

## Welsh food companies to develop new innovative products to help tackle childhood obesity

Welsh Government and Innovate UK have awarded a share of £250,000 research and development funding to four Welsh companies to allow them to assess the feasibility of their new solutions.

The companies were invited to submit solutions which focus on reducing levels of salt, sugar and saturated fat as well as increasing the levels of vitamins, minerals and fibre provided in food and drink for children.

Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“We already have a great reputation for quality food and drink, and our companies are taking innovation seriously as part of their offering. We are proud to promote our industry nationally and internationally and I congratulate the four Welsh companies who have showcased their innovation to win this funding. Tackling childhood obesity in Wales is a priority for the Welsh Government and by improving the diets of our children today, we enable them to become the healthy adults of tomorrow.”

The funding was provided through the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI), a national programme that enables public sector bodies to connect with businesses that have the potential to provide innovative solutions to public sector challenges.

Obesity has a significant impact on the economy. In 2011, obesity alone was estimated to cost the NHS in Wales £73m, with between £1.4m and £1.65m spent each week treating diseases resulting from obesity.

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## Knowledge Transfer Partnerships bring direct benefits to businesses

The Minister was speaking at an event at Cardiff City Stadium to celebrate Wales' successes with the programme which enables companies to access academic skills and expertise to address strategic business challenges.

In the past three years 90 KTP projects have been completed in Wales. Welsh Government funding of £4.2m has leveraged £12.6m of private sector match funding and led to over 150 jobs.

The Minister said:

“The KTP programme is a flagship initiative matching high calibre graduates and their academic mentors with real issues and problems in the world of business. It has run successfully for over forty years, and the Welsh Government is happy to match fund projects for businesses in Wales.

“By encouraging collaboration, we are helping businesses improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge and technology.

“For graduates, making the move from university to the workplace can be challenging. KTPs allow them to apply their degree to real business scenarios, under the guidance of expert mentors.

“With businesses and graduates benefiting, everybody wins through this collaboration which also contributes directly to the prosperity of the country.”

Some of the projects highlighted at the event included:

- Innoture Ltd manufacture, develop and commercialise micro needle technologies. Through a KTP they are working with Swansea University on a project which is developing new micro needle based pharmaceutical product applications. Support has included generation of laboratory data to support its strategic aims, and support in writing its first regulatory submission.
- Qioptic designs and manufactures photonic products and solutions that serve a wide range of markets. It is working with Cardiff University on a project to develop and apply an inventory control decision support system. The programme has given Qioptic access to world class expertise and talent through Cardiff University, and has inspired a successful two-year Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council research project in the area.

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## **Major financial recruiter to create 100 jobs in Cardiff**

The company, which will be based in Capital Tower, already has offices in London, New York, Hong Kong and Dubai, and has chosen the capital city of

Wales as its newest hub.

Hamlyn Williams' focus is on corporate governance and front of house positions in the mid to senior position level. The company will join a financial and professional services sector that employs some 136,000 people across Wales.

Wales won this considerable inward investment thanks to opportunities offered by the fastest growing sector of the Welsh economy, beating significant offers from South Africa to locate this sizeable office.

Wales is already home to Admiral and Go Compare, while international companies such as Deloitte and Arthur J Gallagher have enjoyed rapid growth since establishing bases here.

Cardiff University and other academic institutions now offer tailored financial services degree courses designed to equip young people with the necessary disciplines in the financial and professional services sector and there are now a number of courses backed by major financial companies that will create a very highly trained graduate work force for this sector.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"We have a lot to offer to financial and professional service sector businesses. We have already attracted big-hitters like Deloitte to Wales, and I am delighted to welcome Hamlyn Williams to join the list of prestigious companies who have enjoyed growth and prosperity here.

"As a University city, Cardiff can offer a rich resource of young, talented graduates who will be ideally placed to feed Hamlyn Williams' newest venture, and I wish them every success."

Founder and CEO of Hamlyn Williams' Nick Vaughan said:

"Cardiff is the ideal place for us to begin our new chapter. The University will supply a strong feed of dynamic young graduates who will bring their enthusiasm and energy to our company.

"We are very happy to have found a home in Wales, and look forward to a fruitful future here."

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# Local Government Settlement to help the vulnerable and protect key public services

The provisional local government settlement also includes a £1.8 million funding floor to ensure no authority has to manage a reduction of more than 1% next year.

This means, that after adjusting for transfers, core funding for local government in 2018-19 will reduce by 0.5% compared to this year.

In order to protect key public services, the 2018-19 settlement allocates an additional £62 million in 2018-19 for schools and £42 million for social services in 2018-19.

This will ensure that the Welsh Government's assumed share of core spending on schools and social services remains at the same level as 2017-18.

General capital funding for 2018-19 will also remain at £143 million.

Other key areas of the 2018-19 settlement include an additional £6 million for homelessness prevention, on top of the £6 million provided in 2017-18.

Alongside the settlement, £600,000 will be provided to support local government in bringing an end to charging for child burials. This builds on positive steps already taken by many councils in Wales and puts in place a fair and consistent approach across the country.

The indicative settlement for 2019-20 shows a reduction of 1.5% reflecting further reductions in the budget available to the Welsh Government. Key public services will continue to be protected.

In 2019-20 the funding provided by the Welsh Government will mean its assumed share of core spending on schools will rise by a further £46 million, with funding continuing to be prioritised within a tighter overall settlement.

The assumed share of core spending on social services will see a further increase in 2019-20 to £73 million reflecting – even within ever-sharper budget constraints – the Welsh Government's recognition of social care as a sector of national strategic importance.

Work also continues in bringing grants into the local government Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and combining some smaller grants. This increases the flexibility for local authorities and reduces the administrative burden associated with grant funding for both authorities and Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Secretary also today published an update on reforming wider local government finance to ensure it meets future needs.

Announcing the provisional settlement, Mark Drakeford said:

“Last year I told local authorities to prepare for the tougher times and harder choices that lay ahead as the flawed and failed policy of austerity continues to hit Wales hard.

“My priority, using a formula we have agreed with local government, is to try and protect councils from the worst of the cuts passed on to us by the UK Government. I think this is reflected in the settlement for 2018-19.

“We have acted to protect funding for key public services such as schools and social care while also recognising the pressures that exist in areas such as homelessness prevention.

“If the Chancellor of the Exchequer follows our advice and does not proceed with cuts in the Autumn Budget then my first priority will be to look again at the cuts we have been forced to make in 2019-20.

“Next year’s settlement might be difficult. We have done all we can to make it manageable. Councils must now use this time to plan ahead and ensure that funding goes to the services and people who need it the most.”

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## [Women have their say on maternity services in Wales](#)

Funded by the Welsh Government, the survey explores women’s experiences of pregnancy and birth in Wales.

Midwives and women from the local user forums in all the health boards across Wales will meet in Cardiff City Hall to listen to the findings and to debate how services could be enhanced to respond to women’s views.

The survey, which closed in April this year, aimed to evaluate women’s views of antenatal services and how current service provisions can prepare women for labour, birth and parenting. It will also help develop a shared vision for the future of midwifery led services based on the findings.

3,968 women from all over Wales completed the full survey and represented all age groups, ranging from first time mothers, to those who have had several births.

The survey found that women would like;

- To build relationships with knowledgeable, compassionate and kind midwives, to not only make women feel safe but enabling them to trust the information given to them;
- More information about the birthing options available to them, so that they can decide where to give birth, not health professionals;
- Improved access to classes that adequately prepare them for birth;
- To have their choices respected, wherever they give birth.

Chief Nursing Officer for Wales, Professor Jean White said:

“The needs of the mother and family must be at the heart of care provision within maternity services in Wales, to ensure that pregnancy and childbirth is a safe and positive experience, where women feel comfortable and confident in their decisions.

“This survey is a step towards developing and strengthening this important relationship between midwife and mother.”

Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health Well-Being and Sport said:

“Pregnancy and childbirth are very personal experiences; therefore it’s important that women are given the opportunity to feedback on the care and advice they received during that time.

“I’m confident that the results of the ‘Your Birth We Care’ survey announced today will take maternity services in Wales to the next level, ensuring women and families feel empowered to make informed decisions about their antenatal care and birth plans during this time.”