



Evaluation of Connect, Engage, Listen, Transform (CELT)

MARCH 2023

Torfaen County Borough Council

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This evaluation was tasked with assessing the delivery and outcomes of the Connect, Engage, Listen, Transform (CELT) programme, involving projects delivered across 10 participating Local Authorities (LA). York Consulting LLP (YCL) was commissioned by Torfaen County Borough Council to undertake this evaluation.
- 1.2 The primary inputs into this evaluation have been:
- Review of project and programme documentation.
 - Qualitative interviews with LA stakeholders.
 - Qualitative interviews with referral and delivery partner staff.
 - Qualitative insight gained from project beneficiaries through interviews and case studies.
 - Analysis of quantitative data relevant to the programme's delivery and outcomes.

Introduction to Connect, Engage, Listen, Transform

- 1.3 CELT was funded by the UK government's Community Renewal Fund (CRF). The project had a collaborative approach with a central management team based in Torfaen County Borough Council (CBC). Leadership of the project sat with the programme board which included representation from the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership (CCRSP) to ensure alignment with local and regional priorities and to drive the development of the regional employability model.
- 1.4 CELT aimed to address employability and skills across the 10 LA areas with a flexible approach enabling differing combinations of activities depending on LA needs. The participating LAs were; Blaenau Gwent CBC, Bridgend CBC, Caerphilly BCB, Cardiff Council, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Torfaen CBC and Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- 1.5 Programme approval was received in November 2021 with the initial programme closure date of 30th June 2022. However, after the extension of CRF funded delivery, the revised programme completion date was December 2022, giving the delivery partners an additional six months to reach their project targets relating to outcomes.
- 1.6 The overall budget for CELT was £1.9 million which was split between the delivery partners depending on activities being delivered and the numbers of participants targeted. The overall aim was to engage and support 1,130 participants.
- 1.7 The programme was designed to pilot and trial a range of engagement activities alongside new employability interventions. There was also a focus on specific industry sectors in some LA areas to target priority industries.
- 1.8 There were no set eligibility criteria relating to individuals' economic status, prior qualification level, age or gender or address¹. Instead, the programme was aimed at

¹ Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

engaging and supporting individuals furthest from the labour market. Predominantly these individuals were long-term unemployed and economically inactive. The focus was set on assessing an individual's needs as these individuals may experience multiple complex needs and barriers, to gain sustainable employment. In some cases, the CELT model aimed to engage these participants so they could receive employment support from other projects, or aimed to support individuals to access services such as the benefits system.

1.9 In keeping with the ethos of furthest from the labour market, potential gaps in the current employability offer, and the specific priorities of the individual LAs, the programme identified several specific target groups:

- Rural communities.
- Those living in the most deprived communities as identified through the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or those with relatively low economic activity.
- People who are homeless or at risk of housing exclusion, hostel and supported accommodation residents.
- Carers.
- People with work limiting health conditions (WLHC) or impairments.
- Prison leavers.
- Those who are digitally excluded.
- Those with little or no experience of work and require support in making career choices.

Report structure

1.10 This report covers the following sections:

- Methodology.
- Rationale and policy fit.
- Programme design.
- Programme delivery and implementation.
- Programme performance.
- Future recommendations.
- Key findings.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The evaluation was designed to address the impact and effectiveness of CELT in terms of:

- The impact of the programme on participants.
- The impact of the programme upon the community and wider society.
- The impact of engagement activities and interventions.
- The impact of advice and guidance given to participants.
- The management of the programme.
- Future recommendations.

2.2 The evaluation method covered a two-stage process: interim assessment and final assessment. A range of stakeholders were involved in different aspects of the evaluation as outlined as follows:

Interim assessment

2.3 Initial meetings with Torfaen County Borough Council representatives for CELT took place to understand the basic programme operation on 9th May 2022.

2.4 This was followed by introductions to the Operational Delivery Group (ODG) on the 25th May 2022 and Strategic Management Board (SMB) on 10th June 2022.

2.5 Review of key documents and data sources included:

- CRF application form.
- CRF activity and finance profiles.
- Activity log and participant timesheet templates.
- Project interest and project referral forms.
- Outcome Referral Form.
- Participant enrolment and exit forms.
- Participant reports.

2.6 An evaluation framework was designed to articulate success criteria for the evaluation. Within this, the evaluation questions, stakeholder groups, engagement methodologies and quantitative analysis techniques were specified (Appendix A).

2.7 The interim evaluation focused on:

- The way in which CELT was established.
- The overall design of the programme.
- How well the central administration of CELT was functioning.
- How effectively the programme was identifying and engaging with the intended participants across the 10 LAs.

- How the programme was helping participants to overcome barriers to employment, to acquire job-relevant skills and to progress within the labour market.
- Whether CELT was being delivered as intended.
- The nature of support being delivered.
- Programme performance.
- How effective CELT was in enabling pathways into employment, focussing on specific industry sectors.
- Characteristics of participants.

2.8 Interviews with a variety of stakeholders allowed qualitative data to be collected and analysed. These interviews took place virtually through Microsoft Teams on an individual or group basis. Insight was gained from 27 interviews with stakeholders across all 10 LAs including Operational Delivery Group members, delivery staff, referral partners and participants. Performance analysis of management information was assessed against targets.

Final assessment

2.9 After the interim report, focus of the evaluation moved towards the outcomes and impacts the programme has achieved. This involved qualitative and quantitative research with the direct beneficiaries of the programme. The key aspects of this stage of the evaluation involved:

- Further Stakeholder consultations across the 10 LAs, including individuals from referral and delivery partner organisations.
- Participant interviews and case studies.
- MI performance analysis.
- Final report.

Fieldwork summary

2.10 Across the 10 participating LAs operational and strategic partners were contacted with support of the central management team at Torfaen County Borough Council. The additional stakeholders were gained through dialogue with operational staff members at each LA.

2.11 A summary of stakeholder insights gained throughout the evaluation is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder insight

Stakeholder	Number of individuals
Strategic	11
Operational	14
Referral partner	11
Delivery partner	11
Participants	34

Source: York Consulting LLP, 2022

3 RATIONALE AND POLICY FIT

Rationale

- 3.1 The rationale of the CELT programme was to identify participants' individual needs and support them towards sustainable work across 10 LAs in South East Wales by trialling various engagement and intervention methods. These methods were designed to assess the needs and barriers of individuals seeking employment, thus improving targeted delivery to improve employment outcomes in the future.
- 3.2 With a focus on supporting those not engaged with existing employability provision, the spectrum of engagement and intervention models allowed CELT to engage with unemployed individuals who have complex barriers to entering the labour market.
- 3.3 The CELT programme identified the gaps in employability provision and acknowledged the following groups to target specific support; rural communities, deprived communities, homeless or at risk of housing exclusion, carers, people with health conditions or impairments, prison leavers, digitally excluded and those who require support in making career choices.
- 3.4 CELT aimed to offer employability programmes which consider participants' full employability journey and provided holistic support to individuals to help support them into relevant, sustainable employment opportunities.
- 3.5 To achieve this, CELT was designed to address 9 key local growth priorities, formed from the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Employment and Skills Plan. Table 2 illustrates the key priorities for each LA and how the programme aimed to achieve these outcomes.

Table 2: Local growth priorities

Local Growth Priority	Priority for	How does the programme contribute
Sustained increase in economic output	BCBC, BGCBC, CC, NCC, TCBC, VoG	The programme will increase participation in the labour market, improving productivity and boosting GVA/GDHI
High skilled employment for local residents and new pathways to prosperity	BGCBC, NCC, TCBC	The Priority Industry Engagement (PIE) activity will create pre-employment pathways into starter roles in priority, high skilled sectors (including advanced manufacturing & digital)
Secure employment for residents	CCBC, MCC, MTCBC, TCBC	
Be socially inclusive, supporting vulnerable groups into employment OR To reduce social and economic inequalities	CC, BCBC, MCC, MTCBC, RCTCBC, TCBC, VoG	The programme will test new engagement methods & targeted interventions to help vulnerable groups who are furthest from the labour market to access employability provision.

Recognise the importance of wellbeing in encouraging social inclusion	CCBC, MCC, RCTCBC, TCBC	This programme will provide rapid access to clinical counselling and physiotherapy services where identified as an employment barrier. We will trial group workshops delivered by clinical and business experts covering health, psychological health, well-being and exercise.
Develop economic resilience through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.	BCBC, BGCBC, TCBC	Our 1:1 caseworker model will tailor support & activity to individuals throughout their employability journey
Improve local skills through training, apprenticeships, & volunteer opportunities	BCBC, TCBC, VoG	The PIE activities will explore ways of engaging local employers in skills development, including procuring their time for "try before you qualify" activities as a bridge between employability and apprenticeships.
COVID-19: Support people at risk of losing their job through qualifications, employability, apprenticeships, alternative employment etc.	CC, TCBC	This programme offers a unique approach to self-employment support. It provides intensive, in person, 1:1 support on the basics of starting up a business to those with no prior knowledge or experience.
Support the establishment and success of small businesses	BGCBC, MTCBC, TCBC	

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

UKCRF objectives

- 3.6 The UK Community Renewal Fund aimed to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. These were the 4 key investment priorities:
- Investment in skills.
 - Investment for local business.
 - Investment in communities and place.
 - Supporting people into employment.
- 3.7 The UKCRF funding enabled CELT to use various innovative pilots to achieve these investment priorities, with a primary focus on supporting people into employment

and to ensure that everyone has the skills they need to take advantage of the opportunities in their local area.

3.8 The Community Renewal Fund Prospectus² set out interventions within these investment priority areas. The following were identified as relevant to the CELT programme:

- Work-based training to address specific local need from local employers.
- Retraining, upskilling or reskilling members of the workforce.
- Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion.
- Promoting rural connectivity via digital connectivity.
- Supporting people to engage with local services which support them on their journey towards employment.
- Identifying and addressing any potential barriers these individuals may face in gaining employment or moving closer to the labour market.
- Raising aspirations, supporting individuals to access Plan for Jobs employment support, jobs and find sustainable employment.
- Supporting people to gain the basic skills they need to develop their potential for sustainable work.
- Testing what works in helping people move towards work via different interventions and targeted approaches.

Funding

3.9 The total planned cost of the CELT programme totalled £1,909,798. This funding package was made up of 99.4% revenue funding with two capital spend items totalling £12,500 relating to adaptations to the mobile outreach bus and fixed signage for the one-stop-shop.

3.10 Table 3 illustrates that the programme spend was focused on 4 priority places, with 6 non-priority places receiving 47.7% of the funding. The 4 priority places included Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen.

Table 3: Planned funding by priority places

Place	Amount	Percentage
Priority places (4) * ³	£999,633	52%
Non-priority places (6)	£910,165	48%
Total	£1,909,798	100%

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

3.11 Table 4 illustrates the spending across categories, highlighting that the largest cost (nearly 60%) related to direct staff costs, particularly delivery staff comprising of delivery coordinators, outreach and caseworker staff. The highest non-staff cost was procurement, totalling £197,800 (10.36%) which was almost one-third of non-

² [UK Community Renewal Fund: prospectus 2021-22 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614442/UK_Community_Renewal_Fund_prospectus_2021-22.pdf)

³ * Identifies the following 4 priority places: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen

staff costs. Other non-direct staff costs comprised of travel allowances, materials and equipment, participant grants/wages and venue hire.

- 3.12 Staff costs were calculated on a full-time equivalent (FTE) post basis for salary and permitted on-costs. This was used to calculate a cost for each month of delivery for each staff line by each delivery provider.

Table 4: CELT spending across categories

Cost Category	Amount	Percentage
Direct staff costs	£1,173,958	62%
Direct non-staff costs	£559,753	29%
Overheads	£176,087	9%
Total	£1,909,798	100%

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

- 3.13 Table 5 demonstrates how the budget was allocated to each LA. The "Lead Authority" costs were understood to be applied by the Lead Authority on a percentage basis across all of the submitted applications and are not included within these totals.

Table 5: Financial allocation by delivery provider

Delivery Provider	Amount	%
Blaenau Gwent * ⁴	£109,182	5.7%
Bridgend	£274,817	14.4%
Caerphilly	£153,800	8.1%
Cardiff	£183,208	9.6%
Merthyr Tydfil *	£126,526	6.6%
Monmouthshire	£157,244	8.2%
Newport	£52,592	2.8%
Rhondda Cynon Taf *	£161,846	8.5%
The Vale of Glamorgan	£88,504	4.6%
Torfaen *	£374,622	19.6%
Torfaen Lead applicant	£227,457	11.9%
Total	£1,909,798	100.0%

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

Targets

⁴ * Identifies the following 4 priority places: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen

3.14 Table 6 illustrates the target groups CELT aimed to engage with, focusing predominantly on those who were economically inactive (61%) and those who were unemployed (33%). The CELT programme aimed to engage with some employed individuals (6%) due to the nature of the outreach and engagement activities.

Table 6: Target groups⁵

Delivery Provider	Economically Inactive	Unemployed	In Work	Total Participants
Blaenau Gwent	20	25	0	45
Bridgend	90	40	0	130
Caerphilly	75	0	0	75
Cardiff	105	107	43	255
Merthyr Tydfil	9	26	0	35
Monmouthshire	45	45	8	98
Newport	10	25	5	40
Rhondda Cynon Taf	214	0	0	214
The Vale of Glamorgan	44	29	0	73
Torfaen	83	68	14	165
Total	695	365	70	1,130

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

Protected Characteristics

3.15 The CELT programme recognised that vulnerable groups accessing CELT engagement activities were likely to hold protected characteristics. To ensure positive impacts for all, they completed a full impact assessment based on the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁶. The following characteristics were specifically identified:

- **Age:** The programme will support learners of all ages to engage / re-engage with the labour market. This will include young people (<25) and older residents.
- **Disability:** Residents with a health condition or impairment are one of the target groups for the engagement activities. The programme specifically aims to reduce the levels of economic inactivity as a result of ill health & disability, taking steps to reduce/ remove these barriers where identified.
- **Race:** We will seek to increase the confidence, health and economic activity of black Asian minority ethnic (BAME) communities.
- **Gender:** The programme will be supporting participants into employment and is in a good position to challenge traditional employment roles where gender stereotypes may exist and assist both males and females to take up and retain employment in non-traditional areas or industries where specific genders are underrepresented.

3.16 In addition, CELT sought to support the following vulnerable groups:

- People who are homeless or at risk of housing exclusion, hostel and supported accommodation residents.
- Carers.

⁵ Table sourced from Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

⁶ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials | GOV.WALES](#)

- Prison leavers.
- Those who are digitally excluded.
- People who live in socio-economically deprived communities with a poorer or worsening labour market position. This includes those living in rural communities and those living in areas that fall in the lower percentiles on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

3.17 The following groups, whilst not specifically targeted, were also able to benefit from CELT support in improving employment, improving health and wellbeing and access to services:

- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.

4 PROGRAMME DESIGN

- 4.1 CELT was the ambition of 10 LAs across the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), developed by members of the CCR Skills Partnership Local Authority cluster group to deliver against 3 key aims:
- To support those furthest from the labour market towards engaging with employability provision, mainstream services and employment.
 - To provide an evidence base of effective employability techniques.
 - To improve outcomes for individuals by closer collaboration across places and organisations by sharing knowledge, expertise and resources to allow holistic changes to employability provision.
- 4.2 The programme was designed to provide closer alignment with industry, particularly the RSP and CCR priority sectors in order to support long-term employment and long-run economic growth with a labour force that is able to meet the everchanging demands of the labour market. In particular construction, care and advanced manufacturing were identified and PIE pathways within the CELT programme.
- 4.3 Various Local Strategic Board members, Operational Delivery Group members, Operational Referral Group members and participants were consulted regarding their views on the overall design and central administration of the programme.
- 4.4 The CELT programme aimed to test out a range of approaches to engagement and intervention activities. The intended combinations of activities delivered by each LA, as defined in the original bid, is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: CELT intended engagement and intervention activities

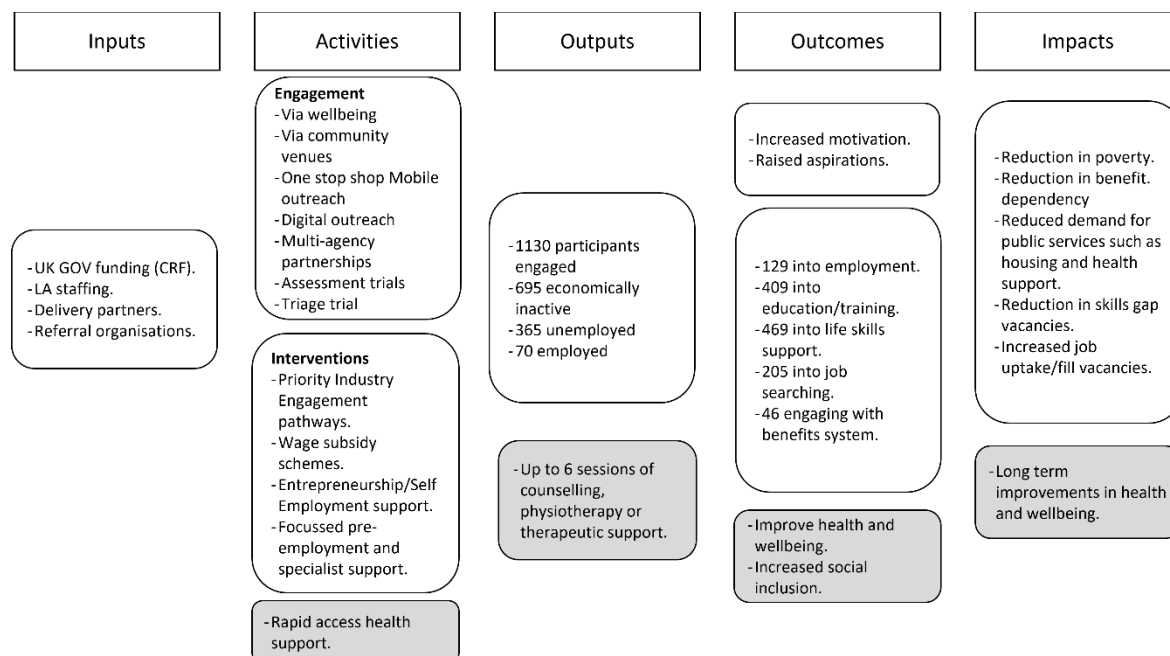
Activity	Blaenau Gwent	Bridgend	Caerphilly	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Newport	Rhondda Cynon Taf	The Vale of Glamorgan	Torfaen
Engagement										
Engagement via wellbeing			X	X		X	X	X		X
Engagement via community venues		X	X		X			X		
One-stop-shop										X
Mobile outreach						X				X
Digital outreach			X	X		X				X
Multi-agency partnerships		X						X	X	
Assessment trials						X		X		X
Triage trial		X				X				X
Interventions										
Priority Industry Engagement Pathways	X					X			X	X
Wage subsidy schemes					X				X	X
Rapid access health support						X		X		X
Entrepreneurship / Self Employment support	X	X				X				
Focused pre-employment and specialist support		X		X	X			X		

Source: Torfaen County Borough Council's UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form

- 4.5 A logic model was developed to set out the intended programme operation and how this would create outputs, outcomes and impacts for individuals accessing CELT projects (Figure 1 for a summary version of the logic model). This logic aligns with the ambitions of the programme and highlights the engagement and intervention activities in addition to the outputs and expected outcomes. This helped to inform the development of research tools to explore the processes, outcomes and impacts.

4.6 As the project aimed to support individuals with employability alongside health and wellbeing, two pathways were created in the logic model to demonstrate the different strands of delivery.

Figure 1: Logic model



Source: York Consulting 2022

Projects

4.7 Activities undertaken and target groups within the CELT programme varied between LAs. Summaries of the types of planned activities involved in each project are presented in Table 8. In some LAs there were different elements within their project funding.

Table 8: CELT projects

Project deliverer	Summary
Blaenau Gwent CBC	Community-based and digital outreach through social media to encourage uptake by young people not accessing other services. The development and trial of Youth Hubs in partnership with 's Youth Employment coaches (YEC) to offer advice and guidance. Direct employment related support through delivery of PIE pathways in Advanced Manufacturing in Materials, Construction and Digital industries focused on young people. Counselling and community psychologists to support health and wellbeing of the young people.
Bridgend CBC	Community-based outreach activities to boost engagement amongst hard-to-reach individuals to direct them towards various support projects through a triage process. Pre-employment activities are delivered to support progression onto other programmes of support under Employability Bridgend.
Caerphilly CBC	Community and digital outreach engaging individuals furthest from the labour market to promote engagement with employability

	provisions through wellbeing-based activities and Life Skills provision.
Cardiff CC	Outreach-based assistance (including provision of a tablet computer) to vulnerable groups, including refugees, to access support (housing, CV writing and job search) and training (e.g. language skills or numeracy) to progress onto qualifications or employment.
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	A) Intermediate Labour Market support within local tourism and hospitality businesses. B) Housing and Life Skills support for ex-offenders to prepare them for employment or qualification support.
Monmouthshire CC	A) Employment-related support delivering training and qualifications linked to self-employment, PIE pathways in construction and hospitality sectors and pre-employment activities to prepare individuals for work. B) Fast track wellbeing and health support delivered by accredited counsellors.
Newport CC	Confidence and wellbeing support to tackle isolation and upskill individuals in preparation to move closer to the labour market through group sessions, volunteering and sessions with the Family Intervention Worker.
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	A) Counselling, holistic psychological support, physiotherapy, occupational health advice, to improve the psychological and physical health and build resilience so participants are better able to secure employment. B) Training and mentoring support to ex-offenders getting them ready for employment.
Torfaen CBC	A) Community engagement and outreach delivering digital, housing, and life skills support to encourage engagement with employability provision. B) Employability support through work placements and wage-subsidised employment for employers within PIE pathways in construction and care. C) Health and wellbeing support delivered through group activities and workshops.
Vale of Glamorgan CBC	Pre-employment and wellbeing support focussed on long-term unemployed individuals building confidence and skills with provision of wage-subsidised PIE pathways and employment support in construction and care sectors.

Source: York Consulting 2022

Management

4.8 Torfaen County Borough Council managed the partnership of 10 LAs, facilitating regular meetings of the:

- Strategic Management Board.
- Operational Delivery Group.

- 4.9 Each LA provided regular project updates to Torfaen to support overall programme monitoring reported in monthly participant data reports and quarterly progress reports.

5 PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Set-up and management

- 5.1 As the programme covered 10 LA-based projects, with differing combinations of engagement and intervention activities, differences in delivery and implementation issues also existed between projects.
- 5.2 All LAs identified having regular operational and strategic meetings enabling representatives from all LAs to share current project and programme performance.
- 5.3 LA stakeholders all expressed positive views regarding these meetings, stating they were helpful in gaining insight on different aspects of the whole programme, due to differences in delivery.
- 5.4 Operational LA stakeholders regularly mentioned the helpful and supportive nature of the meetings where ideas and concerns could be expressed. Some operational stakeholders also highlighted the helpful nature of learning about the progress and complications of activities being piloted in other areas to help with any future considerations.
- 5.5 The CRF programme was initially intended to be implemented in a compressed timeframe with programme approval in November 2021 and an initial closure date of 30th June 2022. This deadline was then extended to 31st December 2022.
- 5.6 Commencement of the CELT programme varied between LA areas due to late sign-off on contracts and staffing constraints.
- 5.7 The first claim period ran until the 30th April 2022. By this time all LA areas had launched their project with engagement and intervention activities taking place. A summary of reported delays are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Delivery timescales

Project deliverer	Delays reported
Blaenau Gwent CBC	Support delivered from 1 st February
Bridgend CBC	CELT project launched 1 st March
Caerphilly CBC	CELT co-ordinator role filled 1 st March
Cardiff CC	Some staffing started 28 th March
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Ex-Offender Employment Mentor started 14 th April
Monmouthshire CC	None reported
Newport CC	Delays in contract sign off so project launched in April
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Relationship Agreement signed 28 th March but delivery from 28 th February
Torfaen CBC	None reported
Vale of Glamorgan CBC	None reported

Source: York Consulting 2022

- 5.8 It must also be noted that although some LA areas struggled to get staff in-post in some cases, this did not impact the entirety of the activities taking place due to multiple streams of delivery.

5.9 Despite delays in programme delivery, overall, operational stakeholders from each of the 10 LA areas identified having strong partnerships across the programme and were positive about the leadership and management of the programme as a whole.

Marketing and referrals

5.10 As identified in Table 10 each LA area had varying combinations of engagement activities, thus resulting in differing marketing approaches. Over the course of engagement and delivery within the CELT programme, some areas undertook different activities than originally anticipated.

Table 10: CELT delivered engagement activities by LA area

Activity	Blaenau Gwent	Bridgend	Caerphilly	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Newport	Rhondda Cynon Taf	The Vale of Glamorgan	Torfaen
Engagement										
Engagement via wellbeing	(x)		X	X		X	X	X		X
Engagement via community venues		X	X		X			X	(x)	
One-stop-shop										X
Mobile outreach	(x)					X				X
Digital outreach	(x)		X	X		X				X
Multi-agency partnerships	(x)	X					(x)	X	X	
Assessment trials						X		X		X
Triage trial		X				X				X

(x) = Additional activities delivered as of July 2022

Source: Torfaen UKCRF application form and York Consulting 2022

5.11 The following sections discuss the 8 engagement activities that took place across all 10 LA's, highlighting some areas of success and challenge experienced throughout the programme's delivery.

Engagement via wellbeing

5.12 The majority of LA's engaged participants through wellbeing activities. Such activities included wellbeing walks, yoga and mindfulness classes and gardening projects. Across all LAs implementing such approaches, LA stakeholders identified the successful nature of doing so. A number of LA stakeholders noted that such activities were not a priority, or in some cases, not possible with other employability programmes.

- 5.13 A large number of stakeholders emphasised the importance of engagement through wellbeing, not only to encourage individuals not previously accessing support, but to act as a building block for relationship development with LA staff, and confidence building to help with any future employability support the individuals may require.

“This project has allowed us to focus on meeting individuals’ wellbeing needs first, which provides them with greater confidence and a positive experience with the authority before consideration of direct employability support.” Caerphilly Operational Stakeholder

“Focussing on wellbeing activities has helped engage those furthest from the labour market, especially those who have been out of work for a long time. They see them as confidence building activities that are voluntary, as soon as they see activities as more mandatory, they can back away.” Vale of Glamorgan Operational Stakeholder

- 5.14 The following case journey demonstrates progression towards employability.

Participant Case Journey 1 (Caerphilly)

A 41-year-old female, who was out of work due to disability became aware of the CELT project when a LA operational stakeholder attended an ASDA coffee morning to advertise the support on offer.

Prior to engaging with the project, she described herself as lacking in confidence and feeling very isolated. She was interested in the support when she heard there was a focus on confidence building and classes related to arts and crafts. She was hopeful that she would feel less isolated if she attended the classes and improved her ability to interact with new people.

“I liked learning new skills whilst meeting people in a similar situation to me.”

Throughout her time engaging with the CELT project, she attended a variety of sessions including pottery and ceramics. She described the sessions as very welcoming and was grateful about the advice and guidance she was given about other support that was on offer elsewhere.

“I do not have any childcare available for my toddler so I was extremely grateful to be able to bring them along so I could access the support and sessions”

Although the participant’s employment situation had not changed, due to being out of work for disability reasons, overall, the participant was very satisfied with the support she received and had recommended the support to 3 friends.

“It has really increased my confidence being able to meet new people, my mental health, anxiety would have definitely worsened without it, and I would have felt more isolated”

Engagement via community venues

- 5.15 Community venues were commonly used as access points to garner engagement from the community, whilst also frequently used as locations for project delivery.
- 5.16 Public advertisement of the CELT offer in each area was commonly employed in community libraries. For example, regular outreach activities through public libraries in the Vale of Glamorgan led to local libraries also sharing the CELT project, and what was offered, on their own social media pages.
- 5.17 A few instances were reported by LA operational staff that challenges were faced at the beginning stages of project delivery. These centred around difficulties completing COVID-based risk assessments or COVID restrictions limiting the use of community centres for marketing and engagement activities for the first few months of 2022. Some stakeholders also mentioned apprehension by individuals to meet in-person again. This led to delays in engagement and resulted in operational staff re-organising original planned activities to focus on engagement in other ways in the early stages of project delivery.

Example: Caerphilly's engagement via community venues and wellbeing.

Caerphilly has a variety of employability provision on offer, however, they found themselves struggling to engage with long-term unemployed and economically inactive participants. CELT staff had attended community venues, coffee mornings, food banks and completing leaflet drops to increase their presence within the community. The leaflet did not emphasise the employability aspect of the project to ensure the targeted individuals are not put-off.

Through delivery of confidence building activities and early level employability skills such as pottery and driving theory test classes at community venues, LA stakeholders formed and built relationships with these individuals to improve their engagement. Marketing materials emphasised the supportive nature of the project improving both confidence and wellbeing for participants. This supportive nature was also passed through when referrals onto other projects were made as participants got to meet with their new mentors prior to sign-off from CELT which has decreased drop-out between projects.

- 5.18 Outreach at community venues also included that of foodbanks and pantry services. Presence at these venues allowed CELT project staff to target support towards individuals in crisis and in need of immediate support.

Participant Case Journey 2 (Bridgend)

Whilst attending a foodbank in Bridgend, a female with a work limiting disability, came across a stand with CELT staff. She approached the stand as she was aware that she was coming to the end of her 6-visit allowance at the foodbank so wanted to seek some additional support.

“At the stand they were very friendly and welcoming offering a warm drink and a chat. I was not expecting anything from the staff as drives like this are normally directed towards getting a job. Instead, I received lots of support and information about other

providers of support for food and clothes, and grants I could apply to, like winter warmth.”

She reported being very satisfied with the advice and guidance she received as she had not heard of many of the services recommended. She also expressed feeling confident that the support staff she was in contact with each week were supportive and knowledgeable of her receipt of disability benefits.

“Although I could not get a job from the support, due to my disability, they helped me in so many other ways. They were comforting and supportive whilst also giving me confidence to access other support and grants once my food vouchers had come to an end.”

One-stop-shop

- 5.19 One marketing and engagement approach used in Torfaen, the One-stop-shop, was identified as an effective technique by multiple stakeholders from a variety of LA stakeholders. Those from other LA areas recognised and emphasised the inclusive and targeted nature of this approach. There have also been some discussions about including this approach in any future funding bids.

Example: Torfaen’s One-stop-shop

The ‘Pod’ in Cwmbran Town Centre partnered with the Eastern Valley Food Bank to become a registered food parcel distribution point. Thus, alongside targeting individuals doing their daily tasks at the shopping centre, those struggling with the cost of living and in need of food support were targeted for engagement.

“The success of the Pod as a distribution centre for food parcels led us to open a second location with a discreet text and delivery service. Individuals we provide for are able to access direct support for a variety of their needs at their time of greatest need.”

Foodbank manager

Individuals were supported in discussing any employment or skills needs they may have had alongside provision of support regarding finances and housing support. This support extended to access to, and support with, IT skills in relation to job searching and filling out any application forms to support with employability, claiming of benefits and housing support.

“Participants see the Pod as somewhere they can access help and support including conversations about any of their needs and how best to address them. We support them with anything we can, and direct to other services where we cannot.” LA operational stakeholder

The Pod has been identified as a crucial element for gaining high numbers of referrals, most commonly self-referrals, to the CELT project in Torfaen.

Mobile outreach

- 5.20 Monmouthshire and Torfaen LAs shared access to a converted minibus to increase accessibility to individuals in rural communities, and those with high volumes of economically inactive and unemployed people. The minibus externally advertised the project with CELT branding whilst also transporting CELT delivery staff out to local communities to advertise the projects and provide support as needed.
- 5.21 The success of the minibus varied between the two participating LA areas. Monmouthshire struggled to receive high numbers of referrals through the bus engagement activities, despite targeting areas of higher poverty and unemployment using NOMIS⁷ and Monmouthshire Authority data and advertising through social media.

Example: Torfaen Mobile outreach minibus

The CELT minibus in Torfaen consisted of community visits and partnership visits, for example to Cwmbran shopping centre and Pontypool town centre, where the bus was positioned in areas of high footfall.

The bus had also been out visiting local communities, schools and meeting residents not currently engaged with any services. The bus is decorated with CELT promotional activity and targeted areas which were hard to reach and generally had lower engagement with support services in recent years. The bus led to an increase in the number of self-referrals after individuals engaged with CELT staff out in the community on the bus.

Digital outreach

- 5.22 Digital outreach took a variety of forms across the CELT network of LAs. For some, the focus was on social media to advertise the project, good news stories achieved and upcoming events or activities for people to engage with. Overall, this outreach strategy had varying success, with some achieving a number of self-referrals from social media outreach, whilst others struggled. Those struggling attributed the difficulties and delays to internal marketing/publicity sign off procedures.
- 5.23 Digital outreach was also used as a form of engagement through provision of digital skills training and temporary or permanent access to IT equipment. The aim was to enable a greater number of individuals to access training, CV writing and job searching and application activities online.

Example: Cardiff Tablet Gifting scheme

A target was set to gift 255 internet enabled tablets, focussed on digitally excluded individuals, to reduce barriers to training and employment.

Provision of the tablets involved a 2-hour onboarding session which included introductions to the tablet. To improve digital skills amongst participants digital skills sessions were also delivered with the opportunity of 1-1 support.

⁷ Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

The tablets, alongside skills sessions, enabled participants to complete both informal and formal accredited courses online which in some cases led to employment. Other instances enabled participants to access training at their own pace which they had not previously been able to access due to caring responsibilities, disability, social anxiety and language barriers.

Participant Case Journey 3 (Cardiff)

A young participant came to Ely Hub with his mum in April 2022 as he wanted help to get into security work and eventually become a police officer. He was signed up to the Communities for Work project for assistance. However, as he was 17 he was unable to do the Security Industry Authority training. The CFW Youth Mentor got in contact with the training company who explained that there is a lot of pre learning required for the SIA course. They suggested he could work on that so he would be ready for the full training when he turned 18.

He only had access to a phone which was not compatible with the course, so the CFW Youth Mentor arranged to meet up regularly for him to complete Counter Terrorism online modules. However, in May the CFW Youth Mentor became aware of the CELT project as a manager attended the Youth Team Mentors meeting. The CFW Youth Mentor helped the young person apply so that he could get access to a tablet so he could complete the pre learning.

“It was straight forward for me – my mentor told me about the project when I explained I didn’t have access to IT at home. We completed the forms and I got the tablet to use.”

He was gifted a tablet and was shown how to use the tablet by the Digital Inclusion team. He was then able to complete the pre-learning at home achieving an Action Counters Terrorism certificate and was accepted onto the next SIA training course in August 2022.

“Without the support I received and the tablet I would not have had the opportunity to do the SIA training.”

Once he had completed the SIA training course, his aim was to apply for security work with the intention of working for the police in the future.

Multi-agency partnerships

- 5.24 Multi-agency partnerships were a focus for over half of the participating LA areas. By increasing the number of connections to organisations, many areas hoped to diversify referral routes for individuals due to a reduction in referrals prior to commencement of the CELT project.
- 5.25 Overall, these partnerships proved successful with some areas forming connections with organisations that had previously been lost, and with new organisations.

Example: Blaenau Gwent’s Multi-agency partnership

CELT in Blaenau Gwent developed and continued delivery of the Youth Hubs alongside DWP. Youth Employment Coaches from DWP operated inside Youth

Service Buildings, alongside CELT youth workers to deliver support, advice and guidance sessions with young people. Young people are then directed to any support or pathways available to them in the locality to fulfil their specific needs.

Youth Employment Coaches were surprised by the level of engagement by young people in the area. Young people reported a 'friendly approach' at these facilities, encouraging them to engage. This resulted in the DWP coaches engaging with young people that had not previously accessed support through DWP's buildings and services.

- 5.26 There was however varying success across some LAs with partnering with Health Boards and GP services for social prescribing. Although advertisement had taken place, some struggled to receive referrals from health settings. These areas identified that a health liaison officer role and agreements with local Health Boards in the future would enable increased engagement and support for individuals with longer-term illnesses.

Triage trial

- 5.27 Other LA areas undertook assessment and triage trials as part of their engagement activities. The triage process was undertaken in some LA areas to remove duplication of support between projects and to ensure participants were receiving the most suitable support depending on their circumstances.
- 5.28 Overall, the triage process worked well across all participating areas with increased referrals linked to social media and advertising campaigns. The needs of individuals were matched with available support on offer, with CELT adding a health and wellbeing, confidence building and pre-employment support focus to that already on offer in these areas.

Example: Bridgend's triage trial

One of the main focuses in Bridgend for CELT was to increase engagement with the community whilst also ensuring participants were being directed to the most suitable support given their circumstances. The work with community centres led to a high number of referrals who are not currently receiving any support from employability services. The triage service through CELT was able to identify the most suitable support for the individual and refer them onto these projects. Participants were involved in wellbeing, life skills and confidence building activities alongside pre-employment support such as CV writing as they waited to be referred onto project such as Bridges into Work which is advertised under the 'Employability Bridgend' banner.

Support delivered in the project

- 5.29 Similar to the engagement and marketing activities taking place, delivery of intervention activities varied between LA areas. There was some deviation from the original plans as identified in Table 11.

Table 11: CELT delivered intervention activities by LA area

Activity	Blaenau Gwent	Bridgend	Caerphilly	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Newport	Rhondda Cynon Taf	The Vale of Glamorgan	Torfaen
Interventions										
Priority Industry Engagement Pathways	X					X			X	X
Wage subsidy schemes					X				X	X
Rapid access health support	(x)					X		X		X
Entrepreneurship / Self Employment support	X	X				X			(x)	
Focused pre-employment and specialist support		X		X	X	(x)		X		

(x) = Additional activities delivered as of July 2022

Source: Torfaen UKCRF application form and York Consulting 2022

5.30 The vast majority of LA areas implemented employment or health-focused interventions to move participants closer to the labour market. Newport and Caerphilly, however, focussed on delivering engagement activities commonly related to confidence building and wellbeing. These aimed to increase engagement with these individuals and build relationships prior to referral onto other employment-focused projects within the LA.

Priority Industry Engagement (PIE) pathways

5.31 The Priority Industry Engagement (PIE) activities aimed to create pre-employment pathways into starter roles in priority, high skilled sectors.

5.32 Most LA areas aiming to implement these pathways reached out to priority sector organisations in the local area to provide work placements and volunteer positions for participants to gain experience. This aspect of the PIE activities was less successful with logistical and administrative challenges inhibiting placements. Two LA areas were unable to deliver a PIE pathways placement during the delivery period for CELT.

- 5.33 Operational staff reported challenges including delays due Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements for placements in care homes and lack of interest by participants due to health concerns inhibiting employment in care and construction settings. Overall, there were a number of comments by LA stakeholders suggesting set-up and management of PIE pathways with employers was time consuming and took longer than anticipated.
- 5.34 A couple of areas decided to either alter or expand the sectors they were originally targeting in an attempt to boost engagement by participants with varying degrees of success.
- 5.35 Another focus was placed on supplying training and qualifications in priority sectors for participants to support them to start roles in the future.

Example: Monmouthshire's PIE intervention

Originally aiming to support participants into roles in the Digital and Hospitality sector, Monmouthshire switched to Construction and Hospitality due to higher success rates with engagement.

Participants were given support to achieve sector specific qualifications, such as Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) cards, personal licencing and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licences.

These qualifications were delivered through in-house face-to-face and online delivery or outsourced through delivery partners. Operational partners noted great success in the Hospitality sector with delivery of qualifications such as Food Safety.

Funded training was limited to 5-day courses to decrease drop-out rates. Once participants had completed their courses or training, they were then offered additional support to aid them into employment including CV support and job searching.

Wage subsidy scheme

- 5.36 Wage subsidy schemes were implemented to offer participants 25-hours of subsidised employment over 8-week periods. The 8-week programmes enabled participants to gain hands-on experience in the workplace and access any training as required to support them into permanent employment. Participants experienced specific job roles, to see if it was something they would wish to continue in the future.
- 5.37 This scheme also benefitted local employers who were able to increase their workforce and could assess participants over a longer timeframe to establish whether they were right for the role and their company.

“The whole process ran very smoothly, CELT staff did a pre-screen, they were able to find us individuals who were willing to work and had interest in our line of work. Then it was like an 8-week long interview, we could see if we were a right fit for each other. We are very grateful to have employed all 4 sent to us.” Host employer in Torfaen

- 5.38 Throughout the placements, participants continued to receive support from CELT project staff with check-ins, observations and support to help individuals attend and complete their roles. Examples included provision of PPE, help with travel expenses and provision of a bicycle.
- 5.39 One LA area struggled to get employers in the local area on board to provide wage subsidised placements with LA stakeholders suggesting this was due to employers wanting to look for full-time employees to fill gaps as a priority.
- 5.40 Where employers were reached, and placements delivered, there were many cases of participants going onto permanent employment at the end of the 8-weeks. Employers were able to fill their vacancies, whilst feeling more secure with the individuals they have employed due to their 8-week long experience with the employees.

Example: Merthyr Tydfil's wage subsidy scheme

A routeway support mentor was appointed to assist the Intermediate Labour Market strand to encourage individuals to take up this offer and help employers with queries. The mentor was effective in matching individuals with the most suitable job roles whilst also keeping participants engaged.

This method led to a number of participants taking up full-time employment with the host employer. In other cases, participants were able to take up roles with other employers after extensive support and engagement by CELT staff.

Staff engagement with employers raised their awareness of skills gaps and skills needs. They then identified the training and qualifications needed to secure employment for participants, and meet the demand of employers.

There was great success in the hospitality sector with CELT enabling participants to complete qualifications such as Level 2 and 3 First Aid training, Level 2 Food Hygiene and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

Participant Case Journey 4 (Torfaen)

A 62-year-old female who had been unemployed for 3 years was actively looking for work, but struggling with no access to internet at home. She was attending Cwmbran library to use a computer when she came across the CELT Pod. She went inside to ask for support with job searching. When the staff asked her what qualifications she held, she mentioned she was a Level 3 qualified nursery nurse.

With this information, CELT staff were able to match her with a nursery in Pontypool who were looking to recruit at that level. She was offered an 8-week wage-subsidised placement opportunity at the nursery.

"It was such a quick process, I was in the Pod on Monday, visiting the nursery on Wednesday and I started the following Monday."

She was very grateful for the opportunity and support she received from CELT staff noting that she was not confident enough on computers to be applying for jobs online.

“Without this I would have still been unemployed and job searching, but not very successfully. I feel so much happier and healthier being back in work doing what I love.”

At the end of her 8-week placement she secured full-time employment.

Rapid access health support

- 5.41 Alongside employment support, CELT identified health support as a key focus to improve health and well-being in the long-term whilst also reducing the reliance on public services such as healthcare. Provision of short specialist interventions such as counselling and physiotherapy, alongside educational group workshops for health and well-being was implemented in some LA areas.
- 5.42 An example of successful implementation features included delivery partners accepting referrals from one consistent referral form and sharing of attendance data and dates for initial contact. This allowed for continuous evaluation and monitoring by CELT project staff.

Example: Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Rapid access health support

Individuals went through a triage and assessment process with an initial phone call assessment. Eligible participants then attended 6 sessions face-to-face or virtually, either counselling or physiotherapy. Referrals were received from parenting organisations, GPs and self-referrals due to word-of-mouth from previous participants.

Counselling was aimed at delivering ‘living life to the full’ training to address issues participants feel prevent them from entering the labour market. The demand for counselling outstripped that of physiotherapy.

Common outcomes for participants related to improved job seeking, life skills, and being referred onto partner organisations such as MIND and New Pathways.

- 5.43 Counselling and therapy support aimed to support individuals who were out of work for long periods of time who felt their mental health and wellbeing was holding them back from (re-)entering the labour market. Participants were equipped with management techniques and skills to support their mental health to provide strong foundations for when they were ready to enter the labour market again.

“Clients which the CELT team have referred to me have been on doctors waiting lists for months or even years trying to access counselling provision.” External counsellor Monmouthshire

- 5.44 The majority of counselling support was delivered through external partners, however, some in-house provision was utilised.

Participant Case Journey 5 (Monmouthshire)

An older female (50+) who had been made redundant during the COVID-19 interruptions came across the CELT project through her “my Monmouthshire app” she used for her local leisure centre. Initially she wanted to retrain and try something new, with a particular interest in counselling.

She was assigned a mentor through CELT where 1:1 discussions took place in person or over the phone. Through these discussions and wellbeing provision she was able to establish that she was not in a position to be considering training or work due to mental health reasons.

She was referred to the counselling delivery partner to take up 6 sessions.

“It was a 3-year waiting list for counselling support through my GP, I couldn’t believe I was able to get support so fast.”

Since starting the counselling support, she feels more confident in her ability to apply for roles in the future. Although at the time of interview, she did not feel ready to apply for jobs, she was working with her CELT mentor on her CV for when she was ready.

“Everyone was very supportive, and nothing felt like a tick-box exercise. Without this support I can’t bear to think what my situation would have been like.”

Entrepreneurship/self-employment support

- 5.45 Self-employment and entrepreneurship support was offered by a number of LAs and commonly took the form of support to undertake training and qualifications, alongside advice and guidance on setting up a business.

Example: Monmouthshire’s Entrepreneurship/Self-employment support

Participants were supported to identify training and qualifications required to start or develop their businesses. Cross referrals occurred with partnership organisations such as Business Wales whereby participants were referred in if they identified a desire to undertake training then returning to these partnership organisations. Participants either received full-funding or part-funding for training and qualifications depending upon ability to pay and cost of the courses.

This supported both individuals with running businesses to improve their offer and those wishing to explore self-employment for the first time. Monmouthshire worked alongside BIG Ideas Wales, Business Wales and the Prince’s Trust amongst others to refer self-employed individuals onto further support where required. Partners identified this offer by CELT as unique as no other project in the area funds training courses for self-employed individuals.

- 5.46 Some individuals accessing this support did not require any additional training or qualifications, instead they required support in relation to start-up costs, building a professional network and advice and guidance in relation to costs, account management and tax.

Participant Case Journey 6 (The Vale of Glamorgan)

A 60 year-old female who was actively searching for interior design roles found herself frequently getting rejected for roles.

“Interviewers saw me as overqualified, and I fear many of them did not want to employ me due to my age.”

She had previously lived abroad, working as an interior designer. She heard about the self-employment support on offer through a friend. She decided to approach the CELT project to help her start as self-employed in Wales as she was not confident in doing so having been working outside of the UK for a long time.

As she had no way of accessing the internet, when she first approached the CELT team she was given an internet enabled tablet to support the start-up of her business. She received advice in relation to setting up her business and was directed towards other partners who could follow up with more specialised support such as website design.

“[Name redacted] was really good at listening to my needs and helped me grow a network of connections in the local area. I don’t know of anywhere else where I could get this pre-employment support, all the places I knew of needed you to have a business up and running already.”

At the point of referral onto other services she had started her business and was in the process of web design.

Focused pre-employment and specialist support

- 5.47 Focused pre-employment support was undertaken to provide individuals with Life Skills support and pre-employment activities such as CV writing and interview techniques. Some LA areas funded delivery of training courses delivered internally or procured out to local delivery providers.

Example: Bridgend Pre-employment support.

Many participants engaged with CELT in Bridgend via community venues, so delivery and support also took place there. Delivery included CV writing/re-writing, job searching, finding volunteering opportunities and identifying any training needs. Some training courses that were delivered included paediatric first aid and food hygiene.

This pre-employment support worked as a confidence builder for participants before they were progressed onto other projects under the ‘Employability Bridgend’ banner once they were confident and equipped to do so.

Client groups targeted

- 5.48 As addressed in the programme design, the CELT projects did not place strict eligibility criteria on participants. The LA areas focussed efforts on assessing individuals’ needs and engaging those furthest from the labour market. A variety of groups were targeted through the implementation of the CELT programme. Table 12 demonstrates the groups of individuals targeted in each area. This table has

been formulated through review of the original bid documentation for the programme and updated with additional information gathered through interviews and progress updates from operational staff in each area.

- 5.49 The variety in target client groups demonstrates the variability in need in each area and efforts made to close gaps in current employability and wellbeing support provision. The ways in which these individuals were targeted varied between areas due to the engagement activities being implemented and the different streams of delivery.

Table 12: Client groups targeted by LA area

Project deliverer	Economically inactive	Unemployed	Employed	Youth/NEET	Care experiences	WLHC/Disabilities	Ex-offenders	HA/LA ⁸ tenants	Rural communities	Attending health settings	Parents
Blaenau Gwent CBC		✓		✓							
Bridgend CBC	✓			✓		✓	✓				
Caerphilly CBC	✓							✓		✓	✓
Cardiff CC		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	✓	✓					✓				
Monmouthshire CC	✓								✓		
Newport CC	✓	✓									✓
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	✓					✓	✓				
Torfaen CBC	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓		
Vale of Glamorgan CBC	✓	✓							✓		

Source: York Consulting 2022

- 5.50 An additional client group intended to be targeted by one LA was homeless individuals. However due to low staffing levels and difficulties engaging with the Housing Team they did not engage with any of these individuals.

- 5.51 Examples of targeted delivery are outlined below:

⁸ HA/LA tenants: Housing Association/Local Authority tenants

Rhondda Cynon Taff Ex-offenders intervention

Conversations were held with partners and organisations working with ex-offenders such as Housing First, Short-Term Offenders and HMP Parc prison. This created referral routes for these individuals to be passed onto the CELT project as close to their release as possible.

A holistic approach was taken to increase contact and engagement with the participants, a particular success was the use of gym passes for individuals. This created a social space for ex-offenders to re-integrate into the community. CELT engagement workers were able to build relationships with ex-offenders in the intermediate period between release and re-settling.

Newport parental intervention

A variety of community-based events were targeted towards parents to increase engagement. Pop-up stands were held at Flying Start Childcare providers so parents could have conversations whilst waiting to collect their children. Pop up and Play and Coffee and Unwind sessions were held in community locations for parents to discuss the barriers and challenges they were facing whilst having childcare provided. Sessions also included wellbeing and mindfulness activities as many parents felt isolated having children through COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Group walks were also organised after school, ending in playgrounds for the children attending.

A family intervention worker also supported parents on a 1-to-1 basis where required for mental health, parenting or any financial advice support.

6 PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Outputs

- 6.1 By the 19th January 2023, 1391 participants had been enrolled onto CELT across all 10 participating LA areas, 123% of the programme’s output target (Table 13). The greatest success was seen in enrolling unemployed and employed individuals as their targets were exceeded by 57% and 184% respectively.

Table 13: Programme outputs

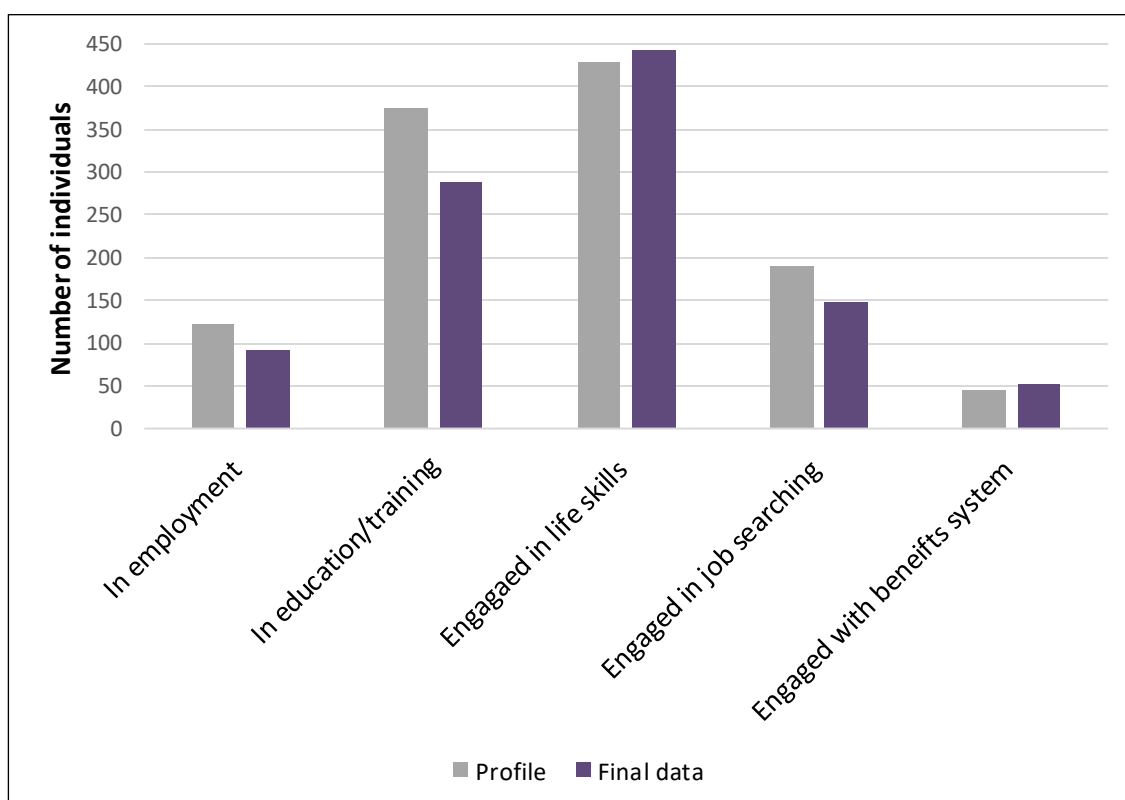
Targets	Profile total	Actual	Percentage
Total participants enrolled	1130	1391	123%
Economically inactive	695	618	89%
Unemployed	365	574	157%
Employed	70	199	284%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Outcomes

- 6.2 The targets relating to outcomes have been outlined in Figure 2 and Table 13. Performance relates to final programme data provided correct as of the 19th January 2023.

Figure 2 Performance against end of programme targets



Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

- 6.3 Individuals engaged in life skills had the highest volume of outcomes claimed, whilst those engaged with the benefits system held the highest proportion of the programme total profile out of all the CRF outcomes with a 13% over performance.

- 6.4 The targets relating to outcomes have been outlined in Table 13. Performance relates to final data provided correct as of 19th January 2023.

Table 14: Programme outcomes

Targets	Profile total	Actual	Percentage
In employment	122	91	75%
In education/training	374	289	77%
Engaged in life skills	429	444	103%
Engaged in job search	190	148	78%
Engaged with benefits system	46	52	113%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

- 6.5 Programme targets for outcomes were also divided by LA area. Outputs vary by LA areas ranging from 0% to 315% of their outcome's targets. The breakdown of performance against targets for each of the LAs is provided in Appendix B.

Outcomes and impacts

- 6.6 Overall, most areas showed confidence with the progress they were making towards their targets during the fieldwork phase of the evaluation. Due to the extension in programme delivery stakeholders were generally confident they would reach their outcome targets. However, there was a small number concerned about certain outcome targets due to participants needing a greater level and length of support prior to moving into employment.
- 6.7 Across most areas, positive statements were made regarding wellbeing support offered to participants. Impacts such as increased confidence, social inclusion and general wellbeing were mentioned by operational members across the LA areas. LA stakeholders commonly mentioned that participants are generally more confident, and the relationships built with CELT project staff encouraged them to increase their participation and, in some cases, move onto employability support either through CELT or other employment projects.
- 6.8 Life skills were commonly identified as an outcome of the support delivered also improving personal confidence for many participants. This was seen as particularly important for individuals following the COVID-19 pandemic and those who had not been part of the labour market for many years.
- 6.9 Many areas were able to demonstrate an increase in support to individuals, either as a result of the programme, or being referred onto others such as job searching, undertaking employment related training or going into employment.
- 6.10 Referral partners across the CELT network explained that participants perceived CELT support as a steppingstone to either employment, or employability support. These partners noted that participants found the CELT project more appealing and easier to engage with than other employability support due to the holistic nature of support. A focus on wellbeing and health alongside employability support allowed participants to feel more confident and have a healthier mindset before moving into employment.

- 6.11 Participants accessing rapid-access health support, such as counselling, commonly identified being on long waiting lists for NHS support. Although it could not be quantified in this evaluation, through supporting these individuals the pressure on NHS services may have been reduced.
- 6.12 Although focussed on participants, the CELT programme also benefitted local economies throughout South Wales by filling skills gaps through the introduction of experienced and qualified individuals to the labour market. Wage subsidy schemes allowed employers to increase their productivity whilst also assessing the participants for employment within the company. Some of these employers were interviewed and expressed their interest in participating in similar schemes in the future due to the successes of employing the participants.

7 CHALLENGES AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Challenges faced

- 7.1 This section summarises the challenges faced encompassing thoughts expressed by LA strategic and operational stakeholders alongside individuals from referral and delivery partner organisations.
- 7.2 Due to the differences in delivery between LA areas the challenges expressed in consultations with individuals commonly refer to specific delivery models.

Timescales

- 7.3 A few LA areas mentioned challenges relating to the approval time and contract sign off disrupting the flow of delivery and support they were able to offer. They identified approval of the CELT programme as disjointed thus costs could not be incurred until the budget was approved, delaying the support that could be provided.
- 7.4 In addition, the late decision on project extension while welcomed did not support effective allocation of resources.

Staffing

- 7.5 Due to delays in recruitment, linked to agency and secondment contracts, caused some LA areas to experience variation in staffing levels throughout the project resulting in some stakeholders feeling stretched. A delay in project delivery in one area led to an increased geographical focus to ensure a larger number of referrals and participants could be achieved to meet outcome target within the compressed delivery period left delivery staff feeling stretched.
- 7.6 Challenges also included in-house and procured staffing changes, such as teams disbanding during the life cycle of the programme.

Outcome reporting

- 7.7 Claiming outcomes was a challenge in some areas with stakeholders suggesting they, or procured delivery partners, were inexperienced in securing target outcomes. Some found that procured delivery staff experienced confusion about requirements for the claim of outcomes and struggled providing the necessary evidence, causing delays.
- 7.8 Some LA stakeholders found the requirements for claiming outcomes challenging as employers and participants were sometimes reluctant to share the necessary information. For example, some participants did not want their employer to know they were previously involved with employability support programmes.
- 7.9 A small number of LA stakeholders mentioned the lack of a management system for reporting leading to delays due to back-and-forth emailing required instead.

Support required

- 7.10 Stakeholders in a number of LA areas explained that the length of support required by individuals was commonly longer than anticipated. This affected both the amount of support required per individual, and delayed claiming of outcomes.
- 7.11 Time lag in reported outcomes, as they could not be claimed until participants exited the projects.
- 7.12 Focus on individuals furthest away from the labour market also meant individuals required more support than anticipated, in some cases, reducing the number of people who could be supported as staff and support were stretched. Some LA operational stakeholders also identified that some individuals needed a higher frequency and level of support before moving towards employability support, also reducing the number of outcomes that could be claimed.
- 7.13 Due to the compressed timeframe for delivery, some stakeholders raised concerns that some participants may be needing support to continue past the end of the project before they were ready to move closer to employment.

PIE pathways and wage-subsidy interventions

- 7.14 Delays were commonly experienced for LAs attempting to deliver PIE pathways or wage-subsidy support. These delays were attributed to employers requesting prior information, DBS checks and references which postponed delivery of supported placements.
- 7.15 In some LA areas, PIE pathways were not implemented due to difficulties seeking these arrangements with employers. Some participants required greater support than could be provided by projects. These participants required a greater amount of pre-employment support such as confidence building and health and wellbeing provision.
- 7.16 There were some difficulties engaging with certain industries for PIE pathway opportunities and wage-subsidy (ILM) schemes. Some LA areas altered the industries for these interventions due to lack of engagement from the original sector or lack of demand from participants. Concerns were raised by LA operational staff that some employers would rather employ participants than provide work experience or ILM positions, as this may disrupt the flow of their work. Some participants also identified being out of work due to health conditions, thus, employment or experience in sectors such as construction and social care were not suitable for their needs.

Health and wellbeing interventions

- 7.17 Some difficulties were faced when trying to receive referrals from GP surgeries through social prescribing. Although the CELT offers were advertised to GP surgeries and health providers, low numbers of inappropriate referrals were made in some areas.
- 7.18 Where referrals from partner organisations and the community were made to health interventions, such as counselling support, some confusion was evident about eligibility for such services. Some areas found a number of referrals being

made for individuals with severe mental health needs or at crisis point, where other services were more appropriate. This increased the administrative burden for CELT staff dealing with a high number of referrals which could not be converted into participants.

- 7.19 Difficulties were faced during the life cycle of CELT when sourcing onward referrals from health and wellbeing interventions. Some found it challenging to find provision with capacity to receive referrals.
- 7.20 Time or session limits on mental health support led some participants feeling as though they had not received enough support before being referred onwards which can break down trust and impact progress when they need to engage with other support/individuals.
- 7.21 A number of stakeholders mentioned a higher demand than anticipated, commonly for wellbeing and rapid access health support activities. Reasons for this include:
- A greater need for reconnection and reducing isolation post-pandemic.
 - A greater demand from individuals with more severe needs than can be catered for under the CELT projects most commonly relating to mental health.

Ex-offender interventions

- 7.22 Although relationships were formed with ex-offenders who were recently released from prison, there were difficulties in engaging with repeat offenders. Stakeholders suggested these individuals were not receptive of support offered to them and would therefore require more in-depth intervention to change attitudes and mindsets before employability provision could be accessed.
- 7.23 Some ex-offenders were housed in temporary accommodation so in some cases moved around frequently after release, leading to sporadic engagement and communication.

Other challenges

- 7.24 Other challenges faced are summarised below:
- Logistical challenges relating to parking permission for the minibus and locations of 'The Pod'.
 - High levels of interest in tablet gifting schemes from individuals ineligible for the support due to area of residence.
 - Internal approval processes within LAs delayed marketing efforts in some cases, potentially slowing the rate of referrals.

COVID-19

- 7.25 Wales saw COVID-19 restrictions easing towards the start of the year in 2022. Thus, many LA areas did not feel that there were any lasting effects of COVID-19 influencing delivery.
- 7.26 A small number of LA areas discussed small disruptions to the initial marketing period for their project. Comments included community centres and libraries being closed at the end of 2021 and start of 2022 meaning marketing efforts had to begin

through social media or telephone conversations. They identified this as a slower process and having smaller turnover in terms of referrals and onboarding in the initial weeks and months of delivery.

- 7.27 One LA area also commented that when community centres had opened some COVID-19 related risk assessments were not adequately completed, again causing delays in marketing and engagement efforts that couldn't take place at these locations.
- 7.28 The vast majority of stakeholders made reference to the personal preferences of participants being the main impact of COVID-19 as some struggled to get used to face-to-face delivery again. Thus, the hybrid approach taken by LAs suited the needs of all participants.
- 7.29 Due to the geographical spread of LAs, operational and strategic meetings took place virtually which were identified as effective and efficient throughout the project.
- 7.30 Delivery partners and participants identified the personal nature of support as somewhat unique since COVID-19 restrictions. They noted that other provision had become impersonal through online delivery and an increase in group-sessions. Many highlighted that the provision of 1-to-1 and in-person support was crucial in having effective impact for individuals socially isolated.
- 7.31 A couple of referral partners in LA areas delivering digital support expressed that COVID-19 had led to an increased need for digital skills and awareness due to an increase in online activities. These related to both personal and work-based activities such as online meetings and social media. Therefore, they identified a heightened demand for digital skills courses for a variety of individuals to stay both socially connected and digitally skilled for future employment.

Future considerations

- 7.32 This programme was delivered as a pilot; a way of testing new engagement and delivery models. Therefore, challenges and lessons learnt were to be expected. The findings of such discussions with all stakeholders are categorised under five headings.

Programme design

- **Flexibility.** Positive comments relating to the flexibility of the CELT approach with partners able to deliver different activities and resulting outcomes which ensures more suitable support for the differing needs of the regions.
- **Longer delivery period.** Most stakeholders commented that the delivery period of their projects needed to be longer to ensure that a greater number of individuals could be supported. In particular to provide longer-term support to individuals furthest from the labour market.
- **Planning.** Some LA areas emphasised a disjointed feel to the commencement of their CELT project due to delays in approval, contract signing and staffing. Therefore, some identified the need for a transition period between

programmes for smoother operation, rather than a delay between programmes ending and future programmes starting.

- **Sector focus.** Some respondents reflected on the balance between the focus on specified sectors and a more general approach. Some thought their sector focus was too narrow and needed to include other sectors. Others preferred a broader approach to cover all sectors. This highlights the tension between targeted funding to address specified market failures and the challenges this can create for practical delivery and meeting targets. This points to the need for clear insight and effective partnerships to address identified needs.

Strategic partnership

- **Health boards.** Future work would benefit from direct links with health boards, such as through a health liaison officer, and with a larger number of qualified health staff, as the demand for such services was greater than expected in many cases. This was especially the case around mental health.
- **Ex-offenders.** Any future support working with ex-offenders would benefit from a system where participants are referred prior to release in all instances to improve engagement and reduce time between release and commencement of support. It also creates a longer time period to build trust between practitioners and ex-offenders.

Implementation

- **Triage and referral.** The development of triage teams and referral processes has been recognised as overwhelmingly positive by all participating LA areas. Therefore, they wish for this aspect of delivery to be continued in future projects as it ensures effective delivery for both the delivery partner and participant.
- **Reduction of time/session limited support.** Although stakeholders were aware of the perceived need for limits to the support for some health-related interventions, some saw it as an inflexible. Some stakeholders identified the need for individual assessment to define a tailored length of support to reduce the possibility of future disengagement from services due to a feeling of abandonment.
- **Mental health counselling.** A number of LA areas saw the short-term and long-term benefits of mental health and counselling provision provided by other LA areas and thus expressed interest in having similar approaches in the future.
- **Use of internal staff.** Some stakeholders discussed their desire to have established LA teams deliver future projects to create a more cohesive support model. This is due to inefficiencies and challenges of subcontracting delivery. Similarly, stakeholders were concerned about the use of agency staff and short fixed-term contracts which can lead to some degree of risk and uncertainty within project delivery which they would like reduced in the future.

- **Other staffing.** In some LA areas, stakeholders suggested an increase in particular staffing roles would have led to an increase in support being offered. For example, specialist staffing such as interpreters, in-house counselling staff and in-house trainers.

Evidence

- **Soft outcomes.** Outcomes were restricted to certain categories defined by UK Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), some expressed that the outcomes were not truly reflective of the work that has been carried out with participants. Some stakeholders argued that other indicators should be identified to demonstrate the variety of work undertaken and the value for participants. For example, improvements in confidence and wellbeing have been identified as important impacts but are not captured in reporting data.
- **Arrangements to collect evidence.** Helping delivery partners to understand the importance of collecting evidence for claims can help to improve the efficiency of delivery. In particular, this might involve sharing practical examples of how this was done and demonstrating good practice. This challenge is related to organisations and teams who have less experience of delivering ESF programmes with rigorous expectations of evidence requirements.
- **Management software.** Some identified the desire for a shared dynamic database for monitoring and evaluation to maximise efficiency by limiting the need for email communication for accurate sharing of data.
- **Evidence requirements.** Some LA stakeholders and delivery partners identified the wish to allow self-declarations or payslips as eligible evidence to claim outcomes to bypass communication issues with participants employers.

8 KEY FINDINGS

8.1 The key findings are outlined below:

- **Participant enrolment:** The profiled target of reaching 1130 individuals was surpassed with a total of 1391 participants enrolled throughout the programme, 23% over profile.
- **Outcomes achieved:** Despite being over-profile for the number of enrolments the programme has overall struggled to reach outcome targets. By 19th January 2023 75% to 113% of outcomes targets had been achieved, totalled across all 10 LAs. Despite positive outlooks expressed throughout the evaluation period there has been difficulties converting enrolled participants into some claimed outcomes.
- **Policy Fit:** The programme was in line with relevant Welsh Government policy and was well-designed to achieve these outputs.
- **Programme design:** Stakeholders consulted were supportive of the overall programme design and the flexibility of the programme's approach. There is evidence that individual project design had been adapted throughout the delivery of the projects to maximise participant reach and impact.
- **Programme management:** There was strong indication that the programme was managed successfully, with effective leadership and regular communication commonly cited by delivery partners. All LA stakeholders identified feeling confident and supported by the central management team who have been quick to respond to queries where needed.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Aims of evaluation	IA interviews	Survey delivery & referral partners	Ints. delivery & referral partners	Management Information	50 participant interviews	Research questions	Method/Comments
The impact of the project on participants.	✓		✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the range and level of support on offer to meet the needs of the participants? • How effective has CELT been in enabling adults to increase motivation, improve attitudes and raise aspirations? • How effective has CELT been in enabling participants to move closer to engagement with the labour market? 	<p>Management information will disclose the outcomes claimed for participants which will explore the impact on their employment status and employability.</p> <p>Qualitative interviews with 50 participants will provide insight into the experiences and resulting impact for each individual. These interviews will explore both the impact on their employment but also aspects of their wider lives.</p> <p>Interviews with LA staff and partners involved with participants through referral or delivery will help to build a picture of the ways in which participants have been impacted and the additionality of this project to their lives.</p>
The impact of the project upon the community and wider society.	✓		✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has CELT been effective in supporting people with protected characteristics? 	<p>Qualitative interviews with LA staff alongside case studies provided will demonstrate impact on individuals with protected characteristic.</p>

Aims of evaluation	IA interviews	Survey delivery & referral partners	Ints. delivery & referral partners	Management Information	50 participant interviews	Research questions	Method/Comments
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What employment sectors has CELT successfully supported participants in? What sectors has CELT been less successful? What factors have contributed to this? 	<p>Management information alongside qualitative interviews with LA stakeholders and project delivery staff will provide insight into the sectors in which participant have been supported in.</p> <p>Management information will also demonstrate the impact on local labour markets with the numbers of participants moving into employment or job searching.</p>
The impact of engagement activities and interventions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective has the marketing of CELT been? • How effective is the range and level of support on offer to meet the needs of the participants? • What engagement activities and interventions of the programme have been most effective in delivering positive outcomes for participants? 	<p>Discussions with LA stakeholders will provide insight into the additionality of the engagement and intervention activities in their area whilst also providing background information into what activities are taking place and the people they have supported.</p> <p>Referral and delivery partners, through the e-survey and qualitative interviews, will identify aspects of the project delivering positive outcomes for participants. Discussions with referral partners will also assess whether the needs of those referrals are being met within the project or elsewhere.</p>

Aims of evaluation	IA interviews	Survey delivery & referral partners	Ints. delivery & referral partners	Management Information	50 participant interviews	Research questions	Method/Comments
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How successful has the Programme been in reaching its target groups? 	<p>Interviews with participants will help build a picture of the impact of the support and whether their needs were met. Discussions may also be able to identify any areas for improvement if they feel their needs could not be met.</p>
The impact of advice and guidance given to participants.	✓		✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the coaching, mentoring and assessment? 	<p>Through qualitative interviews with participants we will build up a picture of the impact of personal support. We will triangulate this against the views of project staff and practitioners who have worked with participants.</p>
The management of the programme.	✓		✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the leadership and strategic management of CELT? • How well have the 10 local authorities collaborated? • How effective have the working relationships with other employability provision been in ensuring effective support for participants and reducing duplication? 	<p>This will be assessed through dialogue with delivery practitioners and participants. We will also assess through interviews with the project management team.</p>

Aims of evaluation	IA interviews	Survey delivery & referral partners	Ints. delivery & referral partners	Management Information	50 participant interviews	Research questions	Method/Comments
Future recommendations	✓		✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the lessons to be learned for the potential development of similar programmes to improve the outcomes for adults? • What recommendations can be made for future work? 	Operational and strategic staff will be consulted to identify lessons learnt from the programme and any recommendations they may have for future delivery. These views will also be considered alongside those of delivery and referral staff and individual project participants.

Source: York Consulting 2022

APPENDIX B: BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN

Background

The CELT project in Blaenau Gwent sat within the Youth Service Team and was aimed at engaging and supporting young people, aged 16 or over, into employment. Individuals benefitted from the support from 1st February 2022 onwards.

Delivery of the CELT project changed from sitting within the Regeneration team, to Youth Service team, resulting in changes in the original engagement and intervention aims.

Bespoke support packages were created for each individual engaging with the project to ensure the needs of each young person were met. Young people had counselling, wellbeing support, employability provision and life skills training available to them through the youth service.

As there is other employability provision in the Blaenau Gwent focussed on young people, CELT specifically aimed to support young people who were furthest away from the labour market, and in some cases, isolated at home. As these individuals generally needed longer-term assistance, support was aimed at re-engaging them in social activities and job searching once ready.

As a short-term project CELT was positioned to build relationships and trust with these young people, to enable them to develop their confidence to be able to move into active job searching and employment in the future.

Marketing

Promotional posters were created and shared with referral organisations and job centres. Organisations and individuals engaging with young people were targeted, including social workers and families to increase referrals.

The Youth Service also undertook advertising through their existing social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter sharing information and posters about the CELT project.

There were efforts to complete community out-reach, however, staff felt this was not an effective strategy early on as individuals they came across were not eligible for support due to being pre-16 in age.

Delivery

Youth Hubs, in collaboration with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), were developed and implemented with support from the CELT project. These Hubs utilised the Youth Service Buildings to offer advice and guidance to young people from both DWP Youth Employment Coaches and CELT youth workers. Individuals were able to have discussions with a number of support workers to discuss their needs and what programmes of support there were in the area to assist them.

Alongside digital outreach taking place through social media, the CELT project also delivered digital outreach through advertisement of a laptop loaning scheme. The laptop

loan was to enable young people to undertake any online employability training, job search and applications and general preparation for employment.

All three CELT youth workers undertook wellbeing provision with young people, including wellbeing discussions and physical activity sessions, including wellbeing walks. The youth workers were also able to draw upon other wellbeing support within Blaenau Gwent when needed.

Local employers were contacted by the CELT project team to introduce PIE pathways, with a specific focus in the construction and social care sectors. The project had more success forming these relationships with the construction sector and local housing associations.

Rapid access health support was delivered in Blaenau Gwent through the Youth Services' already established counselling provision. This helped the young people to prepare them for direct employability support and provision.

Performance

Just under two-thirds of targeted young people were enrolled into the project (Table 1). Delivery in Blaenau Gwent ceased on 29th July 2022. Due to the limited time frame for delivery and supporting young people with complex needs, the targets were not reached.

Table 1 Blaenau Gwent outputs and outcomes

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	45	28	62%
Outcomes			
In employment	26	3	12%
In education/training	15	3	20%
Engaged in life skills	10	2	20%
Engaged in job searching	9	1	11%
Engaged with benefits system	0	0	NA

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Between 1 to 3 outcomes were claimed per target, performance ranged from 11% - 20% of project targets.

Successes

Youth Employment Coaches from DWP were surprised by the number of young people who were engaging at the Youth Hubs. These individuals were not previously engaged with DWP through their facilities.

Strategic and operational stakeholders were positive about the ability to adapt the project dependent upon individual needs, but also organically throughout the project in local areas to fit support to demand.

A referral partner identified that similar bespoke support, based on both wellbeing and employability, was not available in the area to support young individuals who were facing multiple barriers, and in many cases have complex issues to address. The CELT project

enabled a number of individuals to be supported in a way that was individualised and had personal touches, through relationship and trust building with the CELT support workers.

Challenges

It was felt by stakeholders that it would be difficult to meet the targets set, such as number of individuals into employment. This was due to the nature of individuals being supported, they required long-term interventions and focus on wellbeing, mental health and overall confidence before moving into employment.

As outcomes for participants could not be claimed until they exited the project, the number of outcomes being claimed throughout project delivery was low, as most individuals needed longer-term support.

Although strong links were formed with local employers in relation to the PIE pathway, during the delivery phase of CELT, no PIE pathways were established or delivered to any participants. Reasons for this included refurbishment at a local housing association so they could no longer offer any placements.

During the life-cycle of the CELT project, counsellors in the Youth Service Team were being utilised to support participants, however, this team disbanded leaving some time in the project without counsellor provision due to sector-wide shortages of counsellors.

Lessons learned/future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- Risks of insufficient time to work with those requiring sustained support.
- Difficulty in establishing PIE pathways.
- ESF and other employability projects competed for young people in Blaenau Gwent which created some confusion and competition for participants.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Reduction in paperwork to be able to spend more time with participants.
- Increase outcomes to include health and wellbeing markers and volunteering.
- Trial of mobile outreach bus.
- Longer-term interventions when focussing on those furthest from the labour market.

APPENDIX C: BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Bridgend was officially launched on 1st March 2022. The project aimed to engage individuals out in the community and operating a triage trial whereby individuals were matched with the most suitable support within the CELT project or directed towards other programmes for employability support.

The project sat within Employability Bridgend the joint name for employability provision supporting both employed and unemployed residents of Bridgend County Borough.

Marketing

When the project first launched, an event was held where local community centres and providers were invited to introduce CELT to the community and to start building relationships post-pandemic. Information and marketing material was also shared with other stakeholders, such as Job Centres to inform both staff and clients of the offer.

Under the umbrella term Employability Bridgend, bilingual posters and social media pages were used to advertise the support on offer through CELT.

Relationships were built with community food pantries and food banks whereby CELT staff were welcomed into their premises to engage with their clients to offer support and/or guidance. CELT staff were present at local foodbanks to engage with potential participants directly. Leaflets and posters were also distributed for use on the days CELT staff were not present to continue advertising of support. Drop-in sessions also took place at local community centres and libraries.

Delivery

Triaging of referrals took place to match participants with the most appropriate support. Triage staff being were to see if the individual had received support previously from Employability Bridgend.

Training courses, including First Aid Level 3, were delivered to participants often alongside pre-employment support. This included CV writing and confidence building support to prepare individuals to move into employment or referral to other employability support services. Self-employment support activities were also delivered to support individuals to start and develop their own businesses.

One-off events were organised throughout the delivery period to increase engagement and forge links with providers. A cost-of-living event was held in conjunction with ESF project NET (Nurture, Equip and Thrive) to provide advice and guidance to the local community on cutting costs in relation to bills. A Family Fun Day was also held leading to a partnership relationship with a local councillor being formed.

Performance

Overall, 198 participants were enrolled in CELT in Bridgend, 52% over target (Table 1).

Table 1 Bridgend performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	130	198	152%
Outcomes			
In employment	26	20	77%
In education/training	40	48	120%
Engaged in life skills	40	70	175%
Engaged in job searching	50	48	96%
Engaged with benefits system	6	11	183%

Source: CELT Participant report 2032 from Torfaen central management team

For 3 of the 5 outcomes targets, Bridgend achieved over profile, ranging from 20% to 83% over profile. However, 2 outcomes targets were not achieved, namely individuals in employment and job searching, 23% and 4% under profile respectively.

Successes

A referral partner, who worked with individuals needing food support praised the CELT projects knowledge and information sharing. They identified strong practices in relation to informing staff of the CELT support offer and sharing leaflets, posters and other marketing material, leading to effective and efficient referrals.

The triage system ensured referrals were directed to the most appropriate support with individuals being referred who had not previously engaged with support under Employability Bridgend.

The holistic support on offer and engagement practices used by CELT staff, such as presence at local foodbanks, was beneficial to engaging with individuals who had previously not had the confidence to approach employability support services. A referral partner identified that participants see the support it as a way to improve participant's employability through training they would not be able to afford or to boost their confidence before they get back into looking for employment.

Challenges

Initial delays were experienced accessing some community centres due to issues with COVID risk assessments which slowed down the project.

Work was undertaken with local GP surgeries to try to encourage referrals, however, without links with the Health Board this proved very challenging with minimal referrals taking place.

Staffing for CELT underwent some changes, due to secondment contracts, leading to the team reducing in size overall but attempts continued to raise awareness and presence in the community. A smaller team, alongside the delayed project commencement in March 2022, led to outcomes being behind schedule.

Lessons learned/future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- Effective partnership with health boards are necessary to support referrals from GP surgeries.
- The need to exceed enrolment targets (or change the ration when bidding) to achieve outcome targets.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Increased size of delivery team to reach more people.
- Working with a greater number of community centres/venues.
- Work alongside the Health Board with a health liaison officer to focus on those unemployed due to health reasons.
- A permanent triage team to be in place.

APPENDIX D: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Caerphilly aimed to address the gap in employability provision for economically inactive individuals. According to stakeholders, previous ESF funded projects had not been able to deliver engagement and wellbeing activities as a hook into employability provision.

The overall aim was to provide participants with a positive experience that boosted their confidence, life skills and reduced social exclusion to prepare them for referral onto other employability provision in the area.

Marketing

Marketing and advertisement had taken two routes. Firstly, the lead project co-ordinator had promoted the project with the council youth projects, housing association, Job Centre Plus work coaches and Pobl supported housing and parent network. This was to ensure other provision understood the CELT offer and how to refer eligible individuals they may come across.

Secondly, community-based advertisement took place. The lead co-ordinator attended coffee mornings, parent network group meetings and job centres to engage individuals directly. Flyers were used on social media platforms to advertise workshops, courses and events hosted by the CELT team. A leaflet had also been developed to explain the CELT project and offer to individuals. This leaflet focussed on confidence building and wellbeing support, rather than employability. It aimed to engage participants furthest from the labour market and those with lower confidence who may have struggled to engage with direct employability provision.

Delivery

The lead project co-ordinator in Caerphilly for CELT took up their post later than planned in March 2022, leading to an initial delay in delivery and outcomes.

Activities delivered through the programme centred around confidence building, health and wellbeing and life skills based on demand from participants. LA stakeholders expressed the importance of asking participants what they wanted, to ensure provision was meeting needs and was effective at engaging a range of individuals.

The project co-ordinator worked with participants to identify courses and support they wanted, then sourced workshops and tutors to deliver these. Examples of wellbeing provision included pottery workshops, confidence building and baking. The project also saw the introduction of driving theory classes including the test and an assessment of driving skills to identify the number of practical lessons needed. Provision was also sourced from Adult Community Learning with some 1:1 provision taking place such as Essential Skills provision and literacy support.

Performance

Caerphilly enrolled 25% more participants than profiled with a total of 94 (Table 1).

Table 15 Caerphilly performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	75	94	125%
Outcomes			
In employment	0	0	N/A
In education/training	34	33	97%
Engaged in life skills	30	27	90%
Engaged in job searching	21	6	29%
Engaged with benefits system	0	0	N/A

Source: CELT Participant reports 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Outcomes targets were set for individuals engaged with education/training, life skills and job searching. Although the number of participants enrolled was over profile, the outcomes targets were not achieved. With 6 individuals engaged in job searching, against a target of 21, this outcome was the lowest performing at 29%.

Successes

LA stakeholders identified having a well-connected employability team in the area. This involved regular meetings leading to smooth referrals both into the CELT project and those graduating onto other employability provision. Introducing the CELT participants to their new mentors/contacts prior to the commencement of their employability support aided in keeping individuals engaged with support.

Overall, LA stakeholders, referral and delivery partners highlighted the positive effects of having tailored support for the economically inactive individuals. This helped fill a gap in the market, as such personalised support and engagement activities had not been possible in other employability provision available in the area.

The support provided through CELT was seen as an intermediary step between the individual's current employment status and the potential of receiving more direct employability support. It focussed on reducing barriers such as low confidence and wellbeing of individuals to prepare them for further support.

A delivery partner, who commonly worked with returning individuals, identified that the CELT project led to the introduction of new individuals to employability support locally. The project had also improved the delivery of 1:1 support, which in most cases, had ceased since the COVID pandemic, allowing for more personalised support and direct relationship building for participants.

Challenges

The project experienced delays in reporting outcomes due to participants asking for further support before they exited from the programme.

Future recommendations

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Pathways/routeways into jobs working with employers.
- A physical drop-in and engagement centre similar to the Torfaen pod.
- Mental health support.
- Larger team to expand the engagement and support.
- Contracted tutors.

APPENDIX E: CARDIFF COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Cardiff was focused on vulnerable individuals. It consisted of three strands, firstly, a tablet gifting scheme which aimed to provide digitally deprived individuals with the technology and skills to reduce technology as a barrier to employment. The tablets were internet enabled and provision was made available for those actively seeking work or for those looking to support their adult learning.

Secondly, a community employment mentor was appointed to provide support to care experienced young people by providing drop-in sessions at hostels and supported living locations to support those actively seeking employment by supporting individuals to access education, employment and training opportunities. Digital support and the opportunity to receive a gifted tablet was also made available for these participants.

Thirdly, a series of community engagement activities across the local authority aimed to engage with priority groups inclusive of long-term unemployed, economically inactive and older people. This provision was used to promote the CELT digital scheme, offer digital skill clinics and provide additional support services.

Marketing

The tablet gifting scheme was widely marketed across the authority, a press release was issued, posters and social media posts were also created. Those working on the other strands of the CELT project also promoted the scheme. The Into Work Advice Team, Communities for Work and Journey2Work also provided referrals to the CELT project.

The community employment mentor received referrals from social services and the Into Work Advice Team. The project was also able to engage with several self-referral individuals through a range of Job Club drop-in sessions. Additional referral sources included the Youth Offending Team, the Youth Service and the Wellbeing Project.

The community engagement events, run in collaboration with the Independent Living Scheme, successfully engaged with older people and supported the promotion of other CELT activities.

Delivery

Tablet gifting began in April 2022, with the digital team creating an eligibility checklist. Once applications had been received, the digital team worked through the applications and met with each applicant in turn, these 2-hour onboarding sessions were conducted in Job Club locations and worked in partnership with the Into Work Advice Service Team. Those participants gifted tablets had access to non-accredited training with the opportunity to work alongside the Into Work Team who assisted individuals with job searching skills and CV writing.

The community employment mentor provided drop-in sessions across 22 locations in order for care experienced individuals or those living in hostels or supported living environments to access digital and job seeking support. Additional support was provided in response to the cost-of-living crisis, the CELT team was able to offer a 'Cooking on a

Budget' course for participants residing in hostels. They also assisted individuals with confidence building and securing volunteering/work experience opportunities.

Community Inclusion Officers attended a number of events across the city promoting the tablet gifting scheme, primarily these events were organised by Cardiff Council's Independent Living Services scheme. Drop-in sessions in local libraries, and weekly sessions at welcome centres for Ukrainian refugees, supported individuals gain digital and job seeking skills.

Performance

A total of 315 participants enrolled in the CELT project in Cardiff, 24% above profile (Table 1).

Table 16 Cardiff performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	255	315	124%
Outcomes			
In employment	0	0	N/A
In education/training	104	50	48%
Engaged in life skills	64	100	156%
Engaged in job searching	20	63	315%
Engaged with benefits system	24	39	163%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Of the 4 outcome targets set for Cardiff, 3 over-performed by 56 - 215%. The numbers of participants engaged in education or training saw with only 48% of the target of 104 achieved.

Successes

The tablet gifting scheme allowed individuals to overcome digital barriers, uptake training courses and engage in job seeking activities. The tablets served as an effective motivator which enabled support workers to actively engage and support participants. Individuals successfully enrolled on the following online courses: health and safety, first aid, food hygiene and improving digital skills.

Several individuals moved into full-time employment in the following sectors: care, construction and retail. Others were supported into other employment routes, for example self-employment or securing a security license.

Successful relationships were built with referral partners and existing local provision partners, for example the Into Work Advice Team, Communities for Work, Journey2Work and the Independent Living Services scheme.

Several elderly participants successfully engaged in digital support drop-in sessions in their local communities, this has enabled confidence building and increased online safety.

Challenges

Challenges with recruitment resulted in changes to the staffing profile, this also resulted in delayed delivery across all three strands of provision.

COVID-19 caused disruption to the community engagement activities, this was to limit older individuals' exposure to COVID-19 and helped prevent the virus spreading.

Language used in the enrolment forms often caused confusion among individuals, particularly when selecting housing options.

Due to the tablet gifting scheme being widely marketed, there were large numbers of Ukrainian Refugees travelling large distances to access free tablets. A statement was released in English, Welsh, Ukrainian and Russian highlighting the level of engagement required after receiving a tablet, however, there were instances of tablets being gifted and then individuals not engaging in support or leaving the UK. The CELT team worked closely with Cardiff Councils biometrics team to ensure reliable identification of participants.

Challenges working with individuals with English as an additional language as there was no provision for an interpreter.

Future recommendations

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Social media marketing enabled an overwhelming response. In the future, clearer eligibility criteria may reduce applications, thus reducing the project administration time and enable better targeted support for individuals with the greatest need.
- Provision for an interpreter in order to best support individuals with ESOL needs.
- Additional staff training to enable staff members to accurately recognise vulnerabilities and ensure participants are directed to the required services.

APPENDIX F: MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Merthyr Tydfil consisted of two strands, firstly, provision of wage subsidised 8-week work placements within the tourism and hospitality industry in order to target gaps in current provision. The project aimed to support those looking for work and provide mutually beneficial support for employers and employees.

Secondly, an ex-offender's intervention programme which aimed to bridge the gap between leaving prison and getting individuals ready for employment and/or engage in life skills. This was achieved by offering a series of initiatives in order to reintegrate participants back into the community by offering support with housing, training opportunities and access to additional mental health support.

Marketing

The wage subsidy strand hoped to receive referrals through Communities for Work (CfW), however, the 8-week support didn't attract participants. The project was able to engage with outreach activities and used word of mouth to recruit people onto the CELT programme.

The ex-offender's intervention programme primarily received referrals through the temporary housing service. This referral method enabled the project to target those who hadn't been involved in the prison support services. Referrals for participants prior to prison release were limited. Participants were also identified through two hotels in Merthyr Tydfil which were housing ex-offenders and homeless people.

Delivery

Wage Subsidised work placements within Tourism and Hospitality:

Several local employers were identified within the tourism and hospitality industry that had the capacity to offer an 8-week subsidised work placement. As part of being part of the programme, employers had to agree to offer a full-time position at the end of the subsidised period, this was to ensure long-term sustainable employment.

Those enrolled on the project agreed to actively take part in their paid work placement whilst also having the opportunity to access various training courses to enhance their skills and experience. First aid, COSHH and food hygiene were offered to those participating.

Support was offered by a Routeway Support Worker throughout the individual's placement process. They were integral in building relationships with employees and securing positions with employers following the completion of their work placements. As part of the CELT project, additional support was made available for those participating in the project, support ranged from the purchase of a bicycle, support with childcare and sharing knowledge of local voluntary organisations.

Ex-offender’s intervention programme

Engagement workers supported ex-offenders living in temporary accommodation to access support services, engage in life skills and access various vocational training courses. For example, budgeting sessions, CSCS training and food awareness skills. Support with CVs, interview skills and using job search platforms were also available.

Those involved in the project worked alongside an employment mentor which supported the individual to gain confidence, build skills and develop a healthy lifestyle with the ambition of supporting them to look for work or training opportunities.

As part of the CELT project, additional support was made available for those participating in the project, for example, the purchase of work clothes and gardening tools to encourage positive activities.

Performance

A total of 30 individuals were supported through the CELT project in Merthyr Tydfil, 5 below that profiled for the area (Table 1).

Table 17 Merthyr Tydfil performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	35	30	86%
Outcomes			
In employment	17	15	88%
In education/training	21	10	48%
Engaged in life skills	4	3	75%
Engaged in job searching	2	0	0%
Engaged with benefits system	6	0	0%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Outcomes were claimed against 3 outcome targets, despite targets being set for 5 outcome types. The greatest achievement against profile was for the number of individuals in employment, despite a 12% underachievement of the profile.

Successes

Wage Subsidised work placements within Tourism and Hospitality:

Several individuals who were out of work or in unsecure employment, for example zero-hour contracts, secured full-time positions in the local tourism and hospitality sector. Many were upskilled through the training opportunities available.

Businesses involved in the programme felt that candidates were well-matched to their establishment and the project enabled them to fill vacant positions after struggling to find staff post-pandemic.

Positive relationships were formed with CfW and Adult Learning Wales to support those looking for work and training opportunities.

Ex-offender's intervention programme

The project successfully bridged the gap between housing and employability, allowing relationships to be built between mentors and participants. Several participants engaged positively with life skills and worked alongside employment mentors to secure training or work opportunities. Some participants successfully transitioned into employment.

Positive referral links were established with the Housing Department to create continuous referral flows.

Challenges

Wage Subsidised work placements within Tourism and Hospitality:

Securing referrals was initially a challenge, they hoped to see more referrals from CfW but despite their large caseloads interest was limited for the CELT project due to the short nature of the work placement.

There were challenges with the invoicing process, this resulted in delayed employer wage subsidy payments.

Expectations of the employer of the programme caused challenges when trying to onboard businesses, many businesses wanted extensive prior information, DBS checks and references for the 8-week work placement period.

Challenges working with English as additional language individuals as there was no provision for an interpreter.

Ex-offenders intervention programme:

CELT engagement workers found those living in temporary accommodation to have sporadic communication which inhibited progress with participants.

Claiming employment outcomes was a challenge. Some CELT participants did not want to inform their employer of being involved with employment support services and therefore outcomes paperwork was difficult to complete.

Lessons learned/future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- The project has benefited from having a Routeway Worker, this was integral to the success of the wage subsidy strand.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- The wage subsidy strand may have benefitted from a longer introductory period, this would have enabled more thorough induction and training processes. Additional time could have enabled the participant to spend the day with their employer and visit the premises, this may have enabled more specific job matching.
- Allowing self-declarations and/or payslips to confirm employment outcomes.

- The ability to access offenders prior to prison release would have enabled engagement workers to form positive relationships and best place resources to maximise support upon release.

APPENIDX G: MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project aimed to streamline Monmouthshire's existing employment and skills provision and address key gaps in the employability offer, particularly around wellbeing and self-employment support. In addition to CELT, the employment and skills team deliver three other employability projects: Inspire2Work (16 – 24), Communities for Work (adult) and Skills@Work.

Marketing

A key strand of the project focussed on improving the employment and skills through digital and physical outreach and is therefore detailed further in the 'Delivery' section below.

The project team worked closely with referral partners to promote the support offer, including the project wellbeing worker having a regular presence at Abergavenny Job Centre. This included developing close links with Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers. Other referral partners included Business Wales and Working Wales.

Delivery

Project activities aimed at streamlining and improving engagement with Monmouthshire's employment and skills provision, which included:

- **Introduction of a triage system:** The employment and skills team moved from having separate referral forms and routes for each employability project, to a single referral route into the employment and skills team. Referrers now complete a basic form which is then followed up with a phone call to the referee to decide what type of support would be most suitable for them.
- [A new employment and skills website](#) was developed and launched, along with improved social media promotional activity.
- **Outreach activities using a bus**, to engage those in the rural areas of the county and promote the support offer available.

Project activities aimed at strengthening Monmouthshire's employment and skills offer included:

- **Delivering training and qualifications:** various training courses were offered on a weekly basis, either delivered internally or by an external partner. Courses included health and safety at work, safeguarding (children and young people), mental health awareness, food hygiene, personal license holder's award and qualifications linked to the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS).
- **Funding training and qualifications:** individuals could receive up to £1,000 to fund courses (lasting no more than 7-days) aimed at helping them into employment or to progress their business.

- **Business support:** Those wishing to set up their own business or become self-employed were supported to source the training and qualifications needed to get their business up and running, which involved signposting to the courses detailed above and/or to other sources of support such as Business Wales, Princes Trust and BIG Ideas Wales.
- **Wellbeing support:** The CELT wellbeing worker conducted an initial needs assessment and helped individuals develop an action plan. If one-to-one career mentoring was deemed necessary, this was delivered internally. If a need for further mental health support was identified, the participant was referred for fast-track counselling that had been procured by the CELT project.

Performance

With an over achievement of 53% a total of 150 participants were enrolled in Monmouthshire (Table 1).

Table 1 Monmouthshire performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	98	150	153%
Outcomes			
In employment	8	4	50%
In education/training	45	61	136%
Engaged in life skills	38	27	71%
Engaged in job searching	5	2	40%
Engaged with benefits system	1	1	100%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

The project managed to claim the 1 individual engaged with benefits since participating and 61 individuals engaged in education or training, 36% over profile. The project managed manage to support 50% of the target individuals into employment and 40% into job searching and claimed 71% of the target for individuals engaged in life skills.

Successes

Stakeholders felt the triage system was more effective and efficient than the previous system, commenting that they had seen a significant increase in referrals since its implementation. It was viewed as a simpler process that also enabled systematic tracking of participants across the different employability projects they deliver, thus improving accountability for participant engagement and outcomes.

The training delivered through the project was thought to offer ‘quick wins’, enabling individuals to progress with their business or into employment through gaining the necessary qualifications. Stakeholders noted the high uptake of hospitality related courses as a key success, hospitality being a priority industry in Monmouthshire. The self-employment support on offer was also viewed as particularly important in Monmouthshire, as the county has a high number of micro-businesses.

It was felt that the counselling had helped individuals move closer towards the labour market, with some having progressed into work whilst others had begun job searching or taken up volunteer roles. Engagement with the counselling support was also strong, with 100% attendance for those referred.

Challenges

Delivery of outreach activities was delayed due to issues with the company supplying the bus. There were also challenges around gaining permission to park in areas that the CELT team had chosen to target, as well as issues with staffing due to only certain staff being qualified to drive the bus.

In addition, it was noted that the wellbeing worker was very stretched in terms of capacity, with a suggestion that a second wellbeing worker was required to meet demand.

Future recommendations

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Combining wellbeing and training means participants are supported more holistically.
- Utilising the expertise and resources of an external organisation would be a better approach for outreach bus activities in the future.
- Future projects may require additional staffing capacity, particularly around supporting participants with mental health and wellbeing needs.

APPENDIX H: NEWPORT COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Newport aimed to address a gap in provision by targeting a cohort – parents with young children who are on the “cusp” of returning to the workforce – that often do not meet the eligibility criteria for other employment support programmes in the area.

For many of the target group, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated existing problems with social isolation, particularly for those whose children had been born during COVID-19 lockdowns. Project activities focussed on building confidence, improving wellbeing, connecting with other parents, and upskilling, with the aim of supporting parents in moving closer to employment.

Marketing

Marketing of the project mainly involved promoting the support offer amongst referral partners. Key referrals included council social services, employment and migration teams, and health workers. The CELT project team met with these practitioners to promote the project, which proved to be an effective method of attracting referrals.

Delivery

The project was structured around the 5 steps to wellbeing⁹: connect with other people, be physically active, learn new skills, give to others and pay attention to the present (mindfulness).

Project activities, delivered between April and September 2022, included:

- **‘Coffee and unwind’ sessions.** A chance for parents to discuss issues and challenges they are facing, finishing with a mindfulness activity. Sessions were supported by a playgroup to provide childcare during the session.
- **One-to-one sessions with the Family Intervention Worker.** Sessions focussed on assessing need and developing an action plan for fostering good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **Group walks after school,** ending with a play session for the children.
- **Training and upskilling,** such as teaching assistant courses, training in paediatric first aid and food hygiene and sessions on CV writing, interview skills and managing anxiety.
- **Support with finding volunteering opportunities.** This was done flexibly and on an ad hoc basis, depending on each participant’s situation and interests.
- **Ad hoc events,** such as a summer holiday family picnic, story time sessions, and cooking and creative arts activities.

⁹ NHS. 5 steps to mental wellbeing. Access here: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

Group activities were predominantly delivered in East and North Newport, whilst the one-to-one support was delivered across all areas of Newport.

Performance

With 38 participants enrolled, the CELT project achieved 95% of the target number of enrolments in Newport (Table 1).

Table 18 Newport performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	40	38	95%
Outcomes			
In employment	13	1	8%
In education/training	17	10	59%
Engaged in life skills	13	6	46%
Engaged in job searching	6	0	0%
Engaged with benefits system	0	0	N/A

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Despite almost achieving the profiled number of enrolments, the project was unable to meet outcome targets where applicable. The achievement percentage varied from 0% - 59% showing a large underachievement across all outcome types. No participants were supported into engaging in job searching, but the greatest achievement against target was for individuals in education or training with 10 individuals supported overall.

Successes

Stakeholders commented that the project was successful in helping tackle social isolation amongst the women who participated, stating that many had formed friendships and often attend other (non-CELT) Community Hub events together. It was felt that as a result of this reduced isolation, many participants had increased confidence and improved wellbeing.

It was also felt by stakeholders that, where referrals came from social services, the project had complemented social services support well, as the CELT project provided support to the parent, whilst social workers focused on the child.

Challenges

The project experienced delays in getting started due to internal council contracting issues. Due to the delay in starting, a decision was made to expand delivery of the project to all areas in Newport, to ensure that engagement and outcomes targets could be met within the shortened timeframe. However, delivering the project across this wider area with no increase in project resource was a significant challenge that stretched the capacity of the project coordinator and family intervention worker.

It was also felt that there was a lack of understanding amongst some referral partners about what issues the programme could, and could not, help with, as 'wellbeing' is a

broad term that can be interpreted to encompass a wide range of things. This led to a small number of referrals where it was deemed that the project was not the right service to support the individual being referred.

Lessons learned/future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- The project demonstrated that there is a definite need for this type of support in Newport.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- A longer delivery period in the future would help to maximise engagement and outcomes.
- A larger staff team would be required to effectively deliver this type of support across all areas in Newport.

APPENDIX I: RHONDDA CYNON TAFF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) consisted of two strands, firstly, provision that enabled individuals to access rapid health support, consisting of a series of therapeutic or physiotherapy sessions. The project aimed to address psychological health and health and well-being needs in order to support those that wanted to seek work and engage in employment related activities. Stakeholders highlighted that there was no existing support aimed for individuals out of work but the project followed the same model as 'Staying Well at Work' which provides similar support to those working in businesses with less than 250 employees.

Secondly, an ex-offender's intervention programme which aimed to bridge the gap between leaving prison and getting individuals ready for employment and/or engage in 'Life Skills'. This was achieved by offering a series of initiatives in order to reintegrate participants back into the community.

Marketing

The rapid health support strand received referrals from a range of organisations including of Communities for Work, DWP, GPs and the health board. In addition to referrals, members of the team attended informal events and delivered presentations in order to engage with potential participants and other stakeholders. For example, attendance at a Ukrainian refugee centre, a local coffee morning and an Armed Forces Day. There was a translator at the Ukraine centre but due to the language barrier, contact with potential participants was limited.

Due to the high level of referrals, marketing was not deemed necessary for this delivery strand.

The ex-offender's intervention programme received referrals predominantly from housing organisations, including supported housing and halfway housing. Additional referrals came from the Job Centre, HMP Parc Prison. Plus, the CELT team liaised with the short-term offender's project clients directly.

Delivery

Rapid Access Health Support:

Delivery began at the end of February 2022 with counsellors delivering trademarked 'Living Life To The Full' training by a procured delivery team. This training aimed to be an accessible service that supported individuals to address the issues that they felt prevented them from becoming employed. The programme involved a series of 6 sessions, delivered weekly via face to face, virtual or over the phone.

The project also included the delivery of physiotherapy sessions over a 6-week period to support individuals' physical health which was seen as a barrier to employment.

Ex-offenders intervention programme:

Engagement workers supported those leaving prison to get involved in various activities, particularly engaging in ‘Life Skills’ and diversionary activities which support individuals to gain confidence, build skills and develop a healthy lifestyle with the ambition of supporting them to look for work or training opportunities.

Performance

The percentage of profiled enrolments in Rhondda Cynon Taf reached 102% with 218 individuals engaged (Table 1).

Table 19 Rhondda Cynon Taf performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	214	218	102%
Outcomes			
In employment	0	0	N/A
In education/training	0	0	N/A
Engaged in life skills	146	124	85%
Engaged in job searching	30	22	73%
Engaged with benefits system	0	1	-

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

Targets for outcomes related to the number of participants engaged in life skills and job searching. A greater number of participants were supported in life skills, contributing to 85% of the profile. Whereas 73% of the profile for number engaged in job searching was achieved. One individual was supported to engage with the benefits system, despite this not being a target for the LA.

Successes

Rapid Access Health Support

Referral routes worked well and successful relationships were formed with the community mental health team, specialist intervention team, GPs and the DWP.

Delivery through a hybrid model worked well – telephone, virtual platforms, face-to-face across numerous locations enabled an inclusive programme to be delivered.

Ex-offenders intervention programme

The gym pass initiative offered by RCTCBC Leisure for Life was a particular success. It allowed ex-offenders to reintegrate back into the community in a social space, keep motivation and enabled the engagement workers to have regular contact with the individuals.

New referral partners were established through the Housing Department to establish continuous referral flows. Contact was also made with other partners to explore referral opportunities i.e. HMP Parc Prison and Pontypridd Probation Office.

The support provided through CELT allowed for a holistic and flexible approach which enabled engagement workers to build relationships with participants between time of release and moving into employment.

Challenges

Rapid Access Health Support

The completion of paperwork was an issue for the procured counselling service, this caused delays in the recording of outcomes for the project. However, measures were put in place to improve and rectify the issues. Additional problems in finding onward referral support that had capacity to take on new clients resulted in outcomes being delayed or unable to be claimed.

Initially, referrals received from organisations were often inappropriate for the service. Some individuals had highly complex mental health needs and were at crisis point, others enrolled in order to satisfy DWPs requirements. This caused a low conversion rate between referrals and engagement numbers and increased the project's administration time. This also resulted in several appointments being cancelled or not attended with less than 24 hours' notice; reducing project efficiency.

Challenges existed with the volume and complexity of the administration required by the project. In particular, securing a delivery partner through procurement. This was hindered by the project delays and extensions granted.

Ex-offenders intervention programme

Engaging with repeat offenders was a challenge, particularly with those aged between 30-40 years of age.

Lessons learned/future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- Demand for counselling has significantly outstripped that for physiotherapy.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- The project would benefit from a project coordinator if it was repeated, as no project management time was included in the original bid.
- Better targeted referrals, may be achieved by briefings with referral organisations prior to delivery and improved communication between the project and external stakeholders.
- The ability to access offenders prior to prison release would have enabled engagement workers to form positive relationships and best place resources to maximise support upon release.

APPENDIX J: TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in Torfaen did not have a specific target group to attempt to engage, instead, the focus was placed on providing health, wellbeing, life skills and employability support. As there were no eligibility criteria, the project was able to support anyone over the age of 16.

Due to this focus, community engagement was identified as a key aspect to engage with a large number of people who would require wellbeing or employment support. The initial aim included getting CELT project staff out into rural communities, and areas with high volumes of unemployed and economically inactive individuals. A one-stop-shop idea was developed to support community engagement.

Marketing

Marketing support was commissioned out of the CELT team to develop advertising material. Internal advertising took place on social media with a separate Facebook page created to share resources and planned activities taking place.

Mobile outreach took place, making use of a minibus to access and engage with individuals in more rural communities and those not currently reached by employability provision. The minibus advertised CELT with external advertisement and CELT team members engaged with potential individuals on their doorstep, providing advice and directing towards relevant support.

A large number of self-referrals took place during the life cycle of the CELT project due to the outreach and community-based engagement activities taking place. The location of The Pod in Cwmbran Town Centre and advertising posters around the town centre advertised the project to a large number of people about their daily routines.

The CELT offer was also advertised to partners, including Job Centres, Citizens Advice Bureau, Social services and libraries to encourage referrals of participants requiring wellbeing, employment and benefits support.

Delivery

The Pod in Cwmbran Town centre provided a space for individuals requiring a vast array of support to access the following:

- Food parcel distribution with Eastern Valley Food Bank.
- Cost of living sessions.
- Advice and guidance in relation to employment, benefits and housing.
- Access to computers for job searching and applications.
- Referrals to other employability programmes within Torfaen.

Gym including gym induction sessions, mindfulness and yoga classes to remove any negative associations individuals may have, to support their health and wellbeing.

PIE pathways and wage-subsidy supported a number of individuals through supported employment including five-day work experience placements and wage-subsidised employment for 25 hours for 8 weeks. These led to full-time employment offers in a number of cases.

Forgeside Food Bank Distribution allowing for a text and drop-off service for food parcel distribution to remove the stigma of using a foodbank.

Outreach minibus had CELT team members onboard allowing direct contact with potential participants and sharing of advice and guidance as needed.

Wellbeing activities including weekly health and wellbeing sessions, a walking group in Forgeside and a gardening project.

Performance

With 238 participants enrolled, there was an overachievement of the profile by 44% (Table 1).

Table 1 Torfaen performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	165	238	144%
Outcomes			
In employment	8	24	300%
In education/training	70	70	100%
Engaged in life skills	66	57	86%
Engaged in job searching	36	1	3%
Engaged with benefits system	6	0	0%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

The project was able to support 24 individuals into employment, greater than the profile of 8 due to the success of the wage-subsidy scheme. The target of 70 individuals in education and training was met. However, the targets relating to life skills and job searching were not met during the delivery period.

Successes

The wage-subsidy aspect of the CELT project was so successful there was an increase in the original profile of placements to keep up with demand. Local employers benefitted from employing such individuals, filling their skills gaps.

A local authority stakeholder emphasised that as multiple outcomes could be claimed for each participant, the outcomes showcased the true value of the CELT project whilst allowing for participants to be supported in multiple ways to fulfil their needs.

The Pod was able to provide advice and guidance for a large number of individuals including access to IT for any applications, it also became a food parcel distribution centre, becoming the 2nd highest distributor in Torfaen.

For individuals accessing food parcels from The Pod, the CELT team was able to provide early intervention to help those in the greatest need, whether employability or benefits-based, or health and wellbeing.

Challenges

The original unit planned to host The Pod had been let to another business resulting in the team having to look for an alternative location, causing a delay in the process.

Delays also occurred with the PIE pathways element of the project due to issues in gaining DBS checks for individuals working/volunteering in care home settings.

Future recommendations

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- A longer period of transition between employability provision.
- Reducing approval time to ensure costs can be incurred earlier.
- Continuation of PIE pathways and supported employment aiding both individuals and local employers.

APPENDIX K: VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

The CELT project in the Vale of Glamorgan had the intention of supporting individuals furthest from the labour market, including those not claiming benefits. It was felt that there was a gap in employability provision in the area focussing on engagement with individuals who had been out of work for a long time and those in rural areas, so the CELT project allowed for a renewed focus on engagement.

Communities for Work in the Vale of Glamorgan had connections with Job Centres with staff members on secondment boosting referrals, however, the CELT project sought to diversify forming relationships with new referral partners.

Overall, there was an aim to increase engagement from those furthest from the labour market through both upskilling and confidence boosting activities leading to engagement with Communities for Work in the long-term. The support was communicated to participants as a steppingstone to boost their confidence before moving onto other direct employment support.

Marketing

Marketing techniques were used to engage individuals at libraries and community centres whilst also publicly advertising to boost self-referrals. One example includes advertisement through a local newspaper, helping to target older individuals in the area. Social media and advertisement through the local radio station was also used to disseminate information about the CELT offer to individuals locally.

Regular outreach at local libraries also led to the libraries using their own social media platforms to distribute information about CELT and who could be supported by the project.

A total of 59 partnership organisations were contacted at the beginning of the project to share information about the CELT project and what could be offered to individuals who may need support. These organisations were targeted to increase and diversify the routes of referral to employability projects in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Delivery

Delivery was focused on both confidence-building activities and securing training and qualifications for individuals to enable them to move closer to the labour market. Individuals who had been out-of-work for long periods of time needed activities and qualifications to help build a more up-to-date CV. Support also included assistance in becoming self-employed.

Examples of training and qualifications funded through the CELT project include HGV driving courses, Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards, First Aid Level 3, working at heights, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and Learning Support Assistant training.

Working alongside the Youth Service, CELT enabled participants to have access to tablets to undertake their learning and homework which aids in completion and pass rate.

Confidence building and pre-employment support activities included: job search support, computer skills support, claiming benefits and accessing training and wellbeing support in the community.

Performance

The number of participants enrolled reached 82, 12% over profile (Table 1).

Table 1 Vale of Glamorgan performance breakdown

	Profile total	Actual	Percentage of total achieved
Outputs			
Participants enrolled	73	82	112%
Outcomes			
In employment	24	24	100%
In education/training	28	4	14%
Engaged in life skills	18	28	156%
Engaged in job searching	11	5	45%
Engaged with benefits system	3	0	0%

Source: CELT Participant report 2023 from Torfaen central management team

The number of participants engaged in life skills was higher than profiled for the CELT project with a 56% overachievement. The project was able to support 100% of the profiled 24 individuals into employment. The remaining 3 outcomes targets were not achieved with the percentage of the profiled target ranging from 0% to 45%.

Successes

The CELT project enabled voluntary sector partnerships, which The Vale of Glamorgan had previously lost.

The project was able to reach both older individuals and those living in rural areas, which had been highlighted as target areas for the project to support those who had not been reached by other employability support. In some cases, individuals were supported who had not been accessing support, or benefits, for a number of years.

Delivery and strategic stakeholders discussed that CELT had enabled a greater level of engagement from individuals as they appeared less anxious to talk to and receive support from the Authority over the Job Centre. There was also further discussion that engaging with and delivering support out in communities helped to remove barriers to engagement.

A number of stakeholders emphasised the bridge CELT had formed for individuals to be able to access other employability provision in area once CELT had improved their confidence, wellbeing and employability.

The personalised support on offer for the individuals was raised as an important aspect of the project by delivery and operational stakeholders as support was targeted to individuals needs, desires and tailored to local employment opportunities.

Challenges

Initially, the CELT project aimed to introduce PIE pathways for participants. However, it quickly became apparent that many of the individuals that would come in contact with the CELT programme were too far removed from the labour market to commit to longer-term volunteering or employment-based activities. They also experienced difficulties finding employers who were willing to take on this scheme, as many experiencing skills shortages were looking for individuals ready to start full-time employment.

At the outset of the project, COVID-19 restrictions limited the use of libraries and other community venues for marketing so slowed the rate of engagement.

Lessons learned and future recommendations

Lessons learned during this project included:

- Avoid PIE pathways as a focus for individuals far from the labour market.

Recommendations for similar future projects cover:

- Introduction of a hub, like the Pod in Torfaen.
- Supported employment for individuals with SEND.
- Commission wellbeing and mental health support.
- Increased delivery of self-employment support.
- Project staff to be on direct contracts to avoid risks associated with agency staff, such as leaving with interruptions to service delivery.