Employability indicators

The % of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Latest Published Comparable Data: 2013/14
Latest Local Data Period: 2014/15 (provisional)
Data Frequency: Annual
Source: Welsh Government

The percentage of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment, or training is derived from an annual survey of school leavers undertaken by Careers Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government, and provides a useful snapshot of pupil destinations which informs careers staff in their work with clients, parents, teachers, and employers.

The Statistical First Release (SFR) Participation of young people in education and the labour market is published annually in July. It contains the definitive source for estimates of the proportion of young people who are NEET in Wales. The proportion of young people who are NEET is one of the measures included within the recently published Programme for Government in the context of Tackling Poverty.

An early indication into the 2014/15 data shows that 2.6 per cent (provisional unpublished data) of young people are classified as NEET and 0 per cent of young people are classified as unknown. This indicated level projects to maintain the current position in the top quartile. There are still too many young people aged 17-19 identified as NEET through the annual careers wales destination survey; however, this does not count all young people within this age range in Merthyr Tydfil.
The percentage of the working age population who are qualified to NVQ level 2 and above is taken from the annual datasets from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Data are presented for working age adults (i.e. including males aged 18-64 and females aged 18-59) according to their age at the start of the academic year. The current position is unsatisfactory (quartile 4) with a comparably low proportion of the working age population qualified to NVQ level 2 and above. In order to improve at the rate identified in the projections and achieve an excellent position the authority will need to ensure that an additional 3000 residents aged 16 to 64 achieve an NVQ level 2 or above by 2017. This number takes into consideration population projections (2011 based).

Merthyr Tydfil currently has 70.6 per cent of the working age population qualified to level 2 and above which is significantly behind the welsh average of 77.6 per cent, this also ranks Merthyr Tydfil as 22 out of 22 the worst performing local authority in Wales. Since 2011 Merthyr Tydfil has seen an increase of 7.7 per cent compared to an increase across Wales of 3.7 per cent.
Employability indicators

The % of the working age population with no qualifications

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Latest Published Comparable Data: 2014
Latest Local Data Period: 2014
Data Frequency: Annual
Source: StatsWales

The percentage of the working age population who do not have a qualification is taken from the annual datasets from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Data are presented for working age adults (i.e. including males aged 18-64 and females aged 18-59) according to their age at the start of the academic year. The current position is unsatisfactory (quartile 4) with a comparably high proportion of the working age population without a qualification. In order to improve at the rate identified in the projections and achieve an excellent position the authority will need to ensure that an additional 1600 residents aged 16 to 64 achieve a recognised qualification by 2017. This number takes into consideration population projections (2011 based).

Merthyr Tydfil currently has 13.1 per cent of the working age population with no qualifications which is significantly above the welsh average of 8.9 per cent, this also ranks Merthyr Tydfil as 21 out of 22 performing local authority in Wales with the near neighbours Blaenau Gwent the worst performing at 13.3 per cent. Since 2011 Merthyr Tydfil has seen a decrease of 5.1 per cent compared to a decrease across Wales 2.1 per cent.
The percentage of former looked after children in education, employment or training at the age of 19 is a National Strategic Indicator (NSI). This indicator offers a perspective on a child's transition to independence. The continuing contact, appropriate accommodation, education, and employment are important to improving outcomes for young people leaving care.

The historic data (2006/07 to 2011/12) refers to the old indicator, which differs from the new data because the new indicator (2012/13 onwards) excludes children who are looked after for less than 13 weeks.

Historic performance was sporadic, frequently jumping between quartiles 1, 2, 3, and 4. The chart demonstrates the wide fluctuation in percentages that reflects the substantial impact single individuals and small groups can have when the overall cohort size is very small, as is the case with this measure. The current position (2014/15) projects to be excellent (upper quartile).

As at 31st March the percentage of young people formerly looked after and engaged in education employment and training has been identified as 61.5 per cent, this represents a significant improvement on the previous data obtained for this target group.
Employability indicators

The number of individuals supported by the council who go on to gain employment

**STORY BEHIND THE DATA**

Latest Published Comparable Data: n/a  
Latest Local Data Period: Quarter 4 - 2014/15  
Data Frequency: Quarterly  
Source: Local Authority

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<th>Period</th>
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Targets were reduced in 2013/14 in preparation for the 2014/15 year to take account of the expected closure of the European funded "Bridges into Work" programme, and uncertainty over future grant funded "Transition into Employment" programme.

A Bridges into Work 2 project has progressed to business planning stage with all signs being positive for future funding to be secured albeit on a smaller scale. National developments linked to Welsh Government will have impact on the target group of Bridges into Work, which will have a significant impact on delivery and reinforces the need to ensure the council can coordinate local partners maximise benefits for Merthyr Tydfil. In the event of future funding not being secured this will impact upon the ability of the council to maintain the coordination of the employability agenda locally and achieve the wider targets, owned by the partners working within this sector across the county borough which also contribute to the Single Integrated Plan.
Employability indicators

The number of adult learners who participate in developing their basic skills

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Latest Published Comparable Data: n/a
Latest Local Data Period: Quarter 4 - 2014/15
Data Frequency: Quarterly
Source: Local Authority

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Quarter 2</td>
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<td>126</td>
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The number of people participating in developing their Basic skills during 2014/15 was 584; this exceeds the target set for the year of 400, an increase of 46 per cent. The numbers participating has increased by 49 per cent on the previous year 2013/14.

The development of basic skills is a key focus within all employability programmes and is also embedded within the Adult Community Learning agenda. The impact of budget cuts to Adult Community Learning, the ceasing of delivery within Bridges into Work and the withdrawal of Family Learning funding from 31st March 2015 by the Welsh Government will impact upon the ability to continue to achieve to the current levels.
Employability indicators

The number of adults supported by the council who gain a qualification at NVQ level 2 or above

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Latest Published Comparable Data: n/a
Latest Local Data Period: Quarter 4 - 2014/15
Data Frequency: Quarterly
Source: Local Authority

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<th>Period</th>
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Targets were reduced in 2013/14 in preparation for the 2014/15 year to take account of the expected closure of the European funded Bridges into Work programme. Performance has been exceeded because the service has successfully secured extensions to the programme until December 2014. Local delivery through Bridges into Work has provided good opportunities for individuals to gain a level 2 qualifications which are attractive to employers. Main delivery is linked to the commissioned strand of Bridges into Work by Merthyr Tydfil College through the Hospitality strand who continues to deliver very well within the community on a commissioned service basis. Targets for the European grant were exceeded for level 2 and level 3 qualifications. Due to funding ceasing for Bridges into Work at the end of December 2014 the delivery element of Bridges was not able to engage with participants locally as the project was implementing project closure. Due to the agreement from council to utilise core allocation to maintain the team and bridge the gap to the new programme, delivery and engagement was reinitiated.
Background

There is a need to improve the skills of adult learners (aged 18 and over) in Merthyr Tydfil, which is an important factor in a person's ability to gain and sustain employment. This project focuses on the development of the adult community learning infrastructure so that accessible opportunities exist to prepare adult learners for employment. In doing so, this project supports the outcome "adults and young people (aged 16 and over) will have developed their skills for work and both gain and sustain employment".

The Project

This is a collaboration project between the local authority and further education colleges to identify and provide the most appropriate education opportunities for the target adult learner communities. Further education colleges have a priority age group of people up to 18 years of age, and Adult Community Learning (ACL) provides vital part of education provision for those adults who either cannot afford full time education or full-time education is inappropriate. This project ensures the ACL service is fit for purpose, and that residents can access the available opportunities.

Where are we now

The service has been working with regional local authority partners on a new European funding proposal (Cohesion). Regionally the local authority partnership has successfully been invited to Business Planning stage for Youth Employment and also Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment. Initial feedback of business plans was expected from Welsh European Funding Office from mid-February 2015.

Issues have arisen due to national developments being planned by Welsh Government which has hindered progress of business planning due to changes introduced to the local authorities. All local authorities remain committed and are working hard with current submissions of financial profile demonstrating a July 1st 2015 start.
Improving the basic skills of adults (aged 16 and over)

START DATE | April 2014
FINISH DATE | March 2015

Background

A key contributor to unemployment or low paying work is poor basic skills. The adult literacy and numeracy score levels in Merthyr Tydfil are poor, so in order to maximise employment opportunities or higher wages levels for residents there is a need to encourage improvement in basic skills. Furthermore, the changes too many systems becoming "online" there is a need to ensure that local residents have the necessary skills to access these systems (e.g. the benefits system and the skills required to access financial support). Poor basic skills are also linked to low levels of well-being and poor mental health, therefore reinforcing its importance.

The Project

This is a programme of work to raise the basic skills of young people and adults to improve their skills for work. This will involve engagement work with our partners and referring organisation, the design of an appropriate curriculum, and the continuous support to individuals so they can succeed in the courses they attend.

Where are we now

The local authority has provided support and guidance on the effective use of the programmes for quality first teaching, interventions and intensive support for primary, secondary and welsh schools. This has included support to evaluate the impact of the strategy through school visits, termly impact reports, tracking information, development reports and sharing good practice sessions.

To drive a change the local authority has provided guidance and training on guided reading, the teaching of writing and on the collation and analysis of data. This was accompanied by facilitating a big maths task and finish group to develop a tracker which will be a consistent and rigorous tracking system to monitor and analyse pupils' progress against expected levels on the programme. All schools are using a Big Maths tracker which allows the school to track pupil progress against age related expectations and these are submitted to the local authority. All schools are reporting impact termly on literacy and numeracy and this data is shared with all head teachers in head teacher forums.

Schools have established a basic skills strategy group has been set up to review the implementation of the strategy and report their findings and recommendations to head teachers. This has ensured tracking is robust, measuring progress as well as attainment, and sharing best practice across schools.
Collaborative planning for projects to tackle the unemployment issues

START DATE | April 2014
FINISH DATE | March 2015

Background

The market to support to unemployed individuals to gain access employment opportunities has become both competitive and complicated. This has the potential to make it difficult for those who need those support services to negotiate this market and receive the correct type of support. This is an important consideration, as access to the correct support could significantly improve the potential opportunities for an individual to access employment. This supports the outcome "adults and young people (aged 16 and over) will have developed their skills for work and both gain and sustain employment".

The Project

This project will establish appropriate mechanisms so that service providers in this market are able to come together to collaborate and share information, so that resources are maximised and customers are signposted to the right organisations. The purpose is to create a closer working relationship with our partners. This project will also look to encourage these organisations, who work with unemployed individuals in a "personal and social capacity", to recognise the wider benefits of employment such as improved health outcomes for those individuals.

Where are we now

The collaborative planning locally is achieved through the Employability Steering group facilitated through the Bridges into Work infrastructure. Bridges into Work has secured extensions to maintain the current level of delivery. The group has recently agreed the Employability action plan for the area and is taking forward agreed key priorities to develop a more coordinated approach. Key areas currently being progressed are information, improved understanding of employer's needs, Joint funding opportunities. Work has also been commissioned on the skills needs of young people linked to the employment sector needs.

Currently being developed is the potential for Merthyr Tydfil to have in place a database of providers which is accessible to professionals and the public through an application on mobile phones. This would support all partners that engage with the unemployed and families to signpost clients to the most appropriate services or assist in the addressing of potential barriers to work e.g. debt advice etc. (Ceased due to potential duplication and corporate information service review)

Regional planning continues with developments linked to Cohesion progressing well. Operational Logic Tables have been developed by six local authorities lead by MTCBC and have successfully progressed to business planning stage with Welsh European Funding Office and also submitted financial profiles for Tackling Poverty through Social Exclusion, Skills for Growth, Youth Attainment and Youth Employment. Discussions continue with WEFO, however there is a strong sense that provision could be further delayed pending the national developments of Welsh Government.