



E-NEWSLETTER Winter 2018



RET update

Our 9th newsletter brings us to the end of a busy 2018. The year has seen the team working with our partners across the region to support funding calls, special workshops to address concerns around GDPR, the establishment of new networks and the facilitation of three information events all in a climate of uncertainty as we move closer to Brexit.

Whilst the uncertainty of what future regional investment will look like remains, we do have the UK Treasury Guarantee in place that will allow us to focus efforts on the delivery of approved projects, seeking to maximise the impact of this last round of EU funding. It will be vital that we pull together the best practice and lessons learnt from our experiences to date so that we can inform the development of what comes next.

We would like to thank you for your support throughout this year. Partnership working sounds like such a simple concept but we recognise the energy and commitment it takes to make it a reality. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to working with you in what should be an interesting 2019!

Lisa, Amy, Natalie, Nicola and Jan



In this edition

RET update

Page 1

Regional performance data

Page 2

Employability & Skills conference

Page 2

Employability success

Page 3

Horizon 2020

Page 4

Cardiff Capital Region

Page 4

Valleys Taskforce

Pages 5 & 6

WEFO news

Page 6

WEFO annual event

Page 7

New ESF priority

Page 8

Regional performance data

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	2,704
	Enterprises created	524
	Jobs created	4,843
ESF	Participants assisted	85,948
	Participants supported into employment	3,433
	Participants gaining qualifications	34,064
	Participants in education / training	2,958

[...back to top](#)

Employability and Skills conference

At the end of November the [Learning and Work Institute](#) hosted their annual Employability and Skills conference at Cardiff City Stadium.

The focus was on the last twenty years of devolution and what has been achieved in that time, as well as areas that Wales still needs to improve upon. The event was very well attended with 140 delegates. The South East RET was also able to be there and delivered a workshop on **Capturing the best of ESF**. Other workshops covered:

- Where are the labour markets in Wales going?
- The evolution of prospective learner decision making
- Wales at its best: tackling the disability employment gap
- Improving job progression in Wales
- Update on the Welsh Government Employability
- What future for young people
- Improving education and employability for Welsh offenders

- The future of the employability profession
- If anyone is interested in the feedback and discussion at the ESF workshop that we facilitated contact us at sewalesret@bridgend.gov.uk and we'll send the notes out to you.

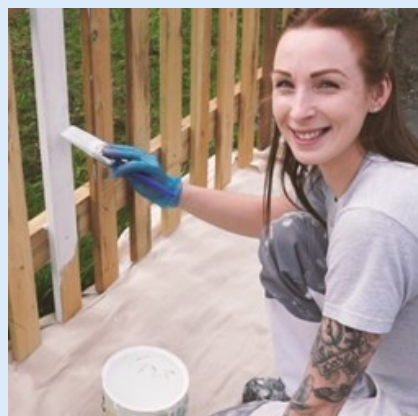


The keynote speech of the day was by Eluned Morgan AM, minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning with a question and answer session following. The minister provided an overview of the skills and employability programmes and initiatives that have been launched by the Welsh Government over the last twelve months and highlighted the commitment of the Welsh Government to reducing the disability employment gap in Wales.

[...back to top](#)

Employability success

With operations across the region now well into the delivery phase there are some significant milestones being reached that should be celebrated. In October the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan, [announced](#) that the Welsh Government led Parents, Childcare and Employment programme ([PaCE](#)) had helped its 1000th participant into work. One of those recently helped by the programme in the South East region is



Channelle. She was an unemployed single parent who previously worked as a delivery driver. She needed a job with more flexibility and

wanted to set up her own painting and decorating business. The PaCE programme helped her to achieve this by providing support to get on to a college course, win a start-up grant and obtain advice on how to get a loan for a company vehicle. She now runs The Lady Paint and Decor Co. which won gold in the Crown New Entrant painting competition last year.

[Bridges into Work](#) recently supported its 700th participant into a volunteer placement. Having been out of work for a number of years, Andrew Morgan, from Blaenavon, Torfaen was encouraged by the team to attend the Bridges into Work 2 community hub in the Melin Academy. As part of his supported action plan, Andrew achieved a level 2 qualification in First Aid and then secured a volunteer placement at [Llantarnam Grange](#). Since his first week, Andrew has



become an integral part of the team. Whether gardening, painting, carrying out maintenance or repairs, putting-up shelves or helping to set up exhibitions, Andrew has proved to be a multi-skilled and highly-adaptable member of the team, with a great deal to offer any prospective employer.



This week WEFO have committed £1.8m to [JobSense](#) to will provide specialist employment and training services to those with hearing or sight problems and who find themselves economically-inactive or long-term unemployed. JobSense will work with employers as well as participants to address the disability employment gap from both sides of the problem. Complimentary to this is the news of additional funding for Healthy Working Wales' ['In Work Support Service'](#) service to provide people with mental or physical health conditions free and rapid access to occupational therapy to help them remain in employment.

[...back to top](#)

Horizon 2020

The December edition of the [Horizon 2020 newsletter](#) is available now with news on funding opportunities, upcoming dates for your diary and good news stories.



[...back to top](#)

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Frank Holmes, founder partner at Gambit Corporate Finance, chairs the [Regional Economic Growth Partnership \(REGP\)](#) which



advises the Cardiff Capital Region's (CCR) Regional Cabinet and leads on the economic growth plan underpinning the City Deal. Here he talks about the short and medium-term goals of the REGP.

The REGP aims to be ambitious and drive considered investment proposals which will improve productivity, turning economic weakness into opportunity. This will require a lot more than the £495 million under its advisory stewardship.

So, we are actively looking to establish partnerships with the investor community to create an Investment, Infrastructure and Innovation Fund aimed at supplying long-term capital, co-investing with inward migrating companies whilst seeking to make acceptable levels of returns, recycling the capital and living off interest, as opposed to

deploying grants.

This fund will focus on connectivity and infrastructure, embracing radical innovation opportunities as well as addressing the challenges of artificial intelligence and data economy, clean growth, the future of mobility and an ageing society, all of which will shape our educational and skills needs.

The REGP also has ambitions to lead the delivery through data-based, industry-backed, interregional and international initiatives and create new markets within the region by co-partnering with the Public sector through a Public Services Testbed, unlocking innovative funding and taking risks proportionate to rigorously assessed rewards and returns. We're also looking to develop more participative means for engagement, like Challenge Calls and Prizes.

At the same time, the REGP aims to build trust, enhance assurance and practice best-in-class governance. Beyond Brexit, City Deal may also become a conduit for other funds from UK Government. Wales cannot afford to miss out its fair share of the Treasury pot and we are raising our voice on the Shared Prosperity Fund.



[...back to top](#)

Valleys Taskforce

Ein Cymoedd
Ein Dyfodol



Our Valleys
Our Future

Since the publication of the 'Our Valleys, Our Future' [one year progress report](#) in July, the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys has reviewed its work and the delivery plan to ensure the actions within it are still fit for purpose and contribute to the three overarching priorities: good jobs and the skills to do them; better public services and improvements and a focus on local community.

In November the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services announced the publication of an update to the delivery plan which focused attention on those areas that add real value to Valleys communities.

A465

A new addition to the plan includes a focus on maximising the benefits of the investment in the A465 for local communities alongside this important corridor. The taskforce has been working with stakeholders and partners to identify and build on the opportunities for investment associated with the A465.



Strategic Hubs

The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services recently announced a £25m capital fund to support the seven strategic hubs over the next two years.

Local authorities in the hub areas have led the development of the blueprints for long term improvements in each strategic hub. Working with the Valleys authorities and the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, further details of the plans for the seven hubs will be announced in the New Year.

Development funding has been made available for some of the local authorities in the strategic hub areas. This will commission the feasibility and design of new integrated transport hubs, replacing where necessary existing rail and bus interchange and improving infrastructure and connectivity which will incorporate key metro development sites. The designs will also take in to account the wider regeneration ambitions for the areas.

Business support

Funding has been provided for a focused business support campaign that identifies and brings together success amongst Valleys communities. Funding has also been allocated for a pilot project to support peer-to-peer network for high growth Valleys based business founders or leaders.

Digital technology

Three digital technology pilot schemes for the Valleys are included in the new delivery plan which will be overseen by the taskforce's digital work stream:

- The taskforce will work with Transport for Wales to ensure its new Integrated Responsive Transport Programme gets people from the more isolated parts of the Valleys to and from their health appointments more effectively, an app will be developed to support this.
- The WiFi i Fi programme – an exciting way opening up public sector broadband to create community WiFi hotspots to be used by everyone in the local area. An app will also be created which...

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[...back to top](#)

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...shows where these hotspots are in the Valleys.

Investment in the Wales-wide mapping tool “Lle”. Developing its functionality and content to enable easy access to a host of useful data to inform and encourage investment in the Valleys.

Valleys Regional Park

In October the Alun Davies AM, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government, announced the creation of a Valleys Regional Park and launched a prospectus, inviting others to help shape the Park.

The My Community section in the delivery plan has been refreshed to deliver the first phase of the Valleys Regional Park, focusing on the three themes of landscape, culture and identity; recreation and wellbeing and communities and enterprise.

At the heart of the plans for the regional park are the Discovery Gateways – locations across the Valleys, which will tell the stories of the Valleys. These gateway sites will encourage people to be more active and to explore the landscapes.

The first 6 sites are [Dare Valley Country Park](#), [Caerphilly Castle](#), [Cwmcarn Forest](#), [Blaenavon World Heritage Visitor Centre](#), [Cyfarthfa Park](#) and [Bryngarw Country Park](#).



In addition to these, Mr Davies (pictured) announced on the 11th December that: “... [Ynysangharad War Memorial Park](#), [Parc Bryn Bach](#) and [Parc Slip Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre](#) will also be developed as Discovery Gateway sites, with Parc Slip Nature Reserve and Wildlife Visitor Centre, working closely with Bryngarw Country Park, as a regional gateway for the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi Valleys.”

[...back to top](#)

WEFO news

WEFO has confirmed that revised ESF participant eligibility guidance will be available before the end of the year. We will circulate this as soon as it is released.

They have also announced changes to their senior management structure. Peter Ryland (pictured) has already taken over as Chief Executive Officer and following the retirement of Jane MacMillan, Head of ESF and ETC at the end of November, her role will be filled by Geraint Green, formerly Head of Research

and Innovation Branch and the Horizon 2020 Unit.



[...back to top](#)

WEFO annual event

The European Structural and Investment Funds 2014 – 2020 Annual Information Event 2018 was held on the 5th December at the Marriot Hotel Cardiff.



The event was opened by Peter Ryland, the new Chief Executive of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), who gave an overview of the progress and developments of 2014- 2020 programmes, highlighting some key successes including the high level of funding committed already, and WEFO's continued aim for full commitment by March 2019.

Rob Halford gave an update on the Future of Regional Investment. He explained that with the current political climate it is currently difficult to give any solid information on the future of regional funding, but there are talks in place with regards to a new Shared Prosperity Fund, that will replace EU Funding. The Welsh Government are working hard to ensure that Wales will be no worse off when leaving the EU and Rob Halford explained that it is important to take learning forward from the current EU programme, capturing key information moving forward in order to design future programmes.

The key note speaker for the event was Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance. He announced the approval of

funding for two new renewable energy programmes, £9m for the GSCS (generation storage consumption supply) scheme, and £0.9m for the Swansea Community Solar Storage with Direct Local Supply project.

The event also celebrated a number of EU Funded project successes. Project winners included:

Best Mentor South West Wales Region

Suzanne Butterworth, Mentor for Communities for Work

Best Mentor South East Wales Region

Kirsty Keane, Mentor for Traineeships

Best Mentor North and Mid Wales Region

Larry Marsden, Lead Peer-Mentor for Cyfle Cymru

Best Cultural Heritage Project (see photo)

This award was won by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for the regeneration of [Pontypridd Lido](#). The project was a £3 million EU supported project which restored the original 1920's Grade II Listed Lido into a 21st Century visitor attraction. The attraction has three heated pools and a state of the art visitor centre which tells the story of the National Lido of Wales.



Congratulations to all the winners!

[...back to top](#)

New ESF priority

At the WEFO annual event there was an information workshop on the new ESF Priority 5 – public services reform and regional working.

Having the right institutional capacity in place can magnify the effect and impact of regional investments including those from European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds. The reverse is also true, in that a lack of capacity in the Welsh regions would risk undermining the success of the investments already in place.

ESF offers an opportunity to develop new ways of working across public services, for example in applying the use of big data. Indicative actions which would be supported under this priority may include, but not limited to:

- Assessments of capacity and capability for collaborative working, including

- development and dissemination of toolkits and new methods or procedures
- Building capacity and capability within existing partnerships
- Targeted investments for specific regional or collaborative partnerships where a capability and capacity assessment has taken place
- Innovative activities that promote social innovation, use of new technology, delivering new services and integration of services.
- Development and implementation of new approaches to integrated service delivery
- Training to provide staff with skills, models and tools to deliver organisational change and service improvement

For more information about the new priority and the potential to develop plans to support work within the Cardiff Capital Region please contact the SE RET manager Lisa Jones at lisa.jones@bridgend.gov.uk.

[...back to top](#)

