

International Day of Older Persons: “Older people have human rights – they must be respected” – Huw Irranca- Davies

To mark International Day of Older Persons (Monday 1st October), the Minister has reaffirmed the Welsh Government’s commitment to putting the human rights of older people in Wales at the heart of Welsh public services and make Wales the best place in the world to grow old.

Wales has a long history of working with and for older people from the introduction of the first Strategy for Older People in Wales in 2003, to establishing the world’s first Older People’s Commissioner in 2008.

The Welsh Government’s determination to improve lives for older people continues today. Earlier this year, the Minister publicly committed to reinvigorate the Welsh Government’s focus on older people’s issues.

Ministers are working closely with older people and their representatives, the Older People’s Commissioner and other interested groups to co-produce a framework for an ageing society.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“To mark International Day of Older Persons, I want to reaffirm the Welsh Government’s determination to put the human rights of older people in Wales at the heart of Welsh public services. Growing older should not erode an individual’s human rights.

“Raising awareness of human rights can empower older people to play an active role in ensuring the care they receive upholds their fundamental right to be treated with dignity and respect. However, we must also raise awareness of human rights among the public bodies and organisations that work with older people every day.

“Celebrating Older People’s Day can encourage people of all ages to look forward with positivity and embrace growing older. My aim is to make Wales the best place in the world to grow old and I look forward to working with key stakeholders, the Older People’s Commissioner and, most importantly, older people themselves, to realise this aim.”

[Pilots for new ways to tackle mental health issues announced](#)

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[Farm Business Grant application window extended](#)

The Farm Business Grant (FBG) is designed to improve the economic and environmental performance of agricultural holdings. It helps farmers make their business more efficient, resilient and environmentally friendly by providing a contribution towards capital investments in items of equipment and machinery.

The FBG, which is administered through Rural Payments Wales, is an important element of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-20.

Farmers were required to have attended a Farming for the Future event to apply. Further information on the grant and how to apply is available on the Farm Business Grant page on the Welsh Government's website.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Given the lack of certainty on future funding from the UK Government, this may be the last window of the Farm Business Grant. I have therefore decided to extend the deadline to 26 October to allow farmers more time to apply for this crucial investment.

“The FBG allows farmers to make important investments in their businesses to support efficiencies, improve productivity and increase their resilience. The prolonged period of dry weather over the summer posed pressures and additional costs on farmers so this grant is particularly timely.

“I urge all eligible farmers who have attended a Farming for the Future event to consider making an application in this extended window.”

[Consultation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales launched](#)

The [eight week consultation](#) will seek the public’s views of the proposed Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill.

There are no circuses using wild animals based in Wales, but when they do visit there are renewed calls to ban the practice.

A previous public consultation exploring the possible licensing of Mobile Animal Exhibits, where views were also sought about the use of wild animals in circuses, found overwhelming support for a ban.

Travelling circuses have toured the United Kingdom for over two hundred years and will continue to be welcome in Wales, but they will not be permitted to use wild animals under the Bill.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“We believe that wild animals should be treated with dignity and respect as sentient beings, and not objectified or perceived as commodities for our entertainment.

“A ban will send a clear message that the people of Wales believe

this practice to be an outdated notion and ethically unacceptable.

“We want future generations of children and young people to develop respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals. I would urge everyone with an interest to give their views on our proposals and take part in the consultation.

“It is important to stress the Bill is not about the use of all animals in circuses or other forms of entertainment, but instead the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales.”

The consultation will be open to responses until 26 November 2018.

[Licensing powers on ‘fracking’ transferred to Wales](#)

The Cabinet Secretary set out her preferred policy in July, that the Welsh Government would not support any applications for hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking” consents, or undertake any new petroleum licensing in Wales.

A [consultation](#) has since been held on petroleum extraction, which closed on 25 September. The consultation received more than 1,800 responses. The Welsh Government will now consider the feedback to the consultation before confirming its future policy by the end of the year.

The Welsh Government has put a Notification Direction in place so that local authorities cannot approve planning applications for unconventional oil and gas, including fracking, without Welsh Ministers’ approval. This supports the Welsh Government’s opposition to unconventional extraction.

The Welsh Government has been working with UK Government and the UK Oil & Gas Authority to ensure a smooth transfer of the powers.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“Burning fossil fuels is the number one contributor to global warming and there is overwhelming scientific evidence which shows how climate change is damaging our planet. Instead of exploring new ways to extract fossil fuels, we should be investing in renewable forms of energy.

“As a Government, we must responsibly manage our natural resources in a way that meets the needs of the people of Wales, not just today, but into the future.

“I would like to thank everyone who provided their feedback to the consultation and I expect to announce the Welsh Government’s policy by the end of the year.”

The Welsh Government [Onshore Petroleum Licensing web page](#) launched on 1st October.