

North Wales Regional Skills Partnership

Annual Report
2022 - 2023



Partneriaeth Sgiliau Rhanbarthol
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Regional Skills Partnership



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01. Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership 2022/23 Annual Report, showcasing how we have been driving forward the skills and employability agenda across our region; both in line with our skills plan and in response to the labour market and challenges of an ever-changing funding landscape.

This year has been a year of progress, and I'm delighted that we were able to launch our new Skills and Employment Plan (2023-25) for the region which was co-produced following extensive consultations with employers, providers and stakeholders. The plan articulates how we need to be ambitious and clear in our thinking, and effective in our action to ensure a resilient skilled talent pool. We have a skills blueprint which identifies three priorities that are required to support the change we would like to see in the region over the next three years.

It was great to share our vision through a collaborative event in January, which really brought the blueprint to life, and if the event is any indication of what the next three years have to offer, there's really lots to be excited about. We saw a real appetite for facilitating more work experience, upskilling, and retraining, and we hope these meaningful conversations will transform into more opportunities for prosperity. Communication and inspiration are two words that thread through the plan and will be crucial to ensure that we are effective in our actions.

During the year, the RSP and its sub-groups and providers have encouraged employers to be ever more creative and flexible in terms of their employment offer.

We have encouraged and facilitated schools and colleges to be able to provide up to date information on career opportunities and the pathways into employment with the aim of inspiring the next generation towards opportunities that exist. As the workplaces changes rapidly, we have focused on ensuring Net Zero skills and digital skills in the region and this will be a key focus for the next three years.

I cannot finish without recognising the incredible contribution of our RSP Board Members and our cluster groups and sub-groups Chairs and members. Their diverse range of skills and experience, and willingness to go the extra mile, ensures that the employer voice continues to play a critical role in shaping the region's future skills system. Together we remain passionate about the region and committed to ensuring that North Wales is firmly on the map when it comes to a skilled workforce. I look forward to working with our clusters and sub-groups over the coming year to deliver our priorities.

There's lots to do over the next year, but equally lots to be excited about. Together, we can do this.



David Roberts

Chair of the North Wales
Regional Skills Partnership



02. Who are the North Wales RSP?

Our Role and Remit

North Wales RSP is one of four Partnerships across Wales. Since 2014, the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) has been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local and regional level.

The main role of the RSP is to address skills shortages by influencing post-16 skills provision in North Wales, based on labour market intelligence and employer-led insight. The RSP pools intelligence from across the labour market system, leverages existing networks provides vital strategic advice, oversight and recommendations to decision-makers.

The RSP members represent networks of partners, rather than solely their own organisation or institution. They act as conduits to wider networks of stakeholders and providers to the skills and employment ecosystem of North Wales.

Governance and Membership

The RSP has five sub-groups/clusters that are part of its structure including:

- Employability Working Group
- Work-based Learning Provider Group
- Digital Skills Network
- Construction Employer Cluster Group
- Public Sector Employer Cluster Group

Employability Working Group:

Aims to provide co-ordination to improve the coherence, quality and cost-effectiveness of employability provision across the region. Overall, the group plays a crucial role in driving collective efforts to enhance employability outcomes by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advocacy. It also serves as a platform for sharing information, research, and best practices related to employability. It enables stakeholders to learn from each other's experiences, successes, and challenges in addressing employability issues.

Work-based Learning Provider Sub-Group:

The purpose of the group is to respond to opportunities presented by employers through the North Wales RSP in terms of post 16 regional work-based learning provision and delivery in the region as well as informing the RSP on existing and planned work-based learning provision. The group comprises all major providers in North Wales and includes the three North Wales Region apprenticeship contract holders. It focuses on the strategic direction of travel for current and future work-based learning provision and delivery within the region within the context of Welsh Government skills priorities and the labour market. The group has a clear vision that sets out priorities and can measure progress and success.

Public Sector Employer Cluster Sub-group:

Aims to develop a collaborative, coordinated and targeted approach to define public sector skills gaps and demand for apprenticeships in North Wales. The group brings together public sector employers across the region to support employer demand for growth via higher level skills and to deliver key messages to inform and influence our regional providers to respond with appropriate provision. The core memberships of the group are the six local authorities, the emergency services and other public sector organisations such as the colleges, Natural Resources Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

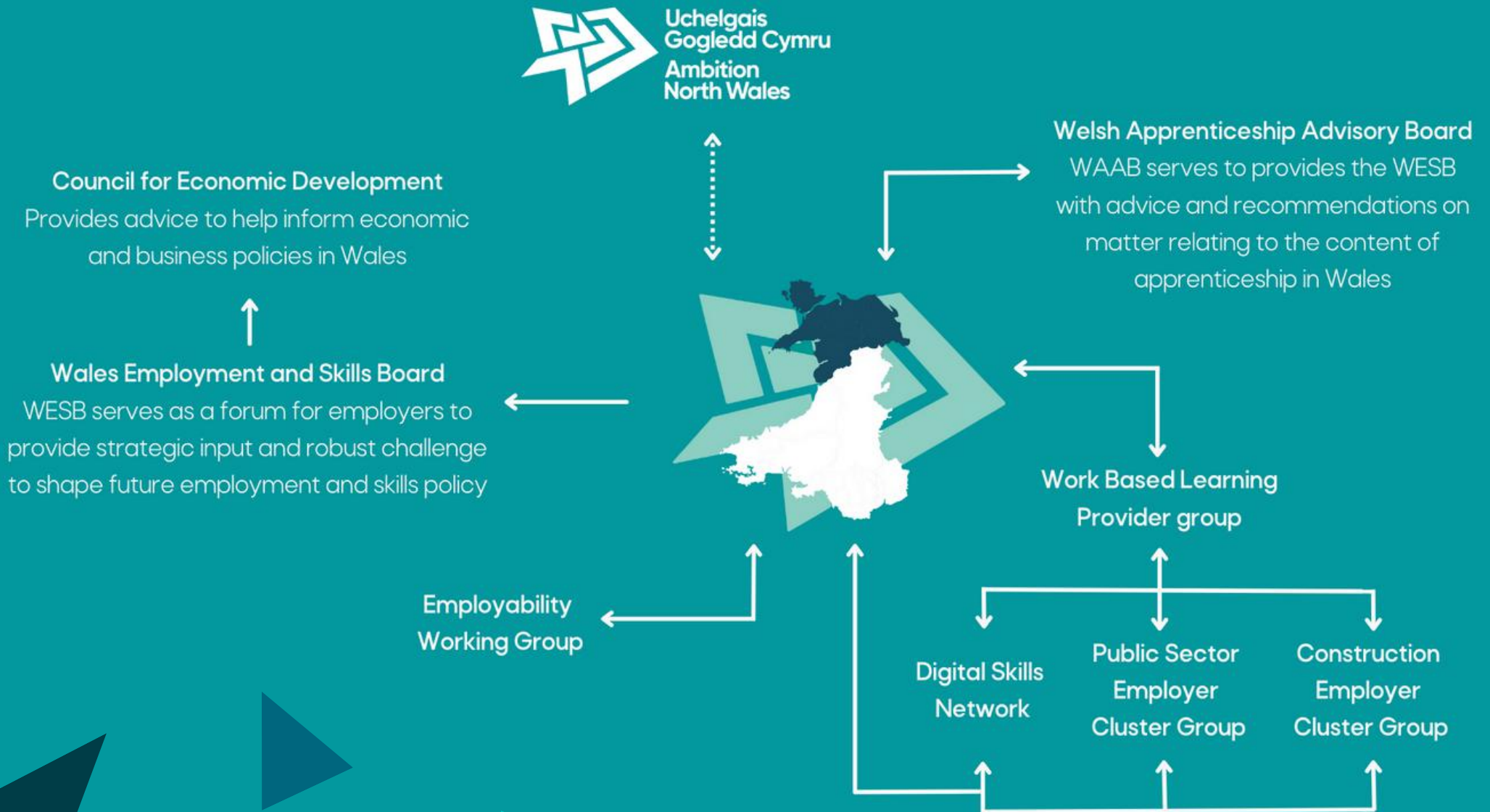
Digital Skills Network:

Aims to develop a collaborative, coordinated and targeted approach to digital skills challenges so that the region has a clear vision and set of priorities. It brings together employers of all sizes from across the region to share their challenges, opportunities, and best practice. Employers who are part of this group represent a multitude of sectors in North Wales, but all have a shared need for digital skills. This allows the group to access extensive knowledge, experience and different perspectives when considering digital skills.

Construction Employer Cluster Sub-group:

Aims to develop a collaborative, coordinated and targeted approach to the challenge of ensuring the right skills and opportunities are available to the construction and built environment sector. Specific objectives are to gather employer views and labour market intelligence that will strengthen the relationships and communication with, and between, regional construction sector employers with education and training providers, and to have a clear voice to ensure that the employer needs can shape the provision and progression pathways for skills development, education, and training in construction jobs. The group also aims to help diversify entrants into the sector, increase the number women in construction.

North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Structure:



North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Membership:



Our North Wales Skills Blueprint

We have identified 3 priorities that are required to support skills and employment landscape over the next 3 years:

ENABLING AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS

- Supporting employers to develop their employees
- Supporting employers to 'access the talent' (including promoting apprenticeships)
- Supporting access to 'work-ready' employees
- Changing perceptions of the North Wales region in respect of employment opportunities
- Raising awareness of and access to the support available

Enabling and empowering employers

Enabling and empowering individuals

How support is provided and making the connections

ENABLING AND EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

- Developing people's skills to meet the needs of employers now and in the future
- Changing perceptions of the North Wales region in respect of employment opportunities
- Raising awareness of the support and options available at key life stages
- Engaging with the influencers of key decisions made by individuals

HOW SUPPORT IS PROVIDED AND MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

- Bringing support providers and key stakeholders together
- Developing the support providers (e.g. mentoring the mentors)
- Understanding what works - collecting and sharing good practice
- Promoting streamlining and de-cluttering - avoiding duplication and encouraging simplicity
- Supporting the development of an agile approach that can respond to needs now and, in the future
- Challenging policy and promoting evidence-based policy and decision making

04. Activities and Achievements: Highlights



QUARTER 3

- Personal Learning Account (PLA) Review
- Career pathways, new curriculum and working with schools educational partners
- Net Zero Skills
- Creative North Wales



QUARTER 1

- Young Person's Guarantee
- Qualifications Wales Review
- Final COVID-19 LMI Impact Report
- SPF Workshops
- Digital Skills Expo



QUARTER 2

- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Social Media Campaigns
- Optimised Retrofit



QUARTER 4

- Skills and Employment Plan Launch
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Brochure Launch
- Low Carbon Energy Skills
- Launch of the Digital Dozen
- Joint Meeting Between WBL Provider Group and Public Sector Employer Cluster Group
- Employability Conference
- Growth Deal Skills

Young Person's Guarantee

We consulted with programmes, projects and stakeholders across the region to better understand the current landscape of offer / support available in terms of the current education, employment, training and wellbeing support/provision available for young people (16-24 years old) locally and regionally as part of the desktop research for the Young Person's Guarantee. A report was submitted to Welsh Government highlighting the regional gaps in provision/support and identified the regional priorities for the future. Click [here](#) to read the report

SPF workshops for Skills and Employability

The RSP facilitated a series of workshops during the first and second quarter of the year to identify regional skills and employability priorities. Training providers including the colleges and universities mapped out the skills priorities of the region and employability providers across all sectors outlined the employability priorities against the regional employability pathway. This activity ensured the awareness of gaps in provision and minimised duplication of projects when the SPF opportunity opened for project applications.

Impact of COVID-19 on North Wales LMI Summary Report

We presented the last iteration of the Covid-19 LMI report to Welsh Government in April 2022. This final summary report was based on research conducted over the pandemic period which gives an overview of skills impact identified in the region over the period of the pandemic. Previous reports have been primarily based on soft intelligence from employers and stakeholder engagement activities, along with robust quantitative labour market intelligence (e.g. job postings data, Universal Credit and Claimant Count, Apprenticeship data), where appropriate. Click [here](#) to read the report

Personal Learning Account (PLA) Qualification Review

The RSP have been working with both Further Education (FE) colleges, Welsh Government and employers to undertake a qualification review of the PLA offer in the region. Ensuring that qualifications offered through the PLA meet industry requirements is crucial, and the RSP have contributed robust labour market intelligence and industry views on the current offer.

Promoting Higher and Degree Apprenticeships in the region

In response to the challenge employers face on where to find information about apprenticeships, the WBL Provider Group developed a brochure for both employers and individuals that includes information about the Higher and Degree apprenticeship pathways and provisions available in the region and how this could help support their future. You can see the brochure [here](#)

Low Carbon Energy Skills

We have started working on a Net Zero Skills Framework to better understand the skills gaps and shortages in the Low Carbon Energy sector and developments. A steering group has been brought together made up of low carbon energy developers, RWE, BP, Morlais, Magnox and Cwmni Eginio to further understand the specialist skills, upskilling and reskilling requirements of the workforce, as well as to identify the transferable and common skills that arise across projects and technologies. We have also worked closely with the training providers to highlight the breadth of educational and training facilities available in the region to support new and existing employers across the low carbon energy industry, including their supply chain.

Digital Skills Expo Event

In partnership with M-SParc, the RSP successfully hosted a Digital Skills Event in June with over 120 people attending. Employers were able to access new talent in the region as we brought together young people, graduates and economically inactive individuals. It was a great opportunity to gain intelligence from employers to understand their skills need now and in the future. Paul Kinlan from Google joined virtually to share advice on how to attract and retain young people in a highly competitive sector.



North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023 - 2025

Over the last 12 months the focus has been on consulting and publishing our new Skills and Employability Plan for 2023-25. We talked to over 400 employers in the region to understand their skills needs and challenges and held focus groups and workshops with our partners and stakeholders to set the vision and priorities for the region over the next three years. The new plan will focus on:

- Helping employers to understand the potential of employees in the region today and in the future
- Help individuals to understand employment opportunities available to them in the region
- Inform and improve decision-making at a policy level
- Facilitate co-operation and partnership working between the key stakeholders

Learn more [here](#).



Qualification Wales Reviews

We have supported a broad range of sector reviews undertaken by Qualifications Wales - including those focused on Digital and Advanced Manufacturing, as well as Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering and the Pre-16 Vocational qualifications suite. This has helped us become informed advocates for the development of new and refreshed National Occupational Standards, capable of being the building blocks for sector-focused vocational qualifications.

Focus now is to work with Qualifications Wales through their sector reviews and help with the implementation processes - influencing Colegau Cymru, NTfW and training providers to ensure that practitioners are suitably skilled to deliver against new requirements; as well as engaging with 'Qualified for the Future' to reshape the qualifications landscape and utilise priority sector cluster groups through the new Curriculum for Wales.

North Wales Regional Skills Partnership launches new Skills and Employment plan for the region

With skills high on the agenda for employers, the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) launched its skills and employment plan for the next three years to help maximise opportunities to upskill in the region.

David Roberts, who chairs the RSP, prides the plan on ‘decluttering’ the complex employment and skills landscape by providing a framework for employers, training providers, and funders to work as a collective.

Its launch event at Venue Cymru saw more than 160 people attend, with specialist panel sessions and speakers encouraging an open dialogue between sectors.

In addition, Welsh Government economy minister Vaughan Gething endorsed the plan during a keynote address delivered remotely.



David, said: “Sharing our vision through a collaborative event really brought the blueprint to life, and if the event is any indication of what the next three years have to offer, there’s really lots to be excited about.

“We saw a real appetite for facilitating more work experience, upskilling, and retraining, and we hope these meaningful conversations will transform into more opportunities for prosperity.

“It was fantastic to hear voices from the next generation of the workforce highlight the benefits of greater collaboration from their perspectives, which created an inspiring force in the room.”




David Roberts at the Skills and Employment Plan Launch Event

To demonstrate the three core aspects of the plan; enabling employers, communicating how support is provided, and empowering individuals, three panel sessions took place with representatives from each division present.

On the concluding panel, current apprentices shared thoughts and answered questions, including Rosie Boddy, who is completing an Airbus apprenticeship, and additionally gave a talk on the day.

 Rosie, who moved from her hometown Farnborough at 17 to North Wales for the apprenticeship, said: “I always knew I wanted to take up a career in the aviation industry, so I was overjoyed to be given the chance to join Airbus for a place on the scheme.

“Since then, the apprenticeship has led to countless opportunities to further my skills, including being able to take part in the WorldSkills UK national finals where I won a gold medal in aircraft maintenance.

“It’s so important for businesses to work closely with colleges to help show the diverse opportunities out there and represent them as viable career choices for young people.” 





Rosie Boddy at the Skills and Employment Plan Launch Event

Another panel session brought representatives from education provisions Bangor University, Wrexham Glyndŵr University, Coleg Cambria, Coleg Llandrillo Menai, Careers Wales, and Flintshire County Council, to speak on their training programmes and current links with industry.

In addition, a business-focussed panel brought together key employers Money Penny, The VAE, M-Sparc, and Wynne Construction, to discuss best practices in developing apprentice and employee skills to strengthen its workforce.

Wynne Construction social value manager Alison Hourihane also led a talk on the opportunities for skills development in the construction industry.

 Reflecting on the event, Alison said: “Working in construction, we leave a legacy for the local community so it’s incredibly important we ensure this from the outset by providing local employment and training opportunities.

“Supporting local people into construction and tapping into education is a huge part of our work and we hope in the next three years of the plan, more individuals will be aware of the opportunities and career avenues available to help build skills up in North Wales industries.” 

Alison Hourihane at the Skills and Employment Plan Launch Event



Skills requirement of Growth Deal Projects

Alongside Ambition North Wales, we have been working to develop a standardised way to identify skills gap and challenges associated with Growth Deal projects to ensure we as a region can maximise opportunities. Work is on-going and the coordination of skills will play a critical role in the delivery of Growth Deal projects. During the year, we have specifically worked with Morlais, Cwmni Eginio, Smart Local Energy, Tourism Talent Network, Egni and Connected Campuses to assist with data and skills analysis.

Creative North Wales

Continued engagement and support provided throughout the year as a steering group member promoting the Creative Industry sector in North Wales. We participated in an all-day 'Codi STEM' event at Coleg Menai, Llangefni aimed at high school pupils to inform and inspire them about careers within the creative and digital sector through delivering Ted Talks. We also attended an awards ceremony organised by Creative North Wales and awarded Rondo Media with the 'Contribution to Developing Skills in the Sector' award

Launched Digital Dozen

The Digital Dozen is a new element of Digital Skills Employer Group. We reimagined the structure of the group to re-energise and drive forward change among digital employers in North Wales. The Digital Dozen is a group of 10 - 14 employers from across all sectors in North Wales with digital skills needs. This group will be the driving force behind the digital skills action plan developed to respond to the Skills and Employment Plan 2023 - 2025. The Digital Dozen will be responsible for deciding the priorities of the group, depicting the direction of travel and focus areas.



Campaigns, Marketing and Communications

We hosted the second campaign of the Pob Cam series in August 2022. Following a similar approach to last year's Pob Cam campaign, our Camu Mlaen campaign was designed to draw attention to the different pathways individuals can following into the work place no matter what their ambitions are. We wanted to inform and inspire young people during their results week of the opportunities available on their doorstep, as well as removing the pressure of needing to know what they want to do in the future upon leaving school. The campaign was hugely successful, with support from some recognisable names such as local artist Lisa Eurgain, singer Gruffydd Wyn and radio presenter Catrin Jones.

As ESF projects came to an end, we celebrated the successes seen in North Wales with a social media campaign in collaboration with the Regional Engagement Team. This ran alongside the Employability Conference in March 2023 and was a great opportunity for ESF Projects to share the impact they have had on our local communities. To learn more about one of the success, visit the [link](#)

What you learn at school is important but it's also just a small part of your education journey. Head

Throughout the year we have also supported stakeholder campaigns including Adult Learning Wales' Adult Learners Week, and Welsh Government's apprenticeship week and React+.

We've also promoted consultations on the Qualifications Wales review of GSEs and Pre-16 Vocational reviews with BBC Wales & BBC Cymru, taking part in segments on why skills and work experience is important to employers

Focus on what you can do

We've contributed towards a segment by S4C and BBC Cymru on encouraging Women into Board positions and encouraging women who have moved from Wales/ North Wales to return, bringing their skills and knowledge to the workplace

We teamed up with Code First Girls to offer women and non-binary people free coding courses and access to tech roles within national organisations such as Deloitte, BT, Nike and GCHQ. The initiative aims to close the gender skills gap in tech, at a time when only 19 % of those studying computer science post 16 years of age are women. This was promoted via interviews on Radio Cymru and on our social media channels.

Everyone's path will be unique and encounter its

own challenges

After a year of hard work, I realised I wasn't enjoying the experience and decided to leave 4 months in. I felt strongly

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a Chartered Engineer doing the job I love

Nigel Roberts
Waste Programme Engineering Lead

I've realised just how important enjoyment is when choosing a subject. It's better to focus on this rather than choosing subjects you think you 'need' to choose

Empowering North Wales: Employability Staff Conference

A conference was held for frontline employability staff. More than 70 mentors and advisers across all sectors, from 17 organisations operating in North Wales, attended the conference. The day was filled with interactive workshops, group discussions, Q&A sessions as well as lightning talks by a panel of employability providers. The conference has provided better understanding of the provision available across the region, who to refer to and how.



Joint meeting between RSP Work Based Learning (WBL) Provider Group and the Public Sector Employer Cluster Group

Two RSP sub-groups met as one group to address challenges faced across public sector organisations relating to the WBL learning offer, delivery, and provision in North Wales. Challenges were around attracting prospective candidates into certain sectors, people's traditional attitude and perception of apprenticeships and funding barriers for upskilling the workforce. Welsh language provision, entry levels and pre-requisites as well as the lack of higher level and degree level apprenticeships is also seen as a barrier across the sector. Plans are already underway to collaboratively address some of the challenges faced by the sector.

National Occupational Standards (NOS)

We have conducted a review on the NOS with a focus on occupational trends/changes, identifying occupations that are emerging, in decline and in priority across our priority sectors. This review help to ensure that standards remain relevant and up to date in a rapidly changing work environment.

Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER)

The establishment of CTER is a landmark piece of legislation, that introduces some of the most significant reforms to the architecture of our education system since devolution. Wales will be the first country in the UK to pioneer a single overarching regulatory, oversight and coordinating authority for post 16 tertiary education. CTER now exists as a legal entity, and will become fully operational in April 2024. It is essential that the voice of employers is clearly heard as the Commission develops. The RSP have held focus sessions with Welsh Government to better understand the role of employers and how their voices will be considered as part of the regulatory body. Going forwards, it will be critical for the RSP Board and partners to hold regular discussions with the CTER Board and Welsh Government.

Optimised Retrofit Programme and Skills

We have assisted Welsh Government's Optimised Retrofit programme to map skills training and provision across Wales. Find out more [here](#).

Recognising that the skills and provision landscape can be complex, we brought Regional Social Landlords and Local Authorities together to an insight session on the current regional training landscape, including further education, higher education and work-based learning, including apprenticeships and Welsh Government programmes including Flexible Skills Fund and Personal Learning Accounts. This session was well received and we were able to discuss current skills gaps and shortages, future skills need and barriers to accessing support with recruitment, upskilling/reskilling staff. The organisations have now become members of the construction employer cluster group and work continues to support them with the challenges identified.

Career Pathways, New Curriculum and working with schools and educational partners

During the year, the RSP have worked closely with GwE educational consortia in North Wales to align new curriculum with needs of employers. Discussions have also taken place with Head teachers to share labour market intelligence and showcase opportunities and breadth of careers available for young people. Outcomes of the discussions and collaboration have resulted in joint working between the RSP, Careers Wales, GwE and Schools to get a shared communication plan on how to target young people in schools from Year 7 onwards with information about career pathways, including promoting apprenticeships.

Net Zero Skills

Ensuring that we have a skilled workforce to make the transition to Net Zero is one of our key priorities as an RSP. During the year, we've worked with Welsh Government to develop the Net Zero Skills Wales Action Plan by ensuring employer voice as part of the discussions. With 43% of employers in the region noting that they anticipate new job roles and skills in their organisation aligned to net zero and green skills, we need to ensure that we have the skills provision in the region to support employers and employees.



Women demonstrate that choice and flexibility is key to Net Zero skills and training

As our economy transitions to support the Welsh Government's net zero ambitions, it's important that we equip our workforce with the right skills and opportunities. Already, there are an ever-increasing number of options when it comes to training and skills, where one route certainly doesn't fit all.

Take Molly Salter and Tesni James from north Wales; while they are both gaining qualifications towards a career in net zero, they are taking very different paths.

Molly is a 20-year-old who achieved five A-levels and decided that full-time university wasn't for her. With a keen interest in climate change, she secured a Low Carbon Energy Efficiency degree apprenticeship at Wrexham Glyndwr University, employed by Flintshire County Council:


 "I always wanted a career that was at the forefront of society and that was forward-looking," says Molly. "When I saw this apprenticeship advertised, it was the dream job that I never knew existed! It was perfect because I was specifically looking for a degree apprenticeship and I have a real passion for climate change. I go to university one day a week and then I work in my role as a Climate Change Project Assistant for the council the rest of the week." 

Her typical day involves trying to source land for council projects such as tree-planting, biodiversity, solar panels and wind turbines and preparing the council's climate change newsletter, which raises awareness among residents of how the local authority is reducing carbon emissions.

 Having started the apprenticeship in September 2022, she is excited for her future: "This area of work is growing. It's the way forward. I'm excited to see what the future holds – I don't know what sector I'll ultimately work in, but I do know that with the skills I'm learning, I can make a big impact." 

Tesni James, meanwhile, has re-trained after having her family. A social worker for nine years, she decided to join the family's construction business, based in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Tesni wanted to gain industry qualifications but, with three young children, wanted to study flexibly.

At her local college, she enrolled onto a Welsh Government-funded Personal Learning Account course to gain the NEBOSH Environmental Management Certificate. The qualification is designed to give learners the knowledge and understanding to help organisations manage their environmental issues.

 Tesni commented: “I gained my Environmental Management Certificate through the PLA-funded course as well as different Health and Safety qualifications. PLAs are fantastic – I did mine through Coleg Llandrillo but I undertook them online. It suited me not to have to travel into college because it worked around the children and the business.

PLAs are fully-funded courses and qualifications that are flexible so that people can train around existing responsibilities in order to progress in a current job or change careers altogether.


An additional investment of £2m by the Welsh Government into green PLAs is supporting Wales’ drive to net zero. The eligibility salary cap has been removed for those upskilling or reskilling in green qualifications in construction, engineering, manufacturing and energy.

As a business, we are keen to look at ways in which we can be more environmentally friendly,” adds Tesni. “Since my studies, we’ve increased our recycling efforts and we are looking at how we can insulate and heat our offices more efficiently.

“The course made me more aware of the regulations and it has helped demonstrate our commitment as a business to net zero. I would encourage others in the industry to take a look at PLAs – they are free qualifications and are available at local colleges across Wales.” 

Tesni, aware of how net zero will directly impact the construction industry, is now exploring options to study an MSc in Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management.

Working behind the scenes in Wales’ efforts to achieve net zero are the four Regional Skills Partnerships. Sian Lloyd Roberts is the North Wales Regional Skills Manager:

 “The Regional Skills Partnerships play a vital role in ensuring that suitably skilled workers are meeting the needs of employers. We act as a bridge between training providers – like colleges – and employers, raising the profile of the training available but also gaining an understanding of the skills needed across Wales.

“Green or low carbon related skills are at the forefront of our remit and is a huge part of what we do. It is our role to help address skills gaps and shortages, working closely with Welsh Government, and we’re really very pleased with the strength and the variety of training and qualifications available in North Wales.”

But there is certainly no complacency within the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership: “There is always more to do, of course, especially in such a fast-evolving sector.” 



Molly Salter



Tesni James

How have we helped employers and partners?

 We are really pleased to be part of the Regional Skills Partnership's Steering Group overseeing the analysis of the skills needs across the low carbon energy industry in North Wales. It's imperative that we work together across sectors and across the region to maximise opportunities presented by the pipeline of projects here in North Wales, and crucially to make sure that the local workforce is fully skilled and prepared to take advantage of those opportunities. The RSP is an excellent vehicle to drive forward this collaboration.

~ Alan Raymant, CEO, Cwmni Egino




 **Egino**

 By working with the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership and partners, Mona Offshore Wind Farm (which is being developed by a partnership between BP and EnBW) is able to work strategically with partners in the skills field to ensure that we maximize the value of our sector in North Wales.

~ Ifer Gwyn, BP



 Working alongside partners as part of the RSP over the last 12 months has been particularly useful in terms of raising the awareness of employers about work-related experiences which are being undertaken by learners on Anglesey. The RSP has been essential in creating a task and finish group with key partners to look at how key employment information and pathways is transmitted to schools, learners and their parents. A forward work plan has been drafted and the next 12 months will be important to use in terms of working with schools, FE college, Careers Wales and the RSP to make communication more effective and improve the opportunities and understanding of pathways for young people.

~ Aaron Evans, Education Department,
Isle of Anglesey Council



“We have been working closely with the NWRSP since late 2022 on the development of our skills and employment strategy, and value immensely the insights, knowledge and experience offered through working with Sian and their valuable team. We treasure the bilateral relationship also because it assists us to understand our wider stakeholder base better, and to consequently work in greater alignment and understanding with them as much as possible.”

~ Poppy Treyhame, RWE



“The Regional Skills Partnership has been of great value to me in building my network of people and groups across the creative and digital sector. I was honoured to be part of the Employer Panel at the launch of their Skills and Employment plan in January and I held a workshop for employability mentors and coaches in March as part of their Employability Conference in The Conwy Business Centre. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to share my voice as an employer about the skills needs within my organisation and the wider creative and digital sector”

~ Hannah Roose, The VAE



“The Regional Skills Partnership recently supported us with a recruitment challenge. An increase in business output meant we were tasked with an increase in resource needs and looking to recruit 40 short term hires in a tight time frame. The network they connected us with provided immediate and invaluable support for our requirements, these included Local Authorities delivering the Communities for Work Plus programme and the Department for Work and Pensions. These connections meant that we got a diverse talent pool and completed a successful campaign by accessing local talent using a network curated directly with the team at the Regional Skills Partnership.”

~ Lucy Rimmer, Qioptiq



“We, as well as many employers across the social care sector are faced with acute challenges relating to staff recruitment and retention. Plas Garnedd are very grateful for Catherine and the team for their help in supporting us to try to recruit support workers into jobs in Anglesey and in Gwynedd. Catherine arranged and facilitated a meeting between us and local employability providers, everyone involved had an influence in their own area of work and the process was of huge value to us. We didn't know that this support existed to us as employers, we are very grateful to the Regional Skills Partnership for providing us with these links.”

~ Trevor & Elen Hughes, Plas Garnedd



05. Assessment Over the Last 12 Months

Employability Working Group

The Employability Working Group has increased in scale and strength over the last year with a range of new agencies attending and bringing their perspectives and experience to the table. I have been particularly pleased to see increased representation from the voluntary sector, a critical part of the complex employability ecosystem across the region. The group hosted an excellent conference for frontline staff from all sectors late in the year and it was fantastic to see the teams working together, sharing their learning and building strong foundations for future collaboration. Achievements over the last year include:

- Arranged an all day face to face employability conference. Around 70 mentors and advisers across all sectors attended the conference in Llandudno. The conference included workshops, group discussions, Q&A sessions, and panel talks to demonstrate the employability opportunities available across the region and provide stakeholders with greater insight into the resources available
- Arranged and delivered a week long social media campaign to promote employability support. Members of the group in collaboration, under a single hashtag, #EmpoweringNorthWales posted case studies and good news stories about individuals and employers who have benefitted from various employability projects as part of a celebration of European Social Fund. The campaign had more than 5,500 impressions (views) across LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.
- Delivered on the 2022/23 employability working group action plan and created a new action plan that supports the wider RSP skills action plan as part of the new three year skills and employment plan
- Provided a channel for regular updates from key partners, Welsh Government, Local authorities, DWP and Working Wales relating to employability programmes, events and funding opportunities as well up to date data and information on the regional landscape in terms of people and certain groups of people in need of employability support
- Lead on various workshops throughout the year, to support with the development of the new Skills and employment plan, to identify regional priorities in readiness for the Shared Prosperity Fund and a workshop was held to support the Young Person's Guarantee to outline the current employability provision available for young people and identify gaps
- Numerous Partnerships and coworking schemes have evolved amongst employability providers through the promotion of provision during group meetings, these include Social Care Wales, AAT, We Mind the Gap, Conwy Connect, The Vae, The National Skills Academy for Food & Drink (Wales) and Outdoor Partnership

~ Niall Waller, Chair



Work-based Learning Provider Group

This year I'm pleased that we have been able to build our programme of actions to meet and support the RSP's new Skills and Employment plan 2023-25, with all the region's Work-Based Learning providers working together to find new ways of building and improving opportunities at all levels in North Wales. We have also been able to bring new shared apprenticeship pilots to the region, including in the creative industries, and have now embarked on a collaborative discussion with the RSP's Public Sector Employer Group on how we can tailor and add value to apprenticeships within this key employment sector in North Wales.

Achievements over the last year include:

- Delivered on the 2022/23 provider group action plan and created a new action plan linked to the new three year RSP skills and employment action plan
- In response to the challenge employers and individuals face on where to find information about apprenticeships, the WBL Provider Group developed a Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship Brochure which highlights the benefits of apprenticeships and clearly shows the apprenticeship pathways, at these levels, on offer in the region as well the providers who deliver in the region.
- A joint meeting between the WBL Provider Group and the Public Sector Employer Cluster Group was held in March to address the challenges faced across public sector organisations relating to the WBL learning offer, delivery, and provision in North Wales. Examples of current difficulties include attracting prospective candidates, people's perception of apprenticeships and funding barriers faced by employers to upskilling the workforce. Plans are already underway to collaboratively address some of the challenges faced by the sector.
- Took part in two skills workshop to identify regional skills priorities as preparation for the Shared Prosperity Fund
- Supported each other's campaigns and events during National Apprenticeship Week with a single objective of promoting apprenticeship opportunities
- A face to face workshop was held to support development of the new Skills and Employment Plan. Topics of discussion included the role of apprenticeships within the plan, general promotion of apprenticeships, regional priority sectors as well as how providers and the RSP together identify and meet future needs
- The new shared apprenticeships model was discussed to understand the regional need. We discussed partnership working opportunities and how to mitigate duplication of offer. Grwp Llandrillo Menai now offers a supported shared apprenticeship opportunity with Agoriad and continues to offer the successful shared apprenticeship opportunity for the creative sector
- The group has developed a list of Large Scale Job Generating Investments in North Wales in order to monitor and respond to the skills demand of significant projects in the region, maximising opportunities for work based learning.
- Responded to new and changes to qualifications to ensure regional effectiveness

~ Paul Bevan, Chair



Digital Skills Network

The last 12 months have seen the group thrive and excel in its partnership working. We have been working to help employers overcome some of their shared barriers and challenges by making connections and sharing best practice and lessons learnt from past experiences. The group has refocused and reformed in a new structure, and we continue to push forward with raising awareness of digital skills needs in North Wales. Having seen how much we've achieved in the last 12 months motivates me further to continue our work as a network. Some of the networks achievements include:

- Hosted a workshop and Digital Skills Expo in partnership with M-SParc in June 2022. We saw over 120 employers, individuals and students come together to showcase their work and job opportunities. The event was a success with several job interviews being offered, allowing some employers to tackle their recruitment challenges.
- Shared best practice with employers in the sector including presentations from Google and BT.
- Focused on to the new Curriculum and Work-Related experience and how this affects the digital competency of future generations. To support the network's understanding of the new curriculum we have delivered focus items on CWRE, with guest speakers from GwE and Qualifications Wales who have been able to share how digital skills are being integrated into education from age 3 onwards.
- The Digital Dozen was formed as a new and innovative group comprised of 10 - 14 local employers from across the region. The primary objective of the Digital Dozen is to address the digital skills gap and ensure that the region's workforce is adequately prepared to harness the potential of digital technologies. By fostering a supportive environment for learning and skill development, the group aims to empower individuals and businesses to embrace digital innovation, drive economic growth, and improve overall productivity.

~ Pryderi ap Rhisiart, Chair



Public Sector Employer Cluster Group

Over the last 12 months we have become a collaborative and coordinated group. Creating a detailed plan of action to address some of the key issues facing the sector. We have strengthened our relationships as public sector bodies and shared good practice. Some key achievements have been our ability to influence provision from our local providers and provide data to ensure equal opportunities for our Welsh speaking workforce.

Achievements over the last year include:

- Hosted workshops to identify common themes of employer challenges and barriers. This included skill gaps, recruitment difficulties and possible solutions. An action plan has been developed to support the sector with some of the issues and challenges identified. Work continues to deliver on the action plan
- Common themes were communicated to the Work Based Learning Provider group during a joint meeting held in March, discussions and actions are ongoing to support the sector with some of the challenges raised, Welsh language provision, employability skills and other bolt on to apprenticeships as well as degree apprenticeships
- Members of the group engaged in collaborative discussions, during regular meetings and outside of meetings, to share knowledge, perspectives, and experiences
- Provided a channel for the group to engage with stakeholders, such as Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, NTfW, Grwp Llandrillo Menai and Coleg Cambria
- Provided a platform to share best practice amongst members, such as the Cyngor Gwynedd Apprenticeship scheme and their graduate programme, Cynllun Yfory. This was particularly helpful for organisations who don't yet have an established apprenticeship scheme or are in early stages of development

~ **Heather Johnson, Chair**



Construction Employer Cluster Group

The construction cluster group has worked together over the past 12 months to establish an action plan and I'm really pleased with how much has been discussed and progressed in such a short space of time. The group has provided a platform for employers to voice their needs in terms of provision and its great news that a funded degree apprenticeship in construction is now in development, for the benefit of the young people in our industry. I am sure successes like this will continue to come through the cluster group over the next 12 months and beyond.

Achievements over the last year include:


- Identified and analysed current and future skills demands, identified areas where shortages exist and discussed ways to bridge those gaps effectively through working with training providers, awarding bodies and other stakeholders. An action plan has been developed by the group that will support the sector with the challenges identified
- Provided a channel for the group to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and training providers
- Actively provided feedback on the new construction apprenticeships to City and Guilds and CITB to influence changes to the current apprenticeship framework requirements and qualification
- Shared best practice which supports others with their organisation's social value strategies for example how they engage with schools and the benefits this brings to their organisations to build a talent pipeline and to inspire young people, to consider a career in construction
- Shared views to the Welsh Government via the RSP about the need across the sector for a funded construction degree apprenticeship. The Welsh Government have now confirmed the development of a degree apprenticeship in civils, surveying, and construction management to take place during 2023-2024.


~ Alison Hourihane, Chair





06. Next 12 Months

 Over the next 12 months, our focus, alongside our partners is to deliver and bring the priorities of our Skills and Employment 2023-25 to life to make a difference to our employers and to the people of the region.

We're currently entering into a new period in the region with the end of European funding, delivery of the Shared Prosperity fund, the development of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) and consultations on pre-16 and post 16 Made in Wales qualifications - all of which will bring about key changes to the skills landscape in Wales. The RSP and broader partners are eager to embrace these changes, that will no doubt bring challenges with them. We want to work with CTER, Qualifications Wales and Welsh Government to ensure that our employers voice is not only heard, but considered in meaningful way. We also want to continue to develop the talent pipeline within education, schools, apprenticeships, FE and HE and ensure that individuals know their options when it comes to their career path and understand the vast opportunities in the region. 



We have some exciting developments over the next 12 months which include:

- Launching our young persons skills plan and toolkit which will include details on career pathways, information on our sectors, 'day in the life of' videos and case studies
- Pilot career pathways shared communication plan with Ynys Mon secondary schools in collaboration with head teachers, Careers Wales, GwE, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Llwyddo'n Lleol 2050
- Work on delivering a Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance Directory in collaboration with Careers Wales and Cardiff Capital Region RSP, Mid Wales RSP and South West RSP
- Skills analysis on Low Carbon Energy developments, digital skills and Health & Social Care skills in the region
- Publish a Low Carbon Energy prospectus for businesses showcasing our excellent educational facilities and skills pipeline
- Hold themed events to match employers, young people and providers to understand skills provision and labour market intelligence
- Continue to work with Welsh Government and providers to influence skills provision and policy
- Continue to support the employability and skills needs of the North Wales Growth Deal programmes
- Continue to support large scale Investment in the region, i.e Freeport to ensure that a pipeline of talent locally

I'm looking forward to continuing to work with our employers, providers and stakeholders to deliver our ambitious vision for skills and employment. We have the enthusiasm and drive as #TeamNorthWales



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