

REPORT TO BRIDGEND PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to highlight ongoing work in relation to fair work, health, well-being and equity and to seek to views of Board members as to how this work can best support partnership action.

2. Connection to the Well-being Objectives for Bridgend County

- 2.1. This report assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective/objectives as described in the Well-being Plan for Bridgend County

***Reducing social and economic inequalities**

3. Background

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

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.

Characteristics within the definition: 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.

Source: Fair Work Wales, Report of the Fair Work Commission, 2019
<https://gov.wales/fair-work-wales>

- 3.2. Employment and working conditions are one of the five essential conditions for health equity, outlined in the Welsh Health Equity Status Report Initiative (WHESRI)

in collaboration with WHO Europe.



- 3.3. The pandemic and associated control measures disrupted working lives and opportunities to participate in fair work for many in Wales. Some groups have 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. Whereas the forecasted levels of unemployment due to the pandemic have not materialised, ensuring those experiencing disadvantage have access to fair work remains an essential way of improving long term health and well-being of individuals and households, including for children.
- 3.4. Public Services Boards can have a vital role in driving participation in fair work. This includes through influencing availability of fair work in an area and place-making, supporting access to that work, encouraging and incentivising fair work practice, being exemplars as good employers and anchor institutions and through the implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty.
- 3.5. The current Bridgend Well-being Plan highlights the importance of addressing income inequality and health inequality, with a focus on disability, older people and other equality groups, reducing the skills gap, promoting a healthy work place among private and third sector organisations, working to improve the skills level of the workforce in Bridgend County to reduce economic inequality. It seeks to widen access to opportunities, improve apprenticeship recruitment, develop working skills programmes to reduce in work poverty and low skill levels, develop ICT/Digital skill packages.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1. Public Health Wales has established an expert panel to advise on how local agencies and regional partnerships can increase participation in fair work in a way that improves health, well-being and equity. The panel, chaired by Professor Ceri Phillips, received evidence from Public Health Wales and subject experts, identified additional evidence, and brought members own expertise to formulate themes, opportunities and draft recommendations. An initial interim report has been submitted to Welsh Government.
- 4.2. The interim findings of the panel has identified how local and regional agencies and partnerships can:

- **Create fair work**, integrating the concept into strategies and plans, and ensuring public money is spent in a way that increases participation in fair work, including through job creation, attracting fair work employers and socially responsible procurement
- **Support fair work**, through use of accreditation schemes, and supporting leadership and management training for fair work
- **Normalise fair work**, develop, share and showcase fair work to improve business productivity and employee health and well-being
- **Improve skills and access** to fair-work local workforce capability to adapt to job opportunities which support health and well-being, through upskilling, in-skilling and reskilling, focus on population groups assessed as most disadvantaged, reducing the impact of the digital inequalities gap.
- **Monitor and evaluate** the impact of efforts to increase participation in fair work, using data and intelligence to direct their efforts

4.3. We are now developing materials to support local and regional partners in their efforts to increase participation in fair work, based on the evidence and findings of the panel. This will also be informed by qualitative insights obtained from local authority councillors and staff and case studies from across the UK.

5. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

- 5.1. Increasing participation in fair work for health, well-being and equity takes a long term approach to addressing well-being, focusing on upstream prevention. The work of the panel has been developed in collaboration, through statutory, business, third sector agencies and has involved young people directly affected by the impact of the pandemic on employment. Success relies on integration with existing approaches of Public Services Boards and their members.
- 5.2. This work is relevant to all seven goals of the Act, and particularly a healthier, resilient, more equal and prosperous Wales of cohesive communities.

6. **Financial implications**

- 6.1. No specific implications.

7. **Recommendation(s)**

- 7.1. Public Services Board consider how its work supports participation in fair work in a way that will improve health, well-being and equity and what additional support would be of value as well-being assessments and plans are developed.

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