Prince Charles Hospital set for multi-million pound makeover

Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil has been awarded a £64.7m funding package for major redevelopment and refurbishment work, Health Minister Dr Brian Gibbons has announced.

The current, crowded Accident & Emergency facilities will be transformed at a cost of £17.8m into a new integrated emergency unit with greater space, separate child-friendly facilities and improved layout allowing privacy and dignity for patients. The unit will include trauma, medical and surgical assessment, fast track for cardiac emergencies, out of hours primary care facilities and the development of a short stay centre.

The bulk of the funding, £42.1m will be spent on much needed ward refurbishment work including removing asbestos and addressing essential health and safety issues to meet modern health standards. The current 30 bed ward design is cramped and compromises patients' privacy and dignity. The funding will create 12 comfortable, high quality 24 bed wards which reduce the risk of cross infection and protect privacy and dignity.

Three smaller schemes have also been fully approved. A new £1.6m MRI scanner will be operational by summer 2007. Previously, MRI activity has been dealt with through referrals to Pontypridd & Rhondda NHST Trust and the use of mobile scanners.

A new 64-slice CT scanner will be installed by April 2007 to replace the ageing 4-slice CT scanner at the hospital. Full capital cost is just under £620K.

Off-site work has already started on £2.5m lift refurbishment scheme at the hospital, including the installation of one new lift at the hospital.

Dr Gibbons said:

I am delighted that we've been able to support this much needed development and expansion work at Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil.

Our strategy Designed for Life summarises our vision for a world-class health service that meets the challenges of the 21st century.

This development and refurbishment programme at Prince Charles Hospital is the realisation of our strategy.

We want a health service that is high quality in design, safe and effective and delivers to people what they want.
NOTES:

- The Strategic Outline Case of the redevelopment of Unscheduled Care Facilities (A&E) has been approved. An Outline Business Case is expected to be presented to the Welsh Assembly Government in summer 2007.
- The Outline Business Case has been approved for the ward refurbishment programme. Full Business Case is expected to be presented to the Assembly Government in summer 2007.
- The Full Business Cases for the MRI Scanner, CT Scanner and hospital lift refurbishment scheme have all been approved.