



Dear all,

Over the last eight months, food and drink businesses across Wales have had to adapt, be agile and develop more resilient business models as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that many businesses have, and continue to, experience difficult times through no fault of their own. However, from changing supply chains to introducing new products or services, businesses in Wales have started to take the necessary steps to be more resilient following the coronavirus crisis and to become more sustainable in the lead up to Brexit.

The Food and Drink Wales Industry Board has continued to actively work with businesses, clusters and Welsh Government to voice concerns, priorities and share immediate and long-term solutions. These conversations formed the basis of our Covid-19 [Recovery Plan](#) – an interim plan outlining the key routes forward to help businesses during the short term. The plan encompasses the challenges and opportunities faced by the industry, with a practical road map supporting businesses throughout the months ahead. Our intention is to focus our collective efforts to get our amazing industry back on its feet not just through the C19 Pandemic but onward through Brexit.

The plan includes real-world, tangible business advice on issues including encouraging and developing online sales, building resilience business models, risk management, added value to supply chains, affordable finance, industry accreditation and training and developing skills.

And while the Recovery Plan has been developed as a response to the pandemic, much of its practical content will be equally applicable for businesses operating in the sector as they meet the changes and challenges that the industry will inevitably experience as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union in January.

We want to stress it is now more important than ever to reconsider business models in light of the consequences of the pandemic. Examining the different needs and behaviors of customers will be vital in keeping businesses afloat and for the food and drink industry in Wales to capture our share of their spend. We would encourage businesses to read the Recovery Plan as it details plans on the best and most effective way of achieving this in a concise format.

We would also like to hear from businesses about how they feel we can bring the recovery plan to life in Wales. As part of our mission to engage directly with businesses and alongside our regular communications via social media and our newsletter, we have started a webinar programme offering businesses direct access to government expertise, guidance and support.

So far, we have hosted a webinar on the wider impacts of coronavirus on the food and drink industry, our Covid-19 Recovery Plan, managing cash reserves and tips for staying on top of cash flow, as well as the latest on skills apprenticeships and training in Wales. We are currently in the process of coordinating future webinars, so if you have any suggestions or any areas you would like to see covered, please let us know. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and on [LinkedIn](#) and be sign up for our [newsletter](#) to be kept up-to-date on future webinar topics and dates.

As ever, and whether your business is in hospitality, retail, food production or food tourism, we would continue to encourage you to voice your concerns about the pandemic and Brexit not only to the Board, but also with colleagues and other businesses, so we can work together to determine the best solutions. Through continued collaboration, Wales can build back better and stronger than ever before.

**Andy Richardson, Chair of the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board**