



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Employability plan

Progress report 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Minister's foreword



Eluned Morgan AM
Minister for Welsh Language
and Lifelong Learning

In March this year, we set out our vision for making Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy. Our Employability Plan presented an ambitious strategy to create a highly trained, inclusive workforce, which can respond effectively to national and regional skills needs. At the centre of this ambition, we committed to helping individuals – regardless of their ability, background, gender, or ethnicity – to achieve their full potential through meaningful employment, delivering high-quality tailored support, increasing opportunities for sustainable work and bringing to the fore the role of employers to ensure the future of the Welsh workforce.

Six months on, this report sets out the progress we have made towards this vision, presenting highlights of our achievements so far and developments made in the delivery of key long-term projects.

Given the scale and breadth of our cross-government Employability Plan, we are not attempting to report on all the actions of the Plan in the relatively short timescale since its publication. In this report, however, we hope to present a flavour of the work ongoing, our direction of travel, and to highlight the progress we have already achieved across government.

I am delighted with the work that is rapidly underway to develop the aspirations of the Plan into fully-fledged initiatives. Over the past few months we have engaged extensively with a broad spectrum of stakeholders and delivery partners to progress our ambitions and lay the foundations for a more efficient, joined-up system of advice and support that will improve employability prospects across Wales.

Amongst a variety of different projects and initiatives across government, we are making excellent progress developing our two new employability services, Working Wales and the Employment Advice Gateway, ready for their launch next year. Through these projects, we will create a more streamlined and efficient

system of employability support, tailored to the needs of the individual and better connected to a range of other services, including transport, health and childcare support, as part of our increasingly holistic, cross-government approach to employability.

Through my own meetings with anchor companies and business networks, we are continuing to strengthen our working relationship with Welsh businesses and crucially underlining their responsibilities as employers to nurture their workforce. Only through developing such partnerships, at both a national and regional level, will we deliver fair work opportunities for all.

Despite the continuing political and economic uncertainty surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union, and its effects on the Welsh labour market, we are determined to drive forward the delivery of our ambitious Employability Plan that will support people across Wales into work today, whilst also preparing for the radical changes of the future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Introduction

As part of the Welsh Government's national strategy, *Prosperity for All*, we published a cross-government Employability Plan in March this year, setting out our vision for an economy founded on high-quality skills and people with the ability to prosper – and our course of action to achieve this.

The Plan established an ambitious programme to deliver a more effective system of employability support, focusing on the diverse needs of individuals, and a dynamic new approach to addressing the varying skills needs across the country. As well as innovative new projects and initiatives, the Plan laid out stretching ten year targets to set the direction for all partners working on employability so that we are more coordinated and efficient, united by common goals. The Plan also aligns closely with the ambitions set out in our Economic Action Plan – together they aim to drive inclusive growth, improve productivity and future proof our economy against future challenges.

Since publication, we have begun delivery of a wide range of actions to achieve the commitments and vision set out in the Plan, working closely with partners to implement and further develop our strategy.

The Plan identified four main themes for action:

provide an individualised approach to employability support

underline the responsibility of employers to up-skill and support their staff

respond to current and projected skills gaps

prepare for a radical shift in the world of work

This is a report on progress made against these themes.

This report reflects upon our achievements over the last six months since the publication of the Plan, setting out the progress we have made delivering these commitments and highlighting developments for future delivery.

This is the first of a series of annual reports on the implementation of the Employability Plan.

Key targets

At the heart of our Employability Plan, we set out a number of stretching national targets to underpin the implementation of the Plan's overarching vision and its four guiding themes

We will eliminate the gap in working age unemployment rates between Wales and the UK within 10 years

There are approximately 71,900 unemployed people in Wales. Bringing 8,600 of this group into employment would eliminate the gap between Wales and the UK.¹ Recent labour market indicators show that the unemployment rate has continued to fall during 2018.

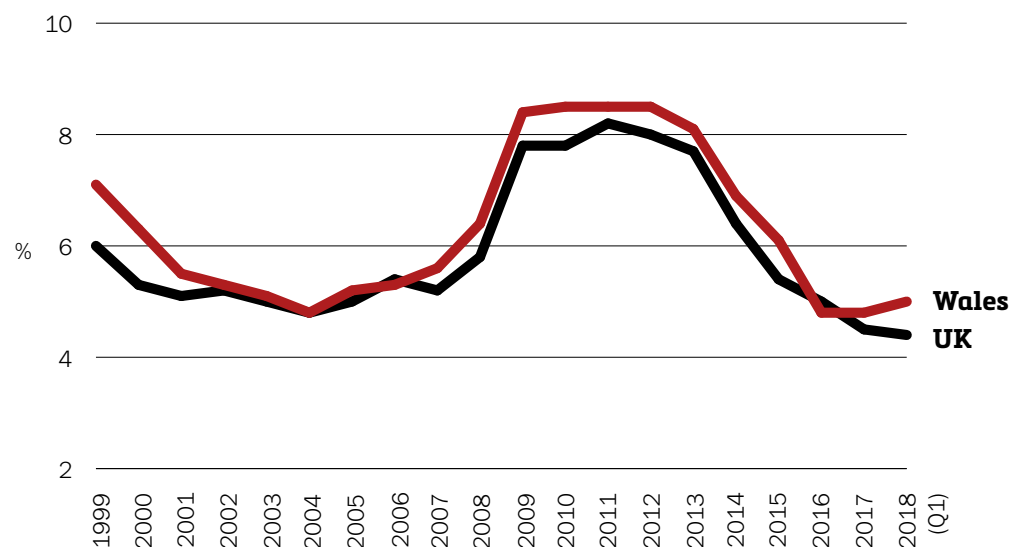
To deliver this ambition, our Employability Plan outlines the changes we are making to our employability support programmes, most notably with the introduction of Working Wales and the Employment Advice Gateway (EAG).

We aim to engage with up to 50,000 people a year through the EAG and we plan to work with approximately 42,000 adults across the first 4 years of the Working Wales programme.

Our existing Communities for Work programme will also provide employability support to over 13,500 participants who are long term unemployed by 2020.

Complementing our support for individuals is our increased focus on matching skills provision to employer needs at local, regional and national levels. Examples of early progress in this area can be found in this report.

Unemployment rate – Wales compared with the UK (18–64)



Source: Annual Population Survey/Local Labour Force Survey

¹ Based on Annual Population Survey (APS) data to March 2018.

We will eliminate the gap in economic inactivity rates between Wales and the UK within 10 years

The rate of economic inactivity in Wales is currently 23.5 per cent, compared with 22.5 per cent for the rest of the UK. To eliminate the gap between Wales and the UK, approximately 18,800 people in Wales would need to move into employment, reducing the current economically inactive population from 339,600 to 320,800.

We recognise the scale of this ambition. We are meeting this challenge through an increased focus on employment for disabled people, including those with

mental health conditions, working closely with businesses to encourage innovative recruitment processes and improve health support for employees, as well as by rationalising and aligning our employability programmes, to ensure people get individualised assistance to tackle their personal barriers to employment.

For example, as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Welsh Government worked alongside City Deal partners to co-design the pan-Wales DWP Work and Health Programme, which is funded by £35.7 million over seven years.

The Work and Health Programme offers tailored, community-based employment support for people with a disability or health condition, and the long-term unemployed, to help them develop their skills

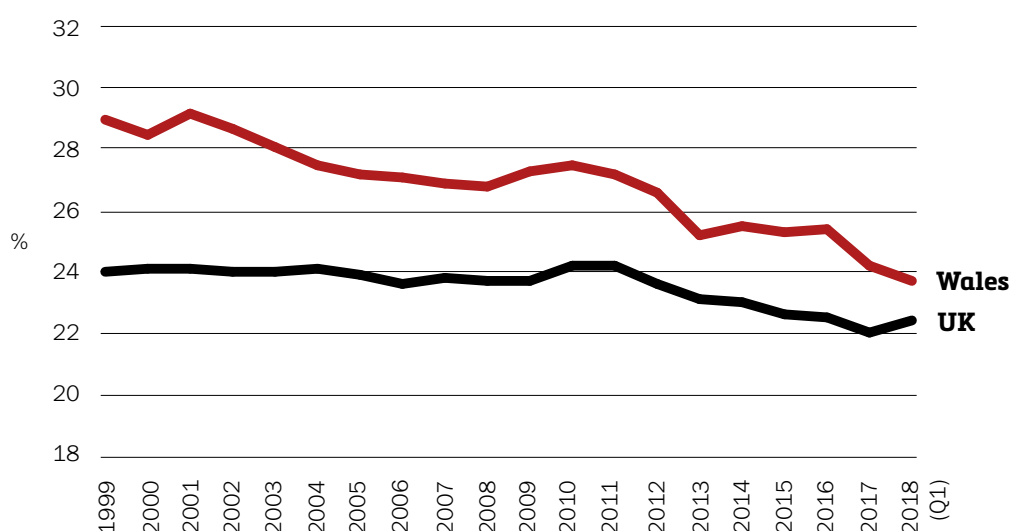
and enter work. Through this programme we intend to help 15,500 people into work, including many economically inactive individuals. To date over 2,200 individuals have been enrolled onto the service and over 600 have subsequently started paid work.

Welsh Government continues to support the delivery of the programme through active participation in the performance management of the programme.

Furthermore, we will continue to tackle levels of economic inactivity through our community employability programmes.

Through the Communities for Work programme alone we plan to engage with over 26,400 economically inactive participants by 2020.

Economic Inactivity rate – Wales compared with the UK



Source: Annual Population Survey/Local Labour Force Survey

We will eliminate the gap between Wales and the UK at all qualification levels in ten years, and ensure in future as a minimum we maintain our performance relative to the rest of the UK

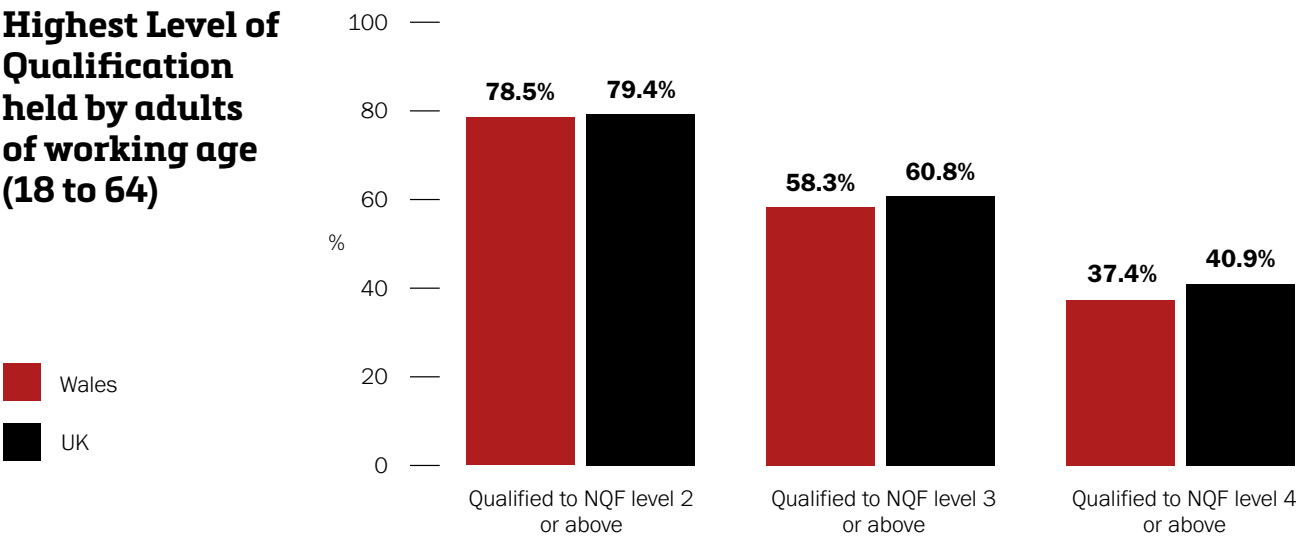
Latest survey data estimates 79 per cent of working age adults are qualified to level 2 or above (5 GCSEs A*-C or equivalent qualifications), 58 per cent level 3 or above (2 A-levels or equivalent) and 37 per cent level 4 or above (Higher Education or equivalent).

The current gap with the UK as a whole increases from 1 percentage point at level 2 and above to 3.5 percentage points at level 4 and above.

Following the setting of this target, we have undertaken work to further understand the Wales-UK gap in qualification levels. We will now consider options for increasing provision to address the gap, including engaging with employers to up-skill their workforce, and reforming Welsh Government-led programmes and initiatives. Our apprenticeships scheme is developing higher skill level opportunities across a variety of sectors. Furthermore, we are creating opportunities for people to

independently learn new skills and train throughout their lives, starting with our work developing proposals for new Personal Learning Accounts.

Highest Level of Qualification held by adults of working age (18 to 64)



Source: Annual Population Survey

We will reduce the number of people who are NEET in Wales

Most recent data published in the last quarter showed that we are continuing to see a decline in young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The number of 16-24 year olds who are NEET fell from approximately 57,200 (10.5 per cent) in 2016 to 49,900 (9.5 per cent) at the end of 2017.

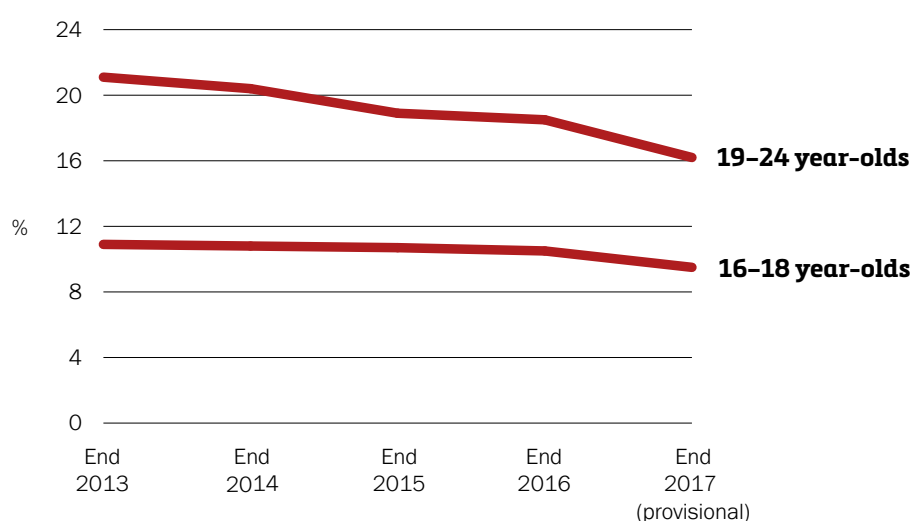
In 2013, the Welsh Government introduced the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), targeted at 11-25 year olds, which sought to bring together all elements of effective NEET reduction into one place, providing a coherent strategy across all related Welsh Government programmes and delivery partners.

Since then, we have seen a steady decrease year-on-year in the number of young people who are NEET in Wales and, for the first time since 2006, the level of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has now fallen below 10 per cent. This progress demonstrates the positive impact a common strategy and partnership working can have towards tangible change over time.

To build on this success, continued funding of £1 million has now been agreed to support further delivery of the Framework into its fifth year of operation.

We are also taking forward work to share the successful approach of the YEPF within all new government employability programmes, particularly the development of the Employment Advice Gateway and within the delivery of Working Wales. We recently convened a national meeting of Engagement and Progression Coordinators (EPCs), Welsh Government officials and Careers Wales to maximise opportunities for collaboration. Through this course of action, we aim to streamline, coordinate and improve the effectiveness of the current landscape of employability and skills support for young people.

Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)



Source: Welsh Government Statistical First Release (SFR 62/2018) Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market

We will work with partners to identify suitable targets for increasing the number of disabled people in work

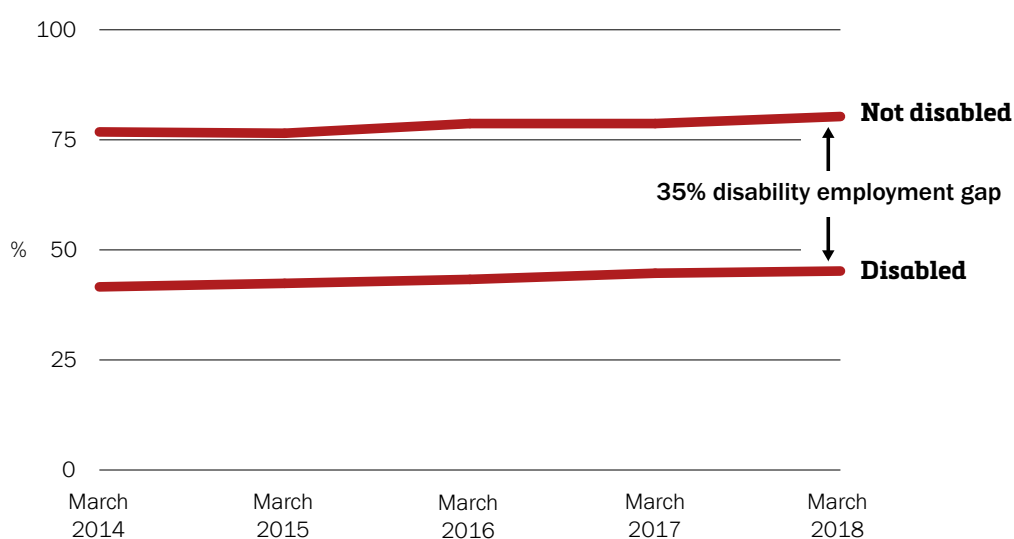
In the Employability Plan, we committed to working with partners to develop an aspirational long-term target for increasing the number of disabled people and those with limiting health conditions into work.

We have made significant progress gathering a wide range of evidence and viewpoints from stakeholders, including a variety of disabled people's organisations, charities, sector representatives and employers. We have utilised the feedback from this consultation to progress our ambitions in this area and we are working to develop a meaningful target that will reflect the needs and wishes of disabled people across Wales. Through setting a target, we hope to provoke the step change necessary within both workplaces and society to break down the barriers being faced by disabled people and those with long-term health conditions seeking employment.

Since March, we have engaged with our partners in a number of ways, including:

- a roundtable hosted by the Learning and Work Institute, involving several disabled people's organisations and training providers, to gather a broad spectrum of sectoral views on what an effective target would look like;
- a wide range of regular engagement forums between Welsh Government officials, representative organisations, disability charities and employers;
- a further roundtable event exploring how the Apprenticeship scheme in particular could support more disabled people into work; and
- meetings between the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and employers to discuss how Welsh Government can support businesses to recruit more disabled people.

Employment rates



Source: Annual Population Survey

We aim to set out a target by the end of this year which will look to reduce the existing disability employment gap, together with further details on how we plan to achieve this ambition. We will continue to work closely with the UK Government through its Work and Health Unit and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to link up with the delivery of their UK-wide target to get 1 million more disabled people into work by 2027, to ensure we see positive results delivered for more disabled people and those with limiting health conditions across Wales.

Furthermore, our 2013 Framework for Action on Independent Living is currently being reviewed with the aim of publishing a new version in autumn 2018. The revised framework, provisionally titled 'Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living', will set out how we are addressing social barriers to equality and inclusion so that disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else. The Framework will also be accompanied by an action plan which will set out a wide range of actions underway across Welsh Government to tackle some of the key barriers identified by disabled people themselves, including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places.

We will set a target in partnership with Public Health Wales to increase the number of employers engaged in the Healthy Working Wales Programme

The Healthy Working Wales Programme connects workplaces, individuals and health professionals to help working age people in Wales stay fit and healthy so that they can remain in employment, or return to work following a period of ill health.

We have been working with Public Health Wales to develop a suitable target that will help drive forward the ambitions of the Healthy Working Wales Programme and maximise its impact on the health of the Welsh workforce.

By March 2020, we plan to extend the reach of the programme to a minimum of 40% of the working age population.

During the current funding period to 2020, we will be working to transform the programme and develop a new delivery model which will help to maximise impact. This includes strengthening the relationship between Public Health Wales and Business Wales to enhance opportunities and support for employers.

As part of a wider review of national health improvement programmes, Public Health Wales has identified a number of areas for improvement within the programme, including:

- strengthening the focus on the relationship between good work and health in its broadest sense, including employment practices, working hours, pay equality and mental wellbeing in addition to the current focus on sickness absence, healthy behaviour's and health and safety;
- increasing the focus on sectors where health inequalities are greatest;
- widening the delivery model to move beyond a focus on the achievement of an award;
- increasing uptake by small and medium sized enterprises; and
- strengthening the programme's focus on evaluation and impact.

Providing an individualised approach to employability support

Our aim is to focus on the unique needs of the individual throughout the employability system in order to provide high-quality bespoke support

Trained EAG advisors will help individuals to identify barriers to employment and talk with the customer about their personal circumstances and aspirations.

Employment Advice Gateway

As set out in the Plan, the new Employment Advice Gateway (EAG) will be a key mechanism for creating a more streamlined and efficient system of employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs. It will be launched in February 2019.

Delivered by Careers Wales, the Gateway will provide an all-Wales entry point to employability support, which will complement existing channels operating at the heart of communities. It will streamline referral and simplify access for individuals to receive the right support across multiple programmes and interventions, working in partnership with existing support networks.

Advice and guidance will be provided face-to-face at Careers Wales offices, local job centres or community hubs, as well as over the phone and online. Trained EAG advisors will help individuals to identify barriers to employment and talk with the customer about their personal circumstances and aspirations. Based on this, advisors will be able to identify their best route to employment, the most appropriate training and education, and the most suitable support, referring the individual to the right service.

Working Wales

We have made significant progress in the development of our new employability programme, Working Wales, which will commence delivery in April 2019. The procurement of contractors for the delivery of the programme is currently ongoing and is expected to conclude with the award of contracts in November this year.

The programme will consolidate Welsh Government's current suite of employability support (including Jobs Growth Wales, ReAct, Access, Traineeships and the Employability Skills Programme) to deliver a new joined-up approach to employability and skills support, designed to meet individuals' needs rather than aligning them with narrow programme eligibility criteria. Supported by EU funds, it will support people of all ages to overcome barriers to achieve and maintain good quality, sustainable employment.

Community Employability Programmes

Our existing community employability programmes, including Communities for Work (CfW) and Parents, Childcare and Employment programme (PaCE), continue to engage those furthest from the jobs market, supporting individuals with the greatest needs and barriers, and helping to get people into employment and out of poverty. These programmes are delivered in the heart of communities to engage with those who do not normally access services. The CfW and PaCE programmes are both supported by EU funding and are delivered in partnership with the DWP.

To the end of May 2018, CfW has engaged with over 15,800 participants in total with some 5,200 progressing into employment. To the same date, PaCE has engaged with over 3,000 participants, with almost 1,000 progressing into employment.

We have now launched the new £12 million Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) programme, which will support and enhance the delivery of Communities for Work and embed learning from the Lift programme. It provides intensive mentoring and support to both engage participants and address the complex barriers to employment experienced by those furthest from the labour market. It enables employability support

to be provided to people either in or at risk of poverty who are not eligible for Communities for Work, PaCE or other regional EU funded Programmes.

In its first 4 months of operation, CfW+ has already engaged with almost 2,200 participants with around 400 people progressing into employment.

Transport

The availability of good quality public services, including reliable transport, is crucial to removing barriers to employment.

This is why we committed in the Plan to providing increased support around transport to help people access work and study.

Working closely with DWP, we have collected feedback on transport services in relation to employability, gathering views from Job Centre Plus customers as well as employers on how we might enhance the transport infrastructure to improve employability in local areas.

In collaboration with DWP and the Community Transport Association, we are now exploring how employers and community transport services can work together to create bespoke and flexible transport-to-work options. This includes plans for a pilot in the Taskforce for the Valleys area and making connections with the support to be offered by the

Employment Advice Gateway for local people experiencing transport barriers to employment.

Officials are currently developing a transport pilot, considering taxation and state aid issues that may have an impact.

The pilot will help to reduce barriers to work arising from a lack of flexible or affordable transport to sites of employment. Such difficulties arise particularly for people with atypical working hours or those on low pay who may be unable to afford their own transport, or even a driving licence. It will benefit individuals looking for work, employers looking for staff, and communities via the social benefits of thriving employers and people earning.

We also consulted earlier this year on proposals to improve the MyTravelPass scheme, which has provided one-third discounts to 16-18 year old residents in Wales since September 2015. Overall, responses to the consultation supported the extension of the lower bus fares scheme for young people, and a full summary of responses has now been published on the Welsh Government website. Following the consultation, we have now concluded negotiations with the bus industry on the details of a newly enhanced scheme, and further details will be announced shortly.

Case study



John* had been struggling to stay in long term employment for several years and had received support from Communities for Work in the past. When John had his first meeting with his Communities For Work Plus Mentor Sara*, they talked about John's situation. John said he was having problems with transport to get to and from work. John didn't raise any wider issues that were directly linked to his employment. Sara supported John with employment mentoring work such as updating his CV, accessing the training he needed, and completing job applications. In the coming months, John made good progress and secured a part time position.

A few months later, John arrived at his regular meeting with Sara visibly agitated and looking exhausted. When Sara asked him how he was feeling, John explained his sleep and his regular access visits with his daughter were being severely disrupted by some problems at his flat. He explained that his privately rented, two-bedroom flat had developed serious damp in both of the bedrooms. During the week, John was sleeping on the floor in his living room. When his daughter came for her weekend visits, John set her up to sleep on the living room sofa, and he slept in the least damp bedroom. While really struggling to sleep, John was getting more and more worried that the damp would affect his daughter's health and affect her weekend access visits with him in the future.

John explained to Sara that he had applied to be placed on the waiting list for social housing – however, he understood that he may not be a priority for two bedroomed accommodation as he was a single person. John agreed that Sara could explore his housing situation further on his behalf. Sara worked with John to access the support he needed to improve his situation and to complete the relevant housing forms.

A month later, John met with an officer from a local social housing landlord. Thanks to the detailed referrals they had received – which fully explained John's need for appropriate accommodation for his daughter's weekend visits – John was placed on the waiting list for a two bedroomed property.

While John's housing situation is not resolved yet, just getting a place on the waiting list meant he could start to worry less and look to the future.

John said:

"I'm really pleased that I explained my housing situation to my Communities for Work Plus Mentor, Sara. At first, I didn't think the damp problem at my flat had anything to do with getting into work, and so I didn't think Sara would be able to help me. But she did and now I'm making progress. I've been able to stop worrying so much about my housing and focus on doing well in my job - I'll be moving up to full time hours soon."

Co-location of local services

A key part of the Employability Plan vision is to establish better links between the public services that we fund and deliver. We have been piloting the co-location of services through the Valleys Taskforce with a view to exploring how this approach could be shared with other parts of Wales.

The recently published Taskforce progress report outlines their work on community hubs, where a range of public services can be brought together under one roof.² They are working with local authorities, the NHS and third sector organisations and have held a series of networking events to enable partners in the Valleys to share good practice and develop guidance for those wishing to develop new hubs.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has proposed a programme of investment in community services. Ferndale will be one of the first towns to benefit from a community hub, which will house a range of community-based services, including the relocated Ferndale Library, comprehensive childcare services and employment support programmes. The Taskforce is

working closely with the council's community zones implementation group as this work is taken forward and will share learning more widely across the Valleys.

Central to the design and success of the new Employment Advice Gateway is the co-location of Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus, Communities for Work and other community based services to enable simplified access and streamlined referrals to progress individuals onto education, training and employment. Careers Wales is committed to co-location and outreach, recognising the need to have a presence where individuals access other services. This is already a well-established practice, with Careers Wales staff having a strong presence across a number of partner organisations, particularly Job Centre Plus and, more recently, moving into other community-based sites such as libraries and local authority hubs.

Effective co-location and community outreach have also brought about considerable dividends in the delivery of our community employability programmes. This is evident in the areas of Cardiff and Llanelli,

Carmarthenshire, where effective community hubs have been established to bring together a range of public services and delivery partners in one place. Since March, Communities for Work have engaged with 191 people in Cardiff through various hubs across the city, supporting 49 into employment; and in Carmarthenshire, through the Un Sir Gar hub in Llanelli, they have engaged with 38 people, supporting 26 into employment.

To promote the benefits of co-location, further Communities for Work stakeholder events are now being proposed for the autumn, where teams will be able to share good practice, including the benefits of 'one-stop-shop' community hubs.

To help customers and stakeholders accessing Careers Wales services across Wales, Careers Wales are currently developing an interactive map of their advisory services including locations, types of service and times. The map will become available with the launch of the Employment Advice Gateway and will help visualise the co-location of services.

² Our Valleys, Our Future Progress Report 2018: one year on, <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>

Health and employability

In June this year, the Welsh Government published 'A Healthier Wales', which sets out our long-term future vision of a whole-system approach to health and social care. This includes a new emphasis on personalised care within a community-based approach which will help to take pressure off hospitals and reduce waiting times. Instead, people will be supported by a range of community-based services and activities, building on local community hubs and on GP and primary care support, which will be personalised to meet people's needs and preferences.

This new direction for health and social care echoes the central vision of the Employability Plan to deliver individualised employability support which is better connected to other public services. Through this shared cross-government approach, we aim to deliver more effective, joined-up services across Wales.

Individual Placement Support (IPS) pilot

A new £2 million pilot is being taken forwards this year that will look to integrate employment advisers into clinical healthcare settings to enable participants to access both mental health and employability services in a joined-up way, tailored to the individual.

Supporting up to 450 people, the pilot will test the 'Individual Placement Support' (IPS) model for individuals with mild to moderate mental health conditions who are either short-term unemployed or about to lose their job because of their health condition.

Where patients enter employment via the pilot, support will also be offered to businesses employing pilot participants.

A team of healthcare professionals trained in IPS principles will work with patients and employers, aiming to help patients access and retain employment, and help employers understand and adapt to the requirements of employees taking part in the pilot.

A key aim of the pilot is to provide practical support focused on the workplace environment and the individual patient's mental health condition, to help employers make suitable adaptations, and to improve acceptance of such adaptations among employers and work colleagues. The pilot will operate out of a clinical setting with a strong outreach function, and can work alongside other European Social Fund (ESF)-interventions.

Working with the UK Government's Work and Health Unit and Jobcentre Plus in Wales, the model will be piloted in the Cwm Taf University Health Board area. The pilot offers a ground-breaking opportunity for better integrating healthcare and employability services. It will also contribute to our work improving employment outcomes for disabled people.

In-Work Support Service

The Welsh Government has agreed a further £2.2 million of match funding to support an ESF bid to continue the delivery of the In-Work Support Service (IWS) until December 2022 - a vital project that promotes health and well-being in the workplace and breaks down barriers to employment for those with physical or mental health conditions.

If approved by WEFO, additional funding will significantly expand the scheme to support up to 12,000 more people to stay in work and 2,500 more businesses to build a healthy workplace. The service will also be widened to encompass more employees in rural areas, and will look to increase engagement with small business networks and local health services.

The IWS provides free and rapid access to occupational therapy designed to help people with mental or physical health conditions to remain in employment.

Through therapeutic interventions, the IWS supports employees on, or at risk of, a long-term sickness absence, which can disproportionately affect SME employers and their employees, who make up a substantial proportion of Welsh businesses. The service promotes to employers the positive impact healthy workplaces can have, as well as the benefits of early intervention to support employees with mild to moderate health conditions.

Bringing together health, skills, business support and funding, this scheme demonstrates the powerful potential of effective cross-government working, delivering positive action for vulnerable people in a joined-up and efficient way.

Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service

The Out of Work service (OoWS) is another vital project linking employability support and health services for some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach members of society. The £17.3 million programme supports those with a history of substance misuse and/or mental ill-health who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive (aged 25 and over), or NEET (aged 16-24) to enter employment or education.

Since the programme began in August 2016, 217 participants have now obtained employment, 191 are engaged in a job search, 857 have obtained qualifications or work-related certifications, and 252 are engaged in volunteer work.

Combining pre-employment engagement, peer mentoring and employment-focused support, as well as engagement with healthcare professionals and employers, the OoWS will support up to 14,100 people across Wales in their recovery from substance misuse and mental ill-health by summer 2020. The OoWS also offers transitional support for up to three months to participants who find work, and can support employers who are looking for advice and support around good practice.

An Annual Conference on the OoWS is planned for early 2019 to recognise the work of the Peer Mentors and to help promote the service, providing an important networking opportunity for key stakeholders and suppliers.

A vital project that promotes health and well-being in the workplace and breaks down barriers to employment for those with physical or mental health conditions.

Case study



As part of their ESF funded In Work Support Service, Rhyl City Strategy delivers regular half day workshops to help local SME employers improve workplace health and wellbeing. Debbie Williams is the Manager of the Bron Haul Residential Home in Rhyl – a busy home with a community of 37 residents. Debbie has attended a number of the workshops in order to learn techniques for managing stress, both for herself and her staff team.

From the workshops, Debbie gained a range of practical tools and techniques for improving wellbeing in the workforce. She was able to introduce a series of wellbeing measures which have now been embedded into workplace practice at Bron Haul. These include 'return to work interviews', regular social events, and a 'Carer of the Month' award scheme. Wellbeing forms are issued to staff with details of how to self-refer to the In Work Support scheme if support is needed with any health concerns putting staff at risk of absence.

Debbie said that the workshops have been extremely effective in helping her to appreciate the importance of wellbeing in enabling teams to work together more effectively. She has noted clear benefits in the health and wellbeing of the workforce as a result of the changes introduced:

"I feel that staff are more open to discussion on their wellbeing and perhaps feel better for opening up. We all look forward to the 'wellbeing monthly meet up' and the 'carer of the month'."

She also stated that the delivery style and format of the course was also helpful for a busy employer trying to prioritise their time:

"We learned a great deal - the delivery of the course was really impressive and I think so beneficial to have bite size sessions."

Over 100 employers from small to medium size enterprises have attended the In Work Support Service workshops to date.

Underlining the responsibility of employers to up-skill their workers, support their staff and provide fair work

We are working in partnership with business to ensure employers support their workers in the right way, establish inclusive workplaces and recognise their responsibility to upskill the workforce

Following the publication of the Economic Action Plan in December 2017, we have made considerable progress over the first half of this year to implement and embed key elements of this Plan, in parallel with the implementation of the Employability Plan.

At the centre of this work has been the development and introduction of a new operating model for direct financial support. The Economic Contract is the centrepiece of this model and frames the Welsh Government's relationship with business, based on the principle of public investment with a social purpose.

The Economic Contract provides the opportunity to highlight and promote responsible business practices which have the potential to support our employability objectives, including fair work and a focus on good health, skills and learning in the workplace. Since the launch of our new operating model in May, we have completed a number of Economic Contracts with a range of businesses across Wales. We are learning from these examples and continue to refine and enhance our approach to maximise our impact.

As set out in the Employability Plan, we are committed to working with the key business networks to encourage the sharing of best practice and discuss government priorities for the Welsh workforce.

The Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning recently held a roundtable in September with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Wales Public Policy Forum. The event provided the opportunity to engage with a range of employers and explore how we can foster more inclusive workplaces in Wales and identify obstacles to employment for those with protected characteristics, a key action point within the Plan.

Since March, the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong learning has also met with a number of Welsh anchor companies both to challenge them to do more for their employees and lead by example, as well as to explore new ways of working together.

For example, Admiral are supporting the Welsh Government's employability strategy by engaging with initiatives to assist people facing challenges and barriers to secure employment.

We are actively exploring the potential for Admiral to utilise Welsh Government employability programmes for the direct recruitment of hard to reach individuals. This would not only widen the diversity of their staffing profile but provide opportunities to individuals who may otherwise struggle to secure interviews.

Case study



Admiral

Award winning employer Admiral is the only FTSE 100 Company with headquarters in Wales and is one of the largest car insurance providers in the UK. With a workforce of over 10,000 people spread across 8 countries, Admiral retains its headquarters in South Wales and has offices in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. Admiral say their commitment to Wales is driven by the calibre of staff they have been able to recruit and retain locally.

Admiral are committed to community engagement not just because it's the right thing to do but also because it's important that when a company relies on a good calibre pool of labour to recruit from we should be investing in supporting innovative local recruitment programmes such as the skills development induction course soon to be launched.

We are keen to work with the Welsh Government to support any initiatives that improve the employability of people in the local community and we look forward to the introduction of Working Wales next year.

Admiral are building on their long history of community engagement by joining forces with Welsh Government to better link employability programmes with employment opportunities. This exciting new partnership will help develop and test how our programmes prepare and support people into employment, providing life changing opportunities for individuals while also meeting the needs of employers.

Working with Trade Unions

As set out in the Plan, we want to continue developing the important relationship between employers, trade unions and government to deliver positive changes within the workplace.

As a key initiative between the Welsh Government and the Trade Unions, we are now developing the next round of the £1.2 million Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) programme, to commence in April 2019.

Utilising the knowledge and networks of unions, the WULF helps to increase essential skill levels within the Welsh workforce by removing barriers for non-traditional learners and fostering effective learning partnerships between employers, unions and training providers to open up opportunities for learning in the workplace.

We are working closely with Wales TUC representatives to ensure we fund projects that reflect the four guiding themes of the Employability Plan and address the recommendations made by the Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure alignment of provision with varying skills priorities across the three regions.

Apprenticeships

Our apprenticeship programme continues to play a major role in delivering the vision of Prosperity for All and the Employability Plan by supporting thousands of people into work and boosting skills provision across Wales.

We are making excellent progress delivering our ambition to create at least 100,000 high quality apprenticeships over this Assembly term. With over 24,000 apprenticeship programme starts achieved during 2016/17, and a provisional 16,000 in the first half of 2017/18, Wales is on its way to meeting the target. We continue to see a year-on-year increase in the number of learners starting our apprenticeship programmes, and we are now aiming to deliver at least 6,000 more apprenticeships every year that have an emphasis on more technical and higher level skills, starting in the 2018/19 academic year.

In response to the recommendations made by the Workforce, Education and Development Services (WEDS), we have developed three new frameworks that have now been given approval by the Wales Apprenticeship Advisory Board (WAAB). We are currently working with WEDS to progress them. The frameworks are all at a higher skill level (L4+) and focus on the following areas:

- **Allied Health Professions Support** – including clinical support workers and healthcare assistants. This framework will support the broad vision of the sector to develop an increasingly skilled, flexible and effective workforce whilst maintaining high quality and safe care for patients. It also addresses specific outcomes of the Skills for Health Sector Skills Assessment 2011.
- **Clinical Therapies** – such as physiotherapy and psychological therapies. This framework will help fulfil the need, identified by WEDS, for more higher level opportunities on offer.
- **Healthcare Sciences** – created in response to WEDS identifying this area as needing a specific framework. Although there is an existing Life Sciences framework at L4, this framework will accommodate a wider range of careers for development. This addition will also boost the available career opportunities in STEM, which is a priority sector for the Welsh Government.

In addition, we are working with the Dental Services Office and the General Dental Council to develop new qualifications and a more robust framework for Dental Nursing.

We have now established a fully integrated pathway of apprenticeship provision, starting with junior apprenticeships and vocational opportunities at school for 14-16 year olds, through to supportive work experience and college level interventions for 16-24 year olds, all the way up to the newly created degree apprenticeships, available for the first time in Wales from September 2018 for Digital and ICT disciplines. Through the development of this pathway, the apprenticeship programme now supports a full spectrum of learners into employment, fostering a new generation of professionals from the age of 14.

We have also stepped-up our engagement with employers to provide greater support with the recruitment of apprentices. We have met with a number of anchor companies, whilst taking forwards a joint action plan with the Federation of Small Businesses to maintain and improve our engagement with SMEs.

We have now established a new independent employer-led Wales Apprenticeship Advice Board that will challenge and champion the learning content contained within the apprenticeship programme and that will respond swiftly to employer demand. A revised employer's communications toolkit was published in August to provide clear

support and guidance applicable to all employers across Wales.

Most recently, we have driven forward action to increase the number of disabled people and other protected groups undertaking an apprenticeship. Working with Remploy and the Work-based Learning network, we aim to create a new brokerage service to match those who are participating with the Working Health programme into apprenticeship opportunities. We have also published a comprehensive equality toolkit to support our apprenticeship providers, including specific modules on gender identity, stereotyping and unconscious bias.

A new Disability Action Plan for Apprenticeships will be published in the autumn, developed in partnership with disabled people's organisations and other sector representatives to identify actions that will break down the barriers to disabled people accessing apprenticeships. The Plan will focus on practical actions to ensure that support packages are available for individuals, employers and our apprenticeship providers. It will also look at how we can make reasonable adjustments in order to make apprenticeships more flexible.

As an employer, the Welsh Government aims to be an exemplar in equality, diversity and inclusion, and we have set ourselves a number of workforce targets to achieve by 2020, including:

- 50/50 gender balance in the Senior Civil Service (SCS)
- 5.8% disabled staff (from 4.9% in 2016)
- 2.5% BAME (from 2% in 2016)

We are making progress on our targets, with our SCS comprising of 40.5% female staff, 5.3% disabled staff and 2.2% BAME staff.

We continue to lead the way for other Welsh employers in stimulating diverse and inclusive workplaces, as demonstrated by the following standards achieved during 2017/18:

- we are currently ranked 12th in the UK within the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Top 100;
- we have been awarded the gold standard in the A:gender Trans and Intersex Policy Standards; and
- we are a Disability Confident Employer Leader, having achieved the highest level accreditation (Level 3).

We have recently reviewed and revised all of our equality and diversity training for staff and continue to roll out unconscious bias and disability confident courses. We have also reviewed our processes for maternity and shared parental leave, drafted a non-binary guide and reviewed our recruitment processes for inclusive language to encourage diverse applicants.

Fostering Fair Work and Better workplaces

Employer engagement on disabilities

The Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning has now met with a number of Welsh anchor companies to challenge them to deliver more inclusive workplaces and explore ways of working together to support more people with disabilities and long-term health conditions into work.

Within these meetings, employers highlighted the need for further support from the Government to aid their recruitment of disabled people, including a clearer pathway to existing support mechanisms.

In response, we are now exploring the possibility of brokering engagement between large employers and disabled people on our support programmes, in a similar way to the hands-on

support provided by the Lift programme, which would provide disabled people with a supported route to job interviews at large organisations.

Following the meeting held by the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning with the Call Centre Forum's newly established Diversity Special Interest Group in June, we have also developed a new section of the Business Skills Gateway dedicated to encouraging employers to recruit more disabled people.

For the very first time, this platform will bring together the details of all support services available to employers and practical information to assist the recruitment of people with disabilities. This includes information on DWP's Access to Work scheme and, for smaller businesses, the contact details for their Small Employer Adviser, of which there are nine across Wales. As an easily accessible, one-stop-shop for employers, this platform aims to promote greater understanding of disability and sets out how employers can take positive steps to diversify their workforce.

www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/employing-disabled-people

The information and support presented here will encourage and promote a greater understanding of disability and show employers how they can develop their recruitment and employment practices to improve the job and career prospects for disabled people.

Business Wales provides a range of support for those who are considering starting up in business, pre-start, or early stage start-up, including a variety of workshops and drop-in surgeries, as well as digital, face-to-face and telephone advice services. A flexible discretionary fund – the Business Wales Participation Fund – is available to help individuals overcome any barriers they may face in participating in Business Wales services. This includes the provision of tailored support for disabled people.

Led by Social Care Wales, we are developing a specific workforce strategy for social care, with a formal launch planned for spring 2019

Case study



27-year old Angharad Mary Long, from Plasmarl in Swansea, tried to hide her hearing impairment from other pupils as she was afraid of being bullied, and struggled throughout her school life as a result. Angharad left full-time education at 18 after achieving her A-levels and was unsure what pathway to follow. She became interested in the care sector after spending time taking care of her grandfather, so after spending time considering her options it seemed like an obvious choice for her.

She started working for Care Watch Care Services in 2014 as a domiciliary care support worker, and worked with the company for 12 months before being introduced to the idea of doing an apprenticeship.

After finding out more about the hands-on practical experience and qualifications she would acquire as part of the apprenticeship, Angharad jumped at the opportunity to apply. She was lucky enough to be successful and was accepted onto the apprenticeship programme with Aspiration Training Ltd.

Now, three years on, Angharad has completed her Level 2&3 apprenticeships in Health and Social Care and is working as a fully qualified domiciliary health care worker, delivering private care in the community. After being qualified for a number of years, she is now looking forward to going on to studying nursing

at college and hopes to go to university in the future. She says her apprenticeship has been the catalyst to helping her kick-start a successful career in the care sector.

She said: "When I left full-time education I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do. School was a difficult time for me but since leaving I feel like people have been more accepting of my hearing impairment and supported me in my career aspirations rather than persecuting me."

"My apprenticeship provided me with all the hands-on, practical experience and skills I needed to be confident working with and caring for older people, while also providing me with the knowledge and insight into the industry I needed to understand the wider issues.

Having completed my apprenticeship, I'm now keen to continue learning and developing my skills and qualifications by progressing onto a nursing course at college. I'm also hoping that with additional qualifications, it will open doors to more opportunities like working abroad.

"The Apprenticeship Programme in Wales is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.

Gender equality

Rapid Review

The first phase of the Rapid Review into our gender and equality policies, supported by Chwarae Teg and the Wales Centre for Public Policy, is now complete.

A report of the review's initial findings was published in July, which provided an assessment of the Welsh Government's systemic approach to gender as a policy-maker and organisation. The report also set out several recommendations for the second phase of the review to take forward, with the aim of putting a gender perspective at the heart of government working. Work on the second phase is now underway to address the challenges identified and bring about the necessary systemic change. A steering group, chaired by the Leader of the House, will be convened in October to help take forward this work.

LGBT equality

We are continuing to work closely with Stonewall and other equality organisations to ensure progress is made around the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the workplace.

Through the Equality and Inclusion Grant, we have funded Stonewall for 3 years (2017-2020) to act as the representative body for LGBT

people in Wales. This includes working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of LGBT people are heard. One of the core activities this funding is used for is a Youth Placement Scheme which provides young LGBT people with the opportunity of a work placement.

Since March, Stonewall has placed an additional 13 young people with 6 organisations, including one placement in North Wales.

Women in STEM

A new working group has now been convened underneath the Welsh Government's Women in STEM board, which is led by the Leader of the House. This new group will drive forward cross-government implementation of the actions for Welsh Government from the 'Talented Women for a Successful Wales' independent report and support our partners to deliver all 33 recommendations for improving the education, recruitment, retention and promotion of girls and women into STEM subjects and careers.³

We continue to support and facilitate a range of initiatives to bring about a step change in overcoming this sectoral gender gap. EU funds of £8.4 million have been awarded to projects which help to enrich and promote STEM participation in Wales.

This includes the £4 million STEM Cymru 2 scheme, which is being supported by £3.2 million of EU funds to increase young people's participation and attainment in STEM subjects and aims for nearly 56% female participation. Since March this year, just over 700 young people have started receiving support and some 165 individuals have completed training in STEM subjects.

EU funds of £8.4 million also includes £5.2 million of EU funding announced in July for the £1.9 million STEM Gogledd and £5.3 million Technocamps projects to encourage young people, especially girls, to study STEM subjects at school.

Over the next four years, STEM Gogledd will work with 600 young people, 60% of whom will be female, to enrich and promote STEM studies at GCSE and beyond through a range of activities that complement the mainstream curriculum within schools across Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy.

Technocamps 2 will work with 3,600 young people across West Wales, North Wales and the South Wales Valleys, two-thirds of whom will be female. It will target secondary schools which do not currently offer computer science as an option at GCSE, or where the subject is only recently available.

³ Talented Women for a Successful Wales' report, 2016, <https://gov.wales/docs/det/report/160308-women-in-science-en.pdf>

The project will enable pupils in these schools to take part in workshops to build on their existing knowledge and enthusiasm for IT and computing.

Supporting the Childcare Sector

In December 2017, we published our 10 year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan. The plan recognises the vital role the childcare sector plays as an economic enabler helping parents and carers to access and remain in work and contains a commitment to provide priority investment into the sector to support growth and sustainability.

In meeting this commitment, we are currently prioritising investment to help build capacity and capability across the sector and to support the sector to be able to take up the opportunity presented by the Prosperity for All Childcare Offer commitment.

Working with Business Wales, we have recently opened a new £100,000 grant fund for bids, which will support childcare businesses to expand their number of childcare places or support business start ups. This funding is also available to child minders as self employed individuals.

We are on track to introduce a new suite of childcare qualifications across levels 2-5 by September 2019, in partnership with Social Care Wales and

Qualifications Wales to drive this work forward. These new qualifications will play a key role in supporting the sector to train and up-skill, providing clearer career pathways and transferability of skills and knowledge between the health, childcare and education sectors.

We are also working in partnership with Social Care Wales to develop a recruiting and retention campaign to support building a capacity and capability across the sector.

Childcare Works project

Working with the National Day Nurseries Association Wales (NDNA), we have been exploring new innovative ways of recruiting to the childcare sector and developing the Childcare Works project.

Childcare Works aims to support those with the right skills and behaviours to work in childcare to gain the necessary introductory skills needed to enter the sector and continue formal training. We have now run two small-scale projects in parts of North and South Wales, aimed at supporting unemployed and economically inactive individuals, offering them short-term work placements with established childcare providers.

The project has produced a number of positive outcomes, including participants being offered further employment and the opportunity to take forward

their formal childcare training and pursue a longer term career in the sector. We are now exploring how this approach could be further developed and aligned to the approach being taken to Working Wales and the development of the Employment Advice Gateway.

Expansion of the Childcare Offer

On 18 June, we announced a further 7 local authorities that will pilot the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer from September 2018, including Conwy, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Torfaen, Newport and Cardiff. This is in addition to the 7 local authorities who began testing the Offer from September 2017.

The Offer provides 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks per year.

We are continuing to work with the early implementer authorities to test various aspects of the Offer and develop innovative solutions to any identified barriers, whilst sharing their learning with other local authorities across Wales.

We anticipate that every local authority will be piloting the Offer to some extent from September 2019 onwards, ahead of a full national roll-out from September 2020.

Success story



Sally was a lone parent of three young children and had been on income support for 8 months. She was referred to Parents, Childcare and Employment Programme (PaCE) via a friend who was already getting help through the programme. Sally's PaCE adviser assessed her skills and referred her to undertake the training she needed through the ACT training contract, commissioned by PaCE. PaCE funded the childcare costs for Sally whilst training and on completion she was able to set up her own business as a self employed IT Consultant and she managed to secure her first contract with The

National Trust. Sally was not aware of the Childcare Offer, so the PaCE adviser helped her apply and gain funding to help with the costs of wrap around childcare once she had started working. By becoming self employed, it gave Sally the choice of having flexible working hours which in turn gave her more time with her children. Sally is now undertaking further training through the Communities for Work Plus project to gain more essential skills to help her progress her new company.

Responding to current and projected skills gaps

Skills Development Fund

A new £10 million Skill Development Fund has been launched to boost regional skills provision and target job-specific skills gaps as identified by the Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs). The fund aims to reintroduce part time provision in particular, to increase employment opportunities for the unemployed and to up-skill those in low-paid employment.

We invited bids from across Wales with Further Education colleges working closely with RSPs on the key priorities for each region. Successful bids will be able to begin delivery for the 2018/19 academic year this September.

Review of Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)

We recognise the crucial role that RSPs play in setting strategic regional priorities, working closely with employers and stakeholders. They are a key partner in implementing the regional approach to economic development set out in our Economic Action Plan and they help to ensure qualifications and occupational standards meet the evolving needs of the Welsh economy.

That is why we committed in the Employability Plan to strengthen the governance and expertise of the RSPs to ensure that they can provide regional leadership and

robust labour market intelligence to influence skills provision in each region effectively.

An independent review into the governance of the RSPs was completed and submitted to the Welsh Government in March. We are currently taking forward work with the RSPs to implement the recommendations. In particular, as a result of the review, we have commissioned shorter, sharper and more accessible Annual Reports from the RSPs for 2018. These reports, submitted to Welsh Government in August, will provide a more effective and transparent evidence base of employer demand to underpin funding recommendations.

The RSP reports and recommendations will be finalised in September and will inform skills provision, particularly the deployment of work-based learning and apprenticeship funding for 2019-20. RSPs will be holding regional dissemination events before the end of 2018 to share and publicise their reports with employers and stakeholders.

We continue to value the challenge provided by the employer-led Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB). WESB reports to the Council of Economic Development in order to ensure that the Welsh Government gains an enhanced strategic perspective on employability and skills as well as

strengthened ties with business, social enterprise and trade unions.

We held the first employability stakeholder meeting in July bringing together key stakeholders including DWP to join WESB to discuss implementation of the Employability Plan.

Improved Use of Labour Market Intelligence

Work is progressing to supply key stakeholders in Wales (including Further Education Institutions and RSPs with interactive Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) analysis tools. These will enable our partners to make better informed, evidence-based decisions and more effectively match the provision offer in Wales to what is required in the labour market.

It is intended that these tools will:

- Provide a breakdown of regional / local LMI in a way that is accessible and can be manipulated by users to meet their specific needs, allowing them to produce tailored outputs, including future projections. This should add value to the existing regional / local LMI that Welsh Government and other public bodies already publish.

- Make use of data scraping techniques to provide timely information on the skills that employers are demanding (i.e. in job advertisements) and, potentially, that individuals are supplying.

An Invitation to tender is being issued, with a contract expected to be awarded in December 2018.

Skills support for rural areas of Wales

Following a meeting with the Country Landowners Association held in August, a number of actions are being progressed to support rural skills development. Welsh Government will commission Qualifications Wales to undertake a review of rural qualifications.

In parallel, we will look to develop support for displaced farm workers in the event of a no deal Brexit scenario. This support will migrate into Working Wales from April 2019 onwards. A rural skills marketing campaign will assist in promoting culture change in the rural economy and will challenge traditionally held views.

Finally, we will work with the Country Landowners Association and providers across Wales to review Continual Professional Development (CPD) programmes to assess if the current courses are fit for purpose, particularly for new entrants.

FE Funding Review

We are committed to delivering a radical review of our Further Education (FE) funding formula to address large demographic changes in FE provision. Working closely with senior FE managers and college principals, we plan to review the existing planning and funding cycle to make the system more efficient and flexible to regional skills needs, in line with recommendations made by the RSPs. We will look to implement changes from the 2019/20 academic year.

We are considering a number of areas for reform within this review, including:

- **full time allocation:** developing a mechanism to link funding more closely to likely demand for further education in each area. We will look to provide funding based on a predicted number of full-time learners at each FEI; increase similarity with Local Authority Sixth Form allocations for parity between the two sectors, taking account of changing demographics in the 16-19 cohort on an annual basis; and use a three year rolling average in predicted numbers to provide stability and avoid large spikes or dips in funding year on year;
- **part time allocation:** to correct the imbalance of part time provision across Wales, we will explore the proposal of splitting the part time allocation on a population basis, either by college, or on a regional basis, in order to take account of movements in the adult population over time more effectively;
- **the deprivation uplift:** providing additional resource to support learners from educationally deprived backgrounds;
- **the sparsity uplift:** delivering a learner entitlement model to ensure that learners from sparse areas have equal access to a broad curriculum and to make allowances for smaller class sizes in areas of low population density;
- **a review of Welsh Baccalaureate funding:** we are proposing to fund the WBQ as a separate qualification for the first time and for the funding to be equivalent to that of an A Level, applying to academic programmes for 2019/20, to be reviewed for 2020/21; and

- **a review of the planning**

process: to take account of the latest set of RSP outcomes, to take effect in September this year. For the 2019/20 regional planning cycle, we will ask RSPs to provide a 3 year line of sight for full time and apprenticeship recommendations and increase college engagement and support to develop regional priorities at a sector subject area level, with a focus on specific programmes where necessary, amongst other proposals.

T-Levels in England

We are closely monitoring progress toward the introduction of new technical qualifications, or 'T levels', in England. We have already engaged with Qualification Wales to fully understand its impact on Wales and there has been inter-ministerial correspondence between the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and Anne Milton, Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, to emphasise our concerns and need for the transportability of qualifications.

Welsh Language as a skill

In May, we launched '*Cymraeg Byd Busnes*' (Welsh for Business) to take forward our ambition for greater recognition of the Welsh language as a skill amongst employers, in both the public and private sectors.

The project has established a network of officers working across Wales to support employers to integrate the use of Welsh language within their businesses and to develop their Welsh language services for customers. In this way, the project emphasises the Welsh language as a fundamental element within the business landscape and therefore an essential skill required within any organisation.

We continue to support projects and partners to further develop the availability of Welsh-medium post-16 provision. A new post-16 Welsh-medium advisory board has now been established by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, bringing together expert stakeholders to advise on future interventions. The board has met regularly and is in the process of developing an action plan for the advancement of Welsh-medium post-16 provision, in partnership with Welsh Government officials. The board have now submitted an initial report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning. This will be developed into a full implementation plan by the autumn, which will include specific actions to increase the availability of vocational qualifications in Welsh.

In addition, a research project conducted by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, supported by the Welsh Government to map the availability of Welsh-medium vocational teaching materials is now underway, and research into the attitudes of post-16 learners to the Welsh language has also been completed by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol which will inform our work in this area.

Workforce planning – NHS & Social Care

As set out in our new health and social care plan, 'A Healthier Wales', we are committed to making NHS Wales an exemplar employer in its support for wellbeing at work and a healthy workforce. Our national approach will focus on increasing workforce skills around prevention and wellbeing, underpinned by increasing generalist skills, which will help individuals to adapt and diversify throughout their careers.

We will look to establish strategic partnerships between all healthcare organisations and education providers, kick-starting capacity building in core areas through a small number of intensive learning academies focussed on delivering the professional capability we will need in the future.

The national 'Train, Work, Live' campaign has already started to make a difference to recruitment in the NHS, but we need to do more. We will look to ensure health boards and local authorities work together with local providers to establish joint campaigns, identify shared recruitment and staffing needs and develop attractive employment packages which can help entice individuals and families to train, work and live in Welsh communities.

Led by Social Care Wales, we are developing a specific workforce strategy for social care, with a formal launch planned for spring 2019, which will identify and seek to address future workforce demands and skill requirements within the sector. This will also be developed working alongside Health Education Improvement Wales to deliver effective workforce planning across the whole of health and social care. There will be clear read-across to the national attraction, retention and recruitment campaign which will promote a positive view of social care as a valued and rewarding place to work.

Most recently, as part of our work to raise the status and profile of the social care workforce, the workforce register was extended to domiciliary care workers on a voluntary basis from April 2018, ahead of mandatory registration from 2020.

Furthermore, Social Care Wales has been working closely with key stakeholders to develop an 'All Wales Induction Framework' for new health and social care workers, launched in April 2018. The new induction framework is being piloted in Hywel Dda health board in 2018-19, ahead of wider roll out across Wales. This is part of the development of the new suite health and social care qualifications at levels 2 to 5, which will help provide clear career pathways across the sector.

Case study



Laura Green, 21, describes herself as ‘hands-on’ and growing up she was interested in cars, mechanics and how things are put together. She left school after GCSEs, unsure of what she wanted to do next but knowing academic study wasn’t for her.

After finding out more about apprenticeships, Laura applied for a placement with Airbus in Broughton. Now she’s part way through a level three apprenticeship in aeronautical engineering helping create wings for aircraft.

Laura said: “I’ve always been happier doing things with my hands. I love mechanics and spent a lot of my spare time growing up learning how to make and repair car parts. I wasn’t really aware of apprenticeships, and I knew A Levels weren’t for me, so I left school after my GCSEs and worked as a lifeguard at a local swimming pool.

“After a couple of years, I realised there wasn’t any progression for me in lifeguarding, I wanted a proper career. By then I knew more about apprenticeships, and after doing some reading and attending a few open days I decided that an apprenticeship was the best way forward for me. I liked the idea of learning on the job and not having to give up earning.”

Laura applied for an apprenticeship in aeronautical engineering with Airbus through Coleg Cambria in Deeside. She now works as a Level 3 Aeronautical Craft Apprentice in systems, responsible for building wings for aircraft.

Laura continued: “I was thrilled when Airbus made me an unconditional offer for an apprenticeship. I’ve had the opportunity to work in different departments to learn more about the production process as a whole. My apprenticeship is in systems, which is all to do with hydraulics, gas and programming in the wings of the plane, but I’ve also done placements in structure which is more about the panels of the wings and how they’re constructed.

I’m considering progressing to a level 4 or maybe a degree apprenticeship. I like the idea of working my way up to management or completing further training to work in maintenance on live aircraft. There’s also the possibility working abroad at one of the other Airbus bases in Germany, France or Spain.

“Academic learning isn’t for everyone, but people who aren’t academic have skills and talents in other areas. My apprenticeship has really opened doors for me, it’s the best thing I could have done.”

The Apprenticeship Programme in Wales is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.

We want to inspire and support the next generation of young entrepreneurs in Wales

In order to face the skills challenges of the future, as a nation we must prepare today, not only by harnessing emerging technologies and new sectors, but also by enabling people to up-skill and learn throughout their lives so that they can thrive in a changing labour market. This is a key part of the future planning work we set out in the Economic Action Plan.

Life-long learning opportunities

Personal Learning Accounts

We have made significant progress developing proposals to introduce personal learning accounts (PLAs) for workers to fund personal vocational training in sectors where there is a skill shortage, including digital and STEM areas. Providing the opportunity for employed individuals to upskill and adapt to the evolving world of work is an essential element of our future-proofing of the Welsh workforce in view of future social and economic changes, including the UK's exit from the European Union.

Since March, we have conducted extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders, including trade unions and training providers, through a roundtable hosted by the Learning and Work Institute, utilising lessons from other PLA models around the world to inform the development of our pilot. We have also driven

forward research into existing skill shortages across Wales.

We hope to launch two pilots from April 2019 aimed at employed individuals, with each pilot testing a different model of delivery. Pending further development, the pilots will offer high-quality accredited training, providing a range of occupational learning courses and approved qualifications linked to key sector drivers to help individuals progress in employment at a higher level and offer shorter training courses aimed at individuals that need up-skilling in key occupational areas to meet employers' needs.

Fostering job progression in low pay sectors

In partnership with the Welsh Government, Wales Centre for Public Policy convened a symposium and debate in July including an expert group roundtable discussion. The event allowed policy makers and experts to review job progression barriers in low paid work and consider the available evidence on how to promote progression. The event considered job progression within the four foundational economy sectors prioritised by the *Economic Action Plan* and also considered progression within other low pay sectors highlighted as part of Regional Skills Partnership Action Plans.

We now want to test our learning, and consider how to foster demand and supply side activity for in-work progression. The Wales Centre for Public Policy report of the event, to be published shortly, will provide recommendations on how to proceed.

Entrepreneurship

We want to inspire and support the next generation of young entrepreneurs in Wales, and help those interested in starting a business to take their ideas forward.

Newly opened in April this year, the Wrexham Enterprise Hub aims to provide wrap-around support for aspiring entrepreneurs, housed in a supportive community space. The hub is fully integrated into Business Wales support services and offers a shared work environment that is being utilised by Business Wales to deliver workshops and client meetings. As part of a two-year pilot, it is hoped that the hub will support the creation of 100 new enterprises and 260 new jobs, as well as help to secure at least £1m of private investment for its member entrepreneurs.

The hub is built upon the concept of 5-9 delivery, requiring the provision of entrepreneurial support services outside of standard working hours. Through this flexible delivery, the hub hopes to encourage more women and other under-represented groups into entrepreneurial activity.

Responses to the tender for a further four Enterprise Hubs are currently being evaluated and the contract will be awarded as 4 regional lots across Wales.

FSB engagement on support for the self-employed and micro-businesses

The Welsh Government is also working closely with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to improve support for those self-employed and for micro-businesses.

A representative from the FSB sits on the Business Wales Strategic Board and actively feeds into the strategy of the service. Through this mechanism, we maintain regular dialogue with the FSB, ensuring that the needs of entrepreneurs, micro-businesses and SMEs are taken into account in the delivery and direction of Business Wales, as well as the advice provided to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport.

The Board enables collaboration on a number of issues, such as finding resolutions to the issues identified in the FSB's 'Missing Middle' and 'Going Solo' self-employment reports, as well as monitoring and evaluating the delivery and impact of Business Wales support for the self-employed, micro-businesses and SMEs to ensure continuous improvement.

The Chair of the FSB also recently attended the Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) in Turkey as part of the Welsh delegation. An action from the GEC is for the Welsh Government to work with the FSB to develop an annual plan for awards, events and publicity on shared topics of interest.

Exploring new sectors in new age of work

Forestry and timber

As set out in the Employability Plan, we want to take advantage of the employment opportunities arising as a result of our low carbon economy and climate change prevention.

We have been scoping further opportunities within the forestry sector in particular to take advantage of the green growth opportunities (as set out in our recently updated Woodland & Trees

Strategy for Wales) and to tackle the future skills and recruitment needs for a revitalised forestry industry over the next decade.⁶

Working closely with a range of sector stakeholders, we are currently developing a new pilot apprenticeship project to increase skills that drive sustainable timber resources, develop employer links that would benefit from pilot intervention, and create 30 new apprenticeship starts through a new employer-led sector skills cluster within the programme. We plan to have the pilot in place by the end of 2018.

New technology centres

We are proactively developing specialist centres to support the development of technological skills and harness developments in new emerging sectors, in order to prepare our workforce for a new age of work.

Construction started in June on the Welsh Government's Advanced Manufacturing Research Institute in Broughton. This centre will provide a new level of technical support to business involved in developing new manufacturing skill and processes. Through its 'open access' offer, it will ensure collaboration between industry, academic partners and entrepreneurs in order to drive

innovation, up-skill the workforce and provide a catalyst for economic growth. We are investing £20 million in the new institute, which will have a strong focus on advanced manufacturing sectors including aerospace, automotive, nuclear and food. The centre is due to open by the end of 2019.

In addition, the world's first compound semiconductor cluster is set to be established in Wales, made up of a series of high tech centres and manufacturing hubs invested in compound semiconductor technology.

Expert Panel on Automation

An Expert Panel has now been established to support the Review of Digital Innovation. The review is being chaired by Professor Phil Brown, Distinguished Research Fellow at Cardiff University.

As well as exploring the impact of automation on the Welsh economy and the future of work, the panel will support in examining the influence of related technologies in the fields of robotics, artificial intelligence, internet of things and large scale data, and the role these will play in transforming Wales' economy and labour market. The panel will take an expanded remit beyond that originally set out in the Plan to incorporate the

above technologies and support Professor Brown with his review.

The panel first met in June and will continue to take evidence bimonthly as they form their policy ideas. An interim report will be made available in November before final recommendations are published in March 2019. The panel also has the scope to provide ongoing advice to Welsh Government so that new ideas can be tested and learnt from at the earliest opportunity.

⁶ Woodlands for Wales: Strategy, <https://gov.wales/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2018/180626-woodlandand-trees-strategy-for-wales-launched/?lang=en>

