

# £21m investment in research to increase opportunities for patients and develop the treatments of tomorrow

The Centre is an example of the strategic investment by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, which provides a focal point for researchers and delivery staff to participate in ground breaking research. The centre has also ensured that patients can receive treatment closer to home.

The Health Secretary made the announcement during a visit to the Clinical Research and Innovation Centre at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

An example of research being led in Wales includes the PARAMEDIC 2 trial which looked at whether the drug adrenaline is helpful or harmful in the treatment of a cardiac arrest that occurs outside a hospital. This research will help to improve the treatment of people who have a cardiac arrest not just in Wales but across the world and in turn, maximises Wales' international competitiveness in research.

Last year, over 17,000 patients participated in almost 480 clinical research studies across a broad range of disease areas – including dementia, stroke, cancer, diabetes and mental health, all of which will help to maximise the international competitiveness of Wales as a destination for research.

The funding demonstrates the continued investment being made by Welsh Government to ensure every Health Board and Trust across Wales is well placed to support a robust environment for research, and ensure patients in Wales have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials and global drug discovery programmes.

Announcing the funding, Vaughan Gething said:

“We recognise the significant role research plays in improving health outcomes, which is why the Welsh Government has committed more than £21m as part of a package of support to strengthen the research environment in the Welsh NHS.

“Facilities such as the Clinical Research and Innovation Centre at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board play an important role in increasing research opportunities for patients to join national and international high quality research studies within their locality.

“There is a growing body of evidence that research environments lead to improved outcomes for patients. We need to support and encourage patients, carers and staff to fully embrace research and make it a core activity within the NHS.

“We want to make Wales one of the most attractive places in the

World for academic and clinical research. As part of this package, we are continuing to invest significantly in Health and Social Care research which will help attract the best talent to Wales”.

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton said:

“When researchers look at whether a treatment works, they observe many more patients than a single doctor will ever treat. Last year more than 17,000 people in Wales chose to take part in clinical research. This funding is the crucial first step towards the evidence we need in order to answer the questions we have about a wide range of medical conditions.

“We also know that patients benefit from clinical research, which is why involvement in a research study is often welcome as it can offer them a new, sometimes breakthrough, treatment option. But it’s worth remembering that you don’t have to be unwell to take part and make a difference. One of the easiest ways to get involved in health and social care research is by registering for HealthWise Wales.”

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## [Kirsty Williams raises the issue of FGM with schools](#)

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams has written to all schools in Wales to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Friday 07 July 2017

All head teachers are being reminded of the issue and their responsibilities to help ensure that children and young people remain safe while they are in school.

The prevalence of FGM is difficult to estimate because of the hidden nature of the crime. However, there are an estimated 137,000 women and girls affected by FGM in Wales and England.

The Education Secretary is highlighting the important role schools can play in identifying potential victims and safeguarding them from FGM. Statutory guidance, [Keeping learners safe](#) is in place to support schools and education services in ensuring that child welfare concerns are acted upon appropriately and effectively, involving investigating agencies where necessary.

The Welsh Government has also produced a range of materials and guidance

available on Hwb to support schools in managing child protection issues.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I have written to schools to seek their assistance in helping eradicate this particularly abhorrent form of violence against women and girls. It is imperative we all recognise the warning signs of a child who might be at risk.

“Female Genital Mutilation is child abuse and a criminal offence. It cannot be justified as a cultural or religious practice and leaders of all main faiths have rightly spoken out against it.

“School and college staff must play a crucial role in safeguarding young people from abuse, which is why it is vital that they are alert to the signs of FGM and what action to take if they have concerns.

“Staff should also be aware that young girls may be taken abroad in summer holidays to undergo FGM, as procedures take up to four weeks to heal. The procedure may therefore be performed before a girl returns to school at the start of the autumn term. It is essential that staff are vigilant in looking for signs of FGM after the school holidays and report anything that may seem suspicious to the appropriate professional.

“ I want all of us to be more aware of this unacceptable abuse, so together we can put an end to FGM in Wales. ”

[July 2017](#)

M T W T F S S

[1](#) [2](#)

[3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

31

[<< Jun](#)

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[\*\*15 companies to showcase what Wales\*\*](#)

## has to offer in Far East

The 15 companies from across Wales will travel to the Far East, as part of a Welsh Government-led, trade mission to show what Wales has to offer to the world.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“Singapore is a leading global business hub with an open and trade driven economy and is actively growing trading relationship with Wales and the UK. Last year alone, the value of exports from Wales to Singapore was £74m and we are keen to build on this success.

“I am pleased that such a diverse range of Welsh businesses are participating in our latest export market visit, ranging from companies providing products and services for global shipping industries, through to businesses specialising in Welsh food products. It highlights the depth and breadth of Welsh expertise across the sectors – an offering which has proven very popular at similar past trade missions.

“This visit strengthens our commitment to sell Wales to the world and will provide an ideal platform for us to build on established links and discuss future export opportunities with a growing market.”

Symitech director Adrian Sutton said:

“This will be our second visit to Singapore and we hope to build on the relationships and contacts we have established and secure our first sales into the region on this forthcoming trip. The support and advice from the International Trade team at Welsh Government is second to none and as a business we are very grateful to be benefiting from this professional service – it’s a credit to Wales.”

Paul Sidebottom, business development manager for Russel IPM, said:

“We have been trading in Singapore in a small way for a number of years. With the assistance of Welsh Government it will allow more time in the market to generate that business. Russell IPM are one of the largest manufacturers of pheromone and glue-based products in Europe with business in the agricultural, food processing and pest control sectors. I am looking forward very much to visiting Singapore again and to some fruitful discussions.”

The companies will be showcasing their offering to the lucrative Singapore market at a business reception, hosted by Deputy British High Commissioner, Mr Jonathan Darby.

There will be further opportunities to maximise potential business opportunities through in-market events and meetings, arranged by Welsh Government, the British High Commission and British Singapore Chamber of Commerce.

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## Smiles all 'round: children's oral health improving in Wales

The report by Public Health Wales is the latest dental survey of five-year-old children in Wales, undertaken by the Welsh Oral Health Information Unit, as part of the NHS dental survey programme.

The report shows:

- a reduction in the proportion of children with decay between 2007-08 (47.6%) and 2015-16 (34.2%). This represents continuing improvement of the proportion of children who have no obvious decay experience by age 5. In 2015-16 in a class of 30 children 20 will have no decay experience. This compares with 16 decay free in a class of 30 children in 2007-08;
- the all-Wales mean decay experience (decayed missing and filled teeth – dmft) has also continued to reduce from 1.98 in 2007-08 to 1.22 in 2015-16. This represents a 38% reduction in mean dmft scores in 9 years.
- in 2007-08, 14 children out of a class size of 30 would have decay experience, with an average of 4.2 teeth affected. By 2015-16 this had fallen to 10 children out of a class of 30, with an average of 3.6 decayed teeth;
- dental disease levels in children in Wales continue to improve across all social groups. In absolute terms, the most deprived quintile have seen the largest reduction in decay prevalence (by 15%) and mean dmft score (by 0.6). There is no evidence of widening inequalities.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m pleased to see the continued progress in improving children’s oral health. It’s clear that our Designed to Smile programme is making a real impact in improving the oral health of children across Wales but we know that we have to continue seeing these improvements.

“As a government, we are fully committed to tackling all forms of inequality So I’m particularly pleased to see that children from the most deprived backgrounds are seeing the biggest reduction in tooth decay.”

Chief Dental Officer for Wales, Dr Colette Bridgeman said:

“Although we’ve seen great improvements in tooth decay in school year 1 children over the last decade or so, there is scope for further improvement for the third of children still experiencing tooth decay.

“We know that dental decay starts early. Typically, half of the decay experienced at 5 years of age will be evident by age 3. Therefore, primary intervention will have most impact before the age of 3, so we are re-focussing Designed to Smile on the 0-5 age group, restating the overarching aim of the programme, to keep children decay free by the age of 5. This will help us deliver the further improvement we need.”

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## **“Better understanding the diseases of today will help us develop the personalised treatments of tomorrow” – Vaughan Gething**

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, has launched a new Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy, which is designed to ensure people across Wales have access to quicker, more accurate diagnosis by enabling clinicians to better understand a patient’s individual disease by analysing their genes. This will help clinicians develop targeted treatments for individuals, rather than provide treatment that’s designed for the population as a whole.

It also sets out plans to apply the latest techniques for improved disease prediction and gain a better understanding of disease outbreaks.

In addition, the strategy will develop research in genetics and genomics, grow knowledge and skills amongst the NHS and non-NHS workforce and build strategic partnerships in genomics for precision medicine.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“New genetic and genomic technologies are allowing us to develop a much more detailed understanding of the link between our genes and our health.

“The strategy I’m launching today has the potential to revolutionise medicine and public health; it marks a move away from reductionism and moves us towards a new era of precision medicine.

“It will enable patients across Wales to access this new technology and shorten their ‘diagnostic odyssey’. Our strategy is not just about providing new test results; it is also about the care and support that patients need in accessing these services and providing them with the information that they need to make the right decision for themselves and their condition, armed with the most accurate, up-to-date and considered information available.

“For instance, our understanding of the genetic basis of cancer now supports the provision of targeted therapies to patients. In lung cancer, four genetic markers have been identified and these allow clinicians to give the treatments most likely to stop the growth of tumours, shrink them and lengthen quality and duration of life.”

The Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy is underpinned by £6.8m Welsh Government funding and was developed by the genomics taskforce, which includes the Welsh Government, NHS Wales, the Third Sector and higher education institutions.