

## Applications now open for the Welsh Enterprise Zone Business Rates Scheme

The scheme focuses on small and medium sized enterprises that are demonstrating business growth, new starts or businesses that are increasing the size of their full time workforce.

Consideration will also be given to other business activity related to sectors, increased productivity and innovation/R&D.

Applications for the 2016/17 financial year can be made until **Friday, 31st March 2017**.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This latest round of the Enterprise Zone Rates Scheme has the potential to make a real difference to businesses, helping to significantly cut their rates bills which in turn can improve cash flow and enable companies to make investments in their growing businesses.

“We first launched the scheme in 2012 and between 2012 -2016 around £9million has been offered to more than 200 eligible businesses located in seven of our Enterprise Zones, with the offer extended to Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone following its designation last year.”

For more information about the Scheme, businesses can ring the Business Wales helpline on freephone 03000 6 03000 or contact the EZBRS team at [EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk) for an application form.

---

## Green Light for Porthcawl Maritime Centre

The £5.5 million Porthcawl Maritime Centre is part of the Welsh Government's wider Tourism Attractor Destination programme which aims to create 11 must visit destinations across Wales.

Also, backed with funds from the Big Lottery, the Welsh Government as well as private and third sector funds, the Maritime Centre is the first phase of the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus programme which aims to transform Porthcawl into a high quality signature destination within Wales that will attract new

visitors to the area.

The development has the potential to accommodate 55 jobs as well as supporting jobs during the construction phase, providing employment opportunities for local people.

The Minister said:

“The coast is the county’s Unique Selling Point and the reason why most visitors come to the area. But to attract more visitors to the area we need to provide more exemplary facilities and services for residents and visitors. Porthcawl Maritime Centre will fulfil this need by providing an exciting and innovative ‘year round’ family centred attraction right on the waterfront.

“Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales’ profile in this globally competitive market.

“The Seaquest Coastal Science and Discovery Centre is a very exciting project which will inspire young people to engage with science and consider careers in science. Congratulations to everybody who has been involved in bringing the project to this point and I wish you all the very best for the delivery phase.”

Welcoming the decision, Mike Clarke, Chairman of Porthcawl Harbourside CIC said:

“It is impossible to fully describe how excited and proud the Porthcawl Harbourside CIC team are to receive the go-ahead for this project. This huge vote of confidence in our team and in the community of Porthcawl is tremendous. We believe this is possibly the biggest community-conceived and led tourism project in the UK, and we are now able to tender for the construction and get started.”

Construction on the Maritime Centre is expected to begin in mid-2017. Over the next five years, the Tourism Attractor Destinations programme will see more than £85 million of EU, Welsh Government, Private and Charitable funds invested in tourism projects across Wales.

---

# HRH The Duke of York brings Pitch@Palace On Tour to Wales

Pitch@Palace offers entrepreneurs the chance to get their Tech business idea in front of a global audience of influencers who can catapult it to the next level.

Pitch@Palace was founded by The Duke of York in 2014 to support entrepreneurs with the amplification and acceleration of their business ideas by connecting them with potential supporters including CEOs, investors, elevators and key business partners.

Pitch@Palace On Tour comes to Cardiff's Tramshed on Friday Feb 24 at the invitation of Cardiff Start, a community support hub for technology start-ups and business professionals, based in or around Cardiff. The Welsh Government is principal sponsor of the first Pitch@Palace event in Wales which is also supported by Innovation Point.

Selected entrepreneurs will pitch their business ideas to His Royal Highness and invited guests and compete to progress to the next stage Pitch@Palace Boot Camp with the most successful then pitching at St James Palace to an audience from the world of entrepreneurship, tech, media and investment.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Technology driven businesses with bright ideas have the potential to create a real positive impact on our lives and on the economy. They operate in a highly competitive environment and young start ups particularly can benefit significantly from high level support and expertise to move to the next level.

"The Welsh Government provides a wide range of business support for these enterprises and our sponsorship of Pitch@Palace opens up potentially new opportunities and experiences for Wales based tech companies and I wish all participants the very best of luck."

Supporting the Economy Secretary's views, Cardiff Start Co-Founder and Pitch@Palace host, Robert Lo Bue, said:

"The tech start up scene in and around the Welsh Capital has exploded in recent years. Our community alone has over 2100 members sharing opportunities and experiences every single day.

"We are very fortunate in Wales to have a supportive Government and a collaborative environment where individual enterprises actively work together to create the ideal ecosystem for budding entrepreneurs.

“Attracting Pitch@Palace to Wales is quite an accolade and an acknowledgement of the rapid growth and success of the sector in Wales.”

There are two main Pitch@Palace events held in the UK every year, each with a different theme, focusing on various areas of the UK Tech industry. The current theme is Human Tech and the potential impact of technology in our everyday lives – focusing on three areas:

- Tech supporting our everyday needs – Health, Education, Environment
- Tech making our lives more efficient – Connecting up homes via the Internet Of Things, Improving Communications, Wearable Tech and Robotics
- Tech augmenting our experience of the world – through Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence.

Pitch@Palace has to date:

- helped over 247 businesses grow and create 643 jobs;
- 66% of start ups have increased employment;
- 65% of competing start ups subsequently raised funds;
- £247m+ of economic activity has been recorded.

The judging panel at Cardiff Pitch@Palace includes: David Buttress, CEO, of Just Eat, Yasmin Crawford, owner of Tramorgan and James Henderson, Fund manager of Inspire Wales.

The selected companies pitching are:

- Kraydel
- Salubrious Ltd
- Helpfulpeeps
- BrainWaveBank Limited
- Learnium
- Harness
- Paperclip
- Alkosens
- Medivation Limited
- Vision Game Labs Ltd
- Volunteer Space
- Recall Alert CIC.

---

**[Welsh Government investing £2.5m to build new facility for Qioptiq in](#)**

## support of its new £82m contract

Work will now commence immediately on the new 24,900 sq. ft. facility that the Welsh Government will construct on land it owns adjacent to Qioptiq's premises on St Asaph Business Park. It will provide secure warehousing and manufacturing space to enable Qioptiq to achieve full operating capacity to deliver the MoD contract within the required timescale. Qioptiq will be investing c£2m in fit out and IT systems.

Ken Skates said:

"Winning this major contract is hugely significant for Qioptiq and for North Wales. Qioptiq is one of our key Anchor companies working in a priority sector and is one of the most dynamic and innovative companies in Wales.

"I am delighted the Welsh Government was able to support the company's successful bid from the early pre qualification stage through to the development of a purpose designed facility that is vital to deliver the contract.

"This new contract secures the long term future of the company in St Asaph where it has a significant economic impact on the local economy through expenditure by employees and through local supply chains. It is another high value manufacturing company whose future has been secured by the work of Welsh Government."

Peter White, Managing Director at Qioptiq said

"We are delighted to have received this major contract from UK MOD to support equipment vital to the safety of our soldiers in front line operations. The support from Welsh Government and the hard work, capability and commitment of our employees were the key factors in our success. We look forward to continuing the successful relationship we have with UK MoD and supporting our troops with this important contract."

Under the new six year contract Qioptiq will supply and maintain a large range of Surveillance and Target Acquisition equipment for the MoD. The company specialises in the design and manufacture of optical and photonic products and solutions that serve a wide range of markets and applications in areas of defence, aerospace, medial and life sciences and industrial manufacturing.

It is a recognised, first-tier supplier to many of the defence and aerospace sector's leading companies with a product range that includes some of the most sophisticated advanced optical technologies ranging from Night Vision

Sights, to Head Up Display Optical modules, through to Space Components

Qioptiq is part of the US owned Excelitas Group which has a worldwide presence with locations throughout Europe, Asia and the USA employing more than 5000 people. It employs over 500 people in North Wales on two sites at St Asaph and Bodelwyddan.

---

## **£95 million investment to train healthcare professionals in Wales**

This significant investment will support nurses, physiotherapists, radiographers and a range of health science training opportunities.

It will enable more than 3000 new students to join those already studying healthcare education programmes across Wales.

The funding builds on Welsh Government funding already in place for nursing, providing more than a 13% increase in nursing training places, on top of the 10% increase in 2016/17 and 22% increase in 2015/16. Midwifery training places will increase by 40%.

The support package will also provide an additional £500,000 to support community healthcare such as advanced practice, education and extended skills training to support primary care clusters.

There will also be a significant increase in practice nurse and district nurse education as well as audiology training places within primary and community settings. This will provide vital funding for community services and will ensure many more patients can be cared for closer to home, rather than in hospital.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“We rely on the skills, knowledge and experience of those providing the care in the NHS on a daily basis.

“This includes nurses and paramedics as well as those behind the scenes, who provide vital support services such as laboratory tests to enable diagnoses to be made and “treatment to be provided.

“Education and training is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of our workforce.

“This £95m investment will ensure that our healthcare professionals are able to provide high quality care now and in the future and that patients’ will be able to receive care closer to home.”

The funding package also includes an additional cohort of physician associate training places available from September 2017 with 12 of these places hosted by Bangor University and 20 hosted by Swansea University.

The funding will also support the integration of hospital and community pharmacy training and education into one programme.