

Ken Skates will visit China to cement Welsh links

Ken Skates announced his impending visit to China at the North Wales Export Forum – one of two events being held to reinforce the Welsh Government's focus on exports and exporters as the UK prepares for life outside of the EU.

The Economy Secretary said:

“I am pleased to have attended both the South Wales and North Wales Export Forum and to have spoken directly to some of our most influential exporters as we prepare for life outside the EU.

“Increasing the value of exports and the number of exporters in Wales have been central pillars of our economic strategy for some time and at this time of change it is more important than ever that we focus on strengthening our trade relations with countries across the world.

“We already have a comprehensive range of support to help companies export and have been proactive in some of the world's largest markets for some time.

“And I am pleased to confirm that next month I will be joining 18 Welsh companies as part of their next trade mission to China with a view to expanding our trade relations and building on what is already a strong and thriving relationship.

“As part of my trip I will be visiting Chongqing and Shanghai and am optimistic that both my visit and the trade mission will enable Welsh companies to win new export business in China.

“This is borne out by experience as my visit and the trade mission to Japan last October has already resulted in £1.4m of orders and potential contracts for the businesses that travelled there.

“I think we all recognise there are challenging times ahead for businesses. I am determined to make sure that we do what we can to help businesses maintain and, indeed, grow their export business as the UK transitions out of the EU.”

One of the companies attending the February trade mission to China and Hong Kong is Wrexham based, specialist manufacturer Conren. Their company export manager, Veronica Dawson said:

“Exporting is key to our business and we currently export to over 30 markets around the world. It has greatly benefitted our business, providing an essential source of revenue, and it has also encouraged us to be more innovative as we develop our products to meet challenges in the global marketplace.

“The Welsh Government has been key to our export success, providing support and advice as we look to new markets. The Export Forum provided a great opportunity for us to meet other exporters from across Wales and hear how other companies are preparing for the future, and we are very much looking forward to next month’s trade mission.”

[News story: Chief Secretary welcomes an investment of more than £100 million creating 100 jobs in Oxford medical research](#)

David Gauke, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, was in Oxford today (30 January 2017) to welcome global healthcare company Novo Nordisk’s announcement of an investment of more than £100 million in the city, creating 100 skilled jobs in diabetic drug discovery in a new research centre.

Laboratory facilities are being created in a new state-of-the-art Oxford University building, which has received £12 million of government funding. Two floors of the building will be occupied by Novo Nordisk and two floors by start-up companies created from ongoing Oxford University research.

Novo Nordisk’s research will help discover new ways of treating type 2 diabetes, one of the world’s biggest public health issues.

The Chief Secretary earlier hosted a round table with senior representatives of Oxford technology companies, covering sectors including autonomous vehicles, biotechnology and reforestation. They discussed government support, including the Industrial Strategy, as well as opportunities and challenges for the future.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke said:

I welcome Novo Nordisk’s investment at Oxford University, which is a vote of confidence in the UK’s position as a world-leader in science and research.

A thriving science and technology sector is key to supporting economic growth, and the government has committed to support further research and innovation in all sectors with an additional £4.7 billion R&D spending by 2020-21.

We are also listening to our industries about their challenges and ambitions. That's why I sat down today with representatives from some of Britain's outstanding technology companies based in Oxford.

The UK's strengths in science, research and innovation are a major focus of the [government's industrial strategy](#).

The government has announced a range of support for science and technology, including:

- an additional £4.7 billion by 2020-21 of R&D spending – the largest increase by any government since 1979
- this is in addition to existing commitments from the spending review to protect science resource funding in real terms over the parliament and spend £6.9 billion on capital infrastructure between 2015-2021 *a new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, to support business-university collaboration

Meeting attendees:

- Ryan Cawood, CEO Oxford Genetics
- Dr Gordon Sanghera, CEO Nanopore Technologies
- Mike Clary, CEO Bodle Technologies
- Eliot Forster, CEO Immunocore
- Professor Andrew Harrison, CEO Diamond Light Source
- Dr Graeme Smith, CEO Oxbotica

[Press release: Man given suspended jail term over illegal Wakefield waste site](#)

A Dewsbury man has been handed a 26-week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, for illegally dumping waste on disused land in Horbury, Wakefield.

Samuel Joseph Stringer Hunter, 25, of Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury, was sentenced by Kirklees Magistrates' Court on 27 January following an Environment Agency investigation.

Hunter had denied two environmental offences but was found guilty after a trial.

Lorna Matchett, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that investigating officers discovered the illegal activities in July 2014.

Hunter had been storing waste on land near Bridge Road, near the River Calder behind the Horbury Bridge Industrial Estate, although no environmental permits were in place for the operation.

There were several piles of mixed waste containing treated and untreated wood waste and plastics, and skips belonging to the Hunter Group or Huddersfield Skip Services, both of which were Hunter was involved with at the time.

The defendant claimed that these waste activities were allowed because they were covered by waste permitting exemptions. But the Environment Agency said the waste was being stored in breach of the exemptions: there was too much waste, it was of a type not compliant with the exemptions and it was stored for too long.

Hunter was told to clear the waste from the site, but inspections between October 2014 and January 2015 revealed that much of it remained. There were also signs that waste had been deposited into the ground, which was contaminated with plastic, glass, a trainer and mixed construction and demolition waste.

The court heard that through running the site illegally, Hunter avoided £4,120 in permitting fees and £5,148 by not installing the correct surfacing to prevent pollution to the ground. It is estimated that Hunter received between £6,400 and £18,720 for the waste he brought onto the site.

In sentencing, the chair of the bench said:

These offences were so serious that custody was the only option.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said after the hearing:

Environmental permitting regulations exist to protect the environment and local communities from the risk of harm. Hunter's activities on this site posed a pollution risk and a fire risk that could have affected the nearby railway line. Hunter also undercut legitimate businesses by avoiding mandatory permitting and infrastructure costs.

We hope this case demonstrates the importance of environmental compliance. Anyone who breaks the rules will be pursued. Anyone who believes waste is being dumped illegally is urged to report the matter to our incident hotline on 0800 807060 so we can investigate.

Prior to sentencing, Hunter told the court in mitigation that he had cleaned

up the waste in the shortest possible time.

In addition to the suspended jail term, he was ordered to undertake a rehabilitation activity of 15 days under supervision, and to carry out 300 hours of unpaid work within the next 12 months. Hunter must also pay legal costs of £4,640 and a victim surcharge of £150.

[News story: Precision medicine in South Africa: apply for funding](#)

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UK businesses can apply for a share of £1.5 million to work with South African partners on non-communicable diseases and child health.

Innovate UK has up to £1.5 million to invest in business projects to develop affordable gene-based diagnostics for non-communicable diseases and child health in South Africa.

The competition aims to encourage innovative partnerships between the UK and South Africa. It is co-funded by Innovate UK and the [South African Medical Research Council](#) (SAMRC).

Projects should seek to develop affordable gene-based diagnostic solutions and targeted treatments for one or more of the following health challenges in South Africa:

- diabetes
- cardiovascular disease
- cancer
- child mortality

The competition is administered by the [Newton Fund](#). Projects must demonstrate how they can have a positive social, economic and/or environmental impact on the wider South African population.

The Newton Fund is part of the UK's official development assistance. It uses science and innovation partnerships to promote economic development and social welfare of partner countries.

- the competition is open, and the registration deadline is midday 10 May

2017

- projects must be led by a UK business working with at least one South African business or research organisation
 - we expect projects to range in size from £300,000 to £500,000 on the UK side and to last up to 36 months
 - UK businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
 - South African partners will be funded by SAMRC
 - a briefing event for potential applicants takes place on 3 February 2017
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The Scottish Conservatives have announced they will bring forward a bill on Frank's Law if the SNP continues to drag its heels on the matter.

Public health spokesman Miles Briggs said it was essential the campaign – which would enable those under the age of 65 suffering from conditions like dementia to access free care – was made law.

And he said if the Scottish Government doesn't take action, he will introduce a Private Member's Bill at Holyrood, which is likely to win majority support.

Last week, leaders of all parties except the SNP united outside the Scottish Parliament to call for the law to be introduced.

Ruth Davidson, along with Kezia Dugdale, Patrick Harvie and Willie Rennie, were presented with party-themed campaign t-shirts by Amanda Kopel, the wife of former Dundee United player Frank, who the appeal is named after.

However, the yellow SNP t-shirt remained empty, as the party failed to send a single representative to the event.

But Mr Briggs said, now there's a parliamentary majority in favour of Frank's Law, he will act if the Scottish Government doesn't.

Last month, the Scottish Conservatives revealed the number of under 65s being treated for dementia was increasing, another indication that the law had to be introduced.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

“There is a majority in the Scottish Parliament in favour of Frank’s Law and ministers need to recognise this and implement it without further delay.

“Hopefully the Scottish Government will see sense and put this in place without me having to go through the parliamentary process of a Member’s Bill.

“But if it does not, I will bring forward such a bill and invite all MSPs to support it to get this put into legislation.

“When you talk to Amanda Kopel and other campaigners you find out there are a lot of people who really need Frank’s Law to happen.

“For so many families across Scotland, time is of the essence. As such, I will arrange a meeting with the Scottish Parliament’s Non-Government Bills Unit to start early work on a potential bill.”

For more information on Frank’s Law, visit:

<http://frankslaw.org/>

The Scottish Conservatives have consistently supported the introduction of this legislation:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/12/sharp-rise-in-u65s-with-dementia-shows-need-for-franks-law/>