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PROJECT REPORT

WORKING AGE - YOUTH CHECKPOINTS
PILOT PROJECT (WALES)

MONEY & PENSIONS SERVICE (MaPS)

Prepared by:
ProMo-Cymru and Youth Cymru



INTRODUCTION

In 2019, Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) awarded 4 grants of £100,000 (one in each part of the UK) for pilot projects to test ways of embedding high-quality money guidance and support for young adults between 18 to 25 at key checkpoints on their journeys to financial independence.

This report provides an overview of the Youth Checkpoints pilot project in Wales, including an analysis and evaluation of the project process, developments, findings, learning and recommendations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

ProMo-Cymru and Youth Cymru were commissioned to research and test what works well and less well to target young adults at key checkpoints and to integrate financial capability provision into these ecosystems.

ProMo-Cymru is a charity and social enterprise working to ensure young people and communities are informed, engaged, connected and heard. We work collaboratively to make links between people and services using creativity and digital technology.

Youth Cymru is a major youth work charity operating within the whole of Wales. We collaborate with our members and other youth-facing organisations to provide unique, innovative and life changing opportunities, projects and programmes, to improve the lives of young people.

APPROACH



ProMo-Cymru and Youth Cymru ensured the project was co-designed by young people and practitioners supporting them, using a Service Design methodology.

THIS METHODOLOGY HAS FOUR PHASES:

DISCOVER,
DEFINE,
DEVELOP,
DELIVER.

Service Design is a method for improving the quality of services, and to deliver services which best meet the needs of users. This ensures solutions are designed based on the needs and requirements of users. Both organisations have extensive experience in co-designing with young people.

As part of the **DISCOVERY** phase, ProMo-Cymru and Youth Cymru consulted with over 6,000 young people and practitioners through online and face-to-face methods. This research then fed into the **DEFINE** stage where we analysed and grouped our findings into key insights. We then **DEVELOPED** 3 prototypes to test our ideas. The feedback from these prototypes resulted in us **DELIVERING** a set of recommendations that will feed into Wales and UK financial capability programmes.



DISCOVERY

The **DISCOVERY** phase of the project was carried out between October 2019 and February 2020. ProMo-Cymru and Youth Cymru commenced the project by undertaking desk-based research which included reviewing existing online and digital financial resources aimed at supporting young adults transitioning into adulthood as well as an extensive literature review of previous MaPS research.

To gain deeper insight into the issues and understand the Welsh perspectives, we conducted face-to-face consultations with 1,015 young people at Skills Cymru events, colleges, and youth centres across Wales.

We also ran digital polls on Instagram and Facebook, successfully gathering 5,482 online responses from young people. Using Instagram Ad Manager, we were able to target and 'push' our survey to 18-25 year olds living in Wales. Only young people whose profiles met those criteria were able to see and respond to the polls.

IN ADDITION, WE ALSO CONSULTED WITH 30 PRACTITIONERS FROM ITEC, ADTRAC, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES AND BRIDGEND COLLEGE. THESE PRACTITIONERS WORKED PRIMARILY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE ABOUT TO ENTER THE WORKPLACE, PROVIDING THEM WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PREPARATION OPPORTUNITIES.

We found the following findings most relevant to our project and they provided a context for this current research.

KEY INSIGHT 1

Young people presently acquire most of their financial information and habits (both good and bad) from parents and family members.

“My mum told me to save every month if I have a wage coming in. You don’t see the money, so you don’t spend it. Put in a separate account.”

“I watched my mum struggle with money when I was growing up, and it took her ages to get out of it. I decided I didn’t want to be in the same boat.”

KEY INSIGHT 2

Many young people lack financial capability, confidence and resilience.

“I’m always stuck in a cycle of paying in arrears.”

“I racked up an unplanned overdraft of £900+, and it was a complete nightmare because I didn’t know that they charged [interest] for it. I had to declare myself bankrupt, so my credit score is rubbish now.”

“Citizens Advice worked out that it will be 6 years before I’m debt-free. In 10 years, I might be able to have a life, but if I don’t spend anything, it’s going to take 6 years. I’m already buying the cheapest food range.”

KEY INSIGHT 3

Young people are hesitant to ask for help, and to identify there is a financial problem and talk about it.

“I don’t want to talk about it. I don’t want to put it on other people. It’s my fault, so I need to deal with it.”

“I’ll ask for help only if I’m struggling with money and don’t have anything to live off.”

“It feels too personal to speak [about my problems]. I’d have to be really in trouble before I spoke to someone.”

KEY INSIGHT 4

Young people become better at managing their money when they have increased responsibilities (family or caring) in their lives.

“The mindset of having to look after a child has changed me. I have responsibilities now, so I check [my finances] everyday via writing things down, keeping lists of things and using online banking.”

“I put away £100 a month for my daughter.”

KEY INSIGHT 5

There is a lack of clear and simple-to-understand financial advice for young people across multiple platforms (for which they expressed a preference).

“I want someone to be direct with me in language I understand. More likely to ignore it when I don't understand it.”

“Making it easy to understand. If I am looking for investment advice, I need it in plain English and not financial jargon.”

“Informal. At the moment, the language is very formal.”

“Ease, readily available, simplistic, apps, videos.”

“Instead of seeing lots of information/text, maybe a video?”

“Simplified guidance to make it more accessible.”

KEY INSIGHT 6

There is a lack of money related support services tailored for young people.

“[It would be helpful] having a website available that has a money advice directory for all the things I need to find. MaPS needs to be more accessible to young people.”

“Services talk to you about where you are now and have a go at us for making bad decisions rather than suggesting solutions. Nobody teaches you this stuff, so how am I supposed to get it right?”

“They don’t care. There’s no empathy; we’re just a number to them. It’s taken me a year and a half, and I haven’t got anywhere.”

“The Money and Pension Service (MaPS) website and advice line. [I] didn’t know that they could help young people. I thought it was for old people and pensions.”

KEY INSIGHT 7

Many practitioners lack training and confidence to support young people on financial capability.

“I would go to a colleague to get advice; this isn’t my area of expertise, and I don’t want to get anything wrong, especially as it’s such an important thing to get right.”

“I think it’s important to get the bigger picture; it might be money problems, but it usually means there’s something else going on. As a youth worker, I can’t turn away from that.”

“I wouldn’t offer advice - I’m not trained to do it, and I’m not comfortable doing something like that.”

DEFINE

With the evidence and insights gathered from the **DISCOVERY** phase, we began the process to generate ideas to create positive change.

Over several full-day discussion sessions, we critically analysed our findings. We began by going through all our primary and secondary research and pulling out the most relevant findings for the project. We looked for common, reoccurring themes. We discussed and drilled down to the root cause of the issues.



WE IDENTIFIED A VARIETY OF RESOURCES AND RESPONSES THAT WOULD AND COULD CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE.

OUR INITIAL LIST OF POTENTIAL PROTOTYPES INCLUDED:

- 1 A triage system to help practitioners categorise young people as a way to better identify their needs.
- 2 Online and virtual reality games, to allow young people to explore scenarios, actions, options and consequences before they become real-life problems.
- 3 Real-life case studies - sliding door type scenarios.
- 4 A website and social media content for young people to access engaging and accessible financial articles and information.
- 5 Support for parents to be able to develop their children's financial capability.
- 6 A helpline service which practitioners could refer young people to.
- 7 Training for practitioners to support young people on financial capability.
- 8 A website and set of resources for practitioners to use with young people.
- 9 One-to-one mentoring and money coaching.

DEVELOPING PROTOTYPES



Previous research has shown that young people tended to reach out to trusted adults like youth practitioners when they needed information and advice. Therefore equipping practitioners with the right knowledge and tools to support young people on financial capability support would be an effective approach.

We hypothesised that by providing financial capability training to practitioners and developing a website with a curated list of useful resources and tools and having a youth-focused helpline that practitioners can signpost young people to, would enable young people to receive better financial support at a key teachable moment.

The resources available to us within the scope of the project and the timescale we needed to adhere to meant that we narrowed down our prototypes to three interlinking prototypes:

- 1 A HELPLINE SERVICE WHICH PRACTITIONERS COULD REFER YOUNG PEOPLE TO.
- 2 TRAINING FOR PRACTITIONERS TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE ON FINANCIAL CAPABILITY.
- 3 A WEBSITE AND SET OF RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS TO USE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

The aim of these three prototypes working together was to simplify the pathway of support.

PROTOTYPE 1

YOUTH MONEY HELPLINE

ProMo-Cymru runs the Meic helpline, which provides information and guidance, signposting and advocacy to young people in Wales. The advisors use a holistic approach to work towards the outcome of what a person can do for themselves. It is rights-based and led by what matters most to the young person.

The helpline is a universal service and supports young people with any issue, however to date the helpline receives very few calls (less than 2%) from young people looking for advice on money, savings and credit.

Building on this existing resource, skill and experience, we were able to pilot the concept of a helpline service which practitioners could refer young people to.

We decided that this was an effective way to test this concept, because the advisors were already trained with the foundational skills of running a young person helpline and we already had the infrastructure in place.

Two ProMo-Cymru helpline advisors completed Train-the-Trainer programme on financial capability.

10 young people were recruited and attended a briefing over Zoom. The young people were aged between 18-25 and had a range of personal circumstances including being in full-time education, leaving full-time education, job seeking, part-time employed, furloughed and facing redundancy.

At the initial briefing, they were supported to create money-related questions and scenarios based on their real experiences in preparation to test the helpline.

Young people were given a time slot of 30 minutes for the following day and asked to contact the helpline. 30% of contacts were made using online chat, 30% over text and 40% were over the phone.

After the testing, the participants filled out an online evaluation survey, and the following week, they attended an evaluation session over Zoom. The helpline advisors provided a breakdown of the contacts, participated in an evaluation session over Zoom and took part in a most significant change evaluation.

PROTOTYPE 2

TRAINING FOR PRACTITIONERS



A central objective of this project was to identify how financial capability could be embedded successfully into key transition points for young adults aged 18-25.

We developed a Train-the-Trainer programme (4 x 1.5 hour weekly webinars) in response to our learning and insights from the DISCOVERY and DEFINE phases.

THE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAMME OUTCOMES INCLUDED:

- ◆ Clearer messaging
- ◆ Face-to-face practitioners more equipped and confident to help young people
- ◆ Online practitioners more equipped and confident to help young people
- ◆ More relevant resources
- ◆ Improved understanding of key strategies and referral routes
- ◆ Earlier intervention to prevent a crisis
- ◆ Greater consistency of support
- ◆ Greater collaboration
- ◆ More young people accessing support

The training content was developed to test a variety of topics, in response to needs identified during consultations with practitioners.

SESSION 1: Exploring financial capability and financial wellbeing, the current national strategy and an overview of the project.

SESSION 2: Youth Practice Outcomes Framework and the project prototype website.

SESSION 3: Young Adults' Outcomes Framework, segmentation (cushioned, struggling, squeezed) and the Meic Helpline.

SESSION 4: Savings, managing credit, toolkits and resources and embedding in your curriculum.

PROTOTYPE 3

RESOURCES WEBSITE

The resources website was designed to accompany the Train-The-Trainer programme. We built a simple database using an online tool called Notion to enable practitioners to quickly find and re-visit the tools and information covered during the course.



THE RESOURCES WERE CATEGORISED UNDER 3 MAIN HEADINGS.



Online Information Hubs (MaPS and Money Advice Service)



Signposting Young People to Further Support and Info (Meic and The Mix)



Info, Strategies and Resources to Support Delivery

DELIVERY -

Our Recommendations

The learning and feedback from our prototypes validated our hypothesis and existing evidence for improving money guidance. Crucially, we created a pathway of support, which begins where young people are at key teachable moments.

These important findings from Wales should be publicised widely among practitioners and key decisions-makers.



AS PART OF THE FINAL DELIVERY STAGE OF OUR SERVICE DESIGN PROCESS, WE HAVE CREATED 8 RECOMMENDATIONS.

1

ADOPT A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PROVIDE MONEY GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Every young person who tested the youth money helpline prototype presented money related issues that were woven into a wide range of other issues. To effectively support young people's money issues, these need to be dealt with and considered in context with their wider life circumstances.

2

DEVELOP BILINGUAL YOUTH-FRIENDLY MONEY RELATED RESOURCES.

This was a recurrent theme that came up throughout the entirety of the project. During the **DISCOVERY** phase, we found that young people didn't feel many services were for them because they were adult-focused. During the helpline testing, the advisors identified a gap in bilingual youth-friendly digital resources to signpost young people to.



3

DEVELOP A CLEAR NAVIGATION PATHWAY OF SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES.

Our research uncovered a lack of clarity amongst practitioners over how best to support young people with financial matters and where to signpost them on to. To ensure practitioners are equipped and confident to do this, they need to be part of a clear consistent pathway.

National helplines have the potential, with training, to provide a clear pathway, enabling practitioners to link young people through to other resources and support. The added benefit that the helpline can deal with any issue that a young person experiences (money related or otherwise), further adds strength to the pathway.



4

USE MODERN COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE SUBJECT OF MONEY.

We were able to gather **5,482** responses from young people through online, quick answer polls on Instagram and reach **4,265** with money related posts created in both Welsh and English. This is a positive indication that young people will engage with money content if promoted in the right way, over the right channels.



5

RAISE AWARENESS AMONGST PRACTITIONERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS, SO THEY CAN BETTER IDENTIFY UNDERLYING MONEY ISSUES AND PROVIDE MORE RELEVANT AND APPROPRIATE SUPPORT.

During the **DISCOVERY** phase, it became clear that support and interventions were not always tailored to meet young people's specific needs. The MaPS Market Segmentation was a particularly useful tool to use with practitioners to help them to better tailor support to meet young people's different needs.

Early indications from the youth money helpline pilot showed that advisors were more able to identify underlying money issues following the training.



6

DEVELOP SPECIALIST TRAINING FOR YOUTH PRACTITIONERS TO EQUIP THEM TO BE MORE CONFIDENT TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Train-the-Trainer prototype clearly demonstrated that there is not only a demand for financial capability training amongst practitioners, but also an improvement in their confidence and ability to support the young people they work with.

This training has the potential to develop greater confidence, ability and skills to enable practitioners and organisations to deliver research-informed support by embedding it within an existing provision.

7

MAKE THE EXISTING MAPS RESOURCES AND TOOLS MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PRACTITIONERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO USE AND FIND.

During the training programme, it became evident that many MaPS resources such as the Young Adults' and the Youth Practice Outcome Frameworks have real potential in terms of developing a “new” impactful assessment tool, that could help shape the support needed by young adults. These frameworks could be further simplified to allow them to be more accessible for time-poor practitioners.

We also found that despite there being a whole range of resources available, the practitioners and young people we engaged with had difficulty finding the information they needed. This should be addressed using suggestions in **Recommendation 4**.

8

USE A COMBINATION OF ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING FOR PRACTITIONERS.

The Train-the-Trainer prototype demonstrated that an online learning programme and platform has real relevance particularly to practitioners and organisations who are primarily young adult facing and challenged in terms of time and opportunity to engage with additional learning.

However, it became clear during delivery that for any training programme to be effective, it would need to combine online provision with face-to-face opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We would like to thank the young people and practitioners who took part in this work. Their contribution will go towards supporting the better provision of financial information of young people in Wales.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This project was supported by the Money and Pensions Service as part of its Working-Age (Savings and Credit) Pathfinder Programme. The Money and Pensions Service has commissioned RSM UK to conduct an independent evaluation of the pathfinders programme, and expects to publish the final report from this study in December 2020 at <https://moneyandpensionservice.org.uk/>