

# [News story: Welsh Secretary: Let's turn Wales into an innovation nation](#)

Alun Cairns has today (6 Nov) delivered a clarion call to Welsh businesses, urging them to seize UK Government support and take a leap into the world of innovation.

Innovate UK is holding a series of events around the UK to introduce a new pilot programme for innovation loans.

The Secretary of State attended today's event in Cardiff's Tramshed Tech where he called on the 200+ business representatives in the room to have the drive to innovate and apply for the financial support available from the UK Government.

Innovation Loans will offer affordable, patient, flexible funding for later-stage research and development projects with a clear route to commercial success.

Innovate UK will announce loans through future competitions and offer them to growth-oriented small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that are able to demonstrate that they:

- have a high quality innovation project
- will be able to afford the interest payments and loan repayments
- need public sector support as they can't access project finance on standard commercial terms

## **Alun Cairns said:**

Innovation can not only revolutionise the way we live our lives, it can bring real opportunities for our businesses to tap into and grow.

The breadth and depth of the innovative and inspiring projects the UK Government supports never fails to astound me. Including here in Wales.

From hydrogen powered cars made in Powys to funding the build of the UK's first office that creates more power than it uses at Swansea University, Innovate UK funding is helping Wales to be at the centre of the new innovations that change the way we do business, the way we live and be at the forefront of developing the solutions for tomorrow.

But there is so much more potential amongst our business community, just waiting to be realised. I encourage Welsh SMEs to take the leap of faith, have the drive to innovate and discover the

financial support available from the UK Government to do so.

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## **Press release: Multi-agency exercise to test temporary barriers at Beales Corner in Bewdley**

The Environment Agency's field team, along with support from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Bewdley Town Council and other partners, will be testing out the deployment of temporary flood barriers and the local community flood plan.

The exercise, which will start at 09:00am, will provide an opportunity to test our barrier deployment plan and procedures in this training exercise. We will be testing our working arrangements with partners and the local Community Flood Group, so the barriers can be quickly and safely erected when needed during a flood, with minimum disruption to residents and businesses.

Pedestrians and traffic will be unable to use this section of road and pathway between Millside Court to where it joins with Kidderminster Road, via the Stourport Road. Access to Bewdley Bridge and the town will remain fully accessible by using the Kidderminster Road.

Mark Bowers, Flood Risk Manager said:

This is a test of our operational equipment and local community flood plan. Although we have carried out numerous barrier deployment exercises at our training depots, doing it on location will give our field team invaluable experience.

It's important to remember that we can never protect 100% against flooding, and we can't guarantee that specific communities will always have access to temporary barriers.

Local residents and businesses should be prepared by checking their flood risk, signing up to flood warnings and finding out what they can do to protect themselves and their property by visiting the Prepare for Flooding page on GOV.UK or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Nick Farress, Bewdley Town Council Clerk added:

This will be a vital practice run to test our new community led

flood plan which has been developed to support the Environment Agency in retaining the temporary barrier at Beale's Corner. The Town Council are very grateful to our band of volunteers who have put themselves forward to help with this vital work".

The temporary barrier deployment is also being supported by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service who is a key partner in the project. Wyre Forest Station Commander, Daryl Justice, said:

Our involvement with the Bewdley Flood Barrier response is new arrangement that will see our Firefighters add even more value to the Wyre Forest community.

When flooding is predicted our on-call firefighters will be given a period of notice which will minimise the impact on their primary employment and, although deployed under the direction of the Environment Agency, they will remain available for life threatening emergencies.

This is one of the first initiatives of its type in the UK and is a great example of how fire crews can add value in other areas. It also supports Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's wider vision of 'Saving More Lives'.

Environment Agency staff and Community Flood Group members will be available during the exercise to provide the public with information about access restrictions, alternative routes and general flood advice. The exercise is likely to conclude around 13:00pm.

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## **[Press release: Bees' Needs Champions awards celebrate pollinator heroes](#)**

A 'Bee City' and a successful reintroduction scheme for the short-haired bumblebee are among the innovative projects highlighted today by Defra Minister Lord Gardiner as inspirational examples of action to protect our pollinators.

The annual [Bees' Needs](#) Champions awards, hosted at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, celebrated 17 bee boosting projects from volunteers, schools, charities and councils across the country which are helping pollinators thrive both in the countryside and in our towns and cities.

From buzzing bumble bees to beautiful butterflies, the UK's 1,500 species of pollinators play a crucial role, helping our flowers, fruit trees and crops

to grow and contributing £400-680million per year due to improved productivity.

Speaking at the Bees' Needs Champions Awards, Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity Lord Gardiner said:

We must all be thankful for our essential pollinators who do such vital work on our behalf, flying from crop to crop, tree to tree, helping us to grow our food. The champions I had the pleasure to meet today are doing exceptional things to return the favour and look after our pollinators. We must not leave them to it. We can all play a part.

Whether it is leaving grass uncut to give bees a home over winter, or inspiring young people to be the pollinator protectors of the future, our combined efforts make a real difference.

Among the champion projects creating a buzz were the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's short-haired bumblebee re-introduction scheme and the Secret Garden project in Salisbury with their 'Bee City' and 'Bee Trail'.

Goldthorpe Primary School in Barnsley and St Albans Primary School in Havant also featured for their pollinator-encouraging enterprises, including building bee hotels, creating wildlife meadows and campaigning in the local community. St Albans school has set up a 'pollinator promise' to get the local community involved, too.

Outdoor education teacher at St Albans Primary School, Julie Newman, said:

By working together as a community, Pollinator Promise is about inspiring others to give hungry and homeless bees food and shelter. Each small individual change adds up to make a big difference to pollinators and people.

Friends of the Earth Bee Cause campaigner, Paul de Zylva, said:

This year's Bees' Needs Champions show how anyone anywhere can help our bees and other vital pollinators not just to survive but to thrive.

The ten year [National Pollinator Strategy](#) is now in its fourth year and relies on action by businesses, community groups, farmers, land owners and local councils to improve conditions for pollinators. Doing so is essential to restore nature across the nation.

With winter fast approaching, bees need our help more than ever to provide them with the food and shelter they need to survive the cold.

Everyone can follow our three top tips on how we can all help pollinators this winter. You do not have to be an expert gardener to make a difference: from installing urban window boxes to planting the right bulbs, everyone can play their part to ensure bees have food and a home.

- Plant flowers, shrubs and trees that thrive in winter. The evergreen mahonia is excellent winter food for bees, while the pendant bells of winter flowering clematis can give pollinators a sugary energy boost. Ivy plants are also an ideal source of food for bees in late autumn – avoid cutting them down.
- Leave suitable places for hibernation undisturbed. Letting areas of a lawn grow long until the spring can provide a hibernation home while cool, north-facing banks are ideal places for bees to burrow. The hollow tubes of dead stems of plants in borders can also serve as a great nesting spot.
- Planting early flowering bulbs like crocus, primrose, snowdrop or coltsfoot that flower in February and March to help support bees and pollinators looking for an early feed. Winter is also the perfect time to plant bee-friendly trees, such as acacia, blackthorn and hazel.

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## **Press release: Lorry driver with foot on dashboard among 4,000 caught by unmarked HGV cab**

The driver, stopped by Humberside Police, was travelling from the M18 onto the M62 near Goole.

The footage is [available to watch at](#)

Another driver pulled over by Devon and Cornwall Police was found to have sent 10 replies to 10 texts within one hour; a driver in Surrey was seen trying to put toothpaste on a toothbrush; and a driver in the East Midlands was spotted steering with his knees while he ate his lunch and used his mobile phone.

The offenders were among more than 4,000 dangerous drivers on England's roads caught by a single unmarked HGV cab over the past two years.

Latest statistics show that mobile phone use is a factor in an average of two deaths on the roads every month, with 124 people losing their lives over the past 5 years and 521 suffering a serious injury.

Richard Leonard, Highways England's Head of Road Safety, said:

The HGV cab, which is funded by Highways England, has been patrolling motorways and major A roads over the past couple of years with the aim of improving road safety.

We've found that the vast majority of drivers are sensible behind the wheel but a few have got into bad habits, or are simply ignoring the law and putting themselves and others at risk.

It's shocking that around two thirds of the drivers that were stopped were using their phones when the statistics show that mobile phone use contributes to two deaths every month on the roads.

The footage of the driver with his foot up on the dashboard is particularly alarming, and I dread to think what would have happened if he had needed to brake suddenly. We will continue to use the cab to tackle deaths and serious injuries and to encourage people to improve how they drive.

The elevated position of the cab allows police officers to film unsafe driving behaviour by pulling up alongside vehicles on motorways and major A roads. Drivers are then pulled over by police cars following behind.

Nearly two thirds of the drivers who were stopped were illegally using a mobile phone while driving, putting themselves and others at risk.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

Police forces are committed to keeping our roads safe and partnership with Highways England is absolutely crucial for that, as we can see from the thousands of offences detected by the HGV cab. Together with targeted local action by police officers, this has become an important element of our intelligence-led operations against dangerous driving.

Driving whilst distracted is completely unacceptable and police are also making use of the tougher new penalties to stop this dangerous behaviour by ensuring that offenders face the full weight of law.

People have to think about the consequences of their actions – a moment's distraction can change innocent lives. It is never a risk worth taking.

In total, 28 police forces have taken part in the HGV cab safety initiative since it began in April 2015, pulling over 4,176 drivers in relation to 5,039 offences.

Officers gave verbal advice to 388 drivers, issued 838 fixed or graduated penalty notices, and filed 3,318 traffic offence reports – usually requiring

attendance at a driver education course. There were also 113 prosecutions for more serious offences.

Reasons for stopping drivers included:

- using mobile phones – 2,508
- not wearing seatbelts – 901
- not in proper control of vehicles – 253
- speeding – 249

Earlier this year, the government doubled the penalty for drivers caught using their phones at the wheel. Motorists now receive 6 points on their licence and a £200 fine – up from the previous 3 points and £100 fine.

A new THINK! road safety video was also launched last month, directed by the team behind the video for Pharrell Williams's hit song Happy, to highlight the dangers of using your phone while driving.

It uses innovative filming, is shot in the style of a music video with an edgy soundtrack from celebrated musician Aphex Twin, and includes numerous pink kittens to highlight how much drivers miss if they are distracted by looking at their handheld phone.

The video is [available to watch at](#)

More details about the law on mobile phone use are available the [Using mobile phones when driving page](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# **[News story: Innovate 2017: take part online](#)**

[Innovate 2017](#) is happening on 8 and 9 November 2017 at the [National Exhibition Centre](#) (NEC) in Birmingham – and you can follow the event at work or from home.

The focus is on UK innovation's role in tackling some of the biggest global

challenges. You can learn about what these challenges mean for individuals, businesses and government, through our social media channels, alongside the opportunities for entrepreneurs to come up with their own solutions.

## **Keep up with the action**

During the 2 days we'll be hosting a number of live video interviews on Facebook.

We will be speaking with some of the UK's top innovators across various sectors and industries, including the winners of the 2 awards that will be handed out. These are the innovation in design award, voted for by Innovate UK colleagues, and the peer-to-peer award, which is voted for by those attending the event.

We'll also provide a look around the centre itself so you can experience the event from afar.

Elsbeth Finch, Indigo& and Tera Allas, McKinsey Global Institute, at Innovate 2016.

## **Have your say**

As well as Facebook, there's the opportunity to get involved in 2 of the panel debates, which will be streaming live on Twitter. You'll be able to watch the debate and tweet any questions on the same screen. We'll be putting the best ones to the speakers to answer.

### **Automating the world – 2:30pm on 8 November 2017**

Are robots really going to take over jobs? And how do you manage this as a business? The session will explore automation and the fourth industrial revolution, looking at the benefits – and potential downsides – of an increased use of data and machine autonomy.

Debating the topic are:

### **Securing the cyber world – 9:45am on 9 November 2017**

The interconnectedness of the world makes the prospect of a cyber war very real. Are our connections and transactions really secure? How can we prepare for the next cyber attack? This session, which features a former hacker, will look at tackling these problems.

Debating the topic are:

## **Still time to attend in person**

If you want to attend in person there's still time to register. Tickets are available now and will be on the day as well. It costs £150 for a one day ticket or £199 for both days.



# Innovate 2016 highlights

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