

Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+) Operational

Board Tuesday 3 December 2024

1.00 – 3.00pm

Online

Notes and Actions

<p>Present:</p> <p>Gareth Matthews – Itec Skills and Employment (Chair)</p> <p>Ruth Collinge – North Wales Training</p> <p>Fen Piercy – B-WBL</p> <p>Claire Howells – Coleg Cambria</p> <p>Sarah Frost - DWP</p> <p>Vicky Crock – Careers Wales</p> <p>Sophie Martin – Grŵp Llandrillo Menai</p> <p>Matthew Burnett – ACT Training Ltd</p> <p>Julie Dyer – Itec Skills and Employment</p> <p>Lisa Pugh – Welsh Government</p> <p>Andrew Chapman – Welsh Government</p> <p>Laura Evans – Welsh Government</p> <p>Jeff Protheroe – Colegau Cymru</p>	<p>Meeting Invitees:</p> <p>N/A on this occasion</p> <p>Apologies:</p> <p>Leon Patnett – ACT Training Ltd</p>
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1. Welcome and apologies (Chair)

Gareth Matthews (GM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Notes and actions of previous meeting (Chair)

The Notes and Actions of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate

Action	Status
Action 1 – Contractors to let Lisa know if there are any queries or observations with the new JGW+ Programme Specifications.	Completed
Action 2 – Gareth to circulate the amended Terms of Reference, for members to suggest any additions, deletions or amends.	Amended version to be circulated

3. Matters arising

There were no further matters arising

4. Stakeholder Updates

a. Welsh Government

Lisa Pugh (LP) updated the group on the following:

- Performance Data – 14,300 enrolments at the end of last week. Significantly higher than expected. 65.3% have Positive Outcomes. LP would like to know what is driving the Positive Outcome?
 - Julie Dyer (JD) outlined that providers are now understanding learners (and more importantly their needs) in greater detail. The majority of participants are looking for

employment as an Outcome, but need to build their confidence and resilience first. Good variety of placements being made available. Beginning to see an increase in Participants moving onto employment via an apprenticeship. Word-of-mouth is driving self-referrals.

- Matt Burnett (MB) – we are beginning to see the Programme mature inc. the maturity of the provider network in working collaboratively. The number of referrals is significant, especially where there is population density. Saw an increase in referrals post October half term, as individuals who entered college and did not get onto a course of first choice – are realising that it is employment that they prefer to move to.
- Ruth Collinge (RC) – echo the point around individuals leaving college, and wanting to move into employment. Has seen an increase in behavioural problems, leading to some Participants being dismissed. However, not seeing the level of referrals like in South Wales.
- Claire Howells (CH) – similar position to Ruth
- Fen Piercy (FP) – also seeing an increase in referrals, inc. Participants joining after leaving an FE course.

Action – LP would appreciate case studies (inc. in a variety of forms e.g. video) from contractors, to support her business case for additional budget.

Action – LP would appreciate a volunteer to host a visit from the First Minister

- Welsh Government Budgets – Have asked the Minister for an extension of the contract framework to Mar 27 – still awaiting a response. A request has been submitted to Welsh Government Central Finance for additional funding. No response yet, but have pushed and escalated internally. LP committed to provide an update to the network (either way) as soon as one is available.
- JD stressed the need to have an indication of next years allocations as soon as possible, as contractors are needing to consider/manage the carry-over. LP stated that she hope to get this information (contract extension and 2025/6 allocations) out to the network before Christmas.
- The ‘Single Operating Model’ – Looking to have ‘engagement sessions’ in the spring. The Minister has agreed the proposed approach, but we also need to have a mind towards any future devolution of employment support.

b. Welsh Government

Andrew Chapman (AC) gave the following update:

The Young Persons’ Guarantee (YPG) commitment has engaged over 42k onto employment and skills programmes and circa 5k have moved into employment since launched. Also, over 650 young people have started their own businesses. There is a recognition that WG may well be under-reporting, with data to be updated next month, (Q4).

c. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Sarah Frost (SF) gave the following update:

New DWP Grant funded Programme – ‘Connect to Work’ - this replaces the Universal Supported Employment programme, expected to be introduced Autumn 2024, to follow on from the closure of the Work and Health and Pioneer programmes. Connect to Work is a ‘supported employment’ programme, delivery will be via Accountable Bodies (Abs), these are in place in England, however in Wales DWP are awaiting confirmation from WLGA as to who the ABs will be – most likely the 4 Lead LAs (originally in place to deliver Universal Supported Employment programme). Once in place they will follow the same model as in England in that ABs will have Director level conversations with DWP to confirm delivery arrangements and timescales. DWP have appointed a Regional Engagement Lead to oversee the programme delivery,

awaiting appointment of Supported Employment Implementation Specialist who will be seconded to DWP. SF confirmed that the Programme is an 'all-age' programme, will be LA not DWP led, with referrals being able to come from a variety of sources. GM raised concerns that there is an overlap with the JGW+ Programme, especially with the cohort aged 16 – 18/19.

SF went on to update members on announcements within the recent Green Paper 'Get Britain Working':

Trailblazers – Economic Inactivity - Emma Edworthy (WG) is meeting with senior DWP officials on 9 Dec 24 to discuss the approach in Wales. In Wales, the funding will be £10m.

New Jobs and Careers Service – Still awaiting the detail, but will not be taking the same approach as England (given the existing relationships and collaboration with Careers Wales and Working Wales)

d. Working Wales

Vicky Crock (VC) gave the following updates:

Working Wales is facing its busiest period currently. Advisers recognise the challenges being felt around the level of need. Issues being faced in being able to refer young people onto some form of provision. Will be hosting a visit of the Minister to a Careers Wales office in Cardiff shortly, so will look to be making the point about the availability of provision then.

5. Prime Contractor Updates (inc. update from Providers' Forum)

a. North Wales Training

Ruth Collinge (RC) gave the following update:

Seeing an increase in demand, but concurrently seeing an increase in behavioural issues which has seen many Participants being dismissed.

Some issues around violence being seen, and support being shown from ACT and Itec in developing the skills of practitioners.

Action – Andrew Chapman (AC) to raise this issue amongst members of the YPG Stakeholder Group to see what further support can be offered to contractors.

b. Coleg Cambria

Claire Howells (CH) gave the following update:

Echo what Ruth said in terms of behavioural issues. Looking to access more placements to support the needs of the Participants, with a view to increasing positive outcomes.

c. B-WBL Consortium

Fen Piercy (FP) gave the following update:

Have recently received an influx of ARRs. All sub-contractors operating at capacity. A number of audits ongoing. Still utilising some 'Renew and Reform' funding to support learners.

d. **ACT Training Ltd**

Matthew Burnett (NB) gave the following update:

Like others, struggling to manage with demand, especially capacity issues in centres.

e. **Itec Skills and Employment**

Julie Dyer (JD) gave the following update:

Outperforming on all measures. Echo the points raised by others, but are also seeing an increase in Safeguarding issues/concerns. Potential to open up centres in other areas, but this cannot progress until contract values for 2025/26 are known. Cardiff has seen a 300% increase in demand.

Also echo the points raised around participants presenting with behavioural issues.

6. Any Other Business

Nothing raised

7. Date of next meeting

Most likely to be end of Feb / beginning of Mar.

ACTIONS

Action	Lead
Action 1 – Gareth to circulate the amended Terms of Reference, for members to suggest any	GM
Action 2 – Lisa would appreciate case studies (inc. in a variety of forms e.g. video) from contractors, to support her business case for additional budget.	All
Action 3 – Lisa would appreciate a volunteer to host a visit from the First Minister	All
Action 4 – Andrew to raise this issue amongst members of the YPG Stakeholder Group to see what further support can be offered to contractors.	AC