



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

West Wales and the Valleys European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020

2019 Annual Implementation Report Summary



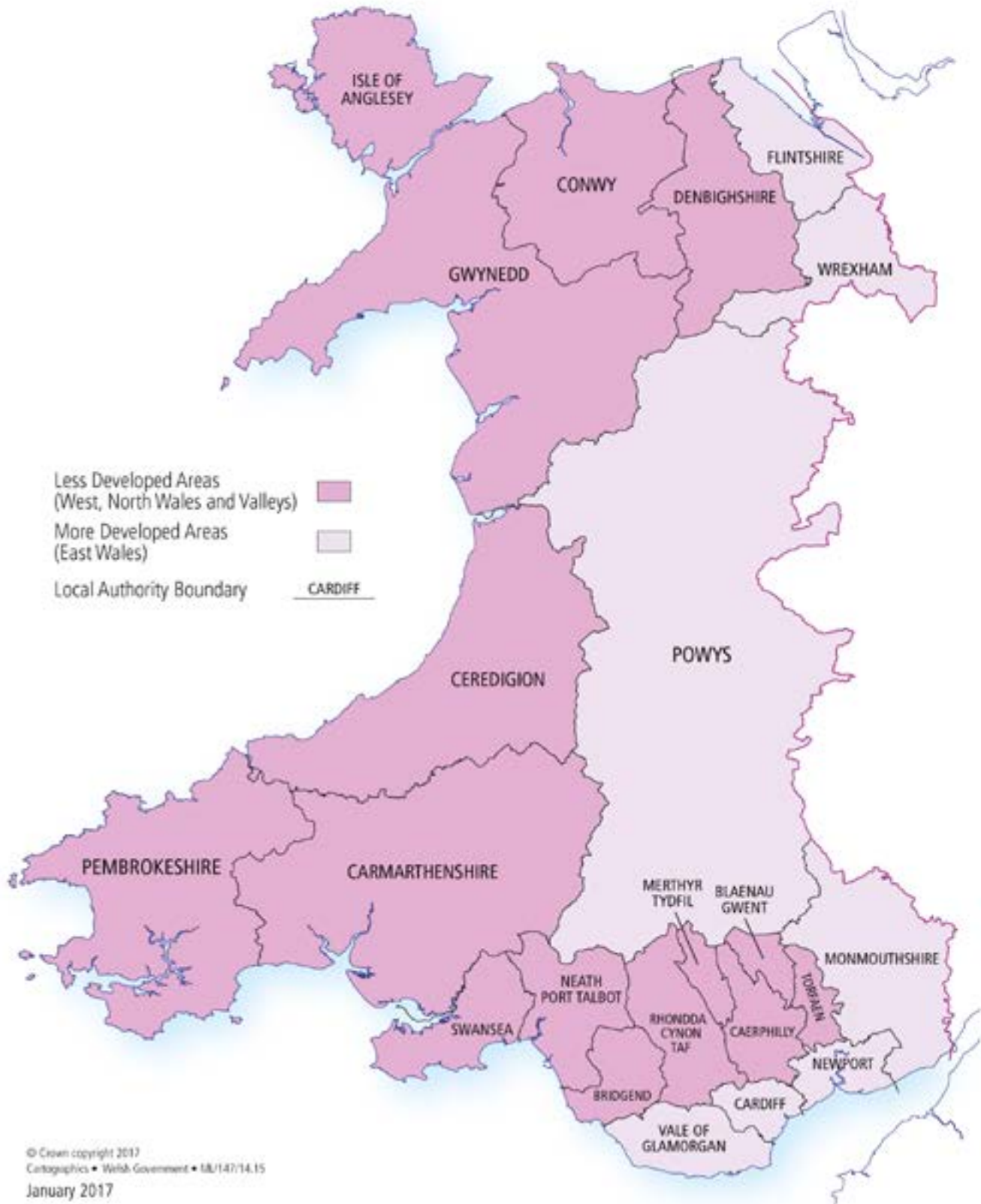
Y Ffôn Gyhoeddus
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop
European Social Fund

European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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Introduction

Wales is benefiting from over €2bn of EU funds through four Structural Funds programmes covering the 2014-2020 period.

As part of this, just under €805m has been allocated to less developed areas through the West Wales and Valleys European Social Fund programme, which aims to drive economic growth by investing in the following priority areas:

Priority	EU budget	Total Budget
Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	€188m	€238m
Skills for Growth	€340m	€471m
Youth Employment and Attainment	€245m	€329m
Public Services Reform and Regional Working	€16m	€22m
Technical Assistance	€16m	€22m
Total	€805m	€1,081m

Programme progress

By the end of 2019, the Welsh Government had invested €803m of EU funds to 63 projects through the European Social Fund driving a total investment of €1.5bn in West Wales and the Valleys. Key highlights include:

- Over 16,700 people helped into work.
- Over 53,800 new qualifications achieved.
- Over 2,900 people progressing into further learning or training.

Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment

EU funds are supporting projects that are increasing the skills and employability of economically inactive and long-term unemployed people, and helping reduce underemployment and absence rates of employed people with work-limiting health conditions and disabled people. Highlights from 2019 include:

- Gower College Swansea secured £6.6m for the Better Jobs Better Futures programme, which is boosting the prospects of unemployed and underemployed people in Swansea through coaching, mentoring, work placements, and opportunities to achieve qualifications.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council secured £2.3m to support small and medium sized enterprises in their approach to staff wellbeing, assistance for people with work-limiting health conditions, and support for people returning to work after a period of absence as part of its new Building Resilience, Prosperity and Wellbeing programme.



Gower College's Better Jobs Better Futures programme is boosting the skills and prospects of people in Swansea



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is supporting SME's to ensure people have access to 'in work' support services for their health and wellbeing needs

Skills for Growth

EU funds are being invested in a range of initiatives that are improving basic, technical and high-level skills of working people across Wales. Highlights during 2019 include:

- Aberystwyth University secured £1.8m to train professionals and recent graduates in the creative industries sector to exploit new technologies in media production through the Advanced Media Production project.



Aberystwyth University is supporting Creative Industries in Wales by delivering a high-level skills programme to people working in the sector

Youth Employment and Attainment

Young people across Wales are benefiting from EU funded training and employment opportunities, including projects that support the take-up and attainment of STEM subjects. The EU funds are also being invested in increasing the skills of early years and childcare workers. Highlights in 2019 include:

- The Welsh Government secured £8.3m to extend its Communities for Work programme for 16-24 year olds in West Wales and the Valleys to 2022. Delivered in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, local authorities and the third sector, the programme is boosting the skills and employability of economically inactive young people in Wales' most deprived communities.
- The Welsh Government's Parents Childcare and Employment (PaCE) scheme for 16-24 year olds was extended in West Wales and the Valleys to 2022 following a £1.2m EU funding boost. The scheme is supporting parents into training or employment where childcare is their main barrier.



PaCE is assisting parents where childcare is a barrier to work



Success stories

Syrian refugees flourishing following support through Cynnydd



Students supported by the Cynnydd project receiving their Nation of Sanctuary Awards

Three young Syrian refugees supported by the EU-funded Cynnydd project were celebrated at a prestigious Nation of Sanctuary Awards held in Cardiff.

Following their traumatic experience of civil war, Motiaa Akroume, Louai Chayah and Ahmad Habib have set an example to other students at Coleg Sir Gar in Carmarthenshire, immersing themselves into college life, impressing tutors and taking advantage of learning opportunities.

The three were shortlisted in the category of English Language Learner of the Year at the awards as part of Refugee Week Wales 2019.

Supported by the Cynnydd project, Motiaa, Louai and Ahmad are studying a level one foundation course at the college and the three will be progressing to a higher qualification next year.

The Cynnydd project supports children and young people between 11 and 24 who are at risk of disengaging with education.

Steve Kelshaw, director of learning support at Coleg Sir Gâr said: "We are all really proud of all three as they have achieved everything that's been asked of them and have taken full advantage of the support available as well as sports and social aspects of college life.

"We have been fortunate to take advantage of EU funding through Cynnydd, to provide additional English classes, though their success is all self-driven so we are looking forward to seeing them achieve even better things in the future."

Skills and career boost for engineer Carys



Carys Godding received support through Chwarae Teg's career development programme, Agile Nation

Carys Godding, an engineer with Welsh Water, credits Chwarae Teg's Career Development Programme, Agile Nation, with boosting her skills and career development.

With support from the European Social Fund, Agile Nation is helping women in Wales progress their careers, and assisting businesses to implement equality strategies and modern working practices.

Carys said: "The programme was an excellent opportunity for me to take time out for myself, to evaluate my skills, and understand what I am good at and what I could improve on. I am now a lot more confident in my role and have valuable skills to take me through to the next level of management.

"I would highly recommend the programme to any female, whether they are looking to develop in their careers or to simply build confidence and skills within their current roles. My group was so inspiring, and we have all remained good friends following the programme."