

London gets the legendary treatment

A Visit Wales marketing campaign will see a huge motion screen at Waterloo station to showcase Wales at its best with a specially edited film which will also bring some serenity and calm to London's busiest rail station, with 250,000 people travelling through Waterloo each day.

Following the recent Lonely Planet accolade, where North Wales was named in the list of the Top 10 Regions for 2017, North Wales Tourism – working with the six Destination Management Partnerships in the area – were successful in securing support from the Visit Wales Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF) to deliver an innovative campaign in London to raise awareness of North Wales as a destination and to capitalise on this great award and recognition by Lonely Planet.

During July and August six London taxis will be 'wrapped' to create an impression the driver is on a surf board or flying down a zip wire. For the first four weeks of the campaign, a bus on a central London route will also be fully wrapped. To support the campaign Radio X will run a digital and airtime competition for listeners to win a 3 night break in North Wales to experience first hand the range of adventure and activities on offer.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"Our aim is to encourage and inspire new visitors to consider Wales as a holiday destination right now, and to continue developing Wales' reputation as a cool, contemporary, vibrant place to visit, with lots going on. Our summer campaign includes a mixture of TV advertising, digital, press partnerships and out of home advertising in key London underground and rail stations.

"Our message for this campaign is clear – Wales is alive over the summer with legendary experiences, festivals and events. We've developed content to showcase Wales' rich culture, heritage and landscapes and celebrate our wealth of cultural and sporting events and icons. I'm delighted that activity from our north Wales partners is reinforcing the message that a legendary experience awaits in Wales this summer."

Jim Jones, Managing Director of North Wales Tourism said:

"We're delighted that this funding from Visit Wales has enabled us to work with partners on a London and South East campaign. Our aim is to raise the profile of the Lonely Planet recognition, but to also draw attention to just how close we are from London."

The Visit Wales campaign also includes TV advertising with the Year of

Legends campaign film starring Luke Evans being shown on Channel 4 in London as well as on Sky Regional London and Sky Adsmart Meridian. Print adverts, cover wraps and editorial features will be appearing in the Evening Standard and the London Metro with printed and digital adverts appearing in 36 rail and underground stations across London.

[Consultation on criminal enforcement powers for the Welsh Revenue Authority launched](#)

From April 2018, the Welsh Revenue Authority will be responsible for collecting and managing landfill disposals tax and land transaction tax – the two taxes being devolved to Wales. They will replace landfill tax and stamp duty land tax, respectively, which are currently collected by HMRC.

HMRC have a wide range of criminal enforcement powers, which help it to tackle and deter tax crime, in relation to stamp duty land tax and landfill tax.

The consultation being launched today asks for views about the advantages and disadvantages of the WRA having a similar set of criminal enforcement powers for land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax but with some differences in scope.

For example, powers of arrest and detention are not proposed as they are not regarded as necessary or proportionate. However, powers to gain entry to premises and seize information are.

The consultation also sets out the proposed safeguards for citizens.

Launching the consultation, Professor Drakeford said:

“In nine months’ time the Welsh Government will raise our own taxes for the first time in almost 800 years.

“The effective collection of taxes is vital to fund the public services we all rely on. To protect these services, it is important we have a tax system that is fair – making it easy for people to pay the right amount of tax at the right time, while tackling and deterring those who seek to evade paying tax.

“That is why I am today launching this consultation about proposals to ensure the Welsh Revenue Authority has the right and proportionate criminal investigative powers in place to tackle and

deter devolved tax crime.

“No government should legislate to provide a public authority with criminal powers unless it is necessary. HMRC currently uses criminal powers in Wales to tackle and deter tax crime in relation to the two taxes being devolved in April and has a clearly-defined set of safeguards to ensure those powers are used proportionately and appropriately. I believe the WRA should be no different.

“The devolution of taxes brings with it new duties – one of which is to protect the interests of law abiding citizens by tackling those who would seek to evade their responsibilities.

“I urge everyone with an interest to get involved and share their views with us on this important issue.”

[Optimum Credit expands its Cardiff operations with Welsh Government support](#)

The company has built up a loan portfolio of over £275m through a network of specialist third party mortgage brokers and now plan to build a retail channel lending directly to customers.

Optimum Credit was established in late 2013 with £600,000 business finance from the Welsh Government and backing from Patron Capital Partners – a private equity real estate investment house and one of the leading real estate managers in Europe.

Welsh Government funding was for the creation of create 44 jobs over five years – the company has exceeded all targets and currently employs 82 at its offices in Dumfries Place.

The company’s expansion is supported by £140K from the Welsh Government’s Growth and Prosperity Fund to create a further 23 jobs and will, in turn, trigger further investment into the company from Patron Capital Partners.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Optimum Credit is very much a made-in-Wales success story. The business has undergone rapid growth in a short time to take the number one position as the UK’s largest lender in the second mortgage market.

“This is quite an achievement in what is a highly competitive market and the company now plan to build on that success by offering their bespoke priced products directly to customers.

“I am delighted the Welsh Government is supporting their next stage of growth that will enable them to take advantage of new opportunities and create more well paid, highly skilled jobs.

“Optimum Credit is a prime example of the innovative, high growth companies and established national and international centres in the financial and professional service sector that have chosen to invest and grow their businesses in Wales.”

Ian Praed, Optimum Credit’s Chief Operating Officer said;

“We’re delighted to continue our positive relationship with the Welsh Government in the further development of Optimum here in Cardiff. From the original start up support provided via their Growth and Prosperity Fund we have created over 80 jobs to date and look forward to adding to this number as we develop and roll out our direct to consumer proposition.”

A retail sales capability will enable Optimum Credit to expand its product range and interact with customers using their channels of choice, delivering through the internet and mobile technology.

£21m investment in research to increase opportunities for patients and develop the treatments of tomorrow

The Centre is an example of the strategic investment by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, which provides a focal point for researchers and delivery staff to participate in ground breaking research. The centre has also ensured that patients can receive treatment closer to home.

The Health Secretary made the announcement during a visit to the Clinical Research and Innovation Centre at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

An example of research being led in Wales includes the PARAMEDIC 2 trial which looked at whether the drug adrenaline is helpful or harmful in the treatment of a cardiac arrest that occurs outside a hospital. This research will help to improve the treatment of people who have a cardiac arrest not just in Wales but across the world and in turn, maximises Wales’

international competitiveness in research.

Last year, over 17,000 patients participated in almost 480 clinical research studies across a broad range of disease areas – including dementia, stroke, cancer, diabetes and mental health, all of which will help to maximise the international competitiveness of Wales as a destination for research.

The funding demonstrates the continued investment being made by Welsh Government to ensure every Health Board and Trust across Wales is well placed to support a robust environment for research, and ensure patients in Wales have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials and global drug discovery programmes.

Announcing the funding, Vaughan Gething said:

“We recognise the significant role research plays in improving health outcomes, which is why the Welsh Government has committed more than £21m as part of a package of support to strengthen the research environment in the Welsh NHS.

“Facilities such as the Clinical Research and Innovation Centre at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board play an important role in increasing research opportunities for patients to join national and international high quality research studies within their locality.

“There is a growing body of evidence that research environments lead to improved outcomes for patients. We need to support and encourage patients, carers and staff to fully embrace research and make it a core activity within the NHS.

“We want to make Wales one of the most attractive places in the World for academic and clinical research. As part of this package, we are continuing to invest significantly in Health and Social Care research which will help attract the best talent to Wales”.

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton said:

“When researchers look at whether a treatment works, they observe many more patients than a single doctor will ever treat. Last year more than 17,000 people in Wales chose to take part in clinical research. This funding is the crucial first step towards the evidence we need in order to answer the questions we have about a wide range of medical conditions.

“We also know that patients benefit from clinical research, which is why involvement in a research study is often welcome as it can offer them a new, sometimes breakthrough, treatment option. But it’s worth remembering that you don’t have to be unwell to take part and make a difference. One of the easiest ways to get involved in health and social care research is by registering for HealthWise

Wales.”

[Kirsty Williams raises the issue of FGM with schools](#)

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams has written to all schools in Wales to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Friday 07 July 2017

All head teachers are being reminded of the issue and their responsibilities to help ensure that children and young people remain safe while they are in school.

The prevalence of FGM is difficult to estimate because of the hidden nature of the crime. However, there are an estimated 137,000 women and girls affected by FGM in Wales and England.

The Education Secretary is highlighting the important role schools can play in identifying potential victims and safeguarding them from FGM. Statutory guidance, [Keeping learners safe](#) is in place to support schools and education services in ensuring that child welfare concerns are acted upon appropriately and effectively, involving investigating agencies where necessary.

The Welsh Government has also produced a range of materials and guidance available on Hwb to support schools in managing child protection issues.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I have written to schools to seek their assistance in helping eradicate this particularly abhorrent form of violence against women and girls. It is imperative we all recognise the warning signs of a child who might be at risk.

“Female Genital Mutilation is child abuse and a criminal offence. It cannot be justified as a cultural or religious practice and leaders of all main faiths have rightly spoken out against it.

“School and college staff must play a crucial role in safeguarding young people from abuse, which is why it is vital that they are alert to the signs of FGM and what action to take if they have concerns.

“Staff should also be aware that young girls may be taken abroad in summer holidays to undergo FGM, as procedures take up to four weeks to heal. The procedure may therefore be performed before a girl returns to school at the start of the autumn term. It is essential that staff are vigilant in looking for signs of FGM after the school holidays and report anything that may seem suspicious to the appropriate professional.

“ I want all of us to be more aware of this unacceptable abuse, so together we can put an end to FGM in Wales. ”

July 2017

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