

High water marks for Wales as annual bathing water statistics released

All 104 designated bathing waters in Wales met the European classifications for bathing water quality this year, with none being classified as 'poor'. 78 bathing waters achieved the highest classification of 'excellent', 21 were classified as 'good' and five as 'sufficient'. Six bathing water classifications have gone up and six have gone down, following the 2018 season.

Bathing waters are sampled regularly during the official bathing season, between 15 May to 30 September, and classified as either excellent, good, sufficient or poor. The classifications go on display at the start of the following year's bathing season.

Cemaes, in Anglesey, has now achieved sufficient bathing water quality, following two years of poor classification. Natural Resources Wales has undertaken considerable work in the area to ensure compliance with the standards.

Wales has more Blue Flag beaches per mile than anywhere else in Britain and Visit Wales is investing in infrastructure to help beaches attain Blue Flag status. Visit Wales is also supporting projects with organisations like Keep Wales Tidy and Surfers Against Sewage to promote responsible, sustainable tourism and the need to protect coastal assets and abundant wildlife.

The Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

"2018 is Wales' Year of the Sea, so I'm pleased to see all bathing waters in Wales meeting the water quality standards, with most areas again achieving an 'excellent' rating. This is an achievement worth celebrating.

"While some bathing waters have improved, it's disappointing to see some classifications fall. Natural Resources Wales will be working with Dŵr Cymru, local authorities and other stakeholders to identify and address any problems with water quality locally.

"Wales has a beautiful coastline and I want to see our bathing waters continue to meet the highest standards we've become accustomed to."

Natalie Hall, Water Manager for Natural Resources Wales, said:

"Protecting the environment is our main purpose which is why we work day in and day out to help make Wales as clean and as safe as possible for people and wildlife.

“We’re especially pleased with the quality improvement in places like Cemaes Bay and Wisemans Bridge that have been real focus areas for us over the years.

“Our hard work will continue, in partnership with others, so that bathing water standards are maintained and continue to improve where necessary.”

[Finance Secretary sets out marine energy ambition for Wales](#)

He will deliver the keynote speech at the Ocean Energy Europe conference and exhibition at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, where the Welsh Government will host a trade stand and 16 Welsh companies will be represented.

Ocean Energy Europe is one of the most important events on Europe’s ocean energy calendar, providing companies with the opportunity to raise their profile and network with key decision-makers, investors and influential entrepreneurs in the sector.

The Finance Secretary said:

“We are striving to make Wales a leading player in the marine energy field with energy generated from waves and the tide playing an important role in our ambitions for a low-carbon economy.

“Our aim is to generate 70% of our energy from renewable sources by 2030. The marine energy sector can play a significant role in helping Wales achieve this target and will be closely aligned with Wales’ First National Marine Plan.

“Over the last 18 months, the EU and Welsh Government has invested in a number of marine energy projects, including Morlais Consent, the Marine Energy Test Area in Pembrokeshire, Bombora Wavepower and Marine Power Systems, as well as ongoing support for Marine Energy Wales.

“All this underpins our ambition to build a thriving industry generating well-paid jobs and business opportunities in Wales. We want to continue to attract developers from around the world to our Welsh waters.”

The Finance Secretary will make his keynote speech at 9am in the main

auditorium of Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

[North Wales project to transform care for people with learning disabilities](#)

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, today (Tuesday, 30 October) announced £1.69m funding over two years for the North Wales Regional Partnership Board to develop new ways of working that could eventually be used across Wales.

The funding comes from the £100m Transformation Fund to support key actions from the Welsh Government's long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

Through better integrating health, social care and the third sector, the project aims to help people with learning disabilities live more independently and get the care they need to closer to home.

The project aims to achieve this in a number of different ways:

- Better integration of health and social services and less duplication of record systems so people only have to 'say it once'.
- Workforce development to create better awareness of disability issues among the wider public sector workforce. This approach should reduce the demand for specialist learning disability services in future.
- Uses of assistive technology to help people with learning disabilities become more independent in their everyday lives.
- Community and culture change. Increasing number of people employed in paid work, accessing training, and volunteering. More effective regional approaches for social prescribing.

Mr Gething said:

"Our long term plan for health and social care, sets out how we will transform the way we deliver care to ensure it is sustainable in the future.

This will require better integration of health and social services to reduce reliance on hospitals and deliver care closer to home. The Transformation Fund will be used to fund a small number of projects which have the most impact in developing and delivering new models of care, and which have potential to scale up so they can be used across Wales.

This project aims to deliver better integration of services for people with learning disabilities to help them live more

independent lives. I hope many of these new ideas can then be rolled out across Wales to provide a better service for patients and reduce the pressure on certain parts of the NHS and social services.”

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Chairman of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board, said:

“We are delighted to hear that our bid for funding has been successful. We have a big ambition in North Wales to improve health and social care, with a clear focus on putting people first and working our services around the needs of residents.

“In a region such as ours, sharing resources, experiences and skills is vital. We all have a common goal and there is a commitment from all organisations to work towards making this dream become reality. Transforming services around learning disabilities has been identified as one of our key areas of work over the coming years and we look forward to using this funding to strengthen and enhance our current quality services to make them even better.”

[£1.4m investment in Colwyn Bay town centre](#)

The funding will be used to create a commercial property investment scheme to bring vacant commercial space back to use and revitalise existing shop fronts in the town.

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans announced £870,000 of Welsh Government investment to support the scheme. £700,000 of this has been allocated as part of the Welsh Government’s £160m Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) programme. A further £170,000 of Town Centre Loan funding from Welsh Government will be made available to businesses via the local authority. The remainder of the funding for the scheme will be provided by the local authority and private investment.

Rebecca Evans said:

“As our town centres change, this investment will help businesses in Colwyn Bay to repair and refurbish buildings to make the high street a more attractive place. Importantly it will also target empty properties and spaces that could be transformed into thriving new shops or businesses.

“There is a real demand for good quality retail and commercial space to help attract businesses to the area and to help local businesses grow and thrive. I believe this investment will build on previous Welsh Government investment in the town and be a springboard for business success in Colwyn Bay.”

Cllr Louise Emery, Conwy County Borough Council’s Cabinet Member for Economic Development said:

“I’m delighted that Colwyn Bay has been awarded this funding. It’s a great opportunity for the town to continue to benefit from investment in its regeneration.”

The Welsh Government’s £20m Town Centre Loans Fund is helping to bring underused sites in town centres back to life. The fund brings empty and derelict sites in town centres back into use and supports activities that increase footfall on high streets. Once loans are repaid, the money is used again to fund new loans.

[Welsh Government commits funding to tackle Craig Y Don contamination](#)

Contaminated land has been found to affect 16 homes on the estate. Investigations earlier this year found high concentrations of arsenic and lead underneath the properties which could pose a risk to human health.

The Welsh Government has committed to fund 60% of the costs, with Anglesey County Council covering the remainder.

Craig Y Don was built in the 1950s on the former Gwaith Hills metal smelter works, which operated between 1786 and 1897, before becoming a chemical works. The estate includes 112 residential properties, both private dwellings and homes owned and leased to tenants by Anglesey County Council.

The Welsh Government funding will ensure residents do not need to pay for the work themselves, while the local authority will not need to pay the total costs from its existing budgets.

The Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

“The remediation costs for contaminated land usually fall to the owner or occupier of the property, in cases where the original polluter no longer exists.

“However, given a number of distinguishing factors at Craig Y Don, we felt it appropriate for the Welsh Government to step in to provide financial support for the remediation work.

“Contaminated land mostly affects former industrial, inner city and dockland areas. I’m pleased to announce this funding, which will help return the land to being a safe and clean place for residents, the community and for future generations.”

Councillor Llinos Medi, Leader of the Isle of Anglesey County Council, said:

“I’m grateful to colleagues in Welsh Government for their financial support in ensuring these important works go ahead.

“This has been a challenging period for the residents of Craig y Don, but they have always been our first priority.

“Through working in partnership we now have the funding needed to help all of them, be they tenants or homeowners.”