

Press release: Welsh Secretary: Wales is a prime location for manufacturing investment

- Smurfit Kappa strengthens commitment to Wales with multi-million-pound investment in Abercarn site
- Welsh Secretary will highlight strong International – UK trade relationship with visit to Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe

Global employers Smurfit Kappa and Olympus are leading the way in demonstrating why Wales is a prime location to invest and do business, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said ahead of a visit to south Wales today (3 May).

Alun Cairns will visit global packaging company Smurfit Kappa's Abercarn factory to mark the company's £2.8 million investment.

He will also highlight Wales' reputation as an investment destination for Japanese companies with a visit to Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe.

Leading today's positive news was confirmation from Smurfit Kappa that it has made a £2.8 million investment to purchase their Abercarn site and buildings. The announcement is being hailed as a signal of the company's continued commitment to their operations and to their staff in Wales.

Smurfit Kappa are world-leading providers of paper-based packaging solutions, with around 45,000 employees in approximately 370 production sites across 35 countries. They have an unrivalled portfolio of paper-packaging solutions, which is constantly updated with market-leading innovations.

With sustainability at the forefront of their company ethos, the Secretary of State will hear how the company's design innovations are helping the UK Government to achieve its 25 Year environment plan.

Marking the announcement during the visit to the Abercarn site, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

Smurfit Kappa is one of south Wales' great manufacturing success stories. Their continued commitment to their operation in Wales is a clear demonstration of the faith in our nation a prime investment destination.

Their investment in their south Wales operation are sure signs that these are exciting times for Smurfit Kappa. Their continued growth has been a strong driver for the overall strength of the private sector here in Wales.

The UK Government will do all it can to support the sector as we aim to establish ourselves as a world class hub of manufacturing

excellence and leading experts in the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyle solutions.

We are pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Wales, to recognise the investment we have made at our Abercarn plant. This investment highlights our commitment to the future of our business at Abercarn and our support to the Welsh economy.

The Secretary of State will also visit Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe – a company that designs, develops and manufactures medical devices from its world class facility in Cardiff.

The company employs 270 people at its St Mellons site. Founded as Gyrus, in 1989, the company grew into a successful FTSE company before it was acquired by the Japanese Olympus Corporation in 2008.

Alun Cairns visited Japan last year with the aim of giving maximum certainty and security to international businesses based in Wales as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.

The company is now playing a pivotal role in Wales' growing reputation as a world leader in life sciences expertise.

Alun Cairns will be welcomed to Olympus by its Managing Director Simon Edwards.

Looking ahead to the visit, Mr Edwards said:

Our facility in Cardiff is playing an important role as we strive for further sustainable growth by making people's lives healthier, safer and more fulfilling.

Life sciences is one of Wales' fastest growing sectors. It has a turnover of around £2 billion and employs around 11,000 people in over 350 companies.

The UK's strengths in science, research and innovation are also a major focus of the government's industrial strategy.

Alun Cairns added:

Smurfit Kappa and Olympus are important investors in Wales.

As we prepare to leave the EU, the UK Government is committed through our Industrial Strategy to ensuring the UK remains one of the best places in the world to do business. Our aim is to create a strong and vibrant economy in Wales and the manufacturing and life sciences sectors are central to this vision.