

# New plan for national mission to raise standards – Kirsty Williams

The Education Secretary has revealed details of a plan to continue to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

Objectives also include introducing a new accountability model and ensuring strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence and well-being.

The plan sets out the actions the Welsh Government will continue to take to keep improving the education system, including:

- Reducing class sizes
- Reforming teacher training
- Strengthening support for learners with Additional Learning Needs
- Establishing a national approach to long-term career development for teachers
- Establishing a new National Academy for Educational Leadership
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy for teachers
- Investing £1.1 billion to upgrade the quality of school buildings.

The Education Secretary also set out a revised timeline for introducing the new Curriculum for Wales, with statutory roll out to schools now set to begin in 2022 to give the teaching profession and schools more time to help develop, and prepare for, the changes.

The new curriculum will be introduced from nursery to Year 7 in 2022, rolling into Year 8 in 2023, Year 9 in 2024, Year 10 in 2025 and Year 11 in 2026. All schools will have access the final curriculum from 2020, to allow them to move towards full roll-out in 2022.

Kirsty Williams said:

“We are entering a fast-changing world that is increasingly competitive, globally connected and technologically advanced. Schools have to prepare our young people for jobs that have not yet been created and challenges that we are yet to encounter. Education has never been more important and, working with the teaching profession, we will continue our national mission to raise standards.

“Our plan is aimed at ensuring every young person in Wales has an equal opportunity to reach the highest standards and their full potential. We can’t achieve those ambitions if we just stand still. Teachers and educators across our system are working together to raise standards and reduce the attainment gap. It is an exciting time to be involved in education in Wales.

“We all share a responsibility to inspire and challenge the next generation. That is why we will support teachers with continuous learning and development, better support and identify our leaders, and reduce class sizes so that we can raise standards for all.”

Commenting on the new curriculum, she added:

“Since becoming Education Secretary I have visited schools across the country, spoken to a range of teachers, parents and experts and held talks with unions.

“It’s the right decision to introduce the curriculum as a phased roll-out rather than a ‘big bang’, and for that to start in 2022. This approach, and an extra year, will mean all schools have the time to engage with the development of the curriculum and be full prepared for the changes. As the OECD have recommended, we will continue our drive to create a curriculum for the 21st century.”

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## Legendary summer enjoyed by tourism in Wales

Record-breaking visitor figures were recorded at Cadw sites as well as the best ever figures being achieved for Amgueddfa Cymru sites.

Tourism businesses in Wales have enjoyed a successful summer. 40% received more visitors than last summer, which in itself was a much better summer than 2015 – and a similar proportion (39%) received the same level.

Figures from Cadw show record-breaking summer visitor figures, partly generated as a result of the Cadw Dragons’ tour across its historic sites, which was part of Wales Year of Legends activity.

The figures show that more than half a million visitors explored Cadw sites during July and August this year – the highest number ever welcomed during the summer season and an increase of 8.2% compared with summer 2016.

This figure contributes to a total of more than 900,000 visitors welcomed since April 2017 – an increase of 12% against the same period last year. This means that annual visitors are on track to reach 1.5 million for the first time by the end of the year.

The success is in part attributed to Cadw’s Live the Legends campaign which brought a family of Welsh Dragons to life in celebration of Wales’s 2017 Year of Legends. As a whole, the Dragons’ summer presence helped generate a 15%

increase in family visitors versus July and August last year – from 87,333 in 2016 to 101,051 in 2017. The Dragon campaign also saw the launch of Little Dragons – an augmented reality smartphone game which allows visitors to ‘snap’ virtual dragons at seven castles across Wales and to date, has been played by nearly 18,000 users.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales also welcomed a record 297,792 visitors to its seven museums in August – the best ever August visitor figure achieved by Amgueddfa Cymru up on August 2016 by 18.9%.

By individual museum, in August, St Fagans had an amazing 117,584 visitors – its second highest figure since 2002 when it had 126,808 visitors, and National Museum Cardiff had a record 76,614 visitors.

Across August and July, National Museum sites attracted half a million visitors (492,845), which is a 17% increase on the same period in 2016 and up by 6.3% on the last record summer in 2012.

Increase in visitors can be attributed to a number of developments including the Dinosaur Babies exhibition at National Museum Cardiff; the re-opening of the main building and new developments at St Fagans National Museum of History as well as the Dino on the Loose campaign.

In addition, a wide variety of reasons have been given for the busy summer generally. The most frequent reasons reported in the Tourism Barometer were businesses’ own marketing (23% of businesses with increased visitors) and more British people staying in the UK (16% of those reporting an increase).

Following a busy summer, 82% are feeling confident or fairly confident about the remainder of 2017.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“It’s extremely encouraging that these figures show that 2017 is really proving to be another successful year for tourism in Wales. We’ve seen two very successful years and we’re looking to sustain that growth. Although there is much uncertainty, it’s evident that the weaker pound has meant that more people are opting to holiday at home this year. I’m delighted that the industry is looking forward to the rest of the year with confidence.

“The figures for Cadw and Amgueddfa Cymru, also show that innovative ideas such as the touring dragons and Dino on the Loose can capture the imagination and spark a renewed interest in Welsh heritage – which has been fantastic to see during Wales’ Year of Legends.”

Accommodation occupancy figures over the 12 months ending July 2017 also point towards a busy summer with occupancy for hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses up one percentage point on 2016. Static caravan occupancy saw a rise of 7 percentage points to 84% when compared with the same period in 2016 while

touring occupancy rates rose by 5 percentage points.

Latest tourism figures can be found on the following

link: <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2017/170926-wales-tourism-business-barometer-wave-3-2017-en.pdf>.

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## **£4m to drive forward marine and tidal energy development in North Wales**

The funding will support Mentor Môn's £5.6m Morlais scheme which will help accelerate the development and commercialisation of multiple tidal stream technologies in the Morlais Demonstration Zone in Anglesey. This will be situated in one of the designated Anglesey Enterprise Zone sites.

The Economy Secretary announced the funding from a UK wide event on marine and tidal energy, held in Cardiff today.

He said:

"The energy generated from wave and tidal flows can play a major role in delivering our ambitions for a Welsh low carbon economy as well as creating sustainable jobs and growth.

"Wales' coastline means we are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the blue economy, which is why the Welsh Government is committed to supporting the creation of new tidal demonstration zones that will help industry develop and test new and innovative tidal and wave technologies for commercial success.

"We have already invested EU funds towards a feasibility study for a demonstration zone off the Pembrokeshire coast and today I am pleased to announce £4.2m of EU funds and a further £300,000 from the Welsh Government to support preparatory and consent work on the Morlais demonstration zone in Anglesey.

"Once up and running, the fully consented area of seabed will be able to support at least 20MW of grid connection capacity, but with potential for 193.5MW, to enable developers to deploy and test multiple tidal energy technologies.

"Over the next 5 to 10 years we have a real window of opportunity to develop and grow Wales' marine energy industry. This funding will provide yet another push to drive our ambitions forward."

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs said,

“Wales’ coastline has the second highest tidal range in the world and provides an ideal environment to test and develop emerging tidal energy technologies. We are keen to promote their potential role in renewable energy generation, supporting a prosperous low carbon future for Wales. Menter Môn’s success in managing the Demonstration Zone originates in an early community energy project supported under Ynni’r Fro. Today’s announcement is a fantastic boost to the sector and the area, showing the difference clean energy makes to Wales.”

Gerallt Llewelyn Jones on behalf of Menter Môn said:

“This is very good news. Menter Môn has worked hard to achieve this important milestone for Anglesey and North Wales. It is critical that we position ourselves at the centre of global developments in marine renewable energy, a known growth sector with substantial employment potential.”

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## **First Minister launches Christmas card competition**

The winning card will be chosen by the First Minister and used as his official Christmas card, which will be sent across the globe to people including the Queen, the Prime Minister, High Commissioners and Ambassadors from across the world.

Children from Years 3 and 4 are being asked to submit their bilingual entries by Friday 10 November 2017.

The successful young artist will get to meet the First Minister and receive a signed, framed copy of their winning entry.

The First Minister said:

“I am calling all Wales’ budding young artists to reach for their colouring pencils, crayons and felt-tip pens and design my official Christmas card.

“I look forward to seeing all the artistic contributions – I am sure they will bring me much festive cheer.”

Last year's competition was won by 9 year old Travis Carter of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân, whose winning design was chosen from more than 700 entries.

Entries should be sent to:

Non Jones / Lloyd Bowen  
Cabinet Communications team  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0300 025 3942

E-mail: [non.jones@gov.wales](mailto:non.jones@gov.wales)

### **Christmas card competition entry guidance**

- The competition is open to all pupils in years 3 & 4 (7-9 years old) in Wales
- All entries should be to a maximum size of A4 (210mm x 297mm)
- Portrait or landscape orientation
- All entries should be "flat" – no uneven surfaces, no cotton wool, glitter, etc.
- Bright, vibrant colours reproduce well.
- Dark backgrounds should be avoided.
- Any text on the artwork should be bilingual – with Welsh first, followed by English.
- Please include the pupil's name age, class and school on the back of their entry.
- Please note that unfortunately we will not be able to return any entries.
- The closing date for the competition is Friday 10 November.

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## **New initiative to put specialist emotional & mental health support in Wales' schools**

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething and Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams have agreed a £1.4m investment to strengthen the support from specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to schools.

Dedicated CAMHS practitioners will be recruited to work with pilot schools in three areas across Wales. The practitioners will provide teachers with on-site help and advice, ensuring pupils experiencing difficulties such as anxiety, low mood, and compulsive self-harm or conduct disorders receive

early help in schools from suitably trained staff, preventing more serious problems occurring later in life.

The model will enable:

- support for teachers to better understand childhood distress, emotional and mental health problems, and reduce stress experienced by teachers concerned about their pupils, by up-skilling them to recognise and deal with low level problems within their competence
- ensuring that when issues are identified that are outside teachers' competence and skills, that specialist liaison, consultancy and advice is available to enable the young person to be directed to more appropriate services such as CAMHS or Local Primary Mental Health Support Services, and to support the teacher and school in providing for the young person's educational needs
- ensuring systems are in place to share appropriate information between CAMHS and schools, shared care arrangements are agreed for those young people requiring more intensive support, and that arrangements are in place to escalate/de-escalate as the young person's needs dictate.

Initially operating as a pilot programme, the initiative will commence by the end of 2017 and cover two full academic years, concluding in the summer of 2020. The results will be evaluated, and take into account a broad range of measures from the perspective of both teachers and pupils.

Wales has led the way in the UK by being the only nation that requires local authorities to provide counselling services in their area for children and young people aged between 11 and 18, as well as pupils in year 6 of primary school. This initiative complements that work by providing an additional layer of more specialist support in schools.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

"One in four people in Wales will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. Getting the right treatment at an early stage, coupled with greater awareness of conditions, can in many cases prevent long term adverse impacts.

"This unique new initiative we're unveiling today will see specialist NHS Wales services extend into the classroom. This will ensure children, teachers and others charged with caring for children in our schools, receive support to promote good emotional and mental health. It will help identify and address issues early, helping to prevent more serious problems occurring later in life.

"One of the Welsh Government's key aims is to improve the health and well-being of the people of Wales. This will help us achieve our ambition of prosperity for all, while taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention.

"We hope this initiative will improve accessibility to support services, better address school related stress, and ease pressures

on specialist CAMHS by reducing inappropriate referrals. We also hope it will facilitate a wider culture which promotes and values positive mental health and wellbeing within our schools.”

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

“Most young people spend a large part of their time in school, so there is a clear need for teachers to be able to help and support them should they experience difficulties in life, such as anxiety, low mood, compulsive self-harm or behaviour disorders.

“Through this new initiative, we are making schools places that actively promote positive mental health and wellbeing, providing evidence-based prevention and early intervention where it’s needed.

“For children and young people, it will enable them to have their problems addressed earlier, before they escalate. For teachers, it will help ensure they feel able and confident in dealing with emotional distress, and know where to go to seek support.”