

ACE expansion plans – investment will treble manufacturing capacity and create jobs for unique Welsh firm

Backed by £50,000 from the Welsh Government's Growth and Prosperity Fund, the company is investing in new equipment that will treble manufacturing capacity and speed up production time to meet the growing UK wide demand for its services.

The £116,000 total investment will see staff numbers rise from 20 to 30 and also safeguard twelve jobs.

Ace Orthotics, trading as Ace Feet in Motion is based on Sanatorium Road and was established by Bob Cooper in 2001 to provide biomechanical gait analysis using state of the art dynamic pressure plates to help accurately assess movement through the foot and lower limb.

It provides specialist podiatric sports injury biomechanical services to the public and high profile sports associations including the WRU, Disability Sports Wales, Welsh Athletics, Welsh Netball and Cardiff City FC, as well as the NHS. It has also worked very closely with the regional Welsh rugby teams and several Premier League football clubs.

Ace's clinical service is supported by a manufacturing arm that designs and makes all forms of modular and bespoke functional insoles intended to correct an abnormal or irregular gait.

Its lab currently makes around 10,000 pairs of bespoke insoles every year, many manufactured utilising state of the art CAD CAM technology. However, 20% of which have to be made completely by hand as its machinery can currently only make insoles to a depth of 30mm. This investment in new machinery will allow the manufacture of insoles up to 66mm in depth.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Ace Orthotics provides a highly specialised and bespoke service and is the only business of its kind in Wales and I am delighted Welsh Government support will help it expand, create new jobs and win new business. The expansion is vital for its long term sustainable growth."

Thomas Cooper, Clinical Director at Ace, said:

"We have seen year on year growth and are experiencing growing demand throughout the UK for our products and need to invest to meet that demand. This investment is absolutely vital to take

advantage of these opportunities and will speed up production, cut costs and enable us to both produce more quality products and win new business.”

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James added:

“Ace Orthotics is a great example of how Wales’ thriving life sciences sector continues to go from strength to strength and I am pleased we have been able to support this company’s ambitious expansion plans in what is a very competitive and cutting-edge UK marketplace.”

In addition to providing specialist podiatry and sports injury biomechanical services Ace also has a specialist footwear centre which is open to the public selling specialist sports footwear and wider fitting comfort footwear.

It has developed its own modular insole range – Feet in Motion insoles (FiMs) as well as Paediatric FiMs which have become the insole of choice for clinicians working with children across the UK. Ace is currently exploring exporting this range across Europe and were part of an extremely successful Welsh Government Life Sciences Trade Mission to the Medica trade fair in Dusseldorf last November.

[First Minister marks the first year of Government](#)

The last 12 months has seen record levels of employment in Wales, with nearly 40,000 jobs supported by the Welsh Government and highest ever levels of inward investment; with nearly 100 new projects brought to Wales, worth at least £660 million to the economy.

With record levels of investment in the NHS, the past 12 months has seen the delivery of the £80m New Treatment Fund, an extra £55 million for social services and successful new campaigns to encourage doctors and nurses to train and work in Wales.

On education, the First Minister spoke of Wales’ generous student finance support package and major investments to reduce infant class sizes, raise school standards and support Wales’ most disadvantaged pupils.

Speaking from his office in Cardiff Bay, the First Minister said:

“The past 12 months have been an exceptional period in British –

and Welsh – politics. Yet, throughout this time, we have remained focused on delivering on the promises we made to the people of Wales.

“We will continue to work hard to deliver on our promises, and to fight for you and your communities. Together, we will build on the achievements of the past 12 months and continue to Take Wales Forward.”

[Rhodri Morgan 1939-2017](#)

“Wales hasn’t just lost a great politician, we’ve lost a real father figure. In very many ways Rhodri wasn’t like other politicians, and that is why people warmed to him, trusted him and felt like they knew him so well. He was funny, clever, engaging on almost any topic and absolutely passionate about all things Welsh.

“I owe him a great deal, just as we all do in Wales. He did so much to fight for, and then establish devolution in the hearts and minds of the public in our country. His bright confidence was infectious, and we can see much of Rhodri’s can-do attitude in our modern Wales. That first decade of self-governance, and making distinct choices for Wales will forever be associated with his leadership.

“He will be hugely missed, and my thoughts are with Julie and all the family at this sad time.”

[Vaughan Gething welcomes improving NHS performance](#)

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improved NHS performance across a range of measures, despite increasing demand for services across Wales.

The latest statistics show:

- over 80% of immediately life-threatening ambulance calls received a response within eight minutes, a record high since the introduction of the new clinical model
- the number of people experiencing delayed transfers of care from hospital remains close to record lows, despite the increasing demand for health and social care services
- the number of people waiting over eight weeks for a diagnostic test is the lowest for six years
- A higher percentage of patients spent less than four hours in all emergency care facilities from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge and 922 fewer patients waited more than 12 hours compared to the previous month
- the end of March saw the best performance against the 26 week and 36 week referral to treatment targets for three years
- performance against the Urgent Suspected Cancer target is the best since November 2014
- demand for NHS services is increasing across every single activity and performance measure monitored by Statistics for Wales

Vaughan Gething said:

“We are seeing improvements across a range of performance measures in the NHS in Wales. This is happening as more and more people are seeking access to NHS treatment covered by these measures.

“Investment in the NHS is the highest it has ever been. This year we have invested an additional £240m in the Welsh NHS to meet the ongoing growth in demand and costs of services.

“I want to thank NHS staff for their efforts. We will continue to work to improve performance for patients but these statistics paint a very positive picture for Wales.”

New housing development made possible thanks to Welsh Government funding

Cwrt Yr Eglwys in Canton was developed by Taff Housing Association in partnership with Cardiff City Council and Pendragon Construction.

The scheme consists of 16 one bedroom flats and four, three bedroom houses.

The Cabinet Secretary said the success of the scheme was a result of good partnership working.

Carl Sargeant said:

“I am always keen to visit schemes which have received Welsh Government funding, to see for myself the benefits our investment can bring to communities.

“I am pleased we have been able to support Taff Housing Association in this development with funding from the Social Housing Grant programme and the Smaller Properties programme. In 2016/17 we made available £4.2 million from the Social Housing Grant programme to support the delivery of affordable housing schemes in Cardiff which are either on site or about to start on site.

“Increasing the supply of homes in Wales remains a top priority for the Welsh Government, which is why we have pledged to deliver 20,000 affordable homes during this administration. I am committed to working with developers, housing associations and local authorities to bring forward schemes which will increase the supply of good quality affordable homes.”