

3,000 new apprenticeships created in Swansea Bay City Region

Following the UK Government and Welsh Government approval of the Swansea Bay City Deal's Skills and Talent programme, Minister Davies met students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Gower College Swansea to hear how it will benefit young people across Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, County of Swansea, and Neath Port Talbot.

The programme will provide opportunities for thousands of people and businesses across the Swansea Bay Region to access skills and training, focusing on industries with high demand for workers. Working in partnership with training providers such as local authorities, schools, colleges, universities and businesses, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership will lead the delivery of the programme to identify skills, find training solutions and develop education and training projects to meet these demands.

Carmarthenshire County Council is the lead Local Authority responsible for the programme that will benefit the whole of the Swansea Bay City Region. The programme will create at least 3,000 new apprenticeships and deliver an additional 2,200 development opportunities as well as creating centres of excellence within sectors including digital, energy, construction, and well-being.

During the visit to Gower College Swansea, Minister Davies met apprentices who are working with EV Wales learning to install electric car charge points. He also spent time learning about the work of Elite Aerial Services and talking to their apprentices about working with robots in fibre infrastructure and communications.

At the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Minister Davies also met students from Ysgol Bro Myrddin and Ysgol Maes Y Gwendraeth Comprehensive Schools who are already benefiting from a pilot project, which will be rolled out more widely in the future. The students, who are currently undertaking BTEC Level 2 and 3 in Engineering, were able to demonstrate their skills using the facilities at the university. The pilot scheme was set up to encourage the exchange of expertise and resources across training providers in the region.

UK Government Minister for Wales David TC Davies said:

I am thrilled to meet the young people set to benefit from the £30 million Skills and Talent programme and hear their exciting plans for the future.

The UK Government is committed to providing excellent development opportunities for people in Wales and helping firms to retain local talent. I look forward to seeing people across south west Wales

take these opportunities to develop their skills and move into well-paid jobs in growing sectors such as engineering, renewable energy and digital innovation.

Barry Liles OBE, Senior Responsible Owner for the Skills and Talent programme and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Skills & Lifelong Learning) at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David said:

The success of securing the funding for the skills & talent initiative will be transformational for the region and will leave a significant legacy of high-level skills occupations and clearly defined career pathways for young people. The RLSP is a mature and proven collaboration of providers who will support the needs of the city deal projects whilst also signposting individuals into sustainable employment.

Dr Llinos Jones, Head Teacher at Ysgol Bro Myrddin, and Wyn Evans, Head Teacher at Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth whose pupils took part in an apprenticeship pilot scheme added:

We, as two schools in the region, are delighted to be part of the Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme. The programme aims to provide a regional solution to identify and deliver the skills and training required for City Deal projects. This investment will allow schools like ours to develop courses that will ultimately support projects and people across the region. Through the program we have developed a Welsh Medium learning pathway in Engineering and IT for over 120 pupils in year one.

Cllr Emlyn Dole, leader of Carmarthenshire County Council said:

We are delighted to welcome the Minister to the region and look forward to rolling out the Skills and Talent programme following the success of our pilot scheme. This approval is very important to us so that we can provide education and training solutions for young people to learn and gain employment locally.

This programme, along with the other parts of City Deal portfolio will help raise the entire regions profile by attracting inward investment, and coupled with creating highly skilled individuals, it will ensure that South West Wales is the perfect place to live and work for generations to come.

Cllr Rob Stewart, Chairman of the Swansea Bay City Deal's Joint Committee, added:

Minister Davies' visit will help further raise the profile of the City Deal's Skills and Talent programme. This programme is key to the overall City Deal investment portfolio as it will equip thousands of local people with the skills they'll need to access well-paid jobs being created by the other City Deal projects in coming years.

Many of the other City Deal projects are already in delivery, with the investment set to play a key role in accelerating our regional economic recovery from the pandemic.

The Swansea Bay City Deal, with eight of its nine programmes and projects now approved, is in a very strong position to further benefit as many regional residents and businesses as possible in the near future.

Mark Jones, Principal of Gower College Swansea said:

We are delighted to welcome Minister Davies and the City Deal officers to the College today. Over a number of years we have been preparing for the City Deal by investing in the development of innovative curriculum to meet key City Deal requirements. In partnership with industry we have developed new programmes in digital, green energy, advanced manufacturing and health and social care, which has led to a 25% increase in apprentices we support in these areas. In 2021-22 we plan to support over 3,500 apprentices including 2,200 apprentices developing skills in key City Deal sectors.

Notes to editors:

- The Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of nine major programmes and projects across the Swansea Bay City Region, which are together worth over £1.8 billion and 9,000 jobs to the region's economy in coming years.
- Funded by the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector, the City Deal is being led by Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire Council and Swansea Council, in partnership with Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea Bay University Health Board and Hywel Dda University Health Board.
- The Skills & Talent programme works with a wide range of stakeholders including:
 - Coleg Sir Gar; Gower College; Neath and Port Talbot College and Pembrokeshire College
 - University of Wales Trinity Saint David; Swansea University and the Open University.
 - National Training Federation of Wales and private training providers School Leaders and Local Authority Education Departments

- Local Authority Regeneration Departments
- Private Sector Cluster groups with connections to 2000 businesses across the region