

Ruabon News Letter 354

14.12.2020

YSGOL RHIWABON
~ SINCE 1575 ~



THE LINK TO THE VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

<https://youtu.be/chedjS9HJQ> (beautifully done).

Little Princess Trust Fundraising – Chloe Davies

Wednesday, 9th December 2020

Chloe Davies, had her long locks cut off to raise money for the Little Princess Trust, and donated her hair to be made into wigs for children.

Chloe and her family would like to pass on their sincere thanks to everyone who donated. Chloe has currently raised £489.

For more information: <https://www.ysgolrhiwabon.co.uk/>

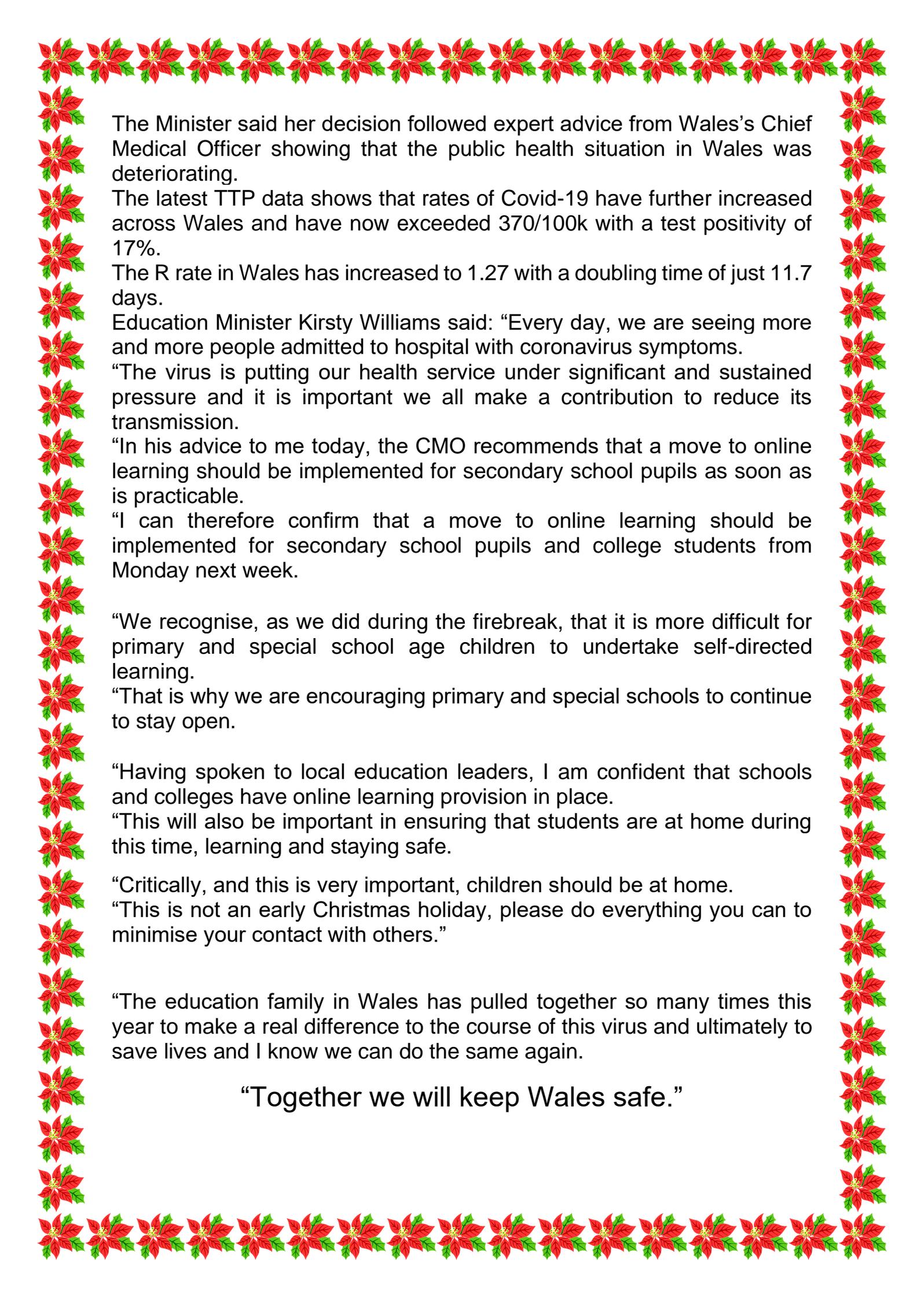
Secondary schools and colleges in Wales will move to online learning from Monday as part of 'national effort to reduce coronavirus transmission'

Secondary schools and colleges in Wales will move to online learning from Monday, December 14 as part of a 'national effort to reduce transmission of coronavirus' Education Minister Kirsty Williams confirmed today.

The Minister made it clear that, thanks to the efforts of education staff across the country, schools and colleges are safe and secure environments, with almost half of all Welsh schools having had zero covid cases since September.

However, it is also recognised that education settings being open can contribute to wider social mixing outside the school and college environment.

By making this decision, the Minister felt it was important to make a 'clear, national direction' to take pressure off individual schools, colleges, local authorities, parents and carers.



The Minister said her decision followed expert advice from Wales's Chief Medical Officer showing that the public health situation in Wales was deteriorating.

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Education Minister Kirsty Williams said: "Every day, we are seeing more and more people admitted to hospital with coronavirus symptoms.

"The virus is putting our health service under significant and sustained pressure and it is important we all make a contribution to reduce its transmission.

"In his advice to me today, the CMO recommends that a move to online learning should be implemented for secondary school pupils as soon as is practicable.

"I can therefore confirm that a move to online learning should be implemented for secondary school pupils and college students from Monday next week.

"We recognise, as we did during the firebreak, that it is more difficult for primary and special school age children to undertake self-directed learning.

"That is why we are encouraging primary and special schools to continue to stay open.

"Having spoken to local education leaders, I am confident that schools and colleges have online learning provision in place.

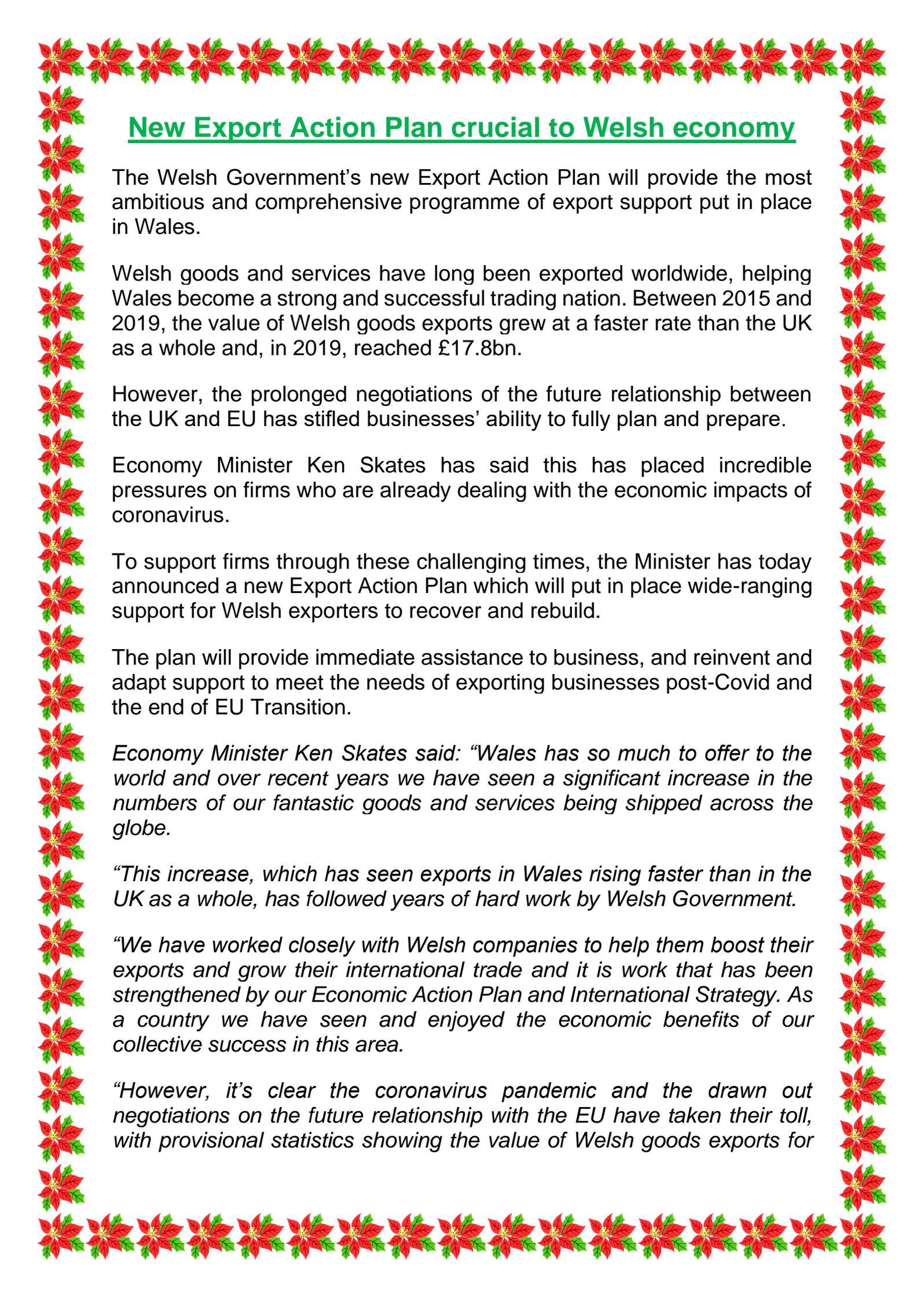
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"Critically, and this is very important, children should be at home.

"This is not an early Christmas holiday, please do everything you can to minimise your contact with others."

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New Export Action Plan crucial to Welsh economy

The Welsh Government's new Export Action Plan will provide the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of export support put in place in Wales.

Welsh goods and services have long been exported worldwide, helping Wales become a strong and successful trading nation. Between 2015 and 2019, the value of Welsh goods exports grew at a faster rate than the UK as a whole and, in 2019, reached £17.8bn.

However, the prolonged negotiations of the future relationship between the UK and EU has stifled businesses' ability to fully plan and prepare.

Economy Minister Ken Skates has said this has placed incredible pressures on firms who are already dealing with the economic impacts of coronavirus.

To support firms through these challenging times, the Minister has today announced a new Export Action Plan which will put in place wide-ranging support for Welsh exporters to recover and rebuild.

The plan will provide immediate assistance to business, and reinvent and adapt support to meet the needs of exporting businesses post-Covid and the end of EU Transition.

Economy Minister Ken Skates said: "Wales has so much to offer to the world and over recent years we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of our fantastic goods and services being shipped across the globe.

"This increase, which has seen exports in Wales rising faster than in the UK as a whole, has followed years of hard work by Welsh Government.

"We have worked closely with Welsh companies to help them boost their exports and grow their international trade and it is work that has been strengthened by our Economic Action Plan and International Strategy. As a country we have seen and enjoyed the economic benefits of our collective success in this area.

"However, it's clear the coronavirus pandemic and the drawn out negotiations on the future relationship with the EU have taken their toll, with provisional statistics showing the value of Welsh goods exports for



the 12 months up to the second quarter of 2020 is down 12.5% on the previous year.

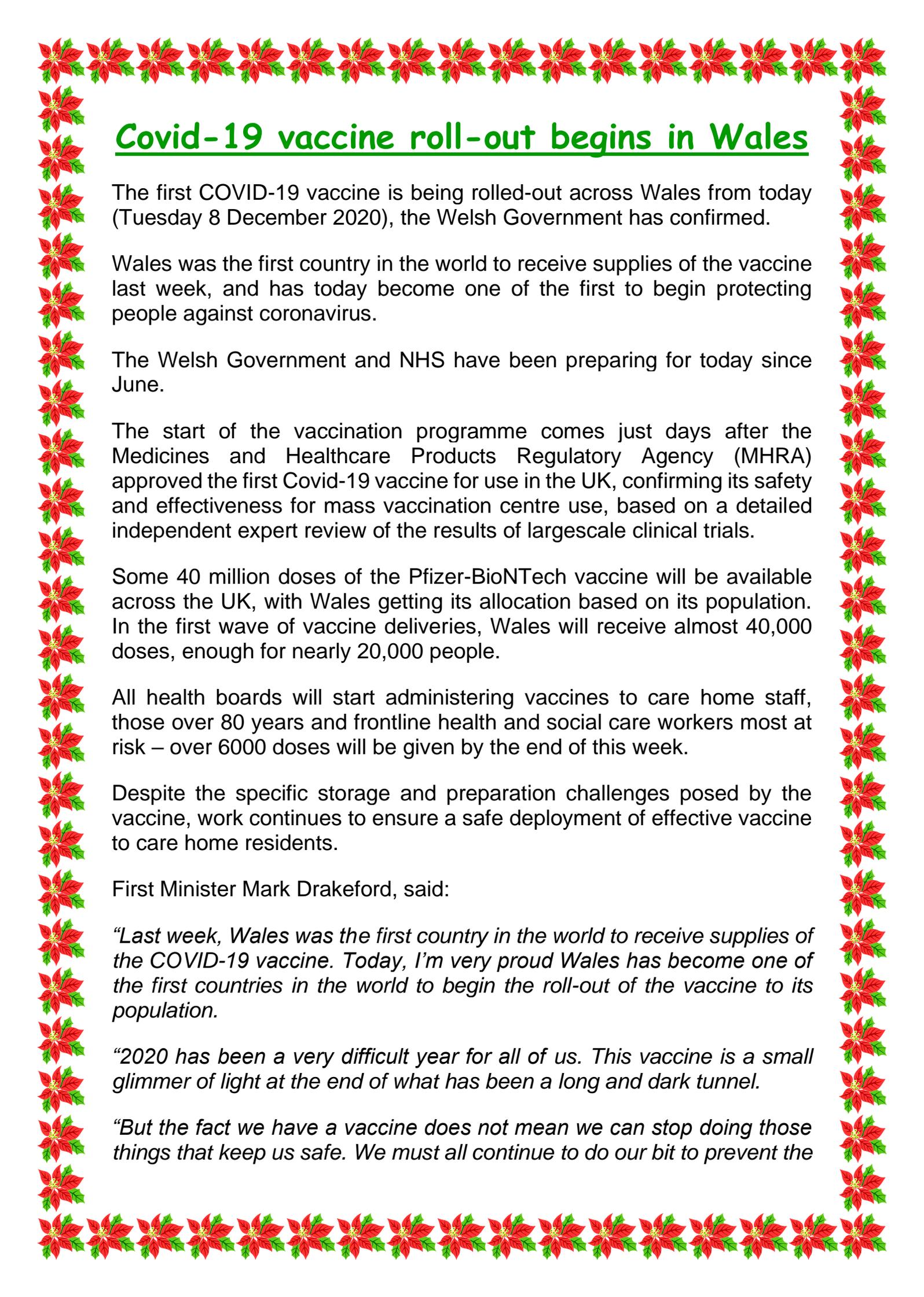
“Today I am launching a new Export Action Plan, which I firmly believe is the most comprehensive and ambitious ever in Wales to support our exporting businesses to recover and rebuild. It has been developed with our partners and is specifically designed to ensure our exporting businesses are well positioned to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.”

The Export Action Plan sets out the Welsh Government’s focus on:

- Adapting existing programmes of export support so they align with new ways of working and the changing needs of business;
- Providing advice and support to Welsh exporters to help them manage the end of the EU transition phase;
- Reaching out to more businesses in Wales, particularly those businesses with a potential to export;
- Building capacity and capability for exporting to ensure Welsh businesses have the right skills and confidence to be successful exporters;
- Developing new export support interventions, including piloting a new Export Cluster initiative to facilitate strong networks of export support;
- Delivering overseas activity in key markets and matching these opportunities for sectors where Wales has particular sectoral strengths.

A new online [Export Hub](#) is also available for businesses. This is an important resource for Welsh firms and provides live information on a range of export issues. This will support both new and existing exporters to grow and address any challenges they face with the future trading environment.

In addition, a series of ‘virtual export market visits’ have been set up for the remainder of this financial year to ensure Welsh businesses can continue to meet with potential customers in target markets.



Covid-19 vaccine roll-out begins in Wales

The first COVID-19 vaccine is being rolled-out across Wales from today (Tuesday 8 December 2020), the Welsh Government has confirmed.

Wales was the first country in the world to receive supplies of the vaccine last week, and has today become one of the first to begin protecting people against coronavirus.

The Welsh Government and NHS have been preparing for today since June.

The start of the vaccination programme comes just days after the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approved the first Covid-19 vaccine for use in the UK, confirming its safety and effectiveness for mass vaccination centre use, based on a detailed independent expert review of the results of largescale clinical trials.

Some 40 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine will be available across the UK, with Wales getting its allocation based on its population. In the first wave of vaccine deliveries, Wales will receive almost 40,000 doses, enough for nearly 20,000 people.

All health boards will start administering vaccines to care home staff, those over 80 years and frontline health and social care workers most at risk – over 6000 doses will be given by the end of this week.

Despite the specific storage and preparation challenges posed by the vaccine, work continues to ensure a safe deployment of effective vaccine to care home residents.

First Minister Mark Drakeford, said:

“Last week, Wales was the first country in the world to receive supplies of the COVID-19 vaccine. Today, I’m very proud Wales has become one of the first countries in the world to begin the roll-out of the vaccine to its population.

“2020 has been a very difficult year for all of us. This vaccine is a small glimmer of light at the end of what has been a long and dark tunnel.

“But the fact we have a vaccine does not mean we can stop doing those things that keep us safe. We must all continue to do our bit to prevent the



spread of coronavirus: regular hand washing, social distancing, and wearing a face covering where required to protect yourself and others.”

Health Minister Vaughan Gething said:

“Vaccines can take many years, even decades, to develop. The fact that a safe and effective vaccine has been developed in less than year is a remarkable tribute to all scientists and researchers around the world who have worked so hard to find a vaccine for COVID-19.

“We have been working really hard to plan for its arrival. Today, the first people in Wales will receive the vaccine. This is the positive news we have all been waiting for.

“We will now do everything we can to ensure we successfully deliver the COVID-19 vaccine across Wales in the days, weeks and months ahead.”

The effects of the vaccine may not be seen for many months and the advice about keeping Wales safe remains in place:

- Keep contacts with other people to a minimum;
- Keep a 2 metre distance from others;
- Wash your hands regularly;
- Wear a face covering where required, and;
- Avoid touching surfaces others have touched, wherever possible.

The vaccine – which needs to be administered in two doses – will initially be prioritised and available for people aged 80 and over, care home staff and residents and those working within front line health and social care services at greatest risk.

WELSH GOVERNMENT MEETS

100,000 APPRENTICESHIPS TARGET

The Welsh Government has achieved its target of creating 100,000 all age, high quality apprenticeships during this Senedd term.

Economy Minister Ken Skates said reaching the milestone was a fantastic achievement and has provided crucial opportunities to individuals and businesses throughout Wales.

Of the 100,000 apprenticeship starts, 60% were undertaken by females, while 57% were learners aged 25 and over.



Economy Minister Ken Skates said: "It's fantastic news that we've reached our target of creating 100,000 apprenticeships in the Senedd term.

"Apprenticeships are a crucial part of our economy and provide people of all ages with opportunities to learn whilst earning a wage.

"I have met many dedicated apprentices, of all ages, at the fantastic businesses we have here in Wales and I've been delighted to hear how they have developed new skills and capabilities. Firms have also told me how investing in apprenticeships have benefited their business and workforce."

The Welsh Government recently announced major new employer incentives to help recruit apprentices. This includes businesses in Wales being able to claim up to £3,000 for each new apprentice they hire under the age of 25.

The incentives are part of the Welsh Government's £40m proactive jobs and skills package to support businesses and workers in recovering from the economic impacts of coronavirus and respond to the effects of the UK leaving the EU.

They will help to ensure crucial employment opportunities for apprentices in Wales, while supporting businesses to hire, train and develop new staff.

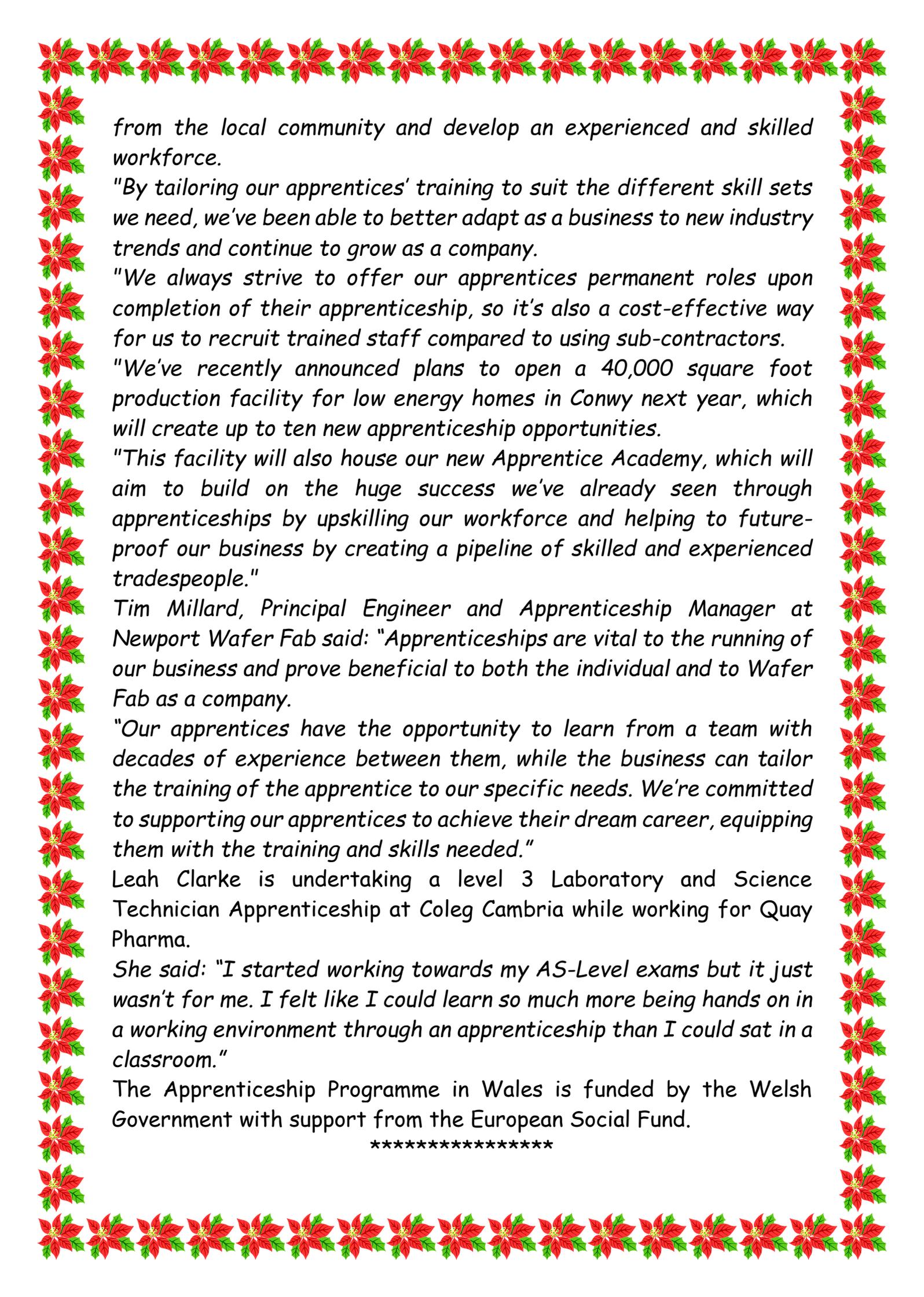
The Minister added: "We are living in incredibly challenging times, but today's announcement shows what can be achieved when government, business and learners work together.

"I am very proud of the action we have taken in reaching the 100,000 milestone.

"It has allowed individuals looking for a change in direction throughout Wales to improve their lives and really show what they're capable of, while businesses of all sizes have benefited from having them as part of their team.

"The incentives I announced recently will be crucial in providing even more apprentices with a chance to shine."

Owain Williams, joint managing director at Williams Homes in Bala, said: "Apprenticeships have been a vital part of our recruitment strategy for the last eighteen years, allowing us to nurture talent



from the local community and develop an experienced and skilled workforce.

"By tailoring our apprentices' training to suit the different skill sets we need, we've been able to better adapt as a business to new industry trends and continue to grow as a company.

"We always strive to offer our apprentices permanent roles upon completion of their apprenticeship, so it's also a cost-effective way for us to recruit trained staff compared to using sub-contractors.

"We've recently announced plans to open a 40,000 square foot production facility for low energy homes in Conwy next year, which will create up to ten new apprenticeship opportunities.

"This facility will also house our new Apprentice Academy, which will aim to build on the huge success we've already seen through apprenticeships by upskilling our workforce and helping to future-proof our business by creating a pipeline of skilled and experienced tradespeople."

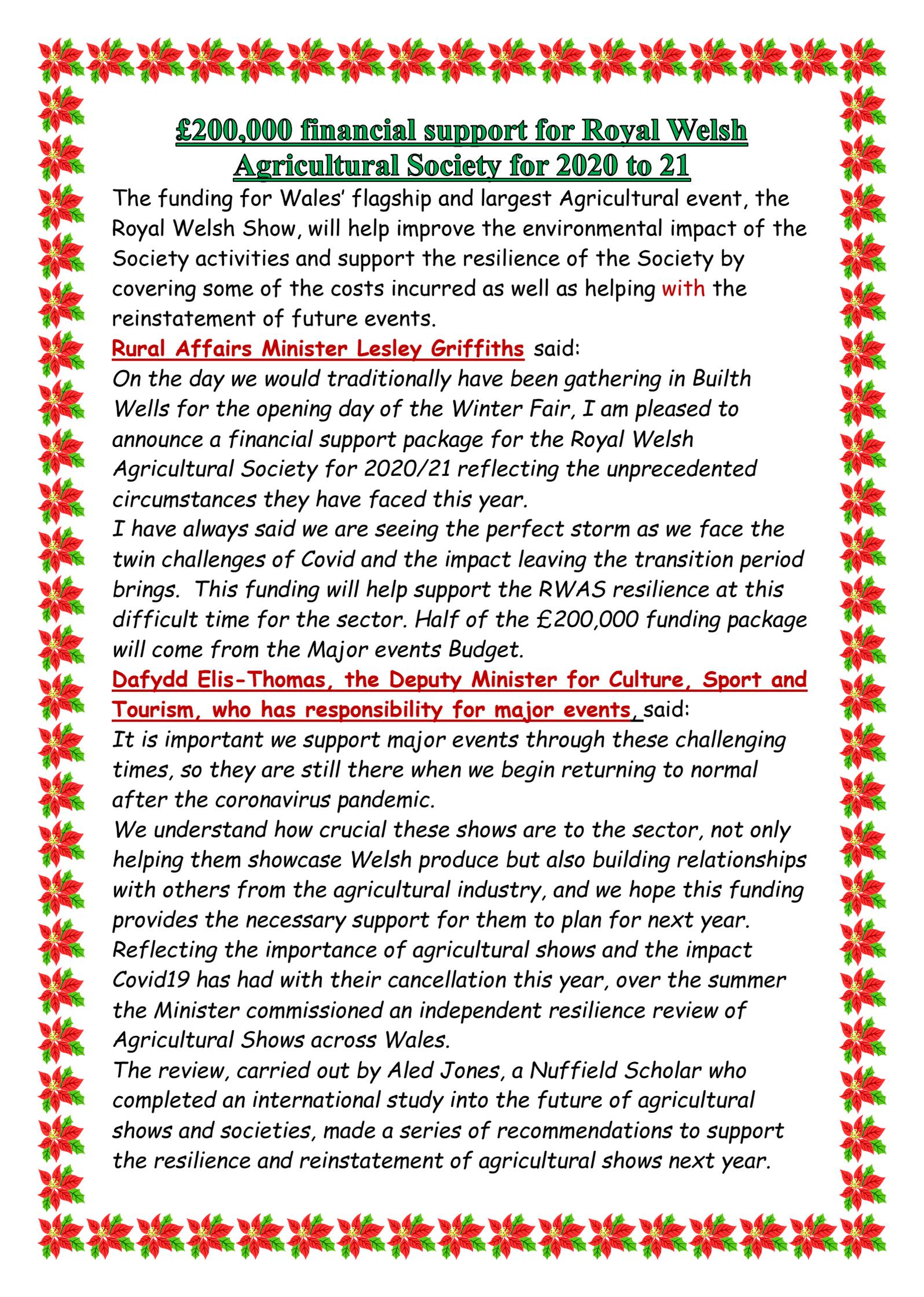
Tim Millard, Principal Engineer and Apprenticeship Manager at Newport Wafer Fab said: "Apprenticeships are vital to the running of our business and prove beneficial to both the individual and to Wafer Fab as a company.

"Our apprentices have the opportunity to learn from a team with decades of experience between them, while the business can tailor the training of the apprentice to our specific needs. We're committed to supporting our apprentices to achieve their dream career, equipping them with the training and skills needed."

Leah Clarke is undertaking a level 3 Laboratory and Science Technician Apprenticeship at Coleg Cambria while working for Quay Pharma.

She said: "I started working towards my AS-Level exams but it just wasn't for me. I felt like I could learn so much more being hands on in a working environment through an apprenticeship than I could sat in a classroom."

The Apprenticeship Programme in Wales is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.



£200,000 financial support for Royal Welsh Agricultural Society for 2020 to 21

The funding for Wales' flagship and largest Agricultural event, the Royal Welsh Show, will help improve the environmental impact of the Society activities and support the resilience of the Society by covering some of the costs incurred as well as helping **with** the reinstatement of future events.

Rural Affairs Minister Lesley Griffiths said:

On the day we would traditionally have been gathering in Builth Wells for the opening day of the Winter Fair, I am pleased to announce a financial support package for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society for 2020/21 reflecting the unprecedented circumstances they have faced this year.

I have always said we are seeing the perfect storm as we face the twin challenges of Covid and the impact leaving the transition period brings. This funding will help support the RWAS resilience at this difficult time for the sector. Half of the £200,000 funding package will come from the Major events Budget.

Dafydd Elis-Thomas, the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, who has responsibility for major events, said:

It is important we support major events through these challenging times, so they are still there when we begin returning to normal after the coronavirus pandemic.

We understand how crucial these shows are to the sector, not only helping them showcase Welsh produce but also building relationships with others from the agricultural industry, and we hope this funding provides the necessary support for them to plan for next year. Reflecting the importance of agricultural shows and the impact Covid19 has had with their cancellation this year, over the summer the Minister commissioned an independent resilience review of Agricultural Shows across Wales.

The review, carried out by Aled Jones, a Nuffield Scholar who completed an international study into the future of agricultural shows and societies, made a series of recommendations to support the resilience and reinstatement of agricultural shows next year.



The Minister has accepted all of the review's recommendations. The Minister has therefore today announced a new innovation fund to help show societies reinstate shows in 2021. It will also provide an opportunity to consider efficiencies to improve engagement and provide a better experience for all competitors.

Other recommendations in the independent review include the need for Welsh Government to produce guidance for show organisers over the arrangements for staging events in 2021 in line with any public health restrictions.

Encouraging greater collaboration between shows through the Association of Shows and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO) and well as introducing structured training for individuals working or volunteering within the show societies were also recommended.

Rural Affairs Minister, Lesley Griffiths, said:

Agricultural shows have a long and prestigious history and are at the centre of our rural communities. The Covid19 restrictions saw the cancellation of this year's shows and this has had a serious impact on all societies and their future resilience.

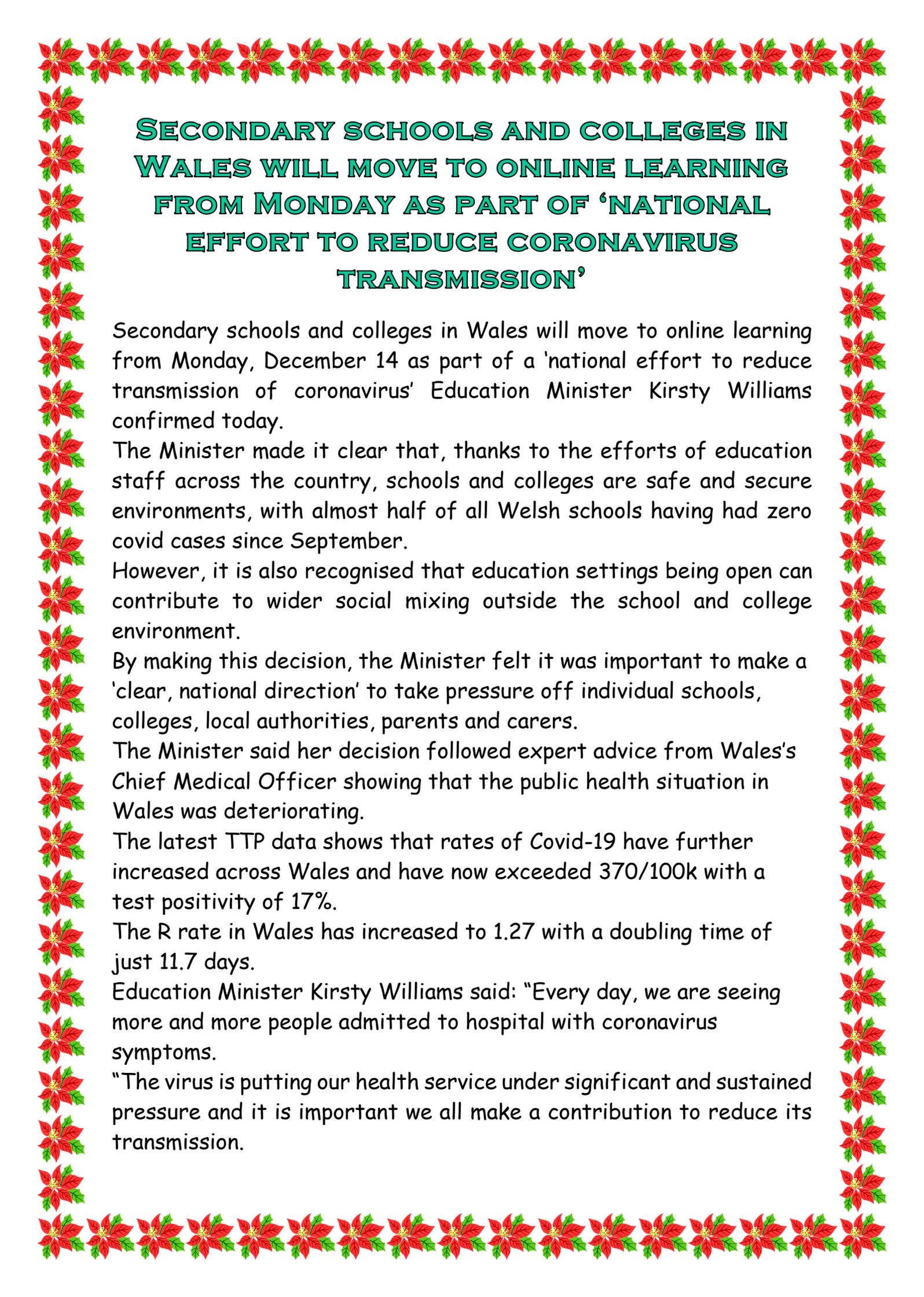
That is why I commissioned an independent resilience review of agricultural shows across Wales and help identify what support might be necessary. I would like to thank Aled for his work on the review and I am pleased to confirm I am accepting all recommendations.

The new innovation fund will help support our Shows at this difficult time and help preparations to reinstate the shows for next season. Our agricultural shows have done really innovative things to hold virtual events this year. I want us to build on this and work together to ensure a strong future for our Shows in Wales.

The Minister also announced over 81% of BPS 2020 claims have been processed for payment on the opening day of the payment window.

The BPS Support Scheme application window closed on 27 November.

Payments will be made from 7 December to those eligible farm businesses whose BPS 2020 claim has not been processed for payment.



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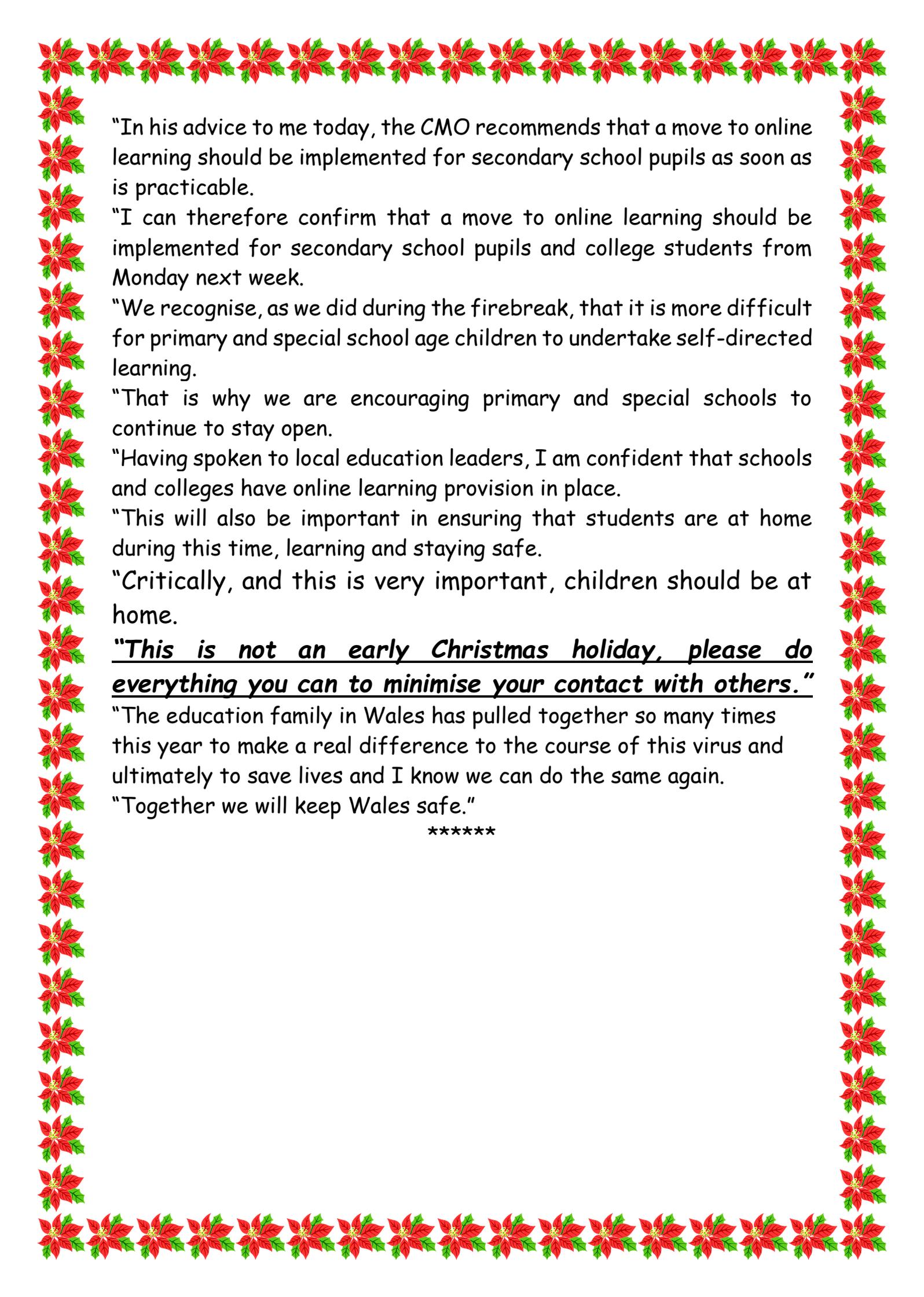
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