

Additional £10 million to help relieve winter pressures in the NHS announced

The funding will be used to support health boards, the ambulance service and social care services across Wales treat and care for the increase in people using services at this time of year.

It will help relieve pressure across the whole system from primary care through to hospital care and social services in Wales, for example enabling older people to leave hospital more quickly through the use of support packages where appropriate.

The Health Secretary expects health boards to work with their partners to determine the best use of the investment based on local pressures, priorities and capacity.

The Health Secretary has also taken action to relieve pressure on GPs by relaxing the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) element of the GP contract until the end of March 2018. The decision recognises the impact of winter pressures not only on the NHS, but on GPs and the wider Primary Care team across Wales. The action being taken will enable GPs and practice nurses to manage their most vulnerable and chronically sick patients during the winter period.

Vaughan Gething said:

“NHS organisations have been planning for this period since the end of last winter, supported by £50 million of funding from us to help them balance urgent and planned care activity.

“Despite this significant investment, what we have seen in the recent days is a system that is under extreme pressure. During this challenging period, I want to provide the NHS in Wales with an extra £10 million of new investment to help front line staff care for our patients through this winter.

“We know both Primary Care and Accident and Emergency (A&E) services across Wales are currently extremely busy. The ambulance service has reported increases of up to 50% in life threatening incidents when compared to last year at times over Christmas. Our 111 service received twice as many calls as predicted on New Year’s Day and the Out of Hours service continues to face huge demands. This additional funding will go some way in helping relieve the pressure on the system.

“I would like to thank all of our NHS staff who are showing, day in day out, great resilience in responding with compassion for patients. Their commitment to their patients and the care they are giving should be highly commended. The system only works because of

staff working within our NHS. They have my gratitude.”