

South Wales Financial Centre of Excellence

Withdrawn 27 May 2019

**BUSINESS
IS
GREAT**

BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND





Welcome to South Wales

Welcome to South Wales – this region, famed for its natural beauty, is a major centre for financial services with blue chip companies running substantial operational functions here, taking advantage of the area's welcoming environment and attractive lifestyle.



Close proximity to London, low overheads and a strong supply of highly skilled staff makes it a thriving financial and business services region.

The South Wales region has a population of 1.8 million within an overall area of approximately 1,303 sq. miles and consists of 12 counties; Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan and includes the cities of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. With its blend of vibrant cities, stunning coastlines and diverse countryside, South Wales offers outstanding quality of life, a growing economy and excellent infrastructure.

The region has a world-class talent pool and competitively priced commercial real estate, making it the ideal location to establish, nurture and grow your business. It also benefits from exceptional access to London, the rest of the UK and beyond.

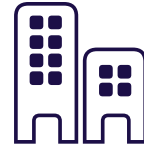
South Wales is well positioned to take advantage of the movement of jobs, from London or overseas, as it offers the assurance of a politically stable UK location at a very competitive cost. In recent years, many global companies such as Deloitte, Atradius and GM Financial UK, have chosen to relocate their operations here.



21,000

There are 95,600 jobs in the financial, business and professional services sector in the South Wales region, with financial and insurance companies alone accounting for 21,000.*

31



31 FTSE 100 companies have headquarters, major corporate centres or other associated operational functions in the South Wales area.*

£2.2bn

Financial and insurance activities contributed £2.2 billion to the UK economy in terms of GVA.**

* Business Register Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2013

** ONS, Regional Gross Value Added, December 2014

Financial hub

South Wales is a major hub for financial and business services in the UK.

There are up to 1 million sq. ft. of new Grade A offices currently under construction in Cardiff alone to support the industry.

South Wales offers a talented labour pool supplemented by specialised training within Welsh academic institutions.



31 FTSE 100 companies have headquarters, major corporate centres or other associated operational functions in the South Wales area.*

This creates opportunities for other financial and business services enterprises considering relocation, as there is an existing pool of qualified labour as well as high numbers of graduates and excellent commuter links.

* Business Register Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2013



Major employers

75% of all employment in the financial and business services sector in Wales is conducted in the South Wales region. **

Industry strengths

The concentration of the financial and business services sector in South Wales means that there are substantial operations being conducted here across a multitude of areas, with particular strengths in insurance, knowledge process servicing and legal services.

Key locations

South Wales has a number of locations hosting clusters of financial and business services companies. There is a population of over 1.8 million people within the region, with a further 1.8 million living in the bordering counties, offering a continuous flow of new talent for companies in the region.



There is access to a catchment of 3.6 million people in the region and surrounding counties

Cardiff Airport is the national airport for Wales and gateway to the country



* ONS 2014

** Welsh Government Statistics, Employee Jobs by Priority Sector, 2013

Cardiff

Cardiff is the capital city of Wales. The city is the focal point for both national and local government, business and commerce for Wales, and many renowned names in the financial and business services sector.

Financial, insurance and business service activities generated over 40,000 jobs for Cardiff in 2013.*

Cardiff International Airport is within 30 minutes' drive of the city centre, offering domestic and international flights, including regular flights to and from London. Other destinations served directly and regularly from Cardiff include Dublin, Amsterdam, Munich and Paris.

The city houses an internet exchange (one of only four UK cities outside of London to have one), which means that businesses located here can take advantage of lower costs and increased data resilience.

Companies include:

- AXA
- Admiral Group
- Atradius
- Barclays
- British Gas
- First Source
- Lloyds Bank
- Legal & General
- Marsh Insurance
- Principality
- Building Society
- RBS
- Willis Insurance



* Welsh Government Statistics, Employee Jobs by Priority Sector, 2013.

CASE STUDY - Cardiff



It's plain sailing in South Wales

Admiral Group is a FTSE 100 company headquartered in Cardiff. The company is worth over £4 billion and employs over 5,000 people in South Wales to conduct the insurance giant's entire operations - from sales to marketing to HR. Admiral has grown organically from 60 to 5,000 staff over the last twenty years and has recruited locally to fill those posts. Admiral has won a number of awards, such as, in 2014, 2nd place in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work.

Admiral has big plans for the future, as shown by their 2014 move to a purpose-built, 220,000 sq. ft. Grade A office building in Central Cardiff that will house over 2,000 of their employees.

HR Director Ceri Assiratti says: "Cardiff won our hearts. People don't always recognise Wales as a great place to come to until they get here, and being only two hours from London, Cardiff offers us the benefit of being close to the UK's financial centre but without the added cost."

admiralgroup.co.uk

CASE STUDY - Cardiff

World class environment

Atradius provides trade credit insurance, surety and collections services worldwide through its strategic presence in 50 countries. Atradius has access to credit information on 200 million companies worldwide with a turnover of €1.6 billion.

Atradius was one of the first companies to recognise the potential of Cardiff as a centre of excellence for financial, professional and business services, where they now employ around 500 people. The company values the high quality lifestyle and well educated and adaptable workforce, amongst the strengths of the Welsh capital.

HR Manager Anne Middleton says: "As a world-class company, we wanted a first-class site. We found it in Cardiff Bay - one of Europe's most innovative and original waterfront developments. The Welsh capital and the surrounding areas offer a diverse, high quality lifestyle and well-educated, adaptable workforce capable of responding to the challenges of continuous change."

Atradius forms part of Grupo Catalana Occidente (CO.OC), one of the leading insurers in Spain and worldwide in credit insurance.

atradius.co.uk



Newport

Newport is the gateway to Wales. In recent years, Newport has become internationally recognised as a host city for big events, having accommodated the NATO summit in 2014 and the Ryder Cup in 2010.

Newport is in the midst of a £2 billion regeneration plan labelled 'The 2020 Masterplan' which will include a number of regeneration projects including 390,000 sq. ft. (36,230 sqm/acre) of commercial property and leisure space at Friars Walk in the city centre.

The Celtic Manor Resort in Newport has been described as being one of Europe's finest destinations, and has been voted M&IT 'Best UK Hotel' for the last four years and C&IT 'Top UK Conference Hotel' for five consecutive years.

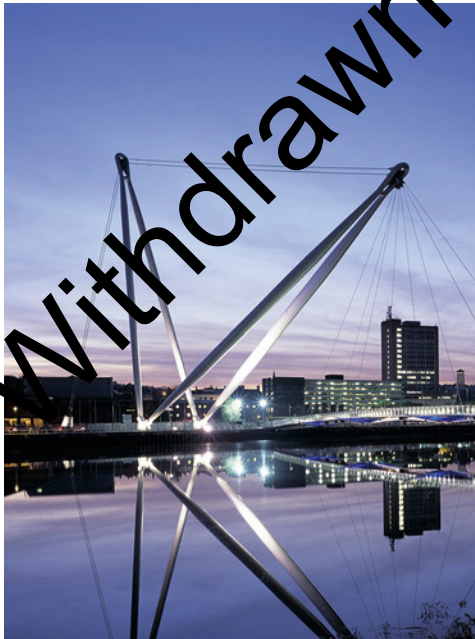
The city is also home to the National Software Academy, a new partnership between academia, Welsh Government and industry leaders to address the shortfall of qualified, industry-ready software engineers. They combine teaching and training in a bespoke commercial/IT environment, to produce sought after graduates with industrial experience who will be recognised as leaders in their field.

Key UK government offices, such as Companies House, the Intellectual Property Office and the Office for National Statistics, who together employ over 2,000 people, are located here. The Intellectual Property Office and the Office for National Statistics relocated to Newport from London to take

advantage of the city's local talent pool and low operating costs. Apart from the financial and business services sector, the other large industry sectors here are advanced manufacturing and ICT. All of these provide services for business and that means the local area provides a range of relevant skills.

Companies include:

- GoCompare
- Admiral Insurance
- Lloyds Bank
- Steria
- Henry Howard Finance
- Target Group



CASE STUDY - Newport

No need to compare

Go Compare is a British financial services comparison website. It provides comparison details for a multitude of financial products as well as energy and household products. The company is now owned by Esure and was the first comparison site to focus on features of insurance products rather than just listing prices. This led to the company being invited to become a member of the British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA). In 2013, gocompare.com reported a turnover of £110 million, up from £105 million in 2012, with profits before tax rising to £25 million, from £24 million.

Founder Hayley Parsons says: "I never even considered anywhere else. One of the things I love about Wales is that people here really like to see you doing well. We always look for people who have something about them; people who have that spark and enjoy coming to work every day. When it comes to finding people like that, there's no comparison with Wales".

gocompare.com



CASE STUDY - Newport



Aiming high

With over 36 years' experience, Target Group is one of the longest-standing service and software providers to the Financial Services industry. In order to deliver to over 50 clients from across the UK, Australia and New Zealand, Target Group operates from an area with the right skills, the right infrastructure, and at the right cost. Its two core offices in Cardiff and Newport are the cornerstone from which the company serves its prestigious client base that includes Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse and DVLA.

Group Sales Director, James Snow says: "We win contracts with clients who are based in locations where operating costs are much higher. Importantly, thanks to the people and infrastructure that we have here, we are able to provide high-quality customer management and a high level of security around IT and payment processing services for our clients."

targetgroup.com



Torfaen

Torfaen is a county within close proximity of Cardiff and Newport in the west and Bristol in the east.

Historically the area had a big manufacturing economy, but is now reinventing itself as a key hub for outsourcing services, particularly for the financial services sector.

Companies include:

- Proxima
- Genfour
- Lloyd and Barnes
- Xchanging

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Swansea

Swansea is a coastal city and Wales' second largest city. Situated on the sandy South Wales coast, Swansea is renowned for its breath-taking scenery and exceptional lifestyle. It is one of only two cities in the UK where growing companies can benefit from 'Tier A' (the highest rate) European Funding.

The city has undergone a transformation as it looks to build on its status as the regional centre for South-West Wales. The redeveloped bus and train stations, the High Street regeneration and the completion of the Boulevard Project to link the city centre with the city's waterfront provides Swansea with a modern infrastructure from which to grow.

Companies include:

- OSTC
- HSBC
- Admiral Group
- ERS



CASE STUDY - Swansea



Trading up

Rapid online connections to global trading floors and the availability of talented graduates to conduct high-powered market transactions have enabled fast-growing futures and derivatives firm, OSTC, to create a thriving exchange on Swansea's waterfront.

The pioneering centre was established by a Cardiff University graduate who grabbed the chance to return to Wales when OSTC was seeking opportunities to set up operations outside the traditional financial hub in London. OSTC now employs 60 graduates in Swansea, mainly from Welsh universities. Under a carefully managed expansion programme, that is set to rise to 200 over the next five years, and most, if not all, will be graduate-level posts.

Among the initiatives to strengthen links between student talent and the business community, the company worked with the Welsh Government to create a mock trading floor at several Welsh universities and also supports an 'Investment Society' for students operating on the campus.

Managing Director, Michael Shirley says: "It is working excellently from Swansea with good universities close by. We are seeing more and more applications for jobs from entrepreneurial and ambitious people and are very happy with the quality of the applicants."

ostc.com



Caerphilly & Rhondda Cynon Taf

Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf are counties bordering Cardiff with a combined population of over 400,000 people. Key towns include Caerphilly, Pontypridd and Llantrisant.

Companies have taken advantage of the excellent transport links to the nearby cities of Cardiff and Newport to relocate their key support services here.

Companies include:

- GM Financial UK
- Arthur J Gallagher
- Creditsafe
- DAS Legal Insurance

CASE STUDY - Caerphilly & Rhondda Cynon Taf

Shaping business strategy

Creditsafe is a multinational provider of online company credit information. The company set up its first UK operation in London in 2000, but found that high operating costs and a lack of availability of quality staff were holding it back. After looking at several locations in the UK and Europe, Creditsafe turned to Wales. The move proved to be extraordinarily successful as company turnover increased by 450% within the first 12 months of setting up in Wales.

Creditsafe sees the move to Wales as the best strategic decision the company has made, transforming how it does business.

Chief Executive Cato Syversen says: "Wales provided everything we needed. Relocating to Wales from Norway was so much easier than I had anticipated as my family and I had help with things like finding a new home and schooling for our children. I feel that Wales wants Creditsafe to succeed as much as we do. I have often said that my ambition is to build a workplace where people want to come to work on a Monday morning, not because they need to, but because they want to. Relocating to Wales has been the best strategic move Creditsafe has ever made. It saved Creditsafe and it framed how we do our business."

creditsafeuk.com



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CASE STUDY - Caerphilly & Rhondda Cynon Taf

Road to success

GM Financial UK is the British subsidiary of GM Financial Inc., the global automotive financial services company of General Motors. With 95 years of experience, the company has an unrivalled reputation in offering finance solutions for the automotive industry in the UK.

As a people-focused business, the main priority for GM Financial UK when seeking a base was the ability to recruit well-qualified, skilled and highly-motivated staff. What Wales offered on all counts convinced the firm that the journey down the M4 motorway was the right one to take. Today, GM Financial UK employs more than 300 people at its flagship offices on Nantgarw Business Park, only a few minutes' drive from the M4 at Cardiff.

From there, it runs an extensive operation providing finance to car buyers and commercial funding for mainly GM/Vauxhall retailers.

As a key part of the expanding financial business community in Wales, GM Financial UK has established excellent relationships with higher education institutions, including the University of South Wales, Cardiff Business School and local colleges. GM Financial UK was also proud Wales to be an environment in which to engender staff loyalty and high retention rates.

Managing Director Ed Paulat says: "We have a keen interest in helping retain and develop skilled talent in the region. Our newly-created Vauxhall Finance Award of Excellence for Cardiff Business School graduates is one example of the perfect collaboration between business and education to further develop the financial sector in Wales. Being based in Wales has been good for GM Financial UK and we anticipate our growth and success continuing in the future. Based on our experience, we would not hesitate to recommend this area to other businesses".

gmfinancial.com





South Wales - Key Employers



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- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Admiral Group | 9. Creditsafe | 17. Lloyds Bank | 24. Steria |
| 2. AXA | 10. First Source | 18. Lloyd & Barnes | 25. Target Group |
| 3. Gradus | 11. GM Financial | 19. Marsh Insurance | 26. Willis Insurance |
| 4. Aviva | 12. Go Compare | 20. OSTC | 27. Xchanging |
| 5. Barclays | 13. Henry Howard Finance | 21. Principality Building Society | 28. Zurich Financial |
| 6. Buy as you view | 14. ERS | 22. Proxima | |
| 7. British Gas | 15. HSBC | 23. RBS | |
| 8. CGI | 16. Legal & General | | |



Recruitment pool

South Wales' growing reputation for financial and business services is reinforced by its highly skilled and cost effective workforce.

South Wales' population of 1.8 million, 34% of whom are educated to degree level or higher, are arguably some of the most hard working and loyal in the UK as evidenced by the wide array of employers located here. In fact, research conducted by Income Data Services in 2013 saw Wales rated as the best region in the UK for workforce loyalty, with staff turnover averaging c5% compared to the next best at c12%.

Wales' renowned higher education institutions also mean that there is a continuous pipeline of talent available to businesses. There are five universities and eight colleges in the South Wales region with over 200,000 students; 100,000 of those students are in higher education.

Cardiff University

Cardiff University is a Russell Group university with nearly 30,000 students. It is ranked 5th amongst UK universities in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework for quality, 2nd for impact and has a global reputation as well as two Nobel Laureates on its staff.

The university produces close to 9,000 graduates and postgraduates annually from over 120 different countries. It collaborates with the best local and international businesses and offers specialist masters degrees ranging from finance to a renowned executive MBA. The university's graduates have gone on to be employed at some of the most prolific companies in the world including Citibank; KPMG; RSA Insurance Group; and Cardiff Chance.

cardiff.ac.uk



Legal & General's medical underwriting team in Cardiff is now the largest in Europe, and is continuing to expand and develop.

Medical Underwriting Academy

In 2002, Legal & General identified a need to up-skill experienced underwriters in the medical underwriting field, where the required specialist understanding is detailed and challenging. The result was a university credit-bearing course, delivered by Cardiff University in a flexible way and using varied modes of provision. Following the success of this course, others followed year on year; each being re-designed or enhanced to accommodate the changing requirements of Legal & General.

The courses have developed into Specialist Medical Modules attended by Legal & General staff from offices around the UK. A blended learning approach is used to ensure that learners can undertake the learning at their own pace before attending the face-to-face course days held at the university. The modules are adult-learning focused and use practical, hands on workshops and real-life examples, as well as industry case studies to aid discussion and understanding of medical conditions.

The partnership has won awards including a National Training Award (Regional Prize) in 2004 & 2010 and has been praised as demonstrating good practices for collaborative working between an HEI and a business. In addition the academy received interest from the wider insurance sector.





University of South Wales

With over 30,000 students, the University of South Wales is the largest university in Wales and one of the largest in the UK. With its roots as a technical college developing engineering students for heavy industry, the university has always focused on engaging with business and producing highly trained graduates that suit the needs of industry.

The University's accounting courses are highly respected, gaining Gold and Platinum ACCA accolades. The University has also been named Public Sector Accountancy College of the Year by PQ Magazine.

The Information Security Research Group (ISRG) at the University of South Wales includes specialists in network security, forensics and threat. The group offers commercial services to organisations such as financial institutions, the Police and other public and private entities. They focus on early warning systems that detect and respond to a variety of cyber-based attacks, with teams developing new technologies such as secure XML, threat

assessment methods, vulnerability management, IDS data integration and secure wireless mobile computing. The group maintains two specialised research labs, the Network Security Research Lab (NSRL) and the Computer Forensics Research Lab (CFRL). The CFRL is a restricted access lab used for analysing computer files in a manner that makes the information gained presentable as evidence in a court. Methods and tools are developed that in an evidentially sound manner, extract information from the information system to address problems currently being encountered in the forensic process.

The Centre for Information Operations at the University of South Wales leads in the areas of information security, digital forensics and cyber threat assessment. It houses training facilities alongside specialist restricted access research labs, where state-of-the-art equipment is used to support diverse R&D projects.

Financial Services firms dealing with the modern threats of cyber invasion can rest assured that there is a pipeline of talent to tackle cyber threats emanating from these bodies.

Southwales.ac.uk

CASE STUDY

Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme

This innovative graduate initiative, unique to Wales, is a full-time programme partly funded by the European Union, designed and delivered by leading financial services employers who are seeking to develop the next generation of talented financial services professionals for the industry in Wales.

This highly regarded programme provides structured training in a wide range of professional roles, senior mentoring and a Masters qualification in Financial Services Management delivered by the University of South Wales. Successful applicants to the programme undergo an intensive 22 months of work, training and academic study, all whilst experiencing a wide range of job roles such as risk/underwriting, commercial account management, product development, business analysis, IT, financial control, finance, credit risk, research, HR and marketing.

The scheme helps to foster home grown talent and create future leaders and professionals for the financial services industry which has a strong and growing presence in Wales.

Participating employers include Julian Hodge Bank, Admiral, Atradius, GM Financial UK, Finance Wales, Optimum Credit, Grant Thornton and Composite Legal Expenses.

The graduate scheme received praise from the Lord Mayor of the City of London, who met scheme representatives at Atradius' UK headquarters in Cardiff during a visit to Wales in April 2014.

Anne Middleton, HR Manager at Atradius, said: "Our objective was to create a strong scheme to help retain and develop skilled graduates in Wales. We are immensely proud of what we've achieved. As employers, we've created a model which works. It represents a perfect collaboration between business and education, which starts to develop a significant talent pool in Wales".



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Cardiff and Vale College

Cardiff and Vale College is a highly ambitious Further Education College with over 20,000 students across the Cardiff capital region. Their new state of the art 4,000 student campus, in the heart of the Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone, provides first-class learning facilities and will be home to a dedicated Financial and Professional Services hub - providing a pipeline of skilled and talented employees.

The college has a strong voice in the sector; it is the lead training provider and partner in Wales for the National Skills Academy for Financial Services, and has recently secured a contract to deliver the Deloitte apprenticeship programme in Cardiff.

Employer-led by design, engagement is a key activity of the college and it works hard to understand the needs of industry, which informs the development of an innovative curriculum.



The College's clients benefit from access to a range of workforce development solutions, tailored to meet pre-agreed requirements. It offers both accredited and non-accredited bespoke training activities, placing the client at the centre of the relationship, whilst always focussing upon return on investment.

Cardiff and Vale College joined the Gazelle Colleges Group in 2012, and is the only Welsh college in the group. Created in 2011, the aim of the group is to work towards the transformation of further education through enterprise and entrepreneurship. Gazelle provides an opportunity to engage with entrepreneurs and innovators and to bring that experience into the heart of further education.

The Group is committed to transforming curricula to encourage an entrepreneurial mind-set. The members want to foster a new generation of entrepreneurs who can bring innovation to existing businesses and who can create their own employment with confidence and ambition.

cavc.ac.uk



20,000+

Cardiff and Vale College is a highly ambitious Further Education College with over 20,000 students across the Cardiff capital region



Digital Connectivity

Wales is a digital nation where companies can flourish and do business with anyone, anytime, anywhere around the globe. Underpinning this is an expanding world class digital infrastructure that is globally competitive, flexible and forward-looking.

Whether you are a multinational corporation looking to relocate your headquarters or a small business looking to benefit from superior connectivity, Wales has the digital infrastructure to support your ambitions.

Wales supports a competitive and diverse fibre market, offering connectivity at all speeds and quality to meet all business requirements.

The Welsh Government works with partners to stimulate competition and diversity of fixed telecoms infrastructure supply in South Wales. An open access duct network is in development for any telco to provide fibre services across the Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone. Telco providers will be offered exclusive commercial rights to operate cable networks using the verges of the motorway/high speed trunk road network in Wales.

The Welsh Government is working with international connectivity providers to deliver direct and diverse international options from South Wales and Cardiff. It will soon be the only UK city offering direct diverse transatlantic connectivity routes bypassing London. This in Wales is destined to be the preferred disaster recovery/backup location for businesses dependent on international connectivity.

Wales has an expanding, diverse and resilient data centre offering. A world-class carrier neutral Tier 3 data centre and strong SME data centre provider is within 10 miles of Cardiff and a new carrier neutral centre is planned within Cardiff itself. Further, interest is also growing in a carrier neutral centre in the Swansea Bay City Region, providing coverage right across South Wales.

Cardiff hosts one of the most successful regional internet exchanges in the UK. IXCardiff opened its doors to business in March 2015 and this exchange is increasing regional resilience and reducing data transit costs for members. It is developing and promoting international connectivity and is offering the local marketplace a local service.

More widely, South Wales has an expanding creative and media sector and IXCardiff is introducing new peering options for accessing this growing market.

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Nick Razey, CEO of Next Generation Data, on site



Outstanding lifestyle

*From wildlife to social life,
from arts to sports, from
landscape to seascape,
Wales delivers what
you want.*

South Wales enjoys a great quality of life and the capital Cardiff has been voted the UK's best city to live in a number of surveys and reports.*

Number 1
UK's best city

* MoneySuperMarket quality of living report, September 2014; European Commission Quality of life in cities report, July 2014; Legal and General Best City to be Young report, October 2013

Housing

Whether renting or buying, South Wales has some of the most competitively priced housing in the UK. One can find all types of properties from apartments with concierge services to manor houses with stables, all within a short commute of the cities of Cardiff, Swansea and Newport.



Landscape

Wales has some of the most incredible landscapes in the world, from the mountains to coast, ancient woodlands to lakes and rivers and it has over 4,000 sq km of National Park. These richly varied landscapes make Wales a superb destination for outdoor activities.



Outdoor activities

Whether your pleasure is jumping on a mountain bike, fishing, enjoying the spectacular coast and mountains on foot, paddle, surf or sailing or indeed partaking in adrenaline bursting high-octane coastal sports, Wales has the answer. The National Cycle Network stretches for over 1000 miles and enjoys 750 miles of beautiful coastline with more high quality beaches - Blue Flag (39) and Green Coast Award (44) - than anywhere else in the UK (2009). With over 500 tranquil lakes and reservoirs, covering a total of approximately 50 square miles, there are numerous opportunities to sail, fish and relax, and there are more castles per square mile to explore in Wales than any other country in the world.

The Wales Coastal Path runs along the entire coast of Wales extending to 870 miles (1,400 km). Add in the 180 mile (285 km) Offa's Dyke pathway, which trails the land border with England, and you can complete the circuit of the entire country.



Sport

Sport is a major interest for people in Wales, be it as a participant or as a spectator, with rugby being the most popular followed closely by football. Wales has been the host to many international sporting events including the World Rally Championships, the Ashes and the Olympics. The geography and natural terrain of Wales means that water sports and extreme sports are growing in popularity.



Cardiff hosted key fixtures of the **IRB Rugby World Cup** in 2015 and will host the UK leg of the **Volvo Ocean Race** in 2017 as well as the **UEFA Champions League Final** in 2017.

The **Principality Stadium** (formerly the Millennium Stadium) is the national stadium of Wales, located in the capital city of Cardiff. It is home to the Welsh national rugby union team. Avid football fans can enjoy Premiership matches at the Liberty Stadium, home of **Swansea FC**.



Cardiff City Stadium is home to **Cardiff City FC** who are currently competing in the Championship, the second tier of the English football league system. The stadium is also the chosen home of the Wales national football team.

The **Wales National Velodrome** is located in the Newport International Sports Village. The Velodrome has a covered 250-metre Siberian pine track, a function room, fitness suite, a drug-testing room, a multi-purpose indoor sports arena and seating for 500 spectators. It has been a key preparation venue for the gold medal winning GB cycling team at the Olympic Games, helping stars like Victoria Pendleton, Laura Trott, Sir Chris Hoy, and Sir Bradley Wiggins to gold.

Culture

Famed for its love of the written (and sung) word, Wales plays host to the Hay Festival, described by Bill Clinton as “the Woodstock of the mind,” which was founded to celebrate great writing and the power of great ideas to transform our way of thinking. Wales also hosts some of Europe’s most respected music and arts festivals with the Artes Mundi, Green Man and Brecon Jazz being particularly well known.



Cardiff, Capital of Wales

Cardiff is in every sense a capital city. Young, emerging, energetic and transformational, it has an enviable reputation for its business community, international sports venues, cutting-edge media and a lifestyle that ranks among the best in Europe. Less than two hours from London, with excellent transport and super-fast broadband, Cardiff is one of Europe’s best-connected and most competitive destinations.

Cardiff is a high-growth city which already benefits from the qualities that define competitive locations – from commercial connectivity and environment, to cultural character, quality of life and opportunity.

Heritage, green spaces and a buzzing cultural scene. Cardiff offers all three – and much more besides. Historic but packed with modern attractions, this is a city on a high. Cardiff’s historic castle has timeless appeal and its contemporary landmarks, such as the Principality Stadium, are world-class. Cardiff has a number of national facilities, including the Welsh National Opera (based at Cardiff’s award-winning Wales Principality Stadium) and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Cardiff’s National Museum is home to the largest collection of Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings outside Paris. Entry to the collection, which includes Renoir’s ‘La Parisienne’, Rodin’s ‘The Kiss’, Van Gogh’s ‘Rain-Auvers’ and Monet’s ‘Waterlilies’, is free for everyone.

South Wales is also a very active media hub, and home to the BBC studios that film Dr Who and Sherlock, and the headquarters of Tinopolis, one of the largest independent television suppliers in the UK and a producer of programmes for the top networks in the USA. The region is also a favourite of many Hollywood productions including Captain America: The First Avenger, the Harry Potter franchise and Robin Hood.

Food and Drink

South Wales is a truly cosmopolitan area and as a result offers something to suit everyone's taste and budget. Nearly every weekend, there's a food festival somewhere in Wales, both small and large. Wales' best-known festival is the Abergavenny Food Festival, which is renowned for its friendly, lively atmosphere, its wacky events, tents, venues and on-trend programme of the great and the good.



*“Simply put, Abergavenny Food Festival is to food and drink what Edinburgh Fringe is to comedy and music!”**

The Cardiff International Food & Drink Festival attracts food producers and suppliers from Cardiff's twin towns of Neath, Stuttgart and Hordland, alongside Welsh produce. There are many food festivals in Cardiff throughout the year, including the Cardiff Vegetarian Festival. In October, the award winning Cowbridge Food and Drink Festival sees the town at its most vibrant.

*Source: Lindy Wildsmith, cook and food writer

The Royal Welsh Show takes place each July and is one of the best attended agricultural events of its kind, with a food hall that offers an array of produce including meats, dairy products and many famous Welsh cheeses. You can also enjoy fruits, preserves, honey and many more products of the land and sea.

History

Wales has a rich culture and heritage. The Romans came to Wales for its gold, the Normans built castles and the Tudor dynasty was founded here.

There are over 500 castles, from Roman times to millionaires' follies of the 19th century, making Wales the castle capital of Europe.

Whichever part of Wales you head for, you'll find yourself within easy distance of some of the world's finest castles and awe-inspiring landmarks. South Wales also has a number of historic sites, from the UK's best preserved Roman amphitheatre in Caerleon to the massive 18th century ironworks in Blaenavon (a UNESCO World Heritage site).



Rail & Air Links

The main rail line connects Cardiff to London in two hours, with times set to reduce when electrification is complete.

The region is home to Cardiff International Airport, which is under an hour from Bristol International Airport and is also within two hours of Heathrow, meaning the whole world is within easy reach.



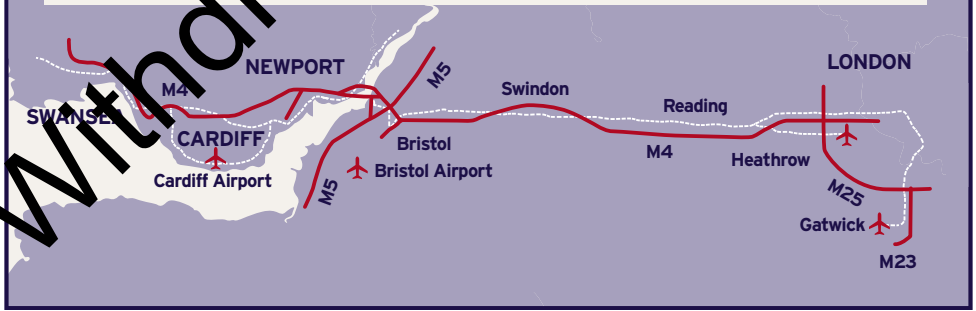
Road and Rail Connections

RAIL

- London - Newport 1hr 50 min
- Cardiff 2hr 10 min
- Swansea 3hr

ROAD

- London - Newport 2hr 40 min
- Cardiff 3hr
- Swansea 3hr 30 min







UK Trade & Investment

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UK Trade & Investment is the Government Department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high-quality investment to the UK's dynamic economy, acknowledged as Europe's best place from which to succeed in global business.

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