

Sell2Wales reaches contract milestone

Every year, more than £6 billion pounds worth of opportunities are advertised through Sell2Wales, which is part of Business Wales, the Welsh Government's flagship business support programme. And this figure is rising as a growing number of public and private sector buyers are using Sell2Wales to make their tenders more accessible.

Of the 22,000 contracts awarded so far Sell2Wales has reported that approximately two thirds have been to Welsh suppliers, and that 75 per cent of these have been to Welsh SME's.

The 22,000-contract milestone was reached with the awarding of work to Aberystwyth-based Aber Heating Engineers who won a contract to supply the National Library of Wales with chillers, worth over £280,000.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said

"I am pleased to confirm that Sell2Wales' has now facilitated the award of 22,000 private and public sector contracts. This important milestone demonstrates Sell2Wales' success in providing an easy to use link between business and the public sector at large.

"The range of contracts available via the platform is huge, encompassing everything from engineering, marketing and IT, to construction, health and safety advice and professional consultancy, and offering opportunities for companies of all shapes and sizes. It is particularly heartening to see the number of Welsh SME's securing business through the service.

"Sell2Wales really does offer opportunities for businesses of all types to grow and develop simply by signing-up to the platform and receiving its regular, tailored alerts about work on offer. I would encourage companies not currently signed up to find out more about this valuable service."

Sell2Wales offers businesses the chance to work with every aspect of the public sector in Wales including; local authorities, the NHS, universities and colleges, and UK and Welsh Government departments and agencies.

It was the sheer scope of opportunity that attracted Aber Heating Engineers to the portal as Mark Sandford, Director, explains: "Opportunities to win work arise frequently and the Sell2Wales portal is very simple to use, allowing you to easily search for opportunities and submit appropriate bids for work either through Sell2Wales or via its links to other portals.

"Sell2Wales has become an important part of our new business strategy. To think we are the winners of the 22,000th contract

award is mind boggling and we are delighted to be a part of the Sell2Wales success story.”

[Apply now for funding to help with costs of school uniform and sports kit](#)

The new fund, PDG Access, is targeted at learners who are eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after and are going into reception class or Year 7 in September and aged 4 or 11 in special schools, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Units or Pupil Referral Units.

The fund will also cover funding for equipment for out of school hours trips, including outdoor learning, and equipment for activities within the curriculum, such as design and technology.

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams and WLGA Leader Debbie Wilcox have urged parents/carers of eligible children to speak to their council today about applying for the new funding.

Kirsty Williams said:

“We want all our pupils to have access to the same opportunities – whether in or outside of school – and PDG Access is about making sure that happens.

“We know that the costs of school uniform, sports kit and equipment for other activities can all add up so it’s really important that parents and carers are aware of this new fund and know where to apply.

“If you think you’re eligible for PDG Access then speak to your council today and you could soon receive £125 to help with these costs.”

Councillor Debbie Wilcox (Newport), WLGA Spokesperson for Education said:

“I would encourage any parents or carers who think they’re eligible for this fund to contact their local authority.

“Local authorities want to support all our pupils to benefit from the same opportunities, which is why WLGA will look forward to continuing discussions with Welsh Government to ensure that such vital funds are maintained and protected.”

Ending the physical punishment of children will protect their rights

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies will today publish a summary of the consultation responses received to the Welsh Government consultation about its plans to introduce legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment.

The consultation, which was launched in January and closed in April 2018, was designed to gather feedback from the public and key stakeholders to further develop a Bill and to help the Welsh Government to address any concerns as the legislation develops.

More than 1,890 responses were received to the consultation, from a range of individuals, organisations and groups. More than 270 people also attended one of the engagement events held across Wales.

The consultation found just over half of respondents (50.3%) agreed and 48.1% disagreed with the statement that the legislative proposal will achieve the aim of protecting children's rights; 1.5% said "don't know".

The First Minister has announced the Welsh Government will introduce a Bill to remove the defence of reasonable punishment in year three of the legislative programme (between September 2018 and July 2019).

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"As a government, we are committed to introducing legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment, which will prohibit the physical punishment of children by parents and those acting in loco parentis. This reinforces our long-standing commitment to children's rights.

"The consultation we launched earlier this year was intended to help inform our legislative proposals, ensuring we develop the very best legislation to help us achieve our aim. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to respond. The responses received will be considered during the development of the Bill.

"While the primary responsibility for raising children lies with parents, the Welsh Government has a very specific role in creating a society in which children can grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. Our commitment to introduce legislation, alongside support for parents, is key to us achieving success in this endeavour."

The Welsh Government is developing the Bill as part of a much wider package of support for children and their parents. This includes:

- the Parenting: Give It Time campaign, which aims to help parents to do the best job they can, by providing positive parenting tips and information
- access to a range of services to promote positive parenting delivered by local government, health, education, social services, social justice and the third sector
- more targeted interventions, such as Flying Start and Families First, which offer support and advice to parents.

[Funding to develop and progress rail projects in Wrexham](#)

The funding will allow the completion of development work to upgrade the Wrexham North Junction as a priority project.

This will enable improved journey times from Wrexham General station going north, allowing trains to pass through the single line section up to Rossett more quickly, which will also contribute towards enabling increased frequency of services.

The investment is also being used to consider a range of other interventions that can further support increased services. These include improvements to signalling and associated infrastructure as well as level crossings in the area.

Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted Welsh Government investment will support Transport for Wales to develop and progress these vital projects with the aim of increasing the frequency and improving journey times of trains operating through the Wrexham area.

“It is our clear ambition to see improvements for the benefit of rail users and this funding will ascertain what can be delivered for that exact purpose.

“This is yet another great example of the steps we are taking a responsible government and again highlights the historic underfunding by the UK Government in our rail network who have spent just 1.5 per cent of their rail infrastructure budget in Wales, despite it accounting for 11 per cent of the track in England and Wales, since 2011.

“Welsh Government investment is improving transport infrastructure in North Wales and comes on the back of my recent announcement of the development of a new Transport and Business Hub to totally regenerate the area around Wrexham General Station.

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