

Support for Streetlife project to extend outreach work

Safer Wales works with people who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence, street-based sex workers, hate crime and young people at risk.

Their StreetLife project protects women who are exploited through prostitution, working with local authorities, the NHS and other partners. The vehicle helps volunteers go out a few times a week and offer women support, advice and access to services.

Carl Sargeant said:

“I am pleased that with Welsh Government support, Safer Wales have been able to purchase a new vehicle. This has enabled Safer Wales to increase capacity through the recruitment of additional volunteers and deliver outreach work simultaneously across Cardiff and Swansea.”

Welsh Government boost to help up-skill Enterprise Zones

The pilots will enable all employers in Ebbw Vale and Port Talbot Enterprise Zones to access an array of pre-approved training, with Welsh Government providing a 50 percent contribution to the cost.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“I am pleased to announce a new strand of Wales’ Flexible Skills Programme will be piloted within Ebbw Vale and Port Talbot Enterprise Zones. The pilots are designed to facilitate access to a variety of skills training programmes, assisting employers and businesses to up-skill and grow.

“The programme also provides an additional incentive for employers to engage with the Welsh Government and develop mutually beneficial relationships with schools, further education and higher education institutions.

“From Robotics to quality auditing, the areas of training have been specifically selected against the needs of employers operating in

those areas and designed to assist them and enhance the skill sets of their employees, which in turn will help develop the businesses and the local economies”

“I am sure the launch events will be very worthwhile and provide an opportunity for businesses to engage with a new and exciting skills support programme. I’d encourage all employers to get involved.”

The Ebbw Vale pilot will launch at an event being held on 16 May at The General Offices, Ebbw Vale with the Port Talbot pilot launching at the Skills Summit on 23 May at The St Pauls Centre, Port Talbot.

Employers and employees who would like more information about the launch events and the scheme itself are invited to email DFESRM@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Welsh Government invests over £660,000 to develop higher strength steel products to safeguard the industry’s future in Wales

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates has announced that £666,327 of Welsh Government Research and Development Grant Funding is being made available to Tata Steel to help the company develop new and innovative higher strength steel products at its sites in Port Talbot and Llanwern.

The grant funding is in addition to Tata’s own investment in the two year project and will enable the company to develop and test new forms of steel that boast improved functionality and increased technical specifications.

The investment in the project will mean Wales is well placed to respond to global market demand for new and advanced steel goods for the automotive and construction sectors and will place Wales in a more competitive position for the future.

Ken Skates said:

“The Welsh Government has been working to support Wales’ steel workers and this latest offer demonstrates our continued commitment to safeguarding a long-term future for the steel industry in Wales.

“Increasing the level of steel related research and development taking place in Wales is critical if we are to meet the demands of

the market and secure the long term future of Welsh steel.

“Not only will increased research and development enable us to develop new products here in Wales it will also increase our competitiveness, help to reduce costs and enable us to reduce our carbon emissions.

“Ultimately it is part of our ongoing efforts to secure a long term future for our steel workers, their families and the industry as a whole.”

This latest funding agreement is part of a wider package of support from Welsh Government for Tata that includes £4m of funding towards skills development activities across Tata’s Welsh operations and a further £8m investment in its Port Talbot plant which will reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. With the exception of funding for skills, Welsh Government support will be subject to agreeing legally binding conditions with Tata.

Chief Nursing Officer presents awards for excellence in nursing at annual showcase conference

The event was held at Cardiff City Stadium and provided an opportunity for health care workers to share experiences, innovative ideas and good practice. The sixth showcase conference was attended by over 200 delegates, including nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses, health care support workers and students.

During the event, the CNO presented the Betsi Cadwaladr Scholarship Foundation award for excellence to Corinne Hocking, sister in the Assessment and Therapy Unit, Llandudno hospital for her work in developing the infusion service provided at the unit. Debbie Tucker, senior ward sister in Prince Philip hospital was highly commended for her work to develop a new Frailty Support Worker role.

Jean White, Chief Nursing Officer said:

“It was a great honour to present the winners of the Betsi Cadwaladr Scholarship Foundation Award, to those who have achieved excellence in their field of nursing.

“I would also like to thank everyone who has contributed to this event. The enthusiasm and pride we have seen here today are a

credit to all those involved.

“It was fantastic to see nurses from all sectors, as well as health care support workers and students working together, sharing ideas and experiences to improve patient care.”

The event was opened by Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, who said:

“I am glad to have the opportunity to spend time with so many nurses, midwives and health care support workers today.

“It is a chance for me to recognize and pay tribute to the fantastic work that nurses are involved in to make sure that patients have the best possible care, and I want to take this opportunity to say thank you.

“The Welsh Government has made a commitment to attract and train more nurses across Wales and we have just launched a nurse recruitment campaign, promoting the benefits of training, working and living in Wales. We are also extending the NHS Wales bursary scheme for a further year.”

Looked after children must have same educational opportunities as their peers – Kirsty Williams

The Cabinet Secretary has reported on progress to better support the education of children who are looked after and outlined her plans for action to continue to raise their educational attainment and make sure they have the same opportunities as their peers.

An annual report on the three year plan for looked after children highlights the progress being made, including an improvement in GCSE results. In 2016 23 per cent of children who are looked after achieved the equivalent of five GCSEs at grade A*–C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics, a 6 percentage points increase on 2015.

The Welsh Government has also worked with Cardiff University – CASCADE to create a new online hub to share information and resources focusing on children in care to help improve their educational outcomes.

The Education Secretary has committed to:

- Looking at the training available to schools and further education colleges with a responsibility for children who are looked after.
- Getting local authorities to review the roles of key workers with a responsibility for children who are looked after.
- Working with the third sector to consider better ways of supporting children who are often difficult to engage in education.
- Making better use of the data available to help looked after children.

The Education Secretary recently announced that the Pupil Development Grant will be extended to provide support to three year old looked after children during their early years in schools. This is part of more than £90m this year to help disadvantaged pupils.

Kirsty Williams said:

“Central to our national mission of education reform is for all children to do well and reach their potential, whatever their background. Looked after children must have the same opportunities as their peers. We have seen an excellent improvement in the GCSE results of those in care and we have committed more funding to build on this, but I want to go further.

“Children often enter care come from a background of family crisis or breakdown. While we can not change their personal experiences, we will continue to support them through their education and prepare them for adulthood.

“Research shows that all too often that simply by being ‘in care’ the expectations placed on these young people reduce. We are taking action to face this issue head on and will continue to do so.”