



Working in partnership to successfully identify skill gaps

By its conclusion in March 2014 over 3,000 people throughout Wales will have benefited from the Skills for Work (Wales) programme.

Since October 2012 Agoriad has been working in partnership with Working Links Wales on the provision of the Skills for Work (Wales) programme in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

Skills for Work (Wales) is a Department for Work and Pensions contract designed to support claimants who have a skills barrier, be it literacy, numeracy or ESOL (English as a Second Language) that prevents them from finding work.

During their time on the course, individuals work towards achieving specific learning goals identified during an in-depth skills assessment undertaken during the welcome session. These targets are agreed between the individual and the tutor and are the basis for their individual learning plan.



With the sessions focused on employment and the world of work, learners spend 8 weeks developing the core skills required to find, secure and sustain employment. We focus on developing skills such as job search, job application forms, writing effective CV's and covering letters and how to conduct themselves during interviews.

The key aim of the Skills for Work (Wales) programme is to

address the identified skills gaps and for each individual to attain the relevant Essential Skills for work and life qualification, be it literacy, numeracy or ESOL.

By its conclusion in March 2014 over 3000 people throughout Wales will have benefited from the Skills for Work (Wales) programme and Agoriad will have supported over 300 of these individuals in achieving an Essential Skills qualification.



Meeting the challenge whilst facing the realities

Formed in 1992 to help disadvantaged young people, in particular those with learning difficulties, to gain skills, secure employment and lead independent lives, Agoriad has actively developed its services to work with individuals with a range of disabilities and also to work with those disadvantaged in the labour market.

Part of this development has been the establishment of a number of Social Enterprises and Social Firms. This approach has enabled us to provide employment opportunities and locally based product and services for our communities. This activity has occurred at a time of great change not only within the company but within a broader based understanding of the benefits of social enterprise projects

Agoriad started life as a company with two staff and a Board of Trustees; it now employs over 50 staff within five separate businesses. Our focus is on the provision of training and employment opportunities for our clients with sustainability as we are committed to meet the needs of our clients, to compete for contracts and develop social enterprise and to trade our own goods and services.

Our latest venture is Môn Social Enterprises, which joins Llys Llewelyn, our café and tearooms in Aberffraw, with Caffi'r Parc Holyhead as a single enterprise. This is a new and exciting development which has emerged from our partnership with Ynys Môn Council with support from the Welsh Government and Social Firms Wales. The collaborative nature of this project perhaps serves as a model for future development not just for Agoriad but also for other similar organisations.

The Trustees of Agoriad recognise the important role that social enterprises and social firms can play by the delivery of services in partnership with the public sector, the opportunities to meet

'market needs' that commercial organisations would not see as sufficiently profitable and, most importantly, the positive impact that can be made to people's lives.

As a social enterprise and registered charity Agoriad is in many ways no different to any other business. We have established our core values, which centre on serving individuals and the community we operate in. We have developed our vision, strategy and commercial awareness and, as all business do, we aim to be profitable, deliver against our contracts, develop our products, and have the right skill sets both amongst the staff and at Board level to deliver sustainability and quality through our business model.

The landscape we face is similar to that of other businesses - tighter markets, increased costs and competition; however, unlike other business some areas of our operations provide little opportunity to make profit. This is where our business approach ensures that we strive to maintain a healthy balance between income generation and reinvestment.

The relationship between the Board and staff is, in my view, vital: sharing the vision, being a team - the 'us', having confidence in each other's contribution and the resilience to work through the difficult times and celebrate the good times.

With the rapidly changing face of service delivery in the public sector there are opportunities to be explored. These are the challenges that the Trustees and staff face, the ones that make demands on our joint skills. Our ability to identify opportunities, develop them and work with partners will shape the future not just for Agoriad and its clients but the broader community of social enterprises.

Interesting times lay ahead.

BRACE GRIFFITHS
Chairman, Agoriad Cyf

The Government is offering 160,000 wage incentives of up to £2,275 for each 18-24 year old on the Work Programme who will be employed for a period of 26 weeks!

Due to the increase in unemployment and the stagnant recruitment market the UK Government realised that there needs to be a new way of helping the unemployed back into employment. They have created a new incentive called the Youth Contract. The Youth Contract is designed to aid employers who have a demand for staff but may struggle to provide the full pay but also provides an excellent benefit for employers who need to cut costs on their current payroll.

How it works:

- Each young person will still need to be paid at least national minimum wage
- £2,275 is the subsidy for those employed on a full time basis (30+ hours a week)
- £1,137.50 is the subsidy for part time workers (under 30 hours a week)
- Payments are delivered to the employer after 26 weeks. However if the employer is classed as a small company (fewer than 50 staff members) then an earlier claim can be made after 8 weeks for a payment of £700



Are you misinformed about young people:

- With fewer young people going to university, there are more and more young people not in employment, education or training who are very bright, articulate and highly motivated
- These young people can inject new talent, enthusiasm and perspective into forward planning businesses
- They provide a springboard for creating new sustainable jobs and building a business skills' base

Why should you access the Youth Contract incentives through Agoriad ?

We need to communicate the added value that Agoriad brings to the Youth Contract initiative

We provide:

- Fee free recruitment, giving businesses cost free access to a pool of job ready candidates who we match to each vacancy
- Pre employment training to prepare candidates for the workplace, including construction, retail, hospitality and customer service
- Pre-screening management, taking the hassle, time and risk out of recruitment
- In work ongoing support, training and liaison to ensure both employers and employees are happy

In addition we give employers a one stop shop for understanding and accessing the wide and sometimes confusing employer support initiatives available to them.

If you need any other information on the facts about the Youth Contract please call Tecwyn Roberts on 01248 361392.



As easy as 1,2,3?

Manij is a self-employment specialist provider; our aim is to help clients on the Work Programme to start their own businesses. So many people think that it is really difficult to start and run their own business so most won't even consider it. This is just because people are often afraid of what they don't know and they base it on 'what they have heard'; these include all sorts of horror stories about tax and legal cases! We can tell you now that starting a business is really easy and providing that the owner of that business puts the effort in, growing and developing that business can be easy too; it is not quite as easy as 1,2,3, but it is not rocket science either.

The economy is starting to pick up, there are lots of positive signs out there, but things are still a bit slow on the ground. It is going to take a while before employers have enough confidence to take people on again. We have lost some big names during the recession but we hope that we can create some new ones in the future.

If it seems difficult or impossible to get a job, it makes perfect sense for clients to create their own job, and maybe later on they will create jobs for others. The business created could be a very simple one or it could be complicated, it does not matter what it starts off as, because it will evolve. The business does not have to restrict itself to doing one type of work, it can do as many different things as it wants. Some clients run their business and also have a part-time job just to bring a little income in during the initial period.

Everyone knows that it does take time for a business to become established. It can be a good few months or a good few years, it all depends on the type of business, the amount of effort and of course, luck! Fortunately, there is some help out there during this time, which includes the following:

- Most clients will get Working Tax Credits, which is often just a little bit less than JSA (or for some clients it will be more). We provide clients with a calculation of how much they should get and we help them with their

applications, renewals etc.

- Most clients will continue to get full Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax benefit until their business makes a certain amount of profit; the level of profit depends on each client's circumstances. We provide clients with a calculation of this so they know what they are entitled to. As the clients profit increases past this level, their Housing benefit and Council Tax Benefit will gradually reduce. We help clients to produce their accounts and to complete the council's self-employment forms (every 3 months).
- Start-up funding – Gone are the days where it was possible to get lots of free money in the form of a grant; the money just isn't there to do this anymore. There are a few funds available, but most are now low rate loans. The Local Investment Fund is a 40% grant, but you need to find the remaining 60% of the money yourself. We help clients to find and apply for any funding that they may be eligible for.

We have helped all sorts of businesses to start up, from artists to beauticians to builders to caterers to childminders to cleaners to craftworkers to fishermen to gardeners to mechanics to PC repairs to photographers to plumbers to shopkeepers to tree surgeons to valeters to web designers to window cleaners and so on... the list is endless.

Self-employment is available to everyone; from our vast experience there is no specific person or a type that becomes successful. Anyone can be successful, just as long as they try their best, put the effort in and take advantage of any opportunities that they see! When people are self-employed, they will see more opportunities because they are 'out there' working, looking and mixing with people, as opposed to when they are not doing anything, often just looking down to the ground.

As you have already read, we help clients with just about everything and anything that they need help with. We can hold their hands or we can just provide the information that they need; it is entirely up to each client. We are only a phone call, a text or an email away. We can help in all areas of business: tax, national insurance, marketing, bookkeeping, self-assessment, costing, business operations, business law...

If anyone on the Work Programme has a business idea, they should mention this to their Agorriad Work Programme advisor, who will then pass on the details to us. We will arrange an appointment, where we will discuss the business idea, the client's personal situation etc. There is absolutely no pressure; all we do is provide information at this stage, and it is then up to the client to decide what they want to do. So take that step and don't just leave the future to chance.

Dylan Williams



Bespoke label service continues to be popular for Dŵr Cerist

The service offered to its customers to create bespoke labels has proved very popular with Dŵr Cerist customers. The ability to "brand" the superb quality of spring water bottled at Dinas Mawddwy has been introduced, amongst others, at Portmerion, The Forestry Commission and the Rhug Estate. The bespoke service is available to large and small organisations alike with the cost being surprisingly affordable.

Dŵr Cerist will be pleased to work with customers to create and supply own brand labels, contact sioned@agoriad.org.uk

Cerist Water is extracted and bottled at the source of the ancient spring at Llawr Cae, Dinas Mawddwy. It is said that in ancient times it was the source of water for the holy men of the mountains and has been enjoyed by monks from the nearby monastery and maybe a Prince or two for hundreds of years. The superb quality and purity of the water is well known and its low mineral content is suitable for low sodium diets.



Examples of the bespoke service: Caffi Portmerion, The Rhug Estate and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor.



Click here... to view our Beautiful Anglesey & Gwynedd eBook



If you have a vacancy we may have a truly ideal applicant you may not have considered

An experienced employment and training provider with **over 20 years experience** and a real understanding of our local labour markets, Agorriad provides employers with a direct link to genuine and capable people seeking employment.

We have a team of Employment Officers located throughout North Wales with the experience, understanding and local knowledge required to match the right individual to the right job.

Our clients range from people searching for entry to professional levels as we work within the framework of Welfare to Work programmes.

If you have a vacancy or would welcome an informal and confidential chat about future employment issues we will be pleased to hear from you. Email: john@agoriad.org.uk

01248 361 392

New websites for Môn Social Enterprises Cyf, Llys Llewelyn and Caffi'r Parc



We have launched a new website for Môn Social Enterprises Cyf that also combines the new sites for both Llys Llewelyn and Caffi'r Parc.

Check it out on:
www.mon-social-enterprises.org.uk





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Without the assistance, Gwyndaf wouldn't be where he is today - independent



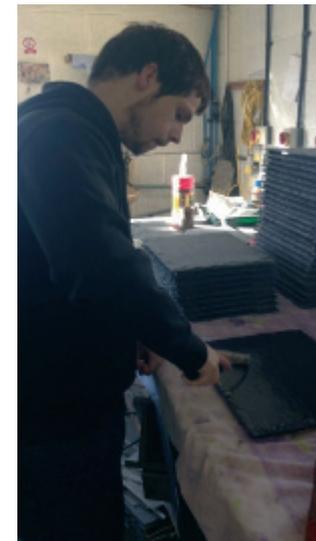
Gwyndaf was referred to the Walkways project in July 2012 by Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, Glynllifon. Having completed many vocational qualifications, Gwyndaf had never had the opportunity to become independent in the workplace.

Initially, Gwyndaf went on work experience in Clwb Golff Pwllheli and the Beacon Climbing Centre, Caernarfon. Alongside the work placement, he underwent travel training to and from placement and studied the Workright qualification to help him understand appropriate behaviour at work. Whilst on placement he received 1:1 support to help develop the skills needed in the workplace.

A work trial was found in Cerrig Granite and Slate Ltd, Pwllheli. Gwyndaf's job would be to polish the slate. Initially on a 6 week supported placement, over the weeks support was reduced as a natural support network was developed with his co-workers. During the trial, Gwyndaf proved to be a good employee and was offered paid employment.

Gwyndaf is now fully independent in his job and has a fantastic working relationship with the staff. Cerrig have tailored his shifts to fit his travelling. Gwyndaf currently works Tuesdays and Thursday 11am -2pm and travels independently back and forth. He is a valued member off staff and meets all deadlines which are asked of him. He has fully integrated into the workplace and enjoyed going with everyone to the Christmas party.

Wendy, Gwyndaf's mother, is extremely happy: "We would like to thank Sarah Jones, Gwyndaf's job coach, for all the support and encouragement over the last couple of years. Without the assistance, Gwyndaf wouldn't be where he is today - independent".



Above: Gwyndaf preparing the slates at Cerrig Granite and Slate Ltd.

Top: Gwyndaf works on his Workright file.

New Look for Ffion

In December 2013 Walkways participant, Ffion Williams, gained paid employment over the Christmas period in New Look, Bangor. Ffion had previously completed Agored Cymru's 'Work Experience' certificate, which included successful work placements at stables and a café.

Agoriad subsequently supported Ffion through the transition from school by helping her to write her CV and teaching her how to approach employers - a skill which she put to good use when she secured herself a summer job in her local chip shop. In November, Ffion began a voluntary work placement in New Look with the support of her Walkways Job Coach.

This experience - in conjunction with Ffion's consistently positive attitude - allowed her to develop the skills and confidence necessary to gain paid employment in the store. In the future, Ffion plans to enrol on Agoriad's Traineeship to build on her literacy, numeracy and ICT skills before applying for a full-time college course.

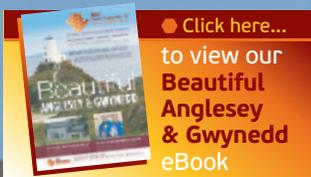


A magical place to spend some time

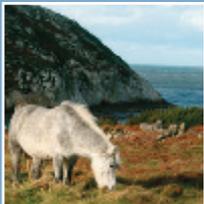


Môn
Social Enterprises Cyf
Mentrau Cymdeithasol Môn Cyf

Môn Social Enterprise is a business that trades for social and/or environmental reasons. It has a clear sense of its 'social mission' knowing the difference it's trying to make, who it aims to help, and how it plans to do it. Most or all of its income comes through selling goods or services. We have a true local understanding of reinvesting profits to further the local 'social mission'. Môn Social Enterprise is a wholly owned Company of Agoriad Cyf. We are pleased to have developed the Caffi'r Parc within our objectives and are delighted that the business has contributed to the local community and provided local employment opportunities.



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& Gwynedd
eBook**



Holyhead Breakwater Country Park with over 106 acres of some of Wales' most stunning scenery.

The Holyhead Breakwater Country Park has stunning scenery, with a backdrop of soaring cliffs, and the majestic heather-clad Holyhead Mountain.

You can access Holyhead Mountain via the Anglesey Coastal Footpath that goes right through the park; you can drive or even cycle to it - a new Green Links cycle track provides one of the routes into the park.

Friendly park staff are on-site to help out with all the information that you will need, with the Information Centre in summer being a hive of activity. Have you ever tried orienteering as a family? It's fun and it's also a great way to explore the park. Basically, orienteering is using a map to find certain orienteering points in the park - don't worry if you've never done it before, there's help when you need it to get you started.

Stroll along the family Nature Trail, experience Rocky Coast, an area of coastline of very special natural interest with the most stunning views. You might even see the Welsh ponies: they graze along and near the coast for a good part of the year as part of an established grazing project.

Maybe a short walk around the lakes area - you might see model boats on the water, with anglers on the big lake after big carp amongst the water lilies.

There are so many things that you can do in the park - you can walk, sit, relax and enjoy yourself. Even during the summer months there are many places where you could feel that you have the place all to yourself. Take in the Brick Shed and see the Outdoor Gallery with wildlife paintings by artists such as Tunncliffe - it really is well worth viewing. The Brick Shed, by the way, used to *actually* be a brick shed. In Victorian times the park used to be a working quarry and if you are interested in industrial history it's a unique experience being able to wander around an area of great beauty whilst being sometimes gently aware of its past.

We have converted the old warden's house into a modern café with meeting rooms for local folk and visitors. It's part of an expanding development which in 2014 will see the cafe area double in size, with the installation of a children's play area and sitting out area, and the outbuildings planned to be developed into dormitory accommodation for walkers who want to extend their Breakwater Park experience.

With food and snacks, importantly sourced from local producers, Caffi'r Parc has provided a welcome and friendly stop-off place for walkers and those of us who just like to take the weight off our feet, relax and take in the surroundings.

Don't forget, the park, which is owned by the Isle of Anglesey County Council and is run by the Council's Countryside and AONB Service, is open all year round. We look forward to seeing you!



The Caffi'r Parc conversion of the old warden's house providing a modern and friendly place to stop-off for food, snacks and takeaways.

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Working on the Skills for Work programme can be very challenging, but helping people is very rewarding.

Bethan Hughes - Employment Officer

I have worked for Agoriad for the past seven years on various training programmes, gaining experiences and skills in a wide variety of tasks, such as teaching basic skills, looking for work placements, training on CV skills, interviewing skills and confidence building.

I am currently working on the Skills for Work programme, which started in October 2012. This concentrates on customers' basic skills - reading and writing. We are sub-contractors for Working Links and receive referrals from Job Centre Plus. My pattern varies from day to day; I work on Anglesey and also one day in Bangor.

Working on the Skills for Work programme can be very challenging. Learners can be very reluctant to learn to read and

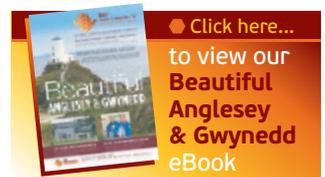
write, as they have always had negative experiences of learning in school and it's something that often does not interest them. We work with people of all ages and different abilities.

The referral process begins when we receive a phone call from the Job Centre with the customer's details and we arrange a meeting for the customer to come and see us for a welcome session. The welcome session will be within two weeks of being referred. Most of our referrals are Work Programme returners, having completed their two years on the Work Programme. Each customer will be referred onto the Skills for Work programme if they do not have a formal qualification of level 2, or above, in Literacy and Numeracy.

They will sit a basic skills assessment on the computer; this will determine which level

they are currently at and also what kind of help and support that they require. If the customer reaches a level 1 in Numeracy and Literacy, then they are referred back to the Job Centre.

Customers that are Level 1 or below will have to attend the Skills for Work course, one day a week for 8 weeks. During this time, we will be looking at reading, writing, using the computer, helping the customers with their CV, using the Universal Jobmatch. Each customer, at the end of the 8 weeks will achieve a qualification in either Numeracy or Literacy.



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