

Fair work for health, well-being and equity: Public Health Wales engagement phase



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1. Background

Work and working conditions are critical determinants of health, well-being and health equity, and a healthy engaged workforce contributes to business productivity and societal prosperity.

In responding to the Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Wider Determinants of Health Unit (WDoHU) in Public Health Wales (PHW) produced a [series of reports](#) examining employment changes in Wales and what might be done to improve health and health equity. Some groups had been particularly affected, such as young people, older people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority groups. The pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequities in participation in fair work and health, while bringing new challenges of its own. Ensuring those experiencing disadvantage have access to fair work remains an essential way of improving the long term health and well-being of individuals and households, including children. Research shows that one in four workers in Wales experiences moderate to high levels of precarious working which is associated with unfair work.¹

Participation in fair work provides a sense of purpose and means that people have money and resources for a healthy life for them and their families. This reduces psychological stress, creates a stepping stone out of poverty and helps children have the best start in life. Fair work can contribute to an economy of well-being, improving outcomes for the whole population, including those most disadvantaged².

In September 2021, Public Health Wales (PHW) established an expert panel to examine the evidence and generate recommendations for local and regional agencies and partnerships to improve participation in fair work in a way that supports health, well-being and equity, and to advise on communication of these recommendations. The expert panel received evidence from PHW and subject experts, identified additional evidence, and brought members' own expertise to formulate themes, opportunities and draft recommendations.

A [suite of products](#) was launched in May 2022 which included a guide. Infographics, animations and case studies.

“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

Figure 1: Fair Work Characteristics, the promotion of equality and inclusion is integral to all six characteristics³

The guide² was primarily developed for decision makers in local authorities, health boards and partnership and joint working arrangements at regional and local level (such as Public Services Boards, Regional Partnership Boards, Corporate Joint Committees, boards responsible for City and Regional Growth Deals and Regional Skills Partnerships). The work identified six areas for action through which local agencies can improve participation in fair work to develop health, well-being and equity.

The purpose of this report is to summarise activity, findings and evaluation of the WDoHU fair work engagement phase since publication of the expert panel resources.



Figure 2: Areas for Action²

2. Engagement phase

2.2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the engagement phase was to:

1. Inspire and influence national, regional and local agencies to improve participation in fair work by supporting them to:
 - make the connection between fair work and health, well-being and equity
 - understand what action they can take
 - consider how they measure their influence on participation in fair work
2. Influence the future work of the unit (and Public Health Wales) on fair work as a determinant of health, including potential collaborative opportunities by:
 - understanding priorities, aspirations and values
 - understanding mechanisms of action of stakeholders addressing fair work
 - understanding potential challenges
 - identifying previous learning
 - identifying current perceived needs in addressing fair work as a route to well-being

We identified and mapped stakeholders in February 2022 and consulted with the Fair Work Expert panel on key stakeholder for engagement activity. Priority stakeholders were identified using the following criteria:

- High degree of interest and influence in relation to fair work and population health and well-being.
- Senior level with knowledge in national/regional or local level policy making.
- Ability to access and influence networks relevant to increasing participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity.

Based on these criteria, 12 stakeholder groups were identified and categorised by level of priority (table 1). 10 of these stakeholder groups were involved during the engagement phase. Efforts to engage the FSB and CBI during the period were unsuccessful, however there was some engagement from Business in the Community.

Level 1	Healthy Working Wales Local Public Health Teams Welsh Local Government Association Building a Healthier Wales Group Directors of Public Health Public Service Board Co-ordinators Group NHS Workforce and OD leads
Level 2	Welsh Government Future Generations Commissioner's Team
Level 3	Confederation of Business and Industry Federation of Small Business Trade Union Council Wales

Table 1: Priority stakeholders for fair work engagement phase.

A communications plan was developed alongside the engagement plan with the aim of:

- Maintaining and increase awareness of fair work products amongst priority stakeholders.
- Disseminating updated products and information of interest to priority stakeholders.
- Using a behaviourally informed approach in engagement to increase awareness of and access to fair work materials.

The engagement plan outlined the evaluation metrics and data collected for engagement activities (full details in appendix 1).

A logic model was developed to provide a depiction of how activities undertaken during the engagement phase will lead to short, medium and long term outcomes.

3. Findings

3.1 Evaluation of impact

Evaluation data was collected in relation to four key areas, summarised in table 2

1. Social media and communications activity
 - webpage views 1780
 - social media activity 18,000 impressions (Facebook), 9,800 (Twitter) and 2,100 (LinkedIn)
 - real living wage week press activity, over 734 views
2. Stakeholder engagement activities
 - presentations and workshops to over 100 priority stakeholders
 - individual meetings held with priority stakeholders
3. Stakeholder engagement data for insights
 - 10 priority stakeholder insights collected
 - workshops positively impacted on stakeholders' understanding and motivation
4. Priority stakeholder behaviours that fair work is explicitly mentioned in policies and plans
 - Review of Public Service Board, Regional Economic Frameworks and Regional Skills Partnership plans

Table 2: Overview of evaluation data for engagement phase

Information was collected to ascertain how confident Local Public Health Teams were in their knowledge and understanding of what works to improve participation in fair work. Results showed lower levels of knowledge and understanding but feedback following the sessions was positive in relation to improved knowledge and understanding. Data collected at workshop with Healthy Working Wales staff demonstrated that their confidence and motivation to discuss fair work with employers was higher after the workshop.

3.2 Review of Public Service Board, Regional Economic Frameworks and Regional Skills Partnership plans

The following section gives an overview of key regional and local level policies and plans in relation to the definition of fair work and its six characteristics. A desktop review of Regional Economic Frameworks plans, Regional Skills Partnerships plans and Public Services Boards (PSBs) Well-being Assessments and Plans was undertaken. During 2022 PSBs published their well-being assessments and are in the process of finalising their Well-being Plans by May 2023, table 3 provides a summary of PSB plans which reference fair work and/or fair work characteristics.

	Fair Work	Fair Reward	Employee Voice	Security and flexibility	Opportunity for access growth and progression	Safe, healthy working environment	Legal rights respected
Cwm Taf							
Cardiff		√			√		
Carmarthen	√	√			√		
Ceredigion	√				√	√	
Conwy and Denbighshire		√			√		
Flintshire and Wrexham					√	√	
Gwent		√			√		
Gwynedd and Anglesey	√				√		
Neath Port Talbot					√		
Pembroke					√		
Powys				√	√		
Swansea							
The Vale					√		

Table 3: summary of PSB plans reference to fair work and fair work characteristics

3.2.1 Cardiff Capital Region

The [Cardiff Capital Region](#) covers 10 local authority areas of South East Wales (Cardiff; the Vale; Merthyr Tydfil; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Bridgend; Torfaen; Caerphilly; Newport; Monmouthshire; Blaenau Gwent). The Cardiff Capital Region has seen significant investment and regeneration over recent decades and the [City Deal](#) will see an investment of over £1.23 billion and is designed to build on the region's sectoral strengths, its high skill base and to accelerate economic growth and productivity.

The [South East Wales Regional Economic Framework](#) makes commitments to responsible investing, supporting sustainability, fair work, Real Living Wage and embedding the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The framework promotes supply chain sustainability, business and personal resilience and champions fair work, digital and flexible ways of working, infrastructure development, skills and employability and digitalisation.

The Cardiff Capital Region [Regional Skills Partnership](#) analyses economic challenges and likely growth areas to identify the skills needed in the workforce. The Cardiff Capital Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan ([2023-2025](#)) does not explicitly mention fair work but does focus on some of the characteristics of fair work such as strengthening the offer in further education, apprenticeships, qualifications, supporting those furthest away from the labour market into work and progress in work.

There are four PSBs which cover the Cardiff Capital Region – Cardiff; The Vale; Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Gwent. Cardiff PSB does not explicitly mention fair work in its plan, but it does have objectives related to two of the fair work characteristics, fair reward (implementation of the Real Living Wage across the public and private sectors) and opportunity for growth, access and progress (in relation to training and local employment).

The Vale PSB has an objective related to the fair work characteristic opportunity for access, growth and progression (employability and training opportunities for those living in areas of deprivation).

Gwent PSB is a newly combined PSB of the previously five separate local authority areas of Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. Gwent PSB has an objective to create a fair and equitable Gwent which it will do by supporting the creation of meaningful employment and training opportunities that enable everyone to receive fair pay for the work they do. These actions relate to two of the fair work characteristics, fair reward and opportunity for growth, access and progression.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB comprises of the merger of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda

Cynon Taf PSB with Bridgend PSB. There is no direct reference to fair work but the objective of 'healthy local neighbourhood' discusses the role of anchor institutions and aiming to improve well-being through their assets to support communities through procurement and reducing their carbon footprint.

3.2.2 North Wales Region

The [Ambition North Wales](#) partnership covers the six local authority areas in North Wales (Flintshire, Wrexham, Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire). It aims to develop the region to be confident and cohesive, improving the region's economic, social and environmental well-being. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is responsible for the Growth Deal and will oversee £240 million investment.

[The North Wales Regional Economic Framework](#) states the following ambitions in relation to fair work:

- Skills – Developing our understanding of the skills required, ensuring the right skills for a future workforce providing opportunities for all, which provides a living wage.
- Digital connectivity – Ensure that all areas of the region have the digital connectivity required to work in a virtual world to allow for equality to access jobs.
- To maximise opportunities of virtual working to allow opportunities for those living in rural areas. Creating access to work without the need to travel and therefore providing a platform for innovative digital opportunities.
- Ensure an all-year tourism offer where appropriate, to create more sustainable opportunities for workforce.
- Reaching for the highest levels of sustainability and ensuring fair work in Wales is rewarded, heard, and represented.

The [North Wales Regional Skills Partnerships](#) works to identify current and future regional skills needs, the plan [\(2023-2025\)](#) outlines three priority areas; enabling and empowering employers; enabling and empowering individuals and how support is provided; and making the connections. It commits to promoting fair work practices and developing a pledge for fair work and pay in the Health and Social Care sector.

Three PSBs cover the North Wales region. Conwy and Denbighshire have objectives related to fair work characteristics of opportunity for access, growth and progression (creating a skilled workforce); fair reward (more people are in well paid work).

Flintshire and Wrexham in its objectives has specific actions related to opportunity for access, growth and progression (volunteering and building career pathways and improving its joined up approach to training and recruitment of Welsh Speakers) and safe, healthy and inclusive environment (identify where

organisations can change systems so that recruitment practices enable diverse and thriving workplaces).

Gwynedd and Anglesey PSB specifically mention the fair work recommendations of the PHW guide “we will commit to developing a fair work mindset, place fair work at the heart of policies and plans, create fair work and be exemplars of fair work in Anglesey and Gwynedd demonstrating the value of such an approach for business and the community and promote access to fair work for all”. Other objectives cover fair work characteristics of opportunity for access, growth and progression (in relation to employment, further education, or training).

3.2.3 Mid Wales Region

Ceredigion is part of the [Growing Mid Wales](#) regional partnership with Powys. The partnership aims to represent the region's interests and priorities for improvements in the local economy with a vision that Mid Wales will be "An enterprising and distinctive region delivering economic growth driven by innovation, skills, connectivity and more productive jobs supporting prosperous and bilingual communities". The regional partnership will oversee the Mid Wales Growth Deal with a £110million investment over the next 10 to 15 years.

The [Mid Wales Regional Economic Framework](#) was developed through collaboration and co-production with stakeholders from across the region. It supports a regionally-focused model of economic development, with its vision for the region being “An enterprising and distinctive region delivering economic growth driven by innovation, skills, connectivity and more productive jobs supporting prosperous and bilingual communities”. The Mid Wales Regional Economic Framework has outlined in relation to fair work the following ambitions:

- We will work towards ensuring that no one is excluded from participation in our economy through a lack of digital connectivity.
- Ensure the appropriate supply of skills and a capable workforce to meet business and industry demands and needs will be fundamental to our future success.

The [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership](#) engages and consults with sectors and industries to identify needs of employers and learners, the plan (2022–2025) does not explicitly mention fair work but does have objectives in relation to learning pathways and progression for learners in Further Education/Higher Education; establish an apprenticeships scheme and work with partners to ensure opportunities for upskills.

The Mid Wales Region has two PSBs, Ceredigion and Powys. Ceredigion commit to fair work recommendations of the PHW guide: “all organisations of the PSB will commit to developing a fair work mindset, place fair work at the heart of policies and plans, create fair work and be exemplars of fair work in Ceredigion

demonstrating the value of such an approach for business and the community and promote access to fair work for all”.

Powys PSB has objectives related to the fair work characteristic of opportunity for access, growth and progression (gaining new skills; improving the approach to lifelong learning, trainee scheme and apprenticeship) security and flexibility (digital connectivity and work life balance).

3.2.4 South West Region

The South West Region covers Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Pembrokeshire and includes the [Swansea Bay City Deal](#) which will see up to £1.3 billion investment in nine major programmes across the Swansea Bay City Region. The City Deal aims to improve people’s lives by raising aspirations, improving services, boosting skills, and creating well-paid employment opportunities.

[The Regional Economic Framework for South West Wales](#) has a vision for a region which is: “enterprising and ambitious; balanced and inclusive; resilient and sustainable”. The Regional Economic Framework for South West Wales has outlined the following ambitions that relate to fair work:

- Be committed to responsible investing, supporting sustainability, fair work, Real Living Wage and embedding the well-being of future generations.
- A focus on high value clusters and supporting fair work and employability can address [these] inequalities.

The [South West Wales Regional Skills Partnership](#) strives to work across the region bridging the gap between education and regeneration in the hope of creating a strong and vibrant economy underpinned by innovation, growth and a capable workforce. The [2023-2025](#) Skills and Employment Plan highlights the need and progresses actions that promote fair work for all, for example in addressing skills gaps and attracting employees to the area.

The South West Region has four PSBs. The Carmarthenshire PSB has an overarching objective to “[ensure] a sustainable economy and fair employment”. Actions include to implement fair work practices through employment and services; to consider the introduction of the Real Living Wage for public services; explore development of a work-based learning/apprenticeship programme.

Pembrokeshire PSB has objectives related to the fair work characteristic opportunity for access, growth and progression (developing initiatives which support those in poverty may remove some of the barriers to work; promoting volunteering and social enterprises that will provide local jobs).

Neath Port Talbot PSB references the fair work characteristic opportunity for access, growth and progression (increasing skills and traineeships) whilst Swansea PSB focuses on objectives in relation to growing the economy (have an economy

that is sustainable and regenerative; integrate our economic work with the climate and environmental considerations to achieve broader outcomes and how we plan our economic future).

3.3 Insights from national perspectives

This section summarises the key policy drivers from Welsh Government in relation to fair work and an overview of the insights gained from the priority stakeholders working on a national level.

The Welsh Government Programme for Government sets out the ambitious commitment between 2021 - 2026, the diagram below illustrates some of the policy and economic context that highlights some of the policy areas in relation to the well-being objectives of “build an economy based on the principals of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future”⁴

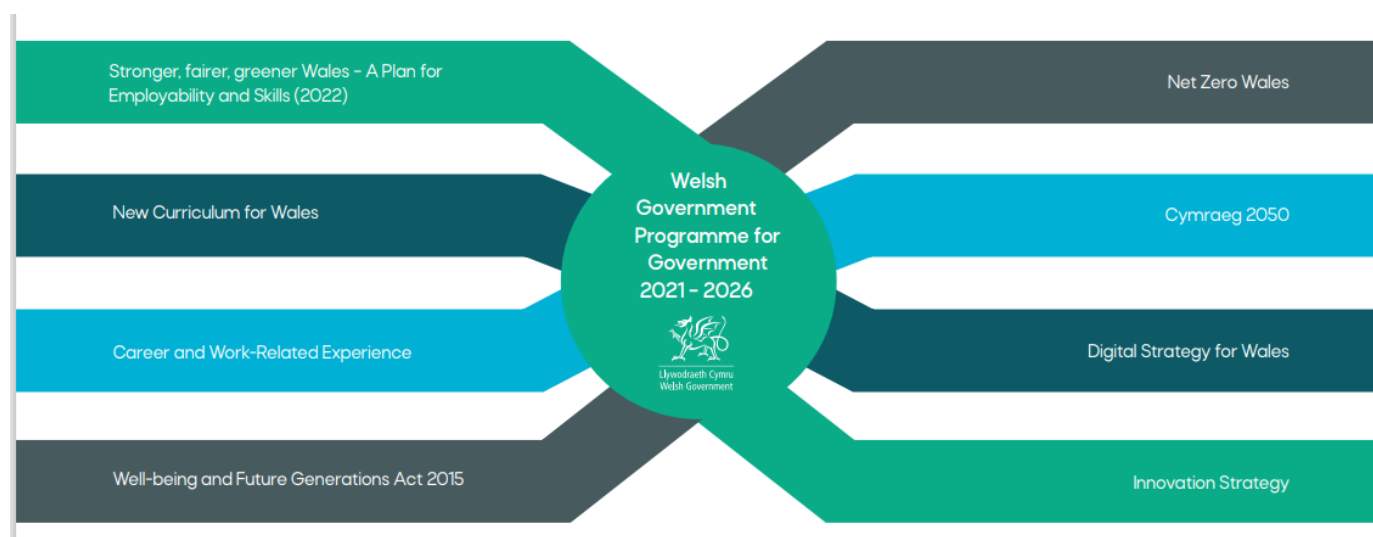


Figure 3 taken from ([North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023 – 2025](#))

In March 2022, Welsh Government launched its ‘Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills’⁵ with a vision to create a Wales “where individuals of all ages can receive a high quality education, with jobs for all, where businesses can thrive in a net zero economy that champions fairness and equality”. The plan outlines its key priority areas, including “Fair work for all. Support and encourage employers to create high quality employment, improve the offer to workers, champion fair employment practices, ensure the social value of investment and encourage the public sector to embed the priorities in workforce planning”.

Welsh Government have progressed with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill⁶. The Bill aims to improve public services through “social partnership working, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement”⁷. The Bill was passed in May 2023 and places a statutory duty to:

- Establish a Social Partnership Council.

- Place a statutory social partnership duty on certain public bodies requiring them to seek consensus or compromise with recognised trade unions when setting and delivering on well-being objectives.
- Create a statutory social partnership duty on Welsh Ministers to consult through the Social Partnership Council when delivering on well-being objectives.
- Amend the A Prosperous Wales goal in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (WFG Act) to replace decent work with fair work.
- Require specified public bodies to consider socially responsible public procurement when carrying out public procurement; set procurement objectives in relation to well-being goals; and publish procurement strategies.
- Require certain public bodies to carry out contract management duties so socially responsible outcomes are pursued through supply chains.
- Place reporting duties on the Welsh Ministers and specified public bodies relating to the social partnership and socially responsible public procurement duties.

The Welsh Government (Social Partnership, Employability and Fair Work Directorate) is developing accompanying statutory guidance to support the Bill and will feature reference to the PHW fair work guide. The Directorate is promoting and increasing participation in fair work by supporting the development of Social Care Fair Work Forum and the Retail Forum in a social partnership approach, seeking to improve working conditions and develop a sustainable, resilient sector which offers fair, secure and rewarding work.

Welsh Government is progressing fair work within the Economic Contract. The contract is a commitment to provide public investment that prioritises the social and environmental needs of Wales whilst building a more resilient and prosperous well-being economy, described as the 'something for something' approach. The Business Wales team within Welsh Government has approached the WDoHU to collaborate in developing and promoting the visibility of fair work in the ongoing development of its website.

The Future Generation Commissioners Office (FGCO) has provided advice to the Public Service Boards in relation to their well-being assessments⁸ noting that clear connection had been made in relation to regional growth and city deals in areas such as energy and the economy. Further consideration needed to be made on the future of work and what skills might be needed with clearer links needed to their respective Regional Skills Partnerships.

The Future Generations Commissioners Office team has also been involved with supporting public bodies in their delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (WFG Act) in areas such as procurement, studying the impact of basic income and the shorter working week, supporting the development of the Social Public and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill⁶. A new Future Generations

Commissioner [Derek Walker](#) has recently been appointed and he is expected to publish his priorities for his seven year term, which could include fair work.

Much of Wales Trade Union Congress (Wales TUC) activities has been dominated by the recent and ongoing industrial action. In December 2022 a new pilot programme, as part of the new curriculum in schools, aimed to help prepare young people for a career, and understand their working rights, healthy working environments and the role of the unions. There is also ongoing work supporting the development of policies and plans, training of union officers and supporting the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. They recognise that for some there is still a strong focus on economic growth and development in some sectors resulting in less of a desire to embrace the concept of fair work.

Public Health Wales (PHW) is developing its Long Term Strategy (2023 – 2035) which outlines the vision for achieving a healthier future for Wales by 2035. There are six strategic priorities with ‘influencing the wider determinants of health’ including that “by 2035 we will have supported public and private sector work to maximise inclusive participation in fair work supporting health and well-being”. PHW Integrated Medium Term Plan (2023-2026) outlines that by 2026 PHW “will have worked with employers and national, regional and local partners to positively influence how work, education and housing can improve health and equity”.

In addition to the work of the WDoHU on fair work, the Healthy Working Wales Programme within PHW will continue to support employers to maximise the contribution of work to improving health and well-being and reducing inequalities. In continuing implementation of the new delivery model, Healthy Working Wales will continue to support employers to create work which is safe and optimises health and well-being, recognising the rapid changes to the world of work since the pandemic.

Fair work will be embedded into the new delivery model and assessment model with topic information and resources available for employers on the HWW webpages. Healthy Working Wales is also working on activity to support people to stay in work through the establishment of the Employee Health Management Partnership bringing together multi-agency partners to address specific issues and to prevent people from falling out of work.

3.4 Insights from Local Public Health Teams

To gain insights to inform the engagement plan objectives, a number of meetings, workshops and discussion were held with all 7 of the local public health teams in Wales. Local public health teams were previously part of PHW and in September 2022 integrated into Health Boards. They play a pivotal role in improving the health and well-being of their local communities. This section provides an overview of insights gained from these discussions.

What policy interventions are already happening at local and regional level?

What are the current areas of action for local and regional agencies including potential and perceived opportunities?

Aneurin Bevan Local Public Health (ABUHB) Team is working towards becoming an established Marmot region with support from the Institute of Health Equity. Fair work related to one of the 8 principals of a Marmot Region (create fair employment and good work for all) with the main objective around decreasing health inequalities. The team has been undertaking a period of engagement and collaboration to incorporate the Marmot principles into its PSB well-being plan and local authority corporate plans. Other key objectives for the team include climate change and social cohesion. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health⁹ focused on the Marmot region with a chapter on fair work, informed by the PHW guide.

Many areas of good practice and opportunities to progress fair work were identified by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) team in relation to BCUHB activities e.g. its role as an anchor institution, development of the staff health and well-being strategy, Healthy Spaces programme and links with the Public Service Boards. It was noted that local communication hubs played an important role in relation to supporting people back into work.

The Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (C&VUHB) team identified many areas of good practice and opportunities to progress fair work e.g. Health Board practices and policies (e.g. apprenticeships and refresh of their 10 year strategy) and Cardiff Council social responsibility and procurement strategy; Regional Partnership Board work on social value. Cardiff has progressed significantly in its ambition to become a [Living Wage City](#) with a steering group set up to drive forward the number of accredited living wage employers, increase the numbers of people working for living wage employers and supporting small businesses to be accredited through the councils living wage accreditation support scheme.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) team has recently completed its Platinum Status with Healthy Working Wales. The CTMUHB is progressing fair work through activities in relation to the living wage and Health Board practices and policies e.g. workforce and development plans; Anchor institution steering group; apprenticeships and staff well-being strategy.

Hywel Dda University Health Board (H DUHB) is working towards being real living wage accredited employers. H DUHB is progressing fair work through its recruitment policy and practices; work on social value; staff induction processes and its staff health and well-being plan. The team has strong links and potential opportunity to work with its PSBs as they develop their plans. Funding streams

were identified as having a potential influencing role e.g. Shared Prosperity funding.

Powys Teaching Health Board recognised the success of the Health and Care Academy in its role to increase access to education, training and development across the health and social care sector. The team has been involved with recruitment drives in the area and is aware of work underway to increase digital access to learning and progression.

The Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) team is developing its population health strategy (Marmot Region) and see this as a key driver to raising its profile and that of fair work. Examples were given of good practice locally such as Citizens Advice projects and Neath Port Talbot College work around access and inclusion. There is progress being made within SBUHB e.g. apprenticeships, procurement. The Shared Prosperity Fund in the region as well as connections with the Economic Regions Teams was highlighted as a future opportunity to raise the profile of fair work.

What are the challenges and barriers for local and regional agencies?

Most teams reflected that there was a tendency to progress and increase participation in fair work in relation to public sector with less focus and effort on the private sector, with some feeling more time should be spent in engaging with the private sector. Some thought that there could be an unintentional increase in inequalities by focusing on public sector. Some teams thought it was difficult to engage with the private sector as it is hard to sell the concept of fair work to some key partners and influencers when there is such a heavy focus on economic growth and development. Discussion also covered the uncertainty of where the biggest gain in the system is, and that influencers of the system will differ in different systems.

Some teams reflected that the current context and service pressures facing Health Boards made it difficult to progress actions in relation to fair work, citing issues such as the impact of the recession; recruitment and retention; ongoing industrial action; aging workforce; need for ongoing skills developments. It was also noted that there might be a tension in the flexibility aspect of the fair work characteristic and the need to deliver a 24hour service.

Funding structures were seen as making it difficult to implement fair work e.g. the nature of funding cycles, use of fixed terms contracts and bank staff within the Health Board. One region viewed some disconnect between the PSB and Shared Prosperity Funding and regional economic level.

Challenges were discussed in relation to increasing participation in fair work in certain sectors e.g. pay award differing across social care and childcare sector and

working conditions in relation to the agriculture sector. The nature of precarious jobs and the rising numbers of people in work poverty make increasing fair work difficult.

What is currently measured in relation to fair work?

In ABUHB the team is working with the Institute of Health Equity to develop 13 indicators to cover the 8 principles of a Marmot region. Discussions are underway to finalise which 2 indicators will be used for decent work, likely to be employment rates and the numbers of employees in receipt of the real living wage.

All other health boards' measurement and evaluation of fair work is not explicitly captured in a dedicated 'fair work plan' *per se* but elements are captured in some workstreams e.g such as apprenticeships; living wage steering groups; recruitment and retention activity and staff surveys. The CTMUHB Population Health Management programme is looking at primary and secondary care data and exploring the possibility of accessing economic data e.g. DWP data which will provide further insight on their communities' needs.

Local public health teams frequently get approached for data, which is often used as a 'hook' with partners and stakeholders. Teams recognised that some fair work data is available and collected as part of the National Indicator data set. It was recognised that there is a lack of local level data on fair work and that many of the data indicators are proxy measures. Further work is needed to understand how to use the data to support the monitoring of the fair work characteristics.

What future support is required and where can we best add value?

Overall, local public health teams valued the opportunity to engage and discuss the work and they would like to maintain connection with the WDoHU for further support as they progress. There was a feeling that this was an opportunity for national and local efforts on fair work to be joined up, for example ensuring amplification of opportunities and that the right stakeholders and partners are being worked with across the system.

Some would value further support and bespoke work in the form of workshops with the PSB and Workforce and OD teams within the Health Boards. Most would also welcome the development of other frameworks to support the practical application of work in this area for example in relation to anchor institutions, foundational economy and procurement.

Most of the teams would also see benefit from further work and development on data, monitoring and evaluation of fair work and understanding of how data can support the concepts of fair work.

4. Discussion

Engagement activities with priority stakeholders consisted of workshops, presentations, meetings and 1:1 discussions. Each engagement activity provided an opportunity to motivate stakeholders to engage with the fair work agenda and raise awareness, improve knowledge and understanding of:

- The definition of fair work and its characteristics.
- The relationship of fair work with health, well-being, equity and productivity.
- The PHW recommendations for increasing participation in fair work to support health, well-being and equity.

Relationships have been developed with 10 of the 12 identified priority stakeholders and with additional stakeholders such as Cynnal Cymru and Business Wales. During the engagement phase stakeholders were supportive of PHW's approach to date and viewed its activities and expert panel resources as complimentary to their work. Stakeholders were generally engaged and most willing to be part of future discussions and activities with PHW to ensure consistency across the system and no duplication of effort.

4.1 Impact and reach of the PHW Fair work for health, well-being and equity guide

Stakeholders found the guide a useful resource and were able to pull out information to support the development of policies, plans and guidance e.g. PSB plans, ABUHB Director of Public Health Annual Report and informal feedback from Welsh Government that it may feature in their guidance documentation for the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

Chapter 5: Create fair employment and good work for all

Why is this important?

Being in (good, fair) employment is protective of health. Conversely, unemployment contributes to poor health. Getting people into work is the first step to reducing inequity, but jobs also need to provide fair employment and good work that promotes well-being.

The Marmot Review proposes a minimum level of quality for jobs to provide good, fair work. Jobs should not only be sustainable and provide a decent living wage, but also opportunities for in-work development, the flexibility to enable people to balance work and family life, and protection from adverse working conditions that can damage health¹.

The Health Equity Status Report Initiative identifies five essential conditions for health equity². Employment and working conditions is one of these, associated with 7% of the difference in self-reported health.

For children, the income and work of their parents is a pivotal factor in the length of time spent in child poverty and the ability to exit poverty³.

There are many different definitions of good, fair or decent work, whether developed by governments, academics or workers' organisations. The Fair Work Commission in Wales considered the many alternatives and identified the following characteristics of fair work⁴:

Figure 15: What is fair work?



Source: Public Health Wales⁴

What can organisations in Gwent do?

Public Health Wales (PHW) has recently published a guide to fair work for local and regional organisations in Wales⁵. This guide was informed by the work and recommendations of the Participation in Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity Expert Panel. The resulting framework for action is illustrated below.

Figure 4: Building a Fairer Gwent: Why Gwent is a Marmot Region⁹

Communication activities during the engagement phase included the dissemination of bespoke briefings to priority stakeholders, with WLGA, WG and HWW playing a key part in disseminating materials to their networks such as PSB co-ordinators, local councillors and businesses. Communication and social media activity were also undertaken in partnership with Cynnal Cymru during [Real Living Wage week](#) to maintain awareness of the materials, gaining reach on Facebook, Twitter and on websites (for example Healthy Working Wales, Public Health Network Cymru).

It was not possible to collect data on the number of downloads of our fair work guide but data was collected on the number of visits to the webpage. Visits were highest upon launch of the materials and steady views maintained thereafter. Overall, there were a high number of views of the animation, but lower views of the talking heads.

4.2 Review of Public Service Board, Regional Economic Frameworks and Regional Skills Partnership plans

Undertaking the desktop review of Regional Economic Frameworks, Regional Skills Partnerships and Public Services Boards Well-being Assessments and Plans has increased understanding of what policy interventions are already happening at

a local and regional level and understanding of how the system in Wales works.

The review of the Regional Economic Framework shows that there are commitments and actions to improve and increase participation in fair work across the four areas via the real living wage; access to and creation of sustainable jobs (e.g. sustainable tourism in the North and Mid and a focus on growth in technology, innovation and emerging industries such as AI and data in the South West and East; digitalisation and digital connectivity; and infrastructure development. The four Regional Economic Framework seems to take a universal approach to addressing regional economic priorities, whilst considering some, but not all of the fair work characteristics.

The review of the Regional Skills Partnership Employability and Skills plans found that two plans reference fair work in relation to addressing skills gaps; attracting employees to the areas; promoting fair work practices and developing a pledge for fair work and pay in the Health and Social Care sector. The other two plans do not specifically reference fair work but do focus on some of the characteristics of fair work such as strengthening the offer in further education, apprenticeships, qualifications; supporting those furthest away from the labour market into work and progress in work; and enabling and empowering employers and individuals in relation to their skills and development needs. These plans tend to focus on the opportunity for access, growth and progression fair work characteristics, with some plans mentioning a targeted population approach and others a broader all population approach.

A key objective of the engagement phase was to help PSBs recognise the importance of fair work for well-being to inform their plan development. Among the 19 previous PSB plans (2017-2022) one plan mentioned fair work, another six referenced elements of the fair work characteristics and others did not reference at all. In the 2023-2028 PSB plans there has been an increase in the number of plans referencing working conditions or employment. Out of the 13 plans, three explicitly reference fair work, eight others have elements of the fair work characteristics in their objectives and two have none.

Whilst it is difficult to attribute the increase in the references to fair work to PHW or WDoHU input, it is likely that our activity to date has contributed to raising the profile of fair work on a local and regional level and influencing content. For example, two plans have used text extracts from the Fair Work Guide. Further follow-up evaluation in the form of survey, focus group or ripple effects mapping could in future support our understanding in relation to PSB processes in determining their well-being plans.

For the PSBs that reference some of the fair work characteristics most were in relation to opportunity for access, growth and progression in activities such as on volunteering, training, upskilling, education and apprenticeships and fair reward through progressing the real living wage in identified sectors. As plans develop it

would be of value for PSBs to consider the other characteristics of fair work, including security and flexibility; safe healthy and inclusive working environment; legal rights respected and given substantive effect; and employee voice. In some PSB areas, the well-being assessments had highlighted issues around fair work which did not subsequently feature in the well-being plans (e.g. issues around recruitment and retention in certain sectors linked to working conditions or high numbers of people in work poverty).

The desktop review and insights with stakeholders has enabled identification of gaps and determine where the WDoHU can continue to add value. It particularly highlighted the importance of influencing key levers in the systems at certain points in policy and planning cycles. As PSBs publish their Well-being plans in May 2023, there is a further short window of opportunity to influence the detailed development of their plans in which local and regional agencies can play a key part.

Longer term key leverage points in planning cycles of the PSBs and Regional Skills Partnerships should be noted with focused engagement and communication activity during these periods. The upcoming Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill also provides an opportunity to influence public sector bodies in their social partnerships and procurement duties in relation to fair work.

4.3 Stakeholder Insights

It was recognised by stakeholders that under devolved Welsh Government powers the landscape and activity to increase participation in fair work is more achievable and supportive within the public sector. Local Public Health teams recognised the opportunities to influence strategic planning cycles within their Health Board. Other common leverage points for local and regional agencies included activity on the real living wage, access to training education and apprenticeships and procurement processes. There is an opportunity to build upon PHW fair work resources and provide evidence based recommendations, frameworks to support practical application of work in the public sector role, especially in the recognized role as Anchor Institution and these leverage points.

However, it should be noted that stakeholders felt that further engagement and influencing activity should be undertaken within the private sector. As Healthy Working Wales progresses the development of its new delivery model, embedding a fair work approach in the development of its resources will strengthen participation in both public and private sector. Further targeted engagement with stakeholders such as Business in the Community and the Federation of Small Businesses could raise the profile of fair work further and lead to future collaboration opportunities. A discussion with Business in the Community shows that there is appetite for collaboration in terms of improving the data that we have on fair work and further resources aimed at businesses.

A commonality across all stakeholders was that there is a lack of local and regional data collection and monitoring of fair work. Most of the indicators and data available are either proxy measures or national figures. Further resources could be developed to aid understanding of how data can support the monitoring and evaluation of activity of the characteristics of fair work and how progress could be measured.

4.4 Applying a behavioural science lens

In collaboration with Public Health Wales Behavioural Science Unit, the WDoHU applied an evidence based behaviour change framework, the Capability Opportunity Motivation Behaviour Model (COM B), to better understand the factors influencing participation in fair work across the system in Wales. The COM B model¹⁰ provides a framework for exploring the determinants of behaviours and has been applied to a range of professional behaviours^{11,12}. The model proposes that three conditions must be met for any behaviour to occur on any given occasion, there must be the capability to perform the behaviour, the opportunity to perform it and the motivation. By mapping the insights gained during the engagement phase and [qualitative research](#) to the COM B, the most appropriate strategies for addressing any barriers can be identified¹³.

By taking this approach, referred to as a behavioural diagnosis, it was evident that most of the barriers and facilitators were in relation to the opportunity element of the COM-B model. With opportunities relating to barriers such as funding, pay structures, resource and retention issues and facilitators such as opportunity to embed in plans and processes and progression on the real living wage. In terms of capability there were barriers in relation to a lack of understanding in relation to fair work and with motivation some felt that that the concept of selling fair work is a difficult task in the current economic climate. According to the Behaviour Change Wheel, an evidence based framework that guides intervention development based on the findings of a behavioural diagnosis, the capability and motivation influences on participation in fair work can be addressed through interventions centred on education with policy options such as communications and marketing¹⁰. This analysis highlighted the need to enhance knowledge and understanding of fair work whilst also highlighting opportunity factors which requires a collective response from the wider system.

5. Conclusion

Our engagement with national, local and regional partners has been a route to influence action to increase participation in fair work. This appears to be particularly the case for PSB well-being plans, through engagement of local public health teams, Future Generations Commissioners Office, and separately, Public Services Boards Coordinators.

Engaging with stakeholders has also established relationships with partners,

especially in local public health teams, and facilitated reflection on opportunities and barriers in this space. However with the limited resources and capacity of the WDoHU and competing pressures not all areas have been explored in relation to future opportunities, particularly in relation to the private sector (no engagement with the CBI and FSB).

During the engagement phase the WDoH was viewed as a source of knowledge and can continue to add value with the development of specialist input as local and regional partners progress work. This was seen as added value and complimentary to the work of Healthy Working Wales with employers.

Opportunities to influence participation in fair work include informing planning cycles (PSBs, Regional skills partnerships, IMTP, LA corporate plans); providing sector specific insights; supporting public sector bodies in their role in relation to anchor institutions, living wage, procurement or apprenticeships; routes to influencing the private sector including local authority business and enterprise, City and regional deals and the work of Healthy Working Wales.

Engagement of stakeholders demonstrated that understanding of the concept of fair work and how to address it remains variable, suggesting a need for supporting capability and motivation. This could be through the development of specific frameworks, guidance, resources and communication materials.

Many local and regional agencies focus in particular on the fair work characteristics of opportunity for access, growth and progression with PSBs seeing this as a key activity, along with the progression of the real living wage. These may be areas to bring a population health lens.

However, people we engaged with identified clear barriers to making progress on fair work, including reward structures beyond the control of the parties involved, public sector finances and pressures, an aging workforce and a lack of levers to influence the private sector where much of the action on fair work is needed.

Continued engagement with stakeholders on fair work in Wales should be centred on identified leverage points to maximise effort to create conditions to increase participation in fair work. Focusing on key opportunities in relation to the development of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill and further development of PSBs plans and activities should also be a point of focus.

Data to monitor and understand participation in fair work and impact on this was clearly lacking for many partners. There is an opportunity to further explore the understanding of how data can support the concepts of fair work and how progress could be measured, with further guidance on data collection and evaluation and monitoring of fair work characteristics along with further research on the extent of fair work in Wales.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Fair Work engagement phase evaluation data

Activity	What	Measure	Data
Social media and communications activity (online)	Reach amongst priority stakeholders and broader stakeholders To promote fair work recommendations and promote WDoH Unit products	Number of webpage views of Fair work resources Number of You Tube views for animations and 'talking head videos' Number of registrants for webinar / workshops Number of presentations and audience size	Fair work page 1780 views (as of 31/5/23) 261 views of animation on you tube (as of 31/5/23) PHNC webinar 15/6/23 57 attendees and 125 views on you tube (as of 31/5/23) Materials disseminated to approx. 200 targeted stakeholders upon launch (May 2022) Social media activity following the publication of the fair work products resulted in 18,000 impressions ¹ (facebook); 9,800 impressions and 5.4% engagement rate (twitter) and 2,100 views on LinkedIn (between 1/3/22 and 30/6/22) Page views for real living wage press release (published 14/11/22) https://phw.nhs.wales/news/real-living-wage-critical-for-health/ 734 views (as of 31/5/23)
Stakeholder engagement activities eg meetings, workshops, presentations	Reach amongst priority stakeholders and broader stakeholders	Number of presentations and audience size	Presentation and workshops including - Healthy Working Wales team; Local public health team x 7; PSB co-ordinators workshop (part of health inequalities workshop); BaHW. Total approx. audience – 100 Stakeholders meetings individuals from target groups (eg WG, WLGA, Future Generations Commissioner Team, Workforce and OD (PHW, Cwm Taf, HEIW, TUC)
Stakeholder engagement data for insights	Awareness of FW / characteristics and relationship to productivity and health and well-being Attitudes toward increasing participation of fair work	Number of stakeholder priority group insights collected Stakeholder material and insights shared with Wider Determinants of Health Unit Qualitative data from engagement activities	10/12 priority stakeholder insights collected
Priority stakeholder behaviours	Fair work explicitly mentioned in policies and plans	Number of PSB plans referencing Fair work	13 PSB plans 2023-2025 of which 3 specifically reference fair work, 8 have element of fair work and 2 have none. (Previous wellbeing plans 1 explicitly referenced fair work, 4 had elements of fair work and others none)

¹ An impression is when the post appears on somebody's timeline, they haven't necessarily interacted with the post.

The average engagement rate across all posts on both platforms is 0.7%, 1% is considered good. The higher the follower count (PHW has tens of thousands), the harder it is to reach the higher engagement rates.

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