wavehill™

social and economic research
ymchwil cymdeithasol ac economaidd

Evaluation of the effect of TRAC and ADTRAC on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework in Gwynedd

September 2020

Wavehill: social and economic research

- Wales office: 21 Alban Square, Aberaeron, Ceredigion, SA46 0DB (registered office)
- West England office: 2-4 Park Street, Bristol, BS1 5HS
- North of England office: Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle, NE1 1LF
- London office: 52 Cecile Park, Crouch End, London, N8 9AS

Contact details:

Tel: 01545 571711
Email: wavehill@wavehill.com
Twitter: @wavehilltweets

More information:

www.wavehill.com
https://twitter.com/wavehilltweets

Report authors:
Chloe Maughan, Ioan Teifi, Endaf Griffiths, Marc Roberts

Any questions in relation to this report should be directed in the first instance to Endaf Griffiths (endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com)

Date of document: September 2020
Version: Final

Client contact:
Bethan Jones, Gwynedd Council | bethanelunedjones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ADTRAC	ADTRAC is a project that supports young people aged between 16 – 24 who are currently NEET
BCUHB	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
CAMHS	Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
EET	Employment, Education & Training
ESF	European Social Fund
GISDA	A charity who support young people at risk of homelessness
GLLM	Grwp Llandrillo Menai - a Further Education Institution in North Wales, involved in the delivery of ADTRAC. GLLM are also a partner within TRAC
LPT	Learner Profile Tool
NEET	Not in Employment, Education & Training
TRAC	TRAC is a project that supports children and young people aged between 11 – 16 who are at risk of becoming NEET
WEMWBS	Warwick & Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
YEPF	Youth Engagement & Progression Framework

Contents

Executive summary

The Youth Engagement & Progression Framework (YEPF) outlines the Welsh Government's approach to reducing the number of young people aged between 11-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). There is a variety of support available in Gwynedd that underpins the YEPF and provides support to help young people continue in or re-engage in education, employment, and training (EET). TRAC and ADTRAC are two projects that contribute to this provision in Gwynedd.

TRAC and ADTRAC are funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), and funding will come to an end in May 2021 for ADTRAC and July 2022 for TRAC. This evaluation explores the contribution and impact that TRAC and ADTRAC have had on the progression of the YEPF in Gwynedd and identify the risks and implications to the Engagement Framework in Gwynedd when the funding of these programmes comes to an end.

TRAC supports children and young people aged between 11 – 16 who are at risk of becoming NEET. The aim of the programme is to work with these individuals to mitigate this risk and to support them to re-engage with their education, progress to further education or to employment. TRAC has been operational in Gwynedd since March 2016.

ADTRAC supports young people aged between 16 – 24 who are currently NEET. The purpose of the programme is to support young people to engage with education, training or employment; to develop employability skills and readiness to work. ADTRAC has been operational since June 2017.

Stakeholders were mostly positive about the contribution that TRAC and ADTRAC had made to the YEPF in Gwynedd. Both projects were felt to be filling a gap in provision available to support young people who have disengaged from education, employment and training or are at risk of disengaging.

The key findings from this evaluation are summarised below:

1. TRAC also appears to be having some influence on reducing the risk of young people becoming NEET. To date, 338 participants have exited TRAC, and of these 48 per cent were recorded to be at a reduced risk of becoming NEET.

2. ADTRAC is having a positive impact on reducing NEET rates among participants who exit the support. Indeed, 77 per cent of participants have exited into EET. However, the number of young people exited from the project remains relatively low, although these figures may improve as the project moves towards completion.

3. TRAC and ADTRAC have brought additional capacity to Gwynedd to support efforts to reduce the number of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. In particular, the provision of 'lead workers' through the projects has helped to contribute to improved brokerage and coordination of support for young people. As such, there are concerns about how these areas of the YEPF will be impacted in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC, as it was not felt that the resource could be supplemented by other existing services.

4. The provision of mental health and wellbeing support and bespoke/tailored support within the support provision of TRAC and ADTRAC were frequently praised by stakeholders. These aspects of provision were seen to be unique to TRAC and ADTRAC and were what differentiated these projects from other support delivered in Gwynedd. Stakeholders were concerned that the withdrawal of these programmes would leave a gap in local support in relation to bespoke support, which may in turn leave a gap in the support available to young people with the biggest barriers to entering EET.

The withdrawal of TRAC and ADTRAC therefore raises concerns about the gaps that will emerge in relation to the provision available to support young people in Gwynedd, whose needs are currently unmet by mainstream provision. In the absence of alternative arrangements, the sustainability of the process for early intervention, brokerage and tracking progress that have been bolstered by TRAC and ADTRAC are potentially at threat, which puts at risk the ability of Gwynedd to fulfil the YEPF, to coordinate support and to ensure young people do not fall within gaps between agencies and provision. As such it is paramount that Gwynedd begins to consider the legacy of these projects and how support can be coordinated in their absence.

The key to TRAC and ADTRAC's perceived success appears to have been the multi-agency approach, which has seen the projects involved in pulling together agencies involved in delivering support for young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET. We would therefore suggest that one of the key recommendations going forward is for organisations under the YEPF to continue working in a multi-agency way and identify resource for coordinating support moving forward.

3 Introduction

In February 2020 Wavehill, and independent social research organisation, were commissioned by the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework Management Group (YEPF Management Group) within Gwynedd Council to evaluate the contribution of TRAC and ADTRAC to the YEPF.

The YEPF is a framework developed by the Welsh Government that outlines the Welsh Government's approach to reducing the number of young people aged between 11-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). At local level, the YEPF Management Group are responsible for meeting the requirements of the YEPF in Gwynedd. The YEPF is based on six key objectives:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement and becoming NEET
- Improving brokerage and co-ordination of support for young people
- Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment
- Greater accountability for local authorities.

There is a variety of support available in Gwynedd that underpins the YEPF and provides support to help young people continue in or re-engage in education, employment, and training (EET). TRAC and ADTRAC, the subject of this evaluation, **are two projects** that contribute to this provision in Gwynedd. Both projects are funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), and funding will come to an end in May 2021 for ADTRAC and July 2022 for TRAC.

TRAC supports children and young people aged between 11 – 16 who are at risk of becoming NEET. The aim of the programme is to work with these individuals to mitigate this risk and to support them to re-engage with their education, progress to further education or to employment. TRAC has been operational in Gwynedd since March 2016.

ADTRAC supports young people aged between 16 – 24 who are currently NEET. The purpose of the programme is to support young people to engage with education, training or employment; to develop employability skills and readiness to work. ADTRAC has been operational since June 2017.

This evaluation will explore the contribution and impact that TRAC and ADTRAC have had on the progression of the YEPF in Gwynedd and identify the risks and implications to the Engagement Framework in Gwynedd when the funding of these programmes comes to an end.

3.1 Background and policy context

In 2018, the Statistical First Release (SFR) [Participation of young people in education and the labour market] found that 10.3 per cent of 16-18 year olds and 16.1 per cent of 19-24 year olds across Wales were NEET (Statistics for Wales, 2019). The SFR does not provide data on a Local Authority basis, however some data is collected in relation to local areas by the [Careers Wales pupils destination survey]. In 2018 the Careers Wales Destinations Survey of school leavers, found that 2.53 per cent of Year 13 school leavers across Wales were known to be NEET (Careers Wales, 2019). In Gwynedd this figure stood at 1.97 per cent. In addition, 1.6 per cent of Year 11 pupils were known to be NEET (ibid). In Gwynedd this figure stood at 1.3 per cent.

There are a range of risk factors for young people becoming NEET, which include low educational attainment at GCSE level, health problems, caring responsibilities and challenging family circumstances (Powell A. , 2018).

Time spent NEET has a substantial economic impact. For example, it is estimated that each 16-18 year old who is NEET will cost on average £56,000 to the public purse over their life up to retirement age, through cost to services, provision of benefits and lost tax revenue (Crawford, Duckworth, Vinoles, & Wyness, 2011). On an individual level, research has highlighted that time spent NEET can adversely impact on the physical and mental health outcomes (Powell, 2018). Time spent NEET can also increase the likelihood of future unemployment for the individual (ibid).

There are a range of initiatives across Wales that have sought to reduce NEET rates among young people. For example, the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016* set out an objective to reduce NEET rates among 16-18 year olds to 9 per cent by 2017. The YEPF was introduced in 2013, as a framework that sets out the Welsh Government's strategy for reducing NEET rates among 11-25 years olds.

There are a range of programmes in place across Gwynedd that aim to reduce NEET rates.

TRAC

TRAC is delivered in Gwynedd, and the remaining five Local Authorities in North Wales. The programme delivers support to young people aged 11-16 years old who are at risk of becoming NEET. The programme is led by Denbighshire County Council. It incorporates a multi-agency approach, working with Careers Wales and the Activate programme within all the secondary schools. In Gwynedd, **the programme predominantly focuses on young people in years 6-11 who are seen to be at risk of disengaging from education, to support them to re-engage and provide them with the skills to succeed in EET. The support provides tailored interventions for those young people. It is hoped that this will therefore have an impact on reducing the number of young people who would otherwise become NEET. The programme sought to contribute to the following targets within the YEPF:**

- Reducing the number of young people who are NEET aged between 16-18 to 9 per cent by 2017
- Reducing the proportion of young people aged between 19-24 who are NEET in Wales, compared to the UK average by 2017.

ADTRAC

In contrast to TRAC, which supports young people before they become NEET, ADTRAC supports young people aged between 16-25 who have already become NEET.

ADTRAC is being delivered in Gwynedd and the remaining five Local Authorities in North Wales through a multi-agency approach, led by Grwp Llandrillo Menai (GLLM). The project is delivered in collaboration with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), who are involved in delivering mental health and wellbeing services, through trained Mental Health Practitioners. This is considered to be an innovative approach to provision of support to reduce NEET rates, as it brings together mental health and wellbeing support with employability support, with the hope of reducing mental health and wellbeing concerns that are believed to be one of the major barriers to young people progressing into EET.

TRAC and ADTRAC are both ESF funded projects that are projected to come to an end in July 2022 and May 2021, respectively. This report seeks to understand what impact these interventions have had in Gwynedd, with the aim of understanding the implications for the YEPF in Gwynedd after the funding for these provisions comes to an end.

The report is structured around each of the objectives that underpin the YEPF, to assess the contribution of TRAC and ADTRAC on the YEPF.

4 Methodology and limitations

This section outlines the methodology for this evaluative work, alongside the limitations related to the approach.

4.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The focus of this evaluation is to understand and evaluate the contribution and impact of TRAC and ADTRAC on the YEPF in Gwynedd. This includes exploring the contribution and impact of the two funded programmes on the six objectives included in the YEPF, namely:

1. Identifying the young people who are most likely to disengage
2. Delivering better brokerage and liaison in relation to support
3. Stronger tracking and bridging processes through the system for young people
4. Ensuring that the provision satisfies the needs of young people
5. Reinforce employment skills and opportunities for employment
6. Improved accountability to ensure better outcomes for young people.

The evaluation will also explore stakeholder perspectives on the support delivered through TRAC and ADTRAC, and the implications of the support being withdrawn on Gwynedd's ability to deliver on the YEPF.

4.2 Methodology

The research team carried out a series of in-depth interviews with 19 stakeholders, by telephone or video. This included 15 one-to-one interviews, and two group interviews.[1] The stakeholder's who were interviewed included:

- Members of the YEPF Management Group
- Members of staff from Gwynedd Council
- Staff engaged in the management and delivery of TRAC
- Staff engaged in management and delivery of ADTRAC
- Stakeholders involved in delivering other employability support and services for young people in Gwynedd, such as staff from Careers Wales, Job Centres and the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
- Stakeholders involved in delivering other support services for young people in Gwynedd, including staff from Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and GISDA[2].

---

[1] To prevent interviewees from being identifiable on the basis of whether they were included in a group interview or an individual interviewee, ID records are based on the number of interviews conducted (n=17).

[2] A charity who provide support to homeless young people.

The research team also reviewed monitoring data relating to TRAC and ADTRAC including:

- Participant Monitoring Data for ADTRAC (up to 1 March 2020)
- Careers wales Post-16 Data
- Participant Monitoring Data for TRAC (up to 28 May 2020)
- Analysis of the destinations of Tier 1 and Tier 2 individuals referred to the Post-16 Panel from Careers Wales.

4.3 Limitations

Whilst in-depth interviews enable researchers to develop a detailed understanding of issues, they may have trade-offs in terms of what participants choose to share. Interviews are by their nature less anonymous than other research methods, such as online surveys, and therefore respondents may self-censure and choose not to provide certain information. This is particularly likely to be a risk where participants are discussing issues relating to their work, where they may be concerned about the potential implications from sharing negative feedback. The research team sought to mitigate against this risk by ensuring participants were provided with confidentiality, which ensures no identifiable information will be shared relating to the participants or their organisation. The research team conducted interviews was also made up of a staff team who are independent from Gwynedd Council, the YEPF Management Group and any other organisations involved in the delivery and management of services related to TRAC, ADTRAC and the YEPF.

5 Key findings

5.1 Overview of the contribution of TRAC & ADTRAC to the YEPF

The YEPF seeks to reduce the number of young people aged 11-25 who are Not in Education, Employment of Training (NEET) in Wales. This includes identifying young people who are likely to become disengaged, and who are therefore at risk of becoming NEET, and providing appropriate support to help mitigate that risk, as well as providing support for young people who have already become NEET to help them re-engage with Education, Employment or Training (EET).

The YEPF in Gwynedd

In Gwynedd, the YEPF Management Group are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the YEPF. The group meet on a quarterly basis, and bring together different agencies and organisations who fall within the Framework. This includes staff from education, children's services, justice, youth services, social services and Careers Wales.

What impact have TRAC and ADTRAC had on Gwynedd's ability to deliver against the YEPF?

Prior to the implementation of TRAC and ADTRAC, members of the YEPF Management Group indicated that there was not much provision in place to fulfil the YEPF. Whilst some panels existed, like the 14-19 network, the work has become more substantive with the introduction of TRAC and ADTRAC.

All interviewees indicated that they felt that TRAC and ADTRAC had a positive impact on Gwynedd's ability to deliver against the YEPF. In explaining their rationale for this, most interviewees (9/16) indicated that TRAC and ADTRAC had provided additional resource, that was not previously available. For example, ADTRAC had provided and additional five Lead Workers to support young people on the ground. This has provided additional resource for 'door knocking' to help identify young people who were previously not in contact with any other services. It was felt that this kind of resource was not available in other services such as Careers Wales and Job Centres. Similarly, respondents reported that TRAC had provided additional resource to support young people that had helped to relieve pressure on schools and other teams. Respondents indicated that this additional resource had helped to coordinate provision across Gwynedd, and had enabled beneficiaries to access tailored support that was focused on their individual needs.

Additionally, interviewees reported that TRAC and ADTRAC had helped them to reach new participants. This included both being able to access participants with a wider range of needs, who other support may not have been as appropriate for, as well as having the resource to reach participants who were not known to other services, as discussed above. This was discussed by 6/16 interviewees.

'If [TRAC and ADTRAC] weren't there, there would be a lot more young people displaced, who we haven't been able to get in touch with. They've been able to do a lot more of the follow up and legwork then us. They would be a lot more 16-18 year olds who we wouldn't know what they we're doing, particularly those not registered with the Job Centre, as they drop off the list, especially if they weren't on TRAC in school, as those get passed on.' **(Interviewee, ID 12)**

Members of the YPEF Management Group were asked to reflect on what difference there would have been on their ability to deliver the YEPF if the two programmes didn't exist. All interviewees who responded to this question indicated that there would have been greater difficulties delivering the YEPF without TRAC and ADTRAC. Of these, 2/5 indicated that they wouldn't have been able to deliver to the same standard. They reported that without TRAC and ADTRAC there would be fewer lead workers available to provide intensive support needed for some of the young people they support. The remaining 3/5 interviewees reported that they would not have been able to deliver anything substantive against the YEPF without TRAC and ADTRAC.

All remaining interviewees were asked to reflect on what difference there would have been to their ability to support young people aged 11-16 to stay in education, or young people aged 16-24 to engage with education, training and employment if TRAC and ADTRAC did not exist. Of these respondents, 9/11 reported that it would be more difficult, or they would not be able to do as much than they were able to deliver with TRAC or ADTRAC.

How do TRAC and ADTRAC compare against other support in Gwynedd in terms of their contribution and impact on the YEPF?

Many interviewees (7/13) reported that the support delivered through TRAC and ADTRAC in Gwynedd were unique, and exceeded beyond the other provision available. In relation to ADTRAC one of the key things discussed here was the partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) which enabled ADTRAC to provide support for mental health and wellbeing within the project. This was held to be a unique feature of the support.

In relation to TRAC, some interviewees highlighted that they felt it was unique in the work it can deliver to identify who is at risk of becoming NEET. Additionally, one interviewee identified that they felt a particular benefit of the support provided was that it was centred on the individual:

'TRAC is centred on the individual – seeing what they could do for the pupil, working with the school – a school saying that this provision would be good, TRAC would then be able to use a network to find relevant provision. They know what is available, it is with them. I cannot think of any other agency that is doing the same sort of thing. We have careers Wales and social services – but cannot give the same time and to do so person centred. With TRAC… [it gives] them consistency, one person to work with, time to devote, the contact with us, and expertise as well. No other service can offer that.' **(Interview ID 17)**

The following sections explore the impact that TRAC and ADTRAC have had on each of the objectives within the YEPF.

5.2 Early identification

Early identification of young people who are at risk of engaging from education, employment or training is one of the key objectives of the YEPF. As part of the YEPF Implementation Plan, the Welsh Government set out that Local Authorities should embed effective early identification systems which enable them to identify young people at risk of disengagement, and which can be used to identify support needs (Welsh Government, 2013). The YEPF Implementation Plan (Welsh Government, 2013) sets out that Local Authorities should develop effective early identification systems pre-16, and ongoing implementation systems post-16, to be integrated with Careers Wales Post-16 Five Tier Model for individuals aged 16-18.

The TRAC 11-24 operation provided a driver for the six North Wales authorities to jointly develop a single Early Identification Tool for the region using a matrix of data to support the identification. It is known as the Learner profile tool (LPT). The LPT identify young people who are eligible for the project and at risk of disengaging from education. The LPT is integrated with schools data, and uses a combination of data sources including data collected on behaviour, attainment, attendance and exclusions to generate a score for the individual which is used by TRAC workers to identify if a young person is eligible to receive support from the TRAC team.

ADTRAC uses the Careers Wales Five Tier Model of engagement to identify young people aged 16-17 who would be suitable for support. Young people are deemed to be eligible for the project where they fall in tier 1, 2 or 3. The Careers Wales Five Tier Model is provided in the table below. For the identification of 18-24-year olds ADTRAC primarily relies on participants being identified through referrals from Jobcentre Plus on the basis of eligibility for unemployment benefits, in addition to other agencies and services that support young people. Tier 1 and 2 Careers Wales data is shared with Post-16 Panels, who then identify appropriate what support they feel they young person should be referred into.

Table 3.1: Careers Wales Five Tier Model of engagement

Tier	Description	Client Group
5	Young people in Further Education, Employment or Training (EET)	Sustaining education, employment or training (EET) Working or studying part-time over 16 hours Voluntary work
4	Young people at risk of dropping out of EET	Engaged in less than 16 hours EET Identified at risk of disengagement from EET
3	Unemployed 16- and 17-year olds known to Careers Wales	Engaged with/known to Careers Wales and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET or assessed as requiring employability skills support to enter EET
2	Unemployed 16- and 17-year olds, known to Careers Wales who are not available for EET	Young people not available for EET Young people unable to seek EET Young people with barriers requiring intensive personal support
1	Unknown status on leaving Careers Wales services	Young people unknown to Careers Wales

How effective are the existing early identification systems of the TRAC and ADTRAC programmes?

Most interviewees who were involved in TRAC reported that the LPT was effective (7/9). Delivery staff felt that the LPT was accurate and correctly identified pupils who required support of were at a high risk of becoming NEET. However, it was felt there were some areas where the tool may not pick up individuals. This was felt in a minority of cases, such as where a participant's attendance may be good as their personal circumstances may mean being at school is preferable to being at home. Some stakeholders felt that TRAC had helped to prevent exclusions by catching cases early.

Stakeholders predominantly responded to questions relating to early identification in relation to TRAC. This may relate to a distinction in the period in which the programmes are operating. For instance TRAC seeks to identify young people who are at risk of disengagement from EET, and therefore may be seen to clearly be seeking opportunities for early identification; whereas, ADTRAC supports young people who have already disengaged, and therefore may not be seen to deliver early identification as it is identifying young people at a reactive stage in their journey. However, one stakeholder (quoted below) praised the 16+ panels as a tool of identification in ADTRAC, that enabled workers to identify support needs early and identify whether they should seek to engage particular participants. It should be noted that 16+ panels were in place before ADTRAC, however this stakeholder felt that ADTRAC had enhanced the panels.

'I think the way they are identified through the 16+ panels is very effective… As everyone is from different agencies the majority of the time someone might recognise the person or the family, and so it helps to share information and raise awareness of whether ADTRAC should knock doors… People are really willing to share information and provide help. The panel is a brilliant way of everyone working together and supporting each other… If the person has multi barriers you can reach out to other agencies who could help support. You know who you can contact for help with different barriers and ensure this is done before we make contact with the young people. These processes have resulted from ADTRAC, and before that there wasn't anything like this. This way of identifying young people is really beneficial, as it brings agencies together… It breaks down barriers to the worker.' **(Interviewee, ID 13)**

TRAC was held to be very important in contributing to the YEPF objective to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET. It was felt that the systems in TRAC had built on the approach to early identification under the YEPF in Gwynedd.

TRAC was felt to be instrumental in the work identifying young people who were NEET, and concerns were raised that without TRAC coordinating this work there would be duplication with others attempting to do it themselves without a clearly coordinated system. Some stakeholders felt that TRAC had helped to bolster work around Early Intervention, for example some stakeholders noted that meetings were not happening to the same extent before TRAC, and that they would not have identified as many young people before TRAC (4/11).

Some stakeholders felt that TRAC had helped them to identify additional young people, who would not have been identified previously (3/11). Whilst, a minority of stakeholders (2/11) felt that there would have been very little change, as their services worked closely with young people anyway. Other stakeholders (3/10) reported that whilst they may have still identified some of the same young people without TRAC, they crucially would not have had the resource to meet their needs without resource from TRAC. Some of these stakeholders felt that the individuals were already known to schools, but there was not the capacity to deliver something of substance to support them.

'The schools understand who's who, and Careers Wales collate the information. But only with TRAC are we able to undertake anything of substance.' **(Interviewee, ID 6)**

Additionally, some stakeholders (2/11) identified that youth engagement meetings were not happening to the same extent without ADTRAC, and that this had bolstered collaboration. Additionally, ADTRAC was felt to have been key in accessing participants:

'ADTRAC have been instrumental with getting contact with the clients. Careers Wales didn't have the resource to do this.' **(Interviewee, ID 12)**

It therefore appears that TRAC is contributing to the objective of early identification within the YEPF, and there is a risk of gaps emerging in relation to the coordination of resource for identification young people at risk of disengaging from education in the absence of this support. ADTRAC also appears to be playing a significant role in the identification and access to young people who have disengaged from EET, and there are concerns about the number of young people who will not be identified without ADTRAC in place to support coordination and provide resources to meet the young people, due to the limited capacity of other organisations.
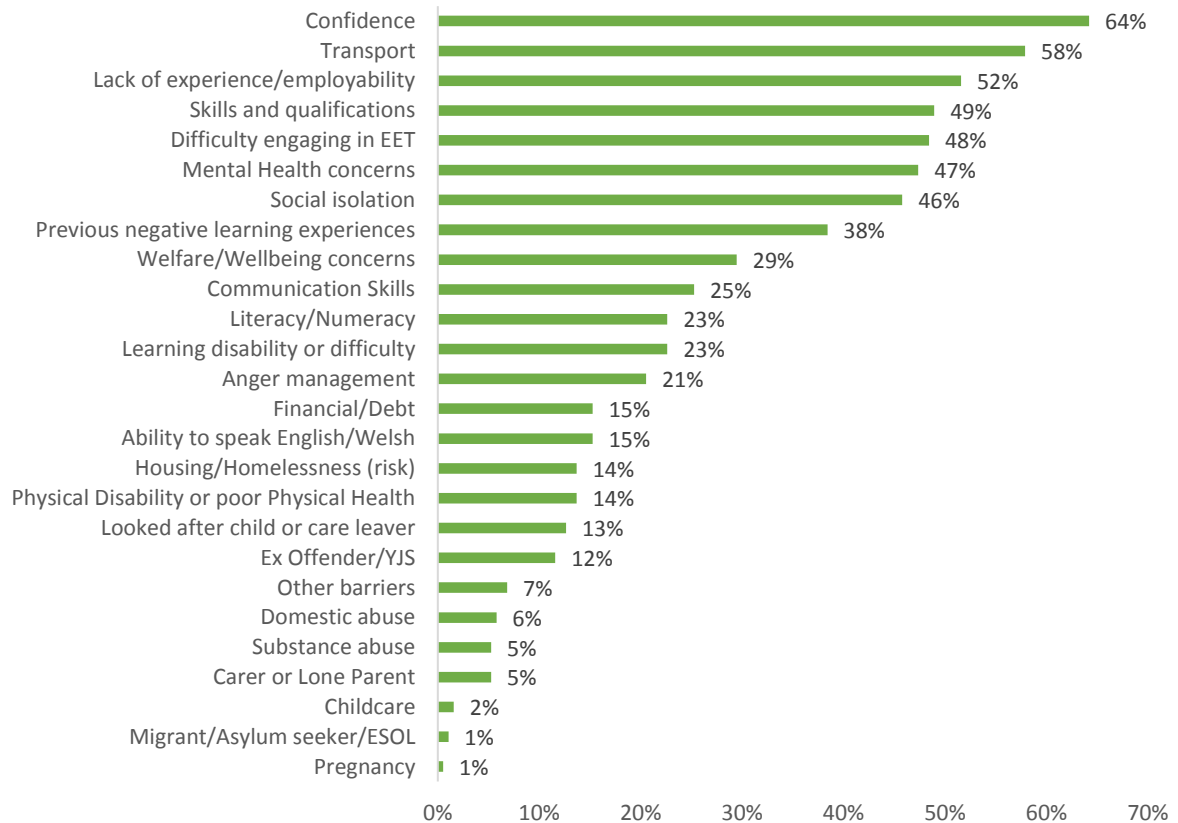
5.3 Brokerage

The YEPF introduced an objective for better brokerage of support for young people who are NEET, through a recognition that 'services and support can be confusing to negotiate for young people and effective coordination [between services] is often lacking' (Welsh Government, 2013). The ambition of this objective was to ensure that young people who have disengaged, or are at risk of disengaging, from EET have access to individuals who can provide support and coordinate other support they may need to reduce the risk of young people slipping through gaps in support and disengaging. The YEPF introduced the role of a 'lead worker' who would fulfil this role. The lead worker is expected to work with the young person to provide direct support and/or coordinate support from other support services.

What are the support needs presented by young people to TRAC and ADTRAC?

Young people who enter support through ADTRAC experience a wide range of barriers to entering EET, as illustrated by Figure 3.1. The most common barriers to entering EET, experienced by over 50 per cent of participants, were low confidence, transport issues, and lack of experience/employability. Additionally 47 per cent of participants had mental health concerns, and 43 per cent of ADTRAC participants were referred to BCUHB for mental health or wellbeing support.

Figure 5.3: Proportion of ADTRAC participants who experienced each barrier to EET on entry to the programme (All participants)

Barrier	Percentage
Confidence	64%
Transport	58%
Lack of experience/employability	52%
Skills and qualifications	49%
Difficulty engaging in EET	48%
Mental Health concerns	47%
Social isolation	46%
Previous negative learning experiences	38%
Welfare/Wellbeing concerns	29%
Communication Skills	25%
Literacy/Numeracy	23%
Learning disability or difficulty	23%
Anger management	21%
Financial/Debt	15%
Ability to speak English/Welsh	15%
Housing/Homelessness (risk)	14%
Physical Disability or poor Physical Health	14%
Looked after child or care leaver	13%
Ex Offender/YJS	12%
Other barriers	7%
Domestic abuse	6%
Substance abuse	5%
Carer or Lone Parent	5%
Childcare	2%
Migrant/Asylum seeker/ESOL	1%
Pregnancy	1%

Source: ADTRAC Participant Monitoring Data (Base=190, All participants)

TRAC collects less comprehensive quantitative data on the support needs for participants, however equality monitoring data reveals that:

- Seven per cent of TRAC participants are looked after children
- Five per cent of TRAC participants have a work limiting health condition, and 4 per cent have a disability
- Two per cent of participants are affected by homelessness or housing exclusion.

Mental health is also a key concern among the TRAC cohort, and 18 per cent of participants have received Mental Health or Counselling intervention as a result of TRAC.

What is the contribution of TRAC and ADTRAC to the brokerage and support liaison arrangements under the Framework?

Members of the YEPF Management Group were asked to reflect on how TRAC and ADTRAC contributed to the brokerage and support liaison arrangements under the Framework. Most interviewees (5/7) discussed how TRAC and ADTRAC fed into coordination of support across agencies and described how services worked collaboratively together around the YEPF to understand the support needs of individuals and coordinate that support. Responses from some stakeholders suggested that these processes had been implemented within the delivery of TRAC and ADTRAC. For example, an interviewee stated that it was TRAC who had 'established the process' for brokerage, and ADTRAC was credited with introducing an 'order and structure'. Under both projects, staff from TRAC/ADTRAC were meeting collaboratively with other organisations involved in delivering support for young people. This was credited with helping organisations to break out of silos and allowing staff to work 'on behalf of the individual, rather than their respective organisations'.

One interviewee also reported how TRAC and ADTRAC has supported brokerage through the implementation of the 'lead worker' role. Both projects include mentors who fulfil the lead worker role, and work with participants to provide support to meet their needs, however this interviewee also detailed how these workers were supporting brokerage by supporting young people to access other support, and helping to broker their access to that support:

> *'The two projects have brought more workers in – so able to support more young people. A key aspect – taking on the role of lead workers described in the framework – therefore leading the young people's needs round, pulling in expertise, helping transition – not just signposting, but often accompanying them for support… Workers help them access basic things like a GP appointment etc, with Universal Credit etc…'* **(Interview ID 8)**

How sustainable are the brokerage and liaison arrangements to sustain the Framework in future?

Members of the YEPF Management Group expressed concerns about whether they would be able to sustain the brokerage arrangements when funding for TRAC/ADTRAC ceases. Respondents questioned who would take on the role of coordinating support between agencies, and raised concerns about the loss of lead workers. There were concerns raised about the level of resource that would be available without the funding from TRAC and ADTRAC, and some stakeholders raised concerns that other agencies would not be able to fill the gap in coordination left by the loss of TRAC and ADTRAC. A particular concern was raised about the loss of lead workers to coordinate support in the absence of ADTRAC. One interviewee reported that in the absence of ADTRAC third sector organisations, statutory services and Careers Wales would need to put more work into outreach activity to help broker support, but they worried that there would be a skills gap here as ADTRAC staff had developed networks and were expert in delivering to the needs of the young people.

The above illustrates that there are concerns about the sustainability of brokerage arrangements in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC.

5.4 Tracking progress

The YEPF includes an objective to strengthen tracking, to ensure that young people are receiving the support they need, and to evaluate the impact of support being provided to young people (Welsh Government, 2013).

What is the contribution of TRAC and ADTRAC to the tracking and bridging arrangements through systems for young people aged between 11 and 24 years old?

TRAC delivery staff reported that they use a combination of the following processes to track progress:

- Setting targets and comparing results
- Regular reviews and reports
- Continual monitoring of participant LPT scores
- Case loading approach
- Feedback from schools.

Within monitoring data TRAC also collect the following:

- A thorough intervention history for each participant, which details the type of intervention received, provider and date of attendance
- Participants are also asked to fill out the Youth Star assessment at regular intervals to track their progress in relation to 6 aspects of their lives[3]
- Outcomes data, including the number of participants who progress in education, enter employment and gain qualifications or other positive outcomes.

ADTRAC collects the following data to track progress of participants:

- Changes in participant wellbeing, measured using the Warwick & Edinburgh Mental Health Scale (WEMWBS)
- Changes in participant employability and work readiness data, measured through the Work Star,[4] in addition to outcome data such as the number of participants entering employment, education and training, and gaining qualifications or other positive outcomes
- Barriers to EET experienced by participants on entry and exit to the support
- Records of training and courses undertaken by participants
- Records of referrals by BCUHB for wellbeing support, and the kind of support provided.

---

[3] Youth Star explores the progress of young people in relation to six aspects of their lives (making a difference, hopes and dreams, wellbeing, education and work, communication, and choices and behaviour). More information is available here.
[4] Work Star measures different aspects of employability and employment and is typically used to measure the journey of adults who are out of work or returning to the workplace. More information on Work Star is available here.

In addition to these formal processes for tracking progress, stakeholders highlighted that tracking progress is also achieved through meetings structures. For ADTRAC this includes the Youth and Progression meetings, where the team for ADTRAC will share information back on the progress of participants who have been referred. Within TRAC, regular meetings between organisations are also used as a tool for tracking progress. Some stakeholders within referring organisations also identified how they received proactive contact from Mentors within ADTRAC to let them know what had happened with a client who has been referred (within the boundaries of data sharing). These processes were more ad-hoc and relied on individual staff members.

Stakeholders also indicated that there are tracking processes in place between TRAC and ADTRAC to handover cases between the projects as young people reach the age threshold where they cease to be eligible for TRAC and become eligible for ADTRAC. This also includes young people who may not have received TRAC support in school but are deemed at risk of becoming NEET.

Stakeholders were asked to reflect on whether they felt the systems for tracking progress within TRAC and ADTRAC were effective. Of these respondents, 6/16 reported that the processes were effective, 7/16 gave a mixed response, and 3/16 respondents expressed that they did not know. Respondents who felt that processes were effective referred to regular meetings and ongoing contact between organisations, which were felt to smooth processes in identifying the needs of participants.

> *'Has been effective. That was the point of TRAC. It made sure that the young people were considered more consistently and regularly (Not just once every two months). Working with everybody allows you to better judge where a young person is in the system. Qualitative input from each organisation.'* **(Interviewee, ID 3)**

Those who gave a more mixed view discussed issues such as processes within ADTRAC to keep contact with referrers being dependent on the individual worker; and queried whether the right things were being measured. For example, with regards to ADTRAC one stakeholder raised concerns about whether they were able to measure smaller steps in progress for participants, which may be particularly meaningful if the participant has very complex barriers. Additionally, a stakeholder raised challenges around the processes for moving young people into wellbeing support as part of ADTRAC:

'I think if there's an ADTRAC worker involved they do keep involved with the key worker. That does happen. The only challenge that I've found myself is that the young people have a lot of challenges, and sometimes it's hard to get the young person to agree to a referral and when they do sometimes it's hard to introduce them to the ADTRAC worker. What I've found has been good is that the ADTRAC workers are understanding that it can take a couple of goes to get the trust of the young people to meet them. The young person had to meet the ADTRAC worker with the referrer, and from there they meet the CAHMS worker, so they have to meet two new people. But when I've said this person is really anxious and it's been more CAHMS they've cut out the middle person, to help lower that barrier… It's a shame we can't have more easy access to the CAHMS workers, as we know the young people and know what their issues are. This ADTRAC process adds in another person they don't know in the middle.' (Interviewee, ID 10)

How suitable are the tracking and bridging processes for the purpose of the Framework in future?

When asked about the suitability of the tracking and bridging processes from TRAC and ADTRAC for the purposes of the Framework, most stakeholders reported that they were suitable (8/9). Only one stakeholder disagreed. They highlighted concerns about whether the right data sources were being used to track process and concerns about the DWP not sharing information. The issue of information sharing with the DWP was also raised by another stakeholder in relation to the effectiveness of the processes. They found that this meant that tracking processes were unable to be integrated with the DWP.

Stakeholders who felt the processes were suitable praised the multi-agency approach, that brought all members of the Framework together.

What impact have the tracking and bridging processes had on young people?

Stakeholders were asked what impact the tracking and bridging processes had had on the young people supported by TRAC and ADTRAC. Responses to this question were generally quite undetailed, and several stakeholders did not give an answer which may suggest this is one of the areas that respondents were less aware of.

Of those who did respond, 6/9 stakeholders reported that the tracking and bridging processes had a positive impact on young people. Commonly stakeholders referred to processes for tracking progress within TRAC or ADTRAC, such as goal setting and revisiting assessment tools like the Work Star or WEMWBS. These were described as helpful for helping participants to 'benchmark their progress'. In discussing tracking progress one stakeholder discussed progress between services, and stated that they felt it was beneficial to young people that ADTRAC could help to move young people across to services by helping them to make introductions, thus smoothing their progress into other services.

Stakeholders were generally unsure whether any of the processes from TRAC or ADTRAC would be retained when funding is withdrawn, though several stakeholders expressed an interest in processes being retained. Concerns were raised over the capacity and funding to deliver on these processes in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC.

> *'What worries me is that the youth service doesn't have the same capacity to pick this work up. Career Wales will still be around, but they work with lots of students. Some elements will remain, but some will be lost and may be less coordinated and less targeted to the young people.'* **(Interviewee, ID 11)**

Another interviewee reported that if systems were retained for tracking progress they were unlikely to be in 'any one place', and we're more likely to be 'organisationally driven' rather than orientated around the individual as they were with TRAC and ADTRAC.

5.5 Provision

The YEPF Implementation Plan called for stronger mapping of existing provision, and for new provision that targets unmet needs to avoid duplication of support (Welsh Government, 2013).

What is TRAC's contribution to the Framework to reduce the number of young people aged between 11 and 16 years old who are at risk of disengaging from education?

TRAC provides access to the following provision:

- Support for wellbeing and attendance
- Counselling and mental health support
- Courses and work placements
- Sessions delivered by Careers Wales.

As previously discussed in the section on Brokerage, this includes a lead worker approach where participants have access to a named mentor in the TRAC team who works with them to identify appropriate provision and coordinate that support.

To date, 383 participants have exited TRAC. Of these, 48 per cent were recorded to be at a reduced risk of becoming NEET. 22 per cent of participants had gained qualifications.

Whilst this may suggest that most exited participants were not recorded to be at reduced risk of becoming NEET (52 per cent), this may in part be related to gaps in available data. Indeed an individual can only be recorded as at reduced risk of becoming NEET if there is a 10 per cent reduction in their LPT score, and as such the LPT does not take into account all individuals who may have seen their risk of becoming NEET reduced to some extent. Additionally, TRAC is performing well against its target of 49 per cent of young people who exit from the project being at reduced risk of becoming NEET.

Stakeholders were positive about the role TRAC has played in reducing the number of young people who are disengaging from education. Not all stakeholders were in a position to respond to this question, however, of those that did 9/12 reported that TRAC has contributed to reducing the number of young people disengaging from education, whilst the remaining three interviewees indicated they didn't know enough about this issue. Two stakeholders reported that TRAC was helping to improve engagement with education and attendance of young people, and one stakeholder reported that they felt it was resulting in a reduction in exclusions. Other stakeholders (3/12) reported that TRAC was providing additional support to help reduce the barriers or issues young people might be facing to help keep them in school.

What is ADTRAC's contribution to the Framework to reduce the number of young people aged between 16 and 24 years old who are at not in education, training or employment?

ADTRAC provides holistic support that is tailored to each individual it supports. ADTRAC provides the following provision to support participants to engage in EET:

- Traditional employability support, such as assisting individuals to develop their CVs and interview skills
- Procuring courses and bespoke training to support participants to develop their skills or overcome their barriers to entering EET
- Helping participants to access and gain new qualifications and training certifications
- Supports participants to access specialist advice and guidance to help overcome barriers
- Specialist mental health and wellbeing support, including developing opportunities for participants to access activities that promote the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

Up to March 2020, 190 young people in Gwynedd had participated in ADTRAC.[5] To date, 78 participants (41 per cent have exited support).

Of the 78 who have exited support, 77 per cent exited into EET. Table 3.2 over page provides a breakdown of the outcomes and destinations of participants who have exited support.

---

[5] This figure includes only individuals who were not listed under "do not claim" within regional monitoring data.

Table 3.2: Outcomes achieved up to March 2020

Outcome Target	Total Achieved (up to March 2020)
Total Participants	190
NEET Participants (16-24 years of age) gaining qualifications upon leaving	41
NEET Participants (16-24 years of age) in education/training upon leaving	23
NEET Participants (16-24 years of age) entering employment upon leaving	37
Participants gaining other positive outcomes	79[6]

Source: ADTRAC Participant Monitoring Data for Gwynedd (Base = 190)

The table below provides a breakdown of the other positive outcomes achieved by participants.

Table 3.3: Other positive outcomes achieved up to March 2020

Other Positive Outcomes	Total Achieved
Any Positive Outcome	79
Achieving part qualification	1
Achieving unaccredited training	8
Education/training less than 16 hours	5
Completing work experience placement	11
Completing volunteering opportunity	8
Employment/self-employment less than 16 hours	4
Entering employment on zero-hour contract	1
Improvement in emotional/mental wellbeing	59
Improvement in soft outcomes	67
More than one qualification	12
Entered into traineeship	2

Source: ADTRAC Participant Monitoring Date for Gwynedd (Base = 190)

This data suggests that ADTRAC is having a positive impact on reducing the number of young people who are NEET in Gwynedd. However, it should be noted that whilst a high proportion of the young people who have exited ADTRAC have entered into EET, Gwynedd is some way behind achieving its targets for the number of young people entered into employment and education and training as a result of ADTRAC. However, this may be influenced to some extent by the fact that the project is still in progress and as such it is possible that more outcomes will be generated and outcome recording may increase as the project moves towards completion. The targets and current performance for Gwynedd are outlined in Table 3.4 over page.

---

[6] This figure is higher than the number of exited individuals, as other positive outcomes have been recorded next to participants who have yet to be exited from support.

Table 3.4: NEET Participants entering EET – Targets & Performance

Outcome	Target	Total Achieved	Proportion of target achieved %
NEET Participants in education/training upon leaving	60	23	38%
NEET Participants entering employment upon leaving	94	37	39%

Source: ADTRAC Participant Monitoring Date for Gwynedd (Base=190)

This may suggest that whilst ADTRAC is contributing to a reduction in the number of young people who are NEET in Gwynedd, it is not having as great an effect as envisaged at the outset of the project, and is reaching a relatively small cohort of participants. It should be noted that this pattern is consistent with challenges that have been faced at operation level across ADTRAC, and is not unique to Gwynedd (Maughan, et al., 2020).

In addition to the hard outcomes discussed above, ADTRAC also appears to be having an impact in reducing the barriers that prevent participants progression into EET. At entry and exit to the project, participants were asked to report the barriers to entering EET they experienced. On entry to ADTRAC, participants experienced on average six barriers that limited their progression to EET. Upon exiting support this average has been reduced to three.

Figure 3.2 over page, shows the proportion of participants who experienced common barriers to entering EET upon entry and exit to the project. On entry confidence was among the principle barriers to participants entering EET, reported by 68 per cent of participants. On exit this barrier was reported by 28 per cent of participants.

The proportion of participants reporting lack of experience/employability and lack of skills and qualifications as barriers to entering EET had also markedly reduced among participants who had exited support. Additionally, the proportion of participants who reported that they had difficulty engaging in EET reduced from 42 per cent to 4 per cent.

Whilst these outcomes are softer in nature, the reductions in barriers is likely to move participants closer to EET, and as such these outcomes may also be seen as evidence of ADTRAC's contribution to reducing the number of young people who are NEET in Gwynedd.

Figure 3.2: Proportion of ADTRAC participants who experienced each barrier to EET on entry and exit to the project
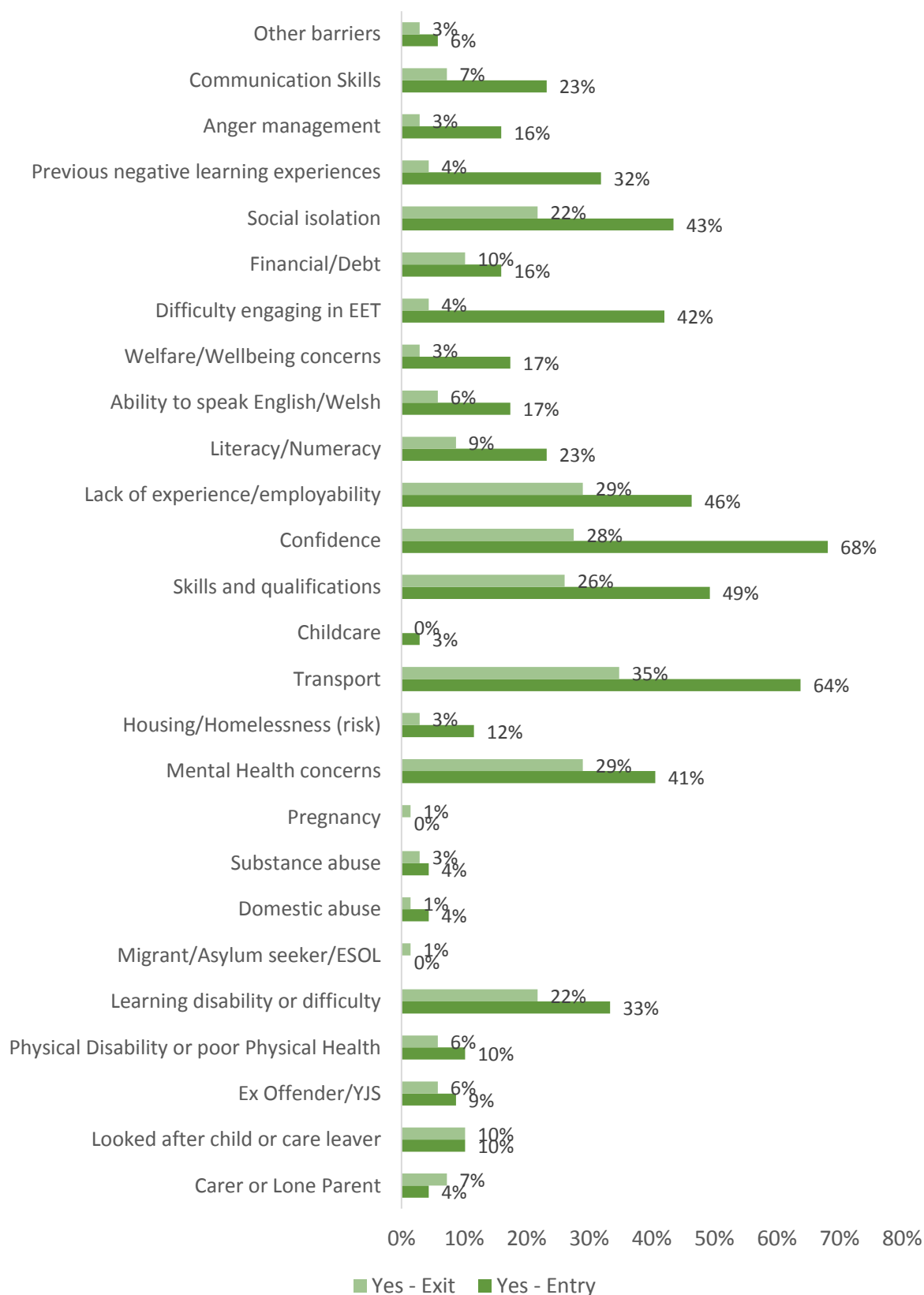
Base: Participants who have exited support (n=69)

Most stakeholders reported that ADTRAC had contributed to reducing the number of young people who were NEET in Gwynedd (10/11). The only exception here was one stakeholder who reported that they feel the current data collected for ADTRAC gives a 'false sense of reassurance', and felt that it needed to be placed in context against the success rates of other programmes to understand how much of a contribution ADTRAC was really making compared to other potential support. Of those stakeholders who were reported that ADTRAC had a positive contribution, most referred to the role ADTRAC played in providing additional support and reducing barriers to EET experienced by participants. This included the provision of mental health and wellbeing support, which was seen to be helping participants to move closer to EET.

One interviewee indicated that whilst they felt ADTRAC was contributing to reducing NEET rates, it didn't necessarily result in participants moving directly into EET, but nevertheless the support was helping them to move young people towards EET even if the support did not result in an outcome straight away:

> *'I think [ADTRAC has] contributed really really well. I think it has contributed, but the number of people who are NEET is very high, we've been able to move them a bit closer, but not all young people have engaged and some have other stuff going on. There are a lot of people who need a lot more intervention who are further away from EET – they might not be able to move on to anything. [ADTRAC is] effective in building the trust and relationship even if they're not ready to enter EET.'* **(Interviewee, ID 13)**

Three participants reported that ADTRAC was able to provide bespoke support and someone to talk to, which were perceived to be important in reducing barriers to EET among young people. Two participants reported that has contributed to a reduction in NEET rates by enabling participants to access training and qualifications, that they may have otherwise been unable to access.

How effective is the TRAC and ADTRAC provision in meeting the support needs of young people?

Stakeholders were positive about the provision delivered through TRAC and ADTRAC, and the majority of stakeholders (16/17) reported that they felt the provision deliver was effective and appropriate to the needs of the target cohorts. However, one interviewee raised challenges around the number of people who could be seen by ADTRAC, noting that there was currently a hold on referrals due to the number of people accessing the service.

> *'Amazing. I've been doing this job for seven years and ADTRAC is by far the most effective of any support provisions. It's multifaceted, previously provision would have focused on one particular process, whereas ADTRAC is looking at advancement through education or wellbeing, or employment. They're covering most of the bases needed.'* **(Interviewee, ID 16)**

Additionally, monitoring data suggests that ADTRAC is struggling to engage participants with no qualifications. Participants with no existing qualifications are one of the largest groups to be referred for ADTRAC, making up 35 per cent of referrals. However, of those, over half either did not enrol with ADTRAC, or disengaged shortly after enrolment. 47 per cent did not enrol, and a further seven percent disengaged. This suggests that ADTRAC is struggling to meet the needs of these young people.

The provision of mental health and wellbeing support and bespoke/tailored support within the support provision of ADTRAC and TRAC were frequently praised by stakeholders. These aspects of provision were seen to be unique about TRAC and ADTRAC and what differentiated these projects from other support delivered in Gwynedd. Whilst there was potentially some duplication with other services when it came to the more traditional employability support delivered by the projects, such as CV support and training courses, the tailored support was viewed as unique to the provision delivered through TRAC and ADTRAC. The Dynamic Purchasing System built in to both projects, for example, enabled mentors to precure courses and training that were unique to the needs of the individual they were supporting, whilst employability support from other organisations was seen to take more of a "blanket" approach.

> *'The main thing that's different with ADTRAC is the wellbeing intervention, which other services can't offer at the same time. And with the DPS training where we can apply for individual training to develop a package for the individual – I don't think other provision can offer this tailored support. But there is some duplication with some of the training from other support, like the Job Centre, and offering job search and CVs support.'* **(Interviewee, ID 13)**

Most interviewees (11/13) indicated that they felt that TRAC and ADTRAC were effectively aligned with other provision that seeks to reduce NEET rates in Gwynedd. It was felt that the support delivered was unique, in respect of the wellbeing provision, and therefore helping to reduce duplication with other provision by targeting a need not met by other support. Additionally, stakeholders reported that the provision was well aligned as the approaches within TRAC and ADTRAC encouraged collaboration with the other agencies to ensure participants were referred on to other provision if it would be more appropriate for them. One stakeholder described ADTRAC as working as a kind of 'triage above other provision', which helped to remove duplication, as it ensured young people were directed to other provision if appropriate. Six stakeholders reported that the two projects were adding value to the available support provision.

However, a minority of stakeholders (2/13) indicated that they felt there was some duplication between TRAC and ADTRAC and other support in Gwynedd. This included duplication of the more traditional employability support such as CV support, which was felt to be replicated in other provision. Additionally, one stakeholder reported that there is duplication between some of the schools, TRAC and other youth services are supporting. However, it was felt that this was not due to poor planning of TRAC, but a result of schools seeking out 'all the support they can get'.

Stakeholders were asked to identify if there were any remaining gaps in provision, with TRAC and ADTRAC in place. Some stakeholders (4/15) reported that there were no gaps in provision, whilst most (9/15) respondents reported that there were some gaps still remaining in the provision available within Gwynedd. Most commonly, stakeholders identified gaps in the provision for particularly "hard to reach" groups, including individuals who were not registered with a school who would not be eligible for TRAC, and individuals aged 16+ who had missed a lot of education, and were unable to access college aged 19+. Other gaps identified included access to more long-term support for young people with complex barriers to EET, transport, and a perceived lack of suitable employment available locally for participants to exit into.

What are the risks and implications to the Framework when the TRAC and ADTRAC funding period comes to an end?

At present, Post-16 panels refer most young people in Tier 2 to ADTRAC for support. According to analysis of the Tier 1 and 2 data (2017-2020) passed from Careers Wales to Post-16 Panels, referrals to ADTRAC are made in the case of 62 per cent of Tier 2 referrals. Around 25 per cent of these young people are referred to ADTRAC wellbeing support. Whilst, 39 per cent of these young people do not enrol in ADTRAC, 61 per cent do enrol. Of those who have exited most (13/14) exited into EET. This suggests there is a big gap in where Tier 2 participants, who are currently supported by ADTRAC, will be supported in the absence of this provision.

Additionally, stakeholders were concerned that gaps would emerge in local provision when the funding for TRAC and ADTRAC cease. Indeed, 13/15 interviewees reported that gaps in provision would emerge when the funding for the two projects comes to an end. Stakeholders reported that TRAC and ADTRAC would leave 'huge gaps' in provision and expressed concerns about what impact this would have on the support available to young people and NEET rates in the area, which they feared would increase as a result. Many stakeholders (4/15) were concerned that the loss of funding for TRAC and ADTRAC would lead to the loss of mental health and wellbeing support, which would leave a gap in supporting young people whose progress into EET is limited by poor mental health and wellbeing. Stakeholders also expressed concern at the loss of resource provided by TRAC.

> *'There won't be the access to the whole TRAC Framework. That won't be in place anymore. That support in schools will no longer be there. Schools will have to try and provide themselves and I can't see them doing so to a standard that would match [what TRAC would deliver] …'* **(Interviewee, ID 11)**

Concerns were also raised about the loss of bespoke one-to-one support which, as discussed previously, was seen as one of the more unique features of the support delivered through TRAC and ADTRAC. The quotes below highlight some of the key gaps stakeholders were concerned would emerge if TRAC and ADTRAC are withdrawn.

'The ability to build bespoke relationships with the young people. There will be a lot of young people who are quite far from engaging with anything who will be left behind, as I don't know what provision will be able to offer the time to knock doors and get to know them. A lot of the wellbeing help will disappear, and there are a lot of young people with issues here. That will be massive. Being able to offer the bespoke training through the DPS. There will be a massive gap.' **(Interviewee, ID 13)**

'[There will be] a big gap – especially in terms of offering   alternative experiences, and alternative curriculum. Where will we get that provision, who will we turn to?' **(Interviewee, ID 17)**

5.6 Employability

What is the contribution and impact of TRAC and ADTRAC to reinforce employability skills and opportunities for young people to gain employment?

20 per cent of young people who had exited TRAC had achieved an outcome relating to improved employability, such as obtaining new qualifications, completing work experience or volunteering or entering employment. These outcomes are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Number and proportion of TRAC participants who have achieved an outcome relating to improved employability

| Employability Outcome	N	%
Participant achieved part time qualifications	36	9%
Participant completed work experience	31	8%
Participant completed volunteering opportunities	16	4%
Participant entered full-time employment (including self-employment)	9	2%
Participant entered part-time employment (including self-employment)	3	1%
Participant who achieved at least one of the outcomes above	78	20%

Source: TRAC Data: Positive Outcomes (Base=383)

As explored in the section above, 77 per cent of participants who exited ADTRAC entered EET. Additionally, 53 per cent of participants achieved a qualification upon exiting the project.

ADTRAC participants were asked to fill in Work Star, which is used to measure different aspects of employability and employment. On entry to the project the average Work Star score for participants was 6.43, on exit this had increased to 7.83. Figures for each element are provided in Figure 3.3. The biggest increases were in relation to aspirations and motivation and job skills and experience. There was also an increase in the average score for job search skills. This suggests that ADTRAC is having a positive impact on participant employability.

Complementing the Work Star data, the proportion of ADTRAC participants who self-reported lack of experience or employability as a barrier to their progression in EET had reduced from 46 per cent to 29 per cent between entry and exit to the support.

Figure 5.3: Work Star scores on entry and exit to the project
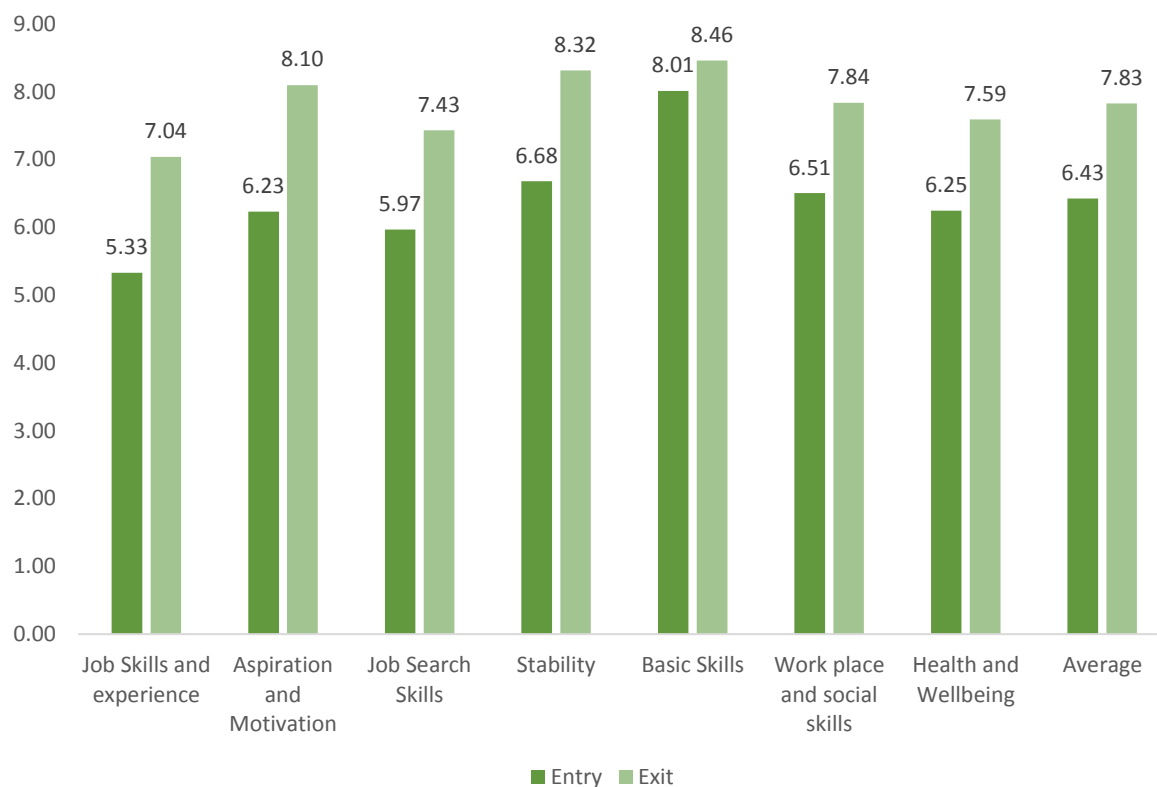
Source: ADTRAC Participant Data (Base=70, exited participants with complete data)

Stakeholders reported that both projects had contributed to the opportunities for young people to gain employment and develop employability skills. Stakeholders reported that TRAC had contributed to employability skills through the provision of vocational courses and work experience. ADTRAC had provided young people with practical support such as development of CVs, qualifications, and bespoke training.

What are the risks/implications to the Framework when the TRAC and ADTRAC funding period ends?

Whilst several aspects of these provisions are captured in other services, most stakeholders (10/12) reported that there would be gaps in the opportunities for young people to move into employment of improve their employability, in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC. Many of these stakeholders 4/10 identified that gaps would emerge in relation to the more tailored support that is delivered through these programmes. For example, ADTRAC enabled courses to be precured for the individual through a Dynamic Purchase System (DPS) – this was felt to be something that would be missing from local support without ADTRAC. Similarly, TRAC advisors were able to identify individually tailored work experience support. It was felt that some of this vocational work may continue to be delivered by other agencies, including schools and youth services, in some ways, but concerns were raised that this was likely to be "blanket" provision which may not adequately meet the needs of the young people TRAC supports.

Stakeholders were also concerned about the loss of in-depth, one-to-one support that it was feared would be lost without TRAC and ADTRAC.

> *'Are there any particular gaps in employability provision you anticipate will emerge when the funding for TRAC and/or ADTRAC ends? Getting actively involved with young people in a way that other services cannot. It is very hands on work and its very directive. These young people are often stuck and socially isolated, lacking motivation, and ADTRAC can provide the tools to overcome these. It's that face to face engagement on a more long-term level than what a service like CAHMS can offer that will be lost.'* **(Interviewee, ID 9)**

The monitoring data and feedback from stakeholders suggest that both projects are contributing to the employability provision available in Gwynedd, though the impact of this appears to be greater in relation to ADTRAC. There are therefore concerns about the loss of employability provision that will result when funding from TRAC and ADTRAC are withdrawn.

5.7 Accountability

The YEPF includes an objective around accountability. This objective was introduced to reduce potential weaknesses around who is responsible for implementing the Framework. The accountability objective includes:

- Holding local authorities and partners to account regularly for implementation of the Framework
- Publishing comparable performance data by local authority for 16, 17 and 18-year-old destinations
- Developing provider level destination measures.

Members of the YEPF Management Group were asked how affective they feel the governance and accountability arrangements of TRAC and ADTRAC are as part of the arrangements and accountability expectations of the YEPF. Responses from interviewees suggested that this is an area which would benefit from further improvement. Three interviewees reported that there was clear accountability in Gwynedd, however two of these interviewees felt that the accountability at regional level was much less clear. Another interviewee reported concerns about weaknesses in the approach – they reported that whilst reports go to the Management Group, they are not feeding into a higher council structure, and raised concerns about their learnings not being brought forward in commissions for EFS funding.

5.8 Legacy

TRAC and ADTRAC are both funded by ESF. Funding is expected to come to an end for ADTRAC in May 2021, and for TRAC in July 2022. Stakeholders were asked to give their perspectives on what the implications of funding coming to an end would have for Gwynedd's ability to fulfil the YEPF. The majority of stakeholders (14/17) indicated that the loss of funding will create gaps. The key areas where stakeholders noted gaps would be created related to brokerage of support and provision.

In relation to brokerage, several stakeholders (3/17) reported that TRAC and ADTRAC played an essential role in coordinating support and 'linking everything together in the Framework'. This included coordinating work across agencies who support young people, and taking on the role to check up on young people where other agencies were perceived to not have the capacity to do so. It was felt that no other agency would have the capacity to deliver this in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC, and the loss of these provisions could impact upon the workload of other services.

> *'I think it's going to cause quite a few implications, in terms of the ability for organisations to identify suitable support. I don't know where the young people will go. ADTRAC coordinates a lot and takes on a lot of the work in checking up on the young people. I don't think other agencies will have the capacity to take this on and coordinate all the intentions. There will be a massive gap unless there is any other provision instead.'* **(Interview ID 13)**

In relation to provision stakeholders reflected that gaps would be created in terms of supporting the specific cohorts of young people that TRAC and ADTRAC support. Several stakeholders reported that they didn't know where the cohort of young people who were typically being supported by TRAC and ADTRAC would be referred on to in the absence of these programmes. In relation to TRAC, it was felt that there would be a gap in school support, particularly in relation to young people who may not be comfortable in an education setting, who were able to benefit from alternative provision in TRAC. This gap was felt to be opening up a high risk of more young people leaving education without a destination, which could lead to an increase in NEET rates among the 16-18 cohort. In relation to ADTRAC, it was felt that there would be a gap in terms of the intensive support delivered through this provision, which would leave a gap in the support for individuals with more complex barriers. There were concerns that this would lead to an increase in NEET rates among this cohort, and potentially additional costs to health services, as ADTRAC would no longer be providing support to some individuals with mental health problems.

> *'It's going to be a big loss to working with these children and young people in ways that other systems can't do. They can't provide the time and the space, and that's one of the most crucial things that will be lost. It would be a tragedy, as enough young people get lost in the system now.'* **(Interview ID 9)**

> *'I think the Framework will still be there and there will be other people working towards it… the youth service won't disappear… but the approach we have (in TRAC) will disappear and the Covid situation is going to have a big impact – TRAC is probably more important than ever, as the needs of those young people are going to be even higher than ever after Covid-19. If there isn't any scheme in place it's quite a worry.'* **(Interview ID 11)**

Most interviewees (9/17) reported that there would have been less progress against the YEPF if TRAC and ADTRAC had not existed, and a further four interviewees reported that it would have been harder to deliver the YEPF.

'There wouldn't have been as much delivered to reduce NEET rates. There is other work taking place that offer support, but I don't think a lot of the young people who are NEET and need extra support would have accessed services without ADTRAC. They would have continued to be NEET. For those with a lot of barriers, they would have been less likely to engage with support to enter EET. ADTRAC has given them the person to believe in them. Its voluntary and no pressure, which has eased it for a lot of the young people. It helps them to get that bit closer to EET. Whereas I think a lot of other provision has very clear paths. Without ADTRAC there isn't the support for young people who don't know which way they want to go.'
(Interview ID 13)

Interviewees were asked if any steps have been taken to mitigate against the implications they had discussed, as explored above. Most interviewees (9/17) indicated that there had not been any steps taken that they were aware of, though several of these interviewees emphasised that they would not necessarily be privy to these discussions within their job role. Another 7/17 interviewees reported that discussions have been taking place about the future, including exploring different models and funding opportunities to bid for, but that nothing concrete was in place.

6 Conclusions

Stakeholders were mostly positive about the contribution that TRAC and ADTRAC had made to the YEPF in Gwynedd. TRAC and ADTRAC were both felt to be filling a gap in the provision available to support young people who are disengaged from education, employment and training or are at risk of disengaging.

Both projects could be seen to be bringing additionality to the provision available in Gwynedd to reduce the number of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.[7] Indeed, there are several ways in which TRAC and ADTRAC could be felt to be generating additionality. For example, the projects both provide additional resource, in the form of 'lead workers' that contribute to improved brokerage and coordination of support. This is meeting a need where pre-existing services and support did not have the capacity to carry out this proactive work. As a result, the projects have helped to extend reach and identify young people who were previously not in contact with any services or support for young people who are NEET.

In the case of TRAC, further additionality is delivered through its preventative focus, which seeks to catch cases early, and help to steer young people back towards engagement with education, before they become NEET.

Further, the involvement of BCUHB in the delivery of ADTRAC, that has seen mental health and wellbeing support delivered within the project, has brought additionality, by providing support to meet the needs of young people who may be prevented from engaging with EET by mental health or wellbeing issues.

However, in relation to outcome measures, at this stage in delivery, the evidence of the contribution of the two projects to reducing the number of young people who are NEET is limited. Indeed, whilst a high proportion of participants who have been exited from ADTRAC have entered into EET, the number of young people who have been exited remains low, and a high proportion of young people who have been supported by TRAC remain at risk of disengaging.

Despite these limitations, in the absence of TRAC and ADTRAC there is a concern that gaps will emerge in relation to the provision available to support young people in Gwynedd, whose needs are currently unmet by mainstream provision. In the absence of alternative arrangements, the sustainability of the process for early intervention, brokerage and tracking progress that have been bolstered by TRAC and ADTRAC are also at threat, which puts at risk the ability of Gwynedd to fulfil the YEPF, to coordinate support and to ensure young people do not fall within gaps between agencies and provision. The reliance on TRAC and ADTRAC to coordinate support in particular puts Gwynedd's progress against the YEPF at risk when funding for these projects is withdrawn, and as such it is paramount that Gwynedd begins to consider the legacy of these projects and how support can be coordinated in their absence.

---

[7] Additionality is defined as 'The extent to which activity takes place at all, on a larger scale, earlier or within a specific designated area or target group as a result of the intervention' (Dancer, 2014).

This raises a broader concern around the organisation of ESF funded projects, which can see Local Authorities become reliant on processes that have been embedded through the resource of a time-bound project, with the absence of a clear exit plan for how resources and processes can be sustained when funding is withdrawn.

At the core of TRAC and ADTRAC's perceived success among stakeholders, appears to have been the multi-agency approach, which has seen the projects involved in pulling together agencies involved in delivering support for young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET. We would therefore suggest that one of the key recommendations going forward is for organisations under the YEPF to continue working in a multi-agency way and identify resource for coordinating support moving forward.

We would encourage all organisations involved in delivering support to reduce the number of young people who are or at risk of becoming NEET, to work together to identify the core aspects of TRAC and ADTRAC that have enabled success, to identify the priority areas for legacy planning.

7 References

Careers Wales, 2019. *Destinations 2018: Key Findings - Survey 2018.* [Online]
Available at: http://destinations.careerswales.com/2018/keyFindings.html
[Accessed 7 May 2020].

Crawford, C., Duckworth, K., Vinoles, A. & Wyness, G., 2011. *Young people's education and labour marker choices aged 16/17 to 18/19,* London: Department for Education.

Dancer, S., 2014. *Additionality Guide: Fourth Edition 2014,* London: Homes & Communities Agency.

Maughan, C., Marshall, T., Griffiths, E. & Wavehill, 2020. *ADTRAC Evaluation: Interim Report (Publication Pending),* s.l.: GLLM.

Powell, A., 2018. *NEET: Young People Not,* London: House of Commons Library.

Statistics for Wales, 2019. *Statistical First Release: Participation of young people in education and the labour market 2017 and 2018 (provisional),* s.l.: Welsh Government.

StatsWales, 2019. *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) by age group and gender.* [Online]
Available at: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Population-Health/Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing/wemwbsscore-by-age-gender
[Accessed 29 April 2020].

Warwick Medical School, 2020. *Collect, score, analyse and interpret WEMWBS.* [Online]
Available at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/using/howto/

Welsh Government, 2013. *Youth engagement and progression framework: Implementation Plan,* s.l.: Welsh Government.

Appendix 1: Research tools

Evaluating the effect of TRAC and ADTRAC on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework in Gwynedd: Discussion guide for stakeholders

<u>Introduction</u>

1. Please could you outline your role and how it relates to TRAC, ADTRAC and/or the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework (YEPF)?

    a. Are you a member of the YEPF Management Group or is your role to do with delivering direct support to participants?

<u>Overview of TRAC and ADTRAC's contribution towards the YEPF</u>

2. *Only members of the YEPF Management Group*: Can you please provide an overview of the YEPF in Gwynedd?

    a. What is the rationale for it?
    b. How does it work e.g. how often are meetings held?
    c. How many agencies are part of the Framework?
    d. How important is the YEPF in reducing the number of NEET young people in Gwynedd?
    e. What provision was in place to fulfil the YEPF before TRAC and ADTRAC?

3. What impact do you believe that TRAC and ADTRAC has had on Gwynedd's ability to deliver against the YEPF?

4. *Only members of the YEPF Management Group:* If the two programmes didn't exist, what difference would that make to your ability to deliver the YEPF in Gwynedd?

5. *All other interviewees, but not YEPF Management Group:* If the two programmes didn't exist, what difference would that make to your ability to support young people 11-16 to stay in education; ability to support young people 16-24 to engage back with education, training, employment?

6. How does TRAC and ADTRAC compare against the other support provisions in Gwynedd in terms of the contribution and impact on the YEPF?

Early Identification

7. *Question only for members involved in TRAC:* How effective is the existing early identification system of the TRAC programme (i.e. the Learner Profiling Tool)?

8. *Question only for members involved in TRAC:* How does TRAC contribute towards the YEPF approach to identifying young people at risk of disengaging and becoming NEET?

    a. To what extent does TRAC enable you to identify young people at risk of disengaging and becoming NEET?
    b. How does the process within TRAC fit alongside Gwynedd's approach to early identification under the YEPF? Has it built on the approach in any way?

9. To what extent do the processes for early identification built into TRAC and ADTRAC enable Gwynedd to deliver an informed coordinated response?

10. What difference would it make to your ability to identify young people at risk of disengaging and becoming NEET in Gwynedd if these two programmes did not exist?

Brokerage [Questions only for YEPF Management Group]

11. How have TRAC and ADTRAC contributed to the brokerage and support liaison arrangements under the Framework i.e. how does it coordinate support/pull in expertise from other agencies/liaise and advocate on behalf of young people with agencies and partners etc.?

    a. How effective is that process?

12. Will these brokering arrangements be sustainable when funding ceases for TRAC/ADTRAC?

13. What difference would it make to your ability to ensure support is provided at the right level and right time in Gwynedd if these two programmes did not exist?

Tracking progress

14. How effective are the systems for tracking progress within TRAC and ADTRAC?

15. What contribution, if any, has TRAC/ADTRAC made to the tracking and bridging arrangements through systems for young people aged between 11-24?

16. What impact have the tracking and bridging processes had on young people?

17. How suitable do you believe these tracking and bridging processes from TRAC/ADTRAC are for the purpose of the Framework?

18. Will any of these be retained after TRAC/ADTRAC finishes?

19. What difference would it make to your ability to track progress in Gwynedd if these two programmes had not existed?

Provision

20. How effective is the support provision delivered within TRAC and ADTRAC?

21. How has TRAC contributed to the aim to reduce the number of young people aged between 11 and 16 years old who are at risk of disengaging from education?

22. How has ADTRAC contributed to the aim to reduce the number of young people aged between 16 and 24 years old who are not in education, training or employment?

23. Do you feel the provision from TRAC and ADTRAC is appropriate to the needs of the cohort it seeks to benefit?

    a. Why? Why not?

24. To what extent do you feel that TRAC/ADTRAC is effectively aligned with other provision that seeks reduce NEET rates within Gwynedd? Please explain your response.

    a. Are there any areas where it adds value?
    b. Are there any areas of crossover or duplication with other support?

25. Are there any remaining gaps in local provision?

26. Are there any gaps in provision you anticipate will emerge when funding for TRAC/ADTRAC ends?

Employability

27. What contribution has TRAC/ADTRAC made to the opportunities available to young people to gain employment and develop their employability skills?

28. Are there any particular gaps in this provision you anticipate will emerge when the funding for TRAC and/or ADTRAC ends?

Accountability

29. **Only for YEPF Management Group:** How effective were the governance/accountability arrangements of TRAC/ADTRAC as part of the arrangements and accountability expectations of the YEPF?

Legacy

30. As you will be aware both ADTRAC and TRAC are ESF funded, with funding expecting to end in May 2021 and July 2022 respectively. What are the implications of this funding coming to an end for Gwynedd's ability to fulfil the YEPF?

31. Have any steps been taken to mitigate against the impact of these implications? If so, what steps?

32. How would the progress against the Framework in Gwynedd have differed if TRAC/ADTRAC had not existed?

wavehill
social and economic research
ymchwil cymdeithasol ac economaidd

01545 571711
wavehill@wavehill.com
wavehill.com