

£36 million for Prince Charles Hospital Refurbishment

The funding from the Welsh Government will be used to continue to refurbish the ground floor at the hospital, providing a new main kitchen, dining area and pharmacy.

Works should start on the project in January 2019 with completion by spring 2021.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m delighted to be able to announce this significant funding for Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr.

“This refurbishment will not only improve the working environment for staff at the hospital, it will also support the delivery of the kind of modern health care we want to see in Wales.

“I’m sure that as well as boosting staff morale, this work will bring significant benefits to patients attending the hospital and the area as a whole.

“I expect these works to deliver significant economic benefits to the community through the use of local labour and sub-contractors. I also expect the project to create apprenticeship opportunities and initiatives to engage schools in the local area.”

Ruth Treharne, Director of Planning and Performance at Cwm Taf University Health Board, said:

“We are delighted that Welsh Government has supported the next phase of refurbishment of the ground and first floor of Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil.

“Amongst the benefits, the funding will provide for a new main kitchen, dining area and a new pharmacy, which as well as helping to meet our statutory compliance requirements, will also provide an enhanced environment for our staff and patients.”

We will continue to support farmers post-Brexit but in a smarter way – Lesley Griffiths

Reaffirming her commitment to do everything possible to ensure the agricultural sector thrives post-Brexit, the Cabinet Secretary thanked everyone who contributed to the 'Brexit and our Land' consultation and helped start a national debate on future farming support.

Over 12,000 responses have been received to the consultation on proposals for a new Land Management Programme, to replace the Common Agricultural Policy in Wales.

The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that changes to how the Welsh Government supports farmers will not be rushed and made three commitments:

- no decisions will be taken until all consultation responses have been reviewed
- no changes to existing payments will happen without further consultation next year; and
- old schemes will not be removed before new schemes are ready.

Speaking at the conference, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“Our plans for future farming support are firmly based on helping ensure farms are resilient and sustainable, whatever the deal on Brexit .

“We’ve had an overwhelming response to our ‘Brexit and our Land’ consultation – I am very grateful for each of the over 12,000 responses we have received and am pleased we’ve had a national debate on our proposals.

“I have been clear from day one. Maintaining the status quo is not an option post-Brexit because it does not help farmers adapt to the challenges of a different and rapidly moving trading environment. Whether we like it or not, the UK will leave the Common Agricultural Policy next year. That is a certainty.

“The Basic Payment Scheme is not the most effective way to support farmers after Brexit – it is too blunt an instrument to deliver. There is no link between BPS and a farmer’s effort, the performance of the farm business or the outcomes achieved. The BPS delivers neither long term resilience nor prosperity.

“I have always stated we have to provide ongoing support to farmers but we need to do so in a better, much smarter way. Farmers need and deserve our support. This is the only way we can keep farmers

on the land and protect our valued rural communities.

“Our proposals for a Public Goods Scheme will do just that – it is a new and meaningful income stream for farmers. It will pay over and above the ‘income foregone and costs incurred’ of our current agri environment schemes. For some farmers it will be the major part of their income and importantly, it will linked to outcomes Wales needs from its land now and in the future’.

“Our proposed Economic Resilience scheme will target funding towards improving businesses. It will be designed to increase productivity, invest in efficiency and diversification and help farmers adapt to new market opportunities.”

The Cabinet Secretary also reminded farmers of the BPS loan scheme support that is available this year and urged those who wish to apply to submit their applications by no later than 30 November.

The Cabinet Secretary added:

“We will be starting BPS payments on 3 December and will ensure we pay as many farm businesses as possible on day 1 of the payment window. Following the exceptionally hot and dry summer, I introduced a BPS loan scheme to support farm businesses and alleviate the short term pressures on a small proportion of claimants not able to receive their BPS early in the payment window.

“I would like to remind everyone this is an ‘opt in’ scheme. The application is currently available to everyone on RPW online and applications must be submitted by 30 November. I urge all farmers to consider applying for this valuable support.”

High water marks for Wales as annual bathing water statistics released

All 104 designated bathing waters in Wales met the European classifications for bathing water quality this year, with none being classified as ‘poor’. 78 bathing waters achieved the highest classification of ‘excellent’, 21 were classified as ‘good’ and five as ‘sufficient’. Six bathing water classifications have gone up and six have gone down, following the 2018 season.

Bathing waters are sampled regularly during the official bathing season,

between 15 May to 30 September, and classified as either excellent, good, sufficient or poor. The classifications go on display at the start of the following year's bathing season.

Cemaes, in Anglesey, has now achieved sufficient bathing water quality, following two years of poor classification. Natural Resources Wales has undertaken considerable work in the area to ensure compliance with the standards.

Wales has more Blue Flag beaches per mile than anywhere else in Britain and Visit Wales is investing in infrastructure to help beaches attain Blue Flag status. Visit Wales is also supporting projects with organisations like Keep Wales Tidy and Surfers Against Sewage to promote responsible, sustainable tourism and the need to protect coastal assets and abundant wildlife.

The Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

"2018 is Wales' Year of the Sea, so I'm pleased to see all bathing waters in Wales meeting the water quality standards, with most areas again achieving an 'excellent' rating. This is an achievement worth celebrating.

"While some bathing waters have improved, it's disappointing to see some classifications fall. Natural Resources Wales will be working with Dŵr Cymru, local authorities and other stakeholders to identify and address any problems with water quality locally.

"Wales has a beautiful coastline and I want to see our bathing waters continue to meet the highest standards we've become accustomed to."

Natalie Hall, Water Manager for Natural Resources Wales, said:

"Protecting the environment is our main purpose which is why we work day in and day out to help make Wales as clean and as safe as possible for people and wildlife.

"We're especially pleased with the quality improvement in places like Cemaes Bay and Wisemans Bridge that have been real focus areas for us over the years.

"Our hard work will continue, in partnership with others, so that bathing water standards are maintained and continue to improve where necessary."

[Finance Secretary sets out marine energy ambition for Wales](#)

He will deliver the keynote speech at the Ocean Energy Europe conference and exhibition at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, where the Welsh Government will host a trade stand and 16 Welsh companies will be represented.

Ocean Energy Europe is one of the most important events on Europe's ocean energy calendar, providing companies with the opportunity to raise their profile and network with key decision-makers, investors and influential entrepreneurs in the sector.

The Finance Secretary said:

"We are striving to make Wales a leading player in the marine energy field with energy generated from waves and the tide playing an important role in our ambitions for a low-carbon economy.

"Our aim is to generate 70% of our energy from renewable sources by 2030. The marine energy sector can play a significant role in helping Wales achieve this target and will be closely aligned with Wales' First National Marine Plan.

"Over the last 18 months, the EU and Welsh Government has invested in a number of marine energy projects, including Morlais Consent, the Marine Energy Test Area in Pembrokeshire, Bombora Wavepower and Marine Power Systems, as well as ongoing support for Marine Energy Wales.

"All this underpins our ambition to build a thriving industry generating well-paid jobs and business opportunities in Wales. We want to continue to attract developers from around the world to our Welsh waters."

The Finance Secretary will make his keynote speech at 9am in the main auditorium of Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

[North Wales project to transform care](#)

for people with learning disabilities

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, today (Tuesday, 30 October) announced £1.69m funding over two years for the North Wales Regional Partnership Board to develop new ways of working that could eventually be used across Wales.

The funding comes from the £100m Transformation Fund to support key actions from the Welsh Government's long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

Through better integrating health, social care and the third sector, the project aims to help people with learning disabilities live more independently and get the care they need to closer to home.

The project aims to achieve this in a number of different ways:

- Better integration of health and social services and less duplication of record systems so people only have to 'say it once'.
- Workforce development to create better awareness of disability issues among the wider public sector workforce. This approach should reduce the demand for specialist learning disability services in future.
- Uses of assistive technology to help people with learning disabilities become more independent in their everyday lives.
- Community and culture change. Increasing number of people employed in paid work, accessing training, and volunteering. More effective regional approaches for social prescribing.

Mr Gething said:

"Our long term plan for health and social care, sets out how we will transform the way we deliver care to ensure it is sustainable in the future.

This will require better integration of health and social services to reduce reliance on hospitals and deliver care closer to home. The Transformation Fund will be used to fund a small number of projects which have the most impact in developing and delivering new models of care, and which have potential to scale up so they can be used across Wales.

This project aims to deliver better integration of services for people with learning disabilities to help them live more independent lives. I hope many of these new ideas can then be rolled out across Wales to provide a better service for patients and reduce the pressure on certain parts of the NHS and social services."

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Chairman of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board, said:

"We are delighted to hear that our bid for funding has been successful. We have a big ambition in North Wales to improve health and social care, with a clear focus on putting people first and working our services around the needs of residents.

"In a region such as ours, sharing resources, experiences and skills is vital. We all have a common goal and there is a commitment from all organisations to work towards making this dream become reality. Transforming services around learning disabilities has been identified as one of our key areas of work over the coming years and we look forward to using this funding to strengthen and enhance our current quality services to make them even better."