

South East Wales Regional Engagement Team



March 2017

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal signed

On St David's Day, 1st March, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal was formally ratified in a special ceremony at Cardiff Airport by the leaders of the ten local authorities of Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, The Vale of Glamorgan, and Torfaen.

Over the next 20 years, the £1.2 billion Cardiff City Deal is aiming to achieve significant economic growth across the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR); creating jobs, improving productivity, increasing economic activity, developing innovation, physical and digital infrastructure and supporting businesses.

Each of the ten councils involved will be required to make a combined capital contribution based on relative population which totals £120m.



The Regional Cabinet of the ten local authority leaders will now develop a Transition Plan that will detail key activity to be undertaken. The transition phase will also see the creation and development of three advisory bodies to the Regional Cabinet - the CCR Economic Growth Partnership, a region-wide business representation organisation, and an Employment and Skills Board. In addition a Regional Transport Authority will be established as a delivery body.

We will keep you informed of City Deal developments and how the investments are benefiting the region as a whole in future editions.

Two thirds of ESI funding programmes 2014-2020 now committed!

The European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund programmes have now committed over £1.3bn or 64% of their available funding across Wales! Both programmes now have a range of operations that deliver a balanced portfolio of support to individuals, businesses, and communities.

Focus on...ESF Priority 1: tackling poverty through sustainable employment

Matthew Hayes, 30, from Pontypool, has been unemployed since he was 16, but with support from one of these projects, **Bridges into Work 2**, has secured his first job.

Matthew has battled mental health issues including depression, anxiety and ADHD all his life, and has found it difficult to find work as a result.



Since making contact with the Bridges into Work 2 project earlier this year he has undertaken training courses and achieved a number of qualifications, while improving his softer skills and interview techniques.

Through the project's 'Dress to Impress' scheme he was also given an outfit to wear for job interviews, and has now been offered a position as a barman at the Parkway Hotel in Cwmbran.

Mr Hayes said: "My anxiety and ADHD has always been a barrier to me finding work and when I did start to apply for jobs I didn't have any experience of job interviews. I couldn't really afford anything decent to wear either – I went to one interview with a £10 suit from a supermarket and it was clear that the employers weren't impressed. The team at Bridges into Work have gone above and beyond to help me get a job. Not only have they sorted me out with clothes, and helped me with qualifications and skills, but they have helped me to work through personal issues too. Now I am really looking forward to starting my new job and getting on with my life."

Jo Thomas, employment support worker at Torfaen council, said: "Matthew has faced a number of challenges in his life that have prevented him from finding work. He is very enthusiastic but needed support and advice on how to dress appropriately and conduct himself at an interview, as well as the more practical qualifications and training. I am delighted that he has now been offered a job and we will be keeping in touch with him regularly to continue the support through Working Skills for Adults 2.

Supporting people into work through European Funding

All projects approved under Priority 1 address the specific, complex barriers individuals face in finding and staying in employment, concentrating on those furthest away from the labour market.

Economically inactive and unemployed people can be supported into work through the Active Inclusion, Communities4Work, Bridges into Work 2 and SOVA Achieving Change through Employment projects (ACE).

The Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) project offers specific support for parents whose main barrier to work is childcare. People with long-term health conditions can be helped into work and assisted to maintain their job through the Welsh Government's Healthy Working Wales projects.

In addition, the ReACT III project helps those facing redundancy or have been made redundant to overcome barriers to finding new employment.

If you'd like to find out more information about any of these projects please email us at SEWalesRET@bridgend.gov.uk.

Funding available for projects to help people stay in work

Under the West Wales and the Valleys ESF programmes opportunities exist to develop ideas which support people to stay in work. Healthy Working Wales (In-Work Service) is the first project using funding from Priority 1 SO3 which aims to reduce underemployment or absence rates for employed individuals.

Healthy Working Wales is a Welsh Government led project targeting those at risk of becoming unemployed due to long term sick absence. It provides wrap-around support through the Health & Work Service (HWS) which refers employees in the early stages of long-term sickness absence to receive rapid access to work-focused interventions. They will also support employers and GP's to address health and work-related issues.

WEFO are interested to hear from organisations seeking to develop ideas which will complement the Healthy Working Wales operation. Discussions with WEFO have confirmed that applications for funding under P1 SO3 would look to support anyone aged 16 or above who is underemployed and experiencing barriers to further employment, not just those with a health condition. In addition, WEFO would be happy to consider small-scale local projects. Any project coming forward would need to contribute to the outputs for this part of the programme:

- Employed individuals including self-employed with a work limiting health condition or disability
- Underemployed participants with barriers to full employment
- Number of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises supported
- Workplace health programmes

The SE Regional Engagement Team welcomes enquiries in response to this opportunity. Our contact details can be found on the bottom of this newsletter.

#TalkValleys

The Minister for Lifelong Learning, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and the Minister for Skills, have joined together, with a group of expert advisors, to develop a fresh approach to delivering real change in the valleys. The taskforce will build upon work previously undertaken in a more coordinated and targeted way which will meet the needs of the valley communities. The taskforce is currently holding a series of public meetings across the South Wales valleys to seek the views of local communities about priorities for their local areas.

If you want to #TalkValleys come and meet the taskforce at their next meetings:

6pm	27 March	The D.O.V.E Workshop in Banwen, Neath
6pm	8 May	Town Hall, Maesteg
6pm	10 May	Institute, Ebbw Vale
6pm	25 May	Coleg y Cymoedd, Rhondda Campus

If you would like to take part at the next meeting please [register](#) or [email](#) to #TalkValleys. Alternatively post your views and comment on [facebook.com/talkvalleys](https://www.facebook.com/talkvalleys)

For information on taskforce membership and priorities visits – [WG Website](#)

EU transition update

Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford AM has been meeting with stakeholders to discuss the future of regional economic development funding, following the publication of the Welsh Government's White Paper – [Securing Wales's Future](#). The paper provides a comprehensive and credible plan for the negotiations with our partners in Europe on the UK's exit from the EU and reaffirms calls for replacement funding from UK sources after 2020 to help Wales address long-term challenges.

The Finance Secretary will also present evidence to the External Affairs and Legislative Committee as part of its [Inquiry into Regional Policy – What Next for Wales?](#) (March 20) looking at the future of regional economic development policy in Wales.

Wales is making significant progress in the delivery of the 2014–2020 programmes, having already invested just over £1.3 billion (64%) of the £2 billion EU Structural Funds allocation, driving a total investment of £2.5 billion.

The UK Treasury has provided a full lifetime guarantee for all structural and investment projects approved before the UK leaves the EU.

Linking ESF delivery with emerging policy

On 14th March, the SE RET facilitated a workshop to raise awareness of the Welsh Government's Employability Plan for Wales.

The aim of the Employability plan is to sustain a low rate of unemployment, reduce levels of economic inactivity and decrease the rate of employment exit by those who are already in work, recognising the growing issue of in-work poverty. The goal is to achieve this through increased employment, increased living standards, reduced skills gaps and reduced variation across Wales.

The workshop, attended by representatives from SHELL and ESF projects delivering across the SE Wales region, was a welcome platform to discuss the plans and directly engage with the officers developing the programme. The team are exploring further engagement

Property Development Funding schemes launched

You may have already seen the news that the Welsh Government has launched two new property development funds. The private sector grants are funded through ERDF and each have £7million available with a grant intervention rate of 35%. Businesses in the South East region are being encouraged to contact the fund team (gde.pdg@wales.gsi.gov.uk) as early as possible to begin discussions. For more information go to the [Welsh Government website](#).

Upcoming events

- The Cardiff Capitol Region ESI Proofing Panel will meet on 27th April
- Europe Day is the 9th May
- The next ESF Priority 2 meeting will be on the 11th May
- The next ESF Priority 1 meeting will be on the 22nd May
- The PMC will be meeting on the 9th June
- The next ESF Priority3 meeting will be on the 4th July

Contact us: SE Wales Regional Engagement Team
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