

Ministers confirm £180m to deliver seamless health and social care in Wales

Health and Social Services Secretary, Vaughan Gething and Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies today set out their spending priorities for 2019-20.

Earlier this year, the Welsh Government published A Healthier Wales, the long-term plan for health and social care in Wales.

As part of the process of transforming the health and social care system, the Welsh Government wants everyone to have access to a single integrated package of health and social care when they need it. This may be delivered by several different services, according to people's needs.

Health and Social Services Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“In Wales, we've set out a clear vision to transform the health and care system. People will receive a single integrated package of support for health and social care tailored to their needs and preferences.

“The £180m package of investment we're confirming today for health and social care in Wales represents a significant additional investment next year. It will be targeted across the health and social care system, to reflect the integrated approach we are promoting towards the development of seamless models of care.”

A package of £130m funding in 2019-20 will help to deliver the single integrated package of support and will be available to health and social care regional partnerships throughout Wales. The funding will be allocated across three main areas:

- £50m of revenue funding for the Integrated Care Fund, which aims to reduce pressure on the hospital and social care system by helping to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions, inappropriate admissions to residential care, and delayed hospital discharges
- £30m to be allocated through the regional partnership boards – these are shared decision-making bodies between health boards and local authorities. Regional partnership boards will play a leading role in the delivery of A Healthier Wales
- £50m for the Transformation Fund, which will be allocated to programmes endorsed by regional partnership boards, to take forward the development and implementation of new models of care.

Ministers have also confirmed local authority social care services will

receive £50m next year – £20m will be provided as part of the local government revenue support grant and a further £30m as a specific grant from the health and social services budget.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies added:

“The £50m additional investment we’re making in social care will help services meet the growing demand for services and the needs of individuals in communities’ right across Wales.

“This wider package of investment demonstrates our commitment to the development of a truly seamless health and social care system in Wales.”

The announcement comes as the Welsh Government will today publish stage two of the draft Budget 2019-20 – the detailed spending proposals set out how the funding to each government portfolio will be allocated to individual programmes and grants.

Consultation launch – Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living

Replacing the 2013 ‘Framework for Action on Independent Living’, the new approach focuses on key issues identified by disabled people including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places.

Disabled people have been consulted throughout the framework’s review, which was overseen by a Steering Group led by Disability Wales.

Contributions to the consultation have come through workshops run across the country, including people with expertise and experience of a wide range of disabilities; through hundreds of emails, letters and phone calls and through conversations in homes, workplaces, schools and communities.

One of the key messages to come out of the engagement process was that, while Welsh Government legislation, policies and programmes are in place to support equality for disabled people, there are often problems with local implementation.

The new framework and accompanying action plan set out how Welsh Government is fulfilling its obligations in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and also highlights the role of key legislation,

including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Welsh Government's national strategy: Prosperity for All.

Underlying the whole framework is the "Social Model of Disability" which recognises the need for societal change – removing barriers so that disabled people are able to participate fully.

There are 75,000 disabled people in Wales who are either actively seeking work or would like to work. They are often being held back by barriers beyond their control, such as organisational systems and other people's attitudes as well as physical and environmental barriers.

Just 45% of working age disabled people in Wales are currently in employment, compared to 80% of those not disabled. This is a shocking 35% "disability employment gap".

Julie James, Leader of the House and Chief Whip, said:

"The Welsh Government is committed to helping disabled people to fulfil their potential, achieve their ambitions and realise their dreams. Disabled people tell us time and again there are many barriers which frustrate them – it is imperative we break these down.

"Tackling these challenges, whether they be physical obstacles such as inaccessible buildings or something more entrenched like people's attitudes, will require real partnership working to create real change. We'll achieve the best results by working with disabled people so we understand the issues properly and find the right solutions.

"I commend this framework for encouraging action with and for disabled people across the whole of Wales. I would urge everyone to respond to the consultation."

Rhian Davies, Chief Executive of Disability Wales, said:

"The Right to Independent Living and being included in the community is fundamental to the draft Framework for Action on Disability. This doesn't mean doing everything for yourself but having appropriate support and access to the necessary resources where needed, as well as action by government and wider society in tackling longstanding barriers in education, employment, housing and transport.

"The aspiration behind the draft Framework is nothing less than the creation of an inclusive nation where all disabled people enjoy their rights on the same basis as others."

The consultation is open from Monday 22nd October and will close on Friday 18th January 2019.

Welsh food and drinks businesses take centre stage at international trade event

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths will join a Food and Drink Wales delegation of thirteen leading companies from across the sector at the biennial Salon International de 'Alimentation (SIAL).

The Cabinet Secretary will meet exhibitors and customers to discuss export opportunities and will attend a Meat Promotion Wales / Hybu Cig Cymru reception to highlight the importance of the food and drink and the red meat sectors in Wales.

Speaking during the SIAL event, which will see more than 7,000 companies from 109 countries networking and exhibiting their produce, the Cabinet Secretary said it was more important than ever that Welsh businesses forged links with partners across Europe and seize every opportunity to export their goods further afield.

The Cabinet Secretary said Welsh food and drink businesses must grab the opportunity to meet with potential trade partners ahead of the uncertainty of Brexit and showcase their world renowned produce. The Welsh food and drinks industry has shown growth in recent years, with the value of exports for 2017 of £527.4million, representing a rise of 21.1%, and up £91.8million from 2016.

With the value of exports of food and drink from Wales to the European Community also increasing by £47.6million between 2016 and 2017, representing a 13.2% rise, Lesley Griffiths has urged Welsh businesses to use opportunities like SIAL to build relationships and showcase their produce to wider markets.

The Welsh Government provides a comprehensive range of programmes to support Welsh food and drink producers to increase their exports. This support ranges from bespoke one to one advice about export strategies and market selection, to exhibiting at key events like SIAL.

The Welsh Government Food and Drink Wales presence at SIAL is a vital exhibition to showcase the variety and quality of food and drink products from Wales to develop new business contacts, enhance their profile and maximise their potential market sales.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“SIAL is a fantastic opportunity for Welsh businesses to showcase the high quality food and drink they produce, as they strive to build relationships with others and their markets.

“Our efforts in raising our profile are making a real difference. Over the past year alone, our food and drink exports have increased by 20% and passed the £500m milestone for the first time.

“However, in these challenging times with Brexit now just a few months away, it is more important than ever that Welsh companies raise their international profile and proactively sell their produce to the world.

“Meat and meat products remain the top Welsh food and drink exports to the European Community, making up more than a quarter of the value of all exports in this category, and we need businesses from this sector to strengthen these ties and build even more partnerships to guarantee their future sustainability.”

Kevin Roberts, Chairman of Hybu Cig Cymru, said:

“Exports are vital for the red meat sector, and contribute over £180m a year to the Welsh economy. Contacts made at SIAL Paris and similar trade events lead directly to new business. We’re pleased that five meat exporters are attending this year as part of a strong Welsh food and drink contingent.

“Since the Cabinet Secretary announced the £1.5 million in financial support for HCC to boost export development this time last year, we have redoubled our efforts to build on business with existing clients, as well as expanding the reach of PGI Welsh Lamb and PGI Welsh Beef into even more countries where it is highly sought-after and respected.”

Wales’ largest and oldest dairy co-operative South Caernarfon Creameries (SCC) will be attending SIAL and showcasing cheeses in their Dragon range, produced on the Llyn Peninsula using 100% Welsh milk from farms across North and Mid Wales.

Alan Wyn Jones, Managing Director of South Caernarfon Creameries, said:

“The event is a massive benefit to South Caernarfon Creameries because it provides us with a shop window to reach out and extend our markets.

“These are exciting times for SCC and following a £13m investment

in our cheesemaking and packing plant at Chwillog, increasing exports from 5% to 15% of our sales is an important goal in our ongoing growth strategy over the next few years.

“We’re looking forward to reinforcing lots of our connections in the industry having significantly increased exports since attending SIAL last year, as well as making new contacts in the global marketplace.”

John Cullen, sales director at GRH Food Company Ltd, which has previously attended the SIAL conference as a visitor and will be exhibiting for the first time this year, said that it had been invaluable for the development of the Gwynedd-based cheese businesses.

In the last two years the company has increasingly exported to Europe, North America and the Middle East, as well as across the UK. It has also moved to a new 43,500 sq ft facility at Snowdonia Business Park, Minffordd near Porthmadog, after securing a £1.7million grant from the Welsh Government’s Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, as part of a £6.5million investment.

“It’s important for Welsh food and drink businesses to get more involved with conferences like these while the opportunity is still there,” said John Cullen.

“It’s a very important stage for networking and helps put Welsh food and drink businesses on the map. You have to be there in one way or another, as a visitor or exhibitor, to make those connections. International backers will take you more seriously if you are at these exhibitions.”

SIAL is held in Paris, France, from 21-25 October 2018.

Communities for Work shows our commitment to address unemployment and support those furthest from the labour market – Eluned Morgan

Committed to getting more people into work, the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning visited Rhyl to meet some of the people helped into employment thanks to the Communities for Work programme.

The programme is a key part of the Welsh Government's Employability Plan to educate, train and prepare people for work, and remove barriers to employment.

Almost 6000 people across Wales have been helped into employment through Communities for Work which will provide a total of £70.5million of support by 2020.

The programme sees community based professionals work with young adults not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and unemployed or economically inactive adults to understand their individual complex barriers to employment and help them gain the skills, training and experience they need. Targeted groups include those from jobless households and/or Black Minority Ethnic groups, and those with barriers to employment such as limited or no skills, disabilities or work limiting health conditions, and care or childcare responsibilities.

The Minister said:

"It's really encouraging to see a rise in employment, but unemployment and economic inactivity are still issues in Wales. Programmes such as Communities for Work and the Parents, Childcare and Employment programme (PaCE) show our commitment to tackling these issues.

"There's strong evidence that employment provides the most sustainable route out of poverty. Communities for Work engages with people in our most deprived areas, to provide support for those who need it most and ensure everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to contribute to our society."

[European collaboration is vital to Welsh universities](#)

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans, who is the lead Minister for the Welsh Government on the Ministerial Forum on EU negotiations, met Professor Colin Riordan, who sits on the Welsh Government's European Advisory Group and Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Professor Kim Graham.

Rebecca Evans said:

"We heard from Professor Riordan and Professor Graham how much they value collaboration with partner universities and how vital it is

that the UK continues to participate in the Erasmus+ and Horizon programmes.

“We share this view, which is why we have consistently lobbied the UK Government on the continued participation. Since 2014 Wales has received over €40m from Erasmus+, supporting more than 200 projects across a range of sectors. In addition Wales has secured more than €98m from the Horizon 2020 programme.

“While the investment is important in demonstrating the value of participation, our involvement goes much further by raising the quality of research and innovation and extending Wales’ global reach.”

Cabinet Secretary for Education Kirsty Williams, who is also attending the Brexit meeting, said:

“A no deal Brexit would be extremely damaging for our higher education sector. Not only would it deny our students and institutions access to vital opportunities but would also jeopardise those academic links that universities in Wales have worked so hard to establish over the past 31 years.

“We want Wales to continue to be a global and outward looking nation but you can’t do this in isolation. That’s why a programme like Erasmus+ is so beneficial because it means that staff, pupils and students can learn from what their peers are doing across Europe and bring that knowledge, expertise and international outlook back with them. These benefits reach across our schools, FE and HE institutions, training providers and adult education and youth organisations.

“We have also repeatedly and strenuously raised the need for the UK Government to share information and operational plans with us as we work with our institutions on planning post-Brexit.”