

## **Podcast Transcript: Series 1-Is that an option? Episode 4-Was it heaven for Year 11?**

### **Betsan Powys:**

Welcome to is that an option and after today's GCSE results will be thousands of young people and parents from one end of Wales to the other grappling with decisions about the options now open to them. Congratulations to everyone who's proud of their results and good luck to those who want to have another shot at a subject or two come resits later this year but to those studying for BTECs via Pearson the wait goes on after an 11th hour announcement of cheques to ensure fair outcomes all round. This really has turned out to be the story that keeps on giving.

So, what about our families and our young people as I know think of them. Well, we heard in the last episode from 3 pupils and three mums who were all waiting pretty anxiously for their results. Since then of course we all heard that standardisation or moderation is out and teacher assessments in.

Well you only have to hear a word or two from Poppy and her mum Emma to guess how things turned out for Poppy.

### **Poppy:**

I'm very very happy with them. I got 11 A stars, an A and then a distinction in additional maths which I am so happy about.

### **Betsan:**

I'm not surprised that's fantastic news that's fantastic and after so many weeks of worrying it must feel even better.

### **Poppy:**

It does there is such a build up before like I've literally I've been struggling to sleep all week and I've been getting dreams about what I'm going to get and you see it on the news and on social media and it's just it was it's been quite scary actually like 'very end curtain' so it's such a relief now.

### **Betsan:**

And mum, I was thinking of asking you both really whether there was any feeling of slight anti-climax because there hadn't been exams and moderation has been removed but I'm sensing quite clearly but there's no feeling of anti-climax whatsoever in your house.

### **Emma:**

Absolutely not and you know I was thinking about this overnight and in Wales obviously the children get to sit different modules for their GCSEs, so you know this time last year we were picking up sort of half GCSE's so Poppy did her maths before Christmas so I do feel that she's worked for them all and her coursework had been in and it had been moderated, she's done the practical in Science the only thing that she didn't do was sit those final bits of exams so I really do feel as though she has earned those grades.

### **Betsan:**

And poppy do sense that these results are going to stand the test of time you know there will be some people who say 'Oh well it's the year of COVID and it's been very difficult for them all through

the summer but all they had an easy ride in the end from your point of view explained to those people what it really feels like for you?

**Poppy:**

I very much hope it lasts the test of time because for me personally can you start working for your GCSE in year nine properly an all throughout high school and it's always in the back of your mind you know I've been making revision notes since the start of September this year and then I start half of my GCSCe's in year 10 and I sat my maths early in November so I have really been working very hard for this all throughout my high school experience and as well I think given the year it has just been absolutely mental like I think these results almost worth a little bit more because they almost like 'well done you've you know survived the year' and you know, now you have to go back to normality and get your results and I think that's really quite special and so I think these results quite a big weight to them

**Betsan:**

And so what's next? I mean you're certainly not going to have to reconsider anything with 11 A stars and an A and a distinction in further maths, So what next what are your thoughts now?

**Poppy:**

Well I'm hoping to stay at my school for six form And yeah I'm very fortunate that I don't have to have resist any GCSE so that I'm not in kind of a position of panic now and I feel really lucky about that.

**Betsan:**

And remind us what the big plan is now for the next two years and beyond?

**Poppy:**

I want to go to Oxford hopefully and study either law or politics and then my big goal is to work internationally with charities.

**Betsan:**

And so Emma, with big goals like that and competitive courses at Oxford that Poppy is aiming for them at least - what about the sixth form? Are you concerned at all about how things are going to pan out in the sixth form? There are going to be large classes because with teacher predictions the results are going to be up, so what are your thoughts about the next year or so for Poppy?

**Emma:**

I am excited do sixth form I from my own experience I hope that Poppy realises the shift levels are obviously very, very different from GCSEs and she's you know she's going to do 4 plus the Welsh Baccalaureate so there's going to be a lot of work.

The class sizes traditionally in the six form that Poppy will be going there usually small so I'm not too worried about them being overcrowded or overwhelmed and yeah I'm not too bothered about that at all to be honest with you. I think it'll be fine and she's in a great school and they're really great at individual help you know helping kids as they need it it's not mass teaching if that makes sense.

**Betsan:**

And before we asked experts advice, it's about that advice as mum what advice are you giving Poppy?

**Emma:**

Don't underestimate the amount of work that A levels are. They are the hardest exams you'll ever take

**Betsan:**

Whoa Poppy, what do you make of that?

**Poppy:**

I mean I like to think that I'm quite a hard working person and I guess it's just another challenge isn't it and you kind of have to take it as head on as possible to be able to you know, really see your own potential and I'm hoping in A levels I'm going to stop underestimating myself that's my plan and you know I really want to push myself then for my school as well because like my mum said I'm very fortunate I go to a school where all my teachers are so supportive and so thoughtful. So I really want to do well for them too so I'm very willing to put the hard work in.

**Emma:**

I would say as well you know for Poppy just to keep being her you know as well as working really hard in school she is generous, she's kind, she charitable and you know and just keep doing what you are doing kiddo.

**Poppy:**

Thanks

**Emma:**

And I feel like you will save the world eventually

**Poppy:**

Thank you

**Betsan:**

Yes congratulations to Poppy who clearly knows where she's headed and what she needs to do to get there, and another daughter and mother team who knew exactly what was needed to get to college to study were Catrin Isaacs and her daughter Marie.

Marie really wanted to excel in Health and Social care and was a bit worried about maths and let's face it, it had been a pretty worrying time for year 11 pupils everywhere so how did it go?

**Catrin:**

They have gone well actually we are pleased with what she's got she's got what she needed to get into college. She's done better than we thought actually for Health and Social which is even better because that's obviously where she wants to go next. She had a really good result for that but I'll let her tell you.

Yeah everything's gone well, really well this morning. I think there was a little bit of uncertainty obviously because the BTECs could possibly go up. I mean the result she's had anyway for them have

come through really well because obviously we had the news this morning that the BTECs weren't going to change and then they were going to change and so but I mean even if they did go up slightly great if they didn't she's done fantastically well for them anyway and actually with the Health and social she won't be able to get any higher anyway so and really well.

**Betsan:**

So, for you really uncertainty has lasted until the very, very last moment hasn't it? So how has Marie do you feel coped with all of that?

**Catrin:**

I think it was the uncertainty was until obviously the Welsh government announced that they were going to allow the centre assessment grades. Once that had happened I think we all sort of felt a lot more confident because we had a lot of confidence in what her teachers had would have put forward they've always been you know we will be going to parents evenings and had results back from school and stuff so we've known whereabouts she was on track for and they are very similar results to what we sort of expected really which is great. Whether or not she might have done a little better had she done the exams, there's the possibility but then whether she might have done a little bit worse you know you never know really ever going to do on the day. So yeah it did last the very last minute and then clearly then this morning waking up to the news that the BTECs decided that they would accept assessment centre grades for them so they may be a possibility of changing again you know it was all a bit uncertain this morning what she was actually going to get on a piece of paper but like I said since no word that the Welsh government were going to change it to the assessment centre grades, that has made us a lot more confident in what she was going to get.

**Betsan:**

So relief really does seem important thing is needed Marie can go on and do what she had planned to do, but let me just ask you I've already heard some people saying ah well teacher assessed grades yeah they had a horrible summer however there's an awful lot of A stars and A's and B's around and you know the higher end of the grades and you concerned that the results just won't be given the same kudos or they won't stand the test of time in the same way?

**Catrin:**

I mean no not really at all to be honest I think that what Marie has had is a really fair reflection of her grade so, for example, she hasn't had all A\* and A's in fact you know she's had a D in maths which is what we fully expected all the way along and her performance standard in with mocks, with in internal assessments and things so that it really hasn't been unexpected the result she had. Like I said they I think they are quite a fair reflection. I think that would be a unfair judgement really. The pupils have worked really hard throughout year 10 and year 11 especially in year 11 the push towards getting to was that big build up actually happening right the way towards the end of lockdown. Even as we were entering lockdown the expectation was that you will still be sitting your exams so you still need to carry on with your school work and that's what's been taken into consideration by teachers as well. So and you know they've got the next step as well coming up which is either further education or college or going into work and these grades they are just a stepping stone on to the next bit. Whatever happens after that that tends to be the thing that they will get reflected on then for future jobs and future progression so this is a small part of it of the big part obviously but you know in future this is not going to be as big of a sort of thing I suppose in

trying to say you know in comparison to what she could achieve then in the future. But it is incredibly important now to get on to the next step.

**Betsan:**

As you say she's made it through all of this good job Marie she's made it exactly where she wanted to go and she knows now what to expect although as you were saying still some questions around how the course will run. So as she moves on now Catrin, we will hear from experts and they have also to views about what these young people ought to be thinking about but as her mum who must be very proud of her today at what's your advice to Marie?

**Catrin:**

She's learned a few lessons actually I think from the experience which is how invaluable it is to actually work hard throughout your education rather than just sort of like wait till the end and try to do your best then as well. So that would be the bit of advice had been give her which is what I've been saying throughout just do your best throughout don't just wait until last minute keep on at it throughout because there's a little bit of uncertainty as well for this next year going forwards and that's the main way that she should be able to protect herself and making sure she's getting she gets the best possible marks next year by putting in as much effort as she can from the start which I know from talking to her and seeing what she's doing now she's already doing her college work and ready and prepared for September.

**Betsan:**

So Marie, we have dragged you from the phone to your grandmother sharing your news so come on tell us what results did you get?

**Marie:**

Fair to say it I'm pretty happy with my results. The only two results that I was like not I wasn't disappointed with them because I knew I was going to get them like it was obviously is going to get them for like I kind of had like this little hope that I might have got a little bit higher but it was my science and my maths. like There is no way I could have got any higher in my science even if I did do the exams, but the maths I could have upped my grade which is the only thing that I'm a little bit disappointed with but I can retake that this year so that's fine. Then I've got an A\* in health and social which I am over the moon with because that means that I can get onto my college course, do level three and there can't be any questions about it and even though I'm doing my maths alongside with it, they know there I could cope with the work. Child development I got an A, hospitality and catering it was a B, A\* in Welsh, R.E I passed with a C. I'm over the moon with a lot of my results and I think that there was very fair like there was some people who like got higher than what they thought they was going to get but it shows in their results like that they could have done it so I think a lot of people are very happy, especially kids in my area as well cause we was all quite nervous after seeing the A level results.

**Betsan:**

Well listen congratulations and fantastic results in the subject that you want to take on and which is really good news and your mum was saying you've had quite a week all in all not just worrying about your results but am I right in thinking that you've got a part time job as well?

**Marie:**

Yes I've managed to get myself a job in the chip shop that's down the street from me and I've been going in there well for about four hours this week and I've been really enjoying myself. I've tried so hard for the last month to get a job.

**Betsan:**

Well it sounds as though the summers looking up then doesn't it, what with the results and the chance of a of a part time job earning some money as well. So from all of this and there's been a lot of this- which is uncertainty over the summer for your year for years 10 through to year 13 really. What have you learned from it all and what advice would you give those pupils will be going through exactly what you've gone through this year in terms of the exams they are facing next year?

**Marie:**

Put your hardest and please don't think you can get away with it at the end of the thing because you really can't. I wish I tried so much harder in maths throughout the last two years because I didn't and if I had I probably would have got the C that I wanted to get today but I didn't get it because in year 10 maths I used to try and like get away with stuff that I probably shouldn't have tried to get away with and definitely talked way too much in maths for me to get the results I want. So if you don't want to see a D on your on your exam results next year please just put in a little bit more effort, not saying don't talk in maths yeah but just put in the slight bit more effort cause it will go that long way.

**Betsan:**

So have a little chat in maths but then put in some effort I think that's very, very good advice and very honest of you and then for your own course, excited about that and what's coming up ?

**Marie:**

Yeah I'm very excited am I the fact their got an A\* in health and social just shows that I've is a lot of work but I can do it and if I can do it that makes me feel so much better. And this morning I've opened them and my mum has checked for me because I didn't see their health and social marks I thought it would be coming out later and then she was like you've got an A star in health and social and I just completely changed my whole mood on my results because that's the one thing that I wanted to see and I got it and that's what I really wanted.

**Betsan:**

Fantastic advice from Marie there, some talking is okay but then work. And good luck in her maths resit; she sounds like a girl on a mission. And finally, Imogen and her mother Catherine Gilmore. They've been glad that when we last spoke the Welsh government was holding its ground and sounding keen not to scrap moderation and rely instead on the assessment of teachers but with other nations moving in that very direction so eventually did the Welsh minister. And despite a top class set of results in a year when a quarter of grades awarded are A\* and A's Imogen feels anything but on top of the world.

**Imogen:**

So I managed to get 11 A stars which I'm pleased about but I just I don't believe I would have got 11 A stars had I taken the exams so I don't believe that my results are particularly credible.

**Betsan:**

So, talk me through your thought process and how you felt over the past week as things have changed so much and what effect that has had on you today?

**Imogen:**

Well I was quite pleased to hear that the AS results would be used for A level so I thought a similar system would be used with year 10 exams for GCSE but they I was really annoyed to find out that they were just going to give everyone teacher assessments and we weren't even going to get to see the moderated results cause I would really like to have seen them just to see how I would have done when it's all a bit more reliable and I would have been a lot happier if I'd received the moderate results instead of just teacher assessments because obviously teachers want pupils to do well and they also want grades to make themselves look better and the schools want better grades so yeah I'm not sure I particular yeah I don't know.

**Betsan:**

I mean 11 A stars is fantastic, but it sounds as though you are finding it hard to celebrate the moment.

**Imogen:**

Yeah I didn't feel pleased with myself at all because I know that I haven't taken the exams and it's more annoying because I haven't had a chance to show how well I could actually have done compared to other people. And now a lot of people have received similar or high results and it doesn't make it makes the moment less special because so many other people have done well as well.

**Betsan:**

Catherine we spoke to you when your son Scott was getting his A level results and he got fantastic results through moderation and then of course the U turn came before Imogen's results have arrived now. So how is all of this left you feeling Catherine?

**Catherine:**

Well disappointed for Imogen and because of course if she sat the exams and she'd had these results we have all been jumping up and down and I think we just still been very happy had she got these results through moderation but I just don't think that doing it this way is robust at all. I'm really disappointed I think that the system we had set up in Wales that we were all expecting to go with using moderation would have been effective. It would have been effective for the majority of pupils and then the minority who felt that they'd be ill served by it could have appealed if they wanted to. I think it makes this this year's results far less credible and meaningful than previous and succeeding years will be so I think so shame. But I mean Imogen would have done extremely well anyway she's perhaps being a bit hard on herself in saying that she wouldn't have got those results. She might have done but she might you know. So we'll never know now but at least we can move on put this behind us she can move on into six form and start her A levels and then and you know she will work hard in that and hopefully do well.

**Betsan:**

Well I'm sure she will and it sounds to me as though she is being very hard on herself and I'm sure they'll be a lot of politicians will need to be quite hard on themselves when all of this is over as well. I mean was it just the case in the end that they there wasn't much choice with other nations changing the way they were going to give the grades that Wales had to follow suit?

**Catherine:**

Well I think there was far less pressure sure to follow suit with a levels you can understand why the why Kirsty Williams felt that she better go with teacher assessed grades once the other nations had done that because what she wouldn't have wanted was our Welsh students not getting into universities because they've been given these moderated results compared to English, Northern Irish and Scottish students. But here we did have like we do with AS levels, we had a set of year 10 results for Sciences, we had a some pupils have done if they done History that also got a mark for that, and we could have gone used those as a baseline moderated it, and people would have been much happier with it than they are going to be now. I think I don't think she did have to follow suit at all because GCSE they are shall we say only GCSEs. They don't necessarily have a significant effect on what's going to happen to you in your life but it would have been very nice for these pupils who are able and have worked hard who would have succeeded as in an ordinary year to have that now just you know pretty much everyone's got A\*s.

**Betsan:**

Well 11 A stars let's be honest is still fantastic I mean not everyone certainly has got 11 A stars with which Imogen has and Imogen, what are the next steps? I mean I hope it will be some celebrations because you deserve them and then what next for you?

**Imogen:**

So I'm still going to carry on and just go back to the same school I was at and I'm going to do A levels which was always the plan so it hasn't really changed my plans. It just means that far more people will go into sixth form and it might mean that class sizes are bigger but it shouldn't have too much would effect on me and hopefully I'll just be able to still do well at A levels. But I don't think its going to be fair on next year's GCSE year because their results are going to be far lower than compared to ours.

**Betsan:**

It's interesting to hear you say that cause in our house that's one of the first things that was said with a son in year 10 and he said 'hang on then you know so what's going to happen to our year?' You just sense the way that this story is going to keep on going and keep on delivering things that maybe people hadn't considered you know as the months go by it'll the knock on effect perhaps will become obvious but Catherine what advice do you have for Imogen I mean you can see she's done very well, you can sense the you know the disappointment that the results haven't been tested as Imogen would have liked but what advice do you have for her as she goes on?

**Catherine:**

Well you just have to move on don't you? Life is full of hurdles and really for Imogen this is probably the first hurdle that you know she hasn't quite made it over with the right credentials I suppose as she puts it and I just think she'll put it behind her and in a few years' time it won't matter at all it really won't. She's only just had these results and heard what other people have got and even now a few hours later she's putting it into perspective and moving on I think she's doing that herself so



that's what I would say. I think Imogen just got to put this into perspective she did well last year in year 10 and yes she's done very well now and she'll do well at a level and move onto some career that that is fulfilling and worthy of her ability.

**Betsan:**

Well listen you're an extremely thoughtful family and if there are going to be discussions and analysis of the past few weeks, I think they could do much worse than coming up to Meifod and having a chat to the Gilmore family because I think they'd learn an awful lot but Imogen from us anyway a huge congratulations I hope you do feel a glow with some point because you clearly deserve it and thank you for taking the time to talk to us.

Three very different girls reflecting three very different aspects of this year's GCSE results thank you to them all for talking to us and thank you to Louise Evans a careers advisor with Careers Wales who has once again taken on the job of advising and talking through the options available to Poppy, Marie, Imogen and year 11 pupils everywhere.

So Louise all sorts of emotions running high today as always I suppose on GCSE results day but perhaps even more so after the story's we've seen in the headlines over the past few weeks. So first off hats off to young people for getting this far I think.

**Louise:**

Well absolutely what a rollercoaster of a year it has been for them I mean they don't know all this work in preparation people revising even when lockdown occurred they were still revising and then to be told you not doing exams and then for to have that change, it's definitely been a rollercoaster for them.

**Betsan:**

And we've heard from two pupils who absolutely scored top notch marks they've really done brilliantly however their respond was very, very different so Poppy and Imogen have responded very differently to the same sorts of results. So do you have an appreciation for how someone like Imogen will be feeling today and her feeling that you know they just don't count for what they ought to have counted for me she says.

**Louise:**

I think it just takes into account that GCSE results and GCSE exams are spread over two whole years so the work that Imogen will have done before even sitting the 90 minute exam at the end will have stood her in good stead. And also to maybe bear in mind that GCSE's whilst you need those to move on the tend to be a stepping stone so particularly going onto a levels once you achieve those grades, in a couple of years when you're maybe going to University and you do another things they look back at GCSE is won't be as big as what it would seem today for them.

**Betsan:**

As you say they seem terribly important today but it's only what they lead to I suppose in the end that important and that's really important for Marie who also did really well and smashed it in the subjects that she really wanted to do and is going to look at her maths again. But she's got the right attitude hasn't she which is 'I know what I'm really good at and now I know I'm really good at it the other subjects that I know I'm not so great at I'm going to buckle down and I'm going to get them'.

**Louise:**

Oh absolutely I think the result she got into health and social just actually prepared her an reinforced her career goals and their career decisions on that that's fantastic and having an awareness that actually maybe the maths that she was a little bit disappointed but she has got the opportunity to re-sit that alongside her next studies so to make the most of that they'll probably be smaller classes when she's re sitting because that tends to be in Colleges and sixth forms. So just to make the most of the extra time and also bear in mind to kind of take things forward differently for the next year so when you get set work and you get set exams and you get set tests to do your best in all those because we don't know what's going to happen again do we?

**Betsan:**

We don't and good luck to Marie. We have every faith that she'll get that Maths C. She sounded like a girl on a mission I have to say. I hope all three are celebrating because of the year it's been. There will be those who say ah well an awful lot of A stars around this year and A's and so on and who knows where all of that will end up. But to those young people therefore who've got the results that they wanted to go back to the sixth form what's the advice Louise on choosing the right subjects and making sure their pitching themselves at the right future at this point?

**Louise:**

I mean when you are looking at sixth forms and colleges there's two kinds of routes you can go down. So you've got the BTEC type route, more vocational courses which have different levels and a lot of that's coursework as you going along. So if you've chosen that the chances are that you've already got an idea of the type of career that you want to be within so for instance health and social care if you want to go into kind of nursing route or something like that. With A levels just to bear in mind that there is a big step up from GCSE to the work required at AS and A levels so if you've maybe just scraped the grades that you needed or you yourself felt that maybe you wouldn't have got the grade that you needed just consider your choices carefully. Speak to your tutors or speak to teachers within the school or the sixth form or within the college and also ask the student services and if you genuinely would like some impartial kind of advice then feel free to contact us we've got people on web chat available daily, qualified careers advisers on our website and we've also got people on the end of a phone so you can phone 0800 0824 4844.

And each college and sixth form does have a careers advisor attached to them so if you start something and you have what we call a wobble- I mean you're not quite sure what you want to do or if you're not enjoying it just don't quit without actually speaking to somebody about it. So whether that be student services, whether that be the careers advisor to look at what other options are out there before you came to make a decision.

**Betsan:**

To those who got some sort of BTEC results today but have seen the headlines that those might change what about them? Is there anything specific they should be doing or just sitting and waiting?

**Louise:**

I think look on the websites, the Qualifications Wales website and the Pearson websites today and they are literally saying that they're working as fast as they can to get it relooked at, that it is possibly easier with a BTEC type qualification to work out what you should have got because you will have been doing work all the way through the courses so you know you should have an idea, So if

the result you've got today you think is a fair result if you pick those up then maybe take that as that's what you're going to get and if you get bumped up a little bit and you know congratulations. But the marking is done differently as well so it doesn't get like A,B,C it gets pass, merits and distinctions in terms of progression a level 2 merit or distinction would give you the same kind of progression opportunity as a higher level GCSE so it's just kind of bearing that in mind really.

**Betsan:**

So as you said you need to consider if it's really the right subject for you. Where is it leading? Why do you want to do it but another thing to consider is because if marks are going to be a bit higher this year and we understand you know very clearly that they are this year, does that mean that classes are going to be bigger? So A level classes will be fuller this year for instance whether it's at school or college than they might otherwise have been?

**Louise:**

Yeah I think it's gonna be so entry requirements to get on all A level grades whether it be in a college or sixth form I think within the first couple of weeks you yourself will know if you're struggling with a subject and whether you think actually 'it's not what I was expecting' and also just to bear in mind that if you've opened your results saying you've got a result that is way higher than what you thought you were going to get, choosing that subject because you've never even thought of it before maybe it's not maybe the right way to go. Think about what were you looking at doing anyway don't change that too much based on a result that you've kind of got today.

**Betsan:**

I was just talking to one teacher was saying well I suspect I'm going to have too many pupils doing my subject in the sixth form and actually September October will be spent finding out who really ought to be doing it so I suppose now is the time to be there to aim high but to be realistic.

**Louise:**

Yes and ask your teachers, ask college tutors, ask student services, ask them, 'Is this the right route for me?' If throughout the whole of two years of GCSE you struggled in biology for instance to even get to C but you managed to go out with a B, the minimum requirements to get onto A levels for in biology, you actually need to think 'Have I got it? Do I enjoy it enough and have I got enough kind of ability in that subject to be able to carry on going forward?', because there is a big step up to very levels from GCSE

**Betsan:**

So, talk to somebody at school and that's one of the most important bit of advice early on I suppose.

**Louise:**

Yeah talk to your teachers especially if you're carrying on in sixth form attached to your school cause your teacher will know you. They will have taught you for the last few years they'll know what you're kind of ability is. It might be actually you disagree with them and you know that you could have maybe done a little bit more effort. Having that kind of conversation now will help. It is also maybe considering how can you choose subjects that you might actually enjoy cause it's not just about what you think you're going to do well at, it could be about what you want to enjoy so obviously as I said you can contact us that Careers Wales if you'd like to chat through your subject choices see what's the best way forward for you.

**Betsan:**

And if you have had a disappointing day and you're thinking, 'do you know what? I don't think this is the way to go but I'm not quite sure what I want to do and I'm not quite sure whether there are jobs out there and I don't know whether there are traineeships or you know whether there are apprenticeships' perhaps and what about those routes. So you're not thinking about going back to school sixth form or college what are the other options available?

**Louise:**

I mean you just mentioned apprenticeships, so apprenticeships are where you working with an employer and you're getting more qualifications alongside - tends to be the minimum is kind of a Level 3 qualification that you'd be working at doing an apprenticeship. Now obviously with the job situation as it is the chances of getting an apprenticeship are possibly lower than they would have been any other year because as we know there are redundancies and people are losing jobs but there are alternatives. So there's a lot of young people every year that actually they just don't want to go to college or a sixth form have had enough of learning in that sort of environment. So you mentioned traineeships, so traineeships are employability type courses where they work with young people to try and establish what career they might like to do, if possible to get them a little bit of work experience and even up to well maybe a level one qualification it you know in the long run. If you wanted information about those we do have sections on our website [careerswales.gov.wales](http://careerswales.gov.wales) where you'd be able to get some information on those and again our web chat and our telephone lines would be able to discuss those with you.

**Betsan:**

Because I can imagine often you're told that you need more experience – 'Well where do I get the experience?' And particularly now that's going to be challenging so it would be worth considering a traineeship for that experience alone?

**Louise:**

Oh absolutely. I mean alongside Careers Wales we've got our Working Wales team as well that that will support young people so it could be that actually they decided 'I want to look for a job and they kind of give themselves a limit so, 'If I've not got job within the next month or six weeks then I want to look at something else. So traineeships are different to college in that they actually start all year, they are rolling programmes so it could actually be that you start college course or a sixth form and you know six to eight weeks down the line - oh this is not for me. What we don't want you to do then is just kind of just forget it or bury your head in the sand. We want you to contact us then to look at your alternatives because there are alternatives all the way forward really.

**Betsan:**

I'm getting my money's worth out of you now really and I putting my mum hat on again but I'm just thinking about pupils in year 10 and 12. They've seen all of this happening. They have been affected one way or the other. They might have done one GCSE qualification this year or they've seen it happen and think 'Gosh you know people have done really well this year is it all going to plummet next year when they're trying to put things back in place and we'll suffer and our grades will suffer?' But as a mother and are trying to tell them look you can only do what you do and you do your best and you know the rest has to happen around you.

But what would your advice be to years 10 and 12?

**Louise:**

Well my daughters actually in year 10 we've had this little chat this morning. I think one of the key things to take from all of this is that you need to work all year. I know a lot of people will be disappointed in the results because a lot of people actually wait for their exams to bump the results up at GCSEs and A levels whereas if you're putting the work in all year so your mock exams and your controlled assessment, if you're putting that working all year if anything like this happens again you're in the best place forward. I mean what I would say for year 10 and 12 is that obviously they they've just missed the same amount of time as what year 11 did this year and they've got to try and get themselves back into education come September, they need to start learning themselves and this will be the same for year 11's going into college or sixth form. So I would say now is the time with a couple of weeks left to start getting yourself into a routine, start planning ahead, start getting your working brain back in if you if you like, and thinking 'Right okay what do I need to do? Is there anything that I can do to prepare?' And if you are stuck or if you need help ask for it all the way through. Ask but don't just say 'Oh it's okay I'll do okay in an exam - ask for help and work all the way through the years

**Betsan:**

I have to say I think we put Marie's words on a T shirt which is 'Okay talk a bit in maths but then work'.

Louise

Yes, yes absolutely

**Betsan:**

Thank you again to Louise Evans to Marie, Poppy and Imogen and I'll just give you those contact details again if you want any advice on the best option for you. The number to call is 0800 0284844. The website is [careerswales.gov.wales](http://careerswales.gov.wales) and look out for Careers Wales on social media too.

Good luck to Imogen Marie and Poppy with the path they've chosen.

Thank you for downloading Is that an option? We hope it's been useful in this of all years and after a collective deep breath good luck to everyone come September.