# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Community Focussed School Business Manager pilots** |
| **DATE**  | **20 July 2018** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education** |

There is evidence to support a significant link between young people’s experience of school-mediated employer activities and increased levels of engagement in learning and attainment. Furthermore, we know that partnership working between schools and a range of community partners, including statutory services, can help raise aspirations, better co-ordinate efforts to improve outcomes and mitigate the effects of disadvantage.

However, we understand that for some schools, the capacity to identify and nurture these partnerships does not exist, or is not applied across a cluster of schools.

I am therefore pleased to announce funding of £315,000 to support the establishment of 9 Community Focussed School Business Manager pilots in 6 local authority areas. These pilots will be jointly funded in partnership with schools and local authorities, and total investment from Welsh Government and local authorities will be £675,000 over a two year period.

The aim of the pilots is to create space for schools to develop new ways of working and, in doing so, increase their capacity to build and strengthen links with a wide range of community partners including: employers; arts, sports and heritage organisations; and health, wellbeing and family support services. Centred around new, Community Focussed School Business Manager roles, these partnerships will work with schools and pupils to contribute to our national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.

Contributing directly towards our National Mission and ‘Prosperity for All’ commitments to ensure closer working between schools and their partners, and extending and promoting learners’ wider experiences, approaches outlined in the bids include:

* enhanced partnerships with community organisations to enrich and enhance curriculum delivery;
* increased school-employer engagement, including work focussed experiences;
* broader community engagement to support local authority provision, including family and early years;
* strengthened engagement with health and wellbeing support services, including GPs, local health boards, and mental health charities; and
* increased use of school premises and income generation.

This initiative, which complements the 11 School Business Manager pilots I announced in September 2017, brings the total investment in business managers to more than £1.9m, with more than £950,000 being provided by Welsh Government.

I am also pleased to confirm that 7 of the pilots will support the delivery of ‘Our Valleys: Our Future’ by increasing connections between local communities and schools in East, West, and Central Valleys areas. The local authorities running the pilots and receiving funding are: Bridgend; Caerphilly (2 clusters); Monmouthshire; Pembrokeshire; Rhondda Cynon Taff (3 clusters); and Torfaen.

Over time, these new ways of working will contribute to our self-improving education system, by developing learning about the benefits of community focused school partnerships, and by sharing best practice.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.