

[New Chair appointed to Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse](#)

Caroline Phipps has been appointed as Chair of the Panel from 14 August 2017 to 13 August 2018.

The Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse is an independent expert advisory Welsh Government Sponsored Body, established under general executive powers of the Welsh Ministers and supported by the Welsh Government. The Panel's remit is to advise on measures to prevent or reduce substance misuse, the associated health and social harms and review implementation of the Welsh Government's Substance Misuse Strategy.

The Panel will consist of not less than eight and not more than 12 Panel Members, all of whom are independent of the Welsh Government.

Members of the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse (APoSM), including the Chair, are not paid, but are reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence costs. They have a time commitment of approximately 10 days per annum.

Rebecca Evans said:

"We are committed to tackling and reducing the harms associated with substance misuse in Wales. I am pleased that Caroline Phipps has agreed to take up the role of Chair of the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse for the next 12 months.

"I am confident Caroline's breadth of knowledge and expertise, along with the continued input from other Panel Members, will be invaluable."

[More EU investment for growth and jobs in Port Talbot](#)

The funding will support a full redevelopment of three hectares of brownfield land; the construction of a new access road and the upgrade of an existing road in what will become strategic employment site for the area.

The two-year project will prepare the site for business investment and the development of more than 200,000 square feet of industrial and office space, which could accommodate around 1,600 jobs.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford, said:

“I’m pleased EU funding is again supporting a key infrastructure and economic growth project in Port Talbot.

“This is an exciting milestone in the redevelopment of the Harbourside area of Port Talbot, which will bring new business opportunities and jobs. The investment is great news for the area and provides another valuable boost to drive the local economy.”

The investment in the new development at Harbourside follows substantial EU funding in the regeneration of Port Talbot, including £54m for the Harbour Way M4 link road; £7.5m in TWI’s new engineering research centre and £2.5m in the town’s new transport hub.

Councillor Annette Wingrave, Neath Port Talbot Council’s cabinet member for regeneration and sustainable development said:

“This funding is fundamental in allowing the council to realise its regeneration aspirations for Harbourside and the surrounding area.

“It will enable us to transform this former docks area into one of the most important strategic employment sites in the region.

“Part of Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone, this further investment in Harbourside will deliver an even more compelling proposition for businesses and companies looking to invest here.

“We have made an excellent start with the new Court Services building and the R&D village at Harbourside Business Park but this will allow us to push on and take full advantage of the investment that has been made in Harbour Way, Port Talbot Parkway Station and the new transport hub.

“It will also support our regeneration work in Port Talbot town centre via the Welsh Government’s Vibrant and Viable Places programme, which is already transforming areas in the town. These are exciting times for the county borough.”

Flying A&E Service Lands in North Wales

The enhanced Service will be officially launched today at Caernarfon Airport

by the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Vaughan Gething AM. Also at the launch will be Wales Air Ambulance (WAA) Chief Executive Angela Hughes, 'Welsh Flying Medics' interim National Director Dr Ami Jones, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Chair Peter Higson, and BCUHB Deputy Chief Executive Dr Evan Moore.

In 2015, a unique Third Sector-Public Sector partnership was created between the WAA, Welsh Government and NHS Wales. This resulted in the creation of the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS Cymru), more commonly known as the 'Welsh Flying Medics', which provides pioneering pre-hospital critical and emergency medical care across Wales.

The Service, which effectively takes the emergency room to the patients, is made up of Welsh Government-funded NHS consultants and critical care practitioners who are able to deliver innovative emergency treatments usually not available outside the hospital environment.

The WAA raises £6.5 million every year from charitable donations to keep the helicopters flying.

Before the 'Welsh Flying Medics' service was introduced, all WAA helicopters were staffed by paramedics. The introduction of consultants and critical care practitioners means that the service is now able to conduct blood transfusions, administer anaesthetics, offer strong painkillers, and conduct a range of medical procedures – all at the scene of an incident.

Over the past two years, the 'Flying Medics' have become operational on the WAA helicopters based in Dafen and in Welshpool. The next phase has seen the Service start working from the Charity's base in Caernarfon. As well as the introduction of the medics, the Charity has also unveiled a newer, more advanced aircraft for North Wales.

In addition, the Service also has access to a fleet of Rapid Response Vehicles and an RRV will be based in Caernarfon along with the advanced helicopter. The medical equipment has been designed to be interchangeable between the Charity's helicopters and the RRVs.

As well as the original partners, this development is being supported by BCUHB and the Welsh Ambulance Service.

An independent evaluation by the Farr Institute at Swansea University has already started to reveal how the 'Welsh Flying Medics' service is having a positive impact on critical care in Wales.

Results indicate that:

- by taking the emergency room to the patient, the Service has shortened the time it takes for somebody who is critically ill to receive consultant-led treatment
- more people in Wales, in rural and urban areas, now have equal access to timely consultant-led treatment during an emergency incident, and can be immediately transported to specialist care at healthcare facilities across Wales and beyond

- the Service has relieved some pressure on frontline NHS emergency services. It has improved the time it takes for certain patients to be taken for a CT scan or emergency surgery. In addition, the Service has reduced timely and costly transfers between hospitals by taking patients directly to the appropriate specialist care
- the Service has supported the development of skills and knowledge in critical and emergency care for NHS Wales employees, both during emergency incidents and by organising regular training opportunities.

Evidence of long-term patient health benefits will be presented over the next few years; however, international evidence suggests that advanced critical and emergency care at the scene of an incident or at a peripheral hospital improves the chances, and speed, of patient recovery.

The Service has also supported the recruitment of emergency medicine and anaesthesia consultants into Wales, including BCUHB.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“I welcome this initiative that will enhance the existing service from Caernarfon and bring it in line with the rest of the EMRTS cover enjoyed elsewhere.

“It will bring access to critical care and emergency medicine much closer for people living in North Wales and ensure that they can get the best care more quickly.

“The new helicopter and rapid response vehicle available at the airbase will protect the existing WAA service and make the area more attractive to the very best clinicians and critical care practitioners. It will play a vital role in the provision of high quality unscheduled care across North Wales.”

Dr Ami Jones, EMRTS Cymru Interim National Director, said:

“Wales can pride itself on having established and consistent platinum-standard critical care across all of the country, via the WAA’s bases in North, Mid and South Wales. The Service is already supporting the work of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board but this next stage in our development can only enhance the benefits that we bring, not just in North Wales, but in Powys and parts of Ceredigion.”

Angela Hughes, Wales Air Ambulance Charity Chief Executive, said:

“The innovative equipment and treatments that we have introduced have attracted international attention, with many Helimed services across the world looking to adopt the Welsh model. Our heartfelt

thanks go to the people of Wales for raising the £6.5m each year needed to keep the four helicopters flying. We are serving Wales and saving lives.”

Gary Doherty, BCUHB Chief Executive, said:

“We are delighted to support this development from the Wales Air Ambulance and EMRTS Cymru which will have a positive impact on critical care in North Wales.

“This specialist service will provide patients in remote and rural areas with rapid access to life saving care.

“We are pleased that this service has also helped the recruitment of emergency medicine and anaesthesia consultants into our hospitals as they were attracted by the opportunity to work for EMRTS Cymru.”

[Alun Davies responds to Newsnight's Welsh language report](#)

Commenting on last night's Newsnight item on the Welsh Language, Minister for Life Long Learning and Welsh Language said:

“The debate displayed some poor judgement and a total lack of knowledge of the Welsh language. Can you imagine the programme asking if the first language of any other group or nation was a hindrance?

“The tone was as if the Welsh language had to justify its own existence. Newsnight seemed to have no knowledge of the fact that Welsh is the first language of many people in Wales and all those who do speak Welsh also speak English.

“Surely a programme such as Newsnight could have at least found a Welsh speaker to talk about the language, someone with an insight into the language and how it is used everyday.

“The questions on bilingualism ‘detering investment’ and ‘putting off English companies’ displayed a complete ignorance of the modern Welsh economy, the current Welsh language standards we have and the plans we announced yesterday and in recent weeks to grow the language.

“Why didn’t they consult BBC Wales colleagues who cover this issue all the time? Wales, only two hours from London, seems to have been treated like a nation far away about whom Newsnight knows little. Newsnight should apologise and offer viewers the informed, considered look at the Welsh language that they deserve.”

[£50m to further improve NHS waiting times in Wales](#)

The investment will be targeted at making improvements to waiting times in elective surgery, diagnostics and therapies over and above those already planned.

Over the last five years, referrals to hospital-based services have increased by around 20% – from 1.07 million in the 12 months ending March 2013 to 1.27 million in the 12 months ending March 2016.

Increases in individual specialities are even higher, with gastroenterology referrals up 37% and orthopaedic referrals up 22% – where the NHS is now able to see and treat more conditions than previously.

But despite the increased demand for treatment, over the last two years, referral to treatment (RTT) and diagnostic waiting times performance has improved markedly.

The number of people waiting more than 36 weeks from referral to treatment has fallen from 28,654 in August 2015 to 12,354 in March 2017 and the number of people waiting more than eight weeks for a diagnostic test has fallen to 4,741, from a high of 28,000.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“The demand on the NHS in Wales, as well as across the other nations in the UK, continues to grow. This places additional pressures on the service to deliver timely care for patients.

“While I expect health boards to plan and deliver sustainable services that meet the needs of their local populations, the £50m investment I’m announcing today will help NHS Wales deal with the extra demand by further reducing waiting times in key areas – such as elective surgery, diagnostics and therapies.”

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“We know that our health service continues to experience increasing demands and pressures. We are providing this additional funding from our reserves so health boards across Wales can go above and beyond the plans they already have in place for this year to drive up performance and offer the best quality service for patients.”