

Health Minister announces £40m funding for new North Denbighshire community hospital

The scheme will provide a healthcare and wellbeing campus at the Grade II listed Royal Alexandra Hospital and a new building offering a range of community services.

The Royal Alexandra Hospital site will be used for counselling and interview rooms, alongside office accommodation. The new building will focus on clinical services, treatment areas, community beds and a same-day minor injuries service, which is linked to the changing model of care in the community.

The plans also include an IV therapies suite, a 28-bed ward and community dental services.

Health Minister Vaughan Gething said:

“The North Denbighshire Community Hospital will be a key development for healthcare in the area. The new hospital will provide a range of services closer to the local community in Rhyl, while also reducing the pressure on services at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

“The development will also bring major benefits to the area linked with the wider regeneration plans for Rhyl.

“I know how important the Royal Alexandra Hospital is to the community so I’m pleased we have retained this historic and important building alongside a new purpose built centre.”

Gary Doherty, chief executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, said:

“This development will transform the way we deliver care to people living in North Denbighshire.

“We’re very excited about the potential this project has to help us transform the way healthcare is provided in the Rhyl area, and how it can support the way services are provided at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.”

Work on the new development is set to begin in autumn 2020. The new clinical build will be commissioned by Spring 2022 and the refurbishment of the Royal Alexandra Hospital is due to be completed by the end of 2022.

New drive to support women entrepreneurs

The Welsh Government's new Supporting Entrepreneurial Women programme was informed by the work of a panel of experts, convened in 2017 to consider how best to encourage, develop and support female entrepreneurship in Wales.

The panel, chaired by Helen Walbey, considered an array of academic evidence and literature on women in entrepreneurship, spoke to a range of business women, representative groups and partner bodies, and aligned its work with the principles of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme which is championed by Be The Spark in Wales.

The result is a new Framework for Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales and a Good Practice Guide to inform how the Welsh Government and business community works to drive the number of women entrepreneurs in Wales.

The Welsh Government have also responded by publishing the Business Wales Action Plan which identifies 10 specific ways in which the Welsh Government and business community can improve. From providing more gender focussed business support and confidence building, increasing the number of female business advisors and mentors in Wales and promoting the career successes of prominent female entrepreneurs including through business awards, the action plan aims to create the right environment in which female entrepreneurs can prosper.

There is also renewed focus on engagement with women entrepreneurs to understand the barriers they face, improved availability of finance options with no restrictions that unfairly affect women, and a Good Practice Guide that encourages business support organisations to adopt ways of working that support female Entrepreneurship.

The Economy Minister will launch the Framework, Good Practice Guide and the Action Plan at a celebratory event in Capital Law. This will be followed by regional events, jointly organised by the Welsh Government and Lloyds Bank, to ensure that business groups right across Wales are aware of the new resources and their role in supporting female entrepreneurship.

The Economy Minister said:

"The underrepresentation of women both as business owners and at a senior executive level is well evidenced and there is no doubt the gender gap is hindering women from achieving their full economic and personal potential.

“Our Economic Action Plan focuses on creating the right environment to enable entrepreneurs to prosper and grow and obviously this must apply to women, just as much as men.

“The work undertaken by the panel of experts recognised the progress that we as the Welsh Government and business representative groups have made in recent years in supporting female entrepreneurship – but the message is clear. We must do more, and with Brexit presenting challenges of an unprecedented scale, now more than ever we need our best talent around the table.

“I call on the business community and financial institutions to work with us to adopt a more gender focussed approach to their work. I hope they will use our new Framework and Good Practice Guide to ensure they play their part in building an environment where women entrepreneurs are encouraged and properly supported to reach their full potential.”

Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip said:

“All women should be given equal opportunities and representation at the most senior level. Helping to understand and remove barriers that women face in entrepreneurial opportunities will support the potential growth of women in business. Through this support, we hope women will be more fairly represented and can flourish in the business sector.

“Although, there is still so much more we can do to achieve better gender equality, this initiative will help women to achieve their full potential and to move away from the underrepresentation of women at senior roles.”

[Concrete jobs set for Pontyclun](#)

The funding will allow Concrete Canvas, whose flexible concrete impregnated fabric can be laid ten times faster than conventional concrete, to develop a cutting edge Research and Development laboratory and testing facility at its Pontyclun site. It will create 25 new well paid jobs and help facilitate the further growth of the company.

Concrete Canvas are themselves investing over £1m into the expansion.

Economy Minister Ken Skates said:

“Concrete Canvas is a company that is well known to us, having been recent recipients of a St Davids Awards for Innovation. Its product is truly world leading and I am delighted to support the company during this next stage of growth.

“Our funding will help contribute towards a project cost of over £1.2m to redevelop the Pontyclun site, introducing state of the art testing equipment and the necessary space and facilities to allow the business to continue to compete on a global stage.

“We are fortunate, in Wales, to have some truly innovative, ambitious businesses and I’m determined to continue to support Concrete Canvas and others to help them reach their potential. This is an innovative product delivered by an excellent company, delivering excellent jobs locally – it’s exactly the sort of investment which fits with my Economic Action Plan.”

Will Crawford, Director of Concrete Canvas said:

“We are delighted to receive this EFF grant funding support from the Welsh Government which will enable us to complete the redevelopment of a cutting-edge Research & Development laboratory and testing facilities at our new site in Pontyclun, which is due to open alongside the new production facility in the third quarter of 2019. The grant will enable the company to realise growth of our Concrete Canvas products across the UK and export markets securing an additional 25 jobs over the next 2 years.”

[New Refugee and Asylum Seeker plan for Wales launched](#)

The ‘Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan’ is the latest step towards the government’s ambition of making Wales a nation of sanctuary for all who choose to make it their home.

It renews the Welsh Government’s commitment of working with the UK Government, local authorities, the Welsh Refugee Coalition and people seeking sanctuary themselves to achieve equality of opportunities, including access to resources and mainstream services. It also recognises the valuable skills and experiences which refugees and asylum seekers can bring with them to enhance Welsh communities.

Welsh communities have already welcomed close to 1,000 Syrian refugees as

part of the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the Community Support scheme, along with many more asylum seekers from across the world. The plan highlights a range of targeted and culturally-appropriate support, recognising the importance of designing and delivering services tailored for often unique needs. These include:

- Mental health services which address the difficult past experiences of those seeking sanctuary
- Interventions to mitigate the risk of refugees and asylum seekers becoming destitute
- Actions to prevent vulnerable individuals from being exploited
- Safeguarding, particularly for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

One key programme is the 'ReStart: Refugee Integration' project which aims to improve access to language tuition, employability support and local cultural knowledge to aid integration. Over 500 refugees will have their needs assessed and given targeted support to help them integrate into society.

A website will be launched to provide accessible, relevant information for refugees and asylum seekers. It will ensure those seeking sanctuary can develop their own knowledge of life in Wales and find advice around health, education and employment, as well as language and general information on the culture and history of Wales.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt, launched the plan today in the Senedd.

She said:

"Refugees and asylum seekers often arrive in Wales following traumatic experiences in their home countries and on their journeys to the UK. Wales has a long, proud history of welcoming refugees and this Nation of Sanctuary plan will ensure this happens.

"We want to support refugees and asylum seekers to rebuild their lives and make a full contribution to Welsh society – to support the taking-up of opportunities and adding to the diversity of our communities.

"Over the next few years, we intend to build upon this Plan to ensure Wales is truly a nation of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers, for the improvement of everybody in society. We want to move beyond just welcoming them; we want to harness their skills and enrich our country by doing so."

The plan has been endorsed by the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN's Refugee Agency dedicated to protecting the rights of people seeking sanctuary.

Wales' radical new curriculum reaches legal milestone

Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, will later unveil a White Paper that lays the legal foundations of a curriculum that is currently being designed by Wales' teachers.

Breaking down traditional subject boundaries and empowering teachers to be more innovative, we will be introducing Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) that cover the Humanities; Health and Wellbeing; Science and Technology; Languages, Literacy and Communications; Expressive Arts; and Maths.

English and Welsh will remain statutory, as will Religious Studies and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Alongside this, the Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence will be statutory up to 16 years old.

Key stages will be removed. Instead, there will be Progression Steps relating to expectations for learners ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16. These will allow teachers to understand each learner's development – taking into account their individual abilities, experiences and rates of learning and understanding.

The changes will ensure that schools can move away from the days of a narrow curriculum and instead give teachers the flexibility to be creative in their teaching. By using this approach practitioners will be able to use their professionalism and expert knowledge to create and design lessons that stretch learners' abilities and horizons.

Kirsty Williams commented:

“Wales started on this journey of reform because of a drive to improve standards – we want our young people to develop higher standards of literacy and numeracy, become more digitally and bilingually competent, and grow to be enterprising, creative and critical thinkers.

“I am absolutely clear that to raise standards and extend opportunities, we need to empower schools and teachers by moving away from a narrow, inflexible and crowded curriculum.

“This is an exciting time for education in Wales. Not only are we developing a curriculum that ensures our learners are equipped to meet the needs of the future, but we are developing a curriculum through genuine collaboration with our schools and key

stakeholders.

“I am asking people across Wales to contribute to this debate over the coming weeks and months. The White Paper is ambitious and far-reaching. But we will only reach those high standards through a genuine national mission and conversation.”