



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

West Wales and the Valleys European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020

2020 Annual Implementation Report Summary



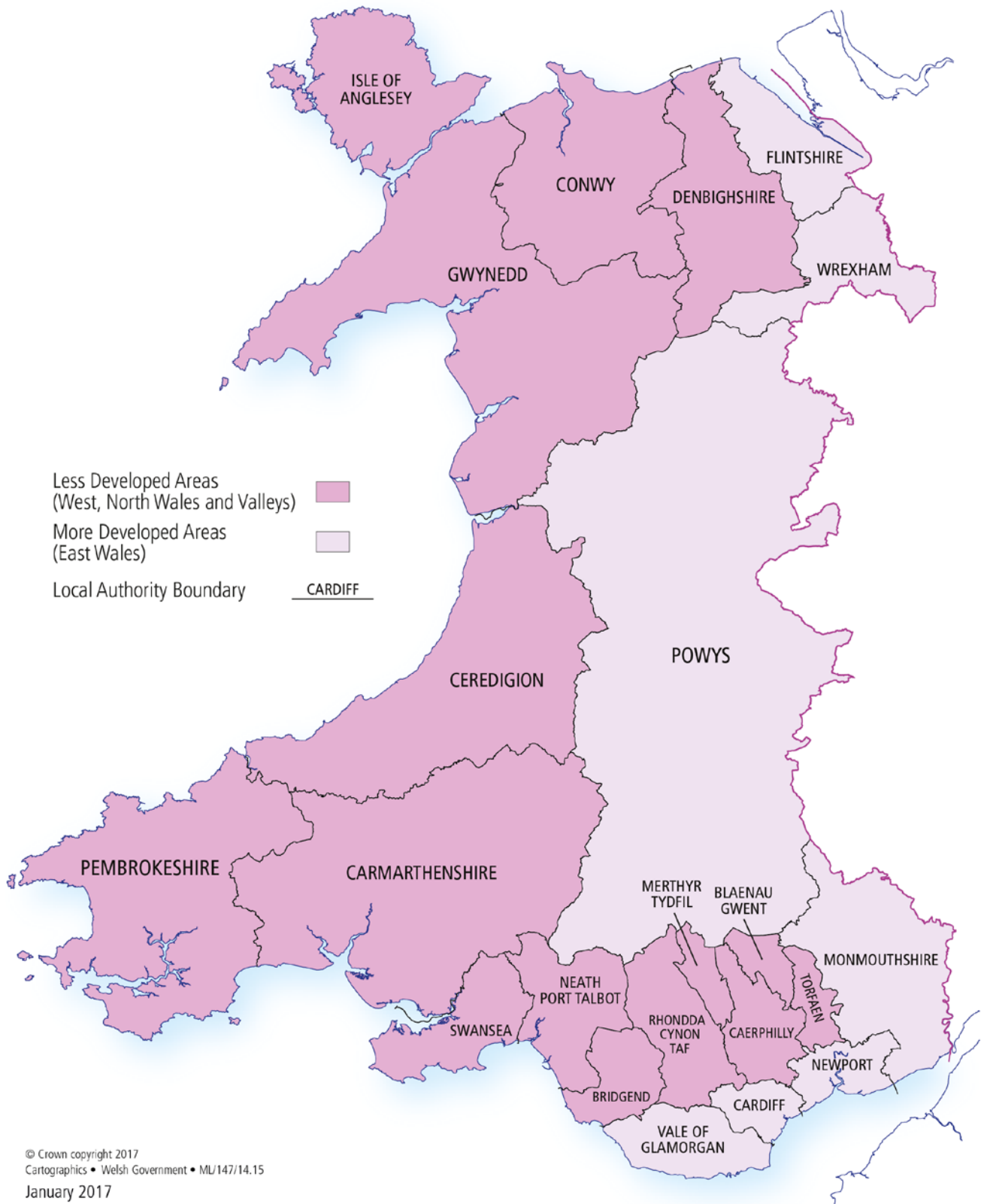
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**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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Introduction

Wales is benefiting from over €2bn of EU funds through four Structural Funds programmes covering the 2014-2020 period.

As part of this, just under €805m has been allocated to less developed areas through the West Wales and Valleys European Social Fund, which aims to drive economic growth by investing in the following priority areas:

Priority	EU budget	Total Budget
Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	€169m	€214m
Skills for Growth	€309m	€427m
Youth Employment and Attainment	€222m	€298m
Public Services Reform and Regional Working	€9m	€12m
Containing Covid through Capacity	€80m	€108m
Technical Assistance	€16m	€22m
Total	€805m	€1,081m

Programme progress

Despite the COVID 19 pandemic, implementation of this Programme continued to make progress and by the end of 2020, the Welsh Government had invested €787m of EU funds to 70 projects through the European Social Fund driving a total investment of €1,179m in West Wales and the Valleys. Key highlights include:

- Over 194,000 people helped into work.
- Over 71,000 new qualifications achieved.
- Over 4,000 people progressing into further learning or training.

Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment

EU funds are supporting projects that are increasing the skills and employability of economically inactive and long-term unemployed people, and helping reduce underemployment and absence rates of employed people with work-limiting health conditions. Highlights from 2020 include:

- £3m additional EU funds awarded to Workways Plus Short Term Unemployed Over 25s project led by Neath Port Talbot Council with Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire Councils, to assist people affected by short-term unemployment.
- Pembrokeshire County Council secured £0.5m EU funds for Tackling Poverty Pembrokeshire. The project aims to improve employment outcomes for people who have a disability or are experiencing absence from employment due to long term sick.
- Swansea Council received £1.2m EU funds for Swansea Working – Short Term Unemployed, which will support a coordinated approach to the engagement and provision of intensive employment mentoring and job matching support as part of the 'Swansea Working' umbrella programme.



Tackling Poverty Pembrokeshire

Skills for Growth

EU funds are being invested in a range of initiatives that are improving basic, technical and high-level skills of working people across Wales. Highlights during 2020 include:

- Swansea University secured additional £2.1m EU funds to extend the Leading Business Growth programme to support a further 359 people to develop high level leadership skills.
- Chwarae Teg secured additional £6m EU funds to extend the Agile Nation 2 project until 2023, delivering accredited leadership qualifications and mentoring to ensure more women are supported in work to develop their careers, and supporting more businesses to implement equality strategies and modern working practices.



Youth Employment and Attainment

Young people across Wales are benefiting from EU funded training and employment opportunities, taking part in projects to increase the take-up and attainment of STEM subjects while EU funds are also being invested in increasing the skills of early years and childcare workers. Highlights in 2020 include:

- Additional £1.2m awarded to 'Inspire 2 Achieve, led by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, to add a new regional delivery partner – Caerphilly County Borough Council – and support a further 550 people in the Caerphilly area.
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council also secured an additional £750,000 EU funds for Inspire 2 Work to extend the project until December 2022. This investment ensures that more 16-24 year olds who face significant challenges to getting into work will receive a range of support including mentoring and counselling, and courses to improve basic skills, self-esteem and digital literacy.
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) secured additional £540,000 EU funds to extend the Achieve Through Work Experience scheme until October 2022 creating more tailored work experience opportunities for young Higher Education students.



Inspire2Work



Inspire2Achieve

Public services reform and regional working

EU funds are supporting projects to stimulate new regional solutions, planning and service models, helping organisations to innovate and work together on a regional basis to find new ways to tackle some of the challenges they are facing and improve the delivery of public services. Highlights in 2020 include:

- £3.7m EU funds awarded for Circular Economy Innovation Communities (CEIC) project led by Swansea University in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University, to help public service and third sector organisations in South Wales reduce their carbon footprint and reduce waste.



Circular Economy Innovation Communities (CEIC)

Success stories

Cam Nesa

A mum who was out of work for four years secured her dream job of caring for adults with dementia, thanks to the Cam Nesa scheme which provides tailored personal support and work-related opportunities for 16-24 year olds in West Wales.

Jordan was always passionate about caring for others but never felt confident enough to be able to apply for a position. However, through Cam Nesa, Jordan engaged in activities, improving her confidence, helping her to gain qualifications and secure a care assistant post at Meadows Care Home, Johnston.

As part of the support Cam Nesa provided, Jordan engaged in activities to improve her health and wellbeing and her ability to believe she could succeed; from art classes to boxing, and learning a new language. As well as employability sessions supporting her in application writing, mock interviews and help with CV and cover letter writing.

Her increased confidence helped her gain qualifications in emergency first aid, engage in Open University taster courses in caring, and work with people who have dementia.

Jordan is now in the process of supporting other young people who have had similar experiences and lack confidence by engaging in a peer mentor programme.

“Cam Nesa has been absolutely amazing,” she said. “I am so grateful for all the help and support that they have given me. I finally feel like me again, not just a Mum. I feel amazing. They helped me gain qualifications I needed to get a job which I am so happy about.”



Jordan from Cam Nesa Scheme

Down to Earth – Build Me Up project

Down to Earth's 'Build Me Up' project supports disadvantaged adults (over 25 years old) in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire to take part in eight-week sustainable construction programmes, working across two hand built sites on the Gower Peninsula, with the aim of improving well-being, employability and confidence. In 2020, the project developed 70 Eco-houses for sale and rental in Pennard, Swansea providing much-needed homes in the area.

Through the WCVA Active Inclusion Fund (supported by EU funds), Down to Earth were provided with the resources to deliver a robust project, enabling each participant to get the support they needed. Through the project participants gained a range of positive outcomes, from improved feelings of self-esteem and confidence, to gaining the experience to lead into paid employment or training.

One participant affected by a stroke four years ago that devastated her life, said of her experience, "This has had a huge impact on my wellbeing; bringing out the old me once again. It has been amazing and emotional and made me realise how far I have come since my stroke left me an empty shell. It helped my mobility, helped me regain confidence for public speaking again and helped me to mix and support others with confidence."

Mark McKenna Director of Down to Earth Project said: "This project allowed people to experience our approach to improving health and wellbeing. At the same time, they were developing amazing spaces for future groups to learn in and enjoy."



Down to Earth's 'Build Me Up' project