



# WELCOME

Communication and inspiration. These are two words that thread through our skills and employment plan for the next three years.



A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Roberts'.

Here in North Wales, we truly have a rich diversity of employment opportunities. Yes, these are turbulent times. Our economy is recovering from Covid-19 and being buffeted by the same macro-economic challenges as other regions and countries. This said, significant opportunities do exist for our region to prosper in the years ahead. But, to do this, we need to be ambitious and clear in our thinking, and effective in our actions.

Amongst much else, we need to encourage employers to be ever more creative and flexible in terms of their employment offer. We need schools and colleges to be able to provide up-to-date information on career opportunities and the pathways into employment. We need to be able to inspire our next generation towards the opportunities that exist, as well as encourage those with valuable experience to return to the active workforce. We need to navigate the challenges of a vastly changed funding landscape, and effectively co-ordinate our skills and employment priorities across our six local authorities.

There's lots to do, but equally lots to be excited about. And the purpose of this three-year skills and employment plan is to provide the framework within which our regional priorities can be achieved. Together, we can do this.

**David Roberts,**  
**Chair of North Wales Regional Skill Partnership**



“ We need to inspire the next generation to the opportunities...”

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1.

# OVERVIEW OF THE SKILLS PLAN



## Overview of the Skills Plan

The North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023-2025 brings together an overview of the employment, recruitment and skills needs of local businesses and employers, together with the skills that individuals need to achieve their potential. In order to provide these skills for local businesses and local residents, the complex employment and skills landscape needs to be 'decluttered', co-ordinated effectively across the region and for employers, training providers and funders to work collaboratively.

### Purpose & Approach

The three-year Skills and Employment Plan has been developed by the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP), in **collaboration with businesses and employers** across the region, underpinned by a comprehensive review of **relevant intelligence and data** sources, set in the **wider strategic and policy context**, along with the current broader **economic and labour market context and skills landscape**.

This plan seeks to highlight the direction of travel of the skills needs of employers across our sectors. It spells out some of the challenges faced by employers, residents, sectors and training providers. It highlights opportunities to build on the existing co-ordination of employment and skills work in the region. Building on these opportunities and overcoming the challenges faced will require co-operation.

## Call to arms:

For the successful delivery of this plan and its priorities, we will require commitments from all partners. Specifically, we ask:



**Employers:** engage with this plan and with the broader work of the RSP; Increase your commitment to investing in the skills development of the current and future workforce;



**Individuals:** Use the support available and to assist you in making positive employment and skills choices;



**Partners and training providers:** Continue to work closely to respond to the changing needs of the North Wales economy and its businesses;



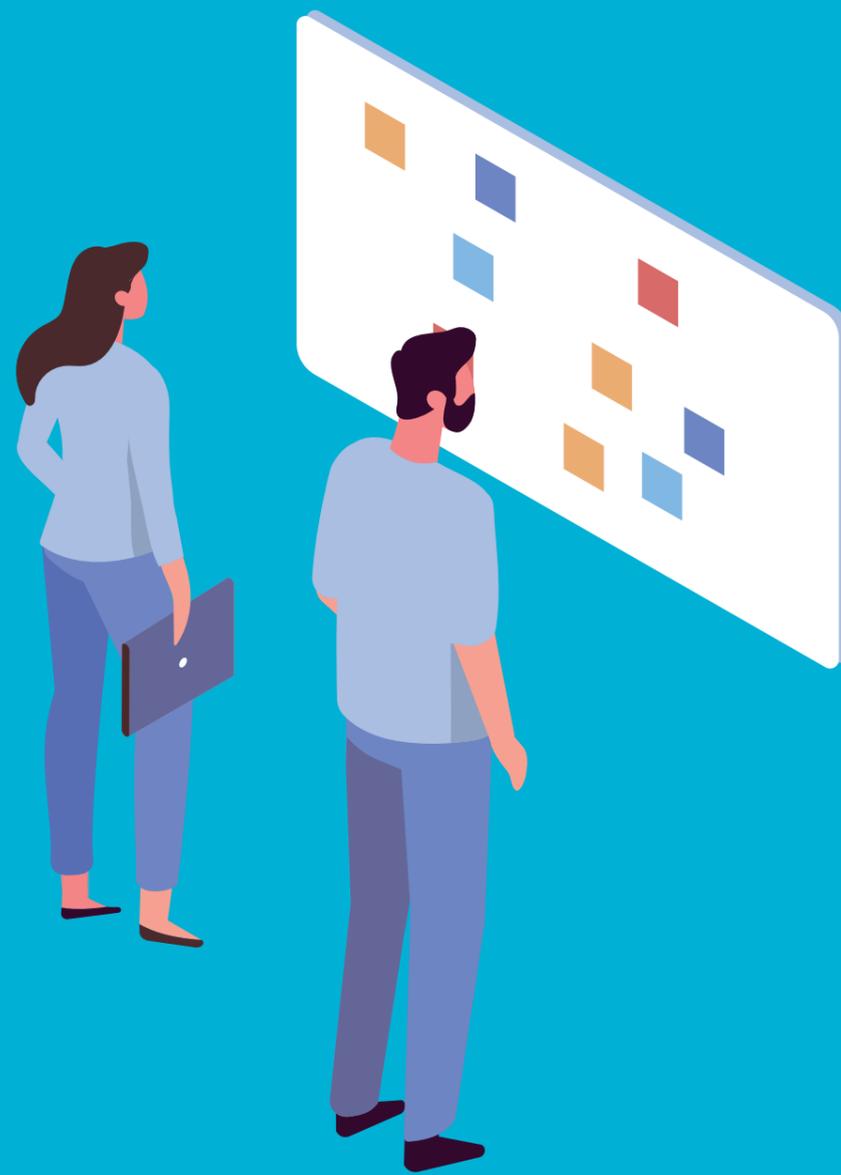
**Welsh Government, and delivery agencies:** Maintain an open and responsive dialogue, to work jointly with us and allow us to shape policy and programmes in order to ensure they address North Wales' skills needs.

## With who did we consult?

Over 400 businesses engaged	Focus groups, workshops and consultation sessions with employers, education and training providers
Employer Skills Survey (259 respondents)	
1-1 interviews	Intelligence and data sources

# 2.

## VISION AND OUTLINE OF OUR PLAN



### Our Vision

Our vision is that North Wales is a region where the people, and specifically their skills and abilities, are a key driver of economic development and well-being. Employers in the region are thriving, developing and growing because of the skills of the local population. Businesses want to move into the region because of the skills of the local population. At the same time, residents can achieve their ambitions and maximise their potential within North Wales.

### How will we do this?

To help to achieve the vision, the Regional Skills and Employment Plan for North Wales will:

- Help employers to **understand the potential of employees** in the region today and in the future
- Help the local population to **understand the employment opportunities** available to them in the region today and in the future
- **Inform and improve decision-making** at a policy and delivery level within the region (including education/training providers)
- **Facilitate co-operation and partnership working** between the key stakeholders



# Our North Wales Skills Blueprint

To underpin our Vision, and set within our regional context, we have identified 3 Priorities that are required to support skills and employment landscape over the next 3 years.

## ENABLING AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS

- Supporting employers to develop their employees
- Supporting employers to 'access the talent' (including promoting apprenticeships)
- Supporting access to 'work-ready' employees
- Changing perceptions of the North Wales region in respect of employment opportunities
- Raising awareness of and access to the support available

Enabling and empowering employers

Enabling and empowering individuals

How support is provided and making the connections

## HOW SUPPORT IS PROVIDED AND MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

- Bringing support providers and key stakeholders together
- Developing the support providers (e.g. mentoring the mentors)
- Understanding what works - collecting and sharing good practice
- Promoting streamlining and de-cluttering - avoiding duplication and encouraging simplicity
- Supporting the development of an agile approach that can respond to needs now and, in the future
- Challenging policy and promoting evidence-based policy and decision making

## ENABLING AND EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

- Developing people's skills to meet the needs of employers now and in the future
- Changing perceptions of the North Wales region in respect of employment opportunities
- Raising awareness of the support and options available at key life stages
- Engaging with the influencers of key decisions made by individuals



“ Understanding what works - collecting and sharing good practice...”

# 3.

# GOVERNANCE



## Our Role & Remit

- The North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) is one of four partnerships across Wales. Since 2014, the North Wales RSP has been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level and regional level.
- The main role of the RSP is to address skills shortages by influencing post-16 skills provision in North Wales based on labour market intelligence and employer-led insight. The RSP pools intelligence from across the labour market system, leverages existing networks and provides vital strategic advice, oversight and recommendations to decision-makers.
- The RSP members represent networks of partners, rather than solely their own organisation or institution. They act as conduits to wider networks of stakeholders and providers to the skills and employment ecosystem of North Wales, bringing their expertise and that of the networks that they represent, and providing the crucial link between local and national, and between policy development and implementation.



## RSP Board Membership



# 4.

## POLICY LANDSCAPE AND REGIONAL DRIVERS



## Welsh Government Strategy and Policy Drivers

The skills landscape at a regional level is profoundly affected by decisions made by Government. The following sets out some of the policy and economic context in which the plan is set, highlighting some of the policy areas that directly affect our skills system.



## Factors Influencing the North Wales Labour Market

<p><b>Technological Drivers</b></p> <p>Technology will cause work to change and shift – in terms of the supply chain, types of occupations, types of tasks performed by workers and employment statuses. Firms will need to transform their business processes and redefine the tasks and jobs their workers perform.</p>	<p><b>Covid-19</b></p> <p>Shortages of talent to fill particular role and loss of skilled staff. Employee expectations of labour market has changed as a result of COVID – flexibility and more sustainable and fair work.</p>	<p><b>Fair Work for All</b></p> <p>Improve pay, quality and availability of employment in Wales. This will also help to attract and retain people across sectors that are struggling with labour shortage.</p>	<p><b>Growing Inequality</b></p> <p>Issues surrounding income inequality, unemployment &amp; long-term inactivity, growing in-work poverty and related wage stagnation mean that certain groups of workers will be more likely to experience labour market disadvantage. These include women, young adults, older workers, people with disabilities and those from Black and other ethnic minorities.</p>	
<p><b>Climate Change</b></p> <p>Importance of education and skills for creating the net zero workforce. New economic activity will generate new occupations, while existing occupations will require 'greening' changes. Both will require new or updated skills, qualifications and training frameworks.</p>	<p><b>Cost of Living and Energy Crisis</b></p> <p>Increase in energy costs and fuel bills is having a huge impact on businesses, particularly SMEs in our region. It is also causing large numbers of recently-retired to return to the workplace. ONS analysis showed there was an increase in economic activity (people working or looking for work) of 116,000 among the over-50s in the past year. More than half the total increase was among men aged over 65.</p>		<p><b>Socio-Cultural Drivers</b></p> <p>Aging population structure: North Wales has a predicted increase in those over-65 alongside a decrease in the working age population.</p>	<p><b>Political Drivers</b></p> <p>Brexit and loss of European funding present challenges for labour markets, traders and skills system.</p>

## Regional Drivers

- North Wales contributes £15.4 billion to the UK economy each year
- The economy is diverse with key sectors being manufacturing, energy and Tourism as well as Public Sector jobs
- Areas of strength and opportunity, particularly in Advanced Manufacturing, Low Carbon Energy, Agri-food, Tourism and Digital sectors as well as Health and Social Care

### Maximising Opportunities in our Region:

- Expertise around energy generation, low carbon tech, offshore wind, Hydrogen and Nuclear
- Offshore Energy Alliance - North Wales coast Energy Cluster
- Strong networks of anchor companies in High Value Manufacturing including aerospace and food and AMRC Cymru
- Optimise North Wales in knowledge economy with partnerships and facilities such as the North West Nuclear Arc, Optic Glyndŵr and M-SParc
- Deeside Business Cluster
- Utilise the strong collaborative skills capability by building on opportunities that will come from developments such as North Wales Medical School
- Transport connectivity - Protecting and enhancing services to Ireland and cross-border to England and into mid Wales, ensuring access to public and active transport modes

### Enablers for Growth:

- North Wales Regional Economic Framework
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Levelling Up Funding
- North Wales Growth Deal

### Other potential large-scale job generating investments:

- Regional housing, regeneration projects and decarbonising housing stock
- Penygroes Decarbonisation Hub - develop skills to install and maintain

- photovoltaic, domestic heat pump and solar hot water systems
- 21st Century Schools Education - Over £480m being invested in the region's schools and colleges
- Growth Track 360
- North Wales Metro
- Low carbon and energy projects including offshore and onshore wind farms and solar
- Holyhead Gateway
- Space, aerospace and automotive (manufacturing, R&D and key locations 21 North Wales Regional Economic Framework including Deeside / Wrexham cluster, Llanbedr and Valley)

### North Wales Growth Deal

- Growth Deal aims to build a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy in North Wales, by creating over 3,800 high value jobs and £1 billion total Investment

### High growth sectors to drive productivity in the region

- Agri-food and Tourism
- Innovation in High Value Manufacturing
- Low Carbon Energy

### Enabling sectors that address barriers to economic growth:

- Digital
- Land and Property

### Developing skills base underpins all Growth Deal Investment:

Create and develop a better skilled workforce: supporting skills and training initiatives and targeted interventions in high value sectors. Ensuring that the skills are within the Region to support the Growth Deal projects.



# 5.

# OUR REGION: NORTH WALES LABOUR MARKET OVERVIEW



## Population

701,149 (2021)

### Age of Population:

45% over 50 years old with the number of adults aged 65 and over projected to grow by 17% by 2025.

Trends towards an ageing population and a likely increase in the economically inactive through retirement, age-related ill health and caring responsibilities.

### Population Growth:

+6,323 in growth over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by +4,494 over the next 5 years.



## GVA

North Wales' GVA value was £15.4 billion in 2020.



## Business Base, Enterprise and Innovation

83.64% of North Wales is reliant on micro and small businesses, but there is a barrier to grow these beyond 50 employees.



## Jobs and skills

### Hard to Fill Occupations:

- Skilled trades – electricians, plumbers, welders
- Engineers
- Care staff, childcare workers, health care workers
- A range of hospitality roles
- Data analysts, IT occupations
- Project management

### Top Specialised Skills (Job Vacancies Data, September 2022):

- Nursing
- Audit
- Marketing
- Mental Health
- Finance

### Top Common Skills (September 2022):

- Communication
- Customer care
- Management
- Welsh language

## Economy

### Unemployment and economic inactivity:

Unemployment rates have remained consistently lower in North Wales than the rest of Wales and the UK at 3.19%. North Wales' economic inactivity rate is 23.34% below Wales and UK average, but it is not consistent across the region and has remained static for many years, which presents a challenge.



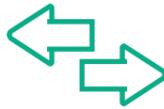
### Regional Average Earnings:

- **£24.8k** Average wage per job (2021).
- Wages not consistent across the region or sectors of the economy.
- Regional average wages per job are **£5.6k** below the national average wages of **£30.4k** per job.

### Cross Border Economy:

- Proximity to Liverpool, Manchester and Northern Powerhouse – people will travel up to **90 minutes** to access well paid employment.
- There are challenges around differences in provision and funding regulations restricting study options for apprentices.

## Travel to Work Area



- Estimated **80%** of working age population reside within the cross-border area.
- **28,600** people travel from North Wales to England.
- **32,400** people travel from England to North Wales.

## Welsh Speakers:



**194,293** Welsh speakers in the region (2021)  
**down by 5%** since 2011.

The highest percentages of Welsh speakers can be found in Gwynedd (**64.3%**) and the Isle of Anglesey (**55.8%**).

## Employment and Wages



- **284,220 Total regional employment** - Jobs projected to grow by **4,764** over the next 5 years.
- **76.3%** Employment rate.
- **77%** of employment in North Wales falls within priority sectors.
- Jobs decreased by **189** over the last 5 years but are projected to grow by **4,764** over the next 5 years.
- **75%** of working age population are in full time employment, **25%** in part time employment, and **11.87%** are self employed.

### Gender Split on Employment:

- **89%** of males in full time employment / **11%** in part time employment.
- **61%** of females in full time employment / **39%** in part time employment.

## Qualifications



### Working Age Population with No / High Qualifications:

**8%** of people in the region have no qualifications, better than the Wales average. **36.3%** of working age population in the region have a level 4+ qualification, lower than Wales' average (37.8%). This is not distributed evenly across the region.

Cymraeg



“ There are 194,293  
Welsh speakers in  
the region...”

# 6.

## OUR EMPLOYERS SKILLS DEMAND: ENABLING AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS



### Current situation:

- The region is facing significant challenges due to the combined challenges and the continued impacts of COVID-19, the UK exiting the EU and the current cost of living/energy crisis.
- Recruitment and retention issues facing all sectors and replacement demand as workforce is ageing
- Marked shift in the labour market. creating labour shortages and general increase in mobility across sectors and occupations.
- The need to build an inclusive talent pipeline of people with the attributes and skills required for our employers has hampered these challenges.
- Need to increase basic and advanced digital skills abilities across all sectors.

### What do we need to do?

- Support employers to develop their employees.
- Support employers to access the talent, including promoting Apprenticeships.
- Support access to work-ready employees.
- Change the perception of North Wales.
- Raise awareness of access to support available.

### How are we going to do it?

- Encourage employers to invest in their brand, and wider 'North Wales' brand, to attract the region's workforce by promoting opportunities and progression routes into sectors.
- Support employers to extend their reach to a wider group of North Wales residents and other local talent pools and diversify their workforce in light of changing demographics and ageing workforce by promoting fair work practices.
- Increase employer awareness and access to support available to employers via skills and employment programmes via campaigns, roadshows and expos.
- The 'fit' between local employer skills and recruitment needs and the courses/ training/ qualifications that the local and national training providers deliver.
- The links between local employers and young people to inspire and inform them about local career opportunities and help them make informed decisions about jobs and careers.
- Promotion of the benefits from Apprenticeships and work based learning opportunities, including Shared Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships.
- The 'fit' between local employer skills and recruitment needs and the courses/ training/ qualifications that the local and national training providers deliver.

# Employer Skills Challenges at a Glance

## Recruitment and shortage of talent to fill particular roles

- Overall skills shortages with **37%** of vacancies hard to fill.
- Employers are currently reporting acute labour supply shortages and unfilled vacancies across most of the region and sectors.
- With skills in short supply, many employers find the recruitment process taking longer and those candidates within demand skill sets and experience are able to leverage higher salaries.
- Loss of skilled staff has been a particular issue for the Manufacturing sector in the region.
- With fewer unemployed people chasing each vacancy, employers will have to find different ways to find and keep staff including increased wages and other benefits such as flexible and sustainable work.

## Skills and Occupation Demands

- **70%** of employers in the region are facing skills challenges with skilled trades, associate and technical occupations and professional occupations in demand.
- Higher level and technical resident skills needed in growth sectors.
- Employability/ work ready skills such as problem solving, communication, digital, leadership & management are sought.
- Staff retention is an issue for employers in certain sectors such as health & social care, advanced manufacturing and construction sectors.
- Future Skills Needs: Top five future skills needs noted by employers across all sectors were renewable energy, project management, digital, Welsh language and specialist engineering skills.
- Salary competitiveness is a challenge in Health & Social Care, Tourism and Hospitality, Advanced Manufacturing, Digital and Construction.
- The majority of employers require all levels of digital skills but recruitment and retention of the right skill level is challenging.
- A number of employers across many sectors struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language skills.

## Occupational Demands

According to Working Futures forecasts, North Wales will need the following key roles annually, up to 2027:

- **1,100** Senior managers, directors, and proprietors (experienced individuals)
- **830** Health professionals (NQF 3+)
- **710** Teaching professionals (NQF 5+)
- **930** Business, media, public sector professionals / associate professionals (NQF 4+)
- **910** Administrative occupations (NQF 2+)
- **1,200** Caring personal service occupations (NQF 2+)
- **1,200** Elementary administration occupations (NQF 1+)

## Transferable and 'work ready' Skills

- Adaptability and ability to learn, together with transferable skills are priorities for many employers who want their workforces to be ready for what the future holds.
- Skills such as emotional intelligence, critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, problem solving are in high demand.
- Strong foundation skills can help support a resilient, agile workforce, able to respond to rapid changes in the workplace.

## In company training

- **'Grow your own'** - Upskilling & re-skilling of current workforce is especially important for employers across all sectors due to labour shortage difficulty. This is not only to broaden the range of candidates that employers can attract, but it also addresses the skills gaps by training existing staff.
- **Leadership and Management skills** are needed to help our SMEs to face the challenges that lie ahead in a turbulent economy.
- Incentives are needed to encourage firms to invest in training for their own employees to help smaller firms retain employees and access specific skills needs.

## Sector Snapshot Skills Demands

- Over the past two years North Wales' sectors have shown resilience within a whirlwind of change. Future business will be in the front line of new arrangements for international trade, movement of people, new Net Zero requirements, and ongoing shifts in workers' and customers' behaviour due to COVID-19, all the while adjusting to demographic and technological change
- This Plan recognises that all sectors have a key role in the development of an effective and efficient economy. This includes sectors from the foundational economy as well as those that may provide the high-value employment that all regions need. No sector of the economy is therefore excluded
- Despite this, it is recognised that there is a long term need to prioritise some sectors, especially when working with the Welsh Government to achieve national priorities including the focus on priority sectors

## Sectors in high demand until 2025

- Health & Social Care
- Creative & Digital
- Financial & Professional

## Sectors showing strong growth until 2025

- Energy & Environment
- Tourism & Hospitality
- High Value Manufacturing
- Food and Farming



# Energy and Environment



### GROWTH

2021 - 2027:

**-3.9%**

### WORKFORCE PROFILE

16 - 24 years	<b>4.3%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>65.7%</b>
50+	<b>30%</b>

**67%**

**28.3%**

### CHALLENGES

- Skills shortages are causing recruitment problems in the energy sector and technical skills are in demand
- Skills shortages are in engineering and technicians' occupations with STEM qualifications as well as quantity surveyors, data scientists, cyber security and project management expert roles
- Challenges of defining skills needs for net zero transition

### OCCUPATIONS

**In demand**

- Project Management for Green Projects
- Data Scientists
- Quantity Surveyors
- Advanced Engineering roles
- Sustainable and Carbon Footprint Evaluators
- EHS Coordinators
- Energy Sufficiency Assessors
- Renewable Energy roles
- Health Physics (Nuclear)
- Health Physics Monitor (Nuclear)

### THINGS TO FOCUS ON

- Increase STEM learners, including diversifying the workforce and encouraging more females to enter
- Upskill current workforce with new technology
- Raise awareness of career opportunities and provide support with identifying suitable transferable skills
- Work with 'renewable energy clusters' to understand skills needs and develop new training opportunities for Further Education and work-based learning

# Construction



### GROWTH

2021 - 2027:

**1.1%**

### WORKFORCE PROFILE

16 - 24 years	<b>12.5%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>50.5%</b>
50+	<b>37%</b>

**89.2%**

**10.1%**

### CHALLENGES

- Skills gaps in professional occupations within the sector
- Retaining apprentices across all levels
- New industry qualifications requirements will mean a change to current recruitment practices
- Develop qualifications to support Retrofit

### OCCUPATIONS

<p><b>In demand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Engineers</li> <li>Architects</li> <li>Logistics</li> <li>Plasterers</li> <li>Plumbers</li> <li>Project Managers</li> <li>Retrofit Coordinators</li> <li>Retrofit Tradespeople</li> <li>Retrofit Assessors</li> <li>PAS2035 Surveyors</li> </ul>	<p><b>In decline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process, Plant and Machine Operative</li> </ul>
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### THINGS TO FOCUS ON

- Increase the number of females entering the sector
- Update the sector perception and increase awareness of different career opportunities
- Develop clear pathways into occupations gaps through education & training and include progression routes
- Promote apprenticeship opportunities for young entrants
- Promote the entry requirements for new apprenticeships with employers, individuals and schools

# Advanced Manufacturing



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

**- 6.2%**



**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	<b>8.4%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>57.7%</b>
50+	<b>33.9%</b>

  
**77.6%**

  
**22.4%**

**CHALLENGES**

- Large portion of the workforce require development in higher level specialist skills
- Perception of the industry as an apprenticeship route is low
- Gender Imbalance
- Deliver skills to support transition to low carbon manufacturing
- Communication and Digital Skills level of the workforce is lacking



**OCCUPATIONS**

**In demand**

- Smart Manufacturing
- Advanced Engineering
- Project Management
- Renewable Energy Occupations
- Maintenance Technicians
- Maintenance Engineers
- Skilled Trades Occupations
- Professional Occupations
- Associate Professional and Technical Occupations

**In decline**

- Textiles, Printing and other Skilled Trades
- Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades



**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Increase the number of females choosing a career path in the sector
- Work to ensure that the apprenticeship frameworks (across all levels) is relevant and fit for purpose
- Raise awareness of the apprenticeship pathway as a career progression route
- Upskill current workforce and increase engagement with schools and colleges to create a pipeline of talent with a focus on succession planning
- Support the developments of new qualifications to support decarbonisation

# Creative and Digital



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

**-7.5%**



**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	<b>8.2%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>56.4%</b>
50+	<b>35.4%</b>

  
**61.1%**

  
**38.3%**

**CHALLENGES**

- Recruitment and retention of skilled individuals is a challenge across the sector
- Developing staff is challenging due to rapid change in technology
- Soft skills that employers are looking for is lacking in new entrants to the workforce



**OCCUPATIONS**

**In demand**

- Associate Professional and Technical Occupations
- Professional Occupations
- Skilled Trades Occupations
- Advanced Digital Roles
- Cyber Security Engineers
- Sound Engineers
- Game Developers
- Digital Competence Tutors
- Script Writers
- Telecom Engineers



**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Introduce more meaningful work experience/ placement and internship opportunities and support employers to be able to offer these opportunities
- Work with education institutions and training providers to ensure soft skills as well as technical skills that employers need are embedded into the curriculum
- Increase the number of females entering digital jobs
- Raise awareness of the provision available to support individuals with upskilling

# Tourism and Hospitality



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

-2.5%

**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	25.5%
25 - 49 years	45.7%
50+	29.1%

59%

41%

**CHALLENGES**

- Recruitment and retention of staff, sector is not seen as an attractive long-term career opportunity
- Huge skills gaps across all roles
- People leaving the sector for better pay elsewhere

**OCCUPATIONS**

**In demand**

- All hospitality roles
- Event Management
- Supervisors
- Managers
- Social Media & Digital Marketing

**In decline**

- Leisure Travel and related Personal Service occupations

**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Raise profile of the sector as a long-term career option and develop clear progression pathways
- Encourage employers to invest in the upskilling of their workforce to enable staff retention
- Promote the value of apprenticeship opportunities

# Health and Social Care



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

-8.3%

**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	8%
25 - 49 years	57.1%
50+	34.9%

31%

68.3%

**CHALLENGES**

- Major issues with recruitment and staff retention, including apprentices
- Cost of living crisis, fuel costs and wages offered in the sector means that many have left the sector
- Increasing demand for Welsh language skills and digital skills, especially in the care sector
- Sector not seen as a high value career route compared to other sectors
- Digital literacy skills
- Welsh language skills

**OCCUPATIONS**

**In demand**

- Health Care Assistants
- Social Care Assistants
- Dentists and Dental Nurses
- Community Care staff
- Occupational Therapists
- Domiciliary Care Staff
- Optometrists

**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Develop clear education and training pathways into occupations of need including progression routes and focus on the changing perceptions of the sector
- Support the sector with recruitment and retention of staff (including apprentices)
- Developing a pledge for fair work and pay
- Increase digital literacy and digital skills capabilities of social care workforce
- Increase and update Welsh language skills of the workforce

# Food and Farming



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

**0.4%**

**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	<b>4.4%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>38.2%</b>
50+	<b>57.4%</b>

**72.3%**

**26.2%**

**CHALLENGES**

- Changing of the Basic Payment Scheme
- Digitalisation of record keeping systems
- Food production industry is not seen as a long-term career opportunity and struggle with recruitment
- Lack of HGV drivers

**OCCUPATIONS**

**In demand**

- Food Production and Processing (specifically meat)
- Butchers
- Crop Harvesting
- Farm Workers
- HGV Drivers

**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Identify opportunities to upskill current workforce in the development of new technologies and digital skills
- Promote the wider career opportunities within the sector

# Financial and Professional



**GROWTH**  
2021 - 2027:

**-7.5%**

**WORKFORCE PROFILE**

16 - 24 years	<b>6.5%</b>
25 - 49 years	<b>57%</b>
50+	<b>36.5%</b>

**54.4%**

**45.5%**

**CHALLENGES**

- Lack of skilled talent pipeline
- Developing staff in an environment with rapidly changing technology
- Huge skills gaps and shortages across the sector, with higher level skills in particular

**OCCUPATIONS**

<p><b>In demand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Bookkeeping</li> <li>· Accountants</li> <li>· Administrators</li> <li>· Managers</li> <li>· IT Technicians</li> <li>· Payroll</li> <li>· HR Officers and Managers</li> </ul>	<p><b>In decline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Secretarial and related occupations</li> <li>· Sales occupations</li> </ul>
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**THINGS TO FOCUS ON**

- Increase supply of higher-level skills to meet demand
- Raise awareness of the provision available within the region to upskill, train and retrain the workforce
- Develop occupational profiles to demonstrate career progressions

# Public Sector



## CHALLENGES

- Sector perception is poor
- Recruitment is challenging with some vacancies being re-advertised more than twice
- Retention of staff is an issue, people leaving the sector for better pay elsewhere
- Lack of talent pipeline
- Economic/financial challenges due to reduced funding



## OCCUPATIONS

### In demand

- Health & Social Care related occupations
- Construction related occupations
- Catering Staff
- Environmental Officers
- IT related occupations
- Retrofit Tradespeople
- Civil Engineers
- Surveyors
- Managers

### In decline

- Protective Service Occupations



## THINGS TO FOCUS ON

- Raise awareness of cross-sector occupations available within certain organisations and develop clear pathways into jobs including progression routes through education and training
- Re-build and transform the image of working in the public sector
- Support the sector to develop a pipeline of talent, including upskilling the existing workforce
- Support the development of new apprenticeship frameworks/ pathways where there is evidenced demand, with a focus on L3+ apprenticeships, including degree apprenticeships
- Support the increase in demand for Welsh language skills
- Support the sector to increase funded opportunities to upskill the current workforce



## Levering North Wales' Economy to deliver Net Zero

- Current acceleration of demand around sustainable business practice and drive to net zero is in those growth technologies around construction sustainability innovation, such as energy efficiency and design as well as manufacturing and fitting new technologies. **Ensuring that the region's workforce has the necessary skills to make this transition is crucial.**
- Immediate skills gaps in specific Low Carbon Construction and Retrofit Construction such as Retrofit Coordinators, Retrofit Assessors, Surveying, Design and Energy Evaluation.
- **43%** of respondents in our Employer Skills Survey (May 2022) said that they anticipate some new job roles and/or skills within their organisation over the next three years to be considered as 'green jobs' or are aligned to the net zero agenda.
- The region is currently developing a Net Zero Skills framework to better understand the skill gap that will emerge within the Low Carbon Energy sector to ensure that we capitalise on the opportunities to reskill the workforce.

“The region is currently developing a Net Zero Skills framework”

## What do we need to do?

- Reinforce the existing promotion of STEM skills and closely link to engineering-related craft and undergraduate courses.
- Clearer progression route from further education to higher education.
- Use upskilling and re-skilling programmes such as Personal Learning Accounts on skills required by employers.
- Improved offer of Level 4 and 5 modules specific to low carbon sectors e.g. offshore engineering will provide bite-sized and sector-focused progression.
- Development of micro-credentials for Net Zero Skills nationally.



## Digital Skills

- While digital skills have increased in demand over the last 3 years, it is clear that COVID-19 has driven digital skills forward as a universally core skill.
- Digital transformation which has exposed skills gaps in all areas of digital skills, but particularly in advanced areas such as coding, social digital marketing and cyber security.
- Emergence of specialist skill areas, such as cyber, AI, geospatial data, IT analytics and data analysis. **Including STEM subjects for longer, incorporating these skills alongside regular studies, and investing earlier in digital skills in the education system could support these skills needs and reduce the unattractiveness of STEM courses to many.**
- **70%** of employers surveyed are currently experiencing skills challenges. These challenges include computer literacy, basic and advanced IT skills and specialist IT skills. Data Science is a notable gap.
- Employers across all sectors are planning to recruit over the next 12 months. Many reported that they will need to recruit into skilled occupations, including Data Analysts, Software Developers, IT Support, Robotics, AI Specialists, IT Networking, Data Processor and Desktop Support roles.
- **48%** of employers said that they struggle to recruit and/or retain a workforce with the right level of digital skills.

## What do we need to do?

- Develop example pathways to highlight the potential different routes through training and education to achieve a career requiring advanced digital skills.
- Reinforce the idea that employers need to invest in their employees by supporting them to upskill in areas where their skills may be lacking through short courses such as Personal Learning Accounts, or longer-term training through higher level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships.
- Improve awareness of available provision in digital skills.
- Improve communication between training providers and employers to ensure the correct provision is available to meet industry demand.



# 7.

## OUR PEOPLE & SKILLS SUPPLY: ENABLING AND EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS



### Current situation

- Young-people between 16-24 and older workers over 50 have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- There is a challenge around lack of understanding on different learning pathways from pre-16 to post-16, and how to help older workers to reskill or re-engage with the labour market.
- In-work progression is a challenge with a growing need to provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities to allow people to progress in the labour market.
- Relatively highly skilled resident population, with high levels of out-commuting due to low awareness of high-value career opportunities within the region.
- Graduate retention in the region is an issue.
- Growing demand in Health and Social Care professions.
- Replacement demand opportunities in a range of sectors, occupations and skill levels.
- The pandemic has changed individuals' views on employment and the North Wales labour market has seen an increase in career switching/sector hopping.
- Investment in the region via growth programmes such as North Wales Growth Deal leading to sustainable, well paid careers.

### What do we need to do?

- Develop people's skills to meet needs of employers now and in the future
- Change perceptions of North Wales in respect of employment opportunities
- Raise awareness of support and options available at key life stages
- Engaging with the influencers of key decisions made by individuals

### How are we going to do it?

- Developing the talent pipeline within and from education, schools, apprenticeships, FE and HE; and empower education leavers to positively respond to the need of North Wales' employers.
- Ensuring that all individuals know their options when it comes to their career path and make sure that people are connected to the opportunities that living in North Wales presents by producing quality labour market information.
- Attracting and retaining a high-quality workforce in North Wales, focusing on our local population and selling North Wales as a great place to live and work.
- Engagement into work, and promoting routes into sustainable jobs / careers for individuals.
- Promoting re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities for current workforce across our sectors and expanding support for career switchers.
- Develop a strong and clear pathway for NEET, veterans, ex-offenders, refugees, those recovering from long term health conditions and over 50's to upskill, re-skill and re-enter the workforce are required.
- Promoting work experience opportunities for pre-16 and post-16 individuals.
- Incentivising the people of North Wales of the benefits of lifelong learning.
- Promote **Enterprise and Innovation skills** across all stages of the employment pathway.

# Employment Pathways for Individuals



“ There is a need to educate the influencers of young people, such as parents and teachers...”

## Workforce Characteristics

### Young workers- 16-25-year-old

- Work/ life balance
- Good pay & progression
- Focus on wellbeing
- Flexibility
- Greater social and environmental responsibilities – diversity, inclusion & climate change are important

### Older workers (50+)

In a tight labour market, older workers who would consider returning to work for the right job are a potential source of untapped talent:

- Flexible hours
- Ability to work remotely
- Job that fits around caring responsibilities

### Core skills across the whole employment cycle (Work-ready/ Employability Skills):

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Problem-solving
- Computer / IT skills
- Organisation
- Leadership
- Hard work and dedication
- Creativity
- Numeracy
- Reliability

## Skills Supply

### Pre-16 and Schools

- The need to inspire children and young people into careers across all sectors of the economy
- We have **347** Primary schools and **54** Secondary Schools across the region
- Engagement of employers with 'Qualified for the Future' and help reshape the qualifications landscape to support the New Curriculum for Wales
- The need to educate the influencers of young people, such as parents and teachers, about career pathways and opportunities
- Work experience opportunities are lacking across all sectors for school age individuals
- The need to focus on employability / work ready and transferable skills is growing as we develop people into the workforce ensuring that young people demonstrate skills: Creative, resilient, team-working, communication, enterprise

## Post-16

### 2 Further Education Colleges were involved in shaping and developing this Plan

- FE has been responsive and resilient during the pandemic.
- General agreement on some of the challenges and issues including; perception of sectors, Net Zero skills, digital skills, Welsh language skills.
- Need to scale up engagement with schools to inspire and inform young people about their career paths and career opportunities with the region.
- Both FE colleges have aligned their provision with growth across sectors in North Wales in terms of full-time provision and continue to expand their offers, with particular growth in provision for Engineering and Manufacturing, Health & Social Care and Construction.
- FEIs are also expanding their offer in terms of Net Zero and digital skills. As new technology such as hydrogen and alternative responses to Net Zero develops, our FE will consider their existing curriculum and refresh their offer in line with employer needs.

### Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

- Continues to expand facilities including The Centre for Infrastructure Skills and Technology (CIST) which is a high-quality Infrastructure skills training destination, with projects specifically assisting to help manage the decarbonisation of housing stock.
- RWE National Apprenticeship Hub.
- Plans for multi million investment on Glynllifon Site via North Wales Growth Deal.
- Work started on a State-of-the-Art Engineering and Renewable Energy Centre in Rhyl.

### Coleg Cambria

- Having recently undergone a **£20m** redevelopment, Yale boasts specialist teaching facilities, science laboratories, computer suites and art studios.
- Commercial facilities include the brand new lâl Restaurant, lâl Flowers and recently renovated Salon lâl.
- Business School offering professional development courses, degree level courses and employer training based at their Northop campus.
- University Centre offering a wide range of degree programmes with partner universities.
- Medru – The Skills Factory in partnership with Bangor University will give businesses and students the opportunity to discover more about Industry 4.0 (engineering, construction, advanced manufacturing and digital) from level 2 – the fourth industrial revolution – and Smart Technology.

### Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning

- Across all programmes in North Wales in 2020/21 (latest year with complete data), there were **3,765** enrolled on WBL programmes.
- There is an increase in Level 3 and Level 4+ apprenticeship starts.
- Stark gender differences on apprenticeship programmes e.g., females entering Engineering and Construction very low compared to Health and Social Care, Business Administration and Management.
- Higher apprenticeships play a vital role by allowing workers to gain practical workplace experience as part of their employment whilst studying. They enable apprentices to enter the labour market immediately or provide employees with a progression route.
- Degree Apprenticeships in Wales are currently offered in Digital and Engineering sectors. In our region, there is a broad offer in these two sectors. Wrexham Glyndwr University also offering a Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Degree Apprenticeship.
- There is a strong need to expand the current Degree Apprenticeships offer to include other areas of need in the region such as Health and Social Care, Construction, Low Carbon/ Green Energy and Leadership and Management.

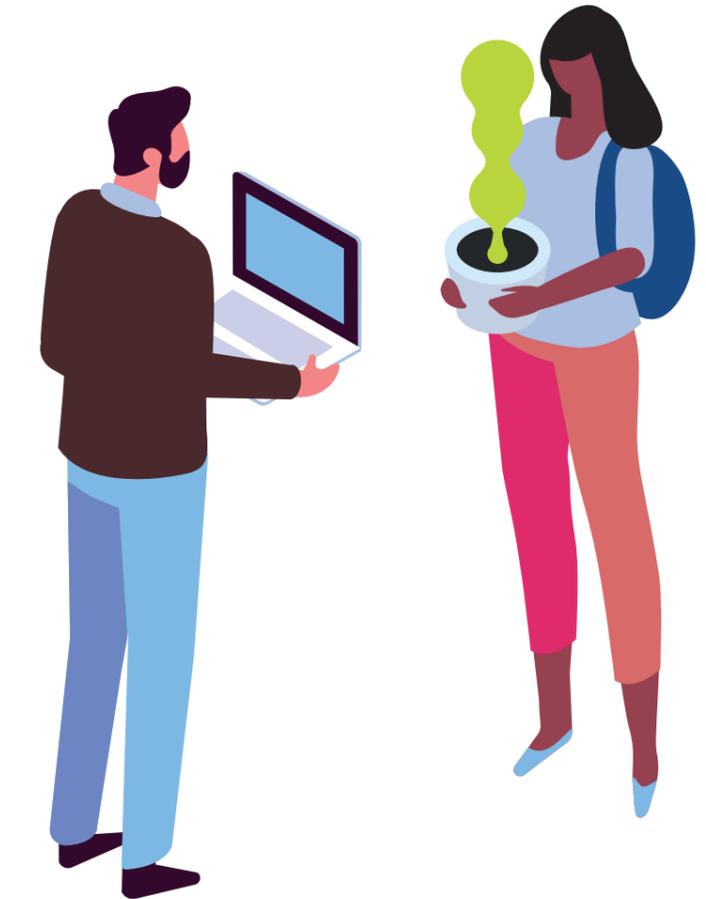
## Higher Education Institutions

Bangor University  
Wrexham Glyndwr University  
The Open University in Wales

- Regional, national and international roles in meeting current and future skills demands
- Key to helping sustain growth of high performing sectors
- Research collaborations and industrial partnerships across Wales and beyond
- Bangor University and Glyndwr University are anchor institutions in our region
- Bangor University has growing specialism in Nuclear and Low Carbon energy research and development
- Glyndwr University has a particular specialism in harnessing optic and photonic technologies

## Adult Community Learning

Welsh Government funds each local authority through a community learning grant and within the region there are three Adult Community Learning partnerships – Flintshire and Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn. Each partnership works collaboratively and with wider partners to ensure individual, local and regional priorities are supported.



“ There is an increase in Level 3 and Level 4+ apprenticeship starts.”

## National Conversation Survey Wales Omnibus finding, 2022:

- **49%** of 16-24-year olds 'do not feel well-prepared to do the course or get the job they want'.
- **61%** of these were male compared to **36%** female.



“The lack of a clear career path into occupations and sectors in the region is a major challenge...”

## Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

- Careers Wales play a crucial role in providing impartial careers information and guidance to young people and adults and supporting parents and key influencers such as teachers.
- Children's perceptions about certain jobs and careers are formed at a young age, with latest research showing that children will start forming their ideas about careers at 7 years old.
- Importance of Careers and Work-Related Experience (CWRE) is embedded in New Curriculum for Wales. Employers in the region are eager to engage with schools and inspire young people into careers paths and opportunities across all sectors.
- According to Careers Wales Career Check Survey 2021 only 11% of year 10 pupils indicated the desire to undertake an apprenticeship after year 11, this option was 71% more popular with males than females.
- Key barrier for young people was not knowing what their education, training and employment pathway could look like, particularly **longer-term**, (National Conversation Young People Survey – Wales, 2022).
- Lack of a clear career path into occupations and sectors in the region is a major challenge cited by young people.

## Claimants, Economically Inactive and Unemployed

- NEET figures (Not in Education, Employment and Training) in North Wales have decreased but are expected to rise as European funded projects come to an end.
- North Wales' economic inactivity rate is 23.3%, below Wales and UK average, but it is not consistent across the region.
- A higher number of claimants than pre COVID, with young people, females and some geographies disproportionately impacted, which is affecting economic activity.
- A set of complex barriers face economically inactive and unemployed people which prevent them from accessing skills and employment opportunities.
- North Wales Employability Pathway aims to ensure that support is given to individuals at every stage of their journey back into work from Pre-Employment to In-Work support.
- The region needs to meet the challenges of competing programmes and ensure effective referral to the right programme for an individual to ensure a clear customer journey.
- Existing local employment support programmes have been funded through a combination of Welsh Government, DWP, European Funding (ESF) and Lottery funding. With the loss of European Funding and the introduction of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), there are clear challenges and opportunities.

## The Employability Pathway

ENGAGEMENT  
CONFIDENCE BUILDING

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT  
DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS

DEVELOPING WORK EXPERIENCE

LABOUR MARKET ENTRY

IN-WORK SKILLS TO ENABLE PROGRESSION

# 8.

## OUR SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS AND INDIVIDUALS: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS AND JOINING THE DOTS



In order to make best use of limited resources in the region all skills, training and employment support and delivery organisations need to work collaboratively and prioritise key workstreams around obtaining and sharing skills intelligence, co-ordinating their work and seeking and securing investment in the region.

**It is recognised that a wide range of activities that are relevant to the priorities of the RSP are delivered by a range of organisations across North Wales.**

**These activities will not be duplicated by the RSP. Rather, the focus is on 'joining the dots' and facilitating the sharing of information to ensure that the activities that are taking place are as effective and efficient as possible.**

### What do we need to do?

- Bring support providers and key stakeholders together.
- Develop the support providers (e.g. mentoring the mentors).
- Understanding what works - collecting and sharing good practice.
- Promote streamlining and de-cluttering - avoiding duplication and encouraging simplicity.
- Supporting the development of an agile approach that can respond to needs now and, in the future.
- Challenging policy and promoting evidence-based policy and decision making.

### How are we going to do it?

- 1** Create networks (including sharing of resources) of support providers across the region.
- 2** Promote activities that are taking place within the network so that opportunities can be shared/fully-utilised.
- 3** Continue to engage with local employers (including public and third sector) via networks, etc. and share their views with the networks of support providers.



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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