

A Manifesto for Career Development in Wales

Priorities for the next Senedd term

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK's leading professional body for the career development sector. This is our 'manifesto' for the Senedd elections in May 2026. Find us at: www.thecdi.net

Career development is vital to Wales' economic resilience, social mobility and wellbeing. As the next Senedd term approaches, we call on all political parties to prioritise highquality career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for people across Wales.

Wales has a strong careers ecosystem, led by Careers Wales and supported by education, community and employer partners. It will only reach its full potential with sustained investment and clear political direction.

1 Invest in career education and guidance

Wales needs a wellresourced careers system that supports people at all stages of life.

Parties should commit to:

- Recognising the international evidence that investment in career guidance delivers economic and social value (1).
- Responding to the public's clear demand for accessible, highquality career support (2).
- Ensuring schools, colleges, universities and community providers have the capacity to deliver strong career learning and guidance.

2 Re-affirm the commitment to lifelong guidance

Career transitions happen throughout life, not only at the end of education.

Parties should commit to:

- Ensuring adults can access impartial, professional guidance whenever they need it.
- Embedding career support across employability, skills, health and community programmes.
- Recognising the role of Careers Wales, local authorities, thirdsector organisations and employers in supporting adults through change.

3 Protect and strengthen a national careers service for Wales

Careers Wales provides sector-leading, impartial, bilingual support across the country.

Parties should commit to:

- Safeguarding a national careers service that offers scale, consistency and integrated digital and facetoiface provision.
- Ensuring Careers Wales remains aligned with the evolving tertiary education and training landscape while retaining its independence and impartiality.
- Supporting collaboration across the wider careers ecosystem.

4 Ensure fair and sustainable funding across the education and training system

A coherent funding system is essential for learner progression and opportunity.

Parties should commit to:

- Ensuring FE, apprenticeships and vocational learners are not disadvantaged compared with university students.
- Providing support for those not yet ready for vocational programmes, including young people at risk of becoming NEET and adults facing barriers.
- Developing a sustainable funding model for higher education that supports widening participation and progression.
- Embedding and funding careers provision across all parts of the tertiary system.

References

Investing in Career Guidance: Joint statement of the Interagency Working Group on Career Guidance (2025). CEDEFOP; European Commission; ETF; OECD; ILO; UNESCO; World Bank Group. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/8900>

Valuing Careers Research Project (2024). Career Development Institute. <https://www.thecdi.net/policy-campaigns-and-media/valuing-careers/valuing-careers-research>