

First Minister's Christmas message

2018 has given us much to celebrate – from the events to mark the 70th anniversary of our NHS, to Geraint Thomas' extraordinary Tour de France win. I'm also proud of the role we played in the poignant ceremonies in Wales, France and Belgium to commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War.

It is unavoidable to look back over the course of the last year without reflecting on the UK government's failure to secure an acceptable withdrawal deal to leave the European Union.

With less than 100 days until the UK leaves the EU, we are heading into the new year with a no deal scenario – which would have a particularly severe impact on Wales – firmly on the table and with Parliament and the UK government at deadlock.

Against this background of uncertainty, the Welsh Government will continue to do everything we can to protect Welsh jobs, support our economy and safeguard public services through these difficult times.

It's important we all recognise the role we can play in unifying our country and avoid further divisions – whether this is in our communities, or even within our own family.

The festive period is a time for family, friends and goodwill. My thoughts are with those who are less fortunate, from the too many who will sleep rough this Christmas to those across the world who face danger daily due to ongoing conflict.

I want to extend a sincere thank you to our dedicated health, social care, emergency service staff and volunteers who give up their Christmas to keep our services running. Your commitment and hard-work is truly admirable.

As my first month as First Minister draws to a close, I remain conscious of the opportunities and the responsibility which comes with this position. I look forward to working with my new Cabinet to deliver for the people of Wales.

I hope you all have a very happy Christmas – Nadolig Llawen i chi i gyd!