

Regional Employment & Skills Plan

South West & Mid Wales

2018



Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
Partneriaeth Dysgu a Sgiliau Rhanbarthol

South West & Mid Wales
De-Orllewin a Canolbarth Cymru



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government

Regional Strategic Planning for Local Skills

The geography of the South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning & Skills Partnership covers six Local Authority areas. This plan will support the work of the Swansea Bay City Region, the Growing Mid Wales Partnership and the Enterprise Zones in the Haven Waterway and Port Talbot, by taking close consideration of the identified skills priorities for those areas and ensuring synergy where possible.



Contents

Foreword	3
Executive Summary	5
Section 1	9
Introduction	
Section 2	13
Policy Context	
Section 3	27
Sector Profiles	
Section 4	37
Aspirational Projects and Key Developments	
Section 5	43
Conclusions and Recommendations	



Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
Partneriaeth Dysgu a Sgiliau Rhanbarthol
South West & Mid Wales
De-Orllewin a Canolbarth Cymru

For more information contact the
**Regional Learning and Skills
Partnership via info@rlpsww.org.uk**



Foreword

No one can tell you what your experience of the world will be in a couple of decades from now. With the embedding and growth of smart technologies, and the advent of artificial intelligence and robotics, humanity is going through a fundamental period of change. Fundamental.

We are not ready for it.

The good news perhaps is that probably nobody is. The changes coming to every facet of life is as unpredictable as will become their pace. They are both opportunity and threat, and all industry sectors will be at the front line of these fundamental changes. Developing a workforce with the skills required to positively impact on the economy of our region is one of the great challenges facing us now. GVA in this region still lags behind other regions of the UK. We need to raise the value through greater investment, establishing new businesses and developing the ones that exist already. They will all need a workforce appropriately skilled and accessible.

During the last year we have seen major projects approved in our area, including the £1.6 billion City Deal for Swansea Bay. Discussions are also ongoing with Governments for a Growth Deal in Mid Wales. These deals aim to boost the economy through public and private sector investment in innovative projects that will increase the number of skilled jobs, increase employment opportunities and boost the GVA of the region.

Skills is an essential part of any economic growth. Engagement with the private sector was and will remain key for the success of any growth or City Deal. The RLSP has accepted the challenge to engage with Industry over the last 3 years and I am pleased to report that this year we have engaged with more business leaders than ever before. We cannot be complacent though and have to engage with more businesses, large and small, from across all sectors and across the whole region.

More than 500 directly engaged with the RLSP this year and have provided further insight into what is actually needed in terms of skills. The feedback from Welsh Government on the Employment and Skills Plan for 2018 referred to the amount of Industry input we received and the subsequent evidence that we could show as being excellent.

However, the challenge from industry is always; can we show them that their contribution has made a difference, that their voice has been heard. Changes have already occurred within work based learning and apprenticeship provision based on the recommendations within the 2017 Employment and Skills Plan. The Colleges are also looking at ways to meet the challenges set by Industry and recommendations made within the 2017 plan with an implementation date of September 2019. Alongside that work, funding was made available this year by the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Skills to FE Colleges to specifically look at some of the recommendations made in the Employment and Skills plan. This funding has already been used to introduce short courses and higher level courses to meet the key issue of work readiness and basic skills.

Raising the perceptions of the opportunities in health, tourism, food, manufacturing and construction to our future workforce is equally important if we are to retain the economic contribution that these industries make in the region. All of these industries offer a career pathway for all skills levels, including the higher skilled and better paid jobs. A major objective moving forward has to be to ensure that all learners know the opportunities available to them post-learning so everyone fulfils their potential and their ambitions.

Most of all, we need to keep our eyes on that unfathomable future. The best we can do for current and future generations, industry and society as a whole is to embed a culture of flexibility, resilience, creativity and confidence. The interaction between providers, employers and government within the RLSP continues to be crucial in this regards and I wholeheartedly support this year's plan and ongoing work.

Paul Greenwood

Chairman, Regional Learning and Skills Partnership



Executive Summary

This Employment and Skills Plan has been developed with the aim of informing and supporting the Welsh Government's strategic approach to the delivery of employment and skills provision.

Developed by the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership for South West & Mid Wales this plan places itself at the centre of Welsh Government's skills policy, working to support the delivery of a post-16 learning environment which is fit for purpose.

Whilst the plan makes recommendations specific to Welsh Government's aforementioned skills policy it is of paramount importance to the RLSP that other important areas of the economy and learning landscape are considered. These include (but are not limited to); secondary schools, careers advice and guidance, shared apprenticeship schemes and basic skills. These are reflected through the five aspirational objectives which will form the driving force behind the RLSP's activities over the next three years.

The RLSP has undertaken extensive employer engagement to inform the demand element of this plan. Over 510 businesses from across the region have engaged with the process through surveys, interviews, cluster group attendance or networking.

The aforementioned cluster groups have and will continue to play a pivotal role in the identification of industry priorities for the region, with plans put in place to address these priorities through effective partnership working with the RLSP and other key stakeholders.

Aspirational Objectives

The partnership has identified a number of aspirational objectives that serve as a long term vision for the region. These aspirational objectives will be addressed through the activities of the partnership and its wider partners and will be reviewed and measured on an annual basis.

- 1. To create a post-16 learning environment that meets the needs of industry and learners whilst supporting providers to deliver the changes necessary.**
- 2. To enhance the development and delivery of Apprenticeship opportunities across the region to ensure that every person has an opportunity to gain new skills or re-skill regardless of their personal circumstances.**
- 3. To increase the parity of esteem between different learning routes and ensuring that learners are given access to advice and guidance that is representative to this end.**
- 4. To be responsive as a region to changing circumstances in terms of skills needs to ensure that those living, working and operating within the region are able to fully capitalise on all opportunities.**
- 5. To explore and when appropriate fully utilise all available delivery options for teaching and learning; including shared apprenticeship schemes, centres of excellence, modular learning and e-learning.**

Industry Priorities

Advanced Materials, Manufacturing & Energy

Increase the number of STEM learning pathways at all levels (e.g. Degree Apprenticeships in Manufacturing, Engineering, Energy, Material Science; Higher Apprenticeships in Business Improvement Techniques), including improving basic skills and expanding the use of apprenticeships to promote careers in engineering and STEM.

Construction

Providers and industry alike need to be responsive to the changing needs of the Construction sector. This translates to forging closer relationships between industry, schools and providers to address needs around increased work experience and mentoring for learners, multi-skilling individuals through a foundation year (to include elements of all key trades) and taking full advantage of Apprenticeships as a viable learning route.

Creative Industries

Ensure that provision meets the needs of the fast paced and developing sector that the Creative Industries is. This extends to ensuring that the specialist digital elements of the sector are aptly supplied for as identified in the priority for the ICT sector below.

Financial and Professional Services and ICT

A closer working relationship between the industry and providers needs to materialise to ensure that course content and delivery mechanisms meets the needs of employers. This is especially pertinent for ICT and digital provision where the fast pace of advancements needs to be reflected appropriately in provision.

Food and Farming

Ensure appropriateness of the qualifications within the sector, including apprenticeships frameworks, so that they are fit for purpose in relation to content and delivery mechanisms.

Health and Social Care

The sector needs support for staff training to ensure eligibility for registration, a targeted campaign to train the workers through a funded programme would bolster the sector and future proof it to be able to meet the demand for care and support at home.

Leisure, Tourism and Retail

The miss-guided perception of the sector held by learners and influencers is a key issue for the sector, severely effecting recruitment and retention rates. Targeted interventions should be developed and delivered within schools to dispel the negative connotations attached to the sector. In addition, providers and the industry should work in conjunction to develop fit for purpose training that is aspirational and representative of the true nature of the sectors vast activities.

Mid Wales Industry Cluster Group

To ensure that interventions developed and recommendations made by the RLSP are aligned to the future needs of the Mid Wales region. This will be informed by the Economic Development Plan and the Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are made within the three key areas of employability, learning and career choices and opportunities and provision. They are not sector specific in their nature and therefore apply across the economy, although some are more relevant than others to certain sectors.

Employability

The work readiness of new entrants is a challenge with many businesses reporting a lack of work experience and entrants having poor attitudes and lack motivation.

Basic skills around numeracy, literacy and digital are proving an issue for many businesses irrespective of sector.

- 1. Enhance partnership working to address the issues around the employability of individuals, aligning this activity to the All Wales Employability Programme.**
- 2. Engage with schools, local authorities and providers to promote the need for basic skills and to highlight the concerns of industry.**
- 3. Support stakeholders to reduce the levels of economic inactivity amongst disadvantaged groups including those with disabilities or long term health conditions.**

Learning and Career Choices

Perceptions of sectors remain a prolific issue, this exacerbates recruitment challenges faced by both providers and employers.

- 4. To increase engagement with schools and influencers to promote sectors that are poorly perceived.**
- 5. To work closely with providers to develop targeted interventions which can support in recruitment to provision linked to the priority sectors identified within this plan.**
- 6. Increase the understanding of opportunities offered by Apprenticeships across the region and develop targeted promotion with employers, learners at all levels, as well as influencers to ensure that opportunities are understood.**



Opportunities and Provision

Significant opportunities will be made available across the region through large scale projects such as the Swansea Bay City Deal and the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

7. To continue to align activities to large scale aspirational projects ensuring that skills requirements are identified and addressed within an appropriate timescale.

Evidence collated via engagement with stakeholders indicates that there are gaps in the provision offered. As a result many learners are either unable to pursue their career path of choice or are forced to identify new pathways to undertake courses in the areas they desire

8. Support partners to develop a curriculum that is fit for purpose, ensuring that new provision is facilitated in areas where currently the required resources are not available.

9. Ensuring that those areas of provision identified within SDF and SPP are supported and delivered.

Many employers feel that apprenticeship frameworks do not meet the needs of their businesses and attribute this as one of the main barriers to employing an apprentice.

10. Improve employer engagement in the development of Apprenticeship frameworks, including for higher and degree level programmes through greater direct employer input and flexibility.

Section 1

Introduction

Regional Employment & Skills Plan South West & Mid Wales

1.1 Purpose

This Regional Employment and Skills Plan for South West & Mid Wales has been developed at the request of the Welsh Government (WG) to inform their strategic approach to the delivery of employment and skills provision. This report correlates with a Regional Planning and Funding template which details recommended changes to the full time further education and work-based learning offers across the region for the next three years (academic years 19/20, 20/21 and 21/22). Both elements combine to support WG in the delivery of a post-16 learning environment which remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of learners, employers and providers.

This iteration of the plan builds on the Employment and Skills Plan prepared for 2017 where the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) made a number of recommendations based on the challenges faced by the region in terms of skills and employment. The recommendations put forward in this year's iteration therefore restate the pertinence of those challenges previously identified, informing the development of an action plan which will dictate the RLSP's activity over the next three years.

1.2 Process

Determining demand is the foundation in the development of a plan that is fit for purpose and integral to this stage is effective and meaningful employer engagement. Building on last year's developments therefore and enhancing its relationship with employers the RLSP continues to facilitate the seven industry cluster groups which play a pivotal role in the identification of industry priorities. The groups directly align with those sectors that have been deemed a priority for the region, which are;

- Advanced Materials, Manufacturing and Energy,
- Construction,
- Creative Industries, Financial and Professional Services and ICT,
- Food and Farming,
- Health and Social Care,
- Leisure, Tourism and Retail.

In addition to facilitating the industry cluster groups the RLSP conducted a thorough primary research exercise, acquiring both qualitative and quantitative data primarily through electronic surveys or via telephone interviews. Over 500 businesses completed the survey, a breakdown of which is provided below:

County	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Carmarthenshire	20	48	24	15	107
Neath Port Talbot	14	26	7	5	52
Pembrokeshire	34	33	17	7	91
Swansea	18	31	27	15	91
Ceredigion	34	26	9	4	73
Powys	19	34	13	8	74
Regional	2	3	5	13	23
Total	138	193	95	54	511

A full list of annexes can be accessed here

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Employers-Engaged-1.pdf>

In addition to the 511 individual employers engaged with we have also ensured that representing bodies have been fully engaged with the development of this report. In total they represent thousands of businesses across the region. Including;

- CITB,
- ECITB,
- Federation of Small Businesses
- South Wales Chamber of Commerce
- National Training Federation for Wales,
- Business Wales,
- Mid Wales Manufacturing Group,
- Pembrokeshire Tourism,
- Carmarthenshire Tourist Association,
- Brecon Beacons Tourist Association,
- Mid Wales Tourism Forum,
- South West Tourism Forum,
- Swansea Tourism,
- Lantra,
- NFU,
- FUW,
- Social Care Wales.

Analysis of the primary evidence gathered is then considered against the curriculum supply information provided by WG on the full time further education and work based learning offers across the region. A key element of this stage was the development of a sub-group consisting of senior representatives from the providers across the region and the industry chairs of the aforementioned cluster groups. The creation of this group allowed for key discussions to take place ensuring that recommendations made were mutually beneficial and accepted by both parties.

1.3 Limitations & Factors for Consideration

When reading this document a number of factors should be considered, these are;

- As per the specification from WG this plan only serves to make recommendations on full time vocational provision and elements of work based learning. The RLSP appreciates that this is a small portion of the post-16 offer available within the region as it does not consider school level provision, A-level provision, the current higher education offer or adult and community learning. It is the hope of the RLSP to produce a regional plan which fully comprehends the entirety of the post-16 landscape, fully addressing these limitations in future iterations with the support of WG.
- The employer evidence included in the sector profiles should be regarded as the views of solely the employers that the RLSP engaged with during this process (either through cluster group meetings, survey responses or interviews) and not the industries as a whole.



Section 2

Policy Context

Regional Employment & Skills Plan South West & Mid Wales

2.1 The Labour Market

2.1.1 Economic Performance

The region as a whole continues to lag behind national (UK and Wales) averages in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). The most recently available indexed values indicate that South West Wales figures report at 66.0, Mid Wales at 65.1 and Wales at 72.7 in comparison to the indexed value of 100 given to the UK.

2.1.2 Demographics

Mid-year population estimates for 2017 indicate that approximately 205,591 people are living in Mid Wales. The same estimates give indication that there are approximately 698,733 individuals living in the four counties of South West Wales. Both economic areas have an ageing population with the proportion of those aged over 65 accounting for 26% of the total population in Mid Wales and 22% in South West Wales.

A rapidly ageing population puts significant financial pressure on health, social care and pensions systems which increases over time. Price Waterhouse Cooper's recently published Golden Age Index report (2017) suggests that to offset these higher costs older workers should be encouraged to remain in the workforce for longer. Their research suggests that this would increase consumer spending, raise GDP and tax revenues in addition to improving the health and wellbeing of older people by keeping them mentally and physically active.

There are a number of interventions that are currently being trialled in other countries which have been implemented to increase and sustain the employment rate in older workers. Some of the key priorities that these countries pursue (and could be implemented in the region) include;

- Pension reform and financial incentives for later retirement,
- Greater access to flexible working for older workers,
- More access to flexible retirement schemes,
- Reverse mentoring schemes, using younger workers to mentor older workers for example in digital skills,
- Extending apprenticeships to older workers,
- Strong anti-discrimination policies.

2.1.3 Qualification Levels

Analysis of the most recently available data indicates that South West Wales has a greater proportion of working age adults with no qualifications when compared with the average for Wales. This however, is not the case for Mid Wales where averages are 2.5 percentage points less than the average for Wales.

2.1.4 Employment and Unemployment

The economic inactivity rate of South West Wales (26.1) compares negatively with the same rate at a Wales level (23.5). This suggests that as a proportion of the total population more people are economically inactive with statistics showing that 14,400 people are unemployed in the region.

The same figures for the Mid Wales region show a more positive picture with its economic inactivity rate reading at 23.2 and 3,300 people being recorded as unemployed.

Furthermore, the largest sectors in terms of employment in the South West Wales, include; Public administration, defence, education and health (99,800), Wholesale, retail, transport, hotels and food (85,200) and Production (31,500).

Whilst the largest employment sectors in Mid Wales, include: Public administration, defence, education and health (26,400), Wholesale, retail, transport, hotels and food (23,500) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (13,300).

2.2 Cross-cutting Priorities

There are a number of cross-cutting priorities which permeate every sector operating within the region which must be taken into consideration, these are detailed below;

2.2.1 Labour Market Failures

Labour market failure occurs when the supply and demand elements of a labour market fail to result in an economic efficiency of labour, or when they do not reach an efficient and/or equitable outcome from society's point of view.

The most commonly cited reasons for labour market failure include;

- The existence of skills gaps,
- Labour immobility,
- Inequality.

It could be argued that a number of the aforementioned factors are prevalent in Wales which possibly combine to worsen or stagnate regional economic recovery and ultimately its improvement.

The existence of Skills Gaps

The existence of skills gaps is an issue for the region, RLSP evidence indicates that 51% of businesses surveyed face skills challenges. Furthermore, 62% feel that new entrants to their sector are not completely work ready. These issues cause significant challenges for businesses through reducing productivity, increasing training costs and hindering the growth and development of that business. Of course, this has a detrimental effect on the wider economy.

Labour Immobility

Labour immobility relates to the lack of movement of labour to where it is in greatest demand. 52% of business surveyed indicated that they experience difficulty in recruiting for specific roles. The region needs to be further promoted as an attractive place to live, work and invest, with on average lower house prices than neighbouring nations and a good quality of life.

In addition, Wales has seen a shift-change in its labour market profile in recent years as a result of the decline of the manufacturing sector and the growth of service industries. More work needs to be done especially with older workers to understand where there may be opportunities to increase industrial mobility. Many skills are transferrable and are not sector specific, support should be given therefore to further understand the parity in skills between some sectors. This could provide a significant lift to the economy and ensure that more individuals remain in long-term meaningful employment.

Inequality

Disability

According to a leading disability charity, Wales has the highest proportion of disabled people in its population, the largest number of disability related benefit claimants and the widest employment gap with non-disabled people of anywhere in the UK. In addition, a report recently completed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that 39% of disabled people in Wales are currently living in poverty compared with 22% for non-disabled people. This would suggest that there is clear inequality within the labour market. Through the Employability Plan it is essential that there is increased inclusivity and accessibility for all disabled people living in Wales. This extends to ensuring that they are equipped with the right skills, the right transport and the right information to fully capitalise on opportunities and create a better and fairer economy.

Gender Imbalances

There is significant evidence to suggest that women and men do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society. For Wales this is especially prevalent within the labour market and economy where there is not an equal representation of men and women across a range of occupational areas. To contextualise this, in January 2017, 59% of 'managers, directors and senior officials' were men. During that same time period 81% of those working in 'caring, leisure and other service occupations' were women and of the 153,200 people working in 'administrative and secretarial occupations, 72% were women.

This highlights issues around the gender pay gap where women appear less in those occupational areas where wages tend to be higher.

'Solving the gender pay gap over the long term means tackling an ingrained difference in the skills that women gain and choose to develop during their academic studies and, therefore, in the jobs they go on to take. If more women are encouraged to study STEM subjects during their education and are taught in a way that recognises their cognitive preferences, we not only prepare them for a more dynamic world of work but we simultaneously start to bridge the gap in pay. This will require clear focus by both policymakers and employers'.

2.2.2 Digital, Automation and Industry 4.0

Many economic commentators believe that the world is on the verge of a period of significant digital transformation often referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0. This transformation will be facilitated by significant enhancements in connectivity speeds, computational power and data availability. It will also support a significant shift towards process automation, enhanced by factors such as machine learning and artificial intelligence.

These changes will impact all areas of the economy, not just those operating within the existing ICT and digital economy. The areas identified as being most likely to change due to digital transformation include manufacturing, retail and office support roles.³

The development of digital skills will be increasingly important at all levels to ensure the competitiveness of the region. This includes ensuring that both new entrants to the labour market and existing employees have the appropriate skills to support businesses. This will place an additional responsibility on individuals and businesses to upskill digitally within their roles.

¹ <http://www.disabilitywales.org/national-disgrace-high-price-disability-poverty-wales/>

² <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/Growth/deloitte-uk-women-in-stem-pay-gap-2016.pdf>

³ <https://www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/ukeo/pwc-uk-economic-outlook-full-report-march-2017-v2.pdf>

The Swansea Bay City Deal and the Skills and Talent Intervention highlight the importance of developing digital skills for the economy of the future and will identify the future skills and provision required to support the economic transition. The RLSP will also work with 'Working Wales' to identify the digital skills required to support individuals into sustainable employment and to mitigate any unintended consequences of digital transformation.

2.2.3 Rurality

Rurality and the rural economy

The rural economy within South West and Mid Wales is of significant importance and encompasses large areas of the North and West of the region. It faces a wide range of challenges that are unique to the rural setting. These include the issues identified below;

a) Declining productivity

The productivity (as measured by GVA) within predominantly rural areas is significantly below the UK and also below those of more urban areas across the region. This is a trend that is visible across the UK. This is in part due to the nature of businesses located within the different areas, with higher numbers of high GVA industries such as financial and professional services being located in the more urban areas. An additional factor is the nature of employment within rural areas with a greater emphasis on part time working and self-employment, often relating to lifestyle businesses.

*'Self-employment, part-time working and seasonal employment are more prevalent in rural labour areas. Self-employment and part-time working can be a positive lifestyle choice or a response to a lack of employment opportunities.'*⁴

This productivity divide between the urban and rural is significant as it produces a number of skills related challenges in particular relating to the availability, recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled individuals.

b) Demographic challenges

Within the region there are a significant number of demographic challenges with rural areas being more likely to have issues regarding an ageing population. This includes a higher proportion of over 65s than the urban averages which affects both the demands on local services as well as the proportion of working age residents who can form the workforce. This demographic imbalance creates significant challenges both in creating a critical mass required for economically viable delivery of interventions but also a requirement for the re-skilling of older individuals.

c) Effects of migrant labour on the rural economy

The rural economy consists of a number of sectors where there is currently a fairly high reliance on the usage of migrant labour, particularly from the EU. These sectors include food production and processing, hospitality and tourism as well as the health and social care sector.

⁴Employability and Skills in Rural Scotland 2012 – Scottish Government Employability Learning Network

d) Access to services

Rurality and in particular deep rurality places significant pressures on the delivery of services due to a number of different factors which include;

- Lower population densities which make achieving relative economies of scale difficult, this can include a low number of clients for services to support, making costs expensive for delivery bodies as well as limiting potential engagement opportunities.
- Large travel distances between conurbations increases time and cost for accessing services, this can hinder the skills development of individuals within rural areas who may encounter these barriers.
- Poor digital connectivity remains a challenge due to the cost of installing fibre broadband, issues with 'the last mile of connectivity' remain a significant challenge for many in rural areas.

2.2.4 Apprenticeships

5,635 learners studied through apprenticeship programmes in South West Wales in academic year 2016/17, this is a very small decrease of 1% compared with figures for academic year 2015/16. From a Mid Wales perspective 1,280 learners studied through apprenticeship programmes in academic year 2016/17, this is a 5% decrease on figures for academic year 2015/16. To view this data in detail, [click here](#). Given the economic and social value apprenticeships hold more can be done to see a greater level of take up. Employer evidence highlights many issues which could be addressed by an increased level of workplace experience and learning which apprenticeships can provide. There are many benefits to both employer and learner and in turn the economy as a whole.

Benefits to Business:

A typical apprenticeship completer is understood to raise productivity by £214 per week. At a sectoral level, apprenticeships are estimated to raise the productivity⁵ of a typical completer by:

- £83 per week in the retail sector
- £114 in the healthcare, public services and care sector
- £268 in the business, administration & legal sector
- £401 in the construction and planning sector; and
- £414 in the engineering and manufacturing sector

Further benefits include improvements in product or service quality, productivity and staff morale.

Benefits to the Economy:

An evaluation report of Work-based Learning in Wales, 2007-2011 (Welsh Government, 2014) illustrates the economic and social value of apprenticeships in Wales. In terms of the economic value of apprenticeships, the report provides an estimate of the value of apprentices to the Welsh economy:

- Foundation Apprenticeship (Level 2) annually generates around £510 million value to the Welsh economy (based on latest participation levels).
- Apprenticeship (Level 3) annually generates a similar £500 million value'.^{6,7}

⁵ the above productivity gains are only achieved upon completion, and in most sectors, there is an initial negative net gain to employers, due to the level of training required before an apprentice's productive capacity approaches that of a skilled worker.

⁶ NTfW – The Value of Apprenticeships to Wales (2015)

⁷ This estimate of the value of apprentices to the Welsh economy was calculated by assuming a return of £16 to each pound of public money spent on a Level 2 Apprenticeship and £21 on a Level 3 Apprenticeship (National Audit Office, 2012). The estimate also assumed that expenditure on Level 2 Apprenticeships was £32-£36 million and Level 3 Apprenticeship was £24-28 million (Welsh Government, 2014).

2.2.5 Adult Learning

A lifelong learning approach is fully supported by the RLSP with recognition being given to the importance of adult learning. Community education and workplace education are undeniably at the core of providing learning opportunities to those individuals who may face unique barriers and are furthest away from the labour market and experiencing disadvantage. It is crucial that learning opportunities offered via adult learning are recognised for the progression opportunities they create and their wider economic benefit in supporting individuals to gain employment and reducing their reliance on state welfare.

2.3 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The RLSP supports the main goals of the act through its ongoing activity which includes:

- Facilitating businesses to identify and evidence the skills requirements required at a local level and to engage with providers to address skills gaps and drive prosperity and growth.
- Promote regional equality through supporting individuals and businesses to achieve their potential through providing appropriate learning opportunities and progression pathways.
- Support sustainable employment through promoting apprenticeships and other vocational learning opportunities including higher, degree and shared apprenticeships.
- Engaging with young people to promote skills and regional career opportunities working with schools ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Encourage and support lifelong learning through supporting in work and employability skills and to support continuous skills development and sustainable employment.
- Support the Welsh language through increasing the availability of provision and access for learners.
- Support the transition of the region and its economy with the appropriate digital skills including through the Swansea Bay City Deal to secure high skill, high wage sustainable jobs for the future.
- Support sustainable growth and combat climate change by promoting green technology skills and innovative methods of skills delivery.

2.4 Brexit

The triggering of Article 50 on the 29th of March 2017 marked the beginning of the process for the UK leaving the European Union over a 2 year timescale. At present the potential impacts of Brexit remain unclear which provides a significant challenge in understanding the future demands of business and the potential impacts on the labour market as a result.

Evidence from the Centre for Cities highlights the importance of exports to the EU from the region and Swansea was ranked as 7th highest in terms of total percentage of exports to the EU with 60% of exports being to the EU⁸. The McKinsey Global Institute has highlighted that improving productivity will be essential to the success of a post Brexit economy as currently '66% of UK employees work in companies with below-average productivity'⁹.

Analysis of employer evidence gathered by the RLSP indicates that of the 436 businesses which responded to the question only 5% felt that Brexit will be positive for them. 30% stated that Brexit will have a negative effect on their business with the remaining 65% indicating a sense of uncertainty around what to expect and therefore its effects.

⁸ <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Cities-Outlook-2017-Web.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/europe/productivity-the-route-to-brex-it-success>

Brexit could be particularly damaging for the Food and Farming sector. Industry engagement suggests that concerns are prevalent, especially around recruitment. Many businesses operating within the food production sector rely on a workforce largely made up of EU nationals. A final agreement therefore on the rights of these EU nationals is integral to the future of these businesses.

Concerns are broad for the Farming sector with the potential loss of subsidies, markets and labour creating unprecedented issues which will have potentially detrimental effects on a range of products, including dairy, arable crops and livestock. The loss of subsidies could force farmers who are already under severe financial pressures to stop functioning. It is vital therefore that government is able to provide assurances to the farming sector that similar supports will be available to protect a vitally important industry to the region.

The full effects of Brexit remain to be seen however changes to trade could provide opportunities for some and be damaging for others. Around half of the UK's trade is with the EU and through EU membership trade costs are reduced, allowing consumers to profit from cheaper goods and services and UK businesses to export more. A change to trade regulations could mean that it will cost more for businesses operating within the UK to export to the EU. On the contrary however, some argue that this will allow businesses to trade more freely with countries outside the EU taking advantage of new markets. This has the potential to affect every business operating within the UK, however it may potentially become more of a prolific issue for the region given its high proportion of micro and small businesses.

2.5 Careers Advice and Guidance

The RLSP feels very strongly that careers advice and guidance is absolutely fundamental to creating a better future for learners.

A recently published report reiterates a message that has been discussed for decades;

'...the perceptions children have about certain jobs and careers are formed and sometimes cemented at a young age. These studies have emphasised that children's aspirations are often shaped, moulded and restricted by gender stereotyping, socio-economic background and, importantly, who they know. These factors can, and do, go on to influence the academic effort children exert in certain lessons, the subjects they choose to study and the jobs they end up pursuing.'

Other major findings include;¹⁰

- *By a considerable margin (over 10 percentage points), the most popular job for children in the UK was either a sportsman or sportswoman with a total of 21.3% of children drawing it as the job they would like to do when they were older. This was followed by teacher, vet and social media and gaming.*
- *the analysis found that parents and other extended members of the family (siblings, grandparents etc) were the most influential in defining children's career aspirations. The least influential person or people was a member of the local community.*
- *Less than 1% of children stated they heard about the job from a volunteer from the world of work coming in to school.*
- *research finds a major disconnect between the careers that primary-age children are most interested in and those that the economy needs and a similar misalignment is also evident among young people in secondary schooling, contrary to arguments that career aspirations of children are transient, changing and should ultimately be ignored.¹¹*

¹⁰ Based on UK findings of a survey of 7-11 year olds.

¹¹ <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DrawingTheFuture.pdf>

Based therefore on findings from such studies and the findings of RLSP consultation with learners strengthening links between education and industry is key and something that the RLSP are passionate about as is evident by the number of recommendations made in previous years specifically around careers advice and guidance.

The RLSP regularly engages with learners to promote the opportunities available to them within the region. A number of resources have been developed to support this, including;

- The Spotlight on South West and Mid Wales (video and poster),
- Sector Infographics,
- Apprenticeships 'at a glance'.

These resources are communicated via direct linkages with the schools, through 14-19 co-ordinators and via attendance at the numerous careers fairs that occur across the region.

2.6 Employability

The RLSP is working alongside the Regional Engagement Team (RET) to support the implementation of Working Wales via the Regional Employability Group. This group provides a forum for existing regional employability projects to engage with the development of 'Working Wales' and to identify barriers faced by clients and communicate skills needs of employers.

The following employability skills have been identified through utilising the employer evidence including through the RLSP survey and cluster groups as well as engagement with the Regional Employability Group.

Social and 'soft skills'

Work readiness was identified by many respondents as a recruitment issue across a large number of sectors and survey respondents were asked to identify their reasons for new entrants not being work ready. In total only 38% of those businesses surveyed felt that new entrants to their sector were work ready. The primary reason reported for a lack of work readiness being that new entrants lacked *'the skills you look for'* and the *'entrants tend to have poor attitude and lack motivation'*.

Many businesses reported new entrants lacked a number of social skills which impacted on their ability to deliver to customers, this included communication, such as face to face with customers and the ability to understand instructions and tasks from management. There were also concerns over poor attitudes and motivation of new entrants, including issues such as timekeeping, etc. This has also been identified by employability providers via the employability group which have identified significant 'soft skills' training needs for clients on top of 'job specific' training, with a need for intensive mentoring and support before individuals can progress.

Employers via the survey have highlighted a willingness to train individuals who display an appropriate attitude a willingness to learn and develop and will invest in developing individuals.

Literacy, numeracy and digital skills

Basic skills are an issue for many employers including literacy, numeracy and digital skills which remain amongst the most common barriers to employment. These have been identified as barriers to entry to apprenticeships in some sectors such as social care where literacy and numeracy are required as part of the apprenticeship.

Practical work experience

There were also concerns regarding the levels of practical experience of new entrants within the working environment which is proving a barrier to employment. There is an universal concern across all sectors that young people in particular are not being provided with the opportunity to experience a work environment either in school or college. Employers are also concerned that the content of some learning is not work relevant and not applicable to the work environment, examples include the ICT sector where professional applications are developing faster than curriculum changes.

Awareness of opportunities and willingness to undertake roles

Employers suggested that there was a lack of awareness of some of the opportunities that exist within sectors and also recruitment challenges resulting in a lack of applicants, this was often exacerbated by a significant staff turnover rate. Feedback from both the survey and the cluster group highlighted that it was prevalent within many manual tasks within the food and drink sector, which currently rely significantly on EU labour as well as certain roles within the Health and Social Care sector.

Employers identified the need for greater promotion of employment opportunities within these sectors, including improving perceptions within the sector with work ongoing for example within the Health and Social Care sector and Leisure and Tourism sectors.

Skilled, professional and technical roles

There remains demand across all sectors for skilled trade occupations (35%) as well as technical (12%) and professional skills (28%). such as engineering, etc. The levels of demand vary across sectors although there is a greater demand for skilled individuals than manual and lower skilled occupation areas. Employers are largely willing to develop staff to develop skills and technical knowledge however when required many find it difficult to recruit individuals with the required skills.

Supporting disability and labour market inclusion

The economic opportunities to the region presented by greater labour market inclusion are significant, however there are significant challenges to be overcome from both employers and stakeholders. The employability group will work alongside Working Wales in supporting access for these clients to services and the labour market, particularly where the individual may face multiple barriers and to promote disability confident employment.

2.7 Schools

2.7.1 New School Curriculum

The RLSP welcome the developments being proposed by the new school curriculum as a result of the Donaldson review. Firstly, the RLSP hopes that the purpose of the new curriculum in supporting children and young people to be;

- 'ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society'

will create more well-rounded individuals. This should alleviate some of the challenges employers are experiencing with new entrants to their sectors.

To quantify this, 19% of employers surveyed indicated that new entrants to their workforce tend to have poor attitudes and lack motivation. With general work-readiness being a more prolific issue with 62% of businesses surveyed indicating that new entrants to their workforce are not work ready (32%) or it varies (30%).

Furthermore, the six 'Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE)' align closely with the priority sectors identified within this plan as well as having direct links with the large aspirational projects proposed for the region such as the Swansea Bay City Deal.

The cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence are relevant to every sector, however it is encouraging to see that these areas relate directly to the skills challenges defined by employers through the primary evidence gathered by the RLSP. To expand, 51% of businesses surveyed indicated that they were experiencing skills gaps, of that number;

- 21% indicated that computer literacy and basic IT skills were a gap with the remaining 9% stating that advanced or specialist IT skills were a gap for them.
- 18% stated that they were experiencing skills gaps directly related to numeracy
- Literacy was an issue for 59% with gaps including; reading and understanding instructions (18%), problem solving (29%) and writing instructions, guidelines, manuals or reports (12%).

2.7.2 Engagement

Throughout the current planning year the RLSP has increased its engagement with local authorities and schools and has made good progress in further developing these relationships in preparation for the next planning year. Examples include;

1. Developing a new challenge for the Welsh Baccalaureate which will initially be piloted in Carmarthenshire. The challenge is based on the four themes of the City Deal (aligning positively with the new AoLE's) and aims to inform learners about the proposal itself and how it relates to them. Depending on the pilot's success the challenge will be rolled out across the SBCR. A similar model centred on the Mid Wales Growth Deal will be piloted in Ceredigion and Powys when the Growth Deal Proposal is finalised.

2. Attending careers fairs and skills events; The RLSP attended numerous careers fairs and skills events over the course of the planning year with the aim of distributing RLSP produced resources. During these fairs the RLSP spoke to learners between the ages of 11 and 18 about their career aspirations and the level and quality of careers advice they receive or had received. In total over 450 learners were surveyed with hundreds more having engaged through conversation.

3. Engagement with the head-teachers of the secondary schools with the region; In recent months the RLSP has strived to meet with every head-teacher across the region to highlight the work of the RLSP and the opportunities that could ensue from the Swansea Bay City Deal. This has been very well received and this engagement will continue.

The RLSP feels that it has already developed a strong foundation that can be built on over the coming planning year. Engagement will continue with the head-teachers with the hope of ensuring that the young people currently in school are able to benefit from the opportunities large aspirational projects might bring.

2.8 Higher Education

A globally competitive regional higher education sector is critical to the success of the region and to supporting the development of a highly skilled economy. This includes attracting students and researchers from outside of the region as well as supporting the local economy and businesses. With a total of 37,600 enrolments and 16,845 first year enrolments into regional higher education institutions and FE colleges (not including enrolments to the OU).

Evidence from employers suggest that they would prefer to have greater flexibility for higher education provision in particular greater part time provision and greater online and e-learning opportunities.

Access to Higher Education in Further Education

Higher Education is also delivered within the further education environment and both the University of Wales Trinity Saint David group and the College University Skills Partnership (CUSP) have worked to develop new areas of provision. This approach supports learners to progress to higher education within their existing FE environment and also to provide a greater geographic availability of higher education provision. The RLSP supports this delivery as it provides important progression pathways for learners within the region.

Degree Apprenticeships

The RLSP is fully supportive of the development of degree apprenticeships to date within the pilot areas of engineering and ICT, however there are opportunities to significantly expand the potential application of degree apprenticeships to other sectors, as well as to expand the pilot provision to cover a wider range of roles and greater specialisation.

The additional sectors that have been identified as potential areas include professional services within construction such as architecture and project management, opportunities within the professional sector including legal and financial services roles where practical in work experience is valued.

There is also the potential to develop a shared degree apprenticeship model across regional employers where applicable following the successful shared apprenticeship models that have been developed to date. In particular there are opportunities to respond to the requirements of the Swansea Bay City Deal and the transformational changes that may occur as a result.

2.9 Occupational Trends

Many employers identified a lack of suitable provision (18%) or suitable frameworks (19%) as being a barrier to training or a reason for not recruiting apprentices. This highlights the need for National Occupational Standards to be as reflective as possible of the diverse labour market and to support suitable activity.

Digital and automation

Research from external agencies such as MGI and PWC and the Centre for Cities suggest that the majority of roles will be impacted and by automation and digital, for example that 23.2% of jobs in Swansea¹² have been identified as 'likely' to shrink due to technological change.

The roles most likely to be impacted by automation and likely to decrease as a result include those roles within predictable physical roles, unpredictable and dangerous physical roles and office support roles and also some roles within customer services¹³.

¹² <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/overview/2017-in-review/automation-and-the-future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-work-force-transitions-in-a-time-of-automation>

There may also be significant changes to sectors which have been identified by the PWC as wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, transportation and storage and administrative and support services¹⁴.

Automation is likely to drive upskilling *'In advanced economies occupations that currently require a secondary education or less see a net decline from automation, while those occupations requiring college degrees and higher grow.'*¹⁵ It is also likely that all future roles will have an element of digital within them rather than being specifically digital, for example using telehealth applications within the delivery of social care. It is important therefore that occupational standards consider the impact of digital transformation within their respective occupational areas, in particular how roles can benefit from digital change and how individual's digital responsibilities can be identified.

ICT sectoral changes

The rapidly evolving nature of the ICT industry means that programming languages and industry standards are constantly changing, with employers requiring staff to be trained in the most appropriate for their business needs and system type. RLSP employer evidence suggests that ICT provision is not successful at maintaining pace with change, that provision is 'not fit for purpose'.

The ability for occupational standards to meet the need of businesses in the ICT is impacted by this pace of change and it is important that the review process is flexible enough to respond to changes within the industry.

The RLSP will support the identification of future job roles and skills requirements through its role within the Swansea Bay City Deal with a focus on the requirements of the 10 remaining City Deal projects. Information collected through this activity will be shared to support the development of appropriate NOS for emerging roles.

2.10 Green Growth

The vision set out by WG in the economic strategy 'Economic Renewal: a new direction (2010)' is centred on achieving economic prosperity through the *'strengths and skills of its people and natural environment'*. A key part of this strategy was the identification of nine priority sectors; ICT, Energy and Environment, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Creative Industries, Life Sciences, Financial and Professional Services, Construction, Tourism and Food and Farming. These sectors are deemed as those who can provide wider economic benefit through exploiting *'ICT, creating green jobs, resource efficiency and the movement to a low carbon economy'*¹⁶.

The economic profile of Wales has historically been shifting from a manufacturing dominated base resulting in *'trends and predicted changes in industrial structure having important implications for the design and successful implementation of green growth policies'*¹⁷. Hence, placing the green economy in a key position as Wales strives to foster innovation and create a prosperous economy that works for everyone.

Green growth can be defined as;

*'Green growth in Wales is about fostering economic growth, development and social inclusion while ensuring that the natural assets provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. To do this it must stimulate investment and innovation which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities, human capital formation and skills building, and redistribute the proceeds of growth'*¹⁸.

¹⁶ <http://www.cynnalcyrmu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Green-Growth-Baseline-Study1.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.cynnalcyrmu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Green-Growth-Baseline-Study1.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.cynnalcyrmu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Green-Growth-Baseline-Study1.pdf>

The four green growth indicators for Wales as proposed by the OECD are as follows;

- **The environmental and resource productivity of the economy** which includes greenhouse gas intensity of economic activity, resource circulation and recover and energy performance and the sustainability of building stock.
- **The natural asset base** which includes the implementation of good environmental management in primary industries and the condition of ecosystems.
- **The environmental quality of life** which is inclusive of the self-perception of wellbeing, health hazards posed by air pollution and access to culture and services.
- **Economic opportunities and policy responses** which includes the skills levels of the workforce and workforce participation; a particular area of interest given the purpose of this plan.

The suggested measurable indicators under economic priorities and policy responses are detailed in the table below;

Economic Opportunities & Policy Responses	Skill Level of the Workforce
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in primary & secondary schools • Percentage of population with no qualifications • Percentage of 16-64 year olds educated to NVQ level 4 and above
	Workforce Participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of unemployment, people aged 16 -64 • Rate of economic inactivity, people aged 16 – 64 • Economic activity rate, people aged 50 and over

The WG has outlined its strategic objectives in relation to green growth through its document 'the business of becoming a sustainable nation.'¹⁹

2.11 Welsh Language

Evidence suggests that the demand for Welsh language skills is very localised and depends entirely on the sector a given business operates within. Only 44 of the 262 (17%) businesses that reported skills gaps, identified Welsh language skills as an issue. To quantify this further written Welsh language skills were reported as a gap by 31 businesses and oral Welsh language skills were reported by 37.

Inference of the data suggests that sectors reporting these issues remains largely consistent with last year's findings with the issue being most prevalent in the Health and Social Care sector, followed by Leisure and Tourism. The following sectors reported gaps but numbers were minimal – public sector, education, retail, third sector and construction.

¹⁹ *The business of becoming a sustainable nation – Welsh Government - 2016*

Section 3

Sector Profiles

Regional Employment & Skills Plan South West & Mid Wales

Context

The following sector profiles are designed to provide a summary of the main findings of primary research gathered by the RLSP between January and June 2018.

The evidence detailed was gathered through either an electronic skills survey or via telephone interviews utilising the same question structure. The findings from these collection methods have been corroborated by the RLSP's industry cluster groups.

The profiles are intended to provide a representative summary of views of the industry representatives and employers with whom the RLSP engaged with throughout the development and completion of this plan.

3.1 Advanced Materials, Manufacturing and Energy

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Advanced-Materials-and-Manufacturing-Energy.pdf>

Work-readiness

Only 29% of employers within the Advanced Materials, Manufacturing and Energy sectors stated that new recruits were work ready, with 39% stating that they were not. The most common reasons cited were that recruits lacked *the skills you look for, the qualifications you look for and the work experience that you require*.

Skills Challenges

Skills challenges within the sector remain an issue with 57% of employers highlighting that they experience skills challenges with issues relating to *problem solving, specialist skills needed to perform the role, reading and understanding instructions and computer literacy*. Skills challenges were also reflected within the recruitment challenges for specific roles with 58% of businesses stating that they had difficulty recruiting for specific roles, these roles included *engineers, welders, CAD/drawing office roles and electro-technical*. Future skills challenges were also identified which included digital and automation technologies as well as the impacts of an ageing workforce placing a high demand on both recruitment and internal upskilling.

Barriers to training

In total 57% of businesses surveyed experienced barriers to training with the most common barriers being *a lack of fund for training/training is expensive, can't spare staff time, difficulty finding training providers who can provide training where or when we want*. This suggests that there is the potential for a greater uptake of activity within the sector.

Priority

Increase the number of STEM learning pathways at all levels (e.g. Degree Apprenticeships in Manufacturing, Engineering, Energy, Material Science; Higher Apprenticeships in Business Improvement Techniques), including improving basic skills and expanding the use of apprenticeships to promote careers in engineering and STEM.

3.2 Construction

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Construction-6.pdf>

Work Readiness

The work readiness of new entrants to the Construction sector was reported as an issue by 66% of those business surveyed. 44% of this number indicated that new entrants were not work ready and the remaining 22% reported that work readiness varies amongst new entrants.

Inference of the data indicates that entrants are missing either the *skills, work experience or qualifications* that employers look for. Many felt that entrants exhibit *poor attitudes and lack motivation*.

Skills Challenges

Skills challenges remain prolific within the sector with 56% of respondents indicating that this is an issue for them. Skills challenges were reported across a number of areas, but primarily in; *skilled trade occupations, professional occupations, associate, professional and technical occupations and process, plant and machine operatives*.

The most commonly cited skills gaps, include:

- *Problem solving* was reported as a gap by 32% of respondents,
- *IT skills* were reported by 36%,
- *Specialist skills* needed to perform the role were reported by 46%,
- *Manual dexterity* was reported by 20%.

Employers feel strongly that much of these skills challenges would be in some part addressed through an increased offer of *workplace learning, practical learning or work experience* on a live site. The current view of many employers is that current full time further education courses lack that practical experience of a working environment which is to the detriment of the learner and the employer.

59% of employers reported that they find it difficult to recruit for specific roles, with the most in demand including; *electricians, architectural staff, CAD technicians, chartered structural and civil engineers and steel fabricators/welders*.

When asked about the future, many employers stated that they perceive various issues around *recruitment and retention* to be their biggest challenges. This further substantiates the need to ensure that the sector is promoted to the younger generation in the hope of dispelling some of the negative perceptions which exist amongst learners and their influencers.

Barriers to Training

Barriers to training were reported by 56% of respondents. The primary barrier is *financial challenges* and the fact that training is expensive which was reported by 31% of the respondents. Additional reported reasons include; *can't spare staff time, lack of provision and a lack of appropriate training/qualifications in the subject areas we need*.

Priority

Providers and industry alike need to be responsive to the changing needs of the Construction sector. This translates to forging closer relationships between industry, schools and providers to address needs around increased work experience and mentoring for learners, multi-skilling individuals through a foundation year (to include elements of all key trades) and taking full advantage of Apprenticeships as a viable learning route.

3.3 Creative Industries

Work-readiness

A total of 24 businesses responded on behalf of the Creative Industries sector. Of this number 42% feel that new entrants to their workforce are not universally work ready.

Respondents reported that new entrants lack the *skills, qualifications and work experience* that they desire. In the main, this is consistent with evidence gathered from other sectors.

Skills Challenges

The majority of respondents (63%) stated that they do not face *skills challenges*. Those that do, reported issues within the areas of; *manager, directors and senior officials, professional occupations, skilled trades occupations and administrative and secretarial occupations*.

The most commonly cited skills gaps, include:

- *IT skills*
- *Specialist skills needed to perform the role*
- *Welsh language skills*
- *Numerical or statistical skills.*

38% of respondents indicated that they experience difficulty in recruiting for specific roles. These roles were varied and included *theatre technicians, machinists, upholsterers, dance leaders and marketing professionals*.

When asked about the future, *training, recruitment and succession planning* were commonly cited as considerations. The majority of respondents indicated that they weren't sure what to expect.

Barriers to Training

Barriers to training were reported by 75% of respondents. The primary barrier reported was that training is expensive with many lacking the funding to offer worthwhile training to their employees. In addition, many reported that there was either a lack of *appropriate qualifications in desired subject areas or they can't spare staff time*. One respondent stated that they would like to see more flexibility in provision citing online courses as an appropriate alternative.

Priority

Ensure that provision meets the needs of the fast paced and developing sector that the Creative Industries is. This extends to ensuring that the specialist digital elements of the sector are aptly supplied for as identified in the priority for the ICT sector below.

3.4 Financial and Professional Services and ICT

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Financial-and-Professional-Services-ICT.pdf>

Work-readiness

In comparison with other sectors, there is a far greater variation in the perceived work readiness of new entrants to the Financial and Professional Services sector.

To quantify this 33% felt that work readiness varies, 30% felt that entrants are work ready and the remaining 34% stated that entrants are not work ready. A similar pattern can be seen for the ICT sector with 29% stating it varies, the same proportion stating that entrants are work ready and the remaining 42% indicating that entrants are not work ready.

Inference of the data indicates that entrants are missing either the *skills, work experience or qualifications* that employers look for. Many felt that entrants *exhibit poor attitudes, and lack motivation*.

Skills Challenges

The majority of respondents from the Financial and Professional Services sector do not face skills challenges. Of the 41% that do, occupational areas where these issues are most prevalent include; *manager, directors and senior officials, professional occupations and administrative and secretarial occupations*.

56% of the respondents representing the ICT sector indicated that they do face skills challenges. Occupational areas where these issues were reported include; skilled trades occupations, sales and customer service occupations and creative roles.

The most commonly cited skills gaps across the two sectors are;

- *Advanced or specialist IT skills*
- *Computer literacy/basic IT skills*
- *Knowledge of products and services offered by the organisation*
- *Specialist skills or knowledge needed to perform the role*

The ICT sector faces more difficulty in recruiting for specific roles with the majority of the Financial and Professional Services sector indicating that this was not an issue for them. The 61% of respondents from the ICT sector face difficulty recruiting candidates with suitable backgrounds in IT. This was coupled with difficulty in recruiting for sales roles which rely on a strong background in IT.

Chartered accountants, software developers, financial service administrators and cyber security specialists were some of the roles reported by those experiencing difficulty in the Financial and Professional Services sector.

In terms of future challenges both sectors perceive *recruitment* to be their most significant consideration. This is made worse by the quick advancement of the sectors and ensuring that their workforces are skilled appropriately to operate within these changing environments.

Barriers to Training

In their totality across both sectors the majority of respondents indicated that they do not face barriers to training. Of the 38% that do, the majority stated that a *lack of funding for training or training being expensive* was their primary barrier. A *lack of appropriate training/qualifications* for their field was also reported.

Priority

A closer working relationship between the industry and providers needs to materialise to ensure that course content and delivery mechanisms meets the needs of employers. This is especially pertinent for ICT and digital provision where the fast pace of advancements needs to be reflected appropriately in provision.

3.5 Food and Farming

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Food-and-Farming-5.pdf>

Work-readiness

Work readiness remains an issue within the sector with 51% of respondents identifying that new entrants were not work ready, or work readiness varied amongst new recruits. The most common reasons were that new entrants lacked *the skills you look for, the work experience that you require and entrants tend to have poor attitudes and lack motivation*. This was reinforced by discussion within the cluster group which highlighted concerns regarding understanding of the roles required within food processing and manufacturing.

Skills Challenges

When asked, 48% of respondents identified that they experience skills challenges, with the most common skills challenges appearing within the occupational areas of *'Associate, professional and technical occupations, manager, director and senior official and skilled trades occupations'*. This was reflected within the cluster group discussions which highlighted the need for appropriate skills particularly within the food manufacturing sector.

Overall retention was not viewed as a significant issue for the majority of businesses within the food and farming sector. However concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on *EU staff from Brexit* within the cluster group but the impact remains unknown.

The skills challenges were increased due the *seasonality* of some roles within both the farming and food processing sectors, currently a significant proportion of this labour is provided via agency and EU recruitment. There were concerns that skills challenges could increase as a result of Brexit.

Barriers to Training

A total of 56% of businesses within the sector stated that they experienced barriers to training with the most common reasons being; *can't spare staff time, Lack of funding for training and a lack of appropriate training/qualifications in the subject areas we need*.

Priority

Ensure appropriateness of the qualifications within the sector, including apprenticeships frameworks, so that they are fit for purpose in relation to content and delivery mechanisms.

3.6 Health and Social Care

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Health-and-Social-Care-2.pdf>

Work-readiness

The work readiness of entrants was variable with 49% responding it *varies* when asked about work readiness, the remaining responses were closely split between yes and no. The most common reasons for individuals not being work ready were *entrants tend to have poor attitudes and lack motivation, the qualifications you look for* and the skills you look for. Evidence from the cluster groups highlighted that within the care sector the priorities are for individuals that possess the appropriate social and interpersonal skills.

Skills Challenges

Recruitment to the sector remains a significant challenge with 67% of respondents stating that they had difficulty in recruiting, common roles that were difficult to recruit for included *care support workers, nurses, domiciliary care staff and kitchen/cleaning staff*.

Retention has been highlighted as an issue within the Health and Social Care sector with 54% of respondents highlighting retention as a concern, reasons for retention challenges include *wages offered are low in comparison to similar organisations, unattractive conditions of employment and long/unsocial hours*. These retention challenges were reflected within cluster group discussions and work is being undertaken across the sector to address the challenges within both recruitment and retention.

When asked if they experienced skills challenges 58% of respondents identified that they had skills challenges within occupational areas including *caring, leisure and other service occupations, professional occupations, manager, director and senior official*. This highlights skills challenges across all levels within the health and social care sector.

Barriers to Training

A total of 62% of respondents identified that they experienced barriers to training with a *'lack of funding for training/training is expensive, can't spare staff time and difficulty in finding training providers who can deliver training where and when we need it.'* It was also noted within the cluster group that some of the basic skills requirements and testing is proving a barrier for some entrants to the social care workforce.

Priority

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 provides a revised framework for the regulation and inspection of social care services in Wales. This Act legally requires social care workers to be registered; domiciliary care workers by April 2020; care home workers by April 2022. The cost of registration is currently £15 per annum rising annually to £30 by 2022, which workers will be expected to pay themselves. In order to register social care workers must hold at least a Level 2 Diploma in Social Care or the Assessed All Wales Induction Framework and core qualification and complete the full qualification within the initial registration period. Currently less than 60% of care workers hold the required qualifications and are ineligible for registration and will be unable to work in the sector post 2020. There would be immense instability in an already fragile market if providers were unable to fulfil contracts because of staff are unable to register without qualifications.

The sector needs support for staff training to ensure eligibility for registration, a targeted campaign to train the workers through a funded programme would bolster the sector and future proof it to be able to meet the demand for care and support at home.

3.7 Leisure, Tourism and Retail

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Leisure-Tourism-and-Retail.pdf>

Work-readiness

The majority (65%) of those businesses surveyed experience issues around the work readiness of new entrants to the sector. To quantify this further, 48% believe that new entrants were not at all work ready and the remaining 17% indicated that the level of work readiness varies. According to the respondents new entrants were missing the *skills and work experience* that the industry requires. In addition, many reported that entrants tend to have *poor attitudes and lack motivation*.

Skills Challenges

48% of respondents reported that they experience skills challenges. These skills challenges relate primarily to *sales and customer service occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations, caring, leisure and other service occupations and managers, directors and senior officials*.

The most commonly cited skills gaps include:

- *Computer Literacy/basic IT Skills* reported by 12% of respondents
- *Problem solving* reported by 17% of respondents
- *Knowledge of products and services* offered by your organisation reported by 14% of respondents
- *Welsh language skills* reported by 10% of respondents

60% of employers reported that they find it difficult to recruit for specific roles, with the most in demand including; *chefs and catering roles, cleaning/housekeeping and maintenance roles, sales roles, managers and instructors*.

When asked about the future, employers surveyed indicated a vast array of differing challenges that they can foresee. For some, *recruitment and succession planning* was their main concern, for others merely *making a profit* and surviving as a profitable business was a consideration. This further substantiates the need to ensure that the sector is promoted to the younger generation in the hope of dispelling some of the negative perceptions which exist amongst learners and their influencers. This will support in ensuring that there is a pipeline of talent within the region that can, and moreover wants to pursue a career in the sector. There is also a need to ensure that the sector has adequate support to remain sustainable through ever-changing circumstances given its significance to the region.

Barriers to Training

Barriers to training were reported by 45% of respondents. The primary barrier is *financial challenges and the fact that training is expensive* which was reported by 19% of the respondents. Additional reported reasons include; *can't spare staff time, lack of provision and a lack of appropriate training/qualifications* in the subject areas we need.

Priority

The miss-guided perception of the sector held by learners and influencers is a key issue for the sector, severely effecting recruitment and retention rates. Targeted interventions should be developed and delivered within schools to dispel the negative connotations attached to the sector. In addition, providers and the industry should work in conjunction to develop fit for purpose training that is aspirational and representative of the true nature of the sectors vast activities.

3.8 Mid Wales

A summary of consultation findings can be seen at:

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mid-Wales-Analysis.pdf>

Work-readiness

60% feel that new entrants to their sector are not completely work ready. To quantify this further, 35% felt that universally new entrants were not work ready and the remaining 25% indicated that the level of work readiness varies. According to the respondents new entrants were missing the *skills and work experience* that the employers require. In addition, many reported that entrants tend to have *poor attitudes and lack motivation*.

Skills Challenges

The existence of skills gaps is an issue for the Mid Wales region, RLSP evidence indicates that 46% of businesses surveyed face skills challenges. To quantify this further;

- 19% indicated that *computer literacy* and *basic IT skills* were a gap with the remaining 7% stating that advanced or *specialist IT skills* were a gap for them.
- 18% stated that they were experiencing skills gaps directly related to *numeracy*
- *Literacy* was an issue for 60% with gaps including; *reading and understanding instructions* (19%), *problem solving* (28%) and *writing instructions, guidelines, manuals or reports* (13%).

47% indicated that they experience difficulty in recruiting for specific roles, with the most in demand including; *CAD technicians, chefs/catering roles, LGV/HGV drivers, Engineers i.e. software, mechanical, design, IT roles, nurses, plumbers and electricians.*

When asked about the future concerns for businesses varied, however common areas reported include, issues with *recruitment and retention, Brexit, funding for training, growing and remaining profitable, succession planning and sourcing skilled and qualified staff.*

Barriers to Training

46% of employers surveyed indicated that they experience barriers to training. Barriers reported include the fact that *training is expensive, can't spare staff time and a lack of appropriate training.* In addition, 66% of employers surveyed stated that they do not employ apprentices, 25% of this number indicated that a lack of *appropriate frameworks* were a contributing factor.

Priority

To ensure that interventions developed and recommendations made by the RLSP are aligned to the future needs of the Mid Wales region. This will be informed by the Economic Development Plan and the Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal.





Section 4

Aspirational Projects and Key Developments

Regional Employment & Skills Plan South West & Mid Wales

4.1 Swansea Bay City Region

4.1.1 Swansea Bay City Deal²⁰

Skills and Talent Intervention

Headed by the RLSP the Skills and Talent Intervention will work with the City Deal projects to identify the specific skills that are needed to support the region. Working with public and private sector training providers, the project will develop and deliver courses, apprenticeships, expand under/post graduate provision as well as engage with schools to ensure that local people are able to benefit from local employment opportunities.

What will the Skills and Talent Intervention do?

- Ensure that the current and future workforce has the necessary skills to deliver the City Deal proposals.
- Engage with schools and young people to offer representative careers guidance, ensuring that they are well informed and able to fully capitalise on the opportunities presented by the proposal.

Yr Egin

The 'Yr Egin' project will build a new creative, digital and media hub on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's (UWTSD) Campus in Carmarthen. It will be the base for the Welsh language broadcaster S4C and will provide start up and development space for creative and digital companies. By taking advantage of the new infrastructure proposals of the Internet Coast, 'Yr Egin' will create major and positive change in the creative and digital economy of Wales.

Life Science and Wellbeing Village

The Life Science and Well-being village will be a physical development in Llanelli. The village will include;

- An institute of life science providing space for research and development.
- A wellness hub which will include a leisure centre, outdoor sports facilities, recreation opportunities and well-being promotion activities.
- A variety of high quality flats and houses available on the open market as well as assisted living, a care home and dedicated housing for people with cognitive impairment or in medical rehabilitation.
- A life science and well-being Centre where a range of wellness services from health, public, private and third sectors will be available in one location. The centre will also include training opportunities which will be developed to meet skills shortages.
- A high-end Hotel offering a range of relaxation opportunities to improve wellness.

Swansea City and Waterfront Digital District

The Swansea City and Waterfront Digital District project will create a new City Centre Business District which will provide co-location space and support for start-up and small businesses alongside global enterprise. The project will include:

- A Digital Village and Tech Quarter.
- A digital square and arena that will provide conference facilities and major event space for tech industries and the universities.
- A Box Village and an Innovation Precinct creating incubation space and co-working areas for start-ups and small businesses.

Life Science and Wellbeing Campuses

The project will include a new Campus at Morriston Hospital and an extension of the existing Singleton Hospital Campus. These Campuses will bring together expertise from research, business and health industries to look at leading developments in clinical research and healthcare technologies.

²⁰ <http://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/>

Factory of the Future

The Factory of the Future project will establish an academic research hub which will provide technology solutions for manufacturing businesses. The project will also establish four physical spokes in Pembroke, Carmarthen, Neath and Port Talbot, each linking in with research facilities in Swansea university. These facilities will:

- Use state of the art equipment and bring together experts from engineering, IT, economics and management
- Improve and increase the use of data and technology to react immediately to changes in demands. This is also known as Smart Manufacturing.

Pembroke Dock Marine

The Pembroke Dock Marine project will regenerate an area of Pembroke Dock to create a dedicated site which will be used as a base by marine energy developers to progress their devices from an idea to a commercial product. The site will allow developers to test, manufacture and maintain offshore renewable energy devices and will be supported by the development of:

- A Marine Energy Test Area (META) - a series of areas along the waterway where developers can test devices at an early stage of development.
- The Pembrokeshire Wave Energy Demonstration Zone - a large offshore wave energy site which can be used by developers to test more developed devices in open sea conditions.
- The Marine Energy Engineering Centre of Excellence (MEECE) - to coordinate and share knowledge, resource, experience and capacity between existing and future developers.

Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Services

The project will involve building a new CENGs technology centre in Baglan. The Centre will offer a range of laboratories and office space to the scientific community and industry. In doing so the centre will bring together a range of technical and commercial experts to bridge the gap between research and application of ideas to industry.

Steel Science

The Steel Science project will:

- Create a centre where steel technologists, academic and research staff will work together to find solutions to problems facing the UK steel sector.
- Develop innovative ways of how the steel industry can use local waste products to create carbon positive steel products and alternative sources of energy that could be used during the steel making process.

Digital Infrastructure

The project will include targeted fixed line improvements to expand the provision of fixed ultra-fast broadband, 4G and WiFi capabilities to benefit both rural and urban areas of the region as well as establish Internet Theme Testbeds to support innovation with 5G mobile connectivity.

Homes as Power Stations

The project will create a new industry in the region which will develop and build innovative energy technologies. These technologies will be applied to new and existing homes in the region and will allow them to produce, store and use their own energy. This will make these homes more energy efficient and reduce energy costs.

The project will also focus on smart technologies in relation to energy demand management (i.e. grid import and export in relation to energy demand, building integrated renewable energy and energy storage) for both new and retrofit housing. The proposed Centre for Excellence in Next Generation Services project will provide a data analytics capability to support the projects smart healthy elements.

A Regional Collaboration for Health (ARCH)²¹

ARCH has been formed to support a joined up regional approach to deliver meaningful change and to improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of South West Wales. It is a collaboration between the NHS health boards of Hywel Dda, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) and Swansea University and supports a range of project activities around the four key areas of workforce, education and training, health and wellbeing, service transformation and research, enterprise and innovation.

4.2 Growing Mid Wales

Mid Wales Growth Deal

In November 2017 a report titled 'City Deals and the Regional Economies of Wales' prepared by the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee recommended a Growth Deal for Mid Wales. The subsequent Autumn Budget committed the UK Government to 'begin negotiations towards moving this forward'. Potential introduction can be expected in 2019.

Beacon+²²

The award-winning BEACON Bio-refining Centre of Excellence, led by Aberystwyth University in partnership with Swansea and Bangor Universities, works in the field of conversion of biomass into bio based products. BEACON helps Welsh businesses develop new ways of converting feedstocks, such as rye grass, and oats, and waste streams into products which have applications in the pharmaceutical, chemicals, fuel and cosmetic industries.

Helix²³

Project HELIX is a pan Wales strategic initiative being delivered by the three partners that make up Food Innovation Wales, with dedicated teams and facilities at:

- The Food Technology Centre, Grwp Llandrillo Menai (North Wales),
- Food Centre Wales, Ceredigion County Council (Mid Wales) and
- Food Industry Centre, Cardiff Metropolitan University (South Wales)

This initiative will develop and deliver academic and practical knowledge transfer activity focused on food innovation, food efficiency and food strategy to increase production and see waste reduction in the food chain. Project HELIX will gather information on food production, trends and waste from across the globe and transfer the knowledge to food producers and manufacturers across Wales.

Aberystwyth Innovation & Enterprise Campus²⁴

Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus (AIEC) will provide world leading facilities and the expertise to create market focused solutions for the agri-tech, food and drink and industrial biotechnology industries.

The campus will contain several complimentary features including an analytical science centre; bio refining centre; Future Food centre, seed biobank and processing facility and a hub area which will facilitate collaborative research projects between the University and private sector in the bio-economy.

The campus, which will cost approximately £35 million to construct, is being led by Aberystwyth University in partnership with the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), and will be a key asset in the region's priority sectors of Food and Farming and Life Sciences.

²¹ <http://www.arch.wales/>

²² <http://beaconwales.org/>

²³ <https://gov.wales/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2017/170322-21-million-food-innovation-project-set-to-safe-guard-thousands-of-welsh-jobs/?lang=en>

²⁴ <https://www.aberinnovation.com/>

The project will create in excess of a 100 jobs in the agri-tech industry and related fields once fully operational, creating demand in terms of higher level scientific skills.

VetHub1²⁵

Aberystwyth University are also leading on the development of the £3m project VetHub1 - a modern, fully-equipped, state-of-the-art facility to promote and protect animal and human health and to support animal health, veterinary, bio-technology and allied industries. The hub will include a unique Category 3 laboratory in addition to a range of other new tests and associated product development for animal diseases that are now emerging within the livestock sector.

The operation will further strengthen critical mass within the Growing Mid Wales area in the priority sector areas of Animal Health and Veterinary Science.

4.3 Support for City/Growth Deals

Swansea Bay City Deal²⁶

The RLSP are the lead body for one of the eleven projects put forward in the proposal of the Swansea Bay City Deal. The Skills and Talent Intervention is an over-arching project which will determine the skills needs of the ten remaining projects and create a pipeline of skilled and talented individuals. Aligning with the 4 key strands of the Deal i.e. Internet of Economic Acceleration; Energy; Life Science and Well-being and Smart Manufacturing, the Intervention will develop a fit for purpose workforce to support the growth of the four themes, in turn improving the future competitiveness of the region.

In the first instance this intervention is initially a desk based research project to identify the available skills within the SBCR. This will act as the foundation on which primary research can be conducted with the 10 remaining projects to identify their specific skill needs and in turn, any gaps which may be present. The research findings will determine the amends or developments required to the education offer within the region. It may be the case that current courses and frameworks will need to be amended or conversely the development of entirely new courses and frameworks to meet industry needs.

Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal

The Growing Mid Wales Partnership was established in 2015 to drive forward the economic wellbeing of the region. To this end, most recently external consultants have been appointed by the Partnership to develop a Regional Economic Development Plan built on a solid evidence base. The strategic priorities identified within the development plan will inform the development of a growth deal for the region.

Initial discussions have identified potential areas of focus for interventions, these include;

- 21st Century Business,
- Rural Powerhouse,
- Tourism,
- Defence and Security.

The RLSP welcomes the development of this plan and have actively fed into consultation activities to inform the evidence base. It is hoped that this plan will provide the RLSP with a clear direction of travel which can be reflected in any recommendations made within future iterations of this Annual Report. This not only applies to provision but also to wider activities the RLSP may choose to pursue with the hope of improving the economic wellbeing of the region.

²⁵ <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2017/07/title-204457-en.html>

²⁶ <http://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/>



Section 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Regional Employment & Skills Plan South West & Mid Wales

Aspirational Objectives

The partnership has identified a number of aspirational objectives that serve as a long term vision for the region. These aspirational objectives will be addressed through the activities of the partnership and its wider partners and will be reviewed and measured on an annual basis through the Regional Employment and Skills Plan.

- 1. To create a post-16 learning environment that meets the needs of industry and learners whilst supporting providers to deliver the changes necessary.**
- 2. To enhance the development and delivery of Apprenticeship opportunities across the region to ensure that every person has an opportunity to gain new skills or re-skill regardless of their personal circumstances.**
- 3. To increase the parity of esteem between different learning routes and ensuring that learners are given access to advice and guidance that is representative to this end.**
- 4. To be responsive as a region to changing circumstances in terms of skills needs to ensure that those living, working and operating within the region are able to fully capitalise on all opportunities.**
- 5. To explore and when appropriate fully utilise all available delivery options for teaching and learning; including shared apprenticeship schemes, centres of excellence, modular learning and e-learning.**

Conclusions and Recommendations

As indicated in section 1 the recommendations made in last year's Employment and Skills Plan remain as pertinent now as they were then. As a result, the RLSP will continue to base its activity on the action plan developed from those recommendations, however this has been amended slightly to reflect the particular areas of importance deducted from this annual report. These main conclusions and recommendations can be seen below;

Work-readiness

The work readiness of new entrants is a challenge with many businesses reporting a lack of work experience and entrants having poor attitudes and lack motivation. Basic skills around numeracy, literacy and digital are proving an issue for many businesses irrespective of sector.

- 1. Enhance partnership working to address the issues around the employability of individuals, aligning this activity to the All Wales Employability Programme.**
- 2. Engage with schools, local authorities and providers to promote the need for basic skills and to highlight the concerns of industry.**
- 3. Support stakeholders to reduce the levels of economic inactivity amongst disadvantaged groups including those with disabilities or long term health conditions.**

Learning and Career Choices

Perceptions of sectors remain a prolific issue, this exacerbates recruitment challenges faced by both providers and employers.

- 4. To increase engagement with schools and influencers to promote sectors that are poorly perceived.**
- 5. To work closely with providers to develop targeted interventions which can support in recruitment to provision linked to the priority sectors identified within this annual report.**
- 6. Increase the understanding of opportunities offered by Apprenticeships across the region and develop targeted promotion with employers, learners at all levels, as well as influencers to ensure that opportunities are understood.**

Opportunities and Provision

Significant opportunities will be made available across the region through large scale projects such as the Swansea Bay City Deal and the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

7. To continue to align activities to large scale aspirational projects ensuring that skills requirements are identified and addressed within an appropriate timescale.

Evidence collated via engagement with stakeholders indicates that there are gaps in the provision offered. As a result many learners are either unable to pursue their career path of choice or are forced to identify new pathways to undertake courses in the areas they desire.

8. Support partners to develop a curriculum that is fit for purpose, ensuring that new provision is facilitated in areas where currently the required resources are not available.

9. Ensuring that those areas of provision identified within SDF and SPP are supported and delivered.

Many employers feel that apprenticeship frameworks do not meet the needs of their businesses and attribute this as one of the main barriers to employing an apprentice.

10. Improve employer engagement in the development of Apprenticeship frameworks, including for higher and degree level programmes through greater direct employer input and flexibility.







Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
Partneriaeth Dysgu a Sgiliau Rhanbarthol

South West & Mid Wales
De-Orllewin a Canolbarth Cymru