

Rapid Evidence Review Recommendations Summary 2026

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-24 AT WORK

A rapid evidence review was completed by Public Health Wales to examine the challenges young people face in accessing, sustaining and progressing in employment, with a particular focus on mental health, wellbeing and wider structural barriers.

The review of available evidence concluded with 16 recommendations to support young people (aged 16-24) at work in Wales.

Recommendations for HWW:

- Develop and promote youth-friendly employer guidance
- Pilot and evaluate multicomponent interventions in Wales
- Co-design guidance and interventions with young people
- Support employers to strengthen retention and progression for young workers
- Act as a bridge between employment and health systems

Recommendations for future research:

- Conduct higher quality, controlled evaluations
- Improve long-term follow up and cost-effectiveness reporting
- Strengthen and standardise wellbeing outcome frameworks
- Improve evidence for disadvantaged subgroups

Recommendations for employers:

- Prioritise multicomponent, personalised interventions
- Strengthen relational and trust building practices
- Integrate mental health support into employment programmes
- Strengthen line-manager capability

Recommendations for policy makers:

- Invest in high-quality evaluation of UK/Wales based programmes
- Improve outcome reporting requirements
- Address structural barriers