

Finance Secretary backs Cardiff's ambition to be the first 'Living Wage City' in the UK

This event is the latest to promote Living Wage Week in Wales following the increase in the rate of pay by 25p from £8.75 to £9 per hour.

Of the 174 Living Wage employers in Wales, 80 are based in Cardiff and last year, Cardiff Council was named the Living Wage for Wales Champion for 2017-18 by the Living Wage Foundation. This was in recognition of its 'outstanding contribution to the development of the Living Wage in Wales, above and beyond the requirements of accreditation.

Professor Drakeford said:

"I welcome Cardiff Council's commitment to becoming a Living Wage City – a commitment to ensuring workers throughout the city live a life of dignity, supporting them to pay off debts and meet the pressures of rising bills.

"Since becoming one of the first organisations in the UK to become a Living Wage employer in 2015, Cardiff Council is leading by example with more than 2,000 full and part-time staff benefitting from a pay rise, mainly women working as breakfast club supervisors, cleaners, domestics, kitchen assistants and midday supervisors."

The Finance Secretary will discuss with stakeholders ways of promoting the Living Wage by encouraging companies to sign up to the Welsh Government's Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains – proof of an organisation's commitment to working towards the Living Wage.

He added:

"The code of practice will encourage organisations to take seriously their commitment to "consider" the Living Wage, and identify what steps can be taken to increase the wages of both employed and contracted staff over time. I support any mechanism developed to help publicise progress in this respect."

The event will take place at Cardiff Castle where the Cabinet Secretary for Finance will join Partnerships and Operations Manager at Living Wage Foundation, Graham Griffiths, council members and staff and various 'Living Wage employers' based in Cardiff.

Gwent project receives £13.4m to develop new models of health and social care

Led by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board, the project is the latest to receive financial support from a £100m Welsh Government fund to develop new ways to deliver health and social care services that can eventually be rolled out across Wales.

Mr Gething, made the announcement during a visit to Serennu Children's Centre in High Cross, where he saw examples of health and social care services being delivered in tandem, to support children with complex needs including ASD.

He explained the funding, provided over two years, will help accelerate projects like these which support key actions from the Welsh Government's long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

The Gwent project has two parts. It will develop new services focused on promoting well-being and preventing illness at a community level to reduce the burden on hospital and will improve the integration between health and social services to ensure a seamless experience for patients.

The transformation work will redraw the landscape across Child and adolescent mental health services to deliver improved access to better services, closer to home. It will establish a 24/7 hospital discharge scheme, which will mean that people are able to get home faster, with the right package of care in place. It will also implement a place based model of care in Caerphilly, as an initial pilot, which will mean that people can access a range of new services within their community rather than being reliant on GP services.

Mr Gething said:

“Our health and social care services are facing increasing demand and if we are to ensure they are fit for the future we need to look at new ways of delivering them.

This will require better integration of health and social services to reduce reliance on hospitals and deliver care closer to home. The Transformation Fund will be used to fund a small number of projects which have the most impact in developing and delivering new models of care. They will have the potential to scale up and be used to improve service delivery across Wales.

Phil Robson, Chair of the Regional Partnership Board said:

“This additional funding will provide much needed resources across Gwent to move our transformation plans forward at substantial pace. We are working as a partnership, across health local government and the third sector, to deliver a very ambitious plan and we are pleased that the Minister has confidence in us as a region to deliver.”

£2m for community projects in Wales

The funding from the Community Facilities Programme (CFP) has been earmarked for seventeen projects across Wales aimed at developing community facilities which bring people together.

CFP is a capital grant scheme which funds the development of community facilities; providing opportunities for local people to improve their day to day lives. Grants are available at two levels – up to £25,000 and up to £250,000.

The scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, including social enterprises. All applicants are expected to work with partners which can come from the public, private or the third sectors.

Alun Davies said,

“The purpose of this funding is to help create resilient communities, where people are directly engaged with local issues. I want our communities to help to deliver the vital local services their people need and I will continue to empower them to be able to do this. Each of the projects announced today provide opportunities to deliver locally, while improving community cohesion and bringing people together.”

Since the CFP opened in 2015 it has funded 83 projects across Wales with grants totalling £17.7 million.

The projects being funded via the latest round of funding are:

- Tudno Community Association, Llandudno – £15,000 towards cost of purchasing new gym equipment for use by disabled users, National Exercise Referral Scheme beneficiaries and young people.
- St Grwst’s Church, Llanrwst, Conwy – £25,000 towards total cost of the internal refurbishment of its facilities and the restoration of the Gwydir Chapel.
- Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Machynllech – £250,000 to develop a permanent visitor centre and community facility to replace the current

porta-cabins, which are reaching the end of their life.

- Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch, Aberystwyth – £25,000 to improve its reception area, fit new windows and commission an arts installation.
- Hay Castle Trust, Hay on Wye – £150,000 to provide a community learning space as part of the wider regeneration of the castle.
- Hope Church, Newtown – £250,000 towards cost of fitting out nursery and Flying Start setting in its new purpose-built facility.
- Menter Cymunedol Mynach, Devils Bridge – £150,000 towards the cost of extending the former Capel Mynach to create a community facility.
- Sheep Music, Presteigne Community Barn, Powys – £23,000 for building a community barn as a covered space for a variety of community activities and events.
- Carmarthen Youth Project, (Dr M'z), Carmarthen – £209,845 towards the cost of purchasing and refurbishing its current building to ensure its future sustainability of venue.
- Hengoed Community Project, Hengoed – £176,639 towards the cost of transforming a former Welsh Baptist Chapel into a Community Wellbeing Centre.
- Treharris Area Community Trust (TACT), Treharris, Merthyr Tydfil – £202,631 to build new changing rooms with a community meeting space.
- Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust, Aberfan – £250,000 to refurbish and extend the community café and gym areas of Aberfan Leisure Centre
- St Catherine's Church, Pontypridd – £23,000 to improve disabled access and refurbish office/interview rooms.
- View (Dove) Ltd, Banwen, Neath Port Talbot – £10,050 to refurbish its nursery.
- Hill Community Development Trust, Phoenix Centre, Swansea – £160,000 towards cost of extending its nursery area and refurbishing training and conference rooms.
- Cardiff City Community Table Tennis Club, Cardiff – £24,516 towards the total cost of creating a community café at the venue.
- St Julian's Baptist Church, St Julian's, Newport – £180,000 to provide a larger community facility which will enable the group to expand the services on offer.

[Young care leavers to be exempt from paying council tax](#)

The plans are the latest in a series of measures designed to make council tax fairer in Wales – a key Welsh Government commitment.

All young people leaving care will not have to pay council tax until the age of 25, if the proposals are approved following the 6 week consultation.

Professor Drakeford said:

“I want to ensure the Welsh Government and our local authorities are doing everything we can to support care leavers and are supporting their successful transition into adulthood and independent living.

“Last year, I asked local authorities to consider using their discretionary powers to grant a full dispensation from council tax for all care leavers, regardless of their individual circumstances. In October 2017, Torfaen Council became the first in Wales to exempt care leavers from paying council tax.

“This is an important opportunity to make our council tax system fairer and I am keen to hear everyone’s views and to work with stakeholders to improve our approach.”

As part of its pledge to make council tax fairer, the Welsh Government has been working to improve uptake of the council tax reduction scheme, which provides support for almost 300,000 vulnerable and low-income households in Wales with their council tax bills.

The consultation will run from 7 November to 19 December and will involve engagement with a range of stakeholders including local authorities, the WLGA, third sector organisations representing care leavers and care leavers.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance will bring forward legislation to exempt care leavers from council tax from 1 April 2019.

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