

£1m made available to Welsh SMEs to help navigate Brexit

The pot, part of Welsh Government's £50m EU Transition Fund, will allow small and medium sized enterprises from across Wales to bid for between £10,000 and £100,000 of Welsh Government funding, to a maximum of half the project costs, to support them as the UK prepares to leave the European Union. It will be open for applications from Wednesday 28 November 2018.

To apply, businesses must:

- be registered to trade in Wales.
- register with Business Wales and complete the Brexit Diagnostic Tool on application: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/>
- be able to demonstrate that the funding will contribute to safeguarding jobs
- have been trading for 12 months or more on the day of application

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"SMEs are the backbone of the our economy and my Economic Action Plan makes absolutely clear my commitment to ensuring they are supported as they look to grow and prosper in a post Brexit world.

There are just a matter of months now until the UK leaves the EU. However, the UK Government's approach to Brexit means businesses in Wales are left with many unanswered questions about what the future holds, with SMEs potentially particularly vulnerable to changes in the economic landscape.

The creation of the Development Bank of Wales, our Brexit Portal and the wider support provided by Business Wales have already been very well received, but I understand too that there are businesses who will need that extra bit of support over the coming months and years.

This £1m fund, I hope, will reach those businesses whilst incentivising all SMEs in Wales to register with Business Wales and benefit from the Brexit Portal and the specialist support on offer.

These are uncertain times, but I want to reassure businesses of all sizes from across Wales that Welsh Government will continue to use all the tools at our disposal as we look to safeguard jobs and ensure our economy continues to grow and prosper."

For further information please contact the Business Wales Helpline on **03000 603000**.

Welsh Government Childcare Offer benefiting low income families – new research

The research on the offer's first year of operation shows 80% of the lowest earning parents in each household accessing the offer earn less than the average salary in Wales. 88% of surveyed parents reported having more disposable income as a result of accessing the offer, and 67% reported the offer gave them more opportunities to increase their future earnings.

The Welsh Government is committed to providing 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year.

The childcare offer is currently being roll-out across Wales, and is available in at least some areas in half of Wales' 22 local authorities. It will be available across the country by 2020.

More than 3,300 children have benefited from the Welsh Government's ground-breaking childcare offer during its first year.

Arad Research, in partnership with NatCen Social Research, was commissioned by the Welsh Government in August 2017 to undertake an independent evaluation of the first year of early implementation of the Childcare Offer in Wales.

The research shows:

- 60% of all parents accessing the Offer (and 80% of the lowest earners in households) accessing the Offer earned the equivalent or less than the median population earnings in Wales;
- 67% reported having more flexibility in the types of jobs they do and the hours they work; and 60% reported having more opportunities for training;
- Access to the offer had encouraged 40% of parents surveyed to access more hours of formal childcare, and 16% of parents say they now use less informal childcare in favour of more formal childcare

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“It's great to see how well our ground-breaking childcare offer is being received among families right across Wales.

“I'm particularly pleased the offer is benefiting low income families, putting more money back into their pockets and allowing them to take up more work or training.

“That’s not only good for the Welsh economy, but it’s also reducing strain on family incomes.”

Healthy Child Wales programme making progress to give children the best possible start in life

The first official statistics published in relation to the Healthy Child Wales Programme, show a steady increase in the percentage of children receiving contacts from the start of the programme in October 2016 up to June this year.

Vaughan Gething said:

“The Healthy Child Wales Programme sets out what planned contacts children and their families can expect from their health boards, from maternity service handover to the first years of schooling. These universal contacts focus on three main themes: screening; immunisation; and monitoring and supporting child development.

“The steady increase in the percentage of children receiving contact with health professionals demonstrates the good progress being made by the Healthy Child Wales Programme to ensure children get the best possible start in life.”

Jean White, Chief Nursing Officer for Wales, said:

“The publication of the Healthy Child Wales Programme statistics demonstrates the value of a universal set of contacts for children in Wales. The regular contact with Health Visitors allows consistent messages to be given to families to help them make choices that will improve health outcomes for their children.”

The full statistics can be accessed on the [Welsh Government website Statistics and Research page](#).

One week left to vote for an amazing teacher

Nominations for the awards are already flooding in, but with one week still to go until the closing date, The Welsh Government's Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams, is urging everyone to nominate their education heroes to ensure that excellent education professionals receive the recognition they deserve.

Categories for awards this year include Teacher and Headteacher of the Year, Best use of Digital Learning, Inspirational use of the Welsh Language and Promoting Wellbeing, Inclusion and Relationships with the Community.

For the new Youth Work in Schools category, judges will be looking for those who have shown real commitment to improving the standards of youth work in schools, excellent leadership skills, and a drive for personal and professional development.

Dylan Lewis, Best Use of Digital winner 2018, Pontarddulais Comprehensive said:

"Coming back to the school was amazing, it was lovely to have pupils and parents congratulating me on my achievements. Since winning the award, I have been invited to take part in discussions on the future direction of digital technologies both in the school and within our cluster schools.

"It is vital that in the teaching profession teachers are acknowledged when they go above and beyond. We are in a profession that has the ability to inspire the next generation of designers, developers and creators."

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

"We've already received so many fantastic nominations from across Wales for this year's awards, however I want to spread the message far and wide so we can celebrate all the very best that education in Wales has to offer.

"I'm also delighted that this year's awards will include the Youth Work in Schools category. Youth work plays a crucial role in supporting so many young people throughout Wales, helping them gain confidence and competence to ensure they fulfil their full potential. The award allows us to recognise the big impact their hard work has on the broader educational system.

"If you know someone that goes above and beyond the call of duty to

support the education of young people across Wales, be it a member of support staff, a teacher or a headteacher that is making big steps for your school, please take the time to nominate them and help us celebrate the greatest of Wales education professionals.”

To nominate a teaching professional doing great work in your area, visit gov.wales/teachingawardscymru. Nominations close 30 November 2018.

Join the conversation with [#TeachingAwardsCymru](https://twitter.com/TeachingAwardsCymru)

The Professional Teaching Awards Cymru 2018 categories:

- NEW Youth Work in Schools
- Supporting Teachers and Learners
- School Business Manager/Bursar
- Promoting Collaboration to Improve Learning Opportunities
- Promoting Wellbeing, Inclusion and Relationships with the Community
- Teacher of the Year
- Headteacher of the Year
- Outstanding New Teacher
- Best use of Digital Learning
- Inspirational use of the Welsh Language

For more information, please contact Cowshed:

awards@wearecowshed.co.uk

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External Digital Panel established to aid public services

Lee Waters AM is leading the establishment of the external Digital Panel with the aim of helping improve the delivery of public services in Wales through better use of digital technologies.

The panel will help to shape the next steps towards improving the way we use digital as well as providing external advice and challenge for the Welsh public sector.

Julie James said:

“The last two decades have seen huge changes in the way digital technology has touched our lives. From online banking to the provision of news; from the growth of social media to shopping and

healthcare, the way we work and play continues to be transformed.

“As a Welsh Government it is crucial we are using our devolved powers to support our communities, our businesses and our public services to react, to adapt and to take advantage of new opportunities.

“I am pleased to establish this panel which will provide advice and challenge public services.”

Membership of the panel is as follows:

- Lee Waters AM – Assembly Member for Llanelli with a keen interest in the potential of technology across the public sector and Wales more generally.
- Anne Marie Cunningham – GP and associate medical director. Active campaigner for social justice, sustainable healthcare and digital transformation.
- Victoria Ford – director at Perago with expertise in change, communications and engagement.
- Paul Matthews – CEO of Monmouthshire Council and visiting professor at Cardiff University.
- Mark Wardle – consultant neurologist and clinical informatician. Chair of NHS Wales Technical Standards Board.
- Dominic Campbell – interim CDO of Homes England and founder of FutureGov. Digital government specialist.
- Sally Meecham – Digital, Data and Technology expert at UK Research and Innovation. She has experience in digital transformation as CDO at Defra and COO at GDS.