



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Employability, Skills and Careers in the Retail Sector

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Equipping new entrants with the skills needed to take up employment opportunities within the retail sector is important and will help address recruitment issues facing the sector.

Providing on-going opportunities to learn and develop is key to addressing staff retention.

The retail sector offers a variety of career paths beyond the shop floor, including roles in buying, distribution, management, and logistics.

Together for Retail – the Wales Retail Forum Action Plan – outlines actions to build a successful, innovative, sustainable, and resilient retail sector that offers fair, secure, and rewarding work.

The Plan contains actions relating to employability, careers, and skills development with the aim of:

“ Supporting more people to enter the retail sector; support more retail workers to develop their skills; promote the opportunities and progression pathways available within the sector; and to identify gaps in provision. ”

This document gives an overview of various programmes, services, and support available to the retail sector and its workers in Wales.



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Welsh Government Programmes and Services

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study, providing opportunity for the Apprentice to:

work alongside experienced staff

gain job specific skills

gain a qualification

earn a wage whilst getting time to study (usually one day a week).

Apprenticeships take 1 to 4 years to complete depending on their level and can be offered to anyone over the age of 16.

Recruiting an apprentice can help employers expand their workforce and its skills base.

Support is available towards the cost of training and assessments.

Employers will work with an approved training provider who will manage the apprentice’s training and assessment programme.

Apprentice frameworks of relevance to the retail sector include:

Business Administration

Baker

Butcher & Meat Processing

Cleaning & Environmental Support Services

Customer Service

Electrical / Mechanical

Maintenance

Facilities Management

Financial Services

Seafood (not Fishmonger)

Hospitality & Catering

Human Resource Management

Logistics

Management

Retail and Warehousing

Sales

Supply Chain Management

Digital Skills for Business (not IT Users)

Digital Technology.

**Recruit an apprentice –
guidance for employers | GOV.WALES**



Business Wales

Business Wales provides entrepreneurs and businesses across Wales with access to a wide range of information, advice, and guidance to help start, sustain, and grow businesses.

Business Wales offers a combination of online, telephone, digital information, and resources, along with business advice through workshops and 1-2-1 business support.

Business Wales provides a range of general business advice and signposting to help individuals start a new retail business and support for existing business owners in the retail sector, through specialist strands of advice including:

Business planning and productivity

Financial management and access to finance

Resource efficiency and decarbonisation

International trade

HR and skills

Equality, diversity and fair work

Marketing, promoting and selling online or considering the right premises for you.

Helpline – **03000 6 03000**

Website – **<http://businesswales.gov.wales>**



Careers Wales

Careers Wales, and their Working Wales service, provide all-age, impartial employability and careers information, advice and guidance tailored to an individual’s needs and circumstances.

They work closely with educational institutions, employers, partners, and community organisations to help young people and adults increase their knowledge and understanding of opportunities, skills needs, and the local labour market.

They have a team of Stakeholder Engagement Advisers who work closely with employers to support with recruitment needs and they have run tailored events for employers and also have a team of Business Engagement advisers that link employers to schools.

The Careers Wales website holds a wide range of information relating to careers and job roles within different sectors, including the retail sector. Individuals can find out what different job roles involve, pay levels, typical hours of work, and the qualifications, skills, and qualities required.

Individuals can also look at the employers and agencies recruiting in the retail sector and see if the future demands expected for individual roles are relevant.

The Careers Wales and Working Wales service offer includes:

- Careers information, advice and guidance
- Help to find job opportunities
- CV and application support
- Job interview preparation
- Support to apply for funding
- Advice and coaching on career change
- Help to upskill and access training
- Linking employers with young people and adults
- Referrals to other employability services
- Redundancy support.

Careers Wales can also help people seeking sanctuary by providing access to:

- A language line for interpretation during our appointments
- Advisers specialising in support for refugees and those seeking sanctuary
- Transferring overseas qualifications into recognised UK equivalents for those applying for work or training.

- [Careers Wales | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Jobs in Retail | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Working with schools | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)



Communities for Work Plus (CfW+)

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is a community-based, intensive mentoring programme, helping those most disadvantaged in the labour market to overcome barriers to employment to get their desired job.

The programme offers:

1 to 1 mentoring in local communities

A barrier fund to help remove barriers to employment such as transport, childcare, interview clothes, CV printing

A training fund for courses (e.g. first aid, customer service, IT skills). This is very flexible and designed to meet needs

Support with searching for jobs

Work experience and volunteering opportunities

In-work support (including a small grant) for participants who leave the programme for employment and subsequently experience difficulties remaining in work.

All CfW+ candidates are assigned a mentor who will assist them with finding a role and all elements of the application process, including helping with CVs, application forms, interview preparation, to name a few.

Additionally, CfW+ mentors will work on softer skills such as confidence / self-esteem, how a person presents themselves to prospective employers, building resilience, and more.

CfW+ teams each employ an Employer Liaison Officers (ELO) who review local job vacancies to assist job matching of candidates.

ELOs can also negotiate larger scale recruitment approaches when employers need to fill a number of roles. They will facilitate local teams running recruitment exercises where a group of candidates are mentored, offered useful training in customer service before the cohort being given guaranteed interviews with an employer.

Communities for Work+ | Business Wales Skills Gateway (gov.wales)



Flexible Skills Programme

The Flexible Skills Programme targets those businesses considering new business opportunities, new technology, an expansion plan, and / or growth. The programme provides financial support towards upskilling staff.

Currently there are specific programmes to help businesses:

Develop advanced digital skills

Address export related skills challenges

Support skills gaps in the Engineering and Manufacturing Sector

Support skills gaps and upskilling in the Creative Sector

Support the development of skills to help address Net Zero challenges

Support skills gaps and upskilling in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector.

For 2025-26 the Flexible Skills Programme will also help fund:

Consultancy support related to identifying new green markets/business models and identifying skills gaps/needs to transition / expand

Leadership and Management training.

Current business eligibility includes:

Businesses must be based in Wales, solvent and you must commit to release staff to undertake the requested training by the end of the financial year

Each element of training must advance the learning of the individuals involved in at least one of the areas listed above

Each element of training must improve the capability or capacity of the business.

Funding awards are discretionary and the final decision on eligibility rests with the Welsh Government.

Flexible Skills Programme | Business Wales Skills Gateway (gov.wales)



Case study

The King's Trust – Get into Retail programme

The Get into Retail programme is designed to support young people aged 16 to 30 with the skills and experience needed for work.

Established by The King's Trust, the programme includes a 3-to-12-week placement with local retail partner stores, offering employment opportunities for young people desiring to work within the retail sector. The King's Trust are passionate and dedicated to making working within retail accessible for all.

Rhian Mathias, Head of Delivery for The King's Trust in Wales said,

“ We are incredibly proud of the Get Into Retail Programme with The King's Trust because young people are empowered to unlock their potential, gain valuable skills, and discover meaningful careers.

Seeing young people thrive and overcome challenges to build their future inspires us all to believe in opportunity and support. ”

Young person success story

This young person talks about their experience of the programme.

“ The Get into Retail programme offers people of all abilities an opportunity to gain work experience in a retail environment to add to their CV with potential of gaining full time employment once the placement comes to an end.

I have Cerebral Palsy and found it very difficult for employers to see my potential when applying for jobs. I got accepted on to the course and given a placement in Marks & Spencer where everyone was really welcoming, and I felt accepted within the team. I now have the experience to pursue a career in retail thanks to this programme and placement.

I felt supported throughout the process, and they even accompanied me on public transport for the first few days of placement to ensure I was comfortable with the route getting back and forth to work.

I would recommend anyone who is considering a career in retail to apply for the programme. ”

The King's Trust – Get into programme



Case study

Hayley's career journey at IKEA Cardiff

Hayley James, Commercial Activities Manager at IKEA Cardiff, started her career in IKEA when she was 17 years old and 17 years later she is still there and says no two days are the same.

The training and development pathway at IKEA has allowed Hayley to complete NVQ college courses, develop her leadership skills with an in-house 2-year training programme, and try several different roles through recognition and secondment opportunities.

At 25, Hayley was the youngest person to be successful in gaining a managerial role in the Cardiff Store. She says her dedication and progression is down to the people around her and career pathway available at IKEA.

Hayley said:

“The IKEA training and development programme is the main reason I have been able to progress my career within a retail setting as there are so many opportunities to learn and try new things, as well as being surrounded by some inspirational leaders.

The IKEA Cardiff community have made it an enjoyable workplace, which explains the reason for my length of service, and as an organisation, understands the importance of work life balance and personal wellbeing.”



Case study

Asda's Supported Internship Programme

Asda UK runs an internship programme in partnership with national charity DFN Project SEARCH and local colleges for young people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties. The programme allows access to full time study-based learning at Asda stores and access to work-based experiential learning every day as well as a specific employability curriculum.

The initiative allowed Asda in Queensferry, Flintshire to recruit its first permanent employees from its supported internship programme in partnership with charity DFN Project SEARCH and local Coleg Cambria in Gwynedd.

One of these colleagues had previously been a full-time learner at Coleg Cambria where he spent time building his skills for employment and trying a few different placements.

Cai was introduced to Asda's Supported Internship Programme by his college mentor and joined the course at the Asda store in Queensferry at a busy Christmas period. He settled in quickly and worked on his independence by taking on different challenges and trying several departments within the store to learn as many new skills as he could before deciding on the role for him.

His favourite department was on trolleys, and he worked with the team to learn the safety of managing the car park a priority.



Cai blossomed quickly and was completing all tasks independently and attending work with a positive attitude and a smile on his face.

After several weeks, Cai was offered part time employment as a Service Colleague on Trolleys at Asda in Queensferry.

Cai said,

“ I am so happy to be given this opportunity to gain part time employment, earn my own money and meet new friends. I have learnt so much and gained confidence and independence that I am now using public transport for the first time ever. I would encourage everyone to look into the programme as it could open doors for future employment. ”

DFN Project SEARCH aims to support 10,000 young adults with a learning disability, or autism spectrum condition (or both) into paid employment by 2030 and has already helped more than 2,000 people to date.

Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+)

Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) is a key part of the Welsh Government's Young Person's Guarantee, providing a bespoke package of support to help 16-19 year olds develop their skills and work experience in line with employers' needs so they can get their first job.

For employers, the programme offers wage subsidies and tailored support to help grow their workforce. In return, employers can help create employment opportunities, work tasters, or work experience placements for young people.

Employers can expect:

Up to 50% of each young person's employment costs at the National Minimum Wage for the first six months

Free recruitment advice from, as well as ongoing training support from a designated contractor to ensure the young employee gets up to speed and continues to develop their skills

Opportunity to design a taster or work experience placement with the potential for this to turn into a job opportunity through the Jobs Growth Wales+ programme.

Jobs Growth Wales+ is available to businesses of any size in any industry in Wales.

Job offers must be for 16-40 hours a week and for a minimum of six months. Any jobs created must be additional to existing workforce needs and employers should be committed to retaining the employee beyond the six-month period.

Jobs Growth Wales+ | Business Wales Skills Gateway
(gov.wales)



Personal Learning Accounts (PLAs)

The Personal Learning Account programme looks to provide support across Wales for individuals to gain higher level skills, which will enable them to access a wider range of job opportunities and / or gain employment at a higher level.

The primary aim of the Personal Learning Account programme is to enable people to upskill and reskill in priority sectors, to improve their career and earnings potential, and to help raise the median income in Wales.

The scheme will continue to focus on those currently earning below £32,371 per annum and on qualifications that have a proven track record of improving earnings.

The PLA Programme is designed to be an adaptable and responsive provision to meet skills gaps by delivering a flexible programme of learning through courses linked to key sector drivers while, at the same time, offering accessible learning choices to enable participants to decide on how and when they study.

The list of approved PLA qualifications is available via **Careers Wales (Course Search (gov.wales))**.

Some of these qualifications are relevant to the Retail sector. Delivery may vary depending on the Further Education Institutions' availability.

Personal Learning Accounts



ReAct+

The ReAct+ programme can help people who have been impacted by redundancy to acquire the skills that recruiting employers are looking for. The programme is underpinned by robust LMI at a local, regional and national level. The programme can also support ex-offenders and offenders who are serving their sentences in the community.

A ReAct+ employer support grant is available to private and third sector employers in any sector who recruit a disabled person. It provides a contribution to the new recruit's wages for the first 12 months' employment.

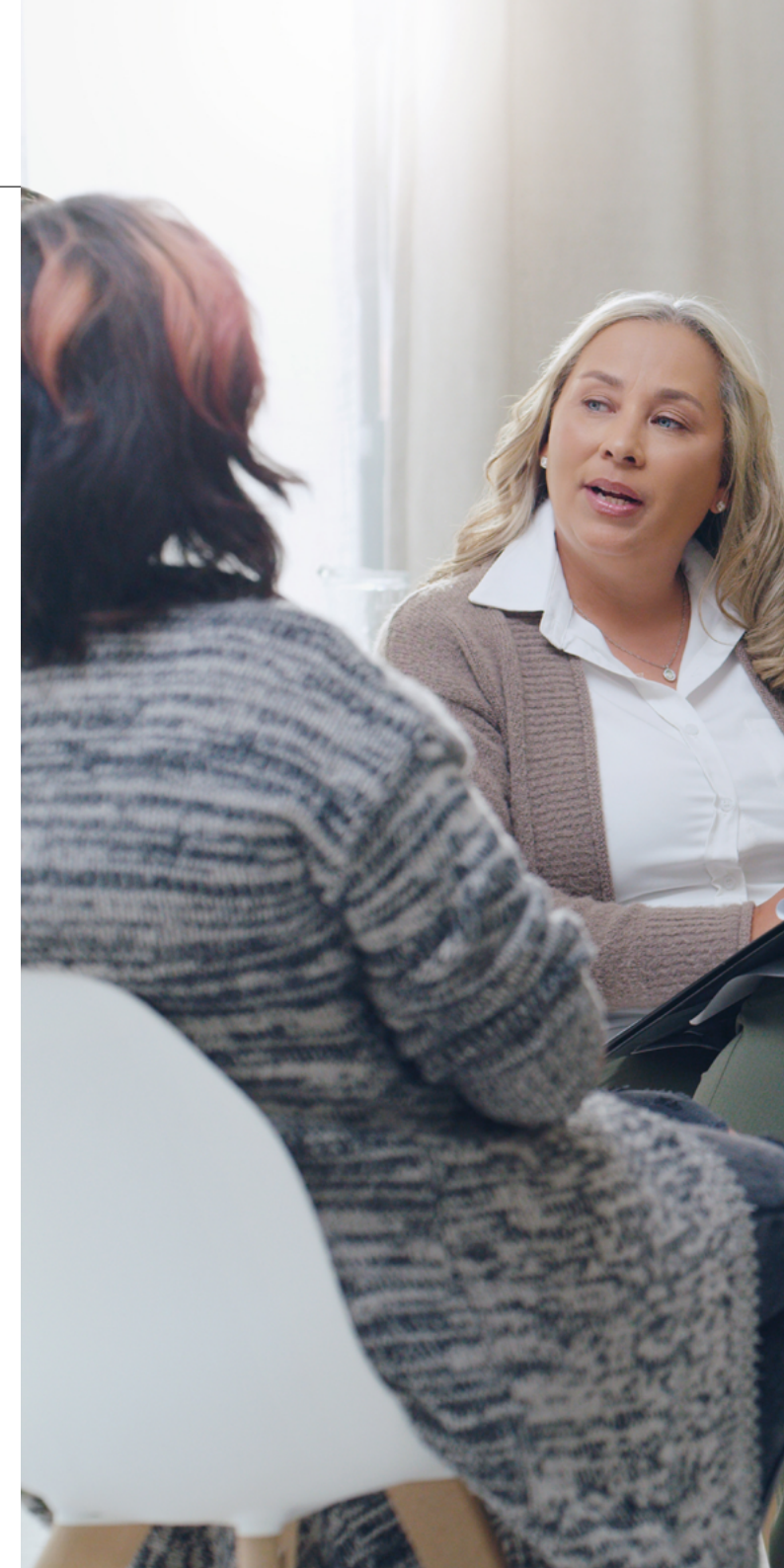
The programme offers individuals:

A vocational training grant

A care / childcare grant

Support for training-related costs such as travel and accommodation.

ReAct+ | Business Wales Skills Gateway
(gov.wales)



Recruit and Train / Skills Gateway

The Recruit and Train pages on the Skills Gateway site provide a raft of useful information for employers who want to find out more about:

Skills and training events

Latest announcements on employability and skills

Support in your area

Guides and tips to help review the way you recruit, manage and develop your staff.

Welcome to Recruit and Train – for information and advice on recruitment and training support | Business Wales Skills Gateway (gov.wales)



Young Person's Guarantee

The Young Person's Guarantee is the Welsh Government's key commitment to provide young people aged 16 to 24 living in Wales support to gain a place in education or training, or help to get into work or self-employment.

The programmes under the YPG also provide a number of support mechanisms for employers including:

direct access to young people

training related funding

recruitment incentives

vacancy / apprenticeship advertising

expert advice; and

in-work health and wellbeing support for staff.

Young Person's Guarantee | Business Wales Skills Gateway (gov.wales)



Union Programmes

Wales Unions Learning Fund (WULF)

The Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) is provided by Welsh Government to help support union led adult learning in the workplace.

All Welsh workers have the opportunity to access the fund to take advantage of the support, advice and guidance and training offers provided through WULF projects. The programme currently has 18 active projects delivering across Wales and most industry sectors.

Any certificated Trade Unions with members based in Wales, whether or not it is affiliated to the Trade Unions Congress, is eligible to apply for WULF funding.

The main focus of the programme is to allow Trade Unions to develop the essential skills and employability of the workforce, with a particular emphasis on removing barriers for traditional non-learners.

**Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) |
Business Wales Skills Gateway (gov.wales)**

