

Evaluation of Youth Employment Initiative in South West Scotland

Final Report for the Scottish Government
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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This Executive Summary presents the findings of an Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which operated across South West Scotland between 2015 and 2018. The evaluation was commissioned by the Scottish Government as Managing Authority for European Social Funds (ESF) in Scotland.
2. The YEI was launched by the European Commission (EC) to specifically support regions across Europe that had experienced a significant increase in youth unemployment and inactivity. It was developed around the Youth Guarantee, with activity to be strongly focused on a personalised package of support interventions geared towards facilitating a young person's transition to the labour market, and the achievement of sustained results.
3. Eligible European regions were defined as those NUTS 2 level regions that had youth unemployment rates of more than 25% in 2012. The South West Scotland was eligible for investment as youth unemployment stood at 25.8% at that time, largely due to: the impact of the economic crisis in 2008; a history of economic and social restructuring through decline in heavy industry and coal-mining; and persistent social and material deprivation and health inequalities.
4. The YEI in South West Scotland was aimed at young people aged 16-29 years not in employment, education or training (NEET), residing in one of twelve South West of Scotland Local Authorities, who were inactive or unemployed, including long-term unemployed, and whether or not they were registered as seeking work. Activity was to lead to young people receiving a quality offer of sustainable employment, education/training, recognised qualifications, apprenticeship or traineeship.
5. Across both age groups (16-24 and 25-29) interventions were to focus on two target groups, namely young people who were:
 - very far from the labour market and who needed significant additional support to overcome barriers and get into work, achieve qualifications, or become self-employed; and
 - more work-ready, with a higher level of skills, qualification and behavioural motivation.

6. Fourteen YEI Strategic Operations were ultimately implemented across South West Scotland. These were managed and delivered through 11 Lead Partners – Local Authorities and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), with the latter delivered via the college sector in South West Scotland.
7. The study method involved: a desk-based review; consultations with Lead Partners and wider stakeholders (e.g. Managing Authority, delivery partners); consultation via surveys and focus groups with young people supported; and a presentation of emerging findings to the Managing Authority and Lead Partners.

Conclusions

8. The conclusions are presented in line with the evaluation objectives.

Achievement of Outputs and Results

9. In assessing the achievements of YEI South West Scotland, it is important to set this within the context of the various challenges faced since the YEI's inception.
10. Delays in agreeing the ESF 2014/2020 Operational Programmes had a knock on effect on finalising and agreeing Scotland's ESF Operational Programmes, including the YEI Strategic Intervention in South West Scotland. Many of the difficulties can be attributed to a perceived lack of clarity from the beginning about the way in which eligibility, cost and audit rules would apply to YEI.
11. This caused challenges both in the commitment of YEI South West Scotland funds and delays in the YEI Strategic Operations getting off the ground locally and gaining traction. Significant funds remained unallocated, and there were further de-commitment of funds across Lead Partners. The final position on expenditure will become clear at the financial end date.
12. The operational context in South West Scotland is also worthy of further reflection. The level of youth unemployment fell sharply following peak levels in 2012. The level of need was not at the same level as that envisaged, and this had a knock-on impact on delivery, expenditure and achievement of targets. However, YEI was an appropriate policy response and its aspirations remained relevant.

13. Some wider factors have, however, potentially reduced the overall impact of YEI in the South West Scotland, namely: restrictions relating to supporting those at risk of becoming NEET; and the definition of NEET adopted meant that young people in employment were ineligible, even where this was only for a few hours per week.
14. Delays in EUMIS (e.g. CSV upload tool) and the addition of pre-payment checks to the claims process means that financial and target data submitted by Lead Partners does not present a true reflection of progress and achievements. This position has been compounded by a perceived lack of detailed guidance from the outset and various iterations published thereafter. Providing the necessary evidence requirements for eligibility has been particularly challenging. This is reflective of the nature of the YEI target group, but also challenges in retrospectively providing additional evidence.
15. This leads to a situation whereby achievements are potentially under-reported. The reality is that more young people will have been supported through the YEI and have achieved sustained results than can be actually claimed for. As further claims are in the process of being submitted by Lead Partners, including final claims, it has been difficult, and would indeed be unfair, to assess performance based solely on the EUMIS monitoring data alone. At face value, performance against outputs and results has been weak, **Table A.1**. However, this is based on 31% of ESF funds paid/pending.

Table A.1: Summary of Outputs and Results Achieved To Date

Indicator	Target	Actual Achieved To Date	% Achieved To Date
Output			
Total Engagement	17,615	7,924	45%
Immediate Results			
Total YEI Completion	14,938	2,618	18%
Participants Receiving a Positive Offer After Leaving	9,518	1,349	14%
Participants in a Positive Destination After Leaving	8,447	1,970	23%
Long Term Results			
Participants in Education or Training Six Months After leaving	4,255	1,489	35
Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving	6,570	475	7
Participants in Six Months After Leaving	614	3	0%

16. In the absence of more up-to-date verified data, a more appropriate way to assess performance would be undertake a proportional assessment based on expenditure claimed/pending (i.e. 31% ESF spend to date¹ against 31% of agreed targets).

Table A.2: Proportional Assessment of Outputs and Results Achieved To Date

Indicator	31% of Target	Actual Achieved To Date	% Achieved To Date
Output			
Total Engagement	5,461	7,924	145%
Immediate Results			
Total YEI Completion	4,631	2,618	57%
Participants Receiving a Positive Offer After Leaving	2,951	1,349	46%
Participants in a Positive Destination After Leaving	2,619	1,970	75%
Long Term Results			
Participants in Education or Training Six Months After leaving	1,319	1,489	113%
Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving	2,037	475	23%
Participants in Six Months After Leaving	190	3	2%

17. Adopting this approach improves YEI achievements across the board, but most notably in terms of total engagements, total completions, and participants in a positive destination after leaving. A further positive finding is that the long-term result of participants in education or training six months after leaving has already been exceeded.
18. With further claims yet to be submitted and verified, there will likely have been further achievement against outputs and results.

¹ Note: we do have data on Lead Partner spend at that point in time against its own match-funding to include this in the calculation. ESF spend to date (as per EUMIS) is therefore used as a proxy.

19. The YEI funds allowed an increased focus on the provision of support to young people, including those furthest from the labour market. Wider feedback from young people supported (i.e. from the primary research undertaken) adds further weight to strong YEI performance and that it is highly regarded:

- 80% of young people that reported a barrier to accessing employment, education or training opportunities (e.g. lack of work experience) said that YEI helped them to overcome this;
- satisfaction with the overall package of YEI support received was also high – some 88% of young people were either satisfied or very satisfied;
- a positive finding is that 77% of young people who responded to the survey continue to be in a positive destination, mainly employment but also college and university;
- there is also some evidence of progression – for example, young people now in promoted posts or undertaking a higher level qualification since leaving YEI;
- the main benefits reported were help to get a job and skills development. It has also increased the self-esteem and confidence of many young people;
- over three-quarters reported that the support was either important or very important in helping them to continue with education, undertake training, or find work; and
- in the absence of the YEI, almost 60% of young people said that they would either likely be unemployed or in a lower skilled, lower paid or less fulfilling/suitable job.

Change in Youth Unemployment and Attribution

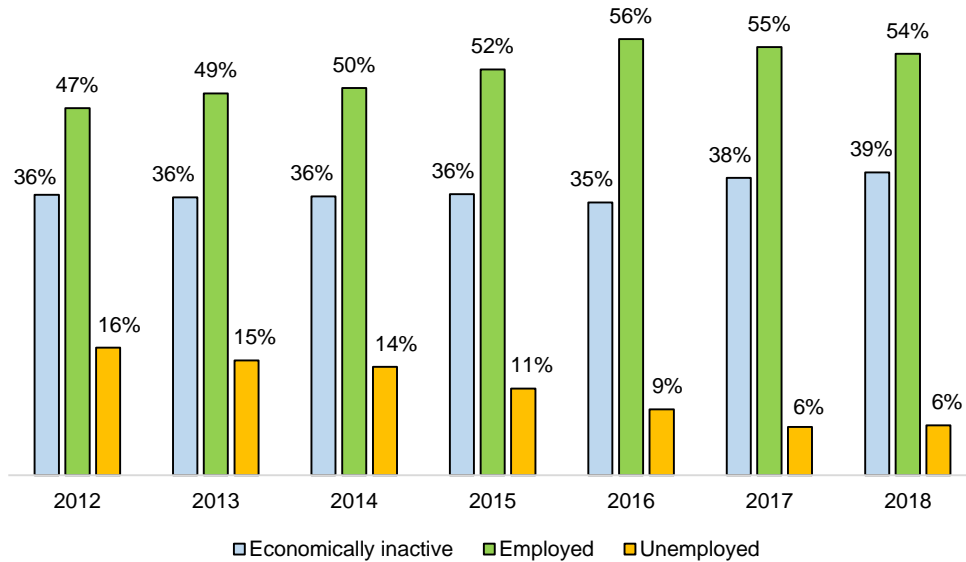
20. The operational context for YEI South West Scotland was reported to have changed from when the programme was first designed, to when delivery started, and on through the delivery phase. This finding was confirmed through our data analysis work.

21. Youth unemployment peaked in South West Scotland in 2012 (25.8%) and then fell sharply between 2012 and 2016. The fall in youth unemployment had implications for YEI demand, as some young people closer to the labour market found work.

22. In part, this is further supported by the performance monitoring data which shows that a relatively high proportion of young people who engaged in YEI did not complete the intervention. While this includes natural attrition, the feedback from Lead Partners supports the view that some young people left YEI early to take up employment.
23. Between 2012 and 2018, South West Scotland experienced a steep decline in youth unemployment from a rate of 26% to 11% (-15pp² decline); and 45,300 to 16,000 young people (29,300, -67% decline). This decline was greater than Scotland (-12pp) and UK (-9pp).
24. Similarly, the youth employment rate in South West Scotland increased by 11pp between 2012 and 2016 (when some YEI operations started). This was greater than the increase in Scotland and the UK, and represented an increase of 20,900 young people moving into work. It has, however, decreased since this time (Scotland has experienced an increase), and the youth employment rate in South West Scotland is still below pre-crisis levels – further highlighting the continued relevance of YEI.
25. Of note is that the youth economic activity rate has been on a consistent downward trend in South West Scotland, and has been consistently below Scotland and UK rates. In South West Scotland there has been a rise in the number of young people who are inactive: +2,500 between 2012 and 2016, and +5,700 between 2016 and 2018. The majority of whom are likely to be students. By comparison, both Scotland and UK have experienced a further decrease since 2016.

² pp = percentage point.

Figure A.1: Share of Youth Population Inactive, Employed and Unemployed – South West Scotland³



Source: APS

26. It is clear that between 2012 and 2016 the majority of unemployed young people in South West Scotland moved into employment. Since then, however, there has been an increase in the number of economically inactive young people, although not in a negative sense as they are primarily students.
27. Looking at the overall absolute changes, we can see that the -29,300 in the number of young people unemployed does not equate to similar rises in economic inactivity and employment, due to the fall in the 16-24 population (- 27,000).

Table A.3: Absolute Changes Summary – South West Scotland

Number	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Young People Unemployed	45,300	22,500	16,000	-29,300	-6,500
Young People Employed	130,300	148,700	135,100	4,800	-13,600
Young People Economically Inactive	99,600	92,900	97,100	-2,500	4,200
16-24 Population	275,200	264,000	248,200	-27,000	-15,800

Source: APS

³ Unemployed figure differs, as is taken as a fraction of total population, rather than economically active population.

28. Verified YEI monitoring data to date shows that:

- 1,970 young people were in a positive destination upon leaving the YEI defined as employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship; and
- 1,967 young people were in a positive destination six months after leaving.

29. When looking at the total decrease in youth unemployment in South West Scotland between 2012 and 2018 (-29,300), the YEI contributes around 7% to this change.

30. The YEI does appear to have played its part in reducing youth unemployment through preparing young people for work, connecting young people into local work experience and employment opportunities, including clear routes into different sectors, and in funding additional college courses in subject areas where young people would have a better chance of finding employment.

31. However, it is also important to recognise that the intervention was one of a number of projects and programmes operational at this time and aimed at this target group. This is further evidenced by the Scottish Government announcement that its commitment to reduce youth unemployment by 40% in Scotland was achieved four years ahead of schedule.

Has the Effect of YEI Varied Based on Sub-Sets of Participants

32. The effect of the YEI on sub-sets of participants is difficult to fully address. In part this reflects the fact that targets set for particular groups (e.g. gender) did not always reflect local demographic patterns, etc. What we can tell from the EUMIS monitoring data, however, is that:

- more young men engaged with YEI than young women;
- the vast majority of young people engaged were in the 16-24 age group; and
- the inactive cohort among young people aged 16-24 years achieved higher completion rates and better results than other cohorts (i.e. unemployed, long-term unemployed).

33. Without having more up-to-date data on performance against outputs and results, it is not possible to comment fully on whether there have been any variations in performance across the individual local authority areas in South West Scotland. However, our overall sense is that some will have performed stronger than others.

How has the structure and timing of YEI helped or hindered delivery compared to other current ESF programmes and to non-European delivery

34. Some of the points around this evaluation objective were touched on above. A few wider points are considered below:

- Helped:
 - no need for the YEI target group to have additional “barriers” like the ESF Employability Pipeline.
- Hindered:
 - additional YEI resources allowed an increased focus on young people, but the landscape was considered to be relatively cluttered at the time of YEI, and when in Scotland there continues to be a focus on ensuring greater integration and alignment and making the employability landscape easier to navigate;
 - challenges for some in terms of getting YEI off the ground at the same time as the Employability Pipeline and other ESF programmes; and
 - by far the main hindrance compared to other ESF and non-European funded programmes was reported to centre on restrictive eligibility rules and administrative tasks (and time) associated with the compliance process.

Contribution Towards Scotland’s Delivery of the Youth Guarantee

35. The Scottish Government has made a commitment that every single 16-19 year old in Scotland will be offered a place in appropriate learning or training if they are not already in a job, Modern Apprenticeship or in education. In some local authority areas, the commitment has been extended to a wider age group of young people (e.g. 16-24 years).

36. The YEI has contributed to Scotland's delivery of the Youth Guarantee through having supporting aims and activities that help progress more young people into education, training and work. In this regard, the YEI is likely to have been consistent with this existing provision, although it may also have simply duplicated or caused confusion. We do not have any reliable or robust evidence to comment either way.

Issues for Consideration

37. We have not sought to provide recommendations, rather we have identified a number of lessons learned or wider points for consideration:

- There will always be inherent challenges in the implementation of projects and programmes that have been subject to detailed design at the European level as it is unable to reflect on local circumstances. There then often lacks sufficient flexibility or freedom to respond to different (and changing) local circumstances and needs and local delivery capacity.
- A more appropriate approach would have been for the Commission to define the high level policy objectives then allow for Managing Authorities, in partnership with others, to design the finer detail of their programme but within that wider strategic framework. This would ensure a much stronger strategic fit with local policy and a closer alignment with current delivery priorities.
- Time is always a key pressure in designing new programmes. There is often insufficient time or resources to fully develop, test and implement a new programme and its supporting operational and governance protocols. Yet again, YEI faced a compressed timescale for delivery which in turns lead to reduced activity levels.
- There is possibly a need to explore ways to reduce the time required from submission of Lead Partner Operational Applications to Formal Offer of Grant Letters being issued. This would help mitigate delays for Lead Partners (and wider delivery providers), and ensure opportunities for expenditure and achievement of results are maximised.
- Detailed guidance, where possible, should be available from the outset – or at least there should be a shared and consistent understanding of clear parameters from within Lead Partners can operate until detailed guidance becomes available.

There also needs to be appropriate document version control and consistent messaging to Lead Partners for the avoidance of any doubt.

- Linked to the point above, and extending to performance monitoring, there might be value in the Managing Authority organising participative workshops sessions with Lead Partners to help build that shared understanding of rules and requirements, as well as drawing on their knowledge and experience in the design and delivery of EU-funded employability programmes.
- While it is recognised that there will always be teething problems with the implementation of new MIS, there might be value in further engagement with Lead Partners on EUMIS and how its functionality could be further improved. This should involve those Lead Partners who deal with a large volume of participants across EU-funded programmes.
- Evidence requirements for eligibility should take cognisance of the particular target groups and the challenges they might face. This has particular issues for capacity within lead/delivery partners to implement a new programme in light of declining staff resources. More consideration of delivery capacity should be included at the outset.
- Examples of what worked well: person-centred approach – tailoring support to meet a young person’s specific needs and aspirations; case management/key worker model - building trusted relationships and helping to support sustained engagement; outreach activity; flexibility of provision – having a broad service offer that can meet the needs of different young people; pre employability support plus work trials, experience, placements and internships linked to real employment opportunities; involving employers in the design of specific interventions that build the range of skills and competencies needed to work in particular sectors; wage subsidies (albeit there were challenges); and ensuring connections into other forms of support.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an [Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative \(YEI\)](#) which operated across South West Scotland between 2015 and 2018.

The evaluation was commissioned by the Scottish Government as Managing Authority for European Social Funds (ESF) in Scotland. The physical end date for YEI Strategic Intervention was 30th September 2018, with the evaluation undertaken over the three-month period October to December 2018.

1.1 Context

ESF provide European Union Member States with investment to deliver the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth⁴. The strategy focuses on five goals spanning employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction, and climate/energy.

The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy identifies similar areas for growth and development. In securing investment from the 2014/2020 ESF and ERDF Programmes, the focus was on how Scotland could best align its Strategic Interventions (including the YEI) to achieve long-term change and contribute towards sustainable economic growth.

The Scottish Government's ESF Operational Programmes 2014/2020⁵ was focussed on delivery against three Thematic Objectives:

1. [Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility](#) – the YEI contributed towards this Thematic Objective.
2. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.
3. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

Although YEI is focused on Theme 1, it is clear that it will have potential impact across all three themes.

⁴ Europe 2020, A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. [Accessed online](#)

⁵ Scottish Government, European Social Fund Operational Programmes 2014/2020. [Accessed online](#)

The YEI was delivered through Priority Axis 4 and through a specific Investment Priority 8ii defined as:

“sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee”⁶.

1.2 Youth Employment Initiative

The YEI was launched in Spring 2013 by the European Commission (EC) to specifically support regions across Europe that had experienced a significant increase in youth unemployment and inactivity. It was developed around the Youth Guarantee, with activity to be strongly focused on a personalised package of support interventions geared towards facilitating a young person’s transition to the labour market, and the achievement of sustained results.

Eligible European regions were defined as those NUTS 2 level regions that had youth unemployment rates of more than 25% in 2012. [The South West Scotland was eligible for investment as youth unemployment stood at 25.8% at that time,](#) largely due to:

- the impact of the economic crisis in 2008;
- a history of economic and social restructuring through decline in heavy industry and coal-mining; and
- persistent social and material deprivation and health inequalities.

The YEI in South West Scotland was aimed at young people aged 16-29 years not in employment, education or training (NEET), residing in one of twelve South West of Scotland Local Authorities, who were inactive or unemployed, including long-term unemployed, and whether or not they were registered as seeking work. Activity was to lead to young people receiving a quality offer of sustainable employment, education/training, recognised qualifications, apprenticeship or traineeship.

⁶ Ibid.

Across both age groups (16-24 and 25-29) interventions were to focus on two target groups, namely young people who were:

- very far from the labour market and who needed significant additional support to overcome barriers and get into work, achieve qualifications, or become self-employed; and
- more work-ready, with a higher level of skills, qualification and behavioural motivation.

Fourteen YEI Strategic Operations were ultimately implemented across South West Scotland. These were managed and delivered through 11 Lead Partners – Local Authorities and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), with the latter delivered via the college sector in South West Scotland.

Given the range of young people to be supported, a broad array of activity was identified in Scotland's ESF Operational Programmes 2014/2020 as eligible for support. This spanned: barrier removal activity; employer recruitment incentives; in-work support; key worker or mentoring support; pre-recruitment training linked to specific job opportunities; support to arrange work experience; tailored counselling and job search advice; employment skills training – e.g. CV preparation, job applications, interview skills; traineeship or apprenticeship; additional educational places; and start-up support for young entrepreneurs.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

This evaluation builds on an earlier in-house evaluation of the South West Scotland YEI undertaken by the Scottish Government (January 2016)⁷. The first evaluation reviewed delivery to date and lessons learned, while this latest evaluation assessed delivery and impact.

More specifically, this evaluation sought to answer six research questions, namely:

1. What programme outputs and results have been achieved by the YEI Strategic Operations;

⁷ Scottish Government, Youth Employment Initiative, Evaluation Report for the 2014/2020 Scottish Operational Programmes, January 2016. [Accessed online](#)

2. Has youth unemployment reduced more in South West Scotland than other areas;
3. If youth unemployment has reduced more in South West Scotland than other areas, how much of this can be attributed to YEI;
4. Has the effect of YEI varied based on sub-sets of participants (e.g. age, attainment, completion, qualifications gained, gender, location);
5. How has the structure and timing of YEI helped or hindered delivery compared to other current ESF programmes (e.g. Employability Pipeline) and to non-European delivery; and
6. How has YEI contributed towards Scotland's delivery of the Youth Guarantee.

1.4 Study Method

The evaluation was undertaken in five main stages, **Figure 1.1**. The study method combined a mix of secondary and primary research, with the former including a desk-based review of background information and data.

Figure 1.1: Study Method



The desk-based research included a review of: the Managing Authority's Operational ESF Programmes 2014/2020; Lead Partner Operation Applications; financial and performance monitoring data; and a socio-economic review.

Table 1.1 provides more detail on the primary research undertaken, and a list of organisations consulted is contained in **Appendix A**. Further detail on the scope of the primary research is provided in the relevant Chapters of the report.

Table 1.1: Primary Research Programme

Stakeholders	Target	Actual
Lead Partners and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 30 face-to-face and telephone consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 consultations with organisations undertaken, which involved 43 individuals
Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 telephone interviews • Online survey of all participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 134 young people engaged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 21 telephone interviews ○ 100 online survey responses ○ 13 involved in focus groups

A session to present and discuss emerging findings was held on 12th December 2018 with the Scottish Government and representatives from Lead Partners.

1.5 Report Structure

The remainder of the evaluation report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides the main themes arising from the consultations undertaken with Lead Partners and wider stakeholders;
- **Chapter 3** presents the main feedback from young people engaged in the YEI;
- **Chapter 4** provides an assessment of progress against YEI budget, outputs and results;
- **Chapter 5** presents analysis of how youth unemployment has changed over the YEI delivery period; and
- **Chapter 6** presents our overall conclusions in line with the evaluation objectives.

2. Lead Partners and Wider Stakeholders

This Chapter presents the main themes arising from the consultations undertaken with Lead Partners and wider stakeholders, and includes more detail on the nature of YEI activities implemented.

2.1 Approach

A mix of face-to-face and telephone consultations were undertaken with:

- all Lead Partners that implemented YEI Strategic Operations – 11 consultations with key contacts within local authorities and the SFC; and
- 12 wider stakeholders, including the Managing Authority, partners' involved in the delivery of YEI support (e.g. the college sector in South West Scotland and third sector organisations), Skills Development Scotland, and the Colleges Partnership.

Consultations typically involved more than one representative from each organisation and reflects different roles and involvement in the YEI (e.g. management, finance, compliance, etc). A total of 43 individuals were involved.

2.2 A Clear Rationale

There was a clear understanding among consultees regarding the rationale for, and purpose of, the YEI. Here, reference was frequently made to the particularly high levels of youth unemployment that existed in 2012, that youth unemployment had been an identified priority nationally and locally, and that there was an expressed political need to continue to tackle the issue.

The results-oriented nature of the YEI was emphasised in terms of clarity around the need to support young people not in employment, education or training into a sustained positive destination.

The additional YEI funds were welcomed, and many reported that the 67% intervention rate was particularly attractive⁸.

Some pointed to the challenging funding climate in Scotland over recent years. Local authorities referred to unprecedented reductions in funding to support the delivery of local services, and the continued need to make significant savings and prioritise available resources.

Therefore, despite the 67% intervention rate, some reported that securing match-funding was challenging.

2.3 A Delayed Start

Lead Partners (and others) raised some initial challenges concerning the delayed start to the 2014/2020 Operational Programmes, including the YEI, and the knock-on impact that this had on delivery. In particular on the ability for Lead Partners to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of employability service provision to young people following the end of the 2007/2013 Operational Programmes.

Consultees referred to lengthy discussions and uncertainty about the cost model to be used for YEI. It was not until latterly in 2015 that the position was clarified by the Managing Authority (i.e. flat rate rather than unit cost), and for formal offer of grant letters to be issued to Lead Partners (end of December 2015).

While some Lead Partners took the decision to start YEI delivery prior to certain aspects being finalised and offer of grant letters received (i.e. operating at risk), others reported that this was not an option and delayed the YEI physical start date locally to 2016 (i.e. shorter delivery period than initially envisaged).

For those starting YEI early, this typically meant initially operating on a smaller scale and/or delivering a hybrid programme that sat somewhere between the previous ESF funded employability programme and the new YEI. Aspirations to maximise spend and sustained results for young people were also important considerations.

Overall, delays were reported to have impacted on local YEI delivery plans, and have since led to the de-committed of funds and wider underspends (**Chapter 4**).

⁸ See also **Chapter 4** - The YEI was additional investment from a specific European Union budget line dedicated to youth employment. It was to be matched from the ESF national allocations (therefore 67% intervention rate). The remainder was to come from project partners (i.e. 33%).

2.4 A Changing and Cluttered Landscape

It was reported that youth employment had been a high priority at a national and local level for some time, with a wide range of projects, programmes and interventions implemented, leading to a somewhat cluttered landscape at the time the YEI was introduced.

This was reported to include the National Third Sector Fund, Employability Pipeline, Opportunities for All, Employability Fund, Scotland's Employer Recruitment Initiative, to name but a few. At the time the YEI was announced, there was reported to be significant activity on the ground to tackle youth unemployment with much of this aimed at the core 16-24 age group.

As such, extending the age group for YEI to 29 years was welcomed.

Many consultees highlighted that while youth unemployment was high in 2012, by the time YEI projects entered the delivery phase the position had changed in Scotland, including the South West. This is further supported though our assessment how youth unemployment has changed (**Chapter 5**).

Signs of economic recovery were also evident with youth unemployment reported to have been on the decline following 2012. The labour market was changing which was reported to have had implications for YEI delivery. Those young people closer to the labour market were said to be finding work more easily. Need and demand for YEI among this cohort of young people was not at the scale envisaged when the YEI was first devised.

Others highlighted that while some young people were finding work at that time, some were moving into more insecure forms of employment (e.g. zero hours' contracts), part-time work, or increasing numbers of graduates working in non-graduate roles. Workforce Development, Increasing Productivity, and the Fair Work agenda were becoming more pertinent and rising up the policy agenda in Scotland.

The definition of NEET used meant that young people in these circumstances could not be supported through YEI. This was considered a missed opportunity, and it was reported that inflexibility in the rules meant that many young people were excluded (e.g. those with a Saturday job). Some felt that a strong enough case was not made to the EC on this particular issue.

Some consultees emphasised that the labour market improvement had however, not been as evident for those young people further from the labour market.

Restrictions relating to supporting those at risk of becoming NEET was reported to have reduced the potential impact of the YEI, and considered “short-sighted”. Many Lead Partners (and other stakeholders) emphasised the shift towards early intervention and preventative approaches, which was at odds with not being able to engage directly with young people while still at school through the YEI.

2.5 A Perceived Lack of Appropriate Guidance

For Lead Partners who took the decision to initially operate the YEI at risk, it was reported that there was little in the way of detailed guidance at that time regarding the evidence that would be required to be collected as part of the audit requirements (e.g. in particular around eligibility). In part, this was why other Lead Partners decided to hold back on delivery to a later stage.

All Lead Partners (and delivery partners) are experienced in the delivery of ESF funded employability programmes, and proceeded on the basis of making use of existing audit and compliance processes and systems. This approach was adopted largely because it was felt that the YEI guidance available at the outset was general, high level, and open to interpretation. The view taken was to proceed on the basis of previous and recent experience in the absence of more detailed YEI guidance.

Many Lead Partners did, however, comment on the helpfulness of the Q&A paper issued by the Managing Authority in January 2016.

The time taken for queries to be answered was raised, as was receiving conflicting advice/guidance depending on who Lead Partners spoke with in the Managing Authority.

2.6 Tightening of Audit and Compliance

Wider feedback from Lead Partners and delivery partners (e.g. colleges) was that there were frequent iterations of the guidance published (i.e. National Rules) over the YEI delivery period. While there was recognition that each iteration sought to provide more detail and clarity, this was said not to be without its challenges.

Providing all of the necessary evidence was reported to be challenging. In part this reflected the time taken by Lead Partners to develop a fuller understanding and to get up to speed with requirements. However, much of the feedback centred on the need to retrospectively try and gather new, additional, or supporting evidence from individuals and/or employers to comply with audit requirements. Trying to retrospectively collate evidence was said to become more difficult as time passes.

This was considered both problematic and time-consuming, with Lead Partners (and colleges) reporting that they followed the latest YEI guidance available at a particular point in time.

Lead Partners reported that the reality is that YEI performance and impact will be under-estimated as a result. The general view is that many more young people will have been supported than can be ultimately claimed for. This largely centres on a wide variety of issues surrounding evidencing eligibility.

The general view is that the YEI guidance and eligibility rules have been restrictive, and have put additional barriers in place for those looking to access support.

2.7 Claims Process

A delay in the Managing Authority Management Information System (MIS) - EUMIS – being developed, tested and going live was another challenge raised. There was, however, understanding and recognition of teething problems associated with the implementation of any new system.

The system was developed largely because Lead Partners use different internal MIS. While the SFC/college sector use the same FES System, this is different to those used by local authorities (use various MIS, including but not limited to Hanlon).

Lead Partners made reference to the development of a CSV upload tool that would allow information/data from their internal systems to be uploaded to EUMIS as part of the financial claim process (i.e. auto transfer).

It was reported that the EUMIS system became live during 2016 – after many projects were up and running - and that the CSV upload tool only became available in Autumn 2017. What this meant in practice was a delay in submitting financial claims. Some Lead Partners were waiting for the CSV upload tool to become available, while others reported that it was becoming more important to submit a claim, and decided to input information manually to EUMIS.

This caused additional work, especially for Lead Partners (and colleges) dealing with a high volume of participants (i.e. inputting each individual's data, scanning and uploading each individual source of evidence, etc).

Wider points raised by Lead Partners and wider stakeholders centred on:

- the delay meant that underspends were not formally reported until relatively late in the YEI delivery period;
- the system was designed based on a unit cost methodology that was subsequently not taken forward;
- desk-based pre-payment checks undertaken by the Management Authority once a claim was submitted were perceived as an additional tier of compliance that did not exist in previous programmes;
- time taken for pre-payment checks to be undertaken, queries addressed and payment to be made:
 - in part considered linked to delays in EUMIS and the CSV upload tool. Lead Partners were also submitting claims at same time which potentially created a back-log
 - high error rates and ineligible claims - from a Lead Partner (and colleges) perspective this firmly relates to proceeding on the basis of previous ESF funded programmes in the perceived absence of detailed guidance on YEI evidence requirements; and

- a new claim could not be submitted via EUMIS while an existing claim was outstanding. This has had implications beyond YEI expenditure, as the system is used for all European funded programmes (e.g. Employability Pipeline).

The general view is that the claims process has been onerous and administrative tasks time-consuming, and that staff costs associated with these functions not adequately resourced financially via YEI.

The new EUMIS system has been a learning curve for all involved, including the Managing Authority, and that while there have been some improvements to its basic functionality, there is considered scope for further improvement.

2.8 Diversity of Models and Service Offering

A range of YEI delivery models were adopted, with some Lead Partners delivering the YEI interventions internally, some procuring the services of external providers⁹, and others using a mix of the two approaches. Where aspects of delivery was sub-contracted this was mainly to draw on specialist support not available in-house.

Local Authority Lead Partners

A broad range of YEI interventions were taken forward by local authorities and associated delivery partners. This was largely designed around a mix of:

- building on Lead Partners experience of supporting the target group;
- plugging gaps in provision; and
- having the flexibility to develop and try new things.

It was reported that young people first engaged in the YEI in different ways – self-referrals, via the Employability Pipeline, through Employability Hubs (or similar), from other Council departments and initiatives, from Jobcentre Plus, from Department of Work and Pensions, and from partner organisations.

Referral mechanisms were reported to work well.

⁹ For example, colleges, local authority ALEOs, third sector organisations.

Once engaged in YEI young people were typically supported through an action planning process that identified needs and ambitions, and identified appropriate support provision.

An example of a holistic tool used by some Lead Partners to establish the baseline position from which progress could be tracked was Work Star. This covers key outcome areas linked to employability and employment: job skills and experience, aspiration and motivation, job-search skills, stability, basic skills, workplace and social skills, and health and well-being.

For some, YEI included a key worker or case management approach whereby each young person would have a named key contact for the duration of their engagement. Where adopted, this approach was considered crucial in building trusted relationships and helping to support sustained engagement.

A wide range of activities were implemented by local authority Lead Partners, and there were elements of commonality across the board, and in line with eligible interventions.

Many Lead Partners offered an [employer recruitment incentive](#) (wage subsidies) to employ a young person. This was not only considered an effective mechanism for supporting young people into new employment opportunities locally, but a useful hook to strengthen Councils' employer engagement relationships. Some reported that for some employers this represented the first time that they had taken on any staff (i.e. sole traders), and as such it was a big step. The wage subsidy was also considered helpful in alleviating some employers' perceived risks regarding employing staff.

Where challenges were reported, this largely related to difficulties employers (and in particular micro/smaller employers) faced in providing the necessary evidence for audit purposes (e.g. bank statements, BACs payments, etc). The general view was that it was more onerous than other non-ESF funded wage subsidy programmes, and that some employers did not ultimately submit any claims for funding. It also put some employers off applying in the first place. The importance of maintaining positive relationships with local employers throughout the process was emphasised.

The provision of [employability skills support](#) was common. This spanned workshops on CV writing, completing job applications, interview skills, mock interviews, and job clubs.

In specific response to employer feedback that some young people are unprepared for the world of work, Dumfries and Galloway Council (and partners, including employers) developed the Dumfries and Galloway Employability Award - a work based qualification with SQA units building employability skills and accrediting the ability to apply those skills in the workplace. It sought to build core competencies including positive attitude, self-management, team working, problem solving, communication and literacy.

Wider [pre-employability and personal development support](#) was also a common feature of YEI delivery as a means of building the confidence and motivation of young people as they progressed towards and into the labour market. This included, for example Pacific Institute training courses - STEPS to Excellence and PX2. The latter course helps young people see that they have choices and that they can take more control of their lives and develop the thinking skills they need to become self-motivated lifelong learners.

For some young people supported, short and sharp interventions were all that was required – for example, support to enable the young person to get the [relevant certifications to then take up specific employment opportunities](#), including in specific sectors. This included Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS Card), Food and Hygiene Certificates, First Aid courses, Health and Safety, Security Guard licence, Welcome Host course, Manual Handling course, etc.

Significant focus was placed by local authority Lead Partners on the provision of [work trials, experience, placements and internships](#). These were considered to work best where they were specifically linked to current or future employment opportunities within local authorities (e.g. Modern Apprenticeships) and within other local employers. The main feedback was that some young people simply lacked the necessary work experience to find a job.

Some examples of activities in this area included [sector based academies](#) which were designed with input from employers to help meet immediate and future recruitment needs. It was also reported that these help employers recruit a workforce with the right mix of skills to sustain and grow their business. Pre-employability support was followed by work placements and a guaranteed job interview. Examples of sector based academies delivered included Care, Construction, Hospitality, Retail, and Contact Centres.

Wider work placement activities delivered included those with a focus on forestry and ground maintenance – and again centred on specific vocational training and industry-recognised qualifications. The focus was on providing young people with real life and practical work experience around the different kinds of work that they would do if employed in that sector.

For some young people not quite at the stage to move directly into employment, [transitional employment or intermediate labour market schemes](#) also featured as a mechanism to assist those young people in need of more intensive support to help find and sustain employment. Here, the focus was on improving young people's employability through a package of pre-employment support, paid work on a temporary contract that gave young people exposure to working environments, alongside relevant training (vocational certificates), personal development support, and mentoring support.

Again, this spanned activity across a range of sectors, including Construction, Creative Industries, Health, Landscaping, to name a few. Paying a wage was said to help support retention, and that work experience had been invaluable for adding to young peoples' CVs, helping them feel ready for work, and for finding employment.

SFC Lead Partner

The SFC, through the college sector in South West of Scotland, provided [additional educational places](#) (i.e. college places) to eligible students via a credit¹⁰ allocation and student support (bursary/childcare).

The YEI funding was reported to have increased the capacity of the college sector to support an increased number of young people than would otherwise have been possible within previous funding frameworks.

All colleges in South West Scotland took up YEI funds with the exception of Dumfries and Galloway College. In part this was reported to be due to colleges not being able to claim any YEI funds until they had achieved delivery of their core credit allocation (as per Regional Outcome Agreements).

Delivering additional credits on top of core credits might have proved challenging.

¹⁰ Note: one credit equals 40 notional hours of learning.

The focus for colleges was reported to be on engaging eligible students on a diverse range of courses that would improve their chances of finding work.

This included taking due consideration of local and regional labour market need and relevant Skills Investment Plans and Skills Assessment Plans. The colleges' outline of proposed activities were submitted to the SFC annually through completion of the College ESF Skills Template (courses, rationale, level, number of students, etc).

No marketing campaigns were undertaken by colleges specifically for YEI, rather those young people subsequently engaged in the YEI had enrolled to start a course (e.g. to start in the 2015/16 or 2016/17 academic year). The 16-24 NEET cohort is a core target market for colleges, and so colleges were able to easily identify the types of courses that these students enrol for based on past experience.

College staff reported that a considerable amount of time and effort went into visiting classes to tell students about the YEI, to identify potential eligible students, and to then work through the appropriate YEI enrolment forms. Most colleges referred to "over-tagging" students as YEI – to allow for those who might leave college before completion of any credits, but also in light of the challenges around evidencing eligibility.

A particular challenge for colleges (but also for local authority Lead Partners) has been around not being able to support students who had a part-time job via YEI. Part-time work is common to help support young people to complete their education. Here, some pointed to different definitions of NEET, with previous ESF programmes using the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition whereby a young person was still considered NEET if they worked less than 15 hours per week. Subsequent clarification provided on the NEET definition to be used then made a number of students ineligible as YEI.

The total additional YEI credits allocated to the college sector are outlined in **Table 2.1**. Eligible courses were not pre-defined, and as highlighted above, colleges reported taking cognisance of the local labour market (among other things).

Table 2.1: YEI Credit Allocation

	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/18	Total
Ayrshire College	1,255	1,255	-	2,510
Glasgow Region	16,038	17,848	21,011	54,897
Lanarkshire Region	14,766	14,766	15,393	44,925
West College Scotland	7,086	7,086	7,086	21,258
Total	39,145	40,955	43,490	123,590

Source: Data provided by SFC.

Note: Glasgow Region includes City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College, and Glasgow Kelvin College. Lanarkshire Region includes New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire College.

A diverse range of courses have been delivered, ranging from Health and Social Care to Construction, from Sport and Fitness to Vehicle Maintenance, from Early Education and Childcare to Hairdressing, and from Photography to Professional Cookery, to name but a few.

In terms of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), courses delivered typically ranged from Level 3 to Level 7 - National Qualification, National Certificate, National Progression Awards, etc.

2.9 YEI Performance against Targets

The general feedback is that it took time to build demand and for YEI projects to garner traction. In part this relates to changes in the labour market as reported earlier (i.e. a decline in youth unemployment) and its impact in demand.

A number of Lead Partners reported that they subsequently reduced targets when YEI funds were de-committed.

Despite this, most reported that the YEI had performed strongly locally - it allowed local authorities to have an increased focus on young people, and enabled colleges to engage with more students.

It was reported to have been particularly successful in supporting young people to, for example:

- build their core competencies and work readiness skills;
- have increased confidence and self-esteem;
- achieve industry-recognised qualifications;

- obtain valuable work experience;
- gain further education qualifications; and
- find and sustain work.

There has also been a particular emphasis placed on working with employers to create more employment opportunities in local areas.

For some, the impact has been less than initial expectations. Here, it was felt that the eligibility criteria had a negative impact on performance. The definition of NEET used was said to have excluded many young people who had a part-time job, and there were challenges around collating evidence of eligibility (e.g. some young people did not have a permanent address or have/access to a passport or drivers licence, or could afford to replace a lost birth certificate, etc). What this meant in practice is that ESF-funding could not be claimed in some cases, but the young people supported nonetheless.

The challenges that many employers faced in providing the necessary level of evidence regarding wage subsidies (or willingness to share some business details) was also typically reported to have impacted negatively on YEI performance.

2.10 What Worked Well

A number of aspects of practice and delivery were identified to have worked well, namely:

- person-centred approach – tailoring support to meet a young person’s specific needs and aspirations;
- case management/key worker model - building trusted relationships and helping to support sustained engagement;
- outreach activity - for engagement and delivery. Going to where young people are, minimising the need for additional transport costs to access support, etc;
- flexibility of provision – having a broad service offer that meets the needs of different young people;

- pre employability support plus work trials, experience, placements and internships linked to real employment opportunities (e.g. Modern Apprenticeships in local authorities, new jobs within other local employers);
- involving employers in the design of specific interventions that build the range of skills and competencies needed to work in particular sectors;
- wage subsidies, albeit there were challenges around the paper trail; and
- connecting young people into other available service provision.

There were therefore a number of identified positive features (strengths) of the Programme.

3. What Young People Told Us

This Chapter presents the main feedback from our interviews with young people engaged in the YEI.

3.1 Primary Research Approach and Challenges

The following approaches were adopted in part to ensure the research complied with the requirements of GDPR:

1. An introduction to the research with an opt-in/opt-out online link to take part in a short telephone interview was issued to Lead Partners and the college sector for distribution to all young people engaged in the YEI. This approach was adopted as contact details could not be passed directly to EKOS.

The overall aim was to undertake 75 telephone interviews, however, the opt-in link resulted in only 59 eligible opt-in contacts¹¹, from which 21 telephone interviews were able to be completed.

We experienced some challenges making contact, which might reflect the fact that young people were at work and could not answer their phone or did not recognise the phone number.

Table 3.1: Telephone Interviews with Young People

		Number
255 Responses to Opt-in or Opt-Out Link	Positive – opt-in	77
	Negative – opt-out	178
77 Opt-Ins	Total excluded	18
59 Eligible Contacts	Interview completed	21
	Declined to take part	6
	Interview arranged – no show	8
	Could not contact - three calls attempted	24

¹¹ Some opt-ins were excluded – duplicates, no contact details provided, had not been supported by the YEI, etc.

2. An online survey was also distributed to Lead Partners and colleges for distribution to young people engaged. This resulted in 100 responses. Where it is known that the opt-in/opt-out and/or online survey links were issued, it is our understanding that different approaches were adopted. Some issued it to all young people supported, others distributed it only to those young people supported via a wage subsidy, and others focussed on those supported in most recent years.
3. Two focus groups were undertaken – one with 5 students supported through additional college places (South Lanarkshire College) and the other with 8 young people supported in a range of ways by Renfrewshire Council and its YEI delivery partners.
4. A prize draw – two winners of a £50 shopping voucher – was offered to help boost responses.

A total of 134 young people therefore provided detailed feedback of their experience with YEI.

3.2 Young People Survey Profile

Key profile information from the telephone and online surveys on young people that responded included that:

- there was a fairly equal split between males and females;
- over three-quarters were aged 16-24 years when they accessed support (77%). This is largely reflective of the make-up of the total population of young people who engaged in YEI;
- 12% have a disability, and this was typically reported as a mental health condition, a learning difficulty or a physical disability;
- almost all were White Scottish, British or Other ethnic origin (98%);
- most had accessed the YEI support recently (64% from 2017 onwards); and
- the vast majority of responses were from young people living in three local authority areas¹² - this likely skews the survey findings.

¹² Renfrewshire (58%), South Ayrshire (19%) or West Dunbartonshire or Helensburgh & Lomond (18%).

3.3 Prior to Accessing YEI Support

Highest Level of Qualifications

Few young people supported had no formal qualifications at the time of engagement with the YEI, and over half had Highers or below as their highest qualification (56%),

Table 3.2.

The YEI also reached some young people with higher level qualifications (e.g. Degree), and in part is likely to reflect challenges associated with a competitive labour market and/or a lack of available employment opportunities that matched their skills/qualifications.

Table 3.2: Highest Level of Qualification

Highest Level of Qualification	%
National 5s or Standard Grade Credit	22%
Highers	19%
Degree	16%
HNC or HND	15%
National 4s or Standard Grade Foundation/General	12%
Completed a Modern Apprenticeship	7%
No formal qualifications	6%
National 1s, 2s or 3s	3%

N=119

Barriers and Length of Time NEET

A significant proportion of young people reported that they faced barriers to accessing employment, education or training opportunities (72%).

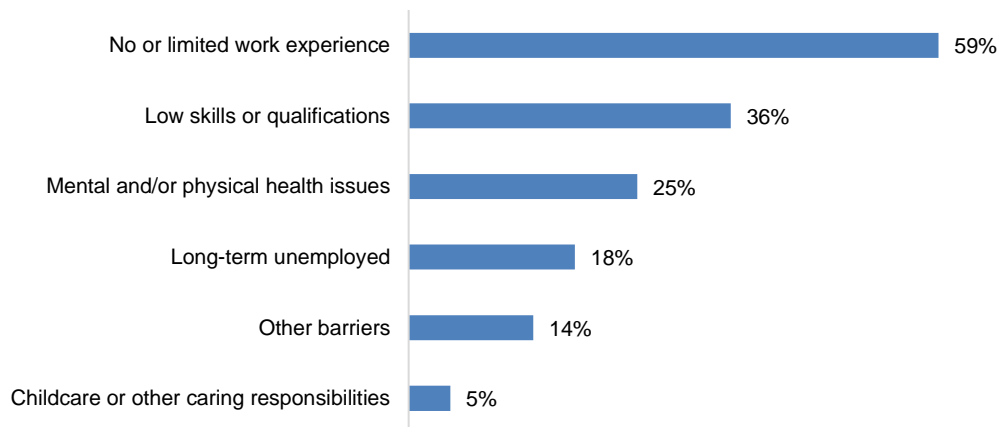
80% of young people who reported a barrier said that the YEI support had helped them to overcome this.

The main barriers reported were no or limited work experience (59%) and low skills/qualifications (36%), **Figure 3.1**. Both have been a key focus of the YEI Strategic Operations delivered locally across South West Scotland.

“Other” barriers reported were difficulties in preparing CVs, completing application forms or getting to the interview stage – again, these were another key focus for YEI interventions.

A few other young people reported a lack of confidence as a key barrier.

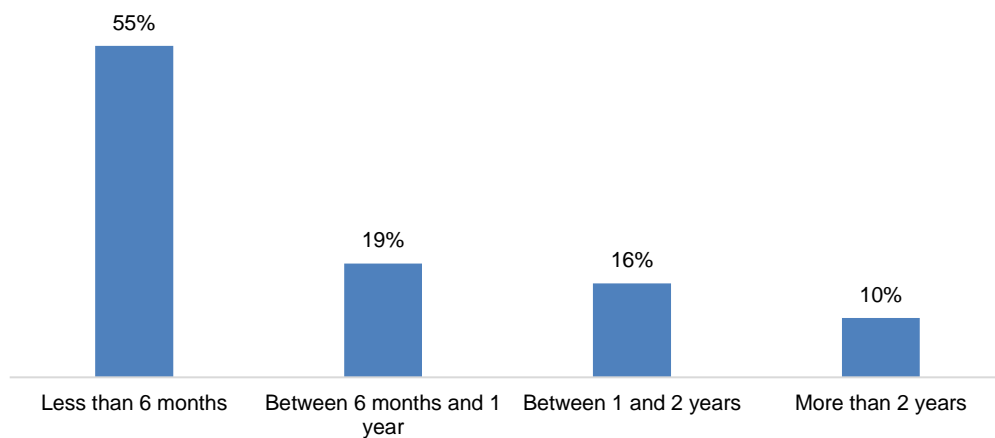
Figure 3.1: Barriers to Employment, Education, and/or Training



N=87. Note: Multiple responses possible.

Over half of respondents had been NEET for less than six months (55%), **Figure 3.2**. The YEI also reached those who had been unemployed for longer periods of time.

Figure 3.2: Length of Time NEET



N=121

3.4 Support Providers and Views on Engagement

Over three-quarters of young people received YEI support through a local authority in South West Scotland, **Table 3.3**. As reported earlier, the bulk of responses relate to a small number of local authorities. Other organisations that provided support included Routes to Work and Inverclyde Community Development Trust.

Where supported was provided by a college, this was largely West College Scotland and Glasgow Clyde College.

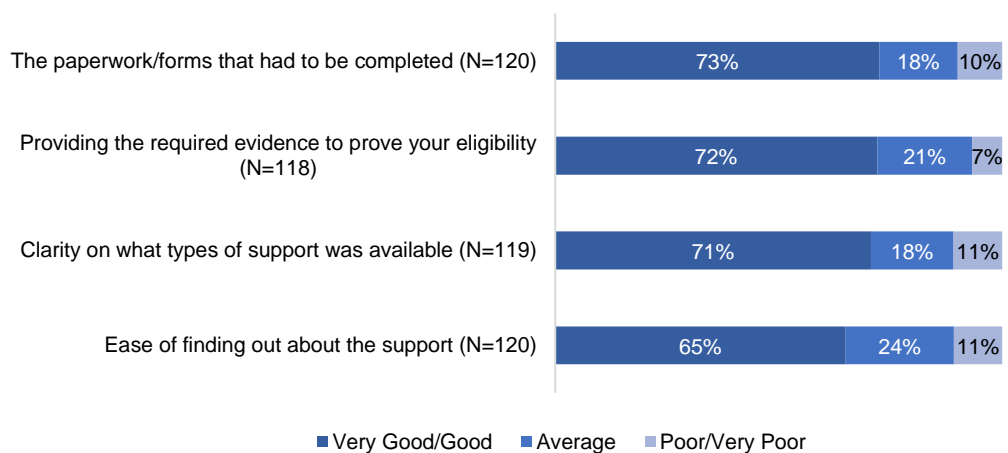
Table 3.3: Delivery Organisation

Delivery Organisation	% of Respondents
Council	78%
Other organisation	24%
College	7%

N=121

Overall, young people rated their initial engagement with the YEI highly, **Figure 3.3**. Each aspect received positive ratings (65%+ good or very good). The paperwork to be completed and providing proof of eligibility were rated most positively. This seems at odds with findings reported earlier (i.e. feedback from Lead Partners and delivery partners), however, this might simply reflect that young people felt that they were supported through that process by delivery staff.

Figure 3.3: Views on Initial Contact and Engagement



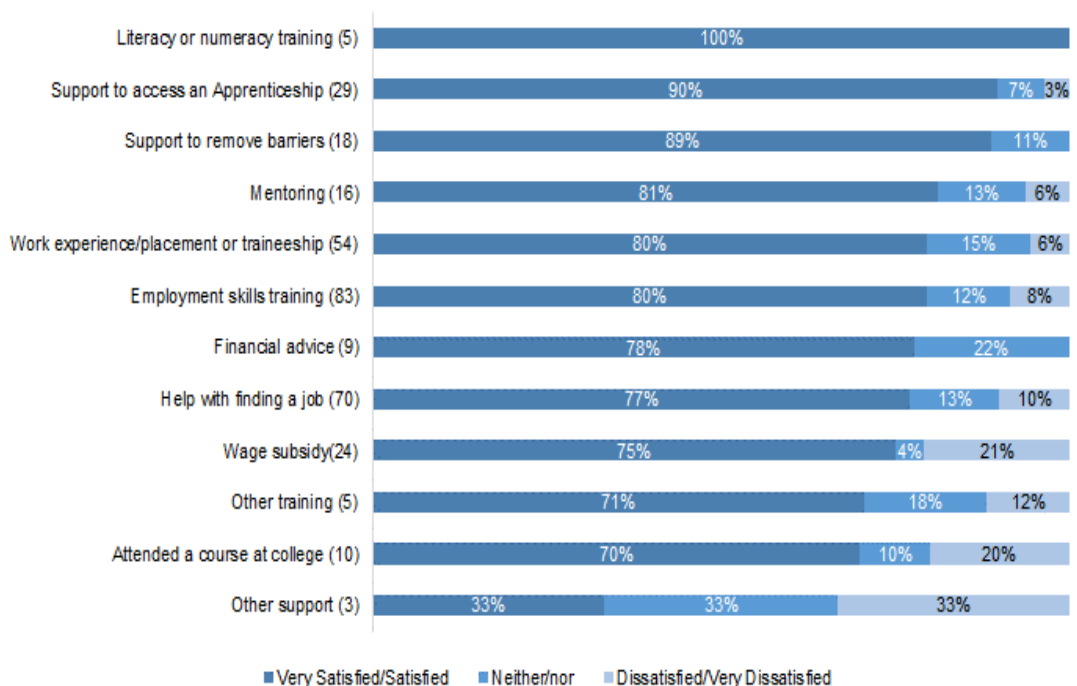
Forms of Support Accessed and Levels of Satisfaction

The top five forms of support accessed by young people were identified as:

- employment skills training e.g. CV prep, interview advice (69%);
- help with finding a job (59%);
- work experience, work placement or traineeship (46%);
- support to access an apprenticeship (24%); and
- wage subsidy (20%).

Nearly all types of support received were highly rated¹³, **Figure 3.4**, with many achieving 80+% satisfied or very satisfied ratings. This includes support to access apprenticeships and work experience/placements. Support to remove barriers and employment skills training were also positively received.

Figure 3.4: Satisfaction with Forms of Support Accessed



¹³ Note the absolute numbers receiving some forms of support are low.

Satisfaction with the overall package of YEI support received was also high – some 88% of young people were either satisfied or very satisfied.

Wider feedback from young people that helps to explain the positive satisfaction ratings are that:

- the support improved their chances of finding work and/or actually lead to employment;
- friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable delivery staff; and
- value was placed on wider advice and guidance provided (e.g. finances/budgeting).

“Without the support I would have found myself in a situation where I had zero work experience and no way to get into the career path I wanted”.

Positive Outcomes Secured with YEI Support

The most common types of jobs secured with YEI support were in administration and the service industry, such as care and support workers and landscaping.

Among those young people who found employment (57), 53% have been in employment for less than one year. The remainder have been in post for over one year.

A positive finding is that most of these young people are with the same employer (72%). Where young people have since left post this was reportedly due to two main factors:

- the fixed term contract came to an end (suggesting that the post was not sustained); and
- found a promoted post with another employer.

Some 47 young people reported undertaking college courses through YEI. This spanned a wide range of courses, with the most common subject areas business administration, construction and care.

Just over half were at SCQ levels, **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Course Level

Course Level	% of Total Respondents Attending Course
SVQ (various levels)	51%
Other	19%
National Certificate	15%
Skills for Work Award	9%
Higher National Certificate	4%
Higher National Diploma	2%

N=47. "Other" responses included sector specific qualifications such as construction accreditations and forklift licencing.

3.5 What Young People Are Doing Now

A positive finding is that 77% of young people who responded to the survey continue to be in a positive destination, mainly employment but also college or university:

- of those in employment, 37% are now in a promoted post; and
- of those in education or training, the main course levels are Higher National Certificate and National Certificate across a wide range of subjects.

Table 3.5: Young People – Status Now

	%
Employed	66%
Unemployed and looking for work	16%
College	8%
University	3%
Unemployed and not looking for work	2%
Other	4%

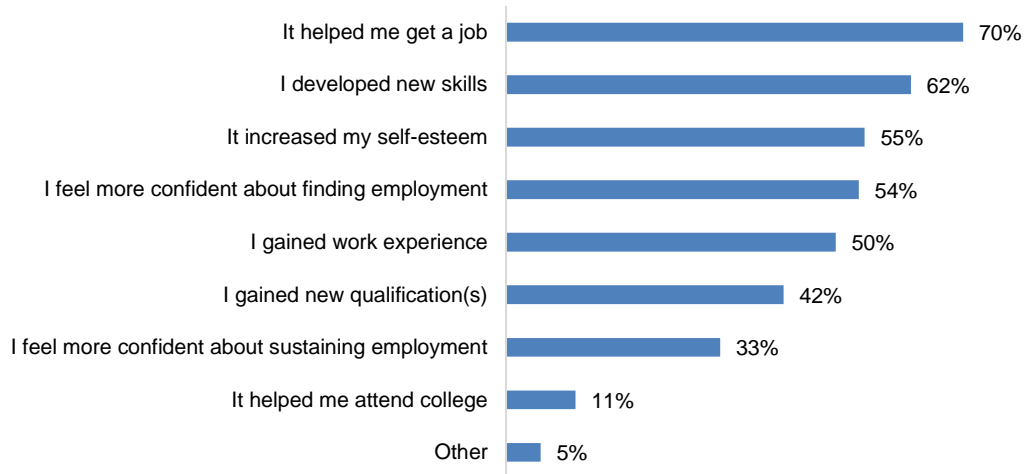
N=119

3.6 Benefits of the Support

Almost all young people reported at least one benefit arising from the YEI support (93%).

With the results-based focus of the YEI, it is perhaps not too surprising that the main benefits related to help to get a job (70%) and skills development (62%).

Figure 3.5: Benefits of YEI Support



N=113. Note: Multiple responses possible

Wider benefits reported by more than half of young people centred on increased self-esteem and confidence

“I feel 100x more confident within myself, I now have the capabilities to work using my own initiative and also work cooperatively in a team. I have gained a brilliant qualification and had a brilliant team to assist me through it, so I feel proud and encouraged to gain some more. It most definitely gave me a more positive and professional outlook on life and adapted me to work environments”.

“I was given a lot of support with my CV, interview skills, confidence building, transport costs, financial advice and a lot more. This allowed me to access a traineeship under YEI, I then received more support in gaining a Modern Apprenticeship, which enabled me to gain an SVQ Level 3 in Administration. When my apprenticeship was due to end, everyone at Invest in Renfrewshire was very helpful and made sure I was prepared for my interviews, that my CV was up to date and that I was applying for the right jobs. With all of the training, information and experience I received, I have now secured a full-time job with Renfrewshire Council as a Clerical Assistant. I feel I would not have been able to have done this without the help of the advisors and definitely not without my work placement which definitely built my confidence and taught me how to deal with certain situations in the working world”.

3.7 Importance of YEI Support

The YEI support was well regarded and valued by young people.

“I would either still be unemployed or stuck within a dead-end job that would take me nowhere and offer me no happiness in life”.

Over three-quarters of young people reported that the support was either important or very important in helping them to continue with education, undertake training, or find employment, **Figure 3.6**.

Figure 3.6: Importance of YEI Support



N=116

An interesting finding is that in the absence of the YEI support, almost 60% of young people said that they would either likely be unemployed or in a lower skilled, lower paid or less fulfilling/suitable jobs, **Table 3.5**.

“I would have found things a lot harder to get into work and help with issues surrounding that if it wasn't for the help I received”.

Table 3.5: Destinations of Young People in the Absence of YEI Support

	%
Unemployed	38%
Lower skilled, lower paid or less fulfilling/less suitable job	19%
Same or a similar job/course	15%
Unsure	14%
College/University	5%
It would have taken longer to get work	5%
Other	5%

N=85

3.8 Strengths and Areas for Improvement of YEI

The main strengths of the support as identified by young people include the:

- support and guidance from delivery staff;
- ease of contact/communication with delivery staff; and
- package of support increased young people' confidence and ability to continue with their education and/or find work.

The main areas for improvement were identified as:

- greater publicity for the opportunities available;
- more tailoring of the support/opportunities to individual interests e.g. specific sectors; and
- reducing the level of paperwork required.

3.9 Focus Groups

South Lanarkshire College

A focus group was held with past YEI beneficiaries at South Lanarkshire College at its East Kilbride campus, on the 7th December 2018. Five students took part, all of whom had studied for a National Certificate in Childcare and Development at the college in 2017/18. All had since progressed and were studying for a Higher National Certificate in Childhood Practice.

Three students went to college straight from school, while two were slightly older and had a period of not being in education, employment or training before going back to college. All had been identified as meeting the criteria for the YEI and were asked to complete forms and provide various evidence. The main feedback was that this was not straightforward, with some sources of evidence difficult to get hold off (e.g. birth certificates).

This was the students' only real interaction with the YEI as a programme.

Nonetheless, there was an understanding that it had allowed the college to fund additional places and all felt that they had benefitted greatly from their course – as shown by their decision to progress to HNC level. All felt that achieving more (and higher level) qualifications would stand them in good stead for getting a job.

All still plan to work in a childcare role in future, although described different routes to achieving that:

- two want to find work after finishing their current course;
- two want to progress to the Higher National Diploma Childhood Practice course at the same college; and
- one wants to go onto university.

Notably, the two older students (25-29 years) were keen to move into work quicker, citing financial pressures, while the younger students (<20 years) were keen to continue with their education.

Invest in Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire Council

A focus group was held with past YEI beneficiaries in Renfrewshire, through Renfrewshire Council's enterprise and employability arm, Invest in Renfrewshire. The group session was held in the Russell Institute in Paisley town centre on the 13th December 2018.

Eight young people attended, alongside two Invest in Renfrewshire employability advisors. All of the young people are now in employment, and had been given time off by their employer to come along.

All had received some form of assistance with finding work. This ranged from one-to-one support to improve their CV, mock interviews or support with applying for jobs, to gaining access to work placements and Modern Apprenticeships, funding for vocational qualifications, or a job with a subsidised wage incentive. Regular contact throughout, including face-to-face meetings with their advisor, had allowed them to develop a good relationship and increased awareness of different opportunities available.

All of the young people felt that the support played an important role in getting them to where they are now, indicating a strong level of additionality (shown right). Overall:

- three would likely still be unemployed without the YEI support;
- three would have found a job, but it would likely have been less satisfying, less well paid or less suited to their skills or interests; and
- two said that they would have went to college or university instead.

What do you think you would currently be doing if you had not accessed support from Invest in Renfrewshire?

I would likely be in a job that is less satisfying, less well paid or less suited to my skills	•••
I would be in the same job/education as now - it made no difference	
I would likely be in a different but similarly skilled/paid/satisfying job	
I would likely be unemployed and looking for work	••
I would likely be unemployed and not looking for work	
I would have considered something else e.g. university or college	••
Something else - write in	

• unemployed, really struggling

Participants were asked to fill out a worksheet on the activities they had taken part in with Invest in Renfrewshire (e.g. CV preparation), what this had led on to (e.g. applying for jobs or feeling more confident), and any longer terms outcomes or benefits generated.

What were the main outcomes/benefits for you from the support?
What enabled them to be achieved?

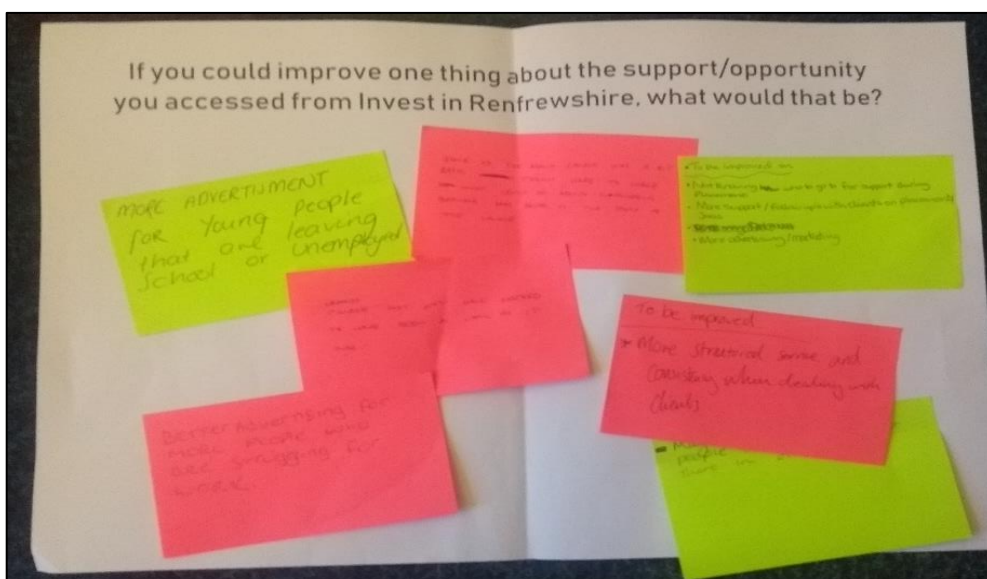
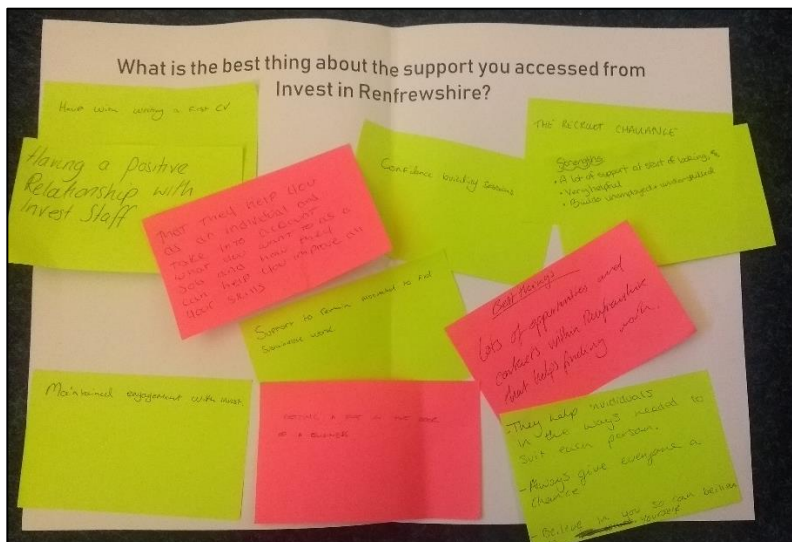
Activities What you did through Invest in Renfrewshire	What enabled you to achieve each outcome?	Outcomes e.g. found a job or new qualifications
Referred to Parent becoming homeless	Chats with invest staff Homeless Prevention Work Meeting with family and Invest staff	Better family Relationships
Didn't have a CV	CV, interviews arranged	Apprenticeship in Child care + Job in a nursery (few years after)
Unemployed (covering shifts in a Bar)	Invest helped with interview practice - Application form	Studying HNC SVQ in Social services and gained a job in Residential care

This was a useful tool for finding out more about the individual journeys undertaken. A diverse range of benefits and outcomes were reported, including employment, new qualifications, being able to learn to drive, having more stability in their life, a better relationship with their family, and more self-esteem. An example of a completed sheet is shown above.

The young people were also asked to identify what the main strengths of the support were, and if there was anything that could have been improved. A key strength was identified as the support from Invest in Renfrewshire staff, including regular communication, helping young people to remain motivated, and matching them up with suitable opportunities.

The main improvements suggested were to more widely promote the YEI, and more follow-up support with those on work placements. However, it was felt that word of mouth referrals tend to be more successful than other methods, in terms of motivation to engage with the service and eventual outcomes.

Interestingly, the administrative side of YEI supported activity, such as the need to prove eligibility, was not raised independently by any participants. When asked about this late on in the session by the group facilitator, however, the group did then comment that there had been some challenges. For instance, some young people were reluctant to sign on with Jobcentre Plus, which then made proving their 'NEET' status more difficult.



3.10 Wider Evidence of Impact

Some Lead Partners provided wider evidence of the impact of the YEI on young people.

Renfrewshire Council

The following video clips involve young people supported via Invest in Renfrewshire and its delivery partners.

<https://investinrenfrewshire.com/news/invest-in-renfrewshire-videos/>

West Dunbartonshire Council

The participant signed up with Working 4U by attending one of the drop in sessions held within the West Employability Hub in June 2015. He had spent some time in British Army and now wished to build a career in civilian life. As a result he required an upgraded CV to allow him to progress in his pursuit for a career in the construction industry. The client also expressed a wish to receive support to improve his interview and presentation skills.

The above requirements were detailed and an action plan was put together to fully support them. The Working 4U Officer wanted to ensure that their client was claiming the correct benefits whilst searching for employment. The W4U Officer contacted job centre colleagues and by working together they guided him through the registration process for universal credit.

In order to take his first steps towards a new career the participant attended various one to one sessions with his W4U Officers in order to amend his outdated CV. This resulted in a presentable and targeted CV which highlighted the participant's construction experience. The client enjoyed attending the one sessions and he felt positive about his future career goals.

During the one to one sessions the participant was given assistance to complete various skilled labourer applications forms as well as being offered the opportunity of a skilled labourer placement through the WDC employer engagement team. This opportunity would give the client experience with Morgan Sindall a leading construction who were constructing two local projects: - a new school campus, as well as a new WDC supersize elderly care home.

Due to the clients past experience and because he held his construction access card and other onsite construction certificates he was an ideal candidate for the placement opportunity. In March 2016 the client completed placements on both sites as well as being given further one to one assistance via the employability skills workshops. The client received positive feedback from the placement provider.

Following the success of the work placements the client applied to a new construction site on the south side of Glasgow (AC Scotland Ltd). The client was successful and started full time employment as a skilled labourer in October 2016. The client has just completed long period of skilled Labourer work with company carrying out multi million pound refurbishment of local Levensgrove Park as well as expecting a new baby in next couple of weeks.

The client had come through a traumatic family and life changing event through the loss of his younger sibling and was very grateful for the understanding and empathy shown from their Working 4U Officer.

4. Financial and Performance Monitoring

This Chapter presents an overview of YEI financial and performance monitoring. The evidence presented is based on a review of background documents provided by the Managing Authority, data from EUMIS, and additional information and data provided by Lead Partners.

Note: YEI Strategic Operations had a physical end date of 30th September 2018 and a financial end date of 31st December 2018. Lead Partners are in the process of submitting further/final claims.

As such, EUMIS does not provide a real time picture of expenditure or outputs and results achieved. In addition, the latest verified data in some cases is significantly out-of-date, which links to points made earlier around challenges faced with compliance rules (e.g. SFC has only had a partial claim for 2015/16 paid at the time of reporting).

YEI achievements, as is reported in this Chapter, will therefore be significantly under-reported.

4.1 Financial Monitoring

Original YEI Operation Budget

The YEI was additional investment from a specific European Union (EU) budget line dedicated to youth employment. It was to be matched from the ESF national allocations and matched again by project partners.

The YEI allocation for the South West Scotland region was €46.3m which was matched, including by a further by €46.3m from Scotland's mainstream ESF (i.e. 67% intervention rate).

This equated to circa £78 million of European investment. Including potential Lead Partners contributions (33%), this brought the anticipated total budget for the YEI in South West Scotland to around £116 million.

Committed YEI Funds

The YEI funds were indicatively allocated by the Scottish Government to Lead Partners late 2014/early 2015 after taking into account three-year trend analysis across a range of relevant socio-economic indicators, including the:

- proportion of 16-29 year olds claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- proportion of 16-29 year olds claiming JSA for more than one year;
- proportion of 16-29 year olds with no qualifications; and
- teenage pregnancy rates among those aged under 20 years.

Lead Partners submitted Operational Applications for funding in March 2015, which were considered by a Scrutiny and Risk Panel which considered compliance, regulations, deliverability, anticipated outcomes, value for money, and the proposed simplified cost methodology.

Formal Offer of Grant Letters were issued by the Managing Authority to Lead Partners on the 31st December 2015.

Around **£64 million** was originally awarded to Lead Partners, representing 82% of the total ESF-budget of £78 million (i.e. around **£14 million unallocated**), **Table 4.1**.

Total project costs were estimated at around £95 million.

Table 4.1: Original YEI Allocations and Total Project Costs

Lead Partner	Original ESF Allocation	Lead Partner Contribution	Total Project Costs
Dumfries and Galloway Council	£1,113,299	£548,341	£1,661,640
East Ayrshire Council	£1,950,000	£960,448	£2,910,448
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	£1,515,000	£746,194	£2,261,194
East Dunbartonshire Council	£134,000	£66,000	£200,000
Glasgow City Council	£12,071,200	£5,945,516	£18,016,716
Inverclyde Council	£920,000	£473,939	£1,393,939
North Ayrshire Council	£2,130,000	£1,049,104	£3,179,104
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,020,000	£2,472,537	£7,492,537
Renfrewshire Council	£5,030,253	£2,477,587	£7,507,840
Scottish Funding Council	£27,954,825	£13,981,606	£41,936,431
South Ayrshire Council	£647,951	£319,140	£967,091
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	£2,984,190	£1,477,150	£4,461,340
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	£632,298.00	£313,265	£945,563
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	£1,389,005	£684,137	£2,073,142
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	£237,978	£117,213	£355,191
Total	£63,729,999	£31,632,179	£95,362,178

Source: Scottish Government.

ESF intervention rate at time of application provided by Scottish Government.

Numbers rounded.

Note: Table 4.1 includes a couple of additional awards made to Lead Partners (subject to separate Operational Applications and assessment) when it was recognised that there would be unallocated European Funds.

This includes awards for additional projects for the following Lead Partners - Ayrshire Council (consortium project with other Ayrshire local authorities), South Lanarkshire Council, and West Dunbartonshire Council.

The Managing Authority faced a number of challenges in committing YEI funds, as articulated within the internal Evaluation Report of the YEI in South West Scotland (January 2016)¹⁴:

“...many of the difficulties can be attributed to a lack of clarity from the beginning about the way in which eligibility, cost and audit rules would apply to YEI. However, some of the difficulties also stem from the nature of youth unemployment in South West Scotland, in particular its close links to other forms of unemployment, poverty and deprivation in a former industrial area; and the policy focus for Scotland, which perhaps does not align well with the tight focus on fairly immediate and sustainable results for the individual participant”.

The internal evaluation went on to make specific reference to the following challenges in the commitment of ESF funds:

- **policy crowding and policy maturity:**
 - those furthest from the labour market already formed the majority of Scottish Government domestic policy, and therefore it was difficult to gain an additional focus on 25-29 year olds
 - another key Scottish Government policy area was self-employment and entrepreneurship, but the EC decision not to enter into tertiary educational areas left this proposed activity outwith scope
 - Skills Development Scotland (SDS) work on Apprenticeships are delivered pan-Scotland, and this was therefore considered unsuitable for YEI;
- **eligibility of participants:**
 - Lead Partners proposed to also target those young people at risk of disengaging from school (i.e. pre-NEET) as experience has shown that a lack of engagement sets the scene for future problems in accessing positive destinations. However, the EC confirmed that the objective of the YEI was not to prevent early school leaving but to tackle existing youth unemployment. This meant that specific programmes of activity did not progress at the same scale; and

¹⁴ Scottish Government, YEI, Evaluation Report for the 2014/2020 Scottish Operational Programmes, January 2016. [Accessed online](#)

- major sponsor withdrawal from YEI:
 - SDS had a tentative allocation of £16 million¹⁵. Geographical constraints (South West Scotland rather than national coverage), difficulties in securing match-funding, and not being able to engage with young people at risk of becoming NEET were identified. YEI funding was therefore not taken up.

In addition, other partners decided not to take up potential YEI funds:

- Glasgow City Council – YEI funding was approved, some funds de-committed, and then the application was subsequently withdrawn in full¹⁶;
- East Renfrewshire Council - wanted to focus its efforts on the ESF-funded Employability Pipeline operation; and
- Dumfries and Galloway College – in part the college might have struggled to deliver additional credits on top of its core credit allocation.

De-commitment of YEI Funds

A number of Lead Partners have de-committed ESF funds totalling around £15.3 million (reducing the funds committed from around £64 million to £48 million). This reduced total project costs accordingly, **Table 4.2**:

- this reduced the total ESF-funding allocated to 62% of the total available budget; and
- means that significant funds were unallocated – almost £30 million which represents 38% of the total ESF budget.

¹⁵ £8 million YEI and £8 million ESF national match funding.

¹⁶ No claims were submitted or grant payments received.

Table 4.2: Revised YEI Allocation and Total Project Costs

Lead Partner	Revised ESF Allocation	Lead Partner Contribution	Total Project Costs
Dumfries and Galloway Council	£1,224,207	£602,968	£1,827,175
East Ayrshire Council	£1,950,000	£960,448	£2,910,448
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	£500,000	£246,269	£746,269
East Dunbartonshire Council	£47,862	£43,565	£91,427
Glasgow City Council	£0*	-	-
Inverclyde Council	£920,000	£459,931	£1,379,931
North Ayrshire Council	£2,129,963	£1,060,037	£3,190,000
North Lanarkshire Council	£3,590,982	£1,768,693	£5,359,675
Renfrewshire Council	£5,030,253	£2,477,587	£7,507,840
Scottish Funding Council	£27,954,619	£13,975,213	£41,929,832
South Ayrshire Council	£480,642	£240,285	£720,927
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	£2,984,190	£1,476,483	£4,460,673
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	£632,298	£313,265	£945,563
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	£736,656	£362,831	£1,099,487
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	£237,978	£117,213	£355,191
Total	£48,419,650	£24,104,786	£72,524,436

Source: Scottish Government.

ESF intervention rate provided by Scottish Government = Percentage now. In some cases it is different to rate at time of application.

* GCC originally de-committed ESF funding from £12,071,200 to £4,903,024 and then withdrew the application in full.

At the time of reporting, it is our understanding that other Lead Partners are in the process of submitting further Change Process documentation to reduce de-commit funds. This includes Dumfries and Galloway Council¹⁷.

The total YEI funds uncommitted or unallocated will increase further.

Wider factors at play for Lead Partners in de-committing funds were reported through the consultation process as:

- the delayed start in the 2014/2020 European Programmes and in finalising the Scottish ESF Operational Programmes had a knock on effect on individual YEI Strategic Operations (e.g. started late or on a reduce scale);

¹⁷ Looking to reduce total ESF grant to £595,110.

- changes in the economy since YEI design – a decrease in youth unemployment impacted negatively on reach/engagement; and
- issues arising through the audit and compliance process (e.g. challenges in evidencing eligibility of some young people supported, challenges faced by businesses in providing the necessary evidence associated with wage subsidies) made some financial claims ineligible.

A point raised by some Lead Partners (and other stakeholders) during the consultation process was that delays in EUMIS (e.g. CSV upload tool) meant that underspends were not identified as early as they potentially could have been. There was felt to have been a missed opportunity to utilise remaining funds in other ways.

Actual YEI ESF Expenditure to Date

The latest verified financial data provided by the Scottish Government via EUMIS shows limited ESF YEI expenditure to date.

Only 24% of the revised total allocation has been claimed by Lead Partners, around £11.8 million, **Table 4.3**.

Note: this does not include Lead Partner Project contributions.

Table 4.3: Verified ESF YEI Expenditure Claimed To Date

Lead Partner	Revised ESF Allocation	Claims Paid to Date	% Claimed to Date
Scottish Funding Council	£27,954,619	£4,960,472	18%
Renfrewshire Council	£5,030,253	£722,804	14%
North Lanarkshire Council	£3,590,982	£2,573,948	72%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	£2,984,190	£1,074,132	36%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	£632,298	£364,914	58%
North Ayrshire Council	£2,129,963	£237,302	11%
East Ayrshire Council	£1,950,000	£410,098	21%
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	£500,000	-	0%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£1,224,207	£16,518	1%
Inverclyde Council	£920,000	£502,032	55%
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	£736,656	£403,850	55%
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	£237,978	-	0%
South Ayrshire Council	£480,642	£461,106	96%
East Dunbartonshire Council	£47,862	£28,631	60%
Total Claimed to Date	£48,419,650	£11,755,807	24%

Source: Scottish Government, YEI Position to Date Analysis. Updated Data Provided December 2018.
Note: GCC Application withdrawn following approval, no claims were submitted/grant payments made.

Expenditure, however, varies by Lead Partner – and ranges from 0% to 96%.

Pending Claims

Table 4.4 provides a partial picture of YEI expenditure, and a number of Lead Partners have additional claims pending (i.e. submitted but not yet checked and verified by the Scottish Government prior to payment). While not yet verified, and therefore subject to change, it does provide a more realistic picture of expenditure.

Table 4.4: Lead Partner ESF YEI Expenditure Claims Pending

Lead Partner	Claims Pending
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£137,650
North Ayrshire Council	£1,025,701
North Lanarkshire Council	£612,038
Renfrewshire Council	£1,383,702
Total Claims Pending	£3,159,091

Source: Scottish Government, YEI Position to Date Analysis. Updated Data Provided December 2018.

Taking actual expenditure claimed and pending claims into account brings total expenditure to around £14.9 million. This represents 31% of the total revised ESF grant allocated to Lead Partners, **Table 4.5**.

Overall, expenditure has been limited and is in part linked to the points outlined earlier in **Chapter 2.3**. Wider factors reported include:

- delays in the EUMIS system being developed, tested and going live;
- time taken for pre-payment checks to be undertaken, clarifications addressed and payment made; and
- only one claim can be submitted at any one time.

Table 4.5: Verified YEI ESF Expenditure Claimed and Pending Claims

Lead Partner	Revised Allocation	Claims Paid and Pending	% Claimed and Pending to Date
Scottish Funding Council	£27,954,619	£4,960,472	18%
Renfrewshire Council	£5,030,253	£2,106,506	42%
North Lanarkshire Council	£3,590,982	£3,185,986	89%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	£2,984,190	£1,074,132	36%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	£632,298	£364,914	58%
North Ayrshire Council	£2,129,963	£1,263,002	59%
East Ayrshire Council	£1,950,000	£410,098	21%
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	£500,000	-	0%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£1,224,207	£154,168	13%
Inverclyde Council	£920,000	£502,032	55%
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	£736,656	£403,850	55%
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	£237,978	-	0%
South Ayrshire Council	£480,642	£461,106	96%
East Dunbartonshire Council	£47,862	£28,631	60%
Total Claimed to Date	£48,419,650	£14,914,897	31%

Source: Scottish Government, YEI Position to Date Analysis. Updated Data Provided December 2018.

Note: GCC Application withdrawn following approval, no claims were submitted/grant payments made.

Projected Financial Outturn

YEI Strategic Operations have a financial end date of 31st December 2018, as such EUMIS does not provide an accurate picture of expenditure. Lead Partners were asked to provide an updated on [projected financial outturn](#). Where we have this information it is outlined below.

Table 4.6: Projected ESF YEI Expenditure

Lead Partner	Revised ESF Allocation	Forecast ESF Financial Outturn	% Forecast Final Claim
Scottish Funding Council	£27,954,619	£27,954,619*	100%
Renfrewshire Council	£5,030,253	£3,783,311	75%
North Lanarkshire Council	£3,590,982	£3,447,343	96%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	£2,984,190	£1,152,081	39%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	£632,298	£632,298	100%
North Ayrshire Council	£2,129,963	£1,920,135	90%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£1,224,207**	£595,110	49%
Inverclyde Council	£920,000	£654,597	71%
South Ayrshire Council	£480,642	£504,106***	105%

Source: Lead Partners, December 2018

* SFC – has paid out the full allocation to the college sector, however, have only had part claim for 2015/16 approved to date.

** Dumfries and Galloway Council is currently in the process of further de-committing ESF funds to £595,110.

*** South Ayrshire Council is currently in discussions with the Managing Authority regarding a change request to increase its grant allocation.

4.2 Performance Monitoring

The Scottish Government, ESF Operational Programmes 2014/2020 Operational Plan sets out the performance monitoring framework for the YEI which spans outputs, intermediate and long-term results.

The focus on achievement of sustained results for young people is a clear focus. Where Lead Partners have de-committed funds, targets were reduced accordingly.

Outputs

There is one output target for the YEI – the number of young people unemployed or NEET engaged. This is then also broken down by age and gender.

To date less than half of the 17,615 engagement target has been achieved (7,924 or 45%), **Table 4.7**. Some Lead Partners have exceeded or almost met the agreed target, while a number are significantly behind target.

It is worth commenting further on SFC's position. Its engagement target represents almost half of the total engagement target, but has only achieved 25% of its target to date. The SFC has experienced high error rates with its submitted claims to the Managing Authority, and to date has only had part of its 2015/16 claim approved.

The reality is that total engagements are likely to be considerably higher – but some might be able to be claimed.

Table 4.7: Total Engagements to Date

Lead Partner	Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Scottish Funding Council	8,238	2,024	25%
Renfrewshire Council	2,200	880	40%
North Lanarkshire Council	2,541	2,314	91%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	544	496	91%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	185	0	0%
North Ayrshire Council	608	70	12%
East Ayrshire Council	830	250	30%
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	300	453	151%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	531	106	20%
Inverclyde Council	256	95	37%
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	831	758	91%
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	109	42	39%
South Ayrshire Council	382	379	99%
East Dunbartonshire Council	60	57	95%
Total	17,615	7,924	45%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Lead Partners anticipated that more males would engage with the YEI than females, and this has been the case to date. Some 59% of engagements have been with young men, the remainder with young women (41%).

As above, there has also been varied performance against this target by Lead Partner, and the reality is that this will simply reflect those who presented for support (and who were eligible) were supported.

Both, however, are currently behind target (47% and 43% respectively), **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8: Total Engagements to Date by Gender

	Male			Female		
	Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date	Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Scottish Funding Council	4,366	941	22%	3,872	1,083	28%
Renfrewshire Council	1,428	521	36%	772	359	47%
North Lanarkshire Council	1,388	1,398	101%	1,153	916	79%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	293	339	116%	251	157	63%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	138	58	42%	118	37	31%
North Ayrshire Council	305	45	15%	303	25	8%
East Ayrshire Council	545	156	29%	285	94	33%
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	132	0	0%	53	0	0%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	358	73	20%	173	33	19%
Inverclyde Council	151	311	206%	149	142	95%
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	542	500	92%	289	258	89%
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	60	31	52%	49	11	22%
South Ayrshire Council	266	266	100%	116	113	97%
East Dunbartonshire Council	36	30	83%	24	27	113%
Total	10,008	4,669	47%	7,607	3,255	43%

Source: YEI Monitoring

The engagement output target shows a clear emphasis on the YEI supporting those aged 16 to 24 years.

This target group represents 81% of the total engagement target, **Table 4.9**. Indeed, more 16 to 24 years have been engaged to date. Both age groups, however, are behind target (both have an achievement rate of 45%).

Table 4.9: Total Engagements to Date by Age

	Aged 16-24			Aged 25-29		
	Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date	Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Scottish Funding Council	7,004	1,824	26%	1,234	200	16%
Renfrewshire Council	1,903	770	40%	297	110	37%
North Lanarkshire Council	1,906	1,761	92%	635	553	87%
South Lanarkshire Council (1)	376	364	97%	168	132	79%
South Lanarkshire Council (2)	256	95	37%	0	0	-
North Ayrshire Council	370	60	16%	238	10	4%
East Ayrshire Council	500	178	36%	330	72	22%
Ayrshire Councils Consortium	126	0	0%	59	0	0%
Dumfries & Galloway Council	512	105	21%	19	1	5%
Inverclyde Council	240	328	137%	60	125	208%
West Dunbartonshire Council (1)	82	40	49%	27	2	7%
West Dunbartonshire Council (2)	586	513	88%	245	245	100%
South Ayrshire Council	322	321	100%	60	58	97%
East Dunbartonshire Council	48	50	104%	12	7	58%
Total	14,231	6,409	45%	3,384	1,515	45%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Intermediate Results to Date

A total of 2,618 young people have completed the YEI supported intervention to date. This represents almost one-fifth of the total target, **Table 4.10**.

This will in part reflect the position that some young people who engaged left the YEI programme early for whatever reason(s). It is our understanding that this reflects natural “churn” or attrition (i.e. drop outs), as well as a number of young people who found employment prior to the support ending.

In comparing the extent of completions with engagements (see **Table 4.7**) the data shows that one-third of young people who engaged went onto complete the YEI support.

Table 4.10: Completed the YEI Supported Intervention

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Unemployed 16-24	Male	3,244	337	10%
	Female	2,353	208	9%
	Total	5,597	545	10%
Long-term Unemployed 16-24	Male	1,592	124	8%
	Female	1,234	127	10%
	Total	2,826	251	9%
Inactive 16-24	Male	2,361	757	32%
	Female	1,960	734	37%
	Total	4,321	1,491	35%
Aged 16-24	Male	7,197	1,218	17%
	Female	5,547	1,069	19%
	Total	12,744	2,287	18%
Aged 25-29	Male	1,252	147	12%
	Female	942	184	20%
	Total	2,194	331	15%
Total	Male	8,449	1,365	16%
	Female	6,489	1,253	19%
	Total	14,938	2,618	18%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Note: It should be noted that for the Immediate Results only those aged 16-24 years are subsequently broken down in terms of whether they were unemployed, long-term unemployed or inactive.

Wider points to note about sub-groups of participants from **Table 4.10** are that:

- more males completed the YEI than females (52% and 48% respectively);
- but female completions were slightly ahead in terms of achievement against target (19% and 16% respectively);
- the majority of completions are those aged 16 to 24 years (87%). This age group also has a slightly better achievement rate against target compared to those aged 25-29 years; and

- among those aged 16-24 years, the inactive cohort achieved higher completion rates than other cohorts (i.e. unemployed, long-term unemployed). They account for 57% of all young people who completed the YEI intervention (and 35% achievement against its target).

Offer of a Positive Destination

A total of 1,349 participants to date have received an offer of a positive destination upon leaving the YEI intervention. This is further defined as an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship. This represents:

- 14% of the overall target, **Table 4.11**;
- 18% of total engagements; and
- 52% of total completions.

Table 4.11: Received an Offer of a Positive Destination upon Leaving

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Unemployed 16-24	Male	2,007	156	8%
	Female	1,495	98	7%
	Total	3,502	254	7%
Long-term Unemployed 16-24	Male	1,055	68	6%
	Female	871	67	8%
	Total	1,926	135	7%
Inactive 16-24	Male	1,663	434	26%
	Female	1,364	457	34%
	Total	3,027	891	29%
Aged 16-24	Male	4,725	658	14%
	Female	3,730	622	17%
	Total	8,455	1,280	15%
Aged 25-29	Male	603	45	7%
	Female	460	24	5%
	Total	1,063	69	6%
Total	Male	5,328	703	13%
	Female	4,190	646	15%
	Total	9,518	1,349	14%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Wider points to note about sub-groups of participants from **Table 4.11** are that:

- more males received an offer of a positive destination upon leaving than females (52% and 48% respectively);
- but female offers of a positive destination were slightly higher in terms of achievement against target (15% and 13% respectively);
- the majority of young people who received an offer of a positive destination upon leaving were aged 16-24 years (95%). This age cohort is also performing better against target than those aged 25-29 years; and
- similar to completions, the inactive 16-24 years cohort appears to have been most successful – accounting for 66% of the total young people who received an offer of a positive destination upon leaving (and 29% achievement against its target).

Participants in a Positive Destination Upon Leaving

Almost 2,000 participants were in a positive destination upon leaving the YEI. This represents an achievement rate of 23% to date, **Table 4.12**.

This represents:

- 25% of total engagements; and
- 75% of total completions.

Table 4.12: Participants in a Positive Destination upon Leaving

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Unemployed 16-24	Male	2,016	238	12%
	Female	1,453	142	10%
	Total	3,469	380	11%
Long-term Unemployed 16-24	Male	1,088	103	9%
	Female	855	115	13%
	Total	1,943	218	11%
Inactive 16-24	Male	1,628	673	41%
	Female	1,264	698	55%
	Total	2,892	1,371	47%
Aged 16-24	Male	4,732	1,014	21%
	Female	3,572	955	27%
	Total	8,304	1,969	24%
Aged 25-29	Male	62	0	0%
	Female	81	1	1%
	Total	143	1	1%
Total	Male	4,794	1,014	21%
	Female	3,653	956	26%
	Total	8,447	1,970	23%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Wider points to note from the table above are that:

- there was a relatively equal split in terms of participants in a positive destination upon leaving by gender (male - 51% and female - 49%);
- but a slighter higher achievement rate for females against target than males (26% and 21% respectively);
- almost all of those in a positive destination upon leaving were aged 16-24 years (99%) – and this age group has achieved a much higher achievement rate against target than those aged 25-29 years; and
- as with previous targets, the inactive 16-24 year cohort was the most successful, accounting for 70% of total participants, and an achievement rate against target of 47%.

Long Term Results

To date almost 1,500 participants were in education or training six months after leaving. This represents 35% of the total target, **Table 4.13**. This indicator is further defined as participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving.

Table 4.13: Participants in Education or Training Six Months after Leaving

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Participants aged 16-24	Male	1,902	610	32%
	Female	1,549	723	47%
	Total	3,451	1,333	39%
Participants aged 25-29	Male	447	49	11%
	Female	357	107	30%
	Total	804	156	19%
Total	Male	2,349	659	28%
	Female	1,906	830	44%
	Total	4,255	1,489	35%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Wider points to note about sub-groups of participants from the table above are that:

- more females were in education or training six months after leaving than males;
- female achievement against target was also much higher than males (44% and 28% respectively); and
- the achievement rate for those aged 16-24 (39%) was much higher than for those aged 25-29 (19%).

Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving

To date almost 500 participants were in employment six months after leaving, which represents 7% of the total target, **Table 4.14**.

Table 4.14: Participants in Employment Six Months after Leaving

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Participants aged 16-24	Male	3,069	228	7%
	Female	2,438	178	7%
	Total	5,507	406	7%
Participants aged 25-29	Male	603	45	7%
	Female	460	24	5%
	Total	1,063	69	6%
Total	Male	3,672	273	7%
	Female	2,898	202	7%
	Total	6,570	475	7%

Source: YEI Monitoring

Wider points to note on sub-groups of participants are that:

- no real difference by gender; and
- slightly lower achievement rates for those aged 25-29 than for 16-24 years.

Participants in Self-Employment Six Months after Leaving

Only three participants were in self-employment six months after leaving, and is substantially behind target, **Table 4.15**.

Table 4.15: Participants in Self-Employment Six Months after Leaving

		Target	Achieved	% Achieved To Date
Participants aged 16-24	Male	249	2	1%
	Female	222	0	0%
	Total	471	2	0%
Participants aged 25-29	Male	62	0	0%
	Female	81	1	1%
	Total	143	1	1%
Total	Male	311	2	1%
	Female	303	1	0%
	Total	614	3	0%

Source: YEI Monitoring

5. How Youth Unemployed Has Changed

This Chapter charts changes in youth unemployment and related statistics in recent years for South West Scotland against comparators (Scotland and UK). Where appropriate, further detail for individual local authorities within South West Scotland has been provided. The timeframe spans 2007 (outlining the impact of the economic shock due to the 2007/08 financial crisis), with particular attention paid to changes from 2012 (baseline year used for the allocation of funds to NUTS 2 regions), and from 2016 (when many of the YEI operations began in South West Scotland).

Data is provided for the total population and for the 16-24 age group. The brief also requested analysis by the 25-29 age group, however, comparable data was not readily available. In discussion with the Managing Authority, the cost of accessing the data was judged to be disproportionate.

Note for Figures and Tables: It should be noted that both percentage changes and percentage point changes are presented throughout this Chapter. For example, percentage changes relating to changes in absolute number (e.g. a fall from 100 to 75 would be a -25% change), while percentage point changes relate to the difference between two percentages (e.g. a change in unemployment rate from 20% to 10% would be a -10 percentage point change). Percentage point changes are abbreviated to pp in this section.

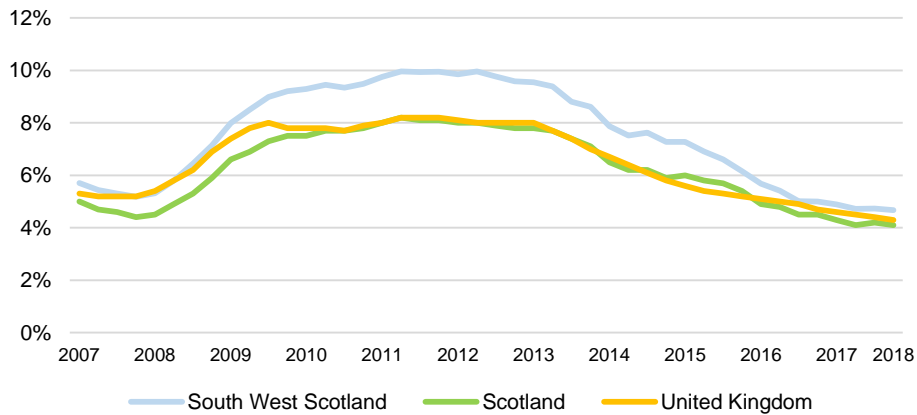
Note regarding the 16-24 Age Group Population: The total 16-24 years population in South West Scotland declined by 27,000 since 2012 (-10%). This is important to note when making direct comparisons between absolute changes in youth unemployment, as a decline in youth unemployment will not necessarily lead to an equivalent rise in youth employment due to the population change.

5.1 Unemployment

Overall Unemployment

Overall unemployment has followed a similar trend across all comparators, with a rise in unemployment due to the 2008/09 recession, and a fall from 2012 onwards. Unemployment in South West Scotland has consistently been above that in Scotland and UK, with the gap largest during the period of highest unemployment.

Figure 5.1: Unemployment Rate



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS)

The local authority areas in South West Scotland currently with the highest levels of unemployment are Inverclyde, North & East Ayrshire and Glasgow. These areas are also among those that have seen the biggest declines since 2012.

Table 5.1: South West Scotland - Unemployment Rate

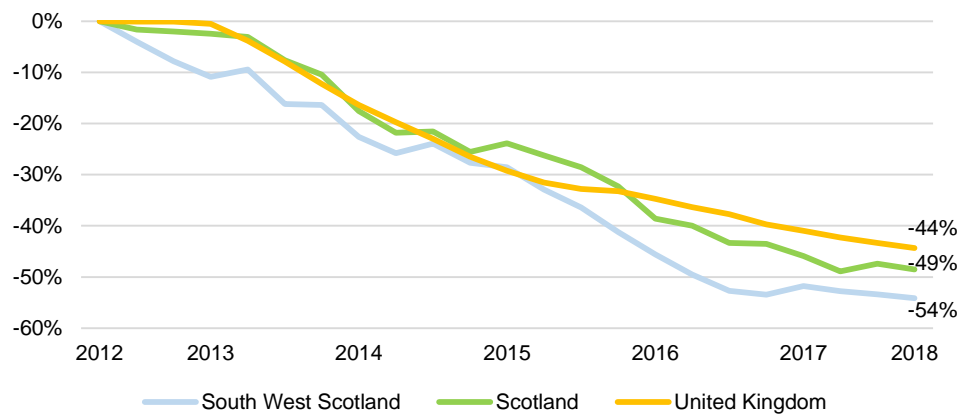
	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Inverclyde	12%	6%	6%	-6pp	0pp
North Ayrshire	13%	8%	6%	-7pp	-2pp
East Ayrshire	11%	7%	6%	-6pp	-1pp
Glasgow City	12%	7%	6%	-7pp	-2pp
West Dunbartonshire	11%	6%	5%	-6pp	-1pp
Renfrewshire	9%	5%	5%	-4pp	-1pp
South Ayrshire	9%	5%	5%	-5pp	-1pp
North Lanarkshire	11%	5%	4%	-7pp	-1pp
South Lanarkshire	7%	5%	4%	-3pp	-1pp
East Dunbartonshire	6%	4%	3%	-3pp	0pp
Dumfries and Galloway	8%	4%	3%	-5pp	-1pp
East Renfrewshire	6%	3%	3%	-3pp	0pp
South West Scotland	10%	6%	5%	-5pp	-1pp
Scotland	8%	5%	4%	-4pp	-1pp
United Kingdom	12%	7%	4%	-8pp	-3pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

Local authorities within South West Scotland with the lowest levels of unemployment include the “affluent” areas of East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire, **Table 5.1**.

In terms of absolute change in unemployment, South West Scotland saw a larger percentage fall at -54% (-64,100) from 2012 than Scotland (-49%, -103,800) and the UK (-44%, -1,120,800), **Figure 5.2**.

Figure 5.2: Absolute Change in Unemployment



Source: APS

In most areas, the majority of the reduction in unemployment happened between 2012 and 2016, with the exceptions being South Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire which also experienced a considerable reduction since 2016, **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2: South West Scotland – Absolute Change in Unemployment

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Inverclyde	5,600	2,600	2,000	-3,600	-600
North Ayrshire	8,300	6,200	3,900	-4,400	-2,300
East Ayrshire	7,000	4,300	3,800	-3,200	-500
Glasgow City	33,300	19,500	17,600	-15,700	-1,900
West Dunbartonshire	5,200	2,200	2,200	-3,000	0
Renfrewshire	7,800	4,300	4,200	-3,600	-100
South Ayrshire	5,800	3,100	2,300	-3,500	-800
North Lanarkshire	22,100	6,500	5,900	-16,200	-600
East Dunbartonshire	3,200	1,800	2,000	-1,200	+200
South Lanarkshire	8,400	8,100	5,900	-2,500	-2,200
Dumfries and Galloway	7,000	3,000	2,200	-4,800	-800
East Renfrewshire	2,300	1,200	1,100	-1,200	-100
South West Scotland	116,700	63,500	53,500	-63,200	-10,000
Scotland	213,800	131,300	110,000	-103,800	-21,300
United Kingdom	2,495,800	1,628,500	1,389,900	-1,105,900	-238,600

Source: APS

In terms of gender:

- male unemployment followed a similar path to overall unemployment but peaked at a higher rate and has been generally higher in South West Scotland; and
- female unemployment has been consistently below overall unemployment and increased at a much more gradual rate post-2008.

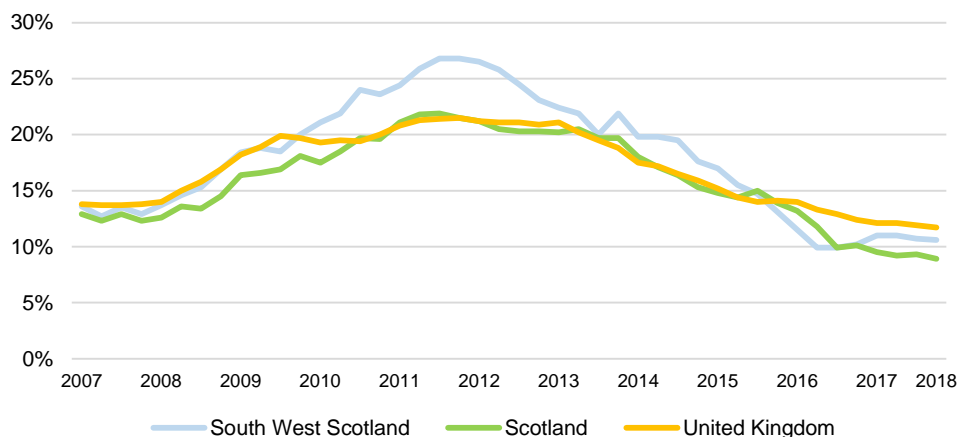
Youth Unemployment

Note: Youth unemployment has been calculated based upon the economically active 16-24 population. This age group generally has high levels of economic activity due to most students being classified as economically inactive. This can make rates somewhat volatile, particularly at lower geographic levels.

Youth unemployment has followed a similar trend to overall unemployment, with a steep increase during and following the recession, followed by a steep decline from 2012/13. Youth unemployment peaked in South West Scotland in 2012 (25.8%) - a higher rate than Scotland and the UK, **Figure 5.3**.

The fall in youth unemployment between 2012 and 2016 would have had implications for YEI delivery as some young people closer to the labour market would have found work more easily. Of note is that the youth unemployment rate in South West Scotland fell below the Scottish average between 2015/16, but has been on the rise again, and is now higher than the Scottish rate.

Figure 5.3: Youth Unemployment Rate



Source: APS

As is to be expected, there was significant variation in youth unemployment in 2012 by local authority area in South West Scotland, with Glasgow and Ayrshire having particularly high rates, and South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire at the lower end, **Table 5.3**.

Youth unemployment has fallen considerably across the board since 2012, with the Ayrshire local authorities experiencing particularly large falls. Most local authority areas experienced much of this reduction between 2012 and 2016, with small falls, or rises from 2016, (although North Ayrshire is the exception to this).

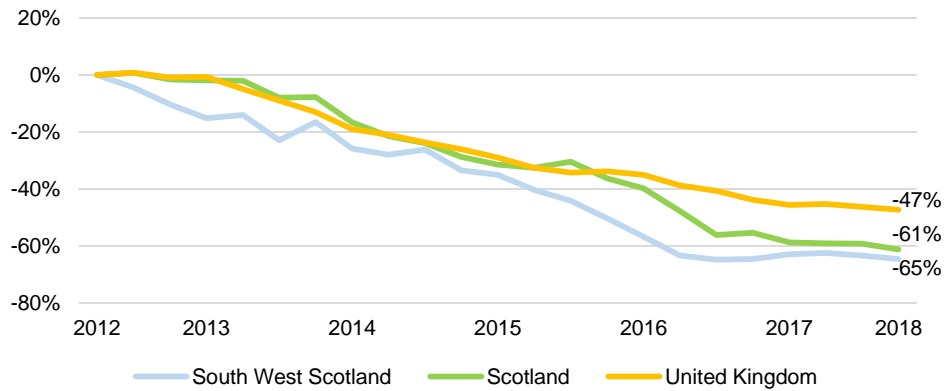
Table 5.3: South West Scotland - Youth Unemployment Rate

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Inverclyde	23%	14%	18%	-5pp	+4pp
East Ayrshire	28%	14%	15%	-13pp	+1pp
Glasgow City	32%	14%	13%	-19pp	-1pp
North Ayrshire	32%	24%	13%	-19pp	-11pp
East Dunbartonshire	22%	17%	12%	-11pp	-5pp
South Lanarkshire	13%	12%	11%	-3pp	-2pp
South Ayrshire	34%	11%	11%	-23pp	0pp
West Dunbartonshire	29%	11%	10%	-18pp	-1pp
East Renfrewshire	14%	4%	10%	-4pp	+6pp
North Lanarkshire	28%	5%	8%	-20pp	+2pp
Renfrewshire	22%	7%	7%	-14pp	+1pp
Dumfries and Galloway	21%	11%	7%	-15pp	-4pp
South West Scotland	26%	12%	11%	-15pp	-1pp
Scotland	21%	13%	9%	-12pp	-4pp
United Kingdom	21%	14%	12%	-9pp	-2pp

Source: APS, percentage rounded. Note: Percentage Point Changes

The absolute change in youth unemployment was larger in South West Scotland between 2012 and 2018 (-65%, -32,200) than Scotland (-61%, -54,800) and the UK (-47%, -462,300), **Figure 5.4**.

Figure 5.4: Absolute Change in Youth Unemployment



Source: APS

As noted in the youth unemployment rates above, much of the reduction in youth unemployment took place between 2012 and 2016, with Inverclyde and North Lanarkshire reporting a rise from 2016, **Table 5.4**.

It should be noted, that with a rise in the number of inactive 16-24 year olds, many local authorities in South West Scotland saw a rise in the youth unemployment rate, whilst simultaneously seeing a fall in the total number of unemployed young people.

Table 5.4: South West Scotland – Absolute Change in Youth Unemployment

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Inverclyde	1,300	700	900	-400	+200
East Ayrshire	2,500	1,100	1,100	-1,400	0
Glasgow City	13,900	6,100	4,900	-9,000	-1,200
North Ayrshire	3,100	2,100	1,200	-1,900	-900
East Dunbartonshire	1,500	1,100	900	-600	-200
South Lanarkshire	3,200	2,800	2,300	-900	-500
South Ayrshire	2,900	900	700	-2,200	-200
West Dunbartonshire	2,100	800	600	-1,500	-200
East Renfrewshire	700	650	500	-200	-150
North Lanarkshire	8,400	1,500	1,800	-6,600	+300
Renfrewshire	3,100	900	900	-2,200	0
Dumfries and Galloway	2,100	1,100	500	-1,600	-600
South West Scotland	45,300	19,600	16,000	-29,300	-3,600
Scotland	85,700	51,600	33,200	-52,500	-18,400
United Kingdom	966,800	627,100	508,700	-458,100	-118,400

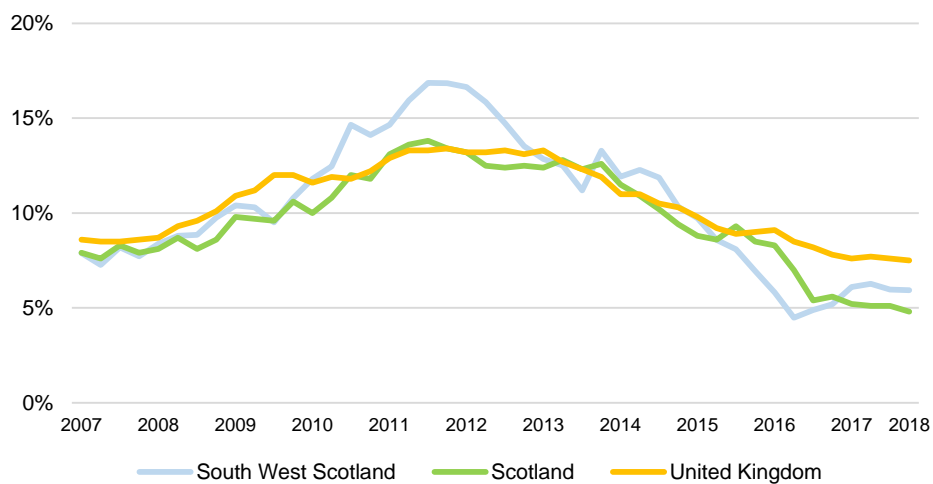
Source: APS

In terms of gender:

- male youth unemployment has been consistently higher than the overall youth unemployment rate, however, the gap has narrowed considerably in recent years; and
- female youth unemployment has been consistently lower than overall youth unemployment, with a much more gradual increase after 2008.

The gap between the overall unemployment rate and the youth unemployment rate increased considerably during the recession, particularly in South West Scotland. The gap fell sharply during the recovery, down to levels below what they were prior to the recession, **Figure 5.5**.

Figure 5.5: Percentage Point Gap between Overall and Youth Unemployment



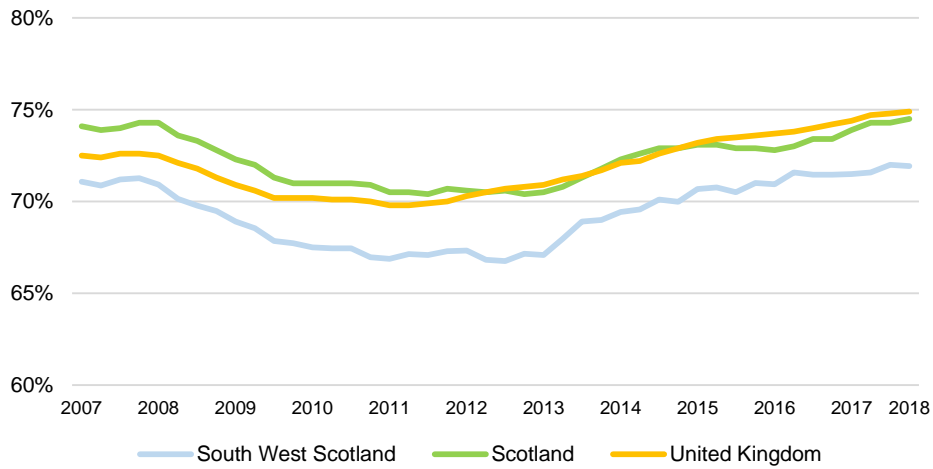
Source: APS

5.2 Employment

The employment rate has followed an inverse path to the unemployment rate, falling during the recession and rising from around 2013 to above the pre-crisis rate in all comparators.

South West Scotland, however, has had a consistently lower employment rate than Scotland and the UK, **Figure 5.6**.

Figure 5.6: Employment Rate



Source: APS

All local authority areas in South West Scotland have experienced a rise in the employment rate since 2012, with Dumfries and Galloway and North Ayrshire experiencing particularly large increases. Many also experienced a positive percentage point change since 2016. The areas with the current highest unemployment rates also have the lowest employment rates (e.g. Glasgow).

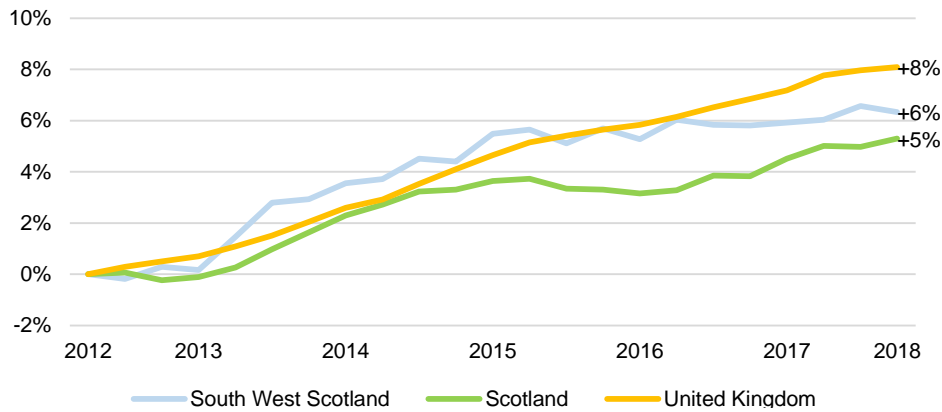
Table 5.5: South West Scotland - Employment Rate

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	59%	65%	66%	+7pp	+1pp
North Ayrshire	62%	65%	70%	+8pp	+5pp
East Ayrshire	67%	66%	70%	+3pp	+4pp
South Ayrshire	70%	73%	71%	+2pp	-2pp
Inverclyde	65%	70%	72%	+7pp	+3pp
West Dunbartonshire	67%	74%	72%	+5pp	-1pp
North Lanarkshire	70%	75%	75%	+5pp	-1pp
East Renfrewshire	73%	78%	75%	+3pp	-3pp
Dumfries and Galloway	67%	75%	75%	+8pp	0pp
Renfrewshire	72%	75%	76%	+5pp	+2pp
East Dunbartonshire	73%	74%	76%	+3pp	+2pp
South Lanarkshire	75%	74%	76%	+1pp	+2pp
South West Scotland	67%	71%	72%	+5pp	+1pp
Scotland	71%	73%	75%	+4pp	+2pp
United Kingdom	71%	74%	75%	+4pp	+1pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

South West Scotland and Scotland have seen a similar absolute rise in employment since 2012 of +6 and +5% respectively, but lower than the UK (+8%), **Figure 5.7**.

Figure 5.7: Absolute Change in Employment



Source: APS

Most local authority areas in South West Scotland experienced an increase in employment in absolute terms since 2012 and since 2016. However, a number, notably East Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire have experienced a subsequent decrease since 2016, **Table 5.6**.

Table 5.6: South West Scotland – Absolute Change in Employment

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	238,000	271,200	272,300	+34,300	+1,100
North Ayrshire	53,200	52,700	56,700	+3,500	+4,000
East Ayrshire	52,400	50,300	52,800	+400	+2,500
South Ayrshire	47,600	49,200	47,300	-300	-1,900
Inverclyde	33,400	34,200	35,100	+1,700	+900
West Dunbartonshire	39,500	41,800	40,800	+1,300	-1,000
North Lanarkshire	153,700	164,300	162,800	+9,100	-1,500
East Renfrewshire	40,300	44,300	42,400	+2,100	-1,900
Dumfries and Galloway	61,200	66,400	65,500	+4,300	-900
Renfrewshire	80,800	82,400	83,500	+2,700	+1,100
East Dunbartonshire	48,100	48,600	49,900	+1,800	+1,300
South Lanarkshire	152,100	147,600	154,500	+2,400	+6,900
South West Scotland	1,000,300	1,053,000	1,063,600	+63,300	+10,600
Scotland	2,412,400	2,488,500	2,540,100	+127,700	+51,600
United Kingdom	28,536,000	30,199,400	30,843,500	+2,307,500	+644,100

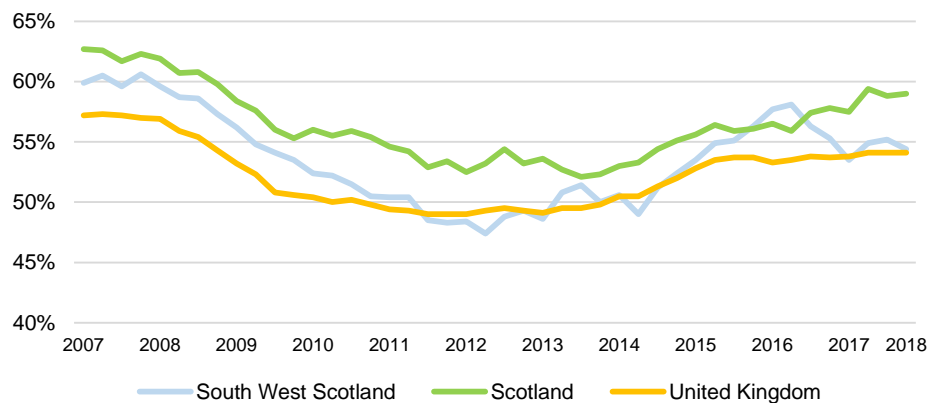
Source: APS

In terms of gender:

- the male employment rate followed a similar trend to the overall employment rate, but has been consistently higher; and
- the female employment rate fell only marginally after 2008 compared to the male employment rate, but has been consistently considerably below the overall employment rate.

The youth employment rate fell considerably in all comparators during the recession and recovered in 2013, but is currently below pre-crisis levels. South West Scotland also experienced a notable dip from 2016, **Figure 5.8**.

Figure 5.8: Youth Employment Rate



Source: APS

Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and East Ayrshire all currently have particularly low youth employment rates, **Table 5.7**. There is, however, some volatility in these figures, most notably with East Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire, with strong growth to 2016, followed by a significant fall.

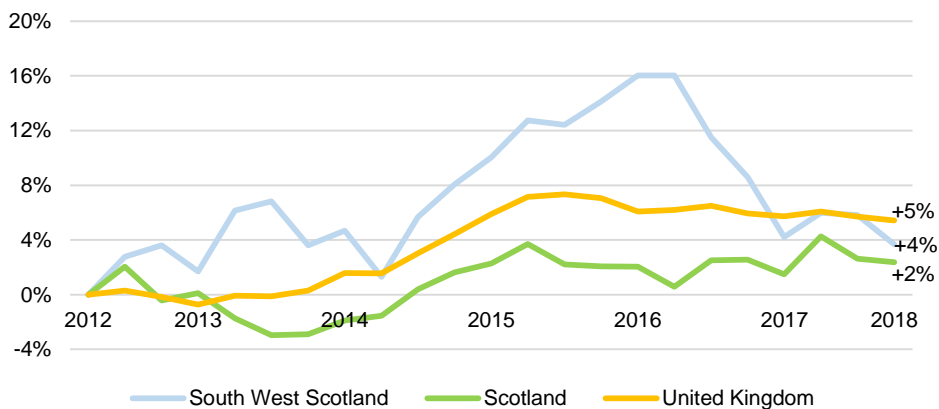
Table 5.7: South West Scotland - Youth Employment Rate

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	39%	47%	44%	+5pp	-3pp
East Renfrewshire	47%	63%	46%	-1pp	-17pp
East Ayrshire	51%	51%	50%	-1pp	-1pp
Inverclyde	47%	58%	53%	+6pp	-5pp
West Dunbartonshire	48%	65%	57%	+9pp	-8pp
South Ayrshire	53%	66%	59%	+6pp	-7pp
North Lanarkshire	59%	70%	59%	+1pp	-11pp
Dumfries and Galloway	56%	67%	60%	+4pp	-8pp
North Ayrshire	46%	47%	60%	+14pp	+13pp
East Dunbartonshire	47%	51%	61%	+14pp	+10pp
South Lanarkshire	56%	61%	62%	+6pp	+1pp
Renfrewshire	52%	68%	70%	+18pp	+1pp
South West Scotland	47%	58%	55%	+7pp	-3pp
Scotland	53%	57%	59%	+6pp	+3pp
United Kingdom	49%	53%	54%	+5pp	+1pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

The absolute numbers of young people in employment have risen by +5% in the UK since 2012, greater than both Scotland and South West Scotland. South West Scotland experienced a large drop in youth employment from 2016 after a period of strong growth, **Figure 5.9**.

Figure 5.9: Absolute Change in Youth Employment



Source: APS

In general terms, there was growth in youth employment from 2012 to 2016, and then a fall from 2016, particularly in Glasgow and North Lanarkshire, **Table 5.8**.

Table 5.8: South West Scotland – Absolute Change in Youth Employment

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	29,300	37,700	32,700	+3,400	-5,000
East Renfrewshire	4,500	6,400	4,600	+100	-1,800
East Ayrshire	6,300	6,500	6,100	-200	-400
Inverclyde	4,400	4,800	4,100	-300	-700
West Dunbartonshire	5,200	6,200	5,100	-100	-1,100
South Ayrshire	5,800	7,200	6,200	+400	-1,000
North Lanarkshire	21,800	25,800	21,200	-600	-4,600
Dumfries and Galloway	7,700	9,400	8,000	+300	-1,400
North Ayrshire	6,600	6,600	8,100	+1,500	1,500
East Dunbartonshire	5,400	5,700	6,500	+1,100	800
South Lanarkshire	20,800	19,800	19,300	-1,500	-500
Renfrewshire	11,200	12,700	12,400	+1,200	-300
South West Scotland	130,300	151,200	135,100	+4,800	-16,100
Scotland	331,500	338,300	339,400	+7,900	1,100
United Kingdom	3,624,200	3,845,000	3,820,700	+196,500	-24,300

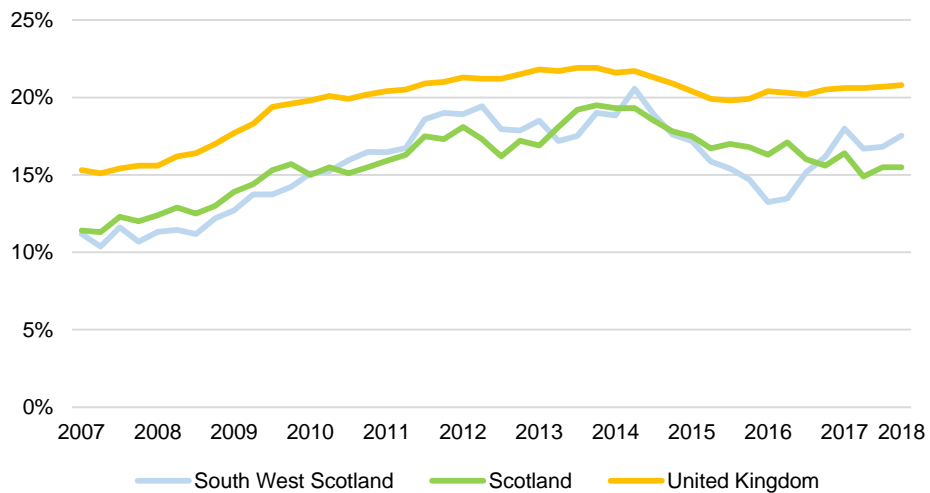
Source: APS

In terms of gender:

- the male youth employment rate experienced a more severe decline than the overall male employment rate. Although there has been some recovery, the rate is currently below the pre-crisis levels in all areas; and
- the female youth unemployment rate trend is broadly similar to the male rate, however, it is generally a few percentage points lower.

The gap between the employment rate and the youth unemployment rate has widened over time, trending slightly downwards from 2013, but remaining considerably higher than the pre-crisis level, **Figure 5.10**.

Figure 5.10: Percentage Point Gap between Overall and Youth Employment

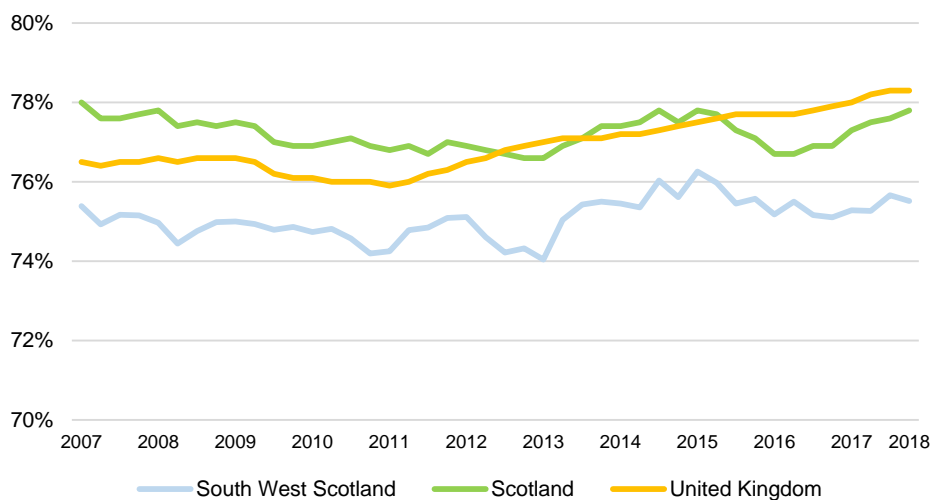


Source: APS

5.3 Economic Activity

The economic activity rate has been more stable than the employment and unemployment rates, trending slightly downwards during the recession, and generally trending upwards from then on. The South West Scotland rate has been consistently below the other comparators, **Figure 5.11**.

Figure 5.11: Economic Activity Rate



Source: APS

Economic activity is currently around 75% to 80% in all local authority areas in South West Scotland, with the exception of Glasgow (70%), although this is an increase of +4pp since 2012, **Table 5.9**.

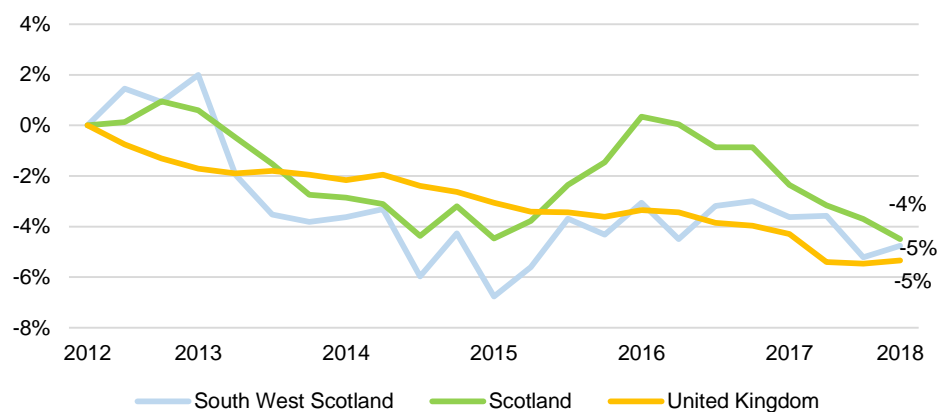
Table 5.9: South West Scotland - Economic Activity Rate

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	67%	70%	70%	+4pp	0pp
North Ayrshire	71%	72%	75%	+3pp	+3pp
South Ayrshire	78%	78%	75%	-3pp	-3pp
East Ayrshire	76%	72%	75%	-1pp	+3pp
Inverclyde	76%	75%	76%	0pp	+1pp
West Dunbartonshire	76%	78%	76%	0pp	-1pp
East Renfrewshire	77%	80%	77%	0pp	-3pp
North Lanarkshire	80%	78%	77%	-2pp	-1pp
Dumfries and Galloway	75%	78%	78%	+3pp	0pp
South Lanarkshire	79%	78%	79%	0pp	+1pp
East Dunbartonshire	78%	77%	79%	+2pp	+2pp
Renfrewshire	79%	79%	80%	+2pp	+1pp
South West Scotland	75%	75%	76%	+1pp	0pp
Scotland	77%	77%	78%	+1pp	+1pp
United Kingdom	77%	78%	78%	+2pp	+1pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

The total number of inactive people has declined by roughly the same across the comparators (South West of Scotland slightly greater decline than Scotland).

Figure 5.12: Absolute Change in Inactive Population



Source: APS

The general trend in the inactive population was a decline, however, a number of local authority areas in South West Scotland experienced an increase. This includes North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire, **Table 5.10**.

Table 5.10: South West Scotland – Absolute Change in Inactive Population

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	134,600	124,600	122,400	-12,200	-2,200
North Ayrshire	24,700	22,900	20,500	-4,200	-2,400
South Ayrshire	14,600	14,800	16,600	+2,000	+1,800
East Ayrshire	18,500	21,300	18,700	+200	-2,600
Inverclyde	12,100	12,400	11,600	-500	-800
West Dunbartonshire	14,200	12,700	13,300	-900	+600
East Renfrewshire	12,900	11,400	12,900	0	+1,500
North Lanarkshire	44,900	47,700	49,600	+4,700	+1,900
Dumfries and Galloway	22,800	19,100	19,100	-3,700	0
South Lanarkshire	42,000	43,100	41,900	-100	-1,200
East Dunbartonshire	14,600	14,900	13,500	-1,100	-1,400
Renfrewshire	24,200	23,600	21,900	-2,300	-1,700
South West Scotland	380,100	368,500	362,000	-18,100	-6,500
Scotland	794,000	796,700	758,300	-35,700	-38,400
United Kingdom	9,464,900	9,148,400	8,959,500	-505,400	-188,900

Source: APS

The main reason for economic inactivity is being a student, long term sick, or being retired.

Inactive people in Scotland are more likely to be long-term sick than in the UK as a whole (27% Scotland, 23% UK), and are less likely to look after family/home (19% Scotland, 24% UK), **Table 5.11**.

Students have become a larger proportion of the inactive population since 2012 (+4pp Scotland, +1pp UK), while being long term sick, looking after family/home and retired have become smaller proportions.

Although data is unavailable below a Scotland level, it is likely that the reason for the low level of economic activity in, for example, Glasgow is due to the high number of students resident in the city given the strong Higher/Further Education sector. Long-term sick will, however, also be a factor.

Table 5.11: Reason for Economic Inactivity¹⁸

		2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Scotland	Student	24%	24%	27%	+4pp	+3pp
	Long-term sick	28%	28%	27%	-2pp	-1pp
	Looking after family/home	20%	21%	19%	-2pp	-2pp
	Retired	18%	14%	14%	-3pp	0pp
	Temporary sick	3%	3%	2%	0pp	-1pp
	Discouraged	1%	1%	1%	0pp	0pp
	Other	7%	10%	11%	+4pp	0pp
UK	Student	26%	26%	27%	+1pp	+1pp
	Looking after family/home	25%	25%	24%	-1pp	-1pp
	Long-term sick	22%	22%	23%	+1pp	0pp
	Retired	16%	13%	13%	-3pp	0pp
	Temporary sick	2%	2%	2%	0pp	0pp
	Discouraged	1%	0%	0%	-1pp	0pp
	Other	8%	11%	11%	+3pp	0pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

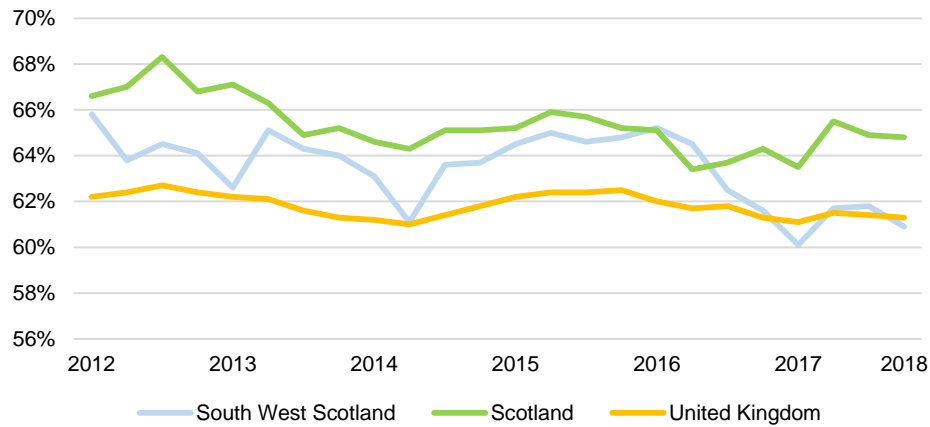
In terms of gender:

- the male economic activity rate has been broadly stable over time, with the main reason for male economic inactivity being long-term sick or being a student, with the proportion of students rising over time; and
- the female economic activity rate has seen a consistent increase over time, but remains considerably below the male rate, primarily due to a large proportion of inactive women staying home to look after the family/home.

The youth economic activity rate has been on a consistent downward trend across the comparators, including South West Scotland, **Figure 5.13**.

¹⁸ Data unavailable below national level

Figure 5.13: Youth Economic Activity Rate



Source: APS

Within South West Scotland, Glasgow and East Renfrewshire currently have lower rates of youth economic activity. East Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway and North Lanarkshire have experienced particularly large decreases since 2016, **Table 5.12**.

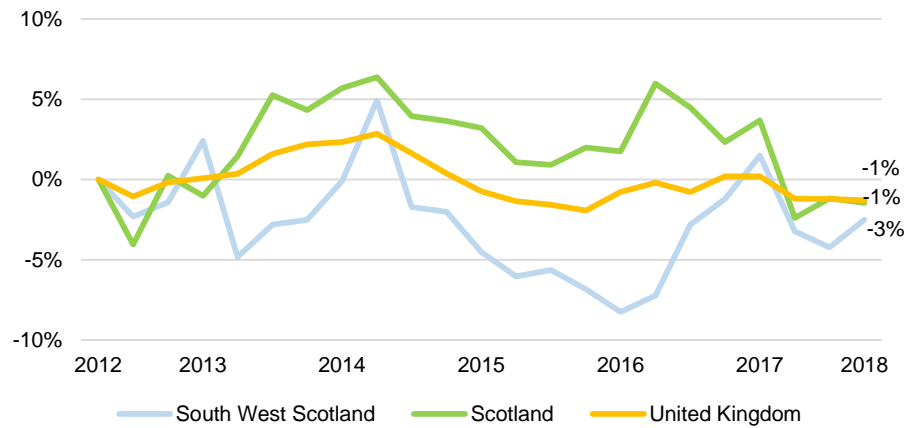
Table 5.12: South West Scotland - Youth Economic Activity Rate

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	50%	55%	51%	+1pp	-4pp
East Renfrewshire	51%	66%	51%	0pp	-15pp
East Ayrshire	66%	60%	59%	-7pp	-1pp
Dumfries and Galloway	67%	75%	61%	-6pp	-14pp
West Dunbartonshire	71%	73%	63%	-8pp	-9pp
North Lanarkshire	80%	74%	64%	-16pp	-10pp
Inverclyde	65%	67%	65%	-1pp	-3pp
South Ayrshire	77%	74%	66%	-12pp	-8pp
East Dunbartonshire	59%	61%	69%	10pp	+7pp
North Ayrshire	66%	62%	69%	+3pp	+7pp
South Lanarkshire	73%	70%	69%	-4pp	-1pp
Renfrewshire	74%	73%	75%	+1pp	+2pp
South West Scotland	64%	65%	61%	-3pp	-4pp
Scotland	67%	65%	65%	-2pp	0pp
United Kingdom	62%	62%	61%	-1pp	-3pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

The absolute change in the number of inactive young people has been erratic, in particular within South West Scotland. In general though, all comparators have seen a decline since 2012, with the largest fall in South West Scotland, **Figure 5.14**.

Figure 5.14: Absolute Change in Inactive Youth Population



Source: APS

Most areas saw a rise in the numbers of young inactive people, particularly North Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway and East Renfrewshire, **Table 5.13**.

Table 5.13: South West Scotland – Absolute Change Inactive Youth Population

	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Glasgow City	43,700	36,000	36,600	-7,100	+600
East Ayrshire	4,500	5,100	5,100	+600	0
East Dunbartonshire	4,800	4,300	3,400	-1,400	-900
North Ayrshire	5,100	5,400	4,300	-800	-1,100
East Renfrewshire	4,900	3,300	4,800	-100	+1,500
Inverclyde	3,100	2,700	2,800	-300	+100
South Lanarkshire	8,700	9,700	9,500	+800	-200
West Dunbartonshire	2,900	2,600	3,400	+500	+800
Renfrewshire	5,000	5,000	4,500	-500	-500
South Ayrshire	2,500	2,900	3,700	+1,200	+800
North Lanarkshire	7,500	9,700	13,000	+5,500	+3,300
Dumfries and Galloway	4,800	3,500	5,200	+400	+1,700
South West Scotland	99,600	91,400	97,100	-2,500	+5,700
Scotland	205,600	209,200	202,600	-3,000	-6,600
United Kingdom	2,765,500	2,744,000	2,729,600	-35,900	-14,400

Inactive young people are overwhelming students, with 80% in Scotland and 78% in the UK, **Table 5.14**.

The fall in youth economic activity is likely due to the increased number of young people moving into Further and Higher Education, and the low rates in Glasgow and East Renfrewshire likely due to the large amount of students attending college or university in the Glasgow.

Table 5.14: Reason for Youth Economic Inactivity¹⁹

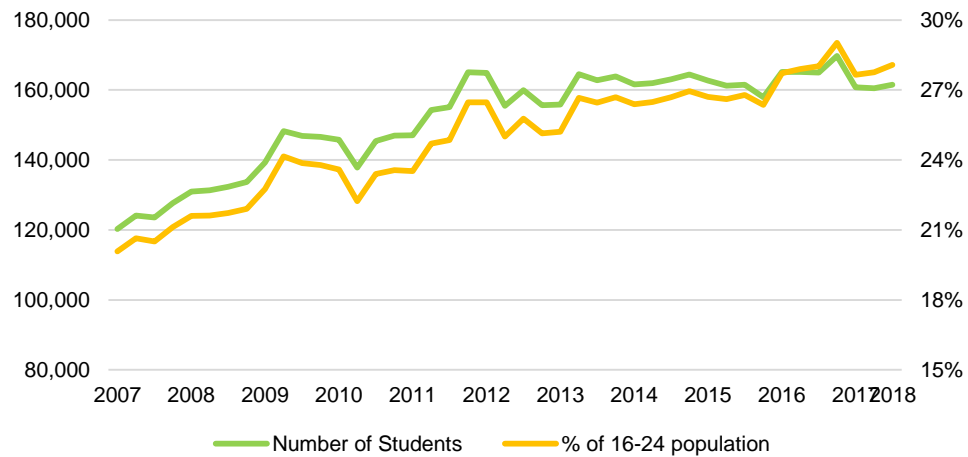
		2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Scotland	Student	80%	77%	80%	-1pp	+3pp
	Long-term sick	4%	7%	7%	+2pp	0pp
	Looking after family/home	8%	7%	5%	-4pp	-2pp
	Temporary sick	1%	1%	1%	0pp	0pp
	Discouraged	0%	1%	0%	0pp	0pp
	Other	6%	8%	7%	+1pp	-1pp
UK	Student	78%	78%	78%	+1pp	0pp
	Looking after family/home	11%	7%	6%	-4pp	0pp
	Long-term sick	4%	6%	6%	+1pp	0pp
	Temporary sick	1%	1%	1%	0pp	0pp
	Discouraged	1%	0%	0%	0pp	0pp
	Other	6%	8%	9%	+2pp	0pp

Source: APS, Note: Percentage Point Changes

The total number of economically inactive students in Scotland has trended upwards over time. Although the total number has fallen slightly since 2012 (-2,400, -2%), the total 16-24 population has fallen further (-47,600, -8%), leading to a rise of +2pp in the proportion of young people who are students, **Figure 5.15**.

¹⁹ Data unavailable below national level

Figure 5.15: Number of Students Aged 16-24 in Scotland



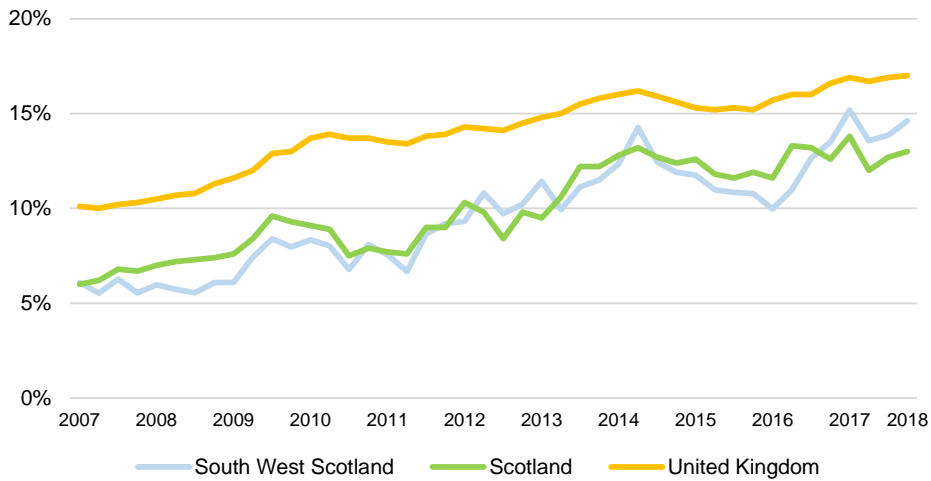
Source: APS

In terms of gender:

- the male youth economic activity rate has been on a consistent downward trend across all areas, with the overwhelming majority students; and
- the female youth economic activity rate trend has had a broadly similar trend to the male rate, however, it has consistently been below the male rate. Inactive females are also mainly students, but a significant minority look after the home/family.

The gap between the overall economic activity rate and the youth economic activity rate has consistently increased over time across all comparators, including South West Scotland. Again, this is likely due to the rising student population, **Figure 5.16**.

Figure 5.16: Percentage Point Gap between Overall and Youth Activity Rate

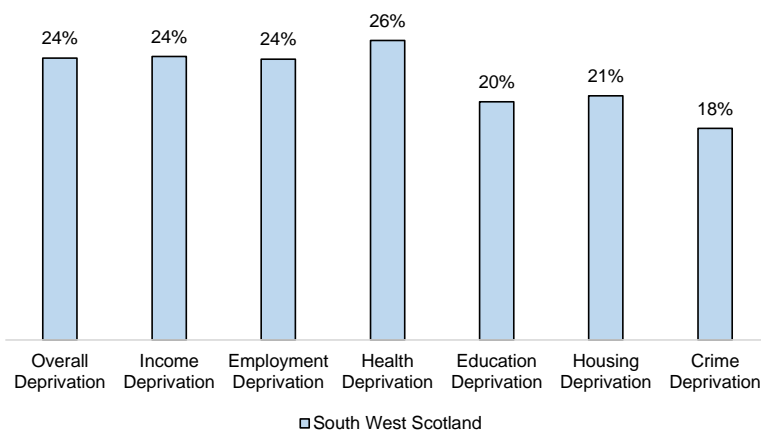


Source: APS

5.4 Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures deprivation across seven domains – income, employment, health, education, geographic access, housing and crime. The SIMD ranks small areas (datazones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). In total 735 datazones in South West Scotland are in the 15% most deprived, 24% of the Scottish total, indicating a higher level of deprivation than the Scottish average. **Figure 5.17** outlines the individual domains and levels of deprivation, showing particular issues in terms of income, employment and health deprivation in South West Scotland.

Figure 5.17: Percentage of Areas in the Bottom 15% Most Deprived in Scotland



Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016

6. Conclusions and Issues for Consideration

This Chapter presents our overall conclusions in line with the study objectives, and lessons learned from YEI delivery in South West Scotland.

6.1 Conclusions

Achievement of Outputs and Results

In assessing the achievements of YEI South West Scotland, it is important to set this within the context of the various challenges faced since the YEI's inception.

Delays in agreeing the ESF 2014/2020 Operational Programmes had a knock on effect on finalising and agreeing Scotland's ESF Operational Programmes, including the YEI Strategic Intervention in South West Scotland. Many of the difficulties can be attributed to a perceived lack of clarity from the beginning about the way in which eligibility, cost and audit rules would apply to YEI.

This caused challenges both in the commitment of YEI South West Scotland funds and delays in the YEI Strategic Operations getting off the ground locally and gaining traction. Significant funds remained unallocated, and there were further de-commitment of funds across Lead Partners. The final position on expenditure will become clear at the financial end date.

The operational context in South West Scotland is also worthy of further reflection. The level of youth unemployment fell sharply following peak levels in 2012. The level of need was not at the same level as that envisaged, and this had a knock-on impact on delivery, expenditure and achievement of targets. However, YEI was an appropriate policy response and its aspirations remained relevant.

Some wider factors have, however, potentially reduced the overall impact of YEI in the South West Scotland, namely:

- restrictions relating to supporting those at risk of becoming NEET; and
- the definition of NEET adopted meant that young people in employment were ineligible, even where this was only for a few hours per week.

Delays in EUMIS (CSV upload tool) and the addition of pre-payment checks to the claims process means that financial and target data submitted by Lead Partners does not present a true reflection of progress and achievements. This position has been compounded by a perceived lack of detailed guidance from the outset and various iterations published thereafter. Providing the necessary evidence requirements for eligibility has been particularly challenging. This is reflective of the nature of the YEI target group, but also challenges in retrospectively providing additional evidence.

This leads to a situation whereby achievements are potentially under-reported. The reality is that more young people will have been supported through the YEI and have achieved sustained results than can be actually claimed for.

As further claims are in the process of being submitted by Lead Partners, including final claims, it has been difficult, and would indeed be unfair, to assess performance based solely on the EUMIS monitoring data alone.

At face value, performance against outputs and results has been weak, **Table 6.1**. However, this is based on 31% of ESF funds paid/pending.

Table 6.1: Summary of Outputs and Results Achieved To Date

Indicator	Target	Actual Achieved To Date	% Achieved To Date
Output			
Total Engagement	17,615	7,924	45%
Immediate Results			
Total YEI Completion	14,938	2,618	18%
Participants Receiving a Positive Offer After Leaving	9,518	1,349	14%
Participants in a Positive Destination After Leaving	8,447	1,970	23%
Long Term Results			
Participants in Education or Training Six Months After leaving	4,255	1,489	35
Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving	6,570	475	7
Participants in Six Months After Leaving	614	3	0%

In the absence of more up-to-date data, a more appropriate way to assess performance would be undertake a proportional assessment based on expenditure claimed/pending (i.e. 31% ESF spend to date²⁰ against 31% of agreed targets),

Table 6.2.

Table 6.3: Proportional Assessment of Outputs and Results Achieved To Date

Indicator	31% of Target	Actual Achieved To Date	% Achieved To Date
Output			
Total Engagement	5,461	7,924	145%
Immediate Results			
Total YEI Completion	4,631	2,618	57%
Participants Receiving a Positive Offer After Leaving	2,951	1,349	46%
Participants in a Positive Destination After Leaving	2,619	1,970	75%
Long Term Results			
Participants in Education or Training Six Months After leaving	1,319	1,489	113%
Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving	2,037	475	23%
Participants in Six Months After Leaving	190	3	2%

Adopting this approach improves YEI achievements across the board, but most notably in terms of total engagements, total completions, and participants in a positive destination after leaving. A further positive finding is that the long-term result of participants in education or training six months after leaving has already been exceeded.

The YEI funds allowed an increased focus on the provision of support to young people, including those furthest from the labour market.

²⁰ Note: we do have data on Lead Partner spend at that point in time against its own match-funding to include this in the calculation. ESF spend to date (as per EUMIS) is therefore used as a proxy.

Wider feedback from young people supported (i.e. from the primary research undertaken) adds further weight to strong YEI performance:

- 80% of young people that reported a barrier to accessing employment, education or training opportunities (e.g. lack of work experience) said that YEI helped them to overcome this;
- satisfaction with the overall package of YEI support received was also high – some 88% of young people were either satisfied or very satisfied;
- a positive finding is that 77% of young people who responded to the survey continue to be in a positive destination, mainly employment but also college and university;
- there is also some evidence of progression – for example, young people now in promoted posts or undertaking a higher level qualification since leaving YEI;
- the main benefits reported were help to get a job and skills development. It has also increased the self-esteem and confidence of many young people;
- over three-quarters reported that the support was either important or very important in helping them to continue with education, undertake training, or find work; and
- in the absence of the YEI, almost 60% of young people said that they would either likely be unemployed or in a lower skilled, lower paid or less fulfilling/suitable job.

These are all positive findings from young people supported, and demonstrate that the YEI is highly regarded.

Change in Youth Unemployment and Attribution

The operational context for YEI South West Scotland was reported to have changed from when the programme was first designed, to when delivery started, and on through the delivery phase.

This finding was confirmed through our data analysis work.

Youth unemployment peaked in South West Scotland in 2012 (25.8%) and then fell sharply between 2012 and 2016. The fall in youth unemployment had implications for YEI demand, as some young people closer to the labour market found work.

In part, this is further supported by the performance monitoring data which shows that a relatively high proportion of young people who engaged in YEI did not complete the intervention. While this includes natural attrition, the feedback from Lead Partners supports the view that some young people left YEI early to take up employment opportunities.

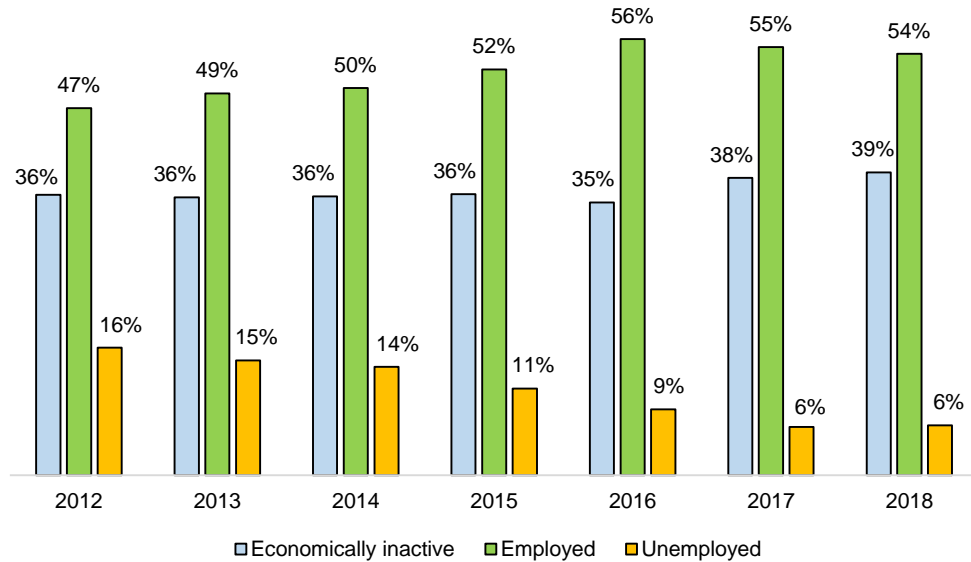
Between 2012 and 2018, South West Scotland experienced a steep decline in youth unemployment from a rate of 26% to 11% (-15pp decline); and 45,300 to 16,000 young people (29,300, -67% decline).

This decline was greater than Scotland (-12pp) and UK (-9pp).

Similarly, the youth employment rate in South West Scotland increased by 11pp between 2012 and 2016 (when some YEI operations started). This was greater than the increase in Scotland and the UK, and represented an increase of 20,900 young people moving into work. It has, however, decreased since this time (Scotland has experienced an increase), and the youth employment rate in South West Scotland is still below pre-crisis levels – further highlighting the continued relevance of YEI.

Of note is that the youth economic activity rate has been on a consistent downward trend in South West Scotland, and has been consistently below Scotland and UK rates. In South West Scotland there has been a rise in the number of young people who are inactive: +2,500 between 2012 and 2016, and +5,700 between 2016 and 2018. The majority of whom are likely to be students. By comparison, both Scotland and UK have experienced a further decrease since 2016.

Figure 6.1: Share of Youth Population Inactive, Employed and Unemployed – South West Scotland²¹



Source: APS

It is clear that between 2012 and 2016 the majority of unemployed young people in South West Scotland moved into employment. Since then, however, there has been an increase in the number of economically inactive young people, although not in a negative sense as they are primarily students.

Looking at the overall absolute changes, we can see that the -29,300 in the number of young people unemployed does not equate to similar rises in economic inactivity and employment, due to the fall in the 16-24 population (- 27,000), **Table 6.3**.

Table 6.3: Absolute Changes Summary – South West Scotland

Number	2012	2016	2018	Change since 2012	Change since 2016
Young People Unemployed	45,300	22,500	16,000	-29,300	-6,500
Young People Employed	130,300	148,700	135,100	4,800	-13,600
Young People Economically Inactive	99,600	92,900	97,100	-2,500	4,200
16-24 Population	275,200	264,000	248,200	-27,000	-15,800

Source: APS

²¹ Unemployed figure differs, as is taken as a fraction of total population, rather than economically active population.

Verified YEI monitoring data to date shows that:

- 1,970 young people were in a positive destination upon leaving the YEI defined as employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship; and
- 1,967 young people were in a positive destination six months after leaving.

When looking at the total decrease in youth unemployment in South West Scotland between 2012 and 2018 (-29,300), the YEI contributes around 7% to this change.

The YEI does appear to have played its part in reducing youth unemployment through preparing young people for work, connecting young people into local work experience and employment opportunities, including clear routes into different sectors, and in funding additional college courses in subject areas where young people would have a better chance of finding employment.

However, it is also important to recognise that the intervention was one of a number of projects and programmes operational at this time and aimed at this target group.

This is further evidenced by the Scottish Government announcement that its commitment to reduce youth unemployment by 40% in Scotland was achieved four years ahead of schedule.

Has the Effect of YEI Varied Based on Sub-Sets of Participants

The effect of the YEI on sub-sets of participants is difficult to fully address. In part this reflects the fact that targets set for particular groups (e.g. gender) did not always reflect local demographic patterns, etc.

What we can tell from the EUMIS monitoring data, however, is that:

- more young men engaged with YEI than young women;
- the vast majority of young people engaged were in the 16-24 age group; and
- the inactive cohort among young people aged 16-24 years achieved higher completion rates and better results than other cohorts (i.e. unemployed, long-term unemployed).

Without having more up-to-date data on performance against outputs and results, it is not possible to comment fully on whether there have been any variations in performance across the individual local authority areas in South West Scotland. However, our overall sense is that some will have performed stronger than others.

How has the structure and timing of YEI helped or hindered delivery compared to other current ESF programmes and to non-European delivery

Some of the points around this evaluation objective were touched on above. A few wider points are considered below:

- Helped:
 - no need for the YEI target group to have additional “barriers” like the ESF Employability Pipeline.
- Hindered:
 - additional YEI resources allowed an increased focus on young people, but the landscape was considered to be relatively cluttered at the time of YEI, and when in Scotland there continues to be a focus on ensuring greater integration and alignment and making the employability landscape easier to navigate;
 - challenges for some in terms of getting YEI off the ground at the same time as the Employability Pipeline and other ESF programmes; and
 - by far the main hindrance compared to other ESF and non-European funded programmes was reported to centre on restrictive eligibility rules and administrative tasks (and time) associated with the compliance process.

Contribution Towards Scotland’s Delivery of the Youth Guarantee

The Scottish Government has made a commitment that every single 16-19 year old in Scotland will be offered a place in appropriate learning or training if they are not already in a job, Modern Apprenticeship or in education. In some local authority areas, the commitment has been extended to a wider age group of young people (e.g. 16-24 years).

The YEI has contributed to Scotland's delivery of the Youth Guarantee through having supporting aims and activities that help progress more young people into education, training and work.

In this regard, the YEI is likely to have been consistent with this existing provision, although it may also have simply duplicated or caused confusion. We do not have any reliable or robust evidence to comment either way.

6.2 Issues for Consideration

We have not sought to provide recommendations, rather we have identified a number of lessons learned or wider points for consideration:

1. There will always be inherent challenges in the implementation of projects and programmes that have been subject to detailed design at the European level as it is unable to reflect on local circumstances. There then often lacks sufficient flexibility or freedom to respond to different (and changing) local circumstances and needs and local delivery capacity.
2. A more appropriate approach would have been for the Commission to define the high level policy objectives then allow for Managing Authorities, in partnership with others, to design the finer detail of their programme but within that wider strategic framework. This would ensure a much stronger strategic fit with local policy and a closer alignment with current delivery priorities.
3. Time is always a key pressure in designing new programmes. There is often insufficient time or resources to fully develop, test and implement a new programme and its supporting operational and governance protocols. Yet again, YEI faced a compressed timescale for delivery which in turns lead to reduced activity levels.
4. There is possibly a need to explore ways to reduce the time required from submission of Lead Partner Operational Applications to Formal Offer of Grant Letters being issued. This would help mitigate delays for Lead Partners (and wider delivery providers), and ensure opportunities for expenditure and achievement of results are maximised.

5. Detailed guidance, where possible, should be available from the outset – or at least there should be a shared and consistent understanding of clear parameters from within Lead Partners can operate until detailed guidance becomes available. There also needs to be appropriate document version control and consistent messaging to Lead Partners for the avoidance of any doubt.
6. Linked to the Point 5, and extending to performance monitoring, there might be value in the Managing Authority organising participative workshops sessions with Lead Partners to help build that shared understanding of rules and requirements, as well as drawing on their knowledge and experience in the design and delivery of EU-funded employability programmes.
7. While it is recognised that there will always be teething problems with the implementation of new MIS, there might be value in further engagement with Lead Partners on EUMIS and how its functionality could be further improved. This should involve those Lead Partners who deal with a large volume of participants across EU-funded programmes.
8. Evidence requirements for eligibility should take cognisance of the particular target groups and the challenges they might face. This has particular issues for capacity within lead/delivery partners to implement a new programme in light of declining staff resources. More consideration of delivery capacity should be included at the outset.
9. Examples of what worked well: person-centred approach – tailoring support to meet a young person’s specific needs and aspirations; case management/key worker model - building trusted relationships and helping to support sustained engagement; outreach activity; flexibility of provision – having a broad service offer that can meet the needs of different young people; pre employability support plus work trials, experience, placements and internships linked to real employment opportunities; involving employers in the design of specific interventions that build the range of skills and competencies needed to work in particular sectors; wage subsidies (albeit challenges around the paper trail); and ensuring connections into other forms of support.

Appendix A: Stakeholders Consulted

Organisations Consulted	
Ayrshire College	North Ayrshire Council
Colleges Partnership	North Lanarkshire Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council	Renfrewshire Council
East Ayrshire Council	Scottish Funding Council
East Dunbartonshire Council	Scottish Government
Glasgow Clyde College	South Ayrshire Council
Glasgow Kelvin College	South Lanarkshire College
Inverclyde Council	South Lanarkshire Council
Impact Arts	Skills Development Scotland
New College Lanarkshire	West College Scotland
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	West Dunbartonshire Council