

CONWY JOB EXPO

The annual all-sector county-wide Jobs and Careers Fair held on Thursday 22 February has been hailed an outstanding success!

The event brought together 1,117 attendees with 86 leading organisations, and shone a light on the many and varied career opportunities within North Wales while securing permanent and temporary positions for many candidates.

Organised by Conwy Employment Hub and funded by the Welsh Government's Communities for Work Plus programme in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and supported by Working Wales which is delivered by Careers Wales, Creating Enterprise and Conwy Business Support, the popular Expo exceeded all expectations.

Libby Duo, Strategic Manager for Conwy Employment Hub, said: "We were expecting an increase in numbers on previous years given the current economic climate and demand for workers in this region, but to have well over a thousand in attendance was incredible.

"The feedback we've had has been very positive from both exhibitors and visitors, particularly as a lot of the companies had vacancies and were able to pre-interview candidates, which was great from both sides."

Jane Cook, the DWP's Employer and Partnership Manager for Conwy, added: "What makes Conwy Job Expo so special is the very real opportunities that are out there, and the platform prospective candidates had to discover so many different sectors, and discuss with top employers whether it's a career for them.

"The results spoke for themselves, both in the number of people who attended, and the successful links built between recruiters, educators, and private and public sector organisations.

Among those in attendance were Abergele's Manorafon Farm Park, North Wales Police, Llandudno Pier, British Army Careers Centre, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Thorncliffe Building Supplies, HB Leisure, HMP Berwyn, Zip World, Dwr Cymru, Wales Ambulance Service Trust, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Evadx Ltd, Conwy County Borough Council, the RAF, and many more.

COMMUNITIES FOR WORK PLUS EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

Conwy Employment Hub has been successfully running the Welsh Government Employability Programmes since 2015, and while this is set to continue in 2024-25 there has been some reform and a substantial reduction of 35% in the budget of the Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) programme from 1 April onwards.

Moving forward, CfW+ needs to have a clear focus on supporting people with complex barriers to employment which is work the Hub already covers.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

The Hub's recently introduced Guaranteed Interview Scheme is already benefitting local employers with Llandudno Pier, Alpine Coaches, Conwy County Borough Council and a number of hotels in Llandudno including The Imperial and St George's now registered.

Designed to make the recruitment process easier for employers, it enhances the application process by giving employers access to the Hub's participants who have been pre-screened so only the most suitable candidates who meet all of the job specifications are put forward for an interview.

The Scheme is a free service which is open to all employers in the county of Conwy no matter how big or small the business or organisation. If you would like to know more about the Scheme or wish to sign up, please call Clare on 01492 577202.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPLOYABILITY PROJECT

The successful bid by the Hub to continue its work with Young People has secured £60,662 from the UKSPF Conwy Key Funds which will be used to help and support 16-19 year olds.

The Hub has been running a programme of events to enable this age group to develop lifelong skills while providing a clear path to employment. Events have ranged from a 10-week Outdoor Activity Pathway run in partnership with Conwy Ffit which was designed to give participants a taster of a career in the activity sector; a Passport to Construction course which gave participants the practical skills for a career in construction including certified training in Health and Safety as well as sitting the test to obtain their CSCS card; and several 6-week employability courses, Moving Forward, with Abergele Youth Shedz.

CONFIDENTLY YOU

Another successful bid the Hub has secured from the UKSPF Conwy Key Funds is for Confidently You.

This was a programme run by the Hub until Spring 2023 which focused on reducing social isolation; building resilience; increasing confidence/self-esteem; developing soft practical, financial, digital and employability skills while improving physical and mental health, which had a significant impact on improving social inclusion and reducing social barriers for 56 participants.

The bid for £92,561 will see Confidently You continue its success by supporting people most in need.

HOMELESS EMPLOYMENT MENTOR

The Hub has also been able to draw down funding from Conwy's Housing Support Grant to pilot a dedicated Homeless Employment Mentor who will strengthen its focus on supporting unemployed people with a range of housing issues, and we're pleased to announce that Gemma Donnellan has been appointed to the 1 year post which starts in April.

Gemma has been a Hub Employment Mentor for 6 years and she's looking forward to her new role which will see her embedded within the Homeless Prevention Team to support people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness to help them overcome barriers to training, volunteering and employment.

JOB FAIRS

Although Conwy Job Expo has been, we are still supporting employers with their recruitment needs by holding regular Job Fairs in partnership with DWP and Maximus at the Jobcentre in Llandudno and JobcentrePlus in Colwyn Bay.

These will be held on a monthly basis, usually on the last Thursday of the month (full schedule for the year tbc) from 10.30am to 12.30pm. They're free and open to all employers that are actively recruiting for live vacancies.

If you would be interested in attending one of our Job Fairs, please email employers@conwy.gov.uk and we'll get in touch.

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING FOR TRAINING

A full and meaningful schedule of training courses and pathways has been put in place till the end of December 2024 which are open to anyone aged 16+ living in Conwy that wishes to acquire new skills.

The project which is costing £292,510 is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and it plays a crucial role in delivering vital jobs and education training academies across the county.

To date 18 courses have been developed in collaboration with employers; 19 people have been supported to access basic skills course, 54 people have been supported to gain a qualification, 78 people have been retraining, and 51 people have been receiving support to gain employment with 20 successfully securing work.

The project has also already played a significant role in helping 12 people reduce structural barriers into employment and into skills provision.

As the project is still very much in its infancy, these are very encouraging stats and the Hub is confident that the outcomes will continue to surpass its target.

GRŴP LLANDRILLO MENAI

Are you tapping into Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the variety of benefits it offers employers as well as employees?

- Employer Skills North Wales benefits companies by identifying skills-gaps and signposting employers to full-funded training aimed at facilitating business growth, safeguarding jobs and supporting the creation of new positions.
- Green Digital Academy enables micro, small and medium businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and introduce new digital technologies.
- Personal Learning Account (PLA) is open to employees who are looking to progress in their current career or rewrite their career. The PLA provides access to a wide range of free and flexible training to gain new skills and qualifications that employers want.

For more information on these, please contact GLLM on 08445 460 460.

BESPOKE BUSINESS EVENTS

The Hub joined forces with COPA, GLLM and DWP to deliver a tailored session of support to employees on the Llandudno Pier, which turned out to be a huge success.

As an employer, navigating your way through the amount of free training available for your staff these days can be a complicated process, as can the different rules around earning money and claiming benefits, so this session sought to pull of that information together in a way that could be easily understood, and motivated members of staff to want to find out more about opening their own Personal Learning Account which enables anyone eligible and over the age of 19 to access flexible, part-time on-line courses and improve their career prospects and the session did exactly that!

If you would like the Hub's Employer Engagement Officers, Clare and Alice to arrange a bespoke session for your workforce, please drop an email to employers@conwy.gov.uk.