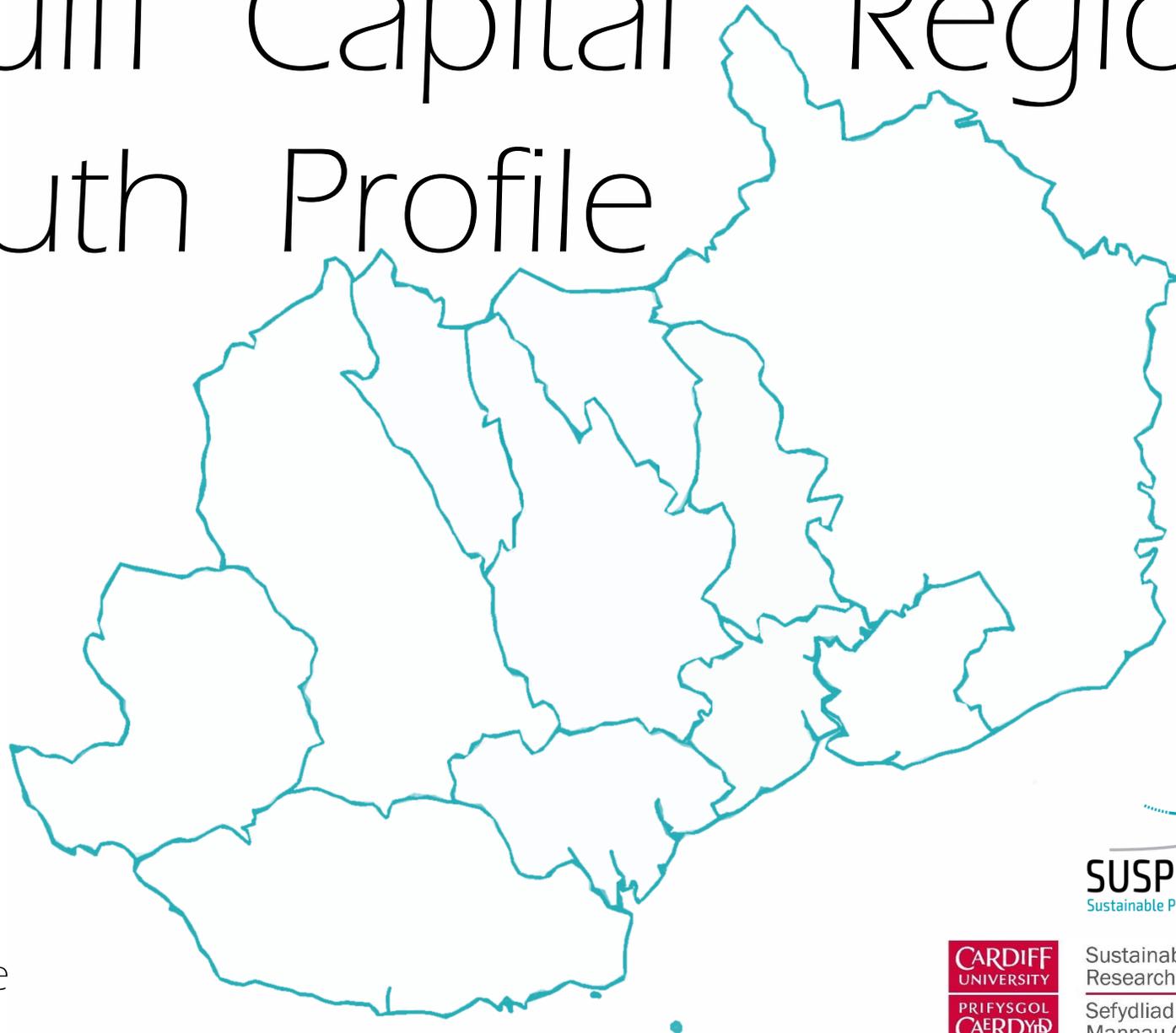


# Cardiff Capital Region Youth Profile



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## THE CASE FOR A REGIONAL YOUTH PROFILE

### CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION AND ITS FUTURE GENERATIONS

This 'Youth Profile' represents an attempt to raise awareness about the future generations of Cardiff Capital Region. The broader research project that it is a part of looks at bringing together the city-region – as an establishment of major importance in the development of South East Wales, and the 'The Well-Being of Future Generations Act'. This innovative piece of legislation represents an extraordinary asset for Wales, marking a significant change of narrative towards inscribing sustainable development at the heart of all public bodies' upcoming choices.

In this sense, the study looks at a specific age group – persons between 16 and 24 – considering that today's youth will be the first one affected by the important decisions currently taken. At the same time, it also intends to make readers conscious that 'future generations' are not a distant and abstract entity; they are here and now, so the directions chosen for developing the city-region should include their values, aspirations, needs and expectations as well.

This is not an exhaustive piece of work. However, the study allows a deeper understanding of general socio-economic characteristics of the young people living in the city-region. Besides the obvious constraints that arise from a quantitative-only analysis, others are caused by the outdated data available (the most recent Census was conducted in 2011, for instance) or even its absence for this particular age group and this particular territory. Several topics deserve to be explored more thoroughly (issues related to everyday mobility, interaction with nature, political engagement or personal relationships – to name a few), and some of them will hopefully emerge in the later stages of the project. For this reason, the current work should be regarded as an on-going project, one that is in the making and will be enhanced as time goes by. Meanwhile, the more complex '[State of the City Region](#)' report (published by Cardiff University's City Region Exchange) can help complementing some of the areas.

The report is part of the [Sustainable City Regions](#) research project, hosted by [SUSPLACE](#) – a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Network funded by the European Commission.

## YOUNG PEOPLE: HOW MANY AND WHERE?



Fig. 1 - Number of young people in each of the ten local authorities forming Cardiff Capital Region, 2016

Cardiff Capital Region hosts more than half of the population aged 16-24 currently living in Wales. This age group represents 12.2% of the city-region's total inhabitants, a fraction that is higher than the averages in Wales and in the United Kingdom.

Among the ten local authorities, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly host the highest number, accounting for almost 60% of the total.

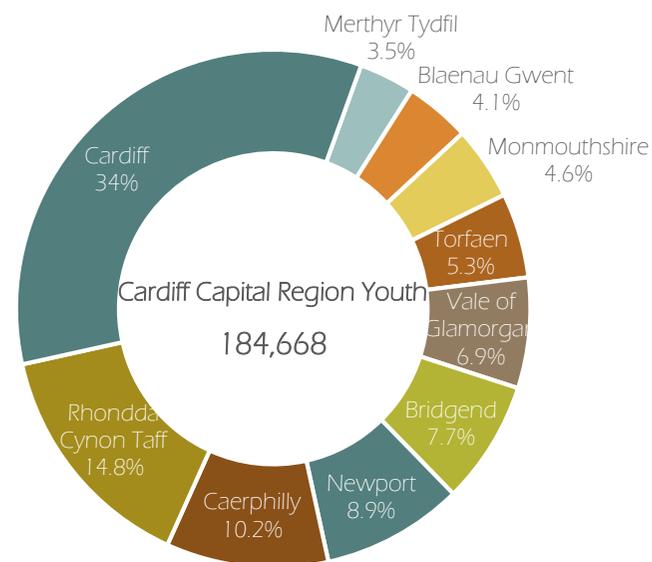


Fig. 2 - Proportion of young people in each local authority, out of total youth in CCR, 2016

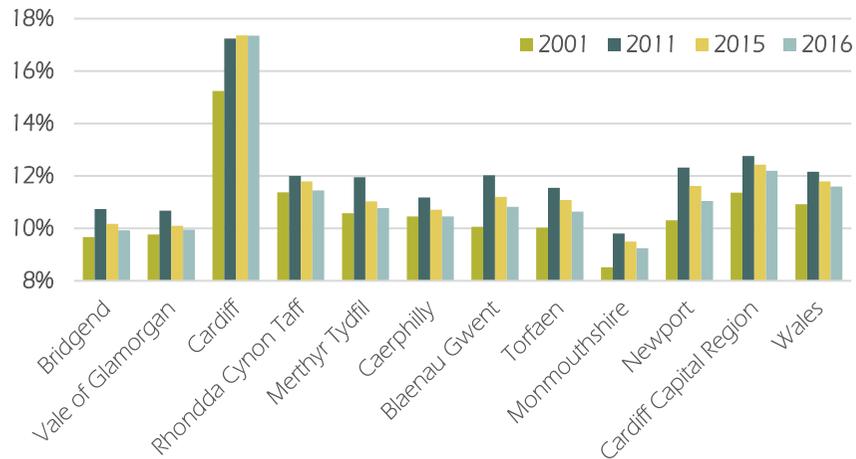


Fig. 3 - Proportion of young people out of total population

In terms of overall population growth, all local authorities have experienced positive rates between 2001 and 2015, with the sole exception of Blaenau Gwent where the population declined. However, examining the evolution of the youth group in particular shows interesting trends. Although the proportion of youth was still higher in 2015 than in 2001, all local authorities except for Cardiff have lost a part of their younger inhabitants between 2011 and mid-2016. Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent seem to have been affected the most.

The latest 'Cardiff Liveable City Report' states that Cardiff is one of the fastest growing core cities in the UK, while the version published in 2015 mentioned that the capital city was considered 'the best city for young people in Britain' (Cardiff Public Services Board, 2015). Indeed, the overall population projections show that the capital city will gain almost 50,000 new inhabitants by 2025, half of the total number expected at city-regional level.

Among the ten local authorities, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire are the only places where the total number of inhabitants is estimated to decline.

Nonetheless, looking specifically at the young residents, the projections are very different. All local authorities are expected to see their youth numbers declining, but rates range from -0.7% in Newport to -23.6% in Blaenau Gwent. Along with the latter, Monmouthshire and Torfaen will also be changing considerably.

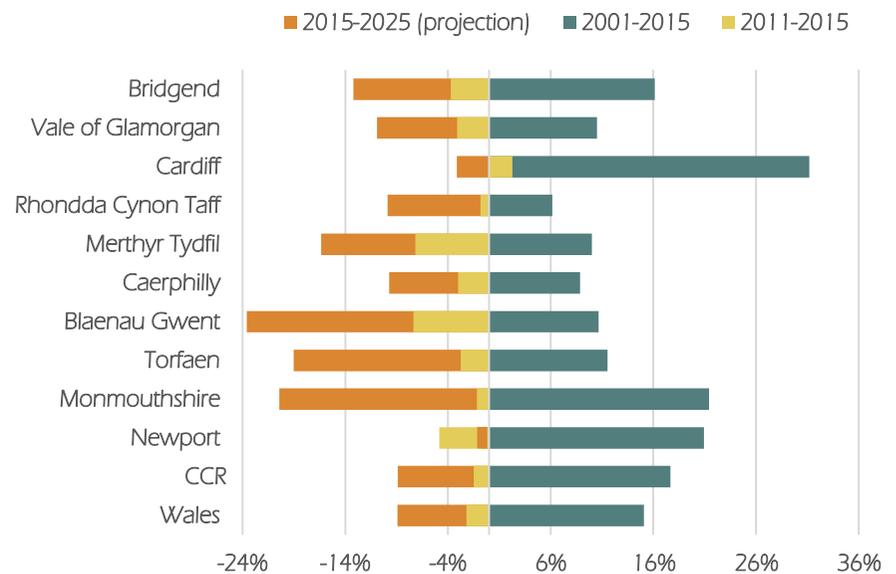


Fig. 4 - Percentage change in young population, actual and projected

At city-regional level, the population pyramid shows a relatively equal distribution among age groups up to 74 years, and smaller percentages of people over 75. Women outnumber men in these categories, determining a slightly unequal gender distribution.

Overall, the youth (16-24) is well represented and the group 20-24 is actually the largest one in the city-region. This situation is influenced by Cardiff, the only local authority where this particular age group is considerably higher than all the others are. This is probably due to the large number of university students the capital city accommodates. On the other hand, Monmouthshire stands out by showing an ageing population and significantly smaller number of adults aged 25-39.

It is important to mention that the graphic representation can be misleading for the 16-19 age cohort. This would normally be 15-19 (following the 5 year intervals), yet for the current research persons aged 15 were included in the category below.

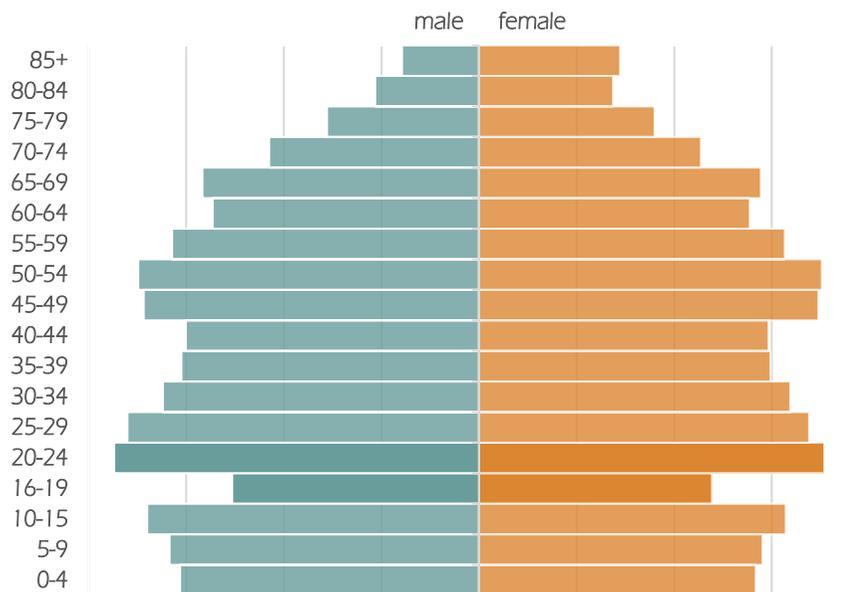


Fig. 5 - Cardiff Capital Region population pyramid, 2016

## HOW DIVERSE AND HOW MOBILE?

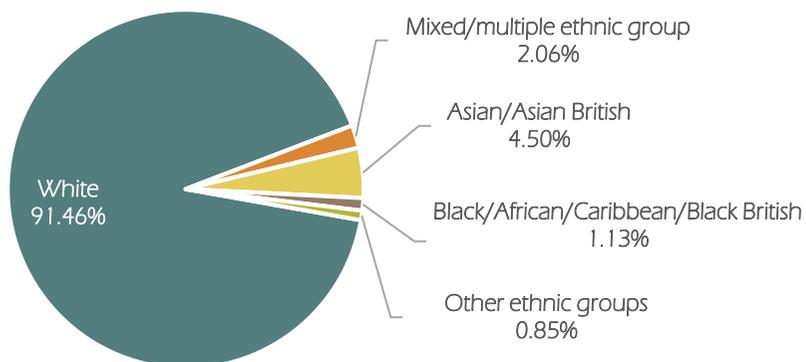


Fig. 6 - Proportion of ethnic groups among the CCR's youth, 2011

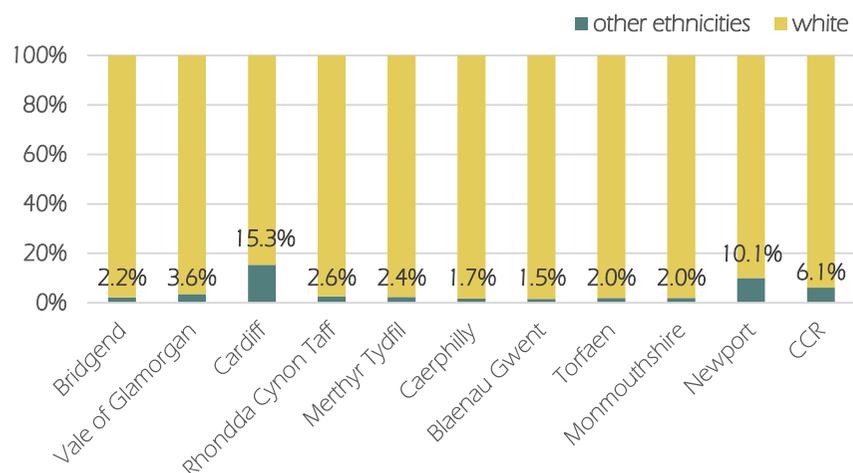


Fig. 7 Ethnic diversity among young people, 2011

Cardiff Capital Region's youth is slightly more ethnically diverse than the city-region's overall population yet levels are very different across the local authorities and are highly influenced by Cardiff and Newport.

In terms of migration within the UK, the CCR shows a positive net migration rate (and so does Wales), both for the overall population and the 16-24 group. Yet again, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport influence these levels, as places where the number of young people entering is higher than the number of those leaving. Actually, RCT and Newport are interesting cases since they seem to attract young people, despite losing other age groups. A counter example is Bridgend where the overall net migration is positive, while for youth is negative.

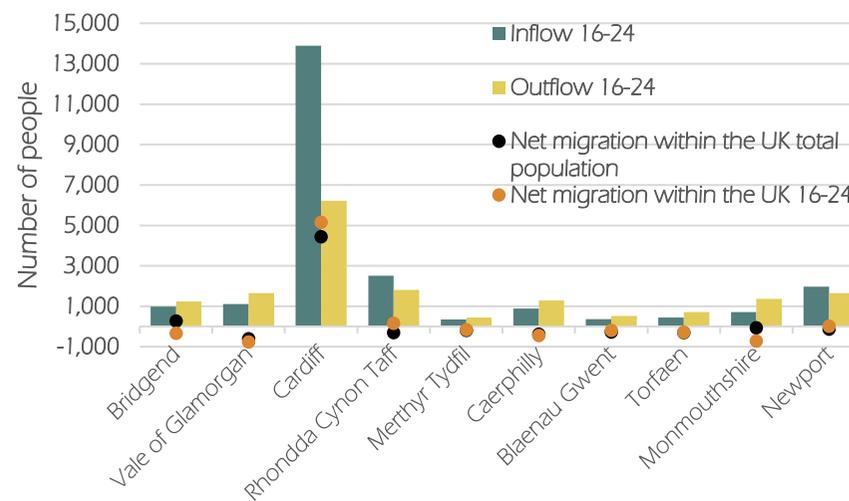


Fig. 8 - Migration of people aged 16-24 within the UK, 2011

## HOW QUALIFIED AND HOW ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE?

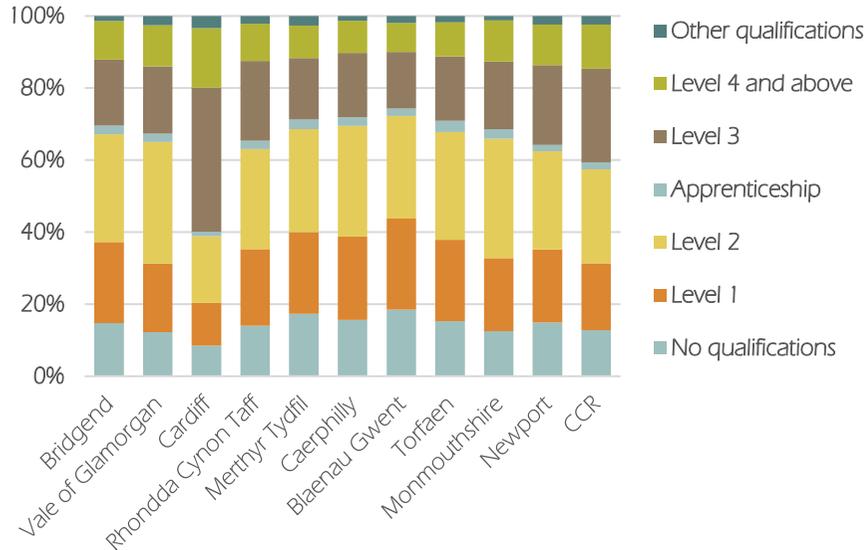


Fig. 9 - Highest level of qualification by age (16-24), 2011

As expected for this age group, Levels 2 and 3 are most common among Cardiff Capital Region's youth qualifications. Two surprising results are the very low rate of apprenticeship (2%) and the relatively high number of persons without any qualifications (12%, almost 1% higher than the Welsh average).

Being a university city, Cardiff has the highest rate of Level 4 qualifications and above (16.5%) and the lowest for no qualifications (8.5%). Simultaneously, Cardiff has the smallest percentage of young people having any Welsh language skills (17.8%), as opposed to Rhondda Cynon Taff where the rate was 25.7% in 2011. At city-regional level, 20.8% of people aged 16-24 have Welsh language skills, slightly more than the overall population where the rate is 19.1%.

The only data available at local authority level regarding young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) comes from the Careers Wales pupil destinations survey. Looking at the past five years, the progress made throughout Wales is considerable.

However, the definitive source for this information is the annual Statistical First Release (SFR), 'Participation of young people in education and the labour market'. This shows much higher rates, yet a continuing downward trend: from 11% (in 2012) to 10.4% (in 2016) for people aged 16-18 and from 23% to 18.5% for the 19-24 in NEET in Wales.

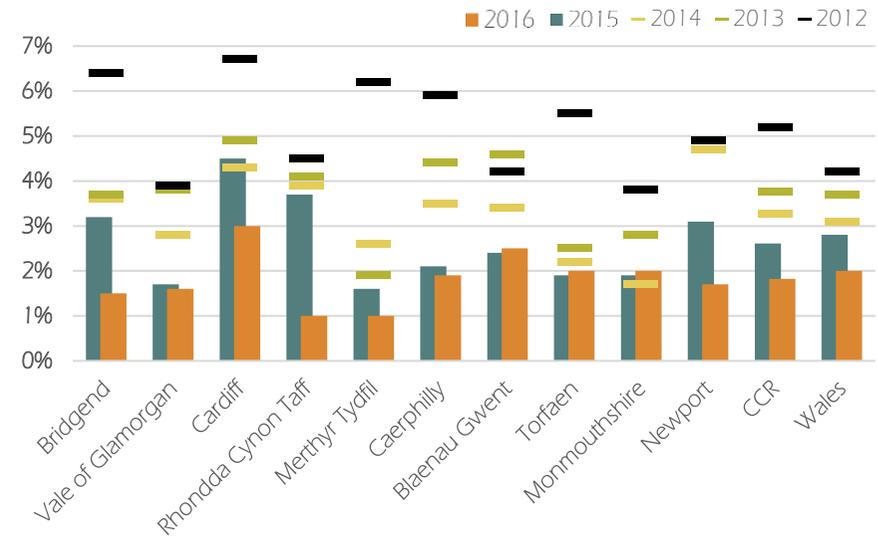


Fig. 10 - Year 11 Leavers from schools known to be not in education, employment or training (NEET), 2017

In terms of unemployment benefits, it was useful to look specifically at persons between 18 and 24 since the levels for the two other years mitigated the results. Thus, in December 2016 there were over 2000 people aged 18-24 receiving jobseeker's allowance. This is the equivalent of 1.5% of the total population in this age group.

Merthyr Tydfil (1.5%), Caerphilly (1.5%) and Blaenau Gwent (2%) are the local authorities where the rate is the highest, following the same trends for the total active population (aged 16-64). Although in all local authorities the number of youth receiving JSA is smaller than compared to the rate for the entire active population, the claimant count shows a different reality.

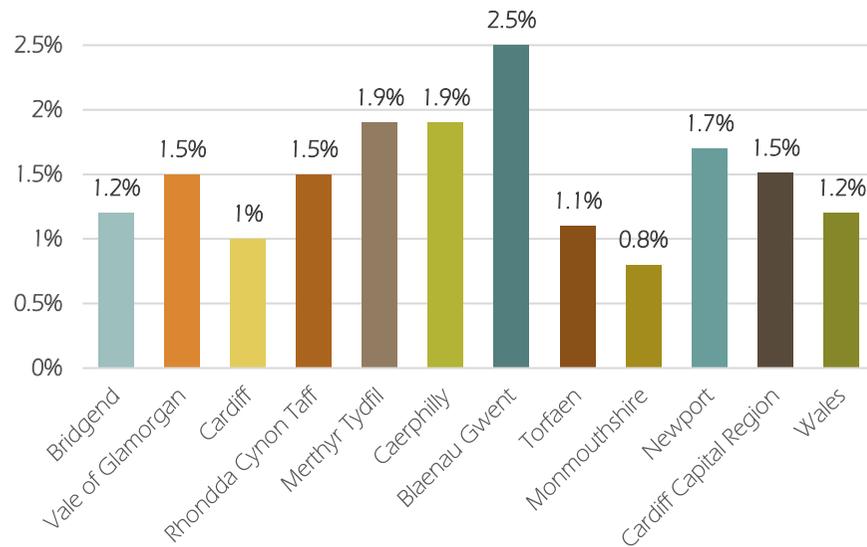


Fig. 11 - Jobseeker's allowance rates (18-24), December 2016

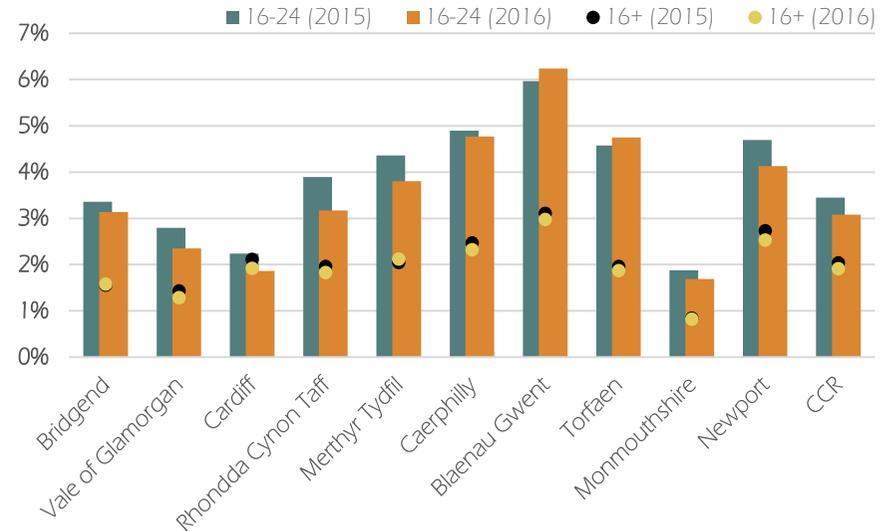


Fig. 12 - Percentage of claimants out of total age group

The claimant count is representative of all people who received benefits for reasons of unemployment, including both JSA and Universal Credit claimants. For all persons over 16, the percentage has either decreased or stayed the same in 2016 compared to 2015, with the sole exception of Merthyr Tydfil.

On the other hand, Merthyr Tydfil, along with RCT and Newport, has seen a substantial drop in the percentage of young people claiming benefits. In contrast, the rates have increased in Blaenau Gwent (by 0.3%) and Torfaen (by 0.2%) for people aged 16-24, despite a small decrease for the overall population.

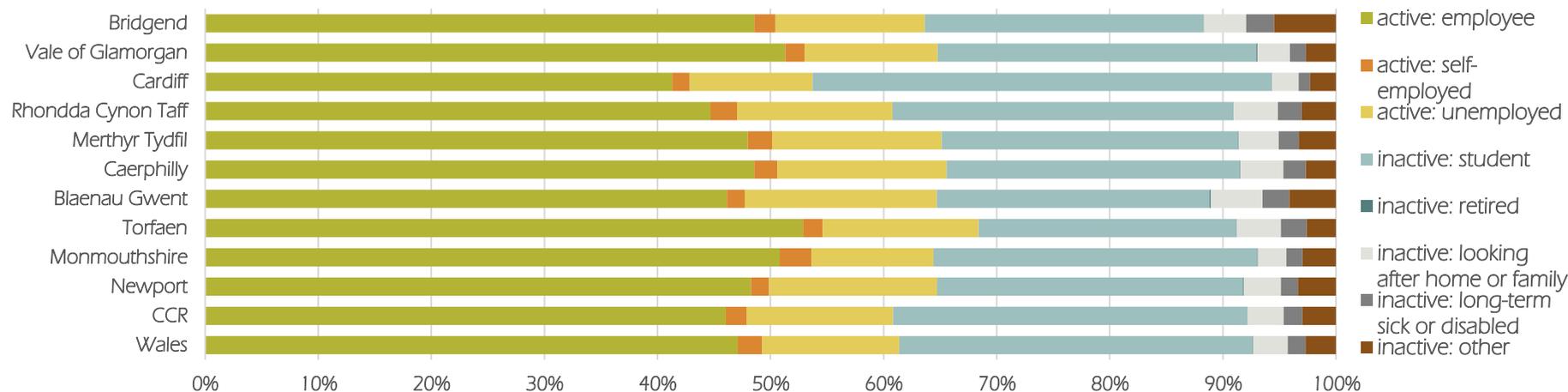


Fig. 13 - Economic activity among young people, 2011

In Cardiff Capital Region, more than 60% of the young people were economically active in 2011. Out of them, almost 79% were in employment, with only 3.9% self-employed, showing a relatively small rate of entrepreneurship. Students account for more than 31% of the city-region's overall young population – nearly 80% of the inactive one.

Looking at individual local authorities, Cardiff is in many cases an outlier because of the large number of students. Only 53.7% of the 16-24 declared to be economically active, whereas 40.6% economically inactive students. This is very different from Torfaen for instance, where 68.4% were economically active and only 22.7% students.

Youth unemployment (the proportion of the economically active population who is unemployed) was highest in Blaenau Gwent, with a rate of 26.3%, followed by Merthyr Tydfil and Newport. This is probably not surprising since these are also the local authorities where unemployment rates for all ages are the highest.

Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent, together with Torfaen and Bridgend are the local authorities where long-term sickness or disabilities are important reasons for the youth's economic inactivity. Their rates are approximately three times bigger than in Cardiff (2.2%).

On the contrary, Monmouthshire shows the lowest unemployment rate at 16.7%. Interestingly, Monmouthshire is also the place where the self-employment rate is the highest in CCR: 5.3% for youth and 19% for all ages. This is probably following a general trend in the UK where a lack of opportunities on the job market, combined with the need for more flexibility, as well as the technological advance that allows working from distance, determine more and more people to become self-employed (Careers Wales, n.d.).

## HOW WELL IN TERMS OF DEPRIVATION?

The Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation is useful for exploring relative deprivation in small areas of Wales, using a combination of domains such as income, employment, education, health, etc. Unfortunately, not all indicators are available for particular age groups, so a mix of sources were used for a deeper analysis. The 'State of the City Region' has already shown that 65% of the most deprived communities in Wales are in the Cardiff Capital Region (City Region Exchange, 2017), while the 'Area Analysis of Child Deprivation' (Welsh Government, 2015) painted an equally undesirable reality, at least for Cardiff, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

Income deprivation, for which data is disaggregated, shows important variations. At CCR level, the rate of income-deprived population is 17.8%, higher than the Welsh average (16%). However, there are significant differences between the ten local authorities, ranging from Monmouthshire (11%) to Blaenau Gwent (22%).

Looking specifically at the youth group, the situation is worse for the CCR (19.5%) compared to the Welsh average (17%). In all local authorities except for Cardiff, the young people seem to be more income-deprived than the overall population. However, there is a big discrepancy between the 16-18 (23% income deprived) and 19-24 (8%) living in the capital city.

Significant differences between the overall population and the young generations exist in Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly and Torfaen where the youth is 3% more deprived than the all ages category. Newport seems to have the most stable proportions when comparing youth with the entire population, yet this average hides a significant discrepancy between the 16-18 and 19-24 split, by almost 10%.

The highest levels of youth income deprivation are in Blaenau Gwent with 29% for the 16-18 and 20% for the 19-24.

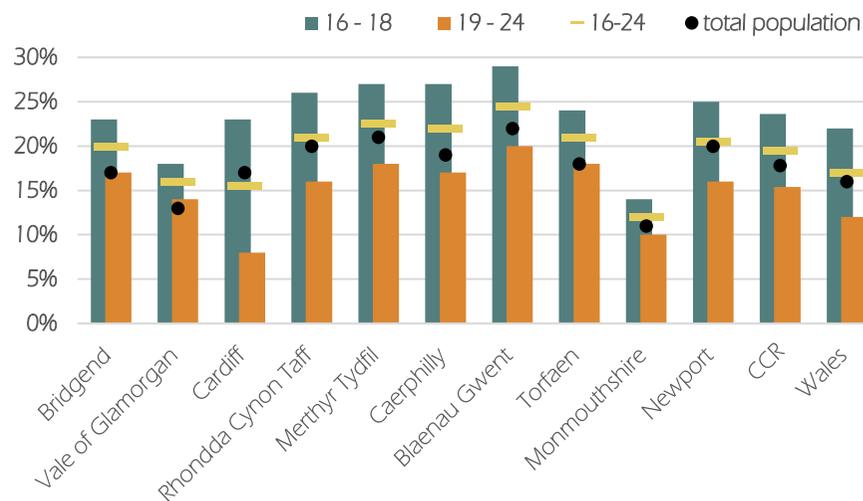


Fig. 14 - Income deprivation, WIMD 2014

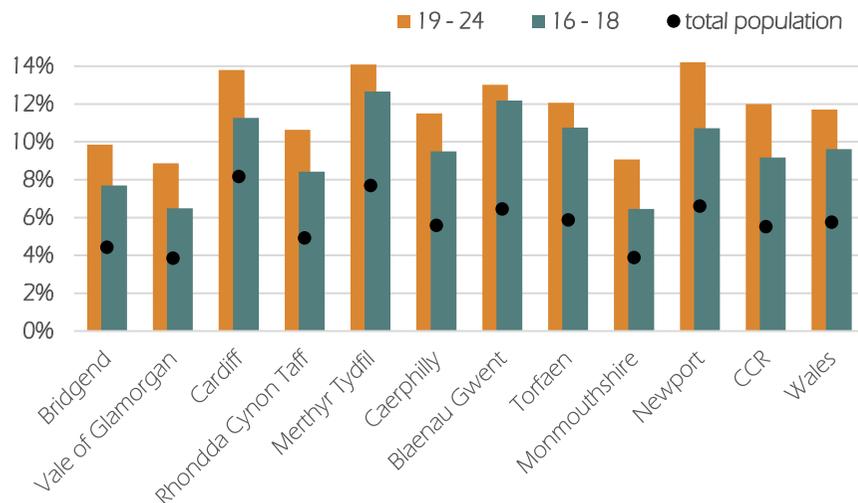


Fig. 15 - People living in overcrowded households, WIMD 2014

Housing, another domain calculated in the WIMD, is interesting because the two indicators used show conflicting patterns when disaggregated.

In terms of overcrowded households, the average for Cardiff Capital Region is similar to the Welsh one for the total population. However, among local authorities, Cardiff stands out having the biggest proportion (8.2%), followed by Merthyr Tydfil and Newport. This could be explained by the general tendency of smaller households in more urbanised, compact cities.

Looking separately at the youth group, the situation seems to be worse, rates being 4-6% higher than for the entire population. Merthyr Tydfil (13.4%) and Blaenau Gwent (12.6%) have the highest proportions, followed by Newport and Cardiff.

As opposed to this indicator, there are fewer people living in households with no central heating in CCR compared to Wales. Similarly, although differences are small, levels for young people are also generally smaller in all ten local authorities.

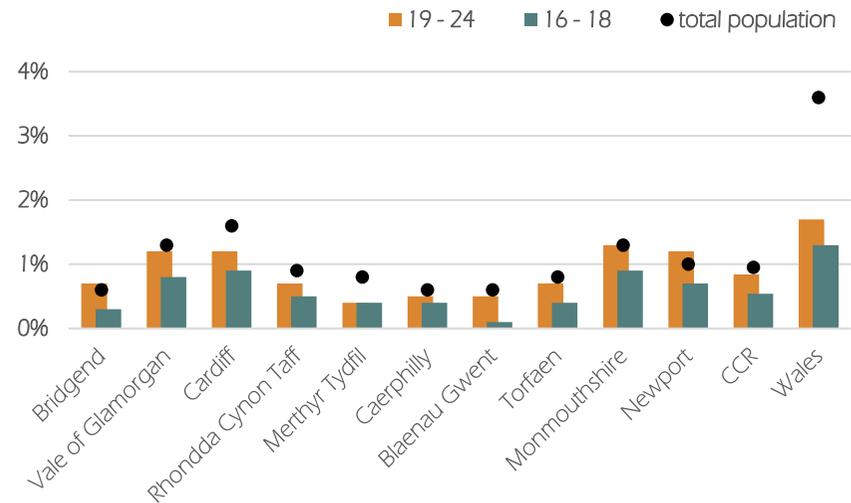


Fig. 16 - People living in households with no central heating, WIMD 2014

## HOW WELL IN TERMS OF HEALTH?

Health self-assessment can be an indicator for general wellbeing and health-related quality of life (ONS, 2013). In Cardiff Capital Region, on average, only 6.5% of young people declared their health level as fair or poor, compared to 22% of the entire population aged 16+. Nonetheless, both age categories overpass the Welsh averages of 6% for 16-24 and 20% for the entire population.

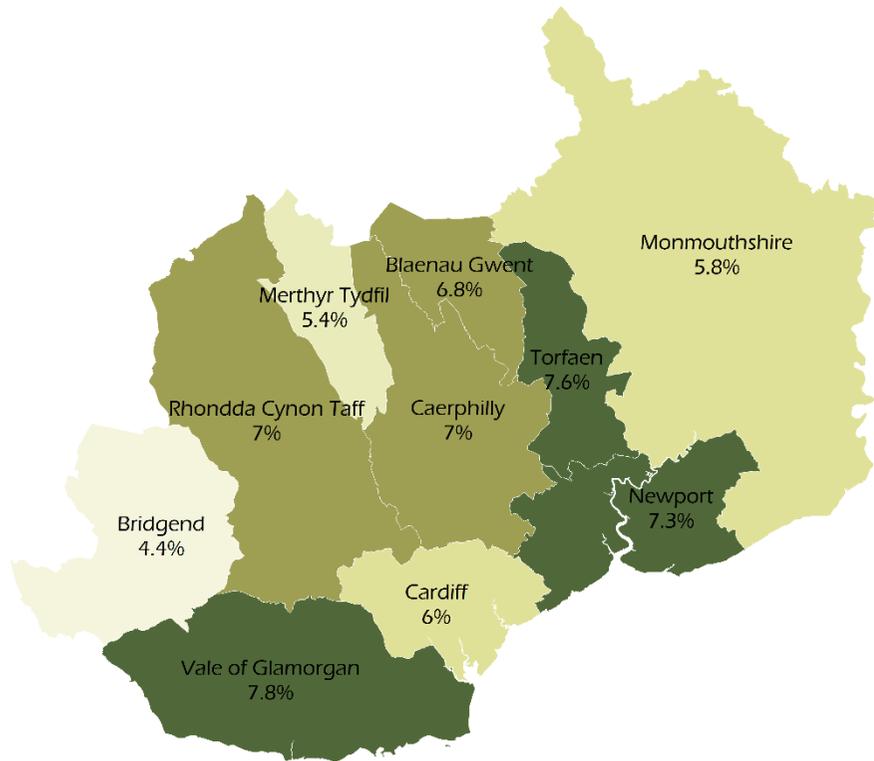


Fig. 17 - Proportion of young people with fair/poor self-rated general health, 2008-2015

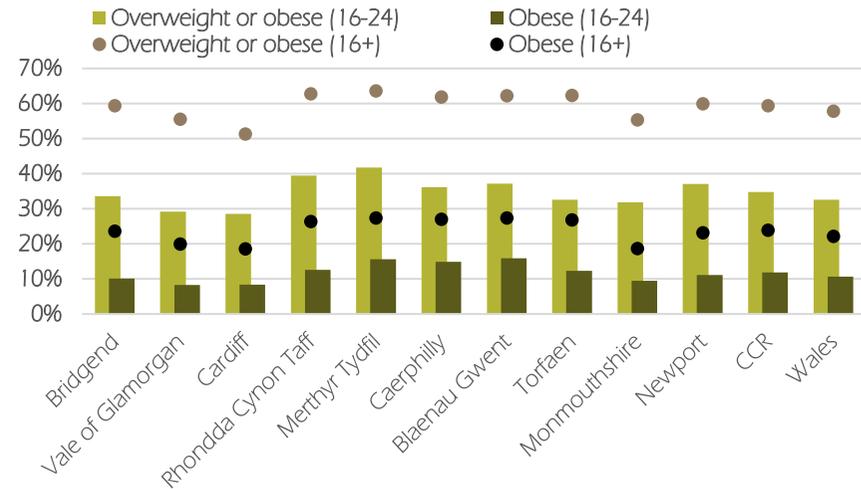


Fig. 18 - Proportion of overweight (BMI +25) and obese (BMI +30) persons, 2008-2015

An unhealthy weight is often perceived as an outcome of poor diet and exercise. Yet, studies have shown that the UK is generally characterised by an 'obesogenic environment', one that encourages people to eat unhealthily and discourages them from doing physical movement (Government Office for Science, 2007). This is an important mind-set shift, showing that tackling obesity (and often numerous other health issues) requires interventions at multiple levels, including changes in the built environment.

While the situation is worrying overall, with at least half of adults being overweight and minimum 18.5% obese, levels for young people are to some extent lower. Merthyr Tydfil has the highest proportion of overweight or obese youth, while Blaenau Gwent has most obese young persons. On the other hand, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have the lowest levels for both categories.

Knowing these problems, it is maybe less surprising that almost 23% of the city-region's youth has not been physically active for at least 30 minutes on any of the days of the week before the poll. Similarly, only 28.6% have been active on five or more days. Nonetheless, although not visible in the figure, young people are doing better in both cases when compared to the entire adult population.

In terms of nutrition, levels for young people in the CCR show that only over a quarter eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetable, compared to 31.2% of all adults (16+). It is interesting to observe that in this respect Cardiff stands out, with almost 35% of the young people meeting the nutritional recommendation. This could be related to higher health awareness, as well as more options, better services and accessibility to healthy food.

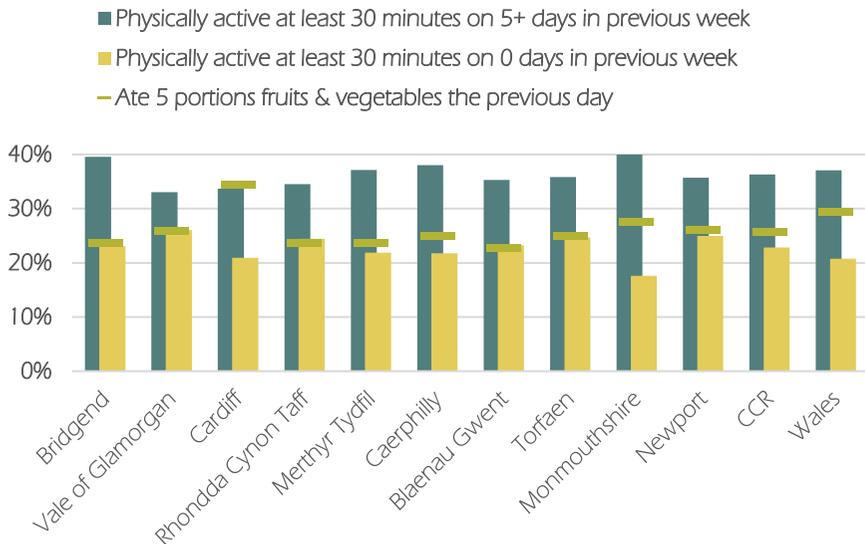


Fig. 19 - Physical activity and diet among youth, 2008-2015

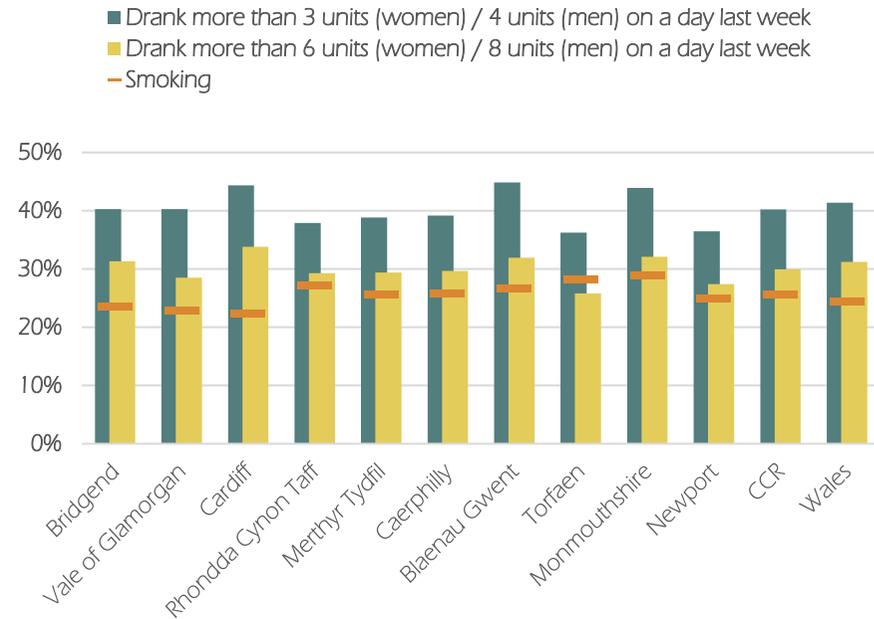


Fig. 20 - Drinking and smoking levels for youth, 2008-2015

Alcohol consumption levels seem to be slightly smaller in the city-region as compared to the Welsh average for youth. Nonetheless, in 7 out of 10 local authorities, more than 40% of respondents had consumed more than 3 or 4 units of alcohol in a day during the previous week. Similarly, more than 25% of all young people in each of the local authority had drunk more than 6 or 8 units of alcohol.

On the other hand, smoking levels surpass the Welsh average, varying from 22.3% in Cardiff to 29% in Monmouthshire.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Although it is important to consider all inhabitants when planning the development of Cardiff Capital Region, looking specifically at the youth group has shown interesting results.

- Cardiff Capital Region hosts **more than 50% of all young people** in Wales. However, the number of persons aged 16-24 has started decreasing since 2011, both in Wales and in CCR, despite an increase in the total number of inhabitants. This downward trend is expected to continue in the next 10 years and might turn into a substantial problem for the labour force.
- There are **significant demographic differences across the ten local authorities** as some of them seem more attractive for young people between 16 and 24. This is probably because of the better living, studying and working conditions, as well as the proximity to Cardiff. Nonetheless, previous studies have shown that overall, Wales is characterised by low graduate retention rates caused by more attractive employment opportunities elsewhere (Bristow, Pill, Davies, & Drinkwater, 2011).
- **Only two local authorities seem ethnically diverse**, and without confusing ethnicity and nationality, this can be a sign that the others are less attractive, open or inclusive for newcomers.
- **Migration levels** show a positive inflow only in Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport which could mean that the others do not provide sufficient pull factors, for instance in terms of housing options, employment/education prospects or leisure opportunities.
- The levels of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continue to decrease, yet **youth unemployment** and the associated high levels of deprivation are serious challenges for the entire city-region. Failing to address them will turn into another reason for young people to leave to other regions or countries that offer better work opportunities.
- **Unhealthy lifestyles** are not only determined by personal choices, but also by the surrounding environment. It is crucial, thus, to support physical activity, healthy eating and emotional well-being both through 'soft strategies' such as information campaigns, as well as through alterations in the built space to accommodate healthy behaviours.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## FIGURE SOURCES

Fig. 1 - Welsh Government. (2017). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2016.

Fig. 2 - Welsh Government. (2017). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2016.

Fig. 3 - ONS. (2001). Census of population.; ONS. (2011). Census of population.; Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015; Welsh Government. (2017). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2016.

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Fig. 6 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 7 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 8 - ONS. (2015). Internal migration, England and Wales: Year ending June 2014.

Fig. 9 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 10 - Welsh Government. (2017). Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Year to 31 March 2017).

Fig. 11 - ONS. (2016). Claimant count by sex and age.

Fig. 12 - ONS. (2016). Claimant count by sex and age.; ONS. (2017). Claimant count by sex and age.

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Fig. 14 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 15 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 16 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 17 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 18 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 19 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 20 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.