

No “Best Before Date” for Welsh Workers

To raise awareness of this fact and encourage more employers to recognise the importance of retraining, retaining and recruiting older workers the Welsh Government has launched a campaign today.

The ‘People don’t have a Best Before Date’ campaign points out the critical importance of older workers to businesses. It is the latest initiative under the Welsh Government’s Age of Investment drive to ensure Wales has the skills it needs to compete in the global marketplace, both now and in the future.

The Welsh Government has teamed up with Learning and Work Institute, Business in the Community (BITC) Cymru and the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales to launch the marketing campaign, which seeks to challenge stereotypes, demonstrate the value of a multigenerational workforce and encourage employers to continually invest in skills throughout their colleagues’ working lives.

A number of workers from a cross-section of exemplar Welsh businesses that have shown a commitment to investing in an all-age workforce are supporting the ‘People don’t have a best before date’ campaign and their stories will feature prominently in the campaign’s promotional materials.

Using a mix of radio and digital advertising and downloadable advice guides and toolkits, the campaign aims to illustrate to employers the tangible business benefits of creating a skilled, effective, multi-generational workforce.

Harding Evans is one of the companies supporting the campaign. Practice Director, Joy Phillips, said the business was committed to investing in the recruitment, retention and retraining of older employees.

“People both young and old want to develop and if you don’t give them the opportunity then you will lose them. We believe having a multi-generational workforce not only benefits the individuals but will address any future skills shortages and again make a difference to the business in the long-term by securing our future owners.”

Commenting on the launch of this campaign and highlighting why it has never been more important for companies to recognise how valuable their older worker are, Skills and Science Minister, Julie James, said:

“Older workers are vital for the future prosperity of our economy and our businesses. Retaining people, developing their skills throughout their working life and recruiting older workers has

never been more critical to business survival as well as growth.

“Our workforce in Wales is getting older and young people joining the labour market will not fill all of the vacancies. This campaign is designed to encourage all employers – but particularly SMEs where the loss of skills and cost of recruitment can be more consequential – that they need older workers to survive and grow.

“We hope it will reinforce the issue to Welsh businesses of all sizes and give them practical advice on how they can manage and retain the skills and experience of their older workers, and appeal to the market of older recruits.”

The campaign is being supported by BITC Cymru, Learning and Work Institute Wales and the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales.

Matt Appleby, Director of BITC Cymru, explained why they were keen to get involved.

“This campaign carries a really important message for Welsh business. With pension changes, people staying fitter and living longer, and many companies struggling to recruit the talent they need, businesses need to make the most of their older workers’ potential and continue to inspire, hire and develop people throughout their working lives.”

David Hagendyk, Director of Learning and Work Institute Wales, said they had been keen to launch the campaign during their Skills for Work Week:

“People often leave work before they are ready to, taking their skills and experience with them. Employers across Wales need to take steps to try and keep their staff longer, by offering flexible working patterns or retraining into different roles.”

Sarah Rochira, Older People’s Commissioner for Wales said that as well as retraining, and retaining employees, the recruitment of new older workers was also a key issue.

“It is important that older people have the opportunity to remain in or regain employment as they can play a key role in the workplace. This campaign will help employers to think more closely about the value of employing older people and utilising their wealth of knowledge and experience in the workplace, as well as the benefits that remaining in work can have on older people’s health and wellbeing.”

The Welsh Government’s Age of Investment campaign promotes the need for wider

skills development to help businesses and individuals to thrive and prosper.

Employers are encouraged to invest more in the skills of their workforce and individuals of all ages are encouraged to develop the skills they need for a successful working life.

For employers looking for more information on how they can invest in the skills of their older workers, the Welsh Government's [Skills Gateway for Business](#) (external link) has a range of advice and guidance.

£20 million extra every year for social services

The funding, which has been made available as a result of consequential funding from the UK Government's March budget, will help ensure the system is sustainable for the future and responds to the pressures facing local government.

The recurrent funding will be invested in three priority areas:

- £9 million will increase funding already made available to manage workforce costs, and promote the stability of the social care market
- £8 million will support work to prevent children from entering care and improve outcomes for those leaving care
- £3 million will be provided to local authorities to support respite for carers given the critical role they play

Prevention is at the heart of the allocation, with the investment designed to pay dividends in the long term.

The extra funding confirmed today means a total of £55 million of additional funding will be invested in social care in 2017-18.

Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, said:

“The Welsh Government has long recognised social services as a sector of national strategic importance, which is why we continue to invest heavily in this area. I am pleased today to confirm an extra £20 million each year will be invested in social services, as a result of the consequential funding we received following March's budget.

“Our focus is on prevention – the funding will have a significant positive impact on people's lives, while at the same time reducing costs for local government in the longer term.

“The investment will improve outcomes for the most vulnerable

people in society. It will be used to improve the sustainability of the social care market, reduce the numbers of children going into care, and improve support for carers.”

National online safety action plan for children and young people to be created – Kirsty Williams

The plan will provide a strategic overview of how the Welsh Government will work with partners to continue to improve online safety support in Wales. The plan will build on the extensive programme already underway in schools to support young people to stay safe online.

The latest figures from the National Survey of Wales show 95% of children aged 7 to 15 used the internet at home and the device most commonly used by these children was a tablet or similar (71%).

Over the last two and a half years, the Welsh Government has strengthened online safety practice in education with:

- 85% of all schools have taken up the 360 degree Safe Cymru tool, which allows schools to check their current online safety policies and provision against national standards and gives practical suggestions to improve and enhance online safety.
- Created the Online Safety Zone on Hwb, the digital learning platform for schools in Wales that can be accessed by teachers, parents and learners.
- Published the ‘Online Safety Resource for Wales’, with practical resources and lesson plans to support schools in their delivery of online safety in the classroom.
- Online safety training sessions have been delivered across all local authorities. Training approximately 2,300 educational professionals, these have provided new skills for teachers and governors in preparing them to deal with issues young people may encounter online.
- In September 2016, we published the Digital Competence Framework, the first element of the new curriculum to be introduced across Wales. This includes a Citizenship Strand that focuses on developing and applying critical thinking skills and strategies. It includes specific elements focused on online behaviour, cyberbullying together with health and well-being.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I am fully committed to keeping our children and young people safe

online. It is our responsibility, as a society, to equip our young people with the skills to be able to think critically and navigate the digital world in a safe and responsible way.

“That is why we have a range of policies in place to help us achieve this, from providing training for teachers and governors to raise their awareness of the issues, teaching new skills to our pupils and providing resources to our schools and parents.

“While we are delivering an extensive programme of online safety activities, there is always scope for more. That is why I am commissioning a national online safety action plan for children and young people. This will provide a strategic overview of how we will continue to enhance online safety support in Wales.”

High growth FinTech firm Delio expands and set to create 30 jobs with Welsh Government support

Delio – founded by Gareth Lewis and David Newman in 2015 – has developed a Configurable, white label platform for financial institutions that helps distribute deal flow and connect high net worth clients with global private market investment opportunities.

The Welsh Government is providing £200,000 repayable business finance that will take the business to the next level, creating 30 new jobs and safeguarding a further seven.

The investment and increase in headcount is essential for Delio to achieve its three-year growth plan and will speed up its expansion plans enabling the business to exploit its IP via a blue chip financial and professional services client base.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Financial Technology is a fast-growth areas for the Welsh economy and one which we are keen to support and develop. Our thriving tech ecosystem with its growing supply chain, combined with our entrepreneurial universities, provide a firm foundation for these sectors to thrive.

“Delio has already been noted for its high growth potential and joins a growing number of emerging, smart Welsh companies that are

clearly making their mark in this market. I am pleased Welsh Government funding will support Delio's expansion plans."

Delio creates private asset platforms for financial services institutions enabling them to appeal to the next generation of high net wealth investors. The bespoke platforms allow their high net worth clients, potential clients and advisors to share, search and access private client opportunities directly using a common platform.

It was born out of the changing needs of today's wealth creators who are increasingly looking to invest directly in opportunities across private equity and debt, social impact and real estate; both direct and via funds. Previously, the offerings of financial institutions were not evolving to accommodate this shift in needs and this is where Delio steps in.

Delio co-founder Gareth Lewis said:

"Our solution helps everyone – from family offices through to global banks – offer more to those seeking to invest directly in private equity, debt, real estate and other asset classes. It provides markets for a range of uses – platforms can connect together multiple institutions on an individual basis so deal flow can be shared both internally and with external partners.

"It can not only be used to improve distribution to existing networks but also to reach new investors and sources of deal flow by sharing opportunities with total control and flexibility."

As well as working with clients in the UK and Europe, Delio is currently in discussions with two of the UK's major financial institutions about rolling out their offering across the banking groups.

In just over a year Delio, which has offices in London, has extended its customer base into Europe – opening an office in Brussels and working on projects across Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg and Australia.

The company was assisted with the grant application process by Mike Fenwick director of grants at professional advisory firm Broomfield & Alexander.

Commenting Mike said:

"Delio is a great example of a financial technology business with significant growth potential and it is great news that the company has decided to grow its operations in Wales with support from the Welsh Government. I wish Gareth and the team every success."

Plans put forward to develop teachers' leadership skills – Kirsty Williams

Updating Assembly Members on plans for a new National Academy for Educational Leadership, Kirsty Williams set out how the new organisation will be arms length from the Welsh Government with the ambition of preparing all leaders in the Welsh education system with the right skills and knowledge to benefit pupils.

The former chief inspector for Estyn Ann Keane has been working with a range of experts to look at how the academy can be established. Her 'shadow board' has made a range of recommendations, including:

- Allowing fair access for teachers to develop their leadership skills.
- Using the latest evidence and research on how leadership in schools makes a difference.
- Developing current leaders in schools while identifying future leaders.

Kirsty Williams said:

"The quality of our education system cannot exceed the quality of our teachers and leadership is central to this.

"Our challenge, as noted by the OECD, is to ensure a national approach to leadership, and make it a prime driver of our education reforms.

"The evidence shows leaders in our school can make a huge difference. I want us to have the right leaders with the right skills to raise standards and set the highest expectations for all our young people.

"I have instructed officials to start scoping the timescale and resources needed to establish the Academy by spring 2018 at the latest. I expect this to be an agile organisation with a small strategic board and led by a chief executive.

"I want to thank Ann Keane for her work as we set up the academy. In a short space of time Ann and shadow board have made good progress on this issue."

Ann Keane said:

"I am very pleased that the Cabinet Secretary has accepted the recommendations of the shadow board. They are the result not only

of our deliberations but of engagement with head teachers and other leaders in the education sector across Wales and an understanding of what happens in other countries.

“We will be sharing more detailed proposals for the Academy in meetings around Wales over the next few weeks to make sure that what is planned for the Academy enables equity of access to high-quality leadership development for leaders and aspiring leaders who work in education sectors in Wales, for the ultimate benefit of learners.

“The Education Secretary wants the academy up and running by 2018. The body is part of a range of Welsh Government reforms including changes to initial teacher training, proposals to revamp teaching standards and new accreditation criteria for initial teacher training providers.”