the jobs I had done before. It was really good.' Participant.

'She asked a lot of questions, but I enjoyed it, it was like a nice chat.' Participant.

'[Staff] was great, very friendly, very approachable'. Participant.

7.17. Participants interviewed for the evaluation struggled to make recommendations to improve the assessment process, indicating overall satisfaction, although one participant did suggest that the enrolment form was not well suited to participants with high level qualifications and skills, as she felt the questions assumed people were seeking to enter low paid/low qualification level employment[104].

---

[103] i.e. Star assessment (measure baseline soft skills), participant action plan and participant contact record.
[104] e.g. Although high level qualifications, such as level 5, are recorded within the form, the list of 'possible areas of support' focuses upon basic type skills.

64

7.17. ~~although one participant did suggest that the enrolment form was not well suited to participants with high level qualifications and skills~~[105].

7.18. During lockdown, much of the assessment was done via phone and, to a lesser extent, online. This made it more challenging, especially for participants who struggled with IT. Feedback from participants indicated that they were satisfied with this process although, as would be expected, 'face to face' contact was preferred.

Mentoring and relationship building

7.19. Interviews with participants and staff highlighted that the project support catered to the bespoke needs of the participant. A key part of the support is the 'one to one' mentoring with staff which enables staff to build a trusted relationship with the participants that included informal and emotional support. This is crucial as it means that participants, especially those who had been disengaged from employment for a long time or who faced complex barriers, were more likely to engage and sustain their engagement in the project activities. The lockdown periods enhanced the need for this emotional support; for example:

'She always says that I can call her if I am feeling low and down and she is always, I always hear from her positive. When I talk with her it makes my day.' Participant.

'I spoke to her about personal stuff too and she helped and encouraged me. I was very low and depressed and she gave me encouragement.' Participant.

'Something that we have had a lot of in the past year is mental health – we have been providing a lot of emotional support over the phone. If people have been really isolated, so people speak to you, so we have been holistic in our

---

[105] ~~e.g. Although high level qualifications, such as level 5, are recorded within the form, the list of 'possible areas of support' focuses upon basic type skills.~~

Pobl &
Gwaith | People & Work

approach, yes we help people practically with their CV and so on, but we do the emotional support too.' Staff member.

7.20. Whilst this support was crucial, some staff raised concerns about needing to establish professional boundaries; for example, it ~~being~~ was reported to be important to emphasise that it was a working relationship and, while staff were friendly, they were not there to become participants' friends.

Other types of support

7.21. By and large, the project offered support to overcome the barriers that participants faced (see para 7.37). Staff and participants commented that t̶T̶hese ranged from straightforward support needs, such as help to access a common work-based course, to those with more complex needs in areas like emotional support, confidence building and/or more unusual training needs. Activities commonly included:

- Help with job applications, CVs and job searching skills; for example, to understand how to write an application, to know what employers are looking for and where and how to look for jobs. This was reported (by interviewees) as particularly helpful for participants who had previously lived outside the UK or who had not been engaged in employment for a long time; and
- access to and funding for a wide range of work-related courses and qualifications, such as teacher assistant training, food hygiene, ESOL and training to become a driving instructor (see further examples of courses in para 7.34).

To a lesser extent, activities included:

- volunteering and work placements, which participants (interviewed for the evaluation) reported finding useful in gaining soft skills, such as confidence and teamwork and which worked as 'tasters', helping their journey toward future employment;
- advice on overcoming barriers, such as advice around finances, child minding and housekeeping;
- signposting to other projects or support services often delivered by the council, as (post-triage) the staff developed a more in-depth understanding of participants' needs; and
- use of partners to develop specific employment skills; for example, in Monmouthshire, Business Wales supported business plans of those becoming self-employed.

67

Commented [HH(-W52]: Again, it would be good to have quant data on this, to see what percentage of participants accessed what type of support

Commented [RB53R52]: Good point, the project does not collect quant data on this. This is based on feedback from interviews. We could provide an indication of strength of feedback for the final report (based on interviews), but the number of interviews are not that large.

<div style="border:1px solid #000; background:#dbe6f0; padding:10px;">

Box 1.   **Gwen's journey**

Gwen (pseudo bot her real name) had negative experiences with other employment support type interventions in the past. She felt that they were only interested in pushing her into a job which she did not want to do so they could hit their outcomes targets. She reported that her experience with J2W was very different. As she put it, the J2W mentor did not 'push' her into anything. Step by step they provided support with different elements that would help her gain employment. Firstly, they would 'get to know her' and understand what she wanted to do. Following that they helped to develop her CV and her job searching skills before focusing on providing her with funding and a placement to do a qualification that she desired. Gaining the qualification was likely to lead to worthwhile employment that included tutoring in a field she wanted to work in. Initially, due to issues with training providers this path had been problematic, however, the mentor continued to support her until they found a training provider that was able to effectively deliver the course. This resulted in Gwen passing two exams and she is now very close to obtaining a qualification which would very likely lead to her chosen career path. As Gwen stated:

'They [J2W] are doing a really good job. This was something I thought I'd never get to do. I'm grateful I was introduced to them'.

</div>

Management and monitoring systems

7.22. Overall, staff felt that the project was well managed by the central team. Communication and associated systems were described as clear and responsive. Staff also commented that management (the central team and operational managers) had a diverse skills base that could be drawn upon to overcome a range of issues.

7.23. Quarterly regional meetings between the operational managers and the central team, which included updates on the project (finance, delivery and CCTs), updates on meeting action points and sharing of good practice were reported by staff (interviewed for the evaluation) as being useful and transparent. Staff also reported that the quarterly 'health checks' to verify information was being collected and shared effectively, for example,

68

participants' referral, enrolment and assessment forms and financial controls, were very useful.

7.24. CEMP, the project monitoring and reporting database was seen as effective by staff (interviewed for the evaluation) and included most of the information the project needed in one accessible online platform[106]. S, staff were reported (by interviewees) to be well trained to use it and it compared favourably in terms of usability with other databases staff had used. The tool is useful in producing bespoke data and it can produce requested reports, such as characteristics of participants and outcomes achieved, based on different timeframes, beneficiary areas and, for Newport, within each hub area.

7.25. The project has detailed record keeping requirements. Typically, staff were expected to complete many a number of different forms[107] for each participant. Although this provided essential data, much of which is inherent to ESF projects, staff reported that the levels of bureaucracy were high and certain aspects of data collection remained paper-based (e.g. collection of signatures) and hence more time consuming, despite the efforts to develop a more digital approach. In addition, helping participants with the 'person specification' section of job applications was described as time consuming. As this was a common occurrence, it represented a large proportion of the frontline staff time, and some felt the forms could be curtailedsimplified, for example, such asby combining elements of the referral and enrolment forms into one from (as some of the information collected was the same).

> **Commented [HH(-W54]:** How could this process be shortened?
>
> **Commented [RB55R54]:** Good point, added.

7.26. Moreover, as highlighted in the inception report, at times it was reported (by staff interviewed for the evaluation) that there could be difficulties in getting clear guidance from WEFO or, occasionally, the central project team, on what

---

[106]The database includes collective and individual data upon participants' engagements and outcomes (performance data), quarterly claims (progress reports) and verifications, CCT evidence, guidance documents and health checks (sample of participants) covering all beneficiary areas.
[107] i.e. referral forms, enrolment form, eligibility evidence form, equal opportunities form, Star assessment (measures baseline soft skills, although this is voluntary), participant action plan and participant contact record.

were described by one interviewee as 'grey areas', where the guidance was not felt to be definitive.

7.27. In Newport, the change by management to a neighbourhood hub-based model in the last year had brought challenges. Staff were based full time centrally at the library then, following adoption of the new model, they were based in different communities. However, ~~following~~ in response to feedback from staff, management recognised the importance of the central location and now staff are located at the library for part of the working week.

7.28. Staff described how the new model meant they were solely in charge of their caseloads (participants) in a specific area. The disadvantage of this was that ~~the~~ individual staff ~~member~~ could no longer rely on a wider team to cover their workload~~,~~. ~~for~~ For example, if they had booked a participant for training and they (the staff) were on leave during this period, there was no one readily available to cover their job to ensure that the participant turned up to the training. Notwithstanding the above, staff (interviewed for the evaluation) recognised that a change in system would result in 'teething issues' and reported that the model should result in a more community-based provision for participants.

7.29. Some staff (interviewed for the evaluation) also suggested that the project should systematically feedback to referral agencies on what participants had achieved, as this was not currently being done, and it was felt that this could encourage more referrals.

Monitoring beyond expected outcomes

7.30. There was a mixed response from staff (interviewed for the evaluation) regarding collecting further data on the benefits of the project. On the one hand, as previously stated, the levels of bureaucracy were felt to be too high and further monitoring was likely to add to this burden. On the other hand,

staff (interviewed for the evaluation) ~~mentioned~~ acknowledged that collecting more qualitative data would be useful[108]; for example:

'We need the stories behind the person. We need to capture people's state of mind. When people have low self-esteem and are lethargic it takes effort to get them to turn themselves around.' Staff member.

7.31. The Star assessment tool collects mainly quantitative data on key skills around seeking employment (managing money, work experience, applying for jobs, CV and interview skills) and mirrors some of the outcomes expected by the project (i.e. job search and work experience). This provides useful baseline data for frontline staff on the participants' skills and is used to measure distance travelled. ~~The~~ However, the tool is not mandatory to complete and is used on a beneficiary level (to understand their participants' needs) and is not therefore kept and shared centrally. Requiring its completion would ~~However,~~ potentially ~~this would~~ provide further insights into the project outcomes (including distance travelled) without adding too much ~~more~~ paperwork.

7.32. The ~~same applies to the~~ 'participant evaluation form' rates the participants' experience of their mentor and any soft skills, such as confidence, they may have acquired through the project support. Like the Star assessment tool, completion is ~~(it is~~ not mandatory – and the ~~The~~ completion rate ~~to these~~ was reported to be lower than that of the Star tool~~.~~; and ~~and~~ data is kept ~~on~~ at a beneficiary level~~)~~; ~~and~~ ~~this rates the participants' experience of their mentor and any soft skills, such as confidence, they may have acquired through the project support.~~ Again, ~~currently~~ the results ~~of these~~ are not shared centrally with the project. However, they ~~but~~ could be shared with the project and included in progress reports, even if just based upon a ~~small~~ sample of participants. ~~The completion rate to these was reported to be lower than that of the Star tool.~~

---

[108] Although this evaluation does record qualitative data through interviews with participants and staff (see boxes 1 and 2) not all staff were likely to be aware of this.

7.33. In the business ~~report~~ case the project highlighted the planned use of the Wales Essential Skills Toolkit, and it is a tool the project has used when planning for bespoke training for a participant. However, the tool has not been used to the extent originally planned, mainly due to the amount of time it took to complete the assessment process with participants, which was further complicated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comparisons with other projects

7.34. Staff (interviewed for the evaluation) were generally very positive when comparing the project to other comparable projects. Staff in Cardiff and Newport who were also involved in other projects generally felt that this project was currently one of their most successful, particularly in the pre-~~COVID-19~~pandemic period (as noted, the ~~COVID-19~~ pandemic affected performance). Staff (interviewed for the evaluation) highlighted a number of areas in which the project had an advantage over other similar projects; for example staff, such as mentors in Cardiff, reported that they had professional qualifications in mentoring and reasonable levels of resources and time to support individuals.

'We bring the professional qualification and the money, that is what makes us unique amongst the employment organisations.' Staff member.

'We have the time to work with people and the budget too.' Staff member.

7.35. Staff (interviewed for the evaluation) also emphasised the intensive and long-term levels of support they were able to provide to some participants; for example, helping a participant to go to university was described as a year-long journey involving preparing English language skills, looking at student finance, accommodation and creating a portfolio. Another example was given of helping a participant train to become a driving instructor and spending two to three hours on each module with him. Similarly, participants (interviewed for the evaluation) provided examples of how staff would try and get them jobs or relevant qualifications for the jobs they wanted and this would contrast with

experiences they had on some other employment projects where they felt they were encouraged to pursue any job just to get them into work.. Nevertheless, as highlighted by some staff (interviewed for the evaluation), similar examples of this type of commitment are shown in other employment support-based projects, such as Communities for Work and PaCE.

7.36. Although the core activity of the project is to help participants overcome the barriers they face, and to gain skills and qualifications that contribute towards more sustainable employment, there are examples of where activities went beyond this; for example, The Passport to Construction course in Monmouthshire that delivers a package of work-based training. This includes CSCS cards, and training in asbestos awareness, manual handling and emergency first aid. This makes participants' skills offer more attractive to employers, compared to having only obtained just the CSCS card.

7.37. As highlighted in section 5, the project was also seen as having the advantage over other comparable projects restricted to specific geographical areas or groups of participants. Staff highlighted how, in Cardiff and Newport[109], populations were now able to access support which was previously only readily available in Communities First areas, creating what was seen as an even playing field. Moreover, the hub system in Cardiff and Newport meant the project could access high footfall and easily refer on to other projects, an advantage which not all other delivery organisations had.

What barriers exist which prevent participants entering employment?

7.38. Interviews with participants and staff highlighted a range of barriers, from relatively straightforward barriers such as a participant lacking the funds, equipment or 'know how' to access a training course, to more complex barriers such as lacking confidence, loneliness, lack of qualifications and/or childcare commitments. However, even those who had more straightforward needs generally reported that they needed more support than that readily offered by JCP (in terms of standard support from employment advisers).

---

[109] Monmouthshire does not have a Communities First area (StatsWales).

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

7.39. Key barriers highlighted by participants and staff in the interviews included:

- needing access to and funding for work-relevant courses / qualifications such as traffic management, track induction, SIA, first aid, health and safety, and English teaching and courses associated with starting their own business;
- help to develop a CV, careers advice and interview and job search skills;
- caring responsibilities and high costs of childcare[110] most notably in terms of childcare for female participants, but also caring responsibilities for elderly parents;
- low self-esteem and confidence, usually a result of not having been involved in the labour market for a considerable time and impact of the lockdowns associated with COVID-19;
- lack of IT and / or digital skills that tended to be more prevalent in older participants and amongst participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;
- needing help to improve English language skills and/or to obtain UK ENIC in order to get recognition of their qualifications from abroad in the UK; and
- a range of physical and/or mental health difficulties.

Box 2..	Aadya's story

Aadya (~~pseudo name~~not her real name) got in touch with J2W after hearing positive things about them from other people.   When Aadya got in touch with J2W she reported that she was feeling depressed and low. Aadya said she felt able to talk to her mentor about personal matters and feelings and that her mentor helped to encourage her and build her up. At Aadya's request, her mentor helped her to join an English class at college. She also helped her with applying for jobs and with interview skills. Aadya had a particular lack of confidence around interviews, but she reported that her mentor helped her step by step and encouraged her to see the skills and experience that she already had, as well as helping her to develop interview skills and encouraging her to view them as good

---

[110] Most of the jobs that participants sought were at entry level and therefore relatively low paid.

Commented [HH(-W62]: Would be great to have a quant breakdown of barriers for final evaluation. Also, is there a reduction in barriers participants face after receiving support, compared with before?

Commented [RB63R62]: Good point, although I don't think this data is available after receiving support i.e. outside the interviews that we do. Barriers recorded on participant database are only recorded when registering for the project and what is noted is more limited than the above.

experience even if she was not offered the job. Aadya now has a job which suits her and where she is gaining a lot of training and development.

Aadya says of her mentor,

'She always wants to help people, to help them to get a job. She is always positive and when I talk with her it makes my day. I want to say thank you to her.'

Outcomes for those who did not gain employment

7.40. Staff reported that there were essentially two broad types of participants who did not gain employment:

- those who 'bought into process' and although they did not enter employment, experienced some form of personal development which brought them closer to the job market; and
- those who, although 'signed up to the process', were not really committed to it and therefore gained little from their participation.

Although in theory, those not committed to the project should be identified during the referral / triage process, it was reported that this could be difficult in practice when, on the face of it, potential participants showed a genuine interest.

7.41. In addition to the tangible recorded outcomes of the project (qualifications, engaging in job search, work experience and volunteering) other key gains included:

- improvements in the sense of well-being of participants with, for example, participants reporting improved mental health due to staff showing an interest in them and being friendly and supportive;
- increases in soft skills, particularly confidence, which were in some cases recorded internally[111]; and
- improved English language skills.

---

[111] Through participants' evaluation forms.

75

Commented [HH(-W64]: Again, would be great to have some quant data on this. How many participants reported an improvement in mental health? How much improvement did they demonstrate?

Commented [RB65R64]: Good point, however, this is based on our interviews and 'quant' data from our knowledge is not available on this.

Commented [HH(-W66]: Any stats available?

Commented [RB67R66]: Good question, sorry this data was not available in a way we could access it

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

7.42. The improvement in confidence, along with establishing a trusted relationship with frontline staff, was an important driver for the participants to gain other skills, even if it did not result in employment; for example as one participant interviewed for the evaluation explained:

'I was not confident in interviews…I was not ready for interviews and she encouraged me and told me that I had lots of experience and I would be alright. [Mentor] said if you apply, you still have the experience of the interview. I did that, I went to another interview and it was a hard interview, but I was not disappointed as I got the experience. [Mentor] was right.'
Participant.

7.43. Another consideration for those who did not gain employment or had not gained employment yet, is that participants and staff talked about how the project tried to meet the aspirations of participants and not just focus on 'getting them into a job'. This was something participants (interviewed for the evaluation) valued, and some contrasted this with their previous experiences with other employment support projects. However, this is likely to mean that the process of gaining employment would take longer and possibly longer than the project could cater for; for example, there were participants who had previously worked in highly skilled professional jobs in the countries they previously lived in and the process of supporting them to get their qualifications and English language skills recognised in this country in order to gain a similar job, could take time and resources. In contrast, gaining an 'entry level' job in a field which needs staff, such as care work, would probably take less time and resources (Holtom et al, 2020).

8. Findings: Progress on Cross Cutting Themes

Introduction

8.1. This section discusses actions and performance in relation to the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs):

- Equal Opportunities, Gender Mainstreaming (this includes the Welsh language in Wales)[112];
- Sustainable Development[113]; and
- Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion[114].

~~8.1.~~8.2. The central team coordinator (from the lead beneficiary) is the CCT champion[115] and takes overall responsibility for the CCTs. In line with the engagement and outcomes data in sections 4 and 6, the data in this section is from April 2021.

~~8.2.~~8.3. This section also summarises the likely contribution of the project to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015. Moreover, the goals associated with this Act mirror some of the CCT and indicators (as referenced in the footnotes).

Overall progress

~~8.3.~~8.4. ~~The project has successfully achieved its CCT targets. However, p~~Progress has been stronger for certain CCT case level indicators than others. Data indicated there was a stronger and more successful response to:

---

[112] "Actions appropriate for this priority could include: New approaches which enable organisations to innovate and work together in, a region to ensure public services are accessible and equitable to all, Support for activity which builds the capacity and capability of the workforce, Actions to ensure that new regional ways of working as they are put in place promote equality of opportunity for staff and inclusive work places, Taking opportunities to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language within new regional ways of working, in service delivery and developing capacity" (WG, 2019 p.4).
[113] "Actions appropriate for this priority could include: Encouraging sustainable transport solutions, Promoting resource efficiency, including energy efficiency and waste management (including recycling) in the delivery and implementation of operations, Supporting the sharing of resources and use of local supply chains" (p.3). (WG, 2019 p.3).
[114] "Actions appropriate to this priority could include: Upskilling and reskilling staff members to help them benefit from new ways of working" (WG, 2019 p.4).
[115] As stated in the project business plan.

Commented [RB68]: Chriss: Should the reader not be told what the three CCT for the Welsh ESF Programmes are? Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming (including the Welsh language), Sustainable Development and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion –as far as I can see a definition is not included elsewhere.

Rhodri: Good point, added.

Commented [DH69R68]: Agreed - added

Commented [RB70]: Nigel: Not factually correct as not all CCT case level indicators have been claimed as achieved and information about to how the operation has delivered any related activity has not been provided. This should be updated to reflect actual achievement at April'21.

Rhodri: Sorry our misunderstanding amended.

Commented [RB71]: Chriss: Objectives there are no CCT targets

Commented [RB72R71]: Rhodri: Good point, deleted.

- reducing inequalities, and in particular, engagement of participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and tackling poverty;
- sustainable development; and
- promoting health and well-being activities.

and a weaker response to:
- older people activities;
- disabled people; and
- peer support activities.

8.4.8.5.   Despite efforts, low levels of demand from participants made it difficult to address occupational segregation and the Welsh language activities.

Reducing inequalities[116]

Occupational segregation activity

8.5.8.6.   There are examples of staff having discussions with employers to tackle occupational segregation, for example around opportunities for women in engineering. There are also examples of helping women to obtain qualifications and / or employment in a male dominated profession, such as HGV driving or security. However, despite informing participants of a wide range of employment opportunities, staff stated that the vast majority of participants chose to go into stereotypical jobs for their gender and that a person-centred approach meant they should respect the aspirations of the participant. There is a balance to be struck here in discussing options, and sensitively and constructively challenging participants' preconceived ideas, while also respecting participants' preferences.

Reducing gender inequalities

---

[116]In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) goals of 'a more equal Wales' and 'a Wales of cohesive communities' (p.3.)

8.6.8.7.   Participants and staff highlighted childcare as a barrier to gaining employment, primarily for women, due to the cost of childcare provision, as 29 per cent of participants on the project had caring responsibilities for a child under 18 and in response, examples were provided of:

- participants being referred to the PaCE project and, if available, Flying Start, which both offer direct childcare support;
- supporting women to access education and training and gain qualifications, and to prepare for when their children were three years old and could access free childcare; and
- in one case, NCC were able to contribute a little towards childcare costs so that a participant was able to attend a work placement.

8.7.8.8.   It is also notable that women were more likely to achieve employment on the project than men (34 per cent of women compared with 27 per cent of men).

Welsh language

8.8.8.9.   Welsh language fluency and prevalence is noted and recorded during the enrolment process[117]. Promotional materials, such as logos and website adverts[118] are available in Welsh and English through NCC and CCC[119]. However, this is not the case with the MHA[120] website advert. The CEMP monitoring tool can also be navigated in Welsh. Staff highlighted that there was capacity to deliver the project in Welsh if requested and to develop the use of Welsh in certain workplaces. However, there was reported to be little demand for this from participants and employers that the project typically worked with. Not one participant chose 'Welsh' as their preferred language of

> **Commented [RB76]: Nigel:** Why?
>
> **Commented [RB77R76]: Rhodri:** Sorry we don't why its not translated.

---

[117] i.e. 'preferred language for communication', 'understand level of Welsh' and 'whether they received provision in Welsh'.
[118] e.g. Welsh and English options: https://www.dewis.cymru/ResourceDirectory/ViewResource.aspx?id=9008; http://www.newport.gov.uk/cy/About-Newport/European-funding/Journey-to-Work.aspx.
[119] As public sector bodies (local authorities) this is routine compliance for such activities in line with the Welsh Language Act.
[120] e.g. English only option: https://www.monmouthshirehousing.co.uk/advice-hub/money-help-advice/work-skills-wise/

communication for the project and only 1 per cent were able to speak Welsh. A study by the Citizens Advice Bureau (2015) highlighted that many people who are fluent in Welsh do not access services in Welsh (when on general offer) and there were complex behavioural and structural barriers for this. However, it suggests that by overcoming structural barriers such as the way Welsh is promoted and how easy it can be accessed, can encourage take up.

Representation and outcomes of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities

8.9.8.10.   Overall, the project has successfully engaged participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The proportion of participants on the project is around twice that of the general population in Cardiff (44 per cent compared with 20 per cent within the local authority) (StatsWales) and Newport (25 per cent compared with 13 per cent within the local authority) (StatsWales). This was attributed by staff to the fact the hubs, such as the Grangetown hub in Cardiff and the Central hub in Newport were near or active in areas with large Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community populations. There was also reported to be 'word of mouth' within some of the communities that attracted more to the project.

8.10.8.11.   However, in Monmouthshire less than 1 per cent of participants were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, compared with 3.5 per cent within the local authority (StatsWales). This was attributed to the small size of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community in Monmouthshire and the rurality of the local authority, meaning the population was more dispersed, and therefore harder to identify and engage.

8.11.8.12.   Data on outcomes suggests that support provided to participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities was effective, as 32 per cent of these participants achieved employment, compared with 25 per cent who were not in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Commented [RB78]: Nigel: Any reasons identified as to why participants or employers did not ask for provision in Welsh language?

Commented [RB79R78]: Good question. We've added context to this but we had no data from interviews regarding why any of them did not choose this option. We will try and follow this up for the final report but the small numbers makes it problematic (i.e. getting a staff member who filled in the form and remembers the experience).

Support for participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities[121]

8.12.8.13.   There were t~~T~~wo main types of support for participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, beyond the core delivery (see para 8.14) this included~~were identified~~:

- support to access ESOL provision and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); and
- identifying employment opportunities; for example, Arabic and Somalian are common languages within communities in Cardiff and Newport and there are work opportunities as translators of these languages being explored by the project.

8.13.8.14.   However, beyond this, participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities who were interviewed suggested that there was little need for specific activities beyond the project's core delivery. This indicates the project's success in mainstreaming the CCT and in developing a person-centred approach that meets the needs of different groups.

Representation of and outcomes for older people

8.14.8.15.   The data showed that 18 per cent of the participants were older than 54, which is roughly similar to the proportion of working age adults in Wales (i.e. 22 per cent) (StatsWales)[122] and that 27 per cent achieved employment, compared with 28 per cent of those under this age. Given research which indicates that older age can be a barrier to employment (see e.g. Rackliff et al, 2010; National Library of Medicine, 2020) the project's success with this group suggests~~indicates~~ that the support provided from the project was effective in supporting older participants.

> **Commented [RB80]: Nigel:** Was this the only type of work opportunity presented to participants from these communities?
>
> **Commented [RB81R80]: Rhodri:** Beyond the usual these are the only ones we picked up on. However, as stated in para 8.14. generally extra support to the core delivery was not needed e.g. they would do security courses etc like others and gain employment. I've re-worded this para as I think it's a little mis-leading as it was.
>
> **Commented [RB82]: Nigel:** How does this indicate support provided was effective? Also taking account of the statement made below
>
> **Commented [RB83R82]:** Good question, we've added context to this and softened the language a bit. The weakness below is more to do with the engagement process where they have struggled.

---

[121] How effective has the operation been in responding to the needs and challenges of supporting those with low or no skills, a work limiting health condition or disability (including substance or alcohol misuse), care or childcare responsibilities, are aged over 54, are from a BME (Black, Minority Ethnic) group or from a jobless household?

[122] This is based on an estimate as exact age range is not shown.

8.15.8.16.   Staff (interviewed for the evaluation) reported that, given older participants' greater vulnerability to COVID-19, recruitment post-2020 was particularly low. Staff were made aware that the project aimed to work with older people and that they could face age discrimination when it came to work. However, there was no reported evidence of any specific activity to try and engage more older people, beyond general awareness raising amongst staff.

Activity to support disabled participants and those with work limiting health conditions, representation and outcomes

8.16.8.17.   The proportion of participants with a disability that the project engaged varied in different beneficiary areas, from 35 per cent in Monmouthshire to around 15 per cent in Cardiff and Newport (compared with 20-24 per cent in the general population) (StatsWales). Monmouthshire's success was reported by a staff member to reflect the high proportion of MHA's resident population who are disabled, which meant that the project was well equipped to cater to related needs, for example, such as physical access to staff, for wheelchair users. Although not reported by staff, it may also have meant that more disabled people were referred to MHA (given its recruitment of residents). Similarly, there was a high proportion of participants who had work limiting health conditions in Monmouthshire (68 per cent), with whilst there were considerably fewer in Cardiff (22 per cent) and Newport (34 per cent)[123]. Staff commented that some of those with work limiting conditions had mental health needs and where relevant these were signposted to available services (see para 8.34).

8.17.8.18.   Outcomes for disabled participants were lower (17 per cent achieved employment, compared with 28 per cent of those who were not disabled). However, this should be viewed in the context that, in the general population disabled people are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people (Scope). Although it was not clear from interviews why this was the

---

[123]There is no readily available national comparator on this, as the data on work limiting conditions only count those who come under the definition of disabled, whilst for this project there were those who had work limiting conditions who were not disabled.

82

Commented [RB84]: Nigel: What type of support was provided? Was there anything specific provided to help people with barriers to engage and achieve?

Commented [RB85R84]: Good question, we've added one direct example that we had and also cross referenced with the mental health support.

Commented [RB86]: Nigel: Any known reasons for this?

Commented [RB87R86]: Good question, sorry we have no specific data from this project.

case, it is possible that they faced more complex barriers and in the general population disabled people are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people (Scope).

8.19. A similar pattern emerges with those with a work limiting health condition, with 22 per cent gaining employment compared with 31 per cent who did not have a work limiting health condition. Again, although it was not clear from interviews why this was the case, it is possible that they faced more complex barriers and in the general population

8.18.8.20. Overall, this suggests that the project is making a difference to disabled participants and those with work limiting health conditions those who face these barrie,rs, even though if these the barriers they face are still restricting progresslimiting the project's impact upon their employment prospects.

Other factors[124]

8.19.8.21. No official central record is made of whether a participant has an issue with substance or alcohol misuse. However, it was reported by staff that participants were referred to the relevant support agencies and charities when such issues were identified.

8.20.8.22. The proportion of participants who are in a jobless household is very high (78 per cent) compared with 17 per cent in all Wales (StatsWales), although it is likely to be higher amongst people who are LTU or EI, and a similar difference is shown in each beneficiary area[125]. In addition, 5 per cent were homeless or affected by housing exclusion and 54 per cent lived in single adult households[126], indicating that the project was successfully targeting those in need.

---

[124] In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) of 'a prosperous Wales' (p.3.)
[125] Outcomes comparison is not made due to lack of readily available data to make a comparison.
[126] No readily available data comparisons were found on 'homeless or affected by housing exclusions' and 'single adult households'.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 3.27 cm, No bullets or numbering

Formatted: Font: Not Italic

Commented [RB88]: Nigel: Can you provide more information about how and what difference is being made?

Commented [RB89R88]: Good question, in terms of 'difference' -unfortunately not at this interim stage. But we will add other outcomes such as qualifications outcomes etc.. for the final report. In terms of 'how' we only have what we already stated above.

Sustainable development[127]

Travel and resource efficiency

~~8.21. In terms of sustainable travel, staff reported that the impact of COVID-19 meant they operated more via phone and digitally, which resulted in less travelling for staff and participants; for example, in Cardiff digital job clubs were developed. Although this was not the result of deliberate action by the project, the experience of working remotely/online may make it easier to sustain in the future.~~ However, the difficulties in engaging and sustaining participant engagement online, and barriers linked to digital literacy and access to devices and data which meant it could take longer to communicate on phone and online, ~~Staff commented on how they needed to be more persistent in their communications (in comparison to 'face to face' contact) and that sometimes re-contacting a participants after a pre-longed period of disengagement could be effective as their live circumstance may have changed.~~may discourage the continuation of remote / online working. ~~Staff commented on how they needed to be more persistent in their communications (in comparison to 'face to face' contact) and that sometimes re-contacting a participants after a pre-longed period of disengagement could be effective as their live circumstance may have changed.~~

~~8.22.~~8.23. Examples of purposeful action to reduce travel and promote sustainable travel, included:

- the use of online training and meetings;
- offering participants in Newport bus tokens;
- the central location of hubs in Cardiff and Newport, with good public transport links;
- purchasing a bike through the barriers fund, without which the participant would have had to catch three different buses to get to work (although lives and works in Cardiff) that would have made the work impractical; and
- MHA's staff's access to electric cars.

---

[127] In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) goal of 'a resilient Wales' (p.3.)

8.23.8.24.   In Addition, in line with the beneficiaries' internal policies, staff work in an environment where, for example, resources such as paper, batteries and toner cartridges are routinely collected and recycled and staff are encouraged to use sustainable transport such as car sharing, public transport and cycling.

8.25.   In terms of sustainable travel, staff (interviewed for the evaluation) also reported that the impact of COVID-19 meant they operated more via phone and digitally, which resulted in less travelling for staff and participants; for example, in Cardiff digital job clubs were developed. Although this was in effect, forced upon the project by social distancing requirements (rather than being chosen as a way to increase environmental sustainability), the experience of working remotely/online may make it easier to sustain in the future.

8.26.   However, difficulties in engaging and sustaining participant engagement online, and barriers linked to digital literacy and access to devices and data were reported by interviewees and may discourage the continuation of remote / online working. These challenges meant it could take longer to communicate on phone and online, and it was in some cases felt to be less effective. In response, staff (interviewed for the evaluation) commented on how they needed to be more persistent in their communications (in comparison to 'face to face' contact) and that sometimes re-contacting a participant after a pre-longed period of disengagement could be effective as their live circumstance may have changed.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 3.27 cm, No bullets or numbering

Commented [RB92]: Nigel: How did the operation seek to overcome these problems?

Commented [RB93R92]: Good question, added.

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt, Not Italic, Font colour: Auto

Formatted: List Paragraph,F5 List Paragraph,List Paragraph1,Dot pt,No Spacing1,List Paragraph Char Char Char,Indicator Text,Numbered Para 1,Bullet 1,Bullet Points,MAIN CONTENT,OBC Bullet,List Paragraph12,List Paragraph11,Colorful List - Accent 11,Normal numbered,L, Left, Indent: Left: 3.27 cm, First

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Support for local supply chains

8.24.8.27.   Staff reported that the budgetary freedom for the project meant that, where possible and appropriate, they used local training providers.

8.25.8.28.   Examples of support for public, private and third sector organisations (as distinct from payments for goods and services from local suppliers) included:

- a partnership in Newport with a local recycling charity[128] which supplied work placements for participants. This meant the project could contribute to the local recycling infrastructure and gain work placements at the same time;
- MHA work in partnership with Monmouthshire council for local work placements; and
- Cardiff often source work placements internally i.e. within the local authority.

Tackling poverty and social exclusion[129]

8.26.8.29.   By helping people enter and sustain employment, the project makes an important contribution to tackling poverty and reducing social exclusion (as unemployment or economic inactivity increases the risk of experiencing poverty and/or social exclusion (JRF, 2020).

8.27.8.30.   Moreover, as highlighted in the business plan, tackling poverty for the project is based upon 'narrowing the educational attainment gap' (p. 24). The project works with a relatively high proportion of people with no qualifications (30 per cent) compared to the average for Wales (7 per cent) (StatsWales). In part this reflects the links between having no qualifications and worklessness (JRF, 2020), meaning that the proportion of participants with no qualifications would be expected to be relatively high. Those with no qualifications might also be expected to be more likely to face more complex barriers than those

---

[128] GAVO and Newport MIND have also being approached for work placements.
[129] [129] In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) of 'a more equal Wales' (p.3.)

with qualifications. This may explain why outcomes for those without qualifications were weaker than those with qualifications; for example:

- 9 per cent of those with no qualifications achieved a work-related qualification, compared with 14 per cent of those with a qualification; and
- 25 per cent of those with no qualifications entered employment, compared with 30 per cent of those with a qualification.

8.28.8.31.   In addition, during the COVID-19 lockdowns:

- in Newport staff worked with Jesus Cares, The Trussell Trust, The Ravenhouse Trust, local businesses and the Welsh Government to offer food parcels to participants who were in isolation, with over 4,000 calls to people who were shielding. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project also offered food to participants in need; and
- in Monmouthshire the project was able to provide specialist Universal Credit advice through MHA Moneywise service.

Mentoring and advocacy activity

8.29.8.32.   Beyond the core activity of the project, which includes mentoring and advocacy work (see para 7.19 -7.21 and Box 1 and 2 in section 7) there were no extra activities reported by staff.

Promoting health and well-being activities[130]

8.30.8.33.   Entering employment, and particularly 'good', sustainable employment, can make important contributions to health and well-being (What Works Wellbeing, 2017). The project was reported to also generate other health and wellbeing impacts; for example, pre-pandemic, COVID-19 staff reported how the hubs provided a social environment for communities. As one put it:

'There is a community feel to the hubs, you get to know people who go in to use the library, people who come in with kids after school. We used to [before COVID] have regular coffee mornings and we would have events on childcare

---

[130] In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) goal of 'a healthier Wales' (p.3.)

as a lot of parents didn't know about the options and we would invite local employers to come and give talks. They were really useful, and people got to meet other people with similar issues.' Staff member.

8.31.8.34. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, when face to face contact and interventions such as training ceased, staff were focused on maintaining contact with participants who felt socially isolated and, in some cases, vulnerable. This included mainly 'comfort calls' and texts to participants; for example:

'Even now with everything on hold she messages me every now and then. I feel really supported; I feel I can ring her about anything.' Participant.

8.32.8.35. This meant that, even though the project struggled to achieve its core outcomes during this time, it was still making an important contribution to participants' health and well-being during a time of crisis.

8.33.8.36. In addition, the project was involved in other activities that benefited health and well-being before and during the epidemic, some of which included helping with substance and alcohol misuse:

- NCC regularly signposted participants to services, such as Universal Credit support, Citizens Advice Bureau, Gwent Drug and Alcohol Services (GDAS) and King Church self-help groups for mental health support; and
- MHA has helped participants access healthcare, such as primary health counselling and has had discussions with mental health providers to seek advice on mental health for the project delivery.

Peer activity

8.34.8.37. Staff described how the hubs in Cardiff provided a convenient place of informal contact where participants could meet and socialise and learn from each other.

88

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

The Well-being of Future Generations Act

8.35.8.38.   Table 2 below provides an indication of the project's contribution to the gaols of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Table 2. Showing the relative contribution of the project to the seven well-being goals from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Green – strong, Amber – medium, Red – weak)

Well-being goals	Key contributions
1. A prosperous Wales	- Increasing employment and upskilling participants, which can be expected to contribute to increases in productivity. - Employment outcomes remain strong despite COVID-19[131].
2. A resilient Wales	- The project's commitment to environmental sustainability (discussed above). However, this is not a major focus of the project.
3. A healthier Wales	- Entering employment, and particularly 'good', sustainable employment, can make important contributions to health and well-being (What Works Wellbeing, 2017a). - Increasing participants' skills can also make important contributions to health and well-being (What Works Wellbeing, 2017b). - Project focused on participant well-being during COVID-19 lockdowns
4. A more equal Wales	- The project has a strong focus upon supporting groups such as people with no or low qualifications and people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities who are exposed to a higher risk of poverty and/or social exclusion (JRF, 2020).

---

[131] As stated in the business plan, achievements in Gross Disposable Household Income through income per head and percentage of people in employment will contribute to the goals of the Act.

	- Employment outcomes for some of these groups, such as people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are strong.
5. A Wales of cohesive communities	- No direct activities undertaken but, by reducing poverty and social exclusion, the project makes an indirect contribution to creating safer and more viable communities and promoting community cohesion.
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	- Despite bilingual promotion and offer of support, very few Welsh speakers engaged and no evidence of culturally based activities.
7. A globally responsible Wales	- The project's commitment to environmental sustainability (discussed above). However, this is not a major focus of the project

9. The future of the project

Introduction

9.1. This section considers options for how the project could continue in the future. These options will be explored further in the final evaluation report.

Context

9.2. The unemployment rate in Wales ~~has~~ increased during the pandemic (Senedd Research, 2021) and although (at the time the report was drafted in early 2022) the forecast is for a recovery in the Welsh economy (Welsh Parliament, 2021), this ~~albeit~~ is dependent upon the on-going success of the vaccine rollout against COVID-19 variants~~,~~. This indicates both ~~that there is~~the likely ~~to be an the likely to be~~ on-going need for, and also opportunities for, employment support projects like J2W.

> Commented [HH(-W98]: Re-word
> Commented [HP99R98]: Thanks, Text amended

9.3. There may also be opportunities to develop what has worked during the pandemic, such as increasing the use of remote and online working, which is more environmentally sustainable and which may be more cost-effective for some participants (but which is unlikely to be appropriate for all participants).

9.4. However, a number of future risks have been identified, including:

- uncertainty about the impacts of COVID-19 upon project delivery, referrals, participant engagement and motivation, and employment opportunities;
- uncertainty about the impacts of the UK's exit from the EU, which are forecast to be negative, but which appear likely to have a slow, long term impact (Welsh Economic Research Unit, 2017); and
- the project's reliance upon match funding which could be under risk due to recent and future funding gaps in local authorities in Wales (Cardiff University, 2021).

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Post-ESF funding opportunities

9.5. The post-ESF proposed Shared Prosperity Fund is expected to offer
opportunities for local authorities to develop projects, and the integration of
J2W with other local authority employment support services in Cardiff and
Newport is seen as an effective one; for example, it makes it easier to offer a
single point of access to a range of services.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Progress on engagements

10.1. Many people who are economically inactive or who have been out of work for a long period (those classed as long term unemployed) face complex barriers to employment, which can discourage or demotivate them[132] and which subsequently makes recruiting them on non-mandated or voluntary employment support programmes, challenging.

10.2. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the project's performance in relation to engaging ~~Long Term Unemployed (~~LTU~~)~~ participants was strong and, in relation to engaging ~~Economic Inactive (~~EI~~)~~ participants, was not far from its target (90 per cent on target).

> **Commented [HH(-W100]:** I don't think there is a definition of EI in this report. It would be worth providing one in the intro.
>
> **Commented [HP101R100]:** Thanks, this has been added.

10.3. However, performance declined sharply following the COVID-19 pandemic given, for example, the closure and / or restricted access to 'points of contact' such as Cardiff[133] and Newport[134] Hubs and referral partners, most notably ~~Job Centre Plus~~JCP. This meant that there was a sharp fall in recruitment, especially amongst LTU participants. Moreover, some potential participants probably deferred engagement until restrictions eased given, for example: negative media coverage of the impact of lockdowns upon employment (and perceptions about the difficulties of finding work); fears of catching COVID-19; childcare responsibilities (given the closure of schools and childcare provision); and the perception that many public services were shut down (in practice, J2W continued to operate throughout the period, albeit moving delivery online).

---

[132] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[133] There are 19 hubs (seven of these are small satellite ones) across Cardiff and five J2W mentors across the city covering the West, South, Central, North and the Star area (Splott, Tremorfa, Adamsdown and Roath).
[134] Four hubs covering Central, East, North, and West Newport.

10.4. In contrast, Monmouthshire bucked this trend where progress on engaging
LTU participants actually improved a little after January 2020, albeit from a
weak start. This reflected improvements in project delivery, in particular more
stable staffing and the impact of COVID-19 upon Monmouth Housing
Association (MHA) tenants (a key source for participants) who, it was felt by
staff (interviewed for the evaluation), had more time to consider and discuss
the options of joining the project, due to the furlough scheme or not being able
to go to work due to COVID-19 restrictions[135].

> **Commented [HH(-W102]:** Do you mean here that the staff of MHA had more time to discuss the project with tenants?
>
> **Commented [RB103R102]:** Good question, no its tenants having more time (i.e. due to furlough scheme and not being able to go to work due to restrictions)

10.5. It is expected that engagements will increase[136] now that COVID-19
restrictions are easing and MHA referral pathways with partners are reported
by staff (interviewed for the evaluation) to be stronger. Both Cardiff and
Newport have a geographically representative network of hubs and services
(through partners and within the local authorities) that refer people to the
project. Furthermore, the project is not confined geographically (unlike, for
example, Communities for Work) and local authorities can appeal to a wider
group of people than other projects that provide employment support with
tighter eligibility criteria, such as PaCE, React3, ACE and some Active
Inclusion projects).

Performance in relation to outcomes

10.6. It is to the credit of the project that performance in relation to employment
outcomes for EI and LTU participants remains strong, and overall the project
is still on target, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Performance
in relation to outcomes six months after entry to employment also remains
strong, indicating many of the jobs have been sustainable. Notwithstanding
this, there was, as would be expected, a considerable fall in outcomes post-
2020 and the project was reliant upon the cushion provided by a very strong
pre-pandemic performance, particularly in Newport, when the project was
considerably over target in relation to employment outcomes. The strength of

---

[135] As tenants' contact with MHA was on-going even through the pandemic.
[136] Depending on the on-going success of the vaccine roll out against COVID-19 variants.

employment outcomes six months after exit in Cardiff has also been important.

10.7. Given the weaker than planned performance in terms of engagements, the stronger than projected performance in terms of employment outcomes means that the project has a higher conversion rate from engagements to employment than was originally anticipated (28 per cent of participants gained employment).

10.8. The high conversion rate is a measure of project effectiveness (and is to be celebrated). Evidence from the research reviewed for the evaluation suggests that the skills and experience of advisers, continuity in adviser support, sustained and frequent contact to maintain motivation and momentum, a person-centred approach, advisers demonstrating understanding of and empathy towards a participant's circumstances, a collaborative relationship between participant/adviser, and advisers taking a proactive approach to addressing barriers, are all likely to have been a key factors here.

> **Commented [HH(-W104]:** Did the participants of this study identify any of these factors? Apart from the strength noted in paragraph 10.8, did the participants note any other positives?
>
> **Commented [HP105R104]:** Thanks, the text has been amended to include this.

The 'success' factors identified in the research reviewed for the evaluation was reflected in interviews with J2W participants and staff. Participants talked of the close and supportive relationship they built with their mentor '(they) really felt like family member', of how mentors made themselves available to talk and the emotional support this provided. ~~'She always says that I can call her if I am feeling low and down and she is always, I always hear from her positive. When I talk with her it makes my day'~~
~~'I spoke to her about personal stuff too and she helped and encouraged me. I was very low and depressed and she gave me encouragement.'~~

10.9. Participants also spoke of how mentors went 'out of (their) way'' to meet their individual needs, and of mentors addressing practical barriers, such as supplying a bike to someone for whom public transport was not available to travel to a job that they were offered. ~~One mentor described in detail the collaborative approach the project worked to:~~

10.10. A further key strength of the project, highlighted by participants, was that they felt that the project was not trying to 'get them into any job' and it focused on the aspirations of the participants. This is supported by the strong performance in relation to job outcomes six months after exit.

10.11. In addition, other recorded outcomes of the project included:

- improvements in participants' well-being[137], which became a particular focus during lockdown periods and which participants greatly valued;
- soft skills mostly in terms of 'confidence' which is recorded internally[138] ; and
- improved English language skills.

10.12. These are all important outcomes in and of themselves and may also contribute to employment outcomes.

> 'There is a virtuous ethic in our work. There is a utilitarian approach where someone gets a service, then they go and that is it and they are a customer. A client is someone you spend a bit more time with. A participant, that is the Aristolian virtuous ethic. With a participant you work in equal partnership and work to move forward together.'

10.13. Despite the evidence suggesting the effectiveness of staff, it is possible that advisors have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and experience supporting currently under-represented groups, such as disabled people, given the lower rates of engagement of disabled people (and evidence from the research reviewed suggests advisors skills and experience will be crucial in effectively supporting disabled people). Working with employers is also seen as an important part of interventions to support disabled people into work.

10.14. The longer-term outlook is also somewhat uncertain. The strength of the economic recovery and prospects for an easing of restrictions suggest that the

---

[137] In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) goal of 'a healthier Wales' and the CCT of 'tackling poverty and social exclusion'.
[138] Through participants' evaluation forms and Star tool assessment.

Formatted: Normal, Indent: Left: 2.54 cm, First line: 0 cm

Commented [HH(-W106]: Did the current project do this?

In the next evaluation would be great to have a lot more detail relating to the type and quality of support offered

Commented [RB107R106]: Good question, no this was not done in relation to disabled people. Yes we could add more in the final evaluation.

sustainability of jobs will improve. However, for some sectors this may be undercut by the withdrawal of government support, such as the furlough scheme and the relief from business rates for qualifying businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Monitoring the economic outlook for different sectors will be important in ensuring that participants are advised and supported to find employment in growth sectors.

10.15. Performance in relation to qualifications, work experience and job search outcomes was weaker than employment outcomes, and overall the project was under target. This underperformance, with the exception of Newport, which, pre-pandemic, was on target with job searches, qualifications and work experience outcomes for LTU participants, was accentuated by the impact of the pandemic.

> **Commented [HH(-W108]:** Why was it not on target pre-covid? What are the implications for the project moving forward?
>
> **Commented [RB109R108]:** Good questions, we've cross referenced as this is explained in the next para. In terms of implications we've made a direct recommendation regarding this (i.e. R5 below) and other recommendations may also help (e.g. around engagements).

10.16. Moreover, evidence from the evaluation also suggests that some participants had fewer complex barriers than expected. Interviews with participants indicated that some participants were relatively 'close' to the labour market and only needed help with job search skills in order to gain employment, so they did not need qualifications to gain employment; an assessment supported by the strong performance in relation to employment outcomes. This was a source of frustration amongst staff that, while their support to help participants enhance their job search skills was helping them enter employment, job search outcomes could not be counted for those who achieved employment outcomes. There project had also struggled to had also been some issues with sourceing work and volunteering experience opportunities prior to COVID-19 with partners and internally as an employer and thisat had more recently improved through internal opportunities within the local authorities.

> **Commented [HH(-W110]:** What were the difficulties? How have they improved?
>
> **Commented [RB111R110]:** Good questions, amended and added information.

10.17. Action in this area is important. The evidence suggests that training is more effective than 'work first' type interventions in producing sustained

employment (rather than low pay/ no pay cycles[139]) and that somewhere between 40 and 75 per cent of workers remain stuck in 'dead-end' jobs and struggle to progress[140]. The evidence identified through the literature review also suggested that integrating personal support with work placements was an effective model in increasing employability. Participation in education or training before entering employment may improve both the sustainability and quality of employment outcomes, which is crucial in tackling poverty, as too few people in low paid jobs are able to develop a career which involves progression to better paid jobs. Referrals of participants exiting J2W to Skills@Work may also be important here and therefore should continue and be encouraged and supported.

10.18. Improving the attractiveness of, as well as access to, work placements will also be important. Evidence reviewed suggests that positive experiences of work placements are associated with:

- providers taking the time to select appropriate placements, with participants having some involvement in the process, so that the type of placement selected fits with participants' needs and/or work aspirations;
- placements suited participants' ways of working, were varied and interesting and/or carried a degree of responsibility;
- supervision by placement managers/other staff which was flexible enough to meet their needs, collaborative in nature and/or meant they were treated equally to other staff; and
- having a sustained six-month period of work experience, although there was some disagreement around whether 30 hours a week was too long[141].

Project design and delivery

---

[139] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.
[140] Devins, Bickerstaffe, Alex Nunn, Mitchell, Mcquaid and Egdell (2011) *The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression,* UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
[141] Rahim, Kotecha, Chanfreau, Arthur, Mitchell, Payne and Haywood (2012) *Evaluation of support for the very long-term unemployed trailblazer,* Department for Work and Pensions.

Commented [HH(-W112]: What are the implications in relation to this project, given that the targets for quals and work experience have not been met?

Commented [RB113R112]: Good point, we've covered this in recommendation 5 below.

Formatted: Bullets, Indent: Left: 1.25 cm, Hanging: 0.75 cm, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 2.14 cm + Indent at: 2.77 cm

Commented [HH(-W114]: It would be good to know if this project is currently encompassing all these in its delivery

Commented [RB115R114]: Good point, we will try and explore this for the final evaluation.

10.19. Overall, staff and especially participants were very positive about their experiences of the project, which included:

- the use of central locations, such as Newport library and Cardiff and Newport hubs, with good transport links, and participants in Monmouthshire, many of which were tenants, had close contact with MHA premises;
- the assessment process which, although described as overly bureaucratic by staff[142], was valued by participants, given that staff delivered the process in a sensitive, person-centred way;
- the mentoring and relationship built between staff and participants, which often fostered a trusted relationship which helped participants overcome their barriers; and
- interventions focused upon the participants' needs which mainly included support with job search skills and accessing work-based qualifications[143] and, to a lesser extent, work placements, advice on life management matters (such as finance), signposting and using partners to deliver bespoke skills.

10.20. Some elements of the project have either been delivered more effectively or proved more important than others; for example:

- overall, participant engagement and recruitment has been more challenging than anticipated. Nevertheless, referral pathways from, for example, council hubs and MHA are now well established and the model has proved effective with some potentially hard to reach groups, such as people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;
- assessment and support are seen as particular strengths by staff and participants; and

---

[142] i.e. referral forms, enrolment form, eligibility evidence form, equal opportunities form, Star assessment (measures baseline soft skills), participant action plan and participant contact record.
[143] e.g. Security Industry Authority, Teacher Assistant Training, Food Hygiene, First Aid, ESOL and lessons to become a driving instructor.

- employability support has also been effective and sometimes all that participants have needed.

10.21. However, as outlined above, there has been less need or demand for skills development and continued support, volunteering placements and work placements than expected, but also difficulties in offering these since the first lockdown.

10.22. Overall, staff felt that the project was well managed by the central team and communication and associated systems (monitoring) were described as clear and responsive; for example:

- CEMP, the project monitoring and reporting database was seen as effective by staff[144] while quarterly 'health checks' helped ensure both effective monitoring and that information was being collected and shared effectively; and
- there was good communication between management and operational staff; for example, good practice and updates were shared in a timely and effective way via the quarterly regional meetings and it was felt that managers listened to feedback from operational staff (e.g. regarding relocating to the Newport library).

10.23. Nevertheless, some challenges and areas of improvement remained; for example:

- the move to a neighbourhood model in Newport meant staff were solely in charge of their caseloads and staff could no longer rely on a wider team to cover their workload in case of absence;
- the case for developing a more systematic process for feedback of participants' achievements to referral partners was identified;

---

[144]The database includes collective and individual data upon participants' engagements and outcomes (performance data), quarterly claims (progress reports) and verifications, CCT evidence, guidance documents and health checks (sample of participants) covering all beneficiary areas.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

- although staff felt that the project was monitored effectively, it was felt that collecting more qualitative data such as the 'stories behind' the participants' journeys would be useful; and

- in the judgment of the evaluation team, more effective use of data already collected by the project (for example, through the Star assessment tool and participant evaluation form) on wider outcomes could be made, if recorded centrally through, for example, CEMP.

Cross Cutting Themes (CCT)

10.24. The project has done particularly well in engaging participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in Cardiff and Newport, where the proportion of participants from these communities is considerably higher than the proportion of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in Wales. This may in part reflect higher unemployment rates amongst some black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (Gov, 2021), but also reflects the project's success in engaging what can be 'hard to reach' groups and in developing a person-centred approach to work with people with differing strengths, weakness and aspirations. However, it has underperformed in Monmouthshire, possibly because unemployment and economic inactivity rates amongst ethnic minorities in Monmouthshire are lower than Cardiff and Newport and populations are more dispersed (and therefore harder to connect with and engage).

10.25. The project has also been very active in terms of promoting health and well-being activities and is likely to make a strong contribution to tackling poverty. This reflects the profile of participants in terms of, for example, older people, levels of qualifications and ethnicity (groups who are exposed to a higher risk of poverty and/or social exclusion), and success in converting engagements into employment outcomes.

10.26. However, there are areas of weakness in addressing the CCT; for example, delivery of Welsh language activities has been limited by the very low numbers of Welsh speakers, but also, in Monmouthshire, by failures to

Commented [RB116]: Nigel: How might the operation better approach this in the time is has left to deliver?

Commented [RB117R116]: Good question, we've added more detail in recommendation 6 below

101

translate website material. The project has struggled to address occupational segregation, with participants mainly opting for traditional roles, despite being offered vocational options. Action here is important, as Wales has a more persistent and prevalent problem with occupational segregation than other parts of the UK. Research reviewed as part of the literature review suggests that tackling this poses challenges for employment support projects, which have limited time for working with participants who may have established ideas about themselves and their work expectations. The qualitative interviews with staffmentors did indeed reported that that most participants desire to go into work typically associated with their sex. The evidence suggests that the focus should be more on broadening people's horizons about employment possibilities, rather than 'challenging' them. Staff stated in interviews that they do have discussions with employers, for example around opportunities for encouraging women into engineering, that they can then invite participants to. Research also identifies that norms about 'suitable' employment may also differ for different ethnic groups (given differing cultural norms held by different ethnic groups). In tackling this, mentoring was a strong recommendation in some research and, coupled with role modelling, may be effective in expanding the horizons of the breadth of employment opportunities for women and men from both majority and minority ethnic communities. Research also highlights the danger of focusing only upon supporting women to broaden their horizons, and inadvertently discouraging the entry of men into female dominated professions.

> **Commented [HH(-W118]:** Would be good to know how this project addressed the issue of occupational segregation. Did they discuss the options with participants?
>
> **Commented [HP119R118]:** Thanks, text amended to include this.

> **Commented [HH(-W120]:** Did J2W do this?
>
> **Commented [HP121R120]:** No, this is given as an example of how addressing occupational segregation can be improved.

Recommendations

10.27. In the light of the findings, the recommendations to the beneficiaries include:

R1: Consider proposing to WEFO a reprofiling of the project targets, to increase the employment outcomes target for both EI and LTU participants, while reducing job search outcome targets (which cannot be claimed if a job outcome is claimed).

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

R2. Continuing to closely monitor project performance, given the uncertain economic outlook and risk that restrictions on social contact are reinstated, which may impact upon engagements and outcomes.

R3. Exploring how engagements with potential participants could be further strengthened. This should include: work with existing partners to raise awareness of the project and also sharing evidence of success (and the impact upon participants referred by partners); identifying potential partners who are known and trusted by people with more complex barriers to employment, such as drug and alcohol misuse and mental health services and community groups and organisations; and assessing the cost effectiveness of direct community outreach work.

R4: Celebrating and sharing good practice from the project around engagement and support for[145] participants from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, with partners and other local authorities and projects in Wales.

R5. Exploring how the project's offer of training, work experience and placements can be strengthened and made more attractive. Advisers are likely to have a key role here in drawing upon assessments of participants' skills and experience in order to advise clients on how investing in skills and experience may help them secure better paid and quality work; for example, training and/or work experience may be used to address issues like weakness in social and emotional skills, such as motivation, confidence and/or mood/anger management, basic or essential skills gaps, and/or specific skills gaps for particular jobs. Improving access to work experience and placements and addressing barriers to online learning (by enhancing ICT skills and improving access to devices and/or data) are also likely to be important.

---

[145]Engaging practice would likely need to be different in other local authorities, as Cardiff and Newport have a far higher proportion within the general population.

R6: Ensure a strong focus upon and reporting of activity to support the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs). It will also be important to ensure that all staff understand the importance of the CCTs. Actions should include:

- project partners to develop an 'active offer' of Welsh, and for example, enact recommendations around Welsh language engagement and offer for services (see e.g. p.14, Citizens Advice Bureau, 2015) and ~~Monmouthshire Housing Association (~~MHA~~)~~ to translate project promotional material on their website into Welsh;

- project partners to undertake additional activity focused upon challenging occupational segregation by broadening people's horizons about employment possibilities, rather than 'challenging' them and also encouraging men to consider entry into female dominated professions.

Project partners should also consider, for example:

- exploring the scope to develop mentoring and role modelling to expand participants' employment horizons;
- actively promoting the Social Model of Disability;
- developing advisers' skills and experience in relation to supporting currently under-represented groups, such as disabled people; and employer engagement to support employment of groups with complex barriers.

There may also, for example, be scope to continue to work online and/or by phone even once restrictions on social contact are eased, reducing the environmental impacts of travel. However, the needs of participants, who may struggle to access or engage with an online offer need to be balanced against the environmental gains, and a blended, and flexible, person-centred offer that works with participants' preferences, is likely to be appropriate.

R7: Explore options to systematically collate results from the Star assessment and participants' evaluation forms centrally, in order to strengthen monitoring of soft outcomes.

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **& Work**

R8: Reassess elements of how the new neighbourhood hub system works in Newport, such as establishing a system to cover staff workloads in cases of absence.

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Appendix 1: Additional research questions and objectives

The evaluation research questions and objectives are listed below.

Management and implementation

- To what extent has the operation implemented the aims, objectives and practices set out in the business plan?

- How well has the operation been managed in meeting the targets and satisfying ESF requirement

- How are the monitoring systems being used to help manage the operation?

- How is the central project team (NCC) perceived and how effective has it been (i.e. performance management, governance, health checks and the role of the project's strategic board.)?[146]

Delivery of operation

- What barriers exist which prevent participants entering employment?

- What support was provided across the regional operation to address participant needs? Who provided this support and were they appropriate to meet the needs of the provisions?

- How is the regional operation progressing against approved targets? Were there any differences in results and practices between different populations? What are the reasons for this?

---

[146] This question was added following the inception meeting for the project.

Pobl &
Gwaith
People
&Work

- To what extent have other regional and national programmes targeting Economically Inactive and Long Term Unemployed individuals affected the operations ability to recruit and support participants?

Outcomes and the impact of the operation

- To what extent did the regional operation succeed in supporting participants to complete a qualification, work experience/volunteering opportunity or job searching and gain employment?

- How effective were the different interventions at supporting participants to complete a qualification, work experience/volunteering opportunity or job searching and gain employment? Were some forms of support more effective? What are the reasons for any variation in performance?

- Is it possible to assess whether these interventions represent value for money against the option of doing nothing for these participants?

- To what extent were those participants who were unable to progress into employment able to benefit from the support provided by the operation?

- Are there any appreciable differences between those who received the intervention and those who did not in terms of their engagement progress towards gaining employment? (Dependent upon identification of comparator group).

Contribution to CCTs

- What contribution has been made in addressing the cross cutting themes (CCTs) as set out by WEFO?

- How has the operation performed against the delivery of CCT aims, objectives and commitments, as well as CCT related indicators, including what worked well/what didn't work, problems identified and how these were addressed? (see CCT indicators in Annexe 1)

Pobl&   People
Gwaith   &Work

- How effective has the operation been in responding to the needs and challenges of supporting those with low or no skills, a work limiting health condition or disability (including substance or alcohol misuse), care or childcare responsibilities, are aged over54, are from a BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES(Black, Minority Ethnic) group or from a jobless household?

- How, and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities for participants to develop skills and access opportunities that challenge stereotypical employment opportunities?

- How, and to what extent, has the operation identified language preference (Welsh/English) and provided opportunities to meet demand and for participants to develop and use their Welsh language skills in the workplace?

- How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being and Future Generations Act?

Achievements and sustainability

- What good practice and innovative interventions did the J2W operation deliver to support Economically Inactive and Long term Unemployed people aged 25 and over?

- Many participants derived significant benefit from J2W but were not able to achieve one of the indicators. Were these benefits adequately recorded and how should they be recognised as a contribution towards the success of the operation?

- Would the provision of more support from the operation post-employment have helped participants sustain their outcome?

- How did the support provided by J2W compare with that provided by other regional and national programmes targeting Economically Inactive and Long term Unemployed people aged 25 and over?

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

- How should any future support for Economically Inactive and Long term Unemployed people aged 25 and over be delivered post December 2022 and how should it be funded?

Pobl& People
Gwaith &Work

Appendix 2: Plain information sheet and General Data Protection Regulation

Evaluation of Journey 2 Work
Plain Information Sheet October 2020

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in the evaluation of Journey 2 Work. Before you decide whether to take part or not, please read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you

What is the evaluation?

The evaluation aims to understand how Journey 2 Work operates, how effective it has been and help inform any improvements that could be made. The evaluation started in September 2020 and is due to end in October 2022.

Who is funding and undertaking the evaluation?

This evaluation is being undertaken by People and Work, a voluntary sector organisation based in Cardiff, and has been commissioned by Newport City Council who lead and manage Journey 2 Work. The project itself is funded by the European Social Fund. The lead researcher is Dr Duncan Holtom, Head of Research at the People and Work.

Why have I been chosen?

We are keen to talk to you because you are involved in and have experience of Journey 2 Work. For example, because you are involved on planning or delivering the project or because you have been supported by the project.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Do I have to take part?

No. It will not cause you any harm should you choose not to participate, and you can withdraw your consent at any stage.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part, you will be contacted by a member of the People and Work evaluation team who will discuss how you can take part. This would usually involve arranging to interview you at a time that is convenient for you. Due to COVID-19/the Corona virus this would usually be by phone or video call (e.g. Zoom, Skype and Teams) The interview is likely to last around 30-40 minutes.

How will the information I provide be used?

We will need your name and contact details, such as phone number, so that we can contact you (this "personal information" will be covered by the General Data Protection Regulations). We will also collect information about your experiences and views. Any information you provide may be shared and discussed with other members of the research team. Reports will be submitted to Newport City Council, and they could potentially be published by Newport City Council and/or the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

This information is being collected and used with your agreement (your consent). This is the legal basis on which we will collect and use your information. If you choose not to, we will not collect or use your information.

Will my contribution to this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All information, which you provide will be kept anonymous (subject to legal requirements, such as requirement to share information to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and adults). Reports will not identify you or your organisation.

All data, such as notes from interviews will be stored securely, and kept for no more than three months after the end of the review before being destroyed.

111

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Are there are any risks if I take part?

No specific risks associated with participation in the study have been identified.

How can I find out more information?

If you would like more information about the evaluation, please contact: Duncan Holtom, Email: Duncan.Holtom@peopleandwork.org.uk; Tel: 029 2048 8536

If you have any question for Newport City Council, who commissioned and are funding this study, you can contact Andrew Smailes, email: Andrew.Smailes@newport.gov.uk.

What rights do I have?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GPDR) covers the collection and use of 'personal data' such as your name and contact details (personal data includes 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'). The GPDR gives you the following rights in relation to the personal data you provide as part of this research:

• The right of access (the right to request a copy of your own data);
• The right of rectification (the right to correct incorrect information);
• The right to object to or restrict processing (or use) of your data;
• The right to erasure (to have your personal data destroyed/deleted); and
• The right to lodge a complaint with the information commissioner's office.

For more information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and how you can exercise your rights in relation to the information we hold on you, please contact our data protection officer: Ann Churcher at ann.churcher@peopleandwork.org.uk

If you would like to make a complaint about the way we have used your personal data, you can contact the information commissioner's office at: casework@ico.org.uk Tel. 029 2067 8400 or 0303 123 1113

Thank you

Pobl & **People**
Gwaith **& Work**

Appendix 3: Scoping phase interview schedule for Operational Managers

Introduction

We (People and Work) have been commissioned by Newport City Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the J2W project. The evaluation began in September 2020 and should be completed in October 2022.

As part of the evaluation, we are interviewing operational managers. The questions are focussed on helping us understand how the project works and any challenges it faces.

Participation in the evaluation is voluntary and it will not cause you any problems if you choose not to. You can choose not to answer any questions or withdraw your consent at any point before any reports are produced.

If it's ok with you, I'll take notes of our discussions. We will use this to help us write reports for Newport City Council. Reports will not identify you by name but because there are only three operational managers there is a risk that your feedback might be identifiable. If there is anything that you would like us to treat as 'off the record' that informs out understanding, but which we don't not include in the reports, please let us know.

Do you have any questions? Are you happy with that?
Thank you

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

Introduction

1. Can you please briefly describe your role as an operational manager?

   *Are there any notable differences with operational managers' role in the other
   areas?*
   How would you describe your relationship with other operational managers?

The programme

2. Could you please briefly describe how the programme engages participants
   (recruitment) in your area? Has this changed much since the programme
   started and have there been any particular successes or challenges?

   *Explore Issues associated with COVID-19 (e.g. social distancing, changes to
   the labour market, digital exclusion)*
   *Have other regional & national programmes targeting EI & LTU individuals
   affected the operations ability to recruit participants?*
   How well is the programme doing against its targets?

3. What would you say was J2W unique selling point of the programme in your
   area? please describe?

4. What happens then? (i.e. after recruitment)? How are participants assessed?
   Has this changed much since the programme started and have there been
   any particular successes or challenges?

   *Explore Issues associated with COVID-19 (e.g. social distancing, changes to
   the labour market, digital exclusion).*

5. What happens then? (i.e. after assessment)? How are participants
   supported? What support, training and/or volunteering opportunities are they

offered? Has this changed much since the programme started and have there been any particular successes or challenges?

What barriers do participants face?

How effective is the programme at addressing participants' barriers?

Have other regional & national programmes targeting EI & LTU individuals affected the operation's ability to support participants?

How has this translated into outcomes?

6. Are some elements of the programme more important than others in helping participants to achieve their and the programmes goals? [e.g. is job search more important than volunteering or training?] why?

   Have there been any unexpected outcomes?

7. Do you think that more support from the operation post-employment would help participants sustain their outcomes? why?

8. **To what extent were those participants who were unable to progress into employment able to benefit from the support provided by the operation? How and why did they benefit?**

9. Do you feel that the project's indicators and measures enabled you to adequately record the benefits participants gained? [If not] why not? What was missed? And how should they be recognised as a contribution towards the success of the operation?

10. What are the key strengths of the programme? why?

11. Are there examples of good or innovative practice you would like to highlight?

**Pobl& People
Gwaith &Work**

12. Looking forward, what do you think are the key challenges and risks the programme faces in your area? And why?

13. How well has the central team managed and monitored the programme?

The evaluation

14. Do you think the evaluation is likely to face any challenges, and if yes, do you have any advice on how we can overcome these challenges?

    Engaging participants for interviews for the evaluation?
    Working within the COVID-19 restrictions

15. How does J2W compare to other national or regional employments support programmes? Does it offer more or something different?

16. If you wanted to benchmark J2SW against other programmes, what would you compare it with?

    Note: e.g. Workways+ (West Wales) and Bridges to Work (Central South Wales), and WCVA's AIF projects.

17. Please let us know of any research or datasets (outside the programme) that may be of use to the evaluation?

Close

18. Is there anything else that we have not talked about that you think is important?

Do you have any questions?   Thank you very much for your time

Pobl& | **People**
Gwaith | **&Work**

Appendix 4: Interview schedule for leads and managers (project staff).

Introduction

Have you received and understood the Plain Language Information sheet and Privacy Notice, explaining your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GPDR)? Do you have any questions? Are you happy to continue with the interview? If you don't want to answer a question or choose not to continue the interview at any point, that's fine. Thank you

Moreover, as this schedule covers stakeholders in different roles, some questions may not be as relevant to your role, please just let me know when this the case and I'll move on to the next question.

Thank you

Interviewees aide-mémoire

Interviews are vital to help us understand what the project did, and to identify "what works and for whom…how interventions work and why they work"; and also how the project could be improved, given the context for the project. Interviewers should therefore encourage interviewees to:

- talk through each stage of their work (**what** they do, **how** they do it, **who** they do it with and also where relevant, **when** they do it); and
- encourage them to reflect on **how well the project works** (or not), i.e. does their work for the project generate the intended changes/outcomes for different groups of participants/SMEs? And also **why they work** (or not) given the **context** for the project, and **how they could be improved**?

The questions in the schedule should help guide you in this, but are not intended as a script and you should use your best judgment to decide which questions to ask and which to omit, given the purpose of the interview (outlined above).

117

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

Interview details

Interviewee Name	
Job Title	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

Background and context

1. **Can you please briefly describe your role within the project?**
   Has the role changed since you started on the project? If yes can you please describe how it has changed?

2. **Can you please tell me what you think are the most important aspects of the context for the project and how they have shaped the project?**

   - *What stops or hinders people from improving from gaining employment?*
   - *Are there differences between EI and LTU or other types of participant (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity)?*
   - *What Impact has COVID-19 had upon participants' motivation and prospects for achieving outcomes?*
   - *Changes to delivery model (e.g. to neighbourhood model)?*

The project: engagement and assessment

3. **Could you please briefly describe how the project engages participants? Has this changed much since the programme started and have there been any particular successes or challenges?**

   - How does the 'one point of access for all pre-employment provision across your LA work (e.g. hub system in Cardiff)?

- *What role do partners (within and outside your LA/HA e.g. JCP, other ESF projects, Job Club) play?*
- *How many people are referred by partners?*
- *How good are referrals?*
- *How well is the project marketed / promoted?*
- *What help do people want?*
- *How well is the programme performing against its recruitment targets?*
- *How diverse is recruitment (e.g. Over 50s, women, BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES), what tactics are used?*
- *What impact has COVID-19 had upon recruitment and referrals?*
- *What steps did you take to minimise any negative impacts and seize any opportunities the COVID-19 crisis created?*
- **[If not answered] What would you say was unique selling point of the project? please describe? (e.g. not post-coded like CfW)**

4. **[If not answered] Do you have suggestions [even if not currently needed] about how recruitment and referrals could be improved for the project?**

5. **What happens then? (i.e. after recruitment)? How are participants assessed / registered? Have there been any particular successes or challenges associated with this? Any things recorded beyond what WEFO expected?**

   - *Can you please describe the role of project staff member that assessed you?*
   - *What types of needs and aspirations do participants have?*
   - *Does the process identify needs and aspirations that cannot be met?*
   - *How useful is the CEMP system?*
   - *Do staff have the time and skills needed?*
   - *Are there any issues with volume of paperwork?*
   - *Can you please describe the Impact of COVID-19 upon the support you provide and how you provide that support?*

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

The project: support and outcomes

6. **Can you please describe how are participants supported (e.g. one to one and group mentoring, bespoke training[147], careers advice, volunteering ops etc)? Have you provided additional support that you had not initially planned for or anticipated? Have there been any particular successes or challenges associated with support for participants?**

   - *What role do mentors play?*
   - *Can you please describe the role of training providers (e.g. Colleges and Passport to Work)?*
   - *Can you please describe the internal training provision?*
   - *Has the FR40 (note: the ability to provide one to one funding to participants) helped? If yes, how?*
   - *How effective is the support the project offers at addressing participants' needs and aspirations?*
   - *How is support tailored to meet the individual circumstances, demands and needs of the participant?*
   - *What barriers do participants face?*
   - *Any issues with volunteering placements?*
   - *Is the training and support enough?*
   - *Do staff have the time and skills needed?*
   - *Can you please describe the Impact of COVID-19 upon the support you provide and how you provide that support?*

7. **How successful has the support translated into outcomes for participants? Are they on target? have there been any unexpected outcomes? Challenges?**

   Outcomes:

---

[147] E.g. First Aid, CCS, SIA, HGV, driving lessons, DBS and TA training.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

- Employment
- Employment after 6 months
- Qualification
- Improved labour market situation
- Job search upon leave (note: issue can't record this if record employment)
- Enter education
- Work relevant certification
- Increase hours
- Return to work
- Reduced risk of becoming NEET
- STEM training

8. **To what extent were those participants who were unable to progress into employment able to benefit from the support provided by the operation? How and why did they benefit?**

9. Do you feel that the project's indicators and measures enabled you to adequately record the benefits participants gained? [If not] why not? What was missed? And how should they be recognised as a contribution towards the success of the operation?

10. Do you think that more support from the operation post-employment would help participants sustain their outcomes? why?

11. Are there examples of good or innovative practice you would like to highlight?

12. **[If not answered] Do you have suggestions [even if not currently needed] on how support and / or outcomes could be improved?**

Management, sustainability and CCT

13. **How well do you feel the programme is being managed?**
    - Contingency plans for COVID-19?

121

Pobl & People
Gwaith &Work

- What has worked well? What has not worked well?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvements in terms of how the project is managed?
- How well have Newport CC (lead) managed the project?

14. How if the project preparing for the future (post ESF)? And are there any lessons learned in terms of delivery models?
- Are you looking at future funding options e.g. the Shared Prosperity Fund?
- Do you think a single point of access for employment support services based upon hubs is an appropriate model? Why?

15. Can you please describe how the project activities relate or contribute to the cross cutting themes of Equal Opportunities & Gender Mainstreaming; Sustainable Development; and Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion?

Equal Opportunities & Gender Mainstreaming:
- Welsh language (e.g. Welsh language marketing material, choice for participants to access activities/resources through medium Welsh, Welsh lessons, raising awareness of Welsh culture)
- Examples of positive action to engage and support women (e.g. Staff training around equality; help to access childcare; help to access /health/social services and public services such as libraries)?
- Activities, which challenge occupational segregation (i.e. people encouraged to do work/activities that do not fit in with gender stereotype) (e.g. careers advice, women doing STEM type jobs/activities, men in caring jobs, activities that encourage equal pay)?
- Any positive action for older people (those over 54) (e.g. staff training around equality; marketing material targeting them; help to access health/social services?)

Sustainable Development:
- Resource efficiency measures (e.g. involvement in any environmental type schemes / awards, energy efficiency, re-use, recycle and reduce waste, good

waste management, use of Skype etc to communicate, production of an eco-code)

- Development of an organisational travel and sustainable transport initiatives (e.g. encouraging use of public transport, walking, cycling, creating a list of public transport options for staff, involvement in a sustainable travel to work scheme)
- Local supply chain development (e.g. utilising local market for training and resources for the project, foundation economy, procurement platforms such as Sell2Wales).

Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion

- Peer support activity (e.g. participants and volunteers supporting each other such as through Facebook, WhatsApp group etc, mentoring each other); and/or
- Community skill building activity (e.g. volunteering and mentoring activities).

Close

16. **Is there anything else that we have not talked about that you think is important?**

17. **Do you have any questions?**

Thank you very much for your time

Pobl & | **People**
Gwaith | **& Work**

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for participants

Introduction

Have you received and understood the Plain Language Information sheet and Privacy Notice? Do you have any questions? Are you happy to continue with the interview? If you don't want to answer a question or choose not to continue the interview at any point, that's fine.

Thank you

Interviewees aide-mémoire

Interviews are vital to help us understand how the project worked with and supported participants, in order to help us identify "what works and for whom…how interventions work and why they work"; and also how the project could be improved, given the context for the project. Interviewers should therefore encourage interviewees to:

- talk through each stage of their engagement with the project (**what** the project did and also what they did, **how** the project and they did it, and also where relevant, **when** they and/or the project did it); and
- encourage them to reflect on **how well the project works** (or not), i.e. did the support from the project contribute to the intended changes/outcomes? And also **why did it work** (or not) given the **context** for the project, and **how could the project be improved**?

The questions in the schedule should help guide you in this, but are not intended as a script and you should use your best judgment to decide which questions to ask and which to omit, given the purpose of the interview (outlined above).

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Note: where possible, information about the characteristics of participants should be gathered from project staff in advance (i.e. gender, age range, ethnicity, EI or LTU and local authority domicile). If this is not possible, please ask them.

Interviewee Name	
Interviewee's gender	
Interviewee's age (e.g. 16-24; 25-53; 54+)	
Interviewee's status (EI or LTU)	
Interviewee's ethnicity (e.g. White British/Welsh, black, Asian or minority ethnic etc)	
Interviewee's location	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

Engagement

1. **Can you please tell me about your first contact with the Journey 2 Work project?** *E.g.*
   - Hub or other local authority service point of contact
   - Job centre
   - Job club
   - Other employment type project (CfW, etc)
   - Word of mouth / friend of family

Pobl & People
Gwaith & Work

- Social media advert (Facebook, twitter) and/ or advert in community setting
- Charity / community orgs
- Influence of COVID -19

2. **Why did you join the project and what help did you want from the project [avoid discussing barriers]?** *E.g.*
   - Employment
   - Career
   - Looking for a new direction in life
   - Boredom
   - No real reason just referred (e.g. risk of benefit sanction)

   E.g. In terms of intervention/ help they wanted::
   - Training (specify what type, soft skills or more specific)[148]
   - Further education
   - Help with CV
   - Interview skills
   - Careers advice
   - Job search
   - Local job market expertise
   - Volunteering / work experience
   - Other life issues, please specify

Barriers

3. **What has been making it hard or stopping you achieve employment/career ambitions?** *E.g.*
   - Lack or wrong type of skills
   - Lack of career advice / knowledge
   - Local job market

---

[148] [148] E.g. First Aid, CCS, SIA, HGV, driving lessons, DBS and TA training.

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

- Caring or other responsibilities
- Financial constraints
- Link with employers
- Social networks
- 'Got stuck in a rut'
- Difficult to travel
- COVID-19

The Project

4. **Can you please tell me what you've done with the project staff member that assessed you [name]?**
   - *Roughly, how many times have you met*
   - *Roughly, how long do spend with her/him*
   - *What did you do? What did you discuss?*
   - *What was good about it? Was anything not so good?*
   - *What impact did COVID-19 have upon the support?*
   - *Based upon your experience, is there anything you think the project could improve or do differently?*

5. **How did the [mentor name] help you?**
   [see list probes to question 2 and 4]

6. **[If relevant] How does the support differ from support you've had from other projects or services?**
   E.g.
   - Compared with Job Centre, charities, Communities for Work+, Active Inclusion

7. **What difference has the project made to you? E.g.**
- Confidence (and other soft skills)
- Employment
- Qualification

- Improved labour market situation
- Job search upon leave
- Enter education
- Work relevant certification
- Increase hours
- Return to work
- STEM training
  - **Has it made any other important differences to you or your family?**
  - **Have you been surprised by what you have achieved?**

8. **Do you think you would have achieved these [outcome listed above] without the project?**
   - *If yes, how? And would it had taken longer? If no, why not?*

Recommendation and close

9. **Could the project be improved in any way?**

10. **Is there anything else that we have not talked about that you think is important?**

Do you have any questions?

Thank you very much for your time

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for partners

<table>
<tr><td>

Introduction

Have you received and understood the Plain Language Information sheet and Privacy Notice? Do you have any questions? Are you happy to continue with the interview? If you don't want to answer a question or choose not to continue the interview at any point, that's fine.

Thank you

</td></tr>
</table>

Interview details

Interviewee Name	
Job Title and Organisation	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

Background and context

1. **Can you please describe your relationship with the project?**

   - *What was your relationship with Journey 2 Work?*
   - *Do you refer participants? how do you refer them??*
   - *Do you offer support / training to participants, how?*
   - *Do you support project staff, how?*

Pobl & People
Gwaith &Work

2. **Can you please tell me what you think are the most important aspects of the context for the project and how they have shaped the project?**

   - *What stops or hinders people from gaining employment?*
   - *What Impact has COVID-19 had upon employment?*
      - What other projects or services focus upon employment support for LTU or EI adults in Cardiff, Monmouthshire and Newport?
   - *Is there a gap in the market for the project? [If yes] What gap in the market does the project fill? What is its unique selling point?*

The project: referral partners

3. **Can you please describe how the referral process works? And who and why do you refer people to the project? Are there any particular strengths or challenges in relation to referral that you would like to highlight?**

   - *What areas (geographically) do you cover?*
   - *Do you check the eligibility of participants for the project? How?*
   - *What is your relationship with the project staff? And Project management?*
   - *Is the project marketed well?*
   - *Does J2W have a good reputation?*
   - *What impact has COVID-19 had upon referrals to the project?*
   - *Do referrals help you meet your organisational targets? is making referrals part of your organisation's culture or ethos?*
   - *How diverse are the people you refer (e.g. Over 50s, women, BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES)?*
   - *Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how the referral process can be improved?*

Project: training partners

4. **Can you please describe how the training process works? Are there any particular strengths or challenges associated with the training the project offers?**
   - *With participants, or project staff?*
   - *How did you become a training provider for the project (procured)?*
   - *What training do you offer? [explore content, duration, volume of training, levels etc]*
   - *How do the people you work with benefit from the training?*
   - *Do you cover STEM subjects?*
   - *How diverse are the people from the project you train (e.g. Over 50s, women, BAME people)?*
   - *Are people from the project undertaking training in non-traditional areas or areas that challenge gender stereotypes? (e.g. women in STEM training?)*
   - *Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how the training can be improved?*

5. **[if not already answered] What outcomes do participants achieve from the training?**
   - *Do you have any feedback you can share from people you've trained?*
   - *How does the training help the person (e.g. type of employment)?*
   - *Have there been any unexpected outcomes?*

CCT

18. Can you please describe how the project activities relate or contribute to the cross cutting themes of Equal Opportunities & Gender Mainstreaming; Sustainable Development; and Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion?

Equal Opportunities & Gender Mainstreaming:

131

- Welsh language (e.g. Welsh language marketing material, choice for participants to access activities/resources through medium Welsh, Welsh lessons, raising awareness of Welsh culture)
- Examples of positive action to engage and support women (e.g. Staff training around equality; help to access childcare; help to access /health/social services and public services such as libraries)?
- Activities, which challenge occupational segregation (i.e. people encouraged to do work/activities that do not fit in with gender stereotype) (e.g. careers advice, women doing STEM type jobs/activities, men in caring jobs, activities that encourage equal pay)?
- Any positive action for older people (those over 54) (e.g. staff training around equality; marketing material targeting them; help to access health/social services?)

Sustainable Development:

- Resource efficiency measures (e.g. involvement in any environmental type schemes / awards, energy efficiency, re-use, recycle and reduce waste, good waste management, use of Skype etc to communicate, production of an eco-code)
- Development of an organisational travel and sustainable transport initiatives (e.g. encouraging use of public transport, walking, cycling, creating a list of public transport options for staff, involvement in a sustainable travel to work scheme)
- Local supply chain development (e.g. utilising local market for training and resources for the project, foundation economy, procurement platforms such as Sell2Wales).

Pobl& **People**
Gwaith **&Work**

Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion

- Peer support activity (e.g. participants and volunteers supporting each other such as through Facebook, WhatsApp group etc, mentoring each other); and/or
- Community skill building activity (e.g. volunteering and mentoring activities).

Close

6. **[If not covered] Could the project be improved in any way?**

7. **Is there anything else that we have not talked about that you think is important?**

Do you have any questions?

Thank you very much for your time