

Welcome to our latest Small Business Fortnight – the e-bulletin about what the FSB Cardiff Office has been doing which aims to keep you on top of key small business issues and what the FSB in Wales has been saying about them.

Help on the menu

The Welsh Assembly Government has been working closely with the FSB to launch a new guide to all the support it provides for small businesses. Help can be obtained from the WAG through:

- Saving businesses time by providing access to free up-to-date independent information on all aspects of starting a business
- Advice on how to access EU and UK financial support for R&D.
- Free start up taster sessions, plus workshops and advice surgery sessions to help you plan and start a new business.
- Free one to one mentoring to develop a business start up idea with growth potential, and guidance during the first 12 months of trading.
- Help with skills development, including leadership and management training with discretionary funding to address specific development needs.
- Assist in preparing procurement bids to compete for public sector contracts.
- Help businesses to explore new markets with guidance on new trade and export opportunities.
- Connect businesses to the expertise and facilities within Universities and colleges in Wales.
- Opportunities to learn how to identify and protect Intellectual Property.
- Repayable business available for SMEs within the identified six sectors that make a significant impact on the Welsh Economy: Advanced Materials & Manufacturing, Creative Industries, Energy & Environment, Financial & professional Services, ICT and Life Sciences.

It sets out how the Assembly Government's new approach to economic development benefits SMEs by supporting entrepreneurship and creating the best environment to start up in business. It also helps existing enterprises grow to improve Wales' competitive edge. Small firms can access all of this and other support, advice and guidance from the public, private and third sector in Wales via a single number (03000 6 03000) and just one [here](#).

Joined-up government?...

Recently published Cabinet minutes revealed the progress that has been made in delivering the key policy commitments of the Economic Renewal Programme, particularly around the whole government approach. It was reported that the Programme had been developed with a high level of co-operation and buy-in from across the Assembly Government which included strengthening the interface between planning and economic development, better regulation, strengthening the supply chains in Wales and taking a whole government approach to supporting Research and Development. It was noted that the staff restructuring within Department for Economy and Transport would be completed by the end of December and all the Sector Panels would be operational by the end of January.

On target to get online

Delivering Digital Wales, WAG's flagship programme under the Economic Renewal Programme, has been launched with close consultation with the FSB. The scheme sets out a roadmap for how Wales can capitalise on emergent digital technologies for the increased wealth and wellbeing of Wales. Less than 40% of Welsh SMEs sell online and Delivering Digital Wales sets out ways of increasing this figure and increasing profitability for Welsh small businesses.

Give us your views

The Wales Policy team will be setting up **focus groups on key issues** in order to inform their policies and manifesto for the Wales Assembly elections in 2010. The team find them hugely valuable in making the case for small businesses so if you would like to be involved in these focus groups please contact Non Rhys, Wales Policy Manager, at Non.Rhys@fsb.org.uk

FSB newsround

[FSB calls for help to snap out of snow](#); [Shoppers queue up in early hours to grab sales bargains](#); [Stressed teachers costing £25m a year](#); [Delaying tax bill could save businesses](#); [Shops count cost of freeze](#); [No jingle tills as shoppers forced away by weather](#); [Businesses complain of EU 'red tape'](#); [Group will bring concerns to PM](#); [Economic impact probe](#); [What 2011 could mean for small firms](#); [Late payers huge burden to our firms](#); [FSB demands end to Euro red tape](#); [Don't let snowfall hurt our footfall](#); [Export red tape slated](#); [Online sales break 10% barrier for first time](#); [Barriers prevent employers offering apprentice places](#); [Arctic blast blowing in on Thursday threatens Christmas shops' climax](#); [FSB calls for new VAT threshold](#); ['Jekyll and Hyde' approach has to change for Welsh firms to succeed](#); [Ieuan under attack over 'elitist' service](#); [Act on pledge to cut red tape, Cable told](#); [Letters Page](#); [Will the gateway to the city ever be as good as this?](#); [Damning criticism of consultation process](#); [Rail upgrade 'will not leave out Wales line'](#).

Press releases

Over the last fortnight the FSB has highlighted entrepreneurship as the missing link in the Welsh Assembly Government's deficit programme after the release of the Draft Assembly Budget (see the release [here](#)); and called for a fresh debate surrounding the future of the tourism industry for firms in Wales (see the release [here](#)).

Assembly doings

Economy and Transport Minister, Ieuan Wyn Jones, has called on the UK Government to help small businesses through a difficult winter by stating that delaying income tax bills which could help save thousands of struggling firms. He said: "The coming few months will be a crucial period for thousands of businesses across Wales. Economic conditions have obviously been very challenging over past couple of years. Added to this, the disastrous weather during the crucial Christmas period and the VAT rise to 20% being brought in on 4 January the will put enormous strain on many of our businesses. Delaying small businesses' income tax bills for the beginning few months of 2011 could help save thousands of struggling firms in Wales by giving them the flexibility to pay their tax bills either over a longer period of time or slightly later in the year when trade has had a chance to pick up and cash-flow is healthier. I'm aware that HMRC does have a 'Time to Pay' scheme but this is

limited to a case-by-case basis. I believe the seriousness of current situation requires more widespread action to help businesses through this difficult time.”