

RESOURCE PACK

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COMMITTED TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
CHANGING YOUR APPROACH

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Welsh Government

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO SEE FROM EMPLOYERS?



Youth Employment UK is home to the [Youth Voice Census](#), the largest annual youth survey in the UK.

Due to close working relationships with organisations such as the Department for Education and the Careers & Enterprise Company, they are ideally placed to offer employment support for young people based on expertise, experience, and youth-led insights.

Recent census findings revealed a common desire amongst young people is to work for a good employer which will support them. According to the 2022 survey with over 4,000 young people taking part, the main things young people want from employers are:

- To be recognised and supported for who they are
- To develop at their own pace with training and development opportunities
- To be treated equally and fairly
- To be paid well for the work that they do



WHAT THE DATA SAYS ABOUT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN WALES AND THE UK

Fortunately, there is now extensive research into youth employment that can help both organisations and young people. This is already leading to exciting initiatives and policy reform.

For example, [The Young Person's Guarantee](#) has been established by the Welsh government to support all young people aged 16-24 in accessing education, training, employment or self-employment.

The YPG aims to ensure that 90% of 16-24-year-olds are in education, employment, or training by 2050, one of the Welsh Government's National Milestones for improving the wellbeing of the people of Wales.

In this section, we will share a few of the most important facts and figures to think about as you consider and develop your approach to hiring and working with young employees in Wales.



- The impacts of the pandemic on young people's opportunities are still being deeply felt. [According to Public Health Wales](#), 36% of 16-24 year old workers were employed in the "shutdown sectors" (those that partially or completely closed due to Covid-19) in Wales, compared to only 11% of those aged 35-64. Many of these young people were also on insecure contracts, offering them little protection during the pandemic, and those living in deprived and rural areas of Wales were most affected.
- [Increasing numbers](#) of young people are eligible for Universal Credit, but many are not actively claiming it. Young people 18-25 are 30% more likely to be looking for work than adults in different age groups—young people are willing and able to work, when the opportunities are made available to them.
- [Bridging the Gap*](#), an extensive report by the Health Foundation, shows that there is a discrepancy between employers' and young people's perceptions of good work. Employers see a "good place to work" as: an enjoyable work environment (43%*), an interesting and fulfilling job (42%*), and having opportunities to progress (41%*). Young people say that they want pay above industry standards, as well as stability and security. However, employers "recognised that pay is an element of good work which they cannot always provide."



Employers see a "good place to work" as:

43%

an enjoyable work environment

42%

an interesting and fulfilling job

41%

having opportunities to progress

- According to [new research published in Business News Wales](#), more than a quarter (27%) of young adults (16 to 24) in the UK are reevaluating their finances and career choices because of the cost-of-living crisis, prioritising apprenticeships over higher education. In addition, 45% of young adults said that cost of living increases have made them want to earn more money in the future.
- According to the same research, 47% of those surveyed cited apprenticeships as great opportunities to learn without incurring student debt, but 68% said they believe that there is a stigma associated with being an apprentice rather than pursuing higher education. This shows that there is still work to be done in improving the perception of non-university routes into employment.
- Work experience, apprenticeships, and placements are highly desirable to young people, but not equally accessible. It is vital that they become more readily available through various employers across Wales. Young people also feel that more structured pathways to employment and specific roles created for them would be positive steps.
- According to data from [Business in the Community](#), 66%* of young people said they found job descriptions hard to understand. Reducing jargon, using clear and accessible language, and including all relevant information (such as working hours and salary) are essential in attracting young people with your job advertisements.
- According to [Public Health Wales](#), six percent of the Welsh population in 2020/21 didn't have access to the internet at home. This means that, while the rise of home working is a huge advantage to many people, it can increase employment barriers for young people if they do not have the ability to connect to work from home.
- 82% of HR professionals surveyed said they were concerned about mental health at work since the Covid-19 pandemic. According to [Health and Care Research Wales](#), 1 in 6 children and young people have a diagnosable mental health problem. Employers must take care to be mindful of this in the recruitment process and their employment practices. However, according to the Bridging the Gap report, 25% of employers do not know if their employees have struggles such as mental health conditions or caring responsibilities.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HIRING YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN YOUR BUSINESS?

Young people bring fresh new ideas into your business, injecting new energy and challenging traditional thinking. This allows organisations to be more representative of the customers they serve and the communities in which they operate.



In addition, a young person is less likely to be set in their ways. Young employees can easily adapt to how things are done in your place of work, readily adopting your work culture and progressing at an impressive speed.

But hiring new young talent who can bring creativity and new skills is not only good business sense for the whole organisation. It's also a great opportunity for individual members of staff to become mentors and to build their leadership and managerial skills.

If you hire and look after young staff well, they will grow with you and be more likely to stay with your organisation long term. There is a stereotype that young people are "job hoppers", but in fact there is little evidence to support this as fact. They are actually just as likely as any employee to stay put if they feel appreciated, valued, and cared for.

The best employers, in other words, will not just think about what they can get from young people. They will also consider what they can offer in return.

A brief word of caution: many employers report that they like hiring young people because they are "digital natives", having grown up with technology. While this is often the case, it is important not to pigeonhole young people due to their age (or to discriminate against older employees, who may be equally digitally skilled.)

THE BENEFITS OF UPSKILLING

One of the best ways to retain your young employees, and to ensure high levels of both productivity and morale, is to develop them through upskilling.

Upskilling refers to providing training, development, guidance, and a learning environment where employees can improve their skills and learn new ones.



Upskilling can be formal (such as traditional training programmes), informal (such as casual mentor-mentee relationships at work), or a combination of the two. In this section we will explore the benefits of and the barriers to upskilling.

Retain your best people

Offering programmes such as apprenticeships, paid traineeships, and internships can help young people to expand their skills, grow their experience, and gain confidence in their job role. Over time, they'll bring value back into your business and repay your investment in them many times over.

According to the CIPD's [evidence review on retaining disadvantaged young people*](#) in the workplace, rewards beyond pay (including benefits, training opportunities, and career development), as well as internal mobility – the chance to be challenged and promoted from within a company – are tremendously important to young people.

Proactive upskilling gives young people the chance to work their way up the ladder and do bigger things. It gives them a great reason to stay with your organisation and to repay you with loyalty and hard work.

Produce higher quality work

Obvious though it may seem, more highly trained employees produce better work. If you invest in training and developing your people, you will see greater productivity and a higher quality of work.

According to FSB

78%

of employers surveyed* reported that productivity had improved after implementing an apprenticeship scheme!

Build your talent pipeline

According to the Bridging the Gap study, 50%* of those surveyed reported employing young people to build a talent pipeline, while 31%* said they did so to widen their candidate pool.

The talent pipeline refers to a pool of candidates available to fill a role or position when one becomes available.

When you invest in developing the talented young people in your organisation, you create the skills you need to help your business thrive in the short, medium, and long term.

Build a healthier workplace culture

Healthy workplaces are happy and productive workplaces, and one of the best ways you can create a healthy workplace culture is to build learning, development, and support for growth into the ways you operate.

Consistent opportunities to learn keep your employees engaged, improves their confidence, and builds a collegial and supportive environment that benefits individuals, teams, and the organisation as a whole.

Save money in the long run

Unfortunately, many employers are reluctant to invest in training and upskilling due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. It is understandable that organisations are having to tighten their belts and reduce expenses. However, cutting your investment in training and development is a major mistake and can actually be a false economy in the long run.

Much as it costs more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one, it is also almost always more expensive and less efficient to hire a new employee than to train and develop one you already have. According to Centric HR, bringing in a new member of staff typically costs 6-9 months' salary.

CHANGING YOUR APPROACH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF GOOD YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The needs expressed by young people across the country inform the five principles of the [Good Youth Employment Charter](#). These core values offer employers a framework through which to create beneficial opportunities for all young people, regardless of where they are in their journey.



Our 5 principles are:

> **Creating Opportunity**

Provide opportunities for young people to gain the skills and experiences they need, through meaningful and quality experiences of the working world. Opportunities should raise their aspirations, boost their skills, and grow their personal networks.

> **Recognising Talent**

Recruit young people based on their ability, talent and potential, recognising they may have limited experience. Ensure that young people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups, as well as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those with additional needs or barriers are not unfairly excluded.

> **Fair Employment**

Provide good quality employment opportunities for young people, such as apprenticeships, graduate roles, entry level jobs and supported internships. Offer fair and safe opportunities and rewards in accordance with the highest industry standards.

➤ **Developing People**

Promote the development of all young people through on- and off-the-job training and support so that they are motivated to take ownership of their careers and equipped to progress.

➤ **Youth Voice**

Listen to young people. Actively provide opportunities for their voices to be heard within your community, industry, or organisation.



Young people want to be heard, and they want to be recognised for their individual skills, attributes, and potential. As a good youth employer, it is vital to recognise that academic grades and prior work experience do not always reflect an individual's full potential. Young people need a chance to prove what they can do, in a way that works for them.

Where to learn more about good Youth employment practices

If you would like to learn more about how to become a great employer for young people, signing the [Good Youth Employment Charter](#) and pledging to follow the five principles is an ideal place to start.

You can also browse the extensive resources in the ["Organisations"](#) section of Youth Employment UK's website.

CONTACT

Contact us to speak with an adviser about how your business can support young people into work.

Call Business Wales on **03000 6 03000** or visit

[Recruitment Support | Business Wales Skills Gateway \(gov.wales\)](#)
for further information, free advice and support.

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