

TrawsCymru extends and improves vital Aberystwyth to Cardiff service

TrawsCymru is the Welsh Government funded, long-distance bus network for Wales comprising a number of routes, the latest of which will connect Aberystwyth with Carmarthen and Port Talbot before continuing on to Cardiff.

Before the end of last year, Ken Skates announced additional funding to local authorities to enable them to introduce a package of improvements to the TrawsCymru bus and coach connections linking Aberystwyth with Carmarthen, Swansea and Cardiff.

Following feedback from passengers, the service has introduced a modern wheelchair accessible high floor coach on the daily Aberystwyth to Cardiff long distance service, which will provide a more comfortable journey for longer distance passengers, complemented by the introduction of a shorter route which will offer quicker 'end to end' journey times.

The service will be operating a more comfortable long distance coach equipped with coach style seating, on board toilet and free WiFi.

Furthermore, TrawsCymru Day Ticket will be valid on the service, so people can visit Cardiff for the day from Aberystwyth and return for £10 (adults) and £7 (young persons). Also, the Welsh concessionary travel passes valid for use on the service.

This coach service will also call at Port Talbot Rail Bus Interchange at the Parkway station.

A daily TrawsCymru T1S bus link will also be maintained between Aberystwyth, Lampeter, Carmarthen and Swansea with additional short journeys between Carmarthen, Cross Hands and Swansea being operated during the day (weekdays and Saturdays)

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"In 2016, when we took on the running of this route, we intended to not just maintain the continuation of this critical service, but to strengthen it.

"We have listened to passengers and have introduced coaches onto this key route, and have significantly reduced journey times. Along with the additional stop in Port Talbot, this long-standing service will add more value to already vital public transport links to and from rural Wales, giving passengers extra choice on this key strategic route."

Further information on the T1C service including a timetable, when it becomes

available, can be found at www.trawscymru.info (external link).

[Give the gift of life – become a living donor](#)

In Wales, 31 people became living donors in 2017-18 and around 1,100 living kidney transplants take place in the UK each year.

Kidneys are the most common organ donated by living people; however there are approximately 5000 people waiting for a new kidney on the transplant list in the UK.

A successful transplant from a living donor (rather than one from someone who has died) is the best treatment for most people with kidney failure. This offers the recipient the best opportunity of success as 82% of kidneys donated by a living donor will still be working after 10 years. This compares with 75% for kidneys transplanted from deceased donors.

Other advantages include:

- reduced waiting time as transplants can take place sooner, when the intended recipient is healthier, aiding recovery
- the possibility of avoiding dialysis altogether, increasing the recipients life-span following a transplant.

Other organs that can be donated by a living person include part of a liver, a segment of a lung and part of the small bowel. The Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“Living donation plays a vital role in saving and transforming lives, offering more patients with kidney failure, and other diseases the possibility of a successful transplant.

“Often, living donors are close relatives or friends but you can still donate an organ to someone you do not know.

“I’m proud that we are leading the way on organ donation in Wales, but while there are people dying waiting for a transplant, we must work harder to further increase awareness of the possibility of living donation.”

Mike Stephens, a Consultant Transplant and Organ Retrieval Surgeon at University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff has first hand experience of how organ donation transforms lives. He said:

“Donating a kidney is a very personal decision and is not something everyone feels comfortable with. Only you can decide if it’s something you would like to volunteer to do.

“Healthy people who wish to help a loved one or a stranger with kidney disease may volunteer to give a kidney.

“Generally people who receive a kidney from a living donor live for longer than those who receive one from a deceased donor and much longer than they would be expected to live if they did not receive a kidney transplant.

“Living kidney donation allows the operation to be planned at a time that is convenient for the recipient, donor and clinical team.”

Ann Marsden, who works as a Living Donor Transplant Co-ordinator at the University Hospital of Wales, has helped to facilitate over 500 life-saving kidney transplants involving living donors over the past 16 years. She said:

“I’ve seen how this selfless act of giving can transform the life of someone suffering with kidney disease.

“Living kidney donation can often be the best long-term form of treatment for a patient with kidney disease, especially if the transplant can be performed before the need for kidney dialysis.

“The operation success rate is excellent and patients receiving a kidney from a living donor can expect to benefit from a fully functioning kidney for 15 to 20 years on average.”

[Campaign encourages patients to get up, get dressed and keep moving](#)

The #EndPJPparalysis 70-day challenge aims to achieve one million patient days of relevant patients being dressed in day clothes and moving around, over a 70 day period. The challenge will run from 17 April until 26 June 2018 in a number of health and care organisations across the UK to mark the 70th anniversary of the NHS.

It has been found that 60% of immobile patients had no medical reason that required bed rest, and that 10 days of bed rest could lead to up to 10 years worth of muscle mass loss in patients over 80 years old.

Morrison Hospital in Swansea launched its Get up and Go! campaign last year to help patients and their families understand why staff were encouraging patients to get out of bed and dressed while still on the ward.

Participating in such a scheme leads to benefits such as:

- a reduction in the length of stay
- reduced loss of mobility, deconditioning and risk of falls
- reduced food wastage due to greater patient mobility and energy need
- reduced risk of needing institutional care on discharge
- enhanced wellbeing of patients and staff.

During a visit to Morrison Hospital to see the scheme in action today, Professor White said:

“Speaking to some of the patients here, I’ve been able to see the benefits that simply getting out of bed and getting dressed has to offer in terms of recovery.

“Patients, in general, prefer to be at home rather than in hospital, and research suggests that too much bed rest could do more harm than good. So by being active, patients keep up their strength and aid recovery so they can go home more quickly.

“It’s refreshing to have seen so many active patients moving around the ward today. This simple change can have a hugely positive effect on a patient both mentally and physically, and I encourage all health and care organisations in Wales to take part in the #EndPJparalysis campaign.”

Physiotherapist Sharon Maggs said:

“There is research which tells that with the elderly, 10 days in bed can mean they lose up to 10 years of muscle strength. That’s astonishing.

“We know that being in bed really isn’t always the best thing for patients. We want to get the message out to patients, relatives and visitors when they come into hospital not to be surprised when myself, or my colleagues, encourage patients to get up, get washed and get dressed.

“We want them to be themselves, be normal. That’s the best rehabilitation.”

Occupational Therapist Sarah Morse added:

“What we want people to do when they come into hospital is get up, choose what you want for breakfast, put your own clothes on, walk to the bathroom and have a wash.

“These are day to day things that you would normally do at home. This will keep you well, keep you strong and keep you active.”

[Finance Secretary visits Noord-Holland to sign Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity with our Dutch neighbours](#)

Professor Drakeford will meet with the Noord-Holland Regional Minister for European Affairs, Cees Loggen and together they will sign the declaration which expresses a desire to uphold strong solidarity and friendship between Wales and Noord-Holland, and a commitment to work together on areas of mutual interest following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

He will then hold talks with Mr Loggen and the King's Commissioner for Noord-Holland, Mr. Johan Remkes, who is the official representative of central government in the Dutch provinces.

The Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity was developed in the context of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions' (CPMR) Cardiff Declaration which was signed by over 20 EU regional and local authority leaders last November, and sets out priorities for future co-operation between EU regions after Brexit.

Mr Drakeford will also visit a coastal defence project in the area and meet with Mr Luc Kohsiek, President of Noord-Holland's Water Board to discuss Noord-Holland's approach to water management and coastal flood prevention.

The Cabinet Secretary will end his trip by visiting the 3D Print Canal House – a 3-year 'Research & Design by Doing' project which involves an international team of partners from various sectors working together on 3D printing a full-size canal house in Amsterdam.

The Finance Secretary said:

“The Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity with Noord-Holland underlines our desire to grow our bilateral relationship with the province, and supports our wider efforts to strengthen relationships with European regions beyond Brexit.

“Noord-Holland is arguably the most economically important of Holland's provinces and this visit provides an opportunity to share ideas of mutual interest particularly in relation to infrastructure and collaborative research and innovation projects.”

Noord-Holland's Regional Minister for European Affairs, Cees Loggen said:

“there is a need for continued exchange, cooperation and learning between the people of the UK and the EU. I hope that many regions in the UK and EU will follow the example that Wales and Noord-Holland have and will co-sign the declaration.”

Wales' award winning 'Best Attraction' – hits nearly 30,000 visitors for Easter

In the final week of the Easter holidays, the Tourism Minister, Lord-Elis Thomas had an opportunity to see the world-class facilities which have been developed by the Zip World team over the last 5 years. The attractions have generated extensive media coverage and played a part in north Wales' growing reputation as Adventure capital of Europe.

Lord Elis-Thomas met with owner of Zip World – Sean Taylor and saw the three sites in north Wales – Zip World Fforest at Betws y Coed; Zip World Slate Caverns in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Zip World Penrhyn Quarry in Bethesda. The company have also established a Headquarters in Llanrwst and between all sites, employ 350 people at peak times.

Zip World was named as the Best Attraction in the National Tourism Awards for Wales 2018 which took place last month. During the awards, north Wales also scooped a Visit Wales special award for International Achievement.

During his tour of the sites, the Minister heard how the Zip World team have had a very busy Easter and are looking forward with confidence to the summer season.

Sean Taylor said:

“As a local boy myself, I was delighted to show Lord Elis-Thomas the exciting developments we have made in the past 5 years at our 3 sites and the positive impact it has had on the local community he grew up in.

“Despite Easter being early this year, we were thrilled to welcome nearly 30,000 adventure seeking guests to our sites. It shows that the innovative developments we have made really capture people's imagination. We have more projects in the pipeline so are looking forward to another exciting year for the company.”

The Tourism Minister, said:

“I’m delighted that the Welsh Government has been able to support the growth of Zip World, this is an excellent example of private sector innovation and public sector support really making an impact in the global market place. The way the team have reinvented and repurposed our industrial landscape to create a series of truly world class attractions has had international recognition – from the likes of the Lonely Planet – and contributed to north Wales’ growing reputation as an adventure destination. I wish Sean and the team well with their future plans which will continue to give people compelling reasons to come to Wales.”