# Annual Report - Key achievements

## Education & Early Years

* PISA results published in December 2019 showed that Wales was the only country to improve in all three core areas. We achieved our best ever scores for reading and maths.
* We increased the salary for newly qualified teachers by 5%.
* More than 20,000 learners in further education benefited from the Education Maintenance Allowance last year.
* We introduced a new package of financial support for higher education and part-time learning.
* Delivered the biggest investment in teachers since devolution, with £24m directed towards professional development.
* Our Flying Start programme supported more than 36,000 children.
* We offered free breakfasts to 75,000 children.
* We are the first UK administration to introduce 30 hour, 48 weeks a year funded Childcare Offer for working parents. From April 2019, the Childcare Offer was available across all local authorities in Wales. Just two years from its pilot introduction, over 50% of estimated eligible children are now taking up the Offer.
* Our school holiday Food and Fun programme offered 4,000 extra places across Wales in 2019 to tackle holiday hunger.
* All local authorities have now established edge-of-care services, and 18 have signed up to formal targets for reducing the number of children in care.
* Investing in the biggest school building programme since the 1960s. £1.4 billion between April 2014 and March 2019, with a further £2.3 billion to be invested from March 2019 onwards.
* We have doubled Pupil Development Grant to over £5 million this year to supports families with the costs of school uniform and sports kit, and equipment for activities both inside and outside of school.
* Delivering the most sustainable and progressive package of student reforms, including up to £17,000 for full time students to help them with upfront living costs and a new package of support for post grads, including bursaries to attract the brightest back to Wales in key areas for the economy. This has contributed to a 46% increase in part time students.

## Decarbonisation

* Declared a climate emergency, the first UK country to do so.
* We have increased our carbon reduction target to 95% by 2050, with an ambition to get to net zero.
* Our low carbon delivery plan Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales has 100 policies and proposals for reducing our carbon levels.
* More than half of our electricity now comes from renewable sources.
* There are nearly 69,000 renewable energy projects in Wales.
* Wales has the fourth highest recycling rates in the world. We recycled, reused or composted 63% of our waste.
* We helped take an estimated 177,000 homes out of fuel poverty between 2008 and 2018, more than halving it across Wales. Our Warm Homes scheme installed energy efficiency measures in more than 50,000 homes.

## Agriculture and natural environment

* We have planted more than 10 million trees since 2014.
* We launched our £150m Coastal Risk Management programme which will run until 2022.
* We consulted on Sustainable Farming and our Land, which contains detailed proposals on how we would support farmers when we leave the Common Agricultural Policy.
* Our BlasCymru/TasteWales food and drink event in March 2019 generated nearly £22m in new business opportunities.

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## Health and social care

* Health spending per person grew by 3.9% in Wales in 2018-19. This is faster than growth in England or Scotland. By 2021, the Welsh Labour Government will have invested £37bn in the Welsh NHS.
* Raised the residential care capital limit to £50,000, two years earlier than planned.
* Wales is the first country in the UK to develop a single cancer pathway for everyone suspected of having cancer.
* Our New Treatment Fund supports faster access to new medicines. As of September 2019, the average time taken for these new treatments to be available on the NHS had fallen from 90 days to just 11. *(please note this figure is variable; 13 days was the December 2019 average - Health boards report every month, and the figure has always well below the 60-day target).*
* Our whole school approach to mental health has benefited more than 10,000 children – 87% of whom needed no onward referral to specialist services.
* Increased ring-fenced mental health budget to £679m in 2019-20 budget.
* We filled 186 GP training place, exceeding an expanded target.
* The NHS Wales workforce has grown by 10.4% over the last five years – nurse training places have risen by 40% overall in this period and midwifery places have risen by 71%.
* There are record numbers of frontline NHS staff in place, supported by record levels of investment in the NHS Wales
* Adult smoking prevalence rates fell to 17% in 2018-19.
* Five-year age-standardised cancer survival rates in Wales have increased by 6.8 percentage points over ten years.
* More than 400,000 men and women are routinely screened in Wales each year as part of the breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening programmes and [this is a key factor in the continued improvement in the 1 year and 5-year survival rates for these cancers.
* Wales was the first country in the UK to adopt a mandatory food hygiene rating scheme.
* Immunisation uptake rates in Wales remain at the top of international benchmarks and are comparable to other UK countries. The vast majority of children in Wales are fully immunised before they start school.
* Life expectancy has increased by 2.8 years for males and 2.2 years for females since 2001-03. Life expectancy at birth in Wales for 2016-18 was 78.3 years for males and 82.3 years for females (ONS data December 2019).

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## Housing & Local Government

* We are on track to deliver 20,000 affordable homes by 2021.
* 2,592 affordable housing units were delivered across Wales in 2018/19, 12% higher than 2017/18 and the highest annual total to date.
* Our Innovative Housing Programme has supported 1,400 new homes, including over 1,000 affordable homes.
* Local authorities have set targets to build 1,750 new council houses by the end of 2022, and some have started building new houses for the first time in decades.
* We are funding seven Housing First projects and have provided an additional £8.8m to local authorities to improve statutory provision to tackle homelessness.
* 93% of social housing dwellings (211,478 dwellings) met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard at 31 March 2019 (including Acceptable Fails). This means that more tenants are living in warm, secure homes which are in a good state of repair. Since 2004, we have provided £1.7bn to provide financial support to social landlords to help them achieve and maintain the standard.
* Our £100 million Targeted Regeneration Investment programme is in the second year of delivery.  To date, over 40 projects have been approved, committing grant funding and loans worth over £57 million. Our £54 million Building for the Future Programme has seen 20 projects approved so far, committing grant of nearly £46 million.
* Introduced the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which includes major reforms to the local government electoral system and governance, including lowering the voting age to 16.
* Provided over £4.3 billion of funding [capital and revenue settlements plus pensions, economic stimulus and highways refurbishment grant] to Local Authorities in 2019-20 to protect the delivery of essential and valued local public services from social care to schools to local roads.  This includes additional funding of £39.1 million specifically to support Councils meeting the costs of teachers’ pensions.

## Economy and skills

* The employment rate in Wales reached a record high of 76.2% in the last three months of 2018 and has remained high in historical terms since then
* We are on track to deliver 100,000 apprenticeships by 2021, and we have now delivered 74,000 apprenticeships
* Working Wales launched in May 2019 and has already supported 15,000 people
* The Foundational Economy Challenge Fund was opened in May 2019 to projects designed to help the everyday economy thrive. The Valleys Taskforce is providing an additional £2.2m to this fund to support 27 Valleys projects.
* The Development Bank of Wales is managing more than £500m of support for businesses.
* Business Wales helped create more than 1,040 new enterprises during 2018.
* The unemployment rate in Wales in November 2019 was the lowest since records began.
* In September 2019, there were 143,700 more people in work in Wales than in September 2010.
* The gender pay gap is decreasing and remains smaller than the UK average
* At the end of 2018 the number of workless households in Wales was 17.2%, the lowest since records began in 2005 (21.6%).

## Travel and infrastructure

* The MyTravelPass discounted bus scheme has been expanded to 16-21 year olds. 20,000 young people have taken 1.3 million discounted journeys since the scheme began.
* Fare reductions will be delivered across the rail network from January 2020. Extra Sunday services were brought on line in December 2019.
* New rolling stock on the Valleys Lines will provide 6,500 more seats every week.
* We are rolling out superfast fibre broadband to a further 26,000 houses and businesses.

## Tax and advice

* In April 2019, Welsh Rates of Income Tax (WRIT) were introduced, enabling the Senedd to make decisions – for the first time – about a proportion of income tax to be paid in Wales.
* WRIT and the other Welsh taxes now contribute around £3.6bn a year to our Budget.
* The first Welsh rates of income tax were set at 10p, the same as England, fulfilling a commitment not to increase income tax during this Senedd term.
* We have introduced new legislation to removing the penalty of imprisonment for non-payment of council tax.
* We have exempted care leavers up to the age of 25 from paying council tax.
* We have maintained our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, with 220,000 households in Wales paying no council tax at all.
* Half of all businesses in Wales pay no business rates at all thanks to our £230m investment in rates relief.
* Our advice services helped 77,000 people secure more than £53m of benefit income they were entitled to in 2018-19.

**International Relations & Welsh Language**

* We continue to deliver our Cymraeg 2050 strategy in order to reach our target of a million Welsh speakers and to increase the percentage of the population that speak Welsh daily.
* We’ve seen positive increases in the number of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin, with more than 11,000 children across Wales now receiving nursery-level education through the medium of Welsh.
* We have worked with local authorities to develop Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – or WESPs – to drive an increase in provision of Welsh-medium education. Thanks to the success of projects such as Siarter Iaith, schools are working to increase the use of Welsh both in and out the classroom, not just at Welsh medium schools but also at English medium schools. We know that we have to push harder on the recruitment of Welsh speaking teachers at secondary level, and we are working to see where any obstacles to recruitment might be removed.
* The Cymraeg Gwaith scheme has seen more than 2,500 employees across a number of workplaces learning Welsh online.
* We have a coherent and comprehensive international strategy, launched by the Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language [in January]. This recognises that our relationship with the EU and its organisations will inevitably change over the coming months and years, but that we want to continue working with our European partners wherever possible. Europe remains our most important export market.