Welsh Headlines — 28 Oct 2026

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? Top Story: Nearly half of Welsh-medium pupils who started university this autumn left Wales

46% of pupils from Welsh-medium schools who began university this autumn are studying outside Wales — 45% in England and 1% in Scotland — with 54% staying in Wales and none going to Northern Ireland, according to UCAS figures obtained by BBC Cymru Fyw. The percentages cover Welsh-medium pupils accepted on to a university or college place 28 days after A-level results day 2026, and were gathered by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The trend has barely moved in three years: 49% went to England and 50% stayed in 2025; 47% went to England with 52% staying in 2024. **The Coleg said it was "a cause of concern" that so many learners leave to study beyond the border.** Cymdeithas yr Iaith education spokesperson **Nanw Maelor** called the figures "a matter of great concern", saying the out-migration of Welsh speakers "remains one of our main problems as a country" and "undermines efforts to restore the language". She criticised the Seren programme for encouraging "some of our brightest young people to leave the country", and said ministers had spent significantly funding students to study outside Wales while Welsh universities face a financial crisis. The Welsh Government said its universities offer "first-class opportunities" and it wants to show young people Wales is "a great place to study and to work"; its Higher Education Review, commissioned by deputy minister **Cefin Campbell** and chaired by Prof **Patrick Prendergast**, first met on 19 October, with an interim report due in summer 2027.

? Budget day: Wales asks for £1bn up front as Healey delivers

Chancellor John Healey delivers his first Budget today, and the Welsh Government has spent the eve of it demanding money up front rather than promises. In a statement issued at 23:00 last night, finance minister **Elin Jones** said Wales had been "short-changed for years" and that "this UK Budget is the moment of truth". Her specific ask: bring forward **£1bn of the £14bn** the UK government has promised for rail in Wales, inside the current spending review period to 2029-30 — pointing out that "just 1% of Network Rail's spending across England and Wales comes to Wales". She also wants real-terms cuts to day-to-day and capital budgets reversed, targeted help with energy costs, and an end to the freeze on Local Housing Allowance, which she said was "pushing people towards homelessness". **Plaid's Westminster finance spokesperson Ben Lake** said the Budget must be "a moment when Labour's promises begin to be delivered", while the UK government said Healey would give households and businesses "breathing space". Already trailed: **gas standing charges will be scrapped**, saving 60% of households an average £45 a year — though the unit price of gas rises, so heavier users will pay more. A fuel duty freeze at 52p a litre for a 16th year and the end of the Carers' Allowance cliff edge are also expected. **Businesses are braced rather than hopeful. John Allport** of Criccieth, who runs a petrol station, garage and chip shop, told BBC Cymru Fyw's *Dros Frecwast* he expects only "tinkering here and there" from a government in "a very difficult position": running a business has "got harder and harder", with fuel up at least 50p a litre since January. He called it "a perfect storm" for firms.

? Cost of living: "tone deaf" stockpile advice lands badly

A single mother in Wales says following government advice to stock up on emergency supplies would mean sacrificing her son's childcare budget for the school holidays. Samantha Richards, 47, works full time and relies on Universal Credit and her son's disability allowance; her 12-year-old, Oscar, is autistic and his safe foods need a fridge and freezer, so tinned goods would not help in a crisis. Last week **Wes Streeting** urged households to keep three days' worth of bottled water and tinned food, plus baby food, torches and phone charging packs, for events such as war, cyber-attack or natural disaster. Prof **Ruth Patrick** of the University of Glasgow, who leads the Changing Realities project, said the guidance "will appear at best tone deaf and at worst almost insulting to the 14 million households currently facing poverty across the UK". **Ana**, 42, from Swansea, founder of the UK Preppers Club, said she was disappointed the announcement did not explain what to do in an emergency — "how do you flush your toilet?" — and that "preparedness shouldn't be just for people that really truly can afford to". The UK government said people do not need to buy everything at once.

? Health: "no one is ever too young for a mammogram if there are symptoms"

A Pembrokeshire fitness instructor who was told for a year that she was too young and too fit for breast cancer has urged women to push for a mammogram. Marie Tilley, from Narberth, found a lump in 2017 aged 38 and was turned away repeatedly; she eventually refused to leave a GP's room until she was referred. Tests confirmed stage two HER2-positive breast cancer. "The message from the doctor for a whole year was that I was too young, too fit and too healthy to have breast cancer," she told BBC Cymru Fyw. Around 96% of breast cancer diagnoses are in women over 40, but charity CoppaFeel! says about 2,500 women under 40 are diagnosed in Britain each year.

?? Senedd, councils and politics

Reform UK councillors in Flintshire failed in an attempt to pull the county out of Wales' Nation of Sanctuary commitment. Group leader **Cllr Helen Brown** and deputy **Cllr Kris Salkeld** argued local resources were "stretched to breaking point" and that the county should "step back" from its Local Authority of Sanctuary status; the motion was defeated. Labour's **Cllr Bill Crease** said there were 3,308 people awaiting asylum decisions in Wales in July 2026, of whom 78 were in Flintshire — "0.1% of the population of Wales", or less than a third of Wrexham's Racecourse Ground. **A Reform MS deleted a post mocking a statue of a Black woman as "the odd one out" while captioning London "our nation's capital". Joe Martin**, MS for Caerdydd Penarth and Reform's shadow minister without portfolio, posted four Trafalgar Square statues on Monday soundtracked by *Rule, Britannia!*; users pointed out his constituency's capital is Cardiff. It was removed within a day. It follows earlier deletions, including a video of a man in crisis whom Martin called a "migrant" who "shouldn't be here". **Roman remains found under a Caerleon school could add £1m to its revamp.** Work at **Caerleon Comprehensive** stopped in the summer when what is believed to be a Roman parade ground wall and road was uncovered — the town was one of three permanent legionary fortresses in Roman Britain. Archaeologists from Heneb are due to finish this week, but a Newport City Council cabinet report warns delays could add around £1m to a project already £6-7m over budget. The council pays 35%, the Welsh Government the rest. **More than 700 homes and a new primary school are proposed on farmland between Portskewett and Caldicot**, described by one backer as "a new urban extension" of the Monmouthshire market town. A pre-application consultation is under way on the Bradbury Farm land, owned by the council, with residential, employment and green space in plans drawn up for its estates department. **A campaigning father has "sacked" his MP after failing to secure a Commons adjournment debate on his son's death. Will Powell**'s son **Robbie** died in 1990 of Addison's disease at Morriston Hospital, Swansea; the NHS accepted negligence six years later, and a fresh inquiry recommended 35 possible charges against five doctors and a secretary after evidence of tampered documents emerged.

?? Courts and inquests

North Wales Police took more than three hours to alert mountain rescue after a disconnected 999 call from a climber who died with his friend on an Eryri ridge. Jayden Long, 19, and **Eddie Hill**, 20, both from Dereham, Norfolk, were found on Crib y Ddysgl — a 1,065m ridge linking Yr Wyddfa to Crib Goch — on 19 February, a day after Long's call at 16:27 GMT on 18 February. A recording captured him saying "hello" and "can you hear me?" before the line dropped. Assistant coroner **Sarah Riley** said officers made "limited" efforts to trace the phone's owner and criticised a lack of training for remote-location calls; she issued a Prevention of Future Deaths report warning of "a significant risk of future deaths". The force said it amended its communications centre policy in September 2026. **A teenager accused of a zombie knife killing told a jury "I'm terribly sorry" as he described stabbing a man he says was attacking him. Georgie Mears**, 19, of Thornhill, Cardiff, denies murdering **Tristan Kerr** in Abertridwr, Caerphilly, in February, where he had gone to deliver two £25 bags of ketamine. He told Newport Crown Court that Kerr punched him twice and pushed him against a wall, and that a knife became visible in Kerr's waistband: "I just stabbed him. If I didn't stab him he would have stabbed me." **Connor Palfrey**, 25, **Ricardo Elliot**, 27, and **Elexi Manny**, 25, deny murder by joint enterprise. **A couple who attacked a woman's ex-partner with a knife and a dog lead on a Swansea street have been jailed. Craig Godfrey**, 36, of Waun Wen, got an extended 10-year sentence for wounding with intent after cutting the man's neck on St Helen's Road in August; **Michaela Nicholls**, 34, of Ystradgynlais, was jailed for four years. South Wales Police said the total custodial term was five years and six months. **A 14-year-old boy has denied murdering a teenage girl whose body was found in a park**, and **a council worker who gambled online has admitted siphoning off £7,000 of council money** for rent and Amazon purchases.

? Storm Boelo: the clean-up, by the numbers

Cardiff Council has published its own tally of Storm Boelo: 110 flooding reports to its out-of-hours service and 130 fallen-tree incidents on the highway. Heol Goch and Main Road in Gwaelod-y-Garth remain closed; Michaelston Road and Castle Hill have reopened, with a watching brief on river levels. Officers were called at 04:20 on Sunday over a possible evacuation on Castle Hill near the St Fagans level crossing, but the Ely peaked without reaching a critical level.

? Sport

Para-cyclist James Ball has a sixth pilot — and it is the man who beat him at the Commonwealth Games. Aaron Pope piloted **Neil Fachie** to two golds in Glasgow three months ago while Ball and **Matt Rotherham** took silvers; the pair now team up for the Para-cycling Track

World Championships in Apeldoorn, which start on Thursday, with Ball defending the world titles he won with Steffan Lloyd in 2025. "It's not me, I promise," Ball joked about his turnover of partners. The bigger target is Los Angeles 2028. **The FAW has renewed its call for Gianni Infantino to step down**, chief executive **Noel Mooney** saying Wales' position "certainly hasn't changed" since it became the first country to withdraw backing for his re-election in August. He called Fifa's plan to sell stakes in its competitions "a classic example of poor governance"; Uefa wants key documents published by 2 November. **Wales have called up in-form Macs Page after Rio Dyer was ruled out through injury.**

? Culture and features

Rhys Ifans has backed Wrexham's bid to be UK City of Culture 2029, joining Matthew Rhys, Ruth Jones, Carol Vorderman, Colin Jackson and Siân Phillips. "It's Wrexham's time and it's Wales's time," said the Haverfordwest-born, Ruthin-raised actor. Wrexham is one of four shortlisted places, with judges visiting at the end of November and £10m of UK government funding for the winner — no Welsh place has held the title. **Ash Dykes is back after a 434-mile row through the Congo Basin**, having encountered elephants, gorillas and "killer" bees — and a day or two of silence when his satellite kit lost power. The 35-year-old from Old Colwyn, who holds five world records, is one expedition into Project 6, six back-to-back challenges in extreme environments.

?? Weather

Light rain and a moderate breeze in Cardiff today, high 15C, low 9C. Thursday sunny intervals and light winds, 15C/8C; Friday sunny intervals, 15C/6C; Saturday misty, 13C/6C; Sunday sunny intervals with a gentle breeze, 13C/7C; Monday 13C/6C. No weather warnings are in force anywhere in the UK.

? Quick Summary

- 46% of Welsh-medium pupils starting university this autumn went outside Wales (45% England, 1% Scotland); 54% stayed — barely changed from 2025's 49%/50%.
- Budget day: Elin Jones wants £1bn of the £14bn rail promise brought forward, real-terms cuts reversed and the LHA freeze ended; gas standing charges to be scrapped, saving 60% of households about £45 a year.
- A Criccieth businessman expects only "tinkering" from the Budget, calling it "a perfect storm" for firms with fuel up 50p a litre since January.
- Stockpiling advice is "tone deaf at best" for families on low incomes, says Prof Ruth Patrick, as a Welsh single mother says it would cost her son's holiday childcare.
- Marie Tilley of Narberth was refused a mammogram for a year at 38 before a stage two HER2-positive diagnosis.

- Reform councillors in Flintshire lost a vote to leave Wales' Nation of Sanctuary commitment; Reform MS Joe Martin deleted a "spot the odd one out" statue post.
- Roman remains under Caerleon Comprehensive could add £1m to a revamp already £6-7m over budget.
- North Wales Police took over three hours to alert mountain rescue after a dropped 999 call from Jayden Long, 19, who died with Eddie Hill, 20, on Crib y Ddysgl.
- Cardiff Council counted 110 flooding reports and 130 fallen-tree incidents from Storm Boelo; two Gwaelod-y-Garth roads stay shut.
- Rhys Ifans backs Wrexham 2029; James Ball teams up with rival pilot Aaron Pope for the world championships in Apeldoorn.

? Method note

Compiled in cron mode at ~09:15 GMT. SearXNG returned the usual index-heavy mix (WalesOnline, BBC Wales, senedd.wales, NewsNow) plus spam (Chinese and German TV listings, a WMO weather page), so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service: 11 index/feed pages and 37 article pages, all successful. De-duplication against yesterday's Welsh file and this morning's UK file dropped the prison-leavers drugs report (yesterday's top story), the radiographer shortage, school milk, Siambr Hywel, the Abertillery rail letter, Storm Boelo's original damage tally (Cardiff Council's own figures repeat yesterday's 110 reports and 130 trees — only the reopened roads are new), the 2-day-old "Wales needs budget boost" line and yesterday's Budget-eve piece. Stale cards dropped on date: Nation.Cymru's Ospreys and Osian Pryce items (24-25 October) and BBC's *Babydoll* number-one story (23 October). The Budget items are deliberately framed as the eve-of-speech asks — the speech itself lands later today and is covered in the UK roundup. Guardian Wales had nothing newer than its Land Registry piece; Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit skipped as instructed; WalesOnline, ITV and senedd.wales bodies remain unusable through the fetcher.

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