

Housing First supporting people to leave homelessness behind

There she saw how the team are supporting people to move off the streets into housing.

Housing First is designed to support people who need significant levels of help to move away from homelessness. People receiving support are offered a place to live and then offered tailored, long term support to help enable them to manage a tenancy independently.

Last month, the Minister announced over £548,000 for the Salvation Army and Cardiff Council for two projects to work closely in the capital. Cardiff Council are establishing a new Housing First pilot to run alongside the existing Salvation Army pilot project, meeting demand locally. Since the Salvation Army's project began, not only have they supported eight people into tenancies, but their help has resulted in none of the eight people having been admitted to A&E.

Julie James said:

“The fantastic team here in Cardiff are supporting people to live independently. I was able to speak with Chris and hear how this approach is helping him to move forward with his life.

“Housing First can help people who are homeless and who often have complex needs including mental illness, problems with drug and alcohol abuse, poor physical health and a lack of a wider support network.

“This approach provides people with flexible support for as long as they need it and focuses on what that person might need to recover and live independently.

“This project is supporting some of the most vulnerable people in Wales to move away from living on our streets. I share the determination of everyone here at the Salvation Army, across the local authorities and charities working to tackle homelessness and improve the lives of people who find themselves without a secure, suitable home.

“We know that this not the right approach for everyone who is homeless – there is still a need for supported housing and temporary accommodation. However, projects like this one in Cardiff can play an important role in supporting people, particularly those who have been sleeping rough for a long time, to be able to sustain a tenancy.”

Yvonne Connolly, Regional Manager for The Salvation Army's Homelessness Services Unit Wales and the South West said:

"It was a pleasure to discuss with the Minister the ground-breaking results that have been achieved by the Housing First Cardiff programme with some of the most marginalised and hard to reach people in our capital city.

"Housing First is a lifelong model which supports individuals out of rough sleeping by first making them a tenant in their own home and intensive, assertive and flexible support to maintain tenure of the property is offered throughout."

Housing First Projects are designed to ensure that the individual has choice and control – they are actively encouraged to engage with support services such as mental health or substance abuse, but they are not required to do so in return for support.

[Learners to experience new languages at an earlier age – Kirsty Williams](#)

In the new curriculum, Modern Foreign Languages would be included within International Languages. This would also include community languages, classical languages and British Sign Language (BSL).

Learners would experience international languages at an earlier age and there would be clear expectations for their progress while at primary school.

This will build on work with the Global Futures Network, which provides a range of support for Modern Foreign Languages in the curriculum.

Schools would be able to choose which language (s) they would like learners to experience in addition to Welsh and English.

Changes are also proposed to the way that Welsh is taught, with the language remaining compulsory for all learners aged 3-16 – alongside English – but no longer separated into first and second language Programmes of Study.

Under the proposals, all learners will follow the same curriculum and there would be more of an emphasis on improving learners' skills and use of the language.

While it would be up to schools to decide how they approach this, they would need to think about opportunities for learners to listen, read, speak and write in Welsh – this might be through use in different parts of the

curriculum or outside the classroom.

Work is already underway with regional consortia and other stakeholders to deliver professional learning in a number of ways, including the Sabbatical Scheme which provides intensive Welsh language training to teachers and teaching assistants.

In the longer-term, qualifications for Welsh, English and International Languages would also change. Qualifications Wales are currently considering how qualifications should change in line with the new curriculum.

Announcing the changes today, the Education Minister said:

“This marks the most dramatic shift in the way languages are taught in Welsh schools since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988.

“We want all our learners to be citizens of both Wales and the world and that means ensuring that all young people from all backgrounds have an opportunity to develop their language skills – whether that’s in Welsh, English or international languages.

“We know these changes will take time and that’s why we won’t be taking a big bang approach. We’re committed to giving schools the time and resources they need to adjust. That’s why I recently announced £24 million over and above what already goes into curriculum support.”

Professor Sioned Davies, author of a Welsh Government commissioned report into Welsh in the curriculum, said:

“I am very pleased that the Welsh Government is fulfilling the recommendations of my report. Ensuring that the Welsh language is a statutory subject for everyone, and removing the term ‘Welsh second language’ is vital if we are to achieve the goal of a million Welsh speakers.

“The new curriculum, which will bring language learning together into one Area of Learning and Experience, will provide an exciting opportunity for teachers in Wales to develop and share expertise in language learning to give our children and young people the best opportunity to develop communication skills in Welsh and English, and in international languages.

“These are exciting and challenging times. There is a need to ensure time and support for the whole system to develop in order to create the best conditions for the new curriculum to flourish.”

A Curriculum and Assessment White Paper is to be published for consultation

shortly. This will set out the proposed changes that are needed to support the introduction of the new Curriculum when the phased roll out commences from 2022.

Kirsty Williams to meet University Ministers to discuss the future of higher education

The Minister convened and will chair the meeting with Scotland's Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead, and Chris Skidmore MP, the UK Government's Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation. Officials from the Northern Ireland Executive will also be present at the meeting in Cardiff.

As well as preparations for Brexit and its implications on the HE sector, the Ministers are also expected to discuss the UK Government's forthcoming Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, led by Philip Augar.

Kirsty Williams said:

"This meeting comes at an absolutely crucial time for our Higher Education sector, as well as the many EU staff and students vital to our universities. Our universities and colleges make a significant contribution to our economy in Wales, employing around 29,000 people, and benefit greatly from our EU membership.

"I've been very clear our higher education institutions need urgent clarity on a number of critical issues, including their engagement in EU-led research schemes, their participation in Erasmus+ and the right of EU nationals working in our universities to continue to do so.

"I've already announced £3.5 million for a programme run by Wales' universities to drive international partnerships and promote Wales as a study destination in a post Brexit world.

"I welcome the opportunity to work with my counterparts to ensure our colleges and universities are not disadvantaged and do not lose a single penny as a result of Brexit."

Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass building stage underway

On a visit to cut the sod at the Cibyn Industrial Estate, the Minister said the scheme is a significant development for North West Wales which will relieve congestion and improve safety in the area.

The 9.8km bypass will be from the Goat roundabout on the A499/A487 junction to the Plas Menai roundabout around Llanwnda, Dinas, Bontnewydd and Caernarfon.

Construction of the bypass, which is being carried out in a joint venture by Balfour Beatty and Ruthin-based Jones Bros, could be completed by Autumn 2021.

Fencing the construction work extents and site clearance will take place shortly allowing the main earthworks operations to commence.

There will be local employment opportunities and placements for trainees, apprentices and graduates as part of the construction stage as well as a focus on local spend on materials and sub-contracts where possible. Meet the buyer events will be held in due course to encourage local people and companies to apply for work on the project.

Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted to mark the beginning of the construction phase on this significant infrastructure scheme in North West Wales.

“The Welsh Government is investing £135 million in the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass which will deliver a real step change in how people travel. This means journeys for motorists will be quicker and more reliable and traffic congestion on local routes will be reduced leading to improved active travel opportunities on which we are working with Sustrans and Gwynedd Council.

“This scheme can have a real positive impact on the area, both in the construction phase by providing local employment and training opportunities and after completion through improved connectivity for communities and better air quality. It will also be vital in delivering better links to tourist destinations.

“Alongside our plans for a third Menai crossing, the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Improvement scheme and proposals to remove the roundabouts at Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr on the A55, the construction of the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass is another fantastic example of how we, as a government, are investing significantly in delivering for the region.”

Actions to address the greatest public health challenge of our generation – obesity – announced

Called '[Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#)', the consultation outlines the actions to be taken to help people in Wales maintain a healthy weight.

The UK has one of the highest levels of obesity in Western Europe. In Wales, twenty seven percent of four-five year olds and sixty percent of our adults are overweight.

Being overweight increases the risk of developing major health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It is also a risk to people's mental health leading to low self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

The proposals set out in the consultation have a strong focus on prevention and are supported by research and international evidence from Public Health Wales into what can help the people to be a healthy weight.

The evidence has informed the content of the plan which is broken into four themes:

- **Leadership and Enabling Change** – strengthening national and local leadership to deliver change through Local Health Boards, Local Authorities, their partners and with communities themselves.
- **Healthy Environments** – creating an environment that helps everyone to make healthier food choices and creating opportunities in daily life for people to be active. Including to legislate on price promotions, calorie labelling on foods eaten out of the home, banning the sale of energy drinks to children and to bring together a range of programmes to develop active environments across communities.
- **Healthy Settings** – ensuring our education, work and leisure facilities promote and provide opportunities for people in Wales to access healthy meals, snacks and drinks and be physically active. Including strengthening support for early years and schools settings to enable healthy eating and daily physical activity opportunities.
- **Healthy People** – providing the opportunities and inspiring people and communities to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. Including support for parents and families, focussing on the crucial first 1000 days and early years and to review delivery of the All Wales Obesity Pathway.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Too many people in Wales are overweight or obese.

“Our high rates of overweight four to five year olds is a matter of national concern. This government is not prepared to let a poor diet or physical inactivity be defining features in the lives of our children and young people.

“We know that many of us want to eat healthier or do more exercise. However, fitting this into our busy lives can appear to be an overwhelming challenge. Creating an environment where it is normal and easy for us all to eat well and be physically active can make a significant difference and nudge us to change our daily routines.

“We want to encourage people to manage their own health and wellbeing, to lose weight and to be active. The long term sustainability of the NHS is at stake.

“We want people in Wales to have long, healthy happy lives. Being a healthy weight is a central part of achieving that goal.

“Tackling the root causes of why people become overweight is complex; it will require intervention at every level. We are under no illusion – there is no quick fix or easy solution to this problem. The proposals outlined today are based on the best evidence available of what could work to turn the tide on obesity.

“This is an issue we simply cannot ignore, it is the greatest public health challenge facing our generation and I urge people to engage fully with this consultation.”