

£600,000 support package to help young care leavers build a better future

Finance Minister, Rebecca Evans and Housing and Local Government Minister, Julie James announced 2 streams of funding – £243,000 from the Welsh Government's Invest to Save fund and £400,000 of Innovate to Save funding – during a visit to the accommodation for young people.

The 2 projects will be delivered by Swansea-based organisation, FABRIC, who already provide accommodation for young people aged 16-17 in the area. The £243,000 support package will help FABRIC to expand its services to the Neath Port Talbot area, providing a home for a further 6 people in the care system.

The second package, worth £400,000, will provide semi-supported accommodation for young adults over the age of 18 leaving the care system and taking their first steps into adulthood – giving them the space to develop their independence whilst offering a support network to fall back on.

Both projects aim to generate cost savings to local authorities by providing a housing solution for young people in care, avoiding the local authority having to use expensive emergency accommodation.

Minister for Finance and Trefnydd said:

“I am pleased that the Welsh Government's Invest to Save fund, along with Innovate to Save funding, is helping support care leavers as they make their transition into adulthood and independent living.

“The evidence tells us that young people leaving the care system are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol, or to end up in the criminal justice system. As well as being terrible for the young people involved, it inevitably leads to costly interventions for the government. This innovative idea seeks to go some way to breaking this cycle by providing young people with help and support when they need it most.”

Minister for Housing and Local Government added:

“This is a great example of how Innovate to Save funding can support some of Wales' most vulnerable young people at a crucial time in their lives. I look forward to seeing more young people fulfilling their potential thanks to help from these projects.”

Together these 2 projects will provide a consistent pathway from care to independent living for some of Wales' most vulnerable young people,

supporting them to develop the required living skills, engage in education and training, employment and address personal development.

Director of FABRIC, Harri Coleman said:

“Combining the goals of achieving equal opportunities and improving outcomes for young people alongside the financial savings which our approach delivers, was the basis of our involvement in Innovate to Save. It is FABRIC’s aim to be a part of eliciting positive change in the FABRIC kids and creating alternative positive outcomes in adulthood. Whilst it may not be possible to achieve equal outcomes for all, FABRIC aspires to see “Equal Opportunities for Care Leavers” in Wales and across the UK.”

£12m programme to transform delivery of health, care and support in West Wales

The money will support a range of initiatives that shift services from hospital to people’s homes and communities making it easier for people to access the care they need, stay well and keep their independence.

Led by the Regional Partnership Board, the West Wales programme is the latest to receive funding from the Welsh Government’s £100m Transformation Fund. The Fund has been created to support key actions from the Welsh Government’s long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

The programme includes:

- New use of technology to enable monitoring of individuals with health conditions, or at risk of developing them, within their homes. Helping people look after themselves, reducing isolation and providing rapid wrap-around support within communities on a 24/7 basis
- Bringing services together, speeding up plans to offer health, social care and other support from one place closer to home
- Building community resilience, improving access to activities that help people feel involved, safe and fulfilled in their neighbourhoods.

Mr Gething said:

“With an increase in life expectancy and our continued public health challenges, our health and social care services will face even greater demand in the future. In order to meet that demand we

need to truly transform the way we deliver care in the future.

This will require better integration of health, social services and the third sector to deliver care closer to home and reduce pressure on hospitals. A Healthier Wales sets out how can achieve this and our Transformation Fund will deliver that vision by funding projects that have potential to scale up to be used across Wales.”

Chair of West Wales Regional Partnership Board Councillor Jane Tremlett said:

“We are delighted to have been awarded this investment and opportunity to deliver further integration between health and care in our region for the benefit of our communities. Our initial three projects will focus on technology, strengthened integration and more community based support to make a real difference in people’s lives.

We are confident that each of these areas will not only benefit citizens in our area but could potentially lead change across Wales and further afield. We are keen also to develop other areas of regional work through development of staff and other partners to maximise social value and to engage meaningfully with our citizens.”

Degree Apprenticeships offer best of both worlds

The university-run scheme will be fully funded by the Welsh Government, with all students’ fees paid for. Courses will be available in key sectors for economic growth identified by the Welsh Government, including IT, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.

In the academic year 2019-20, subjects include Software Engineering, Cyber Security and Data Analytics, with further courses being developed.

Courses are being provided this year by Bangor University, Cardiff Met, Swansea, Trinity Saint David, the Open University, Wrexham Glyndŵr and the University of South Wales.

The funding will be managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

Degree apprentices work throughout their degree, spending part of their time

at university and the rest with their employer, developing the skills and knowledge needed to excel, both in university and in their work role.

Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education, said:

“It is essential people are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to benefit from the opportunities an evolving labour market presents. Degree apprenticeships are ideal for people already working in technology industries but are keen to study to degree level, or those who are new to the workforce but would like to study for a degree at the same time.

“This is also about improving social mobility and widening participation – providing alternative routes into higher education for people who didn’t consider or may not have had the opportunity to go to university straight after leaving school.

“The degree apprenticeship therefore offers those all-round benefits – they’re good for individual development, good for diversifying entry into the professions and good for Wales’ economic well-being.”

Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport, said:

“Our rapidly changing economy means that securing and retaining a highly skilled workforce is imperative to our future economic wellbeing. And with the ongoing challenges and uncertainties of Brexit there is no doubt that developing a highly skilled and flexible workforce is more important than ever. These degree apprenticeships have been designed to reflect the needs of employers in Wales, providing the knowledge and skills they recognise and value. They will help improve productivity by upskilling both the new and the existing workforce, and will deliver clear benefits to both employer and employee.”

Siobhan Stephens is currently undertaking a Degree Apprenticeship at University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) while working at Mobilise, a digital cloud development business in Swansea.

Siobhan said:

“I’ve always known I wanted to work with computers – I find them fascinating. I took computer science and ICT at A Level, but I wasn’t sure if university was the right fit for me. I just wanted to get straight into work.

“For me, a degree apprenticeship is the best of both worlds. I spend four days a week working at Mobilise, getting hands-on

experience in software development, and one day a week at university learning the theory behind it. Working this way means I can see how the theory works in practice and apply my on-the-job knowledge to my studies.

“My degree apprenticeship will only take a year longer than a normal degree. At the end of it I’ll have a recognised qualification and four years of industry experience under my belt.”

Barry Liles OBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Skills and Lifelong Learning) at UWTSD, said:

“As a provider of high level skills, we recognise the immense benefits to both our students and employers that can be achieved through digital degree apprenticeships. They are invaluable for preparing students with the skills and knowledge needed for industry – using a combination of expertise to upskill the talent pipeline for employers in Wales and beyond. We want to ensure that every student who walks through our doors, leaves with a skillset for life.”

Further information on the available courses can be found on the university websites.

More than £2.5m to deliver care closer to home and help people to live independently in Western Bay area

The funding allocation includes:

- More than £650,000 for specialist equipment and assistive technology to support early hospital discharge, prevent hospital admissions and support people to remain safe in their own homes
- More than £620,000 for the development of specialist supported living schemes in Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot
- More than £200,000 to relocate and transform the Children’s Home in Ty Nant in Swansea
- £270,000 to refurbish a ward at Tonna Hospital in Neath, to ensure the Integrated Autism Service has close links with mental health services
- £285,000 towards the costs of development of Bridgend Wellbeing Hub which will provide multi-agency prevention and wellbeing support
- More than £560,000 to create new accommodation for the Integrated Autism

Service, Neuro-Developmental, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Multi-Agency Placement Support Services within Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board.

Julie James said:

“Our three-year Integrated Care Fund capital programme aims to better integrate health, social care and housing, because we know homes can make a difference to our health.

“The right housing can support people to remain independent, or provide the right environment for people leaving hospital, reducing delays in getting people home. The programme is beginning to support this objective but I want it to feature more housing which supports people’s health and social care needs in the future.

“As well as this, the right kind of support in our hospitals can improve care, and help people return home sooner. We know our health and social care services face long term pressures, and this programme can also support investment which will help them to operate and integrate more effectively.

“It is vital that people receive the right support when they need it, whether they are older people with complex needs and long term health conditions, people with learning disabilities, children with complex health needs, or carers.”

Councillor Rob Jones, Leader of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council chairs the Western Bay Regional Partnership Board. He said:

“We welcome this additional investment which will enable us to deliver more sustainable services that better meet people’s needs. Through bringing local partners together, Western Bay’s innovative, integrated services are making a real and meaningful difference to people’s lives.

“2019 represents a time of great change for us as a partnership as the Health Bound boundary change comes into place and Bridgend leaves to join the Cwm Taf region on 1st April, but all partners remain fully committed to delivering services of the highest possible standard”.

New immigration rules will hit the Welsh economy finds report

The Welsh Government asked the Wales Centre for Public Policy to examine how the Whitehall plans, which were published in a recent White Paper, to change the immigration system once the UK has left the EU, will affect Wales.

This included examining the impact of stopping overseas workers from staying in the UK for more than a year if they earn less than £30,000.

The key findings from the report, which was carried out in collaboration with experts from Kings College London and the University of Oxford, include:

- The White Paper proposals are likely to substantially reduce low-paid EU migration to the UK, and reduce middle and higher-paid EU migration, albeit by a lesser degree.
- Wales will be affected more than the UK as a whole by the cut in the number of people migrating for work, but the overall impact on the Welsh economy is projected to be less than that on the UK economy.
- There would be an estimated hit to GDP in Wales of between 1% and 1.5% of GDP over 10 years, compared to between 1.5% and 2% for the UK as a whole. The policy would also reduce GDP per capita.
- Securing a salary threshold of below £30,000 would slightly mitigate the impacts – a £20,000 threshold is estimated to lead to a reduction in GDP of between 0.8% and 1.2% over 10 years.
- The sectors most affected by the proposed changes across all skills levels include manufacturing, education, social care and health.
- The profile of detailed sectors and occupations expected to be affected in Wales is likely to be broadly similar to the UK as a whole.

Jeremy Miles said:

“This report once again confirms our fears that the UK government’s migration proposals will do nothing to help employers and will hit the Welsh economy. The government’s plans will have a real impact on both the private and public sector.

“Nurses, junior doctors, vets and a range of workers we need for our public services and industry will find it much more difficult and less attractive to come to Wales under these proposals. The immigration system should help our economy and people, not stifle it and limit its potential.

“We want the UK government to drop the threat of a £30,000 salary threshold which will do so much to harm to our economy. We need a flexible, managed approach to immigration that is fair but does not do unnecessary damage to our prosperity. That is why we have set out detailed proposals for a post-Brexit immigration system that

links more closely to employment needs and serves the interests of the country.”