

New measures to support and promote the Welsh Language

The Commissioner has played a crucial role in the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards system to ensure the availability of services in Welsh. The Welsh Government intends to expand and build on the work of the Commissioner to bring promotion and regulation of the Welsh language together to ensure the most efficient structures to achieve our vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Government's White Paper, [*'Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill'*](#), outlines a range of proposals that aim to strike the right balance between promoting the Welsh language and regulating compliance with Welsh language duties.

Suggestions in the White Paper include:

- Establishing a Welsh Language Commission to organise and coordinate work to promote the Welsh language across all parts of Wales.
- Making it clearer to people, public bodies and businesses who they can turn to if they want to develop their use of the Welsh language.
- Giving greater clarity for Welsh speakers as to which services bodies must provide in Welsh, and to work to increase the use of those services.
- Helping bodies develop their capacity to deliver services in Welsh.
- Streamlining the processes involved in making and imposing Welsh Language Standards, and removing the bureaucracy involved in handling complaints of bodies' non-compliance with Standards to ensure people receive a quick remedy.
- The Welsh Government to be responsible for imposing Standards on bodies through regulations and compliance notices. The Welsh Language Commission to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Standards.
- Removing the restrictions in the current legislation so Standards could be placed on any body, so long as it is within the Assembly's power to do so.

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Alun Davies said:

"Earlier this year I asked organisations across Wales to give us their views on the current Welsh Language Measure and Standards, the responses show there is general support for the Standards and their positive impact on Welsh language services. It is important that we acknowledge the hard work of the Commissioner and her staff in rolling out the Standards to bodies across Wales.

"However, the responses also highlighted the bureaucracy around the Standards and led us to believe that we have not struck the right

balance in our work to promote the Welsh language on the one hand, and regulate Welsh language services on the other.

“These proposals in the White Paper reflect what we were told. We want to refocus our efforts on promotion and make changes to the way the Welsh Language Standards system works to make sure it is as efficient and effective as possible in giving people rights to use Welsh. I believe the Welsh Language Commission will be a powerhouse for achieving both these aims.

“I will be looking to make improvements to the Standards process whilst we agree the future direction of policy and prepare the necessary legislation to enact it. As I set out in my statement of 19 July I remain committed to the roll out of Standards and will be laying Standards regulations for health bodies before the end of the year. The Commissioner will continue to play an instrumental role in delivering this work until any new arrangements are in place.

“Today, in announcing the White Paper, I am beginning a period of public consultation which will run for 12 weeks until the last day of October. I will be holding events in September and October. I hope that the proposals will stimulate an energetic debate to help inform the next steps.

“A little under a month since I published our strategy on reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the proposals in this White Paper are another step on the journey to delivering our ambitious vision for the Welsh language.”

£2.1m to tackle youth homelessness and rough sleeping

The funding is in addition to the £8m of funding provided via the Homelessness Prevention Grant programme and the £6m allocated to local authorities to prevent homelessness.

Local Authorities, working with voluntary sector organisations, will be invited to apply for the funding for projects which address rough sleeping, youth homelessness, people with a mental health need who are homeless or potentially homeless, and improving access to the private rented sector for people in housing need. As these issues are often interlinked, projects which address these linkages will be particularly encouraged.

The announcement comes as an evaluation report of the Welsh Government's

homelessness legislation under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 is published. The report found that overall, the increased focus on prevention introduced under the Act has led to the prevention of homelessness for a larger number of people than previously but that certain groups, such as single men, care leavers and those experiencing multiple issues have not benefitted to the same extent. The report also highlighted variations across Wales in the delivery of services.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Providing people with a safe, warm and secure home remains a key priority. The report published today shows that Local authorities have made a positive start in implementing the legislation we introduced in 2015 to help everyone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

“There is more we can do however, particularly for those groups who are still struggling to get the help they need. Along with the £14m I announced earlier this year, the funding I have announced today will be available to projects that aim to target these groups and tackle the issues they face.”

Welsh Government Supports Welsh Law Firm to Double Swansea Office Space

The investment is backed by £293,500 from the Welsh Government’s Business Finance Scheme which ensures JCP’s expansion goes ahead at its current Swansea headquarters, rather than opening a new office outside of Wales – which was an option under consideration.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This project supports our drive to spread economic benefits throughout Wales and to develop the competitive edge of each region of Wales, creating better jobs, closer to home.

“The growth of the legal services sector in Wales is a key priority of the financial and professional services’ strategy and I am pleased Welsh Government support means this expansion will be made in Swansea and help to strengthen and broaden the legal skills base within Swansea City Region.

“It will not only create 50 new jobs, offering career opportunities for law graduates and young solicitors, but of equal importance, it will safeguard a further 20 legal administration jobs in the city.”

Established in 1990, JCP currently employs 210 people, with offices in Swansea, Carmarthen and throughout Pembrokeshire.

The company's recent merger with Glamorgan Law extended its geographical reach throughout South East Wales, absorbing offices in Caerphilly, Cardiff, Cowbridge and Pontypridd.

To accommodate the growth of its services to clients based outside Wales – both in the UK and internationally – JCP Solicitors aims to expand into an adjacent property on Waterside Business Park in Swansea.

Hayley Davies, Director and CEO at JCP Solicitors said:

“The past 5 years have been an exciting time for growth at JCP Solicitors, and the recent merger with Glamorgan Law further supports our Business Strategy. Our next step is expansion by organic growth, but we have deliberated for some time on the best location to do this, having outgrown our current Swansea base some time ago.

“This investment will support us to further develop our services through the recruitment of new team members. The appointment of specialist and supporting roles will provide the required expertise to further assist thriving businesses in the Swansea Bay region.

“I am delighted that our business will be able to keep this investment and these extra jobs here in the Swansea Bay Region. Furthermore, pressing ahead with the expansion without moving means that we will be able to continue to service our existing and loyal client base without causing them or our staff any disruption.”

Wales a popular choice for day trips

The number of tourism day visits made to Wales in the 12 months ending June 2017 has increased by 9% compared to the 12 months previous, while the amount spent has increased by 34%.

In the 12 months ending June 2017, there were 100.7 million tourism day visits to Wales, with an associated spend of £4,711 million.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, tourism in Wales is in a strong position. In 2016 the total number of visits to Wales – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – was 15% up. It’s excellent news that the day trips market is performing strongly into the early summer of 2017. Added to this, 87% of respondents in our tourism barometer survey said they were confident about how their business will perform over the summer.

“We will continue with our campaign work to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities to attract overseas visitors and those looking to holiday at home due to the weak pound. Visit Wales’ London marketing campaign has been targeting London and the South East over the summer to entice Londoners to Wales during the Year of Legends. This includes a huge motion screen at Waterloo station to showcase Wales at its best with a specially edited film.”

10,000 new NHS dental places to be created in Wales

The additional places are being created as part of a wider package of investment to develop new and improved NHS dental services across Wales.

As part of this investment, £450,000 will go to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and £300,000 to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to provide access to new NHS dentistry places. Cardiff has seen significant population growth and this additional funding will help meet a growing need. New access is also planned in the areas of greatest need across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area.

In addition, new investment is being made to strengthen specialist children's dentistry services. This will see new consultant and specialist appointments being made to work with existing community and hospital-based services. This will help increase access to specialist paediatric dental services closer to home and ensure those children with highest treatment need have timely access to treatment.

The new specialists will work closely with general dental practice teams to improve children's preventive care and treatment services in NHS dental services in Wales. It's expected up to 3,000 additional patients per year will be able to access specialist paediatric dentistry services as a result, which will reduce waiting times for hospital-based services.

Other investments as part of a wider reform of the way in which NHS dental services are delivered include:

- Funding for courses to equip all dentists in Wales with the skills and knowledge they need to lead their teams in the delivery of effective preventive treatment and care
- A clinically-led dental e-referral management system for Wales that will improve the quality of patient care and reduce waiting times for treatment
- Improving dental information to better understand variation in provision and to link the use of services by patients to improve the value of services and outcomes of care
- Widening access to training and education for communities by offering opportunities for people who want to train and work as dental care professionals.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"Improving NHS dental services and patients' access to them is a priority for the Welsh Government.

"I'm really pleased that the investment I'm announcing today will create 10,000 new NHS dental places. This will improve access to NHS dental services for people in some of the most deprived areas of Wales.

"We're also investing in new specialist paediatric dentistry to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable children are met. The investment in specialist paediatric dentistry will help improve NHS dental treatment and care for those children who are affected by dental disease."