



REPORT TO THE GROWING MID WALES BOARD

11th March 2022

TITLE:	Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership – Progress Update
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide Members of the Growing Mid Wales Board with an update on progress of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Since the last report, the Regional Skills Partnership continues to make good progress working with business leaders and stakeholders across the region to understand the skills provision and labour market needs, in order to drive investment that meets the requirements of both employers and workforce.
- 2.2. The RSP Board has been focused on the key areas of work required, in order to provide a clear programme of work to pursue, including the key areas of structure, needs identification, partnership building and future planning. The RSP Manager continues to work closely with our respective Chief Regional Officers and regional stakeholders to support Regional Economic Frameworks, WG priorities and continue to build awareness of cross-border issues.

3. Recruitment.

- 3.1. Following a successful recruitment campaign, the RSP Employer Engagement Officer has been appointed and commenced in role on 6th December 2021.

4. Establish the foundations of a Regional Skills Observatory to ensure provision of robust LMI, aligned to economic and employer intelligence.

- 4.1. The RSP Partnership Manager has been working with Data Cymru to set up the Mid Wales Skills Observatory and to provide data analysis support.
- 4.2. Data Cymru has provided the RSP team with EMSI Analyst Toolkit licences to supplement national and local Labour Market Intelligence. EMSI have provided training for RSP teams.
- 4.3. The RSP Manager continues to work with Data Cymru to develop the RSP website. This will bring together information on the RSPs work and priorities, Board information, skills data links and policy documents in a modern content management system.
- 4.4. Data Cymru continues to provide additional support in the form of data analysis using labour market intelligence to identify economic trends and understand skills gaps and shortages across the region as well as supporting the RSP in developing the Covid-19 reports to submit to WG.

5. Green Skills Report.

- 5.1. In addition to the above, Data Cymru are working with the four RSP Managers to develop a Green Skills Report that will be shared with WG. Some further amendments are being made and it is anticipated this will be signed off in February. It is important that the report is robust as it will be used by WG to form the basis of the Net Zero Skills Action Plan which they plan to publish in the spring.

6. Covid – 19 Reporting.

- 6.1. The quarterly report was submitted to WG at the end of October. Welsh Government are taking the key findings from each of the reports and briefing Ministers.
- 6.2. Moving forward, WG have requested a final Covid 19 report that should act as a summary of findings over the pandemic and shed light on how the employment and skills landscape of the region has been changed by the pandemic. This report will be submitted in March/April 2022.

7. RSP Grant Award Report Submission.

- 7.1. The RSP submitted the quarterly Grant Award Activity Report to WG which has been approved.

8. Employability and Skills Plan and Action Plan.

- 8.1. The RSP continues to provide a regional perspective to inform national and UK sector skills strategies and to provide baseline data for FE planning, using employer led intelligence and LMI data.
- 8.2. The four RSP Managers are awaiting further guidance from WG on the requirements for the new Skills Plan and Action Plan which will identify priorities for regional investment that supports jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region.

9. Young Persons Guarantee.

- 9.1. The Programme for Government (PfG) sets out an ambitious commitment to deliver the Young Persons Guarantee, giving everyone under 25 the offer of support into work, education, training, or self-employment.
- 9.2. The guarantee was set to ensure no lost generation across Wales due to the predicted economic downturn and the huge rise in unemployment as a result of Covid and Brexit.
- 9.3. Since the PfG was published, the job market has recovered far more rapidly than predicted and seems to be buoyant with demand in some areas outweighing supply. However, the YPG still has an important role to play in supporting Welsh Government reach its policy goal of becoming a fairer, greener, and more successful Wales. The YPG also needs to continue to focus on:
- Assisting young people into more sustainable job roles;
 - Progression for young people within these jobs and whether we now face a generation of under-employment;
 - Planning for a possible second wave of unemployment over the next few months; and

- The lack of skills or skills mismatch within the labour market.

9.4. Summary of the outcomes and measures:

- One desktop report per region by Spring 2022 submitted to Welsh Government.
- Two events per region involving programmes and projects Jan 2022 - Spring 2022.
- Work with Working Wales and provide an update report to ensure that all the information is added to the support finder and local support finder.
- Local support finder directory and guidance pack produced for advisors locally to ensure that information and awareness of projects and programmes are available.
- An action plan in relation to any strategic barriers identified during your research work, submitted to Welsh Government by the end of March 2022.

9.5. It is recognised that this is a large piece of work with a tight deadline. The RSP Manger is working with senior leaders and colleagues across both Local Authorities to consider resourcing options to complete this work.

10. Board Membership and Establishment of Cluster Groups.

10.1. As previously agreed by the GMW Board, the RSP Chair and RSP Manager are reviewing current RSP Board membership and the establishment of a number of cluster groups.

10.2. There have been in depth discussions with RSP Board members where members comments, views, and opinions on the cluster groups were considered. It was agreed the there has to be a clear need and focus for any potential cluster group.

10.3. The RSP Manager has met with the other RSP Managers to understand the specific groups they have chosen, the purpose and how well they are working. Some of the cluster groups for the other RSP groups meet monthly, while some meet every three months or every 6 weeks depending on specific requirements.

10.4. Following this review, initial cluster groups will be established with the first meetings held in March:

- Training Providers
- Businesses
- Public Services

10.5. In addition to these cluster groups Policy Task and Finish Groups will also be established for specific areas of WG Policy work.

11. Mid Wales Strategic Employability Network.

11.1. The Mid Wales Strategic Employability Network is a joint endeavour between the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership and the Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team. It will be facilitated by the RET on behalf of the region.

11.2. The primary aim of the network is to bring together relevant stakeholders in the region that work with beneficiaries aged 14 plus seeking both 'hard' and 'soft' employability support.

11.3. The network will;

- Act as a regional focus point for employability activity and news e.g. dissemination of new policy initiatives from WG and UK Gov;

- Share regional intelligence regarding current employability initiatives to avoid duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration;
- Collate regional evidence including mapping of existing delivery against organisations and current effectiveness of employability provision in Mid Wales, and identify opportunities to ‘do things differently’;
- Provide a regional view on shared priorities for employability and skills provision in Mid Wales, with a view to further developing collaborative working relationships and ensuring the region is best placed for future funding opportunities;
- Provide a regional view on emerging employability and skills projects to ensure activity aligns with regional priorities. This will include taking a view on the regional relevance of pan-Wales employability projects.

12. Legal Implications

12.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

13. Human Resources Implications

13.1. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

14. Financial Implications

14.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

15. Appendices

15.1. None

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