# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Personal Learning Account Programme** |
| **DATE** | **16 September 2019** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education**  **Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport** |

The Employability Plan commits to piloting a Personal Learning Account. The account will provide funding for vocational retraining of employed people in industry sectors where there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Today, the Personal Learning Account Programme is being launched and will support employed people to gain higher level skills and qualifications, further opening up the opportunities for people to switch careers.

The programme is available to anyone who lives in Wales, is over the age of 19 and is in employment, but earning less than the Welsh Median income (£26,000 per year). It is being piloted by Coleg Gwent in the south east and Grwp Llandrillo Menai in the north. It offers employed people the chance to access free and flexible courses within Welsh Government’s priority sectors, initially within the engineering, construction and ICT sectors.

This programme is being taken forward jointly between us as the Ministers for Education, and for Economy and Transport. The Progressive Agreement reached between the First Minister and Education Minister in December 2018 included a new commitment to deliver a “right to lifelong learning, investing in skills which people need throughout their lives”. The Personal Learning Account will empower individuals to instigate a renewed interest in learning, empowering them to take responsibility for their learning to support their transition between job roles and aid career progression.

In the economic climate we face, the right to lifelong learning becomes more important than ever and this initiative has been designed to help people in Wales upskill and overcome barriers that might be holding them back from realising their full potential. This collaborative approach will provide individuals with higher level skills and qualifications to enable them to gain a higher level of employment which, in turn, will help employers recruit people with the right skills and qualifications to enable their businesses and the economy to grow.

Employers within the engineering, construction and ICT sectors are experiencing rising skill shortages and are looking to recruit individuals with the relevant vocational skills and qualifications they need to fill current and future gaps. This new programme will help them do that by providing flexible and responsive local provision to meet these skill gaps.

All of the courses are funded by the Welsh Government and dedicated careers advisers at Working Wales will help each individual to establish a workable plan that is manageable around their existing commitments to help them achieve their future career goals. The pilot programme will run for two years and will be monitored with the intention of additional courses becoming available across a wider variety of priority sectors, further opening up the opportunities for people to switch careers.

Our new Personal Learning Account will give individuals the opportunity to obtain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to embark on a new career, and do so in a way that fits around their lifestyle.

Individuals can access the programme via Working Wales. They can drop in to a Careers Wales office, visit [workingwales.gov.wales,](https://workingwales.gov.wales/) call 0800 028 4844 or contact the colleges directly.