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## **HEALTH MINISTER TO OUTLINE TWO-YEAR SPENDING PLANS**

### **Priorities include more money for neonatal care, eating disorders and improving access**

Health Minister Edwina Hart will today outline new spending priorities for the next two years following the increased funding for health and social services announced in last week's draft budget.

The money will help meet a range of the Welsh Assembly Government's *One Wales* commitments.

It will include:

- £4m for neonatal services in Wales to improve care for smallest and most vulnerable babies;
- £1.5m to improve services for those suffering from eating disorders;
- 63m next year to ensure that by the end of December 2009 no patient will wait more than 26 weeks from primary care referral to treatment, with an extra £54m available in 2010/11;
- £16m next year, rising to £19m in 2010/11, for mental health services; and,
- £3.6m for taking forward the autism strategy.

Edwina Hart said:

"I have made it clear that services for patients with eating disorders are poor and need to improve significantly.

"Guidance to the NHS on improving services is currently being prepared but as part of my budget allocation I can today announce that I am allocating £1.5m to take forward the development of community services.

"This will enable earlier treatment of those suffering from eating disorders so their needs can be met as quickly as possible and lower the risk of their condition worsening to such a state as to require inpatient care."

Mrs Hart added:

"We are committed to further improving services for mothers and new born babies and work is already under way to achieve this.

“Earlier this year, I consulted with clinicians on the review of neonatal services, and priorities have now been identified, such as the need for a dedicated transport system, a clinical information system and the development of clinical networks to improve the care of babies needing specialist treatment.

“This extra £2million a year will help deliver these improvements from April.

“I will also be launching all Wales standards for neonatal services on 8 December which will form the basis of the improvement of services in Wales. The standards will be used by the managed clinical networks to support planning, design and delivery, whilst ensuring equity of access across Wales.”

“BLISS has been involved in both of these areas of work to ensure that Wales develops a neonatal service which delivers the highest quality of care to Wales' most vulnerable babies.”

Mrs Hart will outline her spending plans at her appearance before the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee later today.

Last week's allocation also includes increased funding to prevent illness and disease, including vaccines, worth more than £69m next year rising to more than £80m in 2010/11; and funding of £2.5m in 2009/10 and £2.6m in 2010/11 will be made available for arrhythmia services.

The budget for chronic diseases will more than double next year to almost £11m, rising to nearly £13m in 2010/11 with £4.1m and £3.5m respectively invested in improving renal services for kidney patients.

#### **Notes to editors:**

1. It was announced last week that the draft budget for health and social services will rise to more than £5.99bn in 2009/10 and reach more than £6.17bn in 2010/11.

This is an increase of over £129.4m and £117.5m respectively compared with the three-year plans set out in the final budget for 2008/09.

That means total spending in this area will increase by £302.9m in 2009/10 and a further £182.9m in 2010/11 – representing a year-on-year percentage increase of 5.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively.

2. For media enquiries only, contact the Welsh Assembly Government Press Office on 029 2089 8012 / 8100 / 8890 or 029 2082 1823. General enquiries to: 0845 010 3300 (English) or 0845 010 4400 (Welsh).