

Green light for highly successful blue light model

The decision comes off the back of a positive independent evaluation of the model commissioned by the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee (EASC).

The clinical response model, announced in summer 2015, moves away from historic time-based targets for all but the most immediately life-threatening or 'Red' calls. It places a greater focus on patient outcomes, prioritising those in most need of an urgent response.

The target is for 65 per cent of the most urgent 'Red calls' to be responded to in eight minutes. The 65% target has been achieved each month since the trial started in October 2015; performance has continued to improve and in each of the last 9 months, more than 75% of red calls have received an emergency response within eight minutes.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"Since the implementation of the new clinical response pilot, the Welsh Ambulance Service has improved its performance significantly.

"The independent evaluation published today backs our decision to take the bold step to adopt the new model, following the successful pilot. The fact they found there to be clear and universal acknowledgement, both from within the ambulance service and external partners, that moving to the new model was appropriate and the right thing to do, is excellent news.

"I also welcome that the report confirms response time performance for those in most need of an immediate clinical intervention has improved substantially. The latest ambulance statistics confirm this with a standard response time of less than five minutes to immediately life-threatening calls in each of the last six months.

"I'd like to thank Welsh Ambulance Service, the ambulance service call handlers, clinicians, volunteers and other staff for their hard work in making the model the success it has been.

"It's fantastic that the pilot has attracted global interest and the Welsh ambulance service has not only been invited to provide advice to a number of ambulance services in England and Scotland, but further afield to Canada, New Zealand, Australia, USA and Chile. The Scottish Ambulance Services Trust is currently undertaking a nationwide pilot of a very similar model to our own.

"It is crucial that we now grasp the opportunity and continue to lead the way internationally in this important area for the benefit of the people of Wales."

Welsh Government flies the flag for Wales in celebration of St David's Day

First Minister Carwyn Jones is launching the inaugural 'Wales in London' week in London this morning. He will make a keynote speech promoting Wales as a key investment location at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) headquarters in Parliament Square.

The First Minister will also host a St David's Day reception at Lancaster House to engage with London-based foreign diplomats and businesses with an interest in Wales.

On Tuesday, the First Minister is travelling to Washington and New York to meet with companies looking to invest in Wales and will discuss trade and business links with political representatives.

While in New York, the First Minister will host a reception to mark the launch of a new £5 million international tourism campaign. The 2017 Year of Legends campaign will show Wales is a country rich in history, storytelling and creativity.

Meanwhile, Finance and Local Government Secretary Mark Drakeford will be celebrating St David's day in Brussels, where he will be hosting the annual evening reception at the British Residence.

Mark Drakeford will also hold a series of meetings with representatives from European Institutions and the UK's Permanent Representative to the EU, Sir Tim Barrow, to discuss Wales' priorities as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

Environment and Rural Affairs Secretary, Lesley Griffiths, is travelling to the United Arab Emirates this week to promote Wales' thriving food and drink industry. During her trip, Lesley Griffiths will join twenty five Welsh food and drink producers at Gulfood, the world's largest food trade event, and hear about plans for the next World Expo, taking place in Dubai 2020.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"St David's Day 2017 marks a step-change in our ambition to promote Wales to the world like never before.

"During these times of great change, there is a need for us to work even harder to raise Wales' international profile and performance. In recent years we have seen record inward investment to Wales; record tourism figures – including an increase of 12% over the last twelve months alone – while our products are now exported across the globe. We are, therefore, well placed to take on the challenge.

“This week, my Cabinet and I will celebrate our national day by promoting Wales around the world and celebrating everything we have to offer. We will use every opportunity to showcase our unique culture, history and language – and demonstrate that Wales is a great place to visit and do business.”

Nearly £14 million for improvements to Ysbyty Gwynedd A&E department

The significant funding will pay for infrastructure improvements at Ysbyty Gwynedd hospital, creating more capacity to deal with peaks in demand while improving the environment for patients, staff and visitors alike.

The funding is for the period 2017-18 and 2019-20 and it is envisaged that work will start in March 2017. The investment will fund:

- A single point of entry to the department
- Three triage rooms
- A four bay resuscitation area plus a separate isolation bay with external access
- Eight cubicles plus two treatment rooms
- Eight chairs in minor injuries
- An assessment unit including relatives' waiting room
- Paediatrics facilities including three assessment rooms and dedicated waiting rooms.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m delighted that we’ve been able to announce this capital money for Ysbyty Gwynedd, it’ll make a real difference to patients accessing emergency and urgent care in North West Wales.

“What is particularly exciting about this new development is the “One Door” approach to medical care, where emergency and urgent care patients will enter through a single point to get the most appropriate care based on their clinical need. This allows them to be treated and discharged or referred on to other specialist services within the hospital or community setting as quickly as possible.

“Once again this is the Welsh Government investing the future of our NHS in Wales.”

Gary Doherty, Chief Executive at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board said:

“We’re absolutely delighted that Welsh Government has approved the £13.89m funding required to redevelop the Emergency Department at Ysbyty Gwynedd.

“The current department is too small and is not designed to meet the requirements of modern clinical practice. This major scheme will provide state of the art accommodation for the 52,000 patients who use the service each year and will help us transform medical and emergency care.

“The Welsh Government’s commitment to this area will also provide a much needed boost to our dedicated and hard working staff and will help improve our recruitment potential.”

Avian Influenza – Next Steps

The current Prevention Zone, which expires on 28 February, requires all keepers of poultry and other captive birds in Wales to keep their birds indoors or take all appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds, and to enhance biosecurity.

The new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, which will be in place from 28 February to 30 April, requires all keepers in Wales to put in place mandatory biosecurity measures and complete a [self assessment of biosecurity measures](#) on their premises. Following this, keepers should then adopt one or more of the following: (i) house their birds, (ii) keep them totally separate from wild birds, by use of netting etc or (iii) allow controlled access to outside areas, subject to applying [additional risk mitigation measures](#).

Dr Christianne Glossop said:

“The Cabinet Secretary’s decision to put in place a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, covering the whole of Wales, until 30 April is based on sound expert and industry advice.

“The risk of infection from wild birds will not decrease in the coming weeks. The changes to the new Prevention Zone are proportionate and place the onus on the keeper to select the best option for their circumstances to protect their birds. They must, however, ensure compliance with the additional risk mitigation measures.”

The Chief Veterinary Officer also spoke of the importance of keepers remaining vigilant for signs for the disease and to continue to practice the very highest levels of biosecurity:

“Avian Influenza is a notifiable disease, and any suspicion should

be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Keepers should practice the highest levels of biosecurity if they are to minimise the risk of infection.

“I continue to strongly encourage all poultry keepers, even those with fewer than 50 birds, to provide their details to the Poultry Register. This will ensure they can be contacted immediately, via email or text update, in an avian disease outbreak enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity.”

Dr Gavin Watkins, a senior veterinary officer within the Welsh Government has recorded a [video message](#) with information and advice on the requirements of the new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone.

Further guidance, contact details, latest developments and a copy of the new Declaration are available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

[Out of Work Service funding extended until 2020](#)

The Out of Work Programme (OoWS), which was launched in September 2016, provides peer support and employment advice to people recovering from substance misuse and/or mental health issues.

The scheme supports people aged 16-24 who are recovering from substance misuse and, or mental health issues and are not in education, employment or training. It also helps people aged 25 or older who are recovering from substance misuse and, or mental health issues and are long-term unemployed.

The programme is funded by the European Social Fund, Welsh Government and the Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards in Wales. It is available across Wales and in addition to helping people recover and gain life and employability skills, it offers transitional support for up to three months to participants who find work.

The extension of funding will ensure both groups continue receiving support until 2020. Planned total funding for the programme will be £17.3m, including £11.5m from the European Social Fund.

Rebecca Evans said:

“I am pleased to announce the extension of funding for this programme which aims to support up to 14,000 people to overcome their barriers to gaining and staying in employment.

“It will provide new opportunities and improve outcomes for

unemployed people, often those furthest from the labour market, so that they can receive the help and support they need to access skills and employment.”

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Mark Drakeford, said:

“Being in employment can help people recovering from substance misuse or mental health issues. By removing the barriers to employment, this project is supporting thousands of people across Wales to enter and stay in the job market.

“I am pleased that EU funds have enabled the extension of this programme, enabling many more to benefit from a healthy future.”