

Annex A

Supporting business growth and sustainable job creation

The Welsh Government is tackling worklessness by encouraging and supporting employment retention and creation across Wales. We have taken steps to improve the position of businesses in Wales and facilitate private sector jobs growth.

These steps include work to improve the overall business environment, creating the conditions and framework for the private sector to create and maintain jobs which allow people in poverty, or at risk of poverty, to engage in a positive way with the labour market. They also include direct action to ease the pressure from challenges and barriers faced by businesses in the short term to stimulate investment and promote growth.

Our focus is on tackling poverty by protecting jobs, supporting the creation of employment opportunities and improving the overall conditions for business, recognising employment offers a high level of protection against poverty.

Within this context the Welsh Government is taking forward a number of actions which support Welsh Government efforts to tackle poverty. These include:

- delivering the Wales Economic Growth Fund and other job creating grant and business finance schemes;
- providing start up grants and entrepreneurship advice and support;
- developing and growing the childcare market;
- taking forward social enterprise activity and;
- delivering our Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

Our annual statement on support to business provides further detail on the impact of our work to support businesses in Wales.

Communities First

Communities First (CF) works with a variety of providers to support the implementation of the programme at a local level.

Examples of collaborative working between CF and the Private Sector:

'The **'Empty Shops'** project in Anglesey has supported local retailers and land owners to bring empty units back into use and regenerate the local retail economy. The project has not only resulted in the creation of 17 new retail businesses in Holyhead, it has also given employment opportunities to local young people who have been trained in skills to renovate disused and derelict premises. The Cluster has worked with private sector owners of empty commercial properties to allow them to be used by the new start-ups in return for a package which would relieve them temporarily of the burden of business rates and give their properties a facelift, free of charge.

Flintshire's Business Entrepreneurship Network aims to develop entrepreneurship through a more accessible, more effective range of opportunities,

to develop entrepreneurial skills through mentoring, work experience and apprenticeships for young people in all sectors.

The **EFFECT Project** aims to promote entrepreneurship and stimulate new business starts in the area through a community based enterprise facilitator and local businesses. The project also seeks to engage with individuals who would not traditionally access Welsh Government services.

Lift Programme

The Lift Programme reflects the commitment in the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan to provide 5,000 training and employment opportunities to people from workless households by the end of 2017. Engagement with, and support from, external organisations is a significant factor in the success of the Programme. Discussions are ongoing with a number of private sector partners, many of which have already proved productive.

Officials from both the Lift Programme and ES&T recently met with representatives from Kier Construction, contractors for Network Rail's Port Talbot Parkway Improvement Scheme. The meeting proved extremely successful with several opportunities being identified for Lift participants from the Afan Valley CF cluster area.

Following a Senedd event hosted by the Wales Retail Consortium, officials have continued to engage with individual retailers to explore the potential for their businesses to support the Lift Programme. For example a number of Boots stores provided seasonal work opportunities for Lift participants over the Christmas period and from January onwards, are starting a series of three week work experience placements in their Llanelli and Swansea stores. Also, Morrisons, in partnership with the Centre of Coaching Excellence, have submitted a proposal to Welsh Government to deliver their 'Our Club' project in partnership with the Lift Programme. The project, which is a 6 week intensive employer led programme, will launch in Spring 2015 and will be based on a localised approach with teams of coaches supporting Lift participants on a personal development plan with the overarching objective to prepare them and bridge them into employment.

European Funding

A number of projects are being developed by Welsh Government Departments which involve working with other departments and external partners in relation to European Social Fund (ESF) and European Development Fund (ERFD) which will strengthen the economy.

For example, within my own portfolio I am developing bids; Communities for Work (C4W) and Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) project.

C4W is part of the CF programme which aims to tackle poverty and will be co-sponsored by DWP. This work will build on the best practice of programmes such as CF, Lift, Want to Work and the Employment Support in Integrated Children's Centres (ESICC). It will further develop the strengths of these programmes in engaging 'hard

to reach' groups who are of working age and furthest from the labour market by providing a personal outreach advisory service across 52 Clusters. Advisers and mentors will identify and provide innovative solutions to address and overcome complex barriers to support eligible programme participants into work

The C4W project will provide intensive support and training for long term unemployed and economically inactive people aged 25+ who have complex barriers; and young people aged 16-24 who are NEET, to enable them to access realistic employment opportunities.

PaCE will help economically inactive parents into sustainable work, where childcare is their main barrier. The operation aims to provide solutions to overcome their childcare barriers to enable the parent to prepare for, and access, employment opportunities. Parents will receive individualised help via a Parent Employment Adviser in their local community. Referrals will come from DWP, Families First and Flying Start tackling poverty programmes.

Community Benefits

Community Benefits policy is a key principle of the Wales Procurement Policy Statement (WPPS) and embedding the 'community benefits' approach is a Programme for Government commitment. The policy directly supports the Tackling Poverty Action Plan by promoting training, employment and supply chain opportunities through public sector contracts in a number of areas across the Welsh economy. Public bodies are required to complete a measurement tool and return to Value Wales for all contracts over £2m.

Since 1 September 2013 all Social Landlords (Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities) have been required to include Community Benefit clauses in all procurement contracts where such benefits can be realised.

For example, analysis of activity by just a small number Registered Social Landlords, worth £112 million, show 86% of spend has been re-invested in Wales. This includes £38 million directly on salaries to Welsh citizens, and £53 million with Wales-based businesses 74% of which were Welsh SMEs. Some 224 disadvantaged people were helped into employment or training, with 7,744 weeks of training being provided.

