

New flood funding for Porthcawl beach announced

The existing sea defences were constructed in 1984 and a recent inspection found the structure to be in a deteriorating condition and coming to the end of its viable life.

The current defences protect several million pounds worth of homes and commercial properties along the Esplanade, including the Grand Pavilion. When complete, the strengthened defences will reduce the risk of flooding and erosion from the sea to 260 properties.

The £2,299,146 announced today will enable works to be carried to improve the defences, which will include:

- the partial demolition of the existing structure;
- replacement of the existing asphalt with a new terraced structure which will be surfaced in a sand colour in line with the responses from the public consultation.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“I am pleased to be able to provide this vital funding to strengthen sea defences in Porthcawl, which will provide reassurance to those who live and work in, or visit this popular tourist destination.

“We have invested unprecedented levels of funding in recent years and over the lifetime of this Government we will be investing over £144million capital funding in flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes around Wales.”

Councillor Richard Young, Cabinet Member for Communities, said:

“This significant investment from the Welsh Assembly is excellent news for Porthcawl, and will enable Bridgend County Borough Council to continue to protect the town centre and seafront area from flooding while also offering a more visually pleasing ‘terraced’ design for the sea defences.

“The contract for the work is currently being finalised, and I am looking forward to being able to reveal more details about the project very soon.”

New Teachers, New Term, New Professional Standards

Developed in partnership with teachers across Wales, the new standards concentrate on the essential elements of every teacher's work – pedagogy, collaboration, leadership, innovation and career-long professional learning.

The new standards will:

- Replace 55 standards with five standards and descriptors that allow teachers to use the standards in a way that's appropriate to their role.
- Inspire, challenge and support every practitioner, from the trainee teacher to the experienced head teacher to focus on the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to meet the needs of their learners.
- Better support new entrants to the teaching profession by bringing greater continuity between initial teacher education, induction and continued development throughout a teacher's career.
- Acknowledge the need for teachers to work together more effectively to make sure all learners benefit from excellent teaching and learning.
- Develop the leadership capacity within the education system by supporting all teachers to develop their leadership skills.

The standards will apply to all serving teachers and leaders by September 2018 and initial teacher training programmes from September 2019. This will provide time to build familiarity with the new standards before they become mandatory.

Kirsty Williams said:

"We value our professional teaching workforce in Wales, and want to support them to be the best they can be throughout their careers.

"Quite simply, no education system is better than the quality of its teachers. Alongside teachers and parents, I share the ambition for a profession committed to the highest standards, lifelong learning and high aspirations for all pupils.

"These new standards are about making sure teachers develop the right skills throughout their career. They empower all those teaching in our classrooms to work together to raise learner outcomes. This is a key part of a fundamental shift towards a system driven by career-long learning. My vision is to strengthen leadership and make sure that there is greater consistency across our schools.

"I am grateful to all those teachers, leaders, consortia and other

partners who have been directly involved in developing these new standards – it is testament to what can be achieved through us working together.”

The Education Workforce Council has developed an enhanced Professional Learning Passport so that teachers can reflect on their practice and map their development against the 5 standards.

Hayden Llewellyn said:

“The standards are a welcome addition to the Passport. We encourage teachers to use them in planning their professional learning and development as they progress through their careers.”

The four regional education consortia will ensure that every newly qualified teacher has a mentor to support them in using and evidencing the standards throughout their induction period.

Families in Wales encouraged to “have the chat” about organ donation wishes

In 2016-17 data published by NHS Blood and Transplant showed there were 21 cases where families either overrode their relatives’ decisions to donate organs, or didn’t support the deemed consent.

With an average of 3.3 organs retrieved per donor in the UK in 2016-17, this could have resulted in as many as 69 additional transplants.

On 1 December 2015, Wales was the first country in the UK to move to a soft opt-out, system of consent to organ donation. This means that unless a person has not registered a decision to become an organ donor (opted in) or a decision not to become an organ donor (opted out), they will be considered as having no objection to being an organ donor – this is known as deemed consent.

As a result of the change an increase in donations is expected over a period of time. Over the last year, there has been a decrease of 18.5% in patients who died whilst on the waiting list for their transplant.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“While there are people dying waiting for their transplant we must work harder to increase the consent rate to have a significant

impact on reducing transplant waiting lists.

“I want to encourage everyone across Wales to talk to their loved ones about their organ donation decision. While we know awareness and understanding is increasing, it’s really important the Welsh public share their decision with their family.

“Simply having a chat about your decision with family and friends ensures they can honour your wishes, when you die.”

One conversation can help benefit the people of Wales and the UK by reducing the number of people dying whilst waiting for a suitable organ to become available, and transforming the lives of others.

You can register a decision at any time by calling 0300 123 23 23 or visiting www.organdonationwales.org or by telling your family (and friends).

New Band 6 paramedic role to deliver enhanced care for patients in Wales

The new deal will enable current Band 5 paramedics in Wales to move up to a newly created Band 6 paramedic role.

It will deliver enhanced care for patients in Wales and the agreement has been reached through successful and positive partnership discussions between the Welsh Ambulance Service, its trade unions, the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee and Welsh Government.

Letters will now be sent to paramedics outlining what is involved in carrying out the new Band 6 role. Changes will take effect from 1 October 2017, and a framework of support and development will be put in place to enable staff to gain a number of extra skills and competencies required as part of the deal. It is expected the process will be complete by 2021.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“Over time the role of the paramedic has fundamentally changed.

“Today their enhanced role spans both emergency and unscheduled care, providing advanced treatments for patients with serious clinical needs but also assessing and signposting patients to the right part of the health system to deliver the care they need.

“They provide advanced life support, make emergency treatment decisions and practice in an environment with a level autonomy not

experienced by others working in our health service. Paramedics are also able to work across the whole healthcare sector rather than being restricted to traditional ambulance crew roles.

“Paramedics work tirelessly day in day out saving lives and supporting the communities they serve, today’s announcement recognises their increasing responsibilities and is something that should be welcomed.”

Richard Lee, Director of Operations for the Welsh Ambulance Service, said:

“Our paramedics provide excellent clinical care across Wales every day and this new job description and development package will allow patients to receive even better care, in many cases closer to home.

“It also recognises the skills of our staff as the paramedic role develops into the 21st century, not only providing treatment for those in need of urgent care, but also assessing patients with less urgent needs who need help accessing the right part of the health system.”

Claire Vaughan, the Trust’s Director of Workforce and Organisational Development, said:

“We would like thank our trade unions, our commissioners and Welsh Government for working closely with us to achieve this important step forward for the paramedic profession.

“An important element of the deal, which will see an improved career framework for our staff, is the creation of further development opportunities and mentorship arrangements for our newly qualified paramedics.”

Stephen Harrhy, Chief Ambulance Service Commissioner for Wales, said:

“I greatly welcome today’s announcement. The role of paramedics has evolved and this agreement, which has been achieved through successful partnership working, recognises the additional responsibilities and skills needed to carry out their work.”

Darron Dupre, Ambulance Lead for UNISON in Wales, said:

“This is a win-win for paramedics and patients. This announcement is all about giving paramedics the cutting edge skills to deal with the changing face of healthcare in Wales.

“These new skills are directly aligned to the most frequent conditions which lead people to call the ambulance service. It’s a great deal for paramedics and it’s a great deal for the people of Wales.”

Nathan Holman, Welsh Ambulance Service branch secretary for the GMB Union, said:

“The GMB Union is highly supportive of the move from Band 5 to Band 6 for paramedics. This is a landmark move that is long overdue.

“This not only rewards the past, but also looks to develop the future of paramedicine, by setting out its role, not only in emergency situations, but also in unscheduled and primary care as a whole.”

Roger John, Welsh Ambulance Service branch secretary for Unite the Union, said:

“The current Welsh deal has been agreed after debate and true partnership working.

“The deal will increase the scope of practice and skill level of paramedics in Wales, offering a more holistic and appropriate treatment option to the patients that access the Welsh Ambulance Service.”

[Overnight visitor figures show continued growth for Welsh tourism sector](#)

The Economy Secretary was responding to the latest Wales Tourism Accommodation Occupancy statistics, which show that occupancy levels across

each of these categories increased between July 2016 and June 2017.

At 68% the occupancy rate for hotels rooms was the highest of all, increasing one percentage points when compared with the previous 12 months.

Guest houses and Bed and Breakfasts occupancy rates stood at 40%, a 2 percentage point increase over the same period, meanwhile self catering units increased by 4 percentage points to 56%, and hostel bed space increased by 3 percentage points to 52%.

The largest change in occupancy rates was seen in static caravans and holiday homes, which rose by 12 percentage points between July 2016 and June 2017 to 86%.

Ken Skates said:

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, these latest occupancy statistics show a strong picture for tourism in Wales and continue to reflect the success we have experienced over the last two years.

“We will continue with our campaign work to promote Wales to both domestic and foreign markets to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities to attract overseas visitors and those looking to holiday at home due to the weak pound.”