# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Medical Education in Wales** |
| **DATE** | **09 July 2018** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services** |

I have previously spoken about my commitment to expanding medical education and training in North Wales. Any extension must be both sustainable and be a part of the established Welsh arrangements for medical education and training. The Cabinet Secretary for Education shares this view.

Working collaboratively, Cardiff, Swansea and Bangor universities have been best-placed to identify and explore options to deliver plans for the expansion of medical education in North Wales.

The universities have made significant progress and submitted their proposals earlier this year for consideration. These proposals reflect the fact that issues faced in north Wales are also experienced in other parts of Wales, particularly in the west of the country. As a result Aberystwyth University will also be involved in developing the proposals.

Today, I can confirm the Cabinet Secretary for Education, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and I have agreed an approach, which will see an immediate expansion in medical school places in Wales and ensure that more medical students study in North Wales, and also provide a pathway for doctors being trained completely in North Wales.

There will be a greater focus on training in the community, reflecting the move to providing more care closer to people’s homes and these new arrangements will provide more opportunities for Welsh speakers to undertake their studies in Welsh. Under the new arrangements, there will be an additional 40 funded medical places from this September, split between Cardiff and Swansea universities.

* Collaboration between Cardiff and Bangor universities will mean that medical students will be able to study in North Wales for the entirety of their medical degree and plan for their postgraduate training. Key components of the transitional arrangements will be longer placements in North Wales with a greater emphasis on working within the community. By 2019 we expect arrangements to be in place for students to study the totality of their medical degree in North Wales
* An increase in places in West Wales will include collaboration between Swansea and Aberystwyth universities, with a greater focus of working in the community.

The initial funding to deliver this will come from the resources identified in the two-year Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru but the commitment goes beyond that agreement.

Expanding medical education opportunities in North and West Wales will not, on their own, address the challenges we face in sustaining our medical workforce. We must ensure medicine is seen as an attractive and accessible career choice.

We have been piloting work experience programmes in GP practices across Wales, which appear to have had a positive impact. Funding has also been made available to support a programme for school pupils interested in applying to medical school. This includes a two-day residential programme, which provides attendees with information about the reality of being a doctor and familiarises them with the admissions processes for medical school. Taken together these are key components of a medical careers framework for Wales.

It is equally important to consider the postgraduate opportunities available across Wales and further work will be required in the coming months to explore this in greater detail.

Today’s announcement is an important step in addressing some of the longer-term medical recruitment and retention issues in the NHS in Wales. It will ensure doctors are trained in North Wales within a shorter time period than it would take to establish a medical school.

I would like to thank the universities for their commitment and collaboration in developing the proposals to support this expansion.