

[Mark Drakeford announces additional £20m for social care in 2017-18](#)

The extra funding announced today is on top of the £25m for social care provided to local authorities through the Revenue Support Grant and £10m to help meet workforce cost pressures in the final 2017-18 Budget.

It brings the additional investment for social care to £55m in 2017-18, which is in line with the extra investment made in social care in England.

Announcing the funding today, Professor Drakeford said:

“This announcement demonstrates the importance that we attach to our social care sector.

“Despite the cuts we have seen to our budget, we have continued to prioritise funding for social care and taken specific measures to support the sustainability of the social care sector, including investing £60m through the Intermediate Care Fund to support the integration of health and social care.

“The extra £20m announced today provides an important boost and brings our total additional investment in social services to £55m in 2017-18.”

Minister for Social Services and Public Health Rebecca Evans added:

“The social care sector is of national strategic importance to the Welsh Government.

“When combined, this £55m of funding shows that once again Wales is leading the way when it comes to ensuring that social care is properly financed and resourced.”

[Health Secretary connects with NHS Wales staff](#)

Health Service employees in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan will be first in Wales to get an opportunity to ask Mr Gething questions about the health service at a Cabinet Connect event.

The first staff Q&A session will be held at University of Wales Hospital, Cardiff, and invitations have been sent to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Public Health Wales and Wales Ambulance Service staff in the area.

Mr Gething said:

“I have had the great pleasure to meet many frontline health employees during visits across Wales and I wanted to build on those discussions through Cabinet Connect events.

“I want to give frontline staff the opportunity to meet me, ask me questions and discuss the issues in the health service that are important to them.”

Cabinet Connect builds on the success of the Carwyn Connect events, which the First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones has used to meet and get the views of people across Wales.

Increase in funding to help Wales' most disadvantaged pupils – Kirsty Williams

The Cabinet Secretary has also announced that the Pupil Deprivation Grant will be renamed the Pupil Development Grant (PDG).

The Welsh Government is to invest over £90m through the Pupil Development Grant over the next financial year to help disadvantaged pupils in Welsh schools.

Extending the PDG was a key part of the progressive agreement between the First Minister and Kirsty Williams.

The Education Secretary has revealed significant expansions to the programme, from the amount allocated to the youngest pupils, to extending the funding to pupils not educated at school, to providing more support to children who are looked after by their local authority.

The changes, which come into affect in April, include:

- Doubling the grant to £600 per eligible child in nursery and reception classes.
- Extending support to all three year old looked after children. The funding can also be used to support previously looked after children who have been adopted.

- Extending the support to pupils whose education happens outside a school setting. Currently only those from pupil referral units received the support.

Kirsty Williams said:

“It remains our national mission that every child has the opportunity to succeed.

“I am pleased that this grant is having a significant impact in breaking the link between poverty and attainment that has dogged our education system. However, there is more to do, which is why we are extending the grant to ensure every child has a fair start in life.

“I am also announcing a small but significant change in the name of the grant. Not only does this reflect the excellent practice that already exists across Wales, but this more positive name will better emphasise learner progression alongside reducing the attainment gap.”

Extra £7 million for innovative all-Wales autism service

Today’s announcement brings the total amount of funding allocated to supporting autism services in Wales to £13 million up to 2021.

Wales is the first part of the UK to create a national service to provide lifetime support to children and adults with autism, and their families. The innovative service, which will be rolled out across the country by 2018, will provide new adult diagnostic services; support for families and carers; help with transition from child to adult provision and training for professionals.

The additional £7 million funding announced over four years (2017/18 – 2020/21) will ensure all regions in Wales are able to provide consistent, high quality, and sustainable autism support.

Minister for Social Service and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, said:

“Wales has long been a leader in providing support for people with autism and their families, publishing our first action plan back in 2008. The National Integrated Autism Service is another important step forward. It will help ensure people receive consistent services and get the right support, at the right time, wherever

they live in Wales.

“The additional funding I have announced today, at the start of National Autism Week, demonstrates our continued commitment to improving autism services. I am confident that the four year funding will enable regions to deliver sustainable support to families.”

The funding will also help deliver the Welsh Government’s Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan. This includes a commitment to developing improved autism resources, such as the new scheme developed by the WLGA, “Can you see me?” which is to be rolled out in the coming months.

The initiative promotes understanding and acceptance of autism within communities in Wales. It is launched today with a video showing support from sporting stars from Wales’ national football and rugby squads.

Leaflets and posters for outlets such as shops, banks, hairdressers and cinemas as well as dentists and GPs have been created to support interactions with people with autism. People with autism can also choose whether they would like to make others aware of their autism by wearing a wristband or showing a card (which will also be available for mobile phones).

Steve Thomas CBE, Chief Executive of the WLGA, said:

“This scheme, which has been led by the National ASD Development Team within the WLGA, will be a significant step in terms of recognising the needs of individuals with ASD across communities in Wales. I am delighted that local authorities will take this forward and play a key role in promoting it. The WLGA warmly welcome the extra funding that has been announced by the Minister, which will help us deepen our work with individuals with ASD, their family and carers, and professionals working with children and adults with ASD.”

[Carwyn Connect heads to Barry](#)

The Carwyn Connect event will give local people the opportunity to meet the First Minister and ask him questions on any issues which affect them or their local community.

The session will take place between 6pm and 7.30pm at the Memo Arts Centre [Gladstone Road, Barry, CF62 8NA].

People are encouraged to register their interest in attending the free events

online at the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cyfarfod-carwyn-carwyn-connect-tickets-29821069622>

Questions can be asked in a number of ways – they can be submitted when people arrive at the venue when doors open at 5.30pm; in advance via email on cabinetcommunications@wales.gsi.gov.uk or via Twitter using @fmwales with the hashtag #carwynconnect.

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

“Over the past year, I have travelled across the country to hear the views of local communities and answer the burning questions of the people of Wales.

“I would like to see as many people as possible at the event in Barry on 3 April, so if you have a question for me, want to raise issues affecting your community or have a great idea to make your home town a better place to live, come along to the event.

“We always discuss a wide variety of topics at these events, with questions about very local issues, to discussions about broad Government policy.

“This is your chance to meet and speak with me in person. I’m really looking forward to meeting you all.”