

Wales Monthly Update

1 November 2024

As we step into November, it's hard to believe how quickly 2024 is flying by! But don't worry – there is still plenty to look forward to before the year comes to a close. Our latest Wales Monthly Update is here to keep you in the loop, providing an overview of our October activities, as well as looking forward as to what is on the agenda for the coming month.

Campaigning and Policy Activity

FSB Wales met with the Welsh Government's new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, to discuss the vital role of small businesses in Wales. FSB urged the Cabinet Secretary to leverage the upcoming Welsh Budget to introduce proactive measures to improve operating conditions for SMEs, including using business rates reductions and reliefs to provide targeted support and encourage growth.

With the UK Government Budget taking place on October 30, we have been working with our colleagues in Westminster to make the case for measures that will help small firms grow, employ more staff, and power economic growth. We've urged the UK Government to increase the Employment Allowance, protect Entrepreneurs Relief and ensure that Wales's unique economic challenges are addressed in the UK Government's growth strategy.

We're excited to share our latest report, launched at M-SParc's Digital Conference, which outlines a strategy to support SMEs in Wales's thriving creative industries. Our report highlights the significant contribution the creative industries make to the Welsh economy, boosting GDP, generating employment, and driving innovation. Supporting this sector can spread prosperity and boost wider health and wellbeing benefits, helping our communities to thrive. [Download the report here](#)



We're hosting further sessions with small creative businesses at Tramshed Cardiff on November 19 and Yr Egin on November 20. Don't miss out, let us know if you'd like to join us!"

We are now working on our next research project, and we'd like your help to shape the future of Business Support in Wales. Our survey, asking about your experiences of accessing business support, will go live on November 3 (FSB Members, keep an eye out for an email with the link).

📄 We are also looking to do interviews with businesses who have accessed business support services to better understand your experiences. If you would like to take part – please get in touch with Dr Llyr ap Gareth at llyr.apgareth@fsb.org.uk

📄 A member of the team gave evidence to a [Senedd inquiry into disability and employment](#), highlighting the importance of small businesses having one place where they can go to access advice which is relevant to their business, emphasising the need to make business support more accessible to disabled entrepreneurs and



urging the Welsh Government to work with the UK Government to address delays in the Access to Work scheme. [View the session here](#)

📄 As part of FSB’s ongoing work supporting Reservists within the Armed Forces and forces leavers, FSB attended a recent event in Sennybridge as part of Exercise Cambrian Patrol – the British Army’s leading patrol exercise hosted by 160th (Welsh) Brigade. The event, which also drew military teams from a wide range of countries, was an excellent opportunity to meet with members of the regular and reserve forces, understand the skillsets developed as part of the Exercise and to discuss the importance of engagement between HM Armed Forces and employers throughout Wales. We were also fortunate to meet with a number of smaller businesses supporting this significant multi-nation exercise in Bannau Brecheiniog.

📄 As part of the recent Convention on the Western Gateway in Newport, FSB Wales contributed to a round table hosted by the Crown Estate looking at the massive opportunities in the development of Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) in the Celtic Sea. The session discussed the opportunities for smaller businesses in Wales through the significant supply chain which will be required for this project which has the potential to generate significant benefit for Welsh businesses, skills development and the wider Welsh and UK economies. [You can see more about the project here](#)

📄 FSB staff attended Plaid Cymru’s Autumn Conference at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. During the two days of the Conference, FSB met with a number of Plaid Cymru Senedd Members, Members of Parliament and Council Members to outline the priorities of FSB’s members in Wales both now and in the run-up to the 2026 Senedd elections. It was also an opportunity to discuss our priorities for the forthcoming UK Government Budget and Welsh Government’s Draft Budget later in the Autumn.

North Wales Update: Mike Learmond

I've been fortunate to attend no less than three business award evenings in October. These events are a great opportunity to meet with business owners in a relaxed setting and gain an insight into their entrepreneurial journeys. So well done to [Môn CF](#), [Menter Môn](#) and Credit Unions of Wales for organising these fantastic events and congratulations to all the winners.



We have also been out and about exhibiting at various venues and meeting FSB members. These included the Business Wales Expo in Venue Cymru, Denbighshire Tourism Forum, various Gwynedd Business Week events and the Employment without Barriers Disability Conference in Llandudno.

It was also interesting to interact with the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre ([AMRC Cymru](#)) in Broughton to learn about the state-of-the-art facilities and expertise they can offer to SMEs in developing new products. In addition, it was a pleasure to meet members of the Wrexham Leadership Alliance to discuss opportunities in the city and industrial estate.

Looking forward into November, we will be attending the Welsh Labour Conference in Llandudno, the Innovate Local Conference in Wrexham and the Denbighshire Business Club Expo in Llangollen, and much more!

Our in-person and virtual networking regular events continue to be popular, so please follow the booking links below and give them a try!



South Wales Update: Rob Basini

A real highlight of October was a visit to FSB member Frog Bikes' unit, near to Pontypool, with our 'Being Responsible Businesses' group of members. Jerry Lawson, Chief Frog, showed businesses around the factory unit, helping the group understand how Frog Bikes produces such exceptional products, while maintaining such a strong focus on looking after the environment. Jerry then gave a truly inspirational presentation on sustainability for small businesses, and those in attendance left feeling motivated and better equipped to carry on their businesses' journeys towards net zero.



This month we also hosted our FSB networking event in Carmarthenshire, in conjunction with Carmarthenshire County Council. The event was extremely well attended, and we received excellent feedback on our speakers, Melissa Curran of Modern Mind Group, and Angela Williams of Business Wales. Both sessions - Melissa's focusing on improving performance in business, and Angela's outlining support available to businesses in the area – were invaluable to attendees.

We also hosted our regular South East Wales Business Networking, which again received really positive feedback from those attending, about the networking opportunities at the event and on the usefulness of the tax tips provided by our guest speaker, Gareth Haddon of James Khan Accountants.



This month, we also exhibited at the Welsh Business Show in Swansea, and were delighted to be a part of the Circular Economy Hotspot, a Europe wide event focusing on the circular economy, which this year took place in Cardiff.

Looking ahead this coming month will see FSB in the area involved in a variety of activity again. We'll be jointly hosting our autumn event with the Development Bank of Wales, and we will be attending the Zokit Business Expo on 14 November. We're also looking forward to jointly hosting our business briefing event with Cardiff University, on 15 November which, as well as providing ample networking opportunities for attendees, will focus on two key areas businesses need to get right - cyber security and ensuring a positive customer experience more generally to retain customers.

We'll also be holding our next Swansea Area Business Networking event on the 19 November, and will be welcoming creative sector businesses to events in Cardiff and Llanelli to discuss our creative economies report.

Upcoming Events

[North Wales Business Breakfast, Wednesday 13 November, 9.30am – 11am](#)

Our in-person networking in North Wales returns with our regular monthly North Wales Business Breakfast events. This monthly networking meet-up, this month taking place in Coleg Cambria Business School, Northop, offers a prime opportunity to forge meaningful business connections, in a professional environment. Come and network, collaborate, promote your services and support each other. Open to all, both FSB members and non-members.

[Wales Virtual Networking, Thursday 14 November, 1-2pm](#)

Embrace the virtual networking scene with us at our Wales Virtual Networking sessions, the perfect dynamic and engaging setting to grow and diversify your business connections. Held fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon, this is your chance to expand your network, share valuable insights and collaborate with our diverse virtual community of business professionals from Wales and across the UK. The event is open to all and FREE to attend.



[Cardiff University Small Business Networking & Briefing, Friday 15 November, 9am – 11.30am](#)

In this digital age, cybersecurity is a fundamental aspect of any business operation, and many small businesses are unsure of where to start with making sure they are safe online. This interactive networking event, in collaboration with the Cyber Innovation Hub, will provide useful information about cyber security and customer retention, covering key areas of the two topics, alongside the chance for attendees to network and make new business connections. This event is open to all and FREE to attend.

[Swansea Area Business Networking, Tuesday 19 November, 9am – 11.45am](#)

Our Swansea Area Business Networking event returns to The Towers Hotel & Spa this month, providing the perfect opportunity to connect with a diverse array of businesses from across the area. Join us at this engaging event for face-to-face networking and the chance to hear from a special guest speaker, providing lots of useful business support advice. Don't miss out and book your place today!

[Wales Virtual Networking, Thursday 28 November, 1-2pm](#)

Join us for our second virtual networking event this month and become part of our wonderful online networking community at our Wales Virtual Networking sessions, the perfect dynamic and engaging setting to grow and diversify your business connections. Held fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon, this is your chance to expand your network, share valuable insights and collaborate with our diverse virtual community of business professionals from Wales and across the UK. The event is open to all and FREE to attend.

[West Wales Business Networking, Wednesday 4 December, 9am – 11.30am](#)

Kick off December with our West Wales Business Networking in-person networking event, being held at The Queens Hall in Narberth. This valuable event presents the opportunity to connect with businesses from across the area, alongside hearing from a guest speaker discussing a key subject to help you and your business flourish. Build your connections within this relaxed and informal environment, whilst enjoying delicious breakfast pastries too! Don't delay and book your spot now!

Meet The Team

If you need any further information about any of the information or events covered here, your Wales contacts are:

[Mike Learmond, Senior Development Manager \(North Wales\)](#)

[Rob Basini, Development Manager \(South & Mid Wales\)](#)

[Shona Holmes-Berry, Operational Support Co-Ordinator \(Wales\)](#)

North Wales social media pages

 **@FSB.North.Wales**

 **@FSBNorthWales**

South Wales social media pages

 **@FSB.South.Mid.Wales**

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