

Entrant company name: **Golley Slater X Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning team at Welsh Government**

Entry title: **Golley Slater x SHELL Welsh Government**

Category: **Best Long-term Client Care**

For over thirteen years, Golley Slater has been the agency of record on the Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (SHELL) account, with a long-term objective of helping connect Welsh adults with support to access education, training and employment, in order to reduce the number of economically inactive individuals.

Each year we deliver up to 15 bilingual campaigns and 30 wider communication and research projects.

The core themes that have defined our long-term relationship with SHELL are:

Team stability with embedded subject-matter expertise Collaborative working with shared objectives– we’re an extension of the [small] client team

Flexible, solutions-focused approach that balances pragmatism with a focus on impact Trust underpinned by honesty

How we’ve laid the foundations of our client relationship

Team structure: We built our team to mirror the client team’s areas of responsibility and expertise. This has established deep subject-matter expertise and close peer-to-peer relationships. In addition, our Client Service Director and Head of Strategy have a long-term (6 years+) view of the whole account to be able to provide strategic counsel.

Balance of knowledge with challenge: We prioritise long-term client and subject-matter knowledge in the team, but balance that with ‘fresh’ thinking and challenge to prevent complacency. We regularly use ‘outsiders’ [other agency employees], to challenge our thinking and enhance creativity.

Smart ways of working: from weekly meetings, end-of-campaign evaluations, quarterly strategy meetings, live WIP trackers, a digital Basecamp to allow everyone real-time access to work and track client/ agency conversations and finance trackers– everything is built to make administration seamless.

We go the extra mile: We'll always try and find a solution—managing to fit in a late brief or tight timelines, or act as overflow resource when their PR teams are over-capacity. For example, taking on the PR and social media remit for the high-profile 2025 Wales Investment Summit at the last minute. We also provide complimentary training, and give them the tools to celebrate their successes internally [award entries, sizzle reels].

How we've made a difference:

Strategic vision

We've helped strengthen SHELL's long-term communications approach by embedding data and insight. Our long-term brand tracking of SHELL's services (first established in 2020) and annual in-depth audience white paper reports have given real insight into how best to design our communications activity, helped land strategic recommendations and provided the objective evidence to measure impact.

Creative innovation

We've embedded creative testing to put the intended audience at the heart of decision-making; and innovated by introducing new channel activity like influencer and stakeholder marketing.

Bespoke support

We've established trusted relationships with senior Welsh Government and partner figures:

Our audience insight reports help shape policy and marketing communications strategy. Our discipline leads including Head of Social, Head of Welsh Language, Head of PR, Head of Media and Head of Strategy provide counsel, strategic direction and training to SHELL team members [and wider Welsh Government teams] at a senior level.

Evidence of our successful relationship:

Since 2013, we've been re-appointed on three separate occasions after competitive tenders.

We've grown the account 1567% from an initial PR retainer valued at £4K/ month in 2013, to over £1m/year in revenue today with a remit that spans full-channel comms planning, media relations, stakeholder, content, social media and influencer marketing, alongside research, advertising creative and media buying.

Alex Bolton Welsh Government: "Super proud of how we have together built the Apprenticeships brand and how our creative concepts have come to life over the last few years and now gaining recognition alongside other inspiring campaigns. THANK YOU to you and the team as always for all your hard work...It's been a great partnership."

Campaign example:

Inspiring Genius Decisions During Apprenticeship Week Wales

Brief, Objectives & Budget

COVID-19 disproportionately impacted the under 25s, who represented three in five job losses. Between 2021 and 2025, we were briefed to use Apprenticeship Week Wales to reposition apprenticeships as a compelling employment route for young people.

Working to an average budget of £50k per PR campaign, our objectives were to: Increase awareness of apprenticeships amongst young people in Wales by 25%. Increase propensity to become an apprentice amongst young people in Wales by 10%. Increase the number of apprenticeship programmes starting in Wales by 5%.

Strategy, Creativity & Innovation

Our campaign activity was built three strategic pillars: Clarity: We needed to educate people on the benefits of apprenticeships and why they're a Genius Decision.

Confidence: Post-pandemic, there were growing mental health concerns amongst young people, which had a knock-on impact on their confidence. We needed to reassure them of the support available throughout the apprenticeship journey.

Connection: Young people didn't believe high quality opportunities existed where they lived. We needed to shift that perception by raising awareness of the wide range of local apprenticeship pathways.

Implementation

Below is a snapshot of campaign activity between 2021– 2025:

Clarity:

We partnered with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru to create a bilingual interactive lesson around apprenticeships, challenging stereotypes and encouraging peer-to-peer conversations about different career pathways available to them.

Partnered with 18 influencers to co create content that raised awareness of apprenticeships through trusted, alternative voices.

Confidence:

Secured strategic business partnerships, who championed the value of hiring apprentices, reinforcing apprenticeships as a credible pathway to successful careers.

Created a bilingual suite of social assets that equipped 16–24 year olds with clear, compelling information about becoming an apprentice, guiding them from interest to application.

Connection:

Developed a suite of inspiring young apprentice case studies for PR usage which generated standout coverage in titles like The Sun, BBC and WalesOnline,.

Promoted success stories with high profile businesses [S4C, Social Care Wales and WRU] through powerful videos, amplified via owned, paid and stakeholder channels.

Measurement

Outputs:

Between 2021– 2025 our campaign delivered:

281 pieces of PR coverage. Reach: 25,369,056.

Organic social reach: 5,564,525.

842 stakeholder posts. Reach: 7,565,010

18 influencers engaged. Reach: 1.29m

Over 500 teachers opened the interactive lesson, indicating it was used in hundreds of classes across Wales.

Outtakes:

Amongst 16-24 year olds:

Awareness levels of apprenticeships increased by 36%- from 33% in 2020 to 45% in 2024 (vs 25% increase target)

Maintained average of 42% awareness between 2021 and 2025.

Outcomes

Amongst 16-24 year olds:

Propensity to become an apprentice increased by 67%- from 27% in 2020 to 45% in 2024. (vs 10% increase target).

Maintained average of 40% propensity between 2021 and 2025

Impact:

Since the campaign launched in 2021, it has helped contribute to more than 100,000 apprenticeship opportunities.