



RET update

Over the summer, as well as our 'normal business' of regional proofing of new operations and engagement with existing ones, we've been hard at work developing our new website which we will be going live very soon. Look out for a one-page newsletter once that happens!

The team worked with LSKIP on the development of the new regional [Employment and Skills](#) plan which was launched on 21st September. We've put together a brief report on the event and you can read this on page 2.

We have also been exploring the important contribution the European programmes can make to the Valleys Taskforce initiative. The taskforce has now published its draft strategy and you can read more about developments on page 3.

Our newsletter is developing all the time and if you'd like us to feature a good news story or press release in a future issue please email us at SEWalesRET@bridgend.gov.uk.

Upcoming events

- FLAG launch – 26th October, 2pm, venue tbc. For info see the [Facebook page](#).
- WEFO annual event – 30th November, Liberty Stadium, Swansea
- Future WG regional policy consultation – 30th November, Liberty Stadium, Swansea
- Horizon 2020 – 7th November, Cardiff City Hall
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership events with Business Wales – 11th October, Cardiff City Stadium

In this edition

[RET update](#)

Page 1

[Upcoming events](#)

Page 1

[CCR Skills Summit](#)

Page 2

[Valleys Taskforce](#)

Page 3

[CFAP funding](#)

Page 3

[RDP funding](#)

Page 4

[Celebrating regional award winners](#)

Page 4

[Agile Nation](#)

Page 5

[ESF competition](#)

Page 6

[Horizon 2020 event](#)

Page 6

[Brexit update](#)

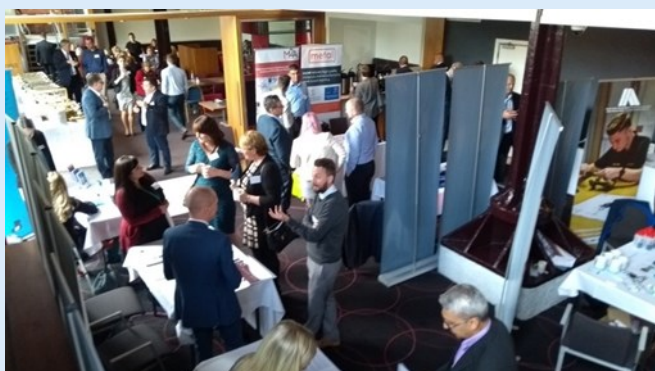
Page 7

CCR Skills Summit

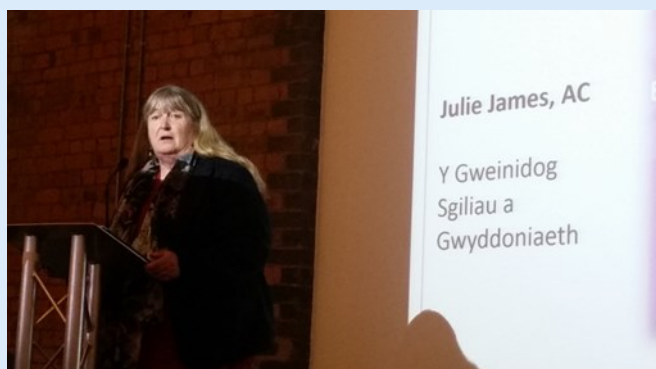
On Thursday 21st September, the Cardiff Capitol Region (CCR) Employment and Skills board hosted their Skills Summit at the Novotel in Cardiff. The event provided an opportunity for government, industry and educators to explore the detail within the newly launched 2017 Employment and Skills Plan and debate current and future challenges/opportunities.

The event also provided a platform for a number of ESF projects to promote their work across the CCR region:

- Bridges into Work 2
- ION Leadership
- M2A
- MeTAL 2
- Upskilling at Work
- Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme
- Working Skills for Adults 2



The keynote speaker in the morning was Julie James AM, Minister for Skills and Science who focused on the importance of skills to the region and to Welsh Government policy. She underlined Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring the skills offer in Wales was receptive to both employer and regional needs.



After lunch, Cllr Debbie Wilcox, the CCR's Joint Cabinet Lead for Employment and Skills and Leader of the WLGA, addressed the assembly on the theme of positive and long term collaborative working across the ten local authorities in the region.



Other presentations covered some of the key themes within the Employment and Skills Plan 2017:

- An employer perspective: tidal lagoon power
- Research and engagement: key findings from the SME Skills Survey
- Welsh Government's Employability delivery plan
- Skills and the regional economy: a skills analysis of the South Wales Metro
- Careers, schools and opportunity: the Cardiff Commitment
- Innovation: the compound semi-conductor cluster
- Skills delivery: addressing sector skills gaps and introducing LTC4



For a copy of the plan or slides from the presentations please visit the [LSKIP](#) website where they will be published shortly.

A message from the Valleys Taskforce

We spent six months talking and listening to the people who live and work in the valleys about what they want to see in their local communities, now, and in the future. It is these discussions that have helped shape “[Our Valleys, Our Future](#)” and the priorities going forward.

The people of the Valleys told us that good quality jobs were needed as well as the skills to do them. We also heard from businesses that they need support from us in order to grow and be able to offer employment and training to local people. We are looking to target investment to deliver high-quality employment sites and premises across the valleys. We also want to make sure that when procuring contracts, we get the most for the Welsh pound.

We heard that there are some good public services in the valleys but they're not always as joined up as they could be. Affordable, frequent and accessible public transport was a key issue raised. We want to better serve the needs of local businesses and communities by taking full advantage of the development of the South Wales Metro and other transport developments to meet these needs.

We want to make more of the Valleys' natural environment; its culture and heritage, so that they are enjoyed more widely, both by local

people and tourists. We want to improve personal wellbeing and new approaches to mental and physical health. We've agreed to develop the concept of a Valleys Landscape Park. We want to promote the outdoor activities we have in the valleys for the valleys communities and beyond.



The people of the valleys have helped identify what we need to focus on and why. We're continuing to engage with those that have already been part of this journey and invite others to join us.

Our next meeting is at 6pm, 2nd of October in Ebbw Vale Institute, click [here](#) for more information. If you can't make it then please join us via:

#TalkValleys



@wg_communities



@talkvalleys



talkvalleys@gov.wales

[Contents](#)

Community Facilities Programme funding

The [Community Facilities Programme](#) is a capital grant scheme for improving community facilities. There are grants available at two levels:

- small grants of between £5000 and £25000
- larger grants of between £25000 and £250000.

The Programme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, including social enterprises. The aim of the programme is to

increase opportunities and develop resilient communities and engagement and partnership working will be key themes to cover in any application.

Delivery partners can come from the public, private or third sector and whilst priority will be given to applications from former Communities First cluster areas, applications from other areas are welcome.

The closing date for applications is 31st March 2018 but groups can apply at any time before then.

[Contents](#)

RDP funding windows

There are a couple of Rural Development Plan (RDP) funding opportunities available this quarter.

The **Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme** funds a variety of co-operation activities for new products, practices, processes and technologies across the agriculture, food and forestry sectors:

- small businesses working together to share production facilities and resources
- short supply chains and local markets including promotion activities in a local context
- pilot projects where the information is made publicly available and widely disseminated.

The window opens on the 18th October and closes on the 20th December.

The Rural Community Development Fund

window opened on the 10th August and offers grants which are primarily aimed at community-based organisations. For example:

- drawing up of community / village development plans
- investments in small scale infrastructure including renewable energy generation and energy saving actions
- investments in ICT including broadband
- improving access to services
- investments and studies for the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage
- Investments in the relocation of activities and conversion of buildings with a view to improving quality of life or increasing environmental performance

The closing date for submissions is 12th October. Please see [here](#) for further information and documents.

[Contents](#)

Celebrating the Region's award winners

We have some fantastic news to share with you - two of the region's EU funded operations are receiving international attention for all the right reasons!



Wales was one of three joint winners for the European Union's recent "Europe in my Region" photo competition from among over 700 entries. The winning photo by Matthew Browne was of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road which has had £87m of EU funding to

boost business and make it safer and quicker for people to commute to work and training in the South East region.

Agile Nation 2 led by Chwarae Teg and has been nominated for The People's Choice Award at the RegioStars Awards. This prestigious annual event honours Europe's most inspiring regional projects supported by EU Cohesion Policy.

Voting is currently open on the RegioStars website and you can cast your vote now using this link <https://www.regiostars.eu/node/248>. It is a very quick process and simply involves a few clicks of your mouse and the time it takes to type your name and email address. Please Note: You can only vote once using a laptop/email address as they will be monitoring for multiple votes against email addresses and IP addresses but please feel free to share the link with family/friends and get them to vote too.

Voting via [Facebook](#) will open on 25 September and [Twitter](#) on 2 October and you can vote once via each of these platforms in addition to your vote via the website.

[Contents](#)

Agile Nation 2: bring out the team leader in you (or someone you know)



As the leading gender equality charity in Wales, [Chwarae Teg](#) works with women to build skills and confidence so that they can progress in the workplace. They also work with businesses to develop an inclusive environment that gives women equal opportunities to succeed.



Currently Chwarae Teg are delivering a FREE Career Development Programme for eligible women working in Wales to develop team leader and management skills. It is fully funded by the European Social Fund and Welsh Government, as part of the Agile Nation 2 project.

We know that, when it comes to employment, there is a persistent gender gap. Studies show women's employment is concentrated in low-paid areas of the economy, and this divide extends to the Welsh Government's nine priority sectors for supporting investment. The

Career Development Programme is specifically designed for women, to help them gain the knowledge, confidence and skills to support their development and progression in the workplace, within sectors where they are often underrepresented.

Ideal for women looking to take the next step towards team leading, supervisory or managerial roles this Career Development Programme provides:

- Access to advice and support to identify career goals, barriers & personal abilities
- The tools & learning to successfully lead and motivate people
- Free training to achieve an accredited Level 2 Leadership and Management qualification

Learning is in a supportive environment with other likeminded women, some are new to the workplace, others just returning to work for whatever reason but all are dealing with the same challenges and leave with increased confidence and skills to take charge of their careers and improve their position in the workplace.

Please click [here](#) to see how women across Wales have benefitted from the programme so far or visit their You Tube channel

www.youtube.com/watch?v=poZhPDMw8Bo



Women can apply directly by completing this [online application form](#).

If you have any questions and would like more information please call 0300 365 0445.

[Contents](#)

#EUFundsCymru Competition 2017

Celebrating 60 years of the European Social Fund #ESF60

To celebrate 60 years of the European Social Fund (ESF), WEFO is launching a [competition](#) to recognise the success of individuals whose lives have been transformed thanks to EU Funding in Wales.

They want to hear about the success stories of individuals who have seized opportunities presented by the European Social Fund, going above and beyond to develop new skills, secure a job or find a new career path.

To take part, sponsors should complete the

[application form](#) nominating an individual from their European Social Fund project, outlining their achievements and the difference it has made to their lives.

WEFO also have a category for all EU projects (ESF and ERDF) to apply. They would like to hear from projects that have successfully embedded sustainability, equality and/or tackling poverty agendas (the [cross-cutting themes](#)) into their activities. This is an opportunity for all sponsors to demonstrate their achievements in this important aspect of project delivery.

The closing date for entries is Friday 20 October 2017 and winners will be announced by the Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford, at the EU Funds Information Event on 30 November.



Investing in people European Social Fund

[Contents](#)

Horizon 2020 event

The Horizon 2020 team are holding an information day to promote the funding opportunities that are available for health, demographic change and wellbeing through the programme.

The event on 7 November 2017 at City Hall in Cardiff is hosted by the Welsh Government, Innovate UK, the Enterprise Europe Network, and the Knowledge Transfer Network.

The day will include:

tips on achieving success in Horizon 2020

- insights on topics around health, demographic change and wellbeing to be funded by the EU in 2018
- what support is available locally and nationally to develop applications
- brokerage sessions throughout the day
- information around consortium building and proposal development on specific calls

Participation is free, [register your interest now!](#)

[Contents](#)

Brexit update

The Welsh Government has published a series of Brexit policy papers, building on their White Paper [Securing Wales' Future](#) that was published in January this year. To date, these include **Brexit and Devolution** (published 15 June) and more recently [Brexit and Fair Movement of People](#) (7 September).

Future papers to be published cover the areas of:

1. Trade
2. Agriculture and Food
3. Regional Investments

Later this Autumn, the Welsh Government is expected to launch a consultation on the future of regional investment in Wales following the publication of its third policy paper sitting underneath **Securing Wales' Future** which calls for replacement funding in full and for devolved competences to be fully respected. Publication of the paper will also mark the beginning of some detailed discussions with partners and stakeholders across Wales.

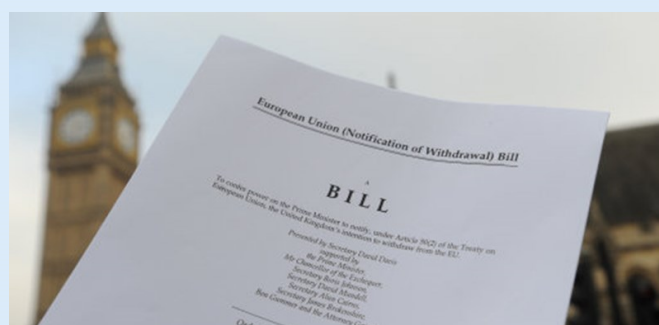
The UK Government is also expected to launch its own formal consultation on its proposed replacement for EU Structural Funds, known as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, around the UK Autumn Statement (22nd of November). Its aim is to complete the planning by June 2018 and launch the new fund in 2019.

Within the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW), the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs and External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committees recently had a [joint consultation](#) open on the implications of the EU (Withdrawal) Bill for Wales. They also hosted a stakeholder training session on the bill (13th September) and an event for key stakeholders and experts (18th September) to discuss the potential implications of The EU (Withdrawal) Bill for Wales.

The third round of Brexit negotiations took place in Brussels between 28th and 31st August. There were a number of papers published by both side during the summer. Notably, the UK has published papers on [new](#)

[customs proposals](#) (15th Aug), [NI and Ireland](#) (16th August) and [goods on the market](#) (21st August). Michel Barnier, from the EU, published a raft of new [EU Brexit papers](#) on 7th September. They include Guiding Principles for the Dialogue on Ireland and Northern Ireland and papers on customs matters; data; public procurement; and intellectual property. The next round of negotiations will take place during the last week of September.

On 11th September, the EU Withdrawal Bill passed its first parliamentary test when MPs backed it by 326 votes to 290 following the second reading of the bill. The UK Government introduced the [Bill](#) to Parliament on July 13th. A key part of the UK Government's Brexit strategy, the bill will convert all existing EU laws into UK law and ensure EU law will no longer apply in the UK. First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, and Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, responded to the Bill with a joint [statement](#) and on the 12th of September, the Welsh



Government published a [formal challenge](#) to the UK Government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill in the form of a Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) laid before the National Assembly for Wales. It is possible that the Welsh Government will also bring forward a "Continuity Bill" to protect the current devolution settlement. As this would need to be passed prior to the UK EU Withdrawal Bill, it would need to go through emergency procedure this autumn. The Bill's Committee stage will take place when MPs return to parliament after their party conferences.

Thanks go to **Lowri Gwilym, WLGA**, for this update.