

[£50m fund to deliver joined-up care closer to home](#)

The fund is being targeted at delivering effective integrated and preventative services for children with complex needs, people with learning disabilities, older people and carers.

- £30m is being invested in projects that help older people maintain their independence, avoid hospital admissions and prevent delayed discharges.
- £15m is being invested in services that support people with learning disabilities, children with complex needs and carers.
- £3m is being invested in the continued delivery of a National Integrated Autism Service (IAS) for Wales, which will improve support services for children, young people and adults by providing them with lifetime support.
- £2m is going to continue the national roll-out of the Welsh Community Care Information System, a common IT system for health boards and social services which provides a shared record of care, allowing practitioners to coordinate and manage work across organisational boundaries.

In addition, funding has been identified to support ICF capital projects in 2018-19. The capital programme is already funding a number of accommodation based solutions to support older persons' housing needs. These include home adaptations, building conversions and new-build schemes. The details of the capital programme will be announced by Ministers in due course.

Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“The £50m we’re investing in the integrated care fund this year demonstrates our commitment to delivering effective integrated services across health, social services, housing and the third sector.

“It will help deliver new innovative and seamless services for children, older people and for people with learning disabilities and other complex needs, ensuring they receive the care and support they need to live the lives they want to lead.”

[Senior MEP in Wales to talk Brexit](#)

The Welsh Government has invited Elmar Brok to Wales to discuss its proposals for a Brexit that protects jobs and the Welsh economy. A leading member of

the Group of the European People's Party (the largest political group in the European Parliament), he is one of the 6 members on the Parliament's Brexit Steering Group, which will play a crucial role in determining the Parliament's views on the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. The European Parliament has a decisive role in the Brexit process, because it must approve the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by the European Commission.

During his visit, Mr Brok will address the First Minister's European Advisory Group and speak at a Wales Governance Centre event, followed by a short Q&A session with the public in Cardiff Bay.

Speaking ahead of Mr Brok's visit, the First Minister said:

"Elmar Brok is one of the longest serving, most experienced and most influential members of the European Parliament.

"I look forward to hearing his thoughts on the current state of the Brexit negotiations and his views on the prospects for a future trade agreement between the UK and the European Union. I am also interested in listening to his views on the future of the EU, notably the priorities for the forthcoming budget round and how the EU, and the next European Parliament, will look without the UK."

Mark Drakeford said:

"I am delighted to be welcoming Elmar Brok to Wales, having had the opportunity to talk to him about Brexit on several occasions over the last 2 years. This is an opportunity for us to outline our plans for a sensible Brexit that protects Wales' economy and jobs. We need to find new ways of working together with our friends and neighbours in Europe on our common challenges."

The First Minister will hold a private meeting with Elmar Brok ahead of the European Advisory Group.

[Latest in Welsh language technology on show](#)

Like 'hiraeth', 'cwtsh' is something that only the Welsh truly understand. 'Cwtsh' evokes feelings of comfort, cosiness and peace. What better title therefore for a mediation and mindfulness app entirely through the medium of Welsh?

“Ap Cwtsh” will be among the latest developments in Welsh language technology that will be showcased today at the ‘Pioneering Wales: Cymraeg 2050 Technology’ event at Tramshed Tech in Cardiff.

A virtual reality experience which helps users understand how it feels to live with dementia, again through the medium of Welsh, will be launched at the event with the help of TV presenter Beti George, a prominent dementia campaigner.

The technology has all been funded by the Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 grant. The grant, a key element of the Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, provides funds to innovative, short-term projects which aim to increase people’s daily use of the language and to promote technology which supports the use of Welsh.

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan said:

“We want the use of Welsh to be a routine part of everyday life so that speakers at all levels feel confident in using it in formal and informal situations.

“Technology is an increasingly important part of that every day life and it is vital therefore that we continue to develop Welsh language technology so that people are able to use their Welsh online as well as in real life. Recent research has shown that languages like Icelandic are under threat because of the dominance of English in technology, so it is vital that we invest in ensuring Welsh has a strong presence online as well as in our communities.

“It is especially important for something like the Dementia VR project because, when a person develops dementia, they may often lose the ability to communicate in their second language.

“I am thrilled that these projects are now coming to fruition. I’m under no illusion about the challenge of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and I’m delighted there are so many organisations and people with the skills and commitment to join us in this task”

Other technology on show includes:

- WordNet – a project to construct a WordNet (lexical database) for the Welsh language.
- Mapio Cymru – Welsh language version of OpenStreetMap that will allow Welsh language mapping of Wales freely under an open licence.
- Bys a Bawd – an interactive song-based resource for families and children.

- Wici Caerdydd – aims to increase the number of Welsh language articles available on Wikipedia, and a project to promote the use of Welsh through Snapchat.

Over £9.7m for Swansea neonatal and post-natal services

The funding will be used to develop a new seven bed Transitional Care Unit and Special Care Baby Unit to improve the quality of care of mothers and babies, and free up space within its current Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Speaking ahead of a visit to the neonatal ward later today, Mr Gething said the changes would allow the health board to increase the number of births which can be treated at Singleton from the end of July 2019. This will increase capacity across the South Wales area, in line with the Neonatal Network plans and the proposals put forward in the South Wales Programme.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Our investment in Singleton Hospital demonstrates our commitment to improving services across the Welsh NHS. The important developments promise to improve quality of care for mothers and their babies, providing a safer environment, with 24/7 access to Neonatal transitional care nurses and access to much-needed neonatal critical care cots.”

The investment in Singleton Hospital will:

- provide a new 7-bed Transitional Care Unit with specialist 24/7 nursing to care for those babies who require more than normal Post-natal care, but do not require admission to the Neonatal Unit, and overnight accommodation for Mothers, with single rooms and ensuite facilities to provide privacy and support infection control
- provide a permanent 12-cot Special Care Baby Unit
- increase Neonatal High Dependency Unit capacity by two cots and Special Care Baby Unit capacity by one cot
- allow space to expand the High Dependency Unit
- provide space for 9 additional special care cots.

Jan Worthing, Singleton Hospital Director, said:

“We very much welcome this £9.71m investment from Welsh Government to support major reconfiguration and additional neonatal capacity

at Singleton Hospital. This supports the South Wales Programme and Central Alliance Group's vision of providing safer and higher quality healthcare within local, regional and tertiary Neonatal and Post-natal care settings.

"Work will begin in mid-2018 and phased to ensure services are not disrupted."

A Digital Vision for the Valleys

The two schemes were put forward as part of a digital vision for the Valleys at the latest taskforce meeting in the Dulais Valley earlier this week.

One of the priorities in Our Valleys, Our Future, the delivery plan for the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, is to develop a digital vision for the Valleys, by working with communities, to identify how technology can be used to deliver better outcomes for people living and working there.

Some of the proposals being considered are;

- An Uber-style app for patients who need to travel to hospital for appointments and treatment, which would bring together all providers of community transport;
- A community WiFi scheme, encouraging existing community hubs to open up their WiFi to local people;
- Investigating better use of the online data mapping tool Lle.

At the latest taskforce meeting, held at the Dove Workshop in Banwen, members approved plans for pilot schemes for each of these proposals.

Leader of the House and Chief Whip Julie James, who is also the Welsh Government lead on digital infrastructure and inclusion, said:

"Wales has always punched above its weight on the world stage in terms of digital innovation and the South Wales region in particular has a high concentration of successful digital companies, as well as university expertise in the sector. The taskforce has a really important role to play in ensuring these successes benefit Valleys communities.

"I look forward to seeing how the schemes we've agreed to pilot in the Valleys – which have been developed in response to local feedback – can improve the lives of people living and working here, as well as the economic prosperity of the area."

Ann Beynon, who leads the delivery of digital elements of Our Valleys, Our Future, added:

“We are supremely aware of the rapid advancement of digital technology across the globe and how it is transforming the ways in which we live, work and socialise.

“Our challenge is to apply that to our own lived experience and to channel it to drive tangible benefits.

“South Wales has a vibrant digital sector which is growing in strength. It is supported by digital skills and training plans developed by the Learning and Skills Council working with local employers and training providers and by significant government investment in digital infrastructure.

“We are determined to tap into the wealth of knowledge available to us and to exploit that investment as we develop the vision for a future digital Valleys.”