

The latest in Skills & Talent across Southeast Wales

Last week saw some tremendously encouraging headlines across our many talent communities, with **Openreach** creating 250 new Welsh jobs in 2022 (following their record year for hiring Women Engineers) **Admiral** named as the UK's fourth best employer for Wellbeing a new plan announced to launch Wales' Space Sector into orbit but a disappointing study by **AAT** reporting on the paucity of careers advice around apprenticeships ...

Openreach: making history in reaching out to wider talent communities ...

The news from **Openreach** was particularly heartwarming as more than 200 of those new roles will be high-quality apprenticeships - with the new recruits based across all parts of Wales, including Cardiff, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire, Powys and, of course Newport, where Openreach has invested hugely in establishing the state-of-the-art **National Learning Centre** that's playing such an important part in driving the company's roll-out of an ultrafast, ultra-reliable Full Fibre broadband network.

This hiring spree is part of the largest and most inclusive recruitment drive in Openreach's history - attracting talent from all backgrounds and communities, to build on the 2,300-strong workforce already employed here in Wales. The campaign is also one of the most inclusive campaigns ever run, following on from the great success of last year where the company attracted 600 women into trainee engineering roles - including 50 females in Wales - by crafting gender neutral job ads and job descriptions that made a real difference in engaging potential candidates from a previously largely untapped demographic.

Admiral flies the flag for Wellbeing in Wales ...

Another large enterprise renowned for its inclusive workforce has also been voted the top Welsh company for Wellbeing - with **Admiral** named as the fourth best UK workplace for wellbeing by the **Great Place to Work Institute**, the global authority on workplace culture.

Having been voted a Great Place to Work for more than 20 consecutive years - and fifth best super large workplace (1,000+ employees) in 2021 - it's wonderful to see Admiral recognised again specifically for its approach to wellbeing; especially as the Institute benchmarks thousands of surveys, assessing holistic employee experiences across work-life balance, sense of fulfilment, job satisfaction, psychological safety and financial security.

Wales' Space Sector gets ready for launch ...

Last week also saw **Welsh Government** reveal a strategy aimed at putting the country at the centre of the global space sector - with Economy Minister Vaughan Gething unveiling **Wales: A Sustainable Space Nation** during a visit to Cardiff University, a seat of learning and inspired innovation with an enviable track record of world-class space research.

This new National Space Strategy highlights the unique physical and business environment Wales offers to the companies that are revolutionising capabilities in the space sector - setting out how Wales could become the world's first sustainable space nation by 2040, leading the way to a 'greener space'.

The strategy provides a blueprint for Wales to become a haven for space industry innovation, grounded in sustainability - unleashing the full potential of pioneering companies including **Airbus Defence & Space**, **Qinetiq**, **Qioptiq** and **Raytheon**, who together manufacture 98% of the global supply of space-qualified glass used in satellites and space vehicles.

It's a mission that involves Wales securing a 5% share of the UK's space market, equating to £2 billion per year for the Welsh economy and helping to create well-paid, highly-skilled jobs closer to home across our native aerospace, advanced manufacturing, communications, photonics and software industries - building on the network of world-class research and teaching facilities at the **Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult** in Newport and **AMRC Cymru** in Broughton; and bringing to the fore the **Wales Academic Space Partnership** that has worked hard to harness collaborative academic expertise from several Welsh universities.

79% of young people in Wales not told about alternatives to degrees

In amongst all the otherwise positive employment headlines, new research unfortunately revealed that not enough is being done to educate young people about alternatives to university - resulting in a huge cost in terms of unfulfilled human potential and billions wasted on tuition fees each year.

The nationally representative study of 2,000 people by **AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians)** found that only 21% of people in Wales had heard about apprenticeships and other alternatives to degrees while at school - and 61% think there should be more resources available to help people learn about them.

As a consequence, misconceptions and apprehensions about apprenticeships are commonplace: the research showing that 43% of people in Wales believe that apprenticeships don't pay enough; and 21% think they are only available for manual labour jobs. Meanwhile, only 54% see them as a 'good' alternative to university - and just 37% are aware that apprenticeships enable people to earn while they learn.

At the same time, the research revealed that 42% of all people aged 21-45 believe their degree has not played an essential role in their careers to date; and 16% of all people with degrees wish they had chosen a different route. This figure rose to 20% of those aged up to 24 years - the highest amongst any age group - suggesting that the 2012 tuition fee increase and ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on in-person teaching are contributing to growing regret around the decision to attend university.

For more news updates on Skills & Talent across Southeast Wales (and beyond), go to www.venturewales.org