

News and information for Wales from:

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Welsh third sector given chance to be switched on to Switch Off campaign

Welsh third sector groups have the chance to lead the nation in WWF Cymru's Earth Hour Switch Off. The annual Earth Hour will take place this year on 31 March. Businesses, communities and homes are encouraged to switch off their lights for one hour from 8.30pm in order to help the environment.

One group will be given the chance to be WWF UK's Champion Community for 2012, receiving £1000 from WWF's official partner, MORE TH>N. A grant of £300 will be given to the Welsh national winner, and this group's community will be able to lead the Welsh Switch Off, ahead of landmarks such as the Millennium Stadium, the Senedd and Caernarfon Castle.

Groups wishing to be considered are asked to describe, in no more than 300 words, why their community should lead the switch off - taking into consideration the sustainable things the community does, and how the group plans to bring people together for Earth Hour.

Anna Meikle, Head of WWF Cymru, said: 'We want entries not just from 'green' groups, but any groups that are striving to be more environmentally friendly have a great idea for marking Earth Hour 2012.'

For full details, including details of how to enter, visit www.wwf.org.uk/wales. The competition closes at midnight on 27 February 2012.

WCVA response to WEF0 consultation

WCVA, in consultation with the third sector European forum (3-SEF), has recently responded to WEF0's reflection exercise on the current round of European Structural Funds which will help inform the 2014-20 programmes.

Based on WCVA's experience of delivering European projects and feedback from the sector, the response includes our view on what should be the investment priorities of the 2014-20 programmes and what lessons have been learned from the current round of Structural Funds.

The response also strongly supports the European Commission's proposal to ring-fence 20 per cent of the European Social Fund (ESF) allocation to an antipoverty and social inclusion priority.

WEFO will follow up on the reflection exercise with a public consultation later this year on the development of the Operational Programmes for the 2014- 2020 programmes in Wales, where the third sector will have an opportunity to express views on the priorities for the funding.

WCVA will also hold a series of regional information events on the development of the post-2013 Structural Funds programmes in Wales on the following dates:

- 18 April - WCVA's offices in Morfa Hall, Rhyl
- 19 April - The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells
- 25 April - The Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen
- 26 April - St Margaret's Park, Aberbargoed

To read our response or for further information, please contact WCVA's third sector European team (3-SET) on 0800 2888 329 or email 3SET@wcva.org.uk or visit <http://bit.ly/A2ZNJT>.

Interim results of state of the sector survey

In response to the recession, WCVA initiated a series of on-line surveys of third sector organisations in Wales in February 2009.

Further surveys have been conducted approximately every four months. This survey was conducted between 3 January and 31 January 2012. There have been between 434 to 750 responses (549 in this survey) to all surveys from a variety of organisations from all parts of the sector, all parts of Wales and representing both large and small organisations.

The surveys have provided evidence of the effect of the recession, subsequent recovery and the current public sector spending cuts on the third sector in Wales. Whilst the data is not able to provide a comprehensive picture, the responses received are illustrative of the situations of many organisations in Wales.

While the overall general outlook is less pessimistic and organisations under pressure are reducing the number of actual and threatened redundancies has increased, this may reflect the uncertainties around the annual cycle of funding decisions and cuts that were predicted following the Welsh Government draft budget.

One organisation reported 33 staff redundancies. While organisations continue to report seeing unemployed people turning to volunteering to maintain or develop skills, there is evidence that many are losing their volunteers because they are unable to afford to continue volunteering. WCVA will continue to monitor these trends, along with challenges, and opportunities that the Welsh third sector should be aware of over the coming year.

The interim report can be read at <http://bit.ly/AAFs5C> and the final report for survey 9 will be available from 28 February 2012.

Volunteering in Wales Fund


The Volunteering in Wales grant scheme is one of Wales' premier volunteering support schemes.

It has been run by WCVA since 1982 and has helped to recruit, train and support thousands of new volunteers.

In 2010/11 alone it recruited over 3,500 new volunteers who have contributed in excess of

350,000 hours and will continue to make a major difference to the quality of life in their communities.

The Fund is open and the deadline to make a grant application is Friday 23 March 2012. Contact the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or help@wcva.org.uk to request an application pack.

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