

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd

## Newsletter Highlights

- Employability Programmes Update
- Conwy Careers Fair
- Community Renewal Fund Review

### WELCOME

We ended the 2022-23 financial year on a high with the Conwy Careers Fair, and I am delighted to report that we have started the new year on a stronger footing with more financial resource from the Welsh Government to run the Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) Employability Programme.

March 2023 saw the end of the Welsh Government's Communities for Work (CfW) and PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) Programmes which have run for eight years. These have both been phenomenally successful and have provided invaluable support to those that needed it in Conwy, and although they have both ended the help and support that was available will continue through CfW+ - of which you can read more about in this newsletter as well as an update on our news and other activities.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and if we can help you and your business in any way please do get in touch.

### WELSH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMMES

Since 2015 the Welsh Government has invested £135 million into the Communities for Work and PaCE employability programmes under the EU Structural and Investment Funds, and with the UK's withdrawal from the EU both schemes ended on 31 March.

Communities for Work (CFW) was operated as a unique partnership with Local Authorities, DWP and third sector partners as a postcoded programme to help and support the most deprived areas of Wales. Since 2015 it has helped 37,000 people and supported 16,000 into Employment.

PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) Programme was for parents whose main barrier into employment was childcare, and since 2015 it has worked with 7,500 parents and supported 3,500 into work.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) was introduced in 2018 to compliment CfW and PaCE, ensuring the help and support was available to the long term unemployed or economically inactive throughout Wales, and in just five years it has supported over 40,000 individuals with over 17,500 moving into employment.

Colin Morris, Head of Employment Programmes in the Welsh Government recently said that it's not just about statistics; "Each number is a person that has been helped. Many have seen their lives and those of their families transformed, often making huge differences to their life chances. The programmes have helped them increase their confidence, given them a greater sense of purpose, fulfilment and social connection, and by helping them gain employment they have also become role models for their children".

Tackling inequality in all its forms remains a key priority of the Welsh Government and in recognition of the challenges that lie ahead, it is funding the expansion of the Communities for Work Plus programme we deliver from 1 April.

This ensures we will be able to continue to help and support those that need it the most throughout the County. We will continue to provide intensive mentoring support tailored to the individual to help people develop their confidence; deliver professional training courses to build their skills; offer funding support to overcome barriers into training and employment and help them find and maintain employment.

As well as the CfW+ Programme, we have additional funding from the Welsh Government Young Person's Guarantee to help and support 16–24-year-olds into employment, self-employment or training to develop lifelong skills.

Today's young people have suffered the most from the pandemic and the Welsh Government recognises that their experiences will have an impact on business operations, culture, education and wider society in years together.

In the 15 months since the launch of the Young Person's Guarantee in October 2021, it has provided support to over 6,500 young people, with nearly 2,800 entering employment, and we look forward to working with the young people of Conwy to give them all a better and brighter future.

## CONWY CAREERS FAIR

On Thursday 23 March, we held the first Conwy Careers Fair dedicated to 16–24-year-olds at The Barn, Eirias Events Centre in Colwyn Bay.

The Fair was part of our remit to help and support 16–24-year-olds into employment and/or training to develop lifelong skills.

The event was organised by us in partnership with Working Wales which is delivered by Careers Wales, the DWP, Creating Enterprise and Conwy Business Support and we were delighted that over 75 businesses and organisations from educational and training courses, businesses with apprenticeships and careers opportunities, and other businesses that wanted to engage with the next generation of employees exhibited. Among the exhibitors were Airbus, Akari Care, Becoming the Great, Excelitas Technologies, Conwy Mind, Claire Michelle Salon, Supertemps, Galw Gofal, Llandudno's The Imperial Hotel, CSM Services Group, Parkdean Resorts, the Army and the police and fire and rescue services, as well as Yr Hwb Menter @ M-SParc, Big Ideas Wales, GYG Karting, and former Wrexham AFC striker Marc Williams, now a multi-sports coach and speaker.

The event ran from 11am to 4pm and during that time we had 482 visitors eager to find out what the opportunities are for them in North Wales. As well as the exhibitors, we also provided some free entertainment with an inflatable assault course and an iBox Game Bus and there were a number of exhibitors who also had interactive stands including Nintendo North Wales, WRU and CELS which provides character education sessions to develop resilience, teamwork and confidence along with other practical skills through fun, practical activities.

The feedback from both exhibitors and attendees was extremely positive:

- 80% of exhibitors rated the event excellent or very good
- 68% of attendees rated the event excellent or very good

And the comments were just as favourable:

"Thank you very much for organising this. We had lots of quality visitors. Hopefully it is a case of same time same place next year."

"We had a great event. Very well organised and we had some great chats with the visitors. One of the best career events we have attended in a long while."

"A great event - good to see it supported by local organisations."

If you would like to be the first to hear about our future events, please do email us at [ceh@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:ceh@conwy.gov.uk) and we'll add you to our database.

## SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

We are continuing to support 16–24-year-olds with a programme of events to enable them to develop skills while providing a clear path to employment. These are just a few that have been held recently:

- An outdoor activity weekend at Glan Llyn which included employability aspects interwoven into the timetable, so they received careers and training advice, CV writing and interview preparation.
- A 10-week Outdoor Activity Pathway was run in partnership with Conwy Ffit which was designed to give participants a taster of a career in the activity sector. The course had participants e-biking, climbing, walking and indoor caving and they received training in cycling courses and First Aid with the option to sign up to additional training courses.
- A Passport to Construction course was run by Creating Enterprise to give participants practical skills for a career in construction including certified training in Health and Safety, preparation for and sitting the test to obtain their CSCS card.
- A fully funded self-defence/awareness training course. The six-week course covered personal safety awareness in daily life and provided participants with effective and easy to remember physical self-defence techniques.
- There have also been pottery and art workshops for creative participants to explore these areas as career options.

## COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

The UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) - Skills and Employability Programme for Recovery and Growth aimed to support people and communities most in need by investing in skills, community and place, local business and supporting young people into employment.

Conwy Employment Hub led on Conwy County Borough Council's bid to secure £263,000 to run five projects and as the programme ended on 31 December 2022, this is an overview of our achievements:

### Confidently You

This focused on reducing social isolation, building resilience, increasing confidence/self-esteem, developing soft practical, financial, digital and employability skills, volunteering, gaining qualifications, improving physical and mental health.

It provided significant support for participants with weekly activities including different forms of training, adventurous activities, art and crafts, and achieved the following:

- 56 participants were supported, and all claimed the programme had improved their social inclusion and reduced social barriers
- 46 participants attended training or educational sessions

#### Therapeutic Counselling

This was short-term work-focussed counselling and/or coaching to support people to overcome mental health barriers to employment which was led by RCS Wales. They supported 50 participants with 84% reporting that their ability to work improved as a result of the intervention and 84% reporting that their health also improved.

#### Mental Health Recovery College

The main product of this project was an Innovation Plan to set out the basis for a Mental Health Recovery College for Conwy.

The plan was based on consultation, discussions with stakeholders and coproduction work with people volunteering to take part - both as individuals who have lived experience of mental illness and as representatives of organisations wishing to be involved. The Plan identified that a Mental Health Recovery College would be of benefit to the county and avenues for funding are now being explored.

#### Pathway and Development Courses

There were two distinct elements of the Programme. The Pathway Courses provided sector specific training to participants who are work ready that focussed on sectors for which there is a proven local demand. The Development Courses sought to engage with people further away from the labour market to get them interested in development options as part of a longer journey towards paid employment.

- 36 courses were held
- 149 participants successfully completed a course
- 31 participants were supported to gain employment
- 69 participants were supported to gain a qualification
- 24 participants were supported to engage in life skills
- 84 participants gained qualifications that aren't OFQUAL registered

#### Library Community Recovery Hubs

This was a pilot project delivering services at libraries that service providers usually deliver from their own premises or were previously unavailable locally. The phase was successful with the services accessed 2,774 times with 261 support and discussion sessions held with individual participants and it is hoped that this will continue.

In summary, the CRF programme was a success in achieving economic benefits to the participants and also for the employer particularly given the current skills and labour shortages, and the positive difference the projects have made to many peoples' lives cannot be underestimated.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Over the last few months, we've had a host of interesting guests join us for our weekly features on Sound Radio and Bayside Radio including:

- Adferiad Recovery
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Midas Touch Jewels
- The VAE
- Kogan Coaching
- Nelson Myatt Solicitors
- Crest

We've discussed job fairs, self-employment, the importance of Wills and Power of Attorneys, training and support for veterans, alongside current job vacancies and career opportunities.

If you'd like to join us on air to talk about your business and industry sector, we'd love to hear from you - just send us an email at [ceh@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:ceh@conwy.gov.uk) and we'll get in touch.

## EMPLOYABILITY NETWORKING EVENT

The Institute of Employability Professionals is holding its first Regional Networking Event in Wales.

Organised in conjunction with Conwy Employment Hub, the event is being hosted by IEP's Corporate Affiliate Partners, People Plus and will be held on Wednesday 3 May at Venue Cymru.

Come and join us to enjoy some refreshments, meet, network, share best practice and ideas with our employability colleagues and peers. Register for your free ticket here on Eventbrite

## NEURODIVERSITY – A RECRUITMENT SOLUTION

A report by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation at the end of March reported that the labour and skills shortages are not going to go away soon and that companies need to adapt their hiring plans to match this. It went on to state that companies who focus on reaching into different communities, skill development and staff engagement will see the benefits.

Reaching different communities ties in with the UK Government's review to boost employment prospects of autistic people.

Currently fewer than three in 10 people with autism work, so the review will provide vital information on what barriers need to be removed to help them start, stay and succeed in work while also focusing on what support employers need to reap the benefits of a neurodiverse workforce.

There are a number of specialist organisations that can help support businesses in this area. If you would like more details, please email us at [ceh@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:ceh@conwy.gov.uk).

## SOCIAL CARE JOB FAIR

A career in social care offers excellent job security, benefits and guaranteed hours, and with over 65 different job roles it also offers a host of wonderful career opportunities.

Many people working in this sector have previously worked in hospitality and retail so to raise awareness of these transferable skills as well as promoting both the sector and the various job roles, a Social Care Job Fair will be held at Coed Pella in Colwyn Bay on Tuesday 16 May from 1pm to 6.30pm.

The event will feature a number of exhibitors who are actively recruiting so don't miss this ideal opportunity to find out more about working in social care.

## NORTH WALES SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT PLAN

The North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) has developed a North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023-2025.

The plan 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. It sets out the challenges, highlights the opportunities and showcases examples of good practice and clearly sets out an Action Plan.

Successful delivery of the plan requires commitment from employers, individuals, training providers and Welsh Government, and RSP has clearly set out an Action Plan with key priorities that are designed to positively impact the challenges faced by North Wales' employers and residents which will improve the region's economic prosperity.

Conwy Employment Hub runs the Welsh Government Employability Programme Communities for Work Plus which also funds the Young Person's Guarantee. For more information on the programmes visit <https://bit.ly/CEHProgrammes>

To view the plan click here