

Communications and Marketing meeting

Date: Tuesday 8 July 2025
Time: 11.0am – 12.30pm
Location: Itec Skills and Employment, Itec House, Penarth Rd, Cardiff CF11 8TT.
A Teams link was available for those unable to attend at the venue.

Attendees:

Venue:

- Karen Smith, NTFW
- George Coulton, Welsh Government
- Izzy Birkett, ACT
- Vicki Gittins, ACT
- Mary Mann, ITEC Skills and Employment
- Jessica Jones, ITEC Skills and Employment
- Bethany Williams-Potter, ITEC Skills and Employment
- Liam Oates, ITEC Skills and Employment

Joined via Teams:

- Rhys Davies, Medr
- Alison Collingridge, Cambrian Training
- Kris Petkova, Cambrian Training
- Louise Akers, NPTC Group - TBC
- Clare Kieft, Educ8

1. Welcome and apologies of absence

Karen welcomed everyone and thanked Itec for hosting the meeting.

Apologies received from:

- Sian Powell, Welsh Government
- Hannah Haley, Coleg Cambria
- Berni Colfer, B-wbl (Pembrokeshire College)
- Emma Rączka, Medr
- Jane Wynn, ACT
- Mike Bell, Educ8
- Matt Tucker, Coleg Y Cymoedd (NPTC Group)
- Tracy Swannick, Cardiff and Vale College

2. Actions from the last meeting

Action 1. A request for more case studies around disability were to be sent to George - Completed.

Action 2. Apprenticeship Week evaluation to be shared with providers once complete. Update included under Agenda item 4.

Action 3. Case studies required around the Welsh Minister's priorities - Completed.

3. NTFW update

9 October 2025 – Team Wales EuroSkills Herning, Denmark, Welcome Home

Event to be held in the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay. 12.30-2.30pm

EuroSkills, 9-13 September 2025. Team UK comprise of 21 individuals, 7 of these are from Wales.

Looking to also use this event for the start of the WorldSkills UK celebrations. A series of events will take place around Wales using a torch (similar to the Olympic torch, but no flame) which will move from one event to the other. This is being called the 'torch relay'. Applications to host one of the events will close on 1 August. The bid form for the torch relay is included in the WorldSkills UK toolkit.

How they are going to use the torch at the different events is still to be confirmed but they are looking at using individuals showcasing their skill - a welder is seen welding a torch, then it being passed over to a chef who would create a model of the torch, etc. Capturing this on video and a social media campaign will also be in place.

Invited guests will include the competitors +2 guests. Invitations will be sent to all MSs, their support staff, and external partners. To encourage the attendance of MSs, comms will also be sent to the relevant MS's who has a competitor or employer attending the event from their constituency.

Format for the day

- Welcome (John Griffiths MS)
- Video from Jack Sargeant
- Minister speech (TBC) and Presentation of Certificates
- Q & A with EuroSkills competitors led by Paul Evans
- WorldSkills UK speech (Focus WSUK National Finals - November 2025)
- Torch Relay
- Cross party panel on skills
- Event close (Paul Evans - ISE Project Director)
- Networking / Skills Showcases provided by some of the competitors.

WorldSkills UK National Finals

25 – 28 November, 2025

Finalists to be announced on Thursday - <https://www.ntfw.org/wsuk-finalists-25/>

There are 47 competitions being hosted across 5 sites - Coleg Gwent, CAVC, Bridgend College, USW and UWTSD. A dedicated page is now available on the WorldSkills UK website which includes a live stream registration link to the medal ceremony taking place on 27 November at the ICC Wales. The Foundation Skills medal ceremony will take place on 26 November at CAVC. The page will continue to be updated as we move closer to the Finals. <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/skills/national-finals-2025/>

Campaign toolkit included with notes of the meeting.

Skill Competition Wales

64 Competitions will take place. Competition briefs will be available online from 1 September. Registration open 24 November-5 December.

4. Welsh Government update

Ministerial action plan approved for the year. The priorities are Apprenticeship Week and Results Week.

Apprenticeship Week – 9-15 February 2026

- English: <https://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision/apprenticeship-week-wales-2026>
- Welsh: <https://www.llyw.cymru/prentisiaethau-dewis-doeth/wythnos-prentisiaethau-cymru-2026>

Genius Decision is still being used for this campaign. There will be a change of focus for 2026, where it will be more on employers, rather than individuals. Assets are being developed and should be available by October.

New assets

Welsh Government are aware that a lot of their assets are now out of date. These are currently under development. The Employer toolkit will hopefully be available in the next few

weeks. Assets will be uploaded onto Brandkit (Select 'Economy' and scroll down to 'Apprenticeships') <https://assets.service.gov.wales/> once complete.

Apprenticeship vacancies platform

This is under review. Is it fit for purpose? How can it be improved?

A small working group is being formed, which will comprise of one representative from Medr, 2 independent training providers and 2 colleges. The following said they would be willing to sit on the group.

- Itec
- ACT
- NPTC
- Medr – Emma or Rhys.

Action 1: Reviewing the apprenticeship vacancies platform - One more college is required to sit on the working group.

Social media

Looking at the best channels to use. LinkedIn is currently giving the best results.

Generating assets for campaigns, ministerial visits, etc.

England has an Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme in place which is made up from apprentices, training providers and employers. Case studies, blogs, images and self-videos are created. Welsh Government are looking to replicate this in Wales.

Cambrian advised that they have asked some of their learners to do some self-filming, ahead of their 30-year anniversary event. They will also be looking to use blogs, etc.

Action 2: Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme

- a) **All:** Nominate one apprentice for the Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme.
- b) **George:** Send a briefing to the group which includes the themes and topics to be covered.
- c) **George:** Ask England to give a presentation on how they are using the model.

Omnibus stats

- **Employers:** General awareness of Apprenticeships has remained consistent amongst all SMEs in Wales at 60%. However, there has been a significant decrease of 17-percentage points in awareness amongst SME with 10+ employees, which is the audience most likely to hire an apprentice. Manufacturing remains the sector with the highest awareness of the apprenticeships programme despite a slight decrease of 5-percentage points. 1 in 4 (24%) SMEs would currently consider hiring an Apprentice now or in the future. Whilst, 1 in 2 (53%) SMEs in Wales feel it 'not at all likely'. This is why we have changed the focus of Apprenticeship Week Wales to employers for 2026.
- **Individuals:** Awareness of the apprenticeship programme has slightly dropped from last year – now stands at 37% and awareness is highest among 25–44-year-olds being around 45%. Most individuals heard about apprenticeships through social media or the news.

Flexible Skills Programme

This programme provides support for employers to upskill their workforce. Welsh Government pay up to 50% towards the training costs. Campaign toolkit included with notes of the meeting.

Results Week campaign

4 August - 7 September 2025

This will be directed to the Careers Wales and Working Wales website. The Young Persons Guarantee will be used, with more of a focus on mental health; results aren't everything, etc. Campaign toolkit included with notes of the meeting.

It was asked that toolkits are circulated 2 weeks prior to the start of a campaign, as a reminder.

5. Medr Update

Rhys Davies was appointed Head of Comms for Medr in May. Rhys gave an update to the group.

- Medr became fully operational in August last year.
- James Owen, formerly Welsh Government, has replaced Simon Pirotte, who was interim CEO.
- The Medr Operational Plan was launched last month - <https://www.medr.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Medr-Operational-Plan-2025-6-English.pdf>. The new communications plan will be available at the end of October.
- The apprenticeships framework consultation will be launched in the autumn.
- Construction level 2 – Looking to resolve issues asap.
- LinkedIn is the strongest platform at the moment.
- Creating a one stop shop for Apprenticeships. Medr will work with Welsh Government on this. Medr isn't the right platform for this, so it will sit with Careers Wales.

Contact emails:

- Rhys - rhys.davies@medr.cymru
- Emma - emma.raczka@medr.cymru

6. Round table updates from Members

B-wbl

- B-wbl recently held their Annual Apprenticeship and JGW+ Awards, 06 June 2025, at Parc y Scarlets. Over 90 applications were submitted from the B-wbl provider network, with 27 finalists selected for the following categories.
 - JGW+ Engagement Learner of the Year (WINNER: Travis, Skills and Training)
 - JGW+ Advancement Learner of the Year (Winner: Lexie, Skills and Training)
 - Shining Star JGW+ (WINNER: Sophie, Coleg Sir Gar)
 - Foundation Apprentice of the Year (WINNER: Sarah, Cymru Care Training)
 - Level 3 Apprentice of the Year (WINNER: Hannah, Pembrokeshire College)
 - Higher Apprentice of the Year (WINNER: Euan, Coleg Sir Gar)
 - Shining Star Apprentice (L2) (WINNER: Marla, HB Training)
 - Shining Star Apprentice (L3) (WINNER: Morgan, Bridgend College)
 - Welsh Language Award (WINNER: Guto, Coleg Sir Gar)
 - Inspiration Use of Welsh Language (WINNER: Joy, Cymru Care Training)
 - Staff award categories and winners:
 - Unsung Hero (WINNER: Tom, Pembrokeshire College)
 - Shining Star Practitioner (WINNER: PRP Training)
- A number of providers have also held internal awards ceremonies.
- Pembrokeshire College's Graduation taking place on 11 July, Higher Apprentices from IDP's have been invited to attend. Learners from Cymru Care Training, PRP Training and HB Training are attending the Ceremony at St Davids Cathedral.
- Recently underwent a two-week Estyn Inspection (3rd – 13th June), awaiting final reports.
- Plans to review 2025/26 marketing plan over summer periods.

Educ8

- Ongoing sales support to drive apprenticeship starts in period 12, FY24/25
- Social media planning for A-level (14th) and GCSE (21st) results in August
- Content creation – refreshed event kit and collateral, and learner/employer induction materials completed. Educ8 prospectus in progress
- Rebranding of our main Gateway office is nearly complete, making it a more welcoming environment for our learners, staff, and other stakeholders
- Budget finalisation and planning for FY25/26
- Ongoing work for our Gradu8 2025 event in September – celebrating the achievements of our learners and employers
- Recruitment of a new Digital Marketing Executive in progress
- Looking forward to collaborating with our NTfW partners at key events later in the year (Skills Cymru and The UK University and Apprenticeship Search in October, and The National Education and Apprenticeship Show in February 2026)

Itec

- Liam Oates and Bethany Williams-Potter have both recently joined Itec.
- A staff conference was held last week, where the theme was the learner experience.
- Two of their large apprenticeship employers BT Group /EE, moved up 6 places in the Top 100 Employers list, putting them in 14th place. Shared on LinkedIn
- New contracts with Moto Services, Burger King, Starbucks, and other big names. Hospitality will now be a focus.
- Coleg Cymraeg has launched a new resource 'Pecyn Prentis' - <https://pecyn-prentis.cymru/>. This is aimed at supporting the employer and also for assessors to use when supporting their learners.
- One of Bethany's tasks is to create a virtual phrasebook for staff and learners. It will contain phrases that are relevant to a particular sector. This will be on a QR code to allow the resource to be updated.

ACT

- Results Week campaign - JGW+ information going live on the website today. This will include information on how employers can get placements and the journey of the learner after leaving school.
- Roadshows – A series of roadshows will take place which will predominantly be for individuals. One has already taken place in Bridgend. With others taking place in Ebbw Vale Market, Caerphilly, Aberdare, Barry and on The Hayes in Cardiff. The Barry and The Hayes events will take place during Apprenticeship Week.

CTC

- Summer Graduation and CTC Awards. Case studies have been sent to Welsh Government. Cambrian will use any not needed on their channels.
- Attending the Royal Welsh Show.
- 30th Anniversary in September. A stakeholder event to take place in Welshpool on 30 September.
- Submitting a bid for the Torch Relay. Looking at marketing activity and how they can support activities that are taking place in Mid Wales.
- Again, hosting the hospitality competitions which are part of Skills Competition Wales.
- Cambrian are now 100% employee owned. Marketing going out around this.
- Planning for Apprenticeship Week.
- 16-19 May – World Chefs Congress and Expo taking place at ICC.
- Looking at doing webinars. Asked the group for recommendations. Most use Teams. George said he would ask internally for Welsh Government's preferred supplier.

Cardiff and Vale College

- CAVC City Centre Campus hosted a series of WorldSkills UK Regional Heats in Beauty Therapy, Beauty Therapy Practitioner, SFX Make Up and Hair, Restaurant Service, Culinary Arts and Cyber Security, welcoming competing learners from a wide range of colleges.
- In November, CAVC is one of 5 colleges in Wales to host WorldSkills UK Finals, and may see some of their learners taking part in this too.
- Eleri Griffiths (CAVC) was shortlisted for an NCTJ award in the trainee category for best data journalism story. She attended the awards ceremony in Manchester. The nomination was for her article on homeschooling in Wales
 - [Article - Eleri Griffiths](#)
 - [Awards Article](#)
- WBLfest 2025, our annual CPD event for practitioners of all 19 subcontractors held on the 24 June. 110 attendees. Over 600 hours of CPD delivered, across sessions such as T&L, Funding and profiling, Welsh and AI.
- Open evenings across lots of the campuses in June.
- Learner Voice main survey finished last month 85% response rate, over 200 learners completed.
- Estyn Link visit 8 July.

NPTC

- Stakeholders (subs) recruiting. Engineering and construction, which are the key priority areas.
- Regional employer events taking place in SE, SW and Mid Wales.
- Changed the time of year for their awards ceremony – Applications open in August, with the ceremony taking place during Apprenticeship Week. Case studies are then taken from this.
- Looking to get ambassadors. These could be shared with George.
- Also looking to do self-filming, Welsh videos, etc. This is taking place Oct/Nov.
- Recruitment of large employers.
- A staff conference is taking place in the autumn.

Updates to be forwarded to Karen from:

- Gower College Swansea
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Coleg Cambria

Future meetings: When there is no representation from a contract holder, an update is to be sent to Karen so it can be included in the notes.

7. AOB

Updated guidelines requested when using the apprenticeships logo. This document is currently being updated.

8. Date of next meeting

14 October 2025 – ACT

A Teams link will be available for those unable to attend the meeting at the venue.