



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

East Wales European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020

2022 Annual Implementation Report Summary



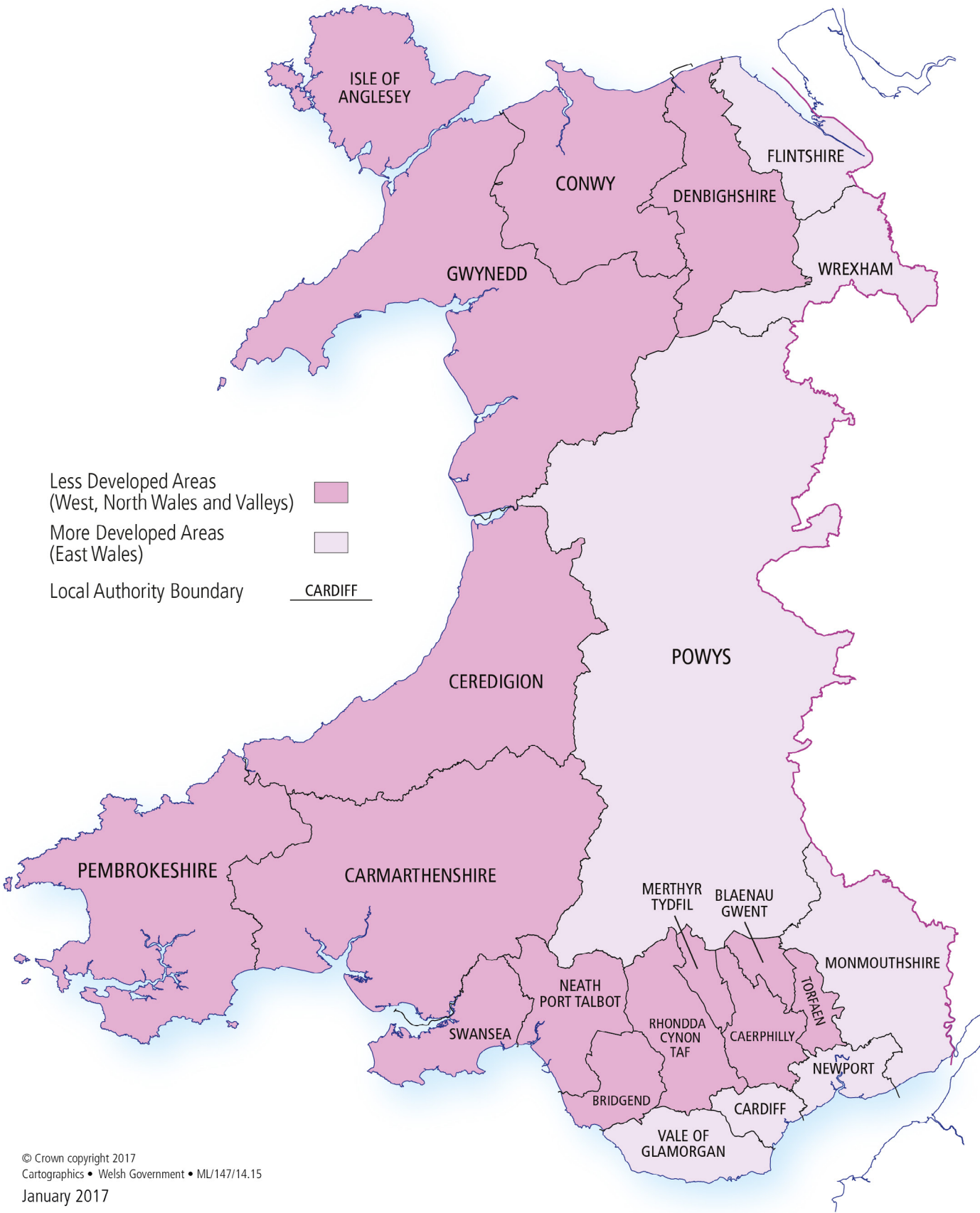
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop
European Social Fund

European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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Introduction

Wales is benefiting from over **€2bn** of EU funds through four Structural Funds programmes covering the 2014-2020 period, driving a total investment of over **€3.7bn**.

As part of this, over **€203m** has been allocated to more developed areas through the East Wales 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 | €25m | €50m |
| Skills for Growth | €74m | €154m |
| Youth Employment and Attainment | €54m | €108m |
| Public Services Reform and Regional Working | €5m | €11m |
| Containing Covid through Capacity | €41m | €82m |
| Technical Assistance | €4m | €8m |
| Total | €203m | €413m |

Programme progress

Progress on programme delivery returned to relatively normal, following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some changes made by operations to respond to the pandemic have continued where appropriate, such as online and remote delivery of support. However, many operations have returned to delivering face-to-face support as public health concerns eased.

In March 2022, following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, WEFO updated its participant eligibility guidance to include additional guidance on the eligibility of Ukrainian nationals in Wales to access support. By the end of 2022, the Welsh Government had fully committed the allocation of EU funds to 46 projects through the European Social Fund in East Wales.

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. Good progress has been made with indicators showing particularly high levels of participation by long-term unemployed participants and levels of support for economically inactive participants.

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. The priority achieved overall good progress against target indicators over the year and by the end of 2022, the priority had fully committed funds to 15 operations.

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. The priority has made good progress, in particular in terms of participation of projects from those who were NEET (not in employment, education or training).

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. Indicators have shown good progress has been made in terms of participation with the projects as well as the level of processes, methods and tools being developed.

Containing Covid through Capacity

During 2022, a retrospective operation was approved in this priority. The operation, which was awarded £30m funds, was led by the Welsh Government's Health Department with local health boards and NHS trusts from across East Wales as joint beneficiaries. The operation is expected to have supported the employment of almost 1,400 additional health and social care staff during the Coronavirus response as well as the purchase of some 134 million items of PPE.

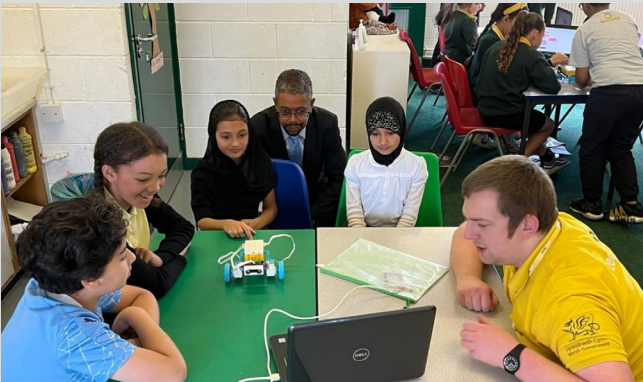
Highlights

Key Stats:

- 9,000 people helped into employment or self-employment
- Almost 46,000 new qualifications achieved
- Over 3,000 people progressing into further learning or training
- 16,000 NEET Participants (16–24 years of age)
- Over 10,700 participants at Risk of becoming NEET (11–24 years of age)

Other highlights:

- The Minister for Economy launched the second intake of graduates joining the Data-AI Fast Track Graduate Programme in January. The programme is delivered by the Welsh Contact Centre Forum and is helping to accelerate participant careers in data/AI and develop them into professionals.
- The Minister for Economy attended a robotics workshop run by the Technocamps project at St Cuthbert's RC Primary School in Cardiff in July to engage with the pupils, hear more about project and its wider mission across Wales.
- MADE Cymru, supported by both ESF and ERDF funds and led by University Trinity St David, won the St David Award for 'Innovation, Science & Technology' for developing a 3D-printed jet respiratory support system to help the NHS fight COVID 19.
- Circular Economy Innovation Communities (CEIC) Wales held an Autumn Conference in Cardiff focussed on the importance of the circular economy in tackling the climate emergency, social learning and communities of practice. The event also showcased initiatives being delivered by CEIC participants in the public service sectors in the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) and Swansea Bay Region (SBR) to tackle the climate emergency.



Minister for Economy attending a Technocamps workshop



MADE Cymru receiving the St David Award for 'Innovation, Science & Technology'



Data-AI Fast Track Graduates

Success Stories

Circular Economy Collaborative Innovation (CEIC) project

The Circular Economy Collaborative Innovation (CEIC) project is a collaboration between Swansea University and Cardiff Metropolitan University to support public sector organisations to develop new methods and processes to reduce their carbon footprint and reach net-zero targets.

A series of cohort workshops have been held in south Wales focused on themes including the decarbonisation of housing, sustainable innovation, circular education, and other circular solutions for public services. The solutions each group creates, along with the impact they have had in their organisations and across the region are then taken back into workplaces

CEIC has featured heavily in the press throughout 2022, with the team invited to talk on BBC Wales Today, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio Cymru and at the National Eisteddfod.

A Programme participant said:

“The CEIC programme connected me with like-minded individuals who are passionate about integrating circular economy approaches into public services. I left it far more knowledgeable, both in regard to the effectiveness of social learning techniques, but also about how public servants in Wales can positively lead the way on sustainable development. It’s not easy, but then who doesn’t like a challenge!”



Participants of the Circular Economy Collaborative Innovation (CEIC) project

Zainab

When Zainab came to the UK in 2021 from Sudan, she had to adjust to a completely different culture, labour market and political system. With a degree in Management Studies she had already worked for 2 years as a social media specialist. Needing help to understand the UK labour market, Zainab was assigned a mentor with Communities for Work.

Communities for Work supported by £66m EU funds, provides community-based support for individuals who are not in employment, education or training and who face complex barriers to employment.

Zainab undertook training courses and with the support of her mentor she applied for many jobs, and although unsuccessful she never became demoralised. She was encouraged to apply as a volunteer at Job Club and after a few months there, a role was advertised on Cardiff Council's website. Zainab applied again and was invited to an interview. Her mentor spent time together going over possible questions and answers and this time Zainab felt more confident. This time she was successful and offered the position of Into Work Advice Trainee.

Zainab said:

"The help I received from Community for Work have had the biggest impact on my job search. My mentor Cath, was extremely supportive and helpful in all aspects of the job searching journey, enhancing my experience and providing guidance. Moreover, her moral support was the biggest motivation to keep going. Given my positive experience, I would recommend joining the project to every job seeker who is in need for consultation or guidance who feels in need of a guide."



Communities for Work participant, Zainab