

Economy Secretary officially opens Carpeo Estate Planning in Newport to create 300 jobs over five years

Carpeo began operating in Newport in July with the employment of 24 people at its new contact centre.

Three months later, on the day of the official launch, there are now 80 people working at the site in Cleppa Park and the company is on course to meet its target of employing 300 people there by 2022.

The company had been deciding between Teeside and Wales for the location of this project but chose Newport following an offer of Welsh Government support.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted to be in Newport to officially open Carpeo Estates Planning’s first office in Wales.

“As a dynamic company with ambitious growth plans, Carpeo are a valuable addition to our growing and vibrant customer service sector which now employs in excess of 30,000 people in over 200 centres across Wales.

“As a Government we have worked closely with Carpeo to support their business plans and to provide strong employment and training opportunities . Carpeo’s plan to employ 300 people here in Newport by 2022 will make them a significant local employer and I wish them every success as they work to grow their operations.”

Carpeo Estate Planning’s Chief Executive Officer Mike Minahan said:

“Having sat on the board of the Welsh Contact Centre Forum for the past 15 years, I know that Wales has a range of competitive advantages to offer contact centre businesses. The quality of people available and their experience of working in a regulated services market is a huge pull. On the softer side, the Welsh accent is sympathetic and consoling, particularly important in our market.

“We’re hugely proud to be bringing these well-paid roles and good employment opportunities to Newport.”

For a small monthly fee, members of the new subscription-based Carpeo Estate

Planning service have access to affordable wills and funeral planning products. Members can also access a discount portal enabling them to save thousands a year on key household purchases, including at supermarkets Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Asda.

Innovative software that has been tried and tested is utilised to identify those people for whom these products and services are particularly relevant and a potential market of 3 million people has been identified.

Cabinet Secretary for Education officially opens Campus 6 building project at Pembrokeshire College

The project was match funded through the allocation of £3.3 million from the 21st Century Schools and Education programme and delivers a new building and the refurbishment of the original campus buildings.

The new building includes additional science laboratories, classrooms, study areas, a fitness suite and sports hall as well as additional hair and beauty training rooms as part of the college's delivery of vocational courses.

The overall aim is that new learners will benefit from exposure to a greater range of courses, in larger, more stimulating classes, which will in turn lead to better outcomes. It is also envisaged that the increase in the range of post-16 options will attract more learners into post-16 learning, and have a positive effect on those from economically deprived areas.

Kirsty Williams said

"I am pleased that the Welsh Government has been able to support this £6.6 million project, with funding of £3.3 million from the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.

"Campus 6 really is a shining example of what can be achieved through collaboration, partnership working and placing the learner at the heart of decision making.

The creation of Campus 6 gives learners the widest choice of subjects in the county covering both academic and vocational options; and avoids the need for learners to travel between centres to access their learning opportunities.

All learners can also benefit from the high quality sports facilities that are part of this new development."

Devolution – the age of the recycling revolution

The [final recycling figures for 2016/17](#) show the average combined reuse, recycling and composting rate across Wales' 22 Local Authorities was 64%, an increase of 4 percentage points on last year's final figure and 59 percentage points higher than the rate in 1998/99, when the data was first collected following devolution. It is also 6 percentage points higher than the current Statutory Recycling Target of 58%.

Welcoming the statistics, the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“Wales leads the way in the UK when it comes to recycling, with these latest figures confirming we are exceeding our ambitious 58% target. It is also encouraging to see Ceredigion has already met our 2025 target of 70%.”

[Further figures released today](#) (external link) show the amount of biodegradable municipal waste Local Authorities are sending to landfill has reduced by 89% since the first full year of the scheme in 2005-06.

Authorities sent 90,827 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill in 2016-17, 77% less than the legal allowance of 390,000 tonnes. All 22 Local Authorities achieved their individual allocated allowance.

Reducing the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill helps to cut greenhouse gas emissions, preventing the production and release of methane into the air from landfill sites.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“It is also great to see the amount of waste we are generating continues to fall year on year. This achievement is thanks to Local Authorities and householders' commitment to recycling. Together, we can continue to make improvements.”

Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, added:

“It is great to see that Local Authorities are stepping up to meet this challenge. Less waste going to landfill shows that we are managing our resources in a better, more sustainable way.

“However, considerable amounts of recyclable material are still being thrown away. This demonstrates further opportunities to keep resources in use for as long as possible as we aim to move towards a circular economy.”

“Producing less waste and maximising recycling will ensure that we manage our limited resources in a better way, which is good for the people, economy and environment of Wales.”

First meeting of the Welsh Revenue Authority board takes place

There are less than 6 months to go before the first Welsh taxes in almost 800 years – land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax – are introduced in Wales. Both taxes will be collected by the WRA when they are introduced on 1 April 2018.

The first meeting of the WRA’s board today in Treforest, is a significant milestone in the establishment of the new organisation, which is the first non-Ministerial department to be created in Wales.

The board discussions will concentrate on the legal establishment of the WRA and its governance arrangements. Over the coming months the focus will shift to the development of the WRA’s functions and its relationship with its customers, in particular the development of the Taxpayer’s Charter.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford announced the appointment of 5 non-executive board members and the WRA’s chief executive Dyfed Alsop, last month.

Kathryn Bishop, chair of the Welsh Revenue Authority, said:

“Taxpayers will want guidance as the new Welsh taxes are introduced and reassurance that the collection process is efficient and secure. The organisation is already working hard on this, bringing in expertise from elsewhere in Wales and in the UK.”

Commenting on what customers can expect from the WRA, Mr Alsop said:

“I want to build an organisation that is confident in delivery and inspires confidence from the people who will use it. The WRA will work in partnership with taxpayers and tax professionals, supporting them in paying tax.

“On a practical level, we’re creating a new digital organisation without a paper based history. We don’t have legacy IT systems or contracts and we also don’t have an existing cultural reputation. I’d hope this means we can shape the new organisation to respond to meet the needs of the people of Wales.”

Over the course of the next 6 months, future customers of the WRA should continue to direct any queries about taxes to HMRC – this includes stamp duty land tax and landfill tax.

All updates about land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax, which will replace stamp duty land tax and landfill tax from April 2018, including guidance for the new taxes, will be published on the new WRA website. Customer registration to the tax system will be available from early 2018.

It will deliver Welsh Ministers’ tax policy and follow the strategic direction set by them but will be operationally independent.

For further information about the implementation of the WRA, contact WRAimplementation@gov.wales.

[Ken Skates leads partners in push for greater road safety in Wales](#)

The Cabinet Secretary opened a high level Road Safety in Wales event in Cardiff today, bringing together key decision makers in the emergency services and local authorities. The event looked ahead to how new and emerging technologies will impact on safety on Welsh roads and how behaviour change models can be applied to reduce casualties, in particular among the most high risk groups of motorcyclists and young people.

Economy and Infrastructure Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The next decade will likely see record Welsh Government investment in our roads – alongside much needed improvements to our cycleways, footpaths, railways and airports.

“In investing in a network fit for modern Wales, we’ve been very clear that safety has to remain paramount, a principle which is reflected in our ambitious target to reduce those killed or seriously injured by 40% by 2020.

“Working in partnership with local authorities, the UK Government, emergency services and road safety organisations we have made excellent progress towards this target, with our roads now amongst

the safest in the world. Every death on our roads is one too many, however, and I am very clear that we must continue to look at how we can improve things further.

“It’s for this reason that we’ve continued to invest millions of pounds through the Road Safety Revenue grant, the Roads Safety Capital Grant and supporting safety cameras through Go Safe, amongst others. It’s disappointing, and a source of much frustration, therefore that one potential game changer for road safety improvements, graduated driver licencing, is still not being considered by UK Government.

“It’s my belief that this is the single biggest measure we could now see to significantly improve road safety on our roads and I’d again call on the UK Government to reassess their position and act to help ensure inexperienced drivers, and those who share the road with them, are as well protected as possible.”

The Road Safety in Wales event brings decision makers across Wales together to review and update the Welsh Government’s road safety framework. This framework informs how partners in Wales work together to ensure Welsh roads are as safe as possible, setting out targets and the actions being taken to achieve them.