

Kirsty Williams confirms EU student funding guarantee for Welsh universities

As a result, EU nationals who intend to study in Wales for the academic year 2019/20 will be eligible to pay the same tuition fees as Welsh students and will be eligible to receive loans and/or grants from Student Finance Wales.

This is a continuation of the Welsh Government's current policy and means that students will be eligible to receive support until they finish their course.

EU students should consult their university's student finance office, or the Student Finance Wales website, for information about the support available.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I am pleased to confirm today that EU students will continue to be entitled to student support in the 19/20 academic year.

"This is absolutely vital if we're to continue to attract students from around the world to study and research at our universities.

"This will provide some welcome clarity for our universities and colleges regarding future funding, but also assures prospective EU students that there will not be any disruption to their funding as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

"Our universities are central to our social and economic future, which value and celebrate their links with Europe, and thrive through the diversity of the people who come to them.

"Today's announcement sends a very clear message; Wales remains a friendly, outward-looking and tolerant place to study. We deeply value our students from the EU and beyond and look forward to welcoming many more to our world-class institutions."

Newport school pioneering new approach to putting children first

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies visited Millbrook Primary School in

Bettws to see first-hand the work the school is undertaking as part of the Welsh Government's Children First initiative.

Children First brings together organisations to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people based around a 'place'. A long-term strategic focus is developed with communities to address local issues, to reduce the inequalities faced by the children, compared with children in more socially advantaged places, and improve their life chances.

In Bettws, that 'place' is Millbrook Primary School. The school acts as the hub for the Children First Pioneer area. The school has established itself as a children's learning community and has a history of working in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory services to deliver better outcomes for children.

A number of services are co-located on the school site, including Prevent social workers, Gwent Police, as well as services which are delivered under the Welsh Government's Flying Start and Families First programmes.

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"It was a real privilege to visit Millbrook Primary School today.

"As Minister for Children, I want to ensure every child in Wales is given the very best start in life. Whilst education is absolutely crucial to a child's development, they often need services that go far beyond the classroom.

"That's why the Welsh Government has developed Children First. It's about putting in place, in one place, the services children, their families and the wider community need to succeed.

"By putting children first, Millbrook Primary School are leading the way in ensuring pupils develop life-long learning skills and are equipped to reach their full potential, and are able to play their part in the Wales of the future."

[Welsh Government takes multi-sector trade mission to Brazil](#)

The trade mission runs from 1st to 6th July. The first stop will be in Sao Paulo before the delegation moves on to the second leg in Rio de Janeiro.

The trade mission is multi-sector, with ten Welsh exporters from a range of

sectors participating.

Welsh Government has been working with Department of International Trade in Brazil to provide in-market assistance to the companies.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Visiting an overseas market can be a crucial element of winning and keeping export business and the markets and exhibitions in our programmes are selected to reflect current international developments.

“Brazil offers excellent opportunities for Welsh exporters across a wide range of sectors, including life-science, energy and manufacturing.

“It is great to see Welsh businesses looking to grow their business through exporting. They are showing their ambition and determination to grow by exploring opportunities in markets like Brazil.

“I am pleased we can support them in this and I hope the delegates make the most of this opportunity.”

Paul McDonnell is the Managing Director of Ruth Lee Ltd, an established family business in North Wales, employing around 25 people in their Corwen factory. They are market leaders in the manufacture of training manikins used by search and rescue organisations throughout the world, with core customers including the emergency services, the military, hospitals, care homes, aviation, Coast Guard and Lifeguards.

He said:

“We already export to most major markets around the world, but South America remains largely untapped for us. We have a small business in Brazil but believe that in such a large market we have significant potential to grow.

“The Trade mission gives us the opportunity to better understand the market, the challenges we must overcome and the opportunities open to us. By building business in Brazil we feel there will be a positive impact for us across Latin America as a whole.”

Economy Secretary to hold Brexit trade talks with North Wales Businesses

Business leaders from some of North Wales' most prominent exporters will give their views on the challenges and opportunities presented by Brexit. Joining Airbus will be Deeside Cereals, Halen Môn, Plas Farm Foods, Qioptiq, Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics and Silverlining Furniture Group.

The latest statistics show over 60% of Welsh exports worth nearly £10billion currently go to EU countries.

Taking into account the 70 plus countries with Free Trade Agreements that the UK has access to through its membership of the EU's Customs Union, nearly three in every four pounds earned by Welsh businesses from overseas sales currently depends on our relationship with our EU partners.

The Welsh Government wants to see continued access to the Single Market and participation in a customs union after Brexit.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"The UK leaving the EU will see the biggest change to our international trading status for a generation. Welsh exports are a key part of our economy, providing jobs and investment and this must not be threatened by Brexit.

"This is why I am again meeting with business leaders from some of Wales' most prominent exporters to listen to their views on the opportunities and threats posed by Brexit.

"Events such as this are part of the Welsh Government's drive to protect and grow our economy. By listening to the needs of business and relaying these concerns to the UK Government, we are making the argument for a deal that can work for our economy. The Prime Minister has a duty to make sure we have a sensible Brexit that allows Welsh businesses to continue to export to the EU, our biggest market, without any barriers, extra costs or new taxes.

"The event will also provide a chance from us to hear first hand from business about the what they see as the opportunities of Brexit, and this will help shape how we build on and progress our ongoing work to grow Welsh exports.

"We will keep doing all we can but what we urgently need now is clarity from the UK Government on the type of Brexit deal they want. It is only this can provide certainty for businesses and allow them to plan for the future."

Ban on microbeads comes into force today

The ban will make it an offence to manufacture or supply any rinse-off personal care product which contain the microbeads.

A microbead is a water-insoluble solid plastic particle of up to 5mm in size, too small to be filtered out in sewage treatment systems. An estimated 680 tonnes of plastic microbeads have been used in personal care products in the UK every year, billions of which end up in the sea. The tiny beads accumulate because they do not biodegrade and are considered impossible to recover once released.

Plastic microbeads have been added to a variety of personal care products for many years, including hand cleansers, face scrubs, toothpastes, shower gels and cosmetics.

The policy to ban microbeads in cosmetic products has gained support from the general public, as well as from the cosmetics industry itself. The legislative ban will ensure a level playing field and consistency in the definition of a "microbead", so that all relevant products are free from microbeads.

The Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn, said:

"I'm pleased to introduce this ban in Wales, which will reduce the amount of plastics entering our seas and prevent further harm to our marine life.

"Microbeads in rinse-off products are unnecessary and there are suitable alternatives which do not have negative impacts on the environment. The ban will provide confidence to consumers that the products they buy will not endanger sea life.

"2018 is Wales' Year Of The Sea and earlier this month I signed the UN Clean Seas pledge. We're taking action to reduce plastic pollution in Wales, such as developing water refill points at key communities along our Wales Coast Path.

"We want to be an example to other countries around the World so that together we can reduce the dangers of plastic to sea life."

Peter Davies, Chair of the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group, said:

"Evidence shows the damage plastic microbeads can cause the marine environment, as well as their potential risk to food security and human health.

"I'm delighted to see this legislation come into force today, which is an important step towards eliminating the danger to sea life from plastic pollution."