



UNDEB EWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfeydd Strwythurol a
Buddsoddi Ewropeaidd**
European Structural
and Investment Funds



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



EU Structural Funds in Wales 2000-2023 – Skills

Introduction

EU funded projects have provided training, employment support and invested in improving the skills of the workforce in some of the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. There are many reasons why an individual might face barriers in terms of completing education and/or securing employment. Specifically designed interventions, tailored to need, can be the key to overcoming those barriers. EU funded projects are able to provide the level of support needed, to enable an individual to find a successful route to achieving their goals.

EU funds have helped to increase vocational skills and higher level skills, reduce gender inequalities, increase workforce diversity, and supported the progression of women in the workforce. Helping people into sustainable employment is key to reducing levels of poverty and increasing social inclusion, EU funds have helped to tackle the barriers preventing people from finding work, focussing on increasing employment and economic activity across Wales.

2 Skills

The Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme (WFSGP), supported the development of a talent pool of future professionals for the Welsh financial services sector. Led by the Welsh Contact Centre Forum, and partnering with financial services companies the project provided graduates with career progression from entry-level roles, to higher paid professional industry roles, through structured training and development programmes, acting as an incentive to keep professional talent working in Wales.



Welsh Financial Service Graduates

The Welsh Government's **Communities for Work** programme, backed by over £44m EU funds, provided one-to-one advice from specialist mentors to increase the employability of economically inactive and long-term unemployed people aged over 25 across Wales, helping people anxious about entering the labour market or struggling to get a job because of a lack of qualifications, childcare responsibilities or health problems.

PaCE (Parents, Childcare & Employment), led by the Welsh Government, supported people who wouldn't traditionally engage with mainstream services, for whom childcare is a main barrier to work. PaCE supported parents prepare for and move into employment by removing their childcare barriers and providing intensive job seeking guidance and procuring the appropriate training based on local labour market intelligence and the participant's capacity to enter employment.

In addition to national skills training programmes such as Apprenticeships and Traineeships, other areas of Wales have benefitted from many regionally focussed initiatives targeting a range of needs. **OPUS**, led by Conwy County Borough Council, focussed on people furthest from the labour market aged over 25, to increase employability and address their barriers to employment. The operation provided support to both economically inactive and long-term unemployed participants with multiple complex barriers to employment.

Supported by £19.7m of EU funds, **Skills for Industry II**, led by Gower College, provided equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal and informal settings, to raise skill levels and tackle skills shortages by providing lower skilled workers with essential and vocational skills qualifications. The project engages with sectors such as energy, construction, creative industries, science, advanced manufacturing, ICT, automotive, engineering, financial and professional services, food, care and tourism.

3 Skills

Led by Gower College and backed by £7m EU funds, the **Better Jobs, Better Futures** programme comprised 5 individual European Social Fund projects with activities that contributed to employability support across Swansea and the surrounding areas, to help over 3,000 unemployed or underemployed participants across Swansea and the surrounding area.

To support manufacturers in Wales adapt to new technologies to improve processes, and increase capacity, **MADE Cymru**, delivered by University of Wales Trinity Saint David offered a suite of online and flexible courses, including the **Advanced Design Engineering** and the **Upskilling for Industry 4 Wales (i4Wales)** projects. Enabling collaborative R&D opportunities to support manufacturers in Wales, the project partnered with over 140 businesses and enrolled over 400 students in Innovation Management and Upskilling for Industry 4.0. courses, creating a collaborative support network throughout Wales.

Supported by £14.1m of EU funds, the **Bridges2Work** project, led by Torfaen County Borough Council, in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Aneurin Leisure Trust (Blaenau Gwent) engaged, supported and prepared the economically inactive, including those who are long-term unemployed across the five Local Authorities. It supported the reduction of poverty by increasing employment levels, particularly for underrepresented groups and those furthest from the labour market.

Supporting young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) will help reduce youth unemployment and improve their career and life prospects. EU funds are focused on raising achievement levels, reducing early school leaving and supporting those most at risk of becoming NEET.



Bridges2Work

4 Skills

Supported by £15m of EU funds, the **Inspire2Work** project, led by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in West Wales and the Valleys and Newport City Council in East Wales in partnership with a total of eight other local authorities, provided tailored support for young people aged 16-24 who are NEET to overcome their barriers, increase their self-esteem, develop employability skills and move closer to the labour market, helping to reduce youth unemployment.



Inspire2Work course participants 2020

Led by Pembrokeshire County Council, **Cam Nesa** operated across Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, working closely with further education colleges. A participant-led programme of support, advice and training for young people (aged 16-24), identified as not being in education, employment or training (NEET), it provided access to a broad range of opportunities including mentoring, coaching, work experience, counselling and advocacy where participants were encouraged to re-engage in education, training and/or employment.

Nature Equip Thrive led by Torfaen County Borough Council (CBC), in collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, aimed to alleviate some of the causes of poverty by reducing underemployment for employed individuals in part-time and non-permanent posts. The project also worked with disabled participants or those with a work limiting health condition (WLHC) who are either looking to return to work after a period of absence or who wish to improve their labour market situation. Engagement with employers was also a key aspect of the project, helping them to implement and improve equality and diversity in the workplace, support flexible working arrangements, and make sustainable changes to the health and wellbeing of staff by developing workplace health programmes.

5 Skills

Torfaen Council's **Working Skills for Adults II** project, backed by £7m EU funds, supported people with low skills across Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil to gain new skills leading to improved job security and career prospects. The project provides job-specific training in areas including construction, accounting and IT, as well as opportunities to develop key skills such as digital literacy.

Cynnydd, led by Powys Council in East Wales and Pembrokeshire Council in West Wales and the Valleys, targeted young people aged 11-19 identified as being at the very greatest risk of becoming NEET. The project identified and tracked these young people, taking account of factors that could increase the risk of them becoming NEET, such as poor language skills and specific learning requirements and/or mental health issues. Individually designed interventions, specifically tailored to each participant supported young people to remain and succeed in education. The project saw a 50% reduction in those identified as being at the very greatest risk of becoming NEET.



Cynnydd

6 Skills

Coleg Gwent's **Upskilling@Work** programme, backed by £10.8m EU funds, offered over 70 Courses across 6 Colleges and supported more than 3,500 employees from over 800 companies with training, career guidance and developing their skills, providing access to lifelong learning for all ages in a variety of settings.

Over a three-year period, **ADTRAC**, led by Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, supported by £6.7m EU funds, provided intensive support to nearly 1,200 young people aged 16-24 across north Wales who faced significant challenges in gaining employment. A range of services were offered including emotional and mental health support, mentoring, courses to improve core skills and IT literacy, and support with job applications. Positive outcomes for participants included improved mental wellbeing, improved employability skills and the ability to reduce the number of barriers they face, such as issues with confidence and communication skills.



ADTRAC project

7 Skills

Led by Denbighshire County Borough Council and supported by £24.8m of EU funds, the **TRAC 11-24** project resulted in a 66% decrease in the number learners aged 16-24 becoming NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training). The scheme, delivered in partnership with Local Authorities and Further Education colleges, provided a range of health and well-being support including counselling, wellbeing and attendance advice, courses and work placements and bespoke advice from Careers Wales. Students who experienced learning difficulties were given mentors with expertise in a variety of issues including housing, welfare and health and wellbeing so that students could focus on their learning and ensure their continued engagement in education.



TRAC 11-14 project team

Coleg Cambria's **Skills for Employers and Employees (SEE)** project provided businesses across North Wales with financial support to raise employee skills and knowledge. The project supported employers to build a skilled and adaptable workforce through subsidised training and development. Vocational training is available in a range of key sectors including Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction, Health and Social Care, Land-based, Energy and Professional Services.

Supported by £2.8m EU funds, **North Wales Business Academy** worked with 480 business owners and employees from over 300 companies in north Wales, supporting them to improve their business performance by increasing the skills of their managers and other employees through the delivery of 'short' accredited courses.

8 Skills

In collaboration with a consortium of other universities across Wales, the Bangor University led **Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS)** project worked across both the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Structural Fund programmes. Aiming to increase the number of individuals with higher-level skills in Research and Innovation (R&I) it supported companies to undertake collaborative research with the expertise of academics in Higher Education.



KESS2

The **University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)** led many EU funded projects including **Industry 4.0 Upskilling for Industry**, providing accredited qualifications to support manufacturing companies to keep pace with Industry 4.0 (Industrial Internet) and modern advanced manufacturing technologies. SME's were also supported with **Advanced Design Engineering (ADE)** processes, materials and technologies, to increase their ability to innovate and remain competitive.

Industry is currently experiencing a period of profound and disruptive technological change referred to as the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' or more commonly **Industry 4.0**. The **International Innovation Master** project upskilled industry workers to create professionals able to understand, adapt and take advantage of the opportunities offered by rapid technological change.

Growing Workforces Through Learning and Development (GWLAD) delivered an integrated bilingual Professional Practice Framework with employers in south west and central Wales in response to their intermediate and higher skills needs. It incorporated accreditation of staff development programmes, prior experiential learning and delivery of an extensive range of modules leading to qualifications in Professional Practice.