

Welsh retail – use it or lose it says Economy Secretary

Kicking off towards the end of what has been a challenging year for UK retail, the new campaign is a joint venture between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Retail Consortium, and is intended to challenge growing misconceptions around the future of the sector.

Despite current industry challenges, retail remains Wales' largest private employer with nearly 12,000 shops providing more than 130,000 jobs. And shops exist in nearly every community in Wales, providing a vital service for local people and visitors and often ensuring an important social outlet and meeting place.

One element of the new campaign centres around the fact that retail is a dynamic industry and one that is transforming at a rapid pace to meet consumer needs. Coupled with the fact that it offers flexible working hours and good pay rates, which grew on average by 7% last year, the campaign promotes retail as an excellent career choice and one that often offers good progression opportunities.

The other element of the campaign focuses on the community benefits of the sector, with retailers across Wales driving local economic growth, investing in the communities in which they are located and providing a vital back drop for social interactions.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said;

“I am proud to be part of this campaign which celebrates and promotes the good work of our retail sector. Shops of all shapes and sizes play an important part in our daily lives, but with changes to the way people shop and increased competition, there is no doubt that this a tough time for the sector.

“The stark reality is that if we don't celebrate the sector and ensure we make good use of it, we are in danger of losing crucial parts of it.

“My Economic Action Plan recognises the importance of retail and identifies it as one of our four Foundation Sectors. This means we are working across Government to increase the sustainability of the sector and to improve its image and how it is perceived. We are also working to maximise the impact that retail has within our communities and regions.

“This new campaign which celebrates the contribution of retail to our economy, our communities and as a career provider fully supports these ambitions , and I hope it will help to ensure a thriving future for the sector.”

Head of Welsh Retail Consortium, Sara Jones said:

“Welsh retail is an exciting, dynamic and diverse industry undergoing profound transition. A thriving retail sector is a great route to better paid jobs, more private sector investment, sharper prices for consumers, and a key route to market for producers.

“Here in Wales it is a key social and economic contributor and is the largest private sector employer, providing employment and services in communities right across the country. Members of the Welsh Retail Consortium are working hard to offer rewarding careers and have committed to work towards roles that offer greater flexibility, are well-remunerated and have clear progression routes for colleagues.

“This campaign offers the opportunity to showcase those opportunities as well as the important role that retail plays in our everyday life.”