

Funding boost announced for South Pembrokeshire Demonstration Zone – the largest wave energy seabed lease in the world.

Speaking at today's Marine Energy Wales conference in Swansea, Economy Secretary Ken Skates said £324,000 of EU and Welsh Government funding has been approved for a technical and commercial feasibility study – a vital next step for developing the zone.

The news comes just a week after the £1.3b Swansea Bay City Region deal was signed which includes a £76m project to establish a marine energy centre around the Port of Milford Haven for marine energy development, fabrication, testing and deployment.

Leased from the Crown Estate, the South Pembrokeshire Demonstration Zone will enable technology developers to deploy and test multi-device arrays of wave energy converters, to generate up to 100MW of green electricity from the sea and act as a catalyst in the establishment of a centre for marine energy production in Wales.

The two phased study will be led by Wave Hub Ltd who are managing the site. The Zone, one of two in Wales, covers 90 sq km area of seabed located between 13-21 kms off the South Pembrokeshire coast near the Milford Haven Waterway.

Ken Skates said:

“The marine sector presents a very real and exciting opportunity for the Welsh economy and developers from around the world are showing an active interest in developing projects in Welsh waters. They recognise that Wales has one of the best marine energy resources and support structures to be found anywhere and the demonstrator zones will play a key role in attracting development and investment.

“The funding boost announced today also coincides with the latest report on the sector in Wales that has seen direct investment in marine energy in Wales increase from £45.5m in 2015 to £68.3m in 2017.

“To date €100m of EU funding has been secured to develop marine energy in Wales and increase the number of wave and tidal energy devices being tested in Welsh waters.

“This growing sector is already supporting supply chain diversity, creating low carbon jobs closer to home and playing a key role in creating sustainable regional economies in Pembrokeshire and

Anglesey that are based on developing their own prioritised and specialised sectors.”

He told delegates that Wales’ profile as a location for marine energy has increased dramatically in recent years with Marine Energy Wales hosting visits to the Port of Milford Haven from world leading marine energy companies from the USA, Singapore, Australia, Sweden, Holland, Ireland, Italy and Scotland.

He concluded by saying that supporting the development of more renewable energy projects, including tidal lagoons, is a Welsh Government priority.

[‘The Daily Mile’ officially launched in Wales](#)

Team GB weightlifter Michaela Breeze and sprinter Christian Malcolm, adventurer Tori James, Public Health Minister Rebecca Evans, founder of The Daily Mile Elaine Wyllie, and head of physical activity at Public Health Wales Robert Sage, will officially launch the initiative at Pontllanfraith Primary School in Blackwood .

The Caerphilly primary school is the latest school in Wales to sign up to The Daily Mile – an easy, fun way to improve children’s health and wellbeing. The initiative is the brain-child of Elaine Wyllie, former headteacher of a large Scottish primary school in Stirling. The initiative sees primary-aged children run, walk or jog for 15 minutes every day in school. It is inclusive, simple and free, with no equipment or set up required.

Minister Rebecca Evans said:

“The Daily Mile is an easy and fun way for children to improve their health and wellbeing. It is a fantastic way to support young people to get the recommended amount of physical activity each day, and will help them grow up healthier and happier. Well done to everyone at Pontllanfraith Primary for getting involved! I encourage schools across Wales to follow hot on their heels and sign up to The Daily Mile.”

Elaine Wyllie, former headteacher and founder of The Daily Mile, commented:

“I’m delighted to see The Daily Mile being launched today in Wales and congratulate the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales in recognising the long lasting benefits that this simple, effective

and free initiative will bring to the children of Wales – better physical, emotional, social and mental health now and into their future lives.”

Christian Malcolm, World and European 200m Medallist, said:

“I’m thrilled to be joining the staff and students of Pontllanfraith Primary School for the national launch of The Daily Mile Cymru. It’s such a simple yet effective initiative – within a month the children are much fitter, and feel happier and more confident in themselves. By instilling these healthy habits at a young age, we’re helping our children to live full and healthy lives.”

Michaela Breeze, Commonwealth Games weightlifting gold Medallist, said:

“Getting children active at a young age is key to setting them up for a healthy lifestyle. The Daily Mile is so simple. There’s no set up, tidy up, or equipment required. Children simply run outside in the fresh air. It’s fully inclusive; every child, whatever their circumstances, age or ability, succeeds at The Daily Mile.”

Angela Talor, Headteacher of Pontllanfraith Primary, said:

“Some of our year 6 pupils took part in Young Ambassador training with the local Sports Development team, and came back really enthusiastic about The Daily Mile. We discussed it with staff and they were keen to do it too. The Young Ambassadors have really got involved in organising and planning for our Daily Mile – we’ve had a few practices to work out how to make it work. We’ve decided that we’re going to be out running or walking every day during afternoon play.”

Robert Sage, Physical Activity lead for Public Health Wales, said:

“We are delighted to have helped bring The Daily Mile to Wales and look forward to encouraging all schools in Wales to adopt The Daily Mile as one of their Healthy School actions. The best way to establish and maintain an active life is to make it part of your day to day routine. The Daily Mile is an excellent way for children to develop good habits that can last throughout life.”

Record breaking numbers of NHS staff in Wales welcomed by Vaughan Gething

Stats show:

- The number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) directly employed NHS staff in September 2016 was 76,288. This was up 3.2 per cent (2,330) from 2015 and at a record high.
- The number of FTE hospital consultants was 2,369 in 2016, up 2.9 per cent (66) from 2015 and at a record high.
- The number of FTE qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors was 22,479 in 2016, up 1.3 per cent (286) from 2015.
- The number of FTE ambulance staff was 2,045 in 2016, up 0.7 per cent (14) from 2015 and at a record high.
- The number of FTE scientific, therapeutic and technical staff was 12,429 in 2016, up 3.8 per cent (457) from 2015 and at a record high.

Statistics on the numbers of GPs in Wales have also been published today showing that there were 2,009 GP practitioners in Wales in 2016, an increase since 2015 and up 127 or 7% since 2006.

In 2016, the total GP workforce stood at 2,944, which includes GPs, GP registrars, GP retainers and GP locums. This compares to 2,887 in 2015.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“The record numbers of staff we’re seeing in our NHS in Wales is clearly good news and demonstrates the strength of our commitment to the NHS. More qualified nurses; more hospital consultants; more ambulance staff and more GPs is evidence of a government that is investing in the future of its health service.

“We recently announced a significant package to support a range of education and training programmes for healthcare professionals in Wales. The good progress we’ve made around staffing, announced today, is a positive but we recognise there’s always more work to be done.

“We have achieved this increase in NHS staff across a wide range of professions in the teeth of continual UK Government cuts to the Welsh Government budget. Even in the most difficult financial position in the history of devolution we continue to invest in our NHS.”

Children's Secretary committed to national approach to advocacy services

Ahead of a debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into advocacy provision, the Cabinet Secretary said he wanted to ensure that all eligible children from across Wales can access an independent professional advocate. He added that this will be implemented by all Local Authorities by June 2017.

Carl Sargeant said:

"Statutory independent advocacy services are crucial in protecting and safeguarding some of the most vulnerable children in Wales.

"We can't have children in one area getting a different service to others, so we absolutely have to have every local authority signed up. I have committed to providing additional funding to meet the cost of this national approach.

"Local Authorities have confirmed their support and we are monitoring progress to ensure implementation by June 2017."

First Minister Carwyn Jones – "We're committed to a sensible Brexit that secures Wales' future"

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"Today signals the end of months of speculation and the start of a critical period of negotiation which will shape our future relationship with Europe and the wider world.

"We remain committed to the priorities set out in our white paper, Securing Wales' Future, which puts full and unfettered access to the Single Market first and foremost.

"Our white paper sets out a sensible negotiating position for the

UK as a whole, and has already influenced the UK Government's approach in important areas including maintaining full access to the Single Market, upholding existing employment rights and the importance of transitional arrangements.

"While we have often been frustrated with the processes by which we've arrived at this point today, we must now concentrate on the job in hand. We stand ready to work constructively with the UK Government to secure a deal which protects Welsh businesses, our economy and the future prosperity of Wales.

"If, as negotiations progress, we believe our priorities are not being championed or our representation falls below a level we find acceptable, we will not remain silent. We will not allow Wales to be side-lined – we will be outspoken and our voice will be heard.

"As a leader of a country which voted to leave the EU, we are wholly focused on securing Wales' future. We will step up to the plate and do all we can to deliver the best possible outcome for Wales."