

Adult learning key to helping people into work

The Minister was marking the start of Adult Learners' Week by visiting Kidzz Fun in Ystrad Mynach where Working Links, an organisation that helps socially excluded people maximise their potential, were holding an open day.

The soft play centre was open to families free of charge so that parents could meet local employers and receive advice on options for returning to work and accessing learning opportunities, all while their children were busy playing.

Funded by the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund and organised by the Learning & Work Institute Wales, Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest annual festival of learning. It aims to inspire thousands of adults each year to discover how learning can change their lives – people like Aqsa Ahmed-Hussein.

Asqa agreed to an arranged marriage at the age of 18, when education was the furthest thing from her mind. By the age of 28 she had four children saw herself as 'just' a wife and mum, but when Aqsa's fourth child was due to start school she knew she needed to update her skills to support her family.

She completed several courses including computer skills, child psychology, counselling skills and a teaching assistant course, all of which gave her the skills she needed to find a job that made paying for childcare worthwhile. Now 41, Aqsa works full-time as a one-to-one classroom assistant at a primary school and is considering further training to become a teacher.

The Minister said:

"I was very pleased to visit Kidzz Fun today and to see how Working Links are helping people in the area learn about the opportunities that are available to them and encouraging people to learn new skills.

"We are committed to improving the prosperity of the people of Wales and the Employment Plan I launched earlier this year sets out clearly how we intend to provide an individualised approach to help people tackle the barriers that are preventing them from working.

"For many, the barrier is a lack of skills or qualifications. In 2017, 21% per cent of those who were economically inactive reported having no qualifications, compared to just 5% of those in employment. This is why I am committed to helping people to improve their skills through adult learning as it will improve their chances of getting fair, secure and rewarding employment.

"Undertaking new learning as an adult is a not only a great way to

improve employability but is also a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, make new friends as well as boosting self-esteem and confidence.”

The Learning and Work Institute Director for Wales David Hagendyk said:

“Faced with an ageing society, a changing world of work, and the rapid deployment of automation and artificial intelligence, giving adults the opportunity to learn throughout their lives is more important than ever. Adult Learners’ Week gives thousands of people across Wales the chance to have a go at learning something new and to develop their skills.”

More information:

For more information on Adult Learners’ Week and find events near you, go to [Careers Wales](#), call 0800 028 4844 or follow [@skillsgatewaycw](#).