



# E-NEWSLETTER

## Autumn 2018



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## RET update

Welcome to the 8th edition of the SE Wales RET Newsletter. You may have already noticed that we've changed the way we share news on events and funding opportunities. These are now shared via twitter and one-off bulletins to ensure that everyone receives the information in good time to respond.

Over the summer the team has contributed to the CCR Skills Partnership annual update report to Welsh Government and once this has been finalised we'll ensure we share via a bulletin.

What's next? Well this autumn period is again set to be a busy one:

- we'll be hoping for clarity on Brexit; we're also keen to better understand how projects plan to share best practice and how we can ensure this informs future developments – if you've any thoughts on this please get in touch!
- we'll see the announcement of the Working Wales contract providers; it'll be good to start discussing how the suite of ESF and Welsh Government funded delivery will successfully work together within region
- the regional SME Competitiveness network will meet for the third time this October with the focus on support and funding to drive forward innovation, and
- our ESF networks will come together for the latest updates on regional developments including City Deal and Valleys Taskforce.

It is more important than ever that we share our good news and project success stories in order to inform the future funding discussion. Please keep sending us your stories so we can promote the impact your project has at a regional level.

## Regional performance data

As promised, these are the latest headline figures for the performance of the ESI funded operations within the SE Region. The data is available in more detail on the [WEFO website](#).

Fund	Indicator	Figures for the SE Region
ERDF	Enterprises assisted	1,911
	Enterprises created	351
	Jobs created	3,472
ESF	Participants assisted	71,093
	Participants supported into employment	6,131
	Participants gaining qualifications	30,255
	Participants in education / training	3,801

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### Welsh Government Employability Plan— progress report

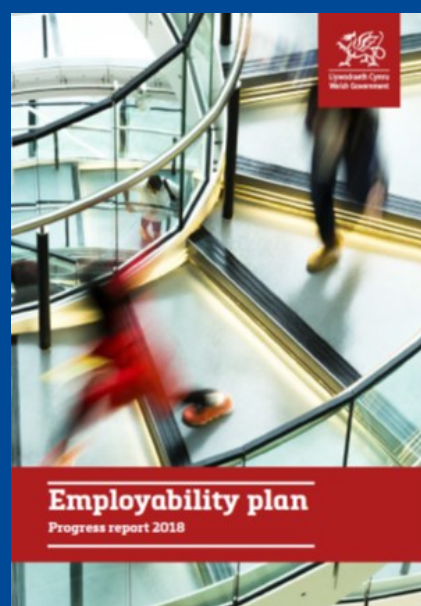
Eluned Morgan, The Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning has announced the publication of the first progress report on the delivery of the Employability Plan. The cross-government Employability Plan was published in March this year, setting out the vision for making Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy

Since publication, Welsh Government has 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 the strategy.

Amongst a variety of different projects and initiatives across government, excellent progress is being made towards developing two new employability services, Working Wales and the Employment Advice Gateway, ready for their launch next year. These projects 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 the increasingly holistic, cross-government approach to employability.

The report showcases key achievements so far; highlights ongoing work and sets out developments planned for the future and can be found [here](#).



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## Digital Maturity Survey for Wales 2018



Welsh Economy  
Research Unit  

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Yr Uned Ymchwil  
i Economi Cymru

Wales, like most other nations, is undergoing a period of rapid transformation, with digital technologies playing a central role in both business and society. Evidence from previous Digital Maturity Surveys shows that more and more businesses are making use of technologies such as cloud computing, e-commerce and video conferencing. They are also benefiting from such use, with 50% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) using superfast broadband to increase profit, and a similar number (48%) increase sales.

Cardiff Business School recognises the importance of research in helping to understand how businesses in Wales are responding to the opportunities provided by superfast broadband. To this end they launched the latest annual Digital Maturity Survey on September 10th. The survey

provides the primary source of data on Welsh businesses and their Digital Maturity – reflecting their IT skills and use of digital technologies.

All businesses taking part in the 2018 survey will be eligible to receive a copy of their free Digital Maturity Score (this will be sent to all participants in early 2019), showing how they compare to others in Wales. By taking part, businesses will be able to support this important research, inform the work of Welsh Government in relation to superfast broadband, and contribute towards the development of Wales as a digital nation.

The survey can be accessed [here](#).

Details of Cardiff Business School's previous digital maturity survey as well as case studies and horizon scanning reports, can be found on their [website](#).

*Further help is available from [Superfast Business Wales](#) - a free business support service that helps eligible small and medium sized Welsh businesses make the most of online technology. Offering free master classes, one-to-one support and website review, support could businesses save money, boost sales and profits and improve productivity*



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## Brexit update

On the 13<sup>th</sup> September the UK government published technical notices relating to [ERDF](#) and [ESF](#) to provide advice in the event the UK leaves the EU without a negotiated



agreement (i.e. a 'no deal'). For a copy of the documents follow the links above.

Beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of EU programmes in Wales can be assured that should there be a 'no-deal' outcome to negotiations with the EU, the **UK Treasury guarantee** will underwrite all expenditure during the life of projects awarded European Structural Funds before the end of December 2020.

The UK Treasury guarantee will now also cover the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) programmes and we understand a technical notice on these programmes will be published by the UK Government shortly.

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## Extra funding to support Young People

On 28<sup>th</sup> August the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford announced that an extra £17m EU funds will be invested to help over 7,000 young people across South East Wales improve their employment prospects.



Inspire2Achieve (I2A), led by Blaenau Gwent and Newport Councils, will receive an extra £15.9m of EU funding to work with schools and colleges to provide support to young people aged 11-19 years who are at risk of falling out of education and training.



Newport Council's Inspire2Work will receive a further £1.46m of EU funding to provide

one-to-one mentoring, help with basic and personal skills and digital literacy, so young people aged 16-24 years can gain qualifications, enter further education and secure employment.

The new investment builds on the £19m of EU funding previously awarded to the schemes, which have already supported over 4,000 young people. Together with the additional funding, the schemes will support 15,000 more individuals over the next four years.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford said:

"It is essential we support our young people to achieve a brighter and more prosperous future. The additional EU funding will help young people address barriers to their education and give them the targeted support they need to access employment. It will build on the successful achievements of EU funds so far, which have already helped almost 40,000 young people across Wales to improve their chances of employment success."

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## A day in the life of an I2A Worker

The morning starts at the office, where I prepare for the day ahead.

Next, at school I will set up my office for the day in preparation to meet with my young people. I work closely with the schools Learning Coach who supports me in ensuring I get to see all my young people that day, and work around each individual's timetable. I will also communicate with the allocated I2A Careers Wales Advisor for the school. We will all discuss cases and share information which also helps me to complete my progress report for the monthly NEET monitoring meeting in order to update the school on the young people's progress.

I will deliver one to one sessions to as many of the 20 young people on my books that I can fit in my allocated time. We meet every week to discuss where they are, where they



would like to be, and set personal goals for them to achieve this, both long term and short term. Each individual is different, and I base my delivery on the referral form from the school and the indicators which have been

highlighted for me to work on. A one to one session could range from anything from 10mins to an hour depending on what we are doing—completing issue based worksheets, or a discussion about their needs, signposting, completing the star assessment and soft outcomes and updating the young person's action plan. At the end of each session all documentation completed by myself and the young person is read and signed confirming future actions, goals and contacts, evidencing the session took place.

Many of the young people I work with are vulnerable and having a rapport with a young person's family can be paramount. Later at a home visit, I will discuss with the family any concerns they may have or I may have, and often get updates regarding the young person's behaviour, attendance, and attainment and their relationships in the community and the family home. I work closely with the family to ensure support starts at home as well as at school. Having a positive relationship with the family is so important when lead working.

I spend a lot of time out and about; as lead working so often revolves around making links within my local community with services and providers available to our young people. After a home visit, I will meet with external services and providers, dependant on which I need that day. It is then that any concerns or advice and guidance are shared to ensure effective partnership working is being practiced to benefit our young people.

Towards the end of the working day I put aside time to complete paperwork which most often will include preparing eligibility letter, completing contact information and interagency referrals to Careers Wales. It is vital to complete outstanding paperwork for the next day.

## Valleys Taskforce update

### Progress Report

In July, the Valleys Taskforce launched a progress report – one year on from the launch in July 2017. The Taskforce has worked closely across Welsh Government and with partners in Local Authorities, local businesses and held more insightful and challenging discussions with people living and working in the Valleys. The report outlines the progress made and you can read it [here](#) or view a summary [video](#).

### Community Hubs

The Taskforce held an event in early July, which brought together 120 community hub and public sector stakeholders to:

- Identify the role that hubs could take to enrich valleys communities and meet the aims of the taskforce.
- Discuss the challenges hubs face to grow and flourish
- Share the contributions of a range of community hubs towards building healthy local communities.



A more in-depth cross sector workshop is being planned to further investigate how the Valleys can take the idea of community hubs forward.

### Valleys Regional Park

The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, and Chair of the Ministerial Taskforce, Alun Davies AM, is due to launch a prospectus for the Valleys

Regional Park in mid-October. The Valleys Regional Park will provide and sustain the improvement and management of a highly-visible network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves and country parks, waterways, heritage sites and attractions across the valleys, linking them with towns and villages.

### Maximising the impact of the A465



The University of South Wales is delivering a white paper highlighting regional economic development aimed at maximising the impact of the duelling of the A465 on the Heads of the Valleys region. The project will bring together existing research and evidence to develop a clear action plan to support the Valleys Taskforce. The summary paper will draw out three priority actions and recommendations for next steps, providing framework for the future evaluation of the infrastructure development programme across the Heads of the Valleys.

The taskforce will continue their conversations with local communities to help achieve the actions in the delivery plan, and start work on a refreshed version identifying new activities that will help achieve their vision for the future of the Valleys. If you have any views, comments or want to get involved you can email:

[ourvalleys@gov.wales](mailto:ourvalleys@gov.wales)

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## Blas Lleol—Taste Local

Cotyledon's Blas Lleol is a project designed to support food producers to reach markets in south east Wales through short supply chains. Part of the work is to engage with farms and growers, helping them to overcome barriers which prevent them from diversifying the way they market their produce. Also, the delivery of rural markets and events within communities.

Accompanying the food producers we have a strong network of regular craft traders at our local markets and together this summer we have launched the Blas Lleol Food and Craft Network.



We have been busy! Here are a few recent highlights:

### Cutting Edge

A feasibility study exploring the potential of farm-based cutting and processing facilities where producers can collaborate to process new products will shortly be available to assist other farms approaching us for assistance.

### Chepstow Market – the first Plastic Free Market in Wales!

This has been hugely successful and is extending to twice monthly until December this year. The results are a startling rise in footfall and sales in the shops during the



market and an increase in the number of shops willing to open on Sunday. Whilst Borough Market in London beat us to being the first to be plastic free in UK, the roll-out to all Cotyledon markets means we are the first networked market in UK.

### Success at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show

For the second year running Cotyledon increased sales and profile of its network of independent artisans to feed the many visiting the Countryside section of the Show. The operation offered Blas Lleol stakeholders the chance to relax and chat and we made new contacts and connections.

### Plans!

We have already achieved many of our targets and are well on the way to achieving our final targets by 2019. We'll be sending out an evaluation report for circulation.

Our Winter Food and Drink Roadshow is launching at Tredegar House market on 17<sup>th</sup> November with a focus on sweets, desserts and sugar craft. It will move to our markets in Chepstow, Belle Vue Park, Newport and Magor until 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Each will promote a different theme and offer tastes, demonstrations, workshops and the obligatory festive freebies. Themes include bakes and cakes, savouries and canapés, mains that are meat, vegan or vegetarian, drinks and aperitifs and great ways to use up the left-overs. Come along and join us, further details [here](#).

## Consultation on Farming Support post-Brexit



The Welsh Government is seeking views on their proposals to continue to support for land managers after Brexit. They have outlined a planned, multi-year transition and are would like to know your thoughts on:

- a new land management programme consisting of an economic resilience scheme and a public goods scheme.
- how the specific schemes that will deliver the support should be designed.

The consultation document can be found [here](#). Please submit your comments by **30 October 2018**. You can do this either by completing an [online form](#) or by [downloading](#) and returning a response form to [BrexitanTir.BrexitandOurLand@gov.wales](mailto:BrexitanTir.BrexitandOurLand@gov.wales) or by post to:

Brexit and Our Land  
Land Management Reform Division  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

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### Business Skills Gateway

The Welsh Government has recently 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. The information and support presented here encourages and promotes a greater understanding of disability and shows employers how they can develop their recruitment and employment practices to improve the job and career prospects for disabled people.

Please click [here](#) for more information.

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## Crafting hubs to benefit rural communities

Five craft hubs are being set up across Bridgend County Borough as part of a £61,000 new initiative which aims to generate jobs and create opportunities where people can socialise, share their skills and improve their abilities.



Based at premises in Aberkenfig, Pontycymmer, Ogmere Vale, Newton and North Cornelly, the Bridgend Craft Collective will be open to seasoned crafters as well as new beginners, and members will receive training in business practice, digital marketing and other related skills.

It has been organised in partnership between the Bridgend Reach team and Eclipse Gift Wrapping using funding from the Thriving Rural Communities Scheme.

The collective will set up opportunities for displaying and selling members' work at craft fairs and exhibitions at prime locations, craft markets, craft trails, pop-up shops and more.

The initiative hopes to establish a local network of craft businesses, and was launched at the Community Church in Pandy Road, Aberkenfig Friday 14 September with First Minister Carwyn Jones AM, Chris Elmore MP, Cllr David Huw, leader of Bridgend County Borough Council and Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education, among others

attending.



Cllr Smith said: "Crafting has experienced a massive boost in popularity over the last few years, and you only have to look at how many 'hobby entrepreneurs' are selling online these days to see this.

"With additional benefits such as business mentoring available, the Craft Collective offers a fantastic opportunity for talented residents to make their work known, improve their skills and spend time with other like-minded creative people."



To find out more, please visit [www.craft.bridgendreach.org.uk](http://www.craft.bridgendreach.org.uk), or search for [Bridgend Craft Collective](#) on Facebook and [@BridgendCraft](#) on Twitter.

The project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** and the Welsh Government.

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