

Communications and Marketing meeting

Date: Tuesday 14 January 2025
Time: 11.0am – 12.30pm
Location: Itec Skills and Employment, Itec House, Penarth Road, 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
- Emma Rączka, Medr
- Jane Wynn, ACT
- Izzy Birkett, ACT
- Mike Bell, Educ8
- Mary Mann, ITEC Skills and Employment
- Angharad Roberts, ITEC Skills and Employment

Joined via Teams:

- Alison Collingridge, Cambrian Training
- Megan Gwilt, Cambrian Training
- Berni Colfer, Pembrokeshire College /B-Wbl
- Kayleigh Caulfield, Coleg Y Cymoedd (NPTC Group)
- Hannah Haley, Coleg Cambria

1. Welcome and apologies of absence

Karen welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Itec for hosting the meeting. Kayleigh is representing Coleg y Cymoedd today, in place of Matt who has sent his apologies. Megan from Cambrian will now be attending in place of Manon.

Apologies received from:

- Matt Tucker, Coleg Y Cymoedd (NPTC Group)
- Jessica Jones, ITEC Skills and Employment
- James Powell, Educ8
- Tracy Swannick, Cardiff and Vale College
- Claire Nightingale, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Steffan Rees, Gower College Swansea
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2. Actions from the last meeting

Action 1. Ministerial visit for Jack Sargeant, which will be used as part of Apprenticeship Week. Contact George with suitable organisations that the minister can visit, especially ones around green skills, carbon management, or energy. The visit needs to take place by the end of October.

Information received from providers is now with the Ministers office and George will update providers as soon as he has heard back from them. He has been told that the Minister would like to focus on shared apprenticeships.

Action 2. George to circulate a template for providers to complete for all events and activities that they have taking place around Apprenticeship Week. This information will then be used during the Apprenticeship Week campaign. **Completed.** Moving forward the Minister would like

to have prior notice on your plans for Apprenticeship Week and see your full marketing plans. George to look at getting a template created for next year so that information is being received in the same format.

Action 3. Itec to share the guide that they have developed around the progression from JGW+ onto Apprenticeships. Will circulate as soon as it has been signed off.

Amendments to the notes that were sent out.

Attendees: Hannah, PRP Training – PRP Training are not a new subcontractor to B-wbl, they have been with them for a number of years.

Action 1. The availability of the visit needs to be confirmed by the end of October so that it can be booked in the minister's diary. Version 2 of the notes were sent to the group on 25 October.

3. NTFW update

Apprenticeships Fair – 12 February 2025

10:00-15:00 at the Senedd.

The event is a direct action from the Cross-Party Group on Apprenticeships that is run by NTFW and CollegesWales, co-chaired by Luke Fletcher MS and Joyce Watson MS. Jack Sargeant MS has confirmed his attendance and will be speaking during the event.

Invitations are being sent to Senedd members, support staff, key stakeholders and members of the cross-party group.

Each college and independent training provider will have an exhibition stand to raise awareness and promote your apprenticeship offer. Visual demonstrations to take place with each CCH bringing along an apprentice to showcase their skill. A table and power will be provided. Providers are also being asked to invite employers. This is a 'drop in' event, rather than formal. MSs will be advised of any employers attending from their constituency. Timings and any restrictions at the Senedd are to be confirmed. Karen to advise Emma and George who has been invited from Medr and Welsh Government.

Action 1 All: Advise Karen what activity you are planning and if you require a larger space.

Skills Competitions

Skills Competition Wales: Competitions will take place between 21 Jan-13 Feb, in locations across Wales. The schedule will be distributed with the notes of the meeting.

WorldSkills UK: Registrations open 3-28 March 2025, with the finals being held in Wales.

4. Welsh Government update

Narrative from FM – the focus moving forward is messaging around success stories off the back of Welsh Government programmes, rather than in the past it has been what ministers are doing.

Currently focussing on 12 stories, and will be showcasing one a month. Every Thursday the Minister is going to give an update on what has been happening and we need to ensure that skills are included. Case studies are therefore required.

Action 2 George: Share the Welsh Government document he was referring to during the meeting.

Apprenticeship Week - 10-16 February 2025

Assets for you to use will be sent out either later today, or tomorrow by Golley Slater. The target is still to create 100,000 apprenticeships in the current term. The call to action will be to the Genius Decision page, rather than the AVS, due to the lack of vacancies and capacity to deliver. Myth busting, factsheets are included in the toolkit. ACT and Educ8 advised that this also part of their campaign. New case studies include green skills,

manufacturing, tech and digital space, and Sports Wales. Also working with Cory's World, a food blogger. The Omnibus study showed that 1 in 2 individuals are aware of apprenticeships, which they are looking to maintain. Reliant on stakeholder engagement due to the budget cuts. As well as re-posting, George asked the group to post direct from their own channels and tag Welsh Government, Working Wales and Business Wales in your social posts.

If you have any other events/activities taking place that you haven't already shared with George, send over the information and he will try to get some paid advertising. This will primarily be on X and Facebook on Welsh Government, Business Wales, etc. The paid campaign went live yesterday, and they have already received a lot of enquiries about vacancies. The Minister's office is being kept informed of this.

Post Apprenticeship Week – Work will be aligned to the minister's priorities. Currently working with the disabled people's champions to encourage more disabled people into skills programmes.

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

Action 4 All: 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.

Other campaigns:

Tata Steel: Pointing employees and businesses that work with Tata towards the UK Government campaign so they are aware of the support that is available to them.

Green skills campaign: George isn't working directly on this, but if you do require further information, he will put you in touch with the right person.

Social channels: Looking at moving away from X, but firstly need to look at how you take the stakeholders with you. Some providers have setup a Bluesky account to see how this will work. If you don't immediately do anything with it, it is worth you registering so you have your preferred user name. With the new X algorithm suppressing posts containing links, rather than including the link within the post, it is advised to post the link separately as a first comment. Issues are being faced by providers when advertising vacancies on Facebook due to their discrimination policy on protected characteristics which include age, sex, disability, etc.

5. Medr Update – Emma

Talking with Welsh Government on Apprenticeship Week and how Medr will be getting involved.

Re-visiting the website and looking at how information can be laid out and made easier to read for their different audiences – providers, employers, learners, etc.

Strategic Plan is with the ministers and is to be published by the end of the month. A feedback document will also be distributed as changes have been made to the draft plan that was released. Around 100 responses were received. Any specific questions to be directed to Emma.

Vacancy in the Apprenticeships Team, closing on 16 January. There is also a Head of Comms vacancy that opens this week.

Simon Pirotte was only in his role on a temporary contract. A successor is now being sourced.

The first round of funding for Medr will be coming in next month for Apprenticeships, FE, Sixth Form, HE. Emma to keep the group informed.

6. Round table updates from Members

Gower College Swansea

- Apprenticeship Week Wales is our current priority
- A dedicated Apprenticeship Fair, Apprenticeship Awards as well as information sessions will be held
- The Fair will take place on 5 Feb and will be open to our full-time students as well as the general public, to meet our subject areas, employers, attend talks as well as get apprenticeship support
- Our Awards will take place on 10 Feb, to celebrate the achievements of our apprentices, employers and staff over the past year
- Information sessions will take place throughout the week, to demystify and share more about the opportunity's apprenticeships can provide to both individuals and employers
- We're working with a marketing agency to launch a campaign to support these activities, as well as a boosted article

Itec: Apprenticeships Fair, will be in attendance with an employer and learner. Comms around being Employee Owned. Changing the feel of their resources, moving away from the red and black by adding different colours. Preparations for Apprenticeship Week include filming, blogs, etc. Priorities for the next 6 months is working with the team in England, who deliver commercial courses, on their marketing campaign.

ACT

JGW+: Close to capacity, getting approx. 25 enquiries a day. Up to 700 with their capacity being 800. Re-opened the OPH centre with a Hair and beauty salon. Focussing on the employers and getting learners job roles.

Apprenticeships: Maintaining approx. 2,000 per week. Apprenticeship Week campaign around myth busting, apprenticeships for all. Targeting individuals rather than employers. Working more as a group with CAVC (ACT owned by CAVC).

Promoting their commercial offer, with the Learning for Work team offering more commercial courses. These can be a one day course for anyone, up to a 5 day course for managers, etc.

Success for Skills Awards taking place on 6 Feb, with 140 nominations received. They have asked all nominees if they would like to be used for a case study.

Senedd event: Looking around Digital, VR experience.

Educ8:

January offer, with a discount package, taster sessions, targeting groups. Comms plan has 2 strands, employer and then schools with vocational courses. Apprenticeship priorities: energy and carbon management, childcare, hair, digital skills for business. Social media and evaluating paid ads, and what is the best channels to use. Apprenticeship Week, webinars with other companies, focussing on employers and speaking with their clients. Learner focussed on their channels. Working with new members of staff, ensuring that consistent messaging is being used when out visiting. Ensuring all new assets are bilingual.

Cambrian Training:

12 Nov was their autumn graduation celebration at the Royal Welsh Showground. Focussed on priority sectors to mark Hospitality Week, with a case study on the day of the life of WBL apprentice Gabby Wilson. Apprentice of the Year sponsor in the Food and Drink Awards. End Oct, WBTA who is a sub of Cambrian's celebrated their 20th anniversary, with the press article being covered by Business New Wales. Hosting the Skills Competition Wales Hospitality competitions, with the first one taking place on 20 January at ICC Wales. This will bring employers, learners, and professionals together. Apprenticeship Week, working with sector teams to run webinars to target school children and parents, making them aware of the apprenticeship route and the options that are available. Attending the Apprenticeships and Education Event at Cardiff City Stadium. Going out to tender for a videographer, asked the group for recommendations.

Coleg Cambria:

Apprenticeship Week, cross-site events for learners, live Q&A sessions. March will see open events across all sites. Hosting the Wales Bakery Conference on 26 Feb. Opened new buildings for students to get real-life practice, and facilities for agricultural learners to gain experience. Campaign for adults to return to education. Graduation in April for HE and Higher Professional learners. Hosting skills competitions across their sites.

Coleg Y Cymoedd and Skills Academy Wales (SAW):

Open events have taken place across their sites. Attendance was mostly focussed towards core curriculum. H&SC visited Denmark through Taith, they are live on radio tomorrow, with a news article following this. Awards night for Caerphilly Business Awards. A partner business Clwb y Draig won the small business award. Event at the Ystrad campus with local employers and training companies, discussing green skills. Worked with GE Aviation on their events in Oct and Nov. New social media campaign, using video case studies rather than images. Attending a Careers event on 18th February at Cardiff City Stadium, hosting Future Fest at the Nantgarw campus which will focus on alternative routes into employment.

SAW Awards took place on 6 Nov, which tied in with 15 years of SAW. In December Vicki Howells attended the Neath campus and met staff, learners and apprentices. Various contractors and subcontractors attended an open day at Neath and Cymoedd. Attending event on 11th to market Apprenticeships. Sharing testimonials, social content, and press articles for partners. SAW jobs fair taking place in Feb in Welshpool and Newtown.

B-wbl:

JGW+: Subcontractors continue to promote the programme and the 'New Year, New Opportunities' campaign is being promoted across social channels. Bridgend College and Pembrokeshire College both holding open evening/event where Apprenticeships and JGW+ programmes are being promoted. Applications are now open for the B-wbl Apprenticeship and JGW+ Learner Awards – this year there are 11 categories, including 2 new staff awards – Shining Star Practitioner Award, and Unsung Hero Award (for staff who work behind the scenes).

CAVC

Final number for nominations for the CAVC Awards were 91. The judging panel have met several times to decide on the winners. The awards will take place on Thursday 13th Feb during apprenticeship week. This is part of a week of celebration we have planned including case studies, quotes and interviews with past and present learners, employers and practitioners, taking place across several mediums. Learner forums have been taking place with groups of learners. This year we have decided to undertake smaller learner voice surveys rather than completing just one large one. These will focus on specific themes. We recently nominated in 3 FE Week award categories. Learner portal now up and running for induction modules and Prentisiauth for all 19 subcontractors. Open evenings planned for early Feb for Cardiff, Barry and ICAT

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.

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