

New Brexit Portal to support business

The new Business Wales Brexit Portal has been designed to provide companies in Wales with up-to-date information and advice on a range of crucial issues including international trading and workforce planning.

It also includes a diagnostic tool that helps businesses to identify how prepared they are for Brexit, recommends actions they should take to increase their resilience and signposts them to additional sources of support.

The new Brexit portal builds on the advice and guidance that has been provided to Welsh companies by both the Welsh Government and Business Wales since the referendum.

It has been designed to make it as easy as possible for business to access the most up to date information and support that they need.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“With just over six months to go until we leave the EU, the UK Government’s approach to Brexit means businesses in Wales are still left with far too many unanswered questions about what the future holds.

As Economy Secretary I am committed to doing all I can to help companies in Wales prepare for the uncertainties and challenges ahead. This week we have announced multi million pound support for Advanced Manufacturing through our EU Transition Fund to help some of our largest companies up-skill and prepare for a post-Brexit world and I will be shortly announcing details of a further £1m to support SMEs to do the same.

The Business Wales Brexit Portal is another example of our proactive approach. It will build on the advice we have provided to businesses ever since the result of the referendum and make it easy as possible for them to access the support and guidance they need.

With advice on exporting, workforce planning, strategy, innovation, finance and people management, the Brexit portal is a practical and comprehensive resource that will also link to information that the UK Government is supplying in case of No Deal – which really would be a worst case scenario for Welsh business and something we are urging the UK Government to do everything possible to avoid.

These are challenging times but I hope the Brexit Portal will genuinely help businesses as they navigate the challenges of the months and years ahead.”

Commenting on the launch of the Business Wales Brexit Portal, Ben Francis, FSB Wales Policy Chair, said:

“The new portal will be a key tool to help SMEs navigate Brexit.

The portal will be a valuable tool in finding advice and providing a health check for businesses. Recent FSB research demonstrated that Welsh businesses are unprepared for a no-deal Brexit in particular, with only 15% of Welsh businesses having taken steps to prepare for this scenario. Therefore, a tool that aids businesses understanding of how they can prepare their business for Brexit is crucial for SMEs in Wales.

We welcome that Welsh Government has listened to our calls to launch the portal, and we would urge SMEs to take advantage of the opportunities to further understand the potential impact of Brexit on their business. We look forward to working with Business Wales, the wider business support services and fellow business organisations to publicise the arrival of the portal so that as many businesses in Wales as possible can take advantage of the Brexit Portal.”

The Welsh Government has also developed an app to support Welsh food and drink businesses to prepare for Brexit. This will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths later today.

Website: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/>

[Pay rise for doctors and dentists in Wales](#)

Mr Gething has confirmed that the Welsh Government has agreed in full the recommendations of the Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration (DDRB):

- a 2% base increase for salaried doctors and dentists, salaried General Medical Practitioners (GMPs) and independent contractor GMPs and General Dental Practitioners (GDPs)
- an additional 2% for independent contractor GMPs, salaried GMPs and to the GMP trainers’ grant and the GMP appraisers’ rate
- an additional 1.5% for Specialty and Associate Specialist (SAS) doctors.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I am pleased to announce today that I have been able to implement the recommendations of the DDRB in full.

This pay rise, which will be backdated to 1 April 2018, recognises the value and dedication of hardworking doctors and dentists and their key contribution to the NHS in Wales. This deal goes beyond what was agreed for doctors and dentists over the border and is yet another reason why Wales is a great place to train, work and live.”

Mr Gething added:

“Following years of austerity, imposed by the UK Government, we have committed additional funding to fulfil the DDRB recommendations. The reality remains, however, that our budgets are limited and so meeting a pay deal resulting from the lifting of the UK Government’s pay cap without appropriate funding to follow presents a risk to the future funding of NHS Wales.

“I am also very happy that BMA Cymru Wales have agreed work in partnership with the Welsh Government and NHS employers to deliver the ambitions set out in A Healthier Wales, around the long term sustainability of the workforce, and delivery of the Primary Care Model for Wales.

“Together with our recent agreement on a pay rise for the rest of the NHS Wales workforce, this shows we are committed to investing in staff to ensure they can continue to deliver excellent health and social care. Together with recruitment campaigns like Train, Work, Live this will help us create a workforce that can deliver our long-term vision for the NHS in Wales.”

Changes to the valuation of in-calf cattle for TB compensation announced

Animal owners are paid compensation for cattle slaughtered because of TB, based on the market value of the cattle concerned.

The valuation determines the market value of an animal based on the price the animal might reasonably obtain if it was for sale in the open market and was not affected or exposed to TB.

Following concerns that some cattle were potentially being valued as being in calf when they were not, a 12 month evidence gathering exercise was carried out by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Food Standards

Agency (FSA).

A total of 7,418 cattle, that were declared by their owner as being in calf were examined post mortem, of which 2,817 animals were found not to be in calf following slaughter. The total amount of extra compensation paid for those not to be in calf is estimated as in excess of £459,000 over a 12 month period.

The Cabinet Secretary has therefore announced from 1 November 2018, written proof of Pregnancy Diagnosis (PD) will now be requested at valuation stage.

Cattle owners will be allowed to request PD evidence, in an agreed format, from their veterinarian that can be presented at valuation stage, provided the PD has been carried out within the previous three months (90 days) of the date of valuation. This will allow the cattle owner to arrange for their animals to be examined before the TB test is due to minimise any disruption to normal farming routines.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Cattle owners are rightly paid compensation for cattle slaughtered because of TB. However, we had concerns that some cattle were potentially being valued as in calf when they were not.

“The study by APHA and FSA shows that this is a real issue and that is why I am introducing changes to the valuation and payment of in-calf cattle, with written proof of Pregnancy Diagnosis now being required at valuation stage.

“These changes will come into force from 1 November this year. I urge all cattle owners to familiarise themselves with the new measures in advance of the changes being implemented and to contact their Official Veterinarian to arrange Pregnancy Diagnosis if appropriate.”

App to support Welsh food and drink businesses post-Brexit launched

The Diagnostic and Brexit scorecard app, which will be launched at Cegin Bodlon Kitchen, aims to support food and drink businesses across Wales and help them respond to the challenges and opportunities Brexit presents.

The app is aimed at food businesses and will help improve access to the latest information about their own business and issues affecting the sector.

The world leading technology will provide cluster members and wider businesses with the opportunity to review the strengths and weaknesses of their business at any time and benchmarked against the industry requirements in trade.

Seven clusters have been established to promote collaboration within the sector. The clusters are companies which produce Fine Food, Seafood, Export, High Impact, NutriWales, Drinks and Honey.

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

“This is an exciting new app that will bring Welsh food and drinks businesses together and will help the sector continue to grow.

“As we prepare to leave the European Union, it is more important than ever that businesses work with governments in projects like these to build their resilience and ensure their competitiveness so they are able to thrive in a post-Brexit world.

“This is a prime example of technology being used to tackle 21st century challenges and drive forward Welsh business growth and respond directly to Brexit challenges that we all face.”

£90,000 to support homeless people into homes in Conwy and Denbighshire

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans has announced the funding for a Housing First pilot project in the area run by Conwy and Denbighshire local authorities.

Housing First involves moving people with complex needs into permanent housing and offering them one to one support to address their problems and to be able to sustain a tenancy themselves.

Rebecca Evans said:

“Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a Welsh Government priority, and we are investing record amounts to address it.

“Housing First services are targeted at those who are likely to have severe mental illness, poor physical health and lack social support.

“Housing First is an innovative approach which has been proven to work elsewhere. It works on the basis that people are more successful in moving forward with their lives if they are housed first and have choice and control over their lives.

“It’s particularly impressive that 78% of people supported by the Anglesey Housing First project have successfully secured and maintained accommodation.

“The cost to the public purse of not housing someone far outweighs the cost of supporting them into accommodation. We aim to support the most vulnerable people in Wales, and Housing First is a sound investment that can save money, as well as lives in the long term. I look forward to the results in Conwy and Denbighshire and seeing people supported into homes.

“The First Minister asked me to Chair a new Ministerial group to support our work tackling youth homelessness, and to oversee the development of Housing First in Wales. We will carefully evaluate how Housing First is working as part of this work, including the project in Conwy and Denbighshire.

“Today I’m meeting Dr Sam Tsemberis, who created the Housing First model in New York. The model is now in operation across the US, Canada, parts of Europe and New Zealand and has successfully housed and treated many thousands of people with severe mental ill-health and addiction. I’m keen to talk to him about how Housing First can work in Wales.”