

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – appointment of chief executive

Alun Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, today announced that Shereen Williams MBE has been appointed as the new Chief Executive to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Thursday 18 October 2018

Alun Davies said:

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of Shereen Williams to the post of Chief Executive to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

“Ms Williams will bring valuable skills to the role: her previous experiences in Local Government and the Third Sector will ensure the Commission has the leadership it needs to complete its current programme of work and beyond as it continues to keep under review all local government areas in Wales, and their electoral arrangements.”

Finance Secretary celebrates first anniversary of the Welsh Revenue Authority

The WRA was established in October 2017, 6 months ahead of the introduction of first 2 devolved Welsh taxes in 800 years – land transaction tax (LTT) and landfill disposals tax (LDT) from 1 April 2018.

A year on and Wales has a brand new function of government. At a WRA Board meeting earlier today the Finance Secretary said:

“The Welsh Revenue Authority plays a key role in our ambition to develop a tax system, which meets the unique needs of Wales.

“I am pleased with the work which has been done to get us to this

point.”

Dyfed Alsop, chief executive of the WRA, said:

“Today is a major milestone for the WRA and is testament to all the support we’ve received from all our partners.

“We’re committed to delivering a fair tax system for Wales, which will help raise important revenue to support public services across Welsh communities.”

The money raised from the Welsh taxes – which includes council tax and non-domestic rates and, from April 2019, Welsh rates of income tax – funds Welsh public services, from our hospitals and schools to improvements to roads and bridges.

First part of £100m transformation of health and social care announced

Developed by the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, the Me, My Home, My Community project integrates health and social care to bring care closer to home.

It will receive nearly £7m over two years from the Transformation Fund to change, develop and join up health and social care services, with more emphasis on preventing illness, and shifting services out of hospital to homes and communities.

The Transformation Fund has been created to support key actions from the Welsh Government’s long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

Me, My Home, My Community is based on partnership working between all parts of the NHS, local authority services, charities and the voluntary sector to ensure individuals and families get the support they need closer to home, at the right time. It aims to maximise independence, which research has shown is the outcome that matters most to people.

The project is informed by a similar initiative developed in Canterbury, New Zealand and has a number of key elements which will improve how health and social services work together:

- Get Me Home and Get Me Home Plus will change the way partner organisations can work together in hospitals. For example local

authorities will work with the NHS to provide increased daily contact on the wards. Get Me Home Plus will see people being assessed in their own home after being discharged from hospital, rather than being assessed before being discharged. This will give a clear understanding of the support and adaptations needed in their home, and it will allow people to return home more quickly after a stay in hospital. Wrap-around care at home will be provided by healthcare professionals, social services carers, and social workers.

- A well-being website will link services across the community and allow health and social care professionals to share information about patients.
- Community development officers will develop and recommend community based care – for example community gardening projects, walking groups ‘men’s sheds’, and ‘talking cafés’.
- Developing a well-being workforce. In addition to social prescribers and existing well-being officers, reception staff will be trained to provide information and connect people to volunteer care workers in the community.
- Identifying people who are at risk and actively supporting them to remain as independent as possible. This involves creating better connections between hospitals, GPs, and pharmacists to ensure everyone is informed of individual patients’ needs when they’re discharged from hospital, and patients have one point of contact.
- Multi disciplinary teams, led by a GP, to develop and review services.

During a visit to Redlands Surgery in Penarth today (Thursday 18 October), Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething met members of the Cardiff and Vale team and some of the team visiting from New Zealand to see the development of the project.

Mr Gething said:

“With an increase in life expectancy and our continued public health challenges, our health and social care services will continue to face increasing pressures. This is why, in our long term plan for health and social care, we have set out the need to truly transform the way we deliver care to ensure it is sustainable in the future.

This will require better integration of health and social services to reduce reliance on hospitals and deliver care closer to home. The Transformation Fund will be used to fund a small number of projects which have the most impact in developing and delivering new models of care, and which have potential to scale up so they can be used across Wales.

I am very pleased to announce the first project to be backed by the Fund. The Cardiff and Vale team have a clear vision of how to deliver better care for patients and reduce pressure on GPs and hospitals, and I look forward to seeing this and other new models developed and rolled-out quickly.”

Cardiff Council's Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, and Chair of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, Cllr Susan Elsmore, said:

"This is a tremendous opportunity to fundamentally realign health and social care, not only in the region, but also across the country, in order to deliver the priorities set out by Welsh Government in its Healthier Wales strategy.

"Our programme has families and individuals at its heart. By having this population focus, local authorities and the NHS can work together to deliver preventative services, at a local level, which maintain independence and produce the outcomes people are looking for.

"There has been a lot of hard work undertaken by the members of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board to continually improve health and social care. Now is the time to build on this work and place the principles of the new national policy at the forefront of our services."

£5 million to help relieve pressure on critical care this winter

The £5m is part of the new £15m annual funding for critical care the Welsh Government announced in July 2018. The £15m fund aims to strengthen all aspects of critical care and help to redesign the way critical care services in Wales are delivered.

Decisions on how the money is allocated are made by a Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Jones. This is the first funding decision made by the group.

Health Boards with critical care units will be allocated a proportion of the funding which will be used to help increase critical care capacity during the busy winter period.

Vaughan Gething said:

"We know that winter brings with it a range of pressures across the NHS in Wales, critical care units are not immune to that pressure and often feel it the most.

"When I announced the £15m funding and Task and Finish Group back

in July I wanted us to have a firmer central hand in place to ensure the right services are delivered in the right place, at the right time to secure more sustainable services for the future. The money I've announced today is that ambition in action and I hope the money allocated today to help increase critical care capacity will make a real difference this winter."

Employment up in Wales, with Mid and North Wales leading the charge

The statistics also show that unemployment fell in two of the four economic regions (Mid Wales and South West Wales) whilst remaining unchanged in North Wales. Economic inactivity also decreased in three of the four economic regions.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"These results are broadly encouraging for much of Wales, particularly Mid and North Wales, and demonstrate that our approach to supporting businesses in Wales during challenging circumstances is having a positive impact. But there can be no escaping that there is more to do.

With the UK Government seemingly worryingly reluctant to invest in Swansea and South West Wales and Brexit on the horizon, it's absolutely essential that we continue to work closely with businesses and potential businesses across Wales to ensure opportunities are maximised.

My Economic Action Plan recognises that each region of Wales has its own distinct opportunities and challenges and that a one size fits all approach to Economic development will not go far enough to drive the economic growth we all want to see. Work to ensure each region builds on their individual strengths to secure maximum economic growth for Wales is already bearing fruit, with our four Chief Regional Officers in place and working closely with local partners and businesses to ensure our economic potential is realised.

There's no question that 2019 will have its challenges, and through our Action Plan and support like the Brexit Portal, I hope that we can be a real help to businesses the length and breadth of Wales as we look to further drive up employment and cut unemployment across Wales."