

[£15million for critical care services in Wales](#)

The funding will be used to strengthen critical care so it can continue to deliver the very highest standard of care to those who need it in the future.

It will help to redesign the way critical care services in Wales are delivered and develop a national model of care for those who are critically ill.

This model will look at developing and expanding the workforce, increasing the number of critical care beds and the options for transferring critically ill patients.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, said:

“Critical care is one of the areas of the NHS that has acutely felt the strains and challenges facing the whole system. Despite this, those who require critical support continue to receive high standards of care thanks to the dedication and compassion of staff.

“Last month I published our long-term plan for future health and social care, which set out how services will be adapted to meet future challenges. Today’s funding will help us to do this within critical care, with 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.”

A Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Jones, will be established to develop the national model and oversee the allocation of funding.

[Most parents think it's wrong to smack a child – new research](#)

The ‘Parental Attitudes Towards Managing Young Children’s Behaviour 2017’ research found 11% of parents with young children reported they had smacked their children in the last 6 months as a way of managing their behaviour. This figure has halved from 22% in 2015.

The research shows 81% of parents disagreed that “it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child”, a significant increase from 71% in 2015.

The number of parents who reported they may smack a child under certain circumstances has fallen from 44% to 31%. Within this, only 5% reported they are comfortable with the idea and would do it when necessary, with a further 26% not liking the idea but saying they will if nothing else works.

Parents reported using a wide variety of alternative techniques to manage their children’s behaviour. The most frequently reported techniques were:

- Praising good behaviour,
- Developing routines,
- Saying no, and
- Telling them off.

The Welsh Government plans to end the physical punishment of children in Wales. The proposed legislation is part of a much wider package of measures the Welsh Government is taking to support children to have the best start in life, and to support parents to do the best job they can.

When parents were asked whether there should be a complete ban on smacking, the balance of opinion is with those who think smacking should not be allowed with 48% agreeing with a ban and 39% disagreeing. There has been a small change in support for the ban since 2015 when 46% agreed and 43% disagreed.

Welcoming the research, Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“I’m very pleased to see from this research that so few parents think that smacking a child is sometimes necessary, and that fewer parents are using physical punishment to manage their child’s behaviour.

“This is exactly the culture change we want to see happening in Wales. While it’s great to see that 81% of parents think it’s never acceptable to smack a child, as a government, we want to ensure every parent recognises that it’s never acceptable to smack a child. This is why we intend to bring forward legislation to make it clear that physically punishing a child is no longer acceptable in Wales.”

It is currently against the law for a parent or carer to physically punish their child, except where this amounts to ‘reasonable punishment’.

The proposed legislation would not involve the creation of a new offence. It would instead remove the defence of ‘reasonable punishment’ to the existing offences of assault and battery. It would mean any adult looking after a child would no longer be able to use physical or corporal punishment against them.

Universal Credit “is hitting the most vulnerable in Wales”

Rebecca Evans said:

“Foodbank use in areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out has increased by 30% according to National Audit Office statistics, compared to a 12% increase in non-Universal Credit areas. This is extremely worrying.

“A Universal Credit claimant survey from Esther McVey’s own department shows that four in ten claimants were experiencing financial difficulties, and that 46% of new Universal Credit claimants need help to make their claim online.

“I have asked the Secretary of State to make Universal Support for people who claim Universal Credit available as widely as possible to help those people who are experiencing difficulties in managing their finances, and for those who are struggling with digital access.

“The recent National Audit Office report was clear; local authorities, housing associations and landlords are all seeing an increase in rent arrears since the introduction of Universal Credit.

“This chimes with many concerns raised and reported to me by the housing sector in Wales.

“The National Audit Office highlighted that the system is lacking in ways to identify vulnerable people, which makes it difficult to see how they are getting the right support, from the outset when they apply for Universal Credit. I have asked the Secretary of State to explain how she plans to rectify this.

“People who are more vulnerable can be offered alternative payment arrangements through Universal Credit, but we are seeing real inconsistencies in the way this is offered to claimants; the Department of Work and Pensions’ own claimant survey indicated that as many as 48% of those surveyed had to request this themselves, rather than being offered it proactively.

“I am deeply concerned about the flaws of Universal Credit, and its impact on the most vulnerable people in Wales, and I will continue to press the UK Government on addressing these.”

Wales hosts second Heathrow business summit

It follows MPs giving their overwhelming support for plans for the construction of the new £14bn runway last month which it is estimated will bring 8400 jobs and £8bn of economic growth to Wales.

Business groups and leaders at the summit will hear from Economy Secretary Ken Skates, CEO of South and Mid Wales Chambers of Commerce, Heather Myers, Director of Pro Steel Engineering, Richard Selby and Chief Strategy Officer at Heathrow Airport, Andrew Macmillan about how they can get the very best out of the opportunities ahead.

The event will also provide networking opportunities for supplier and buyers to meet and build contacts and relationships.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“In total it is estimated that the new runway will deliver 8400 new jobs and £8bn in economic growth and I am determined that a significant portion of those benefits will be felt here in Wales.

“As a Welsh Government we are working closely with Heathrow and doing all we can to ensure Wales gets the very best out of the opportunities associated with the new runway.

“This includes exploring airport links between Heathrow and Wales to ensure better connectivity to Wales for tourist and businesses, and working hard to bring one of the Heathrow Logistic Hubs – which will host some of the off-site construction for the runway – to one of the six shortlisted Welsh sites still in the running. This would create hundreds of new jobs and inject millions of pounds into our economy.

“Today’s event, the second of its kind in Wales, is a great opportunity for Welsh SMEs to promote their goods and services to Heathrow and make valuable connections with the Airport’s Supply Chain that will help secure economic benefits here in Wales.

“It is also a great opportunity for companies to link with other SME and explore opportunities for collaborations that could help to drive up the potential economic benefits for all parties, and ensure that the benefits of this major infrastructure project are felt in communities right across Wales.”

A55 improvement scheme gets green light

The £25 million scheme between Junctions 12 and 13 will improve safety on this section of the route as well as reduce the risk of flooding.

Work includes upgrading the 2.2km stretch to present day standards, providing safer accesses onto the A55, an improved drainage system to ensure future resilience to flooding, new footways to improve pedestrian access to the local bus service and new wildlife pipes installed under the A55.

Active travel is an integral part of the scheme and a new walking and cycling route will be constructed parallel with the eastbound carriageway.

Resurfacing of the route with low noise surfacing will be extended past Abergwyngregyn helping to reduce road noise in this area.

The scheme is backed by £14.9m from the European Regional Development Fund.

Ken Skates said:

“The Abergwyngregyn – Tai’r Meibion scheme is yet another demonstration of the Welsh Government taking action to improve transport infrastructure in North Wales. We are investing heavily throughout the region and this project shows our commitment to improving and strengthening the A55.

“The scheme will be vital in ensuring a safer route for local and through traffic, reducing flood risk, building better pedestrian and cycling connections with communities and enhancing biodiversity.

“The next stage is to appoint a contractor with works planned to begin towards the end of this year. This construction phase will also result in local employment and workforce training opportunities providing a real boost to the area’s economy.

“Today’s announcement follows the go-ahead I gave recently for the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass and I am certain both schemes will deliver for businesses and communities in North West Wales whilst improving safety for road users and ensuring we have a modern transport network.”

Enabling work is due to begin in the Autumn including site clearance and widening an existing road, all of which will be done off the A55.

Construction works on the A55 is programmed to begin in Spring 2019 for a

period of 18 months. All four lanes on the A55 will be kept running under a speed restriction between 6am to 7pm in order to minimise any disruption.