

The latest in Skills & Talent across Southeast Wales



Businesses, apprentices and training providers across Wales came together last week to celebrate the incredible variety of skills programmes now being offered to people of all age groups - through the many different types of apprenticeships that are increasingly shaping the future for individuals of all talent communities.

The **Apprenticeship Week Wales** skills showcase was complemented by news of the **Industrial Cadet** pre-apprentice age programmes and the **Tramshed Tech 2022 Startup Academy** - though somewhat tempered by the **Chwarae Teg** State-of-the-Nation report on Gender Equality...

Apprenticeship Week Wales celebrates future-ready skills

Apprenticeship Week Wales 2022 ran from 7th-13th February, showcasing a wide variety of events and social media activity, highlighting how apprenticeships can give individuals the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career - and how businesses can develop a talented workforce that's equipped with future-ready skills.

Sponsoring a series of events throughout Apprenticeship Week, the Welsh Government confirmed its £366m investment over the next three years to deliver 125,000 all-age apprenticeships across Wales during this term of government - with Economy Minister Vaughan Gething detailing how this major investment will help support the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring that **at least 90% of 16-24 year olds in Wales will be in education, employment or training by 2050**.

The £366m will increase opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to develop transferable skills for lifelong learning in the workplace, playing a significant part in tackling skills shortages in the priority sectors that are so critical to economic growth - and a key role in supporting our ambitions for net zero, the every-day foundational economy and core public service delivery.

'Inclusion' was a central theme throughout the week, with The National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) - which represents work-based training providers across the country - organising three virtual events to spotlight the diversity of apprenticeships available to many different communities; reflecting the government commitment to invest more in supporting people from under-represented groups to take up apprenticeship opportunities.

Industrial Cadets' sharpen manufacturing and engineering skills in North Wales

A pre-apprenticeship-age innovation saw **Coleg Cambria** hit the headlines last week, thanks to its pioneering Industrial Cadet partnership with leading North Wales companies.

More than 60 'Cadets' from the college's Deeside site are combining their studies with placements at industry heavyweights that include Atlas Copco, AMRC Cymru, Ardagh, ConvaTec, DRB, Electroimpact, ESD, JCB, Kellogg's, Magellan Aerospace, TATA, Triumph Actuation Systems and UPM Shotton - gaining valuable real-life, real-time experience with quality-driven organisations in sectors that range from food production to manufacturing and engineering.

Led by educational charity the **Engineering Development Trust**, Industrial Cadets is an industry benchmark for outreach and education, building pathways through academia and employment: supporting schools and students seeking high-quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) opportunities - nurturing early talent pipelines and aiming to open school-age eyes to apprenticeships and other opportunities with local employers.

GCSEs and A-levels in 2022 to be graded more generously

Many of the people choosing the apprenticeship pathway will be leaving school in 2022 - and last week brought news that pupils' GCSE and A-level exams will be graded more generously than in pre-pandemic years.

The move is to make up for the disruption caused by Covid, with national exams going ahead for the first time since the pandemic began. Grade boundaries are likely to be lower and more lenient than in previous years - **set at a 'mid-point'** between the 2019 pre-pandemic boundaries and the grade levels used in teacher assessments in 2021, offering what Ofqual described as a "safety net" for students.

Under teacher assessment, more students passed exams and achieved higher marks, including record numbers in Wales securing top A-level grades.

Tramshed Tech Startup Academy 2022 Cohort Announced

Tramshed Tech has kickstarted its next iteration of the Startup Academy - **the first of three cohorts throughout 2022**. Seventeen pre-start and early-stage businesses have been selected and enrolled into the award-winning Startup Academy powered by Google for Startups - a 12-week programme designed to support entrepreneurs in all aspects of starting and growing a business.

The new cohort will be provided with weekly workshops, peer-to-peer sessions, progress support and a large range of on-demand resources - with Tramshed Tech leveraging their partnerships with Barclays Eagle Labs, Cardiff University, Geovation and NatWest, each of whom will be engaged in the Academy for referrals, mentoring and advice.

Chwarae Teg calls for greater focus on becoming a Gender Equal Nation

Wales' leading gender equality charity, Chwarae Teg, has called for a renewed focus from government, business and civil society to tackle the causes of gender inequality.

In its annual **State of the Nation report**, published last week, Chwarae Teg outlines Wales' progress towards becoming a gender equal nation and explores the experiences of women in the economy and workplace, with data that reveals "a frustrating picture" of gender equality in Wales.

The report suggests that while Wales is becoming a more equal nation in some areas, against too many indicators we are making little to no progress, with Wales' gender pay gap increasing to 12.3% this year.

More women aged 16-24 are now in work when compared to men - but this contrasts with an overall increase in unemployment amongst females, with women from an ethnic minority being particularly affected. 6.7% of women from an ethnic minority are currently unemployed, an increase of 2.4% on last year. This compares to an increase of just 0.4% to unemployment rates amongst white women to an overall rate of 3.8%.

For further updates on Skills & Talent in the CCR, go to www.venturewales.org