

## Training subsidies available for construction businesses through CITB employer network

**T**hanks to a new pilot initiative set up this year by CITB, construction businesses can now get as much as 50 percent of their training costs subsidised. This will allow workers to learn new skills, renew qualifications, and complete mandatory training required for a variety of roles and trades – such as asbestos awareness, health and safety, and first aid qualifications.

The employer network is a new 12-month initiative set up and funded by CITB and coordinated and delivered by local network groups across the regions, including Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

The subsidised training fund is available to all CITB registered companies and is designed to simplify the way construction businesses get the support and funding they need to access the training they want.

The scheme is being coordinated by us here at Cyfle Building Skills, and the employer networks chosen for each region are Swansea Bay Construction Support Group for Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, CCTAL for Carmarthenshire, and Dyfed Training Group (DTG) for Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

As these employer networks are organising the administration of the scheme, there's no need for individual businesses to fill in the CITB forms in order to apply for the grant.

Also, unlike the restrictions in some other schemes, the training can be in anything that supports construction employers. These could be the trade skills the business needs right now or something it could need in the future – such as net zero, digital skills or innovative new technologies training.

There is even a possibility that businesses can get considerably more than the existing grant scheme, so businesses will have to apply to the employer networks to see how much they may be entitled to.

Tim Balcon, CITB Chief Executive, said:

"I'm really excited about this pilot – this is about putting employers in the driving seat to identify and address their local skills challenges and how best CITB can align our funding and resources to support their skills needs. I would encourage employers in the pilot areas to get involved and use their voice to shape the local training provision."



Collectively, the construction employers in the pilot areas will shape the way the funds provided by CITB are spent. If the pilot is a success, it could radically change the way training is funded by CITB, so please get in touch with your regional employer network representative to find out what funding you could get.

### Regional contacts:

Neath Port Talbot & Swansea: Gemma Mineur-  
gemma.mineur@nptcgroup.ac.uk or 07725224865

Carmarthenshire: Lynette Daniels- lynette.  
anthony@colegsirgar.ac.uk or 07531454477

Pembrokeshire & Ceredigion: Tanya Smith- info@  
dyfed-training.co.uk or 01834 871099

## Onsite Hub partners with Tai Tarian's Copper Foundation

**O**ur South West Wales Onsite Hub has partnered with the Copper Foundation, Tai Tarian's employment initiative, to provide even more candidates with the opportunity of a first step towards a career in construction.

Tai Tarian is one of the largest social housing providers in Wales, owning over 9,000 properties across the Neath Port Talbot County Borough. Its Copper Foundation initiative was founded in the summer of 2017 to help people struggling to find a route back into employment.

The scheme provides successful candidates with a 12-month contract to work on Tai Tarian's external improvement programme, repairing and replacing fences, paths, walls and gates across its communities.

It also provides training support and guidance throughout the year – including the Onsite Hub 10-day work experience placement – as a way of giving candidates the best possible chance of securing full-time work once the contract ends.

Since the scheme was launched, the foundation has given opportunities to 75 individuals working on around 600 properties across Neath Port Talbot.



As part of their Onsite Hub placement, the initiative's seven latest recruits – all hailing from the Sandfields area of Port Talbot – were given a week's training, co-ordinated by us here at Cyfle Building Skills, which included health and safety awareness, the CSCS test, and employability training.

As always, upon successful completion of their 10-day work experience placement, each candidate received a toolkit for their chosen trade, along with a £200 training allowance.

Rhys Fisher, our Onsite Hub Training Co-ordinator, said: "The opportunity that the Copper Foundation and CITB's Onsite Hub have created for these candidates is exemplar, with each candidate being more employable after undertaking the programme."

The toolkits and attendance allowance are the short-term gain, whereas the bigger picture is the employment opportunities that follows, if successful."

Rhys Bowen, one of the Copper Foundation's new recruits, added: "I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into working with the Copper Foundation. It's a great opportunity to further myself, learn new skills, and gain valuable site experience.

"I'll mainly be working in the area near where I live and helping to enhance its appearance, so it is something I'm really looking forward to."

Nick Cope, Head of Capital Investment, Tai Tarian, said: "We are delighted to welcome another seven members to the Copper Foundation, and without the CITB On Site Experience we would not have had a true reflection of each candidate.

"The project is all about giving people a great experience of the world of work and over the next 12 months they will undergo numerous training courses and play a huge part in improving the external and internal areas of our properties."



## Partnering with 2B Enterprising to encourage the next generation

**W**e are delighted to have recently signed up with 2B Enterprising on its Bumbles of Honeywood Programme. The aim of the programme is to forge partnerships between businesses and schools in the community and inspire children to learn life skills through story and play.

2B Enterprising was founded by Sue Poole – an experienced education leader in Business, Enterprise and Finance – who recognised that to make a significant change to the entrepreneurial skills of our workforce, we need to work with them from a very early age.

The Bumbles of Honeywood programme has been designed and developed by education and enterprise professionals. It has the aim of inspiring, raising aspirations, and developing the skills of future generations by introducing them to valuable life experiences and key skills at an early stage in their educational development.

2B Enterprising employs education professionals to deliver the activity sessions in participating schools – all of whom have experience working in a classroom environment and are fully trained to deliver The Bumbles of Honeywood programme.



These staff often visit participating schools in collaboration with industry professionals to give the pupils a better idea of what different trades and professions exist, how important they are to society, and what options might be available to them later in their education and as a potential career.

The resources offered to schools by the programme are fully funded and support teachers to deliver engaging and exciting activities aimed at a variety of learning areas within the national curriculum.

The scheme is now working with more than 130 primary schools across the UK, and all resources are available bilingually in Welsh and English.

Our current involvement in the programme is as a Corporate Engagement Partner with 2B Enterprising, providing

financial support to deliver the scheme to 10 schools in the region. We pay for the resources (which can then be used across the school) as well as goodies for one class (30 children) and three delivery sessions throughout the year. This means that the programme can be offered to the schools completely free of charge.

The resources are targeted at pupils aged 5-8 but can be used for those younger or older, depending on the capabilities of the children. Themes covered by the resources include sustainability, well-being, inclusivity, and diversity.

Our Training Coordinator, Brett Enoch, has so far visited seven schools across the region to take part in classroom activities. During his involvement, the scheme focussed on engaging and fun content which encouraged the children to play and use their imagination on stories and topics which highlight the importance of – and opportunities available in – the construction industry.

Brett Enoch, Training Coordinator, Cyfle Building Skills, said:

“The Bumbles of Honeywood resources – so cleverly designed by 2B Enterprising – are a great idea, and perfect for helping younger children understand all the different kinds of jobs and industries that come together to create the communities they live in. The stories and activities are designed to help them think creatively and

entrepreneurially, and they also act as a brilliant introduction to some of the softer skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

“The children at the schools I have visited all enjoyed the activities they were given, and through play, were able to explore areas of the world of work that they may never have had a chance to previously learn about. What’s more, we all had fun!

“It’s vital for the future of our communities that we explain to children about the opportunities that are available to them, and this project is a fantastic way to inspire them and raise aspirations, while developing transferable, real-world life skills from an early age.”



## New collaboration is set to Inspire Skills Excellence in Wales

**W**e are delighted to have commenced a new collaboration with Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales (ISEiW) – a Welsh Government funded initiative led by Coleg Sir Gar.

ISEiW delivers a programme of activities that raise awareness of vocational education and training, as well as career pathways that will positively impact businesses in Wales.

The project does this by supporting vocational learning through Skills Competitions and its Have a Go initiative, to encourage young people to excel in the world of work.

The aim of the initiative is to provide young people in Wales with improved employability skills and life changing opportunities; with employers ultimately benefiting through the employment of highly skilled individuals bringing proficiency and added value to their businesses, as well as contributing to the overall prosperity of Wales.

The ISEiW Have a Go initiative – on which we have recently become collaborators – uses fun and interactive experiences to encourage school children and college students to learn more about vocational careers and apprenticeships through interactive, practical learning challenges.



On our first engagement with the project, our Placement Coordinator, Shaun Williams, visited Ysgol Dyffryn Aman (Amman Valley Comprehensive) to speak to a class of 23 Year 8 pupils about green energy and some of the low carbon initiatives and technologies now being used in the construction industry.

The children were given a short talk by Shaun, which included how photovoltaic cells capture solar energy and convert it to electricity. During the talk, Shaun also gave details of how such panels were utilised during Cyfle’s involvement with the project to build the Kachumbala Maternity Unit in Uganda, and the availability

of apprenticeships to enter the construction industry.

The class was then given the challenge of building a solar powered car, using a Have a Go kit provided by ISEiW – with all pupils completing the challenge successfully during the allotted one-hour lesson.

The school visit was overseen by Michelle Snell, the project’s Have a Go Champion, who is primarily responsible for delivering the range of Have a Go challenges to schools across the region. Also in attendance was Ysgol Dyffryn Aman’s Head of Maths, Francis Mazzeo, who was available to help the children complete their challenge.

Shaun Williams, our Placement Coordinator, said: “The Have a Go initiative is a great way for young people to get to grips with some of the skills and technologies that are required to fill the skills gap within industry. The sessions are a very rewarding and fun way to inspire the next generation of industry professionals, and we are delighted to be collaborating with Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales on this initiative.”

Michelle Snell, Have a Go Champion, ISEiW, said: “We are lucky to have a number of businesses that provide their time and expertise to enhance the sessions we deliver, and it’s great to have Cyfle Building Skills on board as a new industry partner.

“All of the sessions take place during normal lesson time, and we are currently able to deliver 30 sessions a year, working with 10 schools across the region. The Have a Go sessions are a fantastic way to promote some of the vocational pathways that students may not have considered, or even know very much about, whilst simultaneously encouraging the development of vitally important transferable life-skills.”

# CYFLE SHARED APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

## National Apprenticeship Week: 6th - 12th February

**N**ational Apprenticeship Week 2023 was the 16th annual week-long celebration of apprentices. It brought together businesses and apprentices across the UK to highlight the positive impact that apprenticeships have on individuals, businesses and the wider economy.

This year, National Apprenticeship Week took place from 6th – 12th February. The theme was Skills for Life, reflecting on how apprenticeships can help individuals develop the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career, and businesses develop a talented workforce that is equipped with future-ready skills.

### Top 8 benefits of an apprenticeship

There are many benefits to taking the apprenticeship route into a career, from gaining new skills to achieving industry-recognised qualifications. Below we've listed eight of the best things about becoming an apprentice.

#### 1. Gain hands-on practical experience

As an apprentice, you will be working with industry professionals, giving you the opportunity to expand your skillset and benefit from their hands-on experience, gained over many years. It also means you can put the theory you might have learned in college to the test in a real-life practical setting and call on your more experienced colleagues for advice and support when needed.

#### 2. Earn as you learn

Unlike college and university courses, apprenticeships give you the opportunity to get paid to learn new skills. You will earn a basic salary whilst simultaneously gaining invaluable practical experience, which is designed to set you up for future career success.

University courses will often leave you with considerable student loans to pay off in the future; instead, an apprenticeship will equip you with a strong professional skill set, as well as money in your pocket.

You may also benefit from many in-work



perks. You will be entitled to 20 days paid annual leave, plus bank holidays, and may also be able to get involved with schemes run by employers for their staff.

#### 3. Enjoy student discounts

Even though you might not be studying at a university, as an apprentice you are still entitled to an NUS student discount card. This can give you great deals on food and drink, special offers in shops and gyms, and often applies both in-store and online.

#### 4. Support, mentoring and educational assistance

Apprenticeships offer much more support than you would get from starting a regular job. The staff here at Cyfle and your employers are available to help guide you on the first steps of your career journey. They will give you the support you need, whether that's providing access to useful educational resources to help your studies or answering work-related questions.

#### 5. Plenty of vocational areas to choose from

There are so many different types of apprenticeships out there to choose from – even when you just look at the world of construction – that you are bound to find an option that suits your abilities and interests and can help you on your way to an exciting and rewarding career.

#### 6. Gain industry-recognised qualifications and 'Skills for Life'

An apprenticeship will allow you to gain industry-recognised qualifications, which will validate the skills and knowledge you have acquired during your apprenticeship. These qualifications will help you when applying for work and highlight your value to future employers. Because they are industry-recognised, these qualifications will stand you in good stead throughout your career, improving your future job prospects and helping with your continuing professional development.

#### 7. Get used to a real-life work environment

Becoming an apprentice is the perfect way to bridge the gap between school and the world of work, or as an introduction back into work after time away. An apprenticeship can help you get used to a professional, real-life work environment. You will also acquire a raft of transferable skills along the way, including time management, self-reliance, communication, and problem-solving.

#### 8. Improve your employability

There's no substitute for experience, and that is why so many employers often ask for a minimum amount of experience when hiring new staff. Even if you don't end up with a permanent position with your employer when your apprenticeship ends, the practical experience you have gained and the time you have already spent in work will enable you to demonstrate your expertise and experience to future employers.

#### The next step...

**Our Queen's Award-winning Shared Apprentice Scheme is available across five local authority regions: Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Neath Port-Talbot and Swansea. If you would like to find out more about becoming an apprentice, get in touch on [info@swwrsa.co.uk](mailto:info@swwrsa.co.uk)**

## Youthbuild UK, Young Builder of the Year Awards 2022



We are proud to be a sponsor of Youthbuild UK. As sponsor, Cyfle provides help and support to disadvantaged and disengaged young people to acquire the valuable skills needed to enter the construction sector.

We would like to extend a huge congratulations to Brandon Davies on achieving Runner Up in this year's Youthbuild UK, Young Builder of the Year Awards 2022, under 19 category.

Brandon, along with his host company Sustainable Fuel Solutions, and representatives from Cyfle, attended the Awards Ceremony held at the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 19th October 2022.

Brandon became a carer for his dad, who suffered long term issues resulting from a car accident.

Brandon did not let this affect his progress at school, where he gained his GCSEs, or college, where he is an exemplary student. Brandon's love of rugby enabled him to play for his local team St. Clare's and also for the Scarlet's rugby team U16's squad.

Brandon secured employment with Cyfle as a Plumbing and Heating apprentice, where he was placed with his host employer Sustainable Fuel Solutions. During this time, Brandon was once again faced with tragedy, when he suddenly lost his dad.

Brandon has continued to be an exemplary student throughout this period and has been offered full time employment with Sustainable Fuel Solutions on completion of his apprenticeship.

He is a worthy winner and we wish him well in his chosen career within the construction industry.

## Special thanks to all our Partners:



For a full list of our Shared Apprenticeship and South West Wales Onsite Hub Companies visit:

[www.cyflebuilding.co.uk/cyfle-building/shared-apprenticeship-and-south-west-wales-onsite-hub-companies](http://www.cyflebuilding.co.uk/cyfle-building/shared-apprenticeship-and-south-west-wales-onsite-hub-companies)

## Jac Lewis Foundation Wellbeing Hub goes from strength to strength

**T**he Jac Lewis Foundation Wellbeing Hub continues to grow in scope, helping an increasing number of people from local communities across Swansea, as the variety of services available at the Hub expands.

The Wellbeing Hub is hosted by Swansea City FC at the Swansea.com stadium every Friday from 10am until 3pm. It is a one-stop shop for preventative support and assistance around the areas of personal wellbeing and mental health.

Since its inception in September 2021, when Swansea City FC first offered to host the hub every Friday, the list of services on offer and the number of attendees has grown. This has required the Hub to move to the larger Swansea Building Society suite on the third floor – with a fantastic view of the pitch – to accommodate its expansion.

The Hub's central location and relaxed, informal atmosphere allows people who may be struggling with issues of mental health to have an easy-to-access, weekly drop-in centre. Here they can feel supported by people familiar with the issues they may be facing and access professional advice and support services free of charge in a completely non-judgmental environment.

The set-up of the hub allows people to come in from the street, with no prior appointment necessary, and receive immediate access to services without long waiting lists and frustrating bureaucracy.

The list of services available at the Hub includes: housing/tenancy support; Citizens Advice; legal advice – from Gomer Williams Solicitors; The Samaritans; The Job Centre; Communities for Work; SAN – support for additional needs, including autism; and Employability Youth Mentors from Swansea City Council.



Though not all services are available every Friday, the providers have graciously made a commitment to be available at least once a month for consultation.

The Hub now also houses a small foodbank, with a selection of items available for attendees in need to take away.

Swansea City FC kindly provides tea and coffee for the whole day, along with sandwiches at 12:30pm. It also supplies a number of 'warm packs', which contain items like blankets, heat packs, gloves and hats to help keep the most vulnerable warm through the winter's coldest months.

Most recently the football club has also provided access to a 'sensory room' – a calm room made available for anybody suffering from anxiety, to give them some peace and quiet away from the main Hub.

In the coming weeks and months, the Hub also hopes to be able to offer arts & crafts activities, a suicide bereavement group, and breathing and relaxation exercises delivered by So Fit – award winning consultants in mental health, mindset and wellbeing in the workplace.



To allow full access to the Hub for everyone – including those with mobility issues – the Hub also offers a pick-up and drop-off service, which can be arranged, again, free of charge.

Callum Humphreys, Mental Health Hub Manager, Jac Lewis Foundation Wellbeing Hub, said:

"It's great to be able to offer this range of integrated and complimentary services to those struggling with matters of mental health in such a comfortable, central location. When people come into the Hub, they may be feeling overwhelmed by certain issues affecting their lives – leading to depression and anxiety.

"By having so many professional services available to them under one roof on the same day, we are able to address some of these factors – housing issues, issues with finding a job, or legal matters – and make some progress that can ease some of their worries. We are all there to help where we can, and never judge anyone or their circumstances.

"Mental health issues can have a great impact on all aspects of life and vice versa. That's why the wellbeing hub takes a holistic approach, enabling adults of all ages and circumstances to talk through their issues with professional councillors who can then refer them to other services to help them improve their situation."

**To find out more about the Jac Lewis Foundation and the Wellbeing Hub, please call 07368828515 or email [jaclewisfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:jaclewisfoundation@gmail.com)**



**For more information on the Cyfle Shared Apprentice Scheme, contact us at: [info@swwrsa.co.uk](mailto:info@swwrsa.co.uk) | 01554 748181 | [www.cyflebuilding.co.uk](http://www.cyflebuilding.co.uk)**