

News and information for Wales from:

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Landmark equality legislation

On 8 April 2010 the Equality Bill received Royal Assent. The Equality Act contains a series of measures for tackling inequalities, which will help Britain to become a fairer society.

Some of the specific measures in the bill include:

- Making the law easier to understand and implement by simplifying 116 pieces of equality legislation into a single Act for individuals, public authorities and private organisations.
- Giving people the right not to be treated less favourably by public authorities because of their age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender status; as well as their disability, gender, or race which were already covered.
- Extending anti-age discrimination rules to include goods, facilities and services, thereby stopping people being unfairly refused insurance or medical treatments based on what age they are, for example.

The Government Equalities Office provide a useful and simple guide to what the Equality Bill means for you: <http://tiny.cc/von8z>

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is now examining how the Act works in practice, by explaining what it means, how it should work, and ultimately, using its powers to help right any wrongs. This will be explained through EHRC Codes and Guidance that set out what the new legislation does for employers, public services and the people of Britain. It is hoped that a specific Guidance for the Third Sector will be produced to help the sector understand how and where the Act applies to them.

For information on this work programme following link: <http://tiny.cc/vhfkcc>

The provisions in the Equality Act will come into force at different times to allow time for people and organisations that are affected by the new laws to carefully prepare for them. It is planned that the Main Provisions of the Act will come into force in October 2010. The Act has specific duties for public authorities in Wales.

The Wales Assembly Government conducted a Listening Exercise on these duties last year and will be issuing a detailed consultation in late Spring. See link for further details: <http://tiny.cc/s52em>

€35 million call for projects that turn environmental challenges into business opportunities

The European Commission has launched a €35 million call for eco-innovation projects to be funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

Under the 2010 CIP Eco-innovation call for proposals, funds are available for new projects in the area of materials recycling, sustainable building products, the food and drink sector and green business practices.

Applications are particularly welcome from small businesses with green products or services that need backing to penetrate markets.

The call runs until 9 September 2010. Some 50 projects could end up being chosen for funding.

<http://tinyurl.com/y5t7rsu>

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Internships opportunity for third sector

Is there a short-term piece of work or project your organisation would like to carry out? Are you missing the capability and resources to be able to do so?

If so, you may be interested in finding out about a pilot programme being run by WCVA that is providing student interns across the third sector.

The Student Internship Programme aims to provide third sector organisations with specialist skills and knowledge through the placement of graduates to undertake a discrete piece of work or project.

The programme can place graduates for between four weeks and three months on a full or part time basis, with travelling expenses the only cost to organisations.

Julie Skelton, who is co-ordinating the project, said that it is a great opportunity for organisations in the third sector, and one that WCVA has already taken advantage of.

‘People may ask what the difference is between an Internship and volunteering. An internship is a single piece of work similar to a project – it has a clear start and end date, it gives the Intern something specific to add to their CV, and is something of real value to the organisation.

‘Examples would include research projects, event organisation, feasibility studies, piloting new ideas, enhancing governance procedures such as risk and volunteer management.

‘The organisations I have spoken to see the Internships as opportunities to try out something new, something from their wish list, whilst showing that the third sector can be a challenging and rewarding career choice.’

WCVA has already benefited from an Internship that aims to embed good practice within the health, social care and wellbeing sector.

Michael Richards, 24, from Powys has been working at WCVA since April.

Through his internship, he is developing a good practice portfolio that will allow health and social care partners across all sectors to share intelligence and inspire new ideas while providing a platform for the third sector to demonstrate how it enhances provision through added value and citizen-centred services.

Michael, who has a degree in history and politics, and a Masters in political theory, said: ‘I have a real interest in politics, which is the principal reason why I wanted to come to WCVA.

‘Seeing the way in which the voluntary sector interacts with the public sector really provides insight into the structure of politics in Wales.

‘I feel this is a worthwhile and high-quality piece of work that has the potential to have an impact upon the voluntary sector and I am proud to be involved in it.

‘I also wanted to intern to add some depth to my CV. I’ve got academic credentials, but through this internship I’ve been able to develop work-based skills that employers look for. My job applications are more accomplished now, which I am sure assists in the short-term job market.’

The internship programme is an easy and simple way to make good use of specialist skills and knowledge while providing an opportunity where everyone has something to gain.

Graduates with a range of skills and interests are keen to take internships within the third sector. If your organisation would like to find out more, contact Julie Skelton on jskelton@wcva.org.uk.



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