

Communications and Marketing meeting

Date: Wednesday 9 April 2025
Time: 11.0am – 12.30pm
Location: ACT, Ocean Park House, East Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF24 5ET.
A Teams link was available for those unable to attend at the venue.

Attendees:

Venue:

- Karen Smith, NTFW
- Izzy Birkett, ACT
- Alison Collingridge, Cambrian Training
- Tracy Swannick, Cardiff and Vale College
- Mike Bell, Educ8
- Mary Mann, ITEC Skills and Employment
- Jessica Jones, ITEC Skills and Employment

Joined via Teams:

- Sian Powell, Welsh Government
- Emma Rączka, Medr
- Megan Gwilt, Cambrian Training
- Hannah Haley, Coleg Cambria
- Matt Tucker, Coleg Y Cymoedd (NPTC Group)
- Gemma Smith, Gower College Swansea

1. Welcome and apologies of absence

Karen welcomed everyone and thanked ACT for hosting the meeting.

Apologies received from:

- George Coulton, Welsh Government
- Jane Wynn, ACT
- Steffan Rees, Gower College Swansea

Sian attending today's meeting as George is on annual leave.

Gemma has just joined Gower College Swansea and will be attending future meetings.

2. Actions from the last meeting

Action 1. Apprenticeships Fair - Advise Karen what activity you are planning and if you require a larger space.

Action 2. Share the Welsh Government document she was referring to during the meeting.
[Completed.](#)

Action 3. Send George examples around disability that can be used for a case study, which will include video and photos.

[Action 1. More case studies around disability required – send to George.](#)

Action 4. Looking forward to 25/26, George asking for providers thoughts on what they would like in the way of assets, rather than policy developing assets without first consulting with the network.

[Sian advised providers that the WG in-house design team can design various assets, but providers would have to pay for print costs.](#)

3. NTFW update

Apprenticeships Fair

A very successful event, which is being repeated during Apprenticeship Week next year. Wednesday 11 February 11:00-14:00 (setup from 10:00). It will be the same format with providers bringing along their apprentices to showcase a skill and for visitors to be able to have a go at an activity on your stand. MSs and Senedd support staff will be invited, along with external stakeholders and providers inviting their employers. Looking to also use the outside of the Senedd (weather permitting), so cars, trucks, plant machinery, etc. Further details will be circulated, once confirmed.

NTFW Conference

A successful conference was held last month at Cardiff City Stadium. Positive feedback was received around the speakers and workshops. This year, Elinor, a Level 3 apprentice, delivered by ACT at Cardiff City Council, assisted with social media promotion on the day.

Skills Competitions

Skills Competition Wales results 2024/25: <https://inspiringskills.gov.wales/results/skills-competition-wales-202425>

In 2025 competitions were delivered in 59 skill areas. 2026 retaining the existing portfolio with the addition of the following skill areas:

- Inclusive Skills: Sustainable Enterprise (focusing on up-cycling)
- Retrofit (Approx. 15k of sponsorship secured to help with setup initial meetings have taken place with partners)
- Sustainable Agriculture (initial meetings have taken place with partners)
- UWTSO have also piloted two competitions in 2024 and 2025 - Ceramics and Screen Printing. These will now be included within the SCW portfolio funded by UWTSO.

WorldSkills UK: <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/>

Finals taking place in Wales 25 – 28 November, 2025

There are 47 competitions being hosted across 5 sites - Coleg Gwent, CAVC, Bridgend College, USW and UWTSO. A total of 7,967 registrations were received, with 889 from Wales.

The medal ceremony will take place at the ICC Wales, Newport and the Foundation Skills medal ceremony will take place at CAVC.

WorldSkills, Shanghai <https://worldskills.org/>

September 2026

WorldSkills UK has announced there will be 86 individuals invited into Squad UK, with 20 competitors coming from Wales. They are starting an 18-month intensive training programme in the hope of being selected to compete at WorldSkills Shanghai. The final UK Team will be announced around April/May 2026.

Sian gave an update on the work that Welsh Government were doing in relation to WorldSkills UK coming to Wales.

A comms plan is being developed, and assets will be created for providers to use. They are looking to do a PR stunt with something like an Olympic torch going around various institutions where competitors are based. Will be looking for providers to invite schools to events showcasing the vocational skills you deliver.

WSUK will be hosting business breakfasts, and they will be looking for providers to host these. Matt said that Coleg y Cymoedd would be happy to host one of the events.

SkillsCymru taking place 26-27 November at Utilita Arena, Cardiff. This will be included in the marketing activity taking place around WorldSkills UK.

Another event that is being included in the marketing activity is The International Investment Summit, which is taking place on 1 December 2025 at ICC Newport.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg10p8nkvgq>

Welsh Government will be looking to ensure there's a strong skills presence at both events. They've been in discussions with Aston Martin and would be interested to hear about any other large organisations you work with, who might be a big draw and potentially interested in getting involved.

4. Welsh Government update

Employability Support Events are taking place across Wales aimed at stakeholders who have experience in delivering employability programmes like ReAct+, Communities for Work+ and Jobs Growth Wales+. Encourage colleagues to attend.

<https://wales.business-events.org.uk/en/events/reshaping-the-future-of-welsh-government-employability-support/>

29 April - Cardiff

8 May - Abergele

22 May – Llandrindod Wells

24 June - Llanelli

Apprenticeship Week

The Minister was very happy with the Apprenticeship Fair that took place at the Senedd. A total of 18 visits by MSs took place during the week. Engaged with 120 stakeholders - employers, providers, local authorities, etc. Looking at a 5% engagement increase next year. Good to see the assets being used by stakeholders. George currently writing an evaluation.

Action 2. Providers to share their Apprenticeship Week evaluations with George so they can be fed into the evaluation that George will be submitting. George to share evaluation with providers once complete.

Campaigns and Assets

Looking at the best way of using social media. Currently using Facebook and Twitter, moving forward, maybe LinkedIn as well. Tik Tok isn't currently an option as it would have to be used across all of Welsh Government.

Updating and reviewing all assets and what is available. All new assets will be uploaded to Brandkit. <https://assets.service.gov.wales/>

Tata – Around £2million has been made available, looking at business resilience, growth, etc. <https://www.npt.gov.uk/tata-steel-transition-information-hub/information-for-businesses/tata-transition-business-support/>

Ex-Offender assets are being developed – brochure, leaflets, digital, etc.

Flexible Skills Programme – Available to businesses, in specific skills areas. Training to be completed by end March 2026. Welsh Government will pay 50% of the training costs.

Employers can choose their own training provider.

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/topics-and-guidance/employing-people-and-improving-skills/recruit-and-train/flexible-skills-programme>

Action 1. Case studies required around the First Minister's priorities.

5. Medr Update

Still in the process of recruiting staff. The Apprenticeships Team should be in place in the next few months. The Head of Comms, is starting on 7 May - Rhys Davies, currently with Welsh Government. Recruitment for the CEO is taking place.

A lot of media interest in the last few months around HE funding. The Strategic Plan was launched last month - <https://www.medr.cymru/en/strategic-plan/>. The Operational Plan will be launched in May. New consultations around registration and regulation taking place in May. Emma encouraged attendance at skills competitions to see the competitions in action and get a better understanding of what is involved.

6. Round table updates from Members

Coleg Cambria – A busy time with various events and open evenings planned. Event with their higher-level students, a graduation event, and an Adult Education evening taking place showcasing their offer, which will include Apprenticeships.

Coleg y Cymoedd - Open evening coming up at Coleg y Cymoedd. Skills Academy Wales are engaging with businesses in Powys, South West and South East Wales. Employer events showing the benefits of Apprenticeships. Ambassadors that are speaking with smaller organisations about the routes and offers that are available to them. Consulting with stakeholders to gather information around their understanding of Apprenticeships, and their needs. Will then be going out with case studies.

Itec - Re-brand now complete and starting to roll it out on their various channels and resources. Recently won a big contract so looking to get case studies on learners. Apprenticeships Team in Wales and England have been working together.

Cambrian Training – On 31 March Cambrian Training became 100% employee owned. Hosted the Hospitality Competitions, which are part of Skills Competition Wales. These were held in January during the International Culinary Championships. Cambrian will be hosting the competitions again in 25/26 but they will take place in colleges due to there being no International Culinary Championships next year as Wales will be hosting WorldChefs in May. Attended the Apprenticeships Fair at the Senedd and had a stand at the National Apprenticeships and Education event, where they showcased Mocktail Making. Working with a local school and talking about the best ways to reach young people. Attending the Spring Fair on 17/18 May. Sponsoring the Apprentice of the Year at the Welsh Food and Drink awards taking place on 22 May. Holding their Spring Graduation on 3 June at the Royal Welsh Showground with the catering being provided by their hospitality team. The awards will take place in the evening in Llandrindod Wells. September marks Cambrian's 30th anniversary so there will be lots of promotion taking place which will include Apprenticeships.

Educ8 – Recently launched Advice and Guidance Level 3. They already deliver level 4 so this now gives them a good progression route. They will be reaching out to existing learners who might be interested in these programmes. Attended FinTech and engaged with around 50-60 employers. Working with Business News Wales on 2 podcasts. The first has already been released which was around social media and digital marketing. To celebrate Earth Day on 22 April, the podcast will be around Energy and Carbon Management. They are looking to secure the CEO of Net Zero Wales to be part of the podcast. Their Graduation Event will take place on 18 September at Llanerch Vineyard.

CAVC – Their Apprenticeship Awards took place in February with 183 people in attendance. Some learners were given the opportunity to speak on stage, which gave a personal touch to the event. A new award for this year was Net Zero and it was the 2nd year for the Welsh Learner award. Several open days have taken place. Shortlisted in 2 categories at the ATA Awards which took place in Liverpool. A very good response from their Learner Voice last year which was aimed at learners in their last year. The next Learner Voice will be open to all learners.

ACT – Held their Success through Skills Awards which took place at CAVC. This was open to all partners, rather than just ACT and ALS. Worked with Business in the Community and celebrated International Women's Day which received positive feedback. Their accountancy team won 3 bronze medals in Skills Competition Wales. Launched iPET Network (First Aid for dogs), level 2 and 3. Maintained occupancy of 750 for JGW+. Working on a campaign to raise awareness on progression routes. Two events will take place in June and then another in August. Campaign aimed at employers – the programmes that are available, learners ready to start on a placement. Focussing on management and green.

Gower College Swansea – Successful events held during Apprenticeship Week which included an open evening and the Apprenticeship Awards. Forthcoming open evenings will be held for Learners and Employers and they will be attending the Air Show in July.

7. AOB

No other business was discussed.

8. Date of meetings for 2025

A Teams link will be available for those unable to attend the meeting at the venue.
Calendar invites will be sent once the venues have been confirmed.

- 8 July 2025 – Itec
- 14 October 2025 – ACT