

Health Secretary kicks off construction of Gwent's new £350m critical care hospital

The Health Secretary announced that the new hospital, which has been known as the Specialist and Critical Care Centre, would be known as The Grange University Hospital.

Welsh Government funding for the new 470 bed hospital was confirmed in October 2016. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board expect the hospital will open to patients in the Spring of 2021.

The Grange University Hospital forms a key part of the ambitious Clinical Futures strategy, launched in 2004, to modernise health services in Gwent. When built, the facility will treat patients who need complex and acute emergency care in the Gwent region and will include a 24 hour specialist assessment facility, intensive care, comprehensive diagnostics, inpatient beds for major emergencies and complex surgery, and theatres.

While the hospital will play an integral part of the delivery of services in Gwent, the Welsh Government expects it to have a strong regional role in south Wales, becoming part of the major acute hospitals network providing safe and sustainable specialised services which deliver the best possible outcomes for patients.

Vaughan Gething said:

"I'm really pleased to be here today to mark the construction process of what will become a state-of-the-art hospital in Gwent. I am pleased to announce that the hospital will be known as The Grange University Hospital. It will bring together complex and more acute services onto one site and improve the quality of care for the very sickest patients."

Judith Paget, Chief Executive of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, said:

"The Grange University Hospital is a major part of our Clinical Futures Strategy and everybody associated with the Health Board is extremely excited that work has now started on this state-of-the-art facility. It will help us to create a much improved care environment, timely access to emergency care, and ensure patients get the best outcomes from their care.

"We have received fantastic support from local people living in the Health Board area as they understand the benefits this hospital and

a new 21st Century model of healthcare will bring.

“I would like to thank our staff for their hard work in getting us to this point and we will continue to work closely with our staff, our local communities, and with Gleeds and Laing O’Rourke to ensure this new hospital is one we can all be proud of.”

Welsh Government calls for views on regulation of Mobile Animal Exhibits

As well as performing wild animals in circuses, Mobile Animal Exhibits include travelling falconry and hawking displays, exotic pets taken into schools for educational purposes and reindeer at Christmas events.

There is currently no standard licencing regime or requirement for routine inspection of Mobile Animal Exhibits. A licencing or registration scheme could improve the welfare of animals in a travelling environment and support businesses operating Mobile Animal Exhibits in Wales to do so in an effective and appropriate way.

The public are being encouraged to have their say in a Welsh Government consultation on the subject. The move follows concerns the welfare needs of some animals kept in Mobile Animal Exhibits can not be met in a travelling environment.

This is the first time people have been able to have their say on this subject in a way that will inform the Government’s next steps.

The consultation asks for people’s views on a range of issues relating to the regulation of Mobile Animal Exhibits in Wales, including whether the use of wild animals in circuses should be banned.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“I strongly believe animals should be protected from pain, injury, fear and distress. There have been concerns expressed about the use of wild animals in some Mobile Animal Exhibits and as the use of such exhibits increases in popularity it is clear we need to look at whether there should be better regulation and controls as is standard for the majority of other businesses.

“This subject is an emotive one and I know there are some very strong views on how we should proceed. It is important we receive a wide-range of views so we can consider these, along with expert

advice, in deciding how Mobile Animal Exhibits should be regulated in future. I would encourage everyone with an interest to take this opportunity to have their say.”

The consultation is available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Welsh Government announce extra rolling stock to improve rail services

The class 319 flex bi-mode trains have been funded by Welsh Government with £1m of support from Arriva Trains Wales, and will be added to existing rolling stock in 2018.

Their introduction will allow for Persons of Reduced Mobility compliance works to be made to the existing class 150 and 158 stock and will provide options for increasing capacity on busy routes. The extra trains will also provide opportunities for the new franchisee to deliver improvements early in the new Wales and Borders rail services contract.

Economy and Infrastructure Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I’ve made no secret of the difficulty in adding good quality rolling stock in Wales and am delighted that, by working with Arriva Trains Wales and others, we’ve been able to secure these extra trains.

“The agreement to secure these trains is one part of a number of agreements with rail industry bodies that ensure that the majority of the current Wales and Borders fleet will comply with Persons of Restricted Mobility regulations by 1 January 2020. The extra trains will be available for the new franchisee to use until at least 2021.

“I’ve been absolutely clear that the next franchise, the Welsh Government’s first, must have the passenger at its heart. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to secure these trains and hope to see them play a part in boosting Wales’ rail service for years to come.”

The trains are being leased following an initial £1.9 million investment by Welsh Government and £1 million from Arriva Trains Wales.

Simon Hughes, Fleet Director for Arriva Trains Wales said;

“These additional trains will be a massive boost for our customers who have been calling for extra capacity for a long time. We are delighted to be investing alongside the Welsh Government to secure this additional rolling stock within our current franchise period.

“Customers on our Valleys network are already seeing the benefit of our May 2017 timetable enhancement. Making the most of our limited number of trains, we were able to deliver 600 extra seats on the busiest commuter trains serving Cardiff following major infrastructure investment by our partners in Network Rail.

“We are proud and excited to welcome these trains into our fleet. The fact they will be more accessible, and delivered alongside improvements to some of our current fleet, means we can make the railway in Wales an increasingly viable means of transport for all.”

The announcement is the second piece of positive news for the rail industry in Wales, following last week’s announcement that [Welsh Government has supported over £30m in investment creating 300 jobs in train manufacturing at CAF’s new factory in Newport.](#)

Funding for Manufacturing Institute to drive up GVA by up to £4 billion

The new institute will have a strong focus on advanced manufacturing sectors including aerospace, automotive, nuclear and food.

It will deliver game-changing support to key manufacturing companies as well as multi-sector supply chain companies and the broader SMEs economy, and is geared to increase productivity, commercialisation, innovation and skills development.

The new institute is expected to drive a thriving competitive industry base which in turn will act as a catalyst for growth and jobs across the supply chain in Deeside, North Wales, the Northern Powerhouse and further afield.

The first phase on the institute is expected to be up and running by 2020 and will build on existing infrastructure already in action such as Coleg Cambria University Centre.

The funding agreed will seek work beginning on the full design and specification of two separate facilities on at Broughton and once close to the Deeside Industrial Park. Airbus are confirmed as the first member at the Broughton site.

Ken Skates said:

“I am absolutely committed to delivering on my pledge to establish a £20m Wales Advanced Manufacturing Research Institute in Deeside which will focus on increasing commercialisation, training and productivity.

“If we are to continue to compete globally Welsh industry must remain competitive and this means adapting to modern techniques and understanding the potential opportunities offered by collaboration and changes in economy for example the fourth industrial revolution.

“The new institute will very much support these ambitions and I am genuinely excited by the impact it could have.

“The centre will be ideally designed and located to deliver benefits for Wales and to maximise opportunities associated with the Northern Powerhouse. Indeed external experts have predicted that, dependant on external economic conditions, GVA could increase by as much as £4bn, an impact that could be absolutely transformational to the economy of North Wales and our country more widely.”

The Institute has been developed by the Deeside Enterprise Zone Advisory Board, with detailed input from, Swansea University AMRC Sheffield, Airbus and Coleg Cambria in conjunction with SMEs and large companies.

[Drive to improve maths in schools launched](#)

The Education Secretary Kirsty Williams will unveil the National Network for Excellence in Mathematics at a school in Cardiff alongside renowned maths expert Dr Hannah Fry who will talk about how to make the subject more compelling and interesting for pupils.

The Welsh Government is investing over £3.2 million in the network this Assembly term which will play a key role in the Education Secretary Kirsty Williams' national mission to raise standards in Welsh schools.

It involves schools, colleges, universities and the four regional education consortia – working together to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics and numeracy in Wales, in support of new curriculum developments.

Its role will include:

- Extra support to develop leadership in maths and help schools work together in support of higher standards.
- Supporting teachers, teaching assistants, further education lecturers and others to develop improved classroom practice.
- Schools and colleges will receive guidance, access to conferences and events on effective teaching practice, alongside a new dedicated online maths zone on the Hwb learning website.
- New accredited evidence-based professional development programmes for teaching staff to improve their mathematics knowledge, and the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Kirsty Williams said:

“We are on a national mission to improve education standards to make sure all our pupils have an equal opportunity to reach the highest standards. This is particularly important in such a critical subject such as maths.

“Our new National Network for Excellence in Maths uses Wales’ ability to come together, to share understanding of what works best, and to support each other in raising standards and our ambitions for excellence.

“The network will capture the best knowledge, expertise and experience from our universities, schools, Consortia and others for the benefit of our young people.”

The Education Secretary will visit Cardiff High School to meet Hannah Fry and the expert board of the network as they begin their work.