

New GP indemnity scheme in Wales moves a step closer

Speaking at the Welsh NHS Confederation annual conference today in Cardiff, the Health Minister confirmed NHS Shared Services Partnership – Legal and Risk Services as the partner to operate the Future Liability Scheme (FLS) from April 1 this year. They currently manage the indemnity arrangements for GPs working out of hours and secondary care indemnity.

The Future Liability Scheme (FLS) will be aligned as far as possible to the scheme announced in England. This will ensure GPs in Wales are not at a disadvantage relative to those in England. It will also ensure GP recruitment and cross border activity will not be adversely affected by different schemes operating in England and Wales.

The scheme will cover clinical negligence liabilities arising from the activities of all contractors who provide primary medical services. This includes GP practice staff and other medical professionals such as salaried GPs, locum GPs, practice pharmacists, practice nurses, healthcare assistants.

The Health Minister, Vaughan Gething said:

“This new scheme will provide greater stability and certainty for GPs in Wales. It will support GP practices and primary care clusters in their delivery of sustainable and accessible health care.”

The confirmation of NHS Shared Services Partnership – Legal and Risk Services to operate the FLS scheme has been welcomed by GPC Wales and NHS Wales, who have worked with Welsh Government in developing the scheme.

Dr Charlotte Jones, Chair of GPC Wales, said:

“GPC Wales supports the Welsh Government’s decision for Legal and Risk Services to operate the future liability scheme from 1 April 2019. The proposed scheme will address one of the biggest financial pressures on GPs, and will enable all GPs, practice teams and wider cluster healthcare professionals to work more closely together taking forward the transformation of Welsh primary.”

Anne Louise Ferguson, Director of Legal Services, NHS Shared Services Partnership – Legal and Risk Services, said:

“NHS Shared Services Partnership Legal and Risk Services is looking

forward to providing a high quality service for GPs in Wales which will build on our success in the delivery of secondary care indemnity.”

54 new classrooms for schools across Wales to reduce classroom sizes

The new classrooms will be provided to schools that have the largest infant class sizes, and also which have high levels of deprivation and/or additional needs.

The £36m fund is made up of £16m of revenue to assist local authorities in recruiting additional teachers, and £20m of capital which will allow local authorities to build additional classrooms and learning space that are needed to reduce infant class sizes.

Announced in April last year, the revenue element of the grant is funding over 90 additional teachers and over 20 additional teaching assistants in schools throughout Wales, laying the groundwork to reduce infant class sizes.

Today, the Education Minister visited Llanharan Primary School in Rhondda Cynon Taff where work to build a two classroom extension is due to begin in April, giving pupils more space to learn. The school is also benefiting from an additional teacher and a teaching assistant through the funding.

Llanharan Primary school was a prime candidate for the funding, as it has 2 infant classes with over 29 pupils, and has above the national average levels of free school meals.

Kirsty Williams said:

“The issue of class sizes has always been a cause for concern for parents and teachers. I’m therefore delighted to announce capital funding for an additional 54 classrooms to reduce infant class sizes.

“Combined with the £16m we have already invested in appointing over 90 new teachers, this funding will benefit over a 100 schools across Wales.

“Taken into context with our wider reforms of strengthening initial teacher training and professional learning, and doing away with unnecessary bureaucracy, this will make a real difference on the front line; ensuring that every child gets the best start in life.

“By providing schools with new classrooms and additional teachers we can allow teachers to devote more time and attention to individual pupils.

“Not only is this beneficial for the pupil and the teacher, but to the school’s ability to improve as a whole; a central part of our national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system which is a source of national pride and confidence.

[Rough sleeper count shows support is vital – Julie James](#)

“Although the annual estimates of the number of people sleeping rough in Wales have shown no significant increase compared to the same time last year, we all know from walking through our towns and city centres that this most visible form of homelessness remains persistent in Wales, and there is much more for us all to do.”

The Rough Sleeper Count is an estimate of the number of people sleeping outdoors over a two week period and over a one night period in Wales. Local authorities estimate that the figures show an additional two people sleeping rough over the two week period compared to the same time less year, an increase of less than one per cent to 347 people.

Local authorities reported 158 people sleeping rough on the night of the snapshot count, a decrease of 16 per cent or 30 people, on the previous year. However bad weather was reported across Wales on the night of the count which may have affected figures.

Across Wales there were 184 emergency bed spaces on the night of the snapshot count, of which 18 per cent or 33 bed spaces were unoccupied and available.

Julie James said:

“While we have to be cautious about these estimates, the number of people sleeping rough appears to be stabilising overall and in some areas numbers appear to actually be decreasing.

“We are investing more than £30m this year and next year to prevent and tackle homelessness. We are committed to building more affordable housing and protecting our social housing stock.

“We will continue to trial the Housing First model in various pilots across Wales, supported by over £700,000 of additional funding. These projects are in their early days but we are already seeing signs of success with people who have been sleeping rough for a long time supported into housing.

“I recently visited the Salvation Army Housing First project in Cardiff and met someone who has been successfully housed through the project. He told me about the dramatic difference it has made to his life and what it means to have his own home again. The reasons people find themselves sleeping rough can be complex and varied; we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Wales has a home that meets their needs.”

[Expanding horizons on Ynys Mon](#)

Led by third sector organisation Môn CF (Môn Communities Forward), the project aims to reduce underemployment and absence rates on the island by supporting people to find solutions to issues including childcare and transport and address them through one to one mentoring and exploring different working practices.

‘Expanding Môn’s Horizons’ will also work with employers, specifically focusing on local small and medium-sized enterprises, to adopt or improve their existing workplace strategies and occupational health.

The £1.2 million scheme, which has been supported by £870,000 of EU funding, will help 450 people and up to 250 local businesses over the next 4 years.

Jeremy Miles, who has responsibility for overseeing EU funded programmes, said:

“It is vital we continue to invest these funds in the areas which need it most, removing barriers to work, reducing in-work poverty and helping people move towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

“EU funds have already helped thousands of people across Wales improve their prospects and careers by tackling problems with persistent poverty and ensuring equal opportunities for all. I am pleased we have been able to support this innovative new venture on Ynys Mon and hope this investment will help build on this success.”

Expanding Môn’s Horizons Project Manager, Rhys Roberts said:

“This is an exciting project and a major boost for Anglesey. Môn CF is delighted to be able to offer a new innovative support programme to employed people on Anglesey looking to develop their careers. We are also excited about the opportunity to help the many small- to medium-sized enterprises on the island.”

In the last decade, EU-funded projects have created 45,000 new jobs and 13,000 new businesses across Wales, while also helping more than 85,000 people into employment.

Fund to revitalise town centres boosted to £31m

The Minister announced an extra £4m of funding in the Town Centre Loans fund for projects across Wales, bringing the total fund to £31m.

Caernarfon has benefitted from more than £2m in Town Centre Loans since 2015, including £73,500 for the not for profit community enterprise Galeri Caernarfon Cyf to renovate a dilapidated building and create five homes in the town centre.

Hannah Blythyn said:

“It’s great to see how Caernarfon has benefitted from using Town Centre Loans to make the best of its fantastic historical assets.

“Ty Castell is a beautiful Georgian building in the centre of the town. Thanks to £250,000 Town Centre Loan funding, the developer was able to renovate the building to create a fantastic boutique hotel and restaurant.

“The team behind Tŷ Glyndŵr used a £60,000 Town Centre Loan to create a bunkhouse, bar and café in a Grade II listed building. These businesses have created jobs and are bringing tourists into the town to experience everything the area has to offer.

“Once the Town Centre Loan is repaid, the money is used again to fund new loans, to bring empty and derelict sites back into use, help businesses to grow and prosper, and support activities that increase footfall on our high streets.”

Town Centre Loans are part of the Welsh Government’s regeneration strategy, which will invest £800m in total between 2014 and 2023. This includes around £250m from the Welsh Government supported by more than £550m from other

organisations and businesses.

Hannah Blythyn also met some of the team behind Caernarfon's HWB Caernarfon Business Improvement District, set up with funding support from the Welsh Government. Business Improvement Districts are an innovative way of pooling their resources together to work as a team and fund agreed activities to benefit the area locally.

Hannah Blythyn added:

"The Caernarfon BID has developed some effective local partnerships and it was good to hear more about how it is making a difference in the town."

Councillor Ioan Thomas, Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development said:

"I was very pleased to welcome the Deputy Minister – it was an opportunity to highlight the positive projects happening locally including the work of HWB Caernarfon.

"Visiting businesses that have benefitted from the Town Centre Loans Fund also provided an opportunity to see the real change the money has made to improve the condition of buildings in the centre of Caernarfon. It shows that the fund offers an excellent opportunity for local businesses and residents to renovate their buildings in the town centre."