

[News story: Welsh Secretary welcomes stars to a special event to celebrate Welsh culture](#)

Leading figures from Welsh culture gathered at the Wales Office tonight (Monday) to celebrate Welsh achievements in creative life.

More than 50 guests from independent TV makers, broadcasters, theatre groups and sports were invited to Gwydyr House in Whitehall.

Hosted by Alun Cairns, the Secretary of State for Wales, the gathering was told that Welsh culture represents a fantastic shop window for the world.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns, said:

I am delighted to welcome people from all walks of creative life to Gwydyr House to celebrate Welsh culture.

All the vibrant elements of Wales are in attendance from sport to tourism and from stage to screen. Together they all play a vital role in showcasing Welsh talent across the world.

Wales Week in London is a brilliant initiative to promote Wales internationally, I am committed to ensuring that Wales continues to punch well above its weight with people enjoying Welsh culture in all four corners of the world.

[Speech: Wales Business Export Summit](#) [Speech](#)

Introduction

Good morning and thank you Dylan for the introduction, I'm delighted to be welcoming you all here this morning.

This event has been in the making since my very first conversation with Liam Fox, the Secretary of State for International Trade, back in the summer of last year.

It was in the aftermath of the referendum, and the reality that the nation had just voted to leave the EU.

We recognised that this would provide some challenges for all Welsh businesses and as mentioned to me by the chairman of CBI, businesses thrive on change and have shown great resilience.

However, we also recognise that this is a time of great opportunity, for the UK, Welsh businesses and the economy.

As part of the United Kingdom, Wales benefits from the economic security and international influence that comes from pooling our resources and sharing our successes with Scotland, England and Northern Ireland.

We need to make sure businesses in Wales have every tool in the box available to them, to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

Liam and I, and the Welsh Government share the same vision for a global and outward looking United Kingdom, and support a desire to ensure his department helps businesses right across the UK to reach their full potential by looking to global markets.

As the Prime Minister said in January 'the result of the referendum was not a decision to turn inward and retreat from the world'. She set up the UK Government Department of International Trade to focus on supporting you and other businesses in your trade ambitions and for that reason we must all be ambitious for Wales, and I want to see us taking advantage of every opportunity.

In December, Liam Fox and I met with a number of Welsh businesses.

Today, this summit builds on that engagement by bringing together more businesses from across Wales to hear about exporting.

In a few minutes, you will hear from my good friend and colleague, Mark Garnier, the Minister for Trade. He and I met last week to discuss how we can work together promoting trade and investment in Wales – We are already planning for the outcomes of today's summit.

I fully intend to ensure Welsh businesses are central to trade missions, I will be attending number of trade missions to offer my support to help land you that deal and I hope some of you will be able to join me.

Exports

Wales is already an exporting nation, the value of Welsh exports was £11.6 billion in 2015.

With technological advances removing the barriers of time and distance we have a golden opportunity to forge a new role for ourselves in the world, one which puts British people first.

Much of the advance technology powering our mobile phones and other devices is being pioneered right here in Wales.

Over half of the world's commercial aircraft are now flying using wings made

by Airbus in Broughton and every two seconds, a GE powered airplane is taking off somewhere in the world.

But it's not just big business that can export, in fact, big business will only take us so far in our ambition.

In 2015, 4,000 Welsh companies took their first steps into exporting – my ambition is to see more Welsh businesses following in their footsteps.

Last week I was at the South Wales Chambers of Commerce Wales Business Awards where I had the privilege to meet with a number of different businesses that already export.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to winners of the success through overseas trade award, Welsh Hills Bakery, and all the nominees, some of whom I know are in this room today.

Small businesses across Wales, who are also supported by FSB and others, are exporting for the first time, with the support of both UK and Welsh Government.

Welsh lamb, Penderyn Whiskey and Anglesey Sea Salt to name just a few.

Halen Môn has been exporting since 2001 and has grown to the point where it now sells salt in 17 different countries across the world.

Government support

The exporting success of companies like Halen Môn is down to the entrepreneurship of those involved in the company. But Government also has a part to play in helping and supporting.

For Halen Môn, that included, setting up meetings with buyers in markets ranging from Hong Kong to Singapore, China, Russia and Japan.

Helping them navigate the necessary paperwork

And supporting their application for Protected Designation of Origin status in 2014.

Additionally, UK Government can support business by bringing together inspiring GREAT British companies in complimentary areas on Trade Missions and at other events.

The UK Government has 1,200 dedicated staff in 109 countries worldwide – a world class resource for businesses in Wales continue to tap in to and that is exactly what I want to see happening.

The Department for International Trade is a department for the whole of the UK, and I want to see businesses in Wales taking advantage of the support they can offer. Whether you are a business in Swansea or Swindon, you are entitled to the same support.

This financial year the activity calendar has included 791 trade missions and events available to UK companies.

It also includes more than 80 DIT created inward and outward missions to and from the UK with our key trading partners globally.

In Wales, the DiT has helped more than 600 companies this year with export service deliveries – including support from our posts overseas, help attending international trade shows and market research.

20 Welsh Companies have told us that our support has helped them win export deals worth more than £200 million in the last nine months.

Working with the Welsh Government

The support offered by the Welsh Government complements the support offered by UK Government. We are not in competition. We both want Welsh businesses to export and secure export deals.

Together, we are supporting businesses of all sizes and in all sectors with every step of their exporting journey.

I know the economic Minister, Ken Skates is disappointed not to be able to attend today, but later on this morning, Mick McGuire, Director for Sectors at the Welsh Government, will be joining us, alongside representatives from UK Government, for a session on the exporting support available to businesses in Wales.

I believe this demonstrates just how closely the UK Government and Welsh Government are working on this shared agenda.

After that, we will hear from Jon Rennie of Cloth Cat Animation, Tim Lowe from Dawnus, and Andrew Evans of SPTS, three successful Welsh exporters on their experiences of exporting and how Government has supported them in their endeavours. I would also like to hear where the UK Government could have gone further.

Conclusion

I hope that you will leave here today inspired to look to global markets.

I also hope that you leave here knowing how to access the tools that will help you make that vision a reality.

There are millions of people across the world looking for your skills, expertise, goods and services and I urge you to have a look.

My job as Secretary of State for Wales is to stand up for Welsh businesses and do everything I can to help companies like yours to prosper. My door is always open to you.

I want to emphasise that at a UK level, through my department at the Wales Office, through the Department for International Trade, and through the

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we can help you take this vital work even further, forging new relationships around the world.

We are determined to do anything and everything we can to grow your business and secure export deals. I would now like to welcome the Minister for International Trade, Mark Garnier, who will talk more about the benefits of trading, and about the support that is available through his department.

Press release: New RSC appointed for East Midlands and the Humber

John Edwards, Director of Education and Skills at Manchester city council, has been named as the new Regional Schools Commissioner for East Midlands and the Humber.

He will be responsible for overseeing the growth of academies in the region and will monitor their performance to ensure children receive the best possible education. He is taking over from Jennifer Bexon-Smith.

John will start later this year, working with Sir David Carter to shape the role and priorities of the growing numbers of academies in the region, contributing to the government's agenda of raising standards, by tackling underperformance to create more 'good' school places for every child regardless of background or circumstances.

John Edwards said:

I'm very much looking forward to the challenges of my new role as Regional Schools Commissioner for the East Midlands and the Humber, and hope I can make a real difference to the lives and outcomes of children and young people working in partnership with everyone in the region.

I will undoubtedly miss Manchester and particularly all the people I work with. I know however that in their capable hands learning in the city will continue to go from strength to strength.

National Schools Commissioner Sir David Carter said:

I am thrilled that John Edwards is joining my team as the new Regional Schools Commissioner for the East Midlands and the Humber region. John was selected from a strong national field and will bring a wealth of experience and talent from his work as Director of Education and Skills in Manchester, that has improved the life

chances of many young people.

Regional Schools Commissioners' (RSCs) responsibilities include:

- taking decisions on the creation of new academies
- monitoring their performance and improving underperforming academies
- ensuring there is a strong supply of excellent sponsors to work with underperforming schools in the region
- encouraging and supporting high-quality applications for new free schools

The East Midlands and the Humber commissioner works with 970 academies and free schools across the region.

[John will be advised by a board of headteachers](#) of 'outstanding' academies or experienced educational leaders. The board challenges and supports the work of the commissioner, bringing additional educational insight and local intelligence to decision-making.

1. The Regional Schools Commissioner for East Midlands and the Humber is responsible for making decisions about academies and free schools in the following local authorities:
 - Barnsley
 - Derby
 - Derbyshire
 - Doncaster
 - East Riding of Yorkshire
 - Kingston upon Hull
 - Leicester
 - Leicestershire
 - Lincolnshire
 - north-east Lincolnshire
 - north Lincolnshire
 - Nottingham
 - Nottinghamshire
 - Rotherham
 - Rutland
 - Sheffield
 - York
2. The [full list of Regional Schools Commissioners](#) are:
 - Tim Coulson: East of England and north-east London
 - John Edwards: East Midlands and the Humber
 - Vicky Beer: Lancashire and West Yorkshire
 - Janet Renou: North of England
 - Martin Post: north-west London and south-central England
 - Dominic Herrington: South-East England and south London
 - Rebecca Clark: South-West England
 - Christine Quinn: West Midlands
3. The RSCs, supported by their headteacher boards, perform functions of the Secretary of State on her behalf, within a national framework. This

will not cut across existing accountability lines; accountability will remain with the Secretary of State, with decisions better informed by sector expertise.

4. Mr Edward's biography: John Edwards has been the Director of Education and Skills for Manchester city council since February 2013, with responsibility for all of the council's education functions, including schools, early years, youth, 14 to 19 and adult skills. Prior to this role, John was Assistant Director for Learning and Skills at Kirklees council, and previously worked for Manchester city council (as Deputy Director of Children's Services) and for Wakefield council. Before moving into local government, John worked in schools across Yorkshire for over a decade, as a maths teacher, head of sixth form and senior leader. He is married with 2 school-age children and lives in Sheffield.

[News story: Technologies of the future: apply for business funding](#)

Innovate UK has up to £15 million to support business projects that stimulate new products and services through emerging and enabling technologies. These technologies could be the basis for billion-pound industries of the future.

Emerging technologies

Emerging technologies are newly developed sciences, where the best application and value is yet to be realised. Examples include quantum technologies, graphene and 2D materials, biofilms, energy harvesting and synthetic biology.

Enabling technologies

Enabling technologies can have wide applicability. Many industries could benefit from advances in areas such as machine learning, compound semiconductors, and earth observation. Examples of enabling technologies include digital, space and satellite, electronics, sensors and photonics, and robotics.

Projects

We expect to fund projects in 4 priority areas:

- emerging technologies
- digital
- enabling capabilities
- space applications

Proposals must demonstrate significant innovation; be applicable to more than one industry, sector or market; and improve growth, productivity or create export opportunities for at least 1 SME.

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for registration is midday on 3 May 2017
 - we expect projects to last between 6 months and 3 years and to range in size from £35,000 to £2 million
 - projects must involve at least 1 SME and be led by a business or a research and technology organisation
 - businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
 - a briefing event for potential applicants will be held on 8 March 2017
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[News story: Defence Secretary underlines UK commitment to European security](#)

Speaking at a meeting of European Union Defence Ministers in Brussels, Sir Michael Fallon called on the EU to step up cooperation with NATO in order for the two organisations to more effectively tackle shared security challenges, including hybrid warfare and cyber.

Sir Michael also called for an improvement in Europe's performance in building national capabilities that can be made available to the EU and NATO. This requires more defence spending and better investment in key equipment.

Britain's commitments in 2017 underline the leading role in European Security the UK will continue to play. This year, Britain is leading NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, a Brigade-size force which is ready and willing to respond to any threat. This spring, the UK will also deploy a battle group of around 800 personnel to lead in Estonia NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed Britain's strong role in EU missions and operations. HMS Echo is currently helping to tackle people smugglers in the Mediterranean, as part of the EU's mission Operation Sophia. Royal Navy deployments to the operation have helped destroy over 120 smuggling boats, apprehending 20 suspected smugglers in the process, and have helped to rescue 10,000 people from the high seas.

Britain also has over 150 UK personnel committed to EU missions and operations, including in Bosnia, Mali and Somalia, demonstrating Britain's global reach.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We are leaving the EU but we will continue to cooperate with our European partners on defence and security. This includes playing our part in the mission in the Mediterranean, rescuing migrants and tackling people smuggling.

Today I have urged the EU to cooperate more closely with NATO, to avoid unnecessary duplication and to work together on new threats, including cyber.

Sir Michael called on the EU and NATO to redouble their efforts on cooperation, noting that while good progress has been made, more work needed to be done, particularly on cyber, hybrid, maritime and coordinated exercises.

Today's meeting also brought forward improvements to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, through the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), to help improve planning and conduct of the training missions (known as non-executive missions) and to enhance civilian and military working. Important improvements to the agreement, suggested by the UK, were agreed today, including limiting the authority of the Director of the MPCC, and avoiding duplication with NATO structures.