

Minister visits Monkton to discuss adult learning initiative

Started in September 2012 with support from the Welsh Government, the Launch Project aims to raise adults' skills standards and education attainment within the community by making learning accessible to everyone.

Both accredited and non-accredited courses and workshops are delivered at the school and other community venues and have been specifically designed to remove barriers so that people in the community can gain the confidence and skills needed to seek employment.

The provision has also been designed to cater for a wide range of learner needs, from basic skills and IT courses to various accredited courses including a foundation degree in Education and Social Inclusion.

During the visit the Minister met with some of the adult learners who have benefitted from the project and heard their personal accounts about how it has helped them to turn their lives around, gain new skills and seize new employment opportunities.

Speaking after the visit, Minister said: "This project is a great example of a community-driven learning initiative that has been designed by the community for the community and I applaud Monkton Primary School for its pivotal role in that.

"The school is clearly committed to lifelong learning and building an ethos of working and learning together, built on mutual respect between adults and children.

"It was also inspiring hearing from those who have benefitted from the project and seeing first hand the positive impact it has had on their lives and their confidence."

"Investment in social care is easing pressure on the NHS" – Huw Irranca-Davies

The Minister confirmed part of the additional £10m the Welsh Government has made available to relieve winter pressures in the NHS is being used to ensure

home care services are in place to enable patients who need ongoing support in the community to leave hospital earlier. The funding will also support people to remain in their own homes, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions, wherever possible.

This funding is in addition to the £60m the Welsh Government is investing in the Integrated Care Fund each year, which is helping to reduce pressures on vital NHS and social care services. The fund is helping to drive integrated working between health, social care, housing and the third sector for a range of preventative purposes, including supporting older people to maintain their independence.

Investment has been made in a number of areas, which include:

- Commissioning additional nursing home beds or intermediate care beds to provide an alternative to acute hospital care for complex assessments
- Providing additional discharge liaison nurse & social worker hours to support complex discharge planning
- Funding additional re-ablement services so individual care and support packages for patients can be agreed and established to avoid admission and support discharge from hospital
- Increasing the capacity within local authorities' Adult Social Work Teams to meet improved flow through the hospital setting and enable individuals to return to their home environment
- Extending the support available from Care & Repair for small adaptation services for older people to facilitate timely discharge from hospital
- Providing intensive rehabilitation services to facilitate earlier and less dependent discharge
- Increasing short term urgent domiciliary care services in people's own homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The most recent statistics for delayed transfers of care in Wales show they are at a 12 year low. Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“In Wales, we are investing significantly in both our health and social care services, because one service cannot work without the other.

“The additional funding we have made available is being used to improve the flow of patients through the system, and treat and care for the increasing number of people – especially the frail elderly – who need health and care services at this time of year.

“Over the past few weeks, I've had the privilege of visiting a range of health and social care settings to see the excellent integrated working and collaboration between services. This vital work is helping to support people to maintain their independence and remain at home, enabling them to lead their own independent lives. It also helps avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care, and minimising delays when someone is due to be discharged from care.

“This is exactly the type of joined-up working we want to see more of, and which will form the very basis of our health and social care services in the years and decades ahead.”

[A recipe for skills success – £3m for ‘Food Skills Cymru’ training programme announced](#)

Speaking at an ‘Invest in Skills: Invest in Growth’ conference for food and drink companies and training providers, the Cabinet Secretary will confirm the programme will launch on 1st April and run until 2023.

The programme, which will be run by Lantra, will include accredited and non-accredited training plus in-house company bespoke support. Over the first three years, the programme is expected to support 650 businesses.

It will be available to all Food Supply Chain businesses outside retail and intervention rates will be in line with the complementary support offered through Business Wales Skills Gateway, Project Helix and Cywain.

Cabinet Secretary will say:

“There is no doubt that Welsh Food and drink is already a success story. The turnover for the sector has increased strongly to £6.9bn and is edging ever nearer to meeting our ambitious 2020 targets early.

“Our detailed action plan for the industry sets out our vision of growing the scale of the sector, strengthening its brand and markets, and doing all these things in a sustainable way. Central to this is the ability to attract and retain a talented workforce and drive up skills within the industry.

“I am delighted to announce £3 million of funding for the development of ‘Food Skills Cymru’ – a package of technical and staff development training for food and drink companies based in Wales. This demonstrates our commitment to developing the skills of the industry and I am confident it can and will continue to grow to form an important backbone of the Welsh economy.”

Further information about Food Skills Cymru can be found by contacting Lantra (Wales@Lantra.co.uk / 01982 552646)

During the conference, the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board launched a new skills strategy and leading companies, including Halen Môn, Bangor Mussels producers and Puffin Produce, signed up to a Welsh Skills pledge. As part of the pledge, they will commit to a range of actions including sending company ambassadors into schools, hosting visits at their manufacturing sites and promoting career opportunities within their local communities.

Successful implementation key to Economic Action Plan says Cabinet Secretary

This was the message from Economy and Transport Secretary, Ken Skates when he spoke at the Swansea University School of Management Business Forum event which focussed on Wales' transport and infrastructure.

The Cabinet Secretary called on the business community to work with the Welsh Government in making the implementation of his Economic Action Plan a success.

He said:

“Our Economic Action plan is a plan for inclusive growth built on strong foundations, supercharged industries of the future and productive regions.

“It provides us with an exciting opportunity to work in a different way in order to drive up wealth and well being, to tackle inequalities and to future proof our country and economy against an unprecedented pace of change.

“And there is no doubt that transport infrastructure, and its role in connecting our communities, people and businesses to jobs, facilities, services and markets, is key to the plan's success.

“Our challenge and mission now is to translate the content of the Economic Action Plan into meaningful delivery that benefits our businesses and communities.

“This will include a real focus on first class implementation of our 'big ticket' policy changes such as the development of our new Economic Contract, and the rolling out of our Economy Futures Fund.

“Of course we cannot do this alone. We need to work constructively

with our partners in business, in the trade unions, in the third sector, in local government and others, in order to make the Economic Action Plan one that truly delivers for Wales. And I urge all our partners to work with us on this important task.”

The Economy Secretary also stressed how important the coming months and years would be for public transport in Wales.

He said:

“In 2018 we expect to become the franchising authority for rail and will award the next Welsh & Borders rail services contract. This will help us to achieve better rail services and transform our network so that our ambitions for a metro that connects our people to jobs and services becomes a transformative reality.”

£100m to deliver 21st Century Schools

An extra £75m, has been allocated to the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme a major, long-term and strategic capital investment programme to modernise education infrastructure.

In addition, £30m will be released from the programme in future years for immediate investment in capital projects that will contribute to the goal of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This is a shared priority with Plaid Cymru.

The money will bring the total invested over the life of the programme to almost £3.8bn. The first phase of the programme will finish in 2019 having invested £1.4bn to support the rebuild and refurbishment of more than 150 schools and colleges across Wales. The second phase will see a spend of £2.3bn.

Kirsty Williams said:

“Our national mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence. Our 21st Century Schools and Education Programme plays a key part in this and is the largest investment in our schools and colleges since the 1960s.

“Having a comfortable, modern, fit-for-purpose environment in which to learn is vital to ensuring young people have the best possible education. This extra funding will mean that even more of our

students will be able to benefit from having the best possible facilities in their schools and colleges.

Eluned Morgan said:

“Reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is a significant challenge and education is key to the success of this ambition. This means we need to invest in new Welsh medium schools and improve and increase the teaching of Welsh in English medium schools. Bringing forward this funding for immediate investment allows us to ensure there is no delay in the work to achieve this target.