

Direct Healthcare Services to establish Europe's first specialist research and testing facility to meet new worldwide standards

The investment at its Caerphilly facility is supported by £50,000 from the Welsh Government's Growth and Prosperity Fund and will create ten jobs and safeguard a further 56. The project costs to fit out the facility with machinery and equipment are part of a wider £600K cap ex investment the company is making.

The new ISO standards for the testing of mattresses and overlays used in treatment encompass all mattresses used in hospitals including trolley and theatre mattresses as well as mattresses used in patients' homes.

The global standards are expected to come into operation this year with the only testing facility currently available based in the USA.

Direct Healthcare Services (DHS) will work closely with the Welsh Wound Innovation Centre to create the new facility to ensure all its products comply with the new standards and ensure it retains its market leading position. The independent European testing facility will be available for use by other companies.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"DHS is a Welsh success story, founded in 2009 with just three members of staff it now employs more than 100 people and is the largest volume supplier of mattresses to the NHS and rapidly growing their international exports with an office in Australia.

"Innovation is at the heart of DHS' success and this is a key expansion project that will ensure its continued growth. DHS is a valued member of the growing Welsh cluster of wound care companies – a priority sub sector for life sciences and I am delighted the Welsh Government is supporting this investment."

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James, added:

"Wales' life sciences sector has gone from strength to strength over recent years, punching well above its weight on a global stage, and this success would not be possible without companies such as Direct Healthcare Services continuing to innovate.

"We are committed to supporting growth of this economically

important sector in Wales and today's expansion announcement from DHS is further evidence of this."

Graham Ewart, Managing Director at DHS said,

"DHS have consistently been an early adopter of regulatory and compliance directives so it makes good sense that we open and operate an independent testing facility to assure compliance to the new global ISO standard. As a Welsh business we are delighted to have the support of the Welsh Government and the commitment and expertise of WWIC as an operating partner."

DHS is the fastest growing manufacturer in its field in the UK with a comprehensive range of products and an extensive intellectual property portfolio winning the Queen's Award for Innovation in 2016 and 2017. In collaboration with the Welsh Wound Innovation Centre (WWIC), it has developed a number of revolutionary new products.

The Welsh Wound Innovation Centre is based near DHS's facility, which will enable customers from around the world that visit WWIC to view the research and test facility at the same time.

It would promote Wales as a world leader, not only in pressure ulcer research at WWIC, but also in the associated product testing at DHS.