

Press release: Fuelling the momentum for a Mid Wales Growth Deal

The UK Government will push forward the agenda for a growth deal for Mid Wales today when Wales Office Minister Lord Bourne hosts a meeting of project team members in Aberystwyth today (FRIDAY 16 March 2018).

Lord Bourne will meet with business leaders and representatives from the agriculture sector and further education establishments to discuss their vision for a Mid Wales Growth Deal and to underline the UK Government's support for the area's economy.

During last year's Autumn Budget, the UK Government announced it would welcome proposals for a Mid Wales growth deal. At Friday's meeting, members of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership will set out what work has already been undertaken to progress the deal and how the proposed projects fit together.

UK Government Minister Lord Bourne said:

Giving local areas powers and freedoms to help support economic growth, create jobs and drive investment is a key part of achieving a Britain that works for everybody.

This is Mid Wales' opportunity to benefit from this growing City and Growth Deal movement. I want to see what progress is being made on developing the vision for the region's economic future.

It is for the partners involved to come up with proposals, and to work with the UK and Welsh Governments to achieve the best deal for Mid Wales. I have no doubt about the ambition of leaders in Mid Wales to get this right as we work together to agree a new deal that will drive growth across the region.

The UK Government has already delivered the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and last year, the Prime Minister signed the Swansea Bay City Region Deal. It is also working towards delivering a growth deal for North Wales, working with local partners and the Welsh Government to identify the best way to strengthen the region's economy and make the most of its connections to the Northern Powerhouse.

A successful proposal for Mid Wales would see every part of Wales benefitting from a UK Government growth deal.

Press release: Championing UK Government support for the North Wales economy

A raft of initiatives to boost economic growth in North Wales will be on the agenda today (16 March) as UK Government Minister Stuart Andrew visits the region to champion government support for the area's economy.

Mr Andrew will address business leaders at the CBI North Wales Committee meeting at Ruthin Castle where he will update on progress with the North Wales Growth Deal and challenge local companies to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the UK Government's Industrial Strategy.

The UK Government has already delivered the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and, last year, the Prime Minister signed the Swansea Bay City Region Deal.

It is now turning its attentions to delivering a growth deal for North Wales, working with local partners and the Welsh Government to identify the best way to strengthen the region's economy and make the most of its connections to the Northern Powerhouse.

The Growth Deal sets out a vision for the region with the aims of creating 5,300 jobs and attracting private sector investment to the value of £1bn in the region over the next 15 years.

UK Government Minister Stuart Andrew said:

From the engineering and manufacturing capabilities of businesses large and small to the research expertise of our colleges and universities, North Wales has long been an engine of the UK's economic prosperity.

The UK Government is doing all it can to support the region; whether that's by backing local leaders to create jobs and growth through the North Wales Growth Deal, rolling out superfast broadband to homes and businesses, or creating Industrial Strategy sector deals that capitalise on the area's strengths.

By taking clear and decisive action and giving direct support to companies and regions they can realise their growth potential and compete in the global economy.

The Minister will also use the meeting to update members on the Chancellor's Spring Statement and address the crucial aspect of cross border working and the benefits North Wales can draw from it to bring prosperity to the region.

He added:

The Northern Powerhouse, coupled with a growth deal represents our best chance to bring transformational change to North Wales – and cross border connectivity is crucial to achieving that aim.

The region is perfectly positioned to benefit from a lucrative export base and a reputation for big energy projects – making it a perfect partner for closer collaboration to expand the economy of the North.

The Minister's visit to North Wales will also see him visit two companies leading the way in groundbreaking design and engineering.

He will visit award winning engineering contractor, Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK in Ruthin. The family owned company was established as a small start-up in the 1950s and now employs almost 350 across the UK. It currently works on contracts in sectors including the construction of highways, flood and marine defence and energy projects around the UK. It has most recently won the contract to build the Brenig wind farm in Denbighshire.

He will then visit a company making a significant contribution to the UK's defence capability in St Asaph. Kent Periscopes is an international supplier of unity vision periscopes, vehicle sights and related equipment for armoured fighting vehicles.

[Press release: PM hosts Business Advisory Council meeting: 15 March](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

"This afternoon the Prime Minister hosted a further meeting of her Business Advisory Council at Downing Street.

"The Prime Minister opened the roundtable with a summary of key moments in the past few weeks, including progress in the Brexit negotiations, the Chancellor's Spring Statement and the Industrial Strategy.

"On the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the Prime Minister spoke about the need to reach agreement with the EU on the terms of the implementation period ahead of the March European Council next week, which the attendees agreed would be vital in providing certainty to businesses and people across the UK.

"She then reiterated the themes from her Mansion House Speech which set out an ambitious partnership with the EU, one driven by principled practicality

rather than ideology. The business leaders welcomed the detail provided in the speech and gave their support.

“The Prime Minister and business leaders also discussed the government’s Industrial Strategy, agreeing on the importance for government and business to work together on all aspects of the plan, particularly investing in the infrastructure and skills needed to support UK productivity growth and the ambition of the government’s “Grand Challenges”.

“The meeting was also attended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer who provided an update on the Spring Statement, the Business Secretary, Greg Clark, who discussed the Industrial Strategy and Brexit Minister, Suella Fernandes, who spoke about Ministerial engagement with European Member States.”

Ivan Menezes, CEO, Diageo

Constantin Cotzias, Director of Bloomberg Europe, Bloomberg

António Horta-Osório, CEO, Lloyds Banking Group

Jan du Plessis, Chairman, BT

Moya Greene, CEO, Royal Mail

Sir Charlie Mayfield, CEO, John Lewis Partnership

Ian Davis, Chairman, Rolls Royce

Mike Cherry OBE, National Chairman, FSB

Dr Adam Marshall, DG, BCC

Stephen Phipson CBE, DG, EEF

Carolyn Fairbairn, DG, CBI

Jayne-Anne Gadhia CBE, CEO, Virgin Money plc

Dame Helena, Head of Personal Investing, Legal & General Group plc

Oliver Benzecry, Chairman and Senior Managing Director, Accenture, UK and Ireland

Dame Carolyn McCall, CEO, ITV

[News story: New alliance to boost confidence in reporting child abuse](#)

A new phase in a campaign to tackle child abuse and neglect has been launched today (Thursday 15 March), as new research reveals the extent of public confidence in reporting child abuse or neglect.

According to [new analysis](#) from YouGov, more than a quarter (26 per cent) of adults surveyed said they had worried about the welfare, neglect or abuse of a child, of which over two-fifths (42 per cent) did not report their suspicions to someone with child protection responsibilities.

Minister for Children and Families Nadhim Zahawi said:

Keeping children safe from harm is everyone's responsibility. It is important people voice their concerns, no matter how small they think they are.

I hope that through the launch of this campaign, we improve people's confidence in spotting the signs of abuse or neglect, so that they feel empowered to report them. Any information passed on to professionals could be the difference between a child living a happy life, or facing the trauma of abuse or neglect.

The campaign is being delivered with the support of the Local Government Association and many participating local councils, as well as police forces, community organisations and the voluntary sector across the country.

Among parents of under 16s questioned by YouGov, almost a third (31 per cent) had worried about a child's welfare, or about abuse or neglect of a child in their local area, but just over half (57 per cent) went on to take any action to raise their concerns.

Overall, 24 per cent of those parents who had concerns and took action had tackled the situation directly, 69 per cent had sought advice and 16 per cent had reported their concerns to a professional, suggesting there is more to be done to help build public confidence in knowing when and how to report a case of suspected abuse.

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker, said:

The public may be nervous about reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, but people don't have to be absolutely certain about whether a child is being abused. If you have a feeling that something's not right, talk to the local children's social care team who will look into it.

Information is usually gathered from many sources, and any individual's report would form one part of a bigger picture – but the public, especially parents, can provide vital information we can act on.

The launch of the campaign is being supported by LBC radio, through a series of daily broadcasts featuring different voices discussing child protection. On Friday 16 March, Minister Zahawi will round up the week of interviews by discussing the campaign and its aims.

- Inform the public about the different types of child abuse and neglect;
- Educate people on how to spot the signs; and
- Reassure people on how the reporting process works as well as supporting them through it.

In 2016/17, more than [400,000 children](#) in England were supported because someone noticed they needed help – and in around half of these cases related specifically to abuse and neglect.

If members of the public are worried about a child they can visit a new dedicated campaign page: [tacklechildabuse](#) to get the contact number for their local council, the NSPCC Helpline number 0808 800 5000 or the Police.

Barnardo's Chief Executive Javed Khan said:

Keeping children safe from harm is at the heart of Barnardo's work – last year alone, our child sexual exploitation services saw a 38 per cent increase in referrals for support. But actually it's everybody's business which is why the Department for Education's 'Together we can tackle child abuse' campaign is so important in raising awareness.

Children may not disclose their own abuse so it's vital that adults – including parents, family members, carers and teachers – are vigilant and take action if they suspect a child may be being harmed.

Our UK-wide specialist workers see first-hand how sexual abuse damages young lives. The charity's Be Safe guide is a useful tool to help spot the signs of grooming and sexual exploitation but you don't have to be certain to report any concerns. Don't worry about being wrong; if you think a child might be in danger, please tell someone.

Matthew Reed, Chief Executive at The Children's Society, said:

No child, whether they are in their teenage years or of pre-school

age should have to suffer the pain of abuse or neglect.

The Children's Society's research has found that young people experiencing neglect are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives, pessimistic about their futures and lacking in confidence in their abilities.

Spotting the signs that something is wrong isn't just a matter for professionals who work with the children, it's everyone's responsibility. It is better for anyone to report concerns that eventually prove to be unfounded than to fail to speak out when a child may be at risk.

David Derbyshire, Director of Safeguarding at Action for Children, said:

The safeguarding of children is really everyone's business; the challenge for all communities is to have the courage to speak up and speak out whenever we are worried a child might be abused or neglected.

Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said:

Child abuse is an appalling crime, and helping to protect vulnerable children is one of the most important challenges that councils tackle every day.

We will always encourage people to refer any concerns about children to their local authority as soon as possible, so that the situation can be investigated, and support or immediate protection put in place where necessary.

Councils have a child referred to them every 49 seconds on a daily basis, but councils too often only hear about problems once they've become serious. We would urge people to pick up the phone whenever they suspect a child may need support or protection, so that councils can help that child or family access the support they need as soon as possible.

[News story: Schools Minister launches](#)

programme to boost leadership

Support for future school leaders and development opportunities for talented teachers were on the agenda as School Standards Minister Nick Gibb visited Greater Manchester for the launch of a government funded programme to help schools in areas of greatest need.

The Schools Minister attended All Saints Catholic College in Dukinfield, Greater Manchester, for the formal launch of Teach First's two-year 'Leading Together' programme – which is funded through the Department for Education's £75 million [Teaching & Leadership Innovation Fund](#).

The announcement is part of the government's drive to support teachers' development and attract the best and brightest recruits into the teaching profession.

Following the launch, the Schools Minister took part in a roundtable discussion on the benefits of leadership opportunities in schools with local headteachers and Russell Hobby, Chief Executive of Teach First.

Thanks to a hardworking and incredibly talented generation of teachers, alongside the government's bold reforms, there are now 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

There are now a record number of teachers in our schools – 15,500 more than in 2010 – but we want to build on this and help schools attract and keep the best and brightest people working in our schools.

Last week the Education Secretary announced a strategy to drive recruitment and boost retention of teachers, working with the unions and professional bodies, and we've been consulting on how to improve development opportunities for teachers, whether they decide to move into a leadership role or want to continue teaching in the classroom.

This programme from Teach First is one of thousands of new training opportunities that we have created through our £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund, supporting schools in the areas of greatest need to help nurture the leaders of tomorrow. It was a pleasure to hear school leaders speak so enthusiastically about our plans to raise the status of the teaching profession.

Teach First's programme is designed to offer staff at schools in areas of disadvantage the skills and support they need to succeed and deliver improvements for pupils' education – at no cost to the school.

Teach First CEO Russell Hobby said:

I'm pleased that we launched the Leading Together programme with the Schools Minister at All Saints Catholic College today. We heard from headteachers at the event about the importance of effective leadership for good schools.

Too often schools in disadvantaged areas miss out on the support they need to build their leadership teams. Thanks to generous support from the Department for Education we're working in partnership with exactly these schools to help them succeed.

The programme was among those earmarked last year to receive a share of the £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund. These projects will help provide tailored training opportunities for teachers on both managing challenging pupil behaviour and developing leadership, so they can make the most of their talent in the classroom.

Today's ministerial visit follows the recent confirmation of a number of other government measures to improve development opportunities for great teachers, whether they decide to move into a leadership role or want to continue teaching in the classroom. These include:

- The commitment to invest £42 million in a Teacher Development Premium pilot to enable teachers and leaders working in areas of greatest need to access high quality professional development, and drive school improvement; and
- The introduction of the new, strengthened national professional qualifications, as well as a £10 million fund to support teachers in the areas that need it most.

These measures will be boosted by the Education Secretary's recent announcement of a strategy to drive recruitment and boost retention of teachers, working with the unions and professional bodies.