

Drumming up international business events for Wales

IBTM World is the leading global event for the meetings, incentives, conferences and events industry. The trade show, held from 27th until 29th November 2018, brings together the global meetings industry to showcase meetings destinations from all over the world.

The team will be promoting the country's credentials as a destination for business events which bring millions of pounds in economic benefit to Wales in the form of spending by conference delegates throughout the country.

Wales has a huge potential to draw further business events to our award-winning venues and destinations which already have a fantastic track record in hosting major events.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas said:

“It is vital that we bring as many conferences and events to the region as we can, as they are key to the growth of our economic strength as a nation. Our investment in Venue Cymru in North Wales and, in particular the opening of ICC Wales next year will be a catalyst for putting Wales on the map internationally. We must capitalise on this opportunity and encourage the world to discover what a wonderful place Wales is to visit as a business delegate.

“In 2019 we will be celebrating a Year of Discovery. As part of that, our business events campaign will encourage key industry decision makers to discover Wales for events by highlighting what makes Wales different. It will focus on our important economic sectors including Life Sciences, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Creative Industries, Food and Drink, Energy and Environment, Financial and Professional services and Technology and emphasise our fantastic range of versatile meetings and events space, experiences and activities and our agile and innovative approach to delivering business events.”

The Wales stand at IBTM World will include many of Wales' top venues, destinations and support partners including Cardiff, The Vale Resort, Venue Cymru, Celtic Manor Resort, Think Orchard, and the International Convention Centre Wales which opens in July next year.

Have you had your Welsh rates of income tax letter yet?

The letter from HMRC, accompanied by a Welsh Government leaflet, about Welsh rates of income tax, tells taxpayers living in Wales that their tax code will begin with a C from 6 April.

Taxpayers in Wales will see no difference to the income tax they pay in 2019-20 following the introduction of Welsh rates of income tax. But from 6 April 2019, for the first time, some of the income tax raised in Wales will be paid directly to the Welsh Government to spend on public services in Wales. This is a change from the current system, where all income tax paid by taxpayers living in Wales is paid to the UK government to fund spending across the UK.

The Welsh Government will propose the rates for Welsh rates of income tax and they will be voted on by the National Assembly for Wales.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“The Welsh Government has proposed setting the first Welsh rates of income tax at 10p. This means that when the new arrangements are introduced in April, Welsh taxpayers will continue to pay the same overall income tax rates as English and Northern Irish taxpayers.

“All income tax paid by people living in Wales will continue to be collected as one payment, as usual, but the money raised in Wales will stay in Wales to spend on our public services, such as schools, hospitals and roads.”

The introduction of Welsh rates of income tax follows the successful introduction of land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax in April 2018 – the first Welsh taxes in almost 800 years – which replaced stamp duty land tax and landfill tax.

More information about Welsh rates of income tax is available on gov.wales. You can also follow the campaign on Twitter:

[#MyTaxMyWales](https://twitter.com/MyTaxMyWales) [@WelshTreasury](https://twitter.com/WelshTreasury)

Branching out; new scheme to help

forestry skills to grow

Forests and woodlands provide a wide range of career opportunities which require highly specialised skills such as tree felling, pruning, coppicing, wood chipping and re-planting.

The two year pilot is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund. It's key to the delivery of the [Employability Plan](#) and is designed to fulfil the skills and recruitment needs identified by the forestry sector through:

- Supporting up to 30 new forestry jobs
- Encouraging and supporting farm diversification
- Increasing skills that drive sustainable timber resource
- Creating a network of employer links.

These job creation opportunities play a crucial role in preparing the sector given the current uncertainties concerning Brexit, and take advantage of the green growth opportunities outlined in the [Woodland and Trees Strategy for Wales](#).

Eager to shine a light on the profession and its possible career pathways, Eluned Morgan wants to encourage more learners over 16 to aspire to be foresters

Launching the pilot at the Royal Welsh Winter Fair today, she said:

“This investment in forestry skills and employment support is crucial if we want people to recognise forest and woodland management as a viable career pathway.

“We rely on the forestry industry to sustainably manage our woodlands and provide us with renewable resources, and that would not be possible without the right skills in place.”

Coleg Sir Gâr, well-established experts in the forestry skills sector, will be delivering the apprenticeship programme which will be rolled out across South, Mid and West Wales.

David Davies, Curriculum Head of Land-Based Studies at Coleg Sir Gar, said:

“The industry really needs workers with the right skills and with more incentives like this we can really encourage more people to become foresters.

“We will be supporting the apprentices to complete their studies at Level 2 and 3 in Trees and Timber, Land-based Engineering and Environmental Conservation, equipping them with the skills they

need to further their careers in the forestry industry.”

Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn, said:

“Our woodlands provide renewable resources which are vital to key Welsh industries and we must ensure they are managed correctly.

“Back in June I published an updated woodlands and trees strategy which set out the kind of woodland we want. The specialist skills and knowledge of the sector are essential to its delivery.”

Basic Payments to remain in 2020 to support transition to new Land Management Programme

Speaking at the Hybu Cig Cymru breakfast, the Cabinet Secretary said the decision to keep BPS for a further year will provide reassurance to the industry and give them more time to prepare for the changes to future farm support post-Brexit.

The Cabinet reiterated her commitment to support farmers through a new Land Management Programme, which will provide support in a smarter way than the current BPS.

At the HCC breakfast, the Cabinet Secretary will also announce over 85% of farmers’ BPS 2018 claims will be paid on Monday 3 December. Over £181m will be paid into the bank accounts of over 13,200 Welsh farm businesses. This includes nearly 1,000 farmers who applied for the BPS loan scheme but will now get their BPS on day one.

Farmers who have their BPS claims for 2018 still to be validated for payment are urged to apply before 30 November for an opt-in loan scheme, announced in response to the spell of hot and dry weather earlier this summer.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“We had an overwhelming response to our consultation ‘Brexit and our Land’ and are now considering all the responses in detail.

“We will continue to support farmers post-Brexit but in a smarter way. Maintaining the status quo is not an option and we now have the opportunity to design a new, better system of farm support.

“The BPS is not linked to outcomes, productivity, farmer effort or need. The proposed schemes in the ‘Brexit and our Land’ Consultation, our new Economic Resilience and Public Goods schemes will do so through providing targeted support.

“I realise this signals big change for the sector at an uncertain time. The transition period is vitally important and is why I am today announcing BPS will remain unchanged for a further year in 2020 to provide certainty and help farmers transition smoothly to a new Land Management Programme.

“This extension will ensure farmers have enough time to prepare and adapt to this new approach. It will ensure a multi-year, managed transition and fulfils our commitment no existing schemes will be removed until replacing schemes are ready. We will also consult further on our proposals next year.”

On the payment of Basic Payment Scheme claims, the Cabinet Secretary added:

“I am delighted to announce that over 85% of farmers will receive their BPS payments on the first day. RPW are continuing to validate the remaining claims as quickly as possible and will be contacting farm businesses directly, if their BPS claims are still to be validated.

“This will give farmers every opportunity, if they wish, to apply for the loan scheme I announced in the summer in response to the hot and dry weather. This loan will help ease the pressures on the claimants not receiving their BPS payments early in the payment window.

“I would urge all farmers who are contacted by RPW this week to submit a BPS Loan Application before the deadline on Friday 30 November. All eligible loan applications received by us will be processed and paid by 10th December.”

£1.5 million funding to support women affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford and the Leader of the House and Chief Whip, Julie James announced £1.2 million of EU funding, alongside £300,000 directly

from the Welsh Government for the £1.7 million Limitless programme during a visit to Welsh Women's Aid in Cardiff.

Led by Threshold DAS, an organisation, which helps people who have been affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, the Limitless programme will work with women to help them take the next step to build a brighter future.

It will provide tailored support, from confidence building to helping them gain formal and accredited qualifications, developed with the Welsh Government's Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence team.

Limitless will also help women who are considering setting up a business and becoming self-employed to achieve their goals.

Professor Drakeford said:

"1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence and 1 in 4 women have experienced domestic violence – this cannot be allowed to continue.

"The Welsh Government, working with partners, is fully committed to tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence and helping women who have been affected by these crimes to build a better future with more economic independence.

"I am pleased that on White Ribbon Day I can announce new funding for Threshold DAS, which will provide invaluable support to help women develop confidence and skills to build their careers."

Ms James added:

"I am humbled to meet the many brave women here today who have been affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence and have been able to turn their lives around for the better.

"The Limitless programme will build on the excellent work Threshold DAS is already doing, helping women to rebuild their confidence and lead independent lives. This is another step in the right direction – working towards a Wales where everybody can live fear free."

Victoria Pedicini, chief executive officer of Threshold DAS, said:

"Domestic violence is widespread and deeply ingrained and has a serious impact on the health and wellbeing of women.

"It's our mission not only to help individuals survive but also to grow and thrive and build a life free from domestic abuse and sexual violence, breaking this devastating cycle.

“We are thrilled to have secured European funding for the Limitless project, which presents an opportunity to build on our educational provision to up skill women currently in employment. It will provide an avenue for a change in career path or pave the way to a brighter future.

“Many women who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence often want to give back after receiving support and help others in similar positions. Our new qualification is designed to provide learners with the skills to offer safe and effective support, while building their confidence and self-esteem.

“We are looking forward to working with the Welsh Government and other partners in the sector, to develop the qualification and hope that in time the project will be replicated throughout the whole of Wales.”