

CANDIDATE GUIDE

Relocating to South Wales

A guide for candidates considering a move to Cardiff, Newport, Swansea or West Wales for a manufacturing or engineering career.

Thinking of a career change? South Wales offers a strong manufacturing and engineering jobs market, housing that costs well below the UK average, and some of the finest coast and countryside in Britain within easy reach of the main towns. This short guide covers what the region offers and how we can help you make the move.

Why move to South Wales?

- **Housing costs less.** The average home in Wales was valued at £215,000 in July 2026, against £273,000 for the UK as a whole (UK House Price Index). The gap against London and the South East is far wider.
- **Free prescriptions.** NHS prescriptions in Wales are free for everyone.
- **Coast and countryside on the doorstep.** The Wales Coast Path runs 870 miles around the entire coastline – the first path in the world to follow a whole country's coast – and the Pembrokeshire Coast and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) national parks are both in the south.
- **Well connected.** Cardiff to London Paddington takes under two hours by train; the M4 links Swansea, Cardiff and Newport with Bristol and the rest of the UK; Cardiff Airport is in the Vale of Glamorgan; and ferries sail to Ireland from Fishguard and Pembroke Dock.
- **Sport and culture.** Cardiff is the capital city, home to the Principality Stadium and Welsh rugby, the Wales Millennium Centre at Cardiff Bay, and a packed calendar of concerts, festivals and international sport.

Industry and careers

Manufacturing is the second-largest employing sector in Wales, accounting for 10.3% of all employee jobs in 2024 – behind only health (Welsh Government, Business Register and Employment Survey 2024). South Wales has a particularly broad industrial base, which is why we are based here:

- **Semiconductors and electronics:** Newport and the surrounding area is home to CSconnected, the UK's compound semiconductor cluster, alongside a long-established electronics industry.
- **Aerospace and defence:** aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul, engine servicing and component manufacturing in and around Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- **Steel, chemicals and energy:** steelmaking at Port Talbot, chemicals and energy along Swansea Bay and the Milford Haven waterway, and the Celtic Freeport at Port Talbot and Milford Haven, focused on green energy and floating offshore wind.
- **Automotive, food and drink, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, packaging and plastics:** spread across Cardiff, Newport, Bridgend, Swansea, the Valleys and West Wales.

Our **South Wales Manufacturing & Engineering Salary Guide** shows typical base salaries by role, sector and postcode, so you can see what a move would mean for your pay.

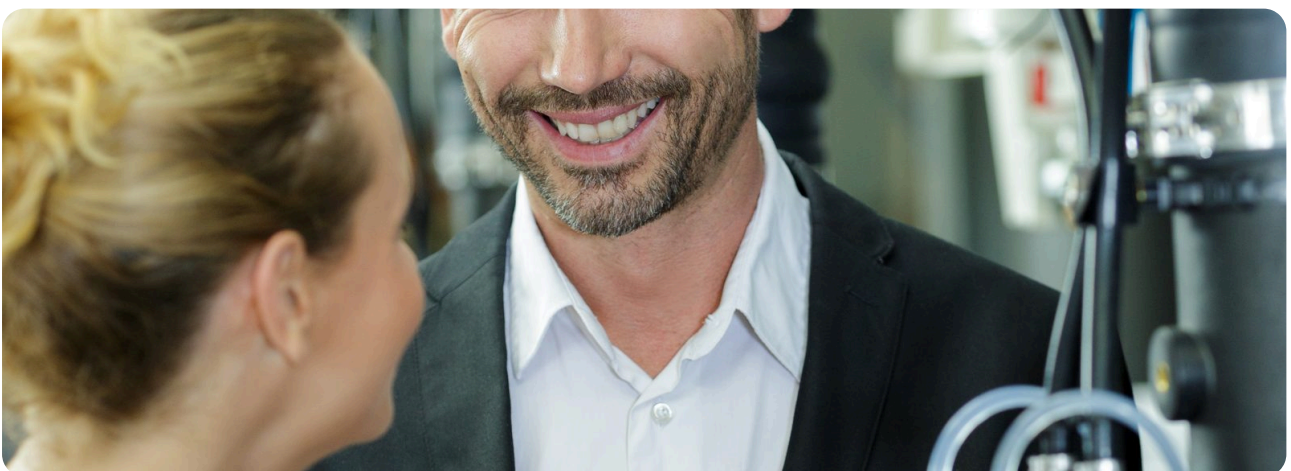


Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

Cardiff is the capital and the region's largest city, with the regenerated Cardiff Bay waterfront, Cardiff Castle and Bute Park in the centre, and the Principality Stadium hosting rugby, football and concerts. Newport, a short drive east, sits beside the Celtic Manor Resort, which hosted the Ryder Cup in 2010 and the NATO Summit in 2014. North of both, the Valleys offer lower house prices still, the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – and the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park beyond.

Swansea, Gower and West Wales

Swansea, Wales's second city, sits on a sweeping bay with the Gower peninsula next door – the first place in the UK to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in 1956, and home to Rhossili Bay. Further west, Carmarthenshire has the National Botanic Garden of Wales, and Pembrokeshire has Britain's only coastal national park, the UK's smallest city at St Davids, and the islands of Skomer and Ramsey with their puffins, grey seals and dolphins.



Making the move

Relocating for a job is a big decision, and we have helped many candidates do it. Tell us where you would like to live and how far you are willing to commute, and we will match you to employers in that area. Some employers offer relocation support, and we will tell you when that applies to a role. We can also advise on realistic salary expectations for your role and location, and on timing the move around your notice period.

Sources

- UK House Price Index, July 2026 release (HM Land Registry / Office for National Statistics).
- Welsh Government, Business Register and Employment Survey 2024.
- Natural Resources Wales, Wales Coast Path.
- Great Western Railway timetables. Figures checked October 2026.

Ready to make the move?

Tell us where you would like to live and the kind of role you are looking for. We recruit for manufacturing and engineering employers across South Wales and can advise on realistic salaries, commutes and timing. Call 02920 450 100 or visit sigmarecruitment.co.uk.