



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Working Together for Wales

A Strategic Framework for the Public
Service Workforce in Wales

“ I want to see best practice being shared and delivered across Welsh public services and that includes best practice in employee relations. Engagement, negotiation and agreement - not diktat.

I want the Welsh way of Government – employers and unions working together to seek solutions – to be the only way in Welsh public services.

And this means sticking to our principles – no two tier workforce, no knee jerk outsourcing, commitments to fair terms if transfers take place, and a continued adherence to our workforce code of practice from all sides...”

Extract from the First Minister’s speech to the WTUC Special Conference November 2010

First Minister Foreword

I am pleased to provide a foreword to this strategic framework for the public service workforce in Wales. Through *Making the Connections, Beyond Boundaries* and most recently the Public Service Leadership Group there is a clear recognition that the transformation of our public services will only succeed with the active engagement of the workforce.

Here in Wales we have an excellent track record of working in partnership with public service employers and trade unions, our public service Workforce Partnership Council is unique to Wales and represents an approach to employee relations which is based on openness, trust and respect. We believe this offers a sustainable value added approach which allows our social partners an opportunity to contribute and have ownership of the challenges we face and the citizen centred outcomes we are all seeking.

This Strategic Framework is a high level document published by the Government and brings together notable practice, much of which already exists across the public service landscape across Wales. I believe if we are to achieve the step change we need in public service delivery we need a coordinated and consistent approach.

Whilst it is the Government's responsibility to provide leadership around public service workforce matters we recognise the vital contribution that our social partners make. I commend this document to you and invite you to work with us in taking this important work forward.

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister of Wales



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1. The Welsh Government's Vision for Public Services

- 1.1 The Welsh Government recognises that the dedication and excellence of the public service workforce is instrumental to transformation. Our vision is for a workforce that is at the heart of citizen-centred public service delivery.
- 1.2 The majority of those who work in the Welsh Public Service are also citizens of Wales and experience public service delivery in their own lives, within their families and across their wider communities everyday. This offers a dual benefit in workforce and citizen engagement and the richest possible way to understand what needs to be done, not just around how things can be improved, but also about different ways to do things, better suited to what is needed. We want our public service workforce to have a voice that is listened to, trusted and acted upon because it has authentic first-hand experience.
- 1.3 We know that trust is crucial to high performing public services. For services to be the very best they can be needs both the workforce and citizens to be fully engaged in a continual loop of feedback and improvement. In this way every employee has the chance to be a leader and influence how the business of public services works. Releasing their creativity and enthusiasm to help protect the jobs that our public services depend upon is vital as we explore ways to directly empower the workforce and adapt to new models of delivery.
- 1.4 We also want a fair deal for our public service workforce. A deal that respects the rights and responsibilities of staff and employers together with the vital role of the Trade Unions in making a difference and shaping a successful future for Wales.

A Strategic Framework

- 1.5 This document provides a strategic framework for the public service workforce in Wales including, Local Government, Health, Education, Further and Higher Education, Welsh Government and Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies. Using broad headings, it outlines how the workforce is at the heart of enabling the Welsh Government's future vision for public services, and sets out the principles by which we will operate in relation to workforce matters.
- 1.6 The framework is forward-looking and aspirational in the way it addresses the need for cultural change to transform service delivery. Both in leadership and employee relations we will continue to strengthen our partnership based approach. This includes working together on workforce mobility and the need to balance employment continuity with reform of how services are delivered. It is rooted in the overriding needs of citizens, affordability, value for money and recognises related developments such as the impact of ICT and the Digital Wales strategy.

The challenges ahead are significant but we are confident that our partnership approach offers the best chance of success.
- 1.7 It is a "living" document, and our social partners have a major stake in its ongoing development and delivery to ensure its continued relevance and fit with our future needs.

Why do we need a Workforce Strategy?

- 1.8 World class public services are at the core of the Welsh Government's ambition to make Wales a confident, prosperous, healthy nation which is fair to all and based on the principles of equality, fairness, social justice, human rights and sustainability.
- 1.9 Over the past decade, Welsh public services have improved across a range of devolved areas, a product of sustained investment focused on efficient, citizen centred delivery and a far-reaching vision for public services first set out in Making the Connections (2004). We remain committed to meeting the needs of citizens through collaboration rather than competition. This means active partnership with all those involved in public services: employers, staff, trade unions, the third sector and, above all, with citizens and communities. Their voices must be centre stage in driving improvement.
- 1.10 Whilst public services have improved since 1999 there is still much to do before Wales can meet its ambition of delivering world class public services which demonstrate high quality, responsive and sustainable outcomes for citizens. The key requirement is an improved quality of life for the people of Wales against a background of unprecedented financial challenge. We must get better at collaboration and working across and within sectors to maximise efficiency and effectiveness and **this means connecting the Welsh public service with the benefits of full, rewarding employment for all who live in Wales.** Everything we do must reflect the need to support our future economy – linking public service improvement with economic renewal and other government programmes.
- 1.11 **To do this means a joined-up, continually improving approach to the workforce as a key enabler rather than a business overhead, in programmes of work right across the Welsh Government.**
- 1.12 The Welsh Government understands the importance of the public service workforce and its critical role in our ambitions for public service improvement and better outcomes for citizens. This is why we have produced a comprehensive cross-sector workforce strategy to set out our vision – linking better workforce management and engagement, based around social partnership, with improved public services.

World class public services with a world class workforce

Innovation, new Delivery Models and improving the Citizen Experience

- 1.13 While we will continue to deliver to citizens through democratically accountable public services and other organisations, the Mutual and Co-operative sector, for example, has an increasingly key role to play at a time when we are exploring new and innovative ways of delivering services and improving economic performance.

- 1.14 Social Enterprise models have joined this movement and are pioneering new and exciting ways of approaching social concerns and contributing to a strong, diverse and sustainable economy. There is a rich diversity and breadth of social enterprises in Wales ranging from individual community enterprises to development trusts, social firms, re-cycling and renewable energy companies, employee owned co-operative housing organisations, credit unions and large enterprises such as Dwr Cymru Welsh Water.
- 1.15 There is much scope for further growth in these areas as part of building sustainable communities through community ownership whilst also encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. Building the capacity and capability of our workforce is key to delivering this ambition.



2. The Strategic Priorities

Building an Engaged, Motivated and High Performing Workforce

- 2.1 The Welsh Government believes that the public service workforce is its most valuable asset but one that through social partnership will need to adapt to the needs of our society. High performance from the workforce means that it performs well through change, is adaptable, sustainable and affordable.
- 2.2 We want to see sustained and closer engagement between service providers, particularly front-line staff and the citizen in the design, delivery and scrutiny of public services in Wales. This is vital if we are to be “a small, clever country playing to our strengths, talents and resources”. It also creates the right conditions for people to know how their work is meaningful. Without an understanding of what they are to deliver and how it contributes to organisational success, even the most committed employee will struggle to be high performing.
- 2.3 This requires leaders who can clearly communicate and explain the vision and understand the cultural conditions that support and sustain high levels of engagement. Leaders must align the role of an organisation with the realities of the outside world and facilitate new ways to deliver the business, new career paths and embed pride in the Wales brand. Transforming the Welsh public service workplace to provide this sort of supportive environment will provide the conditions for a workforce that has the drive and energy to span boundaries and give of its best.
- 2.4 Currently, the repeated messages about the public sector in the media can deeply damage motivation and engagement. The Welsh Government is committed to working with Trade Unions and employers through the Workforce Partnership Council to limit the impact of financial challenge, providing the workforce with a voice, pan-Wales, so that ideas can be fed upwards.
- 2.5 The issues of employee engagement, empowerment, motivation and high performance are interlinked and interdependent. As a Government, we are setting out the basis for an action plan to be improved continuously through experience of working together. To help get things started we will:
 - **establish a cross-sector Community of Practice around Engagement to help define what we mean by high performance; bringing together collective knowledge and good practice, to develop a collective approach to measuring employee engagement, embedded in wider business planning, that works across organisations, both public and private, and provides a voice for the workforce.**

Attracting and Retaining Talent

- 2.6 The Welsh Public Service is a great place to work – but who knows that? Does the Welsh Public Service have the right identity, branding and external image that attracts the best?

If not, then it should

- 2.7 Wider Government work covers social services, education, housing, leisure, emergency services, country governance and policy...and many others... so why wouldn't people want to work here when the end reward is making a real difference to all our lives? One issue is that public service organisations can be seen as disjointed, rather than one public service with a shared vision of delivering improvements for the people of Wales.
- 2.8 Opening up new career paths, and allowing public service workers to grow and develop outside of their own organisation and sector is essential if we are to retain and motivate talented people. **Overcoming barriers to movement such as pension portability and continuity of service is essential and being actively addressed.**
- 2.9 We don't always attract and retain the best talent because of perceived and actual barriers to people accessing public service jobs. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that inconsistency around process; the complexity of recruitment systems; and the lack of feedback to candidates have all meant that people will try but give up trying when they fail to break through these barriers.
- 2.10 It is essential that we recruit, as well as develop, talent so the consistent demonstration of equal opportunity practices, keeping job adverts and the application process relevant and simple will all go a long way to achieving this. **A future common recruitment and interchange portal for all public sector jobs in Wales will help drive this.**
- 2.11 Increasing the use of apprenticeship schemes across the public service is another important way of bringing in and developing talent. We must provide opportunities for people to work in public services in roles that build their skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications in a structured way which equips them for careers, either within or outside of the public services. **The Welsh Government will lead the development of a Welsh Public Service Apprenticeship Scheme to help further embed the creation of apprenticeships, and enable individuals to make better career choices.** The knowledge they gain of each sector will be invaluable to other sectors they move to.



Developing Skills

- 2.12 The professions and specialisms we have within our public services are varied and diverse. The professional skills range is extraordinary and plentiful. We also have essential core skills which equip us to manage people, resources and finances in multi-million pound organisations.
- 2.13 We cannot afford to stand still and must continue to develop our skills and build capability to meet the demands of the changing environments we work within. For Wales to be the “*small clever country*” we aspire to be, the skills of our people are paramount, and we must be innovative and flexible in how we go about developing those skills. There are numerous ways to learn in a more cost-effective, joined-up manner, making the most of the resources that we share. **Development of common leadership and management programmes, common procurement and sharing of training contracts, and better use of e-learning will help facilitate this.**
- 2.14 For the Welsh Public Service to truly develop a learning culture it is essential we develop the ability to fully use the skills of our people, and facilitate continuous learning. By creating a learning culture right across Government we will: enable and encourage people to work together with a shared aim of improved and more efficient service delivery; become more adaptive to the changes in our external environment and citizen expectations; and better learn from what we do to improve our services.

Ensuring Equality and Diversity

- 2.15 Public service employment accounts for about a quarter of all employment in Wales. Ensuring we are representative and reflective of the society we serve is crucial as is a flexible and future-proofed approach to matching people to jobs. **We are committed to evidencing the diversity of the people of Wales through developing innovative approaches to gathering and collating intelligence on workforce data and trends to inform the more strategic workforce planning required in the future.**
- 2.16 There is substantial research to show that the *most productive and engaged nations are those that are most equal*. The same has been shown to hold true of organisations and their employees. Welsh public service employers are bound by the general equality duties outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 (which require public authorities to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations) and by the Wales Specific Equality Duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, listed public authorities in Wales which are designed to support listed public bodies in Wales to better perform the general equality duties.

The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. Public Sector employers will need to take account of these protected characteristics in the development of their Strategic Equality Plan and objectives and will need to work with partners such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Under the Specific Duties all listed, public service employers in Wales are required to develop outcome focused equality objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP). These objectives will be based on the robust evidence that Welsh public employers gather and when they engage, involve and consult with organisations and individuals. The goal is to develop objectives that will make a difference to people's lives in Wales. These objectives must be published by 2 April 2012 and will show what actions will be taken to carry forward the equality objectives. In the Programme for Government, the Welsh Government has committed to producing its SEP on 2 April 2012.

There is much common ground between Welsh public organisations and Welsh Government, Welsh local government and NHS Wales have worked together to ensure a shared understanding during the development of their equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plans.

The Welsh Government has lead the way in ensuring that equality is at the heart of everything we do, with the publication of Equality Impact Assessment as part of its budget process in 2010.

It is important to consider how, at the all-Wales level we:

- actively value people to maximise their health, well-being, independence, talent, choice and control;
- support people who work in Welsh public services to deliver outcomes which feed into the public authority equality objectives, recognising the value of the different contributions they make; and
- consider a more collaborative approach across the Welsh public sector in the co-ordination and delivery of Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans which would be of mutual value.



3. Maintaining Values to Build Brand

- 3.1 Since devolution, the Welsh Government has led with a distinct set of values, delivering public services around integrity, openness, authenticity and trust. Unlike other areas of the UK, the underpinning ethic has been collaboration - not competition - and belief in the Welsh way being one of a shared and sharing community.
- 3.2 Building brand and identity around the public service workforce in Wales is crucial if we are to break down barriers around mobility, and ensure greater consistency of approach around skills, leadership and engagement.
- 3.3 At the heart of our ethics and values is **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** which is about managing business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society. Public service employment can play an important part in embedding a Welsh Government approach to CSR and this needs to be recognised through collaborative activities **underpinned by a common Charter** including:
- finding out how helpful public services are in **improving the employability of citizens;**
 - taking an active, practical role alongside social partners across Wales in programmes **tackling the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training**, and other groups of long-term unemployed people in Wales;
 - developing **workforce planning** within **strategic business plans;**
 - conducting **outreach programmes** with the future workforce in schools, further and higher education and other communities such as ex-offenders;
 - **conducting Equality Impact Assessments** across collaborative programmes and activities.



4. Developing our Culture

- 4.1 In future, the public services approach to personal development will be underpinned by a clearer link to behaviours – *it is not only about what we deliver, but how we deliver it*. Behavioural change is important when addressing internal challenges such as staff engagement, leading in times of uncertainty and managing organisational change, in addition to being vital for those in customer or citizen facing roles.
- 4.2 **It is essential that we build capability not only within our own organisations but across the public service as a whole. As a Government, we will continue to work across sectors (public private and Third sector), and utilise professional networks to build consistency of standards, shared development programmes, and service-wide career paths.**
- 4.3 As a Government we internally recognise 26 professions and remain focussed on strengthening the approach to professions across public services in Wales. These professions provide us with the opportunity to develop a common language, common development programmes and common career paths. This approach supports the mobility of people and the utilisation of skills and resources across public service organisations.
- 4.4 It is not only professional specialist areas which are important to us or provide opportunities for mobility - there are also a wide range of critical core, transferable skills around, for example, cost effectiveness, the management of resources, and ensuring the consistent delivery of high quality services to the customer.
- 4.5 A number of public service organisations have excelled at this, facing the challenge with resilience, resourcefulness and innovative thinking, resulting in positive change in difficult times. We need to capture this enthusiasm for rising to the challenge and embracing new ways of working so that in less lean times we will continue to manage our resources to maximum effect. Our future priorities are all about delivery and customer service - and we need to ensure that we develop the skills, capabilities and behaviours to achieve this.

Improving Leadership at all Levels

- 4.6 We recognise the critical importance of leadership as an agent of change. We see leadership as a matter not just for those in senior roles but for everyone in public service organisations. We should all take responsibility for excellent delivery of the vital services we provide.
- 4.7 Part of our agenda for transforming employee relations includes progress towards a partnership model which includes employers sharing power through involving the workforce and their representatives in the running of their organisations - but this requires responsibility and leadership from all concerned. It is this culture shift we are attempting to facilitate.

Creating a Centre of Excellence – improving co-ordination and delivery of personal development

- 4.8 As a Government we recognise the importance of leadership in its widest context whether you are a Chief Executive of a public service organisation, Chair of a board, Councillor or supervising a small team - you are all in a leadership role. We understand that excellence in public service delivery flows from the people in these roles, their leadership style and behaviours have a big impact on workforce engagement, motivation and commitment to high quality public services.
- 4.9 As we continue to aspire to the concept of a Welsh Public Service, with greater integration and collaboration, it is important to build a cadre of leaders who are trained to international standards and who understand the social, political and economic context of Wales. This professional class of public service leaders will need to be attuned to the wider world of leadership and development and be immersed in latest practice.
- 4.10 We believe this is best achieved through using our existing institutions using the leadership, management, research and policy capacity which already exists across Wales. We believe this approach would be ideally suited as we enter the next phase of devolution with a refreshed Assembly and new powers. **We will look to harness this capacity along the lines of a virtual Harvard Kennedy School of Government which by any measure is the leading global institution for public affairs, public policy and preparing the public service practitioners for the future.**



5. Employee Relations and Partnership Working

- 5.1 This framework sets the Welsh Government's high quality standards for employee relations and partnership with trade unions, employers and other social partners. Excellent employee relations are not an end in themselves. They should always support our vision for world class public service delivery, linking the workforce with the need for citizen-centred services.

Strengthening the Role of the Workforce Partnership Council

- 5.2 The Workforce Partnership Council, and its predecessor the Workforce Forum, has been a key feature of our approach to partnership working since 2006. It is unique to Wales bringing together public service employers and Trade Unions through the Wales TUC. It is a pan-Wales cross-sector arena facilitated by government and chaired by the First Minister to discuss strategic workforce matters.
- 5.3 We believe that this kind of social partnership approach, which has a proven track record as shown by the Economic Summits, is equally valid for meeting the challenge of constrained budgets and the need to improve public services for the citizens we serve.
- 5.4 **The Council oversees a number of agreements such as Partnership and Managing Change and the Memorandum of Understanding with local government. These will be subject to review and updating to ensure they are fit for purpose.**
- 5.5 The Welsh Government is committed to partnership working with Trade Unions and we want to see progress that is more visible and consistent across public services. We recognise, however, that we cannot be prescriptive as many organisations will have partnership arrangements in place or are currently working with their Trade Unions to design them and we understand the different governance that is in place. This means we will further our commitment to partnership working through promoting **the use of partnership fora by all Public Service Employers with a target for adoption by June 2014.**
- 5.6 It has been recognised by employers and Trade Unions alike for some time that senior managers, full time officers and workplace representatives need to have the skills to move from traditional "adversarial" employee relations to true partnership based on principles agreed at the Workforce Partnership Council namely openness, shared vision and trust. This is a key element in culture change.
- 5.7 Changing culture takes time but progress is being made, a new partnership training programme is already being tested at a local level. **We will extend the use of the agreed partnership training programme to all public service organisations in Wales with a target completion date of the end of 2012. We will also seek agreement to adopt a standard for the operation of partnership working across public services in Wales.**

Changing Culture and Behaviours

5.8 The thread which runs through this framework is the need to change the way we work. We need to re-balance certain elements of key relationships within public service employment. We need to be clearer about the Deal we have with our people – what we expect in terms of our aspirations for the people of Wales. We need a clearer articulation of what quality employment looks like, what are the standards we expect of public service employers with a new government and an Assembly with new powers.



6. The “Deal”

- 6.1 The Welsh Government wants to see tangible demonstration of its values by organisations and their employees. A key source of risk is that there is neither one employer nor one authority for employment. The Deal is about changing behaviour and delivering results. Public servants need to:
- find real satisfaction in jobs that they know deliver
 - span boundaries in both their work and thinking
 - focus on outcomes
 - know when to rise above organisational self-interest
 - learn not blame
 - understand, respect and value each others’ roles and responsibilities and wellbeing.

Operating the Deal

- 6.2 Successive Welsh Governments have called for a holistic approach to the workforce making it more collaborative, sustainable, mobile and adaptable. Although there has been good practice, overall the pace has been slow and uncoordinated, obscuring the connection between the whole workforce, excellent value services and citizen experience. We expect all organisations to adopt the challenge to work together.
- 6.3 As a Government our side of the **Deal** is to set out what we want:
- **engagement with the Welsh Government’s agenda across Portfolios**
 - **accountability for the role of public service employment** in the well being and economy of Wales
 - a **Welsh response to external pressures on employment**, including imposed changes
 - the **free movement of labour and talent between employers** underwritten by continuity of employment
 - to support a range of flexible interventions to support any public servants displaced as a result of the current climate
 - **better, explicitly recognised and rewarded use of frontline experience**
 - constantly **raised levels of employee engagement** and greater numbers of highly engaged employees
 - raising and **tackling the implications arising from separate terms and conditions** of service, including pensions, working patterns, pay and reward with a view to a fairer, affordable public service
 - harmonised, if not **shared, systems, processes and services.**

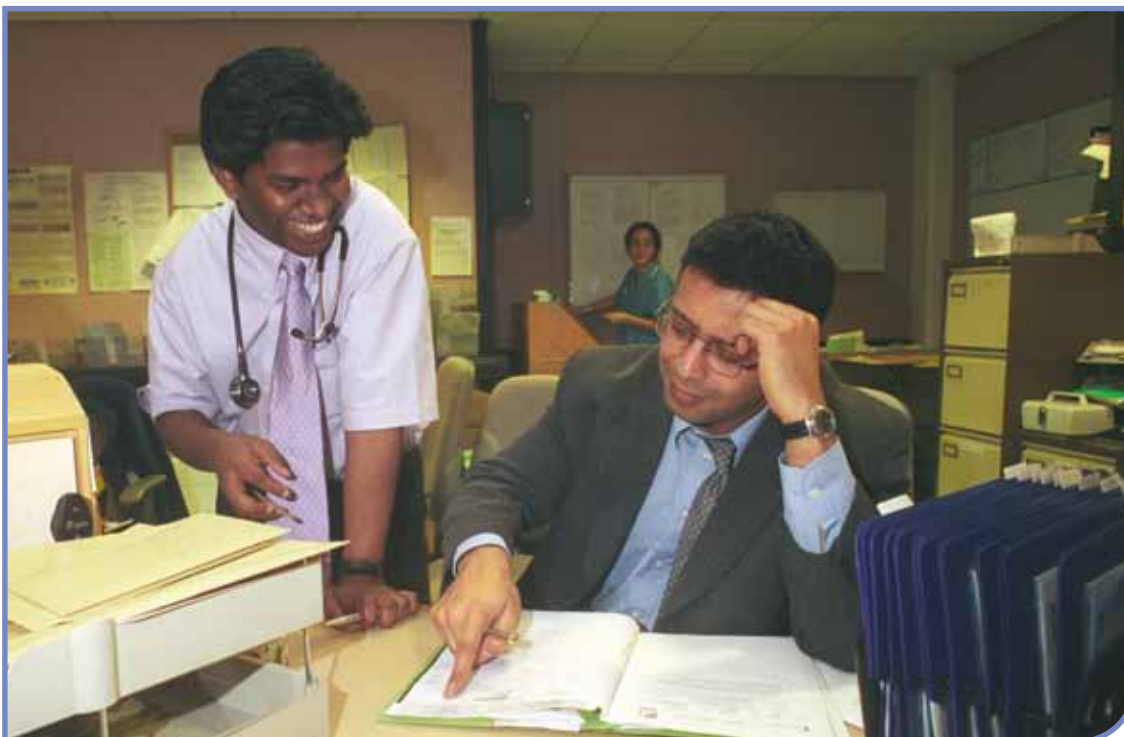
7. Developing and Delivering the Strategy

Working with our Social Partners and Stakeholders

- 7.1 As we work towards delivering this framework it is apparent that we will need in-depth engagement with all our social partners to ensure this strategic framework is developed and delivered. We will need ongoing involvement and ownership to ensure the framework is relevant to the needs of the workforce community and continues to command their support.
- 7.2 We will be working through the principle of progress by consent as we seek to reach a consensus all on the matters contained in this framework and move forward together. We have a balance to strike between ensuring that our approach to the public service workforce is taken forward but wishing to take account of the views and advice of our social partners.

Working across Government

- 7.3 None of this will be achieved unless we work effectively across sectors and across organisations. **As a devolved Government, we work with colleagues across the Public Service landscape to drive a joined up approach to workforce matters.**
- 7.4 **Building on and maintaining effective relationships across both arenas is essential, and where we have recognised professional networks and a common language these help build those relationships.**



Structures and Governance

- 7.5 Within the profession that covers the Human Resource, Organisational Development and Workforce professionals (here referred to as HR), there are structures in place which provide leadership and governance for public service workforce and people issues in Wales. Two of the key bodies within this governance structure are the HR Heads of Profession Steering Group, and the Workforce Partnership Council.
- 7.6 **The first, the HR Heads of Profession Steering Group, provides a forum for public service HR leads to represent their sectors and to be an authoritative voice and point of professional reference for colleagues across the Welsh Public Service. The Group will seek to achieve transformational change through influence, the development and promotion of a shared strategic workforce vision and brand, and through joint leadership and collaboration.**
- 7.7 In addition to this group developing the HR profession in Wales, it also provides an opportunity for key HR leaders to identify and jointly tackle the shared 'big issues' for HR and workforce professionals across the Welsh Public Service.

This will be enabled through:

- **the creation of an HR website for the Welsh Public Service to share knowledge and expertise**
- **the development of HR career paths including HR graduate and apprenticeship programmes**
- **identifying opportunities for joint procurement and the sharing of services.**



8. Measuring Success

- 8.1 This framework addresses the need for cultural change, both in leadership and employee relations, as we strengthen our partnership based approach. It is forward looking, aspirational and reflects key future workforce needs around mobility and a new deal for how we work together. It is rooted in the overriding needs of citizens.
- 8.2 Measuring how well we are doing against this agenda is at the heart of our approach with a clearly defined programme of work, with measurable objectives. Many of our key objectives are long-term but in terms of outcomes these will be measured at interim stages of this term of government as it is vital we demonstrate not only our commitment but actual delivery of these aims.

