

# Delivering fair work for health, well-being and equity

What it is, why it matters and what you can do

A guide for local and regional organisations in Wales



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Wales

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# 1 Foreword

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# 1 Foreword



The relationship between levels of economic activity and the health of societies has long been recognised as a fundamental determinant of health. What has a more recent history is the notion of fair work. Wales' industrial past left indelible scars through previous generations, while future students of history will reflect on the devastating impact of Covid-19 on today's communities.

I gladly accepted the invitation to chair the Participation in Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity Expert Panel, which enabled me to pursue a long-term interest in the relationship between work and health. The expertise of the Panel was crucial in forensically considering the evidence against a challenging timescale, and in scrutinising information to a depth that increasingly demonstrated the significance of fair work for population health and well-being. Fair work provides a sense of purpose, contributing to the well-being of the worker, business and wider community. When aligned with a sustainable and green approach to economic development can equip the Welsh economy for the future.

Fair work is not time specific, it is not dependent on location or type of industry. However, too many workers suffer from the effects of what are precarious or even toxic working environments. These harms are not shared evenly across society, as has been vividly exposed by the COVID-19 spotlight.

Stress and financial difficulties arising from the pandemic, coupled with the increasing cost of living and poor working environments, all contribute to inequalities in levels of chronic ill-health and mortality rates across Wales. Many employers adapted rapidly to safeguard their workforce's health during the pandemic. As we look to shape a better future for Wales, it is our duty to improve participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity. At local and regional levels, we must act with focus and intensity to make access to good quality work more equitable, use public funding to improve working conditions and partner with businesses to promote and implement fair work.

As panel chair, I want to sincerely thank the panel members for their dedication, expert insights and the quality of the discussions which have informed the development of this guide.

**Professor Ceri J Phillips**

Vice Chair, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Emeritus Professor of Health Economics at Swansea University and Honorary Professor in Cardiff University School of Medicine

Chair, Participation in Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity Expert Panel

## 2 About this guide



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## 2 About this guide

### This guide is for:

- Local authority councillors
- Other decision makers in Local Authorities, Health Boards and organisations working at local and regional level
- Partnerships and joint working arrangements at regional and local level: Public Services Boards, Regional Partnership Boards, Corporate Joint Committees, boards responsible for City and Regional Growth Deals, and Regional Skills Partnerships
- Others interested in increasing participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity

Action on fair work supports a healthier, more equal and more prosperous Wales, and if done well, can support all seven well-being goals. This guide is intended to support agencies in their existing efforts to improve health, well-being and equity through inclusive participation in fair work.

This guide was informed by the work and recommendations of the Participation in Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity Expert Panel. The report of that panel and related documents are available at [phw.nhs.wales/FairWork](http://phw.nhs.wales/FairWork)

### The seven well-being goals for Wales <sup>1</sup>



### Fair work

*“Fair work is where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected.”*

Fair Work Commission, 2019 <sup>2</sup>

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## 4 Summary of actions to increase inclusive participation in fair work



# 5 Why fair work?



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# 5 Why fair work?

## 5.1 Fair work is good for health, well-being and equity

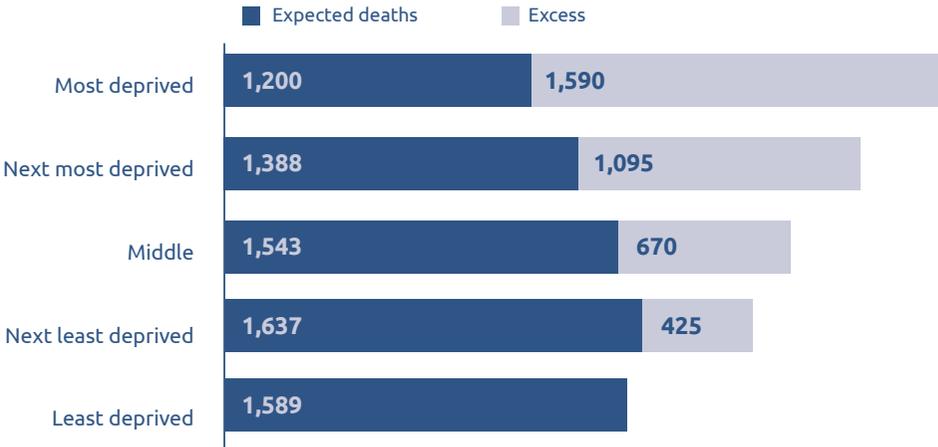
**Participation in fair work provides a sense of purpose and means that people have money, time and resources for a healthy life for themselves and their families. Fair, rewarding and secure work can reduce psychological stress, create a stepping stone out of poverty and help dependent children have the best start in life.**

### People are dying in Wales because they do not have the essentials for a healthy life

A lack of the essential conditions for good health means that too often, people in Wales die too early. The building blocks that support a healthy life, called wider determinants of health, include education and skills, participation in fair work, money and resources, housing and our surroundings. Without these building blocks in place, our health and well-being is affected, leading to ill-health that is avoidable and unfair.

One third of all premature deaths in Wales are related to these wider determinants of health, as measured by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. <sup>3</sup> The graph shows how many premature deaths we might expect in Wales if everyone’s experiences were similar to the least disadvantaged 20% of areas. However, instead of the 1,200 premature deaths that would be expected in the most disadvantaged of our communities, in fact there are 2,790 premature deaths.

Expected deaths by deprivation fifth, if the mortality rates of the least deprived fifth were to apply, Wales, persons aged <75, 2016-18 <sup>4</sup>



Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these different experiences further. Described as a ‘syndemic’, the pandemic interacted with and exacerbated existing non-communicable disease and social conditions for the most disadvantaged communities. <sup>5</sup> Working conditions played an important role in both the spread of the virus and the ability of people to adapt to restrictions imposed. <sup>6</sup>



Health & health services



Health & income security and social protection



Health & living conditions



Health & social and human capital



Health & employment and working conditions

## 5.2 Fair work as a part of a just, green recovery, is better for business

**Fair work contributes to a well-being economy, which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound and helps everyone realise their potential. <sup>7</sup> With a diverse, healthy and engaged workforce, businesses and organisations can be more productive, contributing to a vibrant and sustainable economy. This needs to be combined with efforts to ensure work is environmentally sustainable.**

### Fair work can contribute to a diverse, engaged work force

Evidence links a more diverse, skilled workforce to developing new ideas and insights. It links increased employee engagement to allowing those ideas to be used and it links a secure environment to helping workers in 'going the extra mile'. All of these underpin higher performance, innovation and productivity in the workplace.<sup>8</sup>

*"High levels of perceived fairness were associated with stronger work motivation, higher commitment to the organisation and a greater willingness to put in discretionary effort."*

Gallie et al., 2017 <sup>9</sup>

The OECD <sup>10</sup> and Carnegie UK Trust <sup>11;12</sup> have both reviewed evidence linking job quality to productivity. While recognising the developing evidence base, both find that for most aspects of job quality, better job quality goes hand in hand with greater productivity.

*"There is a great deal of evidence to show clear associations between job quality and the health of workers, their ability to successfully combine work and life while fully mobilising their skills and abilities to build a career, and their productivity.*

*"Investments in quality working environments can be welfare enhancing and economically efficient. Policies and practices reflect these findings insufficiently, an apparent paradox that finds its roots in various market failures."*

OECD, 2018 <sup>13</sup>

Fair work underpins the Welsh Government's *Economic resilience and reconstruction mission*, where the vision is for a well-being economy, supported by outcomes of a prosperous economy, a green economy and an equal economy,<sup>7</sup> and *Stronger, fairer, greener Wales*, Welsh Government's plan for employability and skills.<sup>14</sup>

### Improving equitable participation in fair work can contribute to a virtuous cycle for a well-being economy

We need a focus on equity for individuals, business and communities to realise full benefits. This means ensuring that no matter what our backgrounds, we can all get good access to education, skills and pathways to fair work. It also means having institutions and governance that work for equity and well-being, recognising current imbalances in power and how these can be addressed. <sup>15</sup>



### 5.3 Poor quality work is bad for health and bad for business

#### We know that unemployment is bad for health

Unemployment can lead to higher mortality, poorer general health (long-standing illness, limiting longstanding illness), poorer mental health (including anxiety and depression), and higher medical consultation (medication consumption and hospital admission rates) through psycho-social factors, socio-economic status and financial stress.<sup>16</sup>

#### It's not just having a job, but the nature of the job that counts for health

The nature of work is important if we want to protect health and well-being. There is clear evidence that the quality of work is important for health; and that poor quality work can be harmful. Poor working conditions can risk physical and mental health, conflict with caring duties affecting the person in work, their family and the wider community. Similarly, work which negatively affects the environment, including through climate change, can also adversely affect health and well-being of our communities.

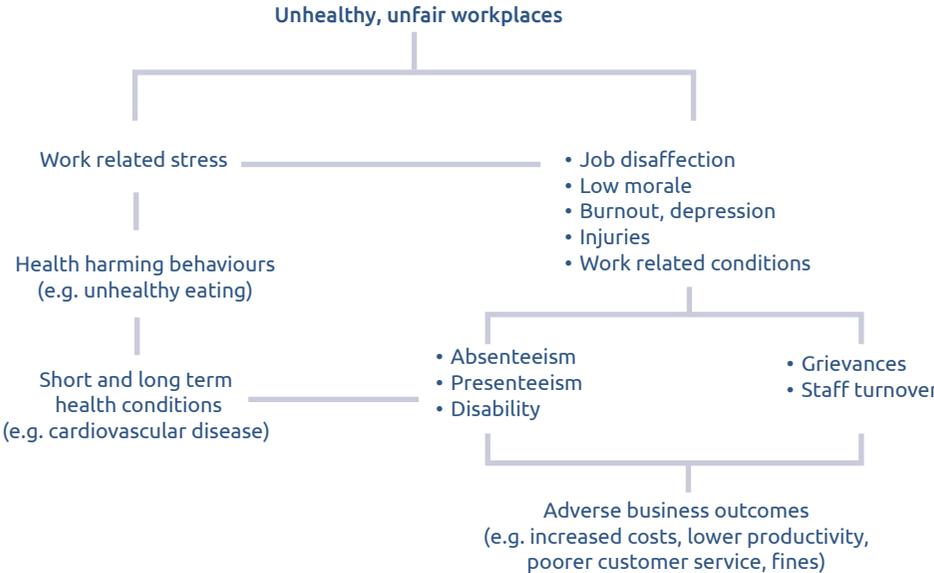
A recent review of international evidence concluded it is not safe to assume that, in the UK, any job will lead to better health and well-being outcomes than unemployment.<sup>17</sup>

### Poor quality jobs are bad for business

*“Strong evidence was found for a negative relationship between job stress and job strain and at-work productivity and for a positive relationship between job rewards and productivity.”*

OECD, 2017 <sup>10</sup>

#### The effects of unhealthy and unfair work workplaces



Derived from The business case in a nutshell, from Healthy Workplace Framework and Model: Background and Supporting Literature and Practices, WHO.<sup>18</sup>

# 6 What is fair work?



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## 6 What is fair work?

**Fair work is where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected.**

### 6.1 Fair work has six characteristics

The six characteristics of fair work are:

- fair reward
- employee voice and collective representation
- security and flexibility
- opportunity for access, growth and progression
- safe, healthy and inclusive working environment
- legal rights respected and given substantive effect



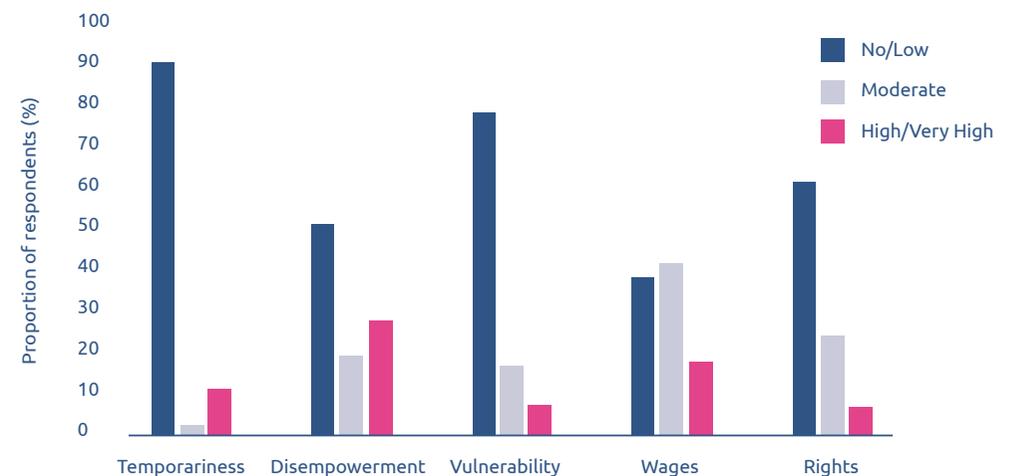
**The promotion of equality and inclusion is integral to all six characteristics.** <sup>2</sup>

This definition was introduced by the Fair Work Commission, whose report to Welsh Government was published in May 2019. <sup>2</sup>

### Many jobs in Wales lack features of fair work

One way to understand the extent of fair work is to consider its absence as identified by precarious working. A study in Wales before the COVID-19 pandemic found that about one in four workers experience moderate to high levels of precarious working.<sup>19</sup> This reflects aspects of absence of fair work. This figure rises to 41% among young people (18-29).

**Prevalence of contributing factors (domains) of precarious employment in Wales, by separate precarious employment domains, based on a questionnaire to a sample of households in Wales, February 2020** <sup>20</sup>



## 6.2 Fair reward



Fair reward relates to rates of pay, but also other terms and conditions, including sick pay, maternity and paternity pay, occupational pension and benefit schemes. It includes fair evaluation of work and transparency in calculation and distribution of pay and benefits.

### The fairness of our reward when we work affects our health and well-being

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how some groups, such as key workers, perform essential roles in our society yet are paid less per hour than the rest of the workforce, with this gap growing over time.<sup>21</sup> Efforts to address this include the Welsh Government announcement of the Real Living Wage for Social Care staff.<sup>22</sup>

### Pay varies by gender, ethnicity, and health

The gender pay gap in Wales has dropped from 17.5% in 1997 to 5% in 2021.<sup>23</sup> These figures reflect median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime for full time workers. They do not take into account the higher rates of part-time working and lower rates of overtime experienced by women.

The ethnicity pay gap between White and ethnic minority groups in Wales is 1.4% (2019), however, for specific minority ethnic groups this gap is likely to be much larger.<sup>24</sup> For example in Wales in 2016/17 Indian people (£14.43) had higher median hourly earnings than White British people (£10.60), whereas Black people had lower (£8.71).<sup>25</sup>

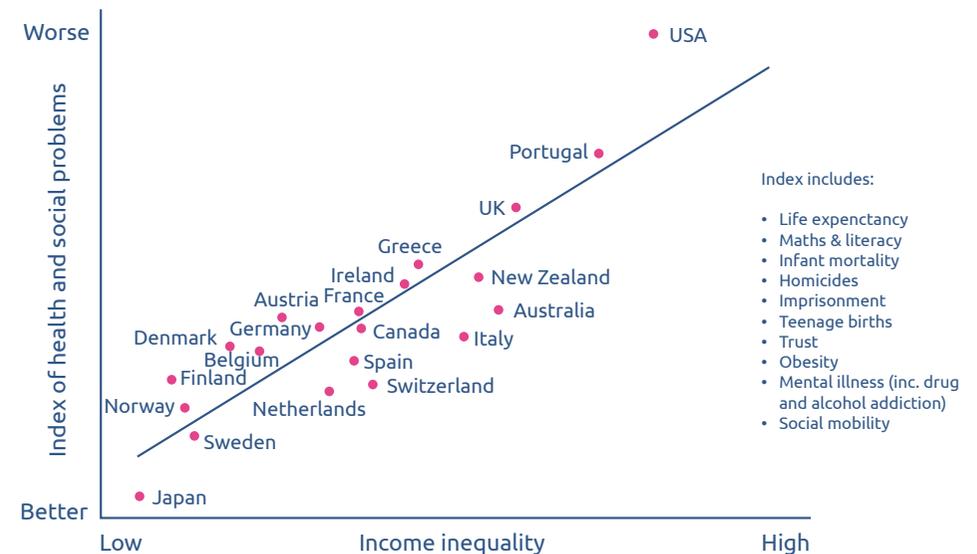
*“An elimination of the pay gap for gender, disability and ethnicity by 2050”*

National Milestone, Welsh Government 2021<sup>26</sup>

### Income inequality within countries is linked to a wide range of poor health and social problems

Looking across different countries, the degree of income inequality within a country is associated with substantial differences in health and social outcomes. This relationship between health and social problems is not seen when comparing average income between rich countries.<sup>27</sup>

### Income inequality and health and social outcomes<sup>28</sup>



## A sufficient income is a pre-requisite for good health

**Increasing family income leads to better health outcomes for children, as well as improved cognitive and socio-behavioural development.**

These were the findings of a review of international evidence from EU and OECD countries in 2021. It also found improvements in maternal health, parenting and the home environment, with the strongest impacts in low income families.<sup>29</sup>

## Increasing employment in recent years has been insufficient to lift children out of poverty

With continued income inequality and lack of sufficient pay, rising employment levels in recent years have had little impact on levels of poverty in Wales. Across the ten years to March 2020, the proportion of children living in relative income poverty in Wales who live in working households increased from about 50% to 70%.<sup>30</sup>



**223,000 people in Wales earn below the real living wage<sup>31</sup>**

In addition to mental health impacts, financial distress has also been associated with higher levels of absenteeism and presenteeism, especially among women, those with lower education or financial literacy and those separated, divorced or single.<sup>32</sup>

## Levels of pay improve employee engagement

*The Bevan Foundation has found strong evidence that paying the Living Wage “reduces staff turnover and absenteeism, with reductions in staff leaving rates of up to 25% being reported”.*

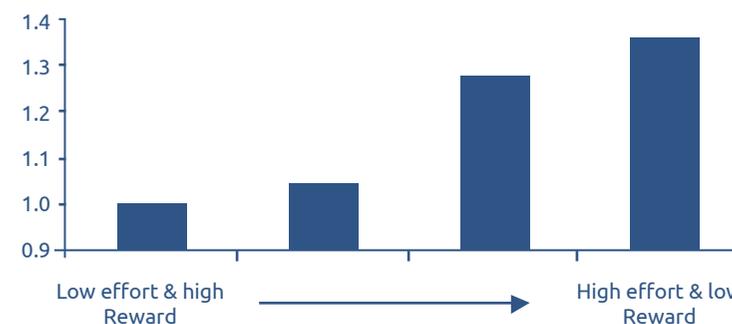
Bevan Foundation, 2016<sup>33</sup>

## An imbalance between reward and effort is associated with future ill health

The seminal Whitehall study found markedly higher risk of cardiovascular disease among those with high job effort relative to their reward after an average of 11 years follow up among over 10,000 civil servants.<sup>34</sup> There was also a higher risk of poor physical and mental functioning irrespective of their grade. Similar findings have been described in other studies.<sup>35</sup>

## Effort Reward Imbalance at Work and Coronary Heart Disease, Adjusted for age, sex and grade, Kuper et al 2002<sup>34</sup>, cited by UCL<sup>36</sup>

Likelihood of CHD



## 6.3 Employee voice and collective representation



**Fair work means that workers are involved in how their work is carried out, their views on matters that concern them are heard and concerns addressed. Under-represented groups, such as those with protected characteristics are heard.**

*"Recognition of a trade union for collective bargaining is both a route to, and a key indicator of, fair work."*

Fair Work Wales, 2019 <sup>2</sup>

In Wales there have been significant developments in efforts to increase employee voice and collective representation, particularly through social partnership. The Draft (at time of writing) Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill would develop this further. <sup>37</sup>

Thirty-two per cent of Welsh employees are in a union, higher than all regions in England and that of Scotland, but not Northern Ireland (2020 figures). <sup>38</sup>

## Proportion of employees with trade union membership (trade union density) in the UK, 2020 <sup>38</sup>



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

*"Participating in decisions is important for people's well-being and motivation, as it provides a way to improve work experience and overall job quality. Employers can benefit from higher productivity and innovation, and reduced workplace conflict and absenteeism."*

CIPD, 2021 <sup>39</sup>

Job control, an important factor affecting health and well-being, includes having a say in how your work is carried out. The Whitehall II study following up 10,000 civil servants examined job control including decision authority (eg "I have a good deal of say in decisions about my work") and skills discretion (such as boredom or learning). It found low job control led to about twice the risk of a coronary event compared with high job control. This effect was not explained by grade, negative emotions or classic coronary risk factors. <sup>40</sup>

## 6.4 Security and flexibility



**Security relates not only to security in having a job, but also to being able to rely on income, hours of working, and working time.**



*"It's just not fair because it's not stable at all. People can take advantage a little bit, especially if you haven't worked for two or three days and then last minute they ask you to come in. Especially if you've got children or something like that"*

Female, 18 - 24, unemployed, Wales 2021 <sup>41</sup> p.63

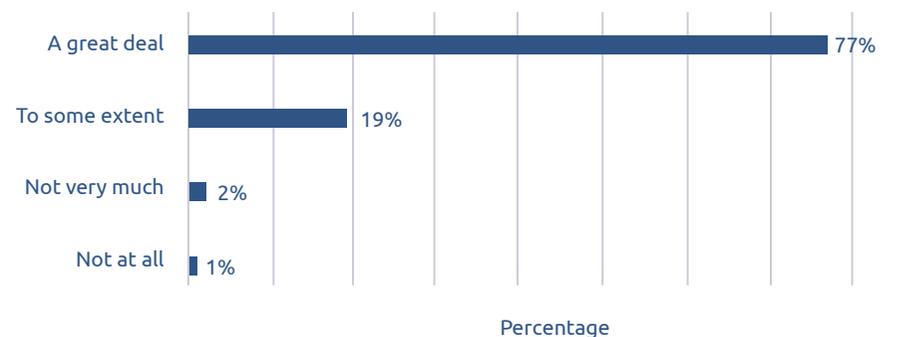
Many workers value having flexibility in their job. When employees are in control of the hours they work and how they retire (partial retirement) this is likely to benefit worker health, related to anxiety and cardiovascular disease. In contrast, where employees do not have this control over flexibility there were no or negative impacts found on health. <sup>42</sup> Some models of work typify this flexibility imbalance, such as false self-employment arrangements and exploitative zero hour contracts.



*"I'm still on a zero-hour contract, which I've been on for about four years now. I've actually asked them for an hourly contract, which I am entitled to. But they keep refusing"*

Female, 18 - 24, Wales, dependent child, Wales 2021 <sup>41</sup> p.33

### In your opinion what extent does job security affect the health and well-being of employees, in general?



Public Health Wales Employer Survey 2021  
(online survey March and April 2021, including 477 employers).

Almost all employers responding to a Healthy Working Wales online survey in March/April 2021 recognised the importance of job security for health and well-being. However, analysis by the TUC across regions and nations in the UK identified levels of insecure work ranging from 9.7% in North West England to 13.1% in Wales. <sup>43</sup>

To get the best from employees, and for workers to get the best from work, flexibility to accommodate the reality of workers' lives, including carers and those with disabilities is essential.

CIPD examined flexible working in 2018, as defined by "working arrangements which allow employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work" (p1). They found that flexible workers are likely to be more engaged, with increased revenue and performance, and that higher levels of engagement, experienced by working flexibly can reduce staff turn over by 87%. <sup>44</sup>

## 6.5 Opportunity for access, growth and progression



Fair work involves ensuring opportunities are open to all to access work, for fulfilment and growth, to develop and progress and to acquire and use skills. This means identifying and addressing barriers that some of our communities face in accessing these opportunities.

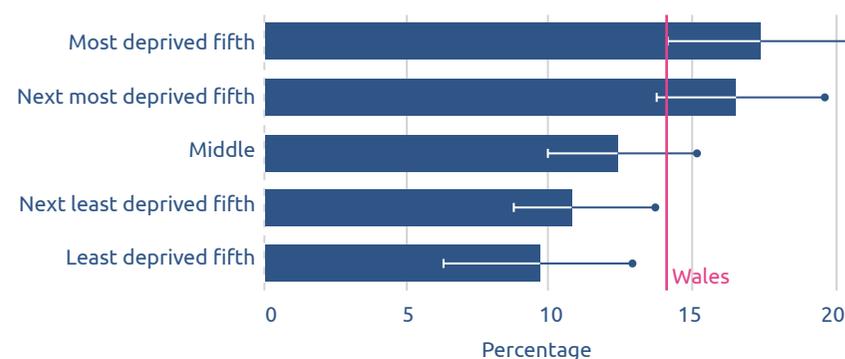
We know not everyone across society gets the same opportunities to access fair work and to progress. Among the groups more likely to face reduced opportunities are those affected by socio-economic disadvantage, particular age groups (especially younger people, and also older people), some ethnic groups, people with physical and mental health conditions, disabled people, learning difficulties, women, carers and those hindered by geography.

The difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people (disability employment gap) in Wales in 2020/21 was 32.9 percentage points. This is higher than the UK average (27.9 percentage points).<sup>45</sup>

The factors that affect access to fair work, growth and progression can combine (intersectionality). For example, the employment gap for those with a long term health condition was 14% in 2018; however, for those in less disadvantaged areas this was 10%, and those in a more disadvantaged area 17%.<sup>46</sup>

Supporting national initiatives such as the Young Person's Guarantee and apprenticeship schemes are important ways to overcome barriers into work.

Gap in employment rate for those with a long term health condition, 2018. Percentage, persons aged 16-64, Wales by deprivation fifths<sup>46</sup>



Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using APS and WIMD 2014 (WG).

### Lifelong learning has well-being benefits

People who keep learning<sup>47</sup> p.1:

- have greater satisfaction and optimism
- report higher well-being; a greater ability to cope with stress; higher self-esteem; hope; and purpose
- often interact with other people, which helps build and strengthen social relationships

*"Taking a part-time course for work over the past year has been estimated to give well-being benefits equivalent to £1,584 of income per year"*

What works wellbeing, 2017<sup>47</sup>

What Works Wellbeing<sup>48</sup> advises that employers create a work environment where progression to more challenging roles is supported, addressing barriers including skills and flexible working, and where well-being is monitored.

## 6.6 Safe, healthy and inclusive working environment



A growing number of employers recognise employee health and well-being as a strategic priority particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic. Many working age adults spend most of their waking hours at work. This means employers have a unique opportunity to create safe, healthy and inclusive working environments. Employees who are fit, healthy and able to work can benefit the employer through reduced sickness absence, greater staff engagement and productivity and reduced staff turnover. <sup>49</sup>

Employers, working with Healthy Working Wales and partners, can create the conditions to maximise employees' health. This includes changes to the work environment to support employees to be more active and eat more healthily and supporting employees relating to their life both in and outside of work. Supporting people who are not well, including helping people get back into work, is an important feature of a healthy working environment.

**Physical and mental well-being at work is determined by the interaction between the working environment, the nature of the work and the individual**

Work has an important role in promoting well-being, providing a sense of fulfilment and social interaction. However, it can also have negative effects on mental health, particularly in the form of stress. Physical factors within the workplace, such as material hazards, noise, poor lighting, dust and dirt, can lead to stress, as can a sense of unfairness and injustice arising from management

process or personal relationships, and a perceived imbalance between the effort required and the rewards of a job.

The six areas of workplace design that can affect stress levels <sup>50</sup>



*"Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances."*

CIPD, 2021 <sup>51</sup>

## 6.7 Legal rights respected and given substantive effect



It can be easy to think that once something is protected in law, it will happen. However, this is not the case. There is a broad spectrum of what it means not to comply with legal obligations, at the extreme this involves a criminal offence, such as modern slavery.

Across the UK there were 5,144 modern slavery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019. Of the 2,251 potential victims supported by The Salvation Army in England and Wales in the year ending June 2019, 48% had experienced labour exploitation and 39% had experienced sexual exploitation.<sup>52</sup>

### Employment and Discrimination Advice and Casework: Citizens Advice

During 2021, this service assisted 2,880 clients with over 12,500 employment and discrimination issues, from all over Wales.\* Of the clients to the service:

- around 57% are female
- around 40% are disabled or have a long term health condition
- between 5% and 9% are from a minority ethnic background (varies by region)

Over half of all clients experienced disability discrimination, including 28% of all discrimination clients who experienced discrimination related to mental health (based on figures covering all of Wales except the six North Wales local authority areas).

\* Thank you to Citizen's Advice Cymru for providing Information on Employment and Discrimination Advice and Casework: Citizens Advice

The most common issues in employment are around:

- pay and entitlements, especially holidays, holiday pay, wages, sick pay and unlawful deductions
- terms and conditions
- grievances
- redundancy
- dismissal

### Examples of cases presenting to Citizen's Advice



#### Case 1. Agency worker and maternity leave

An agency worker nearing the end of maternity leave and planning on returning to work called the agency. The client had post-natal depression so was unfit to return immediately.

As her maternity pay had ended, she wanted to be paid some of her holiday pay. She was told she must resign to get this money. When she asked for holiday pay again some weeks later, they issued her a P45 and claimed she had therefore resigned.



#### Case 2. Furlough and apparent dismissal

Four clients, all aged over 50 with continuous service of over 45 years stopped receiving pay and payslips whilst they were on furlough leave and were left to assume they had been dismissed. The business had in fact transferred without following TUPE and the new employer took agency workers on instead.

Citizens Advice represented these affected individuals in case 1 and case 2, negotiating settlement agreements.

# 7 Why now?

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## 7 Why now?

### 7.1 The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the close relationship between health and work

The pandemic sent shock waves through the world of work, our economy and wider society. It demonstrated the importance of the nature of work for health, well-being and equity and the importance of health for effective services and business delivery.

#### Employers recognised the importance of health and well-being for their organisation

During this time we saw employers adapt rapidly to the challenges of COVID-19 to support the health of their employees and others, some of these have been captured in case studies by Healthy Working Wales.<sup>53</sup> An overwhelming proportion of employers in a Healthy Working Wales survey during the pandemic recognised the very high importance of health and well-being for their organisation.

On a scale of 0 – 10 how important is employee health and well-being to your organisation?

9.4

Public Health Wales Employer Survey 2021 (online survey March and April 2021, including 477 employers)

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a public health and socio-economic crisis, exacerbating underlying inequities, and exposing new vulnerabilities. ...*

*“The impact on livelihoods, especially for the most vulnerable, has been catastrophic, highlighting how interdependent individual health and well-being, social cohesion, and the economy are.”*

Welsh Health Equity Status Report initiative (WHESRI) <sup>6</sup>

## The nature of the workplace had a significant role in the risk of COVID-19 deaths

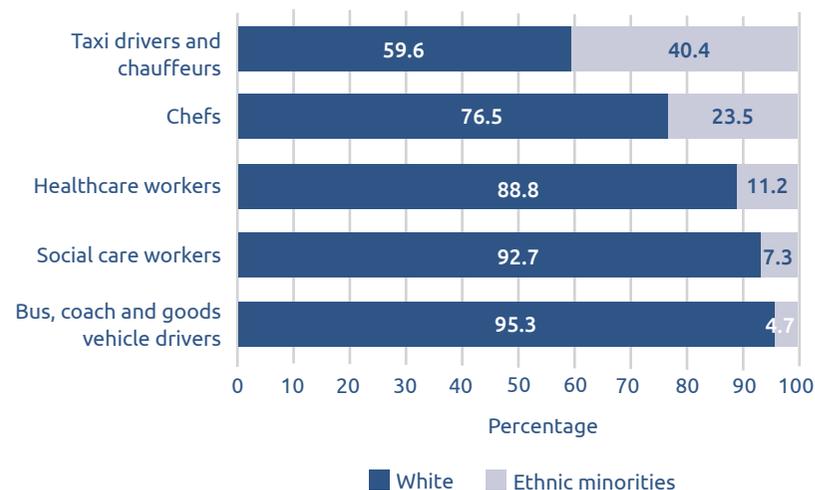
Some occupations, particularly key workers, were unable to work from home, and the ability to introduce social distancing and personal protective equipment varied substantially by occupation. <sup>6</sup> These differences contributed to the risk of contracting COVID-19 in the work place falling unevenly across society.

In men, the COVID-19 related death rate in elementary occupations, such as process plant workers or security guards was 3.8 times higher than that in professionals, <sup>54</sup> and for those men working within health and social care, the COVID-19 related death rate was substantially higher in care workers (110 per 100,000) than in medical practitioners (28 per 100,000). <sup>55</sup> \*

Ethnic minority groups are over-represented in occupations at higher-risk of contracting COVID-19. <sup>6</sup>

Interventions such as adequate paid sick leave, which support isolation, are not only an important aspect of fair work, but constitute public health measures to protect our population. <sup>56</sup>

### Employment in specific occupations at higher risk of COVID-19 by ethnicity, percentage, Wales <sup>6</sup>



\* Standardised for age and sex.

## 7.2 COVID-19 restrictions disrupted participation in fair work, for some more than others

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been unequal and have particularly affected low income households, women, ethnic minority groups, young people and areas with high levels of deprivation.<sup>57</sup> Young people have been disproportionately affected due to the number working in shutdown and low paid sectors.<sup>58</sup>

In the early months of the pandemic in Wales, job losses were experienced more by those employed on an atypical contract (12.1%), fixed-term contract (7.7%) and also those who were self-employed (9.3%) compared with those employed on permanent arrangements (1.8%).<sup>19</sup> A UK study found those in precarious (atypical) work were also more likely to have been furloughed or lost hours than those in secure (typical) work.<sup>59</sup> Across the UK those on lowest pay were more likely to be affected.<sup>60</sup>

### Working from home comes with positives and negatives for health

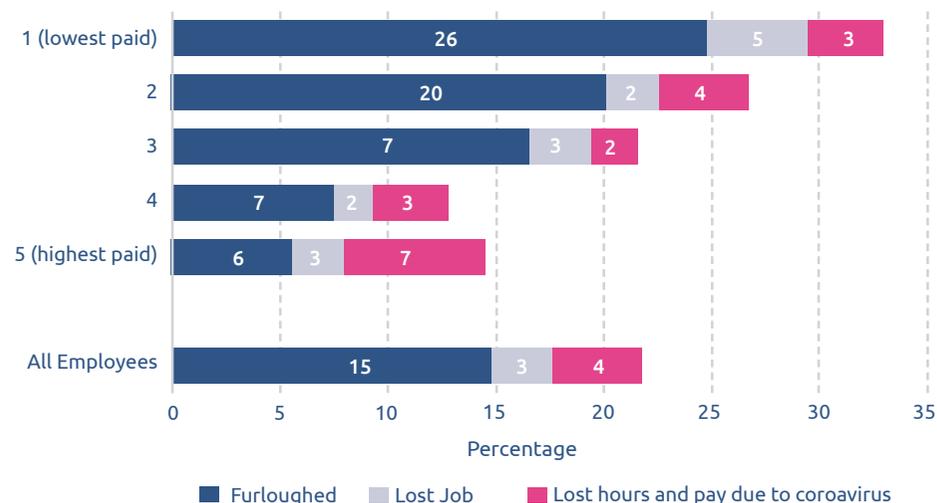
A health impact assessment of home and agile working found mixed impacts.<sup>61</sup> Positive impacts include potential increased efficiency and productivity, disabled people having additional opportunities to join the workforce in Wales and potential for those with caring responsibilities such as lone and working parents to work flexibly. Negative impacts include an increased risk to physical health and safety from homeworking such as musculoskeletal conditions. Many women in the workforce faced particular challenges due to the uneven distribution of both work that can be done from home and of additional caring responsibilities.



*"I was actually pretty lucky as I kept my normal income but at the start for the first five months, they gave me permission not to attend work because my mum is asthmatic. Luckily they still paid me then, they didn't cut my pay, they let me work from home"* (Female, 18-24, secure employment)

Public Health Wales/Beaufort Research, 2021<sup>41</sup>

Proportion of employees who experienced job changes, by employee earnings quintile prior to the pandemic: UK, 6 – 11 May 2020



Source: Resolution Foundation. The effect of the Coronavirus crisis on workers. 2020.<sup>60</sup>



*"A 21 year old father of a young baby working for a waste management company in North Wales received a call from his workplace on his way to work during lockdown to say they were letting him go because business had dried up. As he was employed through an agency he was not entitled to any paid notice or redundancy payment."*

Public Health Wales/Beaufort Research, 2021<sup>41</sup>

### 7.3 We're at a point of change in the world of work

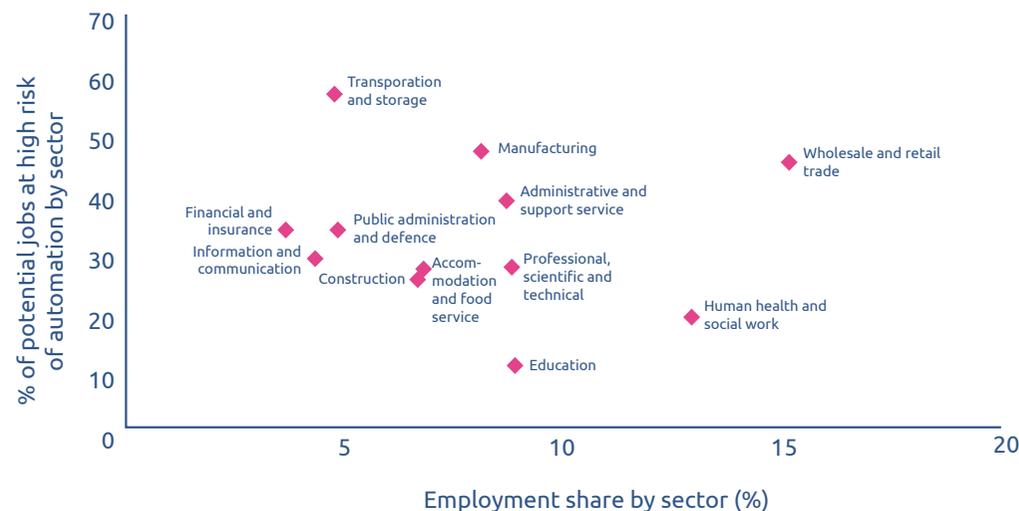
**In Wales we face the cumulative impacts of the triple challenge of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. This triple challenge will continue to have a significant impact on the world of work, affecting different sectors in different ways, and, in turn, affecting the health and well-being of the population of Wales.** <sup>62</sup>

Pre-pandemic changes to the world of work have been accelerated during the pandemic and its continuing repercussions, including automation, digitisation, and the use of artificial intelligence <sup>63 64</sup>. There has also been a move towards home and hybrid working in some sectors. A recent review of potential digital futures in Wales estimates 19% of jobs will be automatable in Wales by 2037 <sup>65</sup>. Women, young people and part-time workers are at greatest risk from automation as they are concentrated in low-skilled occupations <sup>66</sup> including manufacturing and wholesale and retail.

With strengthened employment pathways and investment in learning and skills, there are opportunities for those groups who were hardest hit by the pandemic and at greatest risk from automation to access new jobs as Wales transitions to a green economy and aims to achieve net zero by 2050.

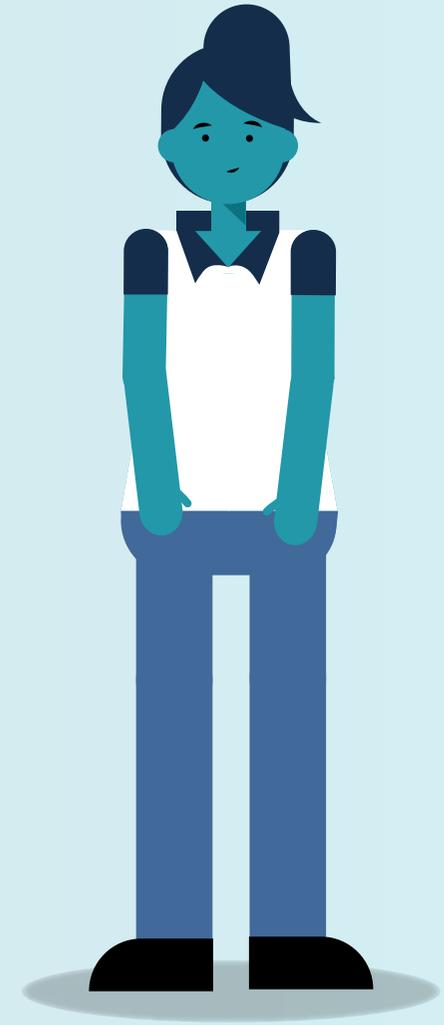
To ensure employee health, well-being and equity in an increasingly digital and automated future employers need support in redesigning jobs with redeployed/re-trained employees engaged throughout the process; training in green and digital jobs needs to be accessible to all and people need to be supported to train and retrain throughout their working lives. <sup>67</sup>

#### Potential impact of job automation by UK industry sector



Source PwC, UK Economic Outlook Report, March 2017 <sup>68</sup>

# 8 What can local and regional organisations do?



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## 8 What can local and regional organisations do?

### 8.1 Local and regional organisations have a pivotal role

**Local and regional organisations, and their partnerships, can drive more inclusive participation in fair, sustainable work as a part of efforts to develop a well-being economy and ensuring best practice in the foundational economy.**

Increasing inclusive participation in fair, sustainable work can be through:

- area and place-making
- job creation and attracting fair work employers
- encouraging and incentivising fair work practice
- supporting pathways to access to that work
- being exemplars as good employers and anchor institutions
- implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty

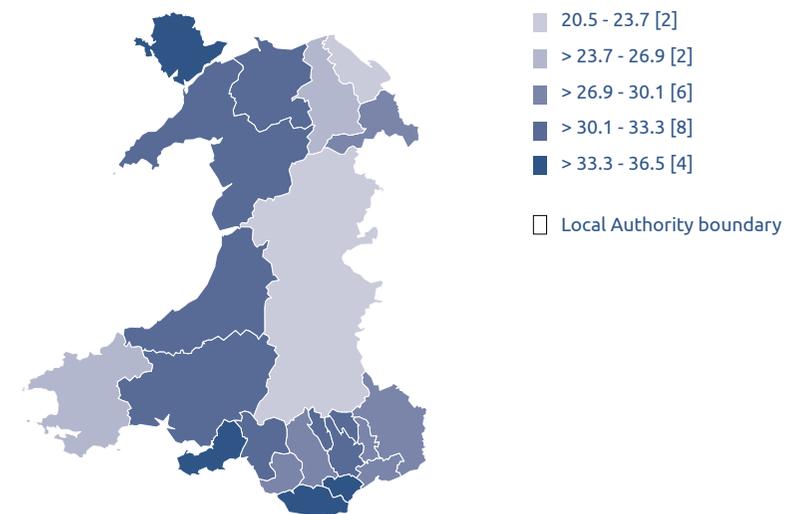
As 30% of the people in employment in Wales are employed in the public sector (year ending September 2021),<sup>69</sup> the impact of local and regional organisations in directly providing inclusive, fair work is substantial.

Public Services Boards can set the direction by incorporating fair work in their Well-being Plans. Regional Economic Frameworks and implementation of City and Growth Deals, supported by Regional Skills Partnerships have an important role in embedding a fair work approach into their work for a more prosperous, more equal and healthier Wales.

The role of local authorities is developing further as the European Funding is replaced by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, and as the recently established Corporate Joint Committees take on responsibility for economic well-being through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The time has never been better to consider the role that local and regional organisations and partnerships can play in increasing participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity.

**Percentage of persons employed in the public sector, persons, year ending 30 Sept 2021, Wales**



Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using APS ONS via StatsWales, Wales Government.  
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Contains OS data© Crown copyright and database right 2022.

## 8.2 Develop a fair work mindset

**To make sure communities get the benefits of fair work, seek the alignment between inclusive participation in fair work and your organisation's mission.**

As a leader in your organisation, do you and your team understand fair work and its benefits? Do you understand how it can help your organisational goals? What levers do you have that can improve inclusive participation in fair work?

Consider a clear and visible commitment to fair work. Do you use tools to make the most of these benefits for health, well-being and equity? Have you a plan for how you can make the greatest impact? Do you know where need is greatest? How will you know if you're having an impact on inclusive participation in fair work in your organisation and in the wider population?

Remember, it is not simply a presence or absence of fair work - all organisations, large or small, will have changes they can make to increase inclusive participation in fair-work.

### Case study



Cardiff and Vale University Health Board became one of the most successful organisations in supporting the Kickstart Scheme in Wales. This government funded scheme created six month work placements to improve young people's life chances. After an initial contract of 50 places, they expanded the programme, including educational sessions in collaboration with Cardiff and Vale College. They filled 146 placements with 12 individuals gaining permanent roles.

For more details of these case studies, see the related case study report

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act <sup>1</sup> provides an excellent framework in relation to fair work:



Taking a **long term** approach, seeking well-being and business benefits from an inclusive approach to participation in fair work



**Prevention** of harms that come from poor working conditions and lack of inclusion



**Integration** between well-being goals, including a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales and a healthier Wales taking a sustainable approach



**Collaboration** between local organisations and others, including businesses to achieve objectives



**Involvement** of communities who can benefit from wider and inclusive participation in fair work

## 8.3 Place fair work at the heart of policies and plans

**A fair work mindset means finding the opportunities to bring a fair work approach into your organisational strategy and policies.**

Consider if your approach makes a real difference where it counts, improving equity, adding years to life and realising co-benefits for your business and the community?

Through the **Socio-economic Duty**<sup>70</sup> you can consider at a strategic level how your organisation can reduce inequality of outcome which results from social disadvantage through access to fair work.

**There is no single magic bullet, a whole systems approach is needed to increase participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity**

Local authorities have a unique role in helping create regional economies for fair work. Rooted in local communities, the local authority connections with education, business and enterprise, transport, digital infrastructure, housing and planning can all be mechanisms to support equitable participation in fair work.

Lever for inclusive participation in fair work can act at a range of levels, for example building the transport infrastructure to address inequalities of access for particular communities, or as part of place making,<sup>71</sup> or more specific actions, such as through Section 106 agreements as a part of providing planning permission.



**Transport infrastructure can support or hinder inclusive participation in fair work**

Bringing a fair work perspective into partnerships, including Public Services Boards, City and Regional Deals and Corporate Joint Committees, could bring benefits for communities and economies. Regional economic development plans, well-being plans or plans under the UK shared prosperity fund can all have inclusive participation in fair work at their heart.

Local Health Boards can support prevention and early intervention, through social prescribing, and increased employability, vocational rehabilitation and multi-professional occupational health services for people in and out of work with mental ill-health and long term health conditions.<sup>14</sup>

**New legal duties may be introduced relating to fair work, social partnership and socially responsible procurement**

The Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill,<sup>37</sup> consulted on by Welsh Government, if enacted, would place duties on:

- Welsh Ministers to set fair work objectives
- certain public bodies to consult with their recognised trade union(s) in relation to well-being objectives
- certain contracting authorities in relation to socially responsible procurement, aimed at contributing to the achievement of well-being goals of and fair work goal.

### Case study



**Digital Communities Wales** worked with Communities for Work (CFW) and Communities for Work+ (CFW+) to help individuals develop their digital skills for the primary purpose of achieving gainful employment. 169 people found employment through using devices with an overall conversion to job rate of 38% between April and September 2021.

## 8.4 Create fair work – Get better value for money

**Whenever we spend public money, it can support inclusive participation in fair work.**

Value from public money comes from goods and services received and delivered, and from the wider impact on well-being and equity. Achieving well-being benefits in an environmentally sustainable way is key to a well-being economy. The Welsh Government's Economic Contract<sup>72</sup> typifies the 'something for something' approach, explicitly asking businesses to demonstrate current action on fair work and commit to new developments in the form of pledges. It also focuses on economic strength and adaptability, promotion of well-being and low carbon and climate resilience.

Three ways to create fair work through public spending:

- socially responsible procurement
- job creation schemes that focus on fair work
- incentivising fair work employers when attracting new employers to an area, with a focus on disadvantaged communities.

**Socially responsible procurement is a lever for fair work**

*“Welsh public sector procurement is a powerful lever with ability to affect sustained change to achieve social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for the well-being of Wales.”*

Welsh Government, 2021<sup>73</sup>

The Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in supply chains for the Welsh Public Sector<sup>74</sup> includes 12 commitments expected from recipients of public money when procuring goods and services.

### Case study



South of Scotland Enterprise, established 2020. This Economic and Community Development Agency has fair work incorporated in everything it does, taking both an internal and external focus. By law (South of Scotland Enterprise Act 2019), all funding must be conditional on commitment to the progression of fair work within their organisation or community.



**The public sector in Wales currently spends in excess of £6.7 billion each year on the procurement of commodities, works and services<sup>75</sup>**

## 8.5 Become a driver of fair work in your area

**Public sector agencies are ideally placed to exemplify fair work. Local organisations can engage directly with local employers to encourage and promote fair work benefits. Businesses sharing their own experience with others can help normalise and demonstrate fair work in action.**

The public sector has the capacity to improve health, well-being and equity at a population level through a fair work approach, not only in relation to direct employees but also by influencing a wide range of other sectors. Some are closer, some are directly working as partners, including third sector and academia, some are in receipt of funding or support, and others are further away.

### Share the benefits of fair work for workers, business and the broader community in your area

When engaging employers on participation in fair work:

- recognise that different sized employers need to respond to the fair work agenda in different ways; even for small employers fair work can be done in a way that supports the business and delivers for workers
- tailor your approach by sector, where messages can be most relevant and address aspects of fair work that are most pressing or likely to gain traction
- meet employers where they are, work with trade unions, and encourage and support the journey to greater participation in fair work from there
- identify business benefits of fair work, such as attracting talent
- support business to business and peer to peer messages
- recognise the need for a joined up approach between sustainability and fair work

Many local and regional agencies are ‘anchor institutions’ who, through size and geographical stake, can support communities through fair work, training, procurement and buildings and land use. <sup>76</sup>By working with other agencies your organisation can also be a catalyst for wider change, moving from an anchor to turbine, driving change.

For examples of a business to business approach, see Business in the Community: [What If Your Job Was Good For You? Case study anthology](#), showing aspects of fair work in action, through case studies reports and videos.

#### Case study



**Cardiff as a Living Wage City.** A group of prominent Cardiff employers joined forces to form the Cardiff Living Wage Action Group and launched their 3 year action plan to begin ‘Making Cardiff a Living Wage City’.

Since becoming a Living Wage City in 2019, Cardiff has increased the total number of workers employed by Cardiff-based accredited Living Wage employers to 48,000. Cardiff University has estimated that an additional £36m has been paid to workers in Cardiff as a result of Living Wage accreditations by Cardiff based employers.

## 8.6 Promote access to fair work for all

**Some in our society face greater barriers in accessing fair work than others. Local and regional organisations can take action to mitigate these barriers.**

Within your own organisation:

- take risks, recognising the rewards of a diverse pools of workers
- capitalise on national schemes that support inclusive participation to fair work, such as apprenticeships
- measure and monitor well-being, inclusivity and fair work

Target work with employers, education and training providers and third sector:

- increasing local workforce capability to adapt to job opportunities which support health and well-being, through upskilling, in-skilling and reskilling
- tailoring efforts proportional to the challenge in accessing fair work, recognising age, sex, disability, ethnicity, health, neurodiversity, parents and carers and socio-economic background

Work with communities:

- focusing not only on access to any work, but to fair work
- responding to the digital literacy gap
- supporting Welsh language
- understanding your communities strengths and needs, measuring what is important

### Case study



**Engage to Change:** Working with young people (16 - 25), employers and parents to overcome employment barriers and develop transferrable skills (2016 – November 2022) for those who have a learning difficulty, learning disability or autism. Using a person centred approach, Engage to Change works closely with young people, their parents/carers to overcome barriers to employment and develop transferable skills. By August 2021 the project had received 984 referrals, giving rise to 429 unpaid work placements and 414 paid placements for up to six months.



## 8.7 Follow the data and know your impact

**To effectively improve population health, well-being and equity through fair work, you need to understand the population of your area, their access and barriers to fair work. This is not just about quantitative data (or numbers), but also qualitative, understanding 'why' and 'so what' for people in your area, bringing in the voice of affected communities, paying particularly attention to those not well reflected in decision making processes, such as young people.**

Regional skills partnerships, local area needs assessments and local well-being assessments will all have a role in describing not only the nature of work in an area, but the needs of people across the localities and regions.

**In December 2021 Welsh ministers have set out national milestones to measure progress** <sup>26</sup>

### **National milestones include:**

- an elimination of the pay gap for gender, disability and ethnicity by 2050
- eradicate the gap between the employment rate in Wales and the UK by 2050, with a focus on fair work and raising labour market participation of under-represented groups
- at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050

### **National indicators are also set covering:**

- percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage
- proportion of employees whose pay is set by collective bargaining

## Invest in knowing your impact

When influencing participation in fair work in order to improve health, well-being and equity, it is essential to consider how you will know what difference you have made. Monitoring and evaluation should have strategic commitment, resource and be followed through to action plans and delivery, learning and shaping future action.

Wales also has enormous opportunity to understand longer term outcomes from our interventions to support fair work, using linked data, given the infrastructure of the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank and Administrative Data Research Wales.

### Case study



**Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter** A voluntary membership and assessment scheme for all organisations of any size, sector or geography (2017 – ongoing). To date 850 employers across Greater Manchester have engaged with the Charter, with c450 becoming Supporters and 43 being assessed as full Members.

## 8.8 Tools & resources to evidence and promote fair work

**There are many resources to help you progress on your fair work journey, and to help private sector organisations demonstrate their commitment to fair work approaches.**

These are in addition to the Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in supply chains.<sup>74</sup>



[The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#) provides a wealth of resources to support public bodies in achieving the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

*A Journey to a Prosperous Wales*,<sup>77</sup> includes a series of resources: Fair and local procurement, Decent (or fair) work, Local (inclusive) economies, Community energy and a low carbon society and Skills for the future. The office has also produced further resources, including *Procuring well-being in Wales*.<sup>78</sup>



[Healthy Working Wales](#) supports and encourages employers to create healthy working environments, take action to improve the health and well-being of their staff, manage sickness absence well and engage with employees effectively, all of which can help to achieve a range of positive business and organisational outcomes.

It offers health advisor support, training events, workshops, information and guidance, and operates a free awards scheme for employers in Wales, providing a framework to improve employee health and well-being, whilst rewarding employers who are actively working to do so.

The Healthy Working Wales Awards are available to all sectors, and sizes of organisations, in Wales and work in partnership with employers to ensure the promotion of happier and healthier workforces, engagement/communication with employees and a better work-life balance.



The National Social Value Measurement Framework (National TOMs Wales)<sup>75</sup> is a tool to support social value from procurement. Using the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, it examines themes, outcomes and measures to support increasing social value. It includes fair work and elements that can help contribute to participation in fair work, such as skills development. The tool can be used across the public sector, and by the private sector too.



Chwarae Teg Fairplay Employer Award focuses on organisations becoming more equal, diverse and inclusive, and giving employees a sense of belonging.



Investors in People is a UK Government backed organisational accreditation scheme focused on employee training and upskilling. They have a variety of accreditation schemes such as those that focus on well-being and apprenticeship programs.



Business in the Community is a business-led membership organisation, dedicated to responsible business. We encourage companies to go faster, braver, and bolder in their responsible business actions. It wants to share how businesses are working together to create a world that is fairer and greener and inspire others to do so too.

Business in the Community's Responsible Business tracker enables an assessment of performance as a responsible business by tracking progress against BITC's Responsible Business Map, which was built on the UN's Global Goals or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligns to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

# 9 Glossary



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## 9 Glossary

<b>Anchor institutions</b>	Large organisations that are unlikely to relocate and have a significant stake in their local area. They have sizeable assets that can be used to support their local community's health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities, for example, through procurement, training, employment, professional development, and buildings and land use. ( <a href="#">Kings Fund</a> )
<b>Corporate Joint Committees</b>	Corporate bodies that provide a mechanism for regional collaboration between local authorities. They can employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and undertake functions relating to strategic development planning and regional transport planning and economic well-being of their areas. There are four Corporate Joint Committees established in Wales. ( <a href="#">Welsh Government</a> )
<b>Economy of well-being</b>	An economy that: 1. expands the opportunities available to people for upward social mobility and for improving their lives along the dimensions that matter most to them; 2. ensures that these opportunities translate into well-being outcomes for all segments of the population, including those at the bottom of the distribution; 3. reduces inequalities; and 4. fosters environmental and social sustainability. ( <a href="#">OECD</a> )
<b>Equity</b>	The absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification. ( <a href="#">Welsh Health Equity Status Report Initiative</a> )
<b>Fair work</b>	Fair work is where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected. There are six characteristics, with promotion of inclusion and equality integral to all six. ( <a href="#">Fair Work Wales</a> )
<b>Pay gap</b>	An equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between two groups of people, eg gender pay gap, ethnicity pay gap.
<b>Placemaking</b>	A holistic approach to the planning and design of developments and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality developments and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense. ( <a href="#">Planning Policy Wales</a> )
<b>Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank</b>	SAIL Databank securely stores and uses anonymised person-based data for research to improve health, well-being and services. SAIL Databank contains billions of anonymised, person-based records and is home to the broadest, most accessible source of anonymised population data in the world. It is funded by the Welsh Government's Health and Care Research Wales and the Economic and Social Research Council. ( <a href="#">SAIL Databanks</a> )
<b>Socio-economic duty</b>	A statutory duty on certain public bodies, when making strategic decisions, to have due regard to the desirability of exercising its functions in a way that is designed to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ( <a href="#">Legislation</a> )
<b>Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)</b>	Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. WIMD is currently made up of eight separate domains (or types) of deprivation (income, employment, health, education, access to services, housing, physical environment and community safety).

# 10 References

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