

New Economic Contract for Businesses seeking Welsh Government support

The Economic Contract is one of the key policies of the Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan, which was launched by Economy Secretary, Ken Skates in December.

The Plan sets out the Welsh Government's new approach to economic development, which is focussed on building strong foundations for inclusive growth, supercharging the industries of the future and empowering Wales' regions.

Under the new Economic Contract, businesses seeking Welsh Government support will need to commit to the principles of growth, fair work, reducing carbon footprints, health, skills and learning in the workplace.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Our new Economic Contract is the start of a new and dynamic relationship between Welsh Government and business that is based on the principle of public investment with a social purpose.

"It means businesses seeking our support will actively collaborate with us and commit to the principles that we believe in – the principles of growth, fair work, health, skills and learning and decarbonisation.

"This contract is about engagement, incentive and spreading good practice, a genuine reciprocal 'something for something' approach that encourages business and Government to explore and test how a company contributes to the wealth and wellbeing of its workers and wider community.

"Many successful companies are already taking steps to adopt responsible business and employment practices and we want to encourage and support others to take a similar path."

The launch of the Economic Contract follows four months of positive engagement with the business community that has helped to shape the Economic Action Plan's operating model now coming into force.

The Welsh Government's five Calls to Action, designed to future proof business, have also now come into effect.

This means from now on, companies looking to qualify for business finance will be required to develop proposals that align to at least one of the Calls to Action. These focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, R&D and automation, exports and trade, high quality employment and skills and

decarbonisation.

The Welsh Government is also :

- Launching its Economy Futures Fund which, in response to calls from business, streamlines and simplifies six Economy, Transport and Tourism funds, with more to follow later.
- Unveiling membership of its new Ministerial Advisory Board, Chaired by Sir Adrian Webb, which will inform policy making and provide strong and challenging external advice. The Ministerial Advisory Board will replace a number of Welsh Government sector panels, groups and boards that are now being phased out, simplifying the way the Welsh Government receives external advice.
- Establishing a cross-Government Delivery Board, chaired by Economy Secretary, Ken Skates to ensure the principles of the Economic Action Plan are embedded right across Government.

The Economy Secretary added:

“I have been really pleased by the way our Economic Action Plan has been received by business, and impressed by the contribution they have made to shaping it.

“ I am excited that we are now moving to the implementation phase with changes to the way we engage with and support business and to how we receive external advice. All of this is geared to securing inclusive growth, future proofing businesses and empowering our people and places to become more productive.

“Today is just the start, and I look forward to implementing the next phase of the plan, which will focus on our new approach to regional economic development and wider cross-government activity, later in the year.”

[Caergwrle set to become Cadw's 43rd castle](#)

The castle dates back to 1277 having initially been built by Dafydd ap Gruffudd. It holds a unique place in Welsh history as the last castle to be built by a native Welsh Prince and played a significant role in events which culminated in Llywelyn's death near Builth in 1282 and Dafydd's own capture and gruesome execution at Shrewsbury in 1283.

Lord Elis-Thomas said:

From Caerphilly to Caernarfon, Conwy to Castell Coch, we are a country blessed with some of the most magnificent, imposing castles in the world, attracting record visitor numbers and boosting the economies of many of our towns and cities.

But there are a whole host of castles on our doorsteps that are, perhaps, less well known but both individually and as a collective serve as precious physical reminders of our history and our heritage. These, to me, are the true Welsh castles – those built or inhabited by distinguished Welshmen of the past – by Llywelyn, Lord Rhys and Glyndwr amongst others. Welsh Princes who fought for and over Wales and helped shape the Wales and Welshness we recognise today.

Cadw already cares for many of these castles of the Welsh princes including Dinefwr and Dryslwyn in the south and Dolbadarn and Castell y Bere in the north. I'm delighted that we've been able to work with the community council to add Caergwrle to their number – ensuring it remains open, cared for and accessible to all.

The Minister added:

I am keen for us to make more of the castles of our famous Welsh princes and their legacy and to make sure the long, proud history of Wales is told and understood through our castles and supporting materials. I hope to say more on how I hope to achieve this in the coming months. In the meantime, I'd encourage those across Wales who have not yet visited their local castle or want to understand more about the legends that live through our stone walls to explore and appreciate their local sites.

Caergwrle is a special place and I look forward to this new partnership ensuring the good work of the community council is continued – making sure as many people as possible can continue to enjoy it for years to come.

Christine Cunnah, Chairman Cllr of Hope Community Council added:

Hope Community Council is absolutely delighted to be in partnership with Cadw, which will ensure that our unique historical site of Caergwrle Castle is protected for future generations to enjoy. Together, we will aim to provide a special place for the local community and visitors. The Council would like to thank Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas for supporting this venture and also it is extremely grateful to Cadw for recognising the great historical significance of this site.

Special delivery – Mothers in Africa set to benefit from Wales’ royal gift

The £1,500 donation, made on behalf of the people of Wales to mark the Royal wedding, will fund a Welsh midwife to travel to Africa to train up to 30 local midwives and teach them ways of making pregnancy and child birth safer.

The First Minister said:

“I have written to the royal couple to convey our best wishes and congratulations on their marriage. Our wedding gift to them will fund a Welsh midwife to travel to some of the poorest African countries, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, to help local midwives make being pregnant and giving birth safer.

“This funding will help save the lives of mothers and babies in Sub Saharan Africa. I am sure the royal couple will agree, this is a blooming marvellous gift from the people of Wales.”

Life for African Mothers has been supporting hospitals in Sub-Saharan Africa for 12 years and, during this time, there has been a significant fall in the number of women who die while pregnant or giving birth. The charity provides medication to treat post-partum haemorrhage and runs midwifery training to help local midwives improve care for both mother and baby.

Today, the First Minister will meet with Angela Gorman, CEO of Life for African Mothers. She said:

“This is great news. I am delighted with the First Minister’s decision to support ‘Life for African Mothers’. The charity supports mothers during childbirth and this funding will mean we can send a midwife to hold skills workshops in some of the poorest African countries, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia.

“The initiative is also about a 2 way sharing of experiences. The midwives who volunteer return to their workplace in Wales with new skills they have also learnt from their time in Africa.”

“We must all work together to challenge ageist stereotypes” – Huw Irranca-Davies

Speaking at the Welsh Senate of Older People in Cardiff, the Minister will say he wants Wales to be a nation that recognises and values the many and varied contributions older people make to creating vibrant and supportive communities.

He will say he’s committed to working with older people to “combat ageist stereotypes and to ensure people of all ages can work together to create the vibrant and supportive communities that we all want.”

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies will say:

“We all know that people in Wales are living longer and healthier lives, and this is to be celebrated. However, it does concern me many older people feel negative images of ageing in the media are creating conflict between the generations.

“In order to publically demonstrate the Welsh Government’s commitment to older people, last week the First Minister announced that my job title has been changed to include older people. I am delighted that this allows me to more visibly act as a champion for older people’s rights, something which is really important to me.

“Changing my job title is not merely a tokenistic gesture. It will be underpinned by a programme of work that will build on Phase 3 of the Strategy for Older People. We will focus on the key issues older people tell us matter to them and I will ensure you are involved at every stage of this process.

“As Minister for Older People, I will work with you to combat ageist stereotypes and to ensure people of all ages can work together to create the vibrant and supportive communities that we all want.”

New project helping people into work

in the childcare sector

The Minister visited the Li'l Angels Day Nursery, based in Shotton, Deeside today to meet some of the people taking part in the Welsh Government-funded National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru "Childcare Works" project.

The project, which has been operating in Flintshire and Wrexham in North Wales and has targeted those over the age of 50, aims to provide those who are currently unemployed and not in education and training (NEET) with the introductory skills they need to re-enter the workforce and develop a career in the childcare sector.

The project helps deliver the Welsh Government's 10 year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan, which sets out plans to build capacity and capability across the childcare sector in Wales, as well as supporting Ministers' plans to create high quality jobs closer to people's homes.

During the visit, the Minister met Gary Sibbald, who was previously out of work but has been taking part in a work placement at the nursery.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"It was an absolute pleasure to visit the Li'l Angels Day Nursery today. I was delighted to see how our investment in developing the childcare sector in Wales is not only creating high quality childcare places, but also creating high quality jobs for local people.

"I was also delighted to meet Gary, who is training to work in the childcare sector under the Childcare Works project. It was great to hear how he's had such a great impact on the children – especially on one little girl who would not talk, who is now speaking, since he started working there."

NDNA has supported 16 participants across a range of nursery settings, working in partnership with nursery owners to provide the participants with a range of childcare specific training, transferable skills and paid work placements.

The placements have supported the participants to secure future employment opportunities and some participants have already started their new employment opportunities within the sector.

Gary, who is currently on placement with L'il Angels Nursery in Shotton said:

"I was made to feel at ease from day one. All staff and children are making my new journey very exciting and I am learning something new every day."

Sue, his manager at L'il Angels, said

“We are very proud and pleased to have been a setting for this project and that the Minister has chosen to visit us, following the placement.”

Lorraine, who is on placement with Kingfisher House Day Nursery, Hawarden, said:

“An amazing opportunity to learn new vocational skills in a supportive environment, which has ultimately led to a new career in the childcare sector. Thank you to NDNA and the Welsh Government for all your help!”

Huw Irranca-Davies added:

“I was delighted to attend the Childcare Works Celebration event and present the participants with their certificates to celebrate their success. This project has helped to attract new skills and experience into the sector, supporting the creation of childcare employment opportunities whilst enabling the participants to use their new skills to start the formal training required for the sector.”

Later in the day, the Minister will present certificates at the National Day Nurseries Association Cymru Celebration event to the successful participants of the Childcare Works project.