



Welcome to the first newsletter from the South East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkIP). This newsletter will tell you about the work of the LSkIP, progress to date, and how the recently formed partnership will be adding value to the skills, learning and employment sector within the South East Region.

LSkIP and its Purpose

The partnership has been set up to enhance collaboration and inform skills delivery in the region.

The LSkIP complements existing partnerships in the other two regions across Wales (the South West and Central Regional Learning Partnership and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board), and all three have been recognised by the Deputy Minister for Technology and Skills, Julie James AM.

The LSkIP is supported by the Welsh Government's Policy Statement on Skills and Skills Implementation plan. These define four key roles for the partnership:

- To produce and analyse labour market information aligned to economic intelligence to inform skills requirements and future priorities
- To provide a mechanism to review regional skills provision and advise Welsh Government on future prioritisation of skills funding in line with regional employment and skills needs
- To act as a strategic body effectively representing regional interests to inform a demand led and sustainable skills system, taking into account the level of skills utilisation in the region
- To maximise future available funds acknowledging the likely reduction in public funds over the coming years

The LSkIP Vision: A strategic partnership to develop the social and economic potential of South East Wales, supporting people and businesses to deliver a high performing prosperous region that stimulates inward investment.

Objectives

- To provide strategic leadership for learning, skills and innovation across the region
- To analyse and share skills and employment data
- To Identify and respond to strategic priorities in relation to skills, learning and employment
- To facilitate joint working between stakeholders – utilising resources, stimulating innovation, raising aspirations
- To produce an Employment and Skills Plan for the region
- Ensuring the region has an excellent learning and skills infrastructure to meet the region's economic and social needs
- Utilising resources to deliver innovative and sustainable economic and social improvements in the region



Workshop Feedback (September 2014)

The section below contains feedback and responses from the initial stakeholder workshop held in September 2014

	Summary of Comments	LSkIP Feedback
The need for a regional skills partnership	Overall, participants were positive and constructive, with encouragement to move quickly with this due to the challenging timeframes.	A Board and Core Working Group have been rapidly established and activity is already underway on the key objectives. Momentum is good even with limited resources.
Employer Engagement	People accepted that the range of businesses and sectors made this a challenge.	Industry representation on the Board, including from Enterprise Zones and business representative organisations, is seen as a positive way forward.
Stakeholder Engagement	The wide range of stakeholders and varying degrees of involvement makes this a complex task; links should be made to existing networks.	Clear communication about objectives, structure and Board will assist in this and contextualise LSkIP's work. Participation is encouraged through representative bodies, as is involvement in relevant work streams.
Funding	There was concern that LSkIP funding should not reduce funds to skills providers; also that the funding and viability of LSkIP was questionable.	The very limited funding agreed for LSkIP to date (£80K) will not affect any other budget. Future funding options are being explored.
Forward work programme	There were concerns about the timescales for the production of the Employment and Skills Plan; employer intelligence and labour market evidence was key.	Work on the plan and other work streams is well underway, with the support of the Board and Core Working Group.
Data and intelligence	Questions were asked about the sourcing of labour market intelligence, and how it will be analysed; gender and other demographics should be included.	An online skills observatory is being developed to house and structure data, such that these issues can be managed. Only reliable data sources will be used, as consistent with those used by the other partnerships.
Relationships with other Partnerships	The Partnership should link with the others in Wales to benefit from their experience; the relationship with Cardiff Capital Region should be clear.	Close partnership working with other partnerships has occurred from the start and will continue; Cardiff Capital Region shares a Board member with LSkIP to ensure activity is complementary.
Role and remit	Expectations of the Partnership varied hugely.	The vision and objectives of LSkIP are clearly set out in this newsletter. Current resourcing will constrain activity to the key deliverables for 14/15.
Membership	The vast majority were supportive of the current structure and governance arrangements, some saying that Wales TUC had been omitted.	The structure is working well, and Wales TUC are now on Core Working Group and Board.
Welsh Language	The Welsh Language integration with partnership activity was referenced several times.	Welsh language issues will be a central pillar in LSkIP activities.
Performance	How will performance be measured?	There will need to be a review process against milestones led by the Board.

ESF Project Development Workshop (January 2015)

An ESF workshop was organised for partners with projects in development, seeking to attract EU funding support. The objective was to highlight ideas in development and promote collaboration between potential partners to reduce duplication. The feedback and recommendations from attendees is below. For further information please contact Karen.higgins@wlga.gov.uk

ESF Priority	Summary of suggestions of how projects can work together / cross refer to add value	Key skill priorities identified for the region identified	What support is required from LSKIP to take this forward
Priority 1 Tackling poverty through sustainable employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects identified that could interlink and work together • Building on existing networks and activities • Explore further opportunities for collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential skills • Pre- Level 2 • Skills for employment • English as a second language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To disseminate information in the region. • Information on how national and regional non ESF funded initiatives should influence the design and delivery of ESF projects
Priority 2 Skills for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further collaborative working to avoid gaps, duplication and co-ordinated delivery between partners • Co-ordination of information and support available from all partners • Posting information on potential projects for joint working or those in development where value could be added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher level • STEM • Growth areas and gaps. • Noted that WEFO can commission projects if they identify gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinator of info on all projects and ensure it is shared • Proactively direct co-operation, e.g. across priorities • Draw on successes of other programmes • Organise more workshops, focusing on individual priorities and look at links across priorities • Engage more private sector • Identify gaps
Priority 3 Youth employment and attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the national framework model • Early identification process for projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability skills: numeracy, literacy • Advanced computing skills • Essential skills – working with others, problem solving, team working etc. • Understanding the world of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about employment opportunities/ demands in the short, medium and long term • Regional project mapping and the development of referral protocols • Sharing and tri-angulating data for the region, for use by projects • Facilitation of regional networking for ESF projects during project design and implementation

Next Step:

Individual workshops will take place for each theme. Please note ESF projects requiring LSKIP support will need to be formally considered by LSKIP. Your contact is Karen.higgins@wlga.gov.uk

Structure and Membership

A Board and a supporting core working group are in place. Both will engage with stakeholders.

Board Members

- Jim Bennett, Colegau Cymru
- Dr Francis Cowe, Higher Education
- Sarah John, National Training Federation for Wales
- Richard Crook, South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration
- Lynette Jones, South East Wales Directors of Education and Education Consortia
- Maggi Dawson, Third Sector
- Professor Brian Morgan, Cardiff Capital Region Board
- Mark Langshaw, Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone
- Michael Bampfield, Cardiff Enterprise Zone
- TBA, St Athan Enterprise Zone
- Neil Blockley, Federation of Small Businesses
- TBA, Confederation of British Industry
- TBA, South Wales Chamber of Commerce
- Sian Cartwright, Wales TUC
- Secretariat: Karen Higgins, WLGA
- Observers: Richard Staniforth, WLGA, Derek Allen, Welsh Government
- Rachel Garside-Jones, Welsh Government

Core Working Group

- Guy Lacey, Colegau Cymru
- Louise Bright, Higher Education
- Margaret Edwards, National Training Federation for Wales
- Mark Shephard, South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration
- Sian Farquharson, South East Wales Directors of Education and Education Consortia
- Judith Stone, WCVA
- Ian Davy, Third Sector, CVCs
- TBA, Cardiff Capital Region Board
- Deri Bevan, Wales TUC
- Bernadette Jones, DWP/Job Centre Plus
- Mark Owen, Careers Wales
- Karen Higgins, LSKIP
- Richard Staniforth, LSKIP
- Derek Allen, Welsh Government

Progress To Date & Next Steps

- A stakeholder event was held on 24th September 2014 after which LSKIP was officially launched. Key themes from the event are presented as a Q&A within this newsletter
- The board met for the first time in November 2014 and its fourth meeting was held on 25th February
- ESF workshop held in January – see feedback in this newsletter
- Work underway on regional Employment and Skills plan, to be completed by 31st March 2015
- The Regional Skills Observatory is currently available in a development format: sewso.infobasecymru.net. This will be available for launch in English and Welsh by 31st March 2015
- Individual workshops for the three ESF priority themes are being organised.
- Board meetings will be held on a bi-monthly basis from April. Core Working Group meetings will continue monthly or as required to support the work programme. Members of both groups will share information with partners
- The LSKIP Newsletter will be distributed twice a year.



For further information, please contact Karen Higgins

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