

**YOUNG WOMEN'S
EXPERIENCES OF
CAREERS ADVICE
AND GUIDANCE
IN WALES**



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1. Executive Summary

Chwarae Teg's vision is a fairer Wales where women achieve and prosper. Working with women, businesses, educators and decision-makers since 1992, Chwarae Teg aim to ensure that women achieve and prosper across all sectors and at all levels in the economy, are visible and influential across all sectors of the economy, society and in public life, and are empowered to achieve their potential, regardless of their background, social status, or geographic location.

Our labour market is still segregated on the basis of gender. Women continue to be under-represented in senior positions in many sectors and are much less likely to be working in sectors traditionally seen as "male", such as construction, engineering and manufacturing. This inequality and segregation is shaped by the choices that are made early in our lives. Careers advice and guidance is therefore a critical tool in challenging stereotypical ideas about career pathways and tackling gender segregation in the workplace. With new sectors likely to see significant growth, such as green tech and digital, without action we're likely to see the same inequality recreated and reinforced.

This research explores how well careers services in Wales are meeting young women's needs and seeks to identify and understand the challenges as we navigate and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. Through desk-based research, an online survey of young women and engagement with careers support providers, we've considered the availability of careers support, content and delivery models, the impact of the pandemic and the wider perception and understanding of careers services.

Pandemic

The pandemic has disrupted access to education and experiences, such as work experience and employer engagement events, due to cancellation of in person events alongside businesses and education moving to remote working for social distancing. This has reduced young women's opportunities to network, speak informally to adults and learn through hands on experience. This was a key reason for significant variance between the age groups of young women respondents to a number of questions, including: awareness and use of services; most common route for accessing career support; and experience of targeted services such as development of soft skills, completion of work experience and advice about new and emerging industries.

For example, only 39% of 14 – 18 year old respondents have completed work experience compared to 88% of 19 – 25 year old respondents. The most common route for organisation of work experience for the older age group was by their school, whereas for the younger age group the most common way by themselves, a parent or a relative. This is concerning from an equality perspective as reliance on parents or relatives to support work experience will negatively impact those with fewer connections and increase the opportunity gap.

The social distancing measures of the pandemic has also impacted the route of delivery for support, with the forced increase in online delivery of support, education and work. 10 of the 13 career service provider survey respondents reported that their services have

changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. 8 shared that there has been a move towards providing remote or virtual consultations with service users online, via email, or by telephone. This increase in opportunities to connect virtually has increased access to events and individuals that would otherwise be prohibitive due to being geographically distant and it will be important to foster a hybrid approach moving forward, with a mixture of in person and virtual careers services.

Availability of careers support and Delivery Methods

Gender stereotypes continue to be an issue in Wales and is particularly marked in the choices of young women with low socio-economic backgrounds, for example those eligible for free school meals. To help challenge gender stereotypes and occupational segregation, it is essential to increase the visibility of women in diverse roles across all sectors and at all levels of leadership. Young women stated that connecting to women in roles and industries they were interested in pursuing through work experiences, networking, employer engagement and mentoring schemes, has been an instrumental part of their career development, support and education.

A huge responsibility for informal careers support is placed on teachers and raises the question of how best to enable them to stay up to date on information about the labour market and training to challenge stereotypes, without further overloading them. There is a need for teachers to participate in careers training to ensure they understand and can share information about the diverse career routes available to their students, but it is essential that there is a careers service in place for teachers to refer and signpost young women to trained professional career advisors as needed.

Key areas for improvement identified:

- Close the gap between awareness and use of careers services
- First contact with services comes too late at 14-16 years old
- Move away from one-size fits all delivery
- Create better links between career services and parents
- Improve and increase support and training for teachers

Content of Careers Support

Almost half of the young women survey respondents, 42%, felt that career support **has given** them what they needed, whilst 26% stated that career support **did not** give them what they needed. 67% of 19-25 year olds reported engagement with potential employers, compared to just 46% of 14-18 year olds, and just 18% of respondents overall reported engagement with employers through talks at school, college or university.

Key areas for improvement identified:

- More targeted support and interventions for women
- Opportunities for young women to hear from role models and access mentoring
- Information about new and emerging industries, including 'green jobs'
- Financial advice as part of wider careers education and support
- More support around work experience and developing work-related skills

Career Services Profession

More consistency is needed in where and how resources are updated to ensure career advice and guidance is up to date on emerging industries and opportunities. Career service professionals should work together to create a resource centre for all career service providers to access aligned up-to-date information on the labour market and emerging industries to bring consistency to the advice and support available.

There is a lack of understanding about how gender shapes young women's experiences, opportunities and outcomes. There seems to be a real focus on equality of opportunity, and not any real consideration of whether women are gaining the same benefits from the career service provision. All career service providers should make equality and unconscious bias training mandatory for all involved in delivering career education and advice. This training must focus on achieving equitable outcomes not just equality of opportunity.

Perception and Understanding of Careers Services

There is a need to improve the image of career services as the prevailing narrative, especially around school career services, is that a career advisor's advice will be generic, gender stereotyped and likely to misdirect or undervalue the receiver. However, career service providers are trained, qualified professionals held to high standards and expected to undertake ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) to keep up to date. Not only this, but they are passionate about delivering a relevant and up to date service. Educators and others need to challenge negative perceptions that might be keeping engagement levels low.

There is also a need to do more to ensure a shared understanding of what constitutes career advice and support. The language used to identify and discuss different elements of career services needs to be made consistent and clearer to enable young women to search for and utilise the appropriate support as required during their life. Clearly defined career service elements may also enable a conversation around what to expect from 'successful' career support, helping to create a more positive narrative around career services.

2. Introduction

Chwarae Teg's vision is a fairer Wales where women achieve and prosper. They have been working with women, businesses, educators and decision-makers since 1992 to tackle the barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential. Chwarae Teg's work is focused around three main objectives; women in the economy; women at risk and women represented. Through their programme delivery, research and influencing work they aim to ensure that women achieve and prosper across all sectors and at all levels in the economy, are visible and influential across all sectors of the economy, society and in public life, and are empowered to achieve their potential, regardless of their background, social status, or geographic location.

Chwarae Teg is the leading authority on gender equality in Wales and works with influencers and decision makers to deliver lasting change, shaping the debate to empower women to achieve their potential. Research is a key part of Chwarae Teg's work to build the evidence-base, spark debate and develop practical recommendations for change.

Our labour market is still segregated on the basis of gender. Women continue to be under-represented in senior positions in many sectors and are much less likely to be working in sectors traditionally seen as "male", such as construction, engineering and manufacturing. This inequality and segregation is shaped by the choices that are made early in our lives. Careers advice and guidance is therefore a critical tool in challenging stereotypical ideas about career pathways and tackling gender segregation in the workplace.

In this research we explore how well the current careers advice provision in Wales is meeting young women's needs and seek to identify and understand what the unmet needs are as we navigate and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Background - Research Rationale

Gender Inequality in the Welsh Economy

The Welsh economy remains unequal. Gender continues to affect people's ability to work, their working hours, pay and contract type and the sectors and job roles they are likely to work in. This inequality is captured by the most recent figures from the Annual Population Survey (July 2020 – June 2021), presented in Chwarae Teg's 2022 State of the Nation Report¹:

- The employment rate for women aged 16-64 in Wales is 69% compared to 75% for men
- Of those who are economically inactive, 24% of women state this is due to looking after family / the home compared to 6% of men
- 37% of women in Wales work part-time compared to 11% of men
- 77% of the manufacturing workforce, 67% of the ICT workforce and 88% of the construction workforce are men
- Women account for 39% of managers, directors and senior officials

As a result of this inequality, there is still a gender pay gap of 12% in Wales¹.

Women are not a homogenous group, and some groups of women experience greater inequality and different barriers. The employment rate for disabled women is much lower again, sitting at 53%¹. Similarly, for ethnic minority women the employment rate is lower at 56%, although when broken down further we see a significant variation for different ethnic groups¹.

Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Occupational Segregation

The causes of gender inequality are varied and complex. A key issue has been identified around gendered stereotypes shaping young people's decisions about what subjects to study and what career paths to pursue. For decades, academic researchers have explored when children develop gender stereotypes and behaviours², and evidence has shown that gender is tightly linked to occupational aspirations of young people.

For example, a report from World Skills UK in 2018 found that young men aspire to a median salary of £1,063 more than young women, and that there was an 18-point difference between how likely young men are to say they are considering a job in engineering or IT compared to women³.

We can see this is true in Wales by looking at the workforce and recent (2021) uptake of apprenticeships in stereotypically male dominated sectors by gender⁴:

- In railway construction and engineering:

¹ Chwarae Teg (2022) *State of the Nation* https://chwaraeteg.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/State-of-the-Nation-2022_digital.pdf (Accessed March 2022)

² Martin & Ruble (2010) *Patterns of Gender Development*, Annual Review Psychology Vol 61: 353-381 [10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511) (Accessed March 2022)

³ World Skills UK (2018) *Closing the Gender Gap*

⁴ Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2021) *Skills & (Re)Training for a Prosperous, Green & Equal Recovery* <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FINAL-ENG-Green-Skills-6-pager.pdf> (Accessed March 2022)

- 20-30% employees are female⁵.
- 150 annual apprentice starts in rail engineering; 0% were female.
- In social housing construction and housing retrofit (including insulation, windows / doors, boiler / heating):
 - 27% of the workforce is female.
 - 3% of apprenticeship starts in general construction were female.
- In agriculture, forestry, nature restoration and related trades:
 - Around 25% of the workforce is female.
- In electric installation, including broadband, electric vehicles and solar panels:
 - 29% of the workforce is female.
 - There are between 360-490 annual apprenticeship starts in electrotechnical, 2% are female.

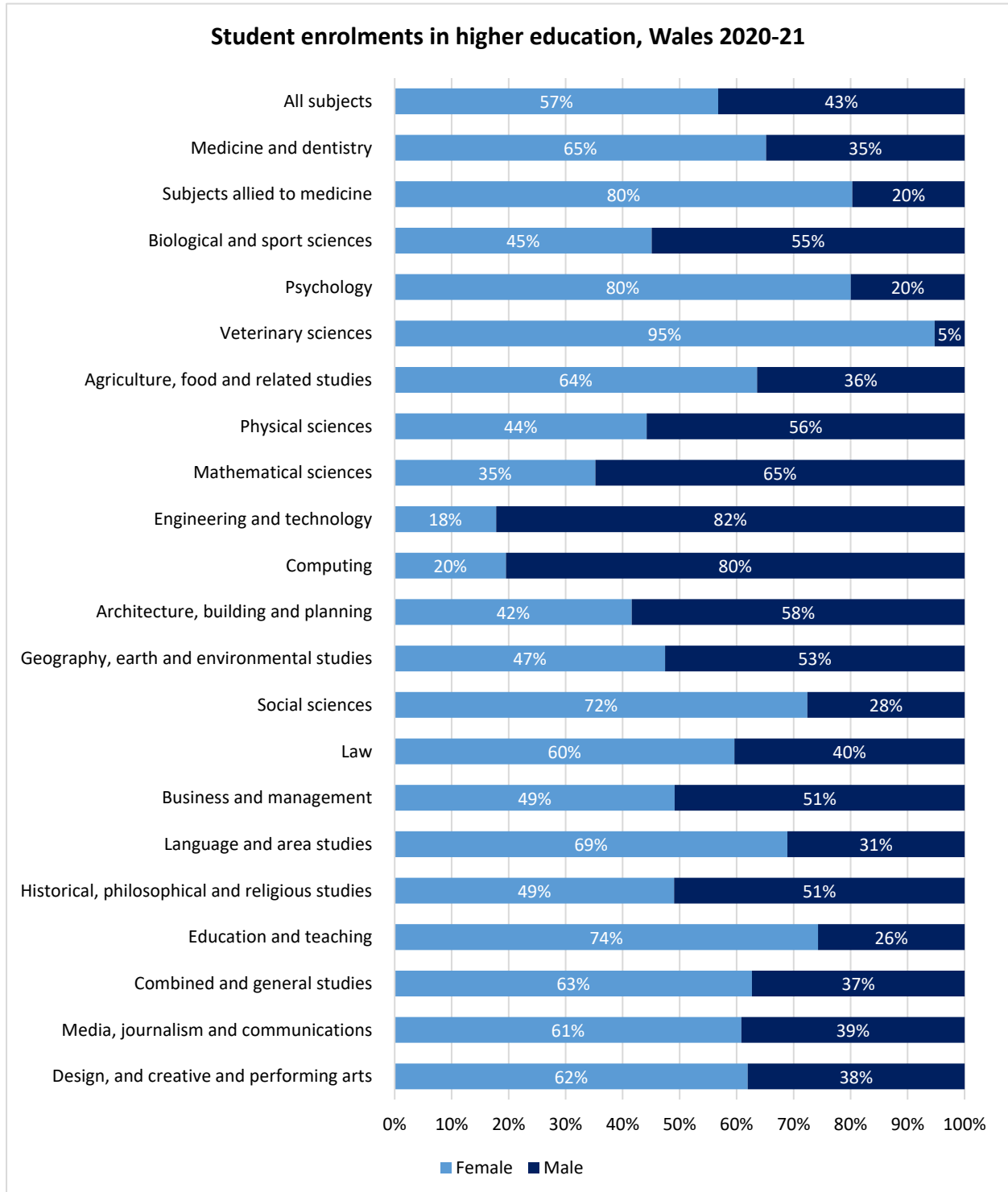
Careers advice and guidance can therefore play a critical role in addressing gender inequality by supporting career planning and decision-making and challenging gendered assumptions. Additionally, support to gain meaningful work experience is a further important role for careers support services; UNESDOC state that high quality employer engagement can be “*especially effective in challenging gendered assumptions and other forms of stereotyping about occupations.*”⁶.

This occupational segregation starts in school with gendered subject choices, as shown by the graph below⁷:

⁵ Note on language use, throughout this report we will use the terms “woman / women” and “man / men” to discuss gender, unless quoting from research or statistics which have segregated by “female” and “male”.

⁶ UNESDOC (2019) Investing in Career Guidance

⁷ StatsWales, *Student enrolments in Wales by HECOS subject, level and mode of study*, <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Higher-Education/Students/student-enrolments-in-wales-by-subject-level-and-mode-of-study> (Access: April 2022)



Provision of Careers Advice in Wales

Wales has a National Career Service, Careers Choices Dewis Gyrfa Ltd (CCDG), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government that provides “*all age, independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales*”⁸. The work of

⁸ Careers Wales ‘About Us’ <https://careerswales.gov.wales/about-us> (accessed March 2022)

Careers Wales is shaped by an annual remit letter from the Minister for the Economy. Although it is a single needs-based service for all ages, CCDG have 3 distinct areas of work:

- **Careers Wales Careers Advisers**– This focuses primarily on Key Stage 4 in schools and colleges supporting young people in making decisions around GCSE subject choices. This is often delivered by providing support to schools and colleges to enhance their curriculum around Careers Education.
- **Education Business Exchange** – A national database of employers who are willing to engage with schools through a variety of activities such as careers fairs, site visits or assemblies.
- **Working Wales Service** – For everyone over the age of 16, which focuses on supporting people to overcome obstacles that may be hindering accessing work, including: funding for training; help for childcare; redundancy support; disability and ill health specialist support; and skills training.

The CCDG, through Careers Wales and Working Wales, are the main body providing careers services to young women in Wales. However, careers support and services are also provided by a diverse mix of organisations including: schools; colleges; universities; youth clubs; and, charities, such as Princes Trust and Mullany Fund.

One of the CCDG's 6 core aims is to help “*address inequality by focusing on the needs of groups who are under-represented in employment, learning or training and by challenging stereotyping.*” To meet this aim CCDG has strong partnerships with other organisations in Wales working with under-represented or at-risk groups with the target of creating a national network of support where organisations are able to refer and signpost individuals to the most appropriate organisation for their needs. To this end the CCDG have an online **Support Finder** tool which directs individuals to organisations in their local area which could support them and identifies potential funding opportunities for their circumstances too.

Since the CCDG is government-led, it aligns to and is a service for delivery of Welsh Government Programmes such as the **Young Person's Guarantee** which launched in November 2021 and is “*an ambitious programme to smooth the difficult labour market transitions for young people under 25.*”⁹. The aim is to support a Welsh Government target goal that “*at least 90% of 16-24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050*”⁹. The joined up national approach enables these goals to be linked to existing successful programmes as well as connected to new initiatives as they develop, such as the **Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)**.

There are 4 RSPs in Wales ‘*to drive investment in skills by developing responses based upon local and regional need*’¹⁰ in South East Wales, South West Wales, Mid Wales and North Wales. The RSPs analyse the economic challenges and likely areas of growth in the region to identify the skills that will be required for the future labour market, this

⁹ Welsh Government (2022) *Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills*

¹⁰ Welsh Government – Regional Skills Partnerships <https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/skills-development/regional-skills-partnerships> (Accessed March 2022)

informs and influences the Welsh Government funding for further education in each region.

Chwarae Teg's research with young women in Wales published in 2018 found a number of challenges with careers provision in Wales¹¹:

- 71% of young women (age 16-25) do not have a career plan
 - Of those that do have a career plan, 42% are working on it in isolation
- 64% of young women have not used formal careers advice services
 - Of those that are, or have used careers advice services the majority have accessed via their school and 54% say it was helpful

Since this research in 2018, Careers Wales have implemented **Changing Lives: A vision for Careers Wales 2017-2020**. This strategic plan set out how Careers Wales intended to achieve its vision for "*all young people to move smoothly and successfully into employment and for adults to be inspired to take control of their lives.*"¹² It set out a new, blended approach to delivery for young people, the Career Discovery Model.

A new strategy, **Brighter Futures**, is in place for 2021-26 which sets out Careers Wales' purpose as being "*to support young people and adults in Wales to create brighter futures...through access to high quality, impartial careers support that makes apposite impact on individuals' education, economic and wellbeing outcomes.*"¹³

This aligns with **The Welsh Government's Plan for Employability and Skills**¹⁴, launched in March 2022, in which the 5 key areas prioritised for action are:

1. Young people realising their potential
2. Tackling economic inequality
3. Championing Fair Work for all
4. Supporting people with a long term health condition to work
5. Nurturing a learning for life culture

The first area aims to deliver The Welsh Government's **Young Person's Guarantee**, through the CCDG's Working Wales department¹⁵.

Pandemic

The pandemic has had a significant impact on all elements of our lives – how we work, how we learn and how we engage with friends and family. The impact has not fallen equally, with women, people of colour, disabled people, people on low incomes and young people all more vulnerable to the health and/or economic impacts of the crisis.

It was projected that young people would be hit hardest by job losses as they dominate in sectors that were forced to remain closed during lockdowns¹⁶. Interruptions to schooling, periods of home-schooling and challenges with accessing work experience

¹¹ Chwarae Teg (2018) Bright: Young Women's Career Aspirations

¹² Career Wales (2017) Changing Lives: A Vision for Careers Wales 2017 – 20

¹³ Careers Wales (2021) Brighter Futures: Our Vision 2021-26

¹⁴ Welsh Government (2022) Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: *A Plan for Employability and Skills*

¹⁵ Welsh Government (2021) *PR: Welsh Government's Young Person's Guarantee officially launched* <https://gov.wales/welsh-governments-young-persons-guarantee-officially-launched> (Accessed March 2022)

¹⁶ J. Rodriguez, Wales Fiscal Analysis (2020) Briefing Paper Covid-19 and the Welsh economy: shutdown sectors and key workers

opportunities as a result of restrictions all pose a significant risk to young people in Wales.

Recent evidence has shown that the pandemic has had a major impact on the mental health of young people, with the number of children assessed as having a mental health need increasing by 25% in March 2021 compared to March 2019, with nearly 1,500 children presenting to social works every week¹⁷.

A nation-wide survey of children and young people aged 3 – 18, undertaken by the Children’s Commissioner for Wales in January 2021, found that strong negative feelings were expressed across all age groups with 30% of 17-18 year olds stating they were worried “most of the time”¹⁸. Around 60% of 15-18 year olds did not feel confident about learning during this time and were concerned it would affect their qualifications¹⁸.

This Research Project

It is essential to understand young women’s experience of career services in Wales, and how the pandemic has impacted on this experience, to inform policies and service development to tackle gender inequality, challenge gender stereotyping and reduce occupational segregation in Wales. This research aims to explore young women’s experience of career services through a complimentary mix of desk-based research and primary research.

¹⁷ Local Government Association (2022) *Surge in Children with Mental Health Problems seen by Councils During Pandemic* <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/surge-children-mental-health-problems-seen-councils-during-pandemic> (Accessed March 2022)

¹⁸ Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2021) *Coronavirus and Me: A second nationwide survey of the views and experiences of children and young people in Wales*

4. Research Methods

This research seeks to understand the careers advice and support available to young women in Wales and explore whether it is meeting the diverse needs of women and preparing them for the future, particularly in the context of the pandemic.

The research aims to amplify young women's voices and offer practical recommendations to Welsh Government, providers of careers advice and employability programmes and wider stakeholders to ensure support in responding to young women's needs.

The research considers how the pandemic has affected young women's career aspirations and plans for the future, any concerns they may have, and consider how careers support can best respond to these.

The following seven core research questions were explored:

1. Are careers advice and support services effectively reaching out and informing girls and young women from diverse backgrounds about the future of work and the labour market?
2. What career advice programmes and services are available in Wales for girls and young women?
3. What are young women's experiences of careers advice and support?
4. What impact did careers advice and support have on young women?
5. What are young women's experiences of work experience and engagement with employers?
6. What impact has Covid-19 had on young women's career aspirations, plans and access to careers advice?
7. What support do young women need and when?

To capture insights addressing these research objectives, Gatehouse ICS conducted multifaceted research; starting with desk-based research to determine what career services are currently available to young women in Wales. This informed the creation of 2 online surveys comprising a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions to understand awareness, accessibility, use and experience of these services; one for young women aged 14 – 25 living or studying in Wales; and, one for career service providers. To delve deeper into points of insight, provide context and gain fuller understanding of how effectively careers services are reaching young women from diverse backgrounds, we undertook one-to-one interviews with 6 career service providers.

Limitations of the Research

Desk based research was undertaken with a pragmatic rather than prescriptive methodology, this allowed pivoting to the most useful sources of data for this research. A limitation with pragmatic methodology is that it is not exhaustive.

Although effort was made to increase participation of young women from diverse demographic backgrounds, especially around geographical settings, employment status, age and ethnic backgrounds, it was not possible to access a representative number of young women for each demographic category. Therefore, we have not been able to undertake any subgroup analysis and the research may be limited in relation to

accurately reflecting views of all subgroups of the target population of young women in Wales between the ages of 14-25.

Further, career service providers are only able to speak from their own experience about the young women who they have engaged with their services, limiting our ability to capture all the young women who 'fall through the gaps'.

Desk Based Research – Identifying Career Service Providers

The desk based research was not exhaustive or a systematic literature review. It was a pragmatic approach to inform and underpin the quantitative and qualitative research that followed. Starting from a list of key career support resources in Wales, compiled by considering different categories of provider such as colleges, schools, universities, charity based, government led.

- Adult Learning - <https://www.adultlearning.wales/#>
- BBC Careers - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/>
- Business Wales - <https://businesswales.gov.wales/>
- Career Development Institute - <https://www.thecdi.net/Developing-Yourself/Wales>
- Career Wales - <https://careerswales.gov.wales/>
- Colleges in Wales
- Dewis Wales - <https://www.dewis.wales/>
- Government Services, e.g. Kickstart Scheme - <https://jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk/government-services/kickstart-scheme/>
- National Careers Service - <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
- UCAS - <https://www.ucas.com/careers-advice>
- Universities in Wales
- Work in Wales - <https://workingwales.gov.wales/>

From this list, we reviewed 36 careers resources considering how they described themselves; routes of access; types of service; and what other career services they signposted to.

Initially, this was limited to information available in the public domain, however it was identified that college and university career service provider resources tend to be within secure student spaces, requiring a password to access them. Therefore, reach out was made to the main career service or information email address listed on the college/university website making a request for information about their career advice resources available to students. Unfortunately, these email requests were unanswered, and due to the timeframe there was no scope to chase this information and therefore it has not been possible to include more detailed overviews of the resources provided by colleges and universities to their students.

However, a member of the research team is an alumnus of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), therefore able to access the UWTSD secure space as a graduate enabling us to create a case study of the UWTSD careers information, services and signposting. This case study is included in Appendix 1 to provide an example of the careers information, services and signposting available to university students in Wales.

The findings from this desk-based research were used to inform and shape the questions for the surveys, and also which career service providers to reach out to with requests to complete the career service providers' survey and help disseminate the young women's survey.

Online Surveys – Young Women & Career Service Providers

There were two distinct but complimentary online surveys published in SurveyMonkey, distributed via social media posts and sharing on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The project team shared the young women's survey with their network with requests to share on with young women. Additionally, there was a targeted email outreach to career service providers requesting they complete the career service provider's survey and share of the young women's survey with their users.

Young women's survey¹⁹, targeting young women aged 14 – 25 living or studying in Wales:

- Covering 5 sections:
 1. Background Information – demographic questions about gender, age, ethnicity, employment status, location.
 2. Past Experience with Career Services – questions about awareness and past experience with career services, such as age when first used career services; route of access; rating of support received; influence on decision making; and what would have improved the support.
 3. Prior Engagement with Targeted Services – question around targeted support for specific information or services, such as work experience, employer engagement, 'soft skills', 'green jobs', and 'new and emerging industry'.
 4. Impact of COVID-19 – questions about the impact of the pandemic on career aspirations, decisions, plans and access to support.
 5. Future Career Services – questions capturing what support young women needed right now and preferences when accessing support.
- Published in English and Welsh with responses accepted in both languages.
- 336 participated in the young women's survey
 1. 252 responses which were analysed and reported in section 5 of this report
 2. 56 removed due to only completing the demographic questions
 3. 28 removed due to gender identity not 'woman'²⁰

Career service provider survey²¹, targeting all providers of careers services in Wales working with young women aged 14-25:

- Covering 4 sections:
 1. Background Information about the Service – questions about the service provided by their organisation, including target audience demographics, types of service provided, route of delivery, and where organisation go to for advice, guidance and recommendations for updating resources.

¹⁹ Full survey in appendix 2

²⁰ Gender identity: 13 "man"; 10 "non-binary", 5 "prefer not to say"

²¹ Full survey in appendix 3

2. Service Access Statistics – questions about types of statistics collected by the organisation.
 3. Personal Opinions of Career Support – qualitative, open text questions asking for personal opinions around strengths of career resources, responsiveness to young women’s needs, how gendered roles are being challenges, job sectors under-accessed by young women, and how to improve access by young women.
 4. Consent if willing to be contacted for in-depth interview to deep dive into more details around the strengths and gaps for young women in Wales.
- 19 career service providers participated with the survey.
 - 13 from 13 different organisations completed the survey, their [responses are analysed in section 6](#) of this report.
 - 6 provided their email address to potentially be contacts for further information.

One-to-one Interviews

Interviews were undertaken with **6** career service providers to explore the strengths of current provision of services to young women in Wales; potential gaps; groups of young women who may be underserved; and, how career service providers could be better supported.

The interviews took the form of informal discussions with no discussion guide. Instead, deep diving into answers provided to the career service providers survey and discussing themes arising from early analysis of the initial 150 young women survey responses, including family influence on decision making, work experience and employee engagement, the impact of the pandemic and language around career services.

These insights have been included in the theme [discussions in section 7](#) of this report.

5. Young Women's Survey Results

There were 336 participants of the young women's survey, from which **252 usable responses** were identified. 56 were removed due to only completing the demographic questions. 28 were removed due to the gender identity selected not being 'woman'.

Summary of Key Points

- **72%** of respondents are 14-18 years old, **26%** are 19-25 years old. There was a significant variance between the responses given by respondents in these different age groups to a number of questions, including: awareness and use of services; most common route for accessing career support; and, experience of targeted services such as development of soft skills, completion of work experience and advice about new and emerging industries.
- For every careers service mentioned in the survey, there are large gaps between awareness and use. Of interest to note, there is slight variation by age, with Careers Wales top for 14-18 year olds (**92%** aware of, **63%** used) versus UCAS which was top for 19-25 year olds (**92%** aware of, **74%** used).
- The most common route for accessing careers support is **via websites** (**44%** of all responses). However, when analysed by age groups there are some variations. For 14 – 18 year olds **via website** is by far the most common route for accessing careers support (**48%**), the next most common is in person (**24%**). Whilst for the older age bracket, accessing career support **in person** is most common (**42%**), followed by websites (**38%**) and emails (**29%**).
- **70%** respondents stated that they did have a plan for their next academic or career step, however that varied by age with **74%** of the 14-18 year olds respondents having a plan, versus **60%** of the 19-25 year old respondents.
- The younger age bracket of 14 – 18 year olds have not had as much careers service support for work experience placements, employer engagement or development of soft skills. This is likely due to a mix of pandemic caused disruption to careers education and in person opportunities for work experiences and employer engagement, funding cuts limiting Careers Wales school support for work experience, and many careers services targeting post-16 year olds. This is concerning as **over 70%** of young women had accessed career services for the first time between the ages of 14 – 16 years old.
- **53%** of all respondents **have done** work experience, versus **47%** who **have not** done work experience. However, only **39%** of 14 – 18 year old respondents **have** completed work experience compared to **88%** of 19 – 25 year old respondents. The most common route for organisation of work experience for the older age group was **by school**, whereas for the younger age group the most common way **by myself / parent / relative**. This is concerning from an equality perspective as reliance on parent or relative to support work experience will negatively impact those with fewer

connection and increases the opportunity gap.

- Similarly, 67% of 19 – 25 year olds have engaged with potential employers compared to only 46% of 14 – 18 year olds. Further, only 18% of respondents engaged with potential employers through talks at school, college or university, despite the fact that this is known to have great potential in challenging stereotypes and was rated very useful for ‘learning about the industry’ by young women, with scores of 7.6 out of 10.
- Only 16% of respondents have received support in developing soft skills; 62% had not; and 22% were not sure if they had. There was some variation with age, 19-25 year olds were more likely to have felt that they had received support from careers services to develop their soft skills; 22% of 19-25 year olds versus 13% of 14-18 year olds. This suggests that young women are largely not being taught about wider workplace skills that are often highly valued by employers.
- Similarly, only 16% of respondents have received careers advice about ‘new and emerging industries’. However, interestingly, a higher percentage of 19-25 year old respondents had not received careers advice on new and emerging markets compared to the younger age group (77% vs 56%), suggesting that this may have been increased this element of careers education in schools recently.
- 97% of respondents answered ‘no’, ‘not sure’ or ‘I don’t know what is meant by green jobs’. This is not to say that the ‘no’ respondents don’t know what green jobs are, but potentially that the careers advice relating to such jobs has not been received. Only 5 respondents had received careers advice or guidance about ‘green jobs’, this suggests that either no information is being provided or the term ‘green jobs’ is not being used in career information or advice.
- Overall, 42% of respondents stated that the careers support **has given** them what they needed. Whilst 26% felt that it **did not** give them what they needed and 32% were not sure. The average score young women gave as a rating for their experience in relation to careers services was 5 out of 10, with a range of 1 – 10.

5.1 Demographics

Ethnic Origin

All but 1 of the 252 respondents shared their ethnic origin. 1 chose 'prefer not to say',

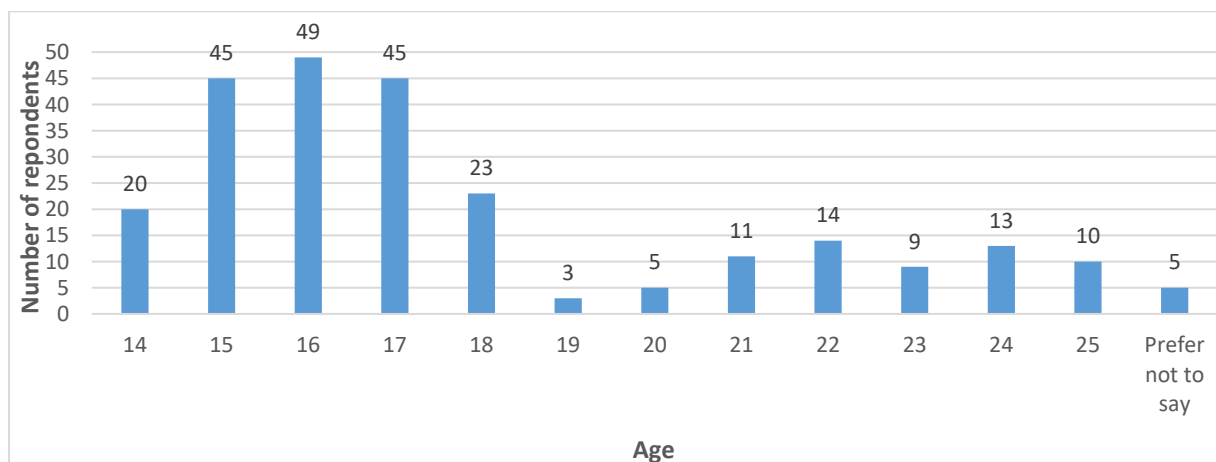
- 221 of white origin
- 15 of Asian origin
- 9 of Mixed origin
- 3 of Arab / Arab British / Welsh origin
- 3 of Black origin

12% of respondents identified as Black, Asian, Arab or mixed origin, 88% respondents identified as white origin.

This is a slighter higher percentage of individual's identifying as Black, Asian, Arab or mixed origin than the total population of Wales, where 5% identify as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic²². However, this varies across age groups, with the highest proportion in younger age groups, with 9.5% of those under 16 in Wales identifying as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic²².

Age

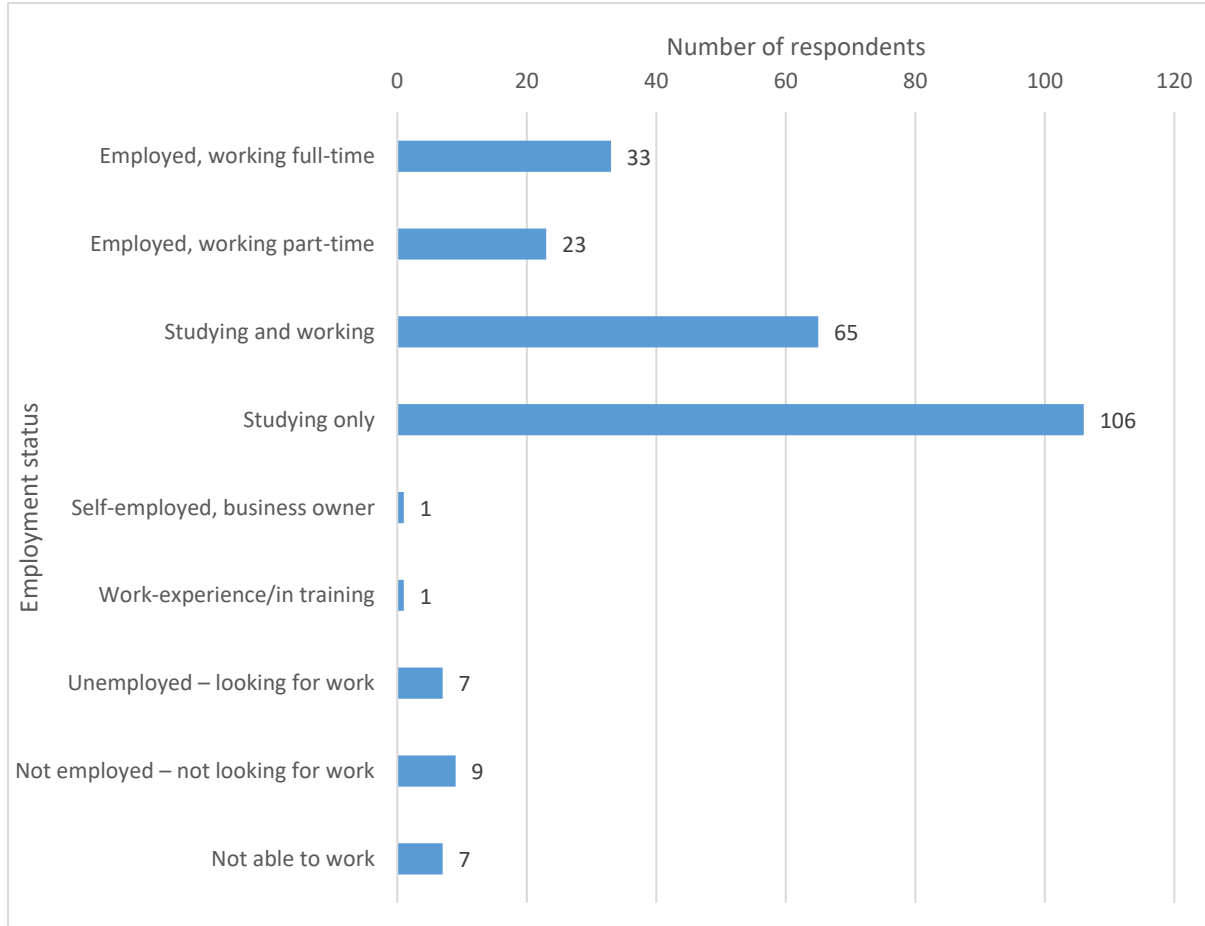
247 of 252 respondents provided their age (72% in the 14-18 year old group; 26% in the 19-25 year old group). The remaining 5 of 252 respondents preferred not to say but confirmed that they are between 14 and 25 years old.



²² StatsWales, *Ethnicity by Age 2018 – 2020*, <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/ethnicity-by-age> (Accessed March 2022)

Employment Status

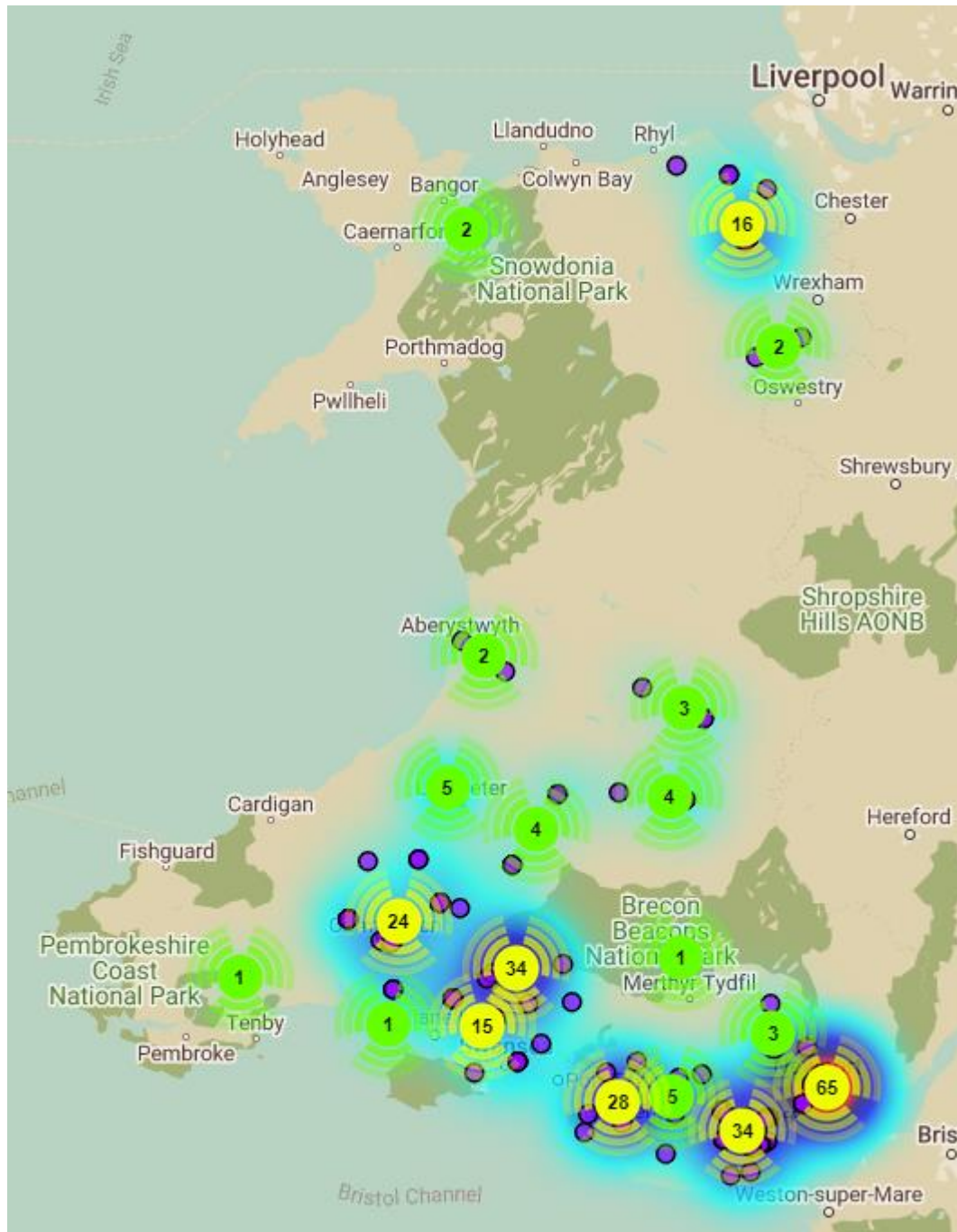
All 252 respondents selected the category that best described their employment status. 68% stated they are studying, 42% studying only and 26% studying and working; 23% are working; 6% are unemployed; 3% not able to work.



Geography

244 of 252 respondents provided the first part of their postcode.

8 of 252 respondents are not currently living in Wales but their previous locations in Wales have been included in the map.



Each purple dot represents a unique start of a postcode e.g. SA18. Thus, one purple dot might represent more than one person with the same postcode.

The areas highlighted blue and red illustrate a heatmap of the number of responses in each geographical area. The yellow and green state the number of individual responses in each area.

There were more respondents based in South-East Wales where the population is higher.

5.2 Career Support Past Experience

Career Services Awareness and Use

All 252 respondents answered the question: *'Please select the career services you are aware of, those you have used and any that were useful?'*

Of the career services listed, Careers Wales was the most well-known, with 90% of respondents being aware of it, followed by UCAS, which 85% were aware of.

The number of respondents who indicated that they had used the service followed a similar pattern with the highest percentages of respondents indicating that they had used Careers Wales (58%) and UCAS (50%).

For every careers services, there are large gaps between awareness and use.

Careers Service	Aware of	% of total respondents "aware of"	Used	% of total respondents "used"
Career Wales	226	90%	145	58%
UCAS	214	85%	126	50%
School Career Service	140	56%	64	25%
Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales	127	50%	33	13%
Adult Learning Wales	102	40%	8	3%
Business Wales	102	40%	9	4%
University Career Service	99	39%	28	11%
College Career Service	97	38%	22	9%
Working Wales	92	37%	15	6%
Career Development Institute	78	31%	6	2%
Dewis Wales	71	28%	5	2%
National Training Federation Wales	68	27%	7	3%
Learning and Work Institution	67	27%	11	4%

3 specific other career services were mentioned in the 'other' option:

- Local council hub support and services
- Unifrog²³
- Universal credit process / kickstart

There are variations in awareness and use by age, as shown in the table below. For example, Careers Wales is top for 14-18 year olds (92% aware of, 63% used) versus UCAS which is top for 19-25 year olds (92% aware of, 74% used).

²³ Unifrog is an online platform that supports students with impartial and independent guidance on a full range of careers options – www.unifrog.org

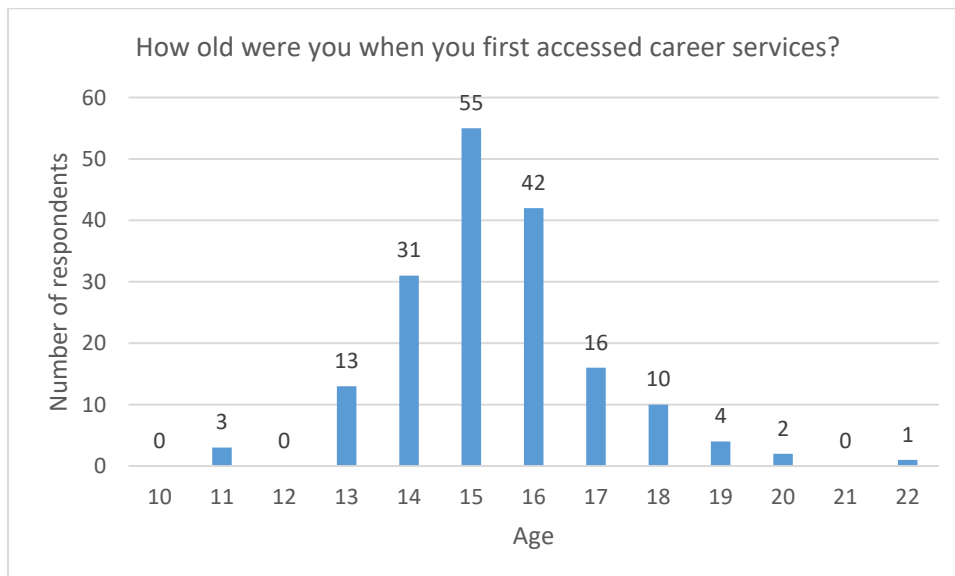
Careers Service	14-18 year olds		19-25 year olds	
	% of 14-18 year olds "aware of"	% of 14-18 year olds "used"	% of 19-25 year olds "aware of"	% of 19-25 year olds "used"
Career Wales	92%	63%	85%	46%
UCAS	82%	41%	92%	74%
School career service	57%	24%	54%	29%
Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales	53%	12%	46%	15%
Working Wales	41%	5%	25%	6%
Adult Learning Wales	41%	1%	40%	9%
College career service	39%	5%	37%	15%
Business Wales	37%	3%	49%	6%
University career service	36%	4%	49%	31%
Career Development Institute	34%	2%	25%	3%
Dewis Wales	31%	2%	23%	3%
Learning and Work Institution	30%	4%	20%	6%
National Training Federation Wales	29%	2%	23%	5%

Age When First Accessed Careers Service

218 of 252 stated their age at which they first accessed career services.

19% of those 218 respondents noted that they had **'never accessed'** career services; 15% being 14 – 18 years old; 4% being 19 – 25 years old.

The graph shows data from the 177 of 218 respondents who shared the age at which career services were first accessed. Over 70% young women had accessed career services for the first time between the ages of 14 – 16 years old.

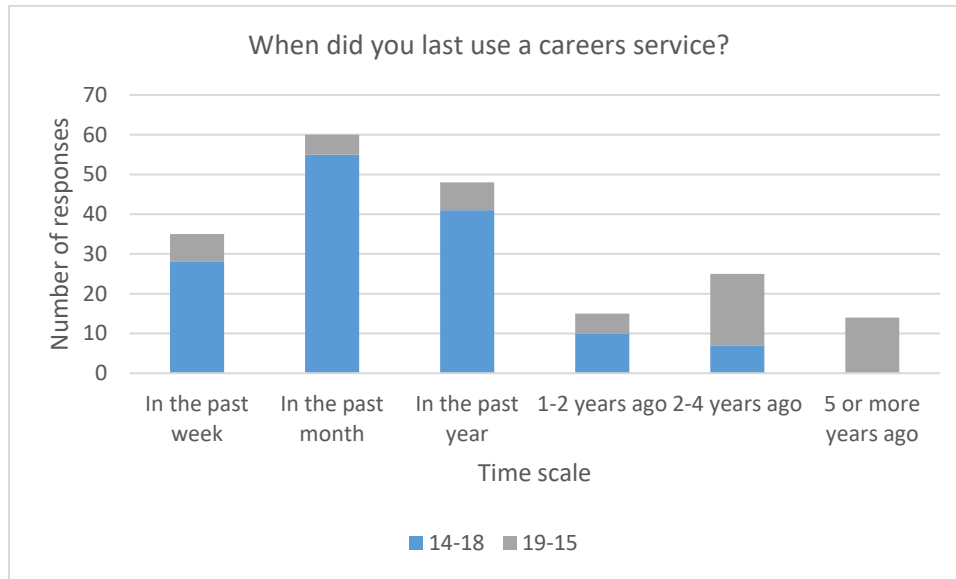


Last use of careers service

239 of 252 respondents indicated when they had last used a career service.

16% of those 239 respondents stated 'none of the above options', these young women were some of the 41 who stated they have 'never accessed' career services.

The graph shows the time when the 201 of 239 respondents last used a career service. 72% stating that they had used a career service within the last year; of which 47% had used a career service within the last month.



How Career Support was Accessed

235 of 252 respondents shared the route via which they accessed career support.

The most common route for accessing careers support is **via websites** (44% of all responses). However, when analysed by age groups there are some variations. For 14 – 18 year olds **via website** is by far the most common route for accessing careers support (48%), the next most common is **in person** (24%). Whilst for the older age bracket, accessing career support **in person** is most common (42%), followed by **websites** (38%) and **emails** (29%).

How did you access careers support?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Website	112	44%	87	48%	25	38%
In Person	75	30%	44	24%	27	42%
Email	55	22%	35	19%	19	29%
Event (in person)	22	9%	15	8%	6	9%
Event (online)	19	8%	17	9%	2	3%
Social Media	18	7%	11	6%	7	11%
Phone call	12	5%	6	3%	6	9%

Overall Rating of Experience of Support from Career Services

156 of 252 responded to the question: *Overall, on a scale of 0-10 how would you rate the support you have experienced in relation to career services?*

Overall, the **average score was 5.0**, with a score range of 0-10. When broken down by age in the table below²⁴, we see the average score sitting mostly around this mid-point score, with ranges including high and low scores.

The only outlier is those aged 25 gave much lower scores, ranging between 1 and 5, resulting in a much **lower average score of 2.8**.

Age	Number of Respondents	Average scores by age, on a scale of 0-10, how would you rate the support you have experienced in relation to career services?	Range of scores
14	7	5.1	3 – 7
15	22	4.9	0 – 10
16	30	5.0	0 – 8
17	30	5.8	2 – 10
18	19	5.1	0 – 9
19	2	6.0	2 – 10
20	2	6.5	5 – 8
21	8	4.4	0 – 8
22	11	4.3	0 – 9
23	6	5.3	3 – 7
24	10	4.8	2 – 10
25	6	2.8	1 – 5
Overall	153	5.0	0 – 10

42% of these 156 young women stated that the careers support gave them what they needed. Whilst 26% felt that it did not give them what they needed and 32% were not sure.

What Would Have Improved the Support

114 of 252 young women shared their thoughts on what would have improved the support they received.

What was notable overall was that despite the apparent availability of a wide array of careers resources, there were still large numbers of service users who did not feel that they were getting:

- the information they needed to make informed careers choices about the full range of options available to them
- personalised advice that suited their particular skillsets and ambitions
- face to face contact with careers advisors / specialists
- access to careers advice once they are no longer in education

Further, several young women did not feel that they were being presented with the same career options as their male counterparts.

²⁴ 3 of 156 did not provide their age and have not been included in the age analysis

The response to this question broadly falls into 3 themes: content of careers support; delivery methods and models; and access.

Content

31% of the 114 respondents described ways they wanted **more information** in various forms:

- 11% explained that they would have liked to have better **information on pathways and requirements to get into some specific careers**

I'm not sure if they're different now, however, when I was 15, I was never told of the different routes of how to get into certain careers. For example, my nurse training was through a degree, I later found out it could be done on an apprenticeship scheme – Age 22

Personally, I feel that there needs to be more open conversations about different career paths and development opportunities available to enable young people to make decisions themselves – Age 24

More specific recommendations for my areas of interest, particularly around extra qualifications I could get and what kind of role would suit me – Age 23

- 15% felt there was **a lack of breadth and depth in the opportunities presented:**
 - 5% of whom stated that in their experience the roles offered to young women were limited to hospitality, cosmetics, nursing or care roles.

From my exposure to job training in Wales, in terms of targeting women, the services seem to be for certain roles - for example nursing or caring which limits the usefulness of these services – Age 24

For there to be more specific pages aimed towards getting females into more practical jobs rather than office jobs – Age 17

More insightful information on predominantly male jobs directed at women and girls. – Age 14

Women were only steered towards certain careers such as hospitality and cosmetics. Men were guided towards the careers that require more education or are more high profile such as policing and engineering – Age 17

*I felt like I shouldn't be given information about hairdressing if I was not interested in that. I felt like the advice needed to be more practical. E.g. you need to improve your grades, I would advise x, y, z. Rather than assuming we wouldn't get far. I am currently working on my PhD so assumptions shouldn't have been made about what I could achieve –
Age 25*

Someone who considered that a desired career like performing was attainable and sustainable and not just a “hobby” – Age 21

- A further 5% of whom would have liked to have seen more information **about non-university / non-academic options like apprenticeships** and less pressure to go into higher or further education
-

Show more options that were available, in detail, rather than assume everyone will go to university to further their education before going into a career – Age 18

Taking more time to help people figure their pathway when leaving school...not just for sixth form, college or university – Age 24

Guiding me towards a pathway that suited my strengths and interests rather than forcing me into an academic bracket – Age 23

There were a diverse array of smaller suggestion to improve content in the following ways:

- More **help and support in general**, including one suggestion that career service providers needed to do more listening, rather than making assumptions about service users.
- **Careers advice needed to be more specific**
- **More up to date advice and relevant information**, including advice about where the available jobs are locally.
- **Less pressure to make decisions**, with one respondent highlighting the pressure to choose ‘a job’ before they knew what subjects they wanted to do.
- **More easily navigable / modern careers websites**, one respondent requested ‘website walkthroughs’
- **Opportunities to speak with people in different careers** and have access to case studies / stories from real people
- **More practical support**, for example CV writing and interviewing skills and getting relevant work experience

Delivery

12% of the 114 respondents thought they could have benefited from **more personalised or tailored advice**. For example, 2 wanted help with making a plan to help them get where they are going.

More specific recommendations for my areas of interest, particularly around extra qualifications I could get and what kind of role would suit me – Age 23

More individualised career support; the support I was given was unhelpful and generalised – Age 24

11% of the 114 respondents felt they could have benefited from more **face to face contact**, with a careers advisor, employer engagement or professional mentoring.

Access

6% of the 114 respondents indicated that it was **difficult to access careers support post education** and that **careers services could be better advertised**

If the support was made more approachable. It's hard to find careers advice if you are not in education. More support should be made, or advertised in the community. A lot of young people get stuck in a job they don't like, but stay because they don't know where to help to start a career they are interested in, unless they go back to college or school and there isn't the motivation to so for a lot of people – Age 22

...but completing an English Literature degree, very little time was spent on career prospects or practical application of the skills I'd developed. I don't remember a careers person reaching out to offer support, and once I graduated it felt like the university services were no longer for me to use – Age 23

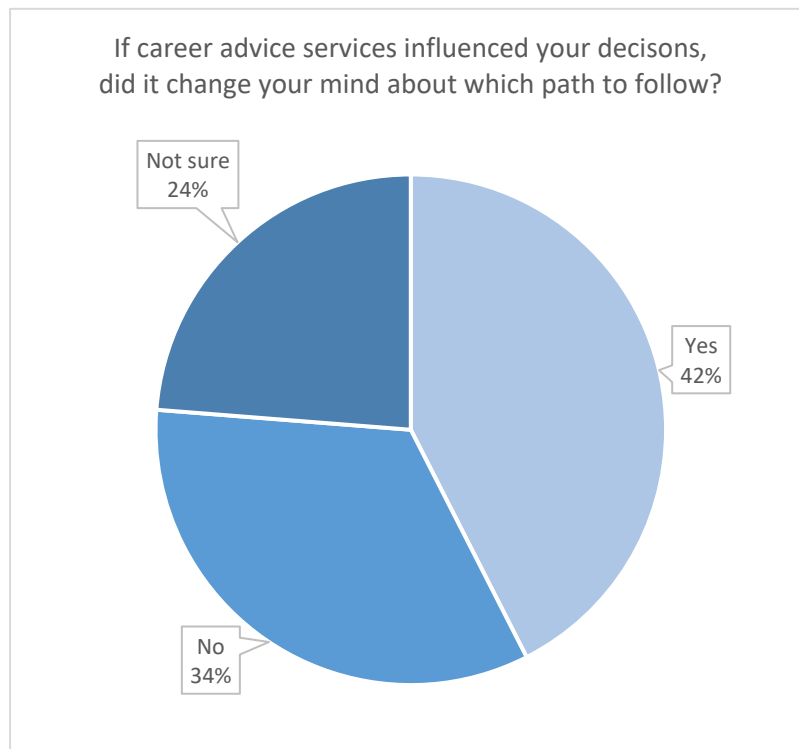
Career Services' Influence on Decisions

157 of 252 responded to the question: 'Has any careers advice services influenced your decisions about study and / or work?'

52% of these 157 respondents stated that the careers advice they received through a career service **had informed their decisions** about study and / or work.

Has any careers services influenced your decisions about study and / or work?	Number of responses	% of respondents
Yes - a lot	17	11%
Yes - a little	64	41%
No	61	39%
Not sure	12	8%

52% of respondents who stated that a career service **had influenced their decision** about study and / or work, were also asked 'if career advice service influenced your decisions, did it change your mind about which path to follow?'. 42% stated yes, it had; 34% noted no, it hadn't; 24% were unsure.



Some respondents provided details about the influence career services had on their decision making around which career path to follow, these included:

It made me more reassured and confident in my career ideas – Age 16

Finding out more about jobs and the requirements allows me to narrow down which I actually am passionate enough about to pursue, particularly if their pathway is competitive or difficult – Age 17

It changed my mind because I was originally going to choose a cookery course at the college I'd like to go to but by going to the careers advisor at my school I found that there were many different routes I could take to actually make it in the profession I would like to go in to. – Age 15

Careers Wales "careers days" where we could go to a careers fair and browse the myriad of options available, really broadened my horizons and made me more aware of alternatives to my original plan. – Age 18

*Opened my mind to different career paths I didn't know were possible
– Age 17*

I had a taste of the career path I wanted to follow as a result of their [career service's] contacts. It was a very valuable experience and it confirmed what I would like to do. – Age 24

Made me more determined to follow a male dominated path – Age 18

Words Used to Describe Career Support Received

The word cloud²⁵ below includes the responses we received from 118 of the 252 young women who shared the words they would use to describe the career support they've received.

The larger and bluer the word the more times it was mentioned. The smallest, whitest words were individual mentions.

130 individual words were mentioned, the top 5 by frequency were:

- Helpful (29 times)
- Useful (16 times)
- Informative (12 times)
- Unhelpful (10 times)
- Generic (7 times)

²⁵ Created using Word Cloud Generator software - <https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatwordcloud>



Most Useful Career Support Received

172 of 252 respondents shared answers to the question: 'In your opinion, what was the most useful career support you've received?'

19% of the 172 respondents explained that **none** of the career support they had received was useful. 15% were aged 14 – 18, 4% were aged 19 – 25.

14% simply selected that they 'haven't had any' or 'none', unfortunately, it is unclear whether this means that they hadn't received any careers support yet, or that none of the career support they'd received was useful. The remaining 5% stated that the support that they had received was not useful, for example:

Nothing really. I want a career to do with art and the school haven't done an assembly on that yet. It's just been about apprenticeships and the army and ironworks and stuff. – Age 16

I've never really been given any positive career support, I've been quite unlucky in the job world really – Age 24

I went in to see my high school careers advisor enquiring about becoming a radiographer but left with information about hairdressing. Most of the girls were advised to go into hairdressing. – Age 25

81% of the 172 respondents shared the source and type of career advice and support that they have found most useful. Interestingly, respondents' answers highlight that 'careers support' is accessed from a variety of sources, not only careers advice services.

Source of advice

17% of the 172 respondents noted that the most useful career support they had received had been **online**. With 12 mentioning UCAS, 2 mentioning Unifrog and 3 describing connecting with people virtually who were interested in the same industry or career.

From UCAS - helping me to select a university course that would improve my career prospects in the future. – Age 24

Reading about jobs on the UCAS website as it was very informative – Age 18

Unifrog, is very detailed – Age 16

Online support has been vital over the last 2 years – Age 24

Speaking to people online who are going into the same or similar career path as me, or talking online to professionals who are already in the industry – Age 16

18% of the 172 respondents stated they had received the most useful career support at **school (14%)**, **college (1%)** or **university (3%)**, with 4% specifying that teachers were instrumental in this support.

Career support included in GCSE courses such as finance, part of the course specifies jobs and roles which you could go into – Age 16

Teachers in school recommending extra-curricular activities to support my career choice – Age 23

My university lecturer continuously went out of her way to find opportunities for us to use our teaching skills and reminded us that this would be the first step in getting our foot in the doors of the teaching world. She encouraged us to network with different schools all around the world. – Age 23

The University established a mentorship scheme which meant I got a first-hand experience of speaking to someone who worked in an area I might like to in the future. – Age 22

8% of the 172 respondents mentioned **Careers Wales** as the most useful career support they'd received. 2 young women expanded with further details:

Careers Wales, helping me to understand apprenticeships more – Age 17

Job summaries and overviews on Careers Wales as it states what qualifications can be used and how high or low the job availability is – Age 16

8% of the 172 respondents shared that the most useful career support they'd received was from their **family**. 3% specifically mentioned their parent(s).

My family telling me about their careers – Age 15

From friends and family in various jobs, they've helped with applications and proof reading and interview tips – Age 22

Type of advice

12% of the 172 respondents identified **meeting with a career advisor** as the most useful career support they had received. 10% of which were 14 – 18 year olds.

They helped show me the options I could take to become what I wanted. – Age 15

The most useful would probably be the one-to-one session with my careers advisor - Age 16

11% of the 172 respondents identified opportunities to **network** and talk with prospective employers and those currently working in the industry as the most useful. With 4% specifically mentioning a careers fair / day they had attended in person.

Careers day at school where they brought in many businesses and conducted mock interviews as well as made us create our own CV - Age 18

Career fairs speaking to actual employers in the industries I'm interested in – Age 16

General advice from older colleagues, more casually in work – Age 25

8% of the 172 respondents outlined the way that their **work, job, volunteering or work experience** had been where they gained the most useful career advice. 3% specified that the work experience they'd completed was the most useful. 7% were 19 – 25 year olds.

My mentor in the relevant career field, and online work experience summer scheme with industry professionals – Age 17

I wouldn't say I've had much useful career support; I've found my career by getting different jobs and finding what I enjoy – Age 22

During my employment... I received 4 sessions of invaluable mentoring to help with my problems including work life balance and support to progress into more of a management role. It was also helpful that I could choose my mentor, who was a woman that had been through a similar pathway as myself. I'd recommend this to anyone who has the opportunity. – Age 24

School pushed us to do lots of volunteering in different organisations and work experience to see what you enjoy – Age 21

5.3 Targeted Services

Programmes or Services Targeted at Young Women

152 of 252 respondents answered the question: ‘Out of those [career services] which you used, were there any that you felt were particularly aimed at young women?’

87% of the 152 respondents stated ‘no’, ‘none’ or ‘don’t know’; 11% of 152 named specific places or services (outlined in the table below); and, 2% of 152 simply stated ‘yes’ without specifying further details.

Out of those which you used, were there any that you felt were particularly aimed at young women?	Number of respondents
No / None / Don't Know	133
Career Wales	6
UCAS	3
Yes	3
School	2
Council	1
Chwarae Teg	1
National Training Federation	1
College	1
Women's Career Mentoring Programme	1

6% of the 152 respondents provided more insight around their answers, including:

I feel as though 90% of careers are focused on men – Age 17

All seemed gender neutral – Age 18

Careers Wales advertising using female influencers – Age 23

I remember seeing UCAS and my college using females for their STEM subjects - Age 22

There was a Women's Career Mentoring Programme which was particularly useful to me as a young woman – Age 17

Work Experience

191 of 252 respondents answered the question: ‘Have you done any work experience?’

53% of the 191 respondents **have done** work experience, versus 47% who **have not** done work experience. However, there is significant variation to note by age²⁶.

68% of the 191 respondents were 14 – 18 year olds. Significantly less of this age group have done work experience compared with the older age group, with only 39% **have** completed work experience against 61% who **have not**.

29% of the 191 respondents were 19 – 25 year olds. The majority, 88%, have completed work experience; only 13% have not.

The table below outlines how the those who **have done** work experience organised it, of note, the most common route for organisation of work experience for the older age group was **by school**, whereas for the younger age group the most common way **by myself / parent / relative**.

The table also captures the reason why those who **have not** completed work experience, again this is significantly different by age group, with the younger group more likely to have had their work experience prevented by Covid-19.

Have you done any work experience?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes, organised by a school	49	26%	15	11%	33	59%
Yes, organised by a college	7	4%	0	0%	6	11%
Yes, organised by a university	12	6%	3	2%	9	16%
Yes, organised by myself / parent / relative	67	35%	41	31%	25	45%
No, not had the chance/opportunity	52	27%	49	37%	3	5%
No, Covid-19 pandemic has prevented it	44	23%	40	31%	4	7%
No, not interested in work experience	4 ²⁷	2%	1	1%	1	2%

The young women who **have done** work experience rated how useful they found it in relation to 6 aspects. Each was scored on a scale of 1-10, where 1 was ‘not useful’ and 10 was ‘very useful’. The table below shows that the scores averaged around the mid-point score, with ‘**learning about the role / industry**’ scoring highest and ‘**networking**’ scoring lowest.

²⁶ Since 5 of 252 respondents preferred not to say their exact age our analysis by age does not always add up to the total for ‘all’

²⁷ 2 of the 4 who stated ‘no, not interested in work experience’ are not included in the age analysis because they selected ‘prefer not to say, but confirm I am between 14 and 25’.

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not useful, 10=very useful) how useful did you find the work experience in relation to...	Average score All	Range All	Average score 14-18	Range 14-18	Average score 19-25	Range 19-25
Informing your career choice(s)	5.5	1 – 10	4.9	1 – 10	6.2	1 – 10
Informing your subject and study choice(s)	5.0	1 - 10	5.0	1 - 10	5.1	1 - 10
Learning about the role / industry	6.9	1 – 10	6.6	1 – 10	7.1	1 – 10
Learning about workplace	6.7	1 - 10	6.6	1 - 10	6.9	1 - 10
Advice for job applications	4.5	1 - 10	4.8	1 - 10	4.0	1 - 10
Networking	4.2	1 - 10	3.9	1 - 10	4.5	1 - 10

Employer Engagement

210 of 252 young women shared insights about their previous engagement with potential employers in line with their career aspirations.

54% of the 210 respondents stated that they had engaged with potential employers; 46% had not. However, this varied by age²⁸, with 67% of 19 – 25 year olds having engaged with a potential employer compared to only 46% of 14 – 18 year olds.

Have you engaged with potential employers in line with your career aspirations?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes - Through talks at school / college / university	38	18%	21	15%	16	24%
Yes - Online events	23	11%	17	12%	5	7%
Yes - Site visits	24	11%	12	9%	10	15%
Yes - Careers fairs	22	10%	8	6%	13	19%
Yes - Other	7	3%	6	4%	1	1%
No	96	46%	74	54%	22	33%

The 7 young women who had engaged with potential employers through a different route than the four options specified in the question, shared their personal route:

- Reached out personally and emailed directly – age 15
- Current employer – age 15
- Connecting with members of online societies in their target industry – age 16
- Through Cadets – age 16
- Friend of their parent – age 17
- A mentor, who they met through a work experience - age 17
- Work as an apprentice – age 20

²⁸ Since 5 of 252 respondents preferred not to say their exact age our analysis by age does not always add up to the total for 'all'

89% of the 210 respondents provided details of whether they had received any support in accessing employers from career services, friends, relatives, school, college or university. Again, there is a variation in response according to age, with 57% of 19 – 25 year olds confirming that they received support accessing employers, but only 30% of 14 – 18 year olds having received support

Did you receive any support in accessing employers?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes - Help from career service	12	6%	4	3%	6	10%
Yes - Help from friends / relatives	26	14%	16	13%	10	17%
Yes - Help from school / college / university	36	19%	17	14%	18	30%
No	113	60%	86	70%	26	43%

23% of the 210 respondents who had engaged with employers rated how useful their engagement was in respect to four areas on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = not useful, 10 = very useful).

The average scores indicate that **'learning about the industry'** was considered the most useful aspect of engagement with potential employers, with an average score of 7.6 out of 10. This increased to 8.3 in just the 14 – 18 year old age group.

On a scale of 1-10 how useful did you find the employer engagement in relation to...	Average score All	Range All	Average score 14-18	Range 14-18	Average score 19-25	Range 19-25
Work environment	6.3	1 - 10	7.0	2 - 10	5.6	1 - 10
Advice for job applications	6.0	1 - 10	7.0	1 - 10	4.9	1 - 10
Interview tips	6.0	1 - 10	6.6	1 - 10	5.2	1 - 10
Learning about the industry	7.6	1 - 10	8.3	5 - 10	6.8	1 - 10

Soft Skills Development

142 of 252 young women responded about whether they had received any support from career services in developing soft skills.

16% of the 142 respondents confirmed that they had received support in developing soft skills; 62% had not; and 22% were not sure if they had.

There was some variation with age²⁹, 19-25 year olds were more likely to have felt that they had received support from careers services to develop their soft skills; 22% of 19-25 year olds versus 13% of 14-18 year olds.

It can be suggested that 19-25 year old respondents were more likely to understand what was meant by the term soft skills with only 11% of them indicating that they were 'not sure' if they had received support, compared to 27% of the younger age group.

²⁹ Since 5 of 252 respondents preferred not to say their exact age our analysis by age does not always add up to the total for 'all'

Have you received any support in developing "soft skills" by career services, for example, teamwork and communication?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes	23	16%	12	13%	10	22%
No	88	62%	56	60%	31	67%
Not sure	31	22%	25	27%	5	11%

Those who had received support developing soft skills rated that support on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = not useful, 10 = very useful). **Responsibility** was scored the highest with 7.4 out of 10, followed by **time management** with 7.1 out of 10.

If yes, on a scale of 1-10 how useful did you find the "soft skills" support you received?	Average score All	Range All	Average score 14-18	Range 14-18	Average score 19-25	Range 19-25
Communication	6.8	3 - 10	7.1	4 - 10	6.4	3 - 10
Self-motivation	6.0	1 - 10	6.4	1 - 10	5.5	2 - 10
Leadership	6.6	2 - 10	7.0	2 - 10	6.1	2 - 10
Responsibility	7.4	3 - 10	8.2	1 - 10	6.3	3 - 10
Teamwork	6.5	2 - 10	6.5	3 - 10	6.4	2 - 8
Problem Solving	6.7	2 - 10	6.8	3 - 9	6.4	2 - 10
Decisiveness	5.7	1 - 10	6.6	3 - 10	4.8	1 - 9
Time Management	7.1	4 - 10	6.6	4 - 10	7.4	5 - 10
Flexibility	5.6	1 - 10	5.8	2 - 10	5.2	1 - 9
Negotiation	5.3	1 - 10	6.2	1 - 9	4.2	1 - 10
Conflict Resolution	6.6	2 - 10	7.1	1 - 10	6.0	2 - 10

Green Jobs Awareness

165 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'Have you received careers advice or guidance about green jobs?'

97% of respondents answered 'no', 'not sure' or 'I don't know what is meant by green jobs'. This is not to say that the 'no' respondents don't know what green jobs are, but potentially that the careers advice relating to such jobs has not been received.

Only 5 respondents had received careers advice or guidance about 'green jobs', this suggests that either no information is being provided or the term 'green jobs' is not being used in career information or advice.

There is not a notable difference between the age groups.

Have you received careers advice or guidance about green jobs?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes - it was useful	1	1%	0	-	0	-
Yes – but it was not useful	4	2%	2	2%	2	4%
No	89	54%	54	51%	34	62%
Not sure	6	4%	4	4%	1	2%
I don't know what is meant by green jobs	65	39%	47	44%	18	32%

New and Emerging Industries

150 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'Have you received careers advice or guidance about new and emerging industries'?

11% of the 150 respondents stated that they had received useful careers advice about new and emerging industries.

However, 9% of 14-18 year old respondents said the careers advice they'd received about new and emerging industries was not useful.

A higher percentage of 19-25 year old respondents had not received careers advice on new and emerging markets compared to the younger age group (77% vs 56%), suggesting that this may have been introduced to careers education in schools recently.

Have you received careers advice or guidance about new and emerging industries?	All	% of All	14-18	% of 14-18	19-25	% of 19-25
Yes - it was useful	17	11%	10	10%	5	10%
Yes – but it was not useful	9	6%	9	9%	0	-
No	93	62%	55	56%	37	77%
Not sure	15	10%	13	13%	2	4%
I don't know what is meant by new and emerging industries	16	11%	12	12%	4	8%

5.4 Impact of COVID-19

The Pandemic's Effect on Career Aspirations

186 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'Has the pandemic affected what job or career you would like?'

The responses were balanced with 34% of the 186 respondents stating that the pandemic **has** affected their career aspirations; 32% stating the pandemic **has not** affected their career aspirations; and, 34% stating they were unsure.

Has the pandemic affected what job or career you would like?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes, in a positive way	30	16%
Yes, in a negative way	33	18%
No	60	32%
Not sure	63	34%

The open text responses to 'in what ways has the pandemic affected what job or career you would like?' demonstrated that it depended on what career the young woman was interested in and how much they felt their education and experiences had been affected by the pandemic.

45% of the 33 young women who believed that the pandemic had affected their career aspirations in a **negative way** stated it was due to the disruptions in their education, work or experiences:

*Missing out on placement to learn how to work in childcare settings
- Age 21*

Work has been closed for periods so delayed my progress - Age 20

I am a student and the pandemic has impacted my studies in a negative way, reducing access to help and teaching hours - Age 17

*It is a lot more difficult to network and meet new people, and a lot of schemes available to young people aren't running because of it
- Age 17*

40% of the 30 young women who felt the pandemic had affected their career aspirations in a **positive way** mentioned careers in education, healthcare or similar:

It's shown me how important healthcare is for the general public and that I would like to be a part of that community - Age 17

More demand for trained psychologists - Age 17

I've gone from performance to education and never looked back
- Age 23

However, the opposite was true for the young women interested in careers in the hospitality, entertainment and creative industries, 15% of the 33 young women who believed that the pandemic had affected their career aspirations in a **negative way** mentioned one of these industries:

The entertainment industry is practically non-existent and elitist thanks to the pandemic, there is less work for less experienced performers
- Age 21

I initially wanted to enter the creative industries in a projects-based role. The pandemic has limited this due to many creative organisations losing funding and/or halting creative output meaning they have less funds to employ people – Age 23

30% of the 30 young women who felt the pandemic had affected their career aspirations in a **positive way** explained that this was due to having more time to consider and explore what was important to them in a career:

I have had more time to consider other careers, when we all stopped being so busy during the lockdowns and had less to fill the time I came across many alternative options. I also have a stronger sense of humanitarianism in me following what we have all experienced and am more focussed to adding global citizenship into my career to aid others around the world. – Age 18

I have had more time to really think about what I want to do out of school, and how much free time I would want for myself – Age 17

Through the pandemic, and my increased amount of time at home, I fell in love with learning about the stars and space, which has now led me down the path of astronomy, learning more about science and coding
- Age 16

4% of respondents highlighted that the **increase in digital** meetings, education and remote working had affected their careers aspirations. Half identifying **positive aspects** such as improved work-life balance:

The changes in the workplace have also been positive, with less time being spent travelling and more time being spent doing things and learning! – Age 24

The pandemic has made me consider how I would like to work, e.g. working from home, how often I would like to go to the office, whether I would want to move to the city. – Age 25

Half outlined the **negative impact**, including mental health concerns the pandemic has caused:

Made me realise that my mental health should always come first and that there is no point pursuing a career if it doesn't make you happy – Age 16

I think it's made everyone a bit confused, was a lot of debate about whether it was going to be CDG's³⁰ I for one was thrown off track because of Covid. One of my friends has said that we are less likely to get employed if we had CDG's because employers wouldn't want to hire someone who didn't do the exam. It's also messed up my mental health along with a bunch of my friends – Age 16

The Pandemic's Effect on Further Study and/or Training Decisions

186 of the 252 respondents answered the question *Has the pandemic affected your career plans or decisions about further study and/or training?*

47% of the 186 respondents stated that the pandemic **has not** affected their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training; 33% stated that the pandemic **has** affected their plans; and, 20% were unsure.

³⁰ CDG – Centre Determined Grades - Learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre-Determined Grade model. This means that their grades will be determined by their school or college based on an assessment of the learner's work.

Has the pandemic affected your career plans or decisions about further study and/or training?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes, in a positive way	27	15%
Yes, in a negative way	34	18%
No	87	47%
Not sure	38	20%

The open text responses provide insight into why the pandemic has or hasn't affected respondents career plans.

44% of the 34 young women who stated that the pandemic has had a **negative effect** on their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training explained that it was due to the way the pandemic had **negatively affected their educational experience**.

It has knocked my confidence and affected my grades – Age 17

Due to the pandemic, I have been less motivated to return to university and get the PGCE. My last year of university became very difficult in the pandemic and I struggled to complete the course as there were more challenges than usual. – Age 23

It has put me off going back to university for a year due to struggling so much in my 3rd year at uni. And a fear of more lockdowns and online lectures which I struggle to engage with. – Age 22

However, 11% of the 27 young women who stated that the pandemic has had a **positive effect** on their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training described how the **negative effect on their educational experience** as a result of the pandemic led to them making a different choice than previously planned, which in turn has led them to a better place.

Made me glad I didn't go to university as I wouldn't have enjoyed online learning and deadlines during the last 2 years. Found a job I probably wouldn't have otherwise. – Age 22

Realised I would prefer to attend a college rather than a sixth form due to the unhappiness I felt when I returned to school – Age 15

29% of the 34 young women who stated that the pandemic had affected their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training in a **negative way** shared that

because of the pandemic they are **less interested in attending or continuing at university**.

I lost a lot of motivation and general school ability, so have decided to delay going to university – Age 17

[I am] less inclined to pursue further education due to the way my university handled remote learning – Age 21

Nervous about going to university as students have had negative experiences like having to stay there over Christmas due to lockdown etc, not as many things are face to face anymore, all online so not as personal. – Age 16

If some lectures are going to be virtual, it's a waste of £9,000 a year. – Age 17

6% of the 186 respondents noted that because of the pandemic they are, or would be, **more interested in applying for a further education course**. Explaining that this was due to the **positives of online learning** leading to them being more able to attend further educational courses that may have otherwise been unavailable to them.

I never wanted to go to a 'real' university because I couldn't cope in that atmosphere, but I was always open to doing open university. Now I've decided that's what I 100% want to do. – Age 18

Online learning has grown massively, and I have been able to complete training that otherwise would've been impossible to fit into my schedule when you take into account travelling to and from events. I love online learning and that door is open now to hop on to these 2 hour webinars and network in a new kind of way. – Age 23

The pandemic has made me consider studying again because I have more spare time now that I don't travel to work, and has also given me the confidence to ask my employer for time to study alongside my job – Age 25

6% of the 186 respondents explained different ways that **plans have changed** due to the experiences of living through the pandemic. 4% felt that it had changed in an **overall positive way**:

I have taken A level subjects that can cater for two careers – Age 17

Always looked at the practical side of working but lockdown taught me that I can go further with the sport industry – Age 16

I decided to go to a different university because I had more time to think and research – Age 18

I want to find work that is meaningful and contributes to something positive in impoverished communities. This is heavily influenced by the pandemic. – Age 25

Whilst 2% felt that it had been changed in **overall negative way**:

It changed what I wanted to do, as I wasn't allowed to study the course that I wanted to – Age 17

21% of the 34 young women who stated that the pandemic has had a **negative effect** on their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training indicated that this was due to **missed work experience, work placement or challenges getting a job**.

If it weren't for the pandemic, I would probably have a new job quicker that would have supported my personal development better. – Age 24

It means that a lot of things have been delayed and / or cancelled such as work experience in school and being able to have a taster of different job roles and careers. – Age 16

Missing out on placement to learn how to work in childcare settings – Age 21

However, 19% of the 27 young women who stated that the pandemic has had a **positive effect** on their career plans or decisions about further study and/or training outlined that this was due to **positives relating to work**:

Remote working has opened up more jobs that I can do without relocating to London – Age: Prefer not to say

I also moved, because of the pandemic, and this led me to working with children with developmental trauma, something I had not experienced before, I am now interested in psychology – Age 25

The Pandemic's Effect on Access to Career Support

186 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'Has the pandemic affected your access to careers advice/support?'

42% of the 186 respondents stated that the pandemic has not affected their access to career support; 28% noted that it had affected their access, of which most stated that it had negatively affected their access to career support; and, 30% were unsure.

Has the pandemic affected your access to careers advice/support?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes, in a positive way	9	5%
Yes, in a negative way	42	23%
No	79	42%
Not sure	56	30%

The open text responses provide insight into how the pandemic has, or hasn't, affected the young women's access to careers support.

45% of the 42 young women who stated that the pandemic had affected their access to careers support in a **negative way** explained that this was due to reduced access to career support.

I have not had the opportunity to talk to people about what I want to do or what would benefit me the most – Age 17

There were fewer school trips to universities, less visiting speakers to school, less chance for a career advisor meeting, less opportunity to speak to teachers about my future – Age 17

With school having been closed multiple times, and visitors not being allowed to come into schools, education on this has become much harder to access – Age 17

The careers advisor was not in school a lot due to Covid – Age 16

It's hard to find someone to talk to in person about careers advice because I'm not in university so no longer have access to their services. Also, it's hard to find careers advice when everything is closed or has such long waiting lists – Age 22

33% of the 42 young women who stated that the pandemic had affected their access to careers support in a **negative way** attributed this to the opportunities missed due to lack of in person events or support:

While being able to network at online events has been enjoyable, I do feel as though I've missed the opportunity to get chatting to someone at an event and develop that mentor relationship – Age 23

Usually would have volunteer work in school, but Covid stopped that. Learning about careers usually was done in person, so I wasn't able to do that – Age 15

Haven't had the opportunity to attend career fairs speak to career services or do work experience – Age 15

No careers fairs or events relating to postgraduate learning to learn more about options – Age 21

We used to have career assemblies, open days in the hall, etc in year 8 but now that we need them, they aren't there. Hard to get hold of the career adviser – Age 16

14% of the 42 young women who stated that the pandemic had affected their access to careers support in a **negative way** shared that this was due to not being able to undertake work experience:

I want to become a dentist in the future and they advise to get work experience and it's difficult with Covid, which also prevented me from doing the Duke of Edinburgh – Age 15

I couldn't do the work experience needed as an impact of the lockdown – Age 18

44% of the 9 young women who stated that the pandemic had affected their access to careers support in a **positive way** shared that they had been able to access more support than previously. 22% noted that there has been an improvement in the career support available in their school. 22% identified the increased online support as the reason the pandemic has improved their access to career support.

8 young women explained that they were unsure of how much the pandemic has affected their access to careers support as they were unsure what the 'normal' would have been prior to the pandemic.

I wouldn't really know where to go for careers advice before or during the pandemic – Age 21

We were never offered careers support after 2019, so I don't know if we would ever have been offered or if it's because of Covid. – Age 18

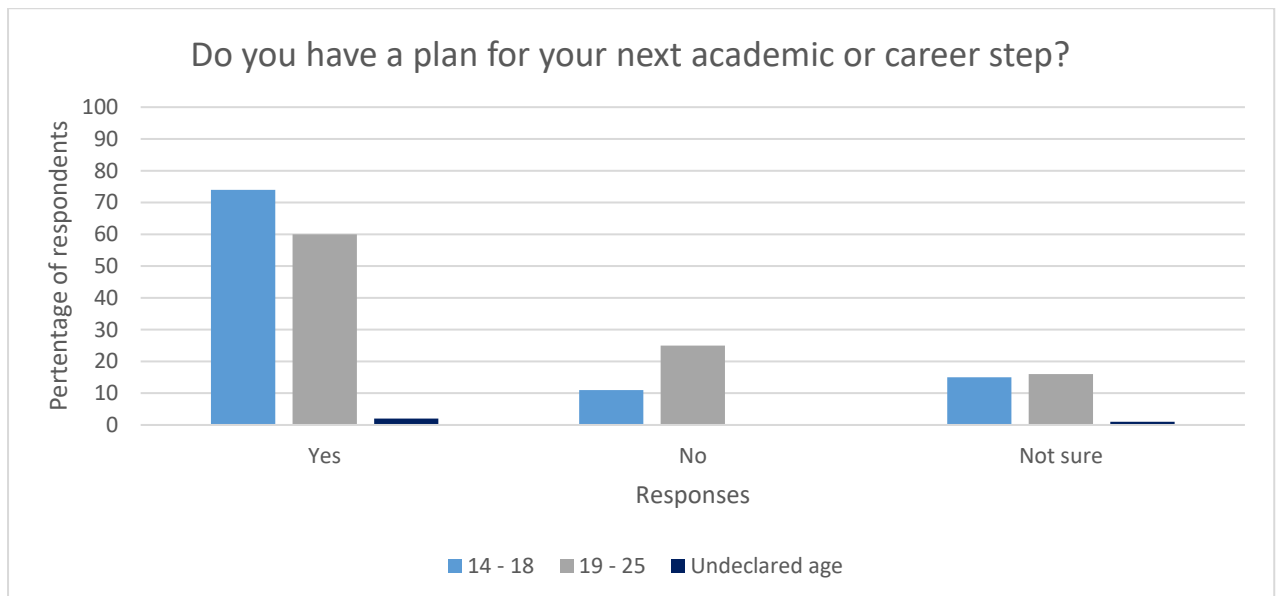
5.5 Career Support Future

Plan for Your Next Step

197 of 252 responded to the question: 'Do you have a plan for your next academic or career step?'

70% of the 182 respondents stated that they did have a plan for their next academic or career step, however that varied by age³¹ with 74% of the 14-18 year old respondents having a plan, versus 60% of the 19-25 year old respondents.

Do you have a plan for your next academic or career step?	All	% of All	14-18 year olds	% of 14-18	19-25 year olds	% of 19-25
Yes	138	70%	102	74%	34	60%
No	29	15%	15	11%	14	25%
Not sure	30	15%	20	15%	9	16%



Support Needed Right Now

149 out of 252 gave an answer to the question 'What career support to you need right now?'. Whilst the vast majority of responses centred on services that one would expect a careers advice service to provide, it was noteworthy that the second largest group were those that had specifically **requested some form of financial advice**. Some didn't specify whilst others singled out financial issues around student-hood, some wanted more job-related financial advice, such as how to negotiate salaries.

4% of the 149 respondents said they **needed general advice about career options**

³¹ 3 of 197 respondents had not to provide their age: 2 of 3 stated 'yes', 1 of 3 stated 'not sure'.

How to get into a veterinary science degree without having done chemistry, and without having done amazing on A-levels. Also, which jobs would suit someone who can't be at the front of a shop or café, so needs somewhere less communicative – Age 17

Right now I think I'm okay, but it's hard to know what you want to do when you're just getting by and can't get certain jobs because of experience and then you can't get experience because no one will take you on because of your lack of experience – Age 24

Advice for self-employment as an actor – Age 21

As a recent graduate, I have not been able to put my degree to use as much as I would have liked to due to the lack of experience. I am hoping to find a job within my degree that will give me the opportunity to gain the experience I need and progress further – Age 23

Whether or not I should do a masters or start teacher training – Age 20

I need support in understanding how to develop my current part time job into my dream career as I currently feel as though my current job isn't a stepping stone to the job I am truly working towards – Age 17

11% of the 149 respondents indicated that they **needed some form of financial advice:** 6% in general; 3% about university financial considerations; 1% about salaries.

Advice on managing money would be more helpful – Age 25

Navigating financial aspects i.e. how to self-advocate for better pay/working conditions – Age 23

Help with narrowing down career choices and accurate recommendations regarding salaries, which country to work in etc – Age 16

I would like to become a part time maths teacher. I'm not sure I can afford university though – Age 16

How to do Student Loans – Age 18

Significant groups suggested they needed further advice on:

- **Employment options** (6% of the 149 respondents)
- **Gaining work experience** (5%)
- **Apprenticeship options** (4%)
- **Choosing A-levels** (3%)
- **Help with UCAS university applications** (3%)
- **Training opportunities** (3%)
- **Boosting confidence** (1%)

Support where to find relevant working experience which would be beneficial experience for jobs in future – Age 21

I need to be aware of the unconventional options of career that I can do with my degree – Age 18

12% of the respondents commented on the quality of advice they were seeking:

- **More specific and less generalised** (6%)
- More **face-to-face** interactions (3%)
- **Mentoring** by someone with relevant experience (3%)

Current support needed includes finding a professional mentor, which I am doing with the help of my manager. Once I am ready for the next step in my career, I will seek support with my CV – Age 23

I am getting support from a mentor however the mentor I have doesn't have experience in the relevant sector I would like to pursue as a career – Age 17

15% of the 149 respondents stated that they currently didn't need any career support ('none'), and 4% indicated that they **didn't know** what career support they needed currently.

Preferences for Accessing Career Support

180 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'How would you like to access that support?' Ranking the options in order of preference where 1 is most preferred through to 5 which is least preferred. The closer the score is to 1 the higher the preference for that route of access to career support.

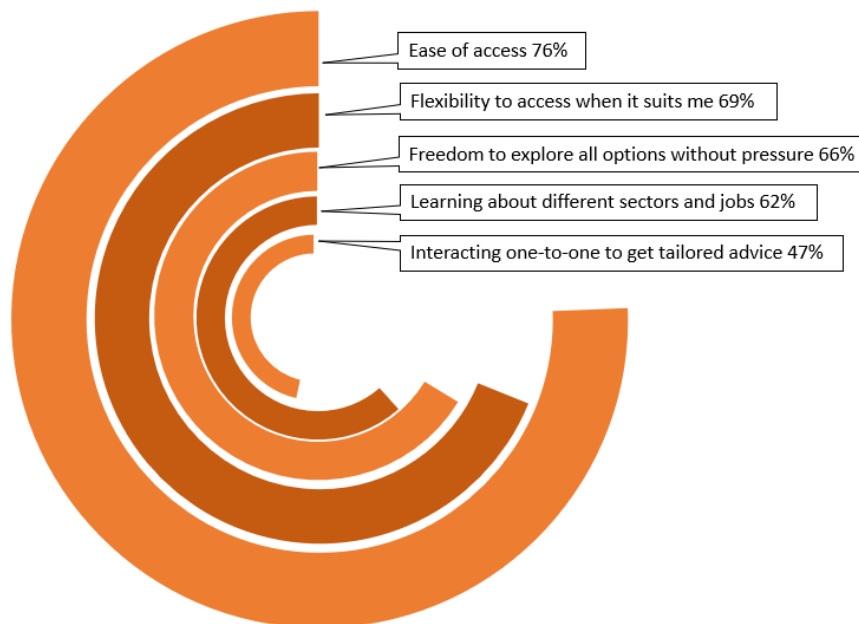
Online communication was given the highest average score of **2.19**, followed closely by **in person** which had an average score of **2.37**.

Form of access	Average ranking
Online communication (e.g., email)	2.19
In person	2.37
Online resources	2.85
Virtual connection (e.g., video chat)	3.13
Other	4.48

193 of 252 answered: 'Which of these are important to you when accessing careers support?' selecting all of the 9 factors in the table below which they believed to be important.

77% of the 193 respondents indicated that '**ease of access**' was most important. This was closely followed by **69%** '**flexibility to access when it suits me**' and **66%** '**freedom to explore all options without pressure**'.

Factors	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Ease of access	146	77%
Flexibility to access when it suits me	133	69%
Freedom to explore all options without pressure	128	66%
Learning about different sectors and jobs	119	61%
Interacting one-to-one to get tailored advice	90	47%
Less intimidating	88	46%
Talking with someone about the job market	73	38%
Go online for everything	57	30%
Anonymity	32	17%



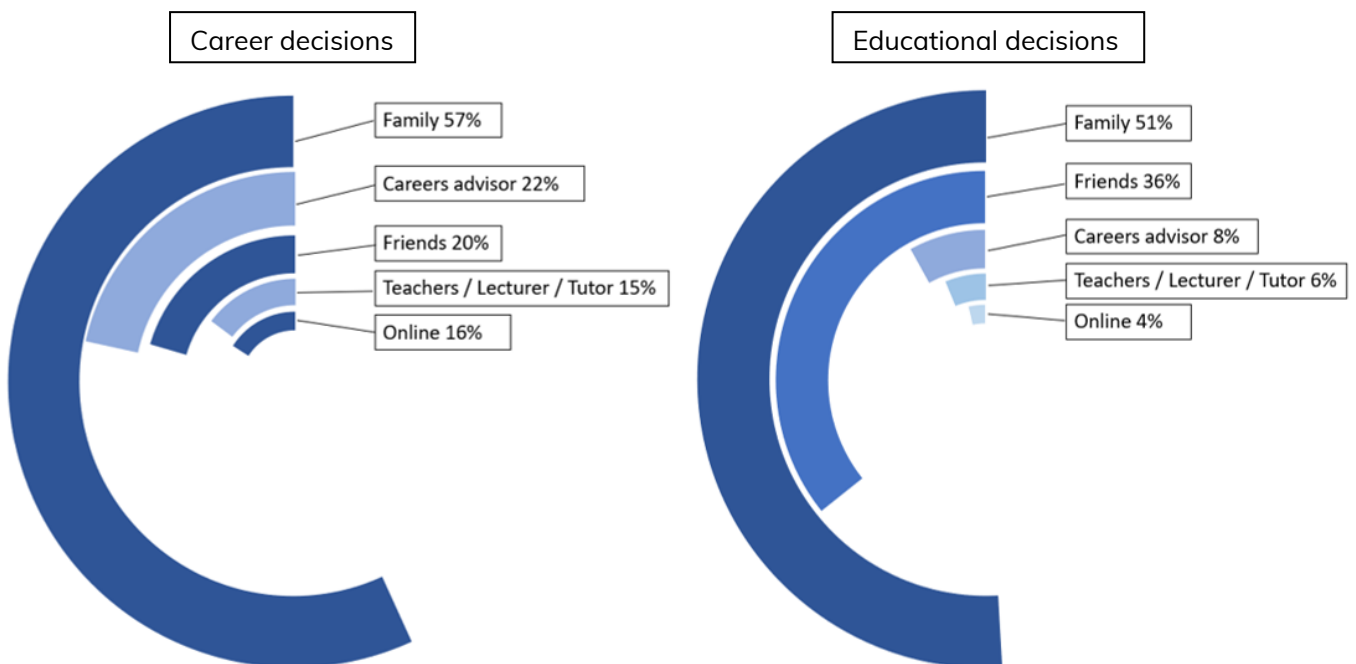
Who Supports Your Decision Making?

88 of 252 respondents answered the question: 'Right now, where / who do you go to for help with making **career decisions**?'³². 112 of 252 respondents answered the similar question: 'Right now, where / who do you go to for help with making **educational decisions**?'³⁶.

Family is the most popular source of help with 50-57% of respondents naming either family or parents as the place they go to for support making decisions. Followed by careers advisors (22%) and friends (19%) for **career decisions**. However, respondents go to their friends 28% more than career advisors for **educational decisions**, reflecting that careers guidance is not considered important when making education decisions.

Source of help with decision making	Career decisions		Educational decisions	
	Number of mentions	% of respondents	Number of mentions	% of respondents
Family	50	57%	57	51%
Careers advisor	19	22%	9	8%
Friends	18	19%	40	36%
Teacher / Lecturer / Tutor	13	15%	7	6%
Website / Online*	14	15%	4	4%
Workplace	6	7%	3	3%
Decide for myself	3	3%	6	5%
University	3	3%	1	1%
Partner	1	1%	9	8%
College (general)	1	1%	2	2%

*Online comments mentioned, UCAS, university websites and online chat rooms like The Student Room



³² Some respondents named more than one source of support; as such, percentages do not add up to 100%, and number of mentions do not align with the number of respondents.

57% of the 88 respondents stated that they go to family for help making **careers decisions**; 35% specifically mentioned their parent(s). Similarly, 51% of the 112 respondents noted that they go to family for help making **educational decisions**; 26% mentioned parent(s).

Google! And friends or family (although it's often the case that family are from a different generation and don't understand the current job market - talking with a specialist would be better) – Age 24

Career decisions:

22% of the 88 respondents noted that they go to careers advisors for help making **career decisions**; 13% specifically mentioned their school careers advisor.

7% of the 88 respondents go to their workplace for help making **career decisions**; 4% mention their colleagues; 2% mention their line manager; and, 1% mention looking at job adverts.

Education decisions:

6% of the 112 respondents go to teachers for **educational decisions**; 2% mentioned their 'head of year'.

3% of the 112 respondents said that they don't have anyone to go to for **educational decisions**.

6. Career Service Provider Survey Insights

The provider survey was completed by 13 providers, from 13 organisations. A further 6 individuals from 5 organisations were interviewed to gather a deeper understanding of the key themes that were coming out from the survey insights, these have been included within section 7.

Summary of Key Points

All 13 survey respondents worked for careers services which provided support to only to people over the age of 16. 8 provide their support exclusively within Wales, 5 are accessible to service users from the whole of the UK, with 1 limited to just England and Wales.

The most common types of career service provided are **one-to-one tailored advice** and **CV writing support**. The most common routes of service delivery are **in person** and **virtual connection**. 10 of the 13 reported that their services have changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. 8 respondents shared that there has been a move towards providing remote or virtual consultations with service users online, via email or via telephone.

11 of the career service provider respondents **do** offer service users support for looking for work experience, with only 2 of those responding **not** offering this support. 12 **do** provide support for service users to be able access and engage with employers, 1 **does not** offer this support.

The survey asked where they go for advice, guidance and recommendations in order to update their resources. It was notable that there was little consensus in the answers to this question. Whilst this may reflect there being a wide range of resources available, it may also indicate that there is lack of consistency and consensus across the various career services, as they would appear to be taking advice and guidance from a very wide range of sources. It is also notable that only one respondent said that they sought advice directly from employers.

Career service providers were asked to indicate whether or not their service is responsive to young women's needs. Broadly there were three types of responses to this and the following questions unpacking how their services are responding to the needs of young women:

1. We treat everyone equally
2. We treat everyone as an individual case
3. We actively target young women to address remaining biases and imbalances

6.1 Career Service Provision

Ages of service users catered for

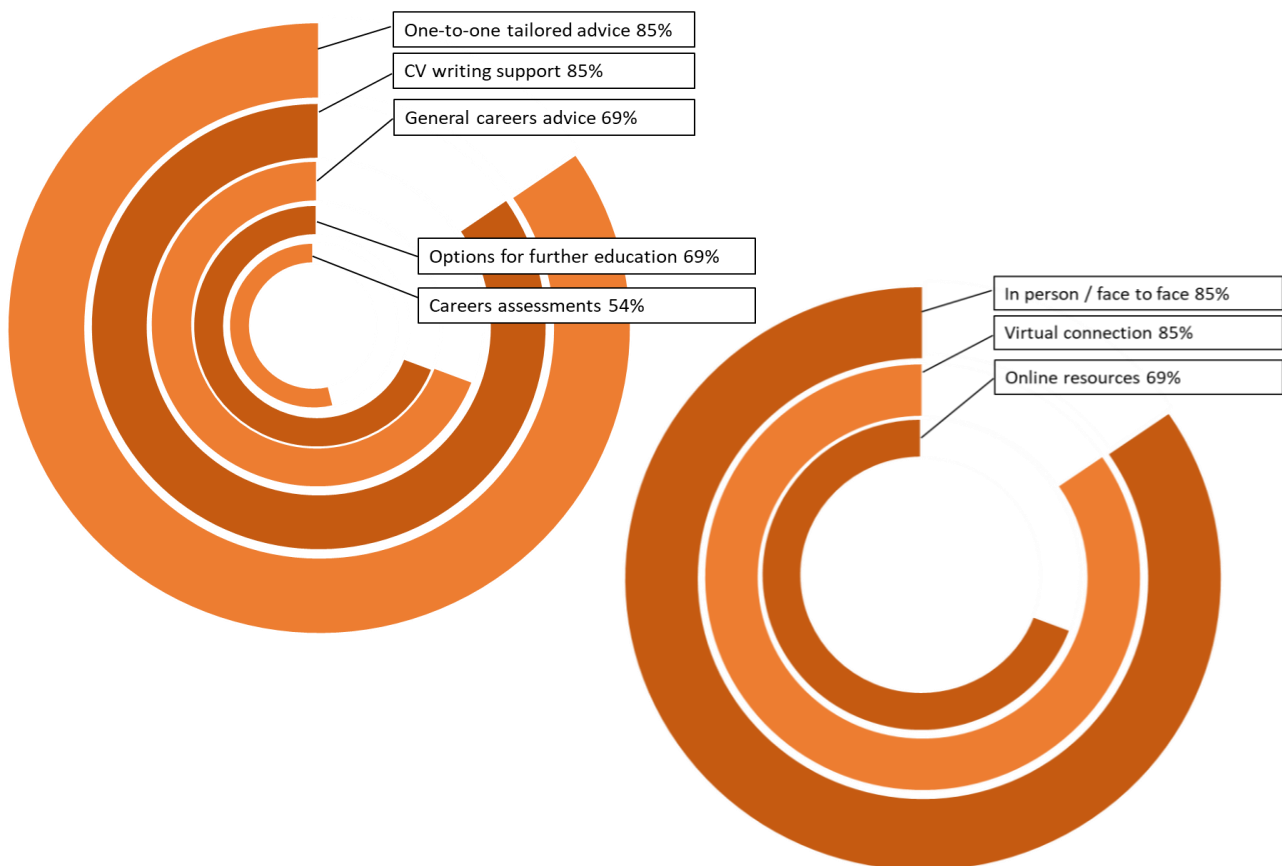
6 of the 13 organisations provide assistance to young people from the age of 16. However, a further 6 only provide support to young people aged 18+ as they are in higher education settings. Only 1 career service provider who responded gives support for those well into their working lives from 25-66 years of age.

Geographical coverage

8 of the 13 organisations provide their support exclusively within Wales although one pointed out that as a university, they provide advice to all their students which includes many international students. 5 are accessible to service users from the whole of the UK, with 1 limited to just England and Wales.

Types of services available

The most common types of career service provided are one-to-one tailored advice and CV writing support. The most common routes of service delivery are in person and virtual connection.



10 of 13 reported that their services have changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. 8 respondents shared that there has been a move towards providing remote or virtual consultations with service users online or via the telephone. One explained that they have been forced to reduce the amount of face-to-face training or coaching days for service users. Another reported that they have had to suspend outreach to community sites such as libraries or job centres. Whilst another said there has been less direct engagement between careers staff and businesses.

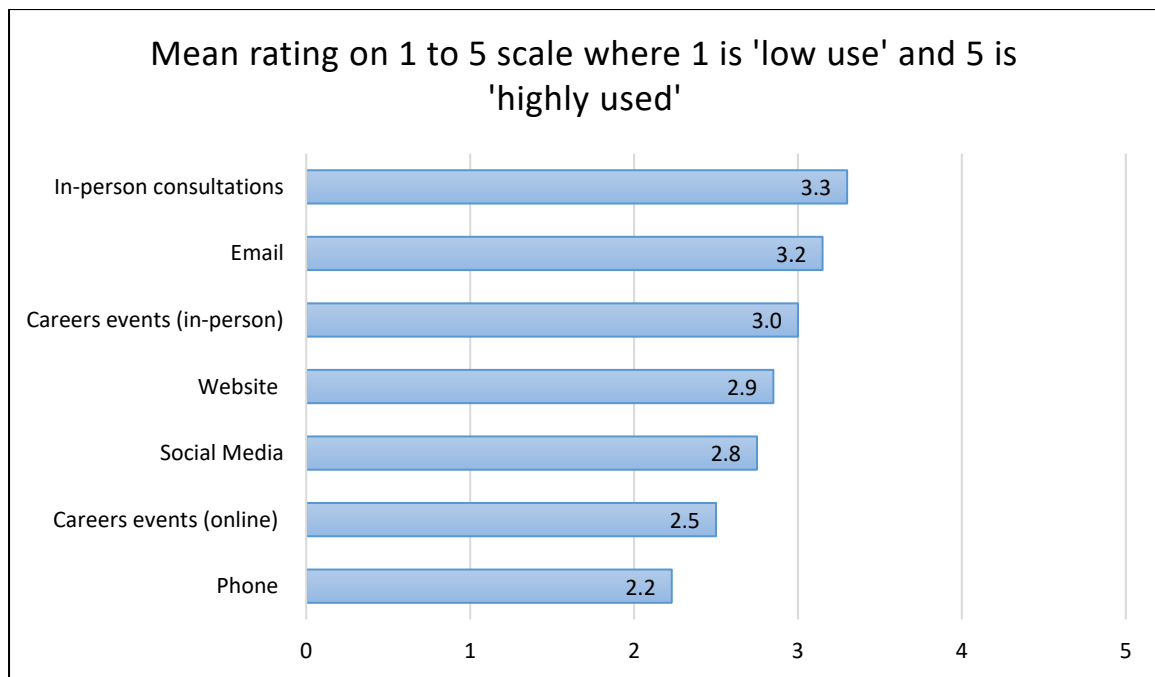
3 of 13 felt there has been no change to their services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Preferred routes of access by young women

Career service providers were asked to rate the extent to which young women use different channels to access their careers services. (Scored 1 to 5, where 1 is low use and 5 is high use.)

Mean ratings ranged from 2.2 to 3.3 suggesting that engagement is fairly balanced across the various channels. The channels scored had response ranges of 1-5, with the exception of social media and careers events online which had response ranges of 1-4.

Overall, the route of access which tends to be the most used by young women is 'in-person consultations', and the route least used being 'phone consultations'.



5 of 13 indicated that the routes used by young women to access their services **has changed** because of the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting that there has been increased engagement via email. Further, 1 respondent felt there to now be an expectation for 24/7 support via multi-platform provision containing audio and video content.

4 of 13 reported no change in routes of access because of the pandemic and 4 of 13 indicated that they were not sure whether routes of access have changed.

6.2 Targeted Services

Availability and support for finding work experience

11 of 13 of the career service provider respondents **do** offer service users support for looking for work experience, with only 2 **not** offering this support.

Support for engagement with employers

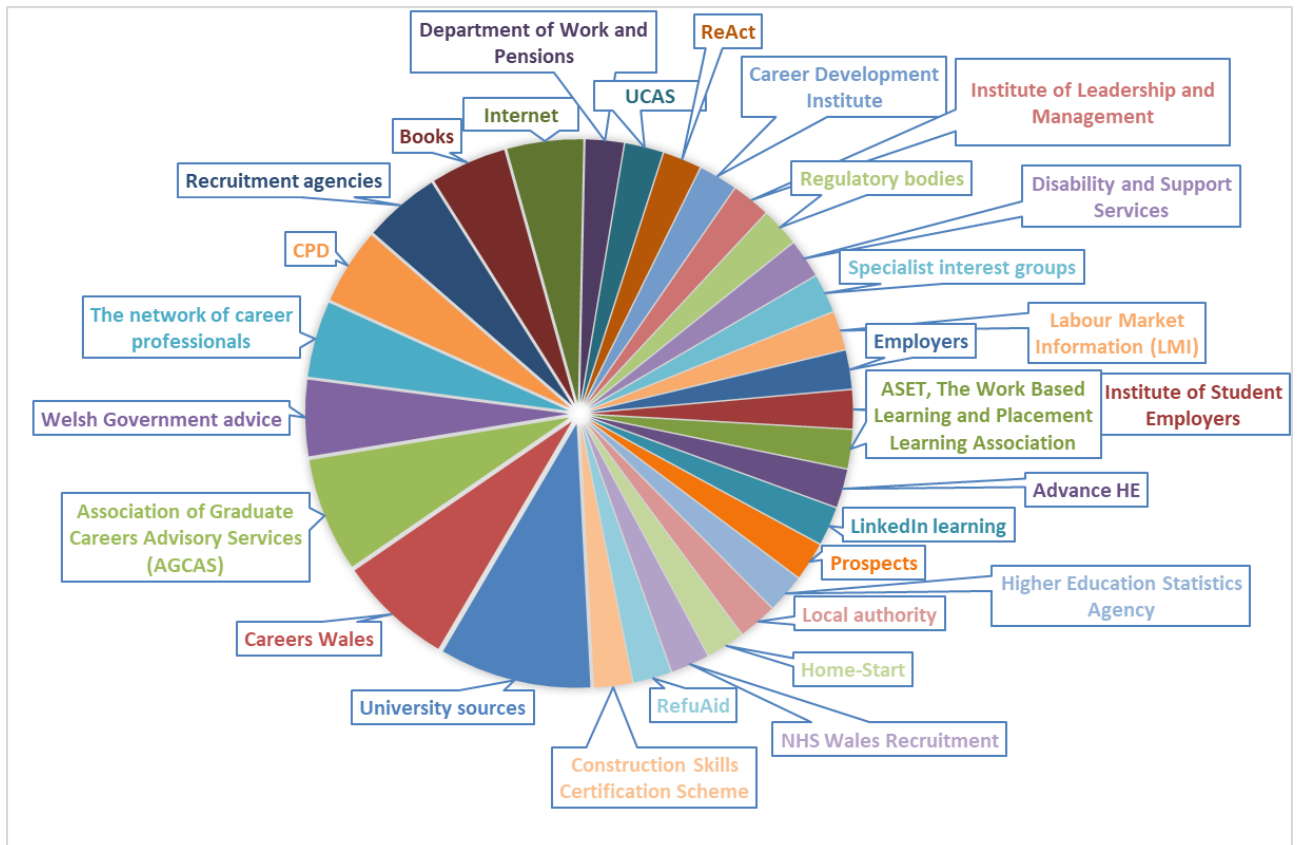
12 of 13 **do** provide support for service users to be able access and engage with employers, 1 **does not** offer this support.

6.3 Futureproofing

Information and guidance for reviewing and updating resources

11 of 13 of respondents shared that their resources are reviewed and updated constantly. Only 2 stated their resources are updated annually, 1 of whom highlighted that whilst materials are reviewed annually, the staff are trained and kept updated constantly through CPD.

The survey asked where they go for advice, guidance and recommendations in order to update their resources. It was notable that there was little consensus in the answers to this question. Whilst this may reflect there being a wide range of resources available, it may also indicate that there is lack of consistency and consensus across the various career services, as they would appear to be taking advice and guidance from a very wide range of sources. It is also notable that only one respondent said that they sought advice directly from employers.



Equality training and or unconscious bias training for staff

All the career service providers said that equality and unconscious bias training is part of their service. 10 stated their training is mandatory, 3 indicated that whilst training is available it is optional.

Extent to which advice is up to date?

7 of 13 considered the advice and guidance that they are providing to be 'up-to-date', with 1 believing that their service is 'sometimes' up to date.

Yes, as a team we work hard to monitor labour markets, explore trends and ensure our advice is relevant – Career Service Provider

6.4 Opinions

5 of 13 did not answer the opinions questions, therefore the following questions collate the insights of the 8 respondents who shared their opinions.

Strengths of their career resources

The career service providers were asked to identify the strengths of their career resources and services:

4 of 8 identified the variety of high-quality resources available to service users. With individuals describing a broad spectrum of personal support, the wide range of interactions supporting career planning, and the multiple channels available from telephone to digital and in-person consultations.

3 pointed to the bank of expertise, experience and professionalism of their staff.

We have a very experienced team of professionals, who are well versed in career development and providing career development resources and coaching. We have excellent outcomes from our interventions.

– Career Service Provider

2 highlighted their ability to provide support in both the Welsh and English language.

2 identified their independence / impartiality as a strength

[We are] wide ranging, independent and impartial, tailored to individuals and well placed to support students and graduates

– Career Service Provider

Other strengths mentioned by individuals included:

- Accessibility
- Ability to tailor advice and support to the individual
- Relevance in terms of being up to date
- Having a large team
- Excellent proven outcomes
- Ability to provide sector specific advice
- Availability in 'outreach' locations such as libraries or job centres
- Free of charge support

Extent to which the service is responsive to young women's needs

Career service providers were asked to indicate whether or not their service is responsive to young women's needs. Broadly there were three types of responses to this, and the following questions unpack how their services are responding to the needs of young women:

1. We treat everyone equally
2. We treat everyone as an individual case
3. We actively target young women to address remaining biases and imbalances

6 of 8 stated that their service is responsive to young women's needs. 2 explained that they provide a fully inclusive service and training programme which supports women to take part, as well as offering additional support to any students facing barriers to development such as care responsibilities. 1 reported that they offer specific support for women trying to enter specific sectors, such as STEM, and try to address intersectionality such as women of colour.

We provide an inclusive training environment and support women to be able to take part in the training programme.

– Career Service Provider

1 reported that their service is individualised and therefore responsive to the needs of all customers.

The service is built around the needs of individuals and is therefore responsive to the needs of all customers.

– Career Service Provider

1 said 'No' – their service is not responsive to young women's needs, with no further explanation.

How are young women being prepared for the changing labour market?

4 of 8 said they did not think there was any difference in the way that young women are prepared for the labour market. One explained that young women, like young men, can access independent careers interviews, both in-person and at virtual job-fairs, giving them contact with employers and highlighting growth job sectors.

2 feel that preparation is poor and that there is still work to be done with respect to preparing young women for the changing labour market. In particular, gender stereotyping is still considered an issue as is the gender pay gap. Another said that although universities are better, the preparation given to young women in schools has room for improvement.

Not very well, careers education in schools is limited. If they go to a university the support is better, I feel many people are left a bit clueless if I am honest.

– Career Service Provider

I think that things have improved hugely especially within the graduate labour market, but there is still a long way to go, the gender pay gap is still unacceptable, and there is still work to be done around gender stereotypes

– Career Service Provider

2 commented that they try to educate young women about the accessibility of roles and that they are likely to be less location specific with the possibility of more remote working, trying to break down stereotypes and ensure equitable access to organisations.

Extent to which the service / advice is challenging gendered roles

The career service providers were invited to explain how they try to challenge gender stereotypes around certain roles or careers. Whilst most recognised that there is remaining bias that needs to be overcome 1 respondent simply stated that all careers provision was fully inclusive.

4 of 8 said they provide events and initiatives around gender issues, positive promotion of roles and sectors, positive recruitment events and a scholarship programme with females in leadership.

Lots of positive promotion of roles/sectors, working with employers to break these down, events to promote positive recruitment, scholarship programme with females in leadership as one strand.

– Career Service Provider

3 commented that they try to avoid gender stereotyping or gendered roles. One respondent explained that staff are given mandatory training to avoid gender bias and interviews are sometimes monitored by the education inspectorate, Estyn³³, in order to highlight opportunities to raise awareness of gender stereotyping. Another reported engaging with employers to break down gender stereotypes.

1 commented that all services are provided without any gender bias, are fully accessible and inclusive.

³³ Estyn is a Crown Body established under the Education Act 1992 and funded by the Welsh Government to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our advice, inspection and capacity building.

We don't provide access to opportunities based on gender, [the service is] fully accessible and inclusive. – Career Service Provider

Jobs or sectors not accessed as easily by young women

4 of 8 agreed that there are some sectors and particular jobs that are not accessed easily by young women. 2 noted STEM careers with one highlighting manufacturing / engineering / technology, and the other mentioning leadership and junior management roles.

1 felt that **all jobs are** easily accessed by young women, disagreeing with the statement that there are some sectors or jobs that are not easily accessed by women.

2 gave answers that were not relevant to the question.

Extent to which the careers service offers any support or opportunities specifically for young women

Service providers were asked directly if there are any services giving support specifically targeted at young women. This seemed to be a difficult question for respondents to answer as some explained that they endeavour to ensure equal and inclusive provision, whilst others said they do provide some support targeted positively at young women.

3 of 8 stated that they offer specific initiatives, support groups and events focusing on attracting young women into STEM careers.

*There are still gender stereotypes which discourage women from entering certain STEM subjects for example. This is improving, confidence is also an issue.
– Career Service Provider*

2 stated that they do not offer anything specifically for young women. Although, it was admitted that occasionally employers stated gender preferences, this was considered rare.

Improving access to career services for young women

Providers were invited to identify steps that could be taken to improve access to careers services for young women. A number of respondents considered this to be an issue best tackled in schools due to recent evidence showing that by their first careers interviews, at 14-16 years old, many cultural biases are already embedded.

4 of 8 felt that gender bias starts becoming embedded in culture prior to young women's first contact with careers services. As such they felt that the conversations and challenge about gender bias in certain careers needs to start earlier in schools.

I strongly believe this should start in school and continue throughout education letting young girls/women know what the opportunities are and keeping all doors open to them and getting them to challenge gender stereotypes.

– Career Service Provider

At higher education level I don't think this is problematic, maybe at school level. – Career Service Provider

There were individual suggestions for: more collaboration with small and medium sized enterprises; improved access to career services in Further Education; better funding of career services; and, more networking events for career service providers that are working with young people.

Groups who should engage more with career services than they currently do

Only a few respondents provided suggestions of groups who should engage more with career services than they currently do, these included: school pupils; students with disabilities, for instance those using screen readers; and, those needing vocational courses who feel that career planning is not required.

Groups of young women that are under served by careers services

Only 3 respondents identified groups of young women they felt were currently poorly served by careers services. 1 suggested those young women that had already become a parent. 1 identified young women from ethnic minorities are under served. 1 felt that careers services are underserving all young women particularly those of school age who could be at least finding out what options are open to them.

All young women, I don't think they have enough career advice and guidance at school, I don't believe they need to be making career decisions at this age but certainly given the opportunity to know what could be available to them. The education system should be helping develop them towards their future careers.

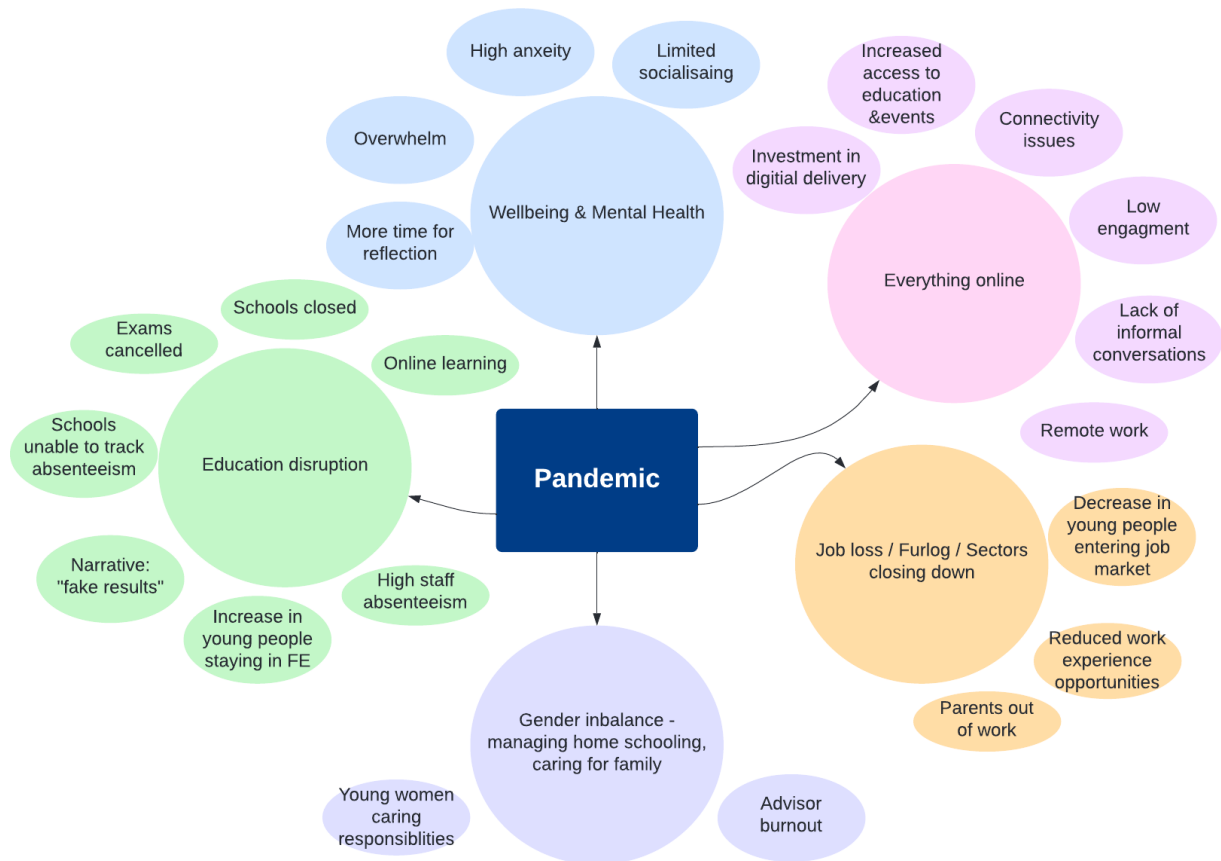
– Career Service Provider

Difficult to quantify but from experience potentially females from ethnic minorities could be under-represented. – Career Service Provider

7. Themes

7.1 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused complete disruption to daily life and impacted young women’s experience of careers support in a myriad of interconnecting ways. The bubble diagram below aims to capture some of the key impacts of the pandemic on young women’s career support, aspirations and plans that arose during this research.



Taking a holistic approach, we will briefly explore how each bubble is interconnected to the others with some examples from the research.

Online vs Face-to-face Support

68% of the young women who completed our survey are actively studying, therefore it was not surprising that throughout the open text responses in the survey there were references to the educational disruption the pandemic has caused. Although many shared the impact of everything moving online with negative associations:

Less inclined to pursue further education due to the way my university handled remote learning – Age 21

There were also a number of comments about how things moving online enabled them to access education courses or events which would have otherwise been out of reach due to geographical reasons, time commitments or cost:

The pandemic has made me consider studying again because I have more spare time now that I don't travel to work, and has also given me the confidence to ask my employer for time to study alongside my job
– Age 25

Similarly, the career service provider survey responses highlighted that there has been an increase in online / virtual engagement as a result of the pandemic. As we dived deeper into this during 1:1 interviews with career service providers, we consistently heard about investment in improving digital services and training staff to increase confidence and competence in delivering career guidance and support digitally. Unfortunately, all career providers we spoke to shared that they had experienced issues with engagement levels with the digital events and support they organised. Despite the potential for digitally delivered events to reach more young women, in reality the attendance and engagement has been minimal.

However, one interviewee observed that there seems to have been an increase in engagement in in-person events in recent times. Prior to the pandemic the key career information points in schools were in person events, with employers coming in to talk at assemblies or careers fairs, and work experience weeks. However, due to Welsh Government guidelines around lockdowns, social distancing recommendations, school and workplace closures, unsurprisingly these events were cancelled or moved online. Young women shared the frustration at these events being cancelled:

With school having been closed multiple times, and visitors not being allowed to come into schools, education on this has become much harder to access – Age 17

Career service provider interviewees pointed out that in many ways virtual events require more courage and confidence from the young person to ask questions and lack the informal conversations that happen around the event.

Informal Advice and Work Experience

Young women have also missed these informal conversations with adults during work experience, volunteering or employment. 64% of the young women aged 14-18 years old who answered the survey question about work experience stated that they had not have the chance to undertake work experience, almost half of whom identified the Covid-19 pandemic as the reason.

It [the pandemic] means that a lot of things have been delayed and / or cancelled such as work experience in school and being able to have a taster of different job roles and careers. – Age 16

Young women were currently employed also shared that the closure of their workplace had a negative impact on their career aspirations:

Work has been closed for periods so has delayed my progress – Age 20

Providers shared that although there were many additional challenges and hurdles to overcome as a result of the sudden switching to everything online. Now there has been time to invest in digital improvement and training, a future hybrid approach will increase accessibility to a wider breadth of events and educational opportunities. Additionally, it is now possible for young women to connect with potential employers, mentors and role models in their chosen industry virtually. There are a number of organisations in Wales offering this type of networking service online, such as The Mullany Fund³⁴, the Women's Equality Network Wales³⁵ and Prospela³⁶.

Online learning has grown massively, and I have been able to complete training that otherwise would've been impossible to fit into my schedule when you take into account travelling to and from events. I love online learning and that door is open now to hop on to these 2 hour webinars and network in a new kind of way - Age 23

[I connect with potential employers through] online societies with members who work in the industry I am interested in - Aged 16

Mental Health

It has been widely published in news and media outlets that the pandemic has had a huge impact on mental health. In Wales, the number of people suffering severe mental health conditions during the period immediately before the pandemic was 11.7%, by April 2020 this increased to 28.1%, with young people experiencing the largest deterioration in mental health³⁷. Although we did not ask about mental health in our research, it was proactively raised by young women and career service providers. One young woman outlined the link between her mental health concerns and educational disruption, especially around exam cancellation.

I think it's made everyone a bit confused, was a lot of debate about whether it was going to be CDG's [Centre Determined Grades]. I for one

³⁴ <https://themullanyfund.org/what-we-do/mullany-e-mentoring/>

³⁵ <https://wenwales.org.uk/connect/mentoring/>

³⁶ <https://prospela.com/become-an-e-mentor/>

³⁷ Cardiff University: Wales Fiscal Analysis (2021) COVID-19 in Wales: the mental health and wellbeing impact

was thrown off track because of Covid. One of my friends said that we are less likely to get employed if we had CDG is because employers wouldn't want to hire someone who didn't do the exam. It's also messed up my mental health along with a bunch of my friends – Age 16

Career service providers shared that there has been an increase in burnout of career advisors, hypothesising that it was due to the gender imbalance in advisors, with most being women, and that the brunt of the extra caring, home-schooling and mental load responsibilities caused by the pandemic falling onto women.

Due to the various guidelines, it has been impossible for schools to accurately record absenteeism or monitor engagement digitally to the same level as possible with in-person teaching. Providers also shared that it was harder to follow up with individuals who didn't answer their emails or phone calls, likely leading to more falling through the net.

Continued Education and Moving into Work

Careers service providers shared that there has been an increase in the number of young people staying in education and lower dropout rates in further education. However, there is a growing concern across further educational institutes about learners' progression, with an increasing number of young people staying in education despite lack of academic progression.

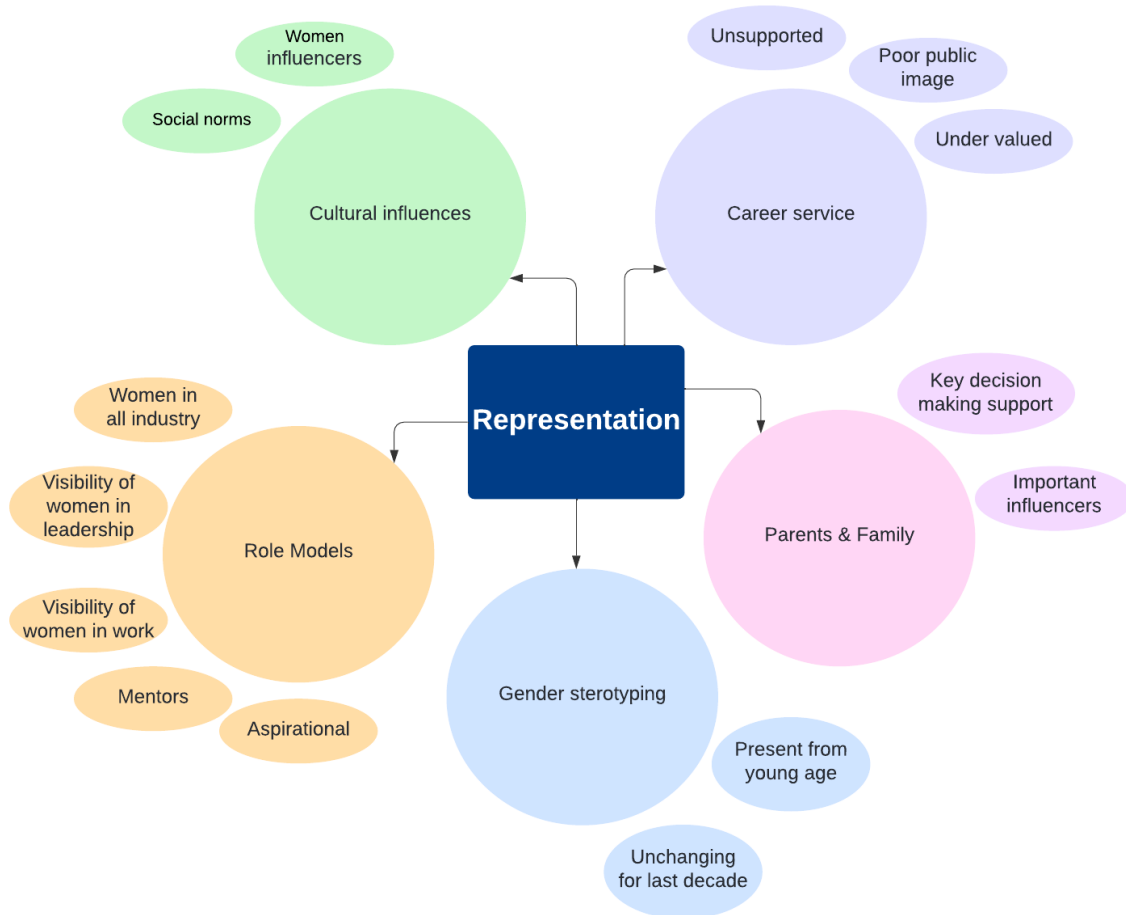
A provider also shared that the financial motivation driving families to encourage or discourage young women to stay in further education has been more complicated due to reduced availability of jobs for young people due to closures of different industries for varying lengths of time over the pandemic. For this reason, there may have been an increase in the pressure for young people to stay in further education to get the Education Maintenance Allowance to financially support their family, especially if the household income was negatively impacted by work closures because of the pandemic.

18% of workers in Wales were employed in sectors that shutdown at the outset of the pandemic, with young people being more likely to be employed by those sectors, 36% aged 16 – 24 years old versus 11% of those 35 – 65 years old³⁸. Additionally, people in non-permanent employment were up to 11 times more likely to experience unemployment compared to people in permanent employment³⁸. Leading to an increase in inequalities across the country, with those in the lowest income households also suffering from the consequences of not attending school in person, having access to free school meals and more likely to have connectivity issues in accessing education online.

³⁸ NHS Public Health Wales (2021) COVID-19 and employment changes in Wales: What we know about current and future impacts

7.2 Representation

Representation of women in work across all industries at all levels of leadership is essential for challenging gender stereotyping and occupational segregation. However, due to the gender inequality that exists globally, including in Wales, there is a need to challenge the stereotypes that young women are exposed to societally, culturally, and also often at home. The diagram below captures the key aspects relating to representation that arose during this research.



Representation of women and career services is complex to unravel, however, we will briefly explore some ways in which it arose in this research.

There is a high dependence on family and friends for career information and decision making, over 50% of respondents stated that they go to family for support with career and education decision making. This aligns with previous research, such as Chwarae Teg’s ‘Bright’ research from 2018 in which 74% of respondents stated that parents were a factor affecting their career choice³⁹.

Interestingly, career service providers identified parents as one of the underserved groups by current career services in Wales. Since we know young women rely on family for decision making, supporting family members to know where and how to access careers services resources and where to signpost their daughters, nieces, sisters,

³⁹ Chwarae Teg (2018) Bright: Young Women’s Career Aspirations

cousins, etc, could not only improve engagement but also greatly inform and facilitate conversations about careers not bound by occupational segregation.

Careers Wales have a ‘Career Check’ survey which is given to pupils in Key Stage 4 (KS4) – a period that encompasses years 10 and 11, the two years during which young people complete their GCSEs, typically aged 14-16 years old. The survey is used as a diagnostic tool by career advisors to identify pupils most in need of their support, however it is a rich data source for observing patterns and preferences of this age group. ADR Wales⁴⁰ have partnered with Careers Wales to combine the data from the ‘Career Check’ survey responses of academic years 2015/16 to 2018/19. This includes responses from over 90,000 pupils (with data from the National Data Collection) and explores the ‘intended pathways of pupils, the kinds of jobs that pupils want to do, perceived barriers to their choices and their assessments of their own competencies with respect to decision making’⁴¹. In their analysis eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) is used as a

Occupational Aspirations of Key Stage 4 children in Wales⁴⁰ by gender and eligibility for free school meals, from the data collected from over 90,000 young people in Wales between 2015 – 2019. A heat map has been applied which shows the highest rated occupations in green, middle ranking occupations in yellow or orange, and the lowest ranked occupations in red

Job	Females			Males			All KS4
	Non-FSM	eFSM	All	Non-FSM	eFSM	All	
Health and Medical	15.4	11.6	14.9	4.4	2.8	4.2	9.5
Leisure, Sports & Tourism	5.1	3.3	4.8	13.8	11.2	13.5	9.2
Engineering	1.4	1.3	1.4	14.1	14.1	14.1	7.8
Computers, Software & IT	1.2	1.0	1.1	11.5	12.0	11.6	6.4
Art & Design	8.6	9.6	8.7	3.5	3.9	3.6	6.1
Emergency, Security and Armed Services	3.5	3.9	3.6	6.9	7.6	7.0	5.3
Law	6.8	5.8	6.7	3.7	2.8	3.6	5.1
Teaching & Education	7.8	5.6	7.5	2.6	2.3	2.5	5.0
Animal Care	7.5	7.7	7.5	1.8	2.3	1.9	4.7
Building & Construction	0.4	0.5	0.4	8.2	12.2	8.7	4.6
TV, Film and Media	4.4	3.3	4.2	4.7	4.3	4.6	4.4
Childcare	7.8	14.1	8.7	0.2	0.3	0.2	4.4
Science &; Research	4.0	2.5	3.8	4.9	2.8	4.6	4.2
Hair & Beauty	7.0	12.6	7.7	0.4	0.5	0.4	4.0
Performing Arts	5.4	4.0	5.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	3.7

⁴⁰ Part of ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK) - which is a partnership of data science experts, academics and specialist teams within Welsh Government who utilise public sector data to research and inform policy

⁴¹ Davies, Huxley & Yunus (2021) *Understanding the origins of labour market disadvantages in Wales*

proxy for low socio-economic background. Analysis of education and career aspirations demonstrated that both gender and socio-economic background have an impact on occupational aspirations, the table above shows the occupational aspirations by gender and eligibility for free school meals, from 'Career Check' questions on their first-choice career area⁴⁰.

The table shows that the top 3 occupations for females eligible for FSM were: Childcare; Hair & Beauty; Health & Medical. Whereas for males eligible for FSM they were: Engineering; Building & Construction; Computers, Software & IT. These align to the gendered stereotypes and are discouraging as for more than a decade Careers Wales have been running programmes to challenge gendered stereotypes.

I remember campaign after campaign, I remember the STEM bus going round, I remember CITV's Bab's the builder campaign, I remember the Genesis project. You know, it hasn't made the difference, and I think it's because we're tackling it all too late, it's got to be tackled in the primary sector – Career Service Provider

This research by ADR Wales, along with others, has further highlighted the need to start this work earlier, incorporating it into primary school education. To this end, in February 2022 Careers Wales ran the first 'Career Discover Week' for year 6 primary school children in Wales which embedded challenging gender stereotyping throughout the activities⁴². However, this is only one piece of the puzzle as this needs to be continued across all spectrums of influence over children and young people, including media, games and advertising.

Representation of role models and real-life case studies is key as young women are unlikely to develop career aspirations without seeing and hearing from role models ahead of them.

Hearing from people from all walks of life so I can see people I relate to and understand in the career I'm looking at so I don't feel unrepresented or alienated - Age 17

Further, it is likely that this is one of the reasons why mentoring was identified in the young women's survey as one of the most useful career support resources and identified as something that would have made their career support better.

Finally, negative representation of career service providers and services was identified, by career service providers, as a key barrier to engagement. Anecdotally and culturally, there is a narrative, especially around school career services, that a career advisor's advice will be generic, gender stereotyped and likely to misdirect or undervalue the

⁴² Careers Wales (2022) <https://careerswales.gov.wales/news/first-career-discovery-week-for-primary-schools> (Accessed March 2022)

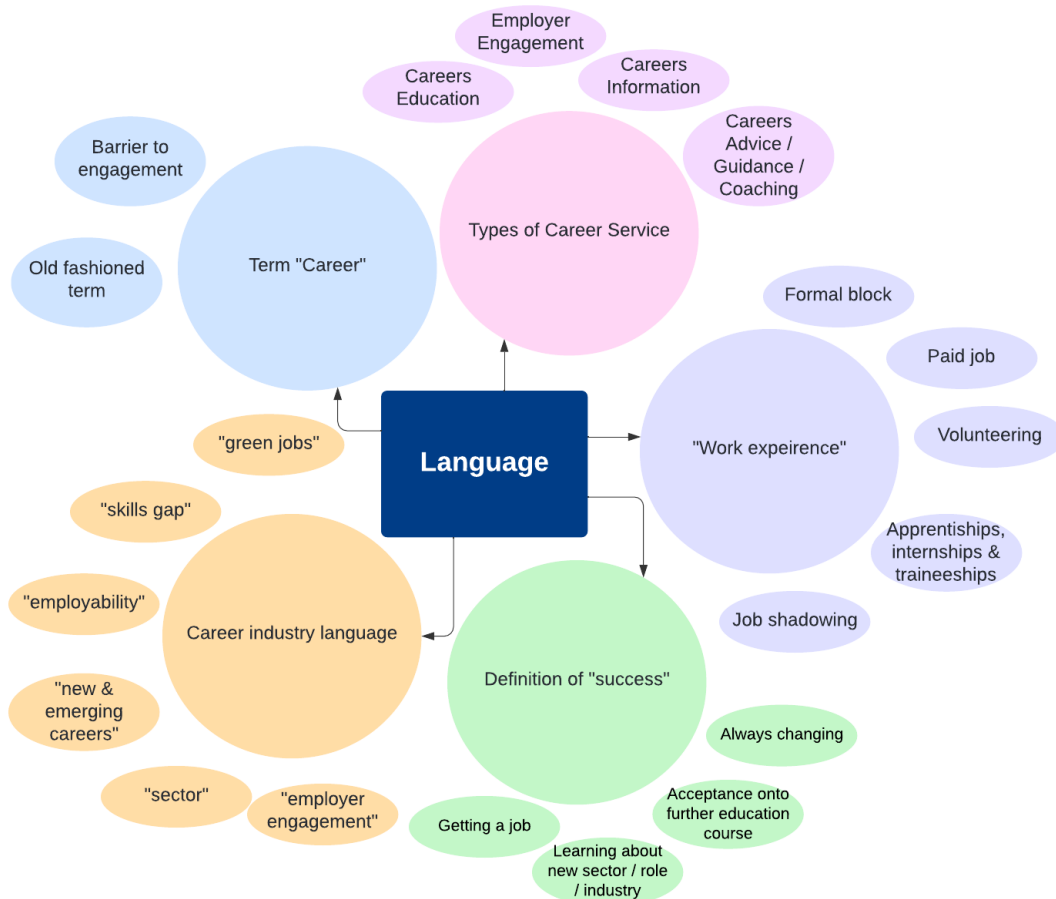
receiver. However, career service providers are trained, qualified professionals held to high standards and expected to undertake ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) courses to keep up to date. Not only this but they are passionate about delivering a relevant and up to date service.

I would absolutely have every senior person in any position of authority tell young people that career specialists know their stuff, and they need to go and have a conversation and support them to do it.
– Career Service Provider

Ideally, there needs to be a shift in the narrative around career services and more widely to challenge gender stereotypes and occupational segregation across all ages and walks of the population, not just those in schools, colleges or universities, to ensure that children and young people are being challenged in school but also at home by family, friends and the media.

7.3 Language

There was a clear theme throughout the surveys and interviews that the language used to describe career advice and support is confusing and at times conflicting. The bubble diagram captures the key aspects identified and the narrative following explores in more detail.



The term 'career service' is broad and encompasses a variety of elements. To breakdown this broader term, the Career Development Institute (CDI) state that for best practice, schools and colleges should have a co-ordinated programme of career services made up of the following 4 elements⁴³:

1. **Careers Education** – This is made up of **a formal progressive programme**, carried out within a group setting, to help develop knowledge and skills to support decision making through research and understanding themselves.
2. **Careers Advice / Guidance / Coaching** – This is **one-to-one** and cannot be done in a big group as it involves questions and personal reflection to uncover motivations. A career service provider described it as *“a real deep bedrock exploration of who somebody is, what their motivations are, and so forth”*.
3. **Careers Information / Signposting** – Information about the full range of options available to progress through education, training or work, and/or signposting on

⁴³ CDI (2018) *Careers Guidance in Schools and Colleges: A guide to best practice and commissioning independent career guidance services.*

where to find more information about particular jobs or industries. This can be provided through a variety of media including: websites; leaflets; social media; presentations; and, conversations.

4. **Employer Engagement** – The purpose of this is to enhance and support careers education and provide opportunities for pupils to be inspired, informed or advised directly by employers.

Typically, the terms ‘career service’ or ‘career support’ are used to describe any service providing any of the above categories. This non-specific language causes issues because the success of each is hugely different, for example, the success of **Careers Education** could be measured by increased knowledge and awareness of different routes and options for the student post-education and would not include tailored guidance or coaching to explore which route would be best for an individual.

In the responses to the young women’s survey question which asked for words used to describe the ‘careers support’ they’d received, there were some answers that suggested the young women considered ‘careers support’ from a broad perspective:

Lacking, and too factual. I had some career support in explaining what jobs do, but there was no support in how to make CVs, how to prepare for interviews etc which are actually the essential parts of starting careers – Aged 17

I've only used a website or two, no guidance through school – Aged 17

Other answers suggested that young women consider ‘careers support’ to only include ‘careers guidance’ and one-to-one interactions with careers advisors:

He was brilliant, gave me the advice and help I needed – Aged 17

Not tailored at all, just a meeting that ‘had to be done’ in school, no follow up, no real care – Aged 22

One young woman captured the confusion around careers support perfectly:

Sometimes useful, sometimes confusing to understand – Aged 16

The challenges associated with the blurring of language is a barrier to engagement and success which one career service provider described with the following analogy:

Unless you're clear about what you're going and looking for, you can't find it. That's like walking around a supermarket with 200,000 products in it trying to create dinner for a set of guests, you don't know who they are, what they like to eat, but yet you have to buy something. Then you end up taking it back because you've got the wrong thing, or it rots in your cupboard because you didn't know what to do with it. And that's very similar to what happens with careers worker.

– Career Service Provider

To further add to this challenge of defining successful career support, it will be different for each individual and also different depending on their stage of life. The questions asking about what support young women need right now in the young women's survey (results in section 5.5) identifies that this is not necessarily linked to anything as simple as age, as there was no correlation between the type of support mentioned and the respondent's age.

Additionally, many responses in the young women's survey indicated that many consider 'career services' to be even broader than the 4 elements outlined by the CDI, incorporating: social media (including TikTok & Instagram); networking with friends, colleagues and individuals in target industry; and, conversations with adults in life, such as friend's parents, guide leaders and neighbours.

Overall, these challenges with defining successful career support tend to lead to polarised opinions of different services. Perhaps websites such as UCAS and UniFrog were generally noted positively because they have clearly defined markers of success in a successful application to further education leading to acceptance on a course. By comparison, college career services are an undefined collection of different careers related services provided by a college, with no clearly defined marker of success; some individuals will require career service support with practical things like creating a CV; some will require career service support with deciding their next step; some will require career service support to learn about the labour market which they are looking to enter into.

Finally, there is no unifying definition of success in careers in general. It could be a specific target salary or a target leadership role, however, it could be less tangible things like a work / life balance or great work colleagues. It is a life-long journey and what an individual is seeking and will view as success at various stages of their life may well differ greatly.

The language used to identify and discuss different elements of career services needs to be made consistent and clearer to enable young women to search for and utilise the appropriate support as required during her life. Clearly defined career service elements may also enable a conversation around what to expect from 'successful' career support, helping to create a more positive narrative around careers services.

The term 'career' has been found to be a barrier to engagement. Career service providers shared that they saw increased engagement when service names did not include the

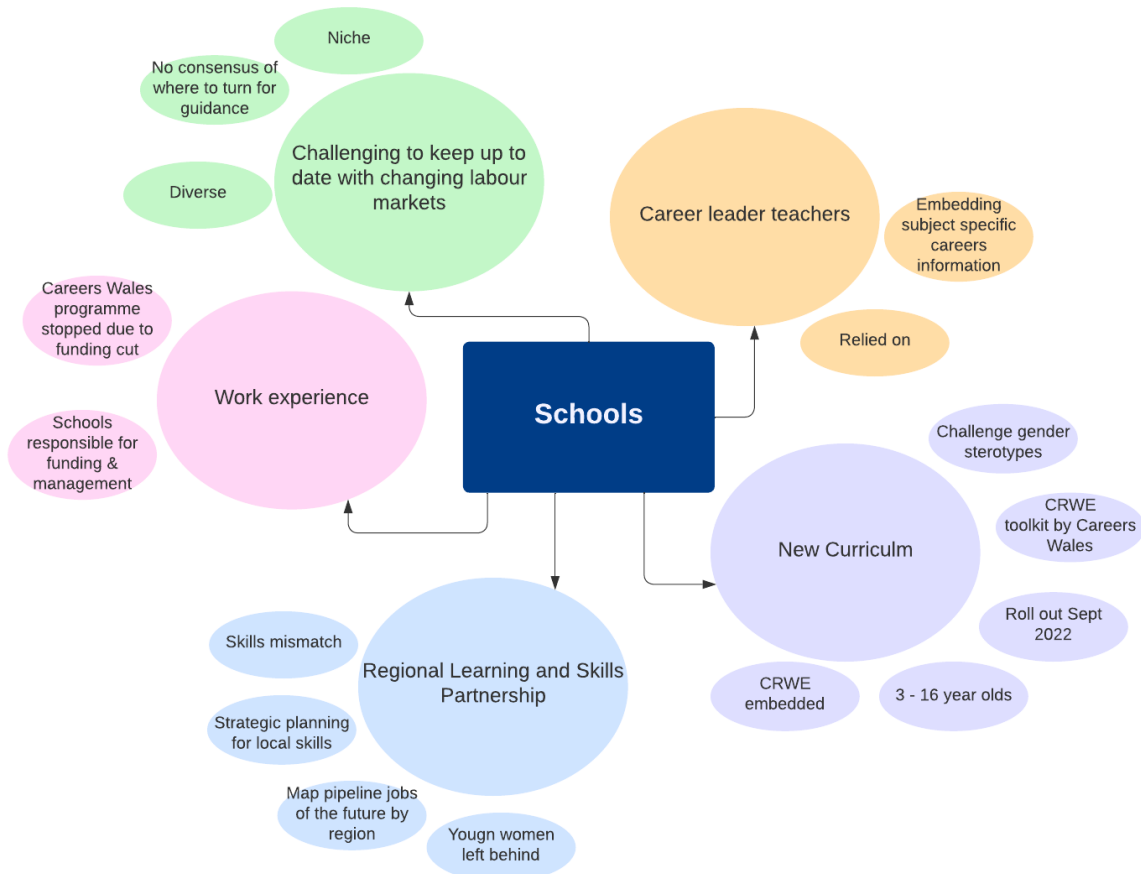
word 'career'. Suggestions were made that this could be due to the imagery that the term 'career' tends to be associated with leaving education, getting an entry level job in a specific industry and gradually progressing up to a leadership role over decades of working life, remaining in the same industry until retirement.

Every industry, profession and organisation have their own language, terminology and acronyms, the career service industry is no different. However, it's key to note that this language can sometimes add to the confusion, decrease engagement and/or reduce perception of success. Taking work experience as an example, during analysis of the young women's survey it was realised that the question '*have you done any work experience?*' wasn't limited to the *formal block of school age work experience* we were aiming to collect information about, but could include volunteering, paid jobs, apprenticeships, job shadowing, internships or traineeships.

Further adding to the confusion, the acronyms around Careers Education curriculums are varied, including: CWoW / CWW (Careers and the World of Work); CWRE (Careers and Work-Related Experiences); WRL (Work-Related Learning); LMI (Labour Market Information); and CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance).

7.4 Schools

Children and young people’s careers education, information and guidance in schools is key to broadening their understanding of the labour market, awareness of different industries and nurturing their aspirations. A key finding of the research was that teachers have an instrumental role in educating and informing young women about careers, and careers education should be embedded into the curriculum, so it isn’t an interruption that teachers need to juggle to fit in. The bubble diagram captures the key aspect relating to this finding, that will be discussed in more detail below.



Reliance on Teachers

Schools and teachers were mentioned over 300 times in the young women’s survey responses, demonstrating how closely linked they are to a variety of questions about careers support. This is not surprising as careers education, information and guidance starts in schools, either directly through educational programmes run alongside the main curriculum or indirectly through young women talking with their teachers about potential opportunities relating to their subject. 23 young women stated that schools and teachers had been the most useful career support they had ever received:

From teachers and a careers advisor in school guiding me on the best options – Age 18

Teachers in school recommending extra-curricular activities to support my career choice – Age 23

This places a huge responsibility on teachers and raises the question of how best to support them in staying up to date on information about the labour market and training to challenge stereotypes, without further overloading them. Teachers' personal experience of the labour market is often fairly narrow, since a frequent careers route for teachers can be: school – A levels – university, subject degree – teaching qualification – working in a school. Therefore, there becomes a need for teachers to participate in careers training to ensure they understand and can share information about the diverse career routes available to their students.

[There should be] careers leaders in schools who take the lead in making sure careers education, information, advice and guidance is embedded and that all the academic staff are experienced and understand what they need to be doing in terms of signposting how their subject fits to particular careers – Career Service Provider

However, it is also essential that there is a careers service in place for teachers to refer and signpost young women to trained professional career advisors as needed.

Economists predict that the combined effect of Covid-19, Brexit and the transition to net zero in the UK will likely trigger a greater level of labour market change than the country has experienced in recent years⁴⁴. 'With the country's trading relationships fundamentally changing, with Covid-19 leaving lasting impacts on how and where we work and consume, and with the next phase of the net zero transition set to demand changes in consumption patterns as well as investment in carbon-saving activities, the rate of structural change is likely to increase in the coming years.'⁴⁶

Keeping resources up to date and relevant in line with changes to the labour market is a key challenge to everyone who provides career support to young women. This is further acknowledged as being challenging with an issue identified by the career service provider survey, that there is no one place where career service providers go to update their resources. Raising the question, where should schools and teachers turn to update their knowledge and understanding of changes to the labour market?

New Curriculum for Wales

This will become even more important in September 2022, when the **new Curriculum for Wales** will be rolled out across schools in Wales, with six different areas of learning and experience and five cross-cutting themes, one of which is Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE)⁴⁵. The way the new CWRE will be embedded into the curriculum is

⁴⁴ The Economy 2030 Inquiry (2022) *Changing jobs? Change in the UK labour market and the role of worker mobility*

⁴⁵ The Curriculum for Wales - <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales> (Accessed March 2022)

described well by the following excerpt from Careers Wales Toolkit for Supporting the Development of CWRE⁴⁶:

The Curriculum for Wales (hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales) provides an excellent framework for CWRE. It enables schools to design and realise their own curriculum which will enable learners to progress towards the four purposes. These four purposes set out the shared vision and aspiration for all children and young people to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The Curriculum for Wales recognises that CWRE is a cross-cutting theme that connects with all Areas. CWRE provides learners with meaningful frames of reference, relevant contexts, realistic examples, up-to-date resources and effective pedagogical approaches to enhance learning in each of the Areas. The Areas offer methods, perspectives and explanations to enhance learners' career thinking and planning.

This toolkit has been produced by Careers Wales to support schools in the development, assessment and evaluation of the quality of their CWRE provision. Embedding CWRE into the curriculum from the start of school at the age of 3 should improve the success of challenging stereotypes and reduce occupational segregation. It further increases the burden of CWRE onto teachers without increasing the level of support teachers are receiving to keep up to date.

Additionally, since the content of the CWRE will be determined by each school this could further increase the variation in quantity and quality of CWRE and careers support young women receive. An Estyn⁴⁷ report in 2017 found: '*The amount of lesson time that schools allocate to CWoW [Careers and the World of Work] continues to vary greatly. A minority of schools do not allocate any time to CWoW. In a minority of schools, staff delivering CWoW are not provided with training or up-to-date resources to carry out this*

⁴⁶ Welsh Government (2021) *Careers and work-related experiences (CWRE): A toolkit for supporting the development of CWRE in schools and settings*

⁴⁷ Estyn is a Crown Body established under the Education Act 1992 and funded by the Welsh Government to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our advice, inspection and capacity building.

role. A minority of schools feel that their CWoW provision is less effective than it was five years ago. These schools believe that reductions in the support available from Careers Wales, combined with the increasing demands of the key stage 4 curriculum, have left them unable to deliver CWoW as effectively as in the past. A very few schools have strengthened their CWoW provision over this period.⁴⁸

The new Curriculum for Wales has a number of similarities to Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence which was rolled out in Scottish schools from 2010, especially in the collaboration with a national careers service working on behalf of the Scottish Government and a Young Person's Guarantee⁴⁹. A 2021 review of this system found the following areas for development⁵⁰:

- There is not equal access to careers services in Scotland, with variability of access dependent on the type of institution attended by a young person.
- Young people not pursuing an academic pathway tend to have more difficulties accessing careers services.
- There is a high demand for careers support from people under the age of 25, with 2 out of 5 UK students wishing that they had received more careers support before choosing their higher and further education courses.

Regional differences

Career service providers highlighted that young women will miss out on future job opportunities in their regions due to skills-mismatch, if young women are not encouraged and inspired to choose relevant subjects in school.

The Welsh Government's Regional Skills Partnerships raises an unexpected obstacle for career service providers as the education and incentive environment will be set up to encourage young women to follow specific routes and develop skills relevant for the opportunities in their region. This means that for young women who don't match with the main skills requirement for their region, they may need to relocate to pursue their interest.

Along with regional differences in key career opportunities, there are also regional differences in the challenges and key barriers inhibiting young women accessing equitable career opportunities. For example, in areas such as The Valleys where there are ongoing generational issues caused by the mining closures:

*If they [the young women] grew up in a background where nobody's worked, and in The Valleys there are 3 generations where people haven't worked, then they're not incentivised to get a job because that's not the role models they've seen around them.
Government has put a lot of effort and time moving high tech businesses into The Valleys and infrastructure and support into The*

⁴⁸ Estyn (2017) *The implementation of careers and world of work framework in secondary schools*

⁴⁹ <https://youngpersonsguarantee.scot/>

⁵⁰ Skills Development Scotland (2021) *The Evidence So Far: Career Review Whitepaper*

Valleys to enable people to consider they've got a better future.
- Career Service Provider

This quote also exemplified how a national career service can help target issues in a holistic way. In this example, CCDG careers advisors working in partnership with schools deliver a Careers Education programme to increase young women's awareness of potential career opportunities in their region. The high-tech businesses incentivised to invest in building their business within The Valleys with local employees will be encouraged to be part of the CCDG Education Business Exchange, engaging with young women in local schools and colleges. The Welsh Government funding priorities for further education in the area will include courses, apprenticeships and traineeships that align to the skills needs of the high-tech businesses.

Work Experience

The 2017 Estyn report also found that *'the proportion of pupils who participate in work experience placements in key stage 4 or in the sixth form has declined substantially over the last five years.'*⁵¹ This was a consequence of the Welsh Government cut to the funding of Careers Wales to operate a national work experience programme on behalf of schools, and subsequent shifting of the responsibility for the service to schools. Many schools have been unable to resource the oversight of the programme independently, often due to not being able to meet the health and safety requirements and the checks and paperwork that are required.⁵¹ This research suggests that this trend has continued as although the pandemic has skewed the data, there was a definite trend in the young women's survey responses with those in the older age group more likely to have undertaken work experience than those in the younger group.

⁵¹ Estyn (2017) *The implementation of careers and world of work framework in secondary schools*

8. Conclusions

This research sought to explore whether the careers education, advice and information available to young women in Wales is meeting their diverse needs and preparing them for the future. Due to the way the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically affected almost every aspect of young women's lives in the last 2 years, the research specifically explored how the pandemic has affected their career aspirations, plans and, access to and utilisation of careers services.

Gender stereotypes continue to be an issue in Wales and is particularly marked in the choices of young women and men with low socio-economic backgrounds, for example those eligible for free school meals. To help challenge gender stereotypes and occupational segregation, it is essential to increase the visibility of women in diverse roles across all sectors and all levels of leadership. Young women stated that connecting to women in roles and industries they were interested in pursuing, through work experiences, networking, employer engagement, role models and mentors, has been an instrumental part of their career development, support and education.

However, the pandemic has disrupted access to education and experiences, such as work experience and employer engagement events, due to cancellation of in person events alongside businesses and education moving to remote working for social distancing. This has reduced young women's opportunities to network, speak informally to adults and learn through hands on experience.

Further, although Wales has a strong network of career service providers and a national career service, thereby being well placed to provide holistic, appropriate support to the diverse needs of young women in Wales, due to funding cuts there are gaps in support for work experience and a significant reduction in one-to-one support available, which is having a direct impact on young women in Wales.

Overall, there is a lack of understanding about how gender shapes young women's experiences, opportunities and outcomes. There seems to be a real focus on equality of opportunity, and not any real consideration of whether women are gaining the same benefits from the career service provision when they do engage with it.

There is a high level of awareness among young women of larger career service providers, yet there is a significant gap between awareness and actual use of services. It is unclear whether this lower use of career services is due to the issues accessing formal support and guidance, and how much is due to the young women choosing to turn to family and friends for support instead of the formal support available.

There have been improvements in the perception of career advisors noted in this research in comparison to Chwarae Teg's previous report *Bright: Young Women's Career Aspirations*⁵², with career advisors being listed more highly as a source of support and an increase in the proportion of young women stating that career advice services have influenced their education and career decisions. To further increase engagement and trust in career services there needs to be a shift in the narrative, especially by individuals such as educators and leaders, to actively encourage young women to utilise the support

⁵² Chwarae Teg (2018) *Bright: Young Women's Career Aspirations*

available. This needs to be supported by a wider conversation, as young women currently turn to parents, family members and friends more often than career professionals for support with their career decision making.

There is also a need for clearer and more consistent language in relation to career services. Currently, the language used can be confusing and at times conflicting, which leads to misaligned expectations, challenges in defining success and uncertainty of the best services for different requirements.

The varied responses from young women made it clear that **there is no one-size fits all approach that can meet their need for dynamic and flexible support with more information about a broad variety of jobs.** However, based on career service provider responses it seems that many services are of a one-size fits all nature, and there are a lack of services targeted specifically at women. The young women's survey also highlighted that the majority of respondents have not received any support to develop soft skills nor received information about 'green jobs' or new and emerging industries.

The pandemic has led to an increase in access through the forced rapid improvements in digital delivery of services, events and education, leading to increased opportunities for young women to potentially access a wider array of services from anywhere; attend webinars and events hosted by organisations across the world; and access educational courses remotely. However, career service providers shared that these digital events often have low attendance and engagement levels, **highlighting the need for a hybrid approach moving forward with a complementary mix of in-person and digital events, education and support.**

The pandemic has led to clear concerns for the mental health of young women and career service providers. It has also increased the risk of young women falling through the gaps since it has become harder to identify at risk students, when they are not attending school or college in person and follow up relies on their response and engagement. This is an issue that will require further investigation and likely will need support measures put in place for young people.

Finally, a significant proportion of the burden of career education, information and advice falls on teachers to deliver. This will continue with the new curriculum in Wales which rolls out in September 2022 and relies on individual schools and teachers to integrate and embed the Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE) into the 6 areas of learning. **Improving the support to teachers and schools is essential as career education programmes need to start challenging stereotypes as early as possible, ideally embedding these lessons into the curriculum to reduce any potential variance by school and teacher.**

9. Recommendations

Availability of careers support and methods of delivery:

- Welsh Government should increase investment into career education and guidance to:
 - a. Increase take-up of careers support and guidance in primary schools and secondary schools prior to GCSE options
 - b. Support engagement with parents, enabling them to provide support to their children as they make education and career decisions.
 - c. Improve provision and take up of post-compulsory education careers services
- Hybrid delivery of career services should become the norm, that includes more face-to-face delivery and tailored guidance, increased resources and dedicated space as required.
- Welsh Government should ensure effective careers support and education in schools by:
 - a. Providing teachers with the skills and training needed to offer baseline career support and guidance
 - b. Providing access to dedicated career advisors within schools, who can provide more substantial support to individuals and ensure a comprehensive approach to career and work education and advice within the school.

Content of Careers Advice and Guidance:

- Career services must include information on new and emerging industries and 'green jobs'.
- Careers Wales should take action to widen access to and improve take up of work experience and work-related education. This will likely require additional funding from Welsh Government and should complement the roll out of the new curriculum and the Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE).
- Welsh Government and Careers Wales should work with partners and to increase access to mentoring and opportunities for networking and to meet relatable and diverse role models.
- Welsh Government should invest in financial advice and education for young people, delivered either via the new curriculum or as part of Careers Wales services.
- Welsh Government should invest in more targeted interventions that provide careers advice and guidance to women.

Careers Services Infrastructure and Profession:

- Careers Wales and representative bodies such as the CDI should work together to create a resource centre for all career providers to access up-to-date

information on the labour market, emerging jobs and sectors, and work to bring consistency to the advice and support available.

- All career providers should make equality and unconscious bias training mandatory for all involved in delivering careers education and advice. This training must focus on achieving equitable outcomes not just equality of opportunity.

Perception and understanding of careers services:

- Further research should be undertaken to understand what is causing the significant gap between awareness of careers advice services and engagement with those services
- Careers Wales, Welsh Government and career provider industry bodies need to create and communicate a shared definition of what constitutes career advice and guidance to improve the perception and understanding of career services.

Appendix 1 – University of South Wales Trinity Saint David Career Services Case Study

Case Study



Careers Services University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Information as of 17/01/22

Overview

Type of organisation: Public University

Website link: <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/>

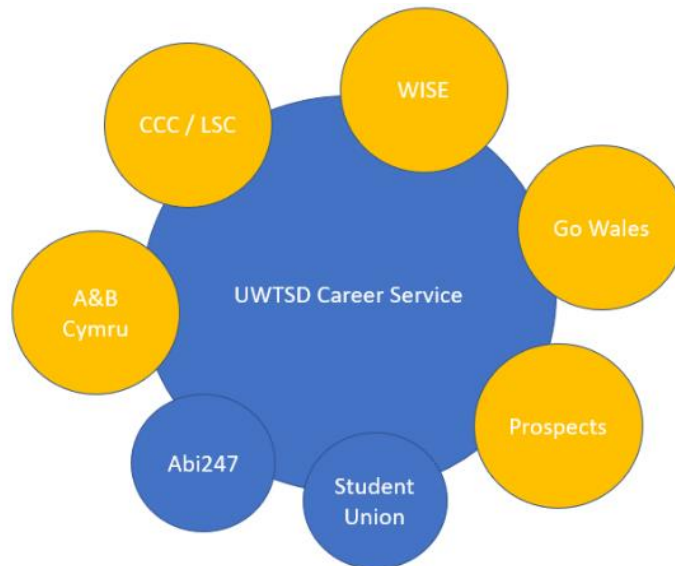
Main Campus Locations: Lampeter,
Carmarthen, & Swansea.

There is a smaller campus in London and
learning centres in Cardiff, Wales, and
Birmingham.



Career Services signposted on UWTSU's website

Students have access to a range of resources and opportunities both as part of the UWTSU Careers Service and provided by external partnerships with the organisations below.



Blue - Internal services within the University

Yellow - External providers/partners

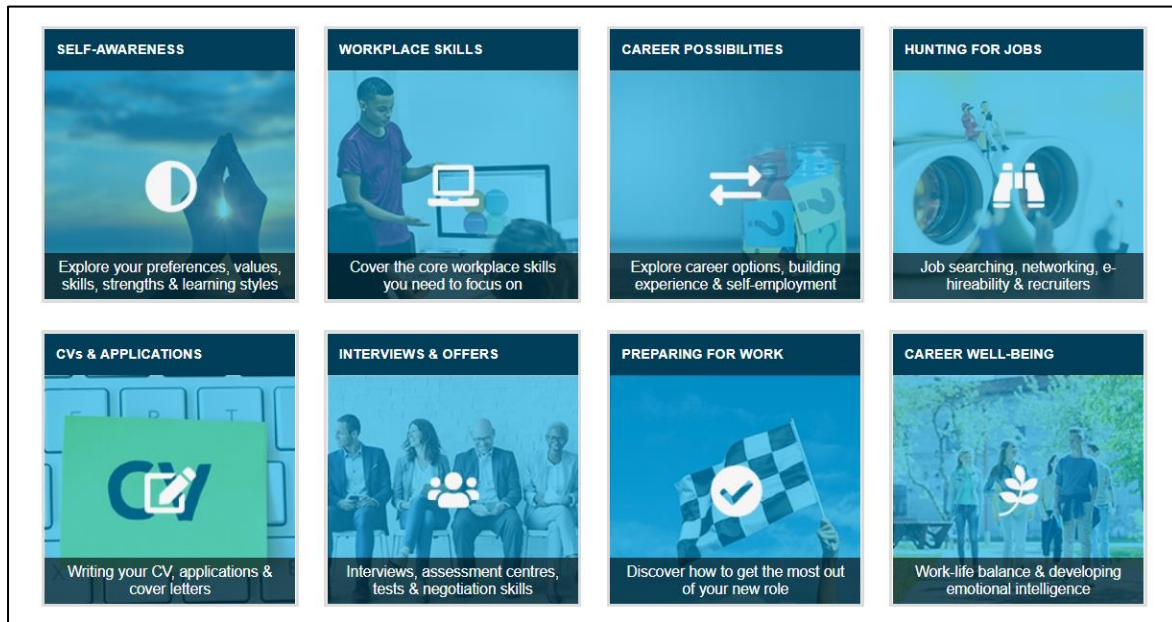
Abi247 - Graduate Careers Platform

A&B Cymru - Arts and Business Cymru

CCC/LSC - Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Language Skills Certificate

WISE - Women in Science and Engineering

Internal Career Services



The image shows the internal UWTSD Career Services dashboard, which provides students and graduates with a range of resources to develop employability skills and access careers advice during their time studying and post-graduation.

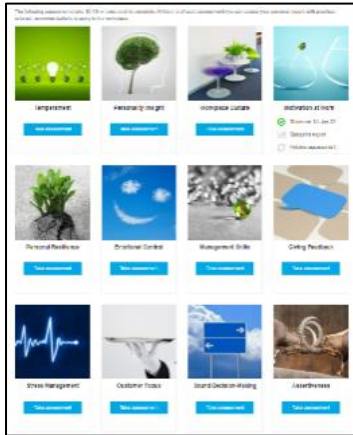
The resource includes access to a career pulse self-assessment, career assessments, career advice, and career tools.

Career Pulse self-assessment

The Career Pulse self-assessment allows students to learn about their tendencies, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses to help identify suitable workplaces. The assessment results are presented in a report and provide advice for next steps.

Students also have access to an 8-stage 'My Employability Programme' to learn and develop employability skills and attributes such as self-awareness, career possibilities & decisions, workplace skills, CVs & Applications, interviews and preparing for work. The content overview and progress bars can be seen in the image to the right.





Career assessments

Students can also undertake career assessments to further explore their tendencies and preferences. This includes assessments around business skills, such as temperament, assertiveness, management skills, and decision-making and well-being related skills such as motivation at work, stress management, and emotional control.

Each assessment provides a tailored report with recommendations to apply to the workplace.

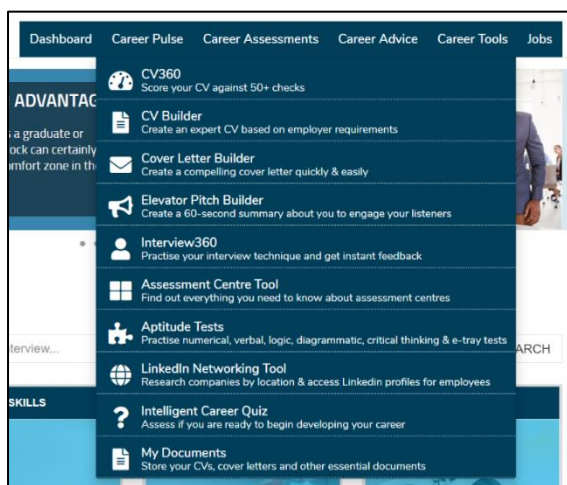
Career Advice

There are services and resources available to students to find career advice including e-learning and skills courses, industry reports, career pathway information and news articles to help students choose their ideal career path. They appear in the Career Advice dropdown menu.

This includes courses for self-learning around business skill areas such as basic finance, business writing, negotiation and training on use of various Microsoft applications.



Students can also book an appointment with a career adviser, however this service does not appear to be available, perhaps due to lack of staff availability during Covid.



Career Tools

UWTSD have access to a wide range of career tools including CV and cover letter building tools, interview skills and techniques, and a careers quiz, as seen in the image.

These tools allow students and graduates to improve their employability through CV and interview assessments, and access to advice on how to complete various activities given in assessment centres when applying for a role.

Students can also access to a LinkedIn searching and networking tool to identify companies and profile.

Job Search

The Career Service dashboard also provides a job search tool for students and graduates to search for roles available across the UK. Jobs can be searched by title, location, industry, company, and even salary. Students can browse company profiles and follow companies' latest updates and vacancies.

There is labour market information resource that allows students and graduates to explore different job areas and associated roles to understand more about various career paths.

The UWTSD Students Union will also respond directly to career support enquiries (by telephone or email). The service is in addition to the main UWTSD Career Service.

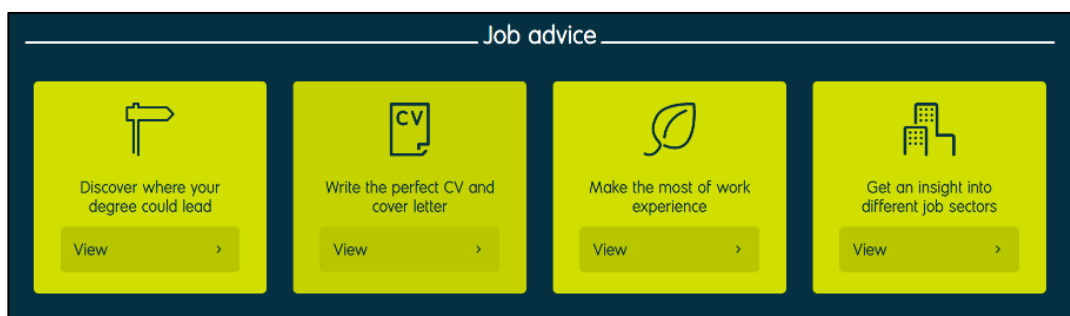
External Career Services

Prospects

Prospects is an online resource for students looking to apply to undergraduate courses, postgraduate courses, or work placements. Resources provided include careers advice, job searches and information on how to choose a university course. A screenshot from a section of the website is below.

Careers Advice:

- Postgraduate open days are held at several universities across England and online
- How to write CVs and cover letters including examples and 'dos and don'ts'
- Interview tips including interview types and practise questions and exercises
- How to apply for work and what skills employers are looking for.



GO Wales

The GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme aims to provide higher education students with tailored work experience to develop their employability skills and improve opportunities for finding graduate level employment after graduation. GO Wales partners with all universities in Wales but students must meet eligibility criteria to participate.



The Programme provides opportunities for temporary work placements, tasters, work shadowing and meeting professionals in a mix of paid or unpaid roles.



Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)

WISE identifies ways to improve gender balance and create a culture of diversity and inclusion in organisations. WISE offers a Ten Steps initiative to increase workplace inclusiveness, including diversity & inclusivity and unconscious bias training for organisations.

WISE reaches out to schools and teachers to provide their 'My Skills My Life' career tool to girls aged 11-19 years old. The platform provides young women with opportunities such as:

- Virtual sessions with women working in STEM to inspire young girls
- Career assessments to match their preferred personality types with role models who have rewarding and successful careers in STEM

Some areas of WISE services are also open to male students such as the WISE networks where students can join groups, organisations and charities across the UK that aim to encourage gender equality across many industries.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Language Skills Certificate

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Language Skills Certificate provides students with the opportunity to gain a qualification that demonstrates their Welsh language skills and enables them to show employers evidence of their ability to communicate confidently and professionally in spoken and written Welsh. The aim is to ensure and develop more Welsh medium study opportunities for learners, students and apprentices in Wales. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol also offers scholarships to undergraduate students who wish to pursue degree courses at universities across Wales. Additionally, 10 Masters Scholarship are offered every year.



Arts and Business Cymru (A&B Cymru)

A&B Cymru's role is to promote, enable and develop mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts. The team works across Wales with a range of arts professionals to provide graduates with internships to provide candidates with valuable experience and skills to support career development.

Strengths

The careers section of the UWTSD website is easy to navigate and has clear signposts for services and resources like in the image here.

Services offered include open days and events for students, career service workshops, skills improvement courses, 1:1 Support and career assessment tools.



Career advice is provided alongside an abundance of supporting resources including articles, interactive media such as videos and external links for further information and support finding jobs and work experience.

Students and graduates of UWTSD have access to these regularly updated career services beyond university and for the rest of their lives.

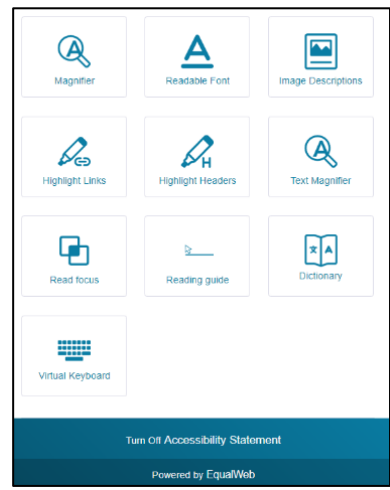
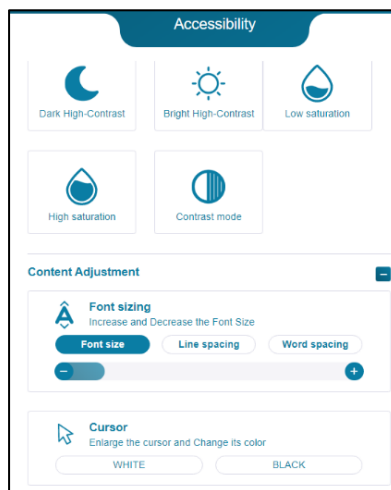
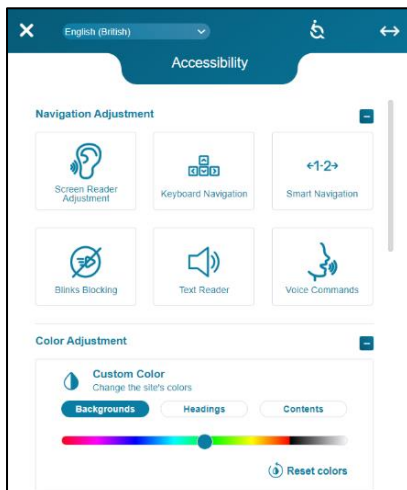
The imagery used in the resources tends to be gender neutral, using images without people often. When people are included in the images they are diverse showing women and men in non-traditional roles, for example a female engineer.

Services for women

UWTSD’s partnership with WISE provides female students with career advice and opportunities in STEM areas where women are often underrepresented. This is a beneficial resource for encouraging young women to work towards STEM careers and providing role models who have found success in these areas.

Accessibility

Users have access to a wide range of adjustments that can be made to make the site more accessible for all. This includes navigation adjustments such as text readers and voice commands, colour adjustment to improve contrast, and content adjustment such as font size. The three images below capture these options.



Gaps

A notable gap in the UWTSD careers service is the lack of accessibility to the public and non-students. The service can only be accessed by current students and graduates with a student ID and is therefore not open to anyone outside of the university.

Despite their partnership with WISE, UWTSD offer no specific tailored services for women in STEM or in other sectors where women are underrepresented such as manufacturing, IT, politics, and fintech (financial technology innovation), key sectors in Welsh industry.

The closest relevant resources to this aspect of advice are a collection of articles, screenshot can be seen below, and videos exploring the issues of women working in STEM and the gender pay gap.

The screenshot displays a list of five articles, each with a small image, a title, a brief description, and an icon indicating the content type (video or text).

- Why are women so valuable in engineering?**
 Engineering professionals discuss the value of greater diversity within the industry and the unique strengths women bring with them. (Video icon)
- The what, why and how of women's networks**
 You may have heard of women's networks, but do you know what they're really all about? This article explores what they are, the benefits of joining them and how to get involved. (Text icon)
- Women in engineering: reaching the top**
 How can you reach the top as a woman in the engineering industry? Are there many women in senior roles? Women engineers share their thoughts on what it takes to be successful within the industry. (Video icon)
- How women can help close the gender pay gap**
 The key to closing the gender pay gap is reform, but women can also influence the gap on an individual level. Here's three ways to minimise the odds of falling victim to the gap and drive change. (Text icon)
- Women in technology**
 The technology industry has traditionally been dominated by men, but how is this changing? Women in the sector share their thoughts. (Video icon)

Another gap is the lack of post-pandemic specific careers advice and services. The labour market and many people's and companies' ways of working have changed dramatically over the last two years, and employer priorities have changed with it. Students need to be aware of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected businesses, and how to adapt their CVs and job applications in the current climate.

Many businesses no longer have offices which means that employers may be looking to hire people who can show they would be an active member of a team even when working remotely. Variable work hours are more accepted in many industries and so attributes related to being able to work flexibly or may be valued. The UWTSD website could interview different local employers asking them what sort of skills they look for in candidates.

Summary and Recommendations

UWTSD offer a wide range of useful resources and services to current and former students regarding careers advice and information, however these services could be extended to provide access to wider audiences such as prospective students who are looking at universities and wondering what courses to choose.

Female students should also have access to tailored advice around certain subject areas to improve uptake and provide women with information and support on how they can find success in male-dominated career industries. Similar to WISE, this could be supported by providing current students with a way to contact student alumni directly as a source of advice and allowing students to connect with role models who have had similar experiences in Wales.

There is currently an alumni section on the main UWTSD website, but contact can only be made through the university and there isn't a directory of graduates and their current roles. UWTSD Students might benefit from an area of the website that only student and graduates can access with ways to contact other alumni directly. Of course, this would require consent from alumni to share their profile and details on the website, but they may be reassured by knowing that they may be a source of inspiration and that only students will be able to see their details. Thus, prompting careers stemming from beginnings in UWTSD.

Appendix 2 - Young Women's Survey Questions

Survey was published using SurveyMonkey

Questions		Response options
Background Information		
1	Which one of the following best describes your gender?	Man Woman Non-binary Prefer not to say In another way - please describe this here [free text box]
2	Do you identify as trans? (Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.)	Yes No Prefer not to say
3	Please indicate your ethnic origin:	Arab / Arab British/Welsh Asian / Asian British/Welsh Bangladeshi Chinese Indian Pakistani Black - Black British/Welsh Black - African Black -Asian Black - Caribbean Black -South/North American Gypsy or Traveller Roma Latin American Indigenous / Indigenous British/Welsh Mixed Mixed - White and Asian Mixed - White and Black White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British White - European White - Irish White - Latin American Prefer not to say Any other background / Prefer to self-describe

4	Please indicate your age:	14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 Prefer not to say - but confirm I am between the ages 14-25 years old
5	Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?	Employed, working full-time Employed, working part-time Studying and working Studying only Self-employed, business owner Work-experience/in training Unemployed – looking for work Not employed – not looking for work Not able to work - please state the reason [free text box]
6	Do you currently live in Wales?	If yes, could you please tell us the first part of your current postcode (e.g. LD3 or CF10)? If no, where did you live in Wales and at what age?
Careers Services		
7	Please select the career services you are aware of, those you have used and any that were useful? Adult Learning Wales Business Wales Career Development Institute Career Wales Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales Dewis Wales UCAS Work in Wales Learning and Work Institution National Training Federation Wales School career service Colleges career service University career service None of the above	Table with tick boxes in columns for: Aware of Used Useful

8	How old were you when you first accessed career services?	Never accessed [free text box]
9	Out of those which you used, were there any that you felt were particularly aimed at young women?	[free text box]
10	When did you last use a careers service? (select one)	In the past week In the past month In the past 6 months In the past year 1-2 years ago 2-4 years ago 5 or more years ago
11	How did you access careers support? (select all that apply)	In Person Email Phone call Website Social Media Event (in person) Event (online) Other [free text box]
Personal experience of careers service		
12	Overall, on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the support you have experienced in relation to career services?	Scale from 1=not useful to 10=very useful
13	Did the careers support give you what you needed?	Yes No Not sure
14	What would have made them better?	[Free text box]
15	Has any careers advice services influenced your decisions about study and / or work?	Yes - A lot Yes - A little No Not sure Never accessed
16	If yes, did it change your mind about which path to follow?	Yes (if so, how and why did it change your mind?) No Not sure [free text box]
17	What words would you use to describe the career support you've received? (Please add as many as you want)	[free text box]
Page 5. Soft skills and emerging markets		
18	Have you received any support in developing "soft skills" by career services, for example teamwork and communication?	Yes No Not sure

19	<p>If yes, on a scale of 1-10 how useful did you find the "soft skills" support you received?</p> <p>Communication Self-motivation Leadership Responsibility Teamwork Problem Solving Decisiveness Time Management Flexibility Negotiation Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>Scoring for each "soft skill" mentioned between 1=not useful to 10=very useful</p>
20	<p>Have you received careers advice or guidance about "green jobs"?</p>	<p>Yes - It was useful Yes - It wasn't useful No Not sure I don't know what is meant by "green job" If yes, what specific industries or jobs were mentioned? [free text box]</p>
21	<p>Have you received careers advice or guidance about new and emerging industries?</p>	<p>Yes - It was useful Yes - It wasn't useful No Not sure I don't know what is meant by "new and emerging industries" If yes, what specific industries or jobs were mentioned? [free text box]</p>
Careers Services - Future Engagement		
22	<p>Do you have a plan for your next academic or career step?</p>	<p>Yes No Not sure</p>
23	<p>What career support do you need right now?</p>	<p>[Free text box]</p>
24	<p>How would you like to access that support? Please rank in order of preference (1 = most preferred)</p>	<p>Ranking 1 - 5 of the following options:</p> <p>Online communication In person Virtual connection (e.g., online chat) Online resources Other</p>

25	Which of these are important to you when accessing careers support? (select all that apply)	Ease of access Flexibility to access when it suits me Freedom to explore all options without pressure Anonymity Learning about different sectors and jobs Talking with someone about the job market Interacting one-to-one to get tailored advice Other, please specify [free text box]
Work experience / Employer engagement		
26	Have you done any work experience?	Yes, organised by a school Yes, organised by a college Yes, organised by a university Yes, organised by myself / parent / relative No, not had the chance / opportunity No, COVID pandemic / lockdown restrictions has prevented it No, not interested in work experience
27	If organised by you, how did you arrange the work experience?	[free text box]
28	On a scale of 1-10 how useful did you find the work experience in relation to... Informing your career choice(s) Informing your subject and study choice(s) Learning about the role / industry Learning about workplace Advice for job applications Networking	Scoring for each statement between 1=not useful to 10=very useful
29	Have you engaged with potential employers in line with your career aspirations?	Yes - Through talks at school / college / university Yes - Online events Yes - Site visits Yes - Careers fairs No Other, please specify [free text box]
30	Did you receive any support in accessing employers?	Yes - Help from career service Yes - Help from friends / relatives Yes - Help from school / college / university No

31	If yes, on a scale of 1-10 how useful did you find the employer engagement in relation to... Work environment Advice for job applications Interview tips Learning about the industry	Scoring for each statement between 1=not useful to10=very useful
Impact of Covid-19		
32	Has the pandemic affected what job or career you would like?	Yes, in a positive way Yes, in a negative way No Not sure In what ways? Tell us more... [free text box]
33	Has the pandemic affected your career plans or decisions about further study and/or training?	Yes, in a positive way Yes, in a negative way No Not sure In what ways? Tell us more... [free text box]
34	Has the pandemic affected your access to careers advice/support?	Yes, in a positive way Yes, in a negative way No Not sure In what ways? Tell us more... [free text box]
Personal opinion of careers support		
35	In your opinion, what was the most useful career support you've received?	[free text box]
36	Right now, where / who do you go to for help with making career decisions?	[free text box] not applicable
37	Right now, where / who do you go to for help with making educational decisions?	[free text box] not applicable
38	Please share any other comments you have below	[free text box]

Appendix 3 – Providers Survey Questions

Survey was published using SurveyMonkey

Question		Response options
1.1	Name	[free text box]
1.2	Email address	[free text box]
2	It can be very useful to our research to have a follow up discussion to a survey. Would you willing to be contacted for a 20-minute call? (By indicating you are willing to be contacted it does not commit you to doing so, you may be contacted and can decline to engage any further at any time.)	yes / no
Background information about the service Please focus on the main service your organisation provides.		
3	Name of career service organisation	[free text box]
4	The target audience of this career service: Age	[free text box]
5	The target audience of this career service: Geography (Please tick all relevant)	All Wales All UK Other [free text box]
6	Types of services provided (Select all that apply)	Career Assessment CV Support Career Information Education information Tailored One-to-One Advice Other [free text box]
7	How are the services delivered? (Select all that apply)	Online communication In person Virtual connection Online resources Other [free text box]
8	Has this changed due to the pandemic?	Yes No Not sure If yes, in what ways has it altered? [free text box]
9	Which routes do young women use to access the services? In Person Email Phone call Website Social Media Careers Event (in person) Careers Event (online) Other	Scoring for each route between "low - very little use" and "high - highly used" Other, please specify [free text box]

10	Has this changed due to the pandemic?	Yes No Not sure If yes, in what ways has it altered? [free text box]
11	Does the service support work experience?	Yes No
12	Does the service support engagement with employers?	Yes No
13	How often are the resources reviewed and updated?	Constantly Monthly Annually Every 2 years Other - please specify [free text box]
14	Where does the service go for advice, guidance and recommendations for updating resources?	[free text box]
15	Does your organisation run equality training and/or unconscious bias training for staff?	Yes - Optional to complete Yes - Mandatory to complete No Not sure
16	Are you aware of Chwarae Teg, their projects, campaigns and services?	Yes - Very familiar and have engaged with them before Yes - Aware of but never engaged with them No

Service access statistics

We recognise that, dependent on the nature of the services, not all will have precise data on uptake, but we would be extremely grateful if you could share any data you do have.

17	Approximately, what number of service users do you have annually?	[free text box]
18	What categories of data, if any, do you collect on the young people accessing your services?	[free text box]
19	Indicate areas by which you are able to share access / uptake data by? (select all that apply)	Gender breakdown Ethnicity Geography Age NEET Other, please specify [free text box]

Personal opinion of careers support

This section asks about your personal opinion about the career services. We recognise that your views do not represent your organisation's and these will be kept anonymous and not linked to your organisation in the analysis.

20	What are the strengths of your careers resources?	[free text box]
21	Do you feel that the advice is up to date?	[free text box]
22	Is the service responsive to young women's needs? If yes, How?	[free text box]
23	How do you think young women are being prepared for the changing labour market?	[free text box]
24	How is the service/advice challenging gendered roles?	[free text box]
25	Are there any job sectors you feel are not accessed as easily by young women?	[free text box]
26	Do you offer any support or opportunities specifically for young women? If yes, what are they	[free text box]
27	In your opinion, what steps could be taken to improve access to career services for young women?	[free text box]
28	Who would you like to see have more engagement with your resources than currently?	[free text box]
29	In your opinion, which groups of young women are under served by careers services and why?	[free text box]
30	Any other comments you would like to add	[free text box]

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