



Partneriaeth Sgiliau Rhanbarthol
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Regional Skills Partnership

Annual Report 2023-2024

North Wales Regional Skills
Partnership

Contents

01. Welcome & Introduction

02. Who are the North Wales RSP?

- Our Role & Remit
- Governance & Membership

03. Our North Wales Skills Blueprint

04. Our 2023-24 Highlights

05. Our Priorities

- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3

06. Next 12 months

07. Contact the Team



Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Report for the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership where we showcase the work that we have been doing over the past twelve months. It's been a busy year during which we have worked hard to support employers and individuals across society, and strengthen the connections between them, as we committed to do in our Skills and Employment Plan launched last year.

During the year, we have focussed on gaining insights into key growth areas such as low carbon energy skills and digital skills, which has enabled us to develop resources suitable for young people and employers alike. Inspiring the next generation towards the amazing range of careers and job opportunities that exist is vital to individual attainment and regional prosperity, and we have seen the RSP expand its engagement - directly and indirectly - with young people in secondary education.

We have engaged with more employers than ever and continue to strengthen our partnerships. Our role to support employers has grown in significance and we will continue help communicate the training and employment opportunities available across the region. We have an excellent range of skills provision in North Wales, but we know that we must collectively do a better job of communicating this and helping employers access the support that they need, when they need it. Engagement with the SME community is a key goal for the year ahead.

I cannot close without recognising the contributions of our RSP Board members, our sub-group chairs and members. The past year's achievements would not have been possible without their hard work and dedication. Through mutual passion and shared goals, we hope to continue to play a key role in shaping the region's skills system, and I look forward to continued collaboration over the year ahead.

David Roberts

Chair of the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership



Who are the North Wales RSP?

Our Role and Remit

The North Wales Regional Skills Partnership is one of four partnerships across Wales, bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand employer skills needs 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 and provides vital strategic advice, oversight and recommendations to decision-makers.

The RSP believe in the transformative power of training and upskilling new and existing staff to drive business provision seamlessly with business needs.

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.

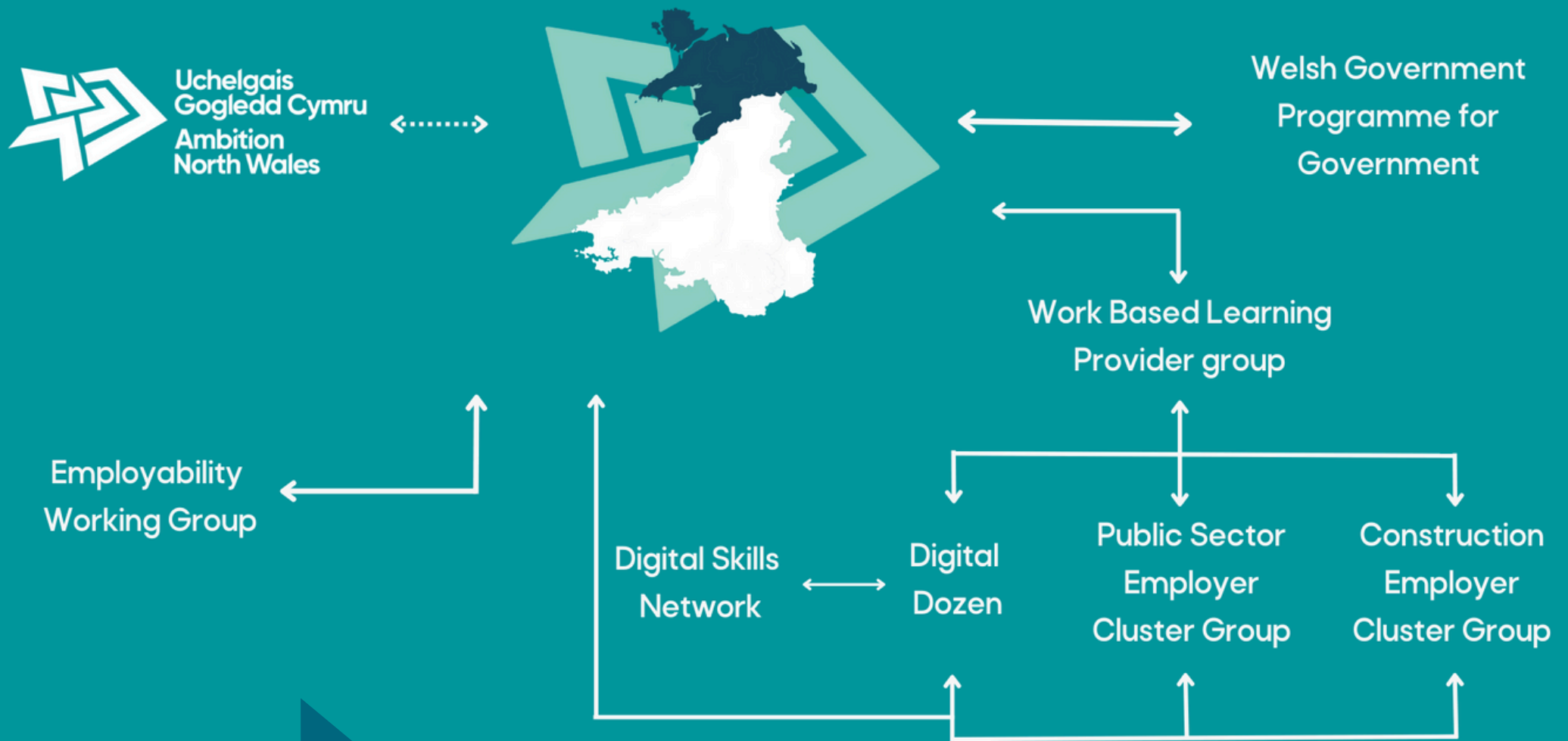
Governance and Membership

Feeding into the RSP Board, there are five sub-group / clusters. These include:

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

These networks are made up of a local training providers, local employability providers and local employers, from SMEs to large enterprises. The purpose of these network is to bring people together to share their challenges and best practice, and to strengthen collaborations across the region.

North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Structure



North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Membership



Our North Wales Skills Blueprint

To underpin our Vision, and set within our regional context, 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

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

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

Our 2023-24 Highlights

Q1



Gwynt y Môr Offshore
Wind Farm Visit



Recruiting ex-offenders:
dispelling myths



Gathered responses to
support Welsh Government's
Net Zero Skills Road Map

Q2



The Eisteddfod
Genedlaethol

Q3



Roundtable discussion at
the Ireland - Wales forum



Seren Conference
Seminar



Empowering North
Wales: Pathways to
Your Future



Low carbon energy
skills research

Q4



Low carbon energy
prospectus and video



Digital Skills Research



Low carbon energy
video



UK SPF Funding for
Skills Portal

Our Priorities

To underpin our recently launched Skills and Employment Plan 2023-2025, we have three over-arching priorities that support the growth within the skills landscape in North Wales. These priorities were drawn together from extensive workshops with the RSP Board and it's sub-groups, as well as being influenced by other evidence and feedback from a wide range of employers, providers and key stakeholders.

This has been our first year of delivery under the 2023-2025 Skills and Employment Plan, and we have worked tirelessly to deliver on our action plan that addresses each of these priorities. We have included some of this year's highlights to showcase the fantastic work we have achieved alongside our partners and stakeholders.

1

Enabling and
Empowering
Employers



2

Enabling and
Empowering
Individuals



3

How support is
provided and
making the
connections



Priority 1: Enabling and Empowering Employers

Low Carbon Energy Skills Research

Low Carbon Energy is a major growth area in North Wales. With this in mind, we commissioned Wavehill to undertake a skills analysis across the low carbon energy industry in North Wales. This included offshore and onshore Wind, Marine energy including tidal as well as Nuclear including SMR developments and Decommissioning. The project objective was to better understand the skills and job roles required by developers and their supply chain, now and over the next 10 years. This research was also key in identifying any skills gaps and shortages faced by the industry. Key developers in the region, RWE, Magnox, BP, Cwmni Eginio and Morlais were responsible for steering the direction of the work. The next step is to work with providers in the region to understand the provision that is available against what is required by industry and identify any gaps (if any). Follow [THIS](#) link to read the full report.

Low Carbon Energy Prospectus and Video

In collaboration with providers in the region, the RSP have developed resources to highlight the excellent educational and training facilities available in North Wales to support the low carbon energy industry as it continues to evolve and grow. The purpose of these engaging resources is to inform and inspire businesses in the low carbon energy industry to establish their businesses in North Wales due to the outstanding training facilities available that businesses could utilise to train staff. We wanted to showcase the outstanding facilities available in North Wales by collating the information into one, easy-to-access location meaning the information. Follow [THIS](#) link to access the prospectus and [THIS](#) link to access the short video.



Retrofit and Net Zero Skills

With Net Zero Skills becoming more and more prevalent, the RSP Board focused on retrofitting and net zero skills at their September meeting in the new Tŷ Gwyrddfai, Decarbonisation hub. These discussions reiterated that skills will be a key enabler as we transition to a net zero economy. The need to ensure that we have the correct provision, future skills pipeline and supply chain in place in the region to deliver on the optimised retrofit programme was apparent. It is vital that both employers and individuals are prepared for the future demands in retrofit and net zero skills. There is a crucial role for the RSP Board and its partners to play in enabling this to ensure we are ready to respond as demands grow in net zero jobs. We're looking forward to working closely with the regional social landlords and responding to their skills and workforce needs.

Anglesey Freeport and Investment Zones

The availability of relevant skills is a critical enabler of the investment and growth ambitions of Anglesey Freeport. Providing young people with the skills they need to engage in future employment as well as upskilling the existing workforce to benefit from new opportunities is a key ambition in the region. The RSP have provided labour market intelligence and data on skills needs to inform the skills plan which aims to ensure:

- 1.The necessary skills are available in the local labour market for the Freeport to achieve the expected investment and job creation;
- 2.That local people are able to access jobs created by the Freeport including removing barriers faced by individuals with protected characteristics, those not currently in employment, and those in low-paid work; and
- 3.The creation of high-quality employment opportunities, attracting companies to locate in the area.



Gathered employer and WBL Provider response to support Welsh Government's Net Zero Skills Road Map

We collected feedback from employers on the key challenges they encounter when upskilling their staff in net zero skills. This information will support the Welsh Government in developing a Net Zero Skills Road Map. Employers face significant challenges when it comes to upskilling their staff in net zero skills. A major issue is the confusion surrounding terminology; terms like "net zero skills" and "green skills" are often unclear with too much jargon, leading to a lack of understanding among employees. Additionally, many employees are already overburdened with their current workloads, making the prospect of additional training seem daunting and unwelcome. This is compounded by a widespread lack of awareness about the importance of net zero initiatives and their relevance to individual roles within the organisation. Furthermore, there is a notable gap in sector-specific knowledge, with many employees unaware of the necessity to upskill in response to industry changes, such as advancements in housing maintenance or low carbon heating systems. The rapid introduction of new technologies further exacerbates this issue, as employees struggle to keep up with what is currently being implemented and what is planned for the future. Pride and reluctance to admit skill gaps also pose significant barriers, preventing many from acknowledging their need for further training. Finally, motivating staff to engage with new initiatives and adapt to evolving standards remains a significant challenge for employers.

Offshore Energy Alliance Skills Topic Champion

Offshore Energy Alliance and Regional Skills Partnership have united to propel North Wales as a hub for skilled local supply chain in the growing offshore wind industry. The North Wales coast is poised for a significant surge in offshore energy initiatives, with the Mona, Morgan, and Awel y Môr wind farms in the pipeline set to play a pivotal role in the UK's renewable energy landscape. Recognising the transformative potential of these projects, the partnership between the RSP and OEA is strategically designed to ensure that the region not only meets but exceeds the skills requirements for this burgeoning sector. This collaborative effort aims to address the imminent demand for a skilled local supply chain and mitigate the potential skills gap associated with the upcoming expansion of offshore wind projects.

Digital Skills Research

Digital Skills is a cross-cutting theme in every industry and job role. To better understand the Digital Skills landscape across North Wales, we commissioned a piece of research, engaging with organisations of all sizes, in all sectors across the region as we recognise that Digital Skills are not limited to one particular sector. Broadly, the purpose of the research was to gain insights into the needs of employers when considering basic and advanced digital skills, tools and technologies, and the diversity of the workforce in the region. Tony Venus of ODAG Consulting, the appointed consultant, carried out the research and presented his findings and the subsequent report with recommendations to the RSP Board and the Digital Dozen. This report will provide a suggested direction of travel for the Digital Dozen and the group will now begin taking action on the 8 recommendations presented in the report.

To read the report or find out more about the recommendations, follow the [link](#).

Construction Degree Apprenticeships

We've been actively engaged in advocating for the development of a construction degree apprenticeship within the Construction Employer Cluster Group. We're pleased to announce that the launch of this new degree apprenticeship program is confirmed for September 2024. The program will offer four distinct pathways for aspiring professionals:

1. Construction Management
2. Civil Engineering
3. Quantity Surveying
4. Surveying



Employer Survey

Building on our 2022-23 employer survey, we committed to conducting another employer survey in 2023-24 to ensure that any activity delivered by the RSP was responding appropriately to current employer needs. We received 76 responses to the survey. 68% of employers said that recruitment is their current biggest challenge, along with economic/financial challenges (36%) and developing staff (29%) proving difficult for employers, all of which are unchanged from our 2022-23 survey. We used this information to inform our plans for the year, whether that was commissioning research, working to inspire the next generation or forward planning for events for front line staff and employers.

76

Employer
Responses

68%

feel recruitment
is a challenge

36%

face economic /
financial challenges

29%

see developing staff
as a challenge



Priority 2: Enabling and Empowering Individuals

Career Pathways Pilot

Together with Cyngor Sir Fôn, Anglesey Education Department, Teachers, Coleg Menai, GWE, Careers Wales, and Llwyddo'n Lleol we've established a Career Pathways Pilot on Ynys Môn. In collaboration, we're launching pilot projects across all five secondary schools in Ynys Môn to inspire young minds about local training and career opportunities and the different pathways to their future. One project for the group is the Teacher Encounter Pilot, which equips teachers with insights into regional job opportunities, allowing them to integrate this knowledge into their classroom teaching and make the connections between the curriculum and working skills.

Another initiative we are developing is an 'Inspire to Build' project, led by the Construction Employer Sub-group. This will be a short-term programme, shining a spotlight on higher-level construction roles such as architecture, planning and quantity surveying. The purpose of this programme is to help inspire young people to consider a career in roles with growing demand. We look forward to updating you on progress with this pilot and hope to see the first cohort take part at the beginning of the next 2024/25 academic year.

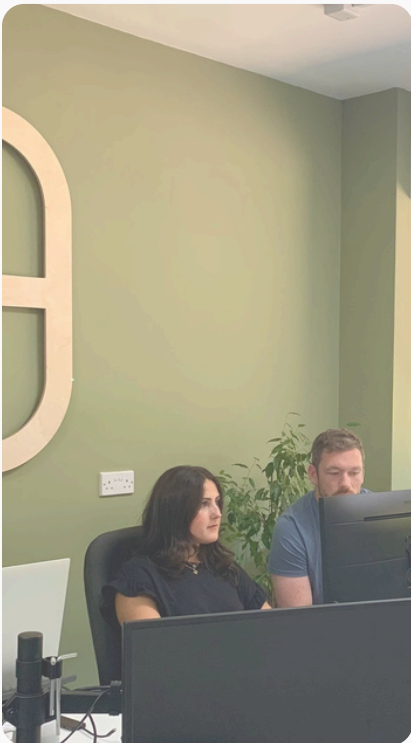
Seren Conference Seminar: 'North Wales: Your Pathways to the Future'

Sian Lloyd Roberts

Delivering a seminar at the Seren Conference



The team held a seminar on 'North Wales: Your Pathways to the Future' at a recent Seren Conference to highlight graduate employment and training opportunities and showcase the opportunities across the region. Over 400 young people attended the session, where they received information on degree apprenticeships, labour market intelligence on key growth sectors, North Wales Growth Deal opportunities and information on employers that have graduate roles. The information provided at the seminar were extracts from our Young Person's Toolkit. The Welsh Government created the Seren Network to ensure that Wales' highest achieving students, aged 16-19 have the right support to make the most of their talents.



Empowering North Wales: Pathways to Your Future

Young people are our future, so it's essential that they feel fully informed about their options. To support young people in their decisions, we have developed an online young person's toolkit, bringing together all the key pieces of information that will help young people to feel confident when making decisions about their future. The toolkit is primarily designed to support 16 - 24-year-olds, however it is also a great tool for individuals from 11 years+, as well as parents, teachers, career advisors and others. It serves as a great introduction to the current training and employment landscape in North Wales.

As every individual is different and will want to engage with this information in their own unique way, we developed four key elements in our young person's toolkit; a young person's skills plan, an animated video summary of the skills plan, written case studies and videos from individuals sharing their thoughts on working in the region. Through our case studies and videos, we have showcased some fantastic young people who are currently thriving in their sectors in North Wales; we recognised the importance of having true representation of young people to inspire our future workforce. The toolkit is designed to be used by stakeholders and employers as a way to highlight opportunities in the key and growth sectors in North Wales, shining a light on roles that are often not considered or face outdated stereotypes. To find out more about the young person's toolkit, click [here](#).

On the next page we have included some quotes from individuals who have already seen the value in our Young Person's Toolkit!



Young Person

"I didn't know where to look for an overview of my options for when I finish my A-Levels. I'm still not sure what I want to do next, but the Young Person's Toolkit has been a good way for me to consider all the options available in North Wales."



Parent of GCSE student

"I wish we had resources like this when we were young - I may have considered a different path entirely! I'm glad my daughter has access to something like this where her options are set out clearly and she can be confident to follow the path she wants."



Teacher

"This toolkit is extremely useful when supporting pupils to make decisions about the future. Things have changed a lot from when I was in their position, so it's great to have this resources as a guide."

Low Carbon Energy Video

Low Carbon Energy is a growing industry in North Wales with plenty of opportunities available across the region. To build on the Young Person's Toolkit and to support employers by ensuring there is a suitable talent pipeline in the region, we've developed some inspiring videos to spotlight the different career opportunities available in North Wales. Whether it's nuclear, marine, or wind power, we've covered it all in the latest addition to the Young Person's Toolkit. We've included an interview from an employer and from an apprentice to give a well-rounded overview of what to expect when working in the sector. The Low Carbon Energy sector is an exciting sector to be part of, and we hope to inspire the next generation of individuals to work in the sector. To find out more and to view the new videos, please visit our [website](#).



North Wales Skills Portal

In October, we received confirmation that we had been awarded some UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding to deliver the North Wales Skills Portal. Rees Brown has joined us as the Skills Portal Project Manager and will focus his time on the delivery of the highly anticipated skills portal. The purpose of the skills portal will be to provide a digital front door to training and job opportunities in North Wales. It will be a new digital platform for the benefit of employers, skills providers and key stakeholders in the region. Development of the portal is underway and we anticipate the launch of the portal in the summer of 2024 and will keep you updated of progress being made.

Recruiting Ex-offenders: Dispelling Myths

Finding work after leaving prison can be difficult for individuals due to the myths associated with recruiting an ex-offender. To dispel some of these myths, the RSP, Ministry of Justice, Working Wales, Welsh Government and DWP worked together to offer employer visits to HMP Berwyn. The aim of these visits was to show employers how individuals develop their skills while in the prison, gaining practical and transferable skills that can be used in the workplace. Several visits to HMP Berwyn were organised and they were well attended by employers across various sectors and have resulted in creating better links with industry and joint working to ensure the recruitment of ex-offenders in the region. We look forward to continuing with this work with HMP Berwyn to further support individuals seamlessly into work throughout 2024/25.

Work Experience Placements

Providing meaningful work experience opportunities has been a subject of discussion with the employers, stakeholders and broader RSP members during the year. Employers that we have spoken to are keen to offer work experience opportunities to young people as they recognise that it enables employers to access the range of talents and unique skills and insights young people bring. It also provides opportunities for existing staff to supervise and mentor young people, helping to develop their management and other professional and personal skills. During the year, we have worked with Welsh Government and partners to develop guidance for employers, parents and schools to highlight the benefits of work experience placements across all our key and growth sectors.

Priority 3: How Support is Provided and Making the Connections

Sharing and Developing Labour Market Intelligence and Data in the Region

During the year, the RSP team have engaged with key stakeholders to share information on labour market intelligence, which includes industries that are growing and declining in the region, as well sharing employers' skills gaps and needs with partners. Information and presentation were made to key stakeholder groups including further education, apprenticeship providers and higher education providers. This year, the RSP also presented and shared LMI with Careers Wales Career Advisors and Business Engagement Advisors, as well as teachers and head teachers in schools which has been warmly received. The RSP Data Observatory and Sector Dashboard and infographics on our website have also been reviewed during the year and now provide up to date data on our key and growth sectors as well as demographic data. Find out more [here](#).

The Eisteddfod Genedlaethol



Over the summer, we attended the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Boduan, Gwynedd. Alongside Ambition North Wales, we had a number of engaging activities for young people. From a tidal energy model (courtesy of Morlais) to a site-wide treasure hunt and postcard activity, our stand was a vibrant hub of activity throughout the week. This was a great opportunity for us to engage with young people to better

understand what their aspirations are for their future. This opened a number of conversations with young people about their understanding of what options are available to them in North Wales. We hope we were able to inspire some young people to follow pathways they may not have previously considered.



Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Visit

In celebration of 'International Women in Engineering Day', RWE invited us to join them for an afternoon at the Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm, the largest offshore wind farm in Wales, situated off the coast of North Wales. We spent the afternoon learning about the great work that takes place at Gwynt y Môr, celebrating the women who are part of the team, and we even had the privilege to take a boat trip to the turbines. It was a fantastic opportunity to see first-hand the scale of work and skills required to maintain the turbines, as well as getting an insight into the cross-section of opportunities available in the sector.



Roundtable Discussion at the Ireland-Wales Forum



The RSP team presented during two round-table discussions at the recent Ireland-Wales Forum that took place at Bangor University. The Ireland-Wales Forum is an annual event where Welsh and Irish Ministers meet to engage political economic and broader stakeholders to develop relationships, exchange policy perspectives, share learning and build cooperation. The main aim is to strengthen the broader Ireland-Wales bilateral relationship. The focus of the forum was on skills and renewable energy. The team were able to present the work of the North Wales RSP to Simon Harris, the Irish Minister for FE HE, Research, Innovation & Science and Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales. We were also able to launch the Low Carbon Energy Skills Prospectus and video at the Roundtable on Energy. Positive feedback was received, and further discussion have ensued with the Department for Education in Ireland on future collaboration on skills and employability matters.

Campaigns, Marketing and Communications

Social Media



In the last 12 months, we utilised our social media platforms to host and support campaigns, sharing messages to inspire individuals of all ages about the options available to them in North Wales. This year we focussed on Results Week, Adult Learner's Week, Apprenticeship Week and Careers Week. With similar themes throughout these campaigns, we used extracts from the Young Person's Toolkit, as well as videos and case studies from the Toolkit to highlight the extent of opportunities available to individuals through work or training.

Sian Lloyd Roberts was also a panellist on the BBC Bitesize Career Tour at Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, sharing her career journey. It was also a great chance to promote the fantastic opportunities on offer for young people in North Wales.

Partner Events and Projects

We've been deeply engaged in supporting numerous partner and stakeholder events by fostering connections among employers, employability providers, training institutions, and schools. One notable event was SparcX on December 5th, where we facilitated connections between M-SParc and employability providers, aiming to assist individuals in accessing various support services to enhance their readiness for entering the labour market. This event had a focus on net zero jobs.

Additionally, we played an active role in organising the Business Inspiring the Next Generation event led by Flintshire Council which was held at AMRC on 19th and 20th October. Our primary focus was to facilitate communication with schools across the region, thus promoting the event effectively. We also helped to encourage STEM employers to participate in the event.

Furthermore, our collaboration extends to working closely with Arfor and the Llwyddo'n Lleol Project. Arfor, a joint initiative by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd, and Anglesey Councils, is dedicated to utilising entrepreneurship and economic development to bolster the heartlands of the Welsh language and sustain its vitality.

How have we helped employers and partners?

Through our work as the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership, we work tirelessly to support employers, build connections and grow our networks to ensure North Wales can maximise its potential within skills and employability. To showcase our hard work and commitment to the development of skills in the region, we reached out to our networks to hear their testimonials about how we've supported them over the last 12 months. Take a look at what has been said about the value of our role:

Alwen Williams - Portfolio Director, Ambition North Wales

The Regional Skills Partnership is an integral part of the Ambition North Wales team. They are passionate about supporting employers and key sectors to address immediate skills needs, but the unquestionable value is in their ability to bring stakeholders together to plan for the evolving skills demands for the future. Our economy is facing into a very exciting time and I feel privileged to work with colleagues who are not only fun to work with but also experts in their field. This team drives the skills and employability initiatives across North Wales, ensuring we are well-prepared for future challenges and opportunities.



Fran Lewis - Head of People and Performance, Conwy County Borough Council

Being part of the Regional Skills Partnership Public Sector sub group has been invaluable support. As well as the opportunity to be kept up to date with key developments and learning opportunities, it's been invaluable to network with colleagues and share common problems and solutions. The Regional Skills Partnership supported our PSB engagement work on Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment alongside the Regional Community Cohesion Teams. Their support enabled us to reach out and share the feedback to a wide audience, which was a great way to collaborate and share ideas.



Ceri Middleton - Work Coach, We Care Wales

Growing pressures in the social care and the early years and play sectors led to the formation of the WeCare Wales campaign. The small team has been tasked with reaching a Wales wide audience to de-myth and positively change the perception of care, and support in the attraction, recruitment and retention of its workforce. We attend career events, provide awareness sessions to professionals and the public, offer free introductory training, resources and a website with information on starting a career in care. Being a part of the North Wales Employability Working group has been a game changer. The group has provided a platform to reach a wide and diverse professional network across North Wales. It has also created a space to better understand the economic landscape and challenges across the regions. Since joining we have managed to build important connections with relevant partners in education, employment, volunteering, and support services, which has been a great advantage. We have also seen how the regional partners have worked collaboratively to produce strong working partnerships that support the needs of local communities. We have built connections with local projects, reaching a diverse range of potential job seekers, with our free training offer and Guaranteed Interview Scheme. This has greatly supported the sectors in reaching new audiences in their attraction, recruitment, and retention campaign, whilst also supporting new career pathways in local communities. We value the opportunity this has given us and look forward to future work together.

Gofalwn .cymru | WeCare .wales

Rhianwen Edwards - Director of Commercial and WBL, Busnes@ Llandrillo Menai

In a rapidly evolving economy, nurturing talent through work-based learning is paramount. As Chair of the Work-based Learning Provider Group, I'm proud of our commitment at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to improve people's futures and how, through robust partnerships, we are helping to drive economic growth in North Wales. Our dedication to providing high-quality training aligns with the goals of the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership. Together, we're shaping a skilled workforce equipped to meet the demands of today's and tomorrow's industries.

Grŵp
**Llandrillo
Menai**
Llandrillo Menai Meirion Dwyfor Busnes@ Llandrillo Menai



Klaire Tanner - Freelance Creative Director

The recent research commissioned by the Regional Skills Partnership has been instrumental in highlighting the critical need for advanced digital skills in our community. As a member of the Digital Dozen, I've used these insights to steer my workshops, which I deliver to young people and companies. Incorporating VR, game design, and AI has not only enhanced the quality and relevance of the workshops but also ensured that participants are equipped with cutting-edge skills. The comprehensive data and actionable recommendations from the research are empowering us to address skills gaps effectively, ultimately enhancing digital inclusion and economic growth in North Wales.



Jane Meredith - OD and Learning Partner, Cartrefi Conwy

We have been part of the Regional Skills Partnership, North Wales Public Sector Apprenticeships Employer Cluster Group since 2021 and value the work that the RSP have been doing in this field. The knowledge that they bring to meetings is immense whether from themselves or from the partners that they invite to share information. Through the RSP, we have been able to partner with Grwp Coleg Menai to introduce a numeracy skills element into the employability projects that we run at Cartrefi Conwy via our subsidiary company Creating Enterprise CIC, making use of funding they had available for numeracy skills through the Multiply Project. Collaborating on some ideas we had, Grwp Coleg Menai created some bespoke numeracy sessions that are practical, real-life and specific to those keen to enter the Construction job market via our Passport to Construction programme, giving our participants an added skill for their CV which will be beneficial to their future employability. We have received excellent feedback from the participants, with one participant stating that it was the best part of the programme. We will be continuing to partner with Grwp Coleg Menai to expand our reach into our communities via further projects to help others with their numeracy skills. Thanks to RSP for helping us to build partnerships to support and grow skills and employability in our communities.



Tudur Jones - Chief Economic Development Officer, Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn

The willingness by Sian and the Regional Skills Partnership to provide ongoing policy input, baseline information and general support throughout the process of developing the Anglesey Freeport Business Case, for submission to Welsh and UK Governments, is invaluable. Ensuring that the local workforce and local business have the necessary skills and qualifications to make the most, over the next 20 years, of opportunities arising from Freeport activity is vital to the local economy. We look forward, therefore, to continue working proactively with the RSP, both to further substantiate and refine the Freeport Skills Plan as well as to drive its subsequent implementation and delivery.



Craig Weeks - Operations Director, JCB

We are creating a culture to deliver excellence, and ensuring people are equipped with the relevant skills to respond to any opportunities in the region is something I am undeniably passionate about. It can be seen through our activities at JCB Transmissions, from engaging with schools or delivering training through our new JCB Skills academy, we will take any opportunity we get to make a difference. But it's very important to say that none of this would be possible without collaborative working with business and education especially the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership. The North Wales Regional Skills Partnership has allowed me to expand my Networks and connect with new people, giving me new opportunities to Inspire Young people and encourage other employers to nurture their current and potential employee's as well as develop myself further. We have a great network of people in North Wales and I look forward to continuing to maximise opportunities through our partnership working and leaving a legacy by changing lives



Vicky Barlow - Senior Manager for School Improvement, Flintshire Education and Youth Portfolio.



I have been delighted to join the work of the Regional Skills Partnership Board over the last twelve months. It has been so helpful for my work with schools to gain a greater insight into the variety of work undertaken by the Partnership. There is a strong focus on providing relevant information and career opportunities to young people and to help support them understand how to navigate career pathways into employment. The digital skills focused research has been particularly interesting and is already informing our work.

I was delighted as well to be able to signpost our schools in Flintshire to the Young Person's Toolkit. This resource can be used by young people, parents, teachers, careers advisors and so many more to help inspire and inform young people. The 'day in the life of' videos in particular, shine a spotlight on why there are so many reasons to choose North Wales as a place to work and have a career. I have been very proud to work in North Wales for most of my career and it's great to see the work of the Board encouraging others to do the same.

It's an exciting time for the Partnership over the next twelve months and I look forward to being part of that journey.

Mandy Evans - Social Value and Sustainability Bid Writer, Griffiths

GRIFFITHS

Being a member of the Regional Skills Partnership Construction Employer Cluster sub-group has been extremely beneficial. It has provided us with regional updates, details of local initiatives and opportunities to link with those in, and supporting, the construction industry. The Regional Skills Partnership has pro-actively facilitated engagement between construction employers and educational establishments in a joint effort to address the region's skills gap. Regular meetings have allowed us to encourage collaboration and develop ideas, including a pilot initiative to encourage young people to consider the construction industry as a career choice.



Assessment Over the Last 12 Months

Employability Working Group

- This year, the group underwent a strategic shift towards becoming a dynamic network, hosting quarterly meetings and establishing a new LinkedIn page. This platform serves as a conduit for providers to exchange their offerings and provisions, fostering enhanced partnership working and collaboration. By sharing resources and insights, we aim to optimise support delivery to individuals in the region while minimising duplication risks.
- A primary focus was placed on enhancing support and provision for individuals from certain underrepresented groups. Through comprehensive assessment of existing resources and identification of gaps, we endeavoured to ensure inclusivity and equity in our services.
- The group welcomed new organisations as members, including the Salvation Army, We Mind the Gap, Agoriad, MPCT, COPA, Maximus and Social Care Wales. This expansion broadens our network, enriching collective expertise and resources in the region.
- Planning for monthly, targeted sessions aimed at employability coaches and mentors commenced this year, with a scheduled launch in April 2024. These focused sessions are designed to equip frontline staff with the latest information and knowledge about regional provisions, referral opportunities, and avenues for cross-organisational collaboration. Topics include JGW+, apprenticeships, support for individuals with disabilities and neurodiversity conditions, digital skills and more.
- In light of funding structure changes due to the end to ESF funding, the group were kept informed about UKSPF during the planning and development stages of the new funding mechanisms. By keeping members abreast of developments, organisations were well-prepared to submit applications to local authorities for their projects when calls were open, ensuring seamless continuity of support initiatives.

Niall Waller

Chair of the Employability Working Group



WBL Provider Group

- We warmly welcomed Rhianwen Edwards, the Director of Commercial and Work-based Learning at Grwp Llandrillo Menai, as the new chair of the group. Rhianwen brings invaluable expertise and experience to the group. We bid farewell to Paul Bevan, whose unwavering support and active leadership have been instrumental in guiding the group over the first half of this year.
- We dedicated significant efforts towards comprehensively understanding and enhancing the delivery of Welsh language and bilingual provision within our region, identifying areas for improvement and implementing targeted strategies.
- The group played a pivotal role in providing the Welsh Government with a comprehensive response aimed at supporting the development of the Net Zero Skills sector roadmap. This response encapsulated key insights from providers, highlighting the challenges faced by employers in upskilling their workforce in net zero skills, along with actionable suggestions on how providers can assist in disseminating the essential messaging of the Net Zero Skills Action Plan.
- In response to concerns voiced by employers regarding apprenticeship provision and delivery, the group have over the past year proactively engaged with challenges raised, ensuring that their responses were swift, effective, and tailored to meet the evolving needs of employers in the region.
- Throughout the year, we remained diligently informed about the Welsh Government's plans pertaining to degree apprenticeships and shared apprenticeships, actively participating in discussions and contributing insights to shape these initiatives for the benefit of all providers and stakeholders involved



Rhianwen Edwards

Chair of the WBL Provider Group

Public Sector Employer Cluster Group

- The group provided a comprehensive response to Welsh Government to support with developing their Net Zero Skills sector roadmap, highlighting the challenges faced by them as employers in upskilling their workforce with net zero skills.
- Through extensive discussions on the findings of the Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment work, the group shared best practices and resources that enhance inclusivity within public sector organisations. By adopting new actions or amplifying existing good practices, the group strives to ensure that public sector workforces mirror the diverse communities they serve, thereby meeting people's needs.
- The group remained informed about new developments within the Welsh Government's plans regarding degree apprenticeships, enabling them to proactively plan within their own workforce.
- Recognising the importance of Welsh language proficiency across organisations in the sector, the group invited the National Centre for Learning Welsh to present on the support they offer to employers and the workforce, including enhanced learning resources and initiatives.
- Acknowledging the variability in work placement opportunities across the region, organisations within the public sector are formalising their offerings to young people. These placements provide valuable insights into the world of work and align with the new curriculum for Wales. Careers Wales attended a meeting to provide insights on how work-related experiences align with the curriculum, ensuring coherence with pre-16 educational objectives.

Heather Johnson

Chair of the Public Sector Employer Cluster Group



Construction Employer Cluster Group

- In partnership with employers and CITB the group have contributed to the development of a 7-week programme tailored for year 12 learners, Inspire to Build. The programme is focused on on-trade careers such as quantity surveying, civil engineering, and construction management. This comprehensive initiative comprises sector-specific sessions led by employers, on-site experiences, and career pathway guidance. The programme is scheduled to commence as a pilot across Anglesey secondary high schools in the upcoming academic year, aiming to nurture future talent in the construction industry.
- Provided a response to the Welsh Government to support the development of their Net Zero Skills sector roadmap. The group effectively articulated the challenges faced by employers in upskilling their workforce with net zero skills, contributing valuable insights to inform policy and initiatives in the sector.
- Hosted Trustmark and NetRet Group Ltd in a meeting to explore the retrofit opportunity landscape. Through insightful discussions, the group gained valuable understanding of the challenges and solutions pertaining to supporting contractors and social landlords in successful retrofit projects, guiding them along a strategic pathway for implementation.
- Maintained active engagement with City and Guilds and CITB with the development of the new degree apprenticeship in Construction throughout the year. By staying informed and providing feedback, the group ensured alignment with workforce planning strategies.
- Had the opportunity to provide feedback on Green Personal Learning Account courses, offering valuable insights into course offerings, identifying any gaps, and suggesting new courses. This proactive engagement contributes to the refinement and enhancement of offerings in line with industry needs and sustainability objectives.



Alison Hourihane

Chair of the Construction Employer Cluster Group

Digital Dozen / Digital Skills Network

- 2023/24 saw the first full year of delivery for the Digital Dozen. As a group of 10 – 14 employers from across all sectors in North Wales with digital skills needs, this group has become the driving force behind the digital skills action plan developed to respond to the Skills and Employment Plan 2023 – 2025. The Digital Dozen has been responsible for deciding the priorities of the group, depicting the direction of travel and focus areas and has had a busy year.
- The group provided a comprehensive response to Welsh Government to support with developing their Net Zero Skills sector roadmap, highlighting the challenges faced by them as employers in upskilling their workforce with net zero skills.
- With the roll-out of the Careers and Work Related Experiences as part of the New Curriculum for Wales, the group invited Careers Wales to one of their meetings to discover how to get involved with schools to support the delivery of CWRE. The group received the relevant contact details for their areas and know who to contact if they have a way off supporting the schools.
- We had the opportunity to provide feedback on the Digital Personal Learning Account courses. It was a valuable exercise for the group, allowing local employers to share which courses they have the most demand for when it comes to skills of employees. Being actively involved in this review means the offer of Digital PLA in North Wales truly reflects the demands of local employers and means that relevant courses will be available for individuals to upskill or reskill.
- A major priority and key piece of work undertaken by the Digital Dozen was the Digital Skills research report. To better understand the Digital Skills landscape across North Wales, we commissioned a piece of research, engaging with organisations of all size, in all sectors across the region. We wanted to gain insights into the needs of employers when considering basic and advanced digital skills, tools and technologies, and the diversity of the workforce in the region. Tony Venus of ODAG Consulting, the appointed consultant, carried out the research and presented 8 recommendations as part of the report. We will now begin undertaking activities in response to these recommendations.

Pryderi ap Rhisiart

Chair of the Digital Skills Network / Digital Dozen



The Next 12 Months



Against a backdrop of known and expected policy changes, and ongoing socio-economic challenges that are facing the region, our focus is on delivering on our priorities for our employers, our people and our partner organisations and help them navigate their skills and workforce challenges.

The soon to be established Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will contribute towards our goal in in region of a smooth transition between schools, further and higher education and apprenticeships, by integrating post-16 pathways. The North Wales RSP and partners are eager to ensure that we're able to play a key role in the development of CTER and we will showcase the best practice that currently exists in our region. We will work with CTER and Welsh Government to ensure that our employers voice helps to shape future skills investments and initiatives and ensure that our people are able to access quality employment opportunities.

We shall continue our regional and local assessment of need focusing on the following:

- Ensuring that provision meets the needs of employers and individuals
- Our ongoing engagement with employers, wider stakeholders and providers with feedback and insights
- Ensuring that we consider the voice of the learner and young people and work with partners to better prepare them for the world of work and further study





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

- Developing and launching our Skills Portal, a digital front door to the local labour market aiming to simplify the skills and employment opportunities in North Wales and connect individuals, employers, and providers in one place.
- Continue to develop and share our young person's toolkit which will help inspire young people of the wealth of opportunities that exist in the region and promote career pathways
- Continue to support Welsh Government with delivery of their Net Zero Skills Action Plan
- Launching the Inspire to Build pilot and social care pilot which strive to inspire young people to pursue careers and job roles that they may not have considered in the Construction and Social Care sectors
- Events and roadshows to help employers with skills challenges and attracting, developing and retaining their workforce
- Moving forward with activities such as campaigns to improve diversity within digital roles and raising awareness of apprenticeship pathways in response to the 8 recommendations presented in the Digital Skills research
- 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 a pipeline of talent locally



Sian Lloyd Roberts
Regional Skills Manager

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