

£5 million to help relieve pressure on critical care this winter

The £5m is part of the new £15m annual funding for critical care the Welsh Government announced in July 2018. The £15m fund aims to strengthen all aspects of critical care and help to redesign the way critical care services in Wales are delivered.

Decisions on how the money is allocated are made by a Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Jones. This is the first funding decision made by the group.

Health Boards with critical care units will be allocated a proportion of the funding which will be used to help increase critical care capacity during the busy winter period.

Vaughan Gething said:

“We know that winter brings with it a range of pressures across the NHS in Wales, critical care units are not immune to that pressure and often feel it the most.

“When I announced the £15m funding and Task and Finish Group back in July I wanted us to have a firmer central hand in place to ensure the right services are delivered in the right place, at the right time to secure more sustainable services for the future. The money I’ve announced today is that ambition in action and I hope the money allocated today to help increase critical care capacity will make a real difference this winter.”

Employment up in Wales, with Mid and North Wales leading the charge

The statistics also show that unemployment fell in two of the four economic regions (Mid Wales and South West Wales) whilst remaining unchanged in North Wales. Economic inactivity also decreased in three of the four economic regions.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“These results are broadly encouraging for much of Wales,

particularly Mid and North Wales, and demonstrate that our approach to supporting businesses in Wales during challenging circumstances is having a positive impact. But there can be no escaping that there is more to do.

With the UK Government seemingly worryingly reluctant to invest in Swansea and South West Wales and Brexit on the horizon, it's absolutely essential that we continue to work closely with businesses and potential businesses across Wales to ensure opportunities are maximised.

My Economic Action Plan recognises that each region of Wales has its own distinct opportunities and challenges and that a one size fits all approach to Economic development will not go far enough to drive the economic growth we all want to see. Work to ensure each region builds on their individual strengths to secure maximum economic growth for Wales is already bearing fruit, with our four Chief Regional Officers in place and working closely with local partners and businesses to ensure our economic potential is realised.

There's no question that 2019 will have its challenges, and through our Action Plan and support like the Brexit Portal, I hope that we can be a real help to businesses the length and breadth of Wales as we look to further drive up employment and cut unemployment across Wales."

[Valleys Regional Park to be source of 'national pride'](#)

Alun Davies set out new proposals to make the most of the natural and cultural heritage of the Valleys, which could have a transformative effect on the local, and national, economy.

Earlier this month, we announced £7m of capital funding over two years, to establish the Valleys Regional Park in the draft Budget. Mr Davies, who is chair of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, will set out how that investment will kick start work to put the Valleys in the vanguard globally, with a national and international profile.

We will:

- develop a high-quality network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves and country parks, rivers, reservoirs and canals, as well as heritage sites and attractions, crucially connect them with our towns and

villages;

- connect Valleys with high-quality walking trails and cycle routes;
- invest in existing sites across the Valleys as Discovery Gateways, to encourage more active lifestyles and showcase the best of the Valleys.

The Cabinet Secretary, who visited other regional parks across Europe to help inform this work, described plans as a statement of ambition about what can be achieved in the Valleys.

He said,

“The Valleys Regional Park is not a one-off project or initiative; it is at the very heart of our ambition to help Valleys communities to maximise the opportunities afforded by our natural and cultural heritage to deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits.

“The Valleys are home to some of the most distinctive and breathtaking natural landscapes in Wales and the UK. But for too long their charm, beauty and cultural heritage; their ability to attract visitors; and to be fully used and recognised by communities themselves, has been overlooked and undervalued. This ends here.

“We will build on the innovative projects already being undertaken and developed by communities across the Valleys – involving more communities, and creating a peer-to-peer, skill sharing network – to get us started.

“We will work closely with local authorities and other partners in the Valleys to identify existing sites which match our ambition and will announce the location of the first phase of Discovery Gateways by the end of the year.”

Chair of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales to step down

She was appointed in November 2015, and will step down from the post with effect from 30 November due to a combination of other competing work commitments and personal reasons.

Mutale Merrill said:

“At a time when legislation is to be brought forward to introduce a new Citizens’ Voice body for Wales, the role of Chair should be

performed by someone who is able to lead the Board of CHCs through the transitional period, which extends beyond my current term of office.

I wish my successor well during this important time and would be delighted to speak to prospective candidates about the role.”

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mutale for the enormous contribution she has made over the last three years in protecting and strengthening the value and integrity of Community Health Councils across Wales and equipping them to take advantage of the changes and improvements that lie ahead. I know that Mutale has enjoyed her time in post, and I wish her well for the future.”

The Welsh Government is recruiting a new Chair through the Public Appointments process. The appointment is remunerated and the closing date for applications is 8th November 2018.

[£43 million investment in housing for the future](#)

Houses that generate their own power, flats with vertical gardens and homes built using local supply chains are some of the projects to share in £43m of innovative housing funding this year.

Tuesday 16 October 2018

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans will today announce which projects will share in the second phase of the three-year Innovative Housing Programme, worth £90m in total.

Successful projects include:

- Nearly £7m for Pobl Group who are developing 225 homes near Tonyrefail. The investment will create the infrastructure to ensure the homes can act as power stations – a UK first at this scale
- £4m for Cartrefi Croeso to build 30 homes in Burry Port using Welsh timber, local off-site manufacturing using local labour, featuring Tŷ Solar panels manufactured in West Wales
- £650,000 for Denbighshire Council to work with partners to establish a factory to produce timber-framed Passivhaus homes for local social

landlords. Cartrefi Conwy will receive £442,000 to build 16 homes using the system. The local supply chain will provide training to local people who might otherwise face barriers to the jobs market

- £1m for Anglesey Council working with Coed Cymru and social housing providers to deliver an affordable and flexible housing construction system using local Welsh softwood and support the development of a local supply chain
- £1.1m for Flintshire Council to build 12 apartments with the flexibility to meet changing needs in social housing including apartments size, wheelchair accessibility and supported living
- £1.9m for Newydd Housing Association to build 23 homes as well as space for start-ups and established businesses as part of the Goods Shed development in Barry
- £2.6m for Powys Council to build 26 low-carbon homes in Newtown using Welsh timber
- £839,000 for Wales and West Housing Association to build 14 homes in Bridgend using the Solcer House model which incorporates energy efficiency and renewable technologies
- £568,000 for Gwynedd Council to build four adaptable pods to Passivhaus standard to provide stable intermediate accommodation for homeless people.
- £9m for Linc Cymru Housing Association to create 50 homes in a timber tower with vertical greening in Cardiff

Rebecca Evans said:

“We are investing in our Innovative Housing Programme to reduce fuel poverty, reduce the impact of house building on the environment, and reduce the health and wellbeing inequalities which are exacerbated by poor quality housing.

“It is clear that if the scale and pace of house-building is to increase significantly, traditional approaches are unlikely to deliver on their own. Done the right way, we have an opportunity to build high quality, near zero carbon homes, capturing and boosting the skills and expertise within the Welsh construction and manufacturing industries.”