

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.

### **Election fever**

The FSB in Wales had an extremely busy election helping members to lobby candidates hard on small business issues. We published briefings for the General Election which offered an analysis of what would be a good and a bad night on May 6<sup>th</sup> for the political parties in Wales, and one on the Chancellor's Budget 2010, including an overview of its potential impact on Wales and a summary of the main policy decisions as they affect business. We also produced the FSB's Welsh Constituency Guide, detailing the political make-up of all the constituencies in Wales. And on 27<sup>th</sup> April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, visited the FSB offices in Cardiff to discuss with members a range of issues surrounding businesses, including an overview of his Budget's potential impact on Wales in future years and the main economic policy decisions of the Labour Party. We are currently working on a comprehensive guide to all our new (and old) Welsh MPs for FSB members as a lobby tool in the weeks and months to come.

### **Welcome to 'Grow-Act'**

You may remember 'ProAct', a Welsh Assembly Government scheme which provided training for employees who were on short time working, and helped companies retain skilled staff who may otherwise have been made redundant. It offered up to £2,000 per individual towards training costs and a wage subsidy of up to £2,000 (at a rate of £50 a day) per individual whilst this training was being undertaken (up to 12 months). This scheme officially ended in March, but the FSB has had significant input into the design of a successor scheme – 'ProAct – Skills Growth Wales', which is a financial support package designed to help Welsh companies grow by funding high level or new technology skills training. Funding is available to private or third sector businesses that are growing or have identified a clear growth opportunity and have the ability to take advantage of it. An average of £3,000 per person to pay for high level and new technology training that will directly help to bring about growth – in turnover, profit and/or employment. It is designed to build on the success of ProAct and help reinvigorate the economy. For more information, contact WAG's Skills.People.Success team on 0845 6066160.

### **FSB newsround**

FSB comments on [weak economic growth](#); a call for [local shop tax breaks](#); more support for [soft loans for small firms](#); extensive [comments on NEETs](#); Alistair Darling's [visit to the FSB](#) in Wales; comments on the parties' [small business policies](#); and comments on [innovation vouchers](#); and [again](#).

### **Press releases**

Over the last fortnight the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in Wales has called on the National Assembly's Sustainability Committee to look closely at the issues surrounding supermarkets when conducting their inquiry into planning policies in Wales (see the release

[here](#)), and a snap poll which showed that the election result has left small firms lacking confidence in the economy and that many will not be looking to grow (see the release [here](#)).

### **Assembly doings**

**Chris Franks AM, question in plenary to First Minister Carwyn Jones AM:** “Would you agree that, in order for Wales to succeed, our home-grown businesses must succeed? What discussions have you had to ensure that Welsh businesses get the funds that they require to develop new ideas and expand and create sustainable jobs in all parts of Wales? Would you make a statement on the creation of a venture capital fund to help Welsh businesses?” **The First Minister:** “You know about Finance Wales and the investment that it makes in early-stage and start-up businesses. It has invested over £151 million to date, and has leveraged a further £350 million of private sector investment into those businesses. The next challenge for us is to develop areas where capital might be raised outside of Finance Wales; whether that is the development of some kind of bank, not perhaps directly, but working with an existing financial institution, looking at the development of local bond markets, or ensuring that our companies also look at flotation as a way of securing capital for the future. Certainly, Finance Wales has been essential in ensuring that many businesses get off the ground.”

For daily summaries of all news Assembly-related, [click here](#).

### **FSB Events**

The FE Awards for Wales, which we hoped to host in June, have been cancelled this for this year. There are no other events planned for 2010.