

Mission possible for Welsh tech companies to supply the space sector

Sponsored by Welsh Government and supported by ESTnet (the network for the Welsh technology sector), the event at Cardiff City Stadium is open to all technology companies in Wales, especially those working in software technologies including big data, analytics, internet of things and cyber-security.

The key message to Welsh tech companies is that many of the tools, services, technologies and products they develop can be utilised by the space industry which is actively looking to other sectors for the development of products and technologies to support growth.

The event is backed by a number of high profile organisations with speakers from both the UK and European Space Agencies, The Satellite Applications Catapult, Airbus, Seraphim Capital and Thales Alenia Space.

Opportunities for Welsh businesses to benefit from the wider space industry will also be highlighted later this month (Wednesday 26 April) at an event organised by Aberystwyth University entitled **Space and Earth Monitoring: identifying business growth opportunities**.

It is aimed at businesses interested in developing their knowledge and involvement with the space sector and will provide information on possible funding and collaborative opportunities and on skills development.

It is targeted at a range of companies from environmental consultancies to UAV specialists and from software developers to satellite developers and specialists in robotics and photonics.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“These events illustrate the growing prospects that the space industry offers Welsh businesses and present a great opportunity to learn more about the sector.

“The key message is that there are opportunities for savvy SMEs in the tech sector to play an important part in supporting the growth of the space sector and that this presents a very real next market opportunity for Welsh Tech companies.”

There will be a mix of presentations to inform and introduce businesses to current and future opportunities within the space industries as well as the support available through Innovate UK, the KTN, academic institutions and the Catapults.

Avril Lewis, managing director of the ESTnet, said:

“The development of the UK space industry presents enormous potential for the Welsh technology sector.

“As the network for the Wales’ fast-growing technology industry, we know the valuable contribution our members can make to drive the development of the UK’s space efforts. It is essential that we ensure our members are given every chance to explore such opportunities and pursue valuable partnerships with organisations and companies working within the UK space industry.”

Smoking at all time low as Wales marks 10th anniversary of ban

The percentage of adults smoking is now at a record low. The Welsh Health Survey 2015 showed that 19% of adults smoke, a significant decrease from 25% in 2005/6. This has exceeded the Welsh Government target of reducing smoking rates to 20% by 2016.

The Minister marked the occasion by visiting Malpas Court Primary School in Newport. The school has recently achieved the National Quality Award as part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) and is the 130th School in Wales to do so. Tobacco use is one of the topics covered under the scheme. Pupils talked to the Minister about smoking and shared their thoughts on what a smokefree Wales means to them.

Clare Harvey, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator at Malpas Court Primary School said:

“As a smokefree school, we provide an environment that protects and promotes the health and wellbeing of the entire school community.

Through our PSE curriculum pupils learn how smoking is addictive, expensive and could have a detrimental effect on their health. As a Healthy School, we are invested in educating our pupils about such issues which protects them and our future generations. We are proud to be one of a small number of schools in Newport to be awarded the Healthy Schools NQA and we encourage our pupils to embrace this in daily school life.”

To help continue this success, the Minister has today announced funding of £417,000 over three years to ASH Wales, the leading third sector organisation working for a smokefree Wales. The funding will contribute to the delivery of the Welsh Government’s Tobacco Control Action Plan, which aims to reduce the prevalence of adult smoking to 16% by 2020.

Chief Executive of the tobacco control campaign group ASH Wales Cymru, Suzanne Cass, said:

“The smoking ban is one of the most important steps forward our nation has taken to protect our health. Since the ban was implemented in 2007, we have seen an incredible change in attitudes towards smoking which has resulted in 5% less people and 94,000 fewer adults still smoking.

“Thanks to this incredible funding from Welsh Government, we can continue to work together to support the remaining 19% of those still addicted to tobacco to choose smokefree and lead a healthier, happier life for themselves and their families.”

The Minister said:

“The ban on smoking in indoor public places has been a huge success. The percentage of adults smoking is now at a record low. This will improve people’s health and life expectancy, and will reduce pressures on the NHS.

“It also means that future generations are protected from the effects of smoking, and do not grow up seeing it as a normal activity.

“We are continuing our efforts to support smokers to quit by signposting them to free NHS cessation services. If passed, the Public Health Bill will ban smoking in playgrounds, schools and hospital grounds, to continue the remarkable culture-change we have seen around smoking in Wales in recent years. I want everyone in Wales to ‘Choose Smokefree’.”

[HPV vaccine programme for gay men introduced](#)

From 1st April, the human papillomavirus vaccine is being offered to all MSM up to 45 years of age who attend sexual health clinics.

The roll-out comes after the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which provides independent, expert advice to governments across the UK, recommended the introduction of a targeted programme of this type.

HPV infections which persist can lead to some forms of cancers or cause

genital warts. The HPV vaccine is very effective in reducing these risks.

Public Health Minister, Rebecca Evans, said:

“A HPV vaccine programme for adolescent girls has been in place since 2008. Vaccinating the majority of girls in the UK, means that their future male partners get some protection too. However boys who become MSM will get far less of this protection.

“I am pleased that a new targeted HPV vaccination programme for gay men up to the age of 45 has been introduced across Wales. Gay men attending clinics for sexual health services will now be offered the vaccine.”

The vaccine is also being offered on a case-by-case basis to people who are considered to be at risk, including MSM who are over 45, transgender men and women, sex workers and HIV-positive men and women.

Aldi's new Welsh regional Distribution Centre opens having created 422 new jobs – with a further 400 jobs in the pipeline across South Wales

The news was warmly welcomed by Economy Secretary Ken Skates when he launched the company's new 40,000 sq. mt. distribution centre and regional offices on the Capital Business Park in Wentloog.

This major development, which will serve as a hub for Aldi's growing portfolio of stores across South Wales and the South West of England, was supported with £4.5m business finance from the Welsh Government.

Speaking at the opening Ken Skates said the Welsh Government is continuing to support Aldi's expansion plans across South Wales targeting Cardiff, Swansea and west Wales which will create a significant number of additional jobs and career opportunities over the next four years.

Ken Skates described the retail sector as one of the most important sectors for Wales, both in numbers of businesses and the number of people working in the sector and the range of job opportunities they provided.

He said:

“Retail is one of those sectors where both youth and experience are equally valued and each can find its place in either sustaining or driving the business forward.

“Supermarkets, along with their various operational support structures, provide different opportunities – from that first Saturday job for young people to fully fledged careers for those seeking supervisory and management roles.

“For many young people it is almost a rite of passage into the world of work and in many cases entire families can be employed by the same business.

“I also know that Aldi offers career paths for graduates and given its wider global reach, the opportunity to gain vital international experience of working in some of the world’s largest market places which is very welcome.”

He said the opening of the centre was a mark of confidence in the Welsh economy that has already created hundreds of jobs as well as opportunities for Welsh food producers.

Dan Oakenfull, Managing Director of the Cardiff Regional Distribution Centre, said:

“South Wales and the South West of England continue to be areas of significant growth for us, and the new distribution centre will help support our immediate and future expansion across the regions.

“The centre has created over 420 jobs for people living in Cardiff and the surrounding areas.”

The Welsh Government has run a number of Meet the Buyer events with Aldi and will continue to discuss further opportunities for Welsh suppliers. Last month Aldi announced it has introduced five new Welsh lamb products to its stores in North Wales. It follows a similar initiative in South Wales last year and means that all of Aldi’s 38 stores in Wales will now stock an extensive range of fresh Welsh lamb products all year round.

Welsh Government support ensured the new centre was based in Wales as alternative sites in England were under consideration.

Funding was towards the abnormal land development costs of more than £5m to get the site ready for construction. Unforeseen ground conditions and hydrological and ecological restraint meant the construction of the new centre would not have been viable without funding support.

Sharp announces £9.5m expansion that will double staff numbers creating more than 70 jobs with Welsh Government support

Sharp Clinical Services (UK) Ltd, which provides global clinical trial services, is relocating from its current facilities in Crickhowell which are at full capacity and investing in the upgrading and fit-out of much larger premises in Rhymney.

The investment is backed by £500,000 business finance from the Welsh Government which ensured the expansion went ahead in Wales as another location in the Midlands was under consideration.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This is a significant expansion project for the life sciences sector in Wales and will effectively embed a large international healthcare plc in Wales, boosting our growing reputation as a key location for pharma service companies.

“I am delighted Welsh Government support helped secure this major investment for Wales that will create a range of skilled employment opportunities for local people and also bring a disused industrial building back into economic use.”

Sharp UK’s base in Crickhowell is the European hub of the Group’s clinical services division and provides global clinical trial services including supplies, drug formulation, manufacturing, packaging, distribution and commercial packaging.

It is currently located in two separate buildings on Elvicta Business Park providing 45,000 sq. ft. of accommodation which is at full capacity with no room to expand and take on new business.

The expansion will enable the company to compete for major clinical and commercial packaging contracts with large pharmaceutical companies. The initial phase of the project will involve the acquisition and renovation of a 75,000 sq ft facility – part of a 108,000 sq ft space within a ten acre site providing space for future expansion and potentially further jobs.

Wales’ Skills and Science Minister, Julie James said:

“Over the last few years the Welsh Government has invested millions in supporting Life Sciences in Wales and as one of our key priority sectors we are keen to see this important area grow even more.

“In Wales, the sector currently employs around 11,000 people in over 360 companies and its worth circa £2bn to the Welsh economy and we are committed to enhancing this further and building Wales’ STEM skills capabilities and capacity.

“This expansion is welcome news for the sector, the local community and the wider Welsh economy and shows how Wales’ healthcare and biotech industries are going from strength to strength.”

Frank Lis, President of Sharp Clinical Services, said about the development,

“We have always felt that a critical part of the services we offer is the expertise of our teams. This new facility will allow us to grow both the Sharp team in Wales to support current business and to expand our clinical services portfolio to new customers, at a larger scale”.

Sharp Clinical Services (UK) Ltd is part of the Sharp Packaging Services division of UDG Healthcare plc, a leading international provider of clinical, commercial, communications and packaging services to the health care industry. It employs more than 7000 people at operations across 23 countries and delivers services to more than 50 countries.