

[Carl Sargeant pledges to tackle rough sleeping](#)

Addressing a conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of Crisis, the Cabinet Secretary called on organisations to work together to come up with innovative solutions to get people off the streets and into homes of their own.

Carl Sargeant said:

“We have made significant strides by introducing ground-breaking legislation and have already helped to prevent homelessness for over 8,800 households in Wales since the new homelessness legislation came into force. Yet we face a sharp rise in rough sleeping, and know that young people are experiencing increasing problems in finding accommodation as a base from which to build their futures.

“It is simply unacceptable that some of our fellow citizens continue to sleep on our streets with no decent alternative and I am determined to reduce incidents of rough sleeping.”

The Cabinet Secretary said that the causes of rough sleeping are complex, and often start with poor early life experiences, so it is important to provide tailored support to help people overcome their difficulties.

Carl Sargeant added:

“We need to rethink our strategy to help single vulnerable people avoid or escape homelessness. Our aim must be to secure long term solutions as quickly as possible and focus our resources on supporting people to rebuild their lives in their own homes.”

[First Act of Assembly term receives Royal Assent](#)

Land transaction tax will replace stamp duty land tax in Wales when it is devolved in April 2018.

At an official sealing ceremony, the Land Transaction Tax and Anti-avoidance

of Devolved Taxes (Wales) Bill became an Act of the Assembly. It is the first Act of this Assembly term.

A Bill receives Royal Assent when Letters Patent under the Welsh Seal signed with Her Majesty's own hand signifying Her Assent are notified to the Clerk of the Assembly.

The First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones applied the Welsh Seal to the Letters Patent at the sealing ceremony, which was also attended by Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“This Act is a significant step in our devolution journey – for the first time in almost 800 years we will have our own taxes.

“It will bring additional responsibility as we become responsible for raising a proportion of our own money and an opportunity to make a real difference to public services in Wales.”

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“ This Act will enable us to introduce a new made-in-Wales tax on land transactions to replace stamp duty land tax, ensuring public services continue to benefit from the revenues raised by this important tax.

“I would like to thank all those who have helped us shape this Act and look forward to continuing to work with them as it is implemented.”

Accelerated Growth Programme passes the 1000 job creation milestone

To-date the programme – which offers a bespoke package of support helping businesses to grow faster, stronger and for longer – has created 1,200 jobs, helped participating companies attract £21.4m of private sector investment and generate £8.3m worth of exports.

It means that every £1 spent on the programme leverages a further £5 of private sector investment – and a further £2 of exports for the Welsh economy.

The programme, launched just two years ago with EU and Welsh Government funding, is currently supporting 370 companies, including start ups, working across Wales in a wide range of sectors.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“SMEs and start ups are the lifeblood of the Welsh economy and this programme is specifically designed to help these businesses overcome any strategic constraints that may be hampering their true high growth potential.

“This approach is working – these businesses are delivering results, creating jobs, increasing turnover and export sales which in turn are providing benefits to local communities throughout the country. I am pleased to note that a number have already created more than 50 jobs each and some have attracted in excess of £1m of private investment.”

One example is Laser Wire Solutions, based in Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, that has seen exports increase by more than £1m since it joined the programme in 2015 – and which it aims to double over the next twelve months.

The company manufactures laser based equipment that strips ultra-fine wires used in industries such as medical device manufacturing, high speed data and aerospace. The business has tripled turnover in the last three years and employs more than 20 highly skilled engineers.

CEO Paul Taylor said:

“We joined the programme to help us overcome the challenges we faced in rapidly scaling the business and fulfilling our true growth potential. We see ourselves as very much a global business and the support we have had has helped us to focus on growing an international company. The Accelerated Growth Programme has been a fantastic resource as it is so flexible and responsive to our needs as we develop.”

The company has benefited from: specialist 1-2-1 consultancy on market research to identify high value clients; HR advice to support management of people in a growing business and ICT advice to ensure they have robust systems critical for back office management and information.

Wales stands in solidarity with the people of Manchester – First Minister Carwyn Jones

First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, said

“Wales stands in solidarity with the people of Manchester, and all those families who are suffering today. There is a particular cruelty at work in this act directed as it was towards teenagers coming out of a concert. It is difficult to imagine an act more appalling and more senseless.

“I pay tribute to the police, the ambulance service, the NHS in Manchester and all those many others in the city who opened their doors and reached out the hand of help when help was needed. Already we have seen countless stories of bravery, generosity and solidarity which show beyond doubt that the people of Manchester, and this country, will not bow to terrorism. That hope, togetherness and unity will always beat hate, and those who seek to divide us.

“Manchester is well known and well loved to very many Welsh people, especially those living in the north. It has seen terrorism before and I have no doubt about the resilience and strength of that great city.

“I have written both to the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham, expressing our outrage at the attacks and offering our solidarity with the people of Manchester.

“I received a National Security briefing from the Cabinet Office by phone this morning, and we will continue to monitor events as they develop. The priorities at this stage must be to give families the support they need, and allow the police the time and space required to conduct their fast-moving investigations without distraction.

“We must never get used to terrorism – at home, or abroad. We can never accept these attacks as a fact of life. We should continue to call it what it is – alien, cruel and hateful. The message from this Chamber is that we will not be cowed, we will not shrink into the shadows and we will not change our way of life. That is the best tribute we can offer to the people of Manchester today.”

OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría expresses condolences after Manchester attack

23/05/17 – In a letter to British Prime Minister Theresa May, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría wrote today:

“I would like to convey my heartfelt condolences following the devastating attack that took place last night in Manchester, leaving many casualties. Our thoughts and sympathies are especially with the people who lost their lives, as well as their families and all those affected by this horrendous attack.

“The OECD family stands firmly with you during this moment of national grievance, and is ready to assist in any way we can. We will never be defeated by terror and are united with the international community in categorically condemning this sickening act of hatred.”