



Introduction

We hope you are keeping well and enjoyed a restful summer. This is our autumn 2024 edition of the seasonal Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership (CCRSP) newsletter.

Looking back at the previous quarter we are happy to note that the Southeast Wales regional economy is still experiencing growth, confidence, and activity. Global warfare still continues to worry us all in terms of both humanitarian and financial issues.

Businesses in the region are still faced with challenges in recruiting competent and qualified staff. Tackling skills gaps and shortages remains a top priority as we transition from autumn into the winter.

We're thrilled with the progress made on our 'Prosperity through Partnership' Employment and Skills Plan since its launch two years ago. Through our board and employer-led cluster groups, we're taking action to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities identified by industry.

After a period of transition, we are also pleased to be able to congratulate Eluned Morgan in her appointment as First Minister of Wales. We are delighted to see the new cabinet take shape and we urge members to embrace the skills agenda. Naturally, we very much look forward to working with Jack Sargeant MS in his role as Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership.

The aim of this update is to inform you about the most recent developments related to skills across the Cardiff Capital Region. We really hope you find the information useful.

Finally, on behalf of the Employment and Skills Board and the project management team, we hope you have a successful Autumn period.

Leigh Hughes,
Chair of the CCRSP Employment and Skills Board



Launch of MEDR



A significant milestone for Medr was achieved in August as they became operational, taking on the majority of their legal responsibilities.

In Wales, Medr is now responsible for funding and regulating the tertiary education sector, including further education (FE), higher education (HE), research and innovation, apprenticeships, adult community learning, and local authority-maintained school sixth forms.

Medr's responsibilities include funding, monitoring tertiary education providers, promoting improvement and enabling sustainable excellence. It is also responsible for prioritising learner interests, responding to employers and economy needs, and collaborating to increase Welsh medium tertiary opportunities.

Although launched in August, Medr will continue to evolve over the following months and the team remain committed to working with all to ensure a smooth transition.

As a new organisation Medr was fortunate to inherit a wealth of resources and colleagues with experience and expertise transferred from HEFCW and the Welsh Government.

Medr are in the process of developing their [strategic plan](#) - outlining how they are committed to fulfilling their legislative responsibilities and the strategic goals of the Welsh Government. Medr will be consulting on the first draft of the plan and documents will be available to access on the Medr website.

The CCRSP is looking forward to working with both Medr and Welsh Government as we continue to deliver against our core programme of work. Our mutual aim is to compliment and not duplicate!

We encourage readers to stay up to date by visiting the live [Medr website](#).

HiVE launch will revolutionise engineering education in Blaenau Gwent.



Blaenau Gwent, a region with a rich history of industrial innovation, is soon to become home to HiVE - a groundbreaking **High Value Engineering** campus.

Developed in partnership with local employers, Coleg Gwent, and funded by both the Welsh and UK Governments, HiVE is set to fulfil the region's need for future-ready skills in advanced manufacturing, engineering and emerging technologies.

HiVE's was established as part of a larger strategy to address current and future skills gaps across Wales.

Blaenau Gwent has experienced growing demand for specialised skills in advanced manufacturing - particularly as the local industry raised concerns about the lack of facilities to train apprentices or upskill the workforce.

HiVE aims to meet these challenges head-on by offering world-class engineering education and state-of-the-art training, all while attracting inward investment and fostering innovation.

The journey of HiVE

Blaenau Gwent Council acquired the Monwell factory, which served as the foundation for HiVE's development. Local Authorities, Coleg Gwent,

industry leaders, and the government established a multi-sector partnership to address future skills needs.

Key funding milestones include a £3 million award from the Welsh Government's Tech Valleys Programme, followed by an additional £9.6 million from the UK Government.

With over £3 million earmarked for cutting-edge equipment, HiVE will offer unparalleled training facilities for students and apprentices, solidifying its place as a vital educational hub.

HiVEs vision and aims

HiVEs goals extend beyond conventional education. It will be the first fully integrated *Centre of Excellence for Industry 4.0* in the UK, boasting a net-zero carbon footprint and Coleg Gwent's first paperless campus.

The facility will serve as a platform for industrial and educational research, positioning it as a leader in sustainable innovation and digital transformation. The campus will also provide a broad engineering curriculum, with a wide range of resources and cutting-edge technology, including £1 million for equipment with investment for 3D printing hubs in local primary schools, and Pearson Level 2 BTEC engineering courses.

A community-centric initiative

HiVE's impact extends beyond technical training. Initiatives like the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme, which supports both employers and

apprentices, reflect HiVE's focus on community development and inclusion.

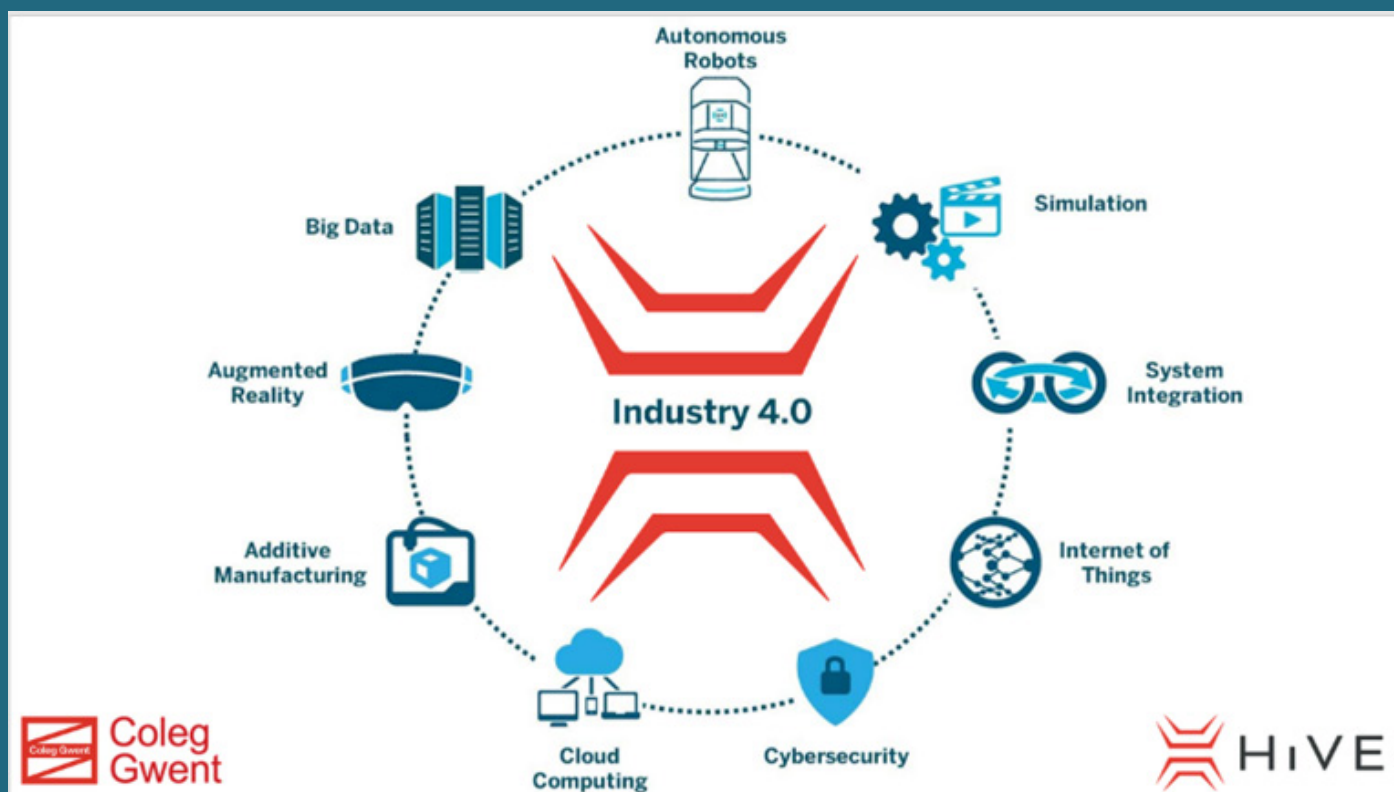
This program helps local manufacturing SMEs recruit and train apprentices, ensuring that courses meet industry needs. HiVE is also committed to fostering STEM education across schools in Blaenau Gwent through its STEM Facilitation Project. This initiative includes mini-HiVEs, climate classrooms, and a cross-school curriculum centred on industry needs, ensuring that students are prepared for future job opportunities.

Partnerships and community engagement

HiVE has established an advisory board comprising industry leaders, educational institutions, and government representatives to maintain open and productive communication with stakeholders. The facility plans to host open-door events for the public and local schools, further strengthening ties with the community.

HiVE is more than just a campus—it's a gateway to a brighter, more sustainable future for students, local industries, and the wider community.

For more information, please contact Tara Lane: tara.lane@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Cardiff Capital Region : Cluster Development Growth Programme (CDGP)

Driving Skills and Data Innovation

Rowena O'Sullivan, CCR's skills and talent manager, recently updated the CCRSP's Employment & Skills Board regarding the achievements of the Cluster Development Growth Programme (CDGP) and the broader skills landscape in Southeast Wales.

As highlighted in our previous newsletter, CCR commissioned CAVC as its lead managing agent and PWC to undertake a deep dive into digital, net zero and manufacturing skills challenges. The full CDGP discovery phase report is now available [online](#) for those interested in the findings.

The skills element of the CDGP focusses on delivering niche, targeted skills interventions to create new talent pools through a series of high impact bootcamps and upskilling interventions for businesses via a series of short courses, which are already making great strides.

A key ambition of CCR's work is to increase data capability and literacy across both private and public sectors. To this end, the CCR has established a data

leaders community including heads of data and transformation leaders and academia, including organisations such as Hodge Bank, ONS, local authorities and SMEs.

As a result of feedback from the community, CCR has launched the Data Inclusivity Network, a bold initiative to tackle diversity challenges within the data sector and make it more accessible to under-represented groups.

The latest program results are impressive: 34 skills interventions in delivery, resulting in 973 people trained or upskilled, 492 businesses supported, and 428 new jobs created by March 2025 – positively impacting the region.

The CDGP's ongoing commitment to nurturing skills and advancing data inclusivity demonstrates CCR's drive to foster regional growth and empower businesses and individuals across Southeast Wales.

Stay tuned as this vital programme continues to deliver positive change across the region.

Welsh Zero Carbon Hwb launched to drive sustainable housing across Wales

The Welsh Government has officially launched the Welsh Zero Carbon Hwb, an all-Wales initiative aimed at helping developers, social landlords, and housing associations reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in homes.

The Hwb, funded by Welsh Government, will provide cutting-edge advice and support for net-zero carbon design and technologies in both new and existing homes.

The Hwb's mission will be rolled out over three years, with an initial focus on assisting social landlords and local authorities. It will eventually expand to include private housebuilders and landlords.

By coordinating and learning from existing UK projects, the Hwb aims to become a leading resource for net-zero housing design, construction, and performance in Wales.

Supported by a steering group consisting of various Welsh Government representatives and housing organisations, the Hwb has partnered with Energy Saving Trust, Good Homes Alliance, and TrustMark to deliver its services.

The Hwb was officially launched in April at The Pavilion in Llandrindod Wells, where over 110 delegates attended.

Elfed Roberts of Pobl Housing Group chaired the event, which featured a video address by Julie James MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing. The day included presentations on the Hwb's mission and case studies from the innovative housing and optimised retrofit programmes.

The Hwb will provide a strong focus on net zero policy, supply chain and importantly skills and training. The Hwb is already focussing on the development of clear net zero definitions and the need for improved training and skills across the sector.

It is anticipated that the Hwb will also facilitate an annual conference to share best practices and continue driving strategic thinking in the sector. The Welsh Zero Carbon Hwb is now poised to support the transition to sustainable, energy-efficient homes across Wales.

For more information please visit <https://zerocarbonhwb.cymru/>



CCRSF Careers resources for Southeast Wales

Skills are often the number one priority for employers; and having individuals with the right skills and qualifications is essential for success.

Some young people may already know what they want to do, but many often don't know what careers exist across Southeast Wales or how they would even find the job of their dreams. To address this, the CCRSP has developed a series of careers guides through a Welsh Government 'Young Person's Guarantee' programme of work.

The CCRSP has recently launched a collection of sector-specific guides focused on regional priority sectors. The bilingual guides have been developed as a comprehensive resource for young people exploring their potential careers paths. The guides provide an overview of the priority sectors across Southeast Wales and are designed not only to inform but also to inspire young individuals and help them to discover the exciting opportunities across these key sectors.

The guides provide a broad overview of each of the CCRSP priority sectors, some valuable insights and information on the job roles available and earning potential. This demonstrates the ongoing commitment to deliver against the three-year CCRSP Employment and Skills Plan and reinforces commitment to addressing skills gaps and shortages faced by regional employers.

The guides can play a critical role in equipping young people with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their future and can be accessed below:

- <https://www.ccrsp.co.uk/eng/priority-sector-careers-guides>
- <https://www.ccrsp.co.uk/cym/priority-sector-careers-guides>



Apprenticeship development update

The landscape of apprenticeships continues to evolve, reflecting the changing needs of industries and the workforce across Wales. Several key developments have emerged recently, particularly concerning new frameworks, qualifications, and broader trends within apprenticeships.

Introduction of new frameworks and qualifications:

In response to emerging industry demands, several new apprenticeship frameworks have been or are set for development, particularly in sectors such as digital, net zero and health. Levels two and three in healthcare science frameworks are currently in development in collaboration with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to meet the demand for pathways into this growing sector.

These new standards are designed to equip apprentices with the skills needed to thrive in rapidly evolving fields.

The CITB have been working on behalf of Welsh Government to publish a consultation on developing degree apprenticeships in construction in Wales. The degree apprenticeships have been created with industry and professional body collaboration and will be launched in Autumn of 2024.

Increased focus on digital and green skills: As the economy increasingly shifts towards digital and green technologies, apprenticeships have expanded to

include more comprehensive training in these areas. There is a growing emphasis on apprenticeships that address skills gaps in these sectors, with frameworks being updated to incorporate digital competencies and sustainability practices across various industries.

Review of qualifications: Qualifications Wales has published its recommendations for post-16 vocational qualifications in hospitality and catering, following a public consultation. A new, streamlined menu of qualifications will be ready for learners from September 2027. This will establish a new streamlined suite of made-for-Wales hospitality and catering qualifications at levels one, two and three for both further education colleges and work-based learning. It will enable learners to progress in catering, food, and beverage or both (hospitality services).

Focus on inclusion and diversity: Recent developments in Welsh Government policy, such as the extended Employer Incentive Scheme and the Anti-Racist Action plan, has aimed to improve inclusion and diversity within apprenticeship programs.

Initiatives have been introduced to encourage participation from underrepresented groups, including individuals with disabilities, and those from minority backgrounds. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that apprenticeships are accessible to a diverse range of learners.

