



# Growing Mid Wales

## September 2024

Welcome to the September edition of the Growing Mid Wales newsletter!

This month, we're excited to share updates on several key initiatives, including the launch of a new mobile coverage checker and the expansion of gigabit broadband, which promises to enhance connectivity for residents and businesses in Ceredigion and Powys.

We also dive into our latest career guidance initiatives and provide a behind-the-scenes look at our team, featuring Amy Waters, our Senior Service Support Officer.

Stay informed and engaged with the progress shaping the future of Mid Wales as we continue working to create new opportunities for growth and development across the region.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

*The Growing Mid Wales team*

[Cover: Newtown ©Visit Wales]

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## Exciting New Career Guidance Initiative Set for Launch in the New Year!

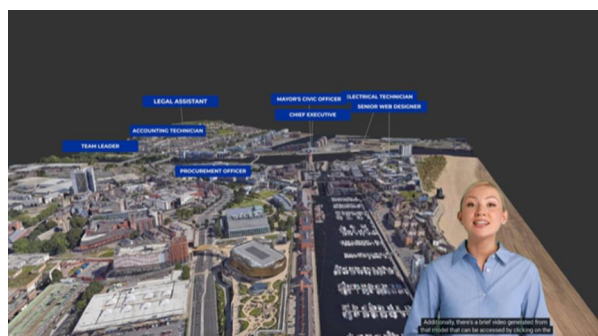
The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) team is making significant strides towards enhancing career guidance for young people, a key priority for the region. Work is well underway, and the new initiative, a careers portal, is expected to be ready at the start of the new year.

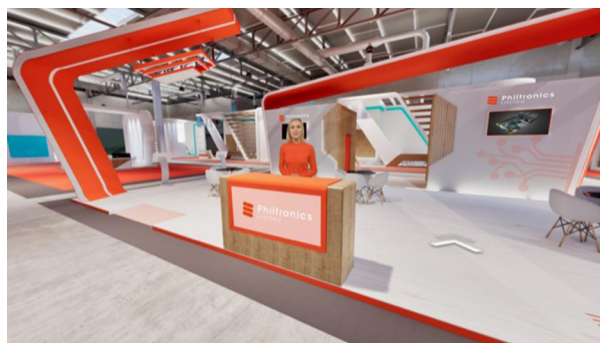
As part of this effort, the RSP is gathering data from partners and young people through surveys to assess the current provision. The interactive AI-driven careers portal, being produced by One Step North is being developed in collaboration with Powys and Ceredigion County Councils Education teams, aims to offer daily access to career opportunities for schoolchildren aged 11-18 across the region, with a special focus on opportunities in Mid Wales.

Once fully launched, the portal will provide schools and learners with seamless access to career pathways and enable further engagement through the RSP cluster groups, creating a more informed and enriched career offering for learners.

Stay tuned for more updates as we approach the new year!

Below are images of the portal in its prototype stage:





## Mapping Education & Training in Mid Wales

The RSP is in the planning stages for a comprehensive mapping exercise of post-16 education and training opportunities across the region. This project will assess classroom-based and work-based learning, focusing on key sectors like agriculture, digital, construction, health and social care, and tourism.

By identifying local training providers, further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions, and relevant courses, this initiative aims to create a detailed, up-to-date directory of skills provision available within Mid Wales.

The mapping exercise will serve as a critical resource for business cluster groups, helping them understand the range of education and training options available and pinpoint gaps in provision. This will enable the RSP, alongside the provider cluster and business cluster groups, to address skills shortages and align training with the needs of local industries.

Sectors included in the scope of the study range from Advanced Manufacturing to Energy and Net Zero, ensuring the region's workforce is equipped with the necessary skills for growth and innovation.

The results of this exercise will be presented in a format that can be updated annually, providing a dynamic tool for guiding skills development and future planning in Mid Wales. The study will play a key role in shaping the region's workforce strategy and supporting the growth of priority sectors.

Results from the mapping exercise will be made available in 2025.

## **RSP Manufacturing & Engineering cluster group update**

The RSP Manufacturing & Engineering cluster group held their first meeting in November 2023. Ceri Stephens is Chair of the group and reports to the RSP Board on behalf of the group. Members represent the voice of regional businesses across the sector.

The group have been busy supporting the RSP through checking industry Labour Market Information (LMI) evidence and data, Standard Industry Codes (SIC) and PLA (Personal Learning accounts) to ensure the business's needs are accurately represented.

At the Royal Welsh Show in July 2024, the RSP launched the Employment and Skills Plan Update 2024 where Ceri participated in the panel discussion.

Group member Tricia Evans, Managing Director, Compact Orbital Gears Limited attended the event commented: "The RSP provides an excellent vehicle to get the employer voice heard and the recently launched strategy document forms the basis for building relationships with employers, local government, educational and training providers which can only be a positive for both current and future employees within our diverse range of businesses."

The group have met quarterly to date with businesses Morland, Nidec and Aber Instruments hosting meetings and guided tours of the workplace providing valuable knowledge and insights into their own industry experiences. The group have also received presentations from Welsh Government on the Flexible Skills Programme. Ceri, Chair sits on the newly formed steering group which supports the development of a new careers portal and reports back progress to the group.

The group is now focusing on the priorities set out in the [Plan](#).



## Local Area Energy Plans endorsed to support transition to net zero

Both Ceredigion and Powys County Councils have recently endorsed their respective Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). These plans, co-created with various stakeholders and funded by the Welsh Government, set out how both local areas can transition to a net zero energy system by 2050.

Key findings of the LAEPs include:

- **High priority projects**
  - **Heat pumps:** the LAEPs estimate that 86000 heat pumps will need to be installed by 2050 across Mid Wales.
  - **Fabric efficiency upgrades:** 61400 homes could benefit from fabric improvements such as insulation and double glazing.
  - **Smart local energy systems:** using electricity locally in a smart, flexible way could minimise energy bills, increase local ownership of renewable energy, and reduce the need for network upgrades.
  - **Heat network:** Aberystwyth has been identified as the most suitable location for a district heat network in Mid Wales.
  - **Electric vehicles:** installation of charging infrastructure will need to match the projected rise in electric vehicles in Mid Wales.

- **Investment:** The LAEPs estimate an additional £1.95 billion investment is needed in Mid Wales to reach net zero, 40% of this will be needed for domestic property upgrades.
- **Skills:** Addressing the region’s skills gap is essential to enable the roll out of efficiency measures, heat pump and solar panel installation at scale. The LAEP estimate an additional 995 jobs could be created locally by 2050.
- **Renewable energy generation:** Mid Wales has the potential to generate a significant amount of renewable electricity. Stakeholders have highlighted however the importance of ensuring benefits are accrued locally (e.g. shared ownership, lower bills).
- **Electricity network upgrades:** The energy networks will use the LAEP outputs to inform their business planning.
- **Multiple benefits:** Initiatives suggested in the LAEPs will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, alleviate fuel poverty, improve health, and create jobs.

To view the LAEPs for each county, visit: <https://www.growingmid.wales/LAEP>

You can view the combined key outputs from the region in this formative [pdf](#).



## Our Mobile Coverage Checker is now live!

We have collaborated with mobile analysts Streetwave to map mobile coverage across the region using waste collection vehicles.

We are making the results available to local residents and businesses through a ground breaking coverage checker.

In June 2024, data-capturing devices were installed in waste collection vehicles across Powys and Ceredigion. These devices have been surveying mobile network quality, currently covering over 95% of properties in the region, with periodic updates.

Network coverage has been continuously analysed across the UK’s four main mobile networks: EE, O2, Three, and Vodafone, collecting data on speeds, signal strength, and network generation.

Mobile speeds can vary drastically across 3G, 4G, and 5G, depending on various factors.

We are therefore sharing the results of our mapping to help residents and businesses make informed decisions about their mobile connectivity options.

It is important to note that the data in our mobile coverage checker is not definitive and should only be used as an additional tool alongside other sources of information.

Use the mobile coverage checker here: [www.growingmid.wales/Coverage](http://www.growingmid.wales/Coverage)



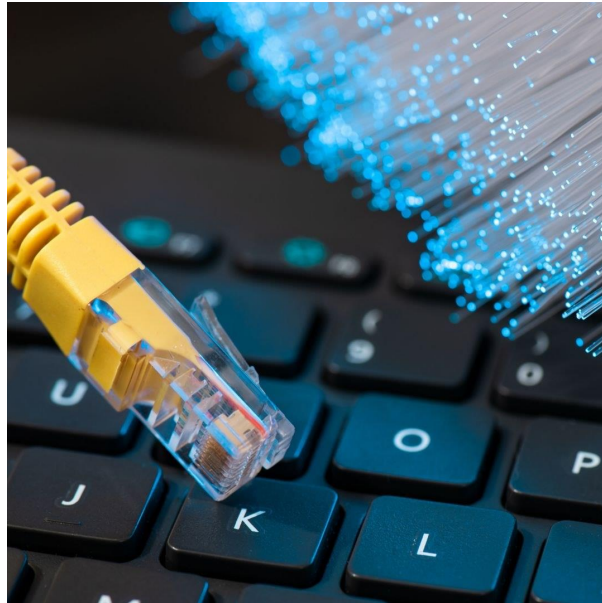
## Gigabit Broadband Expansion to Boost Connectivity in Ceredigion and Powys

We are thrilled to announce a major step forward in digital infrastructure for the region.

Ceredigion and Powys are set to benefit significantly from the UK Government's Project Gigabit, with a new framework agreement signed between Building Digital UK (BDUK) and Openreach. This agreement, valued at up to £800 million, aims to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to some of the most remote and hard-to-reach areas across the UK, including over 42,000 premises in Northwest, Mid, and Southeast Wales.

The rollout will be transformative for Ceredigion and Powys, addressing long-standing digital inequalities and providing faster, more reliable internet services to both residents and businesses. This project marks a critical step in fostering economic growth, enhancing connectivity, and improving the quality of life in these rural communities.

Read the full story on our news page: <https://www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/17114/Gigabit-Broadband-Expansion-to-Boost-Connectivity-in-Ceredigion-and-Powys>



## Meet the Team

**Amy Waters - Senior Service Support Officer**



**When did you start with the team?**

*I joined the Growing Mid Wales team in January this year. I became part of team Ceredigion in April 2023 supporting the Integrated Community Equipment Service (Targeted & Short-Term Services) after some time away travelling - prior to this I worked in hospitality.*

**Can you tell us more about your role?**



*As a Senior Service Support Officer, I have a varied role as I support two teams, two days a week with Ceredigion County Council 's Housing Team and three days a week with GMW undertaking tasks for the Growth Deal team including arranging meetings, minute taking and raising invoices.*

**What are your current priorities?**

*My current priorities are to continue to support various meetings whilst deepening my understanding of the processes involved with project management.*



*1 - Amy, on a very chilly sunrise walk up Pen y Fan!*

**What developments have you seen over the years?**

*Having only joined in January, the milestone that stands out is the Growing Mid Wales Board granting approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Elan Valley Lakes project – the first project to advance to this stage.*

**What's been your biggest achievement?**

*I undertook the ILM 2 qualification with Chwarae Teg during Covid-19, this supported my role as an assistant restaurant manager at the time and I gained knowledge which I could carry over to other career paths.*

**One word that sums up the Growing Mid Wales Team:**

*Supportive.*

## Other news

### £10 million for community-driven energy projects to power Wales's green future

Welsh Government unveils new grant scheme to support the development of Smart Local Energy Systems.

The Welsh Government has announced a new £10 million capital grant scheme to support the development of Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) across Wales.

For more information: <https://www.gov.wales/ynni-cymru-capital-grant-funding-programme-2024-2025>

## Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our X, LinkedIn pages, and YouTube channel:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

[www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales](http://www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales)

<https://www.youtube.com/@TCC-GMW>

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

Disclaimer: As a Growing Mid Wales Stakeholder you receive these emails so that we can share news and information with you on a regular basis. You can inform us if you no longer wish to receive these emails by emailing [growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk).

