

Over £1.34m to tackle rough sleeping this winter

Minister for Housing and Local Government Julie James has announced more than £1.34m to tackle rough sleeping in Wales this winter, including £25,000 for every local authority in Wales to assist with winter pressures and deliver support to rough sleepers.

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This also includes specific funding for Cardiff, Wrexham, Newport and Swansea, as the four local authority areas with the most complex rough sleeping issues. The funding includes:

- £50,000 for the Wallich in Cardiff to support the emergency overnight accommodation in their shelter
- £25,000 for the Huggard in Cardiff to create a safer environment and increase the support team in their night shelter
- £33,800 for Newport Council to fund work to proactively support people who are sleeping rough into sustainable accommodation
- £54,000 for the Community Care Collaborative to develop and deliver health and social care services to rough sleepers in Wrexham, alongside housing advice, welfare advice and a range of other services
- £77,600 for Wrexham Council to develop a multi-agency model, with public sector and third sector organisations delivering joined up services to rough sleepers to encourage those people not currently engaging with services to access support to improve their health and quality of life and enable them to move to longer term accommodation
- £99,000 for a range of projects in Swansea including funding for the Wallich to develop their Rough Sleeper Intervention Team into a seven-day service.

Julie James said:

“This funding is part of the £30m we are investing over this year and the next to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. As the weather turns colder it is vital that the right support is available to ensure people can stay safe and warm this winter. We are working closely with local authorities and the third sector to ensure we are providing the right support to help people who are sleeping rough in Wales to leave the streets.

“People find themselves sleeping on the streets for a range of complex reasons, and they may require a great deal of support and understanding. We are committed to supporting them to find safe and secure housing, so they can achieve their full potential.

“I want to encourage anyone who is concerned about rough sleepers

to use the Streetlink App, which will alert local authorities and outreach services who can then offer help.”

SC2 ready to make a splash in 2019

The new £15 million attraction has been supported by the Welsh Government through £720,000 of Tourism Investment Support Funding.

SC2 will open to the public on the 5th April 2019, with construction work now well underway on the site next to the Sky Tower on Rhyl promenade. Inside holds Wales’ first TAG Active play arena, and the first JUNIOR TAG in the UK, as well as indoor and outdoor water play for all ages and abilities, flume rides, beach style paddling, feature slides and five themed food offers.

Once open, SC2 will create and safeguard 65 jobs and is estimated to attract more than 350,000 visitors to the area.

The Deputy Minister had the opportunity to see how the attraction is developing, with all slides now in place and the TAG Active installation taking shape, the next step is to add the water in the next few weeks.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“It’s great to see the progress being made on SC2, and we look forward to the opening next year of what will become an all-weather, flagship attraction for the seaside town. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to support this project and also pleased to see how the promenade is showing significant improvements, with SC2 sitting alongside a refreshed Pavilion Theatre with other private sector enterprises also showing confidence and investing in the town.”

Councillor Bobby Feeley, Cabinet Lead Member for Well-being and Independence, said: “We are delighted that there is so much excitement and anticipation ahead of the opening of SC2 and we were delighted to welcome the Minister to Rhyl. He saw for himself the tremendous progress that is being made with the construction works, and how SC2 fits in to the wider regeneration of the waterfront in Rhyl.

“It will be a first class attraction for the whole of the North Wales coast and is expected to attract an extra 350,000 visitors to the town each year. This will be of major benefit to the economy of Rhyl, Denbighshire and the wider North Wales region, as well as providing a unique leisure experience that make people want to make

repeat visits to the attraction and to Rhyl.”

The Deputy Minister also had the opportunity to visit Pro Kitesurfing which opened in 2014 and is a unique centre bringing the exciting Olympic Pro Kitesurfing Village and lifestyle sports into the heart of Rhyl.

£2.4m boost for tackling substance misuse in Wales

The money will go to the seven Area Planning Boards to deliver frontline services to support the Welsh Government’s objectives for tackling substance misuse in Wales. It will support the further development of these vital services and respond to the recent Healthcare Inspectorate Wales review.

Mr Gething said:

“I am pleased to be able to announce an extra £2.4m funding for the Area Planning Boards. This will help the boards deliver these important services and meet the ongoing challenge of substance misuse in Wales.

Alongside the introduction of legislation such as the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018, this additional funding underpins our firm and ongoing commitment to improving health outcomes and addressing the harms associated with alcohol and substance misuse in Wales.

Since the launch our substance misuse strategy in 2008 we have seen sustained improvements in waiting times for substance misuse services. However in recent years budgetary constraints have meant we’ve been unable to increase funding in this area so I am glad we are now able to back the boards with extra money to meet future challenges.

These include delivering more integrated services as set-out in our long-term plan for the NHS, A Healthier Wales and to respond to the recent Healthcare Inspectorate Wales review.”

The Welsh Government’s Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2016-18 sets out a range of actions to tackle substance misuse. In the New Year work will be undertaken to inform our future approach building on the evidence and successes to date.

The seven Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards (APBs) commission and deliver

treatment services to support those who are dependent on a range of drugs, based on the identified need in their areas. The extra £2.4m will be allocated in the 2019-20 financial year budgets.

[The Welsh Government invests a noteworthy £3m in musical education](#)

The Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, confirmed £3m for improving music services in schools across Wales over the next two years.

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The fund aims to increase access and opportunities for children and young people in Wales to learn new instruments and study music. It builds on initiatives such as [Anthem](#) and will offer opportunities to ensure the provision of high quality, universal access to musical education for all learners.

£1.5million will be spent in 2018/19, with a further £1.5 million allocated for music services next year. This includes £1million per annum as agreed as part of the two-year budget agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, and £0.5m as announced in yesterday's final budget allocation.

Local Authorities have received £1.4million via the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) which may be used to support a variety of services including:

- Purchasing new and endangered instruments
- Ensuring all pupils have access to lessons, exams and courses
- Covering costs of attendance at orchestras, choirs and bands
- Initiating a 'rock and pop' ensemble
- Supporting music co-operative arrangements

National Youth Arts Wales has received £100,000 to continue their music services, including youth ensembles.

Kirsty Williams, said:

“Music is at the heart of our nation’s rich heritage and I am absolutely committed to ensuring all our young people, whatever their background, have the same opportunities to develop their musical talent and reach their full potential.

“Schools will already be delivering musical education as part of our progressive new curriculum, and this additional funding will help break down barriers, such as costs for exams and access to instruments.”

Bethan Sayed AM, Committee Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, said:

“I’m pleased by this announcement and that more money has been committed to this than initially proposed in the Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru budget agreement.

“People across the sector, throughout Wales, have been calling for extra, targeted support and I hope that the funding announced will start to reverse the decline we’ve witnessed in music in schools.

“The Education Secretary has worked with me and others in good faith and this is a testament to what can be achieved when there is consensus on an issue.”

[Wales secures strong deal to safeguard fish stocks](#)

As part of the UK Ministerial negotiating team, the Welsh Government helped secure the deal at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels which concluded in the early hours of this morning.

The Welsh Government secured deals to:

- avoid needless discards of sea bass and protect the interests of commercial and recreational fishers whilst keeping the stock on track to recovery
- increase or maintain quotas for skates/rays, plaice, haddock and megrim in the Celtic Sea and for cod, haddock, plaice and sole in the Irish Sea while still meeting sustainability targets
- facilitate interim solutions to the challenges posed by zero-catch advice for a number of species under the implementation of the Discard Ban in accordance with the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Minister said:

“I would like to thank the members of the Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group who have helped identify the key issues around sea bass and other important stocks in Wales. As a result, we were able to present a strong Welsh case to the Presidency and Commission, along with colleagues from the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations.

“In line with our commitments to ensure our natural resources are sustainably managed, my priority was to safeguard fish stocks whilst securing a positive outcome for those coastal communities whose economies depend so much on the sea. This year’s negotiations were more important than ever with the uncertainty Brexit presents.

“There is a need to fish at sustainable levels based on the best available scientific advice. Finding the right balance in the negotiations was a challenge but we were successful in securing a deal which matches Wales’ priorities.

“I believe a strong and fair balance was struck between protecting the economic interests of small-scale fishers and recreational anglers with the need to move stocks toward the position where they can be fished sustainably into the future.”