

November 2019

Dear Parliamentary Party Candidates,

While many of the key issues for the people and places of Wales are devolved, there are areas where decisions made by the UK Government and UK Parliament have direct and indirect consequences.

This includes the way in which the UK exits the European Union and the way in which the UK Government replaces European funding. European Structural and Investment funds play a critical role in Wales. They support:

- research and innovation
- the most disadvantaged communities
- young people and adults seeking to improve their skills, find employment and build careers
- sustainable management of our natural resources

They are also an important part of helping to grow Welsh business and the economy through structures such as the Business Wales support service and other support streams.

For Wales, this funding will total around £2 billion in the period 2014-2020. It has been used in a variety of ways: from supporting small businesses with master's and PhD students to large infrastructure projects; from supporting the most disadvantaged in our society with skills and apprenticeships to finding new ways to store and transport energy. This funding matters in almost every walk of life, to people of all ages and backgrounds.

We are calling on all political parties to replace structural funds in full. The current UK Government has pledged to create a Shared Prosperity Fund to replace these funds. Any Shared Prosperity Fund must be devolved by design and operate on a needs-based model.

The prosperity of Wales, the work delivered by our businesses, education providers, and charities and many of the ways our young people are supported all rely on this funding.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Cottam, Head of External Affairs of Federation of Small Businesses Wales

David Hagendyk, Director of the Learning and Work Institute Wales

Heather Myers, Chief Executive of the South and Mid Wales Chambers of Commerce

Iestyn Davies, Chief Executive of ColegauCymru

Professor Julie Lydon OBE, Chair of Universities Wales

Margaret Phelan, Wales Official of the University and College Union (UCU)

Rob Simkins, President of National Union of Students Wales

Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)



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