

# Business Plan for 2014 – 2020 Operations European Social Fund – East Wales

Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth

ESF Theme 2A: Adaptability, Growth & Progression

Specific Objective 1: To increase the skill levels,  
including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce  
with no or low skills

## Skills@Work

Newport City Council

Version 1.4

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## Operation and Beneficiaries

The Lead Beneficiary for the Skills@Work operation in East Wales is Newport City Council. The Joint Beneficiaries are as below:

- Cardiff City Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Newport City Council (as a delivery partner)

## Executive Summary

The Skills@Work Operation is seeking funding from the East Wales ESF Programme, Priority Theme 2A; Adaptability, Growth and Progression. The operation is targeted at Specific Objective 1; To increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills. The operation is proposing to start in January 2019, and run for 47 months to December 2022.

The Skills@Work operation will deliver across the Local Authority areas of Cardiff, Monmouthshire and Newport bringing together a collaborative partnership between the South East Wales Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive package of support. The operation will seek to engage those target groups as set out in the ESF Operation Programme for East Wales, with the aim to increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills.

The operation aims to support 1516 participants, and will focus on achieving the programme level result indicators as set out in the table below:

Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – male	339
Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – female	421
Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – male	376
Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – female	380

### Description, outputs and activities

The Skills@Work operation aims to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills at all levels from NQF Entry Level 1 to NQF Level 2 across the workforce of the East Wales region through community based provision, thereby improving the opportunities for currently low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase earnings potential.

Community based provision will focus on supporting reluctant learners to engage with flexible learning opportunities outside of the workplace and will offer a range of provision including literacy, numeracy, ICT and other generic transferable skills resulting in an eligible qualification from NQF Entry Level 1 to NQF Level 2. Basic

literacy and numeracy skills acquisition will form a key area to improve the mobility of the workforce and sustainable employment.

The proposed delivery model looks at a number of headline interventions (further details are provided in section 2)

- Activity 1 – Regional LMI/Employee Liaison
- Activity 2 – Engagement and Enrolment
- Activity 3 – Initial Assessment and Action Plans
- Activity 4 – Support and delivery of qualifications
- Activity 5 – Career Progression
- Activity 6 – Tracking and Monitoring

### Operation Strategy and Resources

The Skills@Work operation will be led by Newport City Council and has the following co-financing Joint Beneficiaries:

- City of Cardiff Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Newport City Council

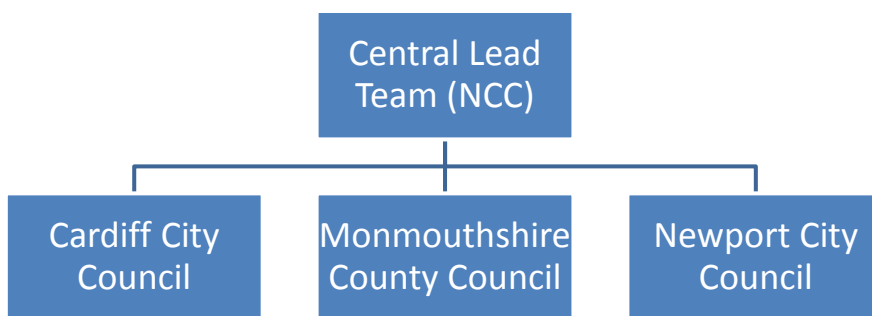
The operation will be directed by a Strategic Management Board, chaired by a nominated officer from a Joint Beneficiary partner, which will provide strategic direction through quarterly meetings with the lead officers from the other Joint Beneficiaries and the Central Lead Manager. These meetings will be utilised to establish operational issues that need to be addressed and ensure performance is reported to the Senior Responsible Officers for each Joint Beneficiary.

The operation governance will be detailed through a Relationship Agreement between the Lead Beneficiary and Joint Beneficiaries. The quarterly claim, claim verification, audit and reporting functions are the responsibility of Newport City Council as Lead Beneficiary.

The operations performance will be managed and delivered through the below arrangements:

1. The Central Lead Team Manager will represent the Skills@Work operation at the P2 Network meeting coordinated by the Regional Engagement Team. Representatives from other ESF operations within the region and WEFO will seek to share best practice and identify strategic joint working opportunities.
2. The Skills@Work Strategic Group will meet quarterly and consist of the Senior Responsible Officers from each Joint Beneficiary and the Lead Beneficiary and will oversee the strategic management, including performance, delivery and procurement of the operation.

3. The Skills@Work Operational Group will meet quarterly, chaired by the Central Lead Team Manager, and consist of the local delivery team managers to discuss performance and any operation issues that may arise. The Operational Group will feed into the Strategic Group any performance issues and conflicts of interest.
4. Joint Beneficiary local delivery teams will oversee and undertake the day to day delivery of the operation within their area and will receive individual quarterly “Health Checks” from the Central Lead Team.



An existing ESF Central Lead Team is in place, within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing service of Newport City Council, and is responsible for the strategic delivery of the Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work operations. It is planned that this team will be expanded to take on the management of the Skills@Work operation. The Central Lead Team will be responsible for managing the performance of the operation and overseeing the delivery of each Joint Beneficiary. This will include responsibility for the following activities:

- Managing performance of Joint Beneficiary progress towards operational targets as agreed with the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).
- Completion of regular monitoring and compliance checks ensuring Joint Beneficiaries adhere to WEFO guidance.
- Reporting and submission of participant outcomes and financial expenditure to WEFO Project Delivery Officers and via WEFO online.
- Collation and storage of required documentation to evidence participant outcomes and financial expenditure.
- Correspondence with WEFO to resolve queries and distribution of information to Joint Beneficiaries.
- Communication with all Joint Beneficiaries on a regular basis ensuring WEFO updates and guidance are received.
- Preparations for WEFO claim verifications and European Funding Audit Team inspections.
- Development of legal agreements between Newport City Council as the Lead Beneficiary and the individual Joint Beneficiaries.

- Creation of a regional procurement framework where appropriate and monitoring of Joint Beneficiary procurement activity.
- Ensure the Operation is adequately promoted and all marketing adheres to WEFO guidelines.

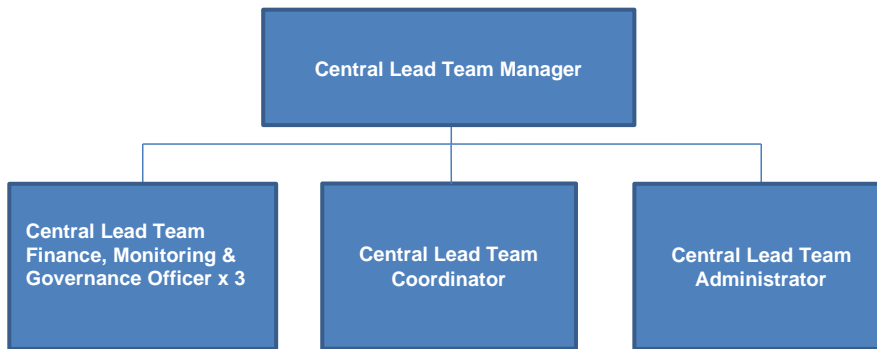
A new Central Lead Team Coordinator post will be created to support the Skills@Work operation and the additional operations. This post along with the existing Central Lead Team posts will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on total participant numbers of each. The cost for delivering the central function for Skills@Work will be covered by the ESF grant and contributions from all Joint Beneficiaries, on an apportionment basis. This methodology has been adopted for the approved Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work operations.

A centralised function will create greater synergy between the four East Wales ESF operations led by Newport City Council, allowing for stronger management and a more strategic approach to delivery across the region. The Central Lead Team posts proposed are as below:

- Central Lead Team Manager – Responsible for managing the regional operation including, but not restricted to: liaison with Joint Beneficiaries and WEFO, regional procurement and management of outcomes, outputs and funding, monitoring and verification. This post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.
- Central Lead Team Coordinator – Responsible for coordinating the operational delivery including, but not restricted to: liaison with Joint Beneficiaries and WEFO, management of outcomes, outputs and funding, monitoring and verification, marketing and publicity. This post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.
- Central Lead Team Finance, Monitoring and Governance Officer – Responsible for tracking of Joint Beneficiary outputs and outcomes, implementation of monitoring systems; ensuring that participants are all eligible for support and outcomes are not duplicated; monitoring of all eligible spend for Joint Beneficiaries, management and implementation of monitoring and reporting systems. To reduce overhead costs and to provide a service in line with the scale of the operation, these posts will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.
- Central Lead Team Administrator – Responsible for the presentation of reports and information for management, ensuring that databases and recording systems are updated correctly and consistently. To reduce overhead costs, and to provide a service in line with the scale of the operation, this post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.

**Commented [WM(-W1):** We will have to re-profile all four Operations once S@W is approved to amend the allocation methodology. Do I take it that all other staff will be time-sheeting?

**Commented [h2]:** Yes, once approved and the participant numbers finalised we will amend the allocation methodology. In terms of all other staff, is this in reference to staff employed by the Joint Beneficiaries? Most JB's will be using fixed percentage contracts as staff will be working a fixed number of regular hours every week.



The operation is seeking a delivery start date in January 2019. We do not foresee the need for a mobilisation period. Newport City Council is already delivering on 3 ESF operations, with a number of transferable processes and procedures already in place, and therefore will be ready to commence delivery upon approval:

- Project management processes have been established and are being implemented successfully, including claim submission and claim verification procedures and quarterly Joint Beneficiary Health Checks.
- Legal agreements referred to as Relationship Agreements have been developed and are in place with our three approved operations. These agreements have been constructed by NCC's legal department with comments from the relevant Joint Beneficiary legal teams, and can be easily amended for the Skills@Work Operation. The final version of the Relationship Agreement will be available for prior to operational approval with signatures gathered alongside those required for the WEFO Grant Offer Letter.
- Specific guidance and documents for the operation such as participant paperwork are being developed by the Central Lead Team during the business planning stage and will be reviewed by the Skills@Work development group.
- The Central Lead Team posts are apportioned across the three currently approved operations, through a methodology based on participant numbers. On approval, the above posts including the Coordinator post once recruited will be apportioned across all four operations.

#### Key barriers & risks

Through the development of both the Operational Logic Table and the Business Plan, a number of risks and potential barriers have been identified. A full list of all risks and barriers is outlined further on; however the following highlights some of the key risks, and the five categories under which we identify risk:



Risk	Example	Mitigation
Operational	Fluctuations in demand/ need	The operation targets have been determined through analysis at a local level. This will be kept under constant review as part of the claims and monitoring process and ongoing Health Checks. Adjustments may be able to be made across Joint Beneficiaries to ensure demand (and outputs) are met. Continual engagement with WEFO will identify early any areas of concern, with an opportunity for the operation.
	Duplication	The Operation will continue to engage with the Upskilling@Work and other potential operations within the region to ensure that delivery is coordinated and duplication is avoided.
Legislative	Local government re-organisation and reductions to core services	It is expected that any new entity formed as a result of local government reorganisation will take on the responsibilities of its predecessor preventing any significant changes to the operation.
	EU Referendum: 'Brexit'	There has been a commitment from UK Government to guarantee funding for operations approved whilst the UK is still part of the EU. Updates will be sought from WEFO/Welsh Government and cascaded to Joint Beneficiaries.
Procurement	Non-compliant procurement of training delivery	The majority of delivery will be undertaken directly by Joint Beneficiaries, with limited procurement expected. Guidance regarding procurement has been written into the Relationship Agreement, and will require prior approval of the Central Lead Team. Should a greater level of procurement be identified, we will look to develop a Regional Procurement Framework specifically for the Operation.
Project Management	Leadership and control	Lead and all Joint Beneficiaries have experience of working with target group, and of delivering similar activities. The Lead Beneficiary has extensive experience of delivering ESF operations and is currently delivering a P1 and two P3 operations within the East Wales region.

Commented [WM(-W3)]: I am also PDO for U@W so am well aware of these Operations activities.

A number of barriers to potential participants have been identified. The operation recognises that not all individuals will experience all of these barriers and has ensured that the delivery model is both flexible and focussed to identify and overcome the

barriers faced by that individual. The barriers identified can be grouped into the following main categories:

<p>Personal Development: How and why people act – their drive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Vision/Aspirations</li> <li>• Socialisation / Social Isolation</li> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>
<p>Community Support (or lack of): Where and how people live – their environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent Care</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Society – Social Exclusion</li> <li>• Local Economy</li> <li>• Opportunity (or lack thereof)</li> </ul>
<p>Employment Skills: What people can do – their skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience (quotable work ethic)</li> <li>• Personal presentation</li> <li>• Work Specific experience</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Numeracy</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul>

Operation costs and co-financing package

The ESF specific Flat Rate 40% (FR-40) Simplified Costs Option methodology has been selected by all beneficiaries within this operation. This method will be applied to all Joint Beneficiaries as well as the associated costs for the Lead Beneficiary due to the management of the operation.

Using the FR-40 Model the total cost of the Skills@Work operation is £3,592,371.80 with £1,939,880.77 ESF grant required at an intervention rate of 54%. The operation will engage with approximately 1516 participants giving a unit cost of £2,370 per participant.

Total Staff Costs	£2,565,979.86
FR40	£1,026,391.94
Total Claim Value	£3,592,371.80
ESF @ 54%	£1,939,880.77
Match Funding	£1,652,491.03

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### Match Funding

Match funding has been provided by Joint Beneficiaries as a combination of Simplified Costs and core budgets, as noted below and detailed within the submitted financial profile. The Central Lead Team will continue to monitor the Match Funding sources and value through quarterly Health Checks with Joint Beneficiaries required to confirm their match funding annually and on submission of the quarterly claims.

Joint Beneficiaries have confirmed match funding as follows:

1. Monmouthshire County Council Community Learning Grants
2. Newport City Council core funding
3. Cardiff Council core funding

## Section 1 – Core Criterion: Strategic Fit

### Alignment with EU Programme and Priority

The Skills@Work operation is seeking to contribute towards ESF Priority Theme 2A Adaptability, Growth and Progression, Specific Objective 1; To increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills.

Skills@Work will deliver across the Local Authority areas of Cardiff, Monmouthshire and Newport and brings together a collaborative partnership made up of Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive package of support to those individuals with low or no skills. The target groups will be those as set out in the ESF Operation Programme for East Wales:

- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – male
- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – female
- Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – male
- Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – female

The operation will deliver a coherent programme of interventions that add to the economic growth within the region by promoting sustainable employment and developing a skilled and responsive workforce. The Tackling Poverty Action Plan recognises that the best route out of poverty is through employment. The Skills@Work operation will help employed people to improve their skills and enhance the relevance of their qualifications.

Actions that the operation will take in support of Specific Objective 1 will include:  
(from p70 of East Wales Operational Programme)

- Actions to provide basic and essential skills provision at ISCED Levels 1 (primary) and 2 (lower secondary education) for employed individuals with low skills (qualifications up to and including lower secondary education ISCED Level 2) or with no formal qualifications
- Actions to provide technical or job specific vocational qualifications at ISCED Levels 1 (primary) and 2 (lower secondary) for employed individuals with low skills (qualifications up to and including lower secondary education ISCED Level 2) or with no formal qualifications
- Developing skills at ISCED Levels 1 and 2 to break down barriers to engagement with technologies, such as digital skills, reducing social isolation and increasing access to work progression opportunities on-line.

The Skills@Work operation aims to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills at all levels from NQF Entry Level to NQF level 2 across the workforce of the East Wales region through community based provision, thereby improving the opportunities for those employees with low or no skills to sustain employment and

increase earnings potential. The operation will work alongside the employer based operation Upskilling@Work to ensure synergy between operations across the region and avoid potential duplication.

The operation will encourage and support skills progression up to NQF level 2 particularly for those with low or no skills, to maximise the benefits skills can have on supporting in-work poverty. The Skills@Work delivery model will balance the need to support access to higher level skills, through referrals to other operations and services, which can increase competitiveness and help bridge the productivity gap.

Community based provision will focus on supporting reluctant learners to engage with flexible learning opportunities outside of the workplace and will offer a range of provision including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and other generic transferable skills resulting in an eligible qualification from NQF Entry Level 1 to NQF Level 2. Basic literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills acquisition will form a key area to improve the mobility of the workforce and sustainable employment.

In order to enhance long term sustainable employment participants will be supported to access further learning opportunities that will enhance their qualification levels above NQF Level 2, supporting their career potential in the faster growing occupational groups. The operation will advise participants on exit of potential progression routes to access qualifications and training above NQF Level 2 such as the Upskilling@Work operation. We understand that this operation engages with the employer rather than the employee directly but envisage that the referral could provide further options to the individual if the employer can be engaged.

The skills profile in East Wales has improved in the last few years but it remains on average weaker than in the UK, a significant proportion of working age people have low or no skills. The operation is aware of the Learning Skills and Innovation Partnership Regional Skills Plan and Cardiff City Region Employment and Skills Plan will ensure where possible that provision meets the needs of the economy and employers in South East Wales.

The Cardiff Capital Region Employment & Skills Plan 2017<sup>1</sup> published in August details a number of major investments that will have an influence on the labour force and skills demand in the South East Wales area, these investments include the below;

### Rail including the Metro

Transport for Wales (TfW) is progressing procurement for the South Wales Metro and Wales and Borders Rail franchise (supported by an ethical procurement panel including the Wales Council for Voluntary Action). Initial skills needs are:

- rail engineering e.g. signalling, electrification, track and rolling stock engineers;
- ICT/digital systems and software engineers, data analysts and cyber security;
- project management skills – cost planning, risk analysts, managers;
- financial, commercial and procurement specialists;
- train operational staff, on-board, customer, station and planning staff.

<sup>1</sup> Cardiff Capital Region Employment & Skills Plan 2017

**Commented [h4]:** The participant will be made aware of the U@W operation if they would like to progress further, however it will at this point be explained that their employer would need to be made aware and engage with that operation before training/support can be provided.

**Commented [WM(-W5)]:** How will it do this and do you have endorsement of the proposal from those concerned.

**Commented [h6]:** Possibly should be amended to note that the operation is aware of the Learning Skills and Innovation Partnership Regional Skills Plan and Cardiff City Region Employment and Skills Plan and will liaise with any future projects to avoid duplication of delivery and where possible align to the priorities noted in those plans.

Some existing staff can meet these demands; however, a paper produced for Transport for Wales indicates that an ageing workforce will result in 800-1,000 replacement staff being needed within the rail sector across South Wales, with about half in infrastructure and half in train operational staff.

**Other transport infrastructure investment creating skills demand:**

- South Wales M4 corridor relief road;<sup>13</sup>
- A465 dualling (see LSKIP's 2016 Employment and Skills Plan)<sup>14</sup> Heads of the Valleys to M50, M5 and Midlands;
- Electrification of the railway from London, Swindon and Bristol.

**Social Housing and 21st Century Schools and Education Programme**

The Welsh Government has committed to 20,000 new houses across Wales to meet social housing need. Skills training is needed for improved efficiencies, quality and accelerated delivery. The Government is looking at potential off-site construction and utilisation of Building Information Modelling (BIM).

**Valleys Taskforce**

Led by the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, the Taskforce remit is to maximise investment across valleys areas looking at improving delivery of public services and creating better jobs closer to home, to increase employment.

**Superfast Cymru - ICT/Digital**

ICT/digital connectivity delivered through the Superfast Cymru broadband network has the potential to drive ICT, digital creativity and technology skills for the wider digital economy. These will have a cross-sector impact on skills demand, key to economic development.

**Enterprise Zones**

Cardiff Airport and St Athan Enterprise Zone focuses on aerospace, automotive, defence, engineering and manufacturing:

- Cardiff International Airport has a major British Airways presence;
- development of the former defence establishment of St Athan with Aston Martin is a high-profile inward investment;
- involvement of Cardiff and Vale College with an on-site campus offering bespoke training and support for apprenticeships;
- Transport infrastructure is a priority.

Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone's main driver is business and financial services (FPS) and digital:

- New office accommodation is being constructed for the BBC and financial, business and legal firms.
- Central Square has Cardiff Central Railway Station and Cardiff Bus Station (under construction).

- The Enterprise Zone has excellent broadband connectivity and is developing a skills base around fintech and digital services.

Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone is a centre for manufacturing and engineering enterprise:

- improving connections to the Midlands automotive industry by dualling the A465;
- a number of key supply chain automotive manufacturing organisations;
- strong life science presence in pharmaceutical manufacturing;
- Local State-of-the-art further education college facilities and access to university research.

In terms of the Economic Opportunities identified in South East Wales, the region is identified as the most populous, and economic activity is focused on the capital and other major employment centres in the region. As the key economic regional driver for Wales, it is critical that the supply, in terms of quality and type of skills being delivered, meets the demand for the region to succeed. Employment in the Cardiff Capital Region economy shows growth in employment in construction, health and social work, finance and insurance, ICT/digital, professional and support services. However, there are a number of skills shortage vacancies (SSVs) highlighted in East Wales in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail, hotels and restaurants and transport and communications.<sup>2</sup>

The operation will utilise Local Authority Partnerships to determine employment needs and to develop linkages with local opportunities ensuring participants are engaged in appropriate education and training that aligns with employment growth and highlighted SSVs for the region. Local Authority Joint Beneficiaries are well placed to work with their Economic Development and Regeneration teams, whilst our Registered Social Landlords work closely with their Local Authorities.

Within Newport for example, the Lead Beneficiary sits within the same service area as both Economic Development and Work & Skills - with links to business and inward investment programmes. The Work Based Learning Academy has strong links to local employers supporting them to recruit employees and work placements as well as workplace training requirements.

Where possible the operation will promote entrepreneurship and self-employment to allow people to move out of in-work poverty and engage with the labour market. This will allow this operation to make linkages that will compliment ERDF and the supporting of SME's.

The operation will therefore contribute to the Programme level common result indicators of:

Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving - male	237
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<sup>2</sup> Skills Gateway, Regional Labour Market Intelligence Report – South East Wales

Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving - female	297
Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving - male	255
Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving – female	266

### Contribution towards EPF for Welsh European Funds

The Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF) refers to support for demand led skills activity and it is clear that the provision of a skilled workforce is key to underpinning many of the EPF Economic Opportunities.

With the proximity of all 10 Local Authorities across the region, taking into account travel to work patterns, development of the Metro, work of the Cardiff City Region board and employment opportunities, contribution to the EPF should be seen on an East Wales regional basis, considering both East Wales and West Wales and Valleys programme areas.

The Skills@Work proposal aims to increase the number of transferable and job specific skills at all levels from NQF Entry Level to NQF level 2 within the workforce of the East Wales Region through community based provision. The provision of support to address and overcome barriers and training opportunities will allow currently low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase earnings potential.

The Skills@Work operation will work in partnership with the Regional Learning Partnership, Cardiff City Region Board, Regional Business and Employment & Skills Partnerships such as Business Improvement Districts, Enterprise Zones and Sector Skills Councils. This will align with growth activity to engage individuals who face in work poverty or a barrier to career to find the appropriate training and gain the necessary skills, utilising Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to ensure that this reflects areas of employer growth and demand and develops linkages with local opportunities and new investments. Developments in the EPF will be periodically reviewed and monitored throughout the life of the operation to ensure that it is flexible in its approach in delivering demand-led skills activity to meet the immediate and future labour market requirements.

This will contribute to meeting wider EPF Thematic Opportunities, notably under the Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Digital Marketplace, Health and Tourism, Recreation and Leisure strands, which will require suitably qualified staff.

The Advanced Manufacturing Demand Driver of having large companies with considerable employment footprints retained as a base in the area will be supported by the increased availability of locally available employees, which will may be

**Commented [WM(-W7)]:** Do you have letters of support from any of these?

**Commented [h8]:** Not currently, representatives from NCC's Regeneration Investment and Housing Service, which the Skills@Work operation sits within, attend meetings with these and will hopefully receive and provide information that supports the operation delivery. The S@W operation is also due to present to the CCR Regional Proofing Panel on the 20<sup>th</sup> September.



participants of the Skills@Work operation that have been up skilled. The St Athan, Cardiff and Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zones and associated supplier industries demonstrate a clear regional demand driver that will provide sustainable employment opportunities for participants engaging with the Skills@Work operation.

The Life Sciences and Health Thematic opportunities note that there will be jobs at either end of the skills spectrum necessary for the development of the sector. The proposed £220m Investment in health and social care can provide sustainable employment and career progression opportunities for many participants of this operation. The Skills@Work operation will take account of the demand for skills in growing sectors such as this to provide non-statutory training to be delivered to participants accordingly and to provide access to further learning opportunities.

The exploitation of ICT assets and opportunities of the digital marketplace are expected to provide a significant opportunity to the region. Anticipated growth will have a direct impact on the skill demands of the region and will have an indirect impact in stimulating growth in other sectors e.g. construction. The development of the BBC drama village and Pinewood Studios investment will provide employment opportunities for participants in this operation. The Skills@Work operation will support employer demands for skill provision.

The EPF also notes that Tourism, Recreation and Leisure sectors have the opportunity to provide significant growth and jobs within the construction industry and supply chains and in tourism businesses themselves. Dependent upon which strategic destination management proposals are progressed, there may be associated employment opportunities in East Wales, such as in the planned retail and hotels at the Circuit of Wales, the Wales National Convention Centre in Newport, and in the regional capital, Cardiff. The operation will also consider opportunities for further growth in tourism in areas such as the Glamorgan Heritage coast and Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In terms of the Economic Opportunities identified in East Wales, the region is identified as the most populous, and economic activity is focused on the capital and other major employment centres in the region. As the key economic regional driver for Wales, it is critical that the supply, in terms of quality and type of skills being delivered, meets the demand for the region to succeed.

Specifically, the Enterprise Zones focussing on Financial and Professional Services and Advanced Manufacturing are noted as Demand Drivers for the region. The aim to maximise the Enterprise Zones dictates the need to ensure that there is a suitably qualified and skilled workforce and that there is a continuing supply of suitably qualified labour coming through and developed within the workplace. This is where operations such as Skills@Work will help to deliver the numbers required and support progression into further learning.

Agglomeration effects of the City Region are noted as offering a major opportunity for economic growth and the development of assets to meet the demands of a growing City Region. This includes improving physical (South Wales Metro, M4 relief road, Cardiff Airport improvements, etc.) and digital connectivity (superfast broadband, broadband delivery and Newport data centre). The Skills@Work operation will align

to the opportunities of the region where this is not provided through other European Programmes

The operation will develop a structure of support that will assist participants to broaden their horizons by making links and accessing training to further career progression and reduce skills shortages within the East Wales region. Links will be made to support the growth of the Thematic Economic Opportunities set out in the EPF, both supporting the core demand driver of the East Wales region and its desire to increase the GDP of the area, as well as those other key sectors and cluster developments which can be more local in nature. The operation is working closely with our West Wales and Valleys partners, the Regional Learning Partnerships and other proposed ESF operations in the region to ensure maximum opportunity and impact across East Wales.

The Skills@Work operation and the West Wales and Valleys operation support the priorities highlighted in the EPF. The operations have the ability to provide and up skill the human capital to support the infrastructural and sector developments that make up the genuine economic opportunities that the wider European Structural Funds can support.

The operation acknowledges that there are other operations working to address this objective and will work towards establishing clear processes for referral and support to avoid duplication.

### Alignment with relevant Welsh Government Policies

The operation clearly aligns itself against a number of Welsh Government policies. The following demonstrates key links being made, providing an initial outline to the national and local policies.

Strategy	Priorities/Outcomes/Linkages	How The Operation will contribute
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015	To ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	<p>The operation expects to contribute towards the achievement of the following National Indicators<sup>3</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross Disposable Household Income per head</li> <li>• Percentage of people in employment</li> <li>• Percentage of people in education, employment or</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government: How to measure a nation's progress? National Indicators for Wales as required by section 10(1) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

		training, measured for different age groups
<p>Welsh Government Employability Plan</p> <p>Responding to current and projected skills gaps</p>	<p>Whilst there is a need for a very clear national direction on the high skills that will be necessary to drive a successful high tech economy in Wales, we will need a more tailored approach to the complexity of the labour market at a local and regional level. We also need to make sure that we have the skills available locally to support the Foundational Economy.<sup>4</sup></p>	<p>The plan notes that “We need to train people for jobs which exist and provide them with the skills and adaptability to respond to future jobs markets.”</p> <p>The operation will aim to achieve this target and enable those who are suffering in work poverty to retrain and up skill increasing income and job security creating further employment opportunities.</p>
<p>Welsh Government Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021</p> <p>Ambitious and Learning</p>	<p>Promote and enhance both academic and vocational routes into and through further and higher education, and the national, international and civic roles of our educational institutions. This includes both full and part-time opportunities that will benefit learners of all ages, employers and communities.<sup>5</sup></p>	<p>The Skills@Work Operation will provide additional routes for employed individuals to complete accredited and vocational training courses, whilst also promoting access to further and higher education.</p>
<p>Welsh Government Prosperity for All: the national strategy</p>	<p>Skills and Employability: the better people’s skills, the better their chances of getting fair, secure and rewarding employment, and the stronger the skills base is in Wales, the more chance we have of attracting new businesses and growing existing ones to improve prosperity.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>We will enable people to develop the skills they need</p>	<p>The Skills@Work operation will allow individuals to develop the skills they want outside of their workplace by offering easy to access training opportunities within their local community.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government Employability Plan, page 27.

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021, page 9.

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government Prosperity for All: the national strategy, page 4

	to get the jobs they want, supporting businesses to start, innovate, and grow, creating decent, secure employment.	
Welsh Government – Vibrant and Viable Places, New Regeneration Framework Visions and outcomes (page 4)	<p>National Outcomes;</p> <p>Prosperous communities; A range of activities at the regional and local level.</p> <p>Learning communities; Regeneration is intrinsically linked with the skills and capacities of individuals, families and communities.</p> <p>Healthier communities; The health and wellbeing of residents are central to the vitality of places.</p>	<p>The Skills@Work operation will join up delivery across 3 local authorities to contribute to the national outcomes. The operation can contribute to the following outcome indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved levels of economic activity</li> <li>• A skilled and confident existing and future workforce</li> <li>• A belief in a better future</li> </ul>
Policy Statement on Skills (2013) Skills that respond to local need (page 10)	<p>Skills that respond to local need.</p> <p>Wales must develop a skills system that is effective at delivering joined-up employment and skills support which reflects the needs of local communities and can work seamlessly alongside national support programme.</p> <p>Stimulate demand for employment and skills support by providing the flexibility to develop responses based upon local and regional need.</p>	<p>The Skills@Work Operation will support the development of skills that are locally responsive by delivering packages of employment training directly linked to current recruitment needs, either through allowing an up skilling of an employer's current workforce or enabling mobility between employers.</p>
Policy Statement on Skills (2013) Skills for employment (page 17)	<p>Skills for Employment.</p> <p>Wales may develop a skills system that can provide the employment support necessary to assist individuals while supplying the tools to enable individuals to take responsibility for improving</p>	<p>The Skills@Work Operation will develop a programme of support that will not overlap any existing or planned provision at a National level.</p>

	<p>the value of their skills within the economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist individuals who are looking to change employers to have access to appropriate employment support programme with in Wales</li> <li>• Provide individuals with access to the information they need to improve their skills</li> </ul>	
<p>Wales: A Vibrant Economy Raising earning (page 12)</p>	<p>There is a strong link between levels of qualifications and levels of earning.</p>	<p>The Skills@Work operation will provide opportunities for people to improve their levels of qualifications which will in turn improve their earning potential, resulting in their contributing to their local economies and local community regeneration.</p> <p>The operation will concentrate on community-based provision for skills training in a variety of curriculum areas, leading to further/higher education, aiming to directly meet local employer demand by supporting individuals to meet employer need</p> <p>Specified employment sector skills are in line with City Strategies identified needs, the National Skills Audit.</p>
<p>Skills Implementation Plan</p>	<p>The skills system in Wales focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills for jobs and growth</li> <li>• Skills that respond to local needs</li> </ul>	<p>Providing an integrated, streamlined and accessible skills and employment offer for individuals and employers and devolving responsibility to delivery</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills that employers value</li> <li>• Skills for employment</li> </ul>	partners to develop flexible responses based upon the needs within local communities.
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## Contribution to Cross Cutting Themes

**Commented [WM(-W9):** I have sent your BP to CCT colleagues and will pass on any comments that they make

The Skills@Work operation will successfully implement a plan that clearly contributes towards the Cross Cutting Themes of Equal Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability, Tackling Poverty and Sustainable Development.

Shared Purpose Shared Delivery required Local Authorities and their partners to develop integrated planning mechanisms to focus on the top priorities for the area. Skills and Work and Economic Opportunity have been identified as key priorities for the area as a result of this Welsh Government guidance.

One Newport Local Service Board has undertaken a labour market analysis of STEM related industries looking at current and future requirements for sustainable employment and business growth working to address gender balance and equality within disadvantaged groups.

### Equal Opportunities

The operation will through its programme of learning and embedded Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) challenge traditional assumptions and stereotypes to raise participation levels in occupations and sectors where a particular gender or recognised equality groups are under-represented. For example, the operation will help to break down traditional job-role assumptions with the aim of increasing participation by both men and women in non-traditional work.

The BME population of South East Wales is the highest in Wales, with Cardiff and Newport having the highest concentrations of BME groups in the country. Evidence nationally and locally such as Newport's Single Integrated Plan, indicates that BME communities such as Roma are more likely to have low skills levels.

Joint Beneficiaries will develop and maintain valuable ways to engage and provide support for those from under-represented groups such as the BME community, women and disabled people. Joint Beneficiaries will ensure these groups are active participants in the operation.

Low skills levels are linked with wider poverty indicators including unemployment and health inequalities. Areas of the 'Competitiveness' region of East Wales have communities as affected by poverty as the 'Convergence' region but this tends to be masked by more affluent neighbourhoods which raise the average for deprivation indicators. This is particularly evident for Cardiff, Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Improving skills levels are regarded as a vital strategy in addressing persistent area based deprivation. Learning levels up to and including Level 2 will be available within the operation. Learning opportunities at Level 3 and 4 will be strongly encouraged and assisted as progression routes through FE and HE if the clients express an interest. Delivery staff will enable all participants to see the acquisition of higher level skills as a real possibility.

A focus on in-work skills could support older working adults who may have lower skills than younger people to compete in the labour market.

WEFO's guidance on Equal Opportunities and Local Authority Equal Opportunities and Diversity policies will be followed and adhered to, ensuring that the opportunities are available for all regardless of ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion. The operation has been created and developed through extensive collaboration which we will continue to do as the implementation and delivery progresses. All recruitment systems will be robust and fair with a comprehensive induction programme to enable employers and individuals to understand the operation. The skills of staff will be assessed and they will be supported and encouraged in any additional learning they wish to undertake to improve their work skills, subject to discussion with WEFO.

The Equalities Act 2010 protects defined groups against discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, marriage, civil partnership, socio-economic background or pregnancy. All Joint Beneficiaries within the operation operate Equal Opportunities policies which stipulate how their staff can best promote equality of opportunity and outcome for men and women in line with this Act.

The Lead Beneficiary will ensure that no member of staff or client receives less favourable treatment on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and social or economic background or is disadvantaged by any practices or procedures that cannot be justified.

#### Apply the Welsh Language

The use and implementation of the Welsh language is essential within this operation and will adhere to the Welsh Government Welsh Language policy and the individual Welsh Language policies of each Joint Beneficiary. Documentation will be made available in alternative formats as required to enable accessibility. Efforts will be made to promote the use of the Welsh Language and offer bilingual learning opportunities, for example promotional materials, participant documents and training courses.

We will ensure that all marketing, publications and printed literature is available bilingually where appropriate. Joint Beneficiaries will ensure that contractors and delivery partners are able to deliver and work in Welsh, if participants wish to do so.

With regards to Welsh language legislation Local Authority Beneficiaries have a statutory duty to comply with the new Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which offers customers a real choice of language

from their first point of contact. Both our Registered Social Landlords have in place Welsh Language Scheme published in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993.

The operation does not envisage large numbers of requests for delivery in the Welsh language, however all partners have the ability to undertake this, should a request be made, or the demand be identified. Partners have access to Welsh Language (and other language) translation, and if required can make provision for training delivered through the medium of Welsh.

The operation will monitor the provision of Welsh Language through its enrolment and referral processes, capturing not only participants' understanding, knowledge and use but also that of the staff engaging with participants.

#### Language and Accessibility

All materials, websites and publicity aimed at the public will be available and accessible in bi- and multi-lingual formats if targeting BME underrepresented groups. Large print, audio and braille versions of training and educational materials will be made available to meet demands. We will also support participants by offering readers and scribes for formal learning and controlled assessments if they are required.

#### Transport

The operation will promote awareness of existing public transport options. We will utilise all existing public transport, if we ascertain that transport links aren't being fully utilised, the operation will seek to increase the level of awareness of potential public transport options. Emphasis must be placed on considerations of timings of routes to ensure unsociable hours; shift work patterns (early morning and late evenings and weekends) are covered. The operation will also consider that sufficient capacity at peak times must be provided. Consideration must also be given to those whose journey and commute to work consists of multiple drop offs.

Travelling to work may be difficult and costly for some of our participants, so the operation will seek to promote alternative travel arrangements such as car share schemes and cycle routes. The operation will work with local organisations such as local community groups and third sector organisations to promote any changes or improvements that are made in order to raise awareness and promote the benefits. This will help change the perceptions of our participants who previously felt that the services failed to meet their needs.

#### Tackling Poverty

Evidence shows clear links between low skill levels and wider indicators of deprivation including long term unemployment, child poverty, health inequalities, substance misuse, crime and anti-social behaviour and the enduring nature of area based deprivation.



There are clear links that show employment offers a high level of protection against poverty for individuals and families. There is a strong correlation between qualifications and skills, employment and earnings. Growth and sustainable jobs are at the heart of the Programme for Government and jobs and the economy are the Welsh Government's overriding priorities.

The Skills@Work operation must look to develop a skills system that is effective at delivering joined-up employment and skills support which reflects the needs of individuals, employers and local economies that can work seamlessly alongside other national and regional support programmes.

Improving skills levels is likely to have an impact on inter-generational poverty as evidence suggests that children from families with low skills/educational attainment/unemployment are more likely to themselves become economically excluded and to not participate in the labour market.

Central Government policy is increasingly focused on tackling poverty through increasing employment rates and reducing economic inactivity, this is linked to changes to the benefits system not least the rollout of tax credits and Universal Credit. Improving skills levels is a fundamental step in maintaining employment, particularly in an increasingly competitive labour market.

One of the objectives in the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan will be to work with partners to identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences. The Skills@Work operation supports those most at risk of in-work poverty with vulnerable targets groups, for example low skilled workers, BME, ESOL, ALN, carers, lone parents and those with a work limiting health condition or disability.

It is proposed that Joint Beneficiaries will use the WEST Assessment Tool to provide an initial diagnostic assessment of the participant's current skill levels. The assessment will be completed after enrolment, arranged and supported by the project worker, and will take approximately 30 minutes. The in-depth assessment will identify competencies and development needs for each individual participant, allowing the operation to produce a targeted learning plan with supporting activities/interventions. The assessment will provide essential skill levels for participants in areas such as numeracy, literacy, digital literacy or ESOL. Additional to providing data around the participant's essential skills level, the assessment will also be used to highlight the work skills or qualifications required for their specific sector/role that they wish to progress. The assessment can be repeated at any point during the participant's engagement with the operation allowing further data to be gathered and learning plans to be updated if required.

#### Sustainable Development

Recent economic forecasts for the region indicate potential skills shortages, with acute pressures in high skilled, technical and managerial roles particularly affecting the science, technology and engineering sectors. Failure to replace such skills lost mainly as a result of the ageing workforce presents a risk to productivity, economic growth,

business continuity and the sustainability of key business sectors particularly as competition from other regions and lower cost workforces increases.

Ensuring that people of working age can acquire relevant workplace skills means that they are more likely to be able to compete in the employment market, are less likely to become unemployed and dependent on benefits, which in turn contributes to sustainable development. The use of labour market information and engagement with employers and the Regional Learning Partnership will help ensure the provision is in line with skills demands.

Ensuring that people of working age continue to participate in paid employment ensures tax revenues to the exchequer which in turn funds sustainable public services and social security costs.

There are well documented links between low skills rates and poverty. Poverty is in turn linked with risks to achieving sustainable development in communities for instance in relation to unemployment, increased levels of crime, health inequalities, inter-generational poverty and area based deprivation.

The Lead Beneficiary will adopt a participant tracking and monitoring system called CEMP. This database is multi-functional in that it is capable of performance monitoring, business intelligence and reporting outcomes to stakeholders. Key outcomes can be tracked throughout the lifetime of the operation with reports generated from any of the data inputted. The CEMP Database also provides in depth demographical knowledge of participants and uses this information for continuous improvement of our delivery. The use of this system encourages Joint Beneficiaries to upload all information to the database thereby negating the need for personal and sensitive data to be sent electronically via email to the Lead Beneficiary which may be unsecured.

#### Access to and Use of ICT

The operation will promote the benefits of digital inclusion to those individuals who aren't computer literate, or perhaps lack confidence with their IT ability. We will promote the use of existing training courses used in community locations. These will provide access and support so our participants will be able to use the internet for a job search (to seek new sustainable employment post upskilling) alongside more general digital wellness. Joint Beneficiaries will also work alongside organisations such as local credit unions to create innovative low cost solutions to increase the number of people accessing the internet.

Joint Beneficiaries will use various social media channels as a way of engaging and building a relationship with the participants. Many participants will be confident in using IT and the internet. However, for those where this is not the case, the benefits of using the internet and IT will be promoted, encouraged and supported. The operation will encourage safe and appropriate use of IT and the internet, developing participants' ICT literacy skills, preparing them for further learning, education and training.

#### Health and Wellbeing

The operation and Joint Beneficiaries will work with health care professionals, organisations and networks to aid with delivering health and wellbeing services. This will serve a dual purpose of complementing the aims of the operation and providing additional support to improve participant's physical and mental wellbeing. This can range from promoting physical exercise and mobility to support to improve personal hygiene. The operation will aspire towards a society in which physical and mental wellbeing is maximised, and where choices and behaviours that benefit future health are actively discussed.

Regional and Thematic group boards

Local Service Boards have identified through their Unified Needs Assessments both Tackling Poverty and Skills and Work as priorities within the Single Integrated Plans for Newport, Cardiff and Monmouthshire. The development of effective learning pathways from basic skills through to higher level skills is a key priority and the programme will contribute to this whilst providing an additional focus on people already in employment. This focus also supports economic growth and competitiveness in the region which has also been a focus for the Welsh Government, Cardiff Capital Region and the individual East Wales local authorities.

	OPPORTUNITIES	IMPACTS
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	Greater equality of opportunity Greater understanding and tolerance of vulnerable/minority groups Greater exposure to a wider range of opportunities for participating females	More vulnerable/minority groups gaining higher qualifications and access to improved opportunities, increasing GDP More tolerant population More choice for employed people
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	Future career opportunities Future workforce better educated in environmental sustainability	Reduction in consumption Increase in reuse Increase in recycling Better environment Better educated population
TACKLING POVERTY	Employed people supported to remain in employment and continue their personal development through community and work based learning/training Improve employed people's self-esteem and	Identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences. Development of a skills system that is effective at delivering joined-up employment and skills support which reflects the needs of local economies.

	confidence to sustain employment.	
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### **Integration with ESI funding or other EU Funding Streams**

This operation will integrate with actions identified within the proposed Specific Objective 2 FE operation within East Wales of this priority. This will support progression at key transition points, enabling an employed individual to access further learning allowing them to gain qualifications above NQF Level 2.

The proposed Skills@Work operation will fill a gap in current provision. Providing a structured learning environment for employed individuals either within their workplace or community. The operation will provide an environment where employed people can engage in life style activities that aim to improve simple skills such as time keeping, literacy and specialist support identified such as, language or mental health resulting in an increased skill level from a vocational or job specific qualification.

The Skills@Work operation complements many other provisions that support the workforce such as Work Based Learning and Jobs growth Wales, also the proposed East Wales Regional operation, Inspire2Work. The Skills@Work operation provides a progression route for participants on Inspire2Work that gain employment and require further interventions allowing them to gain skills and qualifications ensuring employment is sustained. Training opportunities if not provided through other European Funded operations will be aligned to consider emerging infrastructure projects in the East Wales region, including both ERDF and domestic, such as Metro, M4 Widening and the Tidal Lagoon.

The ex-ante assessment of the use of Financial Instruments (FI) in ESF concluded that FI for the proposed actions were inappropriate, unlikely to be cost effective and be too dependent on uncertain employment outcomes. It is therefore not proposed to utilise FI in the delivery of the proposed actions.

There may be opportunities in the future to develop local delivery opportunities with eligible RDP ward areas, however, the RDP Programme and the LAG Partnerships have yet to be approved and therefore, it is probably too early to say if there are proposals, or elements of this operation, that may offer some synergy.

### **Integrations with other EU funding and transnational opportunities**

There are no plans, at this stage, for integrating the Skills@Work operation with other EU Funding Streams. The Interreg North West Europe and Interreg Atlantic Arc Programmes whilst both heavily influenced by the need to create jobs, are not devised to offer support or deliver education and training interventions, so integrating with these Programmes would be difficult.

Alongside this, there is also the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the impact this will have on other EU funds. It is therefore difficult for us to also determine our level of

input into other EU funding and transnational opportunities, so it has been difficult to discuss this possibility with partners. However, we will utilise the experience of our partners to consider alternative funding streams, and to explore further opportunities should they be available in the future.

## Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

This proposal forms an integral part of an overall strategy and model to address economic inactivity across the East Wales area, by providing the confidence and training necessary to overcome skills deficits and thereby reduce economic inactivity.

We recognise the need to work with other operations in the region and have worked closely with our West Wales and Valleys partners to ensure a complimentary approach to delivery across the East Wales region and both EU Programme areas.

The proposal has been designed to work in conjunction with other programmes and Welsh Government back bone operations and will not duplicate but compliment and add value, filling gaps in provision where there is a specific need. Meetings have been held with the FE/HE network to discuss the SO2 operation within the Skills for Growth priority. These discussions have clarified that the Skills@Work operation will only engage with employees; however we will continue to develop referral routes and coherent pathways of support between the various proposed operations. The Skills@Work operation will only engage with individuals and not target engagement with employers.

The operation has engaged in detailed discussion with partners including Working Skills for Adults 2 WWV partners and has engaged with a number of stakeholders:

P2 Upskilling@Work: This operation, led by Coleg Gwent in East Wales aims to increase the skills level, including work relevant skills of those in the workforce with no or low skills. We will engage with colleagues in this operation, to consider how it may provide additional support for participants exiting the Skills@Work operation who are interested in gaining further qualifications above NQF Level 2.

- Communities for Work Plus: This programme aims to help those adults furthest away from the labour market into employment but will also support a small number of individuals facing in work poverty.

The following partners have been consulted, with their level of engagement set out below:

Organisation	Involvement
Monmouthshire County Council	Proposed Joint Beneficiary
Cardiff City Council	Proposed Joint Beneficiary
Vale of Glamorgan County Council	Consulted on proposals
Monmouthshire Housing Association	Consulted on proposals
Coleg Gwent	Consulted on proposals
Cardiff and Vale College	Consulted on proposals
Neath Port Talbot College Group	Consulted on proposals

Torfaen CBC	Member of SWYP group, Lead for WWV Working Skills for Adults 2
FE/HE Network (SEW)	Member of SWYP group
FE EU Managers Network	Consulted on proposals
DfES	Member of SWYP group
DWP	Member of SWYP group
Public Health Wales	Member of SWYP group
South East Wales Specialist European Team	Member of SWYP group
South East Wales Directors of Environment & Regeneration Group (SEWDER)	Endorsement of proposals
Learning, Skills & Innovation Partnership (LSkIP)	Endorsement of proposals
South West and Central Regional Learning Partnership	Endorsement of proposals - TBC
Powys County Council	Endorsement of proposals
Gwent Adult Community Learning Partnership	Endorsement of proposals
Cardiff and the Vale Adult Community Learning Partnership	Endorsement of proposals

**Commented [WM(-W10):** Grateful for evidence of such endorsements

**Commented [h11]:** Many endorsements for the Skills@Work operation were gained over 2 years ago, when the operation was initially created, through presentations by either NCC as the LB or by individual JB's to various groups. Unfortunately written notification i.e minutes were either not collected at this point or were unavailable due to the format of the meetings.

In addition, the following engagement and consultation activity has contributed to the development of the operation:

Local Authority partners

- Attendance and participation in regional meetings for Skills, Worklessness and Young People
- Participation at regional monthly meetings of the East Wales ESF working group.
- Regular communications with the Working Skills for Adults 2 WWV lead partner through meetings, email, and telephone.
- Reports and Communication with Cardiff and Vale Community Learning Partnership
- Reports and Communication with Gwent ACL Partnership Strategic Group

Non LA partners

- All five Local Authority Local Service Boards
- Presentation and discussion at the regional FE/HE Network meetings
- Attendance and participation in regional meetings for Skills, Worklessness and Young People
- JobCentre Plus
- Careers Wales
- Public Health
- DWP
- Coleg Gwent
- Cardiff and Vale College

- Neath Port Talbot College Group

The Skills, Worklessness and Young People (SWYP) group is multi-disciplinary in its make-up which has given a balanced, regional approach to the development of the operation. Partners have drawn on existing good practise and used the gaps identified through the Work and Skills Strategy to develop this operation. Therefore, the operation takes a consistent approach to identifying and supporting employed people in need of up skilling, but allowing flexibility to meet local need.

## **Further Strategic Criterion: Cross Cutting Themes**

### **Statutory Obligations fulfilled by the Operation**

#### Welsh Language

Joint Beneficiaries will be required to comply with the Welsh Language Act and will support the overarching Welsh Government strategy 'A Living Language'.

The Skills@Work operation will ensure that Welsh versions of training and educational marketing materials will be made available to meet demand. The Lead Beneficiary will ensure operation materials, websites and publicity aimed at the public are made available in accessible and bi- or multi-lingual formats. Large print, audio and braille versions of training and educational marketing materials will be made available to meet demand.

#### Sustainable Development

A key element of the ESF programme is to meet the requirements of the EU strategy Europe 2020: sustainable growth.

Welsh Government strategies have been produced to deliver on the sustainable development agenda, as outlined below:

- Government of Wales Act 2006 - Ministers must demonstrate how they promote sustainable development.
- One Wales: One Planet - sustainable development is our central organising principle
- Programme for Government - deliver jobs and growth with a focus on sustainable development.

To ensure that the operation Lead and Joint Beneficiaries fulfil their statutory obligations under all legislation relating to sustainable development, the operation will:

- Embed the principals of Sustainable development as a Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) in its activities;
- Promote environmental awareness and good practice in delivery of activities. This may include the promotion where appropriate of careers in the

environmental, renewable energy sectors, conservation and waste management;

- Joint Beneficiaries will be encouraged to reduce the amount of waste produced, re-use materials and products wherever possible and recycle materials and products wherever possible;
- Joint Beneficiaries will be encouraged to use Environmental Management systems;
- The Lead Beneficiary will work with WEFO to keep up to date with developing guidance and policy in relation to sustainable development and convey this to Joint Beneficiaries, and will adapt processes and practices as necessary.

### Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015

The Act states that the actions of public bodies should be preventative in nature and comply with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, and therefore any ESF operations will need to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Act places a responsibility upon public bodies to ensure that any decisions they make take in to account the future wellbeing of the people of Wales. The Act covers public bodies, and therefore both Local Authority beneficiaries will be duty bound by the Act. The nature of the activity being undertaken by Skills@Work ensures that consideration will be given to the seven well-being goals within the Wellbeing Act, and that in doing so, the operation expects to contribute towards the achievement of the following National Indicators:<sup>7</sup>

- Gross Disposable Household Income per head
- Percentage of people in employment
- Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups

### Equal Opportunities

The Lead Beneficiary (Newport City Council) has a Strategic Equality Plan (2016-2020), with 9 equality objectives developed to meet the requirements of Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, under the framework of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

A more equal Wales	
1.	Diversity in the workplace
2.	Engagement and democratic participation
3.	Improving Access to Services
4.	Tackling Poverty
A Wales of cohesive communities	

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government: How to measure a nation's progress? National Indicators for Wales as required by section 10(1) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



5.	Cohesive Communities and tackling hate crime
6.	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
7.	Homelessness
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	
8.	Compliance with Welsh Language Standards
9.	Corporate Compliance

The Skills@Work operation will seek to ensure that:

- All Joint Beneficiaries are committed to equal opportunities principles, creating an inclusive environment where equality and diversity are valued and seen as key to successfully delivering high-quality services.
- Services will comply with the Welsh Language Scheme, Welsh Language Act (1993) and Welsh Standards.
- All Joint Beneficiaries will be expected to keep up to date with developing Policy and guidance in relation equal opportunities and implement changes as required.
- The Lead Beneficiary will ensure that partners within the operation and any contracted providers meet legal obligations and ensure that any procured services utilised through the operation comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- Any tendering and evaluation processes undertaken for the award of contracts for the delivery of this operation will ask specific questions to ensure equality of opportunity and fairness at work.
- All employees, staff, contractors that are involved in this operation during the course of their work behave in a manner which respects the dignity of colleagues, business partners and contacts, participants and members of the public at all times.

#### Equality and Diversity

- The Lead Beneficiary and all Joint Beneficiaries, have Equality and Diversity policies in place, which will apply throughout the course of the Skills@Work operation.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires that all Joint Beneficiaries have due regard to the need to meet the three 'aims' of the General Equality Duty and comply with the supporting Specific Equality Duties.
- The Lead Beneficiary, in its role as an employer, will comply with relevant legislation relating to Equality and Diversity (including the Equality Act 2010 and General and Specific Duties contained within the Act) ensuring the best interests of clients and staff are met.
- The Lead Beneficiary will work to the principles of the Equality Duty in regard to the advancement of equality and good relations which cover the nine protected characteristics.
- The Lead Beneficiary will ensure that no member of staff or client receives less favourable treatment on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender

reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and social or economic background or is disadvantaged by any practices or procedures that cannot be justified.

## Contribution towards CCTs Objectives, Indicators and Targets

Each Joint Beneficiary has provided information against the Priority 2, Specific Objective 1, which is to increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills.

### Specific examples of delivering against the CCT Objectives

The Central Lead Team Manager will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of cross cutting theme objectives, indicators and targets, reporting on progress through the regular reporting arrangements that will be established between both the Lead and Joint Beneficiaries, and the Lead and WEFO.

As part of the ongoing monitoring between the Lead and Joint Beneficiaries, the Central Lead Team will monitor progress against specific actions, addressing areas of concern, and recognising best practice.

Joint Beneficiaries will not undertake the role of Cross Cutting Themes champion, this will be the responsibility of the Central Lead Team Manager. The Central Lead Team Manager has previous experience of delivering similar skills provision projects, including Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work. They are responsible for similar monitoring of progress and best practice with Joint Beneficiaries. Further Strategic Criterion: Suitability of Investment

## Further Strategic Criterion: Suitability of Investment

### Potential for Private Sector Displacement

The Skills@Work operation will take full account of the potential to distort the private market for training provision. No training will be offered that is mandatory, e.g. workplace health and safety as this is ineligible unless procured, or for which an existing commercial market exists, where a number of providers are offering a course at full open market rate, or are being addressed by other ESF operations. The existing commercial market for the provision of local training is monitored by previously established training provider groups set up within each Local Authority. It is proposed that a representative from each Joint Beneficiary will become a member of the groups, ensuring not duplication of training provision and therefore distortion of the private market. This will also ensure that no commercial competition is distorted within the FE sector, between ESF operations or more widely in the open market. ESF funding will not be used to subsidise commercially viable activity.

**Commented [WM(-W12):** Move this section to Suitability of Investment further criterion

**Commented [WM(-W13):** Which in any case is ineligible unless procured

**Commented [WM(-W14):** How will this be established?

## Defining the Barriers

The Socio-economic analysis shows that a large proportion of the population of East Wales has low or no basic skills. Alongside this, the issue of low/no skills linking to low wages and deprivation has been well documented in local, regional and national strategies as well as negative reporting in the national press. The Socio-economic analysis reveals that the labour market varies greatly across East Wales. Since 2001 the employment rate has decreased in four of EW's seven local authority areas, the relatively largest being Powys, the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and Newport. Employment rates for those with low or no qualifications has declined to as low as 40.7%.

The total number of employed individuals aged 16-64 within the three Local Authority areas represented within Skills@Work delivery area is 311,126 with 23,400 of those being deemed as working in low skilled occupations<sup>8</sup>.

Further analysis from the data source shows that of the working age population in those local authority areas targeted by the Skills@Work operation there are 31,388 (10.1%) with no qualifications and 41,698 (13.4%) with the highest qualification being at Level 1.

*Table showing highest level of qualification held by employed individuals aged 16-64*

Highest Level of Qualification	Cardiff	Monmouthshire	Newport	Total
All categories: Highest level of qualification	199,702	38,064	73,360	311,126
No qualifications	17,782	4,505	9,101	31,388
Level 1 qualifications	24,695	5,730	11,273	41,698
Level 2 qualifications	31,096	6,687	12,859	50,642
Level 3 qualifications	30,288	5,427	10,694	46,409
Level 4 qualifications and above	82,641	12,716	23,442	118,799
Apprenticeships and other qualifications	13,200	2,999	5,991	22,190

The table below shows that in comparison to Wales and the UK, the local authority areas targeted by the Skills@Work operation have a higher percentage of individuals with a Level 1 or below qualification.

*Table showing level and % for those aged 16-64 in Wales and the UK*

	Wales (level)	Wales (%)	United Kingdom (level)	United Kingdom (%)
Individual levels				
NVQ4 and above	663900	35.1	15769900	38.4
NVQ3	336700	17.8	6975400	17
NVQ2	337900	17.9	6550000	16
NVQ1	211000	11.2	4379300	10.7
Other qualifications	114200	6	2794300	6.8

<sup>8</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey (Oct 2015 – Sep 2016)

Trade Apprenticeships	63600	3.4	1292600	3.2
No qualifications	164200	8.7	3272100	8

The target groups taken from the ESF East Wales Operational Programme that relate to the Skills@Work operation are as follows:

- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – male
- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications- female
- Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2)- male
- Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2)- female

The main barriers faced by the groups targeted by this operation can be grouped into the following three categories:

- Personal Development
- Employee Sustainability
- Employment Skills

## Overcoming the Barriers

### 1) Personal Development Barriers

These barriers relate to how and why people act in a certain way and their approach to life and work. This can include a range of factors including, but not limited to, confidence, motivation, visions/aspirations, socialisation/social isolation, expectations and participation.

These barriers can often be the most difficult to overcome due to the highly personal nature of such factors. That is why our operation is built around the idea of flexible learning on top of their current employment. The ability to structure learning around the participant will ensure positive engagement and maximum results. This will give the participant a good base for other barriers to be overcome. It is also necessary to provide an initial in-depth assessment to clearly identify the aspirations and manage expectations of each participant. This will ensure that any intervention is relevant to addressing individual's barriers.

### 2) Employee Sustainability and Progression Barriers

These are barriers which concern the environment of each participant, i.e. to where and how people live. This includes a range of factors including, but not limited to, welfare dependency, dependent care, transport, the workplace opportunities and the local economy.

Overcoming these barriers requires a mixture of a change in attitude and practical sustainable solutions. One of the main problems which participants of Skills@Work will face is that of In Work Poverty. By providing them with an opportunity to upskill and gain an improved qualification, or even their first qualification, our participants will then be able to find better paid employment, and therefore more sustainable.

On a broader scale, this will also require us to change a participant's perception of themselves in society. It is about encouraging a spirit of independence, supporting social mobility, and fostering trust and resilience within the community.

### 3) Employment Skills Barriers

These are barriers which concern what our participants can actually do. This includes a range of factors such as their experience, their work specific experience, literacy, numeracy, ICT and Communication (i.e. ESOL). This is about providing the right skills and the right experience through accessing appropriate training and qualifications to meet the needs of employers now and in the future.

Joint Beneficiaries have an excellent record of delivering activity to overcome these barriers.

The operation accepts that not all participants will face all of the barriers, but most participants will face multiple barriers. This is why the operation's community based learning model is essential; it will allow us to create a flexible provision adaptable to participant's needs. The operation will be participant led, and outcome focussed.

Most often people who have not engaged in education or training for a long period of time is a lack of confidence in themselves, which in turn hinders them from taking advantage of future opportunities they may be offered. We have predicted that it is likely that individuals in the targeted groups will then have these self-belief issues. Therefore support for these needs will be required.

Alongside addressing issues regarding confidence and motivation the operation will complete an assessment of their skills and barriers to progression so we can agree a suitable pathway to progression and development of skills before ultimately obtaining an improved qualification.

Although skills and qualifications are not synonymous, a lack of qualifications is emblematic and closely correlated to a lack of skills in a region. People with no or limited qualifications are undoubtedly among the most disadvantaged in regards to employment. One of the key aims of this operation is to target these individuals through an assertive campaign to develop the skills and qualifications they will need to find and maintain sustainable employment and begin a path of career development.

The following provides a list of actions identified by the Joint Beneficiaries as a means of capturing potential participants, and creating various means of referrals:

- Briefing sessions for front line staff and publicity material for the operation up in community locations, including Hubs, Libraries, Leisure Centres, Doctor Surgeries and community buildings.
- Briefing sessions will also be held in local Job Centres to inform them of the operation and how it can assist those who are eligible, i.e. those who despite being in employment are still claiming JSA or Universal Credit.
- Provide briefings/drop in surgeries to Parent and Toddler groups, carer groups and other community groups.

- Raise awareness of and set up referral mechanisms with social housing providers, and providing them with publicity information/FAQ sheets for Tenancy Officers to take with them on tenant visits.

A National Audit Report<sup>9</sup> concluded that sustainable employment was more likely to be achieved if people had better skills to compete in the labour market, that involving employers in up-skilling was important once the individual was in work, and that understanding the local labour market and its patterns is the best way to help people to sustain employment. This operation is tailored to ensure that the participants are holistically supported that will, in the end, result in sustainable employment and a better skilled workforce.

### Potential of the Operation to Duplicate Activity

Engagement with other delivery agents has taken place on both a Local and Regional Level. Joint Beneficiaries have consulted services in their area that are required to provide employability support and local delivery models have been based upon these exercises to ensure resources are targeted and avoid duplication.

Previous ESF projects in the East Wales region have focused on providing skills and qualifications to those participants who are not currently in employment or are far from the job market and there is no risk of duplicating activity. Skills@Work will work closely alongside the P2 operation Upskilling@Work, which provides participants with work based learning opportunities. Coleg Gwent and Cardiff and Vale College were previously Joint Beneficiaries on Skills@Work operation, and therefore both operations have a good understanding of how each operation can aid the other, and therefore ensure good working practises.

### Research Supporting the Delivery Method

Under the 2000-2006 RCE programmes there were no localised regional operations in South East Wales, therefore we have looked to West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programme. The Working Skills for Adults and Bridges into Work operations were delivered in this programme, which covers 6 of the 10 wards within the South East Wales region, and addressed the same target group.

Evidence for the need and success of the activities proposed by this operation are noted in Wavehill's 'Final Evaluation of the Working Skills for Adults Project' which states that Working Skills for Adults was 'unique across the region in the scale and breadth of the opportunities it offered to work with employees and employers. It is the only option of this scale across the region and is therefore strategically important for the free training provision it offers the employed' (p11).

It specifically endorses the approach of using key workers as a means of engaging and supporting participants and sees this as a critical part of the project. The breadth and scope of the project is highlighted as being unique as is its ability to tailor support

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157398/report.aspx>

Commented [WM(-W15): Move to Suitability of Investment further criterion

to meet the needs of participants. All of these features that have contributed to the success of Working Skills for Adults will be retained and further developed in the Skills@Work operation.

Further to this, funding for adult learning from traditional sources has been reduced significantly during the past 4 years which has affected the scope and scale of Adult and Community Learning delivery through FE College and Local Authority routes. The impact has been a noticeable reduction in opportunities for individuals to engage with learning opportunities in their own communities.

Delivery of training opportunities in community settings is typically coordinated through the local Adult Community Learning Partnerships, of which the Joint Beneficiaries are part of and deliver an element of this activity under various franchise arrangements. On this basis, the Joint Beneficiaries that intend delivering similar training activities as private sector training companies already form part of that existing market place, therefore reducing significantly any displacement impacts.

Joint Beneficiaries have identified the need for this operation in several ways:

- Learning from the previous Working Skills for Adults project.
- Local research in conjunction with LSB and other partners.
- Partnership workshops in the run-up to ESF proposal

Research from a wide variety of data sources including the Department of Work and Pensions and Statistics Wales and research papers produced by recognised organisations such as the UKCES, Institute for Employment Studies, Federation of Small Businesses, Centre for Economic Inclusion, highlights the following:

- Understanding the labour market and its patterns is important if people are to be supported in work
- Building close relationships with employers has a better outcome than a more ad-hoc approach
- Improving qualifications and addressing essential skills needs is the best way to support individuals
- Employers stress the importance of soft skills – good communication, ability to learn, punctuality, reliability etc. – and identify this need among employees.

In determining our rationale for utilising a lead worker type approach to delivery we have looked at the Working Skills for Adults project which highlighted the need for this approach. Whilst delivered in Convergence areas only the results of the evaluation showed that a lead worker approach was successful in this target group.

**Commented [WM(-W16):** Better to make the comparison with WSfA since Bridges does not have the same participant target group

In the 2013 Wavehill commissioned review of Working Skills for Adults project. Some key findings highlighted;

1. “.....It is clear that the support worker role is critical for employees and employers alike and therefore needs to continue with a few enhancements.”

2. "...Utilising this model WSfA has benefitted a majority of participants in job related outcomes linked to increased confidence in jobs, raised job satisfaction, and increased responsibilities in roles.

The Skills@Work operation will take on board the recommendation for enhancements to the lead worker role, as noted below

1. "...The project appears to have been most beneficial for completers who are female, from older (26+) age groups, and in some job related areas for those with WLHC. It has proved less positive for those from the youngest age groups (16-25), for male completers, and those with disabilities. Therefore future enhancements need to focus upon developing specialist capabilities amongst 'support workers' and employer liaison officers to support specific groups of employees so that outcomes can be more equitably be achieved across the project."

#### Evidence to support need and approach

The evidence to support need for the Skills@Work operation will be updated as more information is gathered from the East Wales Region.

As recognised in the Country Specific Recommendations, investing in skills is a key driver in the development of a modern knowledge-based economy and in responding and adapting to economic changes. There is a strong correlation between qualification and skills, employment and earnings, with those in part-time work more likely to have low skills, emphasising the role of skills development in addressing in-work poverty, up-skilling those with no or basic skills to support them to progress within the labour market.

Delivering to the needs of both employers and the wider economy will be the fundamental principle of all demand led skills interventions within Priority Axis 2. Demand will be articulated in a number of ways including directly through employers or through research evidence on areas of economic opportunity or growth.

The main focus of Specific Objective 1 is to increase the skills and qualification levels, including vocational skills, of employed (including self-employed) individuals across EW with no or low skills. It will target those qualified to ISCED Level 2 (lower secondary education) or below, including those with no formal qualifications, with a focus on both increasing their qualification levels and on addressing skills gaps at this level.

As set out in the Strategy, of those working age adults in employment in Wales, the most recent figures show that approximately 43% have either no or low (up to and including NQF Level 2) qualifications. At a more detailed level, of the working age adults in employment, 6.9% have no qualifications at all, while 14.1% have below NQF level 2 qualifications and 21.7% have qualifications at NQF level 2.

While there are no specific measures for skills gaps, research indicates that they are more common among lower skilled occupations, with both skills specific to the job role (technical, practical and job specific skills) and essential and basic skills (such as

**Commented [WM(-W17):** Include under Suitability of Investment further criterion

**Commented [WM(-W18):** Which?



planning and organisation, oral communication, customer handling and problem solving skills) being cited as skills shortages. This indicates that there is a need not only to increase the level at which the no and low skilled are qualified but also to ensure that they achieve qualifications in skills which are relevant to the needs of employers.<sup>10</sup>

The direct results will therefore be focused around the number of the specific target group gaining qualifications at ISCED Levels 1 and 2 in essential and technical or job specific skills. These results will both increase the qualification levels of those with no or low skills and upgrade and update the skills of those already qualified to ISCED Levels 1 and 2, providing them with the skills and qualifications relevant to the needs of employers.

The longer term impact of these interventions on the overall skills levels of the workforce will be measured through programme evaluation, which will consider the impact of ESF interventions in the context of the range of external factors that influence these measures.<sup>11</sup>

South East Wales is home to nearly half the population of Wales and a workforce of 665,000 in 90,000 businesses across ten local authorities (LAs). Cardiff, capital of Wales, is dynamic driver for growth leading the regional economy by almost every measure. It stands at around 90% of UK GVA and salary levels. LAs in the region close to the M4 corridor perform significantly better than those further away and in the Heads of the Valleys. Geography and heritage of the region still impacts on the location of communities and a stretched economic regional transport infrastructure.

Adult skills development is key to assisting entry (or a return) to employment with equality of access essential. Employability skills and post-19 employment arise from schools and colleges, the third sector, employers, unions and other WBL and post 16 providers. This is often the start for people on a training escalator of improving qualifications and life chances. A wide range of funded support and delivery will be needed. For further bespoke training a range of funding and delivery have been identified including employer co-investment in skills<sup>11</sup> and privately funded training.

Skills Utilisation is key requiring a 'skills escalator' of learning supporting progression through to higher level skills - upskilling will be supported by a high level of collaboration between the local universities and FE colleges with local campuses focussing on L1-3 and L4-5 in association with HE, where appropriate. Essential skills and employability will be addressed through a broad coalition e.g. Third Sector, WCVA, FE.

Under-utilisation of qualifications and employment skills is common. Evidence suggests underutilisation can lead to skills loss over time. Forecasts reflect continued professional development (CPD) as part of good company practice by High Performance Working (HPW) companies.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> UKCES (2013), Employer Skills Survey 2013 – Wales report

<sup>11</sup> East Wales Operation Programme

<sup>12</sup> LSKIP South East Wales Employment and Skills Report Consultation Document

The Local Authority need for the operation is derived from a reduction in funding over the last few years, meaning that from September 2015 only basic skills will be funded through Adult Education. Additionally Monmouthshire has no Communities First area and therefore no additional support for learners that may be at risk of in work poverty.

## Section 2 – Core Criterion: Delivery

### The Ultimate Change(s) sought or Final Outcome(s) of the Operation

The Skills@Work operation seeks to bring about the following changes as set out in the Operational Logic Table. The aim of the operation is to increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or a low skill level, ensuring that employment is sustained and skills delivery is for jobs and growth, responds to local need, that employer's value.

Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving - male	237
Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving - female	297
Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving - male	255
Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving - female	266

The preferred delivery model to be utilised was required to address a number of key areas highlighted during scoping meetings and the Operational Logic Table, these were separated into the below headings.

#### Minimum Requirements

- A comprehensive support package for those in unsustainable/precarious employment
- Identification of barriers and assessment of need
- Access to a range of qualifications
- Employment support including CV writing, interview skills, careers advice and job searching
- Tracking of distance travelled and progress towards operational outcomes.

#### Optional Activities

- Support with transport issues. i.e. driving lessons
- Childcare and replacement care allowing access to interventions.

#### Ultimate Changes

- Maximise potential employment opportunities

- Increase skill levels and attainment of qualifications
- Remove personal development barriers
- Support provided to overcome community support barriers

## **Delivery Model Options considered for the Operation**

A full SWOT analysis is provided in Annex 5, however the following summarises the key points and discussion for each option:

### **Option 1 – Delivery by Joint Beneficiaries**

Skills@Work will target employed participants with:

- No formal qualifications, or
- Up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2)

Skills@Work follows a holistic model of delivery that focuses on meeting the needs of individual participants in moving them closer to sustainable employment and career progression.

The key approach is summarised below:

Employed individuals engaged through community led provision - Some Local Authority partners have a franchise agreement with the local colleges to deliver essential, transferrable and functional skills alongside vocational training. This provision is mainly accessed by unemployed learners referred through partnership organisations such as Jobcentre Plus that require claimants to increase their employability skills. With support from the Skills@Work operation the intention would be to focus flexible, accessible and local provision to employed, low skilled learners. The operation would be enhanced by weekend and evening provision in the local authority learning venues, as required and tailored to the needs of both the learner and their employment. The majority of the training and qualifications will be delivered in house by the Adult and Community Learning departments. Any specialist vocational training or services would be sourced from procured delivery partners.

Training solutions will be provided by the Skills@Work operation that is informed by both the individuals' needs and where possible linking them with LMI data and priority sectors outlined in the EPF. Provision will be focused on delivering tangible results to participants as a result of undertaking training and gaining new qualifications.

### **Option 2 – Fully Contracted Out**

The engagement, support and series of intervention could be fully contracted out to the third or private sector with the management remaining the main provider. The primary benefit would be that it requires minimal input from the Joint Beneficiaries, as the service would be fully contracted out to the third or private sector. However as the operation will be functioning across three Local Authority areas, and each will have varying requirements for the level of support needed, this option could create a very disjointed approach to service delivery to the detriment of the participant. The differing

values and practises of organisations will be highlighted, and therefore creating a more fragmented approach.

Organisations have different values and practices, creating a more fragmented approach, which could cause inconsistency in delivery and management, not providing the holistic package of support that is required. It is also unlikely to provide the consistent level of contact required by participants, potentially leading to participants disengaging with the process.

With the preferred delivery option, the single provider has already established effective relationships, has worked collaboratively with employees and local communities which in turn will accelerate service delivery and embed best practice. This will also help avoid the risk of duplication ensuring the most efficient use of existing resources and a consistent approach to employee engagement across the region.

### **Option 3 – ‘Do nothing’ option**

The option of ‘*Do nothing*’ was not a realistic solution to improving employability and employment levels across the region.

The Socio Economic Analysis shows that East Wales performs well in terms of the proportion of working age adults with higher skills however a large proportion of its population continue to have low or no skills, a significant contributing factor to the continued GVA lag with the UK. Basic skills therefore remain a priority, to improve workers abilities, to enhance employer adaptability, to support progression opportunities and to help tackle in-work poverty.

The Socio Economic Analysis shows that the strength of the labour market varies significantly across EW depending on location and qualification level. Compared with 2001, the employment rate in 2012 was lower in four of EW’s seven local authority areas. Relatively large declines were recorded in Powys, the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and Newport. In EW employment rates for those with NQF level 4 and above remained constant at around 87%. In contrast, employment rates for those with low or no qualifications have declined to as low as 40.7%.

### **Option 4 – Delivery without ESF grant**

Joint Beneficiaries could look to support participants without the benefit of ESF support, however this is not considered likely to deliver the best outcome for participants. Much of the training funded by the local authority for post-19 funds cannot be contracted out as the local authorities are constitutionally invested to deliver this element.

The development of an engagement and learning model contracted out through a number of agencies has been considered but due to the complexity of implementation and monitoring of participants it was felt that this process would be unmanageable. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that contracted service providers who are not embedded in the community may fail to engage the low/no skilled workforce due to the process of developing relationships and building trust.

It has been estimated by Joint Beneficiaries that approximately 30% of the proposed outcomes and engagement with participants could be achieved without ESF grant. The ESF grant and proposed delivery model will allow Joint Beneficiaries to significantly enhance their current offer to employed individuals with no/low skills.

## Delivery Model to be Utilised

The preferred option for delivery is Option 1 – Delivery by Joint Beneficiaries with limited procurement. The preferred option has resulted from completing a SWOT analysis (attached as Annex 5) which includes reflection on the gaps identified.

### Activity 1 – Regional LMI

Liaison with Local Authority Business Support Teams to gather LMI data, ensuring provision of up to date advice and guidance to employees.

**Commented [WM(-W19):** Most of this is not relevant to this proposal

The operation will generate interest through assertive outreach prior to participants enrolling, through a variety of means that will include but not be restricted to:

- Traditional publicity and marketing materials including leaflets, flyers, newsletters and Skills@Work branding.
- Outreach events in target community areas.
- Targeted assertive outreach in specific venues/organisations such as GP surgeries, shopping centres, Adult and Community Learning venues, libraries, leisure venues, etc.
- Engagement activities with other partners such as Health Boards, Social Housing Associations and Third Sector Organisations, to gain access to their clients/service users. Drop-in information and advice sessions.
- Referrals from other agencies and operations, for example Careers Wales, Remploy (Work and Health Programme), JCP, Adult Education, Communities for Work Plus, Families First, Flying Start and other ESF operations such as Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work.

### Activity 2 – Engagement and Enrolment

Active engagement of employees outside of their workplace will support those unwilling to realise skills deficits and admit them to their employers or whose employers fail to engage. Provision will be accessible to suit working lives, e.g. evenings and weekends.

The engagement process will include confirmation of the individual's eligibility to ensure that the Skills@Work operation is most suitable to support their needs. Evidence will be gathered to ensure the initial ESF eligibility criteria is met:

- Age (16 plus)
- Right to live/work in UK
- Address (within the targeted local authority areas)

Once the above is confirmed the participants eligibility will be checked for support from for the Skills@Work operation:

- Employment status

- Low or no skills
- Qualification level

The engagement and support officers will seek to establish the participant's motive for engagement with Skills@Work, in seeking to improve their skill level:

- to gain skills to improve chances of switching employers or industries/roles
- to identify and move towards alternate career choices
- to improve performance in current role and enhance sustainability of their employment
- to take extra responsibilities within current employer
- to seek promotion or transfer within current employer
- to seek additional hours work (e.g. move from 0 hours contracts, underemployed etc.)

Where alternate career choices and future employability are highlighted as an area for support, participants will be guided to potential areas of economic growth as represented by the key thematic economic opportunities outlined in the EPF with particular reference to those highlighted within the South East Wales Regional opportunities.

### **Activity 3 – Initial Assessment and Action Plans**

Engagement and support workers will work with participants to produce a mutually agreed tailored action plan with identified activities, goals and timescales that are specific to their needs. This activity will clearly identify and suggest ways of overcoming any personal development, community support or employment skills barriers that the participant may be experiencing. The action plan will also set out the level of 1:1 support to be provided i.e. agreed dates for review meetings and re-assessment.

The reviews and re-assessment of the action plans will be critical in ensuring that the planned activities are taking place, that the participant is engaging with them and benefitting from them. This will also demonstrate progress for the operation ensuring that participants are receiving the most appropriate support towards maintaining sustainable employment, increased working hours and/or career progression or change.

The WEST Assessment Tool will be used to provide an initial diagnostic assessment of the participant's current skill levels. The assessment will be completed after enrolment, arranged and supported by the project worker, and will take approximately 30 minutes. The in-depth assessment will identify competencies and development needs for each individual participant, allowing the operation to produce a targeted learning plan with supporting activities/interventions. The assessment will provide essential skill levels for participants in areas such as numeracy, literacy, digital literacy or ESOL. Additional to providing data around the participant's essential skills level, the assessment will also be used to highlight the work skills or qualifications required for their specific sector/role that they wish to progress. The assessment can be repeated at any point during the participant's engagement with the operation allowing further data to be gathered and learning plans to be updated if required.

Other assessment tools such as distance travelled tools, a paper based Essential Skills Assessment developed by Coleg Gwent and STAR assessments may also be used with participants to further refine the barriers but also as tools to overcome certain barriers such as poor expectations. These may include employment skills, aptitudes and capability mapping.

**Activity 4 – Support and delivery of qualifications**

Initial activities will be designed to foster trust between engagement/support workers and participant to overcome the barrier presented. These activities will drive towards the acquisition of the essential and basic skills (such as planning and organisation, oral communication, customer handling and problem solving skills).

Further activity will focus on the delivery of training, personal development skills and qualifications that improve the participants’ likelihood of maintaining sustainable employment. This will include activities predominantly related to motivation, confidence, self-esteem and work specific barriers that may be restricting an individual’s employability skills.

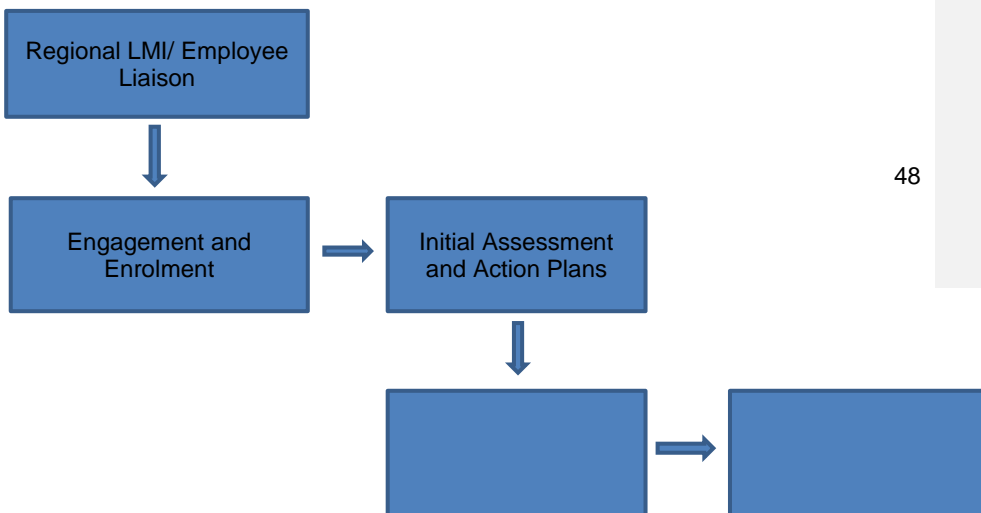
Engagement and support officers will work with participants delivering generic transferable skills and elements of provision required by employers. Participants will be offered support on a 1-1 and small group basis within a community setting.

A range of qualifications and awards to up skill those with low or no qualifications including a menu of opportunities to deliver a range of skills and qualifications as required by participants.

Skills interventions (including basic and functional skills provision, plus vocational training) tailored to;

- Move participants with no skills to at least a Level 1 qualification.
- Move participants with a Level 1 qualification to a Level 2 qualification.
- Provide participants with Level 2 skills or qualifications with another recognised and accredited Level 2 qualification.

Where appropriate and in addition to the recognised qualification outcome, the provision of generic transferable work relevant skills such as customer service, team working, communication, organisation, problem solving, etc. and career progression courses such as CV writing, application forms, interview techniques.







#### **Activity 5 – Career Progression**

The primary focus of the Skills@Work operation provision of high quality, relevant accredited qualifications, however participants will also be offered support which is designed to encourage labour market mobility such as:

- Access to job clubs providing supervised access to equipment and supporting online job search and application
- CV writing skills and updates.
- Interview skills and practice including mock interviews with real employers
- Jobs Fairs

#### **Activity 6 – Tracking and Monitoring**

Regular tracking and monitoring of participant progress will be completed whilst engaged on the operation ensuring achievement of their goals, time spent on the operation and qualifications achieved. Further tracking will also be completed post exit for a period of 3 months and a final 6 month follow up contact to monitor sustainment of employment or progression.

#### Financial Instrument

The Skills@Work operation will not operate as a Financial Instrument.

#### Procurement

The majority of the training and qualifications will be delivered in house by Local Authority adult and community learning departments. Any specialist vocational training or services would be sourced from procured delivery partners, through the central procurement framework.

Consideration is being given to a central procurement framework across the region. This will reduce the number of procurement exercises undertaken, simplify management of the process, allow for greater opportunities amongst partners to access alternative training provision and support on a regional basis, along with providing value for money through economy of scale.

## Organisational Experience

### Details of public (including EU) funding over the last 5 years

Newport City Council has a vast experience of delivering structural fund programmes. We have been successful in securing both ESF and ERDF under the RCE programme, and prior to that Objective 2 and 3.

Newport also have significant experience of securing funding and delivering a wide range of publically funded programmes such as Vibrant and Viable Places (£14.98m, the largest VVP grant awarded in Wales), Work Programme (£3m), and 21st Century Schools (£32m).

Grant Award Body	Project/Programme	Lead Partner	Award Value	Duration
Welsh Government	21 <sup>st</sup> Century schools	Newport City Council	£7.5m (£15m total cost)	2014/15 – 2018/19
Welsh Government	21 <sup>st</sup> Century schools Welsh Medium Secondary School	Newport City Council	£8.5m (£17m total cost)	2014/15 – 2016/17
Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places	Connecting Commercial Street	Newport City Council	£14.98m	2014/15-2016/17
WEFO	Pillgwenlly Regeneration Project	Newport City Council	£6.7m	2010/11-2015/16
Department for Culture, Media & Sport	Super Connected Cities	Newport City Council	£6m	2014/15
DWP	Future Jobs Fund	Newport City Council	£3m	2009-2011
DWP	Work Programme	Newport City Council	£4m	2012-2017
Welsh Government	Flying Start	Newport City Council	£2.7m	2012/13 – 2014/15

Welsh Government	Communities 1 <sup>st</sup> programme across Newport	Newport City Council	£2.5m	2014/15
Welsh Government	Communities 1 <sup>st</sup> programme across Newport	Newport City Council	£1.8m	2013/14
Welsh Government	Arbed: Maximising ECO Bettws Arbed: Maximising ECO Ringland	Newport City Council	£1.6m (total value) £740k ERDF	2013/14
DWP	Work Choice	Newport City Council	£1.2m	2013-2017
WEFO ESF	Life Skills Carers	Big Lottery	£607k	2011-2014
Welsh Government	Arbed	Newport City Council	£377,916	2014/15

#### Joint Beneficiary Experience

The Joint Beneficiaries within the operation have facilitated projects under ESF, ERDF, RDP and Transnational EU Programmes, which has resulted in effective project management procedures being developed, understood, implemented and reviewed.

There is also significant experience relating to PIVT and EFAT audits, which has provided valuable experience and knowledge for managing and implementing EU grant aided projects, which will underpin this operation.

This operation also acknowledges the need for continual review and planning. Therefore the operation incorporates the capacity to ensure service delivery is based on up to date needs and effective use of resources.

Newport City Council has extensive experience working in partnership with a range of organisations including public, private and third sector to deliver and manage a wide number of programmes targeting skills, education and worklessness. Newport City Council has been the lead accountable body for many of these programmes, providing a Central Management Team that was available to support partners with all aspects of management and delivery.

- Deprived Areas Funding: 2008 – 2011. Working with the BME community with Newport to identify barriers to employment and employment opportunities.
- PS3 – NEET: 2010 – Present. Delivering 13 week tailored provisions to young people, identified as NEET in Newport, in partnership with private sector training providers.
- Flexible Support Funds: 2012 – 2014. Delivering bespoke programmes, specifically related to Soccer, Rugby and Cricket, to the long term unemployed and 18-24 year old job seekers. The project was delivered in partnership with

Newport, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire.

- Future Jobs Fund: 2009 – 2011. Providing work placements and skills development for young people aged 18 – 24. The project was delivered in partnership with Newport City Homes, Charter Housing, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Communities First, GAVO, Coleg Gwent and Newport University. Newport City Councils central team managed and delivered the programme with partner support.
- Life Skills Carers Programme (ESF): 2010 – December 2014. Identifying barriers to employment and education specific to this client group and putting interventions in place.
- Work Programme: 2011 – Present. Working with long term unemployed people to identify barriers to employment, address barriers, move into and support whilst in employment. Newport City Council as the Lead accountable body delivers the programme across the Newport, Caerphilly and Cardiff areas and works in partnership with the Local Authorities and relevant strategic boards.
- Communities First, Families First, Flying Start: 2009 – Present. Supporting people with basic skills and life choices so they are able to effectively compete when searching for work, accessing further learning and training opportunities.

#### Track record of Delivering Similar Operations

Part of the Newport City Council's strategic plan is to address worklessness and skills, with this element being delivered through implementation of grant funded projects, local authority funded projects and contracted projects. All projects and operations work to complement one another's outcomes and add value to each other's objectives.

As an authority Newport City Council has extensive experience of delivering many successful operations, programmes and projects in partnership with public, third sector and private organisations, and experience of working with local partnership boards, local service boards, Welsh Government, health boards and social housing associations.

A number of programmes have provided experience of delivering in partnership with multiple organisations, examples of this are:

**Sport That Works (Department of Work and Pensions)** – A Flexible Support Fund project delivered in partnership with 7 Local Authority areas in South East Wales including Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire. The project aimed to deliver employability skills using the vehicle of sport to people aged between 18 and 24. The project promoted participation, basic skills, and vocational skills, working with 120 young people and supporting 39% into employment against a target of 30%. Our role as the Lead Accountable Body was to coordinate all activities between the partners, and deliver all financial monitoring and performance monitoring for the programme.

**Care Leavers (NEET)** – A Flexible Support Funded project delivered in partnership with JCP, Community Development and social services in Newport, the aim was to provide employment skills and training opportunities to young people leaving care. This would reduce the risk of these young people becoming recipients of a DWP benefit in the future.

**Life Skills Carers Project** – This project was funded from 2010 to December 2014 through both the European Social Fund and the BIG Lottery. A target group for the project was engagement with young carers aged 16 – 24 years old. The project was delivered in partnership with Newport City Council social services, Community Development and Barnardo's. Referrals were received from many voluntary organisations and council services also identified young carers for the project team to support. The End of Contract Evaluation and Self-Evaluation reports are attached in the annexe.

**Future Jobs Fund** – Newport City Council delivered this programme as the Lead Accountable Body for the Newport City Partnership. This partnership was developed with and delivered by Newport City Homes, Charter Housing, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Newport Communities First, GAVO, Coleg Gwent and Newport University. Newport City Councils central team managed and delivered the programme with partner support through provision of placements and in work mentoring services.

**Inspire 2 Work** – An ESF operation that targets young people aged 16-24 years old who are NEET. NCC is the Lead Beneficiary working with Local Authorities, a Registered Social Landlord and Housing Charity to provide tailored support to this cohort, enabling them to move back in to education, employment or training.

**Journey 2 Work** – An ESF operation that targets long term unemployed and economically inactive individuals aged over 25 years of age. NCC is the Lead Beneficiary working with Local Authorities and a Registered Social Landlord to provide tailored support to this cohort, enabling them to move closer to the job market, gain qualifications and employment.

**The Work Based Learning Academy (WBLA)** – This is a vehicle that the Local Service Board commissioned to coordinate all work placements and work experience opportunities created by its partners, for 16-24 years. Since its inception in December 2013 it has evolved from not only coordinating work placements for LSB partners but providing a recruitment function for public, private and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners. The WBLA successfully secures over 500 opportunities for local people a year.

Delivery of these schemes has provided the lead partner with a wealth of experience in the delivery and management of public funds. Community development has well established financial and operation systems embedded within the organisation, and strong relationships with internal support such as Audit and Finance. We have been subject to a number of external audits, such as annual WAO audits, PIVT audits, and most recently, a successful EFAT audit which demonstrates our strong project management procedures.

## **Aspects of the Operation that are considered Innovative**

The delivery of ESF funded training at levels 1 and 2 to individual employees, rather than through engagement with the employer, in the East Wales region is a new activity and therefore innovative for the region

It is important for the Skills@Work operation to be delivered seamlessly with existing ESF provision such as the Upskilling@Work Operation. This operation can provide employees in the region a comprehensive range of training options to suit their needs, arranged and delivered in the most efficient model possible for the employee. The Skills@Work operation, although not directly engaging the employer, will support this model by ensuring that participants seeking to gain qualifications above NQF level 2 are provided information on the Upskilling@Work operation or other projects that can provide higher level skills/qualifications.

The operation considers skills on a regional level across to EU Programme areas but delivered with local economic knowledge through links with local community development and business services team. This is innovative in that we are able to deliver up skilling that addresses a local need whilst also meeting regional long term demand.

Newport has proposed the use of a central GIS monitoring system (CEMP) across all partners, to ensure a consistent approach to counting participants, monitoring outputs and identifying specific geographical and operational areas for improvement before they become issues for concern.

## Outline Assessment of Primary Risks and Dependencies

Risk Category	Risk Examples	Risk Mitigation
Operational Risk	<p>Fluctuations in demand/need for activity provided through the operation.</p> <p>Changes in the availability of match funding.</p> <p>Withdrawal of a Joint Beneficiary</p>	<p>The operation is demand-led and can be re-profiled at the review stage there is a significant change required.</p> <p>All delivery partners manage budgets annually and would be providing match mainly through staff. Any unexpected changes can be accommodated during the review. Additional sources of eligible Match Funding will be reviewed for eligibility as changes are made to funding streams for example the Flexible Funding programme through Welsh Government which is due to be implemented in April 2019.</p> <p>Each Local Authority will be responsible for procuring clean, eligible sources of Match Funding for the operation.</p> <p>Each Joint Beneficiary has their own discreet package of activity; therefore, the withdrawal of a Joint Beneficiary will not impact on the delivery of other Joint Beneficiaries. There would be an impact of operational outcomes and finances, but remaining partners would be given the option to pick up additional finance and outcomes before any consideration is given to re-profiling and/ or downsizing, as contained within the operational Relationship Agreement.</p>
Legislative	<p>Local government re-organisation and reductions to core services.</p> <p>Equality, environmental legislation, etc.</p>	<p>It is expected that any new entity formed as a result of local government reorganisation will take on the responsibilities of its predecessor preventing any significant changes to the operation.</p>

Commented [WM(-W20)]: Which and when

	<p>U.K. Member State withdrawal from the EU</p>	<p>As experienced beneficiaries all partners are equipped to deal with any such changes and will ensure compliance in line with any guidance produced by WEFO. Processes will be followed to ensure environmental sustainability and reduction of emissions regarding Energy, Waste and Travel.</p> <p>The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, announced on the 3rd October 2016 that the UK Government will guarantee expenditure for all European Structural and Investment funds projects that are approved before the UK leaves the EU.</p> <p>On the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 the First Minister launched the policy paper “Brexit and Devolution” which sets out the Welsh Government’s expectation that powers already devolved to Wales will remain devolved after EU withdrawal unless the UK government specifically legislates to change the devolution settlement.</p> <p>On 24th April 2018, the UK and Welsh Governments reached an agreement on changes to the EU Withdrawal Bill in the form of an Intergovernmental Agreement on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill and the Establishment of Common Frameworks. This agreement would give powers to UK Ministers to make regulations imposing restrictions in devolved matters which can last for 5 years once made. The implication of this agreement is that UK Ministers could legislate within devolved matters without the National Assembly for Wales’ consent until March 2026.</p> <p>However on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the UK Government announced that it was extending its guarantee of EU funding to cover Wales’ (and the rest of the UK’s) allocation for Structural Funds under this EU budget period to 2020. As drafted, this extension of the</p>
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		<p>guarantee significantly reduces the risks associated with both not committing funding and underspends in a no deal scenario.</p> <p>Project closure plans will include processes for the potential halt to EU funding after 2020.</p>
Procurement	Non compliance	The Lead and Joint Beneficiaries have significant experience in procuring goods and services for European Structural Funded operations with each organisation having its own robust procurement policy.
Project Management	<p>Leadership and control.</p> <p>Ability to meet outputs, activity and results.</p>	<p>Lead Beneficiary has experience of managing similar operations in previous rounds of EU Structural Funds. All Joint Beneficiaries have experience of participating in similar operations.</p> <p>Robust planning based on experience will avoid setting of unachievable targets. Ensuring that there is no duplication of outcomes between this operation and others within the same Specific Objective should ensure the participant receives the most appropriate support. Newport has proposed the use of a central GIS monitoring system across all partners, to ensure a consistent approach to counting participants, monitoring outputs and identifying areas for improvement before they become issues for concern.</p> <p>Robust procedures and processes will be produced to ensure eligibility of participants, evidence requirements and project documentation is consistent across the region and not a risk to the operation.</p>

	Dispute between Lead Beneficiary and Joint Beneficiary	SLAs will be in place to clarify the responsibilities of Joint Beneficiaries, and to set out procedures for resolution.
State Aid	Use of public funds to obtain a competitive advantage.	<p>The operation has reviewed its State Aid status and has considered there to be No Aid as the training and support provided through the Skills@Work operation to the individual will take place outside of their workplace.</p> <p>It is envisaged that any specialist vocational training or services would be sourced from procured delivery partners.</p>
Geographic Eligibility	Engagement with participants with a work address outside of the East Wales region	<p>Although there is no planned engagement with employers, the participant's work address will be used to evidence eligibility for support from the Skills@Work operation within the East Wales region, as per WEFO's Eligibility Rules on Support from European Structural Funds 2014-2020, specifically Geographic Eligibility rule number one.</p> <p>It is not envisaged that WEFO's second rule of Geographic Eligibility will be applied using the participants home address, however as engagement is proposed to take place within the community this could be approved with WEFO on a case by case basis.</p>

## Further Delivery Criterion: Indicators & Outcomes

### Longer Term Benefits

The Skills@Work Operation will seek to achieve several long term benefits:

- Participants will be provided access to opportunities to improve their employability, therefore increasing the likelihood of sustainable employment and decreasing benefit dependency.
- Improved skill levels and qualifications for those in precarious employment.
- The availability of a more highly motivated, better skilled, and work ready workforce for local employers.
- An improved local (and ultimately national) GDP.
- Individuals are more engaged with society and their community.
- Achievement of sustainable employment by participants.
- An improved labour market position for participants.
- Improved health and well-being.

### Short and Medium Term Benefits

The Operation outputs are as follows, as indicated in ESF Priority Axis 2, Specific Objective 1: To increase the skill levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills:

- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (male)
- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (female)
- Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (male)
- Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (female)

Distance travelled for each participant will be closely monitored and recorded which will enable an overall assessment of the impact of the intervention.

In addition to the identified programme outputs, a number of further short term results and outputs have been identified through use of the STAR assessment tool:

- Emotional
- Social

- Family/relationships
- Learning/education
- Financial

Activities to achieve results and outputs

The activity to be undertaken is detailed under ‘Section 2- Delivery’ and will be undertaken by all Joint Beneficiaries with a view to delivering the targets outlined above.

Flow Logic

In terms of the logical flow of activity to indicator achievement and long term benefits, this is reasonably simple for the purposes of this particular operation and can be summarised thus:

- Tailored and targeted interventions for individual participants with low or no qualifications, leading to....
- Increased qualifications and skills levels, improved confidence and a more mobile, agile and sustainable workforce, leading to...
- Long term benefits for the Welsh economy through greater labour market participation and flexibility, leading to increased GDP and improved wellbeing for the participants.

**Result and Output Indicators**

The Skills@Work operation will support approximately 1516 participants over a 4 year period to increase skill levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills. The operation will target 760 employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications and 756 Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2). The operation will focus on achieving the programme level result indicators as set out in the table below, providing a total of 1055 individual outcomes:

Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – male	237
Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – female	297
Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary level or above upon leaving – male	255
Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary level or above upon leaving – female	266

The following provides an overarching framework for the Skills@Work delivery model.

### Activity 1 – Regional LMI/Employee Liaison

Liaison with Local Authority Business Support Teams to gather LMI data, ensuring provision of up to date advice and guidance to employees.

Commented [WM(-W21): Most of this is not relevant to this proposal

The operation will generate interest through assertive outreach prior to participants enrolling, through a variety of means that will include but not be restricted to:

- Traditional publicity and marketing materials including leaflets, flyers, newsletters and Skills@Work branding.
- Outreach events in target community areas.
- Targeted assertive outreach in specific venues/organisations such as GP surgeries, shopping centres, Adult and Community Learning venues, libraries, leisure venues, etc.
- Engagement activities with other partners such as Health Boards, Social Housing Associations and Third Sector Organisations, to gain access to their clients/service users. Drop-in information and advice sessions.
- Referrals from other agencies and operations, for example Careers Wales, Remploy (Work and Health Programme), JCP, Adult Education, Communities for Work Plus, Families First, Flying Start and other ESF operations such as Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work.

### Activity 2 – Engagement and Enrolment

Active engagement of employees outside of their workplace will support those unwilling to realise skills deficits and admit them to their employers or whose employers fail to engage. Provision will be accessible to suit working lives, e.g. evenings and weekends.

The engagement process will include confirmation of the individual's eligibility to ensure that the Skills@Work operation is most suitable to support their needs. Evidence will be gathered to ensure the initial ESF eligibility criteria is met:

- Age (16 plus)
- Right to live/work in UK
- Address (within the targeted local authority areas)

Once the above is confirmed the participants eligibility will be checked for support from for the Skills@Work operation:

- Employment status ()
- Low or no skills
- Qualification level

The engagement and support officers will seek to establish the participant's motive for engagement with Skills@Work, in seeking to improve their skill level:

- to gain skills to improve chances of switching employers or industries/roles
- to identify and move towards alternate career choices
- to improve performance in current role and enhance sustainability of their employment

- to take extra responsibilities within current employer
- to seek promotion or transfer within current employer
- to seek additional hours work (e.g. move from 0 hours contracts, underemployed etc.)

Where alternate career choices and future employability are highlighted as an area for support, participants will be guided to potential areas of economic growth as represented by the key thematic economic opportunities outlined in the EPF with particular reference to those highlighted within the South East Wales Regional opportunities.

### **Activity 3 – Initial Assessment and Action Plans**

Engagement and support workers will work with participants to produce a mutually agreed tailored action plan with identified activities, goals and timescales that are specific to their needs. This activity will clearly identify and suggest ways of overcoming any personal development, community support or employment skills barriers that the participant may be experiencing. The action plan will also set out the level of 1:1 support to be provided i.e. agreed dates for review meetings and re-assessment.

The reviews and re-assessment of the action plans will be critical in ensuring that the planned activities are taking place, that the participant is engaging with them and benefitting from them. This will also demonstrate progress for the operation ensuring that participants are receiving the most appropriate support towards maintaining sustainable employment, increased working hours and/or career progression or change.

The WEST Assessment Tool will be used to provide an initial diagnostic assessment of the participant's current skill levels. The assessment will be completed after enrolment, arranged and supported by the project worker, and will take approximately 30 minutes. The in-depth assessment will identify competencies and development needs for each individual participant, allowing the operation to produce a targeted learning plan with supporting activities/interventions. The assessment will provide essential skill levels for participants in areas such as numeracy, literacy, digital literacy or ESOL. Additional to providing data around the participant's essential skills level, the assessment will also be used to highlight the work skills or qualifications required for their specific sector/role that they wish to progress. The assessment can be repeated at any point during the participant's engagement with the operation allowing further data to be gathered and learning plans to be updated if required.

Other assessment tools such as distance travelled tools, a paper based Essential Skills Assessment developed by Coleg Gwent and STAR assessments may also be used with participants to further refine the barriers but also as tools to overcome certain barriers such as poor expectations. These may include employment skills, aptitudes and capability mapping.

### **Activity 4 – Support and delivery of qualifications**

Initial activities will be designed to foster trust between engagement/support workers and participant to overcome the barrier presented. These activities will drive towards

the acquisition of the essential and basic skills (such as planning and organisation, oral communication, customer handling and problem solving skills).

Further activity will focus on the delivery of training, personal development skills and qualifications that improve the participants' likelihood of maintaining sustainable employment. This will include activities predominantly related to motivation, confidence, self-esteem and work specific barriers that may be restricting an individual's employability skills.

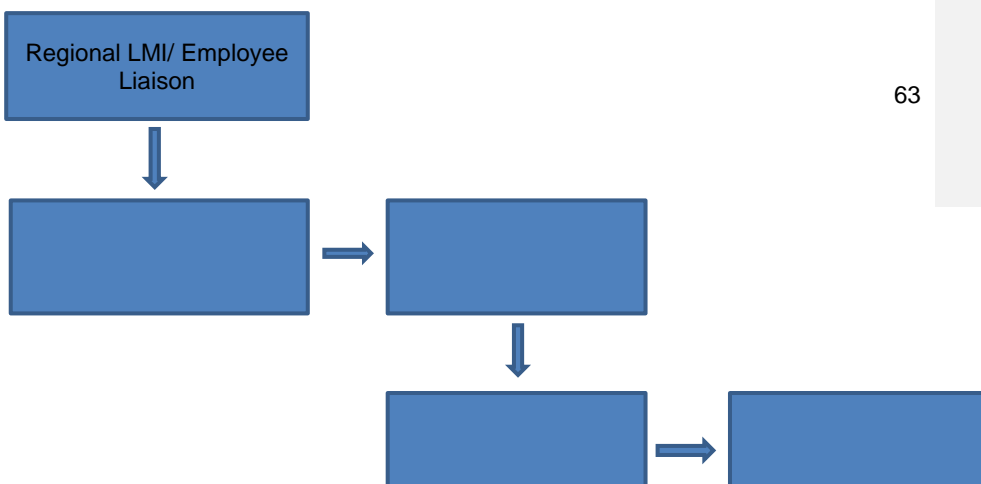
Engagement and support officers will work with participants delivering generic transferable skills and elements of provision required by employers. Participants will be offered support on a 1-1 and small group basis within a community setting.

A range of qualifications and awards to up skill those with low or no qualifications including a menu of opportunities to deliver a range of skills and qualifications as required by participants.

Skills interventions (including basic and functional skills provision, plus vocational training) tailored to;

- Move participants with no skills to at least a Level 1 qualification.
- Move participants with a Level 1 qualification to a Level 2 qualification.
- Provide participants with Level 2 skills or qualifications with another recognised and accredited Level 2 qualification.

Where appropriate and in addition to the recognised qualification outcome, the provision of generic transferable work relevant skills such as customer service, team working, communication, organisation, problem solving, etc. and career progression courses such as CV writing, application forms, interview techniques.





#### **Activity 5 – Career Progression**

The primary focus of the Skills@Work operation provision of high quality, relevant accredited qualifications, however participants will also be offered support which is designed to encourage labour market mobility such as:

- Access to job clubs providing supervised access to equipment and supporting online job search and application
- CV writing skills and updates.
- Interview skills and practice including mock interviews with real employers
- Jobs Fairs

#### **Activity 6 – Tracking and Monitoring**

Regular tracking and monitoring of participant progress will be completed whilst engaged on the operation ensuring achievement of their goals, time spent on the operation and qualifications achieved. Further tracking will also be completed post exit for a period of 3 months and a final 6 month follow up contact to monitor sustainment of employment or progression.

#### Responsibility

The delivery of each indicator is a collective responsibility across the operation, with all Joint Beneficiaries contributing towards the achievement of core indicators. An



identified post within each Joint Beneficiary team will have responsibility for locally managing the delivery of the operation and reporting back to the Central Lead Team.

The Central Lead Team will have ultimate responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the operation, ensuring performance indicators are achieved at an operational level.

As part of their role the Central Lead Team will undertake a series of health checks with each of the Joint Beneficiaries. These checks will take place between each claim period and will provide an opportunity to look at operational progress to date, variances against profile, remedial action, key issues, best practise etc. In addition to the checks undertaken by the Central Lead Team as part of the claim process, they also ensure activity and records are compliant for the purposes of the 2014-2020 ESF Programme.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The operation will be required to monitor and evaluate a comprehensive set of data, the purpose of which will be to ensure successful delivery of the Operation, to identify gaps in provision, best practise, and to evaluate the achievement of operational indicators.

Responsibility for monitoring data will operate on two levels:

1. Joint Beneficiaries are responsible for the timely submission of monitoring data to the Central Lead Team, ensuring its accuracy in line with WEFO requirements, and will be required to support and participate in any evaluation activities undertaken as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation plan. This monitoring data will be reported to WEFO as part of the claim process.
2. Overall monitoring data will be the responsibility of the Central Lead Team to ensure it is completed accurately and timely in line with WEFO requirements.
3. The Lead Beneficiary (via the Central Lead Team) will monitor each Joint Beneficiary against its outputs, spend and overall performance.

The types of data collection forms that will be used throughout the lifetime of the operation will include, but not be restricted to:

- Enrolments forms
- Participant action plan and reviews
- Eligibility forms
- Assessment forms
- Equal opportunities monitoring forms
- Feedback forms
- Evidence of outcomes i.e. qualifications, employment
- Delivery and achievement of Cross Cutting Theme commitments, and Programme and Operational level indicators.

Evaluation will be an on-going feature of the operation and will be undertaken both by the Central Lead Team, and through external evaluation. We recognise that to be

**Commented [WM(-W22)]:** When will Monitoring & Evaluation Plan be available as we really need this before approval

**Commented [h23]:** The draft Monitoring and Evaluation plan is being finalised

effective, evaluation needs to be an ongoing feature of the operation, and therefore the operation will be evaluated at two key points during delivery:

1. A mid-term evaluation to look at progress of the operation, and will provide an opportunity to:
  - Identify what is working well, what isn't and use this to inform delivery
  - Highlight good practise across the Joint Beneficiaries
  - Identify areas of improvement for the remainder of the operation.
2. A final report will evaluate overall effectiveness of the operation:
  - Highlighting best practise
  - Evaluating value for money
  - Opportunities to integrate successful interventions into mainstream activity or future projects.

The draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be further developed by the Central Lead Team, with key stages following those set out in the WEFO guidelines:

- Overarching aims of the M&E Plan
- Defining the policy objectives and intended outcomes
- Define the audience for the evaluation
- Identify the evaluation objectives and research
- Evaluation approach
- Data requirements
- Resources required and governance arrangements
- Commissioning
- Undertaking evaluation
- Using the findings/dissemination

Further detail around the requirements of the external evaluation will be developed through the Monitoring and Evaluation plan, however at a minimum it is expected the evaluation will look to consider the following:

- The overall success of the operation: Achievement of targets, Management of the operation, Delivery model, Achievement of cross cutting theme aims, commitments, indicators and any agreed case level indicators
- Impact of the operation on participants
- Value for money with a counterfactual guide
- A review of the Theory of Change and Logic Model
- Interviews with key personnel including participants
- A review of documentation and secondary data
- Quantitative Data and Qualitative analysis

## **Further Delivery Criterion: Management of Operation**

## Operation Governance Arrangements

The Skills@Work Operation will have delivery oversight at three levels:

1. A South East Wales Strategic Group will meet periodically. This will allow for sharing of best practise, and to identify strategic joint working opportunities.
2. A Central Lead Team will oversee strategic management, delivery and procurement. This group will meet throughout the lifetime of the operations and will be used to discuss progress, monitor outcomes and monitor appropriate processes.
3. Joint Beneficiaries Local Delivery Teams will oversee and undertake the day to day delivery of the operation within their area.

## Local Arrangements

Newport City Council has robust governance arrangements in place for all externally funded projects and extensive experience of project managing large ventures. The operation will be delivered in line with the Councils' Project Management principles as set out in the Corporate Reporting and Project Management Framework.

The team will be managed by the Central Lead Team Manager who will report to the regional Skills@Work Strategic Group, NCC's Right Skills Intervention Board. Regular meetings will be sought with the WEFO PDO by the Central Lead Team Manager to review operation performance and delivery against profile. The Central Lead Team Manager will liaise closely with the Senior Funded Operations Manager within Torfaen Council, who has responsibility for the regional management of the Working Skills for Adults 2 operation, to ensure consistency across the South East Wales region and sharing of good practice.

The Senior Responsible Officer, who's role as Newport City Councils Community Regeneration Manager, is responsible for both the Inspire 2 Work, Inspire 2 Achieve and Journey 2 Work operations. They will directly line manager the Central Lead Team Manager and oversee the team's workload and effectiveness to support each operation Joint Beneficiaries. The Senior Responsible Officer will also report on the Skills@Work operation to both the Cardiff City Region Employability Board and Skills Board.

## Human Resources

The Central Lead Team to manage Skills@Work will consist of 4 full time posts. The competencies and grades have been evaluated by the host authority, Newport, in line with its Organisational Development Department practices.

The levels and numbers of staff that have been agreed for the East Wales operation Central Lead Team are considered sufficient for operations of this scale.

All Joint Beneficiaries have robust recruitment policies and procedures in place which can be evidenced if required.

### Central Management, Governance and Procurement

**Commented [h24]:** No, the SRO is only responsible for the operations led by NCC.

**Commented [WM(-W25):** Who or what post is the SRO and what will be their role regarding the Operation – do they also cover Bridges and WSFA?

Whilst the majority of provision will be delivered in house, we will seek to procure for specialist support. At present, partners will be responsible for procurement within their organisations, with procurement frameworks already in place, or to be undertaken through the mobilisation period.

However, consideration is being given to a central procurement framework across the region. This will reduce the number of procurement exercises undertaken, simplify management of the process, allow for greater opportunities amongst partners to access alternative training provision and support on a regional basis, along with providing value for money through economy of scale. Given the close working partnership between East Wales and WWV operations, consideration will also be given to create a framework covering all 10 Local Authority areas.

#### Governance arrangements for delivery

The governance arrangements for the delivery and tracking of performance are as follows:

- The Central Lead Team Manager will represent the Skills@Work operation at the P2 Network meeting coordinated by the Regional Engagement Team. Representatives from other ESF operations within the region and WEFO will seek to share best practice and identify strategic joint working opportunities.
- The Skills@Work Strategic Group will meet quarterly and consist of the Senior Responsible Officers from each Joint Beneficiary and the Lead Beneficiary and will oversee the strategic management, including performance, delivery and procurement of the operation.
- The Skills@Work Operational Group will meet quarterly, chaired by the Central Lead Team Manager, and consist of the local delivery team managers to discuss performance and any operation issues that may arise. The Operational Group will feed into the Strategic Group any performance issues and conflicts of interest.
- Joint Beneficiary local delivery teams will oversee and undertake the day to day delivery of the operation within their area and will receive individual quarterly "Health Checks" from the Central Lead Team.
- Bi-annual "Practitioner Events" will be facilitated by the Central Lead Team to bring together project workers from each Joint Beneficiary allowing sharing of good practice, delivery of workshops on topics of concern and presentations from Joint Beneficiaries regarding individual delivery methods.

An existing ESF Central Lead Team is in place within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing service of Newport City Council, and is responsible for the strategic delivery of the Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work operations. It is planned that this team will be expanded to take on the management of the Skills@Work operation. The Central Lead Team will be responsible for managing the

performance of the operation and overseeing the delivery of each Joint Beneficiary. This will include responsibility for the following activities:

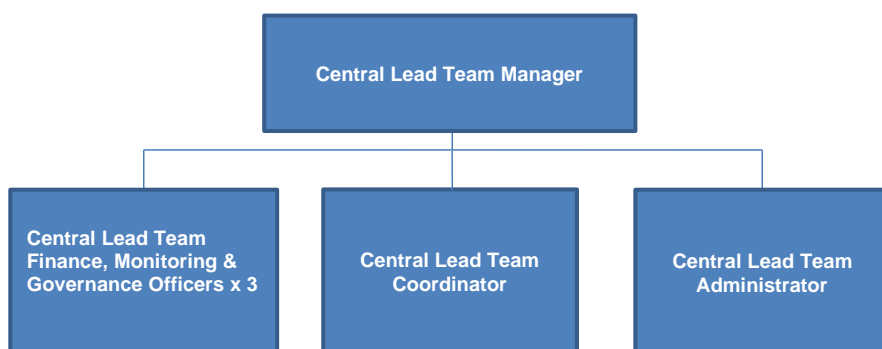
- Managing performance of Joint Beneficiary progress towards operational targets as agreed with the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).
- Completion of regular monitoring and compliance checks ensuring Joint Beneficiaries adhere to WEFO guidance.
- Reporting and submission of participant outcomes and financial expenditure to WEFO Project Delivery Officers and via WEFO online.
- Collation and storage of required documentation to evidence participant outcomes and financial expenditure.
- Correspondence with WEFO to resolve queries and distribution of information to Joint Beneficiaries.
- Communication with all Joint Beneficiaries on a regular basis ensuring WEFO updates and guidance are received.
- Preparations for WEFO claim verifications and European Funding Audit Team inspections.
- Development of legal agreements between Newport City Council as the Lead Beneficiary and the individual Joint Beneficiaries.
- Creation of a regional procurement framework where appropriate and monitoring of Joint Beneficiary procurement activity.
- Ensure the Operation is adequately promoted and all marketing adheres to WEFO guidelines.

A new Central Lead Team Coordinator post will be created to support Skills@Work operation. This post along with the existing Central Lead Team posts will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on total participant numbers of each. The cost for delivering the central function for Skills@Work will be covered by the ESF grant and contributions from all Joint Beneficiaries, on an apportionment basis. This methodology has been adopted for the approved Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work operations.

A centralised function will create greater synergy between the four East Wales ESF operations led by Newport City Council, allowing for stronger management and a more strategic approach to delivery across the region. The Central Lead Team posts proposed are as below:

- Central Lead Team Manager – Responsible for managing the regional operation including, but not restricted to: liaison with Joint Beneficiaries and WEFO, regional procurement and management of outcomes, outputs and funding, monitoring and verification. This post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.
- Central Lead Team Coordinator – Responsible for coordinating the operational delivery including, but not restricted to: liaison with Joint Beneficiaries and WEFO, management of outcomes, outputs and funding, monitoring and verification, marketing and publicity. This post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.

- Central Lead Team Finance, Monitoring and Governance Officer – Responsible for tracking of Joint Beneficiary outputs and outcomes, implementation of monitoring systems; ensuring that participants are all eligible for support and outcomes are not duplicated; monitoring of all eligible spend for Joint Beneficiaries, management and implementation of monitoring and reporting systems. To reduce overhead costs and to provide a service in line with the scale of the operation, these posts will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.
- Central Lead Team Administrator – Responsible for the presentation of reports and information for management, ensuring that databases and recording systems are updated correctly and consistently. To reduce overhead costs, and to provide a service in line with the scale of the operation, this post will be apportioned across all 4 operations based on participant numbers.



The operation is seeking a delivery start date in January 2019. We do not foresee the need for a mobilisation period. Newport City Council is already delivering on 3 ESF operations, with a number of transferable processes and procedures already in place, and therefore will be ready to commence delivery upon approval:

- Project management processes have been established and are being implemented successfully, including claim submission and claim verification procedures and quarterly Joint Beneficiary Health Checks.
- Legal agreements referred to as Relationship Agreements have been developed and are in place with our three approved operations. These agreements have been constructed by NCC’s legal department with comments from the relevant Joint Beneficiary legal teams, and can be easily amended for the Skills@Work Operation. The final version of the Relationship Agreement will be available for prior to operational approval with signatures gathered alongside those required for the WEFO Grant Offer Letter.

- Specific guidance and documents for the operation such as participant paperwork are being developed by the Central Lead Team during the business planning stage and will be reviewed by the Skills@Work development group.
- The Central Lead Team posts are apportioned across the three currently approved operations, through a methodology based on participant numbers. On approval, the above posts including the Coordinator post once recruited will be apportioned across all four operations.

The Central Lead Team is well placed within the Local Authority to allow access and support to a number of officers and services within the Authority, for example officers in Legal, Finance, Internal Audit and European Affairs.

### Relationship Agreement

Governance arrangements will be covered by a Relationship Agreement between the Lead and Joint Beneficiaries. This agreement is one that has previously been agreed and implemented with partners from approved, existing operations.

These agreements have been agreed with our legal department, and are such that they can easily transfer to Skills@Work. We are currently drafting the final Skills@Work agreement for circulation to Joint Beneficiaries.

The relationship agreement sets out the governance arrangements for the operation. It details the core roles and responsibilities of the Lead and Joint Beneficiaries, setting out the requirements and commitments of all parties under the headings set out below. The previous agreements have fallen into two sections:

Section 1 sets out the formal context of the relationship agreement, and is signed by all Joint Beneficiaries:

- Working Arrangements
- Agreement
- Default
- Dispute Resolution
- Termination
- Commencement and Duration of operation

Section 2 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the partners, the offer letter and the grant conditions which are passed on to the Joint Beneficiary. This section sets out the conditions under which the Joint Beneficiary must deliver their part of the operation, their requirement to deliver to profile, and sets out mitigation to address issues e.g. slippage against spend, underperformance of targets, match funding issues.

### **Staff Performance Measures**

- Engagements: including planning and delivering engagement events, marketing activity and achieving adequate referral information

- Enrolment: including data entry and administration accuracy, participant eligibility and initial assessment completion. Compliance will be measured against EU regulations. RAG rating of participant files to measure administration compliance
- On programme support: Identifying barriers and delivering support to ensure participants retention and ultimately gaining qualifications. Retention and progression will also be measured with KPI's for qualifications obtained and participant progression as a result of achieving qualifications.
- Tracking and monitoring: All participants will need regular contact and engagement prior to gaining qualifications. Tracking will also be done after qualifications have been obtained to monitor progression.
- Quality Assurance: observations for teacher planning, delivery and engagement time. Attainment KPI's to measure course completion and pass rates.

### **Business Continuity**

The Joint Beneficiary business continuity plans ensure that all have the resources and processes in place to cover incidents that affect their ability to deliver services. Each service within the Local Authority responsible for delivery of the operation has a large team of staff available who are ready to work across various contracts to deliver performance, quality and compliance outcomes. All delivery and management staff will be adept at recording contract information on the CEMP database; this will ensure that in the event of sickness, illness of leave support to participants will be maintained. The CEMP database server is backed up on a daily basis so information is safely stored for future use.

In the event of the identified delivery locations being unavailable each Joint Beneficiary has identified alternative community centres/locations where they have the capacity to deliver services that are accessible to the local community. These venues are linked to Local Authority servers, have corporate and open WIFI connections and I.T suites available.

### **Key management and staff functions considered necessary**

The Joint Beneficiaries have highlighted the below staff functions as necessary to support the delivery of the Skills@Work operation:

- Contract Delivery & Partnership Manager
- Curriculum Manager
- Finance & Monitoring Manager
- Project Co-ordinator
- Economic Inactivity Workers
- Administration support
- Tutors

### **Availability of resources for effective delivery**

Joint Beneficiaries have already created a staffing structure that will allow immediate delivery of the operation, with additional recruitment backfilling posts as and when required. The service areas responsible for the delivery have vast experience of successfully delivering employability, mentoring and training programmes. Dedicated



delivery locations that are accessible to participants have been highlighted within each Local Authority area.

The delivery will be heavily supported by the Local Authority Adult Community Learning service which has qualified teaching staff to plan, teach, assess and evaluate the required range for qualifications, along with the teaching resources and venues, which will enable a flexible response to learner need.

Each Joint Beneficiary has policies and processes in place to manage delivery requirements and safeguard staff and participants. The policies also include lone working, safeguarding issues, equality & diversity and health and safety.

### Procurement Arrangements

Where we have established an identified need, Local Authority Procurement Frameworks will be used to source the activity. This will be monitored by the Central Lead Team and reported to WEFO.

### Risk Management

The Skills@Work operation will monitor risk via the Skills@Work Strategic Group, using Risk and Issue registers, in line with the Lead Beneficiaries Corporate Project Management Procedures. A risk register will be created and maintained throughout the lifetime of the operation. In the initial stages of the operation, the Strategic Group will be meeting quarterly for the first nine months. This will be reviewed initially and more frequent meetings held, if necessary.

The initial risks identified are:

Risk Factor	Mitigating Measure
East Wales Operation Central Lead Team – Not being recruited.	An existing Central Lead Team is already in place to manage the Skills@Work operation.
Insufficiently experienced staff	<p>The Operational Management Group will provide experience and support to any staff that have limited experience of ESF funded operations.</p> <p>The Central Lead Team Manager has extensive experience of delivering ESF projects under previous RCE and Objective 3 Programmes, and has been involved in the development of the monitoring systems, IT database, and financial systems for both Inspire operations. The Central Lead team have successfully delivered to date the Inspire</p>

	2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work and Journey 2 Work operations.
Brexit	<p>This remains a risk until such a point that the operation is approved.</p> <p>There has been a commitment from UK Government to guarantee funding for operations approved whilst the UK is still part of the EU.</p>

### ICT Arrangements

The Central Lead Team will have an agile and flexible working environment. Each Team member will have their own laptop, wireless access to all required drives and internet access. The Team will be able to work from a myriad of other venues in line with the Lead Beneficiaries' Agile Working Policies.

The Skills@Work Local Delivery Teams within each Joint Beneficiary will be allocated with all of the necessary access to computers, laptops, mobiles and other devices as deemed necessary. No significant expenditure on new IT for the operation is envisaged.

### Operation Closure Requirements

The Skills@Work operation will have regard to project closure from the date of approval. The Lead Beneficiary understands the need to ensure that record keeping, both financial and participant, needs to be fully compliant to allow a smooth close for the operation, whether this is the original date, or for a revised closure date.

The Central Lead Team will establish a timetable of 'Health Check' visits to all Joint Beneficiaries on a regular basis to ensure activity and records are compliant for the purposes of the 2014-2020 ESF Programme.

The operation will have regard to the existing and future updates on Project Closure Guidance which WEFO hold on their website.

### Compliance with Legislation

All Joint Beneficiaries are aware of all legislative requirements associated with the delivery of the Operation and are all working within the conditions set out in the WEFO document- Eligibility rules and conditions for support from the European Structural Funds 2014- 2020.

All of the Joint Beneficiaries taking part in the operation are large organisations and therefore already have Equality and Diversity Policies in place, this ensures that all staff are aware of the issues and standards required of them.

All venues used will be assessed for accessibility; equipment where possible will be adapted for individuals with specific needs. For example, IT equipment suitable for those with a visual impairment will be used, or a sign language interpreter would be employed to support participants with hearing difficulties. Special arrangements would be made for those with physical disabilities. All Joint Beneficiaries of the Skills@Work programme understand that it is a part of their statutory duty to comply with equalities legislation.

All staff will be aware of the importance of environmental issues and the potential impact on communities. The Skills@Work Operation will make appropriate use of technology to minimise impact on the environment and encourage the use of public and/or shared transport where appropriate.

### **Promotional Activity**

The Lead Beneficiary for the Operation is currently preparing a Marketing and Communications Strategy that will develop in line with WEFO Publicity Guidance and in conjunction with WEFO's Communications Team.

All Joint Beneficiaries will undertake local public relations activities and ensure that the publicity activities highlight the EU support; this will be achieved through the following:

- Acknowledge EU Funds when you refer to or publicise the operation
- Inform those taking part in the project, including participants, businesses and contractors that they are benefitting from EU funds
- Ensure arrangements are in place so that Joint Beneficiaries, contractors and businesses in receipt of financial support acknowledge the EU funds in publicity activities, including the display of a permanent plaque (available free of charge from WEFO) and a poster (using WEFO's template) in a prominent position where project activities take place
- Liaise with WEFO to arrange a Ministerial announcement of the award of EU funds for the operation
- Ensure all press notices, newsletters, online and social media content, and other promotional materials relating to the operation prominently acknowledge EU funds, including use of logo(s)
- Refer to the EU fund (European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, or European Structural and Investment Funds) not WEFO.

## **Section 3 – Core Criterion: Financial & Compliance**

### **Organisational Capacity and Expertise**

The Skills@Work operation will be led by Newport City Council.

Newport City Council was formed initially as a County Borough in 1996, and obtained City Status in 2002. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest in Wales, providing all major services such as education, leisure, housing, social services, planning and highways. Newport City Council is a Unitary Authority, which is responsible for the administration of all areas of local government within a single tier for a given area. The council employs approximately 5000 people and has an annual revenue budget of around £300 million.

Newport City Council became a County Borough Authority in 1996, following local government reorganisation, prior to which it formed part of Gwent Unitary Authority.

Newport City Council has adopted a constitution that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The law requires some of these processes, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Constitution is divided into 16 Articles, which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business.

Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to provide clear leadership to the community, improve the delivery of services to the citizens of Newport, and ensure that decisions are taken efficiently and effectively and to create an effective means of holding decision-makers to account.

The Constitution is intended to enable the Council to carry out those aims and objectives.

There will be close support and working relationships established between the Central Lead Team in Newport and the Central Support Team in Torfaen County Borough Council that are acting as the Lead Beneficiary for the Bridges Into Work and Working Skills for Adults 2 operations.

The purpose is to establish consistent and rigorous operation management procedures and sharing of best practice in the delivery of all ESF funded activity in the East Wales region. This will help to ensure that the individual operations to be delivered within the programme are managed and advised in a consistent manner.

### **Conflict of Interest**

There are no conflicts of interest in the Local Authority acting as Lead Beneficiary for the Skills@Work operation.

## County Court Judgements

Newport City Council as lead beneficiary of the Skills@Work operation has not incurred any County Court Judgements.

## Initial Outline Cost Breakdown

Based on the FR-40 model and working on an intervention rate of 54%, the operation will be valued at £3,592,371.80, based on indicative costs and match funding already identified.

Joint Beneficiary	ESF Grant	Match Funding	Total
Cardiff City Council	£798,207.10	£679,954.20	£1,478,161.30
Monmouthshire County Council	£245,663.76	£288,387.90	£534,051.66
Newport City Council	£736,469.40	£627,362.82	£1,363,832.23
Central Lead Team	£116,816.37	£99,510.24	£216,326.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,939,880.77</b>	<b>£1,652,491.03</b>	<b>£3,592,371.80</b>

### Simplified Costs

The Lead and all Joint Beneficiaries have submitted financial profiles, identifying delivery costs and potential match funding. The Lead partner has engaged with co-financing beneficiaries to discuss delivery costs, match funding (including any restrictions), and options for simplified costs with a single preferred methodology to be applied.

The figures provided at this stage are subject to further refinement with partners, before full costing's and a match funding delivery profile can be finalised.

Whilst further work is required to finalise a preferred financial delivery model, the current position of the operation is the preferred methodology for the calculation of all non-direct staff and non-fully procured costs is the FR-40 model. Further support and advice from WEFO officers of both the FR-15, and the FR-40 methodology would be appreciated to determine the most appropriate route.

## State Aid Status

The operation has reviewed its State Aid status and has considered there to be No Aid as the training and support provided through the Skills@Work operation to the individual will take place outside of their workplace.

It is envisaged that any specialist vocational training or services would be sourced from procured delivery partners.

## **Income potentially classed as ‘net revenue generating’ under Art. 61 of the Common Provisions Regulation**

There is no income foreseen as part of this operation, as defined ‘net revenue generating’ under Article 61 of the Common Provisions Regulation. The central management team will continue to monitor this as part of its strategic management of the operation, and will report any potential revenue generation to WEFO.

## **Funding Package**

Based on the FR-40 model as noted above, and working on an intervention rate of 54%, the operation will be valued at approximately £3,592,371.80 , based on indicative costs and match funding already identified, however will be subject to further refinement as Simplified Costs are agreed, and other match funding is secured (please see attached Finance spread sheet for further detail). The Joint Beneficiaries will continue to work to identify further match funding through the business planning stage with the aim to reducing the intervention rate further.

ESF Funding	£ 1,939,880.77
Match Funding	£ 1,652,491.03
Total Operation Value	£ 3,592,371.80

It is estimated, based on partner information provided to date the operation will support 1541 participants across the region. Further work is required on both participant and match funding data to bring this in line with data as contained within the Operational Programme.

This figure has been determined through beneficiary research as having the level of impact required. It also takes into account other potential operations delivering within the region such as Upskilling@Work.

### Assumptions

The operation has made a number of assumptions in respect of the funding package. These will continue to be refined in further iterations of the business plan:

- Costs have been based on experience of similar delivery models within the partner organisations, that reflects the level of experience and skills expertise required.
- Assumptions have been made with regard to the availability of some identified match funding post year 1. This will be refined through further iterations of the delivery profile and business plan.

### Joint Beneficiary arrangements in respect of co-financing

The operation has 3 co-financing beneficiaries:

- Monmouthshire County Council
- Cardiff City Council
- Newport City Council

At present Joint Beneficiaries are only able to identify match funding at 46% to support delivery in their area of operation, and to support a Central Lead Team. The operation is mindful that the intervention rate for East Wales is currently set at 50%, however is seeking some flexibility otherwise as it has been noted by Joint Beneficiaries that the operation will not be able to deliver the necessary interventions given the availability of direct match funding available in each organisation. The Lead Beneficiary costs have been apportioned based on the value of ESF grant provided to each Joint Beneficiaries.

Co-financing in-kind by source / type and its links to operation costs

The Joint Beneficiaries have provided some outline information on potential sources of match funding, which include such sources as:

Source	Link to operation costs
Monmouthshire Community Learning Franchise grant	Match against the delivery of qualifications to employed learners, including staff time, accreditation costs, venue hire
Newport Community Learning Franchise grant	Match against the delivery of qualifications to employed learners, including staff time, accreditation costs, venue hire
Cardiff City Council Core Funding	Match against the delivery of qualifications to employed learners, including staff time, accreditation costs, venue hire

Any other potential sources of funding that have been considered and/or may be required/ addressing gaps in the funding package

The Joint Beneficiaries have worked where possible to provide sufficient match funding for the operation. However, it is recognised that further iterations of the business plan and delivery profile may impact on delivery costs. In particular where a simplified cost model is agreed with WEFO, further work may be required on the funding package. Partners have been conservative in some calculations, and so some scope may remain within the parameters of certain match funding already identified.

Evidence that all potential funding from non-EU sources have been explored

Partners have considered alternative sources of funding from non EU sources but these are limited in what provision can be offered and are at times restricted to specific geographical areas and client groups.

There are limited funding sources outside of the public purse that offer this level of intervention to employed people, in particular those in full time employment. The BIG Lottery Fund in Wales is one potential source of grant funding that can offer this level

of intervention, currently their only programme with the funding size required for an operation like Skills@Work is targeted at those aged 16-24 with learning disabilities.

Many of the funding sources available that have been explored are restricted to voluntary or community organisations and not available to public sector organisations.

Sources and timing for the introduction of co-financing/ co-financing in-kind, with an explanation of any conditions or restrictions in its availability

Sources and restrictions of co-financing have been identified in the table above. We are aware that these funds come with restrictions as to the target group of participants, and the timing of their availability; with some funds available on an annual basis, Joint Beneficiaries have had to consider a wide range of match funding options to meet the need of the operation:

Monmouthshire Community Learning Franchise Grant	This is an annual allocation. We have made assumptions that this will be available for years 2, 3 and 4 also.
Newport Community Learning Franchise Grant	This is an annual allocation. We have made assumptions that this will be available for years 2, 3 and 4 also
Cardiff City Council	This is an annual allocation. We have made assumptions that this will be available for years 2, 3 and 4 also

Those Joint Beneficiaries that have provided initial cost figures have all provided indicative match funding allocations, we have a better understanding from other ESF Operations led by Newport City Council of the Simplified Cost Methodology and WEFO's expectations in terms of intervention rates. However, the financial profiles will require amendments in successive iterations of this plan as Joint Beneficiaries finalise the size of their local operations and the resultant financial requirements.

**Further Financial Criterion: Value for Money**

**Cost Benefit Analysis**

**Option 1**

The chosen option for Skills@Work is a mixed delivery model, predominantly delivered by beneficiaries, with limited procurement.

The approach would support the continuation of a multi-agency approach to supporting those furthest from the labour market but will also enable Joint Beneficiaries to co-ordinate the process with partners, so that local needs and gaps can be met.



In delivering this option, the operation is delivering a model that balances risk and costs, with minimal financial risk.

A detailed breakdown of the costs of the Operation is attached in the financial profile. In considering this profile in relation to the ESF Operational Programme, the overall unit cost per participant is actually lower than at operational Programme level.

	Skills@Work	ESF P2 OP Target
Total participants	1541	40,300
Value (Inc. Match funding)	£ 3,592,371.80	£106,800,000
Unit cost	£ 2,370	£2,650

This is also evidenced when comparing the unit cost for the achievement of outcomes, although this varies across individual outcomes. Examples of some unit costs are demonstrated below showing value for money:

Outcomes	Total	Unit cost per outcome (S@W)	ESF OP Target	Unit cost per outcome (OP Level)
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (male)	237	£15,157	5616	£19,017
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (female)	297	£12,095	5112	£20,892
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (male)	255	£14,087	9576	£11,153
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (female)	266	£13,505	8712	£12,259

## Option 2

	Skills@Work	ESF P2 OP Target
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Total participants	1541	40,300
Value (Inc. Match funding)	£4,653,241	£106,800,000
Unit cost	£3,019.62	£2,650

Outcomes	Total	Unit cost per outcome (S@W)	ESF OP Target	Unit cost per outcome (OP Level)
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (male)	240	£19,389	5616	£19,017
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (female)	304	£15,307	5112	£20,892
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (male)	257	£18,106	9576	£11,153
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (female)	270	£17,234	8712	£12,259

### Option 3

No Cost Benefit Analysis available as Option 3 is to do nothing.

### Option 4

	Skills@Work	ESF P2 OP Target
Total participants	859	40,300
Value (Inc. Match funding)	£1,939,880.77	£106,800,000
Unit cost	£2,260	£2,650

Outcomes	Total	Unit cost per outcome (S@W)	ESF OP Target	Unit cost per outcome (OP Level)
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (male)	101	£19,207	5616	£19,017
Employed, including self-employed Participants with no formal qualifications gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving (female)	124	£15,644	5112	£20,892
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (male)	135	£14,369	9576	£11,153
Employed, including self-employed Participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (CQFW Level 2) gaining an 'essential skills' or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (CQFW Level 2) level upon leaving (female)	145	£13,378	8712	£12,259

## Operation Costs

The financial profile contains an effective cash flow projection for the lifespan of the operation, broken down by quarterly claim period. This information is available at Joint Beneficiary level and provided in Annex 4.

## Further Financial Criterion: Long Term Sustainability

### Potential for Sustainability

The Operation has some confidence that even after closure, elements of delivery such as the accessible delivery of training courses within the local community to employed individual will continue to have an impact, if delivered through services such as Adult Community Learning. Unfortunately without the ESF Grant it is doubtful the same level

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of one to one support will be available for participants to support them to gain more skills and qualifications.

The Operation aims to develop resilience in the workforce, so as their confidence and skills and qualifications develop, they will be able to progress. This will either enable them to progress into sustainable employment or softer outcomes will be achieved.

The landscape of need is anticipated to change in the medium term owing to the impact of all the proposed ESF funded activities in the 2014-2020 period and improvements in the economic situation overall.

It appears unlikely that Wales will receive ESF revenue support post 2020, however confirmation has been received from the UK Treasury that funds will be made available to continue those ESF Operations approved to deliver post 2020.

### **Financially Sustainable Model**

The focus of the Skills@Work Joint Beneficiaries will be to provide a mechanism for those currently in employment with little or no qualifications to upskill with a community based learning method. This will then lead to sustainable employment opportunities. The training and support structures will enable the participants to gain both the soft and hard skills that will enable them to engage and maintain sustainable employment past the end of the operation.

This Operation acknowledges that due to personal, social and educational barriers, not every participant will receive a qualification and progress into more sustainable employment. It is anticipated that the long term impact of the operation will challenge behaviours, actions and attitudes, subsequently establishing firm foundations on which to support in the future, and provide generic skills.

The Operation also brings together agencies to work collaboratively, develop referral mechanisms alongside developing opportunities for joint working. It is hoped that these relationships, and the best practise formed will continue following the end of the operation.

Match funding has been provided through core budgets; it is hoped that any future successful best practise can be embedded into the core delivery of the Joint Beneficiaries.

The availability of Match Funding sources and levels impacts on the staff time and ESF grant available to help deliver the operation and could be deemed as low in comparison to other projects/programmes. The Joint Beneficiaries have assessed the number of participants that will be engaged and the equivalent staff resource required to deliver the necessary support in comparison to similar services offered within their organisations and have deemed the caseload sizes and resource available as acceptable to meet the operation aims.

### **Mainstreaming**

The implementation of the operation should provide evidence to all service providers that combining resources for the benefit of participants will also have great benefits for their own organisations. Post ESF funding, it is envisioned the services required supporting individuals engaged through Skills@Work, and related operations will be identified and implemented through a collaborative approach based on the best practise evidence base of the operation.

## **Project Closure**

The operation has a built in closure period of 3 months included in its profile in which delivery will cease.

The full closure strategy will be developed through the Central Lead Team, and in partnership with Joint Beneficiaries to ensure a seamless closure period. The Central Lead Team will be responsible for overseeing the close down of the operation, working closely with WEFO and Joint Beneficiaries to ensure all records are finalised and archived and closure reports prepared and published.

## **Section 4 – Annexes**

### **Annex 1 – Supporting Information**

- Tackling Poverty – Welsh Government Action Plan 2012 -2016
- Welsh Government – Vibrant & Viable places, new regeneration framework
- Policy Statement on Skills 2013
- South East Wales Regional Frame Work – Delivering a Future with Prosperity 2013 – 2030
- Qualified for Life – 2014
- Employer Skills Survey 2013
- ELSKIP Consultation Document
- Newport City Region STEM strategy
- Equality Improvement Framework
- Sustainable Employment Framework
- Cardiff Capital Region – Power in the Economy
- Skills Implementation Plan
- Co-Investment Strategy
- Carers Pathway Project – Self Evaluation Report
- Carers Pathway Project – End of Contract Report

**Annex 2 – Operation Logic Table**

<b>Operation Title:</b>	<b>Skills@Work</b>
<b>Operation Synopsis</b>	To invest in skills as a driver of productivity and growth, to aid progression within employment and improve the skills mix and diversity of our workforce. Also to increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with low or no skills.
<b>Programme/Priority/Theme (multiple if appropriate):</b>	Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth ESF Theme 2A: Adaptability, growth and progression
<b>Geographical area within proposed activity would take place:</b>	South East Wales - Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan

Contribution towards the Specific Objectives	What change will the proposed operation seek to achieve?	How will the proposed operation achieve the changes sought?	Programme output indicators and targets
<p><i>Of the 'specific objectives' identified within the relevant Operational Programme document(s), please list those that the proposed operation would deliver against.</i></p>	<p><i>Of the 'changes sought' identified within the relevant Operational Programme document(s), please list those that the proposed operation would seek to achieve. These should relate directly to the specific objectives identified under the previous column.</i></p>	<p><i>For each 'change sought' identified in the previous column, please describe the specific activities that will be undertaken through the proposed operation in order to achieve these.</i></p>	<p><i>Please identify which Programme output indicators will be used to capture the activities described under the previous column. If possible, please identify a provisional contribution towards the relevant output target.</i></p>
<p><b>ESF Theme 2A: Adaptability, Growth and Progression</b></p> <p>(SO1)</p> <p>To increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills.</p>	<p>Increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal</li> </ul>	<p>A single flexible model of delivery to support the multi-agency networks and business needs within each LA area. Please note that the list below is not a descriptive journey for every participant rather a series of interventions that participants will have access to depending on their level of need identified. This is not an exhaustive list of interventions. The model recognises the need for two distinct engagement routes to ensure equality of opportunity for the groups targeted.</p> <p><u>Activity 1 (A1) Regional LMI/Employer Liaison</u>  <u>Link to National Skills Audit and SSC data</u></p>	<p><b><u>Activity A1 will underpin direction of delivery throughout the life of the programme</u></b></p>



<p>The programme will align with the Welsh Government “Skills Strategy” ensuring skills delivery is for jobs and growth, responds to local need, that employers value and for employment.</p> <p>The programme will also align with the Welsh Government “Tackling Poverty Action Plan” which aims to reduce poverty, especially persistent poverty amongst some of the most deprived people and communities.</p>	<p>qualifications – male</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – female</li> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – male</li> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – female</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with employers to gather LMI, support development of ‘demand led’ provision, to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to labour market fluctuations and support employers to continue to employ more disadvantaged people.</li> <li>• Targeted support to employers to employ disadvantaged individuals, for example, to employ older people or people with a work limiting health condition/disability.</li> </ul> <p><u>Activity 2 (A2) Engagement, Assessment &amp; Support – Employers</u></p> <p>Active engagement of local and regional employers to support in work provision for employees who wish to progress within their existing field, with clear referral mechanisms established to avoid duplication of activity with other operations.</p> <p>Officers to work with employers and relevant business support agencies (avoiding duplication) to provide support in activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills audit of the management of the organisation with reference to higher leadership and management skills.</li> <li>• Review of existing equality &amp; diversity policies with guidance and support, with an aim to implement improved policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Activity A2 &amp; A3 to ensure targeted engagement, assessment &amp; support leading to qualification outputs through A4</u></b></p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the screening process for employers such as those working with the Welsh Government Workforce Development Programme.</li> </ul> <p><u>Activity 3 (A3) Engagement, Assessment &amp; Support – Employees</u> Active engagement of employees outside of their workplace will support those unwilling to realise skills deficits and admit them to their employers or whose employers fail to engage. Provision to be accessible to suit working lives, e.g. evenings and weekends.</p> <p>Engagement and support officers to work with participants providing support on a 1-1 and small group basis within the workplace and community settings, and to undertake reliable and objective diagnostic assessments of participants' current level of training and skills.</p> <p><u>Activity 4 (A4) Delivery of Programmes</u> Engagement and support officers to work with participants delivering generic transferable skills and elements of provision required by employers. A range of qualifications and awards to up skill those with low or no qualifications including a menu of procured opportunities to deliver a range of skills and qualifications as required by participants and employers.</p>	<p><b><u>Outputs indicators to be achieved following a series of tailored interventions for individuals from A4</u></b></p> <p>Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – male</p> <p>Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – female</p> <p>Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving – male</p>
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		<p>Skills interventions (including basic and functional skills provision, plus vocational training) tailored to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move participants with no skills to at least a Level 1 qualification.</li> <li>- Move participants with a Level 1 qualification to a Level 2 qualification.</li> <li>- Provide participants with Level 2 skills or qualifications with another recognised and accredited Level 2 qualification.</li> </ul> <p>Where appropriate and in addition to the recognised qualification outcome, the provision of generic transferable work relevant skills such as customer service, team working, communication, organisation, problem solving, etc. and employment progression courses such as CV writing, application forms, interview techniques, job searching.</p>	<p>Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving - female</p>
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Group(s) targeted	Identifying the barriers	Overcoming the barriers	How does the proposed operation fit within the wider investment context as set out in the Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF)?
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – male</li> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – female</li> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – male</li> <li>• Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – female</li> </ul>	<p>The barriers identified below may be common to all four themes, not all individuals or businesses will experience all of these as barriers – the purpose of the single delivery model is to ensure participant/employer focused delivery to address those barriers faced by that individual.</p> <p><u>Personal and Business Development Barriers</u> How and why people act – their drive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Vision/Aspirations</li> <li>• Socialisation / Social Isolation</li> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul> <p><u>Employee sustainability and progression Barriers</u></p>	<p>The @Work model that underpins this table contains 18 “gateways” or barriers. Activities described are specifically included to open the gateway and support the participant to overcome the barrier. Participants will have access if required to all of the activities that will support them, continual assessment and review will therefore be crucial to ensure participation in appropriate activities for each individual.</p> <p><u>Personal/Business Development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves awareness/identity</li> <li>• Develops talent and potential</li> <li>• Enhances quality of life</li> </ul> <p>This activity will recognise the ability of an individual and how to increase it, identify and address their approach to life/work and the contribution they can make.</p> <p><u>Community Support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages independence</li> <li>• Supports mobility</li> <li>• Fosters trust and resilience</li> <li>• Builds aspirations and</li> </ul>	<p>ESF can support demand led skills activity to up skill the workforce of the sector and its ancillary supply chains, thereby supporting development and expansion and increasing competitiveness and productivity.</p> <p>Thematic Economic Opportunities within the region include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Food and Farming – Growth targeted by Welsh Government in the Food and Farming sector across Wales, including East Wales.</li> <li>2) Tourism, Recreation and Leisure – Opportunities for further growth in tourism in the Brecon Beacons National Park, Glamorgan Heritage coast and Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the cities of Cardiff and Newport.</li> <li>3) Advanced Manufacturing – Growth planned at St Athans/Cardiff Airport advanced manufacturing/aerospace Enterprise Zone.</li> <li>4) Information, Communication and Technology – Growth of sector and digital economy supported by the roll out of superfast broadband.</li> </ol>
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	<p>Where and how people live – their environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits</li> <li>• Dependent care</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Society: culture of workplace opportunity</li> <li>• Local economy</li> <li>• Time and cost</li> </ul> <p><u>Employment Skills</u> What people can do – their skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience (quotable work ethic)</li> <li>• Work specific experience</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Numeracy</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes equality and inclusion</li> </ul> <p>This activity will change the perception of an individual's place in society and match needs with opportunities. Activity 1 will be a key intervention in breaking down barriers to ensure that relevant routes are developed for employer led skills and opportunities, expelling myths such as 'I'm not skilled enough' and 'I don't know what's out there'.</p> <p><u>Employment Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet employers needs</li> <li>• Promotes sustained employment</li> <li>• Reduce sector skills shortages</li> </ul> <p>This activity will provide the skills and qualifications that are relevant, in demand, at the required level and also provide the experience to meet the needs of employers now and in the future.</p>	<p>5) Financial and Professional Services – Expected growth in Central Cardiff Financial and Professional Services Enterprise Zone and in Newport.</p> <p>6) Construction – Development of South Wales Metro project, Great Western mainline electrification, M4 relief road and improvements to M4 corridor, development of business sites in Newport and Cardiff, 21st Century schools programme.</p> <p>The operation will be complementary to skills activity delivered in the region, taking account of the activity of the Learning Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkIP), to avoid duplication of ESF funded operations and other provision.</p> <p>The operation described seeks to improve workforce resilience across the region, thereby improving productivity and the GDP. LMI will be gathered through the Learning Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkIP) to ensure the training, skills and qualifications gained meet regional employment growth and employer demand.</p>
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			Align to Local Authority Single Integrated Plans which are monitored through Local Service Boards (LSBs). LSBs include key partners from the statutory, voluntary and third sector.
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## Annex 3 – Financial Breakdown

### Newport City Council Financial Profile



NCC Financial Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Cardiff City Council Financial Profile



CCC Financial Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Monmouthshire Council Financial Profile



MCC Financial Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Central Lead Team Financial Profile



CLT Financial Profile -  
Final.xlsx

### Regional Financial Profile



Regional Financial  
Profile - Final.xlsx

## Annex 4 – Participant Indicators and Targets

### Newport City Council Indicator Profile



NCC Indicator Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Cardiff City Council Indicator Profile



CCC Indicator Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Monmouthshire Council Indicator Profile



MCC Indicator Profile  
- Final.xlsx

### Regional Indicator Profile



Regional Indicator  
Profile - Final.xlsx



## Annex 5 – SWOT Analysis

### Option 1 – Delivery by beneficiaries with limited procurement

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>Allows consistent focus on personalising interventions with the participants and local employers through a key worker led approach, controlled by Joint Beneficiaries. Avoids potential State Aid issues through the use of procurement framework contract. Will deliver alongside the WWV's Working Skills for Adults operation, ensuring a consistent approach across the South East Wales region..</p>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <p>Relatively inflexible delivery structure if there are significant changes within Joint Beneficiaries' own organisations. Relies on Joint Beneficiaries' own staff to deliver, which could prove more difficult to hold to account than an external contractor.</p>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>Use of existing structures within Joint Beneficiaries' organisations gives greater flexibility in the provision of match funding, should other funding sources reduce / disappear.</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>If the FR-40 model is adopted, any long term staff vacancies would undermine the available ESF funding placing a higher financial burden on Joint Beneficiaries.</p>

Option 2 – Do nothing

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>No interference in existing training market.</p>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <p>Reliance on external forces to up skill local workforce. (Unlikely to deliver courses in community settings at times to suit the participants.)</p>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>Limited due to inactivity.</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>Existing cycle of in work poverty and low skills levels likely to continue. Perception of the region as low skilled and unappealing to inward investment, threatening economic opportunities.</p>

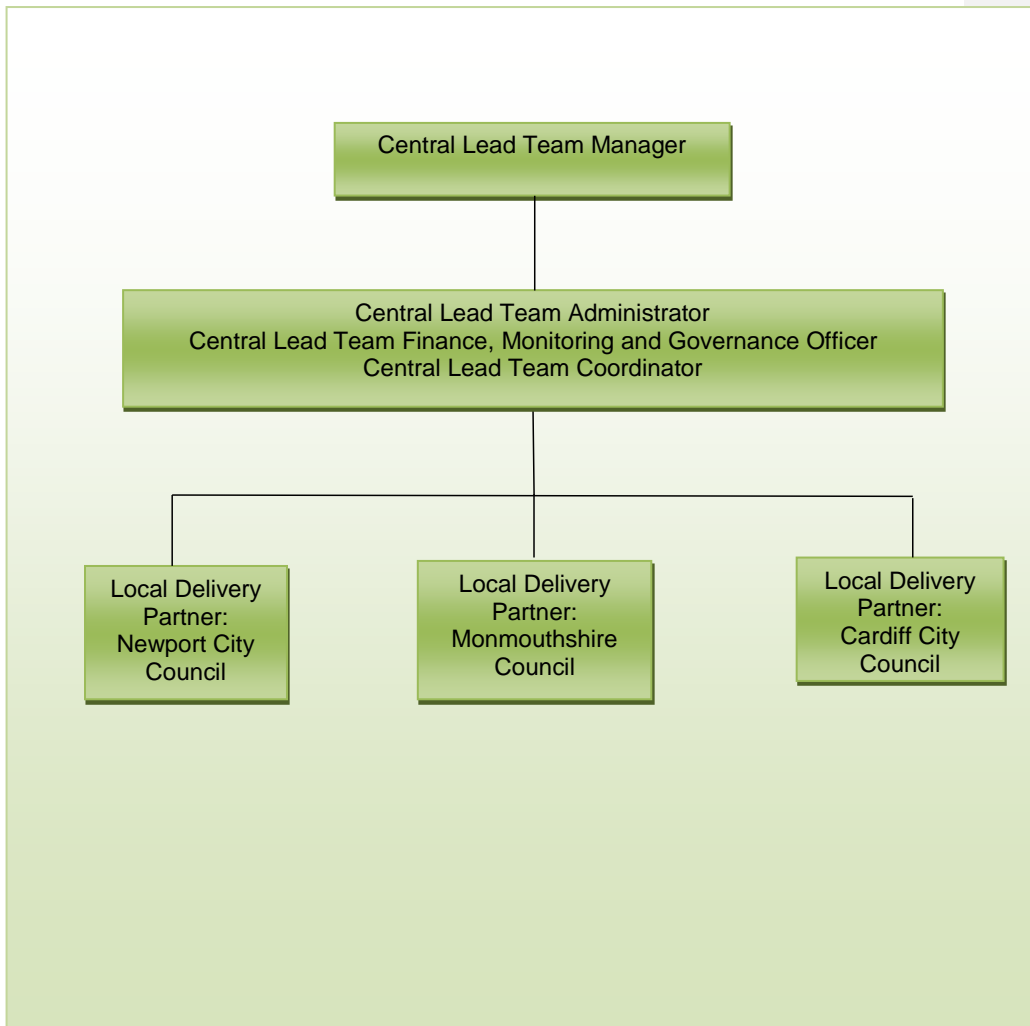
Option 3 – Fully contracted

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>Ensure State Aid compliance at all levels, as all delivery will be subject to a competitive tender process. Low operational risk for lead beneficiary, following initial tender exercise.</p>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <p>Entirely dependent on the quality of external contractors to engage and deliver in a manner that suits the end participant.</p>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>Easier to switch between providers if a certain contractor is not delivering what is required, changes their business model or has performance issues.</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>Lack of direct control over delivery, may give rise to external contractors 'chasing the quick wins' rather than delivering consistent support to participants.</p>

Option 4 – Delivery without ESF

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>More flexible funding and delivery model.</p> <p>Joint Beneficiaries not required to adhere to European Commission eligibility requirements and evidence for outcomes.</p>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <p>Reduced resource to deliver the required interventions to individuals. Shorter delivery timeframes.</p>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>Easier to amend the delivery model and invite further stakeholders to become engaged in delivery, responding to the need of local employers.</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>No long term sustainability due to most funding sources being approved annually.</p>

## Annex 6 – Central Lead Team Structure



## Annex 8 – Risk Register

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Actions to reduce or avoid risk occurring	Person responsible for dealing with the risk?
Unavailability of Match Funding	H	L	<p>Identification with Joint Beneficiaries of current and potential match funding sources.</p> <p>Production of a legally binding relationship agreement indemnifying Newport City Council against all risk.</p>	Central Lead Manager
Reduction in Match Funding value due to further austerity actions	H	M	Clean, eligible sources of Match Funding have been indicated in the S@W Business Plan to WEFO. The sources have been approved for use by WG and the authority.	Central Lead Manager
Insufficient resources available to approve Business Plan applications	H	L	Working with service managers and partners to gain relevant support at the correct levels.	Central Lead Manager
Duplication with other ESF operations/WG Programmes	H	L	<p>Communication with other proposed ESF operations and existing alternatively funded programmes to ensure delivery is not duplicated within the Region.</p> <p>Approval of Business Plans through the CCR Regional Proofing Panel</p>	Central Lead Manager

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Actions to reduce or avoid risk occurring</b>	<b>Person responsible for dealing with the risk?</b>
Underachievement against operation targets	H	L	Targets have been set at realistic levels based on quantifiable need that already exists within Newport.  Robust monitoring processes will highlight any early underachievement that can be addressed and resolved	Central Lead Manager
Non-compliance with WEFO requirements – risk of claw back	H	L	Robust management arrangements, regular reports to CM and a Relationship Agreement detailing the Joint Beneficiaries responsibilities	Central Lead Manager
Refusal or inability by Joint Beneficiaries to provide the required data or documentation as evidence	H	L	Relationship Agreement produced that clearly states requirements of Joint Beneficiaries	Central Lead Manager
Lack of communication regarding amendments to guidance provided by WEFO	H	L	Regular updates for the cabinet member, briefing on changes and updates made with in the project design, finances, and governance.  Quarterly review meetings with WEFO Project Development Officer	Central Lead Manager
Late submission of claim information by Joint Beneficiaries	H	L	Schedule of claim dates provided for full lifetime of operation and reminder each quarter of claim deadlines	Central Lead Manager

**Annex 9 – Project Closure**

TBC



## Annex 10 – Central Lead Team Job Descriptions



Central Lead Finance  
Monitoring Governan



Central Lead Team  
Manager JD.pdf



Central Lead Admin  
JD.pdf

## Annex 11 – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan



S@W Monitoring and  
Evaluation Plan v2.doc

## Annex 12 – Relationship Agreement



S@W Relationship  
Agreement Draft v1.0

## Annex 13 – Joint Beneficiary Delivery Models

### Newport City Council Delivery Model



NCC S@W Delivery  
Model 270318.docx

### Cardiff City Council Delivery Model



S@W Joint  
Beneficiary Delivery Model

### Monmouthshire Council Delivery Model



MCC S@W Delivery  
Model v0.1 290518.docx