

'Cymraeg for Kids' rolled out across Wales

'Cymraeg for Kids' is a unique project set up by the Welsh Government in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to support and encourage parents and prospective parents to transfer the Welsh language to children and promote the benefits of bilingualism.

Established in April 2016, the project works with NHS Wales and other partners to provide advice and support on the benefits of raising a child bilingually. It also provides groups for parents and carers to engage in activities that promote the development of Welsh language skills in children from birth to school age.

A network of officers currently delivers these services in 14 local authorities, but this new money will enable Mudiad Meithrin to expand these activities across the whole country for the first time. The nature of the services offered will be tailored to meet the specific linguistic needs of parents.

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies said:

"We know that the combination of parental and social interaction with frequent exposure to practical language assists language learning and positively affects the linguistic competence of the child in later life.

"Encouraging and promoting the use of the Welsh language within the family remains one of the Welsh Government's key priorities.

"It is vital we support our most important resource, namely our people – whether they're fluent, lacking in confidence or eager to learn. We need to enable them to use the language in increasingly practical, creative and fun ways."

Dr Gwenllian L. Davies, Chief Executive of Mudiad Methrin, said:

"We're really pleased to be able to expand 'Cymraeg for Kids' to all parts of Wales and look forward to encouraging and supporting families to use Welsh at home. We'll continue to work closely at a local level with all partners who share the vision of one million Welsh speakers by 2050."

Cancer survival rates improving but early detection is key – Vaughan Gething

“Our refreshed cancer delivery plan outlines our ambition to improve outcomes to be among the best in Europe. To do this we must detect more cancers at earlier stages, so that patients can get the most benefit from the treatments available. Our annual report outlines how health boards are reorganising services to achieve this.

“Cwm Taf Health Board has developed a new route for patients who see their GP with non-specific symptoms, integrating primary care and hospital clinicians to work towards a swifter diagnosis.

“Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has significantly improved its diagnostic services; it is now one of two health organisations in the UK to introduce a digital pathology system. Coupled with Welsh Government investment in scanning technology, waiting times and travel times for patients in North Wales have significantly reduced.

“In Abertawe Bro Morgannwg, patients with a suspicious chest X-Ray are now routinely booked in for a CT scan, removing the delay involved in the GP requesting further investigations.”

“Sadly cancer is affecting increasing numbers of people in Wales. The NHS is responding and treated 8% more people in 2015/16 compared to five years earlier; with 11% more people receiving their treatment within the cancer waiting time target.

“We have increased spending on cancer from £307million in 2011-12 to £409million in 2014-15; we have invested nearly £10million for replacement linear accelerators and allocated £15m in this year’s budgets for improvements in diagnostic technology.

“Cancer survival continues to improve but we know there is more work to do. We are committed to continuing to improve and to deliver the best treatment and care to people with cancer in Wales.”

Traditionally Reared Pedigree Welsh Pork Awarded Protected Status

The European Commission has today awarded Pork from traditionally reared Pedigree Welsh Pigs with Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) status. It joins a number of Welsh products that have been successful in achieving EU protected status. These include PGI Welsh Lamb and Beef, PDO Halen Môn/Anglesey Sea Salt, PGI Pembrokeshire early new potatoes, Conwy Mussels, PGI Carmarthen Ham and PDO & PGI Welsh Wine.

Unlike geographically specific protected foods, Pedigree Welsh Pork can be produced anywhere in Europe, providing the animals are pedigree and are registered with the British Pig Association or a similar breed association. Pig keepers using the TSG designation will be encouraged to become members of the Pedigree Welsh Pig Society who will be able to offer help and support to ensure pigs are reared according to traditional methods, keeping to the high standards of husbandry.

The application process for TSG status began over 4 years ago with support and funding from the Welsh Government. Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths welcomed the announcement. She said:

“I would like to congratulate Pedigree Welsh Pig Society for gaining the first Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) EU status in Wales. I am pleased the Welsh Government was able to assist the application with funding and support.

“This is further confirmation of what we already know – Wales produces world leading food and drink. Our Protected Food Name basket is growing, which gives recognition to the dedication of our producers to quality and it ensures their products are protected under EU law.”

Bob Stevenson, Chairman of the Pedigree Welsh Pig Society and an eminent pig vet said:

“Consumers can now be 100% certain when buying traditionally reared Pedigree Welsh pork that provenance is assured and that the meat has been produced in a way that has prioritised the well-being of the animal throughout its entire life.”

“This is a great accolade for Wales’ native pig breed and one that will help further elevate the profile of Welsh pork”, says Melanie Cargill, representative of a new initiative to develop the pig industry in Wales. “Shoppers are increasingly looking for assurance

when it comes to their food purchases and this gives discerning customers that something extra.”

“Being only the third TSG awarded in the UK, it really demonstrates how unique the Welsh pig is.”

Lesley Griffiths also spoke of the Welsh Government’s intention to ensure Protected Food Names continue to be recognised after the UK leaves the European Union:

“We are working closely with Defra, who act as the link to the EU, to ensure a future for protected food names when we leave Europe. There are other countries outside of Europe with protected food names and this sets a precedent for the UK to consider a similar reciprocal scheme in the future.”

[Clarity on Brexit – Finance Ministers voice disappointment following quadrilateral meeting](#)

Following today’s Finance Ministers Quadrilateral in Edinburgh the devolved administrations have voiced their disappointment at the UK Government’s lack of assurances that there will be meaningful engagement over the approach it proposes to take on Brexit. The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Ministers also underlined the economic and public finance challenges this lack of clarity presents.

The meeting was attended by Scotland’s Finance Secretary Derek Mackay, Chief Secretary to the Treasury David Gauke, the Welsh Government’s Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford and Stormont Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir.

Welsh Government Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“Our White Paper, Securing Wales’ Future, which was discussed at the recent JMC (EN) provides a comprehensive, credible plan for the negotiations as the UK prepares to exit from the EU. It focuses on Wales’ priorities but in a way which would work for the whole of the UK.

“We have always been clear that a hard Brexit would be highly

damaging to the Welsh and UK economy. That is why we have repeatedly called for full and unfettered access to the single market in our negotiations with the UK Government. Our economy is closely integrated into the single market and our success in attracting foreign investment owes much to this access.

“The fact of Brexit is not in doubt but we need to ensure a good outcome for Wales. We will continue our discussions with the UK Government through the JMC (EN) but we need to see these discussions intensify over the next few weeks as the triggering of Article 50 approaches. We need a clear signal from the UK Government that the views of the devolved administrations are taken into account so we secure a future post Brexit that works for Wales and works for the rest of the UK.”

Scotland’s Finance Secretary Mr Mackay said:

“While I am disappointed about this lack of progress with the UK Government, we will continue to work with the Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments as it is essential for the devolved administrations to be at the heart of any decision making. We need clarity from the UK Government as we have the right to have our say on how devolved budgets and our economy will be affected by a hard Brexit. I asked again today that the UK Government give serious consideration to the proposals the Scottish Government has put forward in response to the outcome of the EU referendum and responds constructively, in the interests of the people of Scotland.

“We have been clear, keeping Scotland in the European single market is absolutely essential for Scottish jobs, investment and long-term economic wellbeing.”

Stormont Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir said:

“ I have previously been on record saying that there is a lack of understanding of the calamitous effects that Brexit would have on our local economy and there has been no appreciation of the need for a special status for the North within the EU. Nothing I have heard today changes that.”

New approach to building resilient communities announced

The approach is focused on employment, early years and empowerment, and will involve phasing out the Communities First programme.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“We have listened very carefully to thousands of people who have been involved in Communities First, either as employees or participants. While it is clear that Communities First was successful in its impact on many individuals, it has not had an impact on overall poverty levels in these communities, which remain stubbornly high.

“We are clear, as a Government, that we must now transition into a new phase in our fight against poverty in Wales. Our support for those who need it most will not end with this programme. Indeed, our aim is to intensify our efforts to give people the tools they need to have a more equal share of this nation’s prosperity. At the centre of this must be the promise of good, secure work.

“A new approach is needed which deals with the root causes of poverty.. We will take forward a cross-government, all-Wales approach focused on helping people into work, giving children the best start in life, and ensuring people’s voices are heard in the design of local services.”

Funding at 70% of current levels will be provided to the Communities First programme until March 2018. A legacy fund of £6m a year, to enable some of the programme’s most effective projects to continue, will be introduced in April 2018.

In addition, the Community Facilities Programme will receive an extra £4m a year from 2017/18, with priority given to Communities First areas, to help protect valuable community assets such as community centres.

A new £12m a year grant to support those who are furthest from the labour market will also be launched. This will build on the success to date of the Communities for Work, Lift and PaCE programmes and will feed into the wider Welsh Government Employability Plan led by the Minister for Skills.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“In total, including these and other ongoing projects, we will continue to put over £25m annually directly into deprived communities. This figure cannot be viewed in isolation. Across the

Welsh Government, there is increasing investment in a range of initiatives which are crucial to preventing and alleviating poverty. These include increasing our investment in apprenticeships to over £126m and investing over £93million through the Pupil Deprivation Grant in 2017-18 to help close the attainment gap of disadvantaged children. In addition we are establishing the Valleys taskforce and creating the North and South Wales metros.”

Investment in Flying Start and Families First, both of which provide practical support to thousands of families and their children across the country, will continue, while the development of Children’s Zones and the establishment of a new Adverse Childhood Experiences hub have already been announced. Support for the Streetgames programme which engages young people in positive activities, and for Citizen’s Advice, will continue.

The Cabinet Secretary added:

“Investing in our children is an investment for the long term. It is the most sustainable means of building a more prosperous future.

“I have been encouraged by the very positive response to the development of Children’s Zones and the establishment of an “ACEs Hub”, to help organisations, communities and individuals across Wales tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences, which can have such a devastating impact on children’s life chances.

“These initiatives, together with our continued investment in our successful Flying Start and Families First programmes, will ensure there is comprehensive support for children as they grow up.

“Building resilient communities is the work of Welsh Government as a whole. We are committed to prosperity for all, a strong economy that creates sustainable, quality employment opportunities accessible to all.

“Together we can build the resilient, safe, strong communities that we all want. And we will continue to engage with communities and stakeholders as we move forward.

“Change is never easy. But we cannot ignore the combination of new and deep-rooted challenges we face. We must have the courage to find fresh ways to respond. That is what I and all of my government colleagues are determined to do.”