

# Welsh stations in line for share of £20m UK Government funding boost for accessibility improvements

- Latest in a series of improvements by the UK Government Transport Secretary to accelerate the pace of change for a more accessible transport network
- Follows launch of new campaign to improve journeys for disabled people when using public transport

Disabled passengers are set to benefit from accessibility improvements at Grangetown, Pontypool & New Inn, Llantwit Major and Neath train stations thanks to a £20m UK Government fund.

The enhancements announced by the UK Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps today (26 February) are funded through the Access for All programme and will include new lifts, accessible toilets and customer information screens.

It comes as the UK Government launches its campaign to improve the journeys of disabled passengers on public transport.

## **Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:**

The ability to travel easily from A to B is an essential factor for our day to day lives – but is not the reality for everyone.

I recognise that we have much more to do, which is why we're making 124 train stations across the country more accessible – a key part of levelling-up access for disabled people to transport and opening up opportunities for all.

This is just the start of a much more ambitious agenda. My goal is to go much further in the years ahead to help ensure that our country's transport system becomes one of the most accessible in the world.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:**

Accessible transport is vital for connecting people with work, family and friends. That is why the UK Government is committed to building a better railway for all passengers in every corner of Wales.

As part of that commitment the UK Government is providing a £20 million funding boost to stations to improve accessibility. This

will open up routes across Wales to disabled people allowing more passengers to travel independently and helping us to move towards a truly accessible transport network.

The enhancements are being made through the Access for All programme which, since 2006, has already made more than 200 stations step free, as well as delivered smaller scale accessibility improvements at more than 1,500 others to improve passenger experience.

Today's £20million is part of a £300million package announced last year which is already providing accessible, step free routes at 73 stations across Great Britain, making it easier for disabled people to travel on the UK's rail network.

### **Minister for Disabled People Justin Tomlinson said:**

Everyone using our rail network deserves platforms and toilets they can use and this £20million investment to improve 124 railway stations across the country will make a huge difference to disabled people.

This Government is committed to levelling up the playing field and later this year we'll launch a national strategy which will ensure disabled people have equal access to all spheres of life.

This follows the launch of the 'it's everyone's journey' advertising campaign to highlight how we can all play a part in making public transport inclusive. The campaign is being supported by more than 100 partners, including First Group, WHSmith Travel and the Alzheimer's Society.

Department for Transport research has shown that behaviours that make public transport a daunting place for disabled people are often unconscious, such as not looking out for a fellow passenger who might need a seat or be in distress.

'It's everyone's journey' will raise awareness about the needs of disabled people when using public transport, particularly people with non-visible impairments, and will also prompt members of the public to think and consider how their behaviour might impact others.

Alongside this, the Department has also launched its Inclusive Transport Leaders scheme, an accreditation scheme which will encourage, celebrate and promote best practice in inclusive transport.

Operators, such as bus and train companies, are encouraged to sign up to the Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme, where they will work towards one of three accreditation levels by demonstrating the steps they have taken to improve the travelling experiences of disabled passengers, older people, and those with reduced mobility.

These improvements form part of the wider Inclusive Transport Strategy and supports the UK Government's ambition of achieving equal access for all on public transport.

## Ends

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# Sellafield permit changes issued

The permit controls receipt and disposal of radioactive waste and imposes conditions and limits on discharges. This is the most significant review of this permit since the early 2000s.

As part of this review Sellafield Ltd submitted an application for a RSA permit variation in 2018. A public consultation on this application was conducted in October 2018 and another took place on the Environment Agency's draft decision in 2019.

A final decision on this application has now been reached, incorporating comments received from both consultations, and today (27 February) the Environment Agency have issued the permit variation to Sellafield Ltd.

Dr Rob Allot, Sellafield Nuclear Regulation Team Leader said:

"The Environment Agency has been working with Sellafield Ltd for some time to carry out a major review of this environmental permit in readiness for the end of fuel reprocessing at the Sellafield site.

The public engagement via the consultations have been a really important part of this process and today signifies a major milestone as we issue the permit variation.

The Sellafield site has historically reprocessed radioactive fuel in its THORP and Magnox reprocessing plants. However, fuel reprocessing came to an end at THORP in November 2018 and Magnox reprocessing is planned to end in 2020. This will mean that the site will see a significant reduction in radioactive discharges to the environment. Given these forecast reductions, the company needs this new RSA environmental permit to better reflect the new, lower discharge levels.

Following the end of fuel reprocessing, Sellafield Ltd's mission will focus on decommissioning and the safe and secure environmental remediation of the Sellafield Site. The permit review has enabled us to build more flexibility into the permits to allow for post operational clean out and clean-up of the high hazard legacy facilities to reduce the risk to people and the environment."

This permit variation incorporated these main changes:

- Significantly reducing site discharge limits and introducing a 2-tier (upper and lower) site discharge limit structure.
  - Removing some site discharge limits where discharges have fallen below significant levels and they do not meet the Environment Agency criteria for setting limits.
  - Replacing plant discharge limits with plant notification levels so that Sellafield Ltd can make most effective use of the available discharge routes and treatment plants.
  - Removing discharge limits related to the rate of fuel reprocessing (throughput) to reflect the end of reprocessing operations.
  - Updating the permit to the latest template so that it reflects recent guidance changes.
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## [UN Human Rights Council 43: Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Torture](#)

Thank you Mr Vice President.

The UK thanks the Special Rapporteur on Torture for his report.

The UK unreservedly condemns the use of torture. Torture is an abhorrent violation of human rights and human dignity, and its impact on societies and individuals is devastating. Preventing torture and tackling impunity for those who torture are essential components of safeguarding our security and a necessary part of any fair legal system and the rule of law. The UK works closely with international partners to eradicate this abhorrent practice.

Torture prevention remains integral to the UK's rule of law programmes, which aim to build security and stability overseas. The UK continues to support torture prevention programmes around the world via the UK's Magna Carta Fund.

The UK is also a long-standing, strong, and vocal supporter of the UN's Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and will continue to encourage and support other states to ratify and implement the protocol soon.

Finally, the UK government stands by its response to the Special Rapporteur's letter, and rejects any allegation Julian Assange has been subjected to torture in any form as a result of actions by the UK government.

Thank you.

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## [Our statement on coronavirus](#)



We are working closely with awarding organisations and the Department for Education to consider how to manage any particular risks to the smooth running of exams and assessments should there be a widespread outbreak of coronavirus.

We will update [our existing guidance](#) to reflect any specific arrangements schools and colleges should put in place if required. In the meantime, students, schools and colleges should continue to prepare for the summer exams and assessments as usual.

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## [Sally Cheshire CBE appointed as Interim Chair of Cafcass](#)

The Secretary of State has announced the appointment of Sally Cheshire CBE as Interim Chair of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass). Sally's term of office will run from 16 December until 30 June 2020 whilst a recruitment campaign is carried out to fill the position on a permanent basis.

The role of Cafcass Chair is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and has been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Cafcass is an independent (non-departmental) public body which has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children going through family proceedings. It is independent of the courts, social services, education and health authorities and all similar agencies.

Cafcass ensures that children and young people who are the subject of such proceedings are kept safe, their voices are properly heard, the decisions made about them by courts are in their best interests and that they and their families are supported throughout the process.

## **Biography**

Sally Cheshire has been a member of Cafcass since May 2018, and was appointed as Deputy Chair in February 2019. Sally is Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the UK's regulator of the fertility sector and embryo research, has held senior leadership roles across the health sector and is currently Chair of Health Education England (North). Sally was also a Board Member of the regional adoption agency 'Adoption Counts', and an independent member of adoption panels in the North West, which approve adopters and family matches in the best interests of children. She previously enjoyed a successful corporate career with Deloitte.