

Research Gaps and Themes in the study of Youth Transitions

Professor Peter Urwin

University of Westminster

COMMUNITY

CATALYST 

Youth Transitions

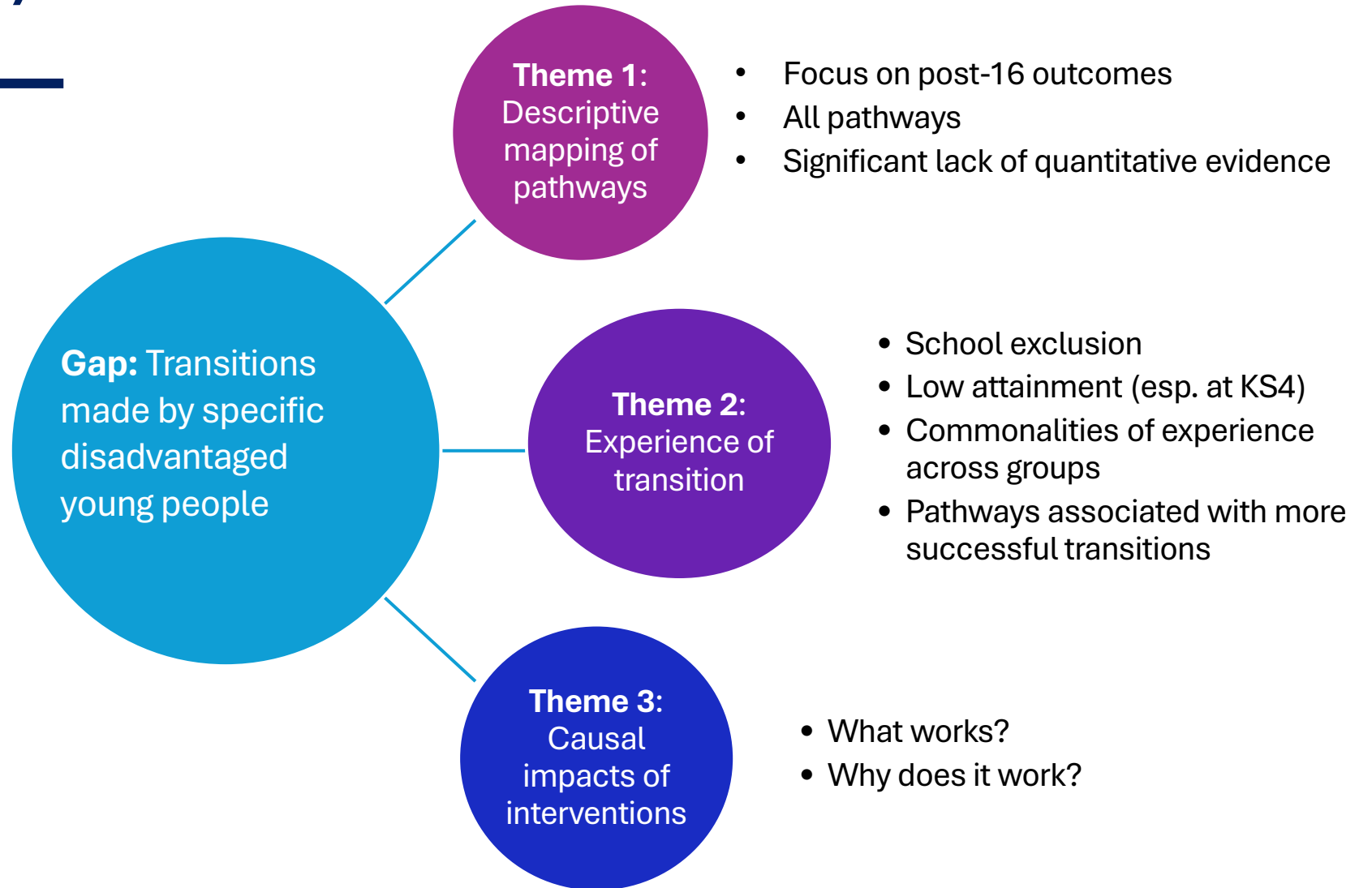
How we identified Gaps and Themes

- Initial literature review to gauge work to date on youth transitions, with a focus on administrative data studies;
- Categorisation/summary then used as part of the introduction for interviews with stakeholders (across 20 academic, policy and practice organisations);
- Second stage lit. review (results in 203 peer reviewed and grey lit. studies) and draws in funder, government and other research agendas.
- Results informed proposed research agenda (Gaps and Themes); nature of support and training; and programme of engagement.
- For instance, post-16 learning seen by researchers as hard to navigate due to complexity of Individualised Learner Record (component of LEO) and wider post-16 NEET/missingness challenges – key driver of gaps.

Gaps and Themes (1)

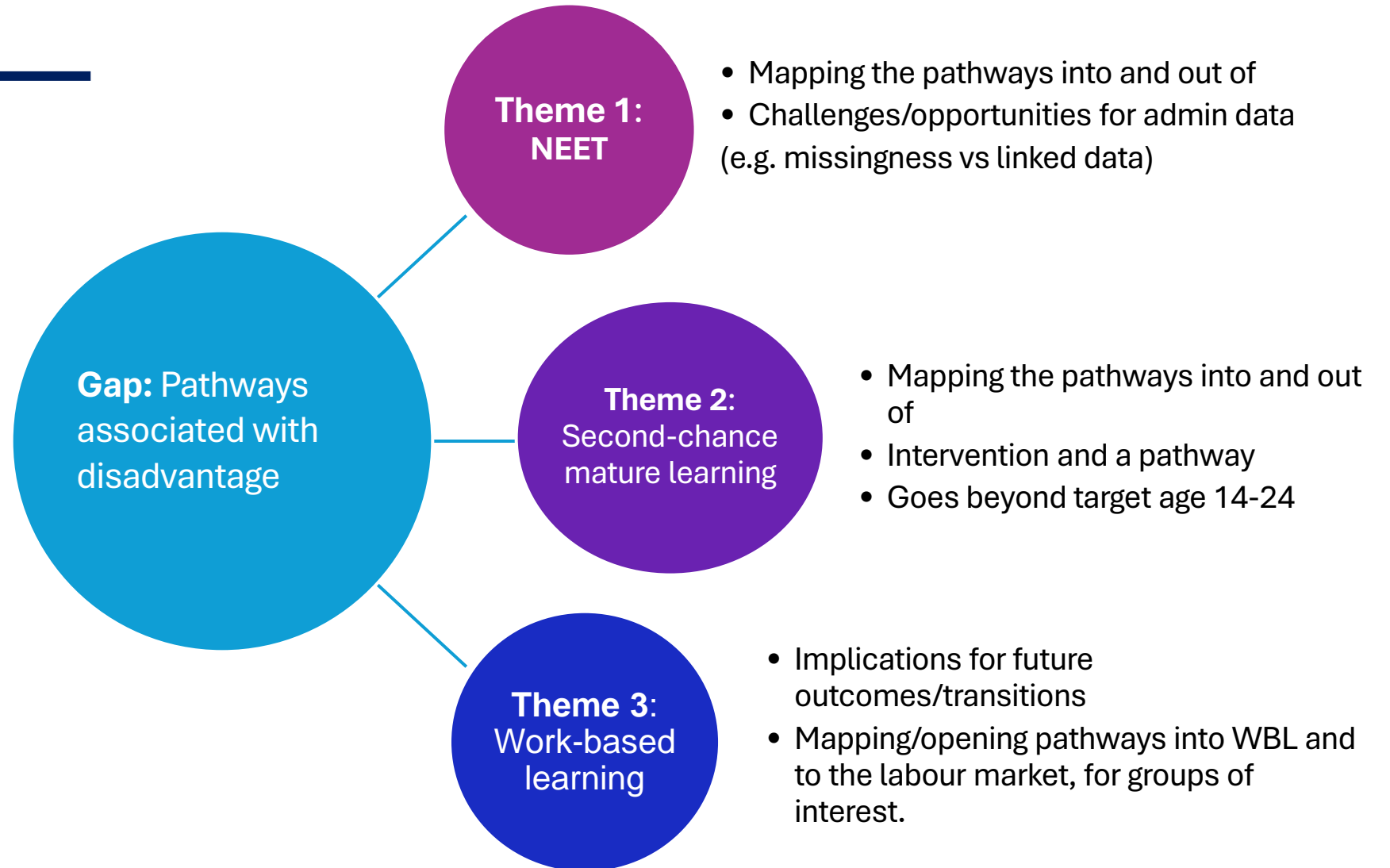
Focus on specific groups of young people and their journeys

- **Young offenders**
- **Experience of social care**
- **Specific ethnic groups**
- **Physical and/or mental health difficulties**



Gaps and Themes (2)

Focus on particular states/transitions that are complex and under-investigated



Developing Research Questions

- **Understanding the Policy Context and Showing Relevance:**
- Get Britain Working White Paper (Nov 2024); Post-16 Education & Skills White Paper (Oct 2025); Curriculum & Assessment Review: Final Report (Nov 2025)
- UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (June 2025); DfE Evaluation Strategy 2025-2029 (April 2025); Skills England: Assessment of priority skills to 2030 (Aug 2025)
- **Research to support evidence-informed policy development.**
- Which evidence gaps remain AND what new insights do Flagship Datasets allow (key drivers of our statement of gaps/themes):
- Key possible datasets: [LEO](#); [GRADE](#); [MoJ&DfE](#); [ECHILD](#).....
- But you may identify potential for insight from other flagship datasets!

Support in Data and Analysis

- **Data Explained guides**, for instance:
 - *Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO): Understanding post-16 learning spells and qualification aims to estimate returns to learning*
 - *Identifying and studying young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*
 - *3 more to come (geographic distance, FSM/IMD and Mature Learners)*
- **Understanding appropriate Administrative Datasets** ([prototype tool](#))
- **Youth Transitions Resources Hub** (datasets recording activity post-16 incl. ILR, School Census, NCCIS, HESA, Employment, Benefits; example SQL scripts; users share code relating to analysis of youth transitions).

Support in Data and Analysis

- Newsletter and other ways of getting involved: <https://www.adruk.org/learning-hub/user-groups-communities/adr-england-research-community-catalyst-youth-transitions/>
- FFT Education Datalab Training provision: [Introduction to the NPD training, 2nd December](#): UCL training programme.
- Online clinics to support ‘new to data’ researchers and one-to-one sessions depending on numbers.
- Forthcoming Westminster sessions/clinics and support materials on quasi-experimental approaches using admin data; and UCL training.
- E.g. ‘clinics’ (each 3 hours f-2-f) inviting researchers using admin data to bring along their policy evaluation challenges to gain advice, guidance and ‘workshop’ solutions.

How to get involved



Research conferences

- Focus on policy, practice and data landscape
- Promote engagement with research agenda
- Learning and development
- Collaboration

Online Forum

- Active communication channel
- Announcements
- Semi-formal setting for asking technical questions

Newsletters

- Highlight latest research from across the community
- Peer review
- For the community, by the community
- Promote upcoming events and activities

Resource Hub

- One stop shop for all resources
- To be launched end-Nov/ early-Dec
- New content throughout the project's lifetime