

Mr Vaughan Gething MS
Minister for Economy
Welsh Government
5th Floor, Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

21st February 2023

Dear Minister,

I am getting in touch with you to raise a question about the scope of the Young Person's Guarantee, and in particular the changes made to Jobs Growth Wales, now Jobs Growth Wales+. The Young Person's Guarantee is a great initiative and it's really encouraging to see such a joined-up approach between education providers, employers, and policy makers - something we've been calling on the governments across the UK to do. Getting our future workforce into good work, and ensuring we've got the right people with the right skills is critical for growth.

By way of introduction, the [Recruitment & Employment Confederation](#) (REC) is the voice of the recruitment industry, speaking up for great recruiters and representing more than 3,000 businesses, with over 70 Welsh headquartered firms and many more UK-wide businesses trading in Wales. Our sector represents a professional services industry that is bigger in scale than either law or accountancy. Across the UK, our industry places someone into a new permanent role every 21 seconds, and in normal times just under one million people into temporary assignments every day. REC members are advisors and partners with businesses in every sector on recruitment, retention and productivity.

Expand Job Growth Wales+ beyond just 16–18-year olds

Our members are alive to current pressures in the labour market with issues like inactivity exacerbating already high levels of labour and skills shortages. Although much of the focus has been on the over 50s, we know that getting young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) into good work is crucial if we are going to tackle shortages in the longer-term. An ageing workforce, particularly in high shortage sectors and emerging sectors, like green, makes it even more important to support the next generation into those jobs. Although we're at the forefront of placing people in work, shortages have had an impact on every sector, including ours.

There's a role for businesses and governments to play in this, and schemes like the Young Person's Guarantee are a really great example of that and certainly a step in the right direction. However, many of our members in Wales have expressed concern about the changes made to certain schemes, most notably Job Growth Wales. Before the scheme changed in 2021, it supported 16–24-year-olds into work. Many REC members used the scheme regularly, finding great candidates at the beginning of their careers, who have gone on to work in recruitment and build their careers. One member has three permanent staff who were employed via Job Growth Wales.

However, since the scheme has narrowed to focus on 16–18-year-olds only, our members say they're no longer able to make use of it. Many of our members hired young people with a year or two years' experience, often from the retail or hospitality sectors, where just like recruitment, strong communication and interpersonal skills were key. While it won't be necessary for all sectors, recruitment is a people business so having at least some professional experience makes all the difference. Unfortunately, the narrowed focus of the scheme no longer allows for this.

I appreciate there are other employment related schemes available, including apprenticeships for example. However, many of our members, particularly the smaller ones don't have business models that support apprenticeships. Instead, expanding a tried and tested scheme to include a slightly older age group will help support a wider pool of young people, and ensure that every sector can make the most of such an important scheme, without undermining opportunities available for 16-18-year-olds.

If you would like to discuss this in further detail, Ellie in my office (ellie.goddard@rec.uk.com) will be happy to arrange something at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Carberry
Chief Executive