

Statement from the First Minister of Wales on the terrorist attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

“Our thoughts today are with all of those who were affected by yesterday’s terrorist attacks on Barcelona and Cambrils. It is truly horrifying to think that people who were simply going about their daily lives, relaxing and enjoying themselves could be targeted in such an evil way.

“Barcelona is a proud and beautiful city which welcomes international visitors with open arms, including many from Wales, and of course we also enjoy an air link with the city through Cardiff Airport. I would urge anyone visiting the area at the moment to keep following the advice of the local authorities and to check the Foreign Office twitter feed and website for further updates.

“Wales and Catalunya of course also share many historical and cultural ties and I want to end by expressing my deepest sympathies on behalf of the people of Wales. We stand by your side at this difficult time.”

Halen Môn takes to the taste of ultrafast Fibre Broadband

Established in 1996 by Alison and David Lea-Wilson, Halen Môn has gone from strength to strength and today exports its product globally to over 15 countries with famous fans including former US President Barack Obama.

To improve the service and offer, the company decided to apply for support through the Welsh Government’s Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher and became one of the first businesses in Wales to invest in Fibre on Demand technology, which has enabled them to access broadband speeds of 330mbps.

The Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher helps businesses meet the initial capital costs involved in installing ultrafast broadband services. Fibre on Demand is available in Wales as part of the Superfast Cymru programme.

Changing to a better and faster connection has made a huge impact at Halen Môn and has enabled the firm to employ a remotely based sales manager, who can link in with the business from any location without needing to be based in Anglesey.

Alison Lea-Wilson, co-founder of Halen Môn, said:

“Making the switch to Fibre on Demand has greatly improved our daily working life. It has seen costs go down and we can run all of our gadgets through one strong broadband connection.

“Fibre on demand has significantly improved our connection speeds meaning we can now work through cloud services and make full use of the technologies available which also allows us to engage with customers throughout the world.

“Accessing faster broadband speeds has become essential, a fourth utility, and deciding to make the switch is really paying off.”

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James said:

“I’m delighted to hear how Fibre on Demand technology thanks to Superfast Cymru is making a real difference to Halen Môn.

“Having access to superfast and ultrafast broadband speeds is becoming increasingly important for businesses throughout Wales and that is why the Welsh Government is investing in providing the infrastructure capable of delivering them.

“Halen Môn is a prime example of how taking advantage of faster broadband can be a real boost to business.

“The Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher is just one of the measures we have taken to support businesses and make Wales one of the best connected countries.

“Across Wales over 647,000 premises can now access superfast broadband as a result of Superfast Cymru, and that figure will increase before the end of the year.

“Thanks to Superfast Cymru, Wales has the best availability of superfast broadband among the devolved nations, with more than eight out of ten premises with access.

“Without the intervention of the programme no premises in Anglesey would be able to access superfast broadband. Today, more than

30,000 can access it.”

Ed Hunt, regional director for Openreach, said:

“The roll out of superfast broadband is making a huge difference to how companies up and down the country do business.

“With faster, more reliable broadband speeds, businesses can expand into new markets or save time and money by doing things, such as downloading large documents, faster.

“Fibre on Demand can enable companies to access ultrafast speeds by extending the fibre-optic broadband connection from their nearest street cabinet to their front door. For some companies, such as Halen Môn that need these faster speeds, this is a great solution.”

Superfast Cymru is the partnership between the Welsh Government, BT, UK Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), bringing faster broadband to areas which would otherwise not receive it.

The Welsh Government also runs the Access Broadband Cymru scheme, which can offer assistance to those not able to access superfast broadband by providing grant aid to help them receive it through other technologies.

Further details are available at www.gov.wales/broadband

Tenants reminded to have their say on lettings agents' fees

The [consultation](#) is the first step towards fulfilling the Welsh Government's Commitment to bringing forward the Fees Charged to Tenants Bill to address fees charged in the private rented sector.

The call came as research into the potential implications of banning these fees published today showed that 84% of the agents who responded charge a set up fee and the average cost to tenants of setting up a tenancy is £178. These fees make up 19% of agents' income – around £10m in total.

Mr Sargeant said:

“I launched the consultation into fees charged to tenants in the private rented sector last month but so far, the biggest response has been from landlords and lettings agents. While I encourage

everyone with an interest to participate in this consultation I particularly want to hear from tenants to ensure we have as wide a range of views as possible.

“I want to know the extent of the fees charged, what those fees cover and understand the implications of the removal of these fees for letting agents, landlords, tenants and any third parties involved in the private rented sector.”

Minister praises Powys for pioneering new electronic health and care system

The Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) gives community nurses, mental health teams, social workers and therapists the digital tools they need to work better together, whilst providing the highest possible levels of care. It allows access to relevant information on the care provided to a range of health and social care professionals, to show where a patient is with their treatment.

When fully implemented across Wales, WCCIS will help break down barriers caused by different organisations using different IT systems, by securely storing important information covering a range of activities such as community nursing, health and social care visits, mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse, complex care needs and social care therapy.

The Welsh Government provided £6.7m in capital funding for the initial set up costs for the WCCIS and has made a further £4m available to support its implementation via the Integrated Care Fund.

The Minister saw the system in action during a visit to Llandrindod Wells.

Social Services Minister, Rebecca Evans said:

“I was really pleased to see the Welsh Community Care Information System in action here in Powys. By being the first area to “go live” with the new system in both the local authority and health board, Powys is truly pioneering this exciting new system.

“The system represents genuine integration between our health and social care services. It is very important that we realise the potential benefits offered by this new system. For front-line practitioners, it allows them to provide more consistent, co-ordinated care and support for individuals in their own communities, while for people receiving that care, it ensures they

receive high quality care in or as close to their home as possible.”

Carol Shillabeer, Chief Executive of Powys Teaching Health Board and Interim Strategic Director of People at Powys County Council said:

“I am very proud of the success of the team in Powys in delivering the first integrated “go live” of the Welsh Community Care Information System in Wales.

“For the first time, members of the integrated teams in our first phase implementers can access client records shared across Health and Care.

“For staff, this will increasingly offer a single point of access to information to support them to deliver joined up health and care. It will reduce duplication and save time that can be invested into frontline care.

“For service users and carers this will reduce frustration & duplication, and improve consistency and continuity of care.”

[A-level and Welsh Bacculaureate students congratulated by Kirsty Williams](#)

This year’s A-level results show:

- 75.3% gained A* to C, the highest since 2009, with 25% achieving A*-A.
- In maths, Wales again outperformed England at A* and A* to C, with 19.4% gaining A*, and 80.4% gaining A* to C.
- There have been increases at A* in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- At A* to C the results have gone up in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography.
- For All Subjects the performance of both male and females learners has improved across all of the grades.

The Welsh Bacculaureate results show:

- 94.1% of candidates achieved the Skills Challenge Certificate.
- 77.5% of candidates passed the Advanced Welsh Bacculaureate.

Over the last year the Welsh Government has taken action to improve A-level results. This includes working with regional consortia, reviewing performance measures and ensuring professional learning support programmes are available for staff.

On a visit to John Frost School in Newport, Kirsty Williams said:

“I want to congratulate everyone receiving their results and thank pupils, teachers and staff for all their hard work.

“These set of results show an encouraging increase in the number achieving the top grades, with improvement in results across maths, biology, chemistry and physics.

“We have also seen the results go up across a range of subjects and I want us to continue to build on this.

“I am committed to making sure our education system provides pupils with the skills and knowledge they need for the modern world.

“Our ongoing reform of A-levels is an important part in our national mission to raise standards and extend opportunities for all our young people.”