

[First Minister responds to UK Government's 'no deal' plans](#)

Responding to the UK Government's 'no deal' plans, First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

"The writing is on the wall. 'No deal' would be a catastrophic failure of the UK Government that would cause huge disruption and serious, long-lasting economic and social damage to all parts of the UK.

"It is hugely frustrating, because if the UK Government had adopted the blueprint to negotiations we set out over 18 months ago, they could have made substantial progress on the future partnership with the EU. They also could have avoided the situation we face today where our biggest employers are considering leaving the UK with the loss of thousands of jobs causing disruption to our economy, our universities are at risk of losing out on vital research and our hospitals are warning of staff shortages putting patients at risk.

"'No deal' is not an option and the UK Government's bluff is fooling no-one. It is time the Prime Minister dropped the poker face and worked constructively with the EU-27 to secure a Brexit deal that protects our citizens, services and economy."

[Funding support for farm businesses announced by Lesley Griffiths](#)

The Cabinet Secretary also announced the Welsh Government would be making a donation of £500,000 to farming charities to help provide short-term support to those families in Wales who are least able to meet living costs.

Lesley Griffiths said:

"In response to the period of exceptionally hot and dry weather earlier this summer, I brought together a range of stakeholders at the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show to discuss the action Government and the industry might take collectively to mitigate the issues farmers are facing.

Whilst the weather and immediate forage situation has improved, I

remain concerned about the medium and longer term cost and fodder availability implications for farm businesses. In recognition of the current exceptional circumstances, I have taken the decision to make available a loan facility to farm businesses later this year.

European regulations set the payment window for BPS from 1 December to 30 June, and based on Wales' excellent payment performance, I expect approximately 90% of farm businesses in Wales to receive their BPS payments on day one. To ensure parity between claimants, I will also introduce a loan facility for the remaining approximate 10% of farm businesses where the BPS claims are yet to be validated and therefore cannot be paid under European regulations."

The Cabinet Secretary added:

"I am conscious the Farming Unions have been calling for us to bring forward the BPS 2018 payments. I have decided this would not be particularly helpful as making advance payments in October will not resolve the immediate or longer term implications of the exceptional weather conditions and it would create an unfortunate disparity between businesses in terms of some receiving BPS payments while others would not.

The Farming Unions themselves recognise this position would be unfair and create further problems. Therefore, the introduction of a loan scheme is a better and fairer solution to the difficult circumstances affecting farm businesses this year.

In the short term, I am acutely aware of the human impact on farming families. I have therefore asked my officials to work closely with the agricultural charities, to decide how best we can support their work. In order to help address immediate financial difficulties, we will be making a donation of £500,000 to help provide short-term support to those families in Wales who are least able to meet living costs.

Making these decisions now will provide farm businesses with assurance and the knowledge they need to help manage their immediate cash flow and plan their finances in the longer term, especially through the forthcoming winter."

[Health Secretary approves £1.7m](#)

funding to upgrade Tonypandy Health Centre

The funding will support the merger of two GP practices in the area to create one new integrated health and care centre, leading to improved services for patients.

The current building will not accommodate the changes needed to merge both practices and modernise services. The accommodation is constrained and rooms are small, with just one treatment room, which is also used by the community nursing team.

Today's investment will allow the Health Board to increase the number of clinical rooms and create secure accommodation and private space for clinical staff and patients.

The Health Secretary said:

“Having two separate GP surgeries within the health centre no longer made sense. For one thing, a large amount of space within the building was being duplicated, which meant facilities were cramped for staff and patients, while recruitment of staff for both surgeries was also a challenge.

“Our long-term plan for health and social care in Wales focuses on providing better care, closer to home. The refurbishment to Tonypandy Health Centre will do just that. I'm pleased we've committed £1.7million funding for the Centre, which will help improve access to local services for patients.”

The funding will also be used to improve the infrastructure of the building, with upgrades to water, drainage, electrics, plumbing and heating, creating a modern building which will serve the community for years to come.

Alan Lawrie, Director of Primary, Community and Mental Health for Cwm Taf University Health Board, said:

“We very much welcome this announcement of funding for the Tonypandy Health Centre by the Welsh Government.

“It will provide the GPs, staff and patients with a new improved primary care environment, which will allow for enhanced services for the population.

“The investment means a wider integrated multidisciplinary team can be accommodated in the refurbished building which will be fit for the future of healthcare in Tonypandy.”

Today's announcement forms part of the biggest targeted investment in primary

and community care infrastructure by the Welsh Government. Earlier this year 19 projects were approved to deliver health and care services closer to people's homes.

[There's still time – a week until Young People into Agriculture Scheme closes](#)

Earlier this year the Cabinet Secretary launched the £6m [Young People into Agriculture scheme](#) to support new young entrants into the industry.

The scheme will offer start-up aid to top performing young people looking to establish a new business or develop an existing business. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate they have the attributes to lead dynamic businesses and drive positive change in the wider industry.

Following the first window for applications, 106 young people progressed to the next stage. Recently, during the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show, the Cabinet Secretary announced a new window for applications, which closes next week on 29 August.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Young farmers are the future of agriculture and that is why attracting the most ambitious new and young entrants to the industry is a priority of mine. Our £6m Young People into Agriculture scheme aims to do just this and I am pleased 106 people have already progressed to the next stage.

“There are 150 places available on the scheme and at the Royal Welsh Show I announced a new window for applications. With a week to go until that window closes, my message to aspiring young people is simple – find out more about the sizeable support available through the scheme to kick start your farming business and future career.

“It is now just over seven months until we leave the European Union and we are working with the industry to help them prepare for the inevitable change and challenges ahead.

Health Secretary approves £646,000 funding to upgrade Fishguard Health Centre

The funding will support the merger of Fishguard and Goodwick surgeries, updating the facilities at the current Fishguard GP practice to accommodate this service change and lead to improved services for patients.

The Health Secretary said:

“Our long-term plan for health and social care in Wales focuses on providing better care, closer to home. The investment at Fishguard Health Centre will do just that. I’m pleased we’re providing £646,000 to assist in updating the Centre and help improve access to local services for patients.”

The investment will also lead to:

- an improved district nursing service by co-locating in the new Health Centre
- direct access to local anti-coagulant clinics, so patients will no longer need to travel to Withybush Hospital
- improved accommodation for community services, including physiotherapy, midwifery and community psychiatric nurse
- opportunities to join staffing, addressing current recruitment challenges caused in part by the two separate practices.

Jill Paterson, Director of Primary Care, Community and Long Term Care at Hywel Dda University Health Board, said:

“On behalf of the health board I am delighted that the Welsh Government has approved this investment for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Health Centre at Fishguard. This vital work will enable us to strengthen Primary care services in the area and improve the Health Centre’s estate, as well as providing joint staffing opportunities. Patients will have less need to travel to Withybush General Hospital for anti-coagulant clinics as we will be able to provide direct access at the Health Centre, whilst there will also be improved accommodation for a range of Community services including physiotherapy, health visiting, district nursing, a heart failure nurse, midwifery, podiatry, community psychiatric nurse, audiology, the leg ulcer service and diabetic retinopathy service.”

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