

# Funding announced to prepare health service in Wales for Brexit

Mr Gething announced the funding, from the Welsh Government's £50m EU Transition Fund, following a meeting with key health and social services partners about Brexit preparations yesterday (Thursday, 25 October).

The Welsh NHS Confederation will receive £150,000 over two years to provide support to Welsh NHS boards and trusts to prepare for Brexit. The money will fund a Brexit Transition Support Programme to enable them to increase awareness, support members to prepare for Brexit and provide a coordinated response in terms of contingency planning.

Public Health Wales will receive £60,000 to help strengthen resilience for health security and health protection in Wales.

Mr Gething said:

“As we move into this critical phase, it is important that we are prepared for all possible outcomes for Brexit, including the possibility of a no-deal.

This funding will help the health service in Wales to ensure the smooth and effective running of services for patients and service users following our withdrawal from the European Union.”

Vanessa Young, Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation said:

“We are pleased to have secured this funding which will help us to support communication and engagement between the NHS and Welsh Government as we prepare and respond to EU withdrawal, in whatever form that takes.

“We will use the funding to help Welsh Government coordinate specific Brexit actions across the NHS and to represent Welsh interests in the UK wide Cavendish Coalition and Brexit Health Alliance.

“The immediate priority is to ensure plans are in place across the health and care system in Wales to manage a no deal Brexit, should that happen. Whatever the outcome of negotiations the NHS potentially faces a number of challenges, including the supply of goods and medicines; protecting public health; and maintaining our valued EU workforce. Ultimately our ambition is for patients to see no difference in the level of service we're able to provide after we leave the EU.”

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## Economy Secretary applauds local construction company on employment practices

The Jehu Group is a Bridgend based, family run business and is currently building a housing scheme on behalf of Newydd Housing Association. The new development, Yr Hen Fuarth will provide 44 brand new homes for affordable rent in the Treforest area.

With its commitment to developing its workforce, recruiting locally, operating sustainably and promoting wellbeing, Jehu demonstrates many of the business behaviours that the Welsh Government is trying to drive through its Economic Action Plan and Economic Contract.

Ken Skates said.

“It was real pleasure to visit Jehu and see its progress in delivering this impressive development which will provide over 40 brand new affordable rental homes in the Pontypridd area.

“Jehu Group is demonstrating many of the responsible business behaviours that we are working hard to embed within Welsh business and its proactive campaign to tackle mental health in the workplace and promote wellbeing is of particular interest.

“Earlier this year as part of the delivery of our Economic Action Plan I was pleased to launch our new Economic Contract. Its aim is to develop a new relationship between the Welsh Government and business that is based on the principle of public investment with a social purpose.

“That means that companies who come to us for support now need to work with us and commit to the principles of growth, fair work, health, skills and learning and decarbonisation and I am pleased to report that the Welsh Government now has Economic Contracts in place with 84 companies.

“The Economic Contract is all about testing how a company contributes to the wealth and wellbeing of its workers and the wider community and then spreading that good practice. It is a real pleasure to be visiting one of the many companies in Wales who are leading by example.”

Simon Jehu, Managing Director at Jehu said,

“I welcome the principles behind the Welsh Government's economic contract, which seeks to drive public investment with a social purpose. As a family business we have always sought to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner with a particular focus creating a caring culture amongst our workforce.”

“We are privileged, alongside our partners such as Newydd Housing Association, to be able to create legacy for future generations through the homes we build and the wider contribution to the communities in which we work. It is good to see recognition of such strong values emerging in Government economic policy.”

Paul Roberts, Chief Executive for Newydd added:

“For Newydd, as a responsible social landlord, it is great to be working with another responsible business in Jehu. This development will not only provide some fantastic affordable homes for the local community, it is also providing employment opportunities during its construction.

“Newydd has a dedicated employability service, which through our community benefits contractor scheme, has seen one of our tenants, Dafydd, join the construction team as an apprentice. Jehu provide practical learning experience on site, which means that Dafydd, gets the support he needs to forge a career in construction.”

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## **Welsh Government funding for Deeside Enterprise Zone traffic improvement**

The scheme, which will be undertaken by Flintshire County Council, will see a partial signalisation of the A548/Parkway Roundabout at Zone 2 of the Industrial Park which will improve the flow of traffic to and from businesses in the area.

A reduced 40 mph speed limit will also be implemented on the A548 approaches to and through the roundabout junction to improve safety.

Parkway serves as the single point of access and exit for Zone 2 and as such, the route becomes congested particularly during shift changes. The proposed improvements, which will commence in early 2019, will help ease traffic issues and ensure the road network in the area is safer for the travelling public.

Flintshire Council has been working closely with businesses on the park to

improve traffic flows at peak times of the day and earlier this year a trial traffic management system was installed with positive results.

The investment in the A548 junction is part of the North East Wales metro which develops integrated transport hubs and improves connectivity between those hubs and connects them with rest of Wales, the UK and beyond.

Other projects benefiting in the Deeside area as part of the metro scheme include the integration of Shotton High/Low stations and a new Deeside Parkway station which are currently being progressed.

Economy and Transport Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“Deeside Industrial Park is a significant employment site in North East Wales and ensuring vehicles are able to travel easily in the area is vital for businesses and workers as well as to the Welsh economy as a whole.

“We have listened to concerns regarding the levels of traffic congestion along the length of Parkway and we are taking action by investing £243,000 in a Flintshire Council led scheme which will be essential in improving the situation.

“Road safety will always be the number one priority and following a number of incidents on approach to the A548 Parkway Roundabout at Zone 2, a reduction in the speed limit will also be introduced in the area.

“Providing improved and sustainable access to Deeside and the Deeside Industrial Park is a key aim of my ambitions for the North East Wales Metro and today’s announcement provides yet more assurance to businesses of the important steps we are taking.”

Flintshire County Council Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside Services, Cllr Carolyn Thomas said:

“I am delighted that we have secured funding for this key scheme which is another step forward in delivering the North East Wales Metro project. Once again, this demonstrates the clear commitment by the current administration to improving the overall County transport network.”

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# “Wales to the World” All change at Aberystwyth Station

EU funding of £1.6 million is being invested in the development through the Welsh Government’s Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales, which aims to create 13 must see destinations across Wales.

Titled “Wales to the World” it will see the current terminus at Park Avenue, Aberystwyth transformed into an authentic Great Western Railway 1930’s style station with the creation of a multifunction display and entertainment facility and new café within the former steam locomotive shed.

Alongside these developments, a new carriage storage shed will be built allowing the priceless collection of historic railway carriages to be stored in a protected environment and aid their long term conservation. Since the 1980’s, the railway has been collecting steam locomotives from around the world. This collection is unrivalled containing many locomotives which are now lost elsewhere. These locomotives have never been on public display.

Minister for Culture Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis Thomas, said:

“Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales’ profile in this globally competitive market. This development will provide mid Wales with a major visitor attraction, and I’m delighted that the funding is helping the team to realise a goal of bringing this unrivalled collection of heritage railway carriages together for all to see and appreciate.”

Robert Gambrill CEO Vale of Rheidol Railway:

“This package of work is highly significant in the story of the Vale of Rheidol Railway and we hope it will see more passengers coming to visit what is a hidden gem in mid Wales. With the help of Visit Wales we are creating a tourist experience that will encourage more people to venture to the area as well as the regular tourist hot spots in Wales.

“Our team at the railway must be thanked for all the behind the scenes work which has already gone into the design of the project. Also Ceredigion Council who have allowed us to achieve the goals of building the station also deserve praise for their efforts.

“We, as a railway hope that everyone joins us in this exciting journey of bringing a 1930’s station back to Aberystwyth”.

In total, the Tourism Attractor Destination programme has been approved with £27.7m ERDF towards a total project cost of £61.8m that will see thirteen strategic infrastructure projects realised up to 2021.

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## Help to buy Wales leads the way in tackling leasehold abuse

Rebecca Evans said:

“In March this year I changed the rules on the Help to Buy – Wales shared equity loan scheme, to restrict the use of leasehold unless absolutely necessary.

“We were able to do this by working with the major home builders. Taylor Wimpey, Bellway, Barratts, Redrow and Persimmon also made the commitment to no longer offer houses for sale on a leasehold unless absolutely necessary.

“Help to Buy – Wales is available to support the purchase of all new homes up to £300,000 bought through a registered builder. This means the impact of reducing the unnecessary use of leasehold in Help to Buy – Wales has been much wider. Feedback from housebuilders is that developers are ensuring homes they market meet Help to Buy – Wales criteria, whether or not they are sold through the scheme.

“New figures out today show that we have virtually eradicated the sale of houses on a leasehold basis through Help to Buy – Wales. I’m proud to say we have worked with builders and made positive change for homebuyers in less than a year, without the need for legislation.

“I want everyone in Wales who buys a new leasehold home to do so on fair lease terms, terms which provide security and confidence. To take this further we are working with UK Finance to see how the lead taken by Help to Buy – Wales could spark positive changes on a wider review of leasehold and give real and lasting protection for buyers.

“Everyone involved in the home buying process has a responsibility to protect the consumer and reinstate confidence into the market. The actions I have taken with Help to Buy – Wales and the commitment from the major home builders demonstrate it can be done simply and quickly. I look forward to working with UK Finance as we continue to make improvements for people who want to buy a home.”

John Marr, Principal, Developed Government and Social Housing, UK Finance, said:

“UK Finance and lenders continue to engage with the UK Government and the Welsh Government in relation to leasehold reform. Today’s figures from Help to Buy Wales show the potential for change and we expect policy makers to consider this when deciding how best to ensure a fair deal for leaseholders across England and Wales. Lender requirements in relation to leasehold reflect firms’ individual positions and these will continue to be framed against the backdrop of any legal restrictions on lease terms.”