

Minister appoints Two Members to the Careers Wales Board

The appointments will run from 17 November 2017 to 16 November 2020.

Careers Wales, a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the Welsh Government, provides high quality, bilingual, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to people of all ages.

Liz Harris is a retired NHS professional with considerable nursing and management experience. She is an experienced manager with expertise in workforce planning and learning and development.

Emma Richards is a Senior Manager in Chwarae Teg leading on the design and delivery of leadership, management and career development opportunities for women across Wales. Following open competition she returns to the Board for a second time bringing a wealth of Board level experience.

The post of Board Member is an unpaid voluntary position with a commitment of a minimum 8 days. Neither appointee has declared any political activity.

Announcing the appointments, the Minister said:

“I attach great importance to role of the CCDG Board and the accountability relationship between Chair, Board Members and Welsh Ministers.”

“The CCDG Board has a key role in delivering Careers Wales’ remit and ensuring the service achieves maximum impact. I look forward to working with them.”

First Minister launches 2018 programme of events to mark centenary of the First World War

Programme 2018 is the latest in the Welsh Government’s series of annual Cymru’n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 brochures, which highlights events and projects of Welsh interest, taking place in Wales and further afield throughout the year. It also includes a range of articles written by partner organisations on commemorative plans and historical events. The launch coincides with the First World War Partnership Day 2018 held in the Pierhead

Building, Cardiff Bay on 30 January.

This year's focus will be the centenary of the Armistice on Sunday 11 November. The National Service of Remembrance will take place at the National War Memorial in Cardiff in the morning to be followed by another commemorative service later in the day.

This year also marks the centenary of the Royal Air Force. The centenary itself will be marked by special events, activities and initiatives throughout 2018. Wales will play a part when the National Aircraft Tour comes to Cardiff City Hall Gardens from the 16th – 20th May 2018. Other events will be held across Wales enabling the public to engage in the centenary. These activities follow on from an event held at Llanystumdwy on 12 January to mark the centenary of Prime Minister David Lloyd George's role in the formation of the RAF.

Other key events include 14-18 NOW, the UK's cultural programme for the First World War centenary, launching their project Now the Hero / Nawr yr Arwr, as part of Swansea International Festival in September.

Nawr Yr Arwr (Now The Hero) is an immersive theatrical experience from Welsh artist Marc Rees that will take visitors on an extraordinary journey through three intertwining narratives of war via a military storming, a raucous wedding party, a protest dance and an ancient wake. The work is inspired by the little-known British Empire Panels painted by Frank Brangwyn that were originally commissioned by the House of Lords to commemorate the First World War, and includes a new requiem composed by double Oscar-nominee Jóhann Jóhannsson.

Another highlight will be a film by Peter Jackson, best known for directing The Lord of the Rings trilogy, who has been commissioned by 14-18 NOW and the Imperial War Museums to create a film on the First World War. Footage from the Imperial War Museums' extensive First World War film archive and audio from the IWM and BBC archives will be restored, and the film will be screened in cinemas and schools across the UK, before being broadcast on BBC One in November 2018. Accompanying resources are being developed and distributed to secondary schools and the Welsh Government is providing funding to ensure engagement across Wales.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914 – 1918 gives us the opportunity to remember the lives of those who served in the First World War.

"Programme 2018 continues the outstanding level of engagement across the whole of the country, which acknowledges the sacrifices made by the people of Wales, as well as the rest of the UK and allied forces, during the First World War.

"It is vital that future generations understand how this terrible war affected Modern Wales, and ensures that we learn from the past in safeguarding a peaceful future.

“The Welsh Government is committed to continuing to support and develop targeted commemorative activities and to present a strong national identity for Wales’ centenary commemoration of the First World War as part of its Cymru’n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme, which will continue until March 2020.”

To find out more about events happening around Wales in 2018, go to www.walesremembers.org

[Next steps to further extend fast broadband in Wales](#)

Since Superfast Cymru began in 2013, the availability of superfast broadband across Wales has more than doubled thanks directly to this project and investment

The latest Ofcom report (December 2017) shows that Wales now has the highest availability of superfast broadband over 30Mbps amongst the devolved nations despite the challenges of the country’s topography.

A thorough testing and verification process is currently under way on the latest data presented by Openreach with the aim of announcing the project’s final figures in the spring.

The new measures, backed by funding of £80m, include a new rollout scheme currently out to tender which encourages rural delivery, business prioritisation and ultrafast 100Mbps services.

Under the scheme solutions will be encouraged in areas suffering the lowest download speeds along with lower 4G mobile data coverage. It will include safeguards to ensure communities are kept up to date as far as possible on whether they will be included.

Also included in the new measures are a review and continuation of the current voucher schemes for those without access to superfast broadband and ongoing work to develop a parallel community focussed scheme. A dedicated broadband outreach team will work with clusters of homes or businesses to procure a solution.

Finally, Openreach will also work an additional two months under the current agreement to connect 2,500 premises at no extra cost to the Welsh Government.

In addition, Openreach has been invited to provide details of structures built but not completed, and the Welsh Government will look at how these can be completed under the existing grant agreement.

Julie James said:

“Through Superfast Cymru we have fundamentally altered the broadband landscape in Wales, bringing superfast broadband to areas of Wales that simply would not have been connected.

“We must not lose sight of the significant achievement that this large scale engineering project represents. Homes and businesses the length and breadth of Wales are now enjoying the benefits of this investment and accessing digital services.

“Despite the success of Superfast Cymru in transforming broadband connectivity across Wales, there is clearly more work to be done and this Government is committed to taking further action.

“The suite of measures I am announcing today, when taken together, will help us to realise the ambition described in Taking Wales Forward to bring people together digitally by offering fast reliable broadband to every property in Wales.

“Together, the successor scheme, the community scheme and our voucher schemes will provide a comprehensive package of interventions that will help us meet the challenges ahead.”

£1.4m EU boost for new aquaculture project

The £2m Smartaqua project will see scientists from Swansea University’s Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research (CSAR) work with Welsh businesses to use advanced technology and develop ground-breaking new products and services for the specialised aquaculture market.

Professor Drakeford said:

“This scheme will drive forward scientific research to help businesses further develop aquaculture industry in Wales.

“This is a specialised sector with the potential to provide significant economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas.”

Over the next four years, the project will focus on methods for cleaner fish production; fish for biomedical research and the aquarium trade and develop locally-sourced and more environmentally-friendly aquafeeds and nutraceuticals.

The project aims to register new patents, help businesses to create jobs and expand the industry in Wales. Businesses in North Wales, South West Wales and the South Wales Valleys are set to benefit.

Professor Carlos Garcia de Leaniz, from CSAR, said:

“We are delighted to receive EU funding for this exciting venture, which will enable us to work with industry to develop existing and new products and technologies; bring them to market, and in turn, generate much-needed employment opportunities, particularly for businesses in rural communities.”

CSAR is Wales' only centre of excellence for sustainable aquaculture and is the UK's leading centre on recirculation technology and non-food aquaculture. It was established in 2003 with backing from the Welsh Government, EU funds and Swansea University.

Finance Secretary encouraged by discussions with peers as Brexit Bill enters 2nd reading in House of Lords

Professor Drakeford visited the House of Lords on Monday (29 January) to brief peers on his concerns with the EU Withdrawal Bill along with Scottish Brexit Secretary Mike Russell, Lord Jim Wallace, the former Deputy First Minister of Scotland, Welsh Government officials and former diplomat Sir Emyr Jones Parry.

The Finance Secretary presented his concerns to peers about clause 11 and other aspects of the bill which, as it currently stands, will mean powers in areas which are devolved to the National Assembly will have new restrictions placed on them once we leave the EU.

The Welsh and Scottish governments published amendments to the bill in September but these were defeated in the House of Commons as a result of the UK government opposition to them. Despite undertakings to do so, the government has not yet brought forward its own amendments to address the concerns about clause 11 and other aspects of the bill. The Welsh and Scottish Governments are therefore urging the House of Lords to consider supporting similar amendments, if the UK government does not bring forward its own amendments which are agreed with the Devolved Administrations.

Ever since the EU Withdrawal Bill, was published, the Welsh Government has resisted its power grab in devolved areas. Working with Scottish counterparts

and peers from both sides of the House of Lords, efforts will be redoubled to bring about the necessary substantial change to it.

Mark Drakeford said:

“I am encouraged by the fantastic turnout and strong support from peers yesterday. I will work hard with peers from all sides of the House to ensure they have the briefing and information necessary to address this issue. What we now need is that the UK Government will come up with a satisfactory amendment early enough to mean a fight is not necessary. Be in no doubt, however, that if such an amendment is not produced, we will do everything we can to defeat this aspect of the bill and to bring about the changes which protect the devolution settlement across the UK.”

A vote upon the inclusion of amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill will take place later in February.