

Health Secretary welcomes week-long NHS 70 celebrations

He also reflected on Wales' role in shaping the NHS of today and set out how the Welsh Government aims to ensure the NHS in Wales continues to provide high-quality healthcare, free at the point of delivery, when it reaches its 100th birthday and beyond.

Since its creation in 1948 by Ebbw Vale MP Aneurin Bevan, Wales has played a key role in the development of the NHS. Following devolution Wales has also led the way across the UK in a number of areas, like introducing an organ donation opt-out system, now being adopted by other home nations.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething said:

“It’s a great honour to be the Health Secretary during the NHS 70 celebrations, here in Wales where the NHS was born. I am looking forward to celebrating our much loved NHS alongside the dedicated, hardworking staff who truly make the service what it is today. It is an opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved since 1948 and also to remember the core principles of the NHS.

While much may have changed since 1948, the words of NHS founder Aneurin Bevan still ring true today as they did 70 years ago,

“No society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means.”

As well as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the NHS, Mr Gething said the 70th birthday was also an opportunity to look to the future.

“The Welsh Government’s long-term plan for the future of health and social care in Wales, A Healthier Wales, focuses on providing more joined-up services, in community settings – removing many of the current frustrations expressed by those both using and working within the system.

“In the future people will only go to a general hospital when it is essential. The intention is to create even better care locally, with support and treatment available across a range of community-based services. Fundamental change is needed to ensure a sustainable future and to ensure the NHS in Wales can remain true to that core value, born in Wales 70 years ago, to provide free

healthcare for all.”

A number of events are being held across Wales to celebrate NHS 70 and the Health Secretary along with the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, will be attending a number of those.

The centrepiece of the celebrations, on the eve of the birthday (4 July), will be a thanksgiving service at Llandaff Cathedral for the NHS attended by HRH, the Prince of Wales who will be greeted by current and past NHS staff from across Wales, as well as Aneira Thomas, the first person born in the NHS.