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# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **North Wales Medical School Task and Finish Group – Phase Two Report** |
| **DATE**  | **10 September 2021** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

I would like to thank Professor Elizabeth Treasure, chair of the North Wales Medical School Task and Finish Group, and all the members, for their hard work in providing me with advice in such a short space of time. They provided me with a focused and practical critical report and a clear set of recommendations.

In light of these recommendations, I have asked my officials to establish a programme board to drive forward phase three, which will implement the recommendations and work towards the delivery of an independent medical school in North Wales.

North Wales faces some significant NHS workforce and retention issues, which is why I am happy to announce today that I have agreed to increase student places for the C21 North Wales programme to 25 in September 2021 and 40 in September 2022.

This increase will build on the success of this programme to date and allow even more students the opportunity to study in the very heart of communities in North Wales, further strengthening our commitment to delivering care as close to people’s homes as possible.

Today’s announcement reinforces our pledge to establish a new medical school in North Wales and we continue to work in social partnership with all stakeholders to achieve our ambition to improve health and care in the region.

I am also pleased to announce an uplift of Swansea University’s graduate-entry medicine intake to an extra 25 students in 2021 – the programme provides the fastest route for training doctors in Wales, with students graduating in four years rather than five.

Swansea University is working in partnership with Hywel Dda and Swansea Bay university health boards to build on their existing mentoring and development schemes to establish a more ambitious range of retention initiatives to ensure that medical students educated in Wales stay in Wales long after graduation.

One thing we have learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic is how truly amazing our NHS in Wales is, and without those who choose to dedicate themselves to caring for individuals in society, the people of Wales would not have a service that they and their families can rely on.

It is therefore important we do everything we can to nurture healthcare professional education and encourage graduates to stay and work in Wales long after graduation.

Additionally, I have asked my officials to conduct a review of the medical service increment for teaching (SIFT) and the NHS Wales Bursary.

SIFT is an additional payment made to NHS Wales organisations to support the costs of undergraduate medical and dental education; the establishment of a new medical school in North Wales is an opportunity to ensure the NHS in Wales is appropriately supported while providing our medical and dental students with the quality and innovative teaching necessary to produce first-class doctors and dentists for Wales.

We have maintained the full bursary package for students starting their studies in the academic year 2021-22 and 2022-23 in Wales. Providing financial support for students to incentivise them following qualification to work within the healthcare sector in Wales. It is now time to review the bursary to ensure that it offers comparable benefits with the other home nations to ensure Wales is the preferred student destination.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.