

Wales joins Connect to Work as thousands offered help into jobs

5.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

First Wales areas launch Connect to Work services as 16 more regions across England and Wales have funding confirmed

- One-to-one employment support delivered in local community settings such as parks and cafes will match people to jobs based on their individual abilities and circumstances
- £300 million investment part of Government's "Pathways to Work" initiative - supporting over 75,000 disabled people and those with health conditions, taking total programme funding to more than £950 million

The first Connect to Work services in Wales have opened their doors, marking a major milestone in the delivery of the Government's Pathways to Work initiative — its long-term plan to reform benefits and employment support and help disabled people who can work with the right support into good jobs.

Today, 16 more areas across England and Wales have had their funding confirmed as part of a £300 million expansion — bringing life-changing, tailored employment support to over 75,000 more people facing complex barriers to work.

Mid Wales, North Wales and South West Wales are among the 16 areas to have their funding confirmed, delivering a significant milestone in the UK Government's commitment to ensure every nation and region can realise its full potential.

To help improve the employment prospects for disabled people, people with health conditions and those with complex needs, the three Welsh areas will receive:

- Mid Wales: Up to £3.9 million to give 1,000 disabled people, people with health conditions and those with complex barriers to work their chance to find good, secure employment
- North Wales: Up to £13.3 million to provide 3,550 people across the region with tailored employment support
- South West Wales: Up to £14.4 million to offer 3,850 local people with the tailored support they need to find work

The funding brings total programme investment to over £950 million across England and Wales, with funding for South East Wales expected to be confirmed soon.

With 2.8 million people out of work due to ill-health, the Government is taking action to tackle economic inactivity and grow the economy as part of its Plan for Change. Connect to Work gives local areas the tools they need to design support around what works for their communities, understanding local job markets and addressing the specific challenges their residents face.

Minister for Employment, The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson said:

This government believes in the potential of every person in every part of the UK. That's

why I'm delighted to confirm funding for three of the four delivery areas in Wales, and it's fantastic to see two of those areas already open and supporting participants.

For too long, too many people have been written off and left behind. Connect to Work changes that - giving people real, tailored support to move into good jobs and out of poverty. That's what spreading opportunity means in practice.

The programme's support is designed to fit around the individual — participants can meet their employment adviser wherever they feel most comfortable, whether that's a local café, a park, or a community hub.

It provides intensive, personalised help including individual coaching from employment specialists, job matching services, and ongoing support for both participants and employers, breaking down the barriers that can make accessing traditional employment support feel daunting and ensuring people don't just get jobs — they keep them.

Secretary of State for Wales Jo Stevens said:

Providing targeted help for people to get into work, means a more financially stable future and a better quality of life for many.

The tailored support offered by Connect to Work services in Wales will ensure anyone who can work is supported to get the right job for them, helping them achieve their goals.

The expansion also includes 13 further areas across England including:

- West Yorkshire: Up to £48.2 million to support over 13,000 disabled people, people with health conditions and complex barriers to work
- East Midlands: Up to £44.1 million of funding to providing over 12,000 local people with tailored employment support
- Liverpool City Region: Up to £43.1 million giving 12,000 people across the region their chance

Connect to Work is already transforming lives across England, with early delivery areas demonstrating the real difference targeted employment support can make.

On his experience with Connect to Work, Adrian from Portsmouth said:

Since joining Connect to Work with Portsmouth City Council, I have been lucky enough to be paired with Leigh who has been helping me with narrowing down my job search and finding employers who are willing to support me with reasonable adjustments.

We have applied for 2 roles, and we have spoken to an employer together about an office-based role and will be inquiring about other roles within their company.

We are also applying to an online pet caring service provider to look at becoming a Dog Boarder which Leigh, my advisor, came up with as an idea for me. So only having had a few sessions with Leigh I feel I'm making more progress towards work than I was able to manage on my own.

A Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) spokesperson said:

Local government welcomes the opportunity this latest initiative gives to invest in locally led specialist employment support. Enabling councils to plan and deliver such vital support locally is a welcome recognition of local government's key role in addressing economic inactivity.

Councils are well placed to deliver this programme, working with other employment and health support services in their areas, and increasing the connections within other key council services, including adult and community learning, adult social care, public health, housing, education, skills and economic development.

We look forward to working with all our key partners across all parts of Wales to ensure that this vital support enables those individuals with complex barriers to find and stay in work.

To access support, disabled people and those with health conditions or complex barriers to work can self-refer or be referred through various routes including healthcare professionals, Local Authorities, and voluntary sector partners.

Connect to Work is part of the UK Government's wider £3.5 billion Get Britain Working package — the biggest investment in employment support for a generation. The package includes overhauling Jobcentres so Work Coaches have more time to support individuals and restarting long-term unemployed people into work.

It also delivers a Youth Guarantee, so every young person is earning or learning and expands health and work initiatives like WorkWell. Together, these measures are designed to tackle economic inactivity, break down barriers to employment, and drive up opportunity in every part of the country.

Further Information

- Connect to Work is a locally delivered programme following internationally recognised Supported Employment frameworks. It supports people who are economically inactive or who are at risk of losing their job because of their health or complex needs, including those with mental health challenges, and learning disabilities.

Gus Williams, CEO of the British Chamber of Commerce for Wales Southeast, Southwest, and Mid said:

We know that economic participation is one of the major challenges in Wales, with too many people excluded from the workforce due to health issues. On the other side many businesses are facing skills and recruitment challenges. The reasons for this can be complex.

Connect to Work represents a significant commitment and investment from the government in finding a way to solve these challenges. The one-to-one support recognises that there is not a single solution, but that people and businesses need tailored support to meet individual and local needs. We look forward to working with the DWP to help engage with employers and support the Connect to Work trials here in

Wales.

- The funding figures for each delivery area are as follows:

Delivery area	Funding (up to)	People supported (up to)
Mid Wales	£3.9m	1,000
South West Wales	£14.4m	3,850
North Wales	£13.3m	3,550
Tees Valley	£17.6m	5,000
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland	£17.2m	4,650
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	£13.1m	3,100
West Yorkshire	£48.2m	13,350
West of England (including North Somerset)	£15.4m	3,900
Swindon & Wiltshire	£10.4m	2,600
East Midlands	£44.1m	12,200
Liverpool City Region	£43.1m	12,000
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	£14.3m	3,700
Cheshire & Warrington	£16.2m	4,150
Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole	£9.3m	2,440
Somerset	£8.2m	2,110
Hull and East Riding	£11.7m	3,400

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/wales-joins-connect-to-work-as-thousands-offered-help-into-jobs>