

New employability plan aims to tackle unemployment and economic inactivity

Whilst unemployment in Wales is relatively low at 5.0 per cent and roughly in line with the UK, nearly a quarter of working-age Welsh adults (24.3 per cent) are economically inactive – neither unemployed nor available for work – compared with 22.0 per cent for the UK as a whole. [The plan](#) aims to address this as well as setting out a long term vision to ensure workers of the future have the skills businesses will need.

Launched today by Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan the plan sets out how the Welsh Government will support those furthest from the labour market, the economically inactive and those at risk of redundancy, into work. It brings together and builds on several existing programmes such as Communities for Work, PaCE, Jobs Growth Wales, ReAct, Better Jobs Closer to Home and Lift to help people build the skills and confidence to find and stay in work and to ensure employers can find the skills they require for their businesses to flourish.

The plan, which complements the recently published [Economic Action Plan](#), sets out four main actions for improving employability. They are:

- Providing an individualised approach to employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs and takes account of personal circumstances, barriers, aptitudes and ambitions.
- Providing support to employers to provide inclusive and fair work whilst underlining their responsibility to up-skill their own workers. This will increase a person's employability and skills with the view of securing in-work progression and reducing a household's risk of living in poverty.
- Responding to current and projected skills gaps to adapt to the changing needs of the market and society.
- Preparing for a radical shift in the world of work to ensure the workforce is ready for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow such as automation, artificial intelligence and robotics

The Minister said:

“Today, Wales has a relatively low level of unemployment, but levels of economic inactivity have remained stubbornly high, despite considerable efforts in this area. There is no doubt that unemployment levels, in particular those not in employment, education or training (NEETS) would have been higher had it not been for significant Welsh Government intervention but we can and need to do more.

“Poverty is still a curse in Welsh society, but employment provides the most sustainable route out of poverty and developing skills is

a vital part of this. The better people's skills, the better their chances are of getting fair, secure and rewarding employment. In addition, the stronger the skills base we have, the more chance we have of attracting new businesses and growing existing ones to increase job opportunities and improve prosperity.

"There are several challenges ahead of us. Our population is ageing, technology is developing ever faster and the political and economic uncertainty around Brexit means there will be disruption to our labour market and economy.

"This employability plan sets out how we intend to face these challenges not to simply weather the storm but emerge from it stronger. We cannot do this alone. It will require a great deal of effort from local authorities, further education and private training providers, the third sector, employers and of course individuals, but together we can seize this opportunity to improve the prosperity of Wales."