

News and information for Wales from:

Wales Council for Voluntary Action
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WCVA continues with recession and recovery survey for 2010

Economic output returned to growth in October to December 2009, and the longest economic downturn since the 1930s.

However, the recovery period is likely to be a difficult time for those parts of the third sector that rely on the public sector for much of their income.

Results from WCVA's recession survey show that the level of optimism has not changed since July 2009, with 39 per cent of organisations in Wales feeling that their economic situation will get worse. 120 employers said that they had 320 posts at risk in the 2010, which has increased since the survey began in February 2009.

Because of these findings and the expected reductions in public sector funding, WCVA is continuing its Recession and Recovery survey into 2010. This survey is emailed to over 6,000 organisations and can be accessed on line at WCVA's website. If your organisation is being affected by the long-term effects of the recession, please consider filling in the survey, which will take about 15 minutes. The results of previous surveys are available on WCVA's website, or by contacting the WCVA Helpdesk.

Results from the survey are used to inform WCVA's policy work and provide the evidence which makes policy makers take notice. Thank you for your help.

Health service seeks third sector involvement

NHS Direct launched in 1998. However, it wasn't until 2000 – ten years ago this month – that the National Health Information Service for Wales joined forces with NHS Direct Wales, with the aim of helping everyone across the country with their health concerns.

Since then, NHS Direct Wales' team of Health Information Specialists have assisted thousands of Welsh people, offering information by post, telephone and through the NHS Direct Wales' website.

To celebrate the anniversary, NHS Direct Wales' Health Information Team is keen to get their Information Specialists more involved with the health and social care community.

To do so, they're asking the voluntary sector to help. If you run a suitable organisation, you can register its details on the NHS Direct Wales directory. Simply visit its website www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/healthwell being included – and fill in the online form.

Celebrating the anniversary, Leanne Hawker of Healthcare Lead, who manage the National Health Information Service, said: 'Our health information service is providing valuable information for people and families to help and support them through their healthcare journeys.'

To find out more about the directory and how your organisation can contribute, contact Gareth Wyn Thomas, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, on 01792 776252 or gareth.w.thomas@ambulance.wales.nhs.uk.

Evidence call for proposed Welsh Language Measure

The National Assembly for Wales is calling for evidence on the general principles of a proposed Measure (a Welsh law), which will lead to more rights for Welsh speakers to receive services in Welsh.

The proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure makes provision in four key areas:

- To confirm the official status of the Welsh language in Wales.
- To establish the post of Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner will be appointed by the First Minister and will have the powers to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. There will also be an Advisory Panel to the Commissioner, appointed by the Welsh Ministers.
- To give the Commissioner the power to investigate complaints from Welsh speakers who believe that their freedom to use the language has been interfered with.
- To modernise the framework for the use of Welsh in the delivery of public services. In time, Welsh language schemes will be replaced by Welsh language standards, with the aim of ensuring greater consistency for the consumer.

There will be five types of standards specified by the Welsh Ministers: service delivery; policy making; operational; promotion; and record keeping. Once an organisation receives a compliance notice from the Commissioner along with an imposition date, their Welsh language scheme will cease to exist and they will be subject to the standards. The Commissioner will have a role in setting the standards for certain sectors by undertaking investigations and presenting reports to the Welsh Ministers.

The National Assembly for Wales will approve a set of standards for a particular sector for the Commissioner to implement. The Commissioner will then decide which parts of the sectoral

standards apply to individual organisations and issue notice, so the burden of responsibility will not be on the organisation to work out whether they need to comply. Organisations will have the right to appeal to the Commissioner and challenge this decision. If this is unsuccessful, they can then appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal.

Third sector organisations will fall under the scope of the Measure if:

- they are in receipt of public money (excluding lottery money) amounting to £400,000 or more in a financial year, where they received money in the previous financial year or will do in a subsequent financial year;
- they provide services to the public under an agreement, or in accordance with arrangements, made with a public authority;
- they are engaged in providing services to the public in education, training (where the provider receives public money for its provision) or career guidance;
- they provide social housing;
- they choose to opt in or agree to be subject to duties.

Further details of the proposed Measure and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum can be found on the National Assembly's website at: <http://tiny.cc/029gj>

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to legislationoffice@wales.gsi.gov.uk and entitle the e-mail Consultation – Proposed Welsh Language Measure. Alternatively, you can write to Owain Roberts, Deputy Committee Clerk, Legislation Office, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA. Submissions should arrive by 11 May 2010.

WCVA will be giving evidence to the Committee in June and if you have any comments for us to consider, please email Lynne Reynolds (lreynolds@wcva.org.uk) by 17 May 2010.



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