

# Striking the right balance: have your say on the Welsh Language

The government's White Paper, 'Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill', outlines a range of proposals that aim to strike the right balance between promoting the Welsh language and regulating compliance with Welsh language duties.

Recommendations in the White Paper include:

- Establishing a Welsh Language Commission to organise and coordinate work to promote the Welsh language across all parts of Wales.
- Making it clearer to people, public bodies and businesses who they can turn to if they want to develop their use of the Welsh language.
- Giving greater clarity for Welsh speakers as to which services bodies must provide in Welsh, and to work to increase the use of those services.
- Helping bodies develop their capacity to deliver services in Welsh.
- Streamlining the processes involved in making and imposing Welsh Language Standards, and removing the bureaucracy involved in handling complaints of bodies' non-compliance with Standards to ensure people receive a quick remedy.
- The Welsh Government to be responsible for imposing Standards on bodies through regulations and compliance notices. The Welsh Language Commission to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Standards.
- Removing the restrictions in the current legislation so Standards could be placed on any body, so long as it is within the Assembly's power to do so.

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Alun Davies said:

"We are very clear of our responsibility as a Government to ensure the legislative framework is appropriate to deliver on the ambition for the language. However, everyone has a part to play, and we want all those who have an interest in the language to contribute to this discussion.

"We know that language policy needs to be rooted in consensus and democratic strength. Together, by renewing our energy, adapting to an ever changing landscape, we can enable the Welsh language to grow – a living language for all that unites us as a nation."

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## Admiral creates 200 jobs thanks to Welsh Government support

They will be formed as part of Admiral's move into the personal lending market, which over time will see the company offer various new products through an online platform including personal loans and car finance.

The 193 customer service and sales posts will be created following Admiral's successful application for a grant of £668,500 from the Business Finance scheme to aid job creation.

The company currently employs over 9000 people across eight countries, with over 6000 of these in Wales.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates welcomed the news:

"Admiral is committed to expanding its operations in Wales. We appreciate its continued presence as a major employer here, and consider this funding a worthwhile investment."

"Welsh Government funding for this new range of products ensured the jobs are created and stay in Wales. I congratulate Admiral on its continued growth and job creation which is a great advertisement for service delivery in Wales."

Admiral Chief Financial Officer, Geraint Jones, commented,

"Wales is one of the fastest growing financial services centres in the UK and Admiral is delighted to be able to launch its new venture into the lending market here in our home city of Cardiff."

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## First Ministers calls on the Prime Minister to work with, not against, the devolved nations

In a letter to the Prime Minister, both First Ministers acknowledge their shared responsibility to work together across the UK to prepare for Brexit.

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

“The governments of these islands have a lot of work to do to ensure that the UK leaves the EU with as little disruption as possible. This will only be achieved by working together.

“Theresa May, Nicola Sturgeon and I all have very different political positions, but an issue as important as Brexit requires us to put our political differences aside and work together to provide stability for the sake of our economy, jobs and public services. One government cannot simply hijack powers from the other two.

“Today, Nicola Sturgeon and I have published joint amendments to the EU withdrawal bill that would enable progress to be made among the governments in a way which respects the hard-won devolution settlements.

“We want a bill that works with, not against, devolution. Until that point is reached, we cannot give it our consent. The amendments we have published today are not about stopping Brexit, they are about protecting the interests of the people of Wales and Scotland. I hope they secure widespread support across the House of Commons.

“While the UK government has so far shown a lack of lack of willingness to engage with the devolved nations, and a fundamental lack of trust, we hope today marks a sea change in the way our governments work together on Brexit. Only by listening to each other, can we find a way forward that protects the interests of all parts of the Union.”

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## **New national strategy for a more prosperous Wales**

Building on the headline commitments in the Programme for Government, [the strategy](#) is designed to drive integration and collaboration across the Welsh public sector, and put people at the heart of improved service delivery.

The strategy sets out a vision and actions covering each of the key themes in the Programme for Government – Prosperous and Secure, Healthy and Active, Ambitious and Learning, and United and Connected.

It also identifies 5 priority areas – early years, housing, social care,

mental health and skills, which have the potential to make the greatest contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being. These are areas where it has been shown that earlier intervention and more seamless services can make a real difference to people's lives.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said,

"Yesterday we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Yes vote that brought devolution to Wales. Devolution has been a journey of political maturity, a story of growing confidence and a firm determination to deliver for Wales.

"Today we publish a new national strategy designed to bring together the efforts of the whole public sector towards this Government's central mission of delivering Prosperity for All.

"Prosperity is about far more than material wealth and cannot be delivered by economic growth alone. It is about every person in Wales enjoying a good quality of life, living in a strong, safe community and sharing in the prosperity of Wales.

"This strategy takes our commitments in Taking Wales Forward, places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they will be delivered in a smarter, more joined up way that cuts across traditional boundaries, both inside and outside government."

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## Welsh Government launch new plan to stub out smoking

Smoking contributes most to the current burden of disease in Wales, causing approximately 5,450 deaths each year and costing the NHS an estimated £302m annually.

The National Survey for Wales 2016/17 showed that 19% of adults smoked; a significant reduction from 25% in 2005/6. This exceeded the Welsh Government target of reducing smoking rates to 20% by 2016.

The new three-year Tobacco Control Delivery Plan will build on the progress already made following the first 10 years of the smoking ban in Wales.

Actions in the new plan include;

- Introducing a statutory ban on smoking in hospital grounds, school grounds, public playgrounds and outdoor care settings for children by summer 2019

- Helping more smokers to quit by encouraging the use of integrated smoking cessation services
- Strengthening referral pathways to smoking cessation services, particularly for groups with high smoking prevalence.

The majority of smokers in Wales (around 6 in 10) want to quit, and just over 4 in 10 have made an attempt to quit in the last year, according to the National Survey for Wales. Large numbers of these individuals 'go-it-alone', yet this is the least effective method of quitting. In order to achieve a further reduction in adult smoking levels in Wales, more need to be motivated to quit and to be encouraged to use cessation services that are already available.

Public Health Minister, Rebecca Evans said:

"As part of our plan for a healthier and more active Wales, we want to support as many people as possible to give up smoking.

"The Tobacco Control Delivery Plan 2017-2020 aims to make smoking cessation services provided by healthcare professionals more accessible. Reducing the rate of smoking will in turn reduce the number of number of people exposed to second hand smoke.

"I'm pleased that we are leading the way in protecting our future generations through the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, which includes a ban on smoking in playgrounds and school grounds. In order to continue the remarkable culture-change relating to smoking that we have seen in Wales in recent years, I want everyone to 'Choose Smokefree'."

Last year, a Tobacco Control Strategic Board was established, Chaired by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Frank Atherton, to oversee the delivery of the new plan and ensure momentum is maintained to achieve the 16% target. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Frank Atherton said:

"Reducing smoking prevalence in Wales will not only benefit the nation's health, but will also relieve some pressure on the NHS.

"The work we have done as the Strategic Board and its sub-groups for cessation, prevention and reducing exposure to smoking has developed this delivery plan. We are confident the actions detailed will help us reach the target of reducing the number of smokers to 16% of the population by 2020."