# WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title:** | **Innovate to Save Fund** |
| **Date:** | **20 February 2018** |
| **By:** | **Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance** |

The Welsh Government is today launching a new round of the Innovate to Save fund, which operates alongside our successful Invest to Save fund.

When the £5m Innovate to Save fund was launched last February, it was against the backdrop of ongoing austerity and the need for all public services to think and work differently to continue to provide the level of services people rely on.

A year on, there is no sign of the UK Government abandoning its damaging policy of austerity and providing the much-needed financial stimulus public services across the UK need. Against this backdrop, the need for change remains as important as ever.

The first round of the Innovate to Save fund attracted 50 bids from across the Welsh public and third sectors. Over the summer, all of these applications were assessed for their suitability and readiness and taking into account the position established in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. A shortlist of eight projects was selected to begin the research and development phase and the ideas were tested and developed more fully before applying for repayable funding to take forward the proposal. This process is ongoing and will be completed next month

In launching a second funding round, our aim is to continue the momentum and build on the innovative ideas and proposals which were put forward last year. We will continue to work in partnership with Nesta and Cardiff University (through the Y Lab arrangement), and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. The basic structure of the fund will remain the same – a mixture of non-repayable grant and a repayable element – but there will be some changes to the process to reflect experience and learning from the first round.

There will be an extended application period with targeted support for those organisations developing their ideas and a flexible research and development phase to take account of the varied nature of the projects.

All parts of the Welsh public and third sectors are eligible to apply for Innovate to Save funding. Last year, a wide range of proposals, from the effectiveness of social prescribing to looking at new ways to assist communities threatened by coastal flooding and long-term decline, were put forward.

We hope to see a similarly wide range of proposals coming forward this year, which will generate cash-releasing savings which can then be re-invested in services and improve outcomes for people, including their quality of life.

I will keep Assembly Members updated about progress.

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.