

## £2.3m EU funding to boost financial services and data science talent pool

The additional investment in the financial services graduate programme, which has already received £2.5m of EU funding, will support 35 more graduates to become professionals in these two important sectors in South East Wales.

A pilot scheme will also be launched to recruit 25 graduates to a two-year data science programme, which will start in September 2018. Graduates with the required experience will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to become tomorrow's data scientists and leaders, by fast-tracking their career progression from entry level to junior data scientists.

Led by the Welsh Contact Centre Forum, the pilot programme will target current and future skills shortages in data science and analytics.

Professor Drakeford said:

"We are committed to helping people get the skills they need to pursue successful careers and drive forward high-growth sectors, which are vital to economic growth and employment.

"This is another example of how EU funds are supporting Wales' growth ambitions. We are calling on the UK Government to replace this vital source of funding after the UK leaves the EU so we can continue to invest in programmes such as these."

Sandra Busby, managing director of the Welsh Contact Centre Forum, said:

"Everyone everywhere needs to be data ready and we can't let the data science boom pass us by.

"We have global businesses in Wales which need access to the best data scientists, which is why we have established the Welsh data science graduate programme to provide industry leaders with a high-quality pool of talent to choose from.

"The successful candidates will benefit from the latest technology and systems, getting hands-on experience from the best this country has to offer. They'll come out of their two-year placements well-rounded and versatile and with an MSc – exactly what every employer is looking for.

"We are also pleased to extend our financial services graduate programme to benefit more graduates to develop careers in this exciting sector. We've got an excellent track record in securing employment for our graduates and look forward to the same success

with our inaugural class of 2018.”