

More than 1000 Welsh businesses benefit from free ICT advice service

The Superfast Business Wales service is backed by the Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Part of the Business Wales service, it provides Welsh SMEs with comprehensive ICT advice and guidance about how they can use online technologies such as cloud computing, online apps and software, social media, mobile working, and much more, to grow and develop their businesses further.

The service is independent and free and includes access to an online needs review, masterclasses and workshops, 1:1 ICT support, and a full website diagnostic. Businesses can also download the new Software Directory, as well as a number of online tools, guides and top tips available on the website: business.wales.gov.uk/superfastbusinesswales.

To date, 1081 businesses have received a telephone consultation with an online business adviser, 860 businesses have attended workshops and masterclasses, and 545 have received 1:1 advice from a digital business adviser.

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James said:

“I’m pleased over a thousand businesses have taken advantage of the Superfast Business Wales service since it was launched a year ago and I would encourage more to do so. The service offers free independent advice and guidance on how to make the best use of the digital technology which is becoming ever more important in the business world.

“Superfast broadband can make a real difference to the way business communicates with its customers and helps to deliver a better quality and more efficient service. The Welsh Government is committed to investing in superfast broadband infrastructure which is vital in supporting growth and prosperity in Wales.”

Monmouthshire-based consultancy business Chris Jones Regeneration has benefited from the free service. Chris Jones said:

“The workshop enabled us to check where we were in terms of the wide platform of digital technologies, helped validate activities we were doing well, and identify gaps that required plugging.

“The 1-1 session with a digital business adviser which followed was holistic and client-focused from the start. My adviser identified ways of making efficiencies and working smarter in relation to customer reach and relationship handling. She also looked at

project management and visualization tools and provided advice on low cost digital solutions. A diagnostic report was prepared with some clear realistic actions for the business to implement over a period of time.

“Overall the service was personal, responsive and above all action based.”

New specialist subjects for 2017 include: How to grow your food and drink business with digital technology, Cyber security, Data Protection and CRM systems, and How to grow your construction business with digital technology.

To find out more and to register onto the Superfast Business Wales service call 0300 060 3000, email superfast@businesswales.org.uk or visit [Superfast Business Wales](#).

[Jahr der Legenden 2017 – at the world’s largest travel show](#)

The show is attended by 120,000 trade and media visitors and around 26,000 consumers. Visit Wales will host meetings with the German, Swiss and Austrian travel trade, press and media over the first 3 days, and promote Wales to consumers over the final 2 days of the show. The team will be joined on the stand by industry partners Blaenavon World Heritage Site, Cambria DMC, Cadw, and Destination Conwy

This year, Wales will host one of the world’s greatest annual sporting events, the UEFA Champions League Final. The countdown is on to Wales hosting this prestigious sporting event in June, and Visit Wales will be showcasing the men’s and women’s UEFA Champions League Final trophies to ITB Berlin from 8- 12 March.

Visitors to the stand will have the opportunity to have a photo taken with the trophies and Visit Wales will be running a prize draw to win a legendary week in Wales for two people during June with tickets to the Women’s and Men’s UEFA Champions League Final. The competition will also be promoted in the German and UK markets throughout March and April as part of the UEFA Champions League marketing activity.

Attendance at ITB is one element of a marketing drive in Germany. January to March is a key booking period for German visitors to Wales, and the campaign aims to inspire potential visitors to come to Wales in 2017. The new TV advert featuring Welsh Hollywood star Luke Evans, which has been well received since its launch, will also be shown to visitors at ITB.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“During these times of great change we are committed to promoting Wales to the world like never before – taking our nation’s story out to new audiences with creativity and confidence. Germany is one of Wales’ three key overseas markets. In 2015, Wales attracted 96,500 visitors from Germany who spent £30 million in the Welsh economy. We’re looking forward to a legendary sporting summer – and hosting the UEFA Champions League Final – the single biggest sporting event in the world this year will be the highlight. ITB gives us an excellent platform to raise awareness of the event coming to Wales this year and we have international campaigns planned in the build up, during and post UEFA Champions League Final which will aim to maximise the impact of hosting the event for Wales, and drive longer term visitor benefits from the UK, German, French and Spanish Markets.”

A digital marketing campaign focusing on the theme of Legends runs until the end of March, attracting visitors to the Visit Wales website and [Facebook page](#). Print campaigns will include a supplement partnership with VisitBritain and women’s lifestyle magazine ‘Brigitte’ and a direct marketing campaign to Visit Wales’ database. Visit Wales will also work with influential partners such as Flybe, P&O Ferries, Dertour, Tui Wolters Reisen, DFDS Seaways and KLM Germany.

Press release: PM call with Taoiseach Enda Kenny: 5 March 2017

This afternoon Prime Minister Theresa May spoke to Taoiseach Enda Kenny following the recent elections in Northern Ireland.

They discussed their shared commitment to work with the parties to move forward and create a stable administration which ensures a strong, peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland.

To that end, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Brokenshire and Irish Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan will meet the parties on Wednesday and the Prime Minister and Taoiseach agreed to discuss the issue again at the EU Council on Thursday.

Government must put £2bn into the budget for social care – Barbara Keeley MP

**Barbara
Keeley MP,**

Labour's Shadow Minister for Social Care and Mental Health, commenting on reports of funding for social care in the forthcoming budget, said:

"Reports of any additional money for social care are of course welcome, but the reality is that it is the Tories who have spent the last 7 years cutting billions from council budgets. This has meant the loss of £5 billion for adult social care.

"Labour is calling on the government to put £2 billion into the budget for social care. There is also an urgent need for a longer-term funding plan to get social care out of the current crisis and on to a more stable footing"

ENDS

Press release: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland statement

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Now that Assembly members have been elected, there is a limited window in which the Assembly and Executive can be restored. Urgent discussions need to take place to ensure inclusive devolved government resumes. These discussions will need to focus on:

- the establishment of a partnership Executive and
- addressing other outstanding issues, including the implementation of past agreements and addressing the legacy of the past.

The responsibility for forming a new Executive rests with the two

parties eligible to nominate a First Minister and deputy First Minister, both to engage with each other and to advance discussions with all eligible parties. A new Executive will need to agree a Programme for Government, a budget for 2017-18 and any changes to how the Executive will work. The UK Government will engage with the parties to secure progress.

On the wider point of addressing outstanding issues, all parties eligible to nominate NI Executive Ministers will need to be involved. The UK Government and the Irish Government will also have roles to play in accordance with the three-stranded approach. Discussions will focus on securing implementation on the basis of existing commitments rather than the renegotiation of prior agreements. In particular, there is an urgent need to resolve the implementation of the commitments concerning the legacy of the past in the Stormont House Agreement.

Starting immediately, the UK and Irish Governments will work closely with the parties to secure progress on these issues. These discussions will be confidential.

Parts of this work are important. Political institutions operating on a basis of partnership, equality and mutual respect are at the heart of the Belfast Agreement.