

Statement from Hannah Blythyn on flooding over the weekend

“My sympathies go out to all those who have been flooded over this weekend and in particular to the family of the young man who lost his life as a result of a landslide.

“I am grateful to the emergency services, local authorities, water companies and Natural Resources Wales who worked around the clock this weekend to support those who have been flooded, close roads, evacuate properties and are now working with affected communities to support the recovery.

“Over this Government term we will provide over £350 million investment across Wales to Local Authorities and Natural Resources Wales to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

“The full impacts of this flooding are still coming in, however we are also hearing reports of where our recent investment has prevented or reduced the impact of flooding. I will make a statement to the Assembly tomorrow to provide the latest update on the situation across Wales.

“Following any major flood event, local authorities are required to investigate the cause and impacts and publish this report. Local authorities will work with other Risk Management Authorities, including NRW and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water, to understand the full extent of the flood impacts and what lessons can be learnt.”

Additional contiguous testing in Intermediate TB Area North to be implemented

Last year there was a 75% increase in TB incidents on the previous 12 months in the Intermediate TB Area North.

In response to the spike, from 13 November 2018 there will be an extension in the use of additional contiguous testing around [Officially TB Free Withdrawn \(OTFW\)](#) breakdown herds in the Intermediate TB Area North.

This additional testing in herds with increased risk of becoming infected will result in a doubling of the effort to identify the disease in the area, adding a further two contiguous tests at six months intervals into the regime.

To support farmers in the Intermediate TB Area North during this difficult time, there will be an introduction of Government subsidised “keep it out” veterinary visits for herds which have tested negative to contiguous testing.

These visits will be delivered by the farmer’s own local practice via specially trained vets and will look at the local disease picture, biosecurity and the farms cattle trading policy and informed purchasing, mirroring the approach used in TB breakdown Cymorth TB visits.

Announcing the changes, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“The introduction of TB Areas as part of our refreshed TB Eradication Programme, allows us to introduce measures quickly, flexibly and at a local level to drive down the disease and react to any localised increases in disease.

“It is clear from the unprecedented increase in new incidents over the last year in the Intermediate TB Area North that this is not a short term trend and the rate will not reduce unaided. That is why I am today announcing that we will redouble our efforts and introduce additional contiguous testing in the Area. On top of this we will support farmers during this difficult time by providing ‘keep it out’ visits for herds which have tested negative.

“We have made good progress toward achieving our goal of eradicating bovine TB from Wales. The introduction of additional contiguous testing within the Intermediate TB Area North will put us in a stronger position to ensure we continue to make progress towards a TB Free Wales.”

National Adoption Week: Children’s Minister encourages more people to consider adopting children

To mark the start of National Adoption Week (15th – 21st October), the Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies has paid tribute to the many

adoptive parents across Wales who have made new families with some of the most vulnerable children in the country, and who are supporting them to fulfill their potential in loving homes.

In Wales:

- More than 300 children found new families in 2017/18 and for one third, this was as part of a sibling group
- 212 adopters were approved in 2017/18.

However we need more people to come forward in Wales. Currently:

- There were 314 children waiting to be adopted at the end of June 2018
- 63 children whose details are on the Wales Adoption Register have been waiting more than 12 months for a permanent home.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“To mark National Adoption Week, I want to pay tribute to families right across Wales who have adopted a child or a group of children, and all those professionals who support them through the journey. Their dedication and commitment is helping give some of our most vulnerable children a new start.

“I also want to encourage anyone who has thought about adopting to contact their local adoption agency or the National Adoption Service for advice about the process. By adopting a child, you’re going to help make a real, transformative difference to their life. As a father myself, there’s nothing more rewarding than seeing a child flourish and develop.

“In Wales, we’ve made significant progress in supporting people to adopt children. But we know there’s much more we need to do to provide the right level of support. I’m committed to ensuring we do what we can to put that support in place.”

The Welsh Government, through its Knowledge Transfer Partnership Scheme is helping St David’s Children’s Society (a partner in the National Adoption Service) to deliver an innovative package of support – known as ‘Adopting Together’ – which is being launched today. The first scheme of its kind, it offers tailored support to adopters through assessment, enhanced training and therapeutic interventions, pre and post placement with a new family.

In addition, the Welsh Government has commissioned further work with Cardiff University that builds on the Adoption Cohort Study. This is a unique study of almost 400 children adopted from care which evidences a level of detail about early adversity, family relationship quality, child psychological health. This next phase will directly engage with a cohort of families to explore their experiences of informal and formal sources of adoption support in Wales, including child psychological well-being and children’s experiences at school (including additional learning needs).

[EU Emissions Trading System \(EU ETS\)](#)

The Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths and Environment Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, in a joint letter to the Chancellor and Minister of State for Energy & Clean Growth, call for the UK Government to initiate immediate Ministerial discussions to determine successor long-term arrangements in line with the devolution settlements.

Under proposals laid out in their latest tranche of 'no deal' Technical Notices, the UK Government has proposed to replace the long-standing emissions trading arrangements – reached by agreement between all four administrations – with a UK wide carbon tax, without discussion with the Devolved Administrations at a Ministerial level.

[First full day of new Wales and borders rail service contract starts today](#)

This is the message from First Minister, Carwyn Jones who will be on Pontypridd station today to mark the first full day of the new Wales and Borders rail services.

At the launch, which sees the 15-year relationship with Arriva Trains Wales come to an end, the First Minister will talk of the historic and economic significance of the new contract.

He will say:

“This is an important moment for rail in Wales – indeed for devolution itself.

Led by Transport for Wales with our partners KeolisAmey this will be the very first 'made in Wales' rail service, designed and delivered by the Welsh Government

The opportunity to re-design and re-purpose our railway network in Wales is a once in a generation opportunity and I am confident that by 2033 it can be the best passenger rail service in the UK.

The chance to develop an integrated transport system that encourages economic growth and better supports our public services is supported across all political parties, and the opportunities to develop Metro systems here in South East Wales, in the North East and around Swansea Bay are drawing attention from across the globe.”

He will also pay tribute to the people on the front line:

“It is important to understand that our bold ambitions will take time to bring to fruition and won’t be achieved overnight.

However, when I talk to the drivers, the guards, the maintenance crews or ticket hall staff across Wales I’m always struck by their enthusiasm and their belief in what our rail network can be in Wales.

We are lucky to have so many people, who come to work for a service every day, genuinely wanting to make it better – and who see in it the potential for growth.

We need to harness their ideas and make our railway the envy of the world.”

Speaking at an earlier event in North Wales, Transport Secretary Ken Skates outlined some of the many improvements passengers can expect to see in the next few weeks, months and years:

“With investment totalling almost £5bn over the next decade and a half, our network will be transformed. We have committed £800m to deliver new trains across the network, which by 2023 will see 95% of rail journeys made on new trains. A further £194m will be put to improving the passenger experiences at our stations across the Wales and Borders network.

There is £738m earmarked to modernise the central metro lines, support the next phase of Metro and run more trains every hour. Transport for Wales rail services will offer 600 new jobs and 450 apprenticeships over the 15 year lifespan of the contract.

Passengers will enjoy the benefits of the introduction of smart ticketing across the network, and through the extension of free travel to under-11s with half-price fares for 16 to 18 year olds, they will see economic improvements also.

This is an exciting time for Wales, and we wish Transport for Wales every success in bringing about these transformational changes on our behalf.”

James Price, Chief Executive, Transport for Wales added:

“Transport for Wales has innovative plans to revolutionise transport across Wales and ambitions to create a rail service that puts customers first. Taking over the running of the Wales and Borders rail service is an important first step on an exciting journey of transformation that will also see the creation of the South Wales Metro.”

Kevin Thomas, Chief Executive, Transport for Wales Rail Services commented:

“Our customers, the people of Wales and border areas, deserve a rail service that matches Welsh Government’s vision. We know people have high expectations of the transformation that will happen in the coming years. We’re determined to win their trust and develop a rail service that exceeds their expectations.”