

Record number of organ donors in Wales

The Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething welcomed the news, saying:

“The organ donation figures are definitely moving in right direction but we do need to have several more years’ data to draw firmer conclusions around the impact of the change in the law.

“Every donor is incredibly precious; with approximately 300 people dying in circumstances where organ donation is possible we need everyone to say yes and for families to be ready to support this decision.

“We must not forget that behind every number is a person and a grieving family. My thanks go out to all those who choose to give the gift of life, and the family who support their decision. Without their generosity, others would not get their transformative transplant.

“We already know that consent data shows an increase in the percentage of families supporting donation and this is now being reflected in the rise in organ donors.

“Numbers in Wales are small which has caused fluctuations in performance in previous years. Despite the progress that is being made, there are still more people waiting for a life saving or life changing organ donation. I urge everyone to consider what their organ donation decisions are and to confirm that on the organ donor register and tell their family of their decision, asking them to honour it.”

You can register a decision at any time by calling 0300 123 23 23 (Calls to this phone line will be answered by NHS Blood and Transplant), by visiting www.organdonationwales.org or by telling your family (and friends).

Call for evidence on UK-wide ban on live export of animals for overseas

slaughter launched

The proposals relate only to the export of animals for slaughter and not to the banning of live animal exports for production or breeding.

Whilst a ban on live animal exports is not currently possible due to EU free trade rules, a ban could be introduced once the UK leaves the EU.

The Welsh Government has also agreed to work with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to consider how existing welfare in transport standards can be strengthened and to support further research in this area.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths said:

“As a government, we are committed to ensuring high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales and our position on live exports for slaughter is clear.

“We would prefer for animals to be slaughtered as close as practicable to their point of production and consider a trade in meat and meat products to be preferable to long distance transport of animals to slaughter. That is why we are supporting the call for evidence on a UK-wide ban on the export of live animals for overseas slaughter.

“Whilst there is likely to be public support for a ban on live exports for slaughter it is important to recognise the trade is currently lawful and a ban is unlikely to be welcomed by all. The livestock industry and the sheep sector in Wales for example are likely to have mixed views, particularly given the uncertainty around our future trading relationship with the EU.

“I encourage the public, the agriculture industry, partners and anyone with an interest in animal welfare to get involved and share their views with us on this important issue.”

“I have also agreed to work with the UK government and other devolved administrations to see how the protection of animal welfare during transport can be strengthened and to support further research in this area. I look forward to receiving the recommendations from both in due course.”

Residential care savings limit increases in Wales

A capital limit determines whether a person pays for the full cost of their residential care, or whether they receive financial support towards the cost from their local authority.

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government commits Ministers to increasing this capital limit used by local authorities who charge for residential care from £24,000 to £50,000 during the current Assembly term.

The capital limit in Wales is the highest in the UK. In England, people with capital and savings above £23,250 have to fund all of their own residential care.

The increase is being delivered in a phased approach, starting in April 2017 when the limit was increased to £30,000. The capital limit has today increased further from £30,000 to £40,000.

There are up to 4,000 care home residents who pay for the full cost of their care. Around 450 care home residents have already benefitted from the increase last year, with a steady increase in this number expected.

Social Care Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"This is the second step in delivering one of our top six 'Taking Wales Forward' commitments to more than doubling the amount of capital a person in residential care can retain without having to use this to pay for their care.

"From today, the capital limit is rising from £30,000 to £40,000, thereby allowing residents to retain a further £10,000 of their hard earned savings and other capital to use as they wish. By the end of the currently Assembly, the limit will be raised to £50,000.

"This is another firm example of this Welsh Government delivering its commitments to the people of Wales."

Lesley Griffiths visits New Zealand to strengthen links between both

countries

During the visit, the Cabinet Secretary will visit the Parliament to attend its Primary Production Select Committee and meet her Ministerial counterparts to discuss a broad range of issues across her portfolio.

The Cabinet Secretary will also visit the Auckland and Manawatu regions to visit dairy, sheep and beef farms and hold discussions with a wide range of representatives from these sectors.

The visit provides an opportunity to discover what Wales can learn from a small, global-facing country such as New Zealand and also discuss opportunities for both countries to work together. The Cabinet Secretary will meet representatives of the winegrowers' industry which has seen a significant growth in the last forty years. The Cabinet Secretary will also meet with the CEO's of the main beef and lamb exporting bodies and with dairy trade organisations such as Fonterra to see what Wales can learn from their food and drink industry.

Speaking ahead of the visit, the Cabinet Secretary said:

"I am pleased to be visiting New Zealand to strengthen the links between our countries. Like Wales, New Zealand is a small outward-facing, globally trading nation and I believe there is a lot we can learn from each other.

"It is now just under a year before we leave the European Union. For decades, the management of our land has been shaped by the EU. This has greatly influenced the structure and performance of our agricultural sector.

"Brexit brings significant and swift changes – the combination of leaving the Common Agricultural Policy and new trading arrangements mean simply maintaining the status quo is untenable.

"I recently published the five core principles for the future of our land and the people who manage it and these will form the basis of our future policy. I have launched a new phase of intensive engagement to develop initial proposals and I see this visit to New Zealand as a key part of that engagement.

"This visit will enable us to learn from their food and drinks industry – a key sector for us post-Brexit. It is also an opportunity to hear about New Zealand's experiences in managing significant change in agricultural policy which is particularly timely as we work to secure a resilient and thriving industry in Wales after leaving the EU."

[Nurse Staffing Levels \(Wales\) Act comes in to full force](#)

The Act places a duty on health boards and NHS Trusts to take steps to calculate and maintain nurse staffing levels in adult acute medical and surgical inpatient wards, as well as a broader duty to consider how many nurses are necessary to provide care for patients sensitively in all settings.

It also ensures that the NHS more widely recognises the professional judgement of nurses in identifying the needs of their patients, and supports nurses from ward to board to have the necessary and sometimes difficult conversations about the resource needs of their patients based on those needs.

Kirsty Williams AM introduced what would become the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act as a Private Member's Bill in December 2014. With the support of Welsh Government, the Act received Royal Assent on 21 March 2016.

Guidance to support NHS staff to implement the legislation was developed through consultations with nurses, patients, staff and stakeholder groups.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“Implementing the Nurse Staffing Levels legislation is a real step forward for Wales, and we have done so because we understand there's an evidence base that shows high quality nursing care with the right numbers and skill mix makes a real difference to patient care and patient outcomes.

“We now have a system to empower and support nurses on the front line, and nurse leaders to use their professional judgement to understand and plan for the right levels of care; with the right number of nurses needed to ensure the patient gets the very best deal possible.”

Chief Nursing Officer for Wales, Jean White said:

“I'm really delighted that Wales has taken the lead in introducing this piece of legislation. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to get the right nurse staffing levels to meet our patients' needs and to empower our nurses with the evidence base that will support and help inform their professional judgement.

There is a real sense of pride in Wales within our nursing

community and we regularly read about how the Welsh public share that sentiment, in letters praising the outstanding care they have received at the hands of our nursing staff. We want to see the implementation of this Act cement that feeling of pride and see it spread to every corner of our workforce and be a clear message to the outside world that in Wales, we value our nurses.”

Tina Donnelly, Director of the Royal College of Nursing in Wales, said:

“This is a fantastic achievement, which will focus on ensuring patients will benefit from legislation that will protect them and ensure a safe environment of care. Low nurse staffing levels are directly linked to sharp rises in patient mortality. This new law means an appropriate number of nurses will be at the bedside providing patient care. RCN Wales has been proud to work with Kirsty Williams AM and the Welsh Government in seeking to achieve this legislation which we confirm was a first for the UK and Europe.”