



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-20**

**FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC  
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No.**

**WORKLESSNESS AND  
COMMUNITY BASED  
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the data sources available in relation to children who live in workless households and to highlight the other sources that are available that shed light on the extent of child poverty in the County.
- 1.2 The report will also outline the community based employment programmes being implemented by the Council to reduce the number of workless households and support people into work as this is the most effective way of increasing the prosperity of individuals and their families; and make reference to the future developments in relation to Community Hubs and Neighbourhood Networks.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the data on workless households and the Council's approach to community based employment support, and
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Members requested further information on the data relating to children in workless households and indicated that there were statistical variances in the data that required further explanation. Information was provided that explained the origin of the data that was used and the limitations of the available data at a national level. As concerns remained in respect of the actual situation in Rhondda Cynon Taf, further information was requested from officers regarding the number of children in workless households in the County Borough. The data available and information that can be extrapolated from the data is discussed in section 4 below.
- 3.2 Data is only useful in so far as it highlights an issue. Once a concern has been identified it is then imperative to implement measures to address the issue. Section 5 therefore highlights the range of provision available to support people to improve their skills and employability so that they can gain and remain in employment. In this way we will be able to reduce the number of children who live in workless households and who live in poverty in the County.

### **4. DATA AND DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 Government agencies have collected a wide range of data in relation to worklessness and poverty and in particular how this has affected children. Worklessness is a term used to refer to people who are not in paid employment and includes people who are economically inactive and unable to work as well as those who are in receipt of benefits and who are actively looking for work.
- 4.2 Over time, the data collected has been changed according to changing demands and some data sources have been discontinued. This is true of the measure of Children in Workless Households formerly collected by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) through their annual survey. This data used to be published on the ONS website and also on NOMIS, a web-based database of labour market statistics run by the University of Durham on behalf of the ONS that focuses on government statistical information on the UK labour market.
- 4.3 NOMIS ceased reporting on the numbers of children in workless households in 2014 as it was deemed the sample size was too low for a reliable estimate to be made. The ONS database stopped including the data in 2017 for the same reason.
- 4.4 Another measure previously collected by the Government was Children in Poverty which is wider than Children in Workless Households as it includes households where there is at least one wage earner. The data on this measure has not been published since 2016. However, there are other sources that can help to shed some light on the current situation in relation to childhood poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.5 The Annual Population Survey January – December 2018 collects data on ‘Children by combined economic activity status of household members.’ **Appendix 1** includes the data for Wales under this measure. This indicates that the number of children living in

working households in Rhondda Cynon Taf, that is households that contain at least one person aged 16-64, where all individuals aged 16 and over are in employment, is 65.1%. It also indicates that 24.9% of children live in mixed households, that is households that contain at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive. The data on the number of children in workless households, that is households that contain at least one person aged 16 to 64, where no-one aged 16 or over is in employment, is not regarded as a reliable figure as the sample size has a coefficient variation of >20. (A figure of 10% is recorded against this category but is not regarded as reliable for practical purposes.)

4.6 The table below indicates the data under this measure for Rhondda Cynon Taf from 2014 to 2018:

Year	Working households	Mixed households	Workless households
2018	65.1%	24.9%	10% (but not considered reliable for practical purposes)
2017	61.29%	24%	14.8%
2016	58.8%	21%	20.2%
2015	60.1%	27.2%	12.6%
2014	57.5%	25.3%	17.1%

As can be seen above, the last two years shows that there has been a reduction with the number of children living in workless households.

4.7 Data on eligibility for free school meals provides another source of information that can be considered when trying to assess the level of poverty in the County. On average just under 22% of primary school aged children in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been eligible for free school meals over the past 3 years. Just under 19% of comprehensive school aged pupils have been eligible for free school meals over the past 3 years. There has been very little variance across the three years in these percentages.

4.8 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service has recently undertaken an assessment of child poverty in the County, broken down by wards. The definition for child poverty within this data is children living in households where income is below 60% of the median income. **Appendix 2** provides a breakdown by ward of the situation for children before and after housing costs. It can be seen that the number of children defined as living in poverty under this definition increases from 13,350 (24%) to 17,612 (32%) when housing costs are included in the calculation.

4.9 Some of the variances may be explained by the different definitions used by different measures. However, another significant consideration may be that whereas previously there was a direct correlation between child poverty and workless households, this is no longer the case as in-work poverty is a phenomenon that has become increasingly apparent across the County in recent years. This growth in in-work poverty is evidenced,

for example, by the rise in the use of foodbanks by working people on low incomes. It may help to explain why child poverty is not reducing in line with a reduction in economic inactivity.

- 4.10 It is notable that the rate of economic inactivity has reduced steadily over the past 3 years in Rhondda Cynon Taf and currently stands at 35,200 which is only 0.3% higher than the percentage for Wales. This is accounted for by reductions in the number of students (from 8,500 to 7,800); the number of people at home/looking after the family (from 7,300 to 5,100) and a slight reduction in the number of long-term sick (from 13,500 to 12,100).
- 4.11 The annual rate of unemployment increased between April 2018 and March 2019 to 6,800 (an increase of 700 over the previous financial year). The claimant count in July 2019 was 4,385 which is 2.9% of the working age population. This is consistent with the percentage for Wales. The age range that is higher than the comparative data for Wales is that for young people aged 18-24 years and specifically 18-21 years where the percentage difference is 1.1%.
- 4.12 There remains a vital need to provide support for individuals to improve their skills so that they can gain and stay in employment. However it is increasingly evident that there is also a need to ensure that people are able to continue to develop their skills whilst in work so that they can sustain their employment and progress in employment as this is the best way in which they can improve their own situation and also that of their family. It is key to reducing child poverty in the County.

## **5. COMMUNITY-BASED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT – PROVISION**

- 5.1 Council services provide a wide range of learning programmes and employment support to help residents to develop their skills and progress into work. We also work closely with advice and training provider partners in the Adult Community Learning Partnership and the Strategic Employment Group as well as regional groups to ensure that there is a wide curriculum available at all levels, mentoring and jobsearch advice to help customers gain work as well as some in-work support to enable them to sustain work. This has resulted in the development of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Pathway model, a strategic approach that ensures that services and organisations work together to ensure that people have the opportunity to access the learning and skills required to improve their employability, alongside the mentoring and employment support to gain and sustain paid employment. An outline of the Employment Pathway can be seen at **Appendix 3**. In practice, this has meant that Welsh Government funding for adult community learning and funding for employment programmes (such as Communities for Work+) and ESF funded programmes have been allocated in such a way that the offer to residents across all parts of the County has been improved and resources maximised. In addition, there is no post code lottery and provision is community based being delivered at community hubs, libraries and other community centres, making it accessible to everyone.
- 5.2 An outline of the learning and support programmes available with data on enrolment and engagement is included at **Appendix 4**.

5.3 A draft Employment and Skills Strategy and Action Plan 2019-22 has been developed and is due to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at the end of September. This includes, as a priority, the need to consider more in-work support so that employees can improve their career prospects as there is a recognition that being in paid employment is no longer always a guarantee of being free of poverty.

## **6. COMMUNITY BASED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT – IMPACT**

6.1 Appendix 4 includes some data on outcomes attached to specific programmes. However, the impact of these programmes is best highlighted through feedback provided by individuals who have participated in them. Accordingly **Appendix 5** includes a case study that is representative of the impact our programmes have on individuals and their families.

## **7. TACKLING POVERTY AND WORKLESSNESS GOING FORWARD – COMMUNITY HUBS**

7.1 The Council's approach to building resilient communities and early intervention and prevention includes the development of Neighbourhood Networks across the County Borough. The Neighbourhood Network is based on a set of characteristics and principles that will allow for a consistent application across the Borough whilst offering flexibility to adapt to the needs of diverse communities. One of the key characteristics is that the Neighbourhood Network will comprise of a **Community Hub** and 'spoke/satellite' model.

7.2 Community Hubs provide a range of services provided by the public and voluntary sector in one or a number of closely located buildings in priority neighbourhoods. Bringing services together will provide a better public service offer and create economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and re-investing resources in new or retrofitted, fit for purpose buildings, will enable services to be sustainable in the longer term. The Hub will, as a minimum, provide information and advice on site to the public and facilitate provision across the wider network of community spokes/satellites within the Neighbourhood Network.

7.3 The spokes/satellites within the Neighbourhood Network will encompass the wide range of facilities, services and groups run by public or third sector organisations, all locally based in the designated catchment area. The Hub and the associated spokes/satellites are intended to work as a network and by working in a more collaborative way, enable the public to navigate all the relevant support available to them in their local area. The response will support a preventative approach that enables individuals, families and communities to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating. These facilities will support a preventative approach that enables individuals and families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

7.4 This approach will, among other things, develop an infrastructure to support:

- A single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance.
- A platform to develop community capacity and volunteering.

- Opportunities for parents and families to improve their relationships and parenting skills.
- Opportunities for vulnerable people to seek support and be signposted to other services as appropriate.
- Opportunities for people to learn and develop skills in support of employment.
- Provide flexible community space for people to meet, share interest and socialise, thereby tackling loneliness and social isolation.

7.5 In determining where the community hubs should be located, consideration was given to the population size, natural boundaries and town centres, identifiable communities, alignment with school catchment areas, existing community support such as Communities First (now replaced by Communities for Work Plus) and Flying Start and availability of public transport. On this basis, ten geographical areas were identified and a community profile prepared of each area, including demographic, socio-economic, housing and educational attainment data.

7.6 The areas are:

- Rhondda Fach;
- South Cynon;
- North Rhondda;
- South Rhondda;
- Mid Rhondda;
- North Cynon;
- North West Taff Ely;
- North East Taff Ely;
- South East Taff Ely;
- South West Taff Ely.

A map of the Neighbourhood Network areas can be seen at **Appendix 6**.

7.7 Two community hubs have currently opened – Canolfan Pennar (Mountain Ash) and Hwb (Ferndale) serving the South Cynon and Rhondda Fach areas respectively. It is expected that each hub will be different depending on the needs within each Neighbourhood Network area. Although it is early days, these two facilities appear to be having a positive impact within their neighbourhoods and providing improved access to a range of services.

7.8 The Hwb at Ferndale is led by an anchor organisation, Fern Partnership. It will deliver the Council's commitments to the Welsh Government Children First Initiative under the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Object 1, Thriving Communities with a focus on the Rhondda Fach 'Community Zone' and the PSB approach to developing "an integrated place based approach to building communities that prevents and mitigates the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and breaks the intergenerational cycle of adversity". Fern Partnership is responsible for childcare provision and for the development of the wider Neighbourhood Network that will ensure the community of the Rhondda Fach is fully involved in the development of services at the hub. Ferndale library has been relocated to the hub building and the Council's employment programmes and learning provision

can also be accessed there alongside a rapidly developing range of activities, advice and support for all ages.

- 7.9 Canolfan Pennar at Mountain Ash involves the co-location of Council services – the library service, One4All, Communities for Work/+, alongside a privately run café. Over 37,000 visits have been recorded to the Hub during the first 3 months of opening while visitor numbers to the library have doubled when compared to the same period last year. However, it is important to note that success is predicated on a different service delivery approach that has seen significant time invested in staff training and engagement with a wide range of providers external to the Council so that customers can access the support and learning opportunities they can identify with on-site.
- 7.10 As further hubs are opened, it is envisaged that they will support the targeting of provision at areas of highest need and contribute to the Council's early intervention and prevention agenda including improving people's health and well-being and enabling them to develop new skills so that they can gain; and stay in work.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no equality or diversity implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 There are no consultation implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 The information contained in this report highlights the efforts made to access a wide range of data sources in order to identify the level of child poverty in the County Borough, the challenges related to this data and the importance of adopting a variety of approaches to address this issue. It shows the commitment of the Council to provide a wide range of learning opportunities, employment and skills support and an integrated approach to the delivery of public services through community hubs in order to support residents to improve their prosperity and enable them to live healthy and rewarding lives as indicated in the Corporate Plan. It also contributes to the priority of providing children with a good start in life.
- 12.2 The community based employment programmes and community hubs approach outlined in the report is a long-term approach to address poverty. They adhere to the 5 ways of working advocated by the Commissioner for Future Generations and Wellbeing

by adopting a collaborative approach with partners to deliver high-quality integrated services to support residents to improve their prospects and those of their families. Learners, employers and service users are involved in influencing the type, range and location of provision.

12.3 The programmes and approach identified in this report make a contribution to:

- A prosperous Wales – by ensuring access to improving skills and qualifications and support to gain and stay in employment through partnership working and making best use of resources;
- A healthier Wales - by providing mentoring support and guidance and sign-posting to relevant support services within and external to the Council;
- A more equal Wales – by targeting support on disadvantaged groups who have specific barriers to training and employment, for example, people with additional learning needs;
- A Wales of cohesive communities – developing neighbourhood networks that support collaboration and co-production of services with the community and businesses;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – ensuring access to a broad range of provision including arts and cultural activities to support personal development and increase employability; and ensuring that activities are available in English and Welsh.

## **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 There are a variety of sources that can be used to shed light on the level of child poverty in the County although the data for children in workless households can no longer be relied upon because of the problems in relation to sample size. It is also no longer a reliable indication of the level of child poverty as the trend of in-work poverty has been increasing. The data collected by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service is a very useful source of information which takes into account a family's situation once housing costs are accounted for and may provide a more accurate analysis of the level of child poverty in the County.
- 13.2 There have been concerted efforts undertaken by Council services to address poverty through ensuring that there is easy access to learning and training opportunities and support for residents to gain and stay in employment as this is seen as key to increasing the prosperity of individuals and families. Further support may be required to ensure that those in employment can be supported to gain further skills so that they can progress in the workplace and attract higher incomes thereby mitigating the risk of in-work poverty.
- 13.3 The Council's decision to develop community hubs in 10 areas (Neighbourhood Network areas) across the County as part of its – to early intervention and prevention will also play a significant contributory role in the response to reducing the numbers of families living in poverty and increasing resilience.



Appendix 1: Children by combined economic activity status of household members

Area <sup>3</sup> name	Working Households <sup>4</sup> (thousands)	Working Households (per cent)	Mixed Households <sup>5</sup> (thousands)	Mixed Households (per cent)	Workless Households <sup>6</sup> (thousands)	Workless Households (per cent)
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	7,366	58.6	3,889	30.9	1,318	10.5
<b>WALES</b>	333	60.9	145	26.5	69	12.6
Isle of Anglesey	7	64.1	3	27.7	1	8.3
Gwynedd	15	63.2	5	22.1	3	14.7
Conwy	11	61.7	5	26.6	2	11.7
Denbighshire	10	59.8	4	24.9	3	15.3
Flintshire	19	70.7	5	17.1	3	12.2
Wrexham	17	69.1	5	21.4	2	9.5
Powys	12	66.7	5	26.3	1	7.0
Ceredigion	6	63.4	3	29.6	1	6.9
Pembrokeshire	11	53.5	5	26.3	4	20.2
Carmarthenshire	21	66.7	8	24.6	3	8.7
Swansea	23	51.5	14	31.3	8	17.1
Neath Port Talbot	13	55.1	8	31.6	3	13.3
Bridgend	14	59.4	5	23.3	4	17.3
Vale of Glamorgan	15	64.7	7	30.2	1	5.1
Cardiff	41	58.7	20	28.2	9	13.1
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10.0</b>
Merthyr Tydfil	6	55.0	3	25.3	2	19.7
Caerphilly	20	57.1	11	31.4	4	11.5
Blaenau Gwent	8	65.5	3	23.8	1	10.7
Torfaen	9	56.7	5	27.3	3	16.0
Monmouthshire	11	66.2	4	26.9	1	6.9
Newport	17	57.7	8	26.3	5	16.0

Source: Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. Children refers to all children under 16.
2. Household includes at least one person aged 16 to 64.
3. This table includes data for UK nations and regions and unitary authorities, counties and districts within the UK.
4. A working household is a household that contains at least one person aged 16-64 where all individuals over the age of 16 are employed.
5. A mixed household is a household that contains at least one individual aged over 16 is in employment and at least one other is unemployed or inactive.
6. A workless household is a household that contains at least one person aged 16-64 where no one over 16 is in employment.
7. = sample size too small to provide an estimate
8. Estimates shaded grey have a coefficient of variation  $>20$  and are not considered reliable for practical purposes.

**Appendix 2 Child poverty**

	Before Housing Costs			After Housing Costs		
	Number of children	% of children	Percentage point change since 2016/17	Number of children	% of children	Percentage point change since 2016/17
<b>Local Authority</b>						
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13350	24.0%	3.8%	17612	32%	0%
<b>Ward</b>		<b>% of children</b>			<b>% of children</b>	
Penrhiwceiber		44.5%			49%	
Treforest		36.1%			44%	
Rhydfelen Central/Ilan		29.6%			39%	
Aberaman North		31.2%			39%	
Aberaman South		31.2%			39%	
Treherbert		31.6%			38%	
Tylorstown		41.6%			38%	
Pen-y-graig		30.0%			38%	
Trealaw		29.0%			38%	
Pen-y-waun		29.1%			38%	
Rhigos		29.1%			38%	
Hirwaun		29.1%			38%	
Cymmer		32.9%			37%	
Ystrad		26.4%			37%	
Llwyn-y-pia		26.4%			37%	
Ferndale		34.2%			36%	
Abercynon		22.6%			36%	
Hawthorn		24.7%			35%	
Maerdy		30.2%			35%	

Cwm Clydach		25.8%			35%	
Tonypandy		25.8%			35%	
Mountain Ash West		26.9%			33%	
Mountain Ash East		26.9%			33%	
Tonyrefail East		23.5%			33%	
Gilfach Goch		25.9%			33%	
Tonyrefail West		25.9%			33%	
Porth		24.1%			33%	
Tyn-y-nant		21.4%			32%	
Beddau		21.4%			32%	
Treorchy		20.7%			31%	
Ynysgir		20.5%			31%	
Ynysybwl		23.6%			31%	
Glyncoch		23.6%			31%	
Cwmbach		25.5%			30%	
Trallwng		18.9%			29%	
Cilfynydd		18.9%			29%	
Aberdare East		21.0%			28%	
Aberdare West/Llwydcoed		19.1%			28%	
Pentre		18.8%			28%	
Taffs Well		15.0%			27%	
Ton-teg		16.6%			25%	
Rhondda		16.4%			25%	
Graig		16.4%			25%	
Pontypridd Town		16.4%			25%	
Llanharan		15.6%			24%	
Brynna		15.6%			24%	

Pont-y-clun		16.5%			22%	
Llanharry		16.6%			22%	
Talbot Green		14.6%			20%	
Llantrisant Town		14.6%			20%	
Church Village		13.6%			19%	
Llantwit Fardre		12.1%			16%	

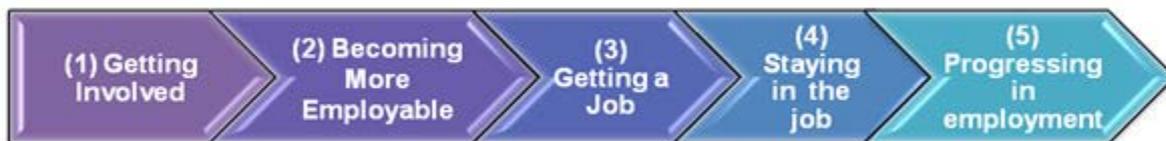
**Rhondda Cynon Taf's Employment Pathway** aims to provide equitable access to employment support and opportunities that align to emerging local labour market needs and employers.

Partners have worked together to develop a streamlined, strategic approach that ensures services and organisations work collaboratively to provide sufficient and appropriate support, training and guidance, to enable people to gain and sustain paid employment of their choosing.

The Employment Pathway has recently been updated to reflect Welsh Government's modelling.

There are five phases to the WG and RCT Employment Pathway for adults and young people.

Entry can be at any Stage/Tier determined by the needs of the person.



### **Stage/Tier One – Getting Involved**

Those who are furthest from the labour market e.g.

- Not yet ready to work
- Not interested in working
- Need support to engage with employability and skills provision.

### **Stage/Tier Two – Becoming More Employable**

Those who need support to increase personal, technical and transferable skills and experience relevant to work e.g.

- Those with no or low skills
- Those with little relevant and/or current quotable experience

### **Stage/Tier Three – Getting a Job**

Those who need limited support to take the final steps to secure fair work e.g.

- People who have only recently become workless
- Those with single or simple barriers

### **Stage/Tier Four – Staying in the Job**

## Appendix 3 Rhondda Cynon Taf's Employment Pathway

Those who are at risk of disengaging from work and those more sensitive to labour force changes; those more likely to be in or at risk of in-work poverty e.g:

- those recently employed following support.
- low or unskilled and low paid
- underemployed, zero hour contracts holders, those working in the gig economy and those affected by welfare reform e.g. UC
- employed people with significant dependent care needs or work limiting health conditions etc

### **Stage/Tier Five – Progressing in Employment**

Those who are relatively secure in work but who are unlikely to progress e.g.

- low skilled workers unable to access training opportunities without additional support
- workers, however highly skilled, whose skills do not match with their current job or industry
- those working in a declining industry or occupational sector.

## **Appendix 4 – Learning and Skills Programmes delivered by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council**

A wide range of programmes are delivered by Council services to support people who have left full-time education. These include programmes designed to improve skills or support well-being as well as programmes that are specifically focussed on supporting people into work. These are delivered by:

- the Adult Education Service,
- Communities for Work/Communities for Work +;
- Education, Employment and Training service;
- the Youth Engagement and Participation Service;
- Organisational Development (HR)

### **Adult Education Service**

The Council's Adult Education Service delivers adult community learning programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is the Lead Body for the Adult Community Learning Partnership in the county. The service provides support, in the main to people over the age of 25.

The service has one lifelong learning centre at Garth Olwg that facilitates a wide range of provision delivered by Council services and other partners including courses, workshops, events and theatre performances.

The majority of courses and programmes are delivered at libraries, community centres and other venues across the county. In 2017/18 learning was delivered at 96 venues.

Provision is targeted at those who are most disadvantaged and would benefit from gaining skills and qualifications although there is also a programme of activities designed to enhance the well-being of participants and to support the social integration and independence of older residents or those who have a life-limiting health condition.

The service's **pre- employment programme** is funded by the Community Learning Grant and runs as either a 2 or 4 week programme delivering a number of accredited courses through either Agored Cymru or Qualsafe. The programme is built around the specific needs of the learners on each course and individuals can choose from a suite of qualifications including resilience skills, creating the right image, telephone skills, job interview skills, team working to name a few. If successful, learners can then progress onto the more sector specific Employment Routes provision or may decide to focus on developing a particular skill further.

The service provides a range of **digital skills** courses, from basic Introduction to Computing to ECDL courses. A 4 week programme delivered for Communities for Work+ to further develop the skills of people who have engaged with Digital Fridays provision has been particularly successful and a clear progression pathway has been developed in partnership with Communities for Work+ and Adult Learning Wales for learners who wish to enhance their digital skills further.

The focus on ensuring that learning meets local needs has also ensured that services work closely with local employers. The **Employment Routes** programme developed by the service has been successful in developing training programmes with employers who have vacancies and ensuring that learners who successfully complete the training and gain the relevant qualifications are assured of an interview. 46 businesses have engaged with the service and contributed to the development of the programme. These include both local and national companies.

**Essential skills** courses are funded through an agreement with Coleg y Cymoedd. They are set up for the year but learners can join at any time. They are open to anyone over the age of 16 who has a literacy and/or numeracy skills need. Learners are able to attend more than one class a week. All learners are assessed using the Welsh Government's Essential Skills Toolkit (WEST) or a paper-based assessment. Their needs are identified from the assessment and a relevant Agored Cymru qualification is selected for them to work towards. Individual support is provided by the tutor. Classes have learners of varying levels of need and, consequently a maximum of 10 learners are enrolled on each course. The majority of classes are held at libraries, job centres and community venues. Specific provision is provided for:

- Carers
- people who need to achieve a Level 2 qualification so that they can enrol on Employment Routes provision (some employers, for example the NHS require employees to have this as a minimum qualification);
- people who work in Vision Products
- people with mental health conditions

The **Independent Learning Skills** programme, funded through an agreement with Coleg y Cymoedd, provides opportunities for people with moderate or severe learning disabilities to achieve a 3 - credit qualification. The courses are held at a variety of venues over two terms and 122 learners are currently engaged on a varied curriculum. The majority of learners arrive at the centres by buses provided by the Adult Services team and carers attend with them. This provision is valued highly by the learners themselves, their families and the Day Centre staff who support the provision. It provides an opportunity for learners to gain confidence, raise their self-esteem and meet new people as well as learn new skills.

**Inspire 2 Work** is an ESF Priority 3 programme that offers a supported Employment Pathway to young people aged 16-24 years living in Rhondda Cynon Taf, providing guidance and training to strengthen the position of young people seeking employment in line with Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework guidelines, and Supporting Engagement in Education, Employment and Training Strategy. The project is focussed on young people with low aspirations, no or low qualifications, those who have difficulty in engaging or participating and who lack awareness of the services that are available to meet their support needs.

To date the project has engaged with 413 young people, 71 of whom have entered employment, 202 have gained qualifications (with some currently going through the accreditation process) and 28 have gone on to further training and education. The funding for this project ends in December 2020.

The service works closely with a wide range of organisations to develop provision that supports the Council's **well-being** agenda. Examples of this work include:

- provision of workshops for the Carer's project such as social media, sugar-craft and sign language;
- collaboration with the Hapi project on 'All about me' – provision for people diagnosed with the early stages of dementia and their family members;
- provision of courses prescribed by Cwm Taf Health Board and the Parc Canol surgery for patients with low level depression and anxiety;
- leisure/hobby-based courses designed to enable people to pursue their interests – of particular relevance to people who are no longer working whether that is due to retirement, ill-health or other reasons

- Chatty café, Knit and Knatter and Age-friendly dancing cater for people of all ages who have common interests

**Welsh-medium provision** is facilitated and contributes to the achievement of the Council's Strategy and Action Plan for the Promotion and Facilitation of the Welsh Language including a weekly Ti a Fi provision for parents and carers of babies and toddlers and Cymraeg i Blant at Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre. Welsh-medium courses and pathways for learners from Welsh language classes on to other courses delivered in the medium of Welsh are facilitated and jointly planned with key partners.

Of particular note in respect of **Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre** is that it hosts the activities of 63 community groups and organisations and provides access to a wide range of advice, information and guidance not just learning opportunities to residents.

### **Communities for Work (CfW)**

This programme is delivered in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions.

The focus of the CfW programme is to help those furthest away from the labour market in to employment, education or training, or to move closer to the labour market.

Priority 1 of the CfW Programme focuses on the provision of mentoring support, access to qualifications, work experience, and volunteering opportunities for adults over the age of 25 who are long term unemployed and economically inactive living in Communities First areas with a view to helping them to secure employment.

Priority 3 of the CfW Programme provides young people aged 16-24 including those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training, living in Communities First areas, with mentoring support to access Education, Employment or Training.

The majority of training is accessed through ACT, the preferred supplier for training provision identified by Welsh Government.

Up to August 2019 the following outcomes have been achieved for adults:

- 1,084 participants engaged
- 120 job entries
- 633 qualifications gained
- 164 increasing employment

Outcomes for the youth provision by August 2019 is as follows:

- 870 engagements
- 166 job entries
- 326 qualifications gained
- 55 entered edycartin/training

## **Communities for Work +**

CfW+ has been designed to be wraparound support service for Communities for Work, and other European Social Fund (ESF) projects, where people are not eligible for support. This replaced the previous Communities First programme. It consists of two new grant funded programmes namely the CfW+ employment support programme and Legacy fund.

CfW+ offers support to all residents in RCT who are looking to get into employment, training or volunteering.

CfW+ is also able to offer in-work support to those we support into work or those clients on low incomes who are looking to retrain or upskill.

The programme is available across the whole of RCT.

We focus work with Adults 25+ who are ineligible for support through ESF grant funded programmes. Young people aged 16-24 are also able to access support if there is no other suitable provision available from other services or ESF grant funded programmes.

The Legacy fund supports projects that have been identified as best practice and meet local priorities. The Council made the decision to utilise the Legacy fund to:

- support voluntary sector partners that previously delivered projects under the Communities First programme that achieved good outcomes to ensure the continuation of good practice delivery;
- commission core offer activities where good outcomes have been achieved.

The collective CfW+ & Legacy programmes deliver on three key elements:-

- **Local Engagement** - These activities are based upon local need & getting people involved. Our Engagement teams organise a number of local activities and events including well-being coffee mornings, day courses, confidence building sessions & support groups.
- **Core Activities** - These include Work Clubs, Digital Fridays, RCT Leisure, Essential Skills (Maths, English, IT), Adult Learning Courses. We commission RCT Adult Education to deliver the Employment Routes programme.
- **1:1 Mentoring** - Our Employment Mentors support people, through 1:1 tailored sessions, to gain qualifications, find work placements & secure employment.

### **Outcomes achieved during 2018/19**

- 3,939 people registered with CfW+ and Legacy programmes
- 714 people received 1:1 employment mentoring
- 393 people gained employment
- 216 people improved their basic IT skills
- 767 people gained a total of 1,370 qualifications
- 144 people entered a work placement
- 82 people enrolled on In-Work support, of which 86.5% either sustained employment or increased their working hours

Other Legacy outcomes achieved with family and youth engagement programmes:

- 904 people improved mental well-being
- 57 increased physical activity through RCT Leisure

- 428 know how to access help & support
- 364 feel more a part of their community
- 492 foodbank vouchers were issued to 272 individuals

### **Education, Employment and Training Service (HR)**

This service is located within the Council's Human Resources department and leads on the management and provision of a range programmes for the Council as follows:

**Apprenticeship Scheme** - The Council's Apprenticeship Scheme has been running since September 2012. During that time, over 180 Apprentices have been employed across the Council in many different service areas. The Scheme is open to anyone from the age of 16. There is no upper age limit. Apprenticeships with RCT Council are fixed for two years and paid at National Minimum Wage, depending on age.

**Graduate Scheme** - Each of the graduate schemes offer a unique opportunity to learn new skills, develop professionally and start a career in community-based public service. Graduates will:

- Earn £26,317 per year on a 37-hour contract
- Complete a range of fully-funded professional qualifications
- Undergo mentoring with a senior member of staff
- Be entitled to participate in a wide-range of staff benefit schemes All successful applicants will be enrolled on a Project Management Level 4 qualification, which will include day release for University attendance

**Work experience** - Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's work experience programme enables people to carry out and/or observe a range of tasks or duties as an employee, but with the emphasis on learning. Anyone can apply for a work placement with the Council. RCT Council work with School, College and University students, as well as non-students, to support and source work placements. European work placements and University internships are also facilitated.

**Care2Work** - The Care2Work programme provides children looked after, young people with care and support needs and care leavers with encouragement and support to identify and access a range of training and employment opportunities.

**Step in the right direction** - this offers two year paid traineeships for children looked after and care leavers aged 16-25. It develops their skills, knowledge and provides work experience in the Council.

**Careers and The World of Work** – working within Secondary, SEN and Primary schools in RCT, providing advice and information on further education and employment related opportunities. Provide a number of workshops and information sessions to increase awareness and explore opportunities available to them to develop the skills they need to decide upon and implement their career paths.

**Career Fairs** – The EET Team arrange two career fairs a year within RCT. Working with partners/employers and key stakeholders.

**Gateway to Employment** – the EET team in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd is working with 8 learners with additional learning and physical needs and arranging suitable

placements within the Council for one year to increase employability skills and sustainable employment.

### **Organisational Development (HR)**

**Building Resilience, Prosperity, and Wellbeing in RCT** is an ESF Priority 1 project that offers SME's within the Rhondda, Cynon Taf Local Authority area an opportunity to pay particular attention to staff absence and the organisational responses, and the support available to meet the wellbeing and health of their workforce.

The project is focussed on employed; including self-employed, who are absent from work, with a work limiting health condition or disability, who wish to return to work.

The Project will provide support to:

- **278** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises within Rhondda, Cynon Taf.
- **2,625** individual participants.

Of these, 20% (580) would be Local Authority employees, 80% (2,323) supported from the Private Sector/SME's.

Specifically developed to provide support to SME's and Individuals, to make the necessary arrangements to enable participants to return to work as quickly as possible, including, but not restricted to:

- Specialist HR support to develop or improve wellbeing, equality and diversity policies and strategies.
- Training for Managers/Employers
- Access to physiotherapists, occupational health nurses, counselling and coaching.

The Project delivery commenced in May 2019, with an expected funding end date in April 2022.



### Communities for Work, Case Study

#### Name of Operation

Priority 1:	East Wales	c80734	<input type="checkbox"/>
	West Wales and Valleys	c80733	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Priority 3:	East Wales	c80859	<input type="checkbox"/>
	West Wales and Valleys	c80858	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Summary

A 29-year-old participant enrolled on to the programme who was claiming income support. The lady was referred to me by the Jobcentre. She is a single mother of several dependent children.

#### Background / What is ...?

Engaged with Sally who is a single mother of several children in receipt of benefits since the age of 16. Sally had her children at a young age and left school without any qualifications. Sally became socially isolated and felt very low with confidence/self esteem due to past life experiences. However, she enquired about support about accessing different training courses through training providers in the local community. Sally had no help with childcare from family members as she had no family support network around her. She moved away from her family and cut all contact with the due to personal circumstances. She wanted to make a step in the right direction for the future of her family and set an example to her children.

#### The engagement...

The engagements were at the local library, but due to childcare barriers she brought her 2 young children with her to the appointments, I offered home visits but she declined. During initial engagements, Sally opened up about her past life experiences and why she does not contact her family. Sally had her first child at the age of 16 then went on to have more children. She left school without any qualifications and went onto the benefits system.

Sally struggled with identifying suitable training or employment as she wanted a career but due to childcare, she felt she could not pursue her career. On our first initial meeting, we discussed her situation, job aspirations and needs. I then helped her create a CV to help her highlight her skills and time management. Following on from this we created an action plan for our next meeting. In our next few meetings we explored a number of options such as training and becoming a teaching assistant.

Whilst exploring these options, I identified a childcare qualification through Coleg Y Cymoedd. Sally and I carried out some research and looked into this option for her. Sally and I then spoke with the college and discovered work based learning. Work based learning is a programme, which enables you to work in a school environment whilst gaining a recognised childcare qualification within 1 year. Sally had to do 12 hours per week in a Local Primary School along with her college course work. This suited her as it worked around school hours and she could then be home in time for when her children finished school.

To start the placement she needed a DBS check but was unable to pay as she was in receipt of benefits, funding was obtained through the CfW barriers fund. Whilst undertaking the qualification and starting work placement within the school, she gained her confidence back. Over the course of the year, Sally showed commitment and completed her coursework to the best of her ability. She struggled throughout the course with her literacy but measures were put in place to ensure she passed her units. Sally volunteered in the school for an extra day a week when her youngest children started full time in school. At the end of the year, she was offered a 16 hour a week job at the Local Primary School and continued with progressing onto her level 3 childcare qualification.

Sally signed off benefits and is now starting to learn to drive. Sally expressed that gaining employment would allow her to make positive changes for herself and her children. From gaining employment, Sally feels that she is setting a positive example for her children and is now able to take her children on their first family holiday.

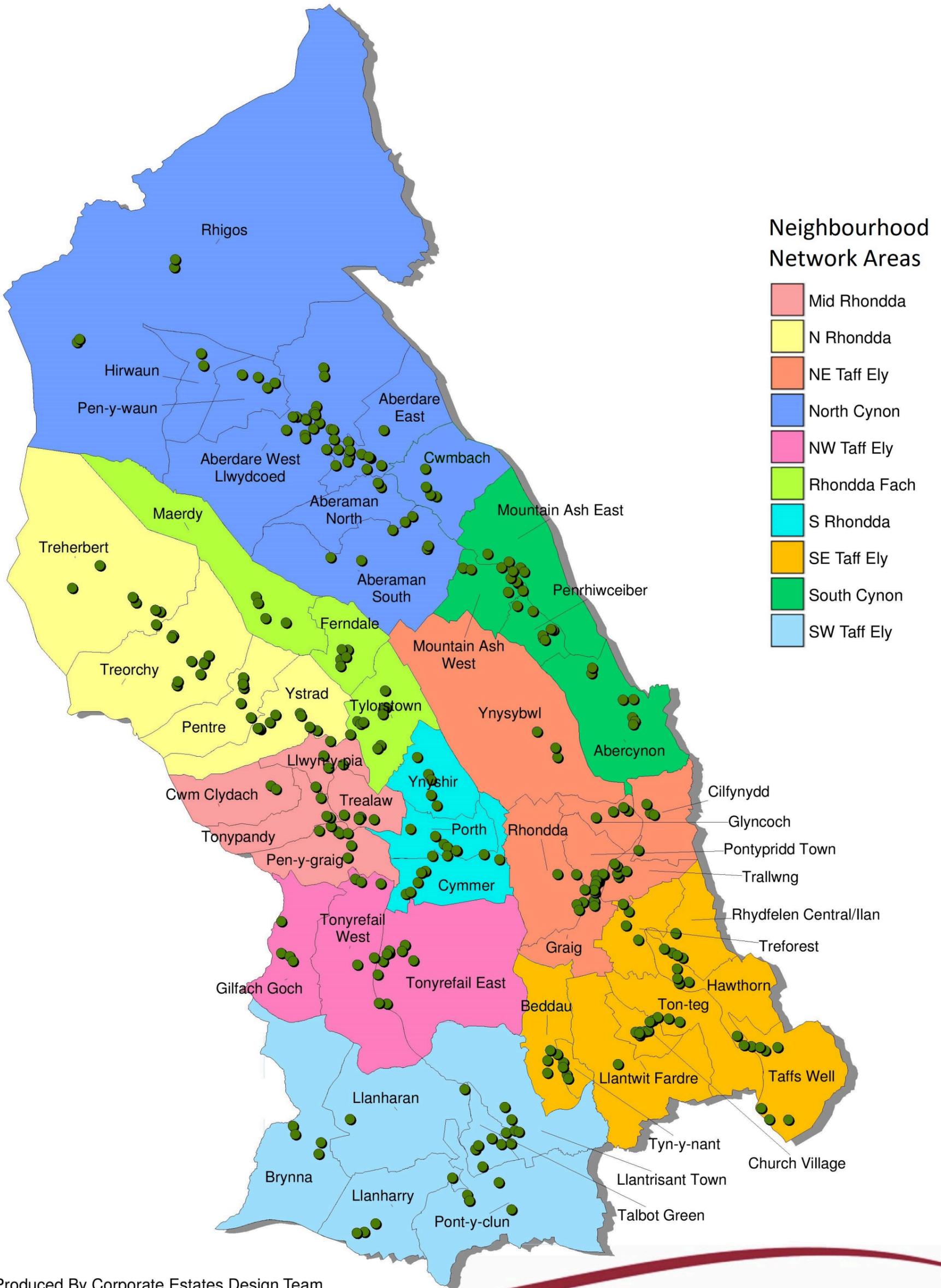
### **Good Practice Shared / Lessons Learned / Outcomes**

- Suitable, fit for purpose, alternative training providers developed through partnership was impactful on the success of the participant's development.
- Partnership working
- The individual improved in confidence and self-esteem as a result of mentoring and training and now is positive with a clear career path.
- Education outcome
- Gained Employment.

### **For More Information**

**Thank you for your Feedback**

# Draft Community Hubs



Map Produced By Corporate Estates Design Team  
 based on information supplied March 2017

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