



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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

## 2021 Annual Implementation Report Summary



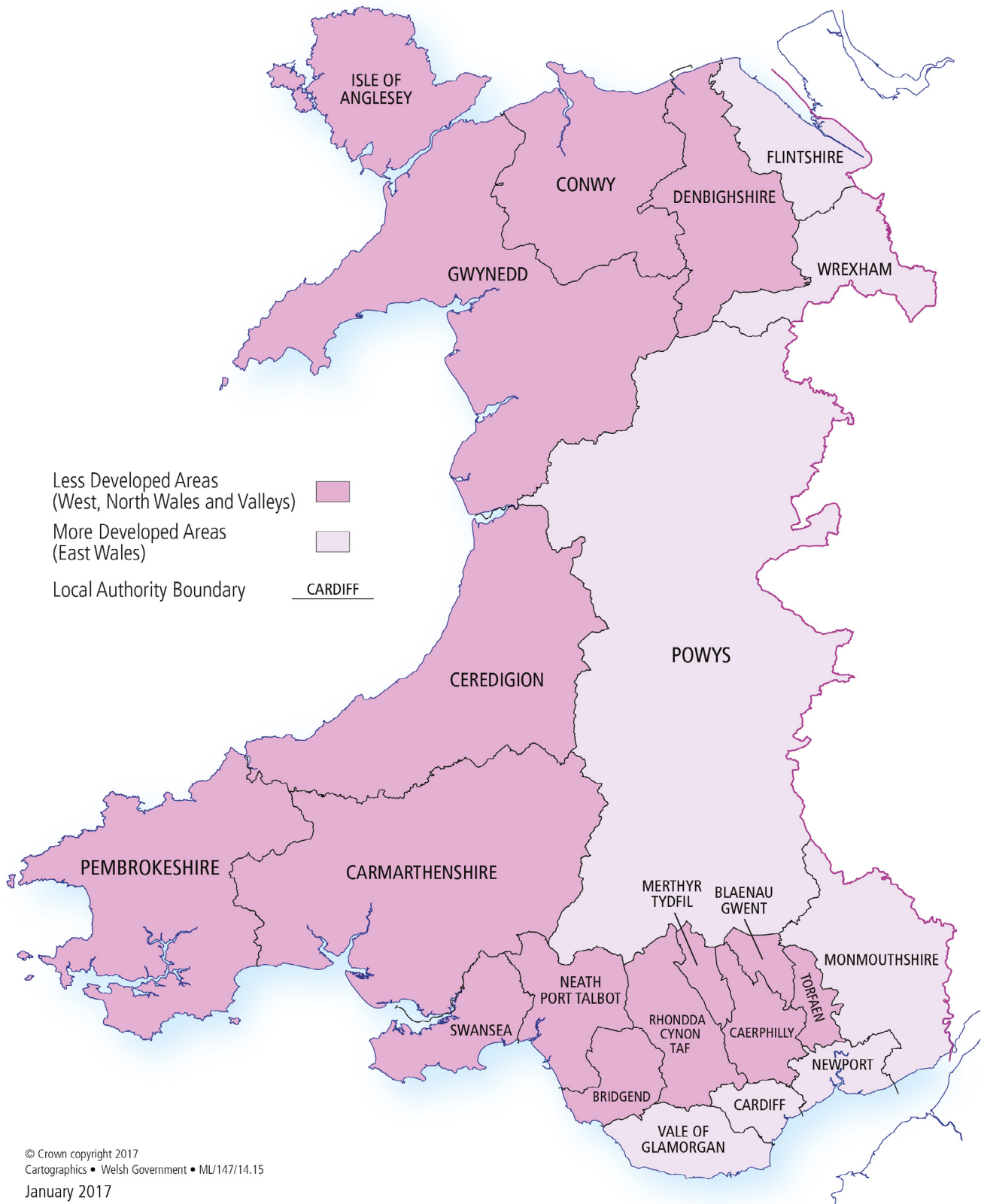
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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop**  
**European Social Fund**

# European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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# Contents

Introduction	3	Youth Employment and Attainment	6
Programme progress	3	Public services reform and regional working	7
Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	4	Success stories	8
Skills for Growth	5		

## 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>€805m</b>	<b>€1,081m</b>

## Programme progress

Despite the COVID 19 pandemic, implementation of this Programme continued to make progress and by the end of 2021, the Welsh Government had fully committed the allocation of EU funds to 73 projects through the European Social Fund in West Wales and the Valleys. Key highlights include:

- Over 25,000 people helped into work
- Over 90,000 new qualifications achieved
- Over 5,000 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, plus helping reduce underemployment and absence rates of employed people with work-limiting health conditions. Highlights from 2021 include:

- £2.3m EU funds were awarded to Elite Supported Employment Agency for JobSense West Wales and the Valleys. The JobSense project has already successfully provided a specialist employability service across East Wales for people with sensory loss who are economically inactive or long-term unemployed. The Funding will allow the project to expand across the West Wales and the Valleys region, supporting a further 230 participants into employment.
- Swansea Council were awarded £1.2m EU funds for the Swansea Short Term Unemployed (Swansea Working) project which offers employment support and training to unemployed individuals aged over 25 to help them improve their lives by gaining sustainable employment, linking in with existing EU funded local support through Workways+ and Communities for Work programmes.

**Do you know someone with sensory loss struggling to find work?**

**During these difficult times, JobSense is still here to support people with sensory loss.**

**HOW CAN JOBSENSE HELP?**

The JobSense Project work with employers to ensure that they receive useful information and support to be able to successfully recruit and support people with hearing or sight loss into their organisations in an accessible and sustainable way.

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**JOBSENSE** **ELITE** Supported Employment

**COS**

Would you like to refer someone? Contact us today.  
info@jobsense.org.uk | www.jobsense.org.uk

**RNI:D**  
\* source - rnib.org.uk

Jobsense



Swansea Working participant, Huw

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# 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 2021 include:

- In May, ION Leadership extended their fully-funded leadership programmes until the end of March 2022. The project is backed by over £6m EU funds, and over the past 11 years has supported over 1,500 leaders in over 1,000 businesses to develop sustainable and profitable enterprises.
- A team from the EU funded MADE project at University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) provided expertise and help to a hospital in Nepal in the fight against COVID-19. They provided advice and shared their designs for a highly efficient 3D printed jet Venturi based respiratory support system to meet the high demand of patients needing oxygen. This collaboration led to the hospital designing and testing two devices using the Venturi which could be deployed across Nepal to help tackle the pandemic.



MADE Cymru respiratory support system

# 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 2021 include:

- An additional £0.25m EU funds for STEM Cymru 2, which provides an exciting range of engineering-themed activities to thousands of young people in West Wales, the Valleys and North West Wales. The additional funding will support the operation to continue for a further two years, ensuring more young people are able to participate.
- In July, ADTRAC ran a series of online and social media activities to celebrate their achievements as part of their closure process. Over the three year period ADTRAC supported over 1,100 young people across North Wales to gain qualifications, enter into further education and training, or enter employment. As well as other positive outcomes for participants such as 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.



EESW STEM Cymru 2 Workshop

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# 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 2021 include:

- £2.9m EU funds were awarded for the North Wales Regional Growth Vision Enabler scheme. The scheme will support the North Wales Economic Ambition Board enabling them to continue their progress of developing and delivering the Growth Deal projects, contributing towards a much wider vision for economic wellbeing in the region.
- The Economic Acceleration and Regeneration Through Innovation (EARTH) project received £2.8m EU funds which will allow local authorities in the Swansea Bay City region to build the required capacity and capability to collaboratively plan and deliver strategic services.



North Wales Economic Ambition Board

# Success stories

## North Wales Business Academy

Supported by £2.8m EU funds, North Wales Business Academy worked with over 480 business owners and employees from over 300 companies in North Wales until the project came to a close in November 2021.

One participant who benefitted has been Rod Williams, the longest serving employee at Crest Co-operative Ltd and now its Managing Director.

Established in 1998, Crest Co-operative Ltd supports over 150 people a year to develop personally, socially and economically including adults with learning disabilities and veterans.

Rod joined North Wales Business Academy, attending the Strategic Business Analysis (SBA) course as he was looking to refresh the processes and strategy of the business and inject more focus and structure. He said:

“Joining North Wales Business Academy has made a real and lasting impact – for me personally, for the team and for Crest as a whole. Creating the business plan as a living document with input from the leadership team, as well as the 30 strong staff and volunteers, has made sure that the plan was a ‘ground up’ approach. This has engaged the workforce to buy into the ideas and adopt some new practices and ways of working, including developing a focus on succession planning”.



North Wales Business Academy participant – Rod Williams, Crest Co-operative Ltd



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## Upskilling@Work

Coleg Gwent's Upskilling@Work programme, backed by £10.8m EU funds, offers over 70 Courses across 6 Colleges and has 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.

Upskilling@Work participants have achieved over 1,800 qualifications and 95% of employers felt that they received value for money from engaging with the project.

Prior to accessing training through Upskilling@Work, ASD Build Ltd, a small independent construction company specialising mainly in social housing, only had a small number of in-house staff and subcontracted out a lot of their work.

Aiming to develop the skills of their own staff and subcontract less, they have adopted a bottom-up approach to training with staff suggesting what they would like to learn and the company working with the local college to determine what could be provided.

As a result of the training their employees now see work-based training as an opportunity for career progression and are able to see the full list of training options rather than simply continuing through levels on their current vocation. They have also taken on an apprentice for the first time, neither of which would have been possible without the Upskilling@Work programme offering suitable courses.

The training and skills building ASD Build Ltd can now offer potential employees through Upskilling@Work has allowed the company to expand, increased staff retention and improved their profitability, keeping them competitive especially with larger social housing contractors.

"I'm really happy with it, it's been easy, and we've built a relationship with the college now." ASD Build Ltd



Upskilling@Work