

Rolls Royce supplier creates 23 new jobs with Welsh Government support

Economy Minister, Ken Skates visited Consort Precision Diamond in Conwy to discuss the expansion plans, which will be supported by £200k from Welsh Government.

The Minister also spoke to the company's management team about the types of challenges they are facing in the run up to Brexit, and urged them to take advantage of the range of support offered to Welsh business to help them prepare and build resilience ahead of Brexit.

Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted that the Welsh Government is supporting Conwy based Consort Precision Diamond in its plan to expand its facilities and create an additional 23 highly skilled jobs at Kinnel Bay.

The support from Welsh Government will help fund the first phase of a five year plan that will see Consort Precision Diamond building a new premises and increasing its head count to just shy of 170.

It was also good to speak to the company about its Brexit preparations and to ensure they are aware of, and are accessing the full range of Welsh Government support. This includes our popular Brexit portal and diagnostic tool which is being used by thousands of businesses across Wales to help them prepare for life outside of the EU.

Consort Precision Diamond actually exports extensively to markets outside of the EU, meaning that it is in a stronger position to deal with the changes and challenges that Brexit will bring.

I would urge any business in Wales to access our comprehensive range of exporting support and advice so they can put themselves in the strongest possible position to navigate the journey ahead.

Of course we know that what business really needs, and continues to call for, is certainty. For our part we will keep pushing the UK Government to take No Deal off the table and work to secure a Brexit that protects Welsh jobs and our economy."

The Minister's message mirrors a new TV ad campaign launched this week that is aimed at helping Welsh SMEs prepare for Brexit. The ad encourages businesses to explore and access the Brexit support available through the Welsh Government's comprehensive Business Wales service so they can put themselves in the strongest position possible.

Consultation on banning third party sales of puppies and kittens launched

Currently, puppies or kittens can either be purchased via a third-party seller, directly from a breeder or from a rescue/rehoming centre. Commercial third-party sellers are those who are licensed pet sellers; in Wales they will hold a licence under the Pet Animals Act 1951.

According to estimates, between 40,000 and 80,000 puppies and kittens are sold via third parties in Great Britain each year.

There are concerns commercial third-party sales lead to poorer welfare conditions for the animals, compared to when people buy direct from the breeder. For example, this might include the introduction to several new and unfamiliar environments and the increased likelihood of multiple journeys the puppies or kittens have to undertake.

The consultation will last for three months and will gather information on the supply chain of puppies and kittens and help identify where Government intervention will have the greatest impact.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“Ensuring high standards of animal welfare is a priority for the Welsh Government.

“There is clear evidence that the sale of puppies and kittens via third parties has the potential to contribute to an increased risk of disease and a lack of socialisation and habituation for the puppies and kittens compared to when people buy directly from the breeder.

“The vast majority of those buying a new puppy or kitten do so with the best of intentions. However, it is not always immediately apparent to the buyer where their new pet originated, or in what conditions it was raised. This consultation is an opportunity to gather as much information as possible to enable us to make lasting improvements to the welfare of puppies and kittens bred in Wales. Banning commercial third party sales of puppies and kittens may only be one aspect of this.

“I urge anyone with an interest in animal welfare to get involved and share their views with us on how we can improve the conditions of sale and ensure good welfare practices.”

The consultation on the impact of a ban on third party sales of puppies and kittens in Wales will run from 19 February 2019 until 17 May.

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales determines an increase in councillors' allowances this year](#)

The Panel has determined an increase of 1.97% to the basic salary for elected members of principal councils to begin to address the erosion of the salary in relation to average earnings. This will take the basic salary to £13,868.

The salaries of leaders and members of the executive have not been increased for several years (except for the increase in the basic element). The Panel consider that holders of these posts have significant functional responsibility and compared to remuneration of many other public sector roles are not well paid.

The Panel has therefore determined that there should be a modest increase of £800 to the Band 1 and Band 2 senior salaries payable to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Members. This is inclusive of the £268 increase to the basic salary that all members will receive.

The Panel are continuing with the three bands of Community and Town councils according to the level of income or expenditure. This is to reflect the wide variation in responsibilities of community and town councils across Wales.

The Panel is continuing mandating a payment of £150 as a contribution to costs and expenses for members of all community and town councils. They furthermore propose that every community and town council reimburse the costs of care for all members if necessary. These measures are aimed at enabling councillors to fulfil their role.

This final report and the Panel's previous reports and determinations can be viewed

at: <https://beta.gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-annual-report-2019-2020>.

Ever thought of becoming a councillor? Watch this short film to see what the role entails and the remuneration and allowances you can

receive: <https://youtu.be/h3o0eKrX2Ds>.

Ministers confirm £60m Welsh Government investment in 115 new and refurbished childcare settings across Wales

The facilities are being developed as part of a £60m capital investment programme in the childcare sector.

Ministers are 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 30 hours is made up of the existing minimum of 10 hours of Foundation Phase and up to 20 hours of childcare with a registered provider.

The Childcare Offer is currently being rolled-out across Wales, and will be available across the country by next year. More than 5,000 eligible children are already benefitting from the offer.

The projects awarded funding will focus primarily on supporting the co-location of existing Foundation Phase education provision with the new Childcare Offer provision on a single site, wherever possible. This will make it as easy as possible for parents to access wrap-around care.

The funding will either help establish new childcare settings or refurbish existing ones to ensure they meet the required standard that would be expecting of a setting delivering the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer.

Local authorities have also secured funding to enable them to operate a Small Grants Scheme in their area, which will enable private and voluntary sector childcare providers to access up to £10,000 of capital funding to carry out work on their premises.

Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, Julie Morgan said:

"I'm very pleased to announce the Welsh Government is giving the go-ahead to the development of 115 new or redeveloped childcare facilities across Wales, as part of a £60m capital investment programme to deliver our highly ambitious Childcare Offer.

"The investment we're making will ensure the Childcare Offer is available to parents across Wales by ensuring there is sufficient childcare in the right areas, with a specific focus on developing new provision in areas that currently lack childcare services, in particular rural and disadvantaged areas."

"The investment will also support the growth and sustainability of the childcare sector across Wales, helping to create high-quality

jobs in the sector.”

Of the projects approved, £33m – nearly 47% of the grants being awarded – are being allocated to Welsh medium childcare settings. This is designed to help deliver the Welsh Government’s ‘Cymraeg 2050’ strategy, which involves delivering its aim of 1m Welsh speakers by 2050.

Minister for the Welsh Language, Eluned Morgan added:

“Expanding Welsh-medium provision in the early years as an access point for Welsh-medium education is a vital part of the vision set out in Cymraeg 2050. I’m delighted that the Welsh Government are making a significant investment in the sector.

“This will allow existing Welsh-medium settings to expand the range services they can offer as well as provide facilities for new settings, enabling greater numbers of children to start their Welsh language journey.”

Projects include:

North Wales

- More than £2.5m for Anglesey to develop 7 projects, including a childcare setting in Ysgol Santes Dwynwen;
- £2.7m for Denbighshire for 4 projects, including the relocation of two Cylch Meithrin from unsuitable premises in Rhyl.

Mid and West Wales

- More than £1.8m for Ceredigion to develop 3 projects, including nearly £800,000 to ensure a childcare setting is installed in a new Welsh medium school in Aberaeron.

South West Wales

- Nearly £3.3m for Neath Port Talbot to develop 7 projects across the County, including a new childcare setting at a Welsh medium primary school in Neath.

South East Wales

- Nearly £5m for Caerphilly to develop 10 projects, including four Welsh medium childcare settings;
 - More than £1.7m for the Vale of Glamorgan to develop 3 projects, including a new childcare setting at Gladstone Primary School.
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Consultation aims to change Relationship and Sexuality Education in preparation for new curriculum

Developed in line with the recommendations from the expert panel [report](#) published in December last year, the new draft guidance will support schools in implementing a 'whole school approach' to RSE; taking into account curriculum, wider school policies, external sources of support and case studies demonstrating best practice.

A name change from Sex and Relationship Education to Relationship and Sexuality Education has also been actioned through the draft guidance, in order to better support schools in engaging with a range of important topics; such as healthy relationships, domestic violence and LGBT issues.

The announcement was made during a visit to Glyncollen Primary School in Swansea, a pioneer school on the group developing the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience of the new curriculum.

During the visit, the Minister joined in with the intergenerational group the school has adopted, called 'Fun with Friends'. This innovative group brings together the school's pupils and older people from the local community, where they are given tasks to work on together, encouraging both parties to interact and learn from each other.

Education Minister Kirsty Williams said:

"Last year, I announced that we would not wait until the new curriculum to make changes to how RSE is taught in our schools, which is why I've decided to revise the current guidance for schools around RSE now.

"Our new guidance will help schools prepare for the changes to how RSE will be taught in our new curriculum by providing them with additional advice and support regarding implementing a whole school approach to RSE.

"High quality Relationships and Sexuality Education is at the heart of our *Prosperity for All* and *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* strategies.

"The skills learners develop through RSE gives them the tools needed to navigate the wide ranging and fast changing influences that can impact on their ability to form healthy relationships.

"It is the lifelong relationships we forge in our early years, such as family and friends, which can provide the stability, security and support needed to maintain well-being.

“I strongly encourage everyone to contribute to the consultation, to make sure that we get RSE right for our pupils.”

Expert Panel chair and Professor of Childhood Studies at Cardiff University, Emma Renold said:

“I am delighted to hear that the Welsh Government has launched this consultation, and that the revised draft guidance for schools has been informed by and is embracing the expert panel’s evidenced-based vision to transform Relationships and Sexuality Education in Wales.

“Embedded in a whole school approach and underpinned by the core principles of rights, equity, inclusivity, protection and empowerment, this guidance, if accompanied by effective professional development, and the time to deliver, has the potential ensure a relevant, engaging and high quality RSE that meets the needs of all children and young people”

Glyncollen Head Teacher, Anna Bolt said:

“As a pioneer school within the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience developing group, we have been given a unique opportunity to trial innovative methods to change how RSE is taught in Welsh schools.

“Through our intergenerational group, ‘Fun with Friends’, we’ve been able to draw on the local community in order to teach our pupils how to form meaningful relationships, encouraging cohesion and fighting against isolation within the community.”