Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Summary Paper 2

Title: Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Summary Paper 2

Subtitle: Provision for Urban and Rural Customers

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

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Glossary

Acronym/Keyword	Definition
Co-location partner	A co-location partner refers to an organisation or service that Working Wales is working with to engage prospective customers.
Co-location site	A co-location site refers to a partner location where Working Wales has a presence in order to engage prospective customers e.g. a Jobcentre Plus office. Unlike outreach and pop-up sites, these sites are typically more permanent in nature.
JGW+	Jobs Growth Wales Plus
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
Outreach	Outreach describes the activity of engaging prospective customers who may not be able to reach permanent Working Wales offices or co-location partner sites. This may include activity with co-location or other partners and attendance at public or careers events.
PACE	Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (a Scottish Government programme)[1]
Pop-up sites	Pop-up sites are sites and venues where temporary Working Wales services have been established to meet demands for support. Pop-up sites are commonly used in scenarios where mass redundancies have occurred and in areas where no permanent Working Wales site has been established.

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[1] This is not to be confused with PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment), an ESF-funded Welsh Government programme.

1.   Introduction/Background

1.1   [Working Wales](#), delivered by Careers Wales, is a Welsh Government-funded service designed to provide streamlined and efficient employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs. Introduced in 2019, the service provides an entry point for employability support. It enables individuals to talk to professional careers advisers about employment and skills, their aims and aspirations, and any challenges that they face in obtaining and maintaining work, education, training or advancing their career.

1.2   It is also important to note that since COVID-19 restrictions to stay at home or stay local were lifted in Wales in 2021, Working Wales support has been available in-person and remotely. As highlighted in the final strategic Working Wales evaluation report, in-person support has continued to increase, with most customers now receiving a blend of in-person and remote support.

Overview of the scope and parameters of the evaluation

1.3   The Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill in 2019 to explore the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Working Wales. This summary paper is one of three produced to disseminate the evaluation findings and sets out findings related to the geographical accessibility of the service, exploring differences in delivery by key area types. Moreover, it focuses on key themes in the research in relation to differences in the delivery and perception of Working Wales between more rural and urban areas.

1.4   The key research questions informing this final stage of the evaluation are as follows:

- Are the benefits of the 'one-team' approach being realised?[2]

- Is the service accessible, particularly to customers in more rural areas? The term 'accessible' in this context refers to geographical access.

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[2] The 'one team' approach means regardless of an individual's careers advice or employability support needs, they will be able to access the Working Wales service and be referred onto the most appropriate support.

- What models work well (co-location of services with partners, community drop-ins, etc.)?

- What can the service do to be more inclusive? This will consider where there are equality gaps in relation to service access based on demographic characteristics or geography and will be framed around groups who face the greatest gap. In supporting young people to meet their own individualised lifelong journeys, are Working Wales reaching those who would benefit from a Working Wales interaction? If not, what changes does the service need to consider to aid an increased reach? How are customers entering the service and what outreach/engagement activities are in place?

- What is the service offer across areas, and how does this interact with partner organisations, services, demand, and labour market conditions?

Report structure

1.5 This report aims to assess how the delivery model adopted by Working Wales varies between different geographies in Wales, considering where it works well, where gaps in the service are apparent, and, looking forward, the future of the service. The report is structured under the following headings:

- Policy and Geographical Context – this section explores how the service aligns with existing rural employability policy and national programmes. This section also briefly summarises evidence collected from other employability and in-work support schemes that relates to how delivery may have varied across types of geography.

- Methodology – this section provides details on the approaches taken in the final stage of fieldwork and considers methodological limitations faced.

- Overview of Support Offer – this section provides an overview of Working Wales monitoring data where differences between rural and urban areas were identified. These findings are complemented by exploring regional differences in survey responses of customers who had engaged

substantively with the service. This section also explores staff and stakeholder perceptions of the current Working Wales delivery model and their perceptions of the challenges associated with delivery across different geographies.

- Understanding of the Service Model and Future Potential – this section provides a summary assessment of the current efficacy of the Working Wales model, particularly highlighting the strengths and challenges associated with the model in relation to its delivery across rural and urban areas.

- Conclusions and Recommendations – this section provides a summative set of findings and recommendations based on analysis throughout the report.

2.   Policy and Geographical Context

2.1   Wales includes a wide variety of geographies on a rural–urban scale, with its most densely populated area (Cardiff) containing 2,572 residents per square kilometre and its least densely populated area (Powys) containing 26 residents per square kilometre[3]. This paper focuses on understanding how these factors may have led to differences in how Working Wales was delivered between more urban and rural areas.

2.2   The ONS estimates that just under one third of Wales' population (32.8 per cent) live in rural local authority areas and that one third of Welsh economic output comes from rural local authority areas[4]. Rurality in Wales intersects with other indicators which could influence the delivery of Working Wales. Other indicators may include public transport links, prominence of the Welsh language, car ownership, and broadband connectivity. The five local authorities in Wales in which over 25 per cent of the population are reported to speak Welsh are all classed as broadly rural local authorities (Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, and Conwy)[5]. As demonstrated in Figure 2.1 below, the rates of economic activity across different geographies in Wales appear to have become more similar over time, with urban and Valleys local authorities aligning more closely with rural local authorities in terms of the proportion of economically inactive people in recent years. Across the UK, similar declines in economic inactivity can also be identified. It is likely that this is due to wider economic conditions and inflationary pressures, e.g. increases in the cost of living which have resulted in more people returning to work[6].

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[3] Office for National Statistics (2022) Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021.
[4] House of Lords Library (2020) Fact file: Rural Economy.
[5] Welsh Government (2022) Welsh language in Wales.
[6] Office for National Statistics (2023) Population changes and economic inactivity trends, UK: 2019 to 2026.

Figure 2.1: Proportion of economically inactive people, by local authority typology
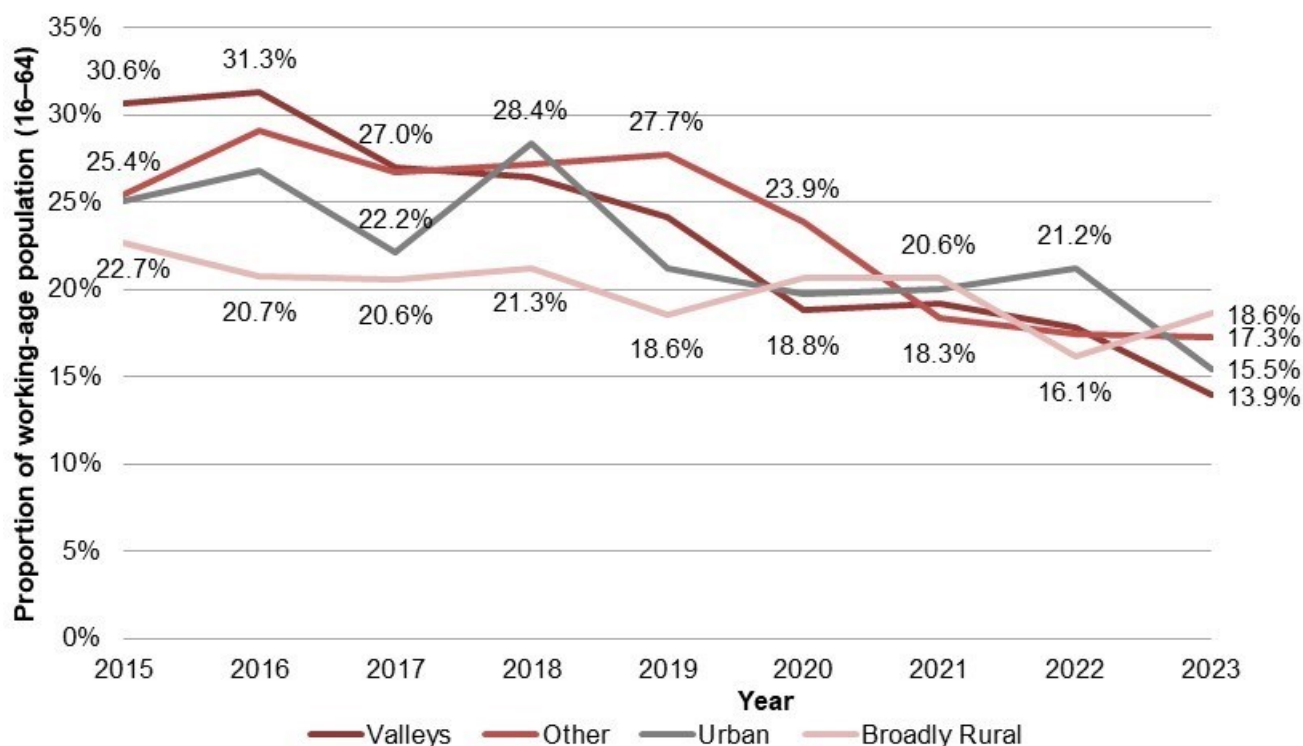
Source: Office for National Statistics (2023) Annual Population Survey

Strategy and policy

2.3   This section outlines the context in which the Working Wales programme operates
       with regard to the differences offered in urban and rural areas across Wales. It
       provides an overview of the current Welsh Government policy context relating to
       employability support, as well as evidence collected from evaluations of ongoing
       and previous employability and employment support operations funded by the
       Welsh Government.

2.4   The Welsh Government's 2022 Plan for Employability and Skills outlines the
       approach under which the Welsh Government is delivering employability support.
       The priorities set out in the plan include: Promote youth participation, progression
       and employment; Tackle economic inequality; Promote Fair Work for all; Support
       people with a long-term health condition to work; and Raise skill and qualification
       levels, and mobility of the workforce. Whilst the Plan operates at a national level
       through delivery of the actions within, it also intends to support and adopt a more

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targeted and more flexible approach in order to better meet the needs of priority groups, developing programmes that can react quickly to local labour markets or shifts in policy and delivery. This is illustrated through the operation of Regional Skills Partnerships, which have been established to drive responses based on local and regional needs.

2.5   The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) aims to provide young people between the ages of 16 and 24 with support to gain a place in education or training or to support them with self-employment. The impact assessment for the YPG[7] discusses some of the additional factors related to the guarantee for young people in rural areas. One of the key considerations is to ensure the availability of Welsh language services, noting that communities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers tend to be rural in nature. Another consideration highlighted is that rural areas of Wales tend to be less economically diverse, with a greater reliance on agriculture and the foundational economy in comparison to urban and semi-urban areas in Wales.

2.6   The 'Prosperity for All' economic action plan also acknowledges lesser economic diversity in rural areas and aims to address this by supporting local authorities and businesses in rural areas to diversify and take advantage of supply chains.

2.7   This approach to addressing the rural economy is also reiterated in the National Development Framework for Rural Areas (2020–2040)[8], highlighting that embracing economic diversification through developing centres and clusters for services in rural areas can improve the employment prosperity of these areas.

Evidence from other programmes

2.8   One of the evaluation objectives often set for Welsh Government employability and employment support programmes is to understand whether there are any differences in programme delivery between rural and urban areas. Evidence of these differences most commonly comes from stakeholder interviews that have

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[7] Welsh Government (2022) The Young Person's Guarantee: impact assessment.
[8] Welsh Government (2019) National Development Framework 2020-2040 Explanatory Paper – Rural Areas.

identified certain challenges that are unique to delivering employability support in rural and sparsely populated areas. Some evaluations also provide quantitative evidence of the differences between rural and urban support delivery through analysing the outcomes of support recipients.

2.9 Key learning, from other programme evaluations, in relation to employability support in urban and rural settings includes:

- **Personal Learning Accounts:** The PLA programme aims to provide funding for individuals in industries with skills shortages to undertake vocational training. The evaluation noted that stakeholders felt that access to online training after the COVID-19 pandemic had a positive impact in reducing barriers to rural learners, as they could access training online.

- **Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+):** In a report into Autumn 2023 insights on the JGW+ programme produced by Estyn, it was noted that delivery in rural areas produced some challenges as long travel times and poor or unreliable public transport had in some cases resulted in provision being withdrawn in rural areas due to low participant numbers. Whilst efforts had been made to engage learners in remote learning, it was felt that the lack of face-to-face support learning and support meant that participants who live in more remote areas were often not effectively engaged in the programme.

- **ReAct III:** Running between 2015 and 2019, ReAct III offered support for individuals who had recently been made redundant through training grants and other support to help them to return to work. The evaluation found that employment outcomes were slightly higher in urban areas (81 per cent vs. 77 per cent in rural areas) and that the largest perceived barrier to employment for rural respondents was a lack of appropriate jobs in the area in which they lived. Those in urban areas were more likely to change their job or occupation than those in rural areas — 47 per cent of rural respondents reported securing the same job role or occupation in comparison to 30 per cent of urban respondents after receiving ReAct support. Furthermore, rural respondents (47 per cent) were more likely to secure a higher-paid job than

urban (30 per cent) and semi-urban respondents (38 per cent) after receiving ReAct support[9,10].

- **Communities for Work Plus:** CfW+ provides specialist employment advisory support and intensive mentoring to people who are underrepresented in the labour market. Similarly to PLA and JGW+, stakeholders felt that online support provision during the COVID-19 pandemic helped to reduce barriers to access for rural customers.

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[9] When asked about the pay of their new role, 47 per cent of rural, 38 per cent of semi-urban and 30 per cent of urban respondents noted that their new job was better-paid than the job that they had before receiving ReAct support.
[10] Please note that the difference between groups was not statistically tested.

3. Methodology

3.1 This section details the methodological approach taken in the final stage of the Working Wales evaluation that relates to this paper. Moreover, this section explores the additional methodological limitations faced and considerations taken.

Research methods and activities

3.2 Fieldwork and desk-based research undertaken to inform this summary paper include:

- A thematic desk-based literature review regarding the urban and rural geographical spread across Wales and the challenges associated with this. Within this desk-based research, researchers conducted extensive searches across various sources including Welsh Government policy and strategy papers, other evaluation reports, studies, and other publication literature. After curating relevant materials, researchers critically analysed and summarised key findings that related to Working Wales. The synthesis of this information included identifying patterns, discrepancies and gaps in existing literature. This process was undertaken to contextualise the evaluation to ensure that the evaluation findings can meaningfully contribute to this body of work. A full list of the literature reviewed can be found in Section 8.

- An in-depth quantitative analysis of programme-level monitoring information provided by Careers Wales. These data include all 95,164 individual Working Wales customers between February 2019 and March 2023 as well as 120,730 customer episodes detailed within this same time period. In many cases, customers received support from Working Wales multiple times. The following terminology has been used when describing customer involvement with the Working Wales service:

  o Where this report refers to **customer engagement**, this refers to the unique customers who have engaged with the service.

- o Where this report refers to **customer episodes**, this is the total number of customer cases which required support. Working Wales staff often work with a customer on multiple occasions; each occasion is recorded as an 'episode'. An episode can be a single day (e.g. where only one interaction is needed) or may extend to several months (e.g. ReAct+ support to a redundant customer seeking a new career direction). The total number of customer episodes (120,730) will contain repeat customers who have received support from the service multiple times. It is important to note that customer circumstances may change between different episodes, for example a customer may have a different labour market status or live in a different location. Where these variables occur, analysis has been conducted by episodes of support rather than number of individual customers in order to fully understand the support the service has provided.

- o **Customer interactions** refers to the methods through which customers engaged with the service e.g. via telephone call or in person. For a full list of interaction type variables analysed please see Annexe Three.

- In-depth semi-structured online interviews with 12 management and 16 delivery staff to reflect on the current Working Wales model, its efficacy, strengths and challenges, and future considerations to ensure that the model achieves its all-Wales entry point vision. Please note that interviews covered a range of topics which included the exploration of urban and rural access to the service. These interviews took place from July–September 2023.

- In-depth online semi-structured online interviews with 14 internal and external stakeholders to explore the efficacy of the current Working Wales model and the future role of Working Wales. As above, please note that interviews covered a range of topics which included the exploration of urban and rural access to the service. Internal stakeholders were Careers Wales

staff, and external stakeholders were individuals employed outside of Careers Wales but working with the Working Wales service. These interviews took place between August and October 2023. All qualitative data has been thematically analysed using grounded theory methodologies[11].

- Surveys with a total of 167 customers who have accessed Working Wales support to gather feedback on the customer support preferences and views regarding the Working Wales service. This survey was undertaken from August to October 2023. Careers Wales supplied Wavehill with contacts for 354 customers who had accessed the service between May and July 2023 (providing a response rate of 47 per cent). These customers were selected as they had meaningful engagement (at least three interactions) with the service within three months prior to being surveyed and were therefore well placed to feed back on their experiences with the service. To ensure that the evaluation engaged with customers across a range of different geographical locations, customers based in Cardiff, Swansea Gwynedd and Wrexham were selected. Of the 167 customers surveyed, 25 were completed face-to-face in Working Wales centres based in the four local authorities by the Wavehill research team (15 per cent of the sample) and 142 were completed online or by telephone via the Qualtrics survey platform (85 per cent of the sample). All quantitative data was analysed using Excel and/or StatsIQ on the Qualtrics platform.

Limitations and considerations

3.3 It is important to highlight that whilst this report has undertaken a range of extensive analysis on programme-level monitoring information, customer relationship management (CRM) systems used by Careers Wales were changed in 2021, meaning that some variables were removed and additional options were also added at this stage. In most cases, the analysis has been able to identify where

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[11] Bryman, A., Quantity and Quality in Social Research, 1998, and Charmaz, K., Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods, in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) Handbook of Qualitative Research 2nd Edition, 2000.

information sources should be merged; for example, previous programmes such as ReAct III and Access have been amalgamated into the new programme ReAct Plus. Therefore, figures included in this report, from analysis of raw programme-level monitoring information, may not align with aggregated reporting figures supplied by the service to Welsh Government.

3.4   The Office for National Statistics defines an 'urban' area as an output area with a population of 10,000 people or more, with all remaining output areas classed as rural[12].

3.5   It is acknowledged that categorising regions across Wales into a binary 'urban' or 'rural' category would be of limited use and would not provide sufficient detail to explore trends across a diverse range of areas. To ensure that the diverse spread of geographical areas across Wales is effectively captured, the following Welsh Government definitions have been utilised within analysis to capture broader trends:

- Rural authorities – Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Monmouthshire. These are often referred to as the nine 'broadly rural' local authorities.

- Valleys authorities – Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, and Torfaen. These are selected as the five authorities that contain parts of the Heads of the Valleys action area.

- Urban authorities – Swansea, Cardiff, and Newport. These are the largest settlements in Wales.

- Other authorities – Flintshire, Wrexham, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, and Vale of Glamorgan[13].

3.6   Further to the broad classifications above, more detailed descriptions by customer location are provided based on customer location categorisation. Table 2.1 over page details the detailed classification given to each geographical indicator. Please

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[12] Office for National Statistics (2016) 2011 Urban/Rural classification.
[13] Welsh Government (2008) 'Rural Wales' - Definitions and how to choose between them.

note that analysis within this report has adopted both types of geographical classification to ensure that urban and rural trends are accurately explored.

Table 2.1: Geographical indicator classification[14]

Detailed geographical indicators	Classification
Urban minor conurbation	Urban
Urban major conurbation	Urban
Urban city and town	Urban
Urban city and town in a sparse setting	Suburban
Rural town and fringe	Suburban
Rural town and fringe in a sparse setting	Suburban
Rural village	Accessible rural
Rural village in a sparse setting	Accessible rural
Rural hamlet and isolated dwellings	Accessible rural
Rural hamlet and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting	Isolated rural

Source: ONS 2011 urban/rural classification

3.7   Please note that customers based outside of Wales have been excluded from local authority typology analysis as these are specific to Wales. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to include them under an additional category due to the small number of customers this applies to (n=158) and the fact that those customers are based in varied geographies. The detailed typology is based on ward level data and therefore customers based in England are included in the analysis to capture their experiences based on these geographies.

3.8   As highlighted above, face-to-face customer surveys were completed in Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, and Gwynedd to ensure that the evaluation engaged with customers across a range of different geographical locations. Whilst this enabled the evaluation to obtain a wide range of feedback across distinct localities, it may not be representative of the wider customer cohort. Similarly, whilst online and telephone interviews were undertaken to ensure that perceptions of the remote Working Wales offer were explored, the majority of all interviewed customers had attended a Working Wales site (95 per cent; 158/167). As a result, the survey findings may not be representative of customers who only accessed the service remotely.

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[14] Office for National Statistics (2016) 2011 urban/rural classification.

4. Overview of Service Offer

Demand for support by customers in rural and urban areas

4.1 Almost one third of all Working Wales customers reside in rural authorities, whilst almost a quarter of customers live in urban or Valleys authorities (Figure 4.1). This broadly aligns with the wider population, with 30.5 per cent of the Welsh population estimated to live in rural local authorities[15]. Considering the proportionate coverage of local authorities and the distribution of customers across a range of urban and rural localities, Working Wales appears to effectively cover a diverse range of geography across Wales.

Figure 4.1: Geographical distribution of Working Wales customers
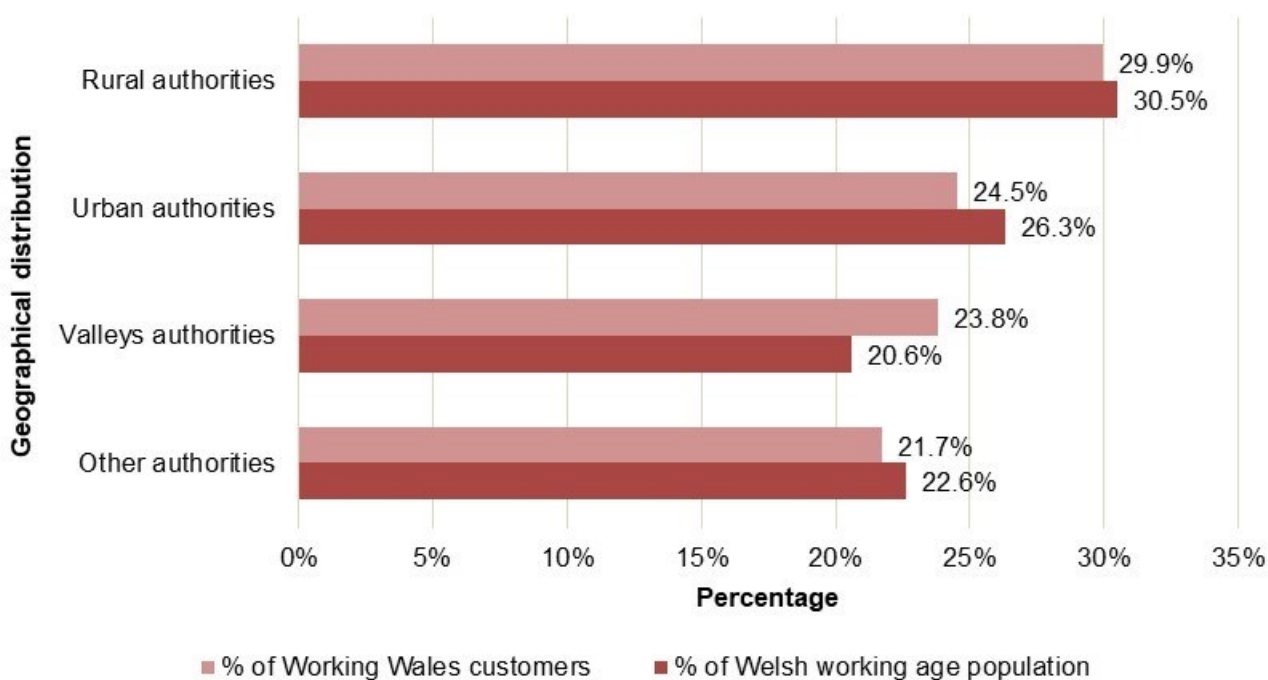
Source: Census data (2021)[16] and Working Wales monitoring information (n=85,965 customer engagements). This excludes all unknown customer locations as well as customer locations outside of Wales. Where customers moved across authority types (n=345), the first recorded authority is listed here. Please note that due to rounding, totals may equal more than 100%.

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[15] Aberystwyth University (2021) A Rural Vision for Wales.
[16] ONS (2022) Economic activity status.

4.2   When examining more detailed descriptions of the service offer in urban and rural locations, most customers engaged in Working Wales appear to reside in urban areas. This is unsurprising when considering the higher populations in urban areas; for example, residents of Cardiff constitute 10.5 per cent of all Working Wales customers. However, it should be considered whether this is in line with need and unemployment patterns across Wales.

Figure 4.2: Geographical distribution of Working Wales customers, by detailed urban–rural split typology
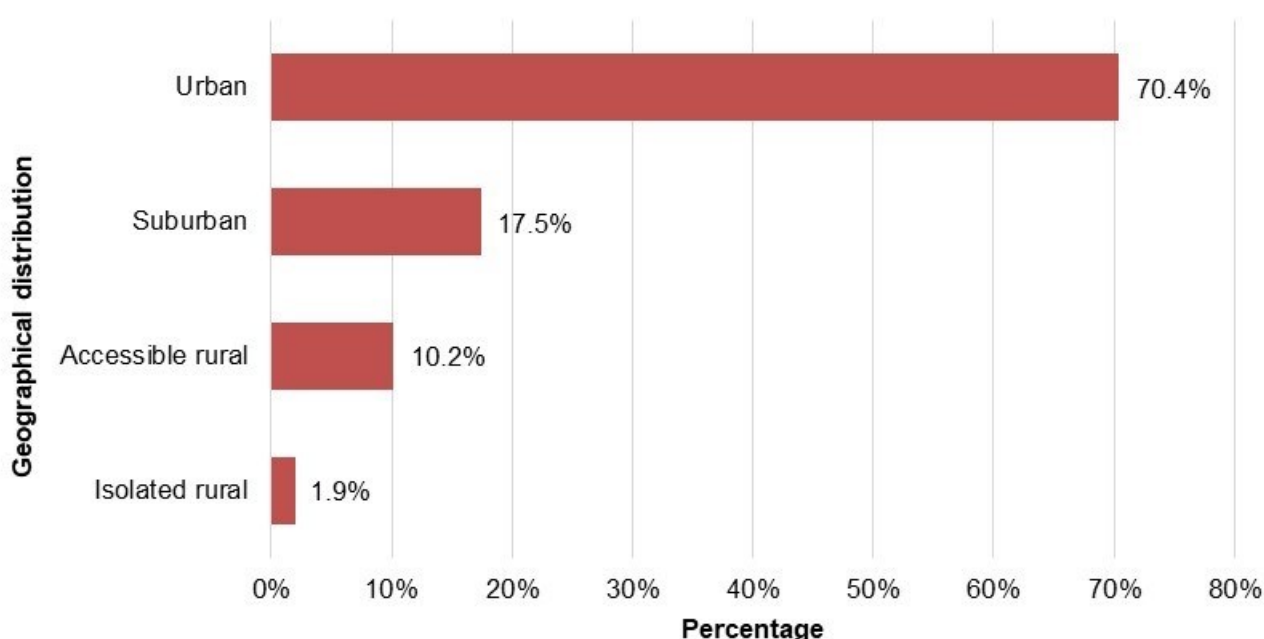
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=86,198 customer engagements). This excludes all unknown customer locations.

4.3   As of October 2023, Working Wales has 90 established co-location sites and 110 established co-location site partners (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4 over page). Over half of all co-location partners were local Jobcentre Plus sites (57.3 per cent).

Figure 4.3: Map of Working Wales co-location sites
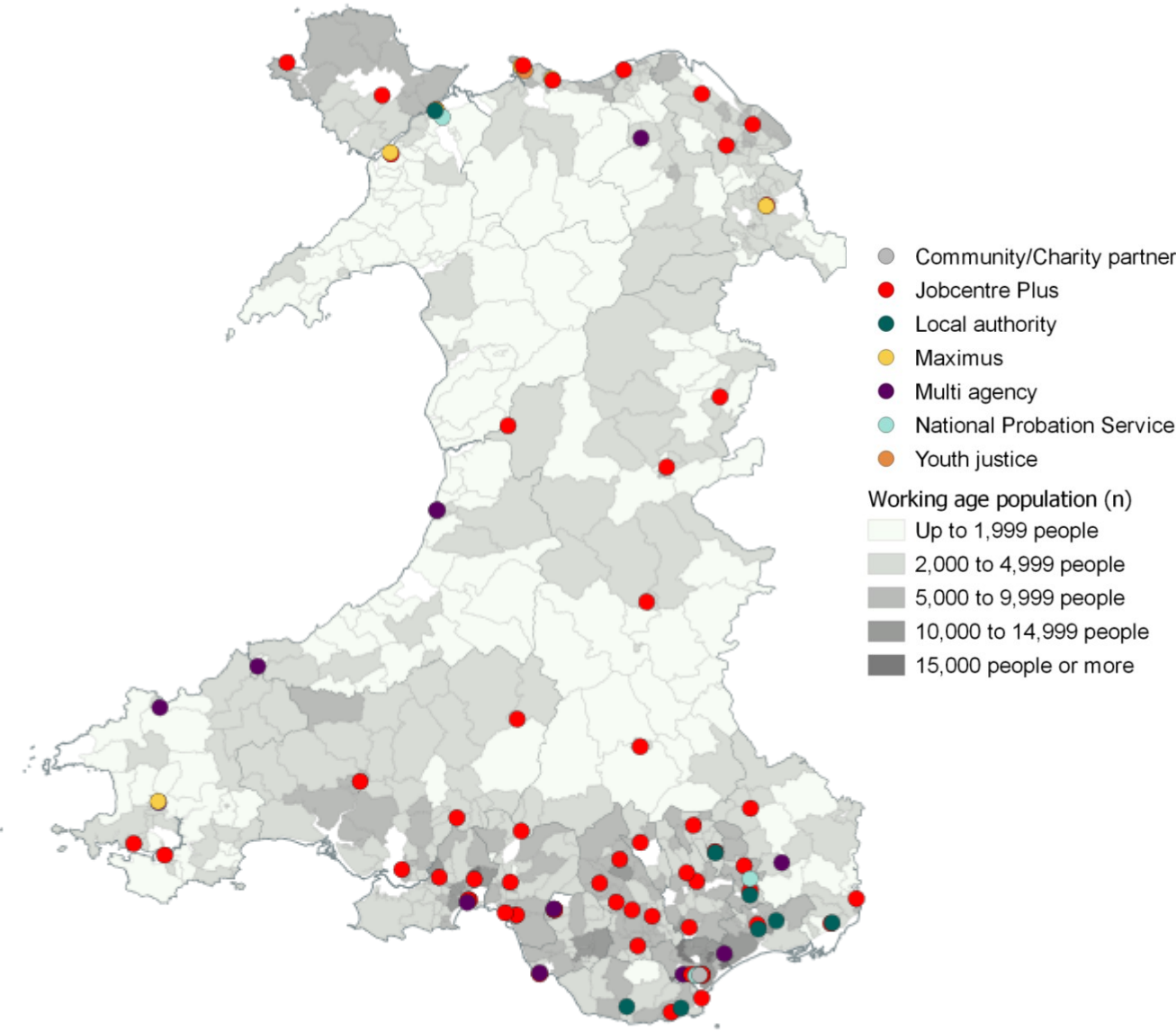
Source: Co-location sites (n=90) as reported by the national Working Wales management team, working age population as of 2021 Census (n=3,107,588).

Figure 4.4: Proportion of Working Wales co-location site partners
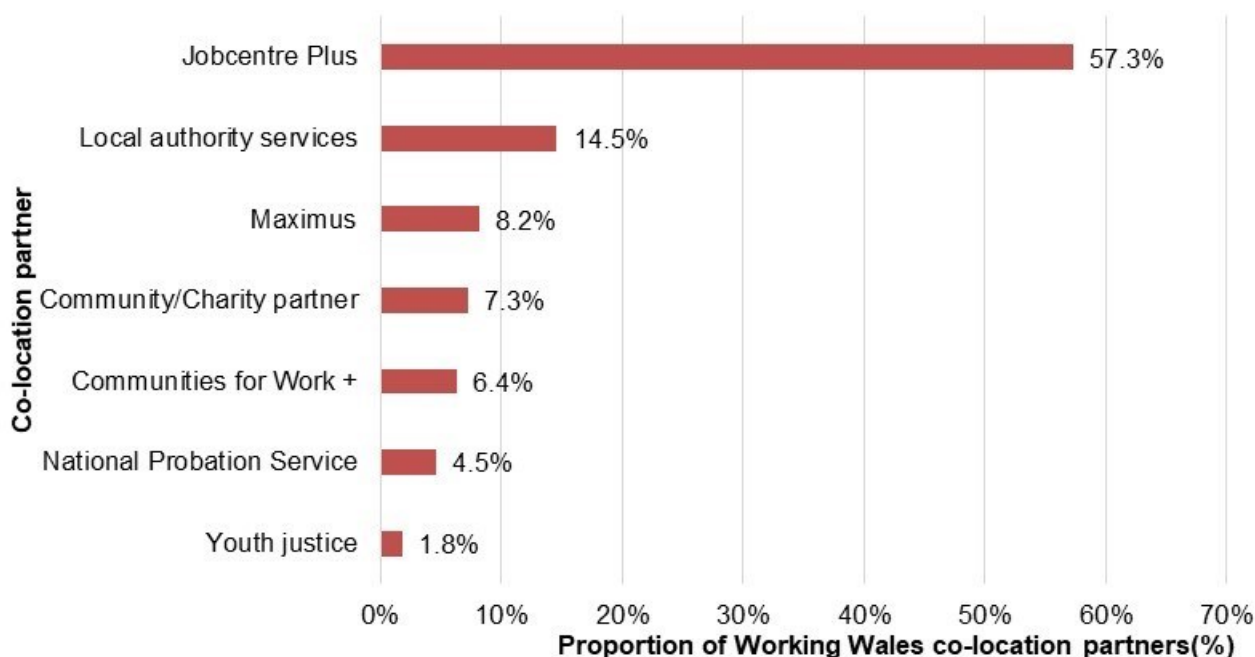
Source: Co-location site partners as reported by the national Working Wales management team (n=110).

4.4   Management and delivery staff noted in interviews that Working Wales staff also undertook outreach work in every part of Wales, mainly through hosting outreach events in community centres, Jobcentre Plus sites and libraries. Moreover, interviews highlighted that small populations in rural areas often meant that there was insufficient demand to justify having a staff member situated in certain areas for more than one day per week, or to continue using a location for in-person sessions after a three-month review period. Staff noted that the COVID-19 pandemic provided them with an opportunity to re-evaluate some of the physical locations that they had previously been using, choosing to suspend services where there was poor footfall and to trial new locations as restrictions were lifted.

4.5   The programme's monitoring information shows that there are some differences in the support demanded between broadly rural authorities and urban, Valleys and other authorities in Wales. Upon engagement, customers are asked which language is preferred for both written and verbal language correspondence. As shown in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6, Working Wales customers in rural authorities were more likely than customers in urban authorities to choose Welsh as their preferred verbal

and written language in which to receive support. When broken down by local authority, however, it appears that these figures are upwardly skewed by Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey where, for example, 29.0 per cent and 15.1 per cent noted respectively that their preferred verbal language was Welsh. As highlighted in Section 2, Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey have the highest proportion of Welsh language speakers across Wales. It is therefore unsurprising that the demand for Welsh language Working Wales support was highest in these local authorities.

Figure 4.5: Customers' preferred verbal language, by authority typology
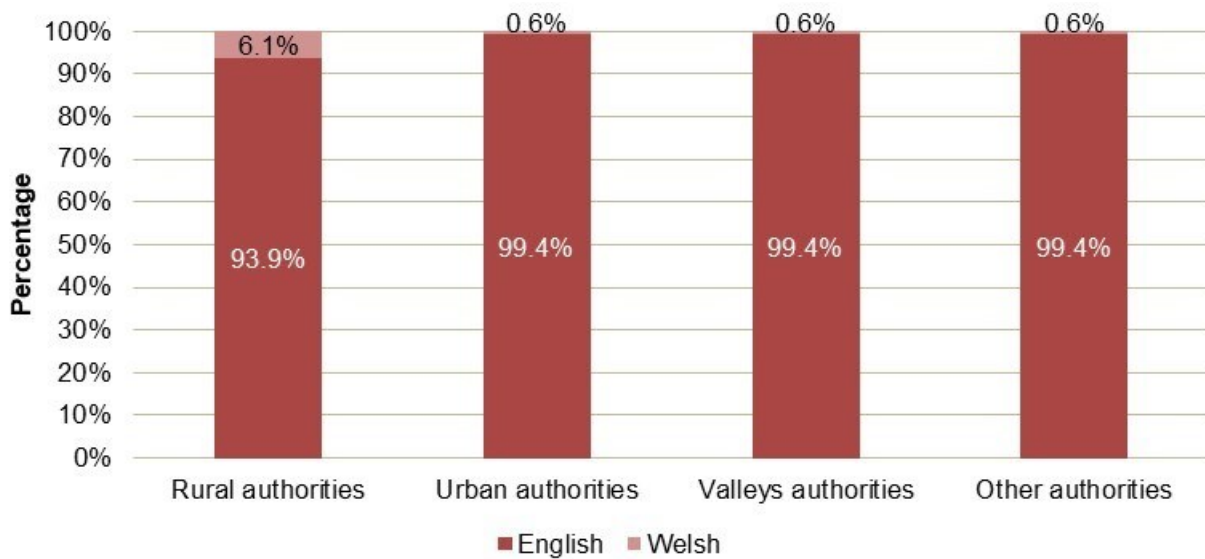
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=73,381 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes where the preferred language was not reported or where data on customers' local authority were not reported or were reported to be outside of Wales. Where customers moved across authority types (n=345), their first recorded location is represented here.

Figure 4.6: Customers' preferred written language, by authority typology
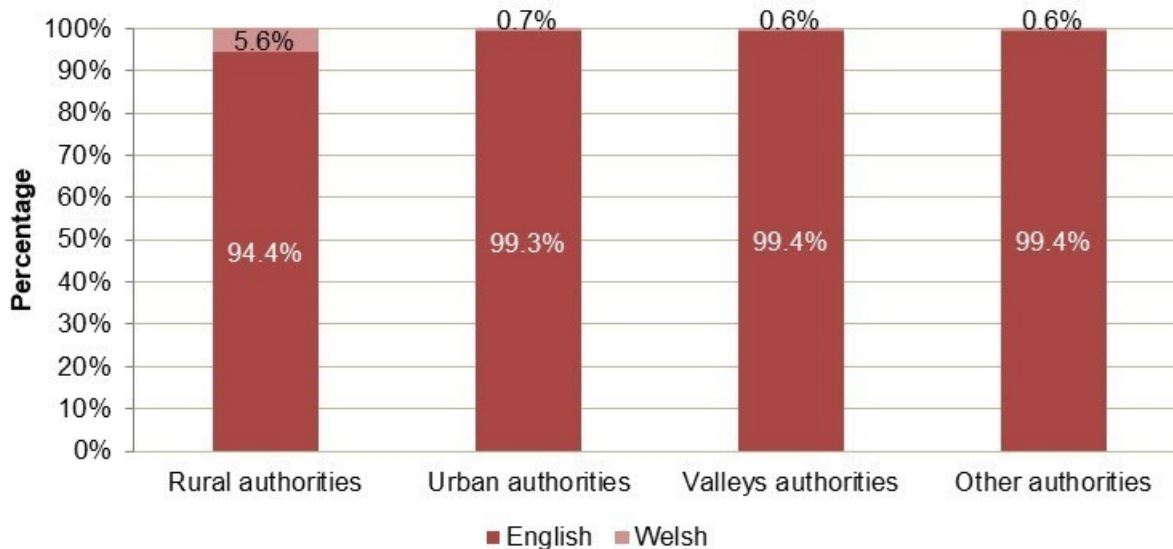
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=73,377 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes where the preferred language was not reported or where data on customers' local authority were not reported or were reported to be outside of Wales. Where customers moved across authority types from 2019–2023 (n=345), their first recorded location is represented here.

4.6 A greater Welsh language preference in rural areas is also evidenced by the more detailed urban/rural typologies detailed in Figures 4.7 and 4.8. As stated above, the higher proportion of Welsh language preference in accessible and isolated rural locations is likely to be skewed towards the higher proportion of Welsh language speakers in Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey.

Figure 4.7: Customers' preferred verbal language, by detailed urban–rural split typology
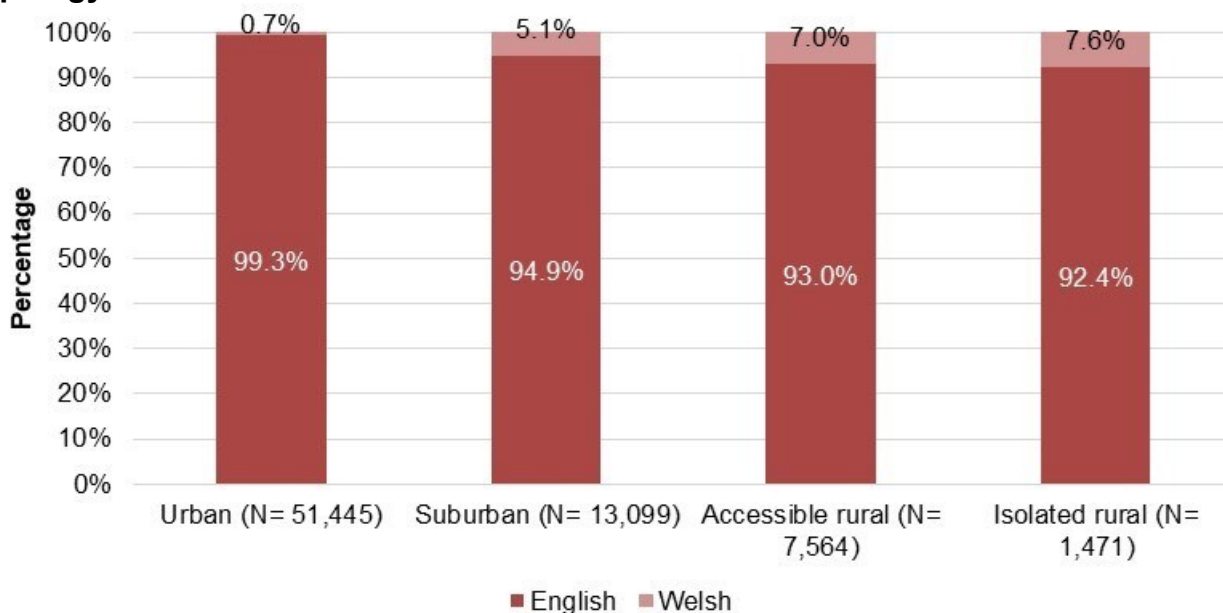
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=73,579 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes individuals where data on the urban/rural typology or preferred language were not recorded. Where customers' typologies changed from 2019–2023 (n=510), their first recorded location is represented here.

Figure 4.8: Customers' preferred written language, by detailed urban–rural split typology
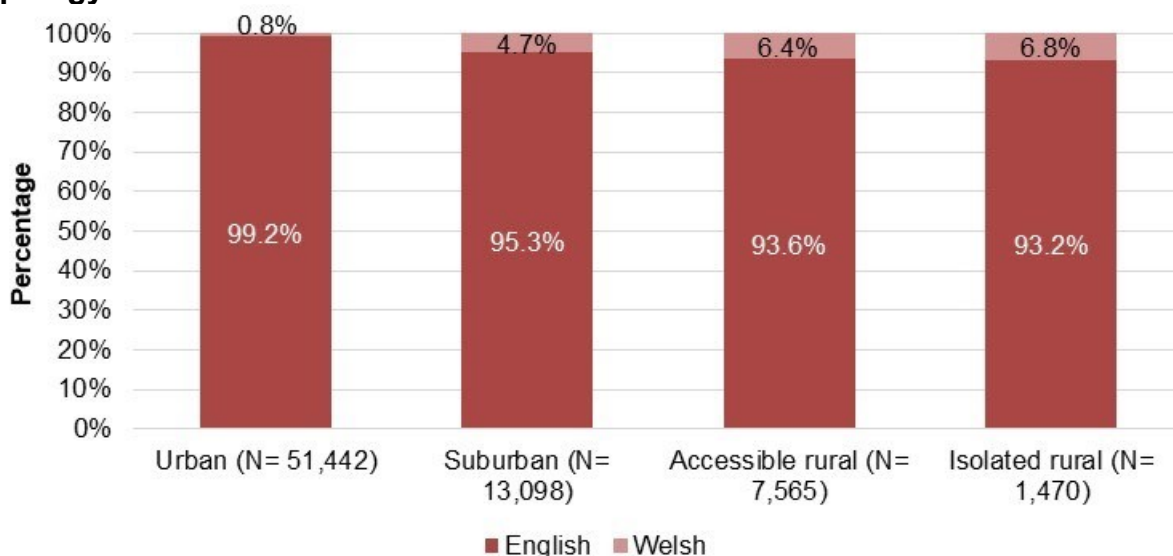
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=73,575 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes individuals where data on the urban/rural typology or preferred language were not recorded. Where customers' typologies changed from 2019–2023 (n=510), their first recorded location is represented here.

4.7   The most common referral routes into Working Wales, in order of popularity, were self-referral, Jobcentre Plus, Careers Wales, CfW, prison services, and college. These constitute a combined 87 per cent of the total referrals into Working Wales; however, there are clear distinctions between urban and rural areas. Table 4.1 shows that a considerably smaller proportion of customers from rural authorities referred themselves into Working Wales than from other authority types (38.5 per cent in rural areas in comparison to 49.6 per cent in urban areas). In addition, the table shows that a larger proportion of customers from rural authorities were referred into Working Wales through Jobcentre Plus (32.9 per cent in rural areas in comparison to 23.0 per cent in urban areas). Statistical testing on whether the referral source was different depending on the authority typology demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference, with a lower-than-expected proportion of rural customers self-referring and a higher-than-expected proportion of customers being referred through Jobcentre Plus being from rural areas[17].

4.8   Fewer self-referrals from customers in rural areas may be the result of multiple factors. For example, fewer self-referrals may indicate that marketing to inform prospective customers of Working Wales, and how they can directly access the service, was less successful at reaching rurally based individuals. Poor transport and digital infrastructure in rural areas may also create additional barriers for prospective rural customers looking to access the service. Additionally, it is possible that there are fewer self-referrals in these areas because other partners are successfully reaching rural customers and referring them to the appropriate support.

Table 4.1: Referral route into Working Wales, by authority typology

Route	Urban authorities (N=21,012)	Valleys authorities (N=20,363)	Rural authorities (N=25,646)	Other authorities (N=18,636)
Self-referral	49.6%	45.0%	38.5%	48.7%
Jobcentre Plus	23.0%	30.9%	32.9%	26.8%
Careers Wales education team	8.0%	6.6%	7.6%	7.2%
Communities for Work	1.4%	2.5%	3.2%	1.2%

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[17] Chi-square test values: n=85,657, χ^2=1,789.52, where df=18 and with a p-value of <0.001.

Route	Urban authorities (N=21,012)	Valleys authorities (N=20,363)	Rural authorities (N=25,646)	Other authorities (N=18,636)
Prison	3.2%	1.4%	2.0%	2.3%
College	1.2%	1.4%	3.6%	1.4%
Other	13.5%	12.2%	12.2%	12.4%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=85,657 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes unknown referral sources and summarises 21 less popular referral sources under 'Other'[18]. Please note due to rounding totals may not equal 100%.

4.9 Assessing Working Wales referral routes via detailed urban/rural typologies confirms that customers in urban areas more commonly self-refer to Working Wales than customers in other areas (46.5 per cent in urban areas in comparison to 41.7 per cent in suburban areas, 40.7 per cent in accessible rural areas, and 40.8 per cent in isolated rural areas). In comparison, customers in isolated rural areas more frequently are referred through Jobcentre Plus compared to customers in other areas (36.9 per cent), which is surprising considering the often greater distance between Jobcentre Plus sites and rurally isolated customers (in comparison to urban customers).

Table 4.2: Referral route into Working Wales, by detailed urban–rural split typology

Route	Urban (N=60,499)	Suburban (N=14,987)	Accessible rural (N=8,729)	Isolated rural (N=1,673)
Self-referral	46.5%	41.7%	40.7%	40.8%
Jobcentre Plus	27.4%	32.3%	30.0%	36.9%
Careers Wales education team	7.3%	7.9%	6.7%	6.9%
Communities for Work	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%
Prison	1.8%	2.1%	6.8%	0.4%
College	2.0%	1.9%	2.5%	2.6%
Other	12.9%	12.0%	11.4%	10.8%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=85,888 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes unknown referral sources and summarises 21 less popular referral sources under 'Other'. Please note that due to rounding totals may equal more than 100%.

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[18] Other sources include: Youth Offending Service, Support Agency, Youth Service, School, Local Authority Provision, Employability Coaching, Housing Support, Social Services, Roadshow/Event, ESF Project, Employer, Probation Service, Voluntary Organisation, JCP Youth Journey, GP/Health Service, PaCE, Training Provider, Business Wales, Citizens Advice, University, and Other (further details not specified).

4.10   Whilst a slightly higher proportion of customers who joined from isolated rural areas were unemployed (59.8 per cent compared to 53.5 per cent in accessible rural areas 56.9 per cent in suburban and 56.7 per cent urban areas), unemployed customers were also more likely to be referred through Jobcentre Plus in these areas (Figure 4.9 below).

Figure 4.9: Proportion of unemployed customers referred through Jobcentre Plus, by detailed urban-rural split typology
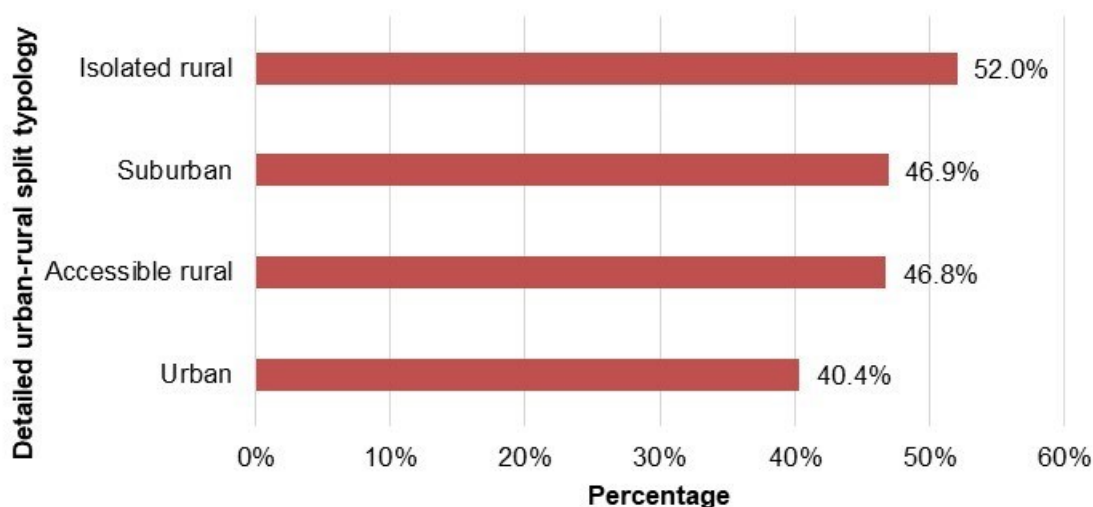
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=48,669 customer engagements). Please note that this refers to customers who were unemployed at engagement and excludes customers where data on the urban/rural typology was not recorded. Where customers' typologies changed from 2019–2023 (n=510), their first recorded location is represented here.

4.11   As Jobcentre Plus is the most common co-location site, it is possible that customers in rural locations are accessing Working Wales via this route because it is the most accessible physical site. Statistical testing on whether the referral source was different depending on the detailed urban–rural split typology demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference, with a higher-than-expected proportion of customers being referred through Jobcentre Plus being from isolated rural areas[19].

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[19] Chi-square test values: n=85,888, χ^2=1,178.12, where df=18 and with a p-value of <0.001.

4.12   Figure 4.10 shows that a higher proportion of customers accessing support in rural areas were aged 50 or above, a trend that was more pronounced when examining the data by detailed urban/rural typology in Figure 4.11 — 21.7 per cent of customers from isolated rural areas were aged 50+ in comparison to 13.0 per cent of those from urban areas. This is consistent with Census data from 2021, where rural and other local authorities have older populations on average in comparison to urban or Valleys authorities[20]. Statistical testing on whether age groups differed depending on the authority typology demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference, with a higher-than-expected proportion of customers being in the age category of 50+ in rural areas.

Figure 4.10: Age, by authority typology
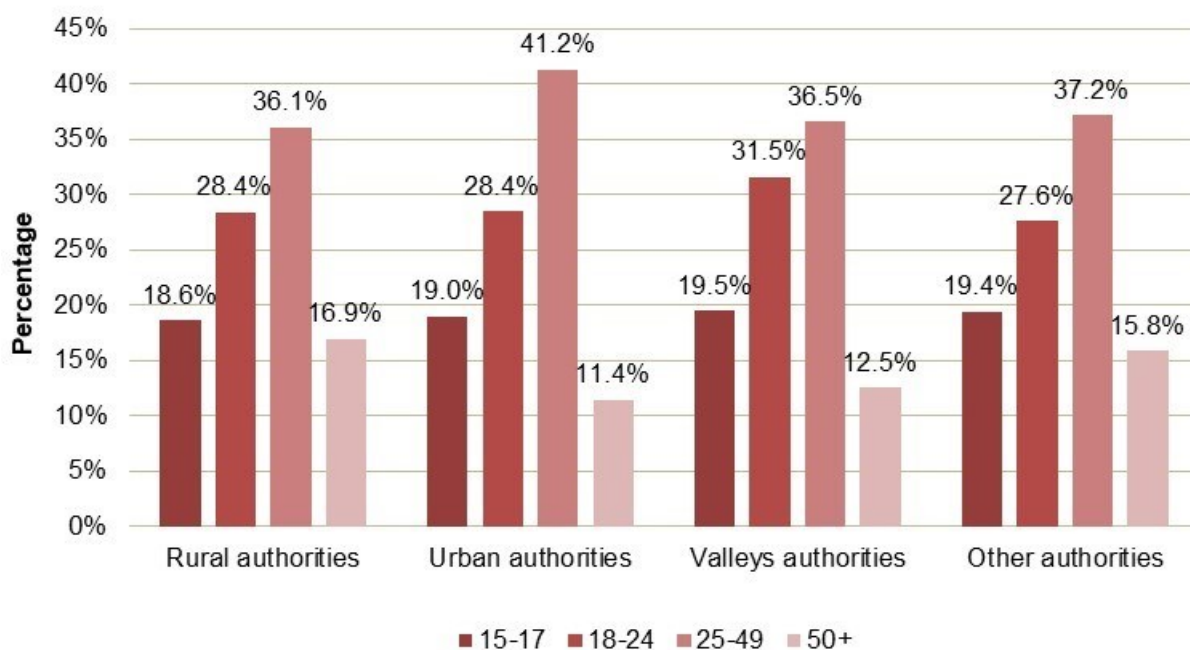
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=85,945 customer engagements). Please note that observations from outside of Wales as well as invalid or blank observations were excluded. Where individuals were recorded in multiple age brackets (N=2,679) or local authority types (N=345), the first recorded age group and location are displayed here.

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[20] Chi-square test values: n=85,945, χ^2=494.45, where df=9 and with a p-value of <0.001

Figure 4.11: Age, by detailed urban–rural split typology
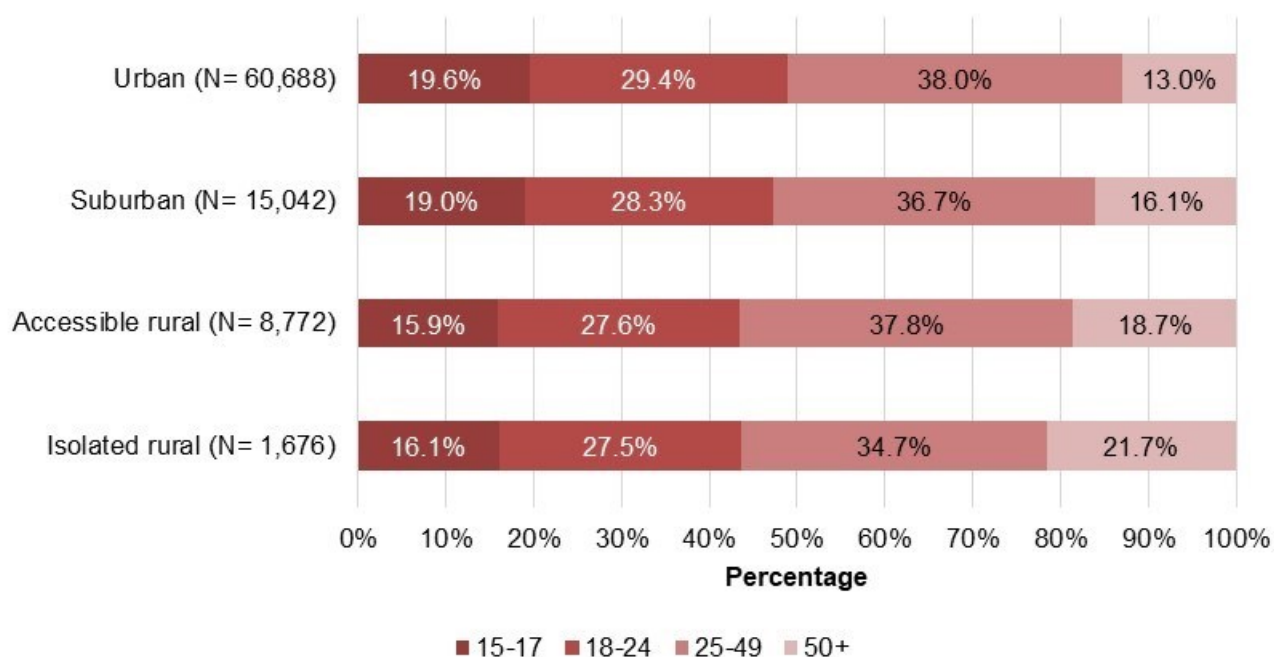
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=86,178 customer engagements). Please note that observations from outside of Wales as well as invalid or blank observations were excluded. Where individuals were recorded in multiple age brackets (N=2,679) or rural urban types (N=510), the first recorded age group and location are displayed here. Please note that due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

4.13   There are also a series of factors which show very little difference between rural and urban areas of Wales. Table 4.3 shows that customer employment status before enrolment in Working Wales appears to be consistent across urban/rural typologies. The only difference emerges among Valleys authorities, which have a slightly higher proportion of customers being unemployed (60.0 per cent) before joining Working Wales in comparison with urban (53.9 per cent), rural (55.9 per cent) and other authorities (56.2 per cent). This is balanced by having a slightly lower proportion of people being economically inactive before joining Working Wales in comparison with the three other authority typologies. Statistical testing on whether the customer status when joining Working Wales differed depending on the authority typology demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference, with a higher-than-expected proportion of customers being unemployed in Valleys

authorities[21]. For context, between 2019 and 2023, the average unemployment rate among Valleys and urban authorities was 4.5 per cent, respectively, in comparison to 3.6 per cent in rural authorities and 3.3 per cent in other authorities[22].

Table 4.3: Customer employment status prior to enrolment, by authority typology

	Rural authorities (N=25,741)	Urban authorities (N=21,101)	Valleys authorities (N=20,450)	Other authorities (N=18,673)
Unemployed	55.9%	53.9%	60.0%	56.2%
Employed	20.0%	20.3%	17.5%	20.4%
Inactive	6.8%	6.5%	3.8%	5.6%
Volunteering	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Apprenticeship or traineeship	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%
Further Education	6.7%	6.6%	7.2%	6.6%
In school	6.4%	7.9%	7.4%	7.5%
Higher Education	0.6%	1.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Unknown	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	0.7%
Other	1.3%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=85,965 customer engagements). Please note that observations from outside of Wales as well as invalid or blank observations were excluded. Please note that due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%

Staff and stakeholder perceptions of offer and its reach

4.14   When asked about the overall reach of Working Wales, stakeholders generally felt that the service has been successful in reaching urban and rural customers in need of support. However, stakeholders also suggested that it is likely that the service misses more prospective customers in rural areas than in urban areas. Where this was the case, stakeholders suggested that it is more difficult for staff to successfully engage individuals in rural areas due to limited community infrastructure. A lack of infrastructure means that it can be more challenging for staff to establish outreach activity and co-location partnerships. Where staff are unable to establish outreach activity and co-location partnerships, they typically have to rely on social media outreach.

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[21] Chi-square test values: n=85,965, χ^2=985.92, where df=36 and with a p-value of <0.001.
[22] Unemployment rate aged 16–64, ONS Annual Population Survey.

4.15 Difficulties engaging rural customers across Wales are widely documented across a range of employability-focused projects, as detailed in Section 2. To overcome this challenge, other Welsh Government programmes e.g. Personal Learning Accounts and ReAct report that they have enhanced their online offer to make support more accessible.[23] Within Communities for Work Plus, opportunities to utilise a mobile support van in rural areas to reduce staff time in venues with limited footfall are also currently being explored.[24]

4.16 Interviewed staff also reported that where they are able to establish co-location and outreach sites in rural areas, these are commonly short-term because of limited footfall. Whilst staff emphasised the importance of reaching rurally-based customers, low footfall at rural co-location or outreach sites meant that it is difficult for managers to justify using staff resource in this way in the longer-term.

> 'There are still big gaps due to the rural nature of the area as the road links are poor and public transport even worse. [We] opened a centre [in a rural area] where there are high levels of unemployment and deprivation but despite lots of outreach activity we were unable to drive sufficient footfall to that office to justify keeping it open.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

4.17 Staff provided a mixed response when asked about the effectiveness of the online offer in terms of attracting rural customers. Some suggested that it has created a positive impact, in light of the low uptake levels when they have attempted to set up physical locations in some rural areas. However, others felt that it has had little impact due to poor broadband coverage in rural areas or because those with poor digital literacy would struggle to access services online.

4.18 It was felt by both staff and stakeholders that the 'pop-up' locations for Working Wales support were beneficial for many customers[25]. However, as highlighted in

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[23] It is important to note that, similarly to Working Wales, enhanced online support offers in other programmes also commonly coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic.
[24] Welsh Government (2023) Evaluation of Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus: Stage 1: Process Evaluation and Theory of Change.
[25] Pop-up office days are events in which Working Wales staff offer one-off drop-ins in order to reach prospective customers who may find reaching a permanent Working Wales site to be challenging.

strategic reporting, it was noted that pop-up sites still struggle to reach customers in rural areas:

> 'On the whole, I think [that the pop-up locations] were very good. The only areas where we struggle are very rural areas, Powys and Gwynedd especially. Even when [the pop-ups] are in a town centre, some people have to get two or three buses. Public transport is a wider problem.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

4.19 Overall, challenges associated with engaging rural customers suggest that future provision should review how the service can best target a substantial volume of customers whilst also addressing needs. As highlighted in the final report co-location sites are predominantly decided based on existing access to an area with customer demand and/or high footfall. Whilst this approach ensures that Working Wales only operates at sites that continue to successfully engage customers, this approach does not necessarily target individuals who are most in need of Working Wales support. Where delivery staff perceived that their outreach had been most successful, they had often engaged a wide variety of partners within local communities to be able to engage with individuals in environments in which they would feel most comfortable. Developing relationships with a wide range of partners can be an effective tool with which to better reach and directly engage with prospective participants in rural areas to ensure that the programme has better reach across Wales.

Staff and stakeholder perceptions of the remote support offer

4.20 Providing a range of options was perceived by stakeholders to be maintaining a flexible and adaptable service that responds to the needs of individuals. This approach allows customers to decide how they would like to engage with Working Wales staff:

> 'I think [that the face-to-face support offer] has to be there. It's so important, but I think, with COVID-19, having the hybrid offer means we're still able to support without them having to come to us. [Having] other platforms adds another layer of flexibility to meet customer needs.' (**Stakeholder interview**)

4.21   Management and delivery staff had a mixed outlook on the remote Working Wales offer, with some noting that it is beneficial for rural customers because it minimises travel. Other staff, however, noted that rural customers often have a strong preference for face-to-face support because it allows them to more easily develop a relationship with Working Wales staff, reducing risks of social isolation. In addition, it was emphasised during interviews that most customers prefer to initially engage with Working Wales face-to-face and were willing to travel long distances in rural areas to do so.

4.22   It was commonly perceived by staff that face-to-face support is more effective than remote support in addressing customers' presenting needs. In these cases, staff and stakeholders reported that face-to-face support allows them to see the 'whole picture' with a customer, including potential barriers on which they may not pick up remotely. However, it is also important to highlight that the increased remote support offer is widely praised by staff as offering more choice and reducing the travel burden on staff and customers. Offering remote Working Wales support has ensured that customers are able to access support however they would like to access it, removing the possible travel burden for them as well. As highlighted in the final evaluation report, it is likely that a blend of face-to-face and remote Working Wales support is an effective and balanced approach to service support. This allows staff and customers to develop good relationships face-to-face and then follow up remotely to ease travel pressures.

Customer reflections on the mode of support offer and its impact

4.23   Evidence from the monitoring information indicates that over the lifetime of the programme, more Working Wales customers have accessed support solely remotely than solely in person. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts this finding, with 65 per cent of the total remote-only interactions occurring in 2020 and 2021. However, the monitoring information also demonstrates that remote interactions remained popular following the pandemic — 45.0 per cent of customer episodes of support in 2022 and 35.9 per cent in 2023 interacted with Working Wales by remote-only means in comparison to 6.5 per cent in 2019. Without further evidence,

it is not possible to establish what drives the decision to access support remotely. However, stakeholders suggested that this decision may be due to the ease of accessing support remotely and/or the suitability of the remote service at different stages of support; for example, a telephone call may be a more appropriate way of initially engaging with the service before then receiving subsequent support in person.

4.24 Figure 4.12 shows that customers in rural authorities were more likely to access remote-only support from Working Wales than customers from urban authorities. The uptake of in-person-only support is also lower among customers in rural authorities in comparison to the other authority typologies.

Figure 4.12: Customer interaction mode, by local authority typology
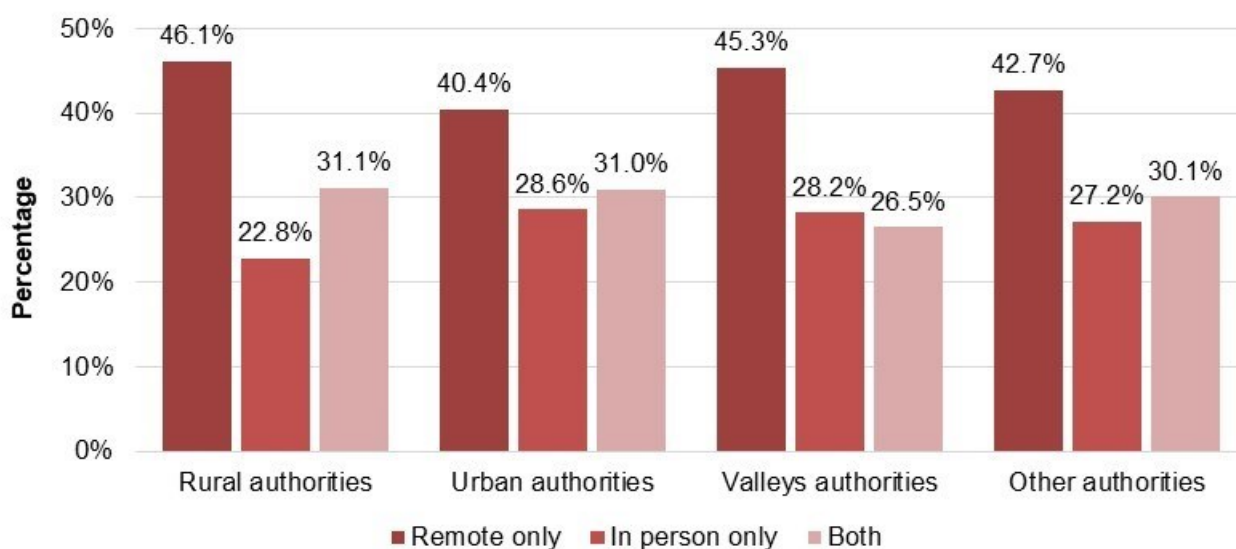
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=67,316 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes interactions for which no geographical data were recorded or where a geographical location outside of Wales was recorded. This also excludes individuals who have not had any recorded interactions with Working Wales since the initial engagement. Where individuals have moved across authority types (n=345), their first recorded authority type is used here.

4.25 After 2021 the continued popularity of the remote offer, via remote-only and blended support, suggests that there is a clear demand for this type of support. Figure 4.13 indicates that customers in isolated rural areas most frequently accessed remote support. This supports staff and stakeholder suggestions that the remote offer

particularly benefits rural customers, but may also highlight challenges that customers in rural areas face when looking to access in-person support.

Figure 4.13: Customer interaction mode, by detailed urban–rural split typology
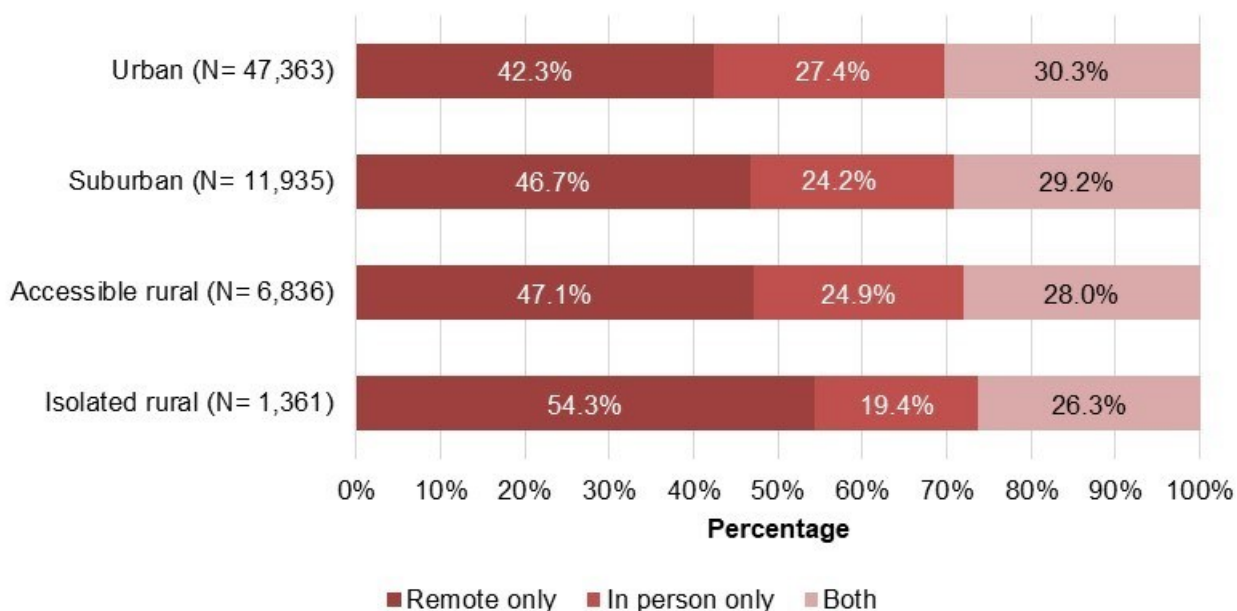
Source: Working Wales monitoring information (N=67,495 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes interactions for which no geographical data were recorded. This also excludes individuals who have not had any recorded interactions with Working Wales since the initial engagement. Where individuals have moved across rural urban types (n=510), their first recorded rural urban type is used here. Please note that due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

4.26   On average, each Working Wales customer has had two interactions with the service. As highlighted in Table 4.4 over page, across all local authority typologies, telephone-based support was the most common Working Wales interaction (50 per cent overall across Wales). Considering pressures due to the current financial climate, e.g. pressures due to the cost-of-living crisis, it is plausible that some customers opt for telephone support from Working Wales for at least some of their support to reduce travel costs.[26] Furthermore, Table 4.4 indicates that a greater number of rural customers engage via telephone (52 per cent) in comparison to urban customers (47 per cent). However, telephone interactions may be driven by

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[26] Please also note that the Working Wales telephone support line is free to use.

demand for in-person support, with slightly fewer rural customers and slightly more urban customers interacting with Working Wales in person.

Table 4.4: Customer interaction mode, by local authority typology

| Interaction type	Rural authorities	Urban authorities	Valleys authorities	Other authorities	Wales total
Telephone	52%	47%	52%	49%	50%
In person	32%	35%	33%	33%	33%
Email	11%	12%	10%	13%	11%
Text	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Video	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Webchat	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Messaging service	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Letter	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n=67,316 customer engagements). Please note that this excludes interactions for which no geographical data were recorded or where a geographical location outside of Wales was recorded. This also excludes individuals who have not had any recorded interactions with Working Wales since the initial engagement. Where individuals have moved across authority types (n=345), their first recorded authority type is used here.[27]

4.27   A small-scale customer survey provides some insight into customer reflections on the mode of support available through Working Wales. However, it should be borne in mind that this survey only has 167 responses from four local authorities (Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, and Gwynedd). Therefore, it is very likely that this does not provide a representative perspective of Working Wales customers.

4.28   The vast majority of surveyed customers reported that they have accessed Working Wales support in-person. Surveyed customers have also interacted with Working Wales more than the average customer has.[28] This differs from overarching customer trends and may suggest that those who engaged with the survey were not representative of the wider Working Wales customer cohort. Survey responses may, instead, provide insight from a sub-group of customers who have accessed Working Wales support more intensively.

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[27] As a result of customers moving across local authority types, percentages may not total 100 per cent.
[28] On average, customers have two interactions with Working Wales. However, as highlighted in the Methodology section of the report, the sample of customers provided to the evaluation team had received at least three interactions.

Figure 4.14: How do you access the Working Wales service?
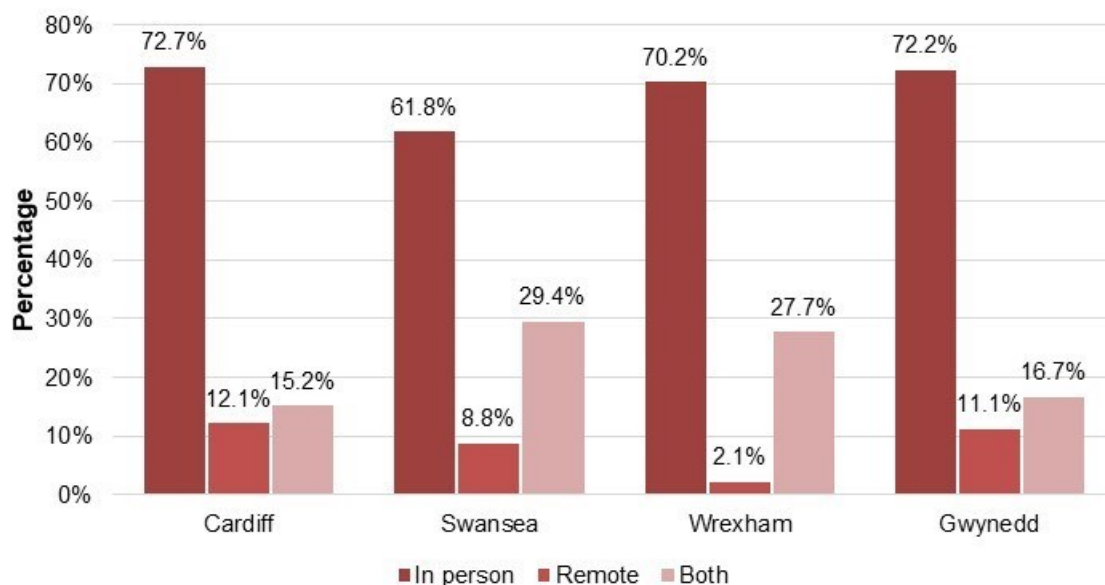
Source: Customer survey (n=134). Please note that this question was a multiple choice question. Those that indicated accessing both in person and remote support were recoded into a both" category.

4.29   The vast majority of surveyed customers reported that accessing a Working Wales centre or pop-up is either 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' (71 per cent). Table 4.5 shows that the geographical location made a limited difference to how easy it is to access Working Wales centres or pop-ups, with very few customers reporting that accessing centres or pop-ups was 'somewhat difficult' (three customers in total).

Table 4.5: How easy is it for you to access a Working Wales centre/pop-up?

Local authority	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
Cardiff	71.8%	17.9%	7.7%	2.6%	0%
Swansea	66.7%	27.3%	3.0%	3.0%	0%
Wrexham	80.0%	18.3%	0%	1.7%	0%
Gwynedd	72.7%	22.7%	4.5%	0%	0%

Source: Customer survey (n=154)

4.30   Tables 4.6 and 4.7 indicate that most surveyed customers are based relatively near to a Working Wales centre or pop-up hub (with under a quarter being more than five miles away). When asked to elaborate why it was easy for them to access Working Wales centres or pop-ups, customers in Cardiff and Wrexham reported that they have access to good transport links. In Gwynedd, 38.1 per cent of customers typically travelled by car and 62.5 per cent (5/8) suggested that sites were typically

easy to access via car.[29] Whilst access via car is manageable for some customers, it is important to acknowledge that this will not be the case for all customers based in rural areas.

Table 4.6: How far do you have to travel to reach a Working Wales centre/pop-up location?

Local authority	Less than 1 mile	2–3 miles	4–5 miles	More than 5 miles
Cardiff	28.2%	51.3%	7.7%	12.8%
Swansea	35.7%	28.6%	21.4%	14.3%
Wrexham	25.9%	53.4%	6.9%	13.8%
Gwynedd	35.0%	20.0%	15.0%	30.0%

Source: Customer survey (n=145). Please note that this excludes all 'don't know' responses and is a single-choice question.

Table 4.7: How do you typically travel to the venue?

Local authority	On foot	By bike/e-scooter	By bus	By train	By car
Cardiff	37.8%	5.4%	35.1%	5.4%	18.9%
Swansea	36.4%	0%	45.5%	0%	24.2%
Wrexham	33.3%	6.7%	43.3%	0%	20.0%
Gwynedd	33.3%	0%	28.6%	0%	38.1%

Source: Customer survey (n=151). Please note that this excludes all 'don't know' responses and is a multiple-choice question, so total local authority percentages may exceed 100 per cent.

4.31   When asked how welcoming they find the physical Working Wales sites to be, all surveyed customers responded positively. In most cases, customers reported that this was because the staff were friendly and approachable and the site itself was accessible and welcoming:

> 'Every staff member I have an interaction with is polite. They're friendly and receptive and my careers adviser is very friendly. It doesn't feel like a hostile environment and they're not difficult to interact with.' (**Customer survey response**)

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[29] This data is based on five respondents from Gwynedd who typically travelled by car and said that they found accessing a Working Wales site 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy'. When asked why all cited good accessibility by car as a reason.

'Every time I go there the staff are friendly and able to accommodate me. They're good at answering any questions I have. Say, if I wanted to amend a booking or change something for next time, they'd be able to do that as well.' (**Customer survey response**)

4.32   Overall, two thirds of surveyed customers who felt able to answer the question (66.1 per cent) said that they would prefer to have all Working Wales support face-to-face[30]. This finding was consistent across all case study locations. As highlighted in the final report, the reasons for this commonly stemmed from customers finding it easier to talk to a Working Wales adviser face-to-face for various reasons including hearing impairments, challenges with English as a second language, and limited digital literacy. In a minority of cases, customers also reported that talking to an adviser face-to-face also felt more personal. Whilst this feedback is from a sample of Working Wales customers who more frequently access face-to-face services than the overall cohort, the perceived value of said support is clear.

Customer reflections on perceived gaps in support and additional support needs relating to urban and rural access

4.33   Almost three quarters of all surveyed customers reported that Working Wales has met their support needs 'to a great extent' (72.1 per cent). Figure 4.15 illustrates that across most surveyed local authorities, customers felt that Working Wales support has met their needs. Whilst slightly fewer customers reported that their needs have meet met 'to a great extent' in Gwynedd (47.8 per cent), qualitative responses indicate that this is typically because they are still in the process of receiving support or because a particular aspect of training or support was not available through Working Wales (e.g. beekeeping courses).

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[30] Please note that this finding was common across all age groups, particularly those aged 35–55 (22 per cent of answers).

Figure 4.15: To what extent do you feel that Working Wales was able to meet your support needs?
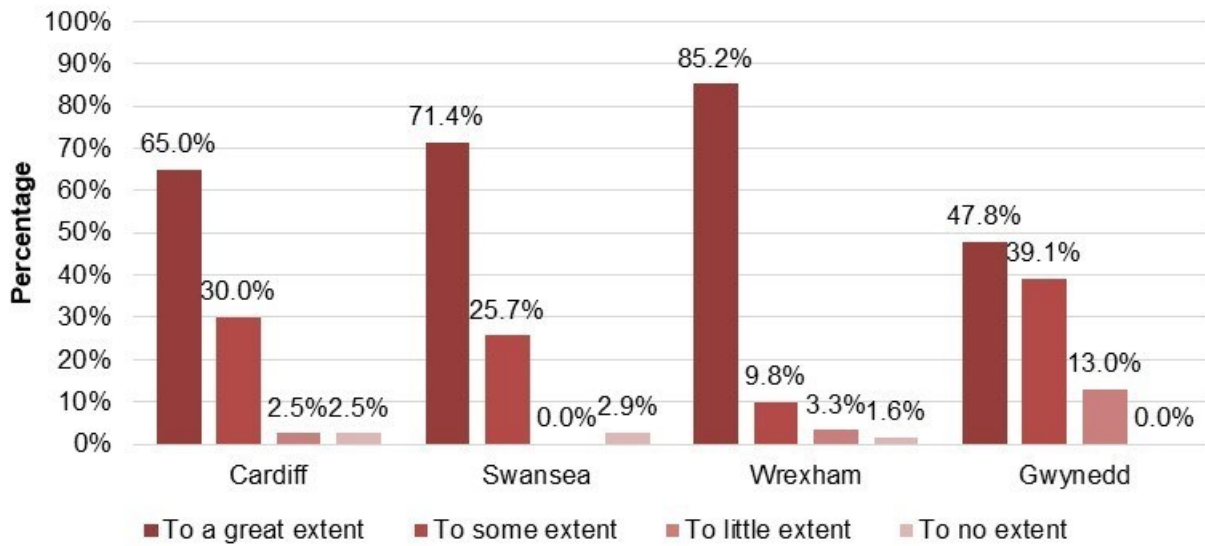
Source: Customer survey (n=159) based on a single-choice question. Please note that due to rounding, figures may total more than 100%.

5.   Understanding of the Service Model and Future Potential

Staff and stakeholder perceptions of the service model

5.1   Reflecting on the key strengths of the model, staff frequently emphasised the value of the consistent Working Wales brand and offer. Whilst regional teams are able to respond to customers' needs in a flexible manner, in line with the local support offer and supplemented by local knowledge, the ability for anyone, regardless of where they live in Wales, to access Working Wales and receive the same offer was praised:

> 'It's continuity for customers. If they access Working Wales support, it will be the same (regardless of where they are in Wales). From a quality point of view, it allows for quality in continuity of the services we provide.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

5.2   Considering the geographical coverage of Working Wales co-location centres and pop-ups, staff were positive that their current provision effectively reaches customers in need of support. Across all regions, staff described working with a range of partners to establish new outreach and pop-up sites to ensure that customers in urban and rural areas have the opportunity to engage with Working Wales support face-to-face. Staff reported that when they are looking to establish new outreach or pop-up sites in areas they have limited coverage, they typically set up 'trial' co-location centres or pop-ups for a period of three months. If 'trial' sites are effectively reaching customers after three months, the site is maintained and if it is not reaching customers it is suspended. Staff reported that this is an effective method to engage new customers as it is systematic and ensures that Working Wales only deploys resource in the longer-term where an approach is effective. The 'trial' period is considered key by many staff as, in some cases, new co-location or pop-up sites fail to engage customers in areas of high unemployment. In these cases, staff suggested that the reason why potential customers do not engage is unknown but the 'trial' period ensures that unsuccessful approaches are prevented in the longer-term.

5.3   Staff and stakeholders also suggested that the remote offer has benefitted customers and staff members. Customers' ability to choose how they want to engage with Working Wales is perceived to be a crucial aspect of the service. Between 50 and 55 per cent of customers residing in rural locations have accessed Working Wales via telephone or video call. This confirms that the remote offer is both valuable and needed. Moreover, staff suggested that the ability to provide online and telephone support reduces resourcing pressures on staff engaging remotely. This means that they do not have to travel to a range of locations, and/or other Working Wales staff outside of their regional team can support queries and the careers advice offer:

> 'It's free support that we can offer bilingually, meet as close as we can to the client or live-chat with. The pace has changed a lot of people's attitudes to services. Having the ability to offer live chat or email responses is crucial and that's been enabled by the 'all-Wales' approach because you're not relying on regional teams.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

5.4   Similarly to the challenges highlighted in other employability evaluations (see Section 2), delivery staff and stakeholders noted that one of the key challenges in rural areas related to large geographical areas being covered by a limited number of staff, making both staff and customers more reliant on public transportation. As identified in 2019 Transport for Wales research, access to public transport considerably varies across the country. Approximately 70 per cent of the Welsh population live less than a 400m walk from a bus stop with at least one bus per hour. However, this varies by region, with 81 per cent of the population in South East Wales being less than 400m to a bus stop with a regular bus in comparison to just over a quarter of the Mid Wales population[31].

5.5   Delivery staff and stakeholders also highlighted that rural customers are more likely to have unreliable broadband, and those with poor digital literacy would also struggle to access services online. This exacerbates issues surrounding staff covering large geographical areas, as these customers are more reliant on face-to-

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[31] Welsh Government (2021) A New Wales Transport Strategy: Transport data and trends.

face support. Whilst Working Wales can identify the location of engaged customers, there is little evidence of the wider barriers that a customer may face in engaging in support (e.g. limited digital connectivity or access to a car or public transport). Where possible, this information should be collected for monitoring systems to ensure that Working Wales is effectively engaging individuals who are in need of support.

5.6   Overall, staff and stakeholders were broadly positive about how Working Wales engages with customers across Wales. However, concerns surrounding whether the service sufficiently engages rural customers in particular remain clear. Whilst in some rural and urban areas, outreach partnerships appear to work well, e.g. working with hospitals and services with expertise in engaging young people NEET, these do not appear to be extensive across all regions and rural geographies.

Future considerations

5.7   Reflecting on how Working Wales could better achieve its vision of being an all-Wales entry point, staff and stakeholders provided a range of suggestions to inform the future delivery of the service.

5.8   Staff and stakeholders frequently praised the Working Wales' national infrastructure and flexible model. Retaining this flexible and inclusive model was perceived by staff and stakeholders as critical for Working Wales to continue supporting a range of customers in rural and urban areas in the future. Retaining this model will also allow the Working Wales service to continue to use new approaches to engage rural customers, acknowledging that there is not a 'one-size-fits-all' method to engaging customers in areas with limited transport and community infrastructure.

5.9   Developing relationships with a broad range of outreach partners was recognised by staff and stakeholders as an effective approach to engage rural customers with Working Wales. Whilst outreach partnerships and pop-up support services were perceived by staff and stakeholders as the most effective way to engage rural customers, it is important to acknowledge that where these methods were used, it can still be challenging for staff to engage customers. Low customer footfall in rural

Working Wales sites result in managers finding it difficult to justify using resource to staff said sites.

5.10　As highlighted in the Working Wales Final Report, whilst resource available through the centralised social media team for Working Wales was praised by stakeholders and staff, it was also perceived as of limited relevance locally. Instead, staff and stakeholders suggested that local teams would benefit from more locally targeted social media resource to enhance engagement with local offers. As Welsh Government and Openreach efforts to ensure that residents across Wales can access fast and reliable full fibre broadband successfully continue[32], it is likely that the remote Working Wales offer and the need for local online outreach will continue to grow in importance.

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[32] Welsh Government (2023) Successful fast full fibre broadband announcement.

6.   Conclusions

6.1   This section summarises key findings related to urban and rural engagement explored within this report.

6.2   Almost one third of all Working Wales customers reside in rural authorities, whilst almost a quarter of customers live in urban or Valleys authorities. Available evidence indicates that Working Wales sites proportionately correspond with total working age populations across Wales. Greater analysis of the reach of Working Wales services, including customer engagement with pop-up sites, would further help to strengthen this assessment at a local level.

6.3   Staff and stakeholders generally felt that Working Wales has successfully reached customers in need of support in urban and rural areas. Where this was the case, staff described offering customer outreach with a wide variety of partners within local communities to engage with individuals in environments in which they would feel most comfortable. Developing relationships with a broad range of outreach partners has been an effective approach within Working Wales to better reach and directly engage with prospective customers in rural areas, ensuring that the programme has a broad reach across Wales.

6.4   Overall, approaches to outreach are effective within Working Wales, with a range of effective practices being referenced by staff (e.g. hosting outreach events in community centres, Jobcentre Plus sites, and libraries). However, staff and stakeholders suggested that it is likely that there are still prospective customers they are not reaching through outreach activity. Staff also suggested that small populations in rural areas often meant that there was insufficient demand to justify having a staff member situated in certain areas for more than one day per week, or to continue using a location for in-person sessions after a three-month review period.

6.5   Pop-up services within Working Wales were also perceived by staff to be an effective mechanism with which to engage prospective customers. This was particularly important when looking to engage customers in rural areas. Staff

reported that offering pop-up services helped them to overcome barriers associated with poor or limited rural infrastructure, but prevented them from overcommitting staff resource in areas in which only small populations resided. This aligns with evaluation findings for other Welsh Government employability support programmes, e.g. [Communities for Work Plus](#), where pop-up services were highlighted as an effective way in which to make inroads with rural communities. However, as highlighted in the final evaluation report, staff reported that it can be challenging to reach some customers, particularly in rural areas, through pop-up services. In these cases, staff were unsure why customers did not engage with pop-up services but suggested that people may be unaware that the pop-up service was there.

6.6   Whilst reasons why potential customers do not engage with outreach and pop-up services were broadly unknown by staff, the 'trial' period for new sites ensures that unsuccessful approaches are prevented in the longer-term. Staff reported that the 'trial' model is effective as it is systematic and ensures that Working Wales only deploys resource in the longer-term where customers are being reached.

6.7   Analysis of Working Wales' monitoring information shows that there are some key differences in how customers in rural and urban areas engage with and receive support from Working Wales. These differences are most prominent when exploring the routes used to refer customers into Working Wales. A larger proportion of customers from rural authorities were referred into Working Wales through Jobcentre Plus than from urban areas. Whilst a slightly higher proportion of customers who joined from rural areas were unemployed than customers in more urban areas, unemployed customers were still more likely to be referred through Jobcentre Plus in rural areas. Limited self-referrals from rural customers may stem from various factors; for example, this may be due to limited transport, digital infrastructure, and/or unsuccessful marketing, all of which could further hinder prospective customers from accessing the service. Alternatively, the success of Jobcentre Plus in reaching and referring rural customers might lead to lower demand for self-referrals in these areas. Additionally, customers in rural areas have more commonly only accessed Working Wales remotely.

6.8   The remote Working Wales offer has evidently met a customer demand, with monitoring information data indicating that almost half of all rurally based customers only access Working Wales support via a remote option. This aligns with evaluation findings from other Welsh Government employability support programmes, e.g. [Personal Learning Accounts](#) and [Communities for Work Plus](#), which highlight that since the COVID-19 pandemic, online support options have become increasingly popular.

6.9   Regardless of their location, most surveyed customers reported that they found the Working Wales service to be easy to access. Whilst this indicates that the service is accessible across a range of geographies, it is important to acknowledge that research activities predominantly reached customers who had engaged in face-to-face service support. As a result, it is likely that some barriers to accessing the service were not fed back through research activity.

6.10   Staff and stakeholders most commonly identified that poor transport infrastructure was the key challenge associated with customer access to Working Wales sites. Staff suggested that transport challenges may result in the service missing more prospective customers in rural areas than in urban areas. As noted in Section 2, this challenge is not unique to Working Wales and is a commonly referenced challenge within employability support across Wales. In [Jobs Growth Wales Plus](#), for example, the cost of transport in rural areas was identified as a key barrier to accessing training. Transport was not identified as a key challenge within the customer survey, however, surveyed customers interacted with Working Wales in-person more than the average customer has. As a result, it is likely that survey responses provide insight from a sub-group of customers who have accessed Working Wales support more intensively.

6.11   Challenges associated with engaging rural customers suggest that future provision should review how co-location and outreach partners are decided upon and sustained. Whilst initial research was undertaken to identify population characteristics and needs across local authorities, current approaches to outreach and co-location appear to be varied across Working Wales, with considerable focus

on footfall and potential volumes of referrals. Responding effectively to demand needs is a core aspect of the flexible Working Wales approach, but additional informed targeting of specific groups and needs may support a more systematic local approach to Working Wales support.

7.   Recommendations

7.1   As a result of the findings within this summary paper, the following recommendations have been identified to aid and improve the future delivery of Working Wales:

7.2   **Recommendation 1:** Future provision should retain outreach and pop-up service models predominantly in rural areas to ensure that resource is effectively targeted at those who may not engage with the service otherwise. It is acknowledged within Working Wales and other employability programme evaluations that pop-up services are an effective short-term mechanism with which to overcome poor or limited rural infrastructure.

7.3   **Recommendation 2:** To ensure customer outreach and pop-up services are as effective as they can be, future provision should look to develop systematic processes in which Careers Wales shares contextual information e.g. labour market information, alongside current customer reach with regional Working Wales teams via heat maps to better identify existing gaps at a local level. This approach would also ensure that limited staff resource is focused in areas where it is needed.

7.4   **Recommendation 3:** Where possible, regional teams should continue to use a combination of methods to engage rural customers. This combination of methods includes continuing to engage a diverse variety of outreach partners, sustaining a remote support offer and adopting more locally focused social media outreach. It is important to acknowledge that there is not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to engaging rural customers and some rural prospective customers are perceived by staff as still difficult to reach due to a lack of community and transport infrastructure. Using a combination of approaches will therefore allow staff the best chance of success when looking to engage people in rural areas.

7.5   **Recommendation 4:** Future delivery should include targeted local marketing campaigns, particularly in rural areas. This will ensure that regional teams can cater for local needs and better engage rural customers.

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Annexe One: Research Tools

Management and delivery staff interviews

Introduction

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role?

Delivery model

2. Could you tell me a little bit about how Working Wales is delivered in your area?
3. What are the key factors that influence the selection of outreach locations in your area?
4. What level of engagement do you tend to see within outreach locations, and how does this differ across locations?
5. How, if at all, has your approach to outreach changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. Have levels of engagement with outreach locations changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
7. How effective are current outreach locations for delivering the Working Wales service?
8. To what extent do you agree that the current locations in your region are easy for customers to reach? Please explain your answer.
9. To what extent do you agree that the environment(s) is welcoming? Is there anything that could be done to make the venues more inviting or welcoming?

Co-location and partnership working

10. Which, if any, partners do you work with in your area to co-locate services?
11. What influenced the decisions to co-locate with these partners?
12. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service in terms of either the level of engagement or the cohort of customers that you have been able to reach? If so, how has this been beneficial?

13. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service or has had unintended consequences? If so, how has this been less beneficial?

14. From your perspective, what works well regarding the overall delivery model in your area?

15. Is there anything that does not work or that has been challenging?

Service reach and engagement

16. What activities do you deliver to engage customers and raise awareness of Working Wales?

17. How effective are these activities at raising awareness and reaching customers?
Does this differ for different groups accessing Working Wales (e.g. young people)?

18. As far as you are aware, are there any communities that have been harder to reach or who do not engage with the provision?
These might include geographical communities or demographic groups.

19. Do you currently undertake any targeted activities to facilitate engagement from these groups or localities? If so, please describe.

20. What else do you think could be done to better support the engagement of these communities or localities?

Referrals and access to services

21. Have there been any changes to the services or partners that you typically signpost to within the last two years? If so, what client needs do these support?

22. Are there any gaps in the employability support available locally to meet the needs of Working Wales customers?

23. Can these needs be met by other local agencies or partners?

Changing economic and social context

24. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals approaching Working Wales for support changed, or have the support needs that individuals present with changed as a result of the changing economic circumstances?

25. Are there further adaptations that you feel that the service needs to make to respond to new or emerging customer needs?

26. Could any of these needs be met by other existing provision?

Support for refugees and migrants

27. What are the main support needs that refugees and migrants present to the service with?

28. What support is available in your local area to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations and other agencies)?

29. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or support available to refugees and forced migrants within your area that are not currently being met by Working Wales or appropriate local partners/services?

The whole-Wales approach

30. Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support as part of a 'one-team' approach. To what extent do you feel that this vision has been realised?

31. What do you feel are the main strengths of this approach?

32. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?

33. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?

34. Is there any employability provision in your local area that is not accessed through Working Wales? If so, what is the impact of this on the service and customers?

35. Is there anything else that has impacted the whole-Wales approach to employability provision?

Stakeholder interviews

Introduction

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role and how you have interacted with Working Wales?

The whole-Wales approach

Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support as part of a 'one-team' approach.

2. What do you feel are the main strengths of the Working Wales approach?
3. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?
4. Which elements of the service are most important and why?
5. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?
6. Going forward, what opportunities are there for the service to support the whole-Wales approach to employability?
7. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals who might benefit from a Working Wales interaction changed as a result of changing social and economic circumstances, or have the support needs of individuals changed?
8. How might Working Wales need to adapt to respond to these changes?
9. Are there any threats to the effectiveness of Working Wales that have emerged since the design of the service?

Delivery model – locations and partnerships

10. Working Wales is currently delivered remotely and face-to-face across a range of locations, with some sites/pop-ups co-located alongside other provision or services. Do you have any views on the current locations/pop-up sites used in your area?
11. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been beneficial?

12. Are there any partners where you think that co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been less beneficial?

13. What are your perspectives on the current remote offer for Working Wales?

Delivery model – engagement, inclusion, and accessibility of support

14. From your perspective, is Working Wales reaching those who would benefit from a Working Wales interaction?

15. If not, which communities or groups are not currently being reached? These could include geographical communities or demographic groups.

16. Are there any factors that may be impacting engagement with these communities? What could Working Wales do to better reach these communities?

17. Is there anything that you think that the service could do to improve the engagement and accessibility of support with individuals from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds?

18. Is there anything that you think that the service could do to improve the engagement and accessibility of support with disabled people?

Support for refugees and migrants

19. With regard to employability, what are the main support needs for refugees and migrants?

20. What support is available to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations and other agencies)?

21. How effectively are these needs currently being met?

22. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or employability support available to refugees and migrants?

Closing comments

23. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding Working Wales?

Participant Intercept Survey (remote survey)

1. Have you ever attended a Working Wales centre or pop-up?

   a. Yes

   b. No

2. How do you access the Working Wales service? Please select all options that apply.

   a. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through a career centre

   b. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through Jobcentre Plus

   c. [Show answer option if Yes to Q1] Through a community venue

   d. On the telephone

   e. Online

   f. Other

      i.[If Other] Please explain how you have accessed Working Wales:

Perspectives on service location and venue

3. How easy is it for you to access a Working Wales centre/pop-up?

   a. Very easy

   b. Somewhat easy

   c. Neither easy nor difficult

   d. Somewhat difficult

   e. Very difficult

   f. Not sure

4. Why do you say that?

5. [If accessed a physical venue] How do you typically travel to the venue?

   a. On foot

   b. By bike/e-scooter

   c. By bus

   d. By train

   e. By car

   f. By taxi

   g. Other

      i.[If Other] Please explain how you travel to the venue:

6. How far do you have to travel to reach a Working Wales centre/pop-up location?

    a.   Less than 1 mile

    b.   2–3 miles

    c.   4–5 miles

    d.   More than 5 miles

    e.   Not sure

7. [If accessed a physical venue] How welcoming do you find the venue for the service?

    a.   Very welcoming

    b.   Somewhat welcoming

    c.   Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming

    d.   Somewhat unwelcoming

    e.   Unwelcoming

8. [If accessed a physical venue] Why do you say that?

9. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales location or venue?

Mode of access

10. [If accessed a physical venue **and** online/over the phone] Do you typically access Working Wales provision face-to-face or remotely?

    a.   Mostly face-to-face

    b.   Mostly remotely (via telephone or online)

    c.   An equal mixture of the two

11. Are there any aspects of the service that you would prefer to access face-to-face?

12. Are there any aspects of the service that you prefer to access remotely (via telephone or online)?

13. Which (if any) remote support have you accessed from Working Wales?

    a.   Self-help resources on the website

    b.   The Support Finder tool

    c.   Webchat with an adviser

    d.   Video or telephone appointments with an adviser

    e.   Something else (Please tell me about it)

> f.   Unsure
>
> g.   None of the above

14. [Carry forward answers] How helpful was this support?

> a.   Very helpful
>
> b.   Somewhat helpful
>
> c.   Not at all helpful

15. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales remote provision?

Experience of support

16. What prompted you to access the Working Wales service?

17. To what extent do you feel that Working Wales was able to meet your support needs?

> a.   To a great extent
>
> b.   To some extent
>
> c.   To a little extent
>
> d.   To no extent

18. Why do you say that?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to share about Working Wales?

Demographic information

As part of our research, we are looking to better understand how different people experience the service. To do this, we are asking customers to provide a few personal details to us. You are free not to answer any questions.

20. Which local authority do you live in?

21. Please could you tell me your age?

22. What is your sex?

23. Is the gender that you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

24. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

25. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Participant Intercept Survey (face-to-face guide)

1. Name of Working Wales site
2. Host venue:
    a. Career centre
    b. Jobcentre Plus
    c. Community venue
    d. Other (Please state)

Perspectives on service location and venue

3. How easy is it for you to access a Working Wales centre/pop-up?
    a. Very easy
    b. Somewhat easy
    c. Neither easy nor difficult
    d. Somewhat difficult
    e. Very difficult
    f. Not sure
4. Why do you say that?
5. How do you typically travel to the venue?
    a. On foot
    b. By bike/e-scooter
    c. By bus
    d. By train
    e. By car
    f. By taxi
    g. Other
        i. [If Other] Please explain how you travel to the venue:
6. How far do you have to travel to reach a Working Wales centre/pop-up location?
    a. Less than 1 mile
    b. 2–3 miles
    c. 4–5 miles
    d. More than 5 miles
    e. Not sure

7. How welcoming do you find the venue for the service?

    a. Very welcoming

    b. Somewhat welcoming

    c. Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming

    d. Somewhat unwelcoming

    e. Unwelcoming

8. Why do you say that?

9. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales location or venue?

Mode of access

10. Do you typically access Working Wales provision face-to-face or remotely?

    a. Mostly face-to-face

    b. Mostly remotely (via telephone or online)

    c. An equal mixture of the two

11. Are there any aspects of the service that you would prefer to access face-to-face?

12. Are there any aspects of the service that you prefer to access remotely (via telephone or online)?

13. Which (if any) remote support have you accessed from Working Wales?

    a. Self-help resources on the website

    b. The Support Finder tool

    c. Webchat with an adviser

    d. Video or telephone appointments with an adviser

    e. Something else (Please tell me about it)

    f. Unsure

    g. None of the above

14. [Carry forward answers] How helpful was this support?

    a. Very helpful

    b. Somewhat helpful

    c. Not at all helpful

15. Is there anything that could be improved regarding the Working Wales remote provision?

Experience of support

16. What prompted you to access the Working Wales service?

17. To what extent do you feel that Working Wales was able to meet your support needs?

    a.   To a great extent

    b.   To some extent

    c.   To a little extent

    d.   To no extent

18. Why do you say that?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to share about Working Wales?

Demographic details

As part of our research, we are looking to better understand how different people experience the service. To do this, we are asking customers to provide a few personal details to us.

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21. Please could you tell me your age?

22. What is your sex?

23. Is the gender that you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

24. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

25. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Annexe Two: Privacy Notices

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with Working Wales management and advisers

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with Working Wales management and advisers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, workshops and surveys, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data are defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and, where available, telephone number) from either:

- Welsh Government in the case of Working Wales management staff; or

- Careers Wales in the case of Working Wales advisers.

The Welsh Government and Careers Wales hold your information because of your involvement with delivery of the Working Wales service. Wavehill will only use email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in an MS Teams interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. You can choose to take part in an interview over the telephone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it from the Welsh Government or Careers Wales.

In all instances, your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders, then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You are not required to provide any additional personal data as part of the interview, with the exception of your image if you agree to an MS Teams interview being video-recorded. We wish to record MS Teams interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme
- Assess the performance and impact of the service
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill three months after the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Wavehill will provide the Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this research project. You have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with stakeholders

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with strategic stakeholders and partner organisations.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

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The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and, where available, telephone number) from one of the following:

- Careers Wales, who hold your details because of your involvement with the Working Wales programme, and you have agreed for your details to be shared with Wavehill to take part in this research project; or

- you agreed that your details could be shared with Wavehill after being contacted by someone already participating in this research who suggested that you may wish to take part.

Wavehill will only use provided email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in an online interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders, then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You can choose to take part in an interview over the telephone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to an online interview being video-recorded.

We may need to record interviews for operational reasons. If this is the case, we will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal

data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
- Assess the performance and impact of the service.
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use these data for research purposes. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill within three months of the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this evaluation. Specifically, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.org.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – online and telephone survey with customers

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through a survey with customers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the survey, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data are defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and/or telephone number) from Careers Wales. Careers Wales hold your information as a user of the Working Wales programme. Wavehill will only use your contact details for the purposes of this evaluation.

How you take part in the research will depend on the contact details that Careers Wales have available for you:

- **If an email address is available:** you will have been invited by email to complete the survey via a link. Completing the survey does not capture your email address or IP address and, as a result, your responses are anonymous.

- **If an email address is not available:** you will have been invited by telephone to complete the survey via a telephone interview. Wavehill do not record your name or contact details as part of your survey response.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part, then please let us know using the email address or telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research, then we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, the responses that you provide. The full survey results are only accessible to Wavehill.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
- Assess the performance and impact of the service.
- Develop recommendations to improve the delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use these data for research purposes. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

When conducting surveys, Wavehill use a survey software program called Qualtrics. We have ensured that Qualtrics is compliant with the UK GDPR and meets our expectations in terms of the security of any data collected via the software.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill within three months of the end of the contract. These include your contact details.

Wavehill will provide the Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this evaluation. Specifically, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are as follows: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

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Name: Sean Homer

Email address: KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

Annexe Three: Variables Analysed

- Year joined
- Duration of support
- Referral_source
- Referred_by_org
- Status_at_joining
- Ward
- Local Authority
- Ruralurbanindicator
- Urbangroups
- Age (available only for 2019–2021 data)
- Age_bracket
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Is_disabled
- Home_language
- Highest_qual_level
- Preferred_language_verbal
- Preferred_language_written
- Forced migrant, refugee, asylum seeker
- Origin_country
- Repeat_joiner_within_year
- Motivation_issues
- Free_school_meals
- Alternative_curriculum
- Substance_issues
- School_poor_non_attender
- English_additional_language
- Veteran_or_service_family
- English_as_additional_language
- Housing_issues_or_homeless
- Lac_or_care_leaver
- Carer
- Young_single_parent_or_pregnancy
- Other_forced_migrant
- Refugee
- Asylum_seeker
- Rurality

- Probation
- In_custody
- Yos_offending_behaviour
- Support
- One_to_one_count
- One_to_one_duration
- Cwc_support_count
- Cwc_support_duration
- Advocacy_liaison_count
- Advocacy_liaison_duration

Interactions
- In_person_interactions
- Email_interactions
- Letter_interactions
- Messaging_service_interactions
- Telephone_interactions
- Text_interactions
- Video_interactions
- Webchat_interactions
- Webinar_interactions

Referrals
- R_access
- R_apprenticeship
- R_business_wales
- R_citizens_advice
- R_college
- R_college_pla
- R_cfw_plus
- R_employability_coaching
- R_employability_skills_programme
- R_employment
- R_engagement
- R_esf_project
- R_event
- R_housing_support
- R_jcp_youth_journey
- R_jgw_plus_advancement
- R_jgw_plus_employment

- R_jgw_plus_engagement
- R_jobcentre_plus
- R_jgw_legacy
- R_learning_training_provider
- R_level_1
- R_la_provision
- R_other
- R_pace
- R_prison_project
- R_react_iii
- R_react_plus
- R_self_help
- R_skills_to_succeed
- R_social_services
- R_summer_sorted
- R_support_agency
- R_uk_enic
- R_union
- R_university
- R_voluntary_work
- R_youth_service